

## Editorial

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JOSEPH MELNICK, Ph.D.

IT SEEMS HIGHLY APPROPRIATE that the first significant departure from the established format of *Gestalt Review* is the presentation of articles from the 1997 International Conference of the Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy (AAGT). We are collaborating in this experiment because *Gestalt Review* and AAGT have much in common in addition to a shared theoretical framework and approximately the same date of birth.

Our commitment to the basic principles of Gestalt therapy links us to each other, and to all other Gestalt institutes and publications. This common ground consists of organizing concepts such as field theory, phenomenology, dialogue, figure/ground, resistance as creative adjustment, and the use of experiment (Melnick, 1997). In this sense, we are aligned with Gestalt therapy as practiced throughout the world. There are, however, three ways in which both *Gestalt Review* and AAGT focus their efforts to build upon the heritage of Gestalt therapy:

- To honor theory and practice developments from all over the world, and to nurture a global sense of a Gestalt community.
- To provide containers in which diverse perspectives toward Gestalt therapy may meet and enrich each other.
- To support the application of Gestalt therapy to multiple levels of system, including individual, dyad, group, family, organization, community, and institution—as a way of leveraging the power that is provided to us in concepts and methods of individual Gestalt therapy.

Though both *Gestalt Review* and AAGT are interested in our history and in our contribution to the development of modern psychotherapy, we are highly oriented to enlarged and modified views that can provide a robust future, one that best fits our contemporary period. While we value and support the work of individual institutions throughout the

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Dr. Melnick, editor of *Gestalt Review*, has been practicing, teaching, and writing about Gestalt therapy for over 25 years.

world, we want to create structures and processes that will support the total Gestalt community. While we agree with the traditional Gestalt emphasis on independence and aggression, we see also the importance of interdependence and collaboration. While we value the thinking of Gestalt practitioners, we seek also to have more dialogue with those of a non-Gestalt orientation.

With the above in mind, *Gestalt Review* is pleased to publish a selection<sup>1</sup> of articles drawn from over 50 presentations at AAGT's Second International Conference, attended by over 250 people from 27 countries. In doing so, we also wish to endorse the following statements from the AAGT Constitution (1994):

That an organization can be created, rather than imposed, and that it will grow out of our contacting; and

That structure will emerge in response to our shared needs, interests and concerns; and

That by believing in the unity of theory and practice, an organization which so creates itself, is itself an experiment, an ongoing organic process of Gestalt formation and destruction, in which old forms are destroyed and new figures emerge—through contact which is bright and lively, energized and graceful fluid and fulfilling; and

That such an organization provides the ground for enrichment, articulation and support of the constantly emerging figure that is Gestalt therapy [p. 3].

### References

- Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy (1994), *Constitutions and By-Laws*, Article 1, p. 3.  
 Melnick, J. (1997), Editorial. *Gestalt Review*, 1: 1–8.

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<sup>1</sup>We received 19 papers in response to solicitation of 25 people who presented at the conference. Given the limitations of space, independent reviewers chose these. The other papers are listed later in the journal.