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AAGT Global has a new format! You will see a brief caption, then click the link for the detailed information.

AAGT Newsletter

October 2019



2019 AGM in Sardinia

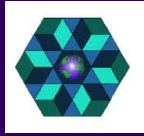
*Somewhere between radical respect,
and the edges of belonging*

MEDI /META/ METTA- terranean, indeed!

This issue is focused on the unique AGM in Sardinia Italy September 2019. The AAGT literally met in the middle of earth (Mediterranean) with the intention of finding a middle ground by putting the focus squarely on being in contact with each other. In this new AGM experiment, participants developed an agenda based solely on what emerged from the deliberate practice of contacting. Challenges of diversity and inclusion, race, gender, power, privilege and oppression, internationality were explored.

In this issue: A plethora of member reflections and pictures to bring those who were not present as close to the event as possible. Information about our 2020 conference in Ireland, AAGT Featured Figures, and as always, AAGT Global listings of member endeavors. ~*Laura*





From the President...



Sardinia, have been looking at the one word on the white/blank page for a long while. It symbolizes the whole, surely not satisfactory as a write up.

It was a white/blank page all around, Sardinia was a fresh and mysterious never ceased to surprise, 2.5 day Gathering which was blank open to what is, who will be interested was a huge question mark, if any.

For me it was a meaningful process leading to a strong fresh event. Very quickly the page started to fill out with colors. Some darker and challenging some lighter and optimistic. The pictures portrayed below in words and photos are a collage that makes the whole. Mine is multicolor, fifteen countries of residence, more of

origin, a fine mix of members and non, first comers and veterans, intertwined with hefty to wonderfully moving conversations all against the blue Mediterranean. The beautiful grounds covered with greens, glorious sunrises and sunsets.

We looked at what it means to change our name to IAAGT. The love for the name and what it feels and mean to many, the frustration at being taken as US based, the invitation to a wider membership and acknowledging who we are and again nostalgia and history.

Thought about the covenant of community, excruciated over what the LGBTQ community has to face in Poland and

vowed to personally support them till AAGT has a policy, latest brought for a vote to Ireland.

We touched color and the impossibility of understanding the depth of experience of being different. There was anger, pain, misunderstanding and above all a wish to meet. We marked the sense of antisemitism felt by some in AAGT and in the field, looked at inclusion and exclusion, briefly on ecology to which we shall pay a lot of attention in Ireland Sep 2020.

At this point the white/blank page feels much more authentic and accurate.

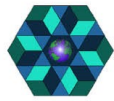
Thank you for materializing my dream, through mutual determination to co-exist and simply by being.

The movement from biennial conference to biennial gathering to the biennial conference and so on becomes natural, and connects to a whole – an international professional community, strong enough to face the music, caring for the field as well as for our professional home.

Dr Talia Bar-Yoseph Levine



*Sardinia,
in water colors*



Brad Larsen Sanchez on Sardinia

Greetings from Portland, Oregon, US. I'm still getting my bearings and recovering from jet lag after returning from the AAGT Annual General Meeting in Sardinia and then the European Association for Gestalt Therapy in Budapest, Hungary. I learned many things, but one is that I don't travel all that well.

At the AAGT Gathering and Annual General Meeting, we said thank you and farewell to Toni Gilligan. I deeply appreciate Toni for her stewardship amidst many challenges and her capacity for tracking relationships and sensitivities. With Toni's departure comes my stepping in to the vice president role. I would be hedging if I did not say I am daunted, yet I feel so wonderfully supported by colleagues, members and current and former board members.

The Gathering and Annual General Meeting was an exciting, complex, stirring, and beautiful collection of people from at least 15 countries. We attended to large group process, dynamics of power, privilege and oppression as well as objections to these terms as they unfolded in the room. As an organization we're facing many dynamic changes and demands, including what it means to be truly international, how do we continue to gather in the midst of an ecological crisis point that is exacerbated by international travel, and how do we raise and give opportunity to new and capable leaders within AAGT.

We discussed the proposal to change our name to the International Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy. It did not go unnoticed to me that when I attended the EAGT conference, following our AGM, most people welcomed me as the next president of the American Association of Gestalt Therapy. That we are international is not obvious by name.

We engaged in the elections process for open positions on the board. This process helped us recognize conflicting language

in our constitution about when decision making and voting should be considered valid. We have formed a committee to review the processes and language to make things clearer going forward.

We listened to a report from AAGT members of our Gender & Sexual Diversity Interest Group who are, and are not alone in this, deeply concerned about LGBTQ security in Poland. We learned that even within the Gestalt community in Poland, clinicians are engaging in conversion therapy, an extraordinarily harmful practice of attempting to coerce gay and lesbian people to be heterosexual. If you've been reviewing the AAGT Member listserv, you can see the letter put forward by the GSD Interest Group.

Attending, discussing, engaging, and listening. These words encapsulate our time together in Sardinia.

Brad Larsen Sanchez, PsyD

Licensed Psychologist
Pronouns: he/him





EDGES^{OF} EXILE^{AND} BELONGING

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Planning for our conference in 2020 in County Clare, Ireland is well under-way. We were delighted to receive a large number of exciting and interesting **workshop proposals**. These have been reviewed by the Presentations Committee, and are now undergoing blind peer review as first steps in the selection and program design process. We will keep you updated and informed about the conference program as it starts to take shape.

People are already seeking to make **reservations** at the Falls Hotel for the conference. We expect to be in a position to release the Code for hotel reservations by mid-October. We'll communicate this to you on the members listserv, our website aagtireland2020.com and on our Instagram and Twitter accounts @aagtireland2020.

Throughout the planning process, the Conference Planning Committee have made every effort to make this an affordable conference. We expect to announce the possibility for you to avail of the **early-bird registration** option by November 2019. We'll keep you posted!

Watch out for a call for **Research Poster proposals** in next month. We're hoping to showcase the diversity of Gestalt research and support dialogue about this during our conference.

Co-Creating a video piece on the theme Edges of Exile and Belonging:

As part of our preparation for the biennial conference in Ireland 2020, we are looking to create a short video based on the conference theme.

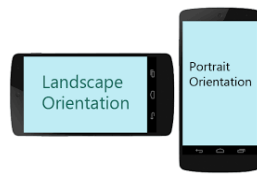
We are inviting you to create this with us. We want to gather video clips of people around the world, saying what the words Exile, Belonging and Edge mean to them. What is our experience of exile and of belonging?

The response could be words, but we would also welcome responses in image, sound, movement... whatever emerges. As an international community,



Interested? Here's what to do next:

Film the piece on your phone or another device. If you are using a phone, **please film in landscape orientation**. Try to keep it short - 30 seconds or so would be perfect. If you prefer, we could set up a zoom video conference meeting with you and record that. Just email us, and we'll set it up.



2. If you can, send some video or photos of the place in the world the speaker is coming from - a streetscape, or landscape, for example. These shots will help us in the editing, and to give context of the wider field.
3. Ask the subject of the video to read and sign the ***informed consent form*** below. Please take a photo of the signed form and email to us.
4. Email to convenors@aagt.org. For larger files, please send via Dropbox to sinead@aagt.org

Your contribution would be greatly valued. We hope you can join us in this co-creation.

Warm regards,

Sinéad, Maryanne, Billy and Toni,
Conference Co-Convenors

[INFORMED CONSENT FORM](#)

Sardinia Gathering and AGM in Porto Ottiolu, Sardinia, Italy - September 13-15 2019

Before: The Board Retreat



The Beginning



The Space Between

I finally decided to go to Sardinia after much deliberation. It would mean that I'd be away from home for three weeks, the challenge of traveling to 3 different countries, the expense of the trip and missing work but in the end, I couldn't resist.

Since I would be in Europe for the EAGT conference in Budapest and then, teaching in Latvia, how could I pass up a chance to be in beautiful Sardinia and to be with AAGT's board – it had been just a year since I left the board after 10 years of being a part/member.

Our first night sitting outside in the pool area – the full moon offering its luminosity to us and reflecting on the Mediterranean Sea. It was glorious. We were laughing, catching up and then, the keyboard musician started playing a Pink Floyd song that sparked stories of long ago sexual encounters and continued with what music companioned different periods of our sexual lives. Laughing and drinking together, breathing by the light of the full moon...

How could this be? We were engaging for the first time in nine years since the rupture in the community. It felt so good – like 'old' times – sharing so intimately and so deeply engaged.

Lying in bed tears streaming I could feel the relief – the opening of new possibilities. We had waded through a challenging 9 years of silence – of pain and disconnect. One thing I knew for sure was that we kept coming back – clearly the organization/community was important enough for us to stay connected in other ways. Of course, I wouldn't presume to speak for my colleagues but this healing this clearing felt amazing.

The next morning at our community meeting looking across the circle at my new found old colleagues and friends I found myself sharing how grateful I was feeling and I apologized for my part of the rupture. (as I tell you about this, I feel the warmth of tears streaming on my cheeks). I hadn't realized to the extent that this rupture lived in me for now I am experiencing this extraordinary opening, clearing, spaciousness for great possibility for our community and beyond.

Gayla Feinstein





The Middle: Group Sessions

Our 2019 gathering in Sardinia offered me nourishment that fed my soul. I left feeling lighter yet stronger and wholesome. What stays with me is seeing the reward of staying with. By negotiating boundaries of what lies between even in conflict I found growth and profound healing. My sense upon leaving was one of belonging. Above all, I felt strength from others who knew the true definition of love and compassion which gently opened my heart. Thank you, Sardinia and to my new Gestalt family, I feel blessed.

ß Julia, Republic of Ireland



Even if, most of the time, AAGT gathering in Sardinia took place indoors, it reminded me of mornings in the garden filled with exquisite light - shiny leaves and vividly coloured flowers; thrills of forthcoming unexpected; birds chirping and singing extravaganza.

Poem:

*"The morning-light aches
with the pain of parting.*

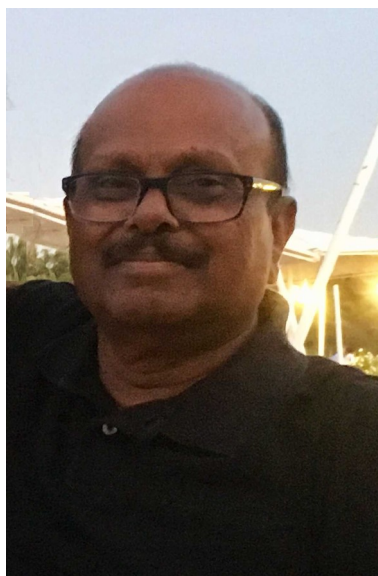
Poet, take up thy flute!

*Let be, if thou must depart,
and go,*

*leaving thy song to the flow-
ers*

*in this dew-dripping au-
tumn."* (Ravindranath
Tagore)

Piotr, UK/Poland à



As a non-Gestaltist it was fascinating to see how the AAGT family of Gestalt Psychotherapists of different nations, cultures and backgrounds come together to express their strong views about important issues and passionately discuss and argue with emotions running high, but at the same time outside the meeting hall they are friends and members of the one Gestalt family. It would not be out of place to quote the speech given in the House of Commons by the late Labour MP Jo Cox: "We are far more united and have far more in common with each other than things that divide us". I was pleasantly surprised how easily and quickly AAGT members accepted me as one of the members of the family. This rare occasion gave me the opportunity to open up and talk about my past.

ß Biman, UK/India



The small groups that collected organically were the fruit of the AGM tree. The intimate contacting with many of the participants will reverberate and forever change me. This is a family and the best of 1. I feel more peaceful and alive and fuller in my more integrated identity with my contemporary family of gestalt and my small town southern Italy roots. Ultimately the AGM business meeting flowed nicely and informed me. [...]

"Absolutely phenomenal! Differences and similar-ities emerged and then merged for me in Sardinia. I see the word phenomenology now as an alive breathing organism" **ß Ema, Canada/Italy**



It's a long way from Australia to Sardinia. I left my continent depleted. By the end of the four days (or was it really only three?) I was restored. [...]

Swim. Eat. Meet. Eat. Meet. Play. Sleep. Repeat. That was it really.



Anna (with the sunspecs)

It all sounds simple in retrospect but a lot happened during our time together. I formed new connections and deepened existing ones. Unfinished business was dealt with and old ruptures were healed. For me, in our meeting in our differences, a lot went on. We covered some serious and sometimes delicate ground.

Anna, Australia à



It was great to have the opportunity to take the time to get to know new Gestalt colleagues from many different cultures and countries.

What is most figural in my memory right now is how intensely and sustainedly we sat together in group of almost 40 people attending to what came up between us.

I really appreciate that we finally managed to do this experiment: having a conference that made contact and dialogue between us on topics that are important, for us in AAGT and for the world at large the priority - not rushing from one workshop to the next.

Thank you all for making this fantasy come alive!

ß Deirdre, Germany/UK

I have enjoyed very much the absence of structure, since within me there is always the tendency to structure meetings of groups. I had come with the intent to do nothing, to let go and let me carry. I enjoyed it very much. I met intense, beautiful and very different people from each other. [...]What a peace. I still see so many faces, I hear so many voices, silence and scents...



Alex, Italy/Germany

The gathering had an unexpected therapeutic effect on me: I felt stronger, healthier and more connected afterwards. Thank you for this lovely, messy and confusing opportunity to find my voice together with you.

Vaclav, Czech Republic/Austria à



My memories are of love and anger; conflict and resolution; ease and discomfort; sea sun and pine cones; all the people I met; and the warmth from all.

Thank you all.

Faye, UK/USA

â



I am very grateful for your acquaintance and for the time we spent together. I am still experiencing the emotions of our meeting, the experience in understanding differences and efforts for being together. Difficulties in our diversity have expanded my perception of every moment. It became a support in finding oneself in a situation of uncertainty. [...]

It was also great experience in important issues of relationships in the organization, its structure and principles.

I was inspired by how we jointly resolved issues of inclusiveness, choice, change, position. Such an interchange is necessary for our organization, so that we remain open to the new and accessible to everyone.

And I took away the important realization that I am not alone in this world.



ß Helena, Ukraine



The past couple of weeks were challenging on a number of fronts, basking in the experience we have created together gives me strength to define between what matters and what can be deleted.

Thank you each and all of you for the contribution you made to this event.

Your acceptance of the unexpected, your commitment to stay with what was and simply being.

You made my dream come true just by being who you are, a special present for the Jewish new year in two days.

For many happy returns, and for meeting in Sep 2020 in Ireland, I raise my glass.

Tali, Israel/UK



Tali and Mari in the Hotel Garden



The End

Sardinia Collage contributed by Dierdre Winter

When the fertile void becomes the fertile oasis

Sardinia, setting for the AAGT gathering and AGM was indeed an oasis for myself and I suspect many others.

From the moment I arrived, the field of hospitality, generosity and good will, supported the international group assembled on this special part of Italy. Attendees from Australia, America, Italy, Ukraine, UK, Ireland, Israel, Greece, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Slovenia supported each other in largely unstructured format, the emphasis on associating, on delving into what does it mean to be international, what are the responsibilities and complexities that come with that intention/aspiration.

One could say about this gathering, old friends met and re-engaged, new friendships formed, differences were celebrated rather than seen as challenges or barriers, past ruptures and old wounds were healed by sincere apologies and regrets.

Some good outcomes I believe are new faces on the board, the issue of internationality is not being rushed, but considered given it's a complex invitation, a commitment to review the Covenant of Community to ensure that it is relevant.

To Toni, Tali, Brad, Rosa, Mari and Deidre who did much of the organizing for the event, Thank you. The renewal I feel for the organization is testimony to the meeting of hearts and minds at Sardinia.

Rod (Rodney Cole)



Came to an AAGT event for the first time, as a friend.

It was a welcomed opportunity to get out of my box, my smaller world and risk following my curiosity, my professional urge to belong to a larger field. The meeting was enriching, interesting, challenging and on the whole more than I bargained for. The variety of the people on any account - origin, personalities, interests, their dedication to stay with what was. My eyes were opened widely to that which is beyond my daily.

As expected I felt out of the loop when Toronto's experience came back to the table time and again, however challenging and unexpected it was also fascinating to feel invited to the depth of the issues addressed. It was a very enriching experience to watch Tali navigating with Toni and Brad next to her, through the sometimes stormy moments to enable contactful dialogic discussions.

The shorter version to all of the above is the fact the then and there,

I decided for the first time ever to become a member of AAGT.

From Edna

"Gestalt therapy was created from an anarchist and two antifascist people, at least, so being as anarchist a minority in the AGM in an all inclusive hotel in an exploited part of a beautiful island and not given really time to reflect and work on all the minorities groups and issues of our organization left me sad and speechless. Maira

Thank you Piotr, Tali, Brad, Dierdra .. and many others for the intense and loving work you all put in to make this experiment rich and alive!

I too see how our similarities shine through our passionate encounters in Sardinia. as I said in the large group. As I heard embodied various flavors of such passion, the gelato ultimately was delicious!

The large group flowed often smoothly (and sometimes choppy) with dialogue and at times rich contacting. I much appreciated the silence in our first and second meetings. People contained the silence and gave me permission to take time to feel the changing ground. The 1 small group meeting in the forest opened me up into the gestalt gathering. I was received in my native tongue and heard fully even though no one understood Italian. This opening went through my post AGM experience to my homecoming (after 62 yrs lived as a Canadian) in San Marco in Lamis.

I had a dream recently of wholeness where all facets of me were in the faces of ancestors and AGM participants. Faces were bright, warm and gleaming in our homecoming.

My hope is that I have impacted upon others even just a smidging of what I have received.

Again thank you all and please use any or all of what I write here for the Newsletter.

Emanuela Nardella, RP

Dear all,

First of all, I want to thank Tali, Brad, Deidre, Burt and others who put so much energy into making it happen. I know it was an uphill struggle. I shared with you the trepidation that nobody would show up. I'm so glad that the opposite happened, and we were an international (intercontinental) group and gathered in good numbers. Thank you for your perseverance in starting this new thing: a meaningful biennial event which complements the AAGT conferences.

For those who weren't there: After a board retreat we gathered with other AAGT members and some non-members and stayed together attending to our experience, discussing, arguing, contacting, crying, laughing, agreeing, disagreeing, approaching, withdrawing – for two and half days – ...and then saying heartfelt goodbyes. At the first day, we got together on the shore and worked for a while in small groups, getting know each other. After the small groups found their way to the big group, we stayed in that form for the rest of the time. It was a leaderless group and we touched on many topics, some trivial, some deep, some touching, some contentious. There was no plan as to which form the gathering will take, it was a spontaneous co-creation (and obviously co-argumentation and co-frustration).

As I was on the way home, flying back to Vienna, I was reflecting on my experience. It was strange to me that I felt as if the gathering had a therapeutic effect on me. I felt stronger, healthier, more connected. I was wondering what about the group did that. After all, it was not a therapeutic group. What I now believe was so nourishing for me, was being with this crazy people who are willing to sit together in discomfort, to endure all the deflections, projections and the likes, who are open to hear and see each other, be personal and express themselves... who then part and come together again. It's messy, it's confusing, but finding my own voice among you, was ... what would be the right word ... *good!* Thank you for that! And of course, we had touching moments of love, wit, smartness, deepness and warmth... but somehow what I want to express my appreciation for here is this coming-together-in-spite-of. That teaches me about love for our own brokenness and about finding my own voice, sometimes broken, occasionally right on, together with you.

The backdrop of our gathering was beautiful Sardinia, mild weather, and see (and full moon). I say this with mixed feelings: enjoyment of the place and sight and the hospitality of those working at the resort, but also being aware of the impact of tourism and flying by plane. I'm asking myself the question, how should AAGT operate in the future so that we can meet each other and associate, as that is a undoubtedly one of the most meaningful things to do, and be attentive to the ecological impact of doing so. Will we have big conferences in ten years? How do we gather as our numbers grow?

Kind regards, Vaclav



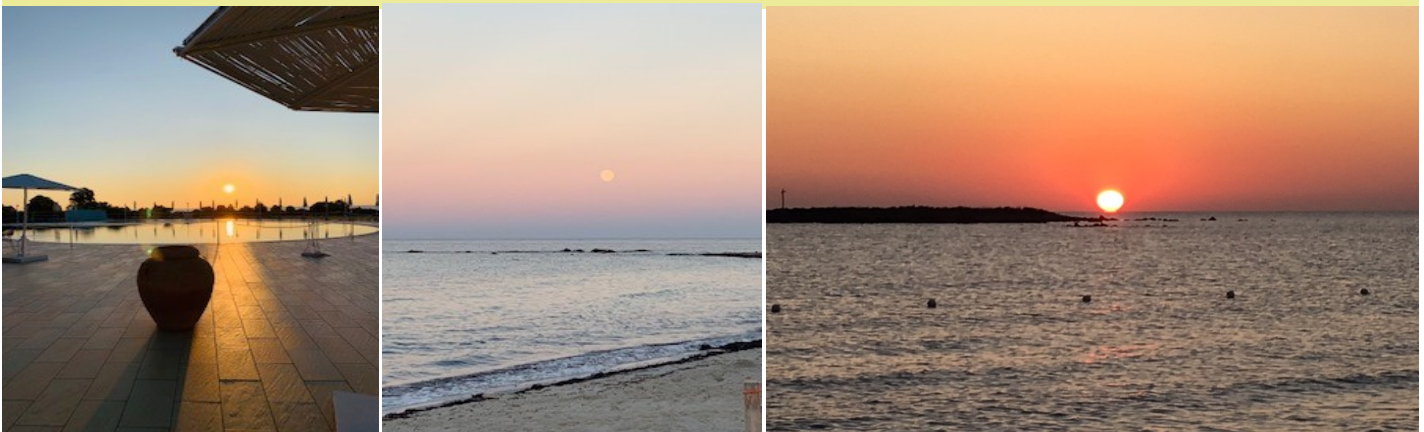
The gorgeous venue and its peaceful surroundings provided the perfect environment for the difficult and rich conversations that took place at the gathering. It was the first time I was inside the circle, both literally and figurative. I deeply appreciate the experience, and I was humbled to see how much was accomplished and learn how far our community has yet to grow in order to become the inclusive international organization we aspire to become. Mari

Piotr's Reminiscences of AAGT Gathering and AGM in Sardinia...

This year's AAGT gathering and AGM in Sardinia was to be an experiment as AAGT extended its invitation to the participants from outside of AAGT and Gestalt community, which enabled me to be joined on this adventure by my husband, Biman. Instead of staying behind, like at some previous conferences, he participated actively in most of the proceedings, spoke in the groups, scheduled and spontaneous. I was thrilled and deeply moved to hear him speak, as he usually does, from his heart, in the honest and personal way, however this was the first time I had an opportunity to be with him in the gestalt group, and for each of us to hear us speak. Biman told us the story of his childhood in India and the horrors that took place during partition of his motherland - this was a story of his uprooted existence and torn apart family, of migration and death, utmost poverty, but also the story of bravery, hope, determination, and love. And this marked only the start of our journey together, as a couple in this totally new context of a group of individuals from varied backgrounds, languages and race, each with their unique story told in their unique voice, but always spoken from the heart; the honest and genuine sharing over the two days and a half of our staying together in Porto Ottiolu.

As far as I know, this was the first experiment of this kind for AAGT, and definitely the first time for Biman and I to sit in the Gestalt group together. The effect was mind-blowing! Neither Biman nor I had experienced each other this way before; often on the edge, unsure of what each of us would hear or say next; surprised, inspired, shaken to the core, moved to tears and thrilled with excitement. The experience meant we had discovered sides to each other that, despite our 32 years together, we didn't know existed. Thank you Tali, Brad, Deirdre, and Burt for making it possible! The time spent in the company of likeminded people became more than just an ordinary meeting. I felt transported somewhere totally else. I thought we formed one of the places that Michel Foucault called *hétéropies* - at the same time non-physical and real and physical space; a tangible utopia. The participants of our gathering created *l'Espace Autre* that made it possible for suspending prejudice and disbelief, and entering realities other than just our own, a realm of our shared humanity: creative, transpersonal, transcultural. I am guessing that being far removed from anywhere, in a remote resort, on an island in the middle of Mediterranean sea, at the edge of Europe also helped ... as did the sun, open skies and turquoise sea, and the full shiny moon that over two nights transformed into the blood-orange harvest moon on the last night of our stay. The special ambiance saturated with respect, curiosity and inclusion was particularly apparent on the second day afternoon when the formal AGM took place.

Amongst the issues we discussed was the proposal to change the AAGT name to IAAGT (I for International) and the request from the AAGT Gender & Sexual Diversity Interest Group for the organization as a whole to make an official to support the LGBTQ+ community in Poland that is currently under increasing siege and persecuted. It is clear to me that without the experience of the prior two days of getting to know each other intimately - in small groups on the beach or just talking with each other by the pool, and during the process of the large group, which at times was not without serious difficulty, frustration and anger, but also with love, respect and kindness, attending efficiently to the issues of such magnitude and complexity during the AGM would not have been possible. The diversity of participants, level of engagement and authenticity, created enough ground for engaging with uneasy issues at hand. This year's AAGT AGM illustrated for me what is quintessentially a good contact: "the cooperation of sense and movement (and also feeling)", to quote Perls, Hefferline & Goodman (1951).



AAGT Featured Figure October 2019



Alexander Lommatzsch

When Laura invited me to introduce myself in any way, of my choice, in relation to Gestalt and AAGT, to tell the truth, I felt a little embarrassed and lost, because it is not part of my daily life habits to introduce myself to such a wide audience. I usually prefer to talk about how I deal with clinical or educational issues. At the same time I feel honored and grateful for the opportunity. I was born in Germany back in 1954. In 1974 I moved to Berlin where I studied pedagogy and where I first met Gestalt in university classes. I had great difficulties with a psychological approach that focused on the responsibility of the individual.

I preferred a linear vision that would allow me to blame the economic and political logic for the troubles of humanity. On the other hand, I had professors with an understanding, humanity, sympathy and love never met before. I have been contaminated. In 1982, the first three-year course in Gestalt Pedagogy organised by the GZB Gestalt Zentrum Berlin began in Berlin. The love for a woman brought me to Italy. I started attending the GTS - Gestalt Training Service in Tuscany, directed by Ischa Bloomberg and I had as a therapist and supervisor Barrie Simmons. The love affair ended and I was enchanted by Puglia and then in love with Caterina, my wife, from Puglia, mother of our children.

Together with her, first a lawyer, then a counsellor and psychologist and then a psychotherapist, we created the IGP - Istituto Gestalt di Puglia, Training centre for counseling and psychotherapy. Puglia was completely deprived of a gestaltic approach. We were alone. From the beginning we tried to attract many trainers from Italy and Europe to teach us and our students the Gestalt and to have personal supervision. For 15 years we have been organizing every summer the "Salento Gestalt Summer School", a week of training meetings with more than 150 people from Italy and the world. Today we are part of EAGT and AAGT, both as organizations and as individual members. Our institute is recognized by the Ministry of University, Education and Research as a Training Institute for Gestalt Psychotherapy. We have professional courses for counsellors, family mediators, art therapists and together with our partners in Rio we offer for trained psychotherapists with professional experience, training courses for family and couple therapy. Just as we, who teach in many countries in Europe and the Americas, are interested in meeting with those who bring us news, innovation, sympathy, silence, creativity and love.

For future and love with best wishes

Alex

AAGT Featured Figure October 2019



My name is **Piotr Mierkowski**. I am a psychologist and psychotherapist, and live and work in UK. I am a graduate of the Gestalt Centre London, where I am now a visiting trainer. I also regularly train gestalt therapy abroad, mostly in Poland, where I was born and grew up. Both migration and rootedness is my background. You can see me on the photo above in my practice in North London: "Hi there!"

Behind me, on the right, you can see a chair I usually sit in, unless I am standing or sitting on the floor. To the left, there is a sofa that some of my clients chose to sit or lie down on. I love reading; hence there are many books on the shelves behind me, mixed with small objects – memories of many travels around the world.

The framed silhouette on the right is a painting by Rabindranath Tagore - a Bengali poet and playwright, the first non-European writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. What drew me to it was the quality of the painter's line, at once strong and confident, and gentle and flowing that gives a sense of movement or gesture. Tagore had no formal training in arts besides, as he used to say, his "sense of rhythm and penchant for unpredictability". He liked leaving his drawings untitled, free from the limits of literary imagination, wishing for the viewer to read them in their own individual way. I was introduced to his art by Biman - my Indian husband and companion for over 32 years; a particle physicist, a voice of reason in my life.

Now, what the above photo does not show, but you can imagine, is the cherry tree that grows in front of my window and that is constantly changing - full of glorious white blossom and buzzing bees in the spring; naked, dark-grey and gnarled in winter - a good reminder that nothing ever stays the same.

This is indeed this focus on the continuing process of change and contact with our environment, the freely ongoing gestalt formation and destruction, that is one of the aspects of Gestalt therapy that has attracted me to in the first place, nearly 40 years ago, when still an undergraduate student of psychology in Warsaw.

Another reason was the Gestalt therapy's insistence on phenomenological enquiry - going beyond any label, and in touch with our individual experience of all living phenomena.

I have remained an AAGT member ever since the conference in Manchester in 2008, which gave me the first opportunity to connect with people who created this wonderful organization that for me, emanates the true essence of Gestalt therapy that *"is first and foremost a philosophy of awareness, contact and response-ability with a therapeutic methodology incorporated in it"*, to quote the words of one of my teachers, Gaie Houston. My recent attendance of the AAGT Gathering and AGM in Sardinia has reaffirmed that conviction.

Warm regards everyone, Piotr



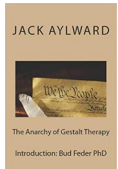
AAGT Global

See what members are offering:

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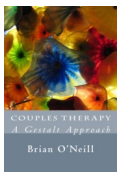
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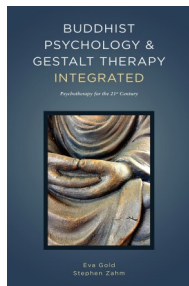
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