POIESIS

A Journal of the Arts & Communication

EGS 25th Anniversary Issue • Reconciliation, Celebration, Resilience

Volume 17, 2020

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COVER PAINTING: "Rio Abajo, Rio Abajo," by Brigitte Wanzenried, lic.phil.I, CAGS. Brigitte was an art and family psychotherapist, a teacher and supervisor at The European Graduate School and at InArtes in Switzerland until her death in 2019. Brigitte was an accomplished painter who exhibited her work in Switzerland at the European Graduate School and elsewhere. Her paintings have been published in *Ein Stück Himmel bitte* with Margo Fuchs-Knill and in *Stella und der Mauerläufer* with Hannelore Dietrich.

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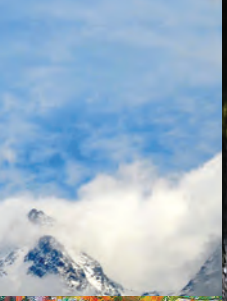

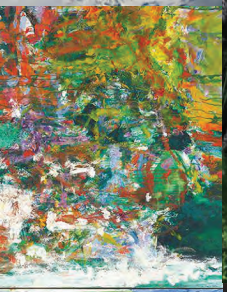


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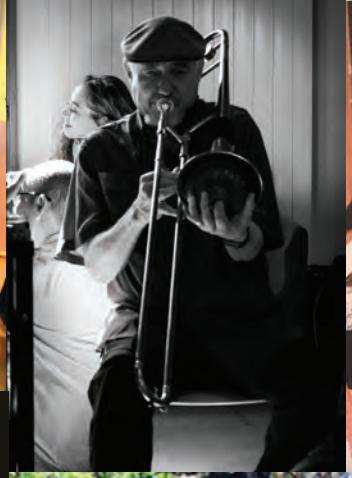
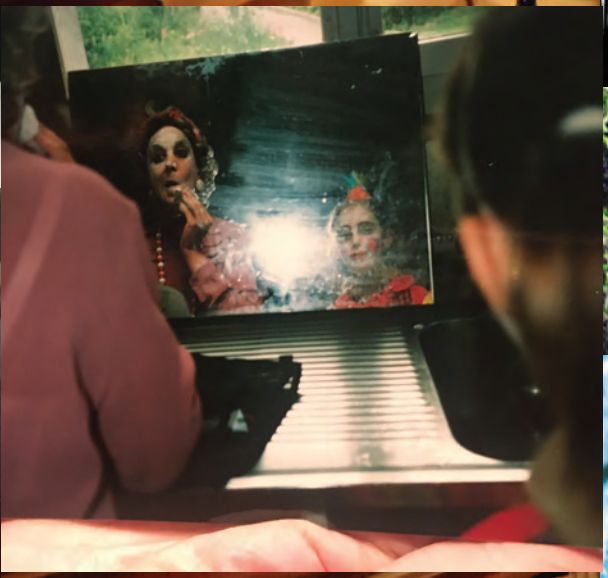





Sengg
Untr Senggboden
Saas-Fee

Blue River

Sally Atkins

An aesthetic response to Brigitte Wanzienried's painting, "Rio Abajo, Rio Abajo." (cover image)

Within the flow of years
Tears written in wood
The river
Shining

At the edge a new
Calligraphy of grasses
And somewhere waiting
Our small boats of longing

Journey of flame and shadows
Down, down the dream river
Our broken boat moves onward
Toward the receding horizon

Down the dark river
Blown by a grieving wind
We are wearing another skin
Sacred and scarred like flowers

Thoughts swim small and golden
In a pressing destiny of sound
Round words of hope and fear
Flow down the holy river

Flash of gold and the staring eye
River tongue licking the edges of light
Down below in the current flow
The slow shaping of stones

Down, down through the net of time
We are only this moment flowing
In the intimacy of earth and water
We know the mystery of blue

Devouring passion, take us down
Drowning, we will arrive
Unutterably alive
Shining.

Editorial Introduction
Poiesis in a Time of Crisis

Stephen K. Levine

Photo: Anna Fenech

I am proud to introduce a new issue of the *POIESIS* journal during this critical period of human existence. As populations all over the world are threatened, we have to ask ourselves: What is worth saving? What is worth our dedication? The threat of futility hangs over us all. We have our daily lives and our routines, we strive to keep a semblance of normality during this abnormal time, but despair, the absence of hope, is always present.

When we began to plan for the publication of this issue of the journal, we envisioned it as a celebration of the 25th anniversary of The European Graduate School (EGS). The theme that

we proposed was, "Reconciliation, Celebration, Resilience." Now we have to ask ourselves: What does this reconciliation imply? The word itself means, "to bring back together again." Certainly we do not want to reconcile ourselves to the fate of mass extinction. We strive mightily to overcome this, and the efforts made to do so are carried out by people working together. There is already reconciliation in the recognition of our interconnection.

Moreover, EGS itself arose out of this spirit, as the founders worked to bring together again the separate arts disciplines into their original interconnection on the basis of a renewed understanding of the role of the arts in human existence. The word that seemed to sum up this understanding was poiesis, the capacity of human beings to respond to difficulty and suffering and to transform them through creative acts that bring beauty into the world. Once the idea for the journal arose, it seemed only natural to use that word as our emblem.

This issue of *POIESIS* aims to bring back together again those who have dedicated themselves to the spirit of poiesis at EGS and in all the countries in which they have been working. There is no dogma that unites us, only the belief that we are capable of creative response. Thus reconciliation clearly turns into celebration, the sense that even in perilous times we hold the hope that we can come together again. As I have written elsewhere, "poiesis is always possible." Only by believing and acting on it can we make this affirmation become true.

And of course, by affirming poiesis as a fundamental capacity of human existence, we build resilience in the face of suffering. As Samuel Beckett wrote, "You must go on. I can't go on. I'll go on." Perhaps we should say, *we* will go on. We will continue to build a new world together out of the ruins of the old. Both individually and collectively, we will go on making, shaping, responding, creating, and we will celebrate what we have made and pass it on to those who come after us. May this issue of *POIESIS* be one of the gifts that we offer. You must go on. We will go on.

A Dance of Resilience and Reconciliation

Daria Halprin

For weeks I worked on a different essay for this collection; unprecedented world events forced me to put it aside. Six weeks ago the world sounded, looked, moved and felt so different. I was in the studio, leading training groups and workshops. I was visiting with my grandchildren. I was attending my ninety-nine year old mother. I was dreaming of my pilgrimage back to the European Graduate School. Enter COVID-19, a global threat impacting us all. Now schools are closed, and therapists, teachers and dancers make their offerings online, glad for the technology that navigates this attenuated distance and connection between us.

We are all asked to shelter in place. As an immune-compromised person, I am identified as one of those at high risk. I have faced my share of high risks, physically, emotionally, and mentally throughout my life. This is different. This is everywhere, and everybody is at risk. It is personal and it is collective, a meta-trauma, encompassing all the other traumas of our global body.

Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, was recently asked where he finds his strength in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on refugees worldwide. His answer was that he finds inspiration in the courage and the resilience of the

healthcare workers putting their lives on the front lines. People in neighborhoods and on city streets create choruses of applause every night, singing and howling together, an aesthetic response to all the first responders. Art rises up and connects us—a celebration of empathy, compassion, solidarity in the midst of isolation and despair.

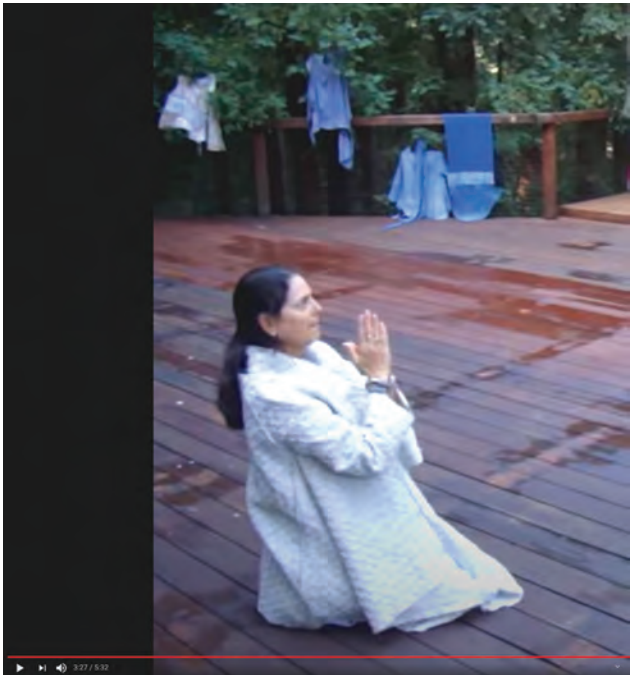
These times call for our resilience—for our capacity to hold with care, and for imaginative recreation. I feel my body contract and let go, contract and let go, on a daily basis now. Every day I reach for a reservoir of resilience to counteract the anxiety and motivate a rebound. Perhaps this has always been the dance, and only now I feel it more vividly. Movement is mobilized by the contraction and release of muscles. The art is in finding a healthy balance between. What we face now on a collective level challenges us to find and sustain that healthy balance. It is our creativity and our spirit that will dance the in-between.

We each have our own signifying shelter in place story to tell, a personal myth that holds a key sense experience, memory, feeling, a narrative self-portrait of this particular time. Here is mine. My mother will reach 100 years old in a few months. I had started visiting her every afternoon, holding her in my arms. We would lean into each other, and she would rest her head on my shoulder. In her final letting-go dance, though we have had our differences, what lives between us now is a tender grace and love. That, and COVID-19. I have had to postpone my daily visits that have been so reconciling, providing her with the shelter of my body, as she once did me. It's too great a risk, for both of us. The paradox of those particular words so near each other—reconciliation and risk.

Some weeks ago, just days before we received the shelter in place order, I got an emergency call from one of my mother's caretakers. We had decided there would be no more ambulances, no more hospitals. A dancer all her life, she had completely lost the use of her legs and had collapsed on the floor. There seemed no way to get her up. I thought I could just lift her in my arms and carry her to bed. It is amazing how heavy such a little body is when dead weight. She is suffering from dementia, so I was unsure to what extent she realized

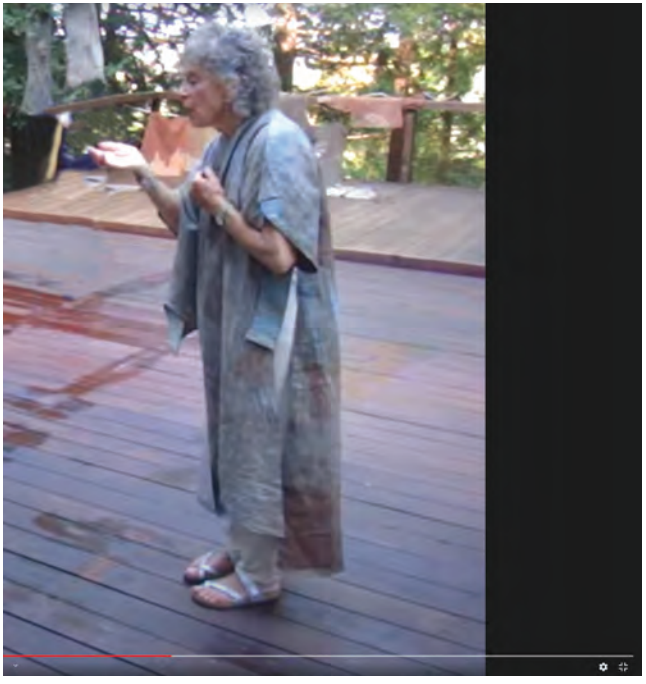
our predicament. I got down on my hands and knees, and coached her as I pulled her along the floor. In a painstaking crawl duet, we made our way together to the side of her bed. She powered that crawl entirely with her upper body. I was stunned by the resilience still left in that body, pure spirit and will.

I can't visit my mother now; I can't hold her in my arms to accompany her in this last chapter. I was her shelter in place and now COVID-19 stands between our bodies. I hope that I will be able to hold her again. I think we are all holding onto the hope that we will feel safe and connected, held and together again. Until then, we all need to shelter in place. I shelter in my heartbeat, pulsing, contracting, and letting go. My heart is strong, she's vulnerable, and she is breaking and rebounding, every day now. She sings across balconies, in the chests of neighbors who have decided to howl out to each other every night from their front yards, hellooooohellooooohelloooo. My heart sings across borders, for the homeless, the painters, the dancers, the poets, the teachers, the health-care workers and first responders, the unsung, the old and the young ones, for all the children who are living in this new world we have created, a world they will have to recreate. My heart sings for my mother, for all the mothers and daughters, for all of you, for the future. It's a song in the melody of sweet and salty tears. It's a song about breaking, and letting go, loosening and holding tight. It's a song of rebounding,



in the key of creativity and spirit. It's the sound of resilience. It's a song for us to dance to.

Shelter in place has become the image of this time—to take shelter, to give shelter, to find shelter, to be sheltered—a powerful image, the color and shape of pain, fear, isolation, and a metaphoric beauty of connecting in deeply healing ways. If we are privileged, our homes and relations provide shelter. The natural environment offers shelter. Our bodies provide shelter, and the expressive arts provide shelter. From within our shelter, our hearts break for those who do not have their basic needs met. Our work as expressive artists, teachers and therapists provides shelter in the capacity of the arts to hold and give creative, embodied expression to our individual and collective distress. It is in the resilience of the expressive arts that we will find support to carry us through this crisis and beyond.



As I recreate the pandemic narrative, imagining it as an expressive arts metaphor, I imagine my dance studio as shelter, my body as shelter, the expressive arts as shelter, the learning community as shelter. I feel in my body this time of suspension, separation and loss. I teach in a remarkable indoor-outdoor studio. I miss this sheltering space where people of diverse backgrounds and from all over the world have come to create art and study since 1952, first with my mother and then with me. I have danced, performed and worked as an expressive arts therapist in that studio all my life. It is

the studio and what unfolds there that I long for greatly–the sensory and intuitively felt human contact, the ways we move together, are alone together, and witness our art-making. I have come to think of the studio space much like a painter thinks of canvas, or like a dancer thinks of her body. The studio acts symbolically and literally as the creative art-making container in which individual and collective autobiography is encountered, expressed and transformed. It provides focus and ritualizes enactments, it serves as a transitional space between everyday life and what Paolo Knill refers to as "the alternative world of the imagination." The studio itself becomes an integral part of the experience, an aesthetic geography that frames and illuminates. It serves as a stage for art-making and for enactment. The space as well as the art-making activity decenters us from our ordinary and habitual ways of perceiving and acting. Wherever we practice, setting the frame and the stage takes on a special aesthetic sense in which a deep dive into creative process and healing rites will take place.

The studio shelters our bodies; our bodies shelter our lives. Our senses, emotions, memories, beliefs are stored in bones, muscles, organs, nervous system, and in each body part. Years ago, as a young woman returning to studio practice following a traumatic period of years of physical disassociation and psychological dislocation, I began my recovery in the only way I knew how, as an artist. Informed by my early studies with Fritz Perls, founder of Gestalt therapy, I was well aware that what was held in my body was also echoed in my psyche. I began a research project to rebuild my sense of body, place and purpose. I returned to the artistic method I had been trained in, spending a year in artistic and therapeutic exploration of each part of my body. I studied anatomy and kinesiology, made visual art, developed dance explorations, wrote poetry inspired by each body part. Drawing from these explorations that created a pathway of return to my own body, I evolved a process I named "Body Part Mythologies" that has guided my work with others. (cf. *The Expressive Body in Life, Art and Therapy,* "Body Part Metaphors," p.145).

My pandemic narrative brings a new dance to my body mythology that will be forever

linked to the life-long duet with my mother. Two dancers crawling together, two different and interconnected stories, two women leaning into art as a way to understand life. We have struggled and made peace. We have sheltered each other and have created shelter for others. We have danced and witnessed so many dances. We performed and taught in a remarkable studio. Now, with nothing standing between us, even as we are held apart by the arms of this emergency, I am grateful to celebrate two lives lived and sheltered by the indomitable healing spirit of the arts. This is a dance of resilience and reconciliation. With this telling, it is also linked to all of you as witnesses. My hope is that we will all continue to find dances of resilience, grow and share inspiration and our stories of shelter in the expressive arts for the benefit of all.

Video image: Tamalpa Institute, *Anna & Daria Halprin Dancing at Mountain Home Studio.* May 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdpvC0-fi64

Daria Halprin, MA, CAGS, REATH, RSMTH, originally trained as a dancer and performance artist. The Co-Founding Director of Tamalpa Institute since 1978, she is a teacher, therapist and author, directing training programs in movement-based expressive arts education, coaching and therapy. Among the leading pioneers in the field of expressive arts education and therapy, her work bridges somatic psychology, movement/dance therapy, community arts-based health education, leadership development, and performance. Published writings include: *Coming Alive* (1989) and *The Expressive Body in Life, Art and Therapy* (2003), as well as others in the field. She has served on the faculty at EGS, CIIS, JFK, Alanus University, UC Berkeley, and as guest teacher and keynote presenter at numerous conferences in educational, health and art centers throughout the world.

Tender Moment
Gopika Dahanukar

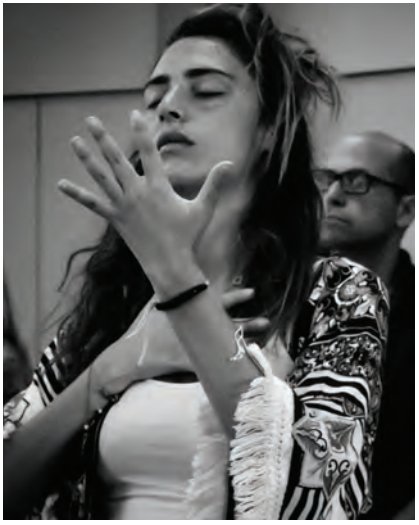
We are walking away from who we are,
while we are moving towards who we know we are

We are finding no space to breathe in the chaos,
while we are holding chaos lovingly with our breath

We are not knowing where we are going,
while we are trusting a place known to us

We are lost in finding what art is,
while we are found in ourselves being lost

Gopika Dahanukar, MFA, CAGS, is an artist, a vocalist and a registered therapeutic expressive arts counselor. She is the Founder and Director of Swahansa Expressive Arts India, a cooperating partner institute of EGS, teaching in Mumbai and in Auroville, an international township in South India. She is also a trustee of the Prafulla Dahanukar Art Foundation, a non-profit organisation that is leading the way in supporting emerging artists and progressive social action through the arts in India.



Photos: Anna Fenech

A Collage in Abbreviations

Paolo Knill

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A cache of words and sentences
in brackets *(italicized thought)*
size XL

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exclamation mark
start over
slippery when wet
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one-way
no U-turn
- hyphen –
from where to where
control ctrl
old
select - delete
fn (cancel)

©®§Ξ⊇Σ↔Ψ&∀

Paolo at the piano. Photo: Anna Fenech.

Paolo J. Knill, Ph.D., Dr. h.c., founder and founding Rector of the European Graduate School, EGS; Professor Emeritus, Lesley University, Cambridge, MA. Honorary member of the board of trustees EGSF. Initiator of the International Network of Expressive Arts Therapy Training Centers and founder of the ISIS European training institutes. Author of *Minstrels of Soul: Intermodal Expressive Therapy*; co-author of *Principles and Practice of Expressive Arts Therapy: Toward a Therapeutic Aesthetics.*

An Interview with the Founding Rector of EGS, Paolo J. Knill

Margo Fuchs Knill

M.: This June you will turn 88, and EGS will have its 25th anniversary celebration. When you were 64, you founded The European Graduate School, together with the non-profit European Foundation EGIS[1] and an academic advisory board. At an age when other people long for retirement, you began another career. What is your predominant sense of EGS now?

P.: A great appreciation for the strong commitment to the phenomenological approach by our faculty members. This approach has held us together in learning to differentiate our practice from the art therapy establishment. I am grateful for that learning because it deepened the understanding of the intermodal methodology. My way in building a theory of practice has always been connected to learning by doing.

I am grateful that the field of expressive arts has succeeded and is growing. A teacher at EGS may encounter students from over fifteen countries. Each summer school radiates with liveliness, a strong sense of empowering each other by accepting our differences. I hold this gift of peaceful coexistence with gratitude.

M.: Can you tell me one thing that you want us to know about intermodal expressive arts?

1. EGIS: Europäische Gesellschaft für Interdisziplinäre Studiengänge, members: Willy Bierter, Herbert Eberhart, Kurt Grünwald, Paolo Knill, Jürgen Kriz, Arnold Steiner, Hans-Helmut Decker-Voigt, and Peter Margelist as the representative of the State of Wallis

P.: The answer should be reinvented each time when this question comes up. In our method of decentering, we need to resonate with what shows itself. Sometimes this shaping that follows the emerging image flows easily, other times it takes patience and discipline. Even when it seems chaotic, we keep shaping until we perceive the attractors towards forms that make sense aesthetically.

Helping to create hope is an essential force in our work with clients. We cannot "give" hope. Hope is closest to us when we are in despair. Hope is the bread and wine of our work. Communion–where the artistic act of being in and out of resonance is of great importance in the sense of community-building and belonging. As long as we belong, we can hold on.

M.: You can look back on 50 years of pioneering since you developed the intermodal approach. Let's look at the do's and don'ts. Can you let us know one thing we should do, and one thing we shouldn't?

P.: By crossing boundaries, from falling to flight, we gain mastery by losing control.

Don't always expect comfort. The work with the arts is also challenging, and it is an art to be artful with challenges.

M.: Together with Herbert Eberhart, you introduced the solution-focused approach to the expressive arts. You talk evocatively about the possible solution and its thingly presence.

P.: The work of art evolves by self-organization, where the creator anticipates with hope and struggle. In the art-making we don't have to solve the problem. Challenges present themselves in a liquid and dynamic state. As soon as we engage in a work of art, we perturb the previous thinking and worrying. New fields of meaning open up through the sensory experience of shaping. The work of art becomes insightful. The client distances from his egocenteredness, he widens his perspective aesthetically by being with his senses.

M.: As you know, I joined the field of expressive arts at its beginning at Lesley University with Shaun McNiff, the founder of expressive arts therapy (cf. McNiff, 2009), Elizabeth McKim, Norma Canner and you.

I have observed that theoretical attractors evolve, fade, and new ones emerge. For instance, at first, the notion that we could "express" ourselves through the arts was for many a freeing break-through. People could allow feelings and express them. Nowadays we speak of an embodied experience through the process of working with the arts. We abstain from a mechanistic input-output method and approach the arts phenomenologically. A work of art, might it be a painting or a poem, emerges through us as something that is new.

P.: Each work of art is irreversibly unique and cannot be repeated. In building the theory of practice, I was at first not yet aware of the impact of the notion of the new. The new manifested in the work of art surprises us, amazes us, perturbs us. We cross boundaries and enter new territories. The new is the carrier of continuity, hope and of a possible future.

M.: Later we were focusing on the intermodal aspects and the concept of crystallization (Knill et al. 2004). The initially undifferentiated artistic process can clarify by moving into another modality, such as shifting from imagery to words or song. You added another approach to crystallization by introducing in community art the idea of doing the work in "takes." We work through repetition and feedback until it works. Nowadays many of us predominantly work in takes until the work of art is aesthetically satisfying and meaningful.

P.: As important as the building of a theory of practice is the philosophy of expressive arts based on the concept of *poiesis* developed by Stephen K. Levine (2019). We need to also approach the work of expressive arts by mindfully shaping and reshaping its philosophy.

M.: As we know, by uncovering certain aspects, we cover up other aspects. In *Minstrels of Soul* (Knill et al. 2004), you pay attention to the spiritual element of working with the arts by

high-lighting the interpersonal aspects. In your last book, co-authored with Herbert Eberhart, the focus is on resource-orientation, non-violent communication and methodological and didactic aspects to "make it work." I would like to spend some time on the solution-focused orientation and the concept of decentering (Eberhart and Knill 2010).

P.: I already wrote about decentering six years before in the article *Chaos, Hoffnung und Kunst* (Chaos, Hope and the Arts), inquiring into the attracting dynamic of the arts. I speak of teleological understanding. The work of art is an emergent, approaching the artist, as the artist is approaching the emerging work of art. Phenomenologically speaking, the work of art reveals even though it is unpredictable. The artistic process is pulling us forward in the dynamic of encountering challenge and solution. Problem-solving is happening right there, in the becoming work of art.

M.: There is no decentering without a concern to decenter from. Decentering, *Intermodales Dezentrieren* IDEC® (Eberhart and Knill 2010), is considered to be the core of the professional expressive arts session. By decentering, the professional and the client or group leave the immediate concern or goal and shift into a process of artistic shaping in order to gain new perspectives and resources. The main attention is put on the facilitation of enabling openings and new learning (Fuchs Knill and Atkins 2020).

Insoo Kim Berg and Steve de Shazer (Herren and Kuhn 2020), who developed the solution-focused approach, state that there is not necessarily a connection between the problem and the solution. We don't need to know everything about the concern in order to find or invent solutions.

Similarly, when we work with decentering, the attitude shifts. Instead of attempting to *move away* from the concern, in decentering, we work *towards* something else, namely wanting to accomplish a work of art.

In our expressive arts work, we still pay attention to the concern in the phase of the filling-in. We know that to talk about the problem can create relief, and often, when asked in a solution-focused manner, we can already notice an easing shift during the filling-in.

Insoo Kim Berg and Steve de Shazer (Herren and Kuhn 2020) brought back the notion of the miracle. A solution-focused professional leaves time and space for the miracle to arise. Do you believe in miracles?

P.: Spontaneously I would like to say yes. Yet I have difficulty answering this question. I would prefer to be asked–do miracles exist? I mean I cannot believe in something that doesn't exist. I am curious about miracles. I am surprised.

The genesis of a miracle evolves as an act of taming, naming, forming, performing. It evolves as the emerging poietic power of the chaotic unknown. Miracles exist as stories. As long as the story is well told and we are in awe, we can believe it. We can attribute a certain suddenness to a miracle. In a similar way, a work of art is not predictable and can suddenly surprise us. Both the miracle and the work of art are purposeless and have the characteristics of a dream world, yet they are thingly present.

M.: Sometimes you speak about the last act of your life. What stands out for you, when you think about it?

P.: I always felt held, even during World War II when our city Schaffhausen in Switzerland was bombed by mistake. I create meaning by *Sinnspiel,* by play. Fear of death and fascination with it have been coupled since my childhood. There was something pleasurable to play "partisan" and to sing; we were in resonance. Living *is* meaning. To keep this imagination alive needs my acting, as long as I can. "Sing, sing, sing a new song now."

I am in the break before the last act. The urge to have the last act or last take under

control is in contradiction to our attitude as expressive arts professionals. By working with the arts, we equip ourselves to be prepared for what is coming and what is awaiting for us. Somewhere. Sometime. Wanting to know everything in advance can lead us to generalizing revelations or disaster predictions. Doing art, analogous to life's work, is full of surprises. I want to ask myself: am I prepared for the surprising thing that suits me? Everything imaginable can be *presented*—in that sense there is no need to be afraid. I want to have the courage to serve the arriving work, for example, a piece of music, without getting into superficial generalizations or making revelations, but by deepening the experience at the surface and by remaining active.

Out of the cutting edge of shadow beams the strongest light.

It is neither bad nor right
neither small nor difficult
sweet nor vain
bitchy nor toxic
furry nor clawed,
neither me nor you.
It is, it is in all of us
it touches and is touched
it warms and is not hot
it knocks, pulls, moves
and presses a new stamp on
the forehead of the earth.

–Margo Fuchs Knill

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Margo Fuchs Knill, Ph.D., Professor, Dean of the Division Arts, Health and Society, psychotherapist, expressive arts professional, and poet.

Whole Art Expression: Going with the Grain of Nature

Shaun McNiff

My purpose here is to try and show why I and others prefer a whole art approach to the use of artistic expression to further human understanding and well-being in therapy, education, health, and research. The term "whole art expression" suggests how the practice of "art" has always included all forms of artistic expression by artists. But this all-inclusive use of the word art evokes many issues regarding current practice. Since specialization, and the resulting separations it creates, define artistic expression today, integration is challenging.

Then

When I started a graduate program in early 1974[1] committed to the integration of various forms of artistic expression in therapy and education, the initiative went "against" the grain of professional, academic, and cultural institutions, all grounded in a specialized separation of the arts. But as evidenced by practice, multi-sensory integration goes "with" the grain of innate human expression, art, and, I believe, nature which is characterized by the communion

1. The Institute for the Arts and Human Development at Lesley College in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Paolo Knill joined us in 1976 through 1994 and was my primary partner in advancing the integration of all forms of artistic expression. (McNiff, 2009, pp. 26-29).

Shaun McNiff, *Quad Bass Player & Dancers*, 2018, 18"x 24", oil on canvas.

(Berry, 2006) and reciprocal relations of life forces. Categorical separations of movement, vision, sound, touch, and other forms of sensory perception and communication do not exist in nature, persons, nor artistic expression, all characterized by interrelationships of participating processes. Societies, organizations, professions, and concepts create the separations.

Advocacy for arts integration was not new and it has always been counter-institutional. We were especially influenced by the history of progressive and experimental education with its focus on creative imagination and the full spectrum of sensory expression and knowing.

The early 1970s was a time when considerable attention was being given to interdisciplinary studies in higher education. However, in terms of our work with artistic expression we were more influenced by early childhood education and the psychology of learning. At that time consideration was given to individual learning styles and the existence of different kinds of intelligences together with variations in perceptual abilities and preferences. Teaching to the strengths and interests of a particular child, and responding to the "whole" person, replaced pedagogical uniformity. There was a recognition of how areas of learning and a person's cognitive and emotional faculties complement one another, and of course this extended to the arts. In working with young children, I noticed that they naturally integrated various art forms and senses—for

example, telling stories while painting and approaching the whole experience as dramatic action and movement.

With regard to therapy and the whole lifespan beyond childhood, our commitment to the integration of the arts was supported by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, which at that time was promoting and funding nationally innovative multidisciplinary training. It was an era of de-institutionalization, and the leadership of the Department felt that community centers and programs would be more effective and responsive without highly specialized staff. And rather than the uniform use of a particular art form, we felt that it made sense to structure therapeutic sessions according to the abilities and interests of a person in relation to the whole spectrum of expression. Predictably, the shift in favor of multi-disciplinary cooperation and identity immediately ended and returned to the dominant paradigm of professional silos as soon the leadership changed with a new political administration.

We were however able to sustain the values of integration, because there were natural bonds in our community of artists with much to learn from one another and the stimulation offered by a wealth of differences not available in specialized environments. The common purpose was paired with encouraging the uniqueness of each person's way of integrating the arts, an approach to training and professional practice that went against the grain, then and now, of adopting fixed systems of practice. And pragmatically, the innovations were effective in many ways, the most obvious being how a single person working with all of the arts offered various forms of artistic expression to the people and programs being served.

Now

After 50 years of integrating all forms of artistic expression, and 25 at the European Graduate School, the practice has been established and maintained throughout the world not only by organizations and people connected to our original experimentation in Cambridge, Massachusetts, but also by wholly separate communities, including: MIECAT (Mel-

bourne Institute of Experiential and Creative Arts Therapy) in Australia; IATE (Institute for the Arts in Therapy and Education) in London, England; and Whitecliffe College in Auckland, New Zealand. This breadth attests to the abiding presence of the whole art experience. The interdependence of artistic expressions is arguably transcultural and grounded in human experience throughout history.

Yet, as I have discovered and documented, people and institutions are habituated to foster separation. The tendencies run deep in various academic, professional, and cultural disciplines and organizations, as well as in the identities of the people within them. Paradoxically, while many in higher education challenge Euro-centric values, the prevailing separation of the arts emanates from the Western industrial revolution's division of labor for production purposes. Professional associations which reflect these structures, then establish standards, prescriptions for training, program approval guidelines, and government regulations, all reinforcing the dominance of the corporate academic complex. Specialization and separations have their place in the world in addressing human needs, but they do not necessarily characterize the psyche, the creative process and imagination, together with professions and organizations designed to advance them.

If a person desires to be a concert pianist or a graphic designer, there is a rationale for specialized training, however, this does not apply to more general access to creative expression. I document, in a recent essay calling for more inclusive approaches to art making, how higher education, with all of its professed commitment to inclusion, is structured top to bottom on the basis of questionable "assumptions about quality expression, talent, the nature of art, and who can and cannot make it" (McNiff, 2018b), all of which actively deters broad participation. When the culture of artistic specialization is applied to public service professions like the arts in education, health, and therapy there are inherent contradictions—too many to discuss here.

My experience with arts integration began in the most organic way when people would

create in varied art forms in the art therapy studio that I ran in a large state hospital. I organized the space for expression, and they brought what was important for them. When we pioneered the use of the first video portable technology in art therapy, participants spontaneously responded to the camera with movement, dramatic enactments, song and poems. The medium was the whole art vehicle. And throughout my career I have introduced percussion to support painting, interpreted paintings through movement, imaginal dialogue, enactment and vocal improvisation, and approached movement as the basis of all forms of artistic expression. The senses are totally inseparable and necessary partners in the most organic way, especially when encouraging depth and the fullness of expression.

As a longstanding member and past president of the largest specialized arts therapy professional association, I respect all of the communities of practice in the various arts therapy disciplines. We share far more fundamental values than differences in relation to the core purpose of the work we do[2]. My preference for a whole art approach is personal and something that I have in common with many others, now and historically, and in no way do I wish to impose it on those who choose to work differently and in circumscribed ways even within a particular art form. But I must note that in my considerable international experience with people and organizations based on both specialized and integrated approaches to the arts, I have not seen any indication that the artistic skills of people working in the former, or the art generated by their participants, is of higher quality than what I have observed in the latter.

I do think that an inclusive community of "art" and "artists" has benefits for the full

2. I have always been comfortable with art therapy because the term literally includes all forms of artistic expression. When I wrote the book *Art-Based Research* (1998), the first on this subject which I had the opportunity to define, I state how artistic inquiry involves all art forms. I had the freedom to do this in an open and non-copyrighted domain. My personal definition of art therapy does the same, while recognizing how the USA trademarked term includes only the visual arts, what in Germany is called *Bildtherapie* (picture or image therapy).

spectrum of practice ranging from those of us who are open to the integration of all forms of artistic expression to those who prefer highly specialized practice. As Ross Prior, whose primary art form is theatre, has said in relation to the separation of the "arts"—"the integrality of 'art'...models the connectedness that we so desperately need today" (Prior, 2018, p. xviii) in our silos of identification.

The pre-existing trademarks and structures of specialized art forms in therapy have made it necessary for those of us working with all of the arts to establish a professional community. While in reality, I believe that everything we do is *art*, I have participated in the propagation of terminology which can admittedly suggest difference rather than commonality. Such is the nature of language and the individual variations permeating art. The graduate program I founded was called *expressive therapies* in keeping with the term used by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts at the time. There was no reference to artistic expression, but in our operational definition, we consistently emphasized *integrating the arts*. In my 1981 book *The Arts and Psychotherapy* I refer to *expressive arts therapy* which has been used by many others and in 1994 was adopted as the name of the integrated arts discipline. I also spoke of *multidisciplinary arts therapy*. Paolo Knill developed a method that he calls *intermodal expressive therapy*, Stephen K. Levine prefers *poiesis*, Natalie Rogers described *the creative connection*, and in Australia, Warren Lett used the terms *multiarts* and *multimodal creative arts*. I believe that ultimately all of these names and others, now existent and yet to come, support the use of *all forms of artistic expression* within a community of shared commitment to the whole of art as distinguished from exclusive specialization.

The core argument regarding professional practice in my experience has always been who can and cannot engage others in artistic expression within the broad areas of education, health, and the larger context of individual and social well-being. I have stated that artistic expression is a force of nature (2015), accessible to people everywhere, like breath, and that training and professions should ultimately be about creating and supporting the most inclusive environments for this to happen with quality and depth. Maintaining that only profes-

sionally credentialed persons in a circumscribed art form can help others receive the benefits of art is like denying access to nature and the nourishment it offers. It also reinforces the misconception that art is only for an anointed few.

Shaun McNiff, *Winston Series 3*, 2018, oil on canvas.

Professionally trained people should lead, create, instruct, supervise, research, and advocate for the most widespread access to artistic expression and its benefits rather than insisting that they are the only ones who can make it accessible to people. I have always maintained that the nurse in the children's hospital, the third grade teacher, artists working in a corrections facility, the music or art teacher attuned to a child's or group's emotional challenges, the adolescent volunteer in a nursing home, or the visual art therapist engaging people through poetry and dance, make vital contributions to the ecology of art and well-being. Arts therapy organizations need to expand and support opportunities for artistic expression rather than limit them.

Communities advocating for a whole art approach are an important step in the direction of a more accessible art experience. They build foundations for a future of creative interdependence where interplay between all forms of expression will promote a more vital and creative life for all, as modeled by nature.

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Expressive Arts Based Research

José Miguel Calderon

The first time I heard about arts-based research (ABR) was at the European Graduate School (EGS) in the summer of 2003, when I went to study in the PhD program. It was in a research seminar taught by Paul Antze and Stephen K. Levine. Can the arts be a method to investigate? I wondered excitedly about that new possibility for me. I came from having already done two research investigations with more traditional methods. At the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, to obtain my degree in psychology, I conducted a quantitative investigation, in which I validated a psychological test to measure the search for help in a group of adolescents. Then for my master's thesis I had an experience somewhat more linked to the arts. I conducted a qualitative research project to deepen psychoanalytic concepts through classical music. I felt that psychoanalytic theory could be better understood from other sources such as music. Without knowing it, I was already approaching ABR. But it was only in classes with Paul and Stephen that I met the new research paradigm that states that the arts can also be a method to approach knowledge in multiple and creative ways. From that moment on, I began to read all the relevant literature by S.K. Levine (2009), Barone and Eisner (2011), Leavy (2009, 2017), and McNiff (2000, 2013), that describes the fascinating universe of ABR and its multiple possibilities. Even an issue of the *POIESIS* journal (2013) was dedicated to this topic.

After finishing the CAGS program at EGS and returning to Peru, I had the opportunity to create the Arts-Based Research course, part of the program of studies in expressive arts therapy offered by TAE Peru (an expressive arts institute). Students have to conduct research using ABR as the main methodology to consolidate their three years of study. I have taught this course for the past 15 years, and it is from this experience that I have learned more about ABR through research done by the students. They receive training in expressive arts, and their way of researching follows the principles of our discipline. Thus they have been enriching the ABR field from the perspective of expressive arts.

In parallel to this process, I felt that it was not appropriate to teach a method without having lived and experienced it. This motivated me to do my PhD dissertation, *Tinkuy: The encounter between the Peruvian imaginary and expressive erts* (2015), where the main method was arts-based research from the perspective of the expressive arts that we were exploring in TAE Peru.

Likewise, my colleagues from TAE Peru, Judith Alalú, Martin Zavala, Monica Prado, Ximena Maurial, and Odette Velez, had the same desire to have a deeper immersion in this method. That is how we came to write the book, *Pain and Beauty: Images from the Expressive Arts in Peru* (2019). Each of us started from a concern or topic of interest in the field of expressive arts, and we developed it, guided by the ABR from the perspective of expressive arts.

Also, from 2017 on, I have had the privilege of teaching, together with Melinda Meyer, the Research I course at EGS that so captivated me and transformed my way of understanding research. In the course with Melinda, I could now share with the EGS community what I learned in TAE Peru and also integrate other research methods related to the arts with my understanding of ABR.

From all these experiences, I would like to share for the 25th anniversary of EGS my vision of arts-based research from the perspective of the expressive arts. I will develop nine points

in which I summarize the central ideas of what has been learned throughout all these years and learning experiences in the communities of EGS and TAE Peru. I propose to call this way of researching, "Expressive Arts Based Research" (EABR), a particular way of conducting arts-based research:

1. **Personal connection with the topic or question:** From the point of view of EABR, the researcher personally approaches his or her research question: What is the personal relationship you have with your research question? Why is it essential for the researcher to deepen that question at this time in his life? What will be the contribution of your work to your community? EABR not only has the potential to generate new knowledge but also to transform the lives of researchers, readers and beneficiaries of the research, as long as the researcher opens up to the personal bond he has with his subject. From this perspective, carrying out the investigation becomes something unavoidable and existential for the researcher.

2. **Decentering:** In EABR, researchers follow the architecture of an expressive arts session developed by Paolo Knill (2018). They temporarily leave the research question to enter the experience of doing art, play or ritual. In the decentering, the principles of expressive arts: intermodality, dialogue with the image, and aesthetic responsibility, among others, are the ones that guide the process. In her thesis, Sandra Requena (2015) (a former TAE Peru student), clearly affirms: Not a step back from the arts! In other words, what Sandra emphasizes is that at this stage we have to stay in the space of creation guided by the arts until we reach a significant artistic product. Do not abandon the creative process with the desire to find answers to the research questions too quickly. Then artists/researchers can decide to present the work of art and receive aesthetic responses from witnesses. It is a stage of honoring the arts and being guided by what emerges beyond the initial research question.

3. **Imaginary of the theme:** The research question and theme have an imaginary that the researcher can access: What are the myths or worldviews related to the theme? What place or geographical space should the researcher visit to better understand the question?

What images, sensations, sounds, movements, poems, illuminate the question? What art, movies, exhibitions, concerts, artists, etc., should I review to understand my question? What place in nature resonates best with the topic to investigate? Researchers are invited to explore and answer these questions as part of the decentering process.

4. Aesthetic analysis: Before understanding the relationship between the experience of making art and the research question, it is necessary to keep the account of the experience at a descriptive level to allow it to speak for itself. In ABR literature, different ways of translating experience in the arts into knowledge are proposed. I think this is one of the greatest contributions of the expressive arts to the field of ABR. In our work, it is important to first make a phenomenological description of the whole process of making art as a step to understanding. We describe the process of the experience, what surprises arose, how the artistic product was created, using an artistic language that will then help us generate connections with the research topic. Researchers at this stage follow the call of James Hillman (1981) to make "*notitia*" as an activity of the soul to know the true essence of things through careful and detailed attention.

5. The Third: Our data in EABR is the Third. I learned this from James Chaytor, another student from TAE Peru and EGS. In the expressive arts, we define the Third (Knill, 2016) as the beautiful, powerful and transformative images that arise in the creation of art, what is most surprising, what touches you and connects you with your effective reality. In quantitative research, we work with numbers, in qualitative with words, and in the EABR with the powerful images that emerge from the creative process, that is, with the Third.

6. Loom / Blanket / Quipu: What do we do with all the information collected? This is the moment where we display everything found in the making of art, play or ritual, in the theoretical review, in our aesthetic analysis, in our imaginary of the theme and the third that emerged to start weaving, spinning and connecting the "knots" or existing common points. Quipu are knots made from fabrics that the Inca and Andean cultures used in general to keep

their accounts. Some specialists also consider them forms of three-dimensional writing that the ancestors of ancient Peru used to recount their stories. At this moment in EABR, researchers begin to weave with their Third and glimpse the type of quipu or blanket that is emerging from all the data collected, that is, the connections that are found with all the elements present. This fabric can be worked on at different times of the process, but it is vitally important to do it for the harvest and presentation, steps that follow. The quipu blanket always keeps open the mystery of the infinite meanings that can emerge from the arts and the beautiful ways in which the fabric can unfold.

7. Harvest: From the quipu blanket (and all the threads that compose it), the harvest is emerging, that is, the answers to the research question enriched by the experience in decentering. The information obtained by EABR can also be integrated into the results obtained through other research methods used: interviews, surveys, observations, etc.

8. Presentation: The blanket/quipu also helps to identify the way in which the researcher wants to present the results. The researcher has the challenge of creating and finding his own way of presenting the results and what he wants to generate in the readers or beneficiaries of the investigation. The final form that the research will have is still a creative act. A video, a poem, a story or a performance, among many other artistic modalities can be part of the way of presenting the results. Who will read the work? What kind of responses does the researcher want to generate in the readers? What do you want them to feel? Where do you want to publish it? How can you more effectively reach and impact the beneficiaries of the research? These are some of the questions that the quipu blanket helps answer.

9. Kronos and Kairos: The presences of the Greek gods Kronos, associated with literal time, and Kairos, associated with the time of the opportune, are indispensable throughout this process. It is important to have a linear time to inform the time and structure required by all investigations, without neglecting the moment of inspiration and the unexpected. If there is no balance between time and experience, the EABR may be affected. Kronos guarantees

academic rigor and viability over time, and, in turn, Kairos protects the mystery and openness from the uncertainty that every process of investigation should have.

Expressive Arts Based Research arises from the impulse to be faithful to the principles of expressive arts, to put the arts at the center and to allow the images to speak. To push to the limit the possibilities of *poiesis* (as Stephen K. Levine always reminds us) throughout the investigation. To honor and celebrate the beauty that arises from this whole process and thus find the best way to expand knowledge, generating well-being and transformation in the researcher and his or her community.

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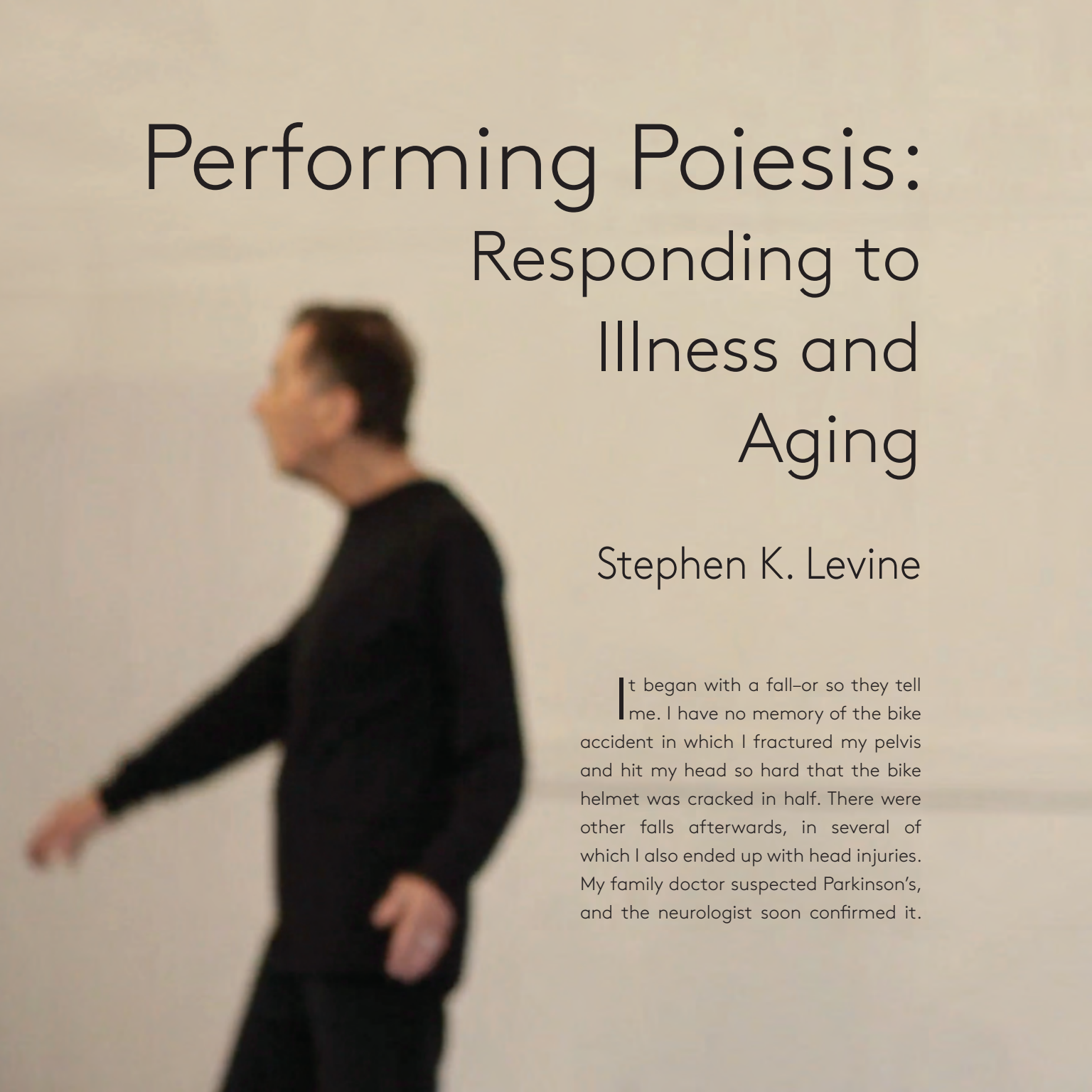


Performing Poiesis: Responding to Illness and Aging

Stephen K. Levine

It began with a fall–or so they tell me. I have no memory of the bike accident in which I fractured my pelvis and hit my head so hard that the bike helmet was cracked in half. There were other falls afterwards, in several of which I also ended up with head injuries. My family doctor suspected Parkinson's, and the neurologist soon confirmed it.

Was it the Parkinson's that led to the falls, or the falls and subsequent hits to the head which produced the disorder? In any case, there I was, faced with a new challenge in life. How to respond?

As a philosopher, educator and practitioner of the expressive arts, I had long reflected about poiesis as a way of understanding the effectiveness of the creative and expressive arts in therapy, education and social change. The word "poiesis" comes from the Greek and refers not only to poetry, but also to the process of making in general. Poiesis designates a way of responding to the changing circumstances which human beings encounter in their lives, both the ones that are to be celebrated and the ones that are to be mourned. The way of poiesis is to respond by making something new. It is our way of being in the world, since, unlike other species, we are not pre-adapted to any particular environment but must make our worlds and, thereby, ourselves, anew each time we encounter changed circumstances.

Poiesis is our general capacity; the arts, then, are a particular form of making. They are, we might say, crystallizations of the poietic process. They are not only made but show themselves as being made. And in so doing, they show the possibility of new worlds and new ways of being in them. This is perhaps what Shelley meant when he referred to poets as the "unacknowledged legislators of mankind." Poiesis brings something new into being, something which is called for in the changing world in which one lives. In this sense, it is always a responsive act, unlike the traditional concept of creativity, which is thought to stem from a pure act of inspiration, as God is said to create the world *ex nihilo*, from nothing.

Poiesis, then, is not the special preserve of artists but the general property of humankind. It is a response to what we encounter, guided by a sense of what we may call "aesthetic responsibility." By "aesthetic" here, we mean coming from the senses; it is a sensitive, sensible and sense-making process which affects us in a bodily-affective way, producing what has been called a "felt sense" of what we make as "just right." This is easy to see in

a therapeutic process, when a client responds to an intervention bodily with, for example, tears or laughter. We call this the "aesthetic response" of clients. It is the therapist's responsibility, then, to help clients find their aesthetic response. This is an example of what we mean by "aesthetic responsibility," but it applies in other fields besides the therapeutic, e.g., children's play or political action. Ultimately, it manifests something that we call "beauty," in the way that Elaine Scarry, for example, makes the connection between beauty and justice in her book, *On Beauty and Being Just*. Beauty is not restricted to the arts or to natural landscape, as traditional aesthetics thought it to be. It is the sensory experience of an appropriate response to what we encounter in the world in any form.

How then could I respond, I reflected, to the changing situation of my life stemming from my new-found physical disability? Although I was in the early phase of Parkinson's, I could already feel some symptoms: a tremor in the right hand, difficulty with balance, and fatigue, among others. Most of all, I had a sense of foreboding. Parkinson's is a degenerative neurological condition; it gets worse over time. I did not want to passively wait for the condition to worsen, to find myself taking on the status of a helpless victim. In reflecting on the foundations of expressive arts, I have often said, "Poiesis is always possible." Now was the time to put this slogan into action. I felt a strong need to respond to my circumstances in a poietic way.

In conversation, my partner Ellen Levine and I had begun to refer to my disorder as "Mr. P." I found this personification to be helpful. It changed the alien character of the disorder into something familiar, in the same way that James Hillman uses personification as a means of understanding psychopathology. I felt I could relate to a person, however unwelcome, more easily than to an alien disease.

How, then, should I relate to Mr. P., I asked myself? My first answer came through writing a poem, "Welcoming Mr. P":

Welcoming Mr. P.

Mr. P. is knocking at the door
Must I let him in?

He bears no gifts
Only burden, danger, fear

At the border there are others
No better than us
Or even worse
Must we let them in?

You shall welcome the stranger
For you were once a stranger yourself

It does not say
Welcome the stranger who can give you
What you need

I hear him knocking
I hear them knocking
I am knocking too

Welcoming
What comes

Why was I "welcoming" Mr. P.? I felt that it was futile to attempt to deny my disorder. Denial would not help me respond to it, but the question remained, how could I welcome this dread prospect? What would that mean? In terms of my understanding of poiesis as a way of responding, I saw the poem as an attempt to respond to what was happening, no matter how troubling. When I look at the poem now, I see that very soon after the response to my own situation, the question arose of how to respond to others who may not be welcome–in particular, those at the border between Mexico and the United States. The President had characterized the migrants as "rapist and murderers." Should they be welcomed as well? I was reminded of the biblical injunction, "Welcome the stranger, for you were once a stranger in a strange land." Similarly, the poem enjoins us to welcome the stranger without asking for their qualifications. The poem states that I can hear them knocking. In a reversal of meaning, I see myself as knocking too, asking to be let into the strange situation in which I find myself.

After writing the poem, I felt a great sense of relief. None of my symptoms disappeared or were even mitigated, but my relationship to them had changed. I now had a sense of active engagement with the disorder, rather than the passive victimization which I had felt at first. However, I did not feel finished with this process and wondered what would come next.

The answer came at an EGS summer session in 2018. Irene Renzenbrink, a doctoral candidate in the expressive arts program, was giving a public defense of her dissertation about using the arts to deal with trauma and loss. In her presentation, Irene shared how she had dealt with her own disability and losses through art-making.

The bravery that Irene showed in the defense by publicly discussing her experience of loss encouraged me to talk about my diagnosis and to read my poem aloud to the students and faculty who had assembled for her defense. By speaking the poem publicly, I had the sense of coming closer to an acceptance of my disability without experiencing shame.

For many years, Ellen and I have had a second home in Martha's Vineyard. Upon returning

from Switzerland that summer, I decided to do a Butoh-inspired dance performance on the hill behind our house. I felt a need to embody my condition.

I began the dance by standing at the bottom of the hill, with my back to the audience of friends who had gathered at the top. I then turned around extremely slowly and made movements in which I welcomed the natural beauty of the world around me. Then I began to move slowly up the hill, stumbling and recovering my balance several times as I ascended. The movements showed my body in various states of development, beginning with childhood and moving gradually into old age. Towards the end, the dance became a dance of surrender and an acceptance of the world and of myself in it as we are.

The dance felt like an important experience to me, as I had both embodied my condition physically and showed it to others. Performance seemed like another step in a poietic response to my disability, moving from the purely linguistic character of the poem to the full-bodied expression of the dance. By performing Parkinson's, I was accepting my disability without shame and asking others to do so as well.

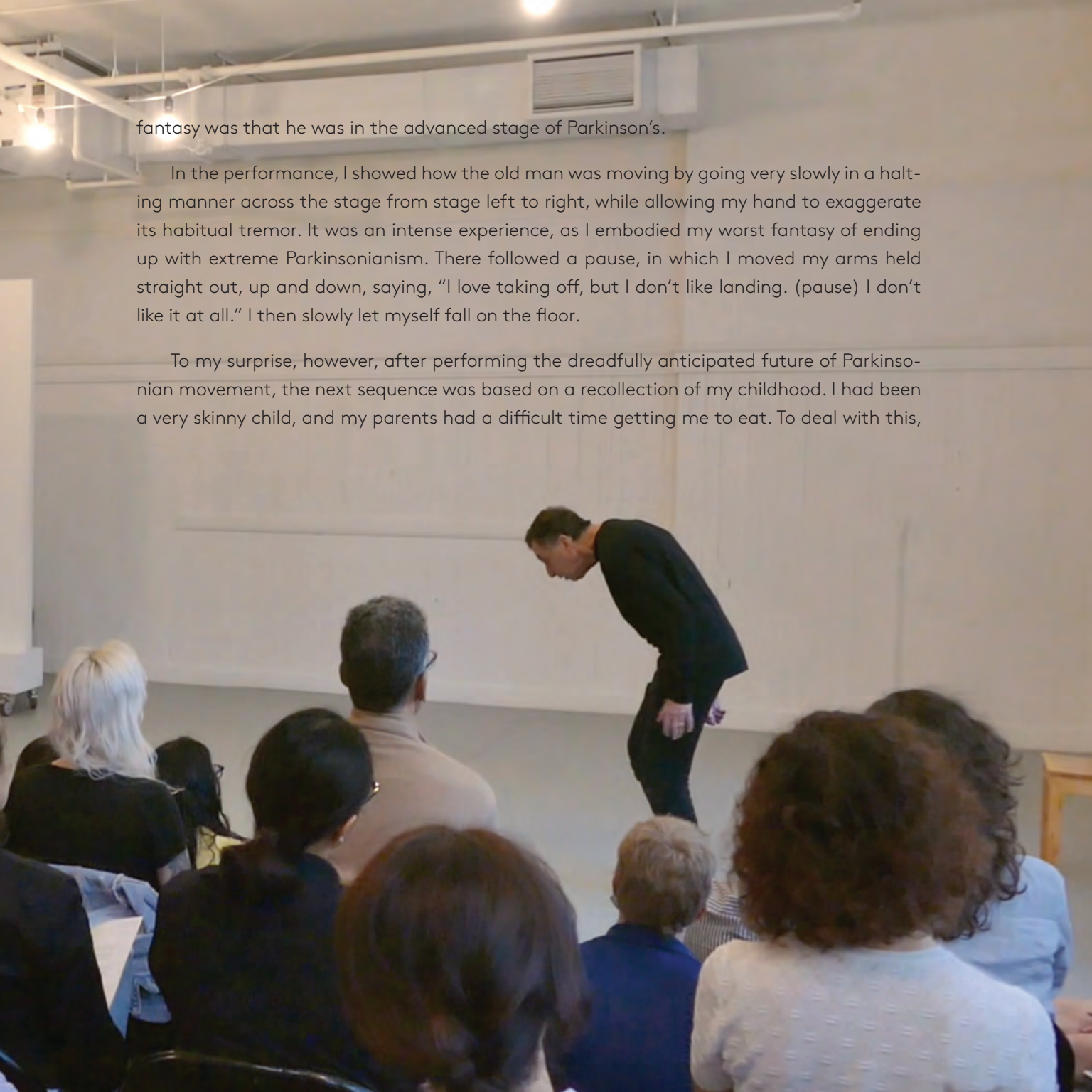
Upon returning to Toronto in the Fall, I began to attend a workshop in Toronto called "Memoir and Movement," given by the dancer and choreographer Sara Porter. The aim of the workshop was to help participants access the experience of memoir through physical movement and dance, as opposed to the usual method of writing.

After a few sessions of the workshop, I was inspired to ask Sara to work privately with me on a performance. I had the sense that I could respond to my disorder not only through poetry and dance but also with physical embodiment and words together. I began by recalling something I had witnessed in the airport on my way back from Switzerland. As I stood waiting outside a bookstore, I observed all the people in the airport rushing by, with the exception of one old man. He moved very slowly, his posture was stooped and his right hand trembled noticeably. At the same time I had the sense that he was trying to go as fast as possible. My

fantasy was that he was in the advanced stage of Parkinson's.

In the performance, I showed how the old man was moving by going very slowly in a halting manner across the stage from stage left to right, while allowing my hand to exaggerate its habitual tremor. It was an intense experience, as I embodied my worst fantasy of ending up with extreme Parkinsonianism. There followed a pause, in which I moved my arms held straight out, up and down, saying, "I love taking off, but I don't like landing. (pause) I don't like it at all." I then slowly let myself fall on the floor.

To my surprise, however, after performing the dreadfully anticipated future of Parkinsonian movement, the next sequence was based on a recollection of my childhood. I had been a very skinny child, and my parents had a difficult time getting me to eat. To deal with this,



my mother would play a game in which she would pick up the food with her fingers and say, while moving it towards my mouth, "Here comes the airplane into the hanger." I would then accept the offering greedily.

After this embodiment of my childhood experience, I got up from the floor and walked slowly towards the back of the stage, while a recording of the Bee Gees singing ''Can't Keep a Good Man Down," played. I ended up facing forward, standing at the back wall of the stage and slowly changing my physical posture, taking a body-builder's stance and flexing my muscles in several different ways, while saying in deep tones, "Charles Atlas, he carried the weight of the world on his shoulders." I went back to my habitual way of standing and said, "I didn't want to be like him, but I also didn't want to be the 97-pound weakling whose girlfriend he took away, while kicking sand in his face." I then walked up to stage right in the manner of Charles Atlas, holding the young girl's hand.

Relaxing into my normal slouch, I moved to the left, and proudly said, "I'm really smart. I've read a lot of books.(pause) Book smart, not street smart. Head smart, not body smart." Taking a step back, I became Capitano, a character from commedia dell'arte, demonstrating how Capitano used his sword, swishing it from left to right quickly, then saying, "But if I lose my sword...," and suddenly becoming the disabled old man slowly walking to the back of the stage, while Neil Young sang "Old Man" in the background. The words, "Old man, take a look at yourself, you're a lot like me," accompanied me while I walked.

At the end of this part of the performance, I came forward and spoke to the audience about my grandchild Leo, how much he loved going into the washroom without turning on the light, and laughing, because "the monsters are afraid of the dark." I then moved to the right and showed how I would become one of the monsters, making myself really scary, growling, and ending by saying, "And he laughed! (pause) And he laughed!" I danced to the Neil Young song for a few minutes and then went offstage.

Of course, performance is not resolution, but a performative exploration can show the way forward and motivate the performer and, perhaps, the audience, to engage with what is happening with renewed energy. If nothing else, it can change an attitude from passive endurance to active engagement. In so doing, not only does the situation look different, but the person engaged in it may gain a sense of hope and possibility. I no longer see Parkinson's as a fate to which I am subject. Rather, it appears to me as a challenge to which I can respond.

Performing poiesis also enabled me to see that all our concerns, whatever they may be, are challenges to which we can respond, both individually and collectively. I have said that poiesis is always possible. I do not know if this is literally true. There are many situations that we can imagine in which any response seems impossible. The possibility of poiesis may only be a hope, but it is a hope that motivates action. Without it, there is only despair.

It Could Have Been Me! (2019) A performance in movement and memoir by Stephen K. Levine in collaboration with Sara Porter. What I have described became the first part of the three-part performance that can be seen on the accompanying link: https://vimeo.com/353242787

Stephen K. Levine, Ph.D., D.S.Sc., REAT, is Emeritus Professor at York University and Founding Dean of Doctoral Studies in Expressive Arts Therapy at EGS. Steve is a poet, actor and clown. He is the author, co-author or editor of many books in the field of expressive arts therapy, including *Philosophy of Expressive Arts Therapy: Poiesis and the Therapeutic Imagination* (2019). He is the founding editor of the journal, *POIESIS: A Journal of the Arts & Communication*, co-founder of IEATA (International Expressive Arts Therapy Association), and co-founder of The Create Institute in Toronto.

Affective Vital Signs

Carrie MacLeod

I return to the rhythm of my pulse for reprise in the current socio-political climate. Listening for vital signs is a way to monitor how my internal metronome is responding to the external world. More recently, I've been tuning into the connective intervals that stretch between each beat. As waves of intolerance reverberate through the echo chambers in society, I'm attracted to spaces that house alternative frequencies. In the disquieting intervals that are being modulated by corrupt systems of power, it is timely to ask: Whose voices are not being heard in the normative white noise? This question recently surfaced with colleagues from refugee resettlement, health care and community arts sectors. As we shared our respective concerns on the mounting xenophobia toward the "flood of Syrians" (Abid, Manan and Rahman, 2017, p. 121), we agreed that it was time for an imaginative response. In acknowledging this social impasse as time-sensitive, we proposed a community-wide partnership between local artists, residents and a settlement organization.

With an aim to catalyse a paradigm shift in settlement interventions, we wanted to extend our scope of engagement beyond refugee target populations. Our intention was to mobilize a variety of sectors in society through weekly arts-based workshops and a culminating public performance. With our combined years of experience as intercultural facilitators, we

knew that the narratives, cultures and histories of the participants would influence our planning. Given our ambitious aspiration to embrace counter-hegemonic processes, we wanted to include the "symbol[s] of objects, events and experiences that a community considers worth naming" (Chilisa, 2012, p. 57) before naming them ourselves. To embody this ethos in our planning, we facilitated dialogues with newcomers and local residents on how mutual accommodation might be co-generated via the arts. We first wanted to listen to their perspectives without imposing an agenda on a process that would speak for itself.

These sincere intentions to be inclusive were thwarted when forty-five participants rushed through the doors on the first night. Carefully devised plans to facilitate a participatory circle of community intentions dissipated when the group vehemently moved their attention elsewhere. The neatly stacked theatre props, art supplies and drums were quickly overturned by a fervent surge of collective energy. In the blink of an eye, imaginal revelations led to a reordering of relations. Oversized hats and cloaks were usurped into characters who inverted hierarchies through fictional power plays. Our preconceived strategies to keep the space relatively contained proved to be futile as participants started to invent imaginary worlds. This unexpected turn of events appeared to unfurl as cacophony and chaos, but subtle systems of meaning-making could be heard through the code of syncopated time. Characters emerged as hero and villain archetypes who sang their way through unfamiliar land.

The logic of improvisation offered vital cues for navigating the underlying power dynamics of resettlement. The presence of the collective imagination bypassed our need for verbatim translation, and community intentions surfaced through playful terms. Without any external prompting, several youths marked their version of a proscenium stage with sections of yarn. Our facilitation team was then promptly directed to take a place in the audience for each scene. Somewhere in between known worlds and alternative worlding, the youth found new destinations through rhythmic collaborations. The tables of hospitality turned on us before we even had a chance to move the chairs. The team of facilitators were invited to

participate in the scenes once the plot had a momentum of its own.

After this initial workshop, it was clear that we all needed to reconfigure our presumed roles and aesthetic responsibilities. This involved unsettling some of our static ideas of resettlement. Even with the best of intentions to create a participatory process, we were implicated in projecting a reductive lens on a complex and shifting social reality. It was clear that we needed to explore our human vulnerabilities *with* one another without trying to control the outcome. Perceiving ourselves as invulnerable hosts would only distance us further from the very process we were initiating. We were not merely curating resettlement strategies for a specific demographic, but were being asked to reimagine collectively how to bridge linguistic and cultural divides. However, making space for disorientation and discomfort was a challenging proposition to uphold. To be unmade in the making involves risk; there are repercussions from traversing unmarked terrain.

We shifted our original plan to offer intensive workshops on theatre, art, storytelling, music and dance in collaboration with local artists from each respective discipline. I intended to collaborate with each artist through "decentering processes" (Knill, 2005, p. 130), but the group was already "on the way" (*ibid,* p. 116) before I became involved. The sequencing of art modalities came from a spacious curiosity and playfulness. Strong percussive beats unravelled from subtle movement phrases. A mural montage inspired the creation of song compositions. Polyrhythms inherently surfaced from theatrical provocations. The natural draw toward "polyaesthetics" (Knill, 2005, p. 128) opened up sensory explorations around themes of arrival and belonging. To arrive was not only about landing in a final destination, but involved improvising our way *through* an aesthetic milieu from a range of positions and proximities. As new alliances formed around our shared strangeness in this unchartered terrain, we were prompted to live into the question: "How can the unknown show us the way forward?" (Levine, S.K. 2019, p. 104). Rather than creating mentorship opportunities for newcomers, it was time to co-create a live nexus where differences could crystallize into surprising forms.

In the fifth workshop, one of the parents offered a poignant observation after delving into the improvisations with their children. They described the spacious invitation to experiment with multiple art forms as a "Qanun" experience. The musicality of the traditional Arabic Qanun instrument relies on the spaces around the notes to inform the textures of the composition. To linger in these spaces *just* long enough is to honor what has come before and simultaneously welcome what is not yet known. This space is not static or devoid of meaning, nor is it a space to be prematurely filled with notes. To enjoy the full range of the Qanun is to fully inhabit the space around each note. The depth of the space implicitly and explicitly informs the breadth of sound.

The practice of tending to the in-between spaces was a timely gift for our process as facilitators. Turning our attention to the intervals as dynamic spaces of meaning-making expanded our fields of perception and reception. It was all too easy to project our sense of "spatial justice" (Soja, 2010, p. 6) onto the participants. Our default position was to micro-manage our own awkwardness to reorient ourselves. These gestures mirrored the spatial politics that were happening on a macro level. Expedited settlement processes have often negated the unfolding dynamics in the interim spaces. It was time for us to make room for an "aesthetics of discomfort" (Aldama and Lindenberger, 2016), and humbly embrace the dissonance that comes with uncertain relations.

When our workshops expanded into outdoor neighbourhood spaces, we noticed a shared fascination for the city soundscapes amongst participants. Curiosity around the unfamiliar neighbourhood tones became a natural entry point for voice and musical improvisations. We began by exploring how the pulse of our respective heartbeats could be synced to the wider pulse of the city. Monitoring our pulse once again served as a place of return: the constant refrain in a city laden with interruptions. The acoustic ecology of the cityscape was a soundtrack just waiting to be transposed with call and response patterns. Humming sounds of motor vehicles and the wail of sirens inspired wild vocal experiments, and the sharp stac-

cato pitch of traffic lights summoned a range of atonal sounds. The parking lot was filled with an array of natural prompts to create a percussive baseline. Rocks, sticks and found objects strewn along the pavement were gathered to form an acoustic rock and roll ensemble to accompany the voices. These audible entry points served as a mode of orientation for the vast sound palette of the city.

Multivocal experiments catalysed a pivotal platform for spoken word and hip-hopscotch improvisations. A kinesthetic grid for hip-hop performances emerged when several youths started to trace the cracks in the pavement with corresponding dance moves. The jagged lines of the splitting concrete led to an original movement and sonic score that emerged from the ground up. Youth from the neighbourhood who were well versed in hip-hop jumped in and sketched large numbered squares at each turning point in the cracks. Rhythms and words were exchanged in both English and Arabic as bodies moved fluidly from square to square. Being "out of step" catalysed moments of humour and humility, and subtle allegiances started to surface through a shared commitment to the poetic and the prosaic. Rather than composing livelihoods on someone else's watch, we found new ways to be in time with one another rhythmically and kinesthetically.

Interweaving site-responsive performances into resettlement initiatives offers a timely paradigm shift. The art of refuge involves sensory provocations that extend beyond bureaucratic representations. Seeking sanctuary calls for visceral cues and spacious intervals between settled and unsettled communities. Improvisation attunes us to the unexpected arrivals and mobile alliances that come from the pulse of life. Somewhere in between here and here, affective vital signs serve as vital signposts as we make our way home with one another on uncommon ground.

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Carrie MacLeod MA, CAGS, is a scholar-practitioner and performance artist who facilitates arts-based peacebuilding, conflict transformation and refugee resettlement initiatives worldwide. Carrie is on the faculty at the European Graduate School and the Vancouver School of Healing Arts. She has published several chapters and training materials in academic, community and artistic contexts.

On Being Able to Paint: Resilience in Action

Ellen G. Levine

Resilience is not only a descriptor, it is also an activity. When we say that someone is resilient, we mean that they are capable of responding to difficulties without breaking or breaking down and without losing a sense of coherence. Despite difficulties and challenges, life continues to retain meaning. Resilient people are flexible and can adjust. When we talk about resilience as an activity, it demonstrates capacities and resources as they are enacted in life. We say that someone is *able* to do something. In this sense, creativity and creative acts are demonstrations of resilience. The ability to make and to shape enacts resilience. Being able to make a work of art, to write a poem, dance, perform in a drama, paint, sing, shows resilience in action.

Marion Milner, the British psychoanalyst and visual artist, writes about the challenges to the beginning painter which often lead to an inability to create anything at all, a kind of paralysis. In her book, *On Not Being Able to Paint,* she writes about the terror of facing the unknown and the difficulty with accepting the chaos that comes with this. Her questions were: Can one learn to paint from going to classes or reading books? Is painting about ren-

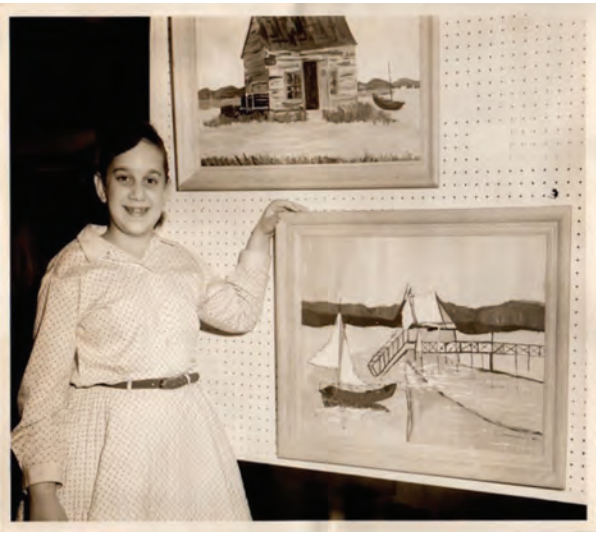
dering what we see in its exact form? Her answers to these questions came out of her own explorations with what she called "free painting," which often involved scribbling and paying attention to the mood produced by the subject rather than the way in which the subject actually appeared.

This way of creating required using her imagination---to see what she could not literally see: the other sides of things, or the insides of things. Sometimes this required losing the edges or the boundaries around things which felt close to a kind of madness. She found that the sheer copying of objects rendered the images lifeless and without any sense of vitality. In addition, planning the painting beforehand also led to a kind of deadness. On the contrary, a kind of non-willed order emerged out of a sense of the rhythm of the painting. In her explorations, she discovered an essential key to painting: that "...painting was a sensory organic language rather than an idea language."

I was nine years old when I started painting. My parents had met a Yugoslavian Jewish refugee, Albert Alcalay, who had arrived in the United States in the early 1950s. He trained as an architect, became an abstract expressionist painter, and then was a survivor of the Nazi persecutions in Yugoslavia and in Italy, where he was on the run and in hiding for several years. He had come with his wife and two small children to Boston. My father, together with another friend, "adopted" Albert Alcalay and helped him get started in his new life. They helped him organize

art classes and connected him with art dealers and galleries. He ultimately became a well-known Boston-area painter and teacher.

I was one of his first students, along with a number of older adolescents and young adults who were in my classes. My father also studied painting in Albert's adult classes. Our class met every Saturday morning from the time that I was nine until I was about thirteen years old. I loved these classes for the way in which they created a space of acceptance and challenge. They were completely different from the experience of my family where there was constant judgement and scrutiny of many aspects of myself.



I took classes during the year in a studio in Boston, and, in the summers, in Gloucester, a small fishing town and vacation community on the north shore of Boston where my family spent summers. The art that we made in these classes was representational. In the summers, we painted outside. Our subjects were mostly boats and harbour structures. In the winters, we painted from photographs. I remember an owl that I copied. One year when I was eleven, I won the first prize for a painting submitted to a show at my synagogue.

After I turned thirteen, I became less and less interested in the painting classes. I am not exactly sure why I stopped going, but perhaps it had something to do with the rather boring experience of copying photographs or painting "real" things. Albert would often take the brush out of my hand and paint on my painting to "correct" it. Perhaps, as an emerg-

ing adolescent, this was an affront to my growing sense of independence and agency. But, reflecting on Marion Milner's painting studies, I can see how the life and vitality was seeping out of my paintings and out of the whole process. While painting initially served to enhance my resilience, allowing me to find a space of acceptance and non-judgment, it eventually stopped serving me in this way.

Ellen Levine, Quilt, 1972, trapunto with jute, cotton and embroidery

After this period, I abandoned painting for a very long time. In my thirties, I turned to painting again but in the context of crafting or quilting. I painted scenes on fabric, embroidered, collaged and quilted over them—creating some pillows and one large quilt. They were scenes of the beach and the seascape—the images which were in my mind and body at the time, spending my summers as an adult on an island in the ocean. I was fascinated by the forms created when the tidal waters met the sand.

These were organic forms that I had observed since I was a small child, growing up on the beaches of the north shore of Boston. The forms had an inherent rhythm and were dynamic meeting points. They were embedded in my bodily experience. The forms themselves seemed to give me strength and sustained me in difficult times.

Many more years passed until I found myself painting again. My art therapy training, in the early 1970s, involved painting, but it was focused on my own inner psychic experience, on

Ellen Levine, *Dawn,* 1992, acrylic, oil stick

making visible that which was invisible and unknown to me (my own unconscious). My paintings were interpreted by my training psychoanalyst as "road maps" into myself, into my own psychic world. When I realized what would be happening to my paintings in being interpreted, I evolved from painting spontaneously to making illustrations of my life experience, particularly my early childhood experiences in my family. I wanted to be a good trainee!

Years later, in 1991, I was taking part in the "Easter Symposium," an annual gathering of expressive arts therapists from around the world. After years of psychoanalytic training in art therapy and in child psychotherapy, I was peeking into a new world to see what was going on. Initially, I was guarded and rather sceptical.

This experience brought me into contact with Annette Brederode, a Dutch art therapist who had devised her own method for helping people to paint. She was leading a painting studio at the Symposium in Switzerland where we worked in a big group with very large sheets of paper on the wall. She introduced a kind of free painting, similar to Milner's approach, where the importance was placed on the body which was painting. The whole body needed to be warmed up before painting, and we worked with large brushes and our eyes closed at first, paying attention to the group sounds and the rhythms of brushes on paper. After this

initial start, we worked without any plan or idea, enjoying applying the paint and the resulting sensuous experience. We were encouraged to follow the image and play with it without getting attached to a meaning or outcome. The emphasis was on what attracted us and where we were longing to go next. Often we would sing spontaneously while we worked, the group providing a holding space for freedom and exploration.

It was in Annette's studios that I reconnected to painting from my childhood, but in a new way, a way that began to make me feel more resilient, stronger and more able. I was painting in a group again but not reproducing images. This new environment for painting allowed my style as a painter to emerge. I was fascinated by landscapes of sky, water and earth. These layers were abstracted, but they anchored the chaos of the explorations. The painting on the opposite page is from this early period (*Dawn*, 1992).

The early organic and oceanic forms in my paintings persist into the present time. The studios with Annette launched not only my own painting practice, which has continued without interruption for the past thirty years, but also brought these approaches to the act of painting into my teaching, my practice of expressive arts therapy and my identity as a painter.

My painting style has evolved from this earlier period without abandoning the layers of the landscape form. In the last decade or so, I have explored various themes in my paintings inspired by photographs from the newspapers. The first photographs with which I worked were motivated by the memory and testimony of unjust situations. I collected a number of photographs of hands holding a picture of someone who had either been killed or had disappeared due to some kind of oppressive situation. I situated these photographs within a landscape, as if the form could hold the image and provide a kind of comfort in the situation.

Ellen Levine, *1936*, 2009,
acrylic, oil stick, photograph

Ellen Levine, *Truth and Reconciliation, Peru #2*,
2007, acrylic, oil stick, pencil and photograph

These paintings of single photographs placed in a landscape environment have evolved into the manipulation of photographs to create a sense of urgency and massiveness about the problem of migration and refugees in our current epoch. I copy some images many times, cut up the photograph into pieces, highlight the photograph or extend it from its edges until the viewer loses a sense of where it begins and ends.

I wrote the following artist statement for a recent show of these works:

Ellen Levine, *Where are we going?*
2019, mixed media, 2′ x 3′.

Where Are We Going?

These paintings are an attempt to respond to the world-wide refugee crisis. More people than ever before in human history are on the move, leaving their home countries and setting out for the unknown. I can only imagine what it is like to be in this situation.

As I paint with and around the photographs, I try to call attention to this situation. I manipulate the photographs, taking parts out or copying many iterations of one image. I keep exploring the sense of flight, of departure, of arrival, of being on the move, of being in-between.

The landscape and the colors serve to hold the forms and to offer some hope and comfort along the way for those who are traveling and risking their lives in the process.

I also have thought about my work as way of bringing the attention of others to the resilience and strength of people in migration in this world. The stories that I have read and the

people I have met have impressed me with their determination and their capacity to withstand great suffering, hoping to arrive at a better place.

In thinking about the development of my work and the use of emotionally-charged photographs in the paintings, I wondered whether I was planning and imposing a theme, rather than painting in the "free" way that Milner describes. On the contrary, my sense is that the photographs actually free me to dream about what I can open up in the space of the painting. Using the photograph draws me into the vitality of the painting, engages my body in a significance that goes beyond me and enlivens my work. This seems to me to be the "free painting" that Milner speaks about; it is the activity that enables me to paint.

Being able to paint engages and reinforces my own resilience. It requires that I draw upon those capacities which allow resilience to develop: imagination, empathy, flexibility, intention, and freedom to allow the images to come forward. Perhaps this account of my process in becoming able to paint can inspire others to find their own resources and develop the resilience they will certainly need to face the challenges of this world.

Ellen G. Levine, MSW, Ph.D., ATR-BC, REAT, RSW is co-founder of and faculty at The CREATE Institute in Toronto and Professor and Core Faculty at the European Graduate School in Switzerland. She is a visual artist and an author, co-author and editor of a number of books in the field, including *Tending the Fire: Studies in Art, Therapy and Creativity*; *Principles and Practice of Expressive Arts Therapy: Toward a Therapeutic Aesthetics*; *Art in Action: Expressive Arts Therapy and Social Change* and, most recently, *Play and Art in Child Psychotherapy: An Expressive Arts Therapy Approach*.

Judith Alalú

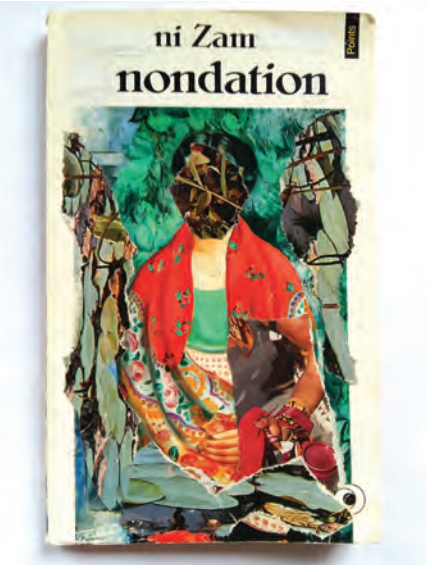
The image of a crown came to me, then the city appeared below and a kind of staircase linking both worlds. When I entered into dialogue with this image I connected with the pain of humanity and at the same time with the possibility of transcending that pain. In these moments the image as an inexhaustible source continues to bring me answers to what we are experiencing in these times.

Judith Alalú, CAGS, Co-founder of and teacher at the Tae Perú institute. Co-founder of Tae Barcelona. Teacher at EGS. Clinical psychologist, therapist and supervisor of expressive arts. Co-author of *Vital Exodus* and *Pain and Beauty: Images from the Expressive Arts in Peru*. Visual artist.

Jacques Stitelmann

These images are part of a hundred-page book, entirely reworked by collage, exfoliation, anchoring and inking, in words and images. It is an author's book and a remover's book! A new story emerges, from the text of the original author and the furnace of my creative imagination.

A process resembling the "Creolisation" of Edouard Glissant and Patrick Chamoiseau, where the mixture of two sources intertwine to give birth to a work, an existence, a life, a thought. A first source of Authority and Power, that of the original author, published and known, who colonized me with his Authority; and that of the native author, me, with my feelings of the moment, my singular cultural back-



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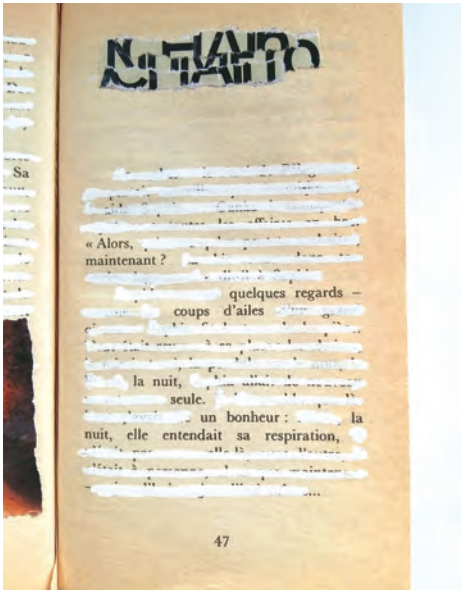
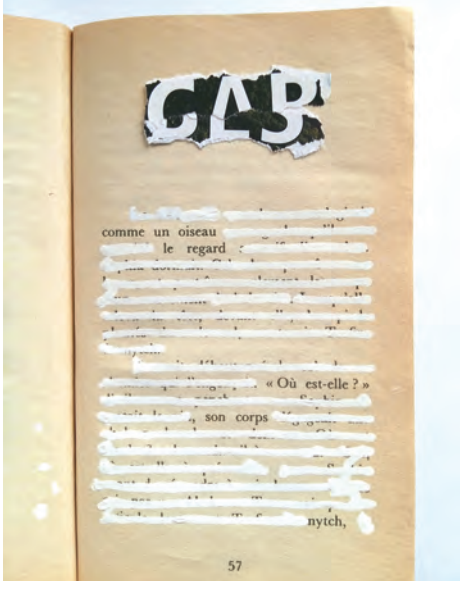
ground, both influenced and in resistance, launched into the poietic creative process.

I work in this way to write poetry, often short, brief, like fragrant or poisonous flowers, and sometimes to develop the text at the level of the novel and the short story. The power of decentering and innovation is wonderful– purely poietic!

Jacques Stitelmann, Ph.D., is an artist, psychologist, psychotherapist and art-therapist. Jacques has worked for a long time in the field of adult psychiatry, where he founded several oraganizations focused on art-therapy. He is the Founder and Director of L'ATELIER, an educational and research institute in art therapy in Geneva, Switzerland. As an artist, he works in painting, land art, mail art, performance and poetry. His work has appeared in private and public collections, and his poetry and prose have been published in several journals and books.





le terrier

Tout autour s'étendait le monde : la guerre, la révolution. toujours le même grondement, impossible de s'en défaire. Apparemment rien n'avait changé. Ils continuaient à vivre

25 years of EGS: A Place to Celebrate Diversity

Peter Wanzenried

It was just before EGS started in 1995 that I came across Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* once again. Here is how I summarized what I learned:

There does not exist any teaching that can be given in words
You have to live your teaching day by day and let others share it with you
Go on the path of your teaching and invite others to come with you
Start from your teaching and let go of whatever keeps you back
Say yes to change and the uncertainty
connected to it

Every teaching is based on words and thoughts
They are not important
They are right and wrong at the same time
For every teaching, the opposite is true as well

Each teacher is an enlightener and an seducer at the same time
Because no one exists without his shadow
So believe in everyone and no one

I have to follow Siddhartha's path
And lose my balance again and again
There does not exist any paradise to stay in
No mother will nourish me for eternity
No wealth gives security

I will go to the river and listen to its waves
Honestly and with dedication, I will become a ferryman
And teach:
Listen to the river
And understand the diversity of its voices

And soon EGS became for me a place to be a ferryman in my teaching. Here are some of my core-ideas as guiding principles:

Improvisation, Decentering and Alternative Experiences

• Slowing down your attention and becoming aware of unexpected views and experiences are important social and personal competencies in our world of quick effects, high efficiency and multi-optional possibilities.

• We have to open doors for alternatives to common everyday understanding of our world in order to accept and to value different points of view. That is what we add to the scientific and technological view of our realities: the perspectives of "Aesthetic Experience"

and "Spiritual Experience." We explore together new ranges of play by using different languages of the arts to express and to shape what we experience, what we hope and dream.

• It is important that we dare to lose our balance, to become decentered and to be a beginner again and again in order to keep learning.

• We have to question our "everyday theories" and the well-trained routines we are used to repeating even if they do not work any longer. In this way we have to go to the limits and explore new limitations given by artistic improvisation and work.

• We are open for a spiritual dimension as well. We leave important questions open and value differences. This is only possible if we have a safe place with clear structures, rules and rituals that allow us to get out of control.

• The main goal is to awaken more individual resources and broaden the range of personal and professional competencies, to explore different patterns of behavior, find unexpected visions and solutions.

• The art of improvisation makes a difference and becomes an important contribution, from developing personal and professional identities in a framework of lifelong-learning, to influencing institutional cultures in a time of changes and to our multicultural society.

In order to live my teaching I have to dare a new way, in contradiction to the usual habits of our teacher-education:

Forget preparing every step
And dare to improvise
Trust the resources
Of your experience

Stop showing
Your information
Trust the message
Of diversity

Dare to become slowly
And breathe
Trust small changes
Step by step

Allow yourself
To make mistakes
Trust the insight
That arises

Improvising
And preparing
Find a balance
And it works

Longing for belonging to a community of diversity

And I am not the only teacher here, I belong to a community. How to find my contribution to our common piece of art?

Dip into the community
Again and again
And ask
What is our common view?

So I have to recognise
The wealth of diversity
And
Be proud of
My own contribution

Let us together
Work on a piece of art
And
Celebrate freedom
For diversity

We get rid
Of any anger
And
Find serenity
In spite of all our differences

That is a project
That nourishes us all

But this is not always so easy. We need an important quality:

The art of tolerance

Tolerance is important between contradictions
It means first to accept differences
Between you and me
Between my bright and my dark sides

Only those who have reconciled with their shadow
Find the freedom to shake hands with their antagonist

Only those who accept their own weaknesses
May tolerate a partner's mistakes

Only those who are proud of themselves
May share the success of others

Only those who accept their own suffering
May have compassion for others

And I think this is much easier when we allow ourselves to just enjoy every single moment with humor:

We are the crazy birds
Come and join us
Do not take care of anything but enjoy
Every present moment
Go as lightly as you can
Find the space you need
For the essence of the tunnel
To decentering.

My roles at EGS

So much for some of my memories I collected within the last 25 years of belonging to EGS. Again and again I had to listen to the river and find a new balance. Even in difficult times, like last year when I lost my dear wife Brigitte, with whom I shared so many wonderful EGS experiences.

In my lectures in the last couple of years, I had the chance to connect being a professor of education and being a storyteller. That is where I could find words to construct new perspectives and keep flowing in the river. I tried to make a combination of the languages of our everyday-life, of science, of the arts and of spirituality, to open doors for diversity. A much bigger challenge living what I teach came with my participation in the exams of the masters and doctoral program. That is where it is necessary to be aware how many possibilities exist to show competencies, how important it is to share stories and experiences from all over the world, and to go beyond right and wrong, good and bad. So with our students from all over the world, I had the chance to find new rivers leading to the ocean of diversity.

Do not follow the lines
You are used to for years
Rather spend your day seeking for a new balance
Because losing and finding balance
Is the only way to eternity

Do not hesitate to turn upside down
Whatever arrives
Rather come to your senses
And follow your calling
For the universe

Do not wait to open your hand
And let go
Whatever you love
But hold your heart
And let it be balanced

Let us go on celebrating our different lines

Peter Wanzenried, PhD, Professor Emeritus at the Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich, teaches at EGS and InArtes Switzerland. He has been an actor and director in Playback Theatre for more than 25 years, presently with "Die närrischen Alten" ("The Old Fools"). He has published *Spielräume für Bildung* and *Unterrichten als Kunst*.

Are We Reconciled to Celebrate Our Resilience?

Wes Chester

As EGS approaches twenty-five, the story of the university moves from fact, to history, to legend. It's understandable. EGS is an entity seemingly created by genius and force of will. Its audacious early rise, its troubled adolescence struggling for recognition against close-minded regulators, bureaucrats and conservative accreditation boards. A school with a Provost, Paolo Knill, who lead his pupils along sheer cliff-faces and over glaciers in search of that sense of bracing aliveness that would vitalize a new breed of helper, one informed by aesthetics, existential and post-modern philosophy, by the language and methods of studio arts, by primitive and modern artistic traditions of human beings. A field regularly welcoming in new ideas, adjusting the curriculum to meet new needs. The university leading the world in helping the field of expressive arts branch from a therapeutic method into coaching, education, and conflict transformation.

Thinking of my own student experience triggers almost unavoidable nostalgia. In a time before texting, before iPhones. If you called home, you called from the Swiss Com phone booth at the village edge, or from the

phone in the hotel lounge. People didn't scatter at the end of class. In a time before most people bothered to carry a 10-pound laptop to the mountain, we entertained each other. Beers and paprika chips in the student lounge, with Paolo and Steve and Ellen Levine, as they discussed things emerging from their classes that day, evolving the theoretical basis of expressive arts therapy, surrounded by a crowd of happy students. Deep late-night after-class jam sessions, accompanied by dancers. Performances for the *Kunstfestival* that stood with anything on stage in Zurich.

There were outings. Dancing with a fellow classmate in our underwear and hiking boots atop a massive rock pile at Sengboden, for our land-art performance. It was a time before selfies. Before there was wifi in every building on campus. All night sings by the fire, walking home up the chapel trail after sunrise, to wait up for breakfast and beginning the next class day. The long-ago when the campus stood on the verge of an empty field, the old street lamps dim enough not to obscure the Milky Way. Even the glaciers were bigger in my day…

I am profoundly indebted to the experience that was EGS in its early adolescence. A place to dream big, to succeed wildly, to fail spectacularly, and always to be buoyed up by love, and the sense of community that has kept me returning to EGS summer after summer over the last seventeen years. In passing into folklore and legend, the spectacular early success of EGS in Saas Fee has become encoded into a canonical tale of a field and a school destined to succeed against the odds. The story and these early memories are treasures…and they are dangerous.

Are we reconciled to celebrate? The celebration of historic milestones is by its nature retrospective, a cheer for what has already happened. The institution of EGS has survived certainly, and is continuing. And it is also clear that today's EGS is not EGS as it began, at least administratively, in 1996. Nor should it be. The intervening years have been ones of growth and change and struggle as well as success. Even the future of the field itself, as taught at EGS, used to seem tied to the fate of our charismatic first Provost. Over twenty-five years,

leadership in the community has changed somewhat and expanded, and survival seems all but assured. And some of the free-wheeling early experimentalism has been selectively bred out of the organism while chasing the approval of a broader accreditation, a financial necessity for any program that would survive the fate of such falling stars as the Black Mountain College. Have we retained enough of what is unique and original in the work to avoid not only dissolution, but disinterest?

Evidence suggests that the student expectations of education are changing. And the world is changing. As a therapist I now find myself, both in my practice and personally, facing and treating anxieties around circumstances unprecedented in my lifetime. Circumstances that would be all too familiar to our founding leaders: Watching the violent extreme right rise to power again in nation after nation. Despots globally are armed and rescinding the social progress of decades with the stroke of a pen, or the dropping of a bomb. The protests and social justice movements we looked to in the 1950s and 60s now fail and fragment based upon internal politics, and a refusal to acknowledge that internally differing opinions in a movement should not outweigh the existential threat to freedom of thought, action and association. And over it all, the shadow of a virus that threatens human life itself.

We all stand witness to circumstances never seen before; the very web of life disintegrating under the pressure of human actions. Again and again leaders fail to rise to the challenge and enact change to pull us from the precipice of the 6th great extinction, the first one witnessed by (and also caused by) humans. And those who would protest in defense of the earth find themselves fragmented and full of righteousness that will not allow allies who differ in approach, language or focus. Yates' oft-overused lines are again met by circum-

stances fully worthy of their power: "...the best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity." The firewall between the world as we know it and cataclysm dwindles, and everywhere hope is snuffed out by the twin madnesses of power and greed.

Can an institution that has graduated fewer students in its twenty-five year history than a small community college does in a single year hope to make an impact against such insults to the human and more-than-human world? Can any institution? Will we bow to the market demand to provide an increasingly individualized and privileged education, a comfortable education where conflict within is kept at a minimum, while the world collapses around everything we have built? Will the legend of EGS be its only lasting contribution to the world?

Now as EGS stands on its quarter-century history, we must pose the question once again. Are we reconciled to simply celebrate our resilience? Are we to become a school of traditions formally kept for the sake of tradition? If longevity is the point of the exercise, then will we encode a kind of story that leads towards the status quo, the slow institutionalization and normalization of our educational process. And is resilience really just code for surviving?

I raise my glass to the founders of the university. I do celebrate the achievements of the past twenty-five years, as unlikely, shining and brilliant as they are. I celebrate also the living community that stretches out across the globe from this beautiful valley. But I am not reconciled merely to celebrate the past. I want to celebrate an institution with an expansive future, one that can continue to innovate in scope and application, while staying true to the premises of academic rigor, critical thinking, and

existential issues within and outside the university. The organism of EGS faces unprecedented challenges both from the "presumed normal" system of education, and from the existential threats of totalitarianism and climate crisis that challenge our students work abroad and their ability to be present.

The community of EGS has deep resources as yet untapped to carry forward this work. There must be an effort to expand the utilization of those resources. Roles in every area of the body of EGS need now gain some relevance before the crisis, not after it. The resilience of any organism depends upon how many supports and how engaged those supports are in the work. The university must professionalize its resilience, so that celebrations can keep coming.

Wes Chester, MA, CAGS is a musician and songwriter, a poet, an artist, an outdoorsman and author, who has worked in arts-based mental health recovery and support since 1996. Wes specializes in therapy for trauma and abuse recovery, and complex issues around human sexuality and relationship. Wes coined the term ecoaesthetics for his particular use of expressive arts to strengthen and heal the aesthetic relationship to nature. His superpowers are a near limitless capacity for unconditional love and full immersion improvisation.

Detail, EGS summer student's studio artwork presentation, Sass Fee, Switzerland. Photo: Anna Fenech

JAZZ POETRY

Elizabeth Gordon McKim

Photo: Anna Fenech.

Jazz Poet of Lynn. Name given to me by Artist-Hosts Tony Toledo and Don White at SPEAK/UP OPEN MIC at the Walnut Street Café in Lynn, Massachusetts. Somewhere in the first decade of the twenty-first century the name takes hold. *Deep. Down in the deep down*. Falls right into me.

As Poet Etheridge Knight said, "Something happens when you name someone." Like Ice Water. Or Spongey Boy or Mellow Man. Funky Drum. Namings from the joint: The penitentiary... "Black Knight."

Or Elizabeth Gordon McKim aka Poet Laureate of The European Graduate School listening to red table poets at the salon/saloon under the disappearing glaze of the glacier in Saas Fee Switzerland: aka Miz Liz riding the

poetry bus with elementary school children and their graduate school teachers for over four decades: aka Bet to her family aka Betty Gordon aka liza lizzy mizzee e/liz shee-mooo and...Jazz Poet...You heard that right. Jazz Poet.

Hold it
Warm it with your own
Life. Listen to its near and far
Pulse its sounds
Its messages

Yes I wear my names
Like proud cloth.

Wear it. Bear
It. We are it.
What else do
We have, we
Do desire
It.

In truth, I have been jazzing poetry for years, *since time and time began*, as sung forth in my Origin Story, ***Mud Matters in the First Circle***, first performed with Paolo Knill in Cam-

bridge Ma. circa 1980 at Lesley College; and then in other small local performance and music venues and still later in still small places in Paris New York Toronto Zurich Jerusalem and beyond. *We live everywhere we travel.*

This mountain is vast
We search for the tiniest
Pebble on the path

So in winter 2020 when Poet-Editor Steve Levine aka *Our Clarifier* asked for something for *POIESIS* (Toronto), I thought: Jazz Poetry. Why not? The sting. The swing. The syncopation. Imagination in the nation.

Jazz Poetry. To be sure. Countless others before and after make jazz poetry in the world/word/whirl. The Oral Tradition of song story and poem . No one owns this great song. It moves through us. And moves beyond.

It sets out from port
With the stranger at the helm
The boat of the dream

And back to the poetry bus with the fourth graders: the chant.

Reach reach reach for the sky now
Push/pull/Gather the wool/
Dig dig dig in the dirt now
It won't hurt now

You and me and us/us
Ride that poetry Bus!

Let's begin... At the beginning.
Let's begin Out Loud
Let's begin with a score
A text. A trust.

What is the reason for your treason?
What is the reason for your trust?

Once you make the score/once you
Know the score/you can refer to it.
You can move within it, change it, move without it, return to it.
Find the breaks and the bridges.
The poem/text is fluid. Invites change. Change and continuance.
Rhythm. Rhythm and pulse. Finding and redefining . Shaping.
And order. Order and sequence. Chaos and Arrangement. Re-
Arrangement and continuance. Rhythm
And pulse.

Paolo and I repeat before every performance,
Whispered like a mantra, like a talisman
Will you never forsake me?
Will you always laugh at my jokes?
I am ready. Are you ready? Are you ready I am ready

We play our hearts out and our heads off...
We find the text. We have the score. We know the way. We practice
Our craft. The poem arrives as a visitation. We are in the ZONE.
The music emerges. The collaboration begins. Connection.
Community Building. Ding. Ding.

Since time began
I lay around the swamp
Listened to caw-caw
And catch-all of crow
Muttered: endlessly

Findaway o ma
Windaroo dah dah
Widda hoo hoo
And a mud hush
Inna night

Sing or sink
Sink or sing
Inna mud

JAZZZONE

An evening of Poetry and music
Thursday 25th July 2019
Steinmatte: Saas Fee Valais Switzerland
Elizabeth McKim Poet Laureate: Vocals
Harold McKinney: Trombone
Paolo Knill on two flutes and keyboard
Sabine Silberberg on the vibes
Intro: Steve Levine: Clarifier
Poster: Artist Belen Moro
Audience: Students: Faculty: Friends from the village

SNIPPETS FROM THE JAZZZONE

Watch out!
Watch out for Poet Laureate!
She's skimming those poems
Across the floor like Frisbees in a spin
Harold McKinney: Mountain Man on trombone
Holding the space and loving the play
Responds to a honking baleful ballad
Re: an old gray goose
Paolo in the fullness of time, carefully
Folds himself into a swiss mosh pit
Like a silver acro/bat flip-flopping
Through a watchful and loving audience
And the poems and music are evolving
Every witch-where:
In the back of the room: Alejo Duque is at the helm:
Taking care of digital business.
Wild flowers from the swiss meadows and flickering lights
Prepare the space for the adventure:
Thanks to Margo's students.

MORE SNIPPETS FROM THE JAZZZONE

I saw the mannequin go down
I saw the mannequin go down the black hole
On the infinitesimal plumb line to infinity...

The things that I know shall never be mine
They shall always move through me
And move beyond.

And the title poem from my new book coming out May 2020
With Leapfrog Press:

LOVERS in the FREE FALL

When I first came here
I found my future
Free-falling
Out of a blank sky
No Moon!
Oblivion covering me
Like a tarp. Till,
Still slumbering and some–
How lapsed, sd sduh
I slapped
Down and wised–
Up, wised up and slapped

Down, to the plausible
Earth, rising up
Too late for my rescue
Revealing our true
Impartial partner–
Ship/ like an open map
Like a well used trap/

Lovers/lovers/ lovers in the free fall
Lovers in the free fall now

I'M PRAYING
I'M PLAYING

I'm searching the i/ching
For traces
For traces of you

I only know a little
About a little

I do not know
A lot about a lot

Not

Low/Knill?
High/Digger?

What? What?

Frieda/Freedoom Ka/doom
Lorca! Lorca! Lorca!
Europa/ Americas/ Hong Kongers

First thoughts.
Prima materia...

Flames insist their way
Into the most
Minimal passageways.

Cuidado cuidado
Watch your back
Check your exits

Write it down
Down in the ledger
Down in the ledger
Of love

Nothing saved
Everything spilling

Nothing spilling
Everything

Saved

In the voices of ancestors
In the voices of the lost ones
Breathing

Tell me a story
I can't refuse

In the beginning
On my Mac Book Pro

I forget if I am a virgin
Or you are a ho

I can't remember
If you are a witch
Or I am a maintenance man

If you are a pro
And I am a penitent

Mud Matters
In the First Circle

Go sip. Go sip.

What do we know now
We did not know before?
What tha? What tha?

And what is unfinished
Is always unfinished
And what is finished
Begins again.....

The things that I know
Shall never be mine
They shall always move through me
And move beyond...

AFTER/WORD

And now, as a child holds
A night time lullaby

We all become a part of loving
You hold me I encircle you
Held and holding

We are gathering in
The light/the dark/the dark/the light

In all our silent places
Where we shelter on
In place...hold on and let go

Whirl without end
Amen and women
Amen

Gratefully and most
Respectfully Submitted
4/21/20 CV Year of the Plague:
Elizabeth Gordon McKim
aka e/weaver believer
Lynn, Massachusetts, USA

Elizabeth Gordon McKim is a poet, performance artist, and intergenerational teacher. Her work is deeply embedded in the Oral Tradition of Song Story and Poem. Widely published in reviews, magazines and journals. Her sixth book of poetry LOVERS in the FREE FALL is scheduled for publication in May 2020 by Leapfrog Press. She is the Poet Laureate of the European Graduate School and known locally as the Jazz Poet of Lynn.

Tangled and Torn

Lynn Ditchfield

I encounter shale—petrified shale. One layer locked into another. Is my pickax strong enough to break through, to comb the rubble for a nugget? In what container do I gather shards?

How will I jump off this treadmill to dive into irresponsibility and sheer silliness? Or stillness? Something less complicated, more pure. Indeed, a much finer fit for tonight.

But this machine keeps me tangled and torn, the tread on my sneakers worn.

I would rather be smoking cigarettes, sipping Benedictine and Brandy liqueur, munching tapas in a sidewalk café, placing bets and laughing heartily whether I win or lose, tossing the ringlets of my long, wild, henna-cadmium-red-hair from side-to-side to the beat of the jazz man's saxophone tickling me with *Sketches of Spain*.

But the beehive, this swarm keeps me tangled and torn, the tread on my sneakers worn.

I am a wandering Jew, a homeless gypsy dragging a cart loaded with all those products, hazardous waste, and hard things. I dump it in an alley to watch the contents tumble down the drain of life.

Yet, the mad manic driver has taken the wheel, keeping me tangled and torn, the tread on my sneakers worn.

"Curse you!" I say, shoving all my worries in the back seat with rain gear, goggles, galoshes, and hiking boots. My knapsack is packed with treats, with goodies and small toys, with magic tricks in cellophane wrappers waiting to delight, like sparkly jewels, batches of bangles, scented bubblegum, and ruby rings. I slip-on the flattering sequined gown and croon a remorseless tango song full of sweet longing.

The dark clouds descend covering the trail of my journey, putrid pools of sweat. I travel round and round the muddy track, like a dial phone always going back to zero.

This is a shadow that keeps me tangled and torn. I must not hide away from its hovering, lanky shape pulling infinite directions away from the sun.

With grace I pick up the disappearing light into the small basket in my hand, soft with intricate weave and velvet handle. It is empty save for a small note to be read in secret, sung in a lullaby to my grandchildren, sweet and innocent, precious beyond all loving memories.

And they will show me how to embrace the machine, to slow the car with my bare feet, take honey safely from bees, and sink behind this shadow to make puppet shows and laugh again.

A tangled and torn journey to writing a dissertation

It is not a coincidence that I wrote this poem while challenging my life-long learning habit by applying to a doctoral program. Although at the time, I knew little about the concept of *decentering*, the process of writing the poem allowed me to metaphorically journey forward to find the "jewels and bangles" among the "rubble" to distill into something meaningful.

Nor is it a coincidence that I wrote this poem as I applied for a Vision Fellowship to create an arts-based curriculum on immigration, conceived of as a small booklet of "best practices" for teachers in my community of Martha's Vineyard, MA. Being awarded this fellowship just

before my 70th birthday made it possible for me to enroll as a doctoral candidate at EGS.

My original intention was to write my dissertation as a novel, fictionalizing the period from 1970-1975 when I participated in Earth Onion Women's Improvisational Theater. After nearly fifty-years teaching with two masters' degrees in education, I began to shift my energy to creative writing. I started the novel with a dialogue between an aging actress and the apparition of The Witch, a character she played years before as part of a feminist theater troupe. Together they delve into that previously "polarized time of violence, upheaval and evil turned up, where even love cut sharp as a knife," living in Washington, D.C., the "belly of the beast" during "the time of take-overs and make-overs, hippies and beats, politicos and militants, Black power and Che, class war, equality feigned, flag burning, bra tossing, Ginsberg, MLK, Angela, and Malcolm, free love, leaflets, petitions, demonstrations, boycotts, psychedelics, poetry and pot, COs, AWOLs, MIAs, changed names, new identities, lawmakers, lawbreakers, INTERPOL and COINTELPRO, undercover cops, phone taps, letters opened, 'narcs,' guns hidden, guns raided, guns planted, covert operations and overt operations. Revolution. War." Would my dissertation be arts-based research exploring the power of the arts to promote social justice issues?

Then came the conflict. The daily bombardment of news about captured children caged on our borders, nightmarish journeys of unaccompanied minors, horrific global migration stories, combined with my history as an activist/educator advocate for human rights since the 1960s, compelled me to act. I volunteered as a translator for asylum seekers from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras incarcerated at a detention center for women and children in Artesia, New Mexico, which intensified my commitment. Additionally, I was witnessing increased fear and bullying in my community and schools. I noticed teachers were anxious and unclear how to approach the crucial yet sensitive subject of immigration. All these factors meant that writing a novel, although still a part of my daily routine, played a secondary role. While studying at EGS, my research, writing and editing focused on expanding the original

"booklet" on immigration into *Borders to Bridges: Creativity-Based Immigration Curriculum Guidebook*. It is now over 590 pages of 50 lesson plans around migration, immigration and refugees, accompanying artwork, sections of poetry/prose/short fiction, personal narratives, extensive resource lists, and a pilot program in seven local schools. My supportive EGS cohorts and advisors encouraged the work and some became contributing educators and artists joining other contributors from thirty-two countries and fifteen states in the U.S. Would this work frame my dissertation?

It has taken me more than two years analyzing, reconciling and balancing the generative tensions between what I consider my Creative Side–the writing of the novel, and my Grounded Side–the creation of the immigration curriculum. As an elder student, I am also conscious of an inner pressure to distill life-long experiences into a meaningful legacy.

Over many years as a student, I have had the profound honor of working directly with several theorists, mentors and scholars who have influenced my practice. Their philosophies of critical pedagogy, arts in education, and expressive arts (EXA) continue to fuse providing personal guidance and perspective.

I conjure theoretical wisdom by becoming an apprentice cook, receiving recipe and instructions from these master chefs to create an original stew, a blending of theoretical sagacity that broadens both the fields of EXA and arts-in-education.

First the roux, Paulo Freire's base of critical consciousness, creative thinking, *conscientização* gives thickness to the blend. Next, stir in the tasty broth of Jessica Hoffmann Davis's magic potion of arts-filled education. Then, Eleanor Duckworth's reminder, "Learning is messy," don't worry if you spill, simply welcome surprises and intrigue in the process. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's mélange of vegetables adds aesthetics with a methodological approach to empirical research, exploring for "goodness." Maxine Greene's herbs and spices contribute the essential "wide-awakening." Pedro Noguera exposes inequalities and access

gaps to make sure there will be sufficient quantity and quality for all.

The like-minded philosophers, professors and leader-practitioners of EXA principles and practices enhance the culinary artistry. Sally Atkins's suffusion of poetry and the beauty of nature into the mixture underscores the joy of processing the concoction. José Miguel Calderón adds a spiritual dimension to the cooking-pot with *tinkuy*, an encounter with *the third*, an unexpected flavor. Stephen K. Levine delights in slow cooking with his secret ingredient *poiesis*, while Ellen Levine's playing with imaginative metaphors brings color to the dish. Paolo Knill calls all the chefs together for a ritual community arts feast. The table is set using Paolo's "architecture of a session" to design the menu: *filling-in* with political discourse before the meal; *decentering* with eyes closed to relish the aromas and tastes; *harvesting* the delicious experience with gratitude. Then, the other Paulo, Freire that is, toasts the gathering, stating that *conscientização* requires reflecting for action, practicing theory. He looks directly at me saying, "Where is the dessert?"

"The dessert-tation?" I inquire, knowing well that thanks to them, this recipe forms the theoretical underpinnings of my dissertation. It also feeds the novel, and writing a novel nourishes the dissertation. The essence is that entering a creative space allows students, teachers, practitioners to *decenter* (Knill, 2005, 2016), and *conscientização* goes to the depth of knowledge, to a higher consciousness, to humanity and worldliness (Freire, 1968, 2018).

To better understand stages of human transformation inherent in these concepts, I return to the words of my poem. First relating to

three parts of Knill's "architecture" framework, when I "jump off the treadmill" and drag that "cart loaded with all those products, hazardous waste, and hard things," I am *filling-in*. When I shout, "Curse you!" at the" manic driver," "the swarm," "the shadow," the impenetrable wall, indulging "I would rather," I am *decentering*. As I "pick up the disappearing light," I am *harvesting* resources.

Finally, Freire's conception of *conscientização* is my secret "sung in a lullaby," in a puppet show, a play, painted in a mural, a thesis, or written in a novel. For now, my dissertation will be the "small basket" with "velvet handle" containing findings from an exploration of creative and expressive arts approaches to teaching immigration, human rights and critical issues of social justice.

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Lynn Ditchfield, C.A.G.S., Ed.M. M.A. has been an educator in urban, rural and international schools, pre-school to university. Her first M.A. was based on the work of Paulo Freire; her second Ed.M. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education focused on arts approaches for at-risk youth. She is the creator, writer, and editor of *Borders to Bridges: Creativity-Based Immigration Curriculum Guidebook*, and co-coordinator of the *Borders to Bridges* pilot program in the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools. She is a doctoral candidate at EGS, works as a writer, workshop facilitator, and adjunct professor.

State of Play
Kristin Briggs

When I was little
I was afraid of Thunderstorm
That first bold growl
from her was always a surprise
It jolted me to an
emergency state
blotting out the conversation
between me and the
little piece of the universe
I inhabited for the sake of play—my
working through of things

Usually, I was embedded
deep in my own world
before I even noticed
the wind—
the shift of clouds—
the leaves turned white—
The trees heaving in concert
with the great inhale—
eons, it seemed,
before the rain came

Each spring
Thunderstorm comes to visit me
to startle, to feed, to electrify, to wash away

Each spring
I play with her

Thunderstorm feels different to me now
I hear her sing:
Given the chance, everything is new
Whether it's me, the universe, or you

Ready or not, I look up willingly
to feel the rain
again

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Dance Improvisation and Embodiment

Judith Greer Essex

No paints nor brushes, marbles nor chisels, pianos or violins are needed to make this art, for we are the stuff that dance is made of. It is born in our body, exists in our body and dies in our body. Dance, then, is the most personal of all the arts... it springs from the very breath of life.

—Walter Terry, Dance Critic, *New York Herald Tribune*

EGS Summer School 2019: Session One

I am leading a large group of international students in an on-going dance improvisation experience we call "community art." Some are trained dancers, others dance socially, and others not at all. There are about 80 people, ranging in age from the early 20s to the mid-80s. Together we will create a dance performance. I am playing with them. The game I play is how to transform this disparate group into a dance ensemble. My objective: to have everyone enjoy themselves and also to have a good composition. They are not my meat puppets, but my collaborators. We will have seven meetings over three weeks. How can I do it? I improvise.

Improvisation is a greatly misunderstood discipline. The standard dictionary definition is incorrect compared to what it means to a dance artist. It is spontaneous, but not without form or frame. Improv does not mean "anything goes," nor "do your thing." Improvisation asks the dancer to be attuned to their own physical/expressive moment and also responsive to outside stimuli at the same time. It has less to do with continual invention, and more to do with the inspiration of what is at hand. This includes the movements of other dancers, the room, or the music. It has to do with being fully present.

To be a good improviser takes practice and skill, although anyone can begin. The attitude of the improviser may be playful, but not reckless, focused, not nonchalant. Group improv asks the dancers to let go of control and yet remain mindful of the frame and the offers made by others. Improvisation is a long-standing and respected tradition in dance. It can be used to find original material for later choreography, but it is also enjoyed as an activity in and for itself. Group dance improvisation is based on forms and structures that allow an ensemble to create dances on the spot. To facilitate it well requires a working knowledge of the basic elements of dance and how to manipulate or play with them along the lines of the elements of composition.

A skillfully designed improvisation has a score–Paolo Knill calls this "an agreement." A score is a plan for movement designed to take into account of the whole situational analysis of the group doing it: who are they, where are they, why are they coming together, when does this occur, and so forth. We can agree on how we begin and how we end. We can agree where things must happen, or that certain movements will happen, but we don't know where or by whom. When I come to work with the ensemble, I have already prepared many parts of the score, although it is not set. It must be open enough to take into account the variations and changes that might occur or the things we discover together.

The dancers get a chance to create a larger play-space in improv. This is deep play–play in the unknown, play with consequences, with enough danger to be exciting. They must

pay attention to their own body movement, the directions and requirements of the score, and to the inspiration of other dancers. This kind of stimulating real-time interaction with others in an artistic setting is vivifying and enlivening. The expressive and artistic abilities of each dancer in the company, be it a group of 10 or 100, actively contribute to the emergent composition–an embodied work of art.

The instrument of the dance is our human body. Our embodied consciousness interacts with the world through the portals of our senses. As an expressive arts facilitator, I use the experience of improv to engage and enliven the kinesthetic and proprioceptive senses of the dancers. Dance improvisation promotes a greater sense of one's own embodiment, aesthetic pleasure and well-being by asking the dancers to use their whole selves in new ways, to distinguish and articulate the whole body in time and space. The greater the contact our senses have with the world, the more astute, accurate, differentiated, specific and concrete our experience will be. The imagination is stimulated and restored through this increased contact with the world in the aesthetic activity of body movement. Dance leads to new thoughts and emotions as well as to new movement patterns Not all that we discover can be translated into words, yet the emergent work gives us valuable experiential knowledge of our own being. Dance is a way of knowing.

I began my career as a dancer and movement teacher for actors many decades ago. Over the arc of a career of helping people not only express themselves but make artistic discoveries through the dance, I have come to think of imagination as physical, rather than purely mental. When we play with a stick, it can become so many things; a wand, a knife, a toothpick, a pen. Both objects and concrete physical encounters with the world quicken this imagination. This makes dance a perfect vehicle for both deepening embodied experience and inspiring emergence in the physical imagination. The dance image is created by the muscles and bones. It is not only reaching high, but also pointing at an airplane, raising your hand to let the teacher know you have the right answer, picking an apple. Dance expands

consciousness. Spend time dancing and you will experience yourself and the world differently than before. The enactment of your self is codified by the way you carry yourself in the world. Dance improv can disrupt that habituated movement. Dance is powerful medicine to help a community attune through movement, rhythm and breath. Because of its power, the improv must be designed with great care and attention to safety.

Each time we met, I brought in materials for the dancers to explore: turning or falling, running or standing still. The experienced dancers are models for the naïve dancers, but all bodies are able to participate. We work with the material of our composition– first body movement, then the timing and tempi, now the use of space. Each time we meet we build on our idea. We add and subtract from the score based on how it is lived in real time.

Photo: Anna Fenech

A good score is devised with all the elements of the dance discipline: time, space, motion, all the aspects of these and the ways they can be manipulated. The score must also take into account the elements of composition: symmetry, sequence, site-specific elements of the available space and so forth. It includes the individual dancer's body and also the shape of the ensemble: solos, duets, trios, quartet, quintets, ensemble, double solos; the variation is almost endless.

The improvised score has markers, and some agreed-upon movement vocabulary and compositional elements. Even these are emergent. I have the ensemble decide with me what felt right, what looked exciting, what attracted which individual dancers. There is openness and room for images to emerge, and these can be surprising. The dancers can be astonished and moved by what they create. Like delicate dough, an improv score must not be handled

too much or it gets tough and unpalatable. Improv derives much of its zest and power from its unknown quality. The image is fresh, not set, and unexpected things can happen within the frame. Each time is different.

With a satisfactory score, the dancer is revitalized and energized. It must allow the in-and-out cycle of doing/ reflecting / doing that is critical to its success. The facilitator should take time to direct attention back to the dancer's inner experience for the participant to feel wholly present, with feedback flowing within their body, from movement, imagination, thoughts, emotions, memories and the dance relationships.

Photo: Anna Fenech

Later in the summer, we dive into our score for one final ensemble experience. As a facilitator, I can still recognize the frame designed around the piece, but the contents no longer belong to me, or at least no more than to anyone in the ensemble. The work itself is fully emergent; from the available materials, the moment of creation, the responsive beings of dancers, musicians and even the surroundings. We have shaped it together, thrown things out that were not working and allowed new/emergent/unexpected images to enter.

Beginning with silence and stillness on the empty floor, the performance area fills and empties, fills and empties–solos, double trios, the entire ensemble. The skilled musicians improvising with us have their own rough score–differing melodies and rhythms that support the dancer's discoveries. Here a soundscape floating lazily through the larch forest, there a driving pulse, a rising intensity. The entrances are firm and present, heads aloft, eyes open,

in contact with each other and the musicians as a genuine ensemble. We are all witnessing the flowering of an original piece, held by all of us, unfolding through us. It is more than a performance; it is a lived, embodied experience of the emergent. And it passes as if by magic. Over the month a spoken text arrived, quoting from Wendell Berry's "Ripening." These spoken words ring in the space as the dancers come to stillness, and for a moment the room falls silent once again, the open stage, always open.

It is intensely moving and exciting. The whole company celebrates together with applause and exhilaration. The dancers remark upon their newfound feelings of competence, potential and capability. There is a lightness in the room. We have served the image, and through this, the image has served us. It was not simply a performance, but the dance of the emerging EGS community, a community defined by deep and aesthetic relationships, and by the never repeated moment-to-moment aliveness that resides within improvisation. The knowledge of that improv enlivens my imagination even now, draws me towards the empty floor, the quiet room, the new partners, and the hazy and undefined longing for a "next-time." The dance continues.

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Sky-diving in Winter

Andreas Meier

animals creep at me
an other reality opens
twisting my thoughts
to dive into
strange skies.

without explanation
you put your arm
around my shoulder
my heart opens
and I listen
to the worlds
of our dancing imaginations.

Andreas C. Meier M.A. C.A.G.S., is a Psychotherapist in private practice, teacher and core member at the institute In Artes, Zürich, and EGS. He is a performer and dancer with specialization in dance improvisation and site-specific work.

Viral

Varvara Siderova

The world is changing, becoming fluid,
interacting and penetrating.
We used to live in an isolated world,
solid and hard, in the capsule of our own beliefs,
only occasionally surprised by the exceptions of unity.
But now the world is becoming fluid and united.
We feel the connection of everything with everything.
We are the means of this connection, our bodies,
our neural fibers are the roots of the earth and the roots of trees.
We feel less distance between you and me, the bodies we are enclosed in.
These solid unshakable wild sick and rejoicing bodies,
which for centuries remained the immovable taboos of sexual pleasures,
became light and floated in a stream of change
became permeable to words and vibrations,
spread beyond birth and death,
spread beyond their borders,
and even beyond "my house," "my country" and "my continent."
We all rushed to meet each other,
People speaking different languages, with different skin colors.
There are no more prejudices and rigid mindsets separating us.
There is not a single rigid guideline, the whole world is mobile and fluid.
What remains the same?
Each movement of consciousness contains the entire universe.

The Healing of Generations:
A Collective Healing Ritual of Post-Soviet Trauma in Russia

Varvara V. Sidorova

We all live in the short opening between past and future. And all of us have different relations with these vectors of our human grid of coordinates. The future can invite and lure some people, or desperately engulf someone, or run into us unexpectedly out of a corner.

Our past may be a main road stably leading one forward, or it can haunt and suppress us wherever we are, make us crouch whimpering in a corner, make our hearts shrink with pain, or beat with joy and flow smoothly into the present.

Each of us is influenced by our personal history, our personal past, but we are not alone, and our personal history is entangled in the bizarre pattern of the histories of our families, our city, our nation. Our entire history is written and stored in our body-consciousness. Likewise, there is the collective body of our country and culture which also can rejoice at or live through the traumatic experience of our history. It can have special relations with other collective bodies and be a part of a greater body–the collective body of entire humankind, or just of a part of the planet.

I was born and live now in modern Russia, I was raised and educated in Russia, and it can be said that I imbibed its cultural stereotypes and modes of behavior. But a part of my life, as of most of the people who grew in Russia before 1991, was spent in the Soviet Union and the other part in the so-called "post-Soviet" space. While a school-child, I was a Pioneer, I wore a red necktie, I made salutes and I remember–my body remembers this feeling–how to stand in line shoulder to shoulder, how to salute raising my arm. There was no alternative at the time, and my parents also adhered to the current ideology without questioning it or doubting the truth of what was told them concerning the outside world, just like many other Russians. I remember that I tried to be a very good Pioneer. We grew up on stories about heroic Pioneers who sacrificed their lives for the Motherland. Our generation was romantic and had exalted ideals. As a child, I cherished the vision of Granddaddy Lenin, that absolutely stainless leader caring about the people. Many people of my generation had a reasonably happy childhood. We spent summers in Pioneer camps knowing absolutely nothing about the cost of our happy life, about the deaths of millions of innocent people who died in concentration camps or of hunger, or at "construction sites of Communism." When a child, I quite earnestly believed that that there is no better state than the Soviet Union and that the people, for instance, living in the United States, are all examples of corrupt capitalists.

In the past century in Russia, almost every generation had its share of traumatic events on a nation-wide scope (World War I, the revolution of 1917, repression, World War II, Perestroika, the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991). The phrase, "post-Soviet trauma," describes the aftermath of Soviet repression and genocide, and also the deformation of the personalities of people who had to live in constant fear, without freedom of opinion and suffering the effects of national traumatic events (Merridale, 1990, 2001, 2006, 2013). We can observe the phenomenon of "multi-historism" in modern Russia (Etkind, 2013). There is no uniform point of view concerning Russian history–a multitude of opinions and attitudes clash and coexist.

Arts-based research helps us to avoid destructive emotions and gives us an opportunity to look safely from a distance at a painful theme (McNiff, 1999, Leavy, 2019). Another basis of this research is the philosophy of intermodal expressive arts therapy. Intermodal transfer from one art form to another helps people to explore the theme deeply (Knill P.J., Levine S.K., Levine, E.G., 2005).

We conducted five studies of groups of 9 to 120 persons; the overall number of participants was about 200. People were asked to recall an episode or present an image related to the Soviet or Post-Soviet period or to the transitional epoch, and explore it through drawing and theatre in small groups with group performances in the end.

In the course of the research, we separated the participants into four groups.

The first group consisted mostly of people whose childhood and youth had taken place in the Soviet Union. Characteristic for this group were such traits as enthusiasm, fervour, passion, public activity, faith, strong guidelines, experiencing the feeling of limitation and of "life within the borders," the joy of community and closeness with others, and a high sense of responsibility.

The second group consisted of people who grew up during the collapse of the Soviet Union. This group is characterized by feelings of guilt, a loss of orientation, a wish to find or create orienting points, and a wish to find one's uniqueness, as well as the motif of turning to traditions.

The third group represented the voice of those who hated the Soviet period as a heartless mechanism, who wanted to break out at any cost, who truly experienced pain and anger and still mourn and are angry. This group consisted of different ages, mostly people who grew up in the Soviet period.

The fourth group was mixed, of various ages and not very distinct. This group exemplified a stress on family values and ancestral bounds; its members spoke of childhood resources, of home, family kinship and native soil, divorced from any connection to Soviet ideology.

In the course of the study, many participants remarked that the exploration of this theme was very important for them because of the possibility to openly discuss it, to have a collective response, and the importance of seeing how other generations reflect on this topic and to look at it from their point of view.

This research shows that it is important to raise the question of post-Soviet trauma and work through it. This trauma is marginalized, unrecognized or not studied enough, and art-based research could be an appropriate instrument for this task. There is a great need for free self-expression and awareness of feelings and of a personal warm environment. The theme of contact with ancestors, reviving traditions and heritage links, is one of the most important and central in modern Russia. In part, these needs may be met by art therapy and intermodal arts therapy, now gaining popularity in Russia.

Collective trauma requires collective healing. During the Opening Ceremony of the 9th International Expressive Arts Therapy Festival Conference in Moscow, dedicated to the theme, "The Healing of Generations," we created and conducted a deep ritual of collective healing. Since 2012 in Moscow we have had an expressive arts therapy conference each year with a different theme, e.g., The Ecology of Soul, The Voice of the Body, The Breathing of Roots, etc. (www.artstherapy.ru).

The Festival of 2019 opened with the collective ritual of community art. Eighty people started with movement and a dance, and during this dance they moved backwards in time and imagined that they met their ancestors. They imagined their life, their difficulties and their power, their love and getting together. During the dance, the participants divided into

ten groups. After this, each group created collectively a felt carpet with the image of the tree. The process included active physical work, matting the wool, trampling on it, throwing the carpets, while listening and moving to the drum music. This active physical work was very important for trauma release and created the feeling that we are both strong and gentle together. During this ritual, a healthy colorful forest was created collectively. We finished with the circle dance, a Russian traditional dance. It has helped people to connect with their roots in spite of many traumatic events that somehow break down this connection. This connection was re-established within each person and on the collective level. In the end, each group presented their carpet to the others with a dance and a name. The ritual created a strong collective resonance; many participants told us later that it was very meaningful for them. I hope its vibrations are still alive and will continue to have an effect.

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Name it. Claim it. Aim it.
Expressive Arts and Social Change

Markus Scott-Alexander

Social change can be an intimidating call to action. I'm interested in approaching social change in a pragmatic way. Despite my strong interest in philosophy and theory about the expressive arts approach, I've done much more work out in the field as an educator. There, I encourage communities and those studying community facilitation to work within a progression from interfacing to interacting and ultimately to interplay. That movement can ignite the life of a group. In staying with the question, "What works?", I am finding that, at the heart of it all, social change starts with people shifting their language from, "What can I do?" to "What can we do?" It's often as simple as that.

I noticed years ago when I asked the question "What can I do," my energy went down. The world is pretty messed up. What can I do…and my energy went down. When I said the world is pretty messed up and asked, "What can we do?", my energy completely changed. My heart opened, my body felt different. Then I started to really enjoy working with larger numbers of people staying with the question, "What can we do?" In this way expressive arts for social change became the next turn of the spiral for me, in seeing what expressive arts can do.

For me, social change happens when you can find your shared values, not your shared beliefs. We can all believe different things, but if we all value transparency, for example, that

can bring our communities together. It can change the society because we can all value transparency.

In the meantime, I have developed a process in expressive arts work called, "Name it. Claim it, Aim it." We can name what makes a difference in a community and really focus on that. In that focusing, we're claiming it or owning it: i.e., "transparency is important to us as a community." What would we do when we're claiming this transparency? What if we do a community art piece that is all about diversity, for example? We then find ways to aim it. Maybe we will have a parade using new music we have created, in true Paolo J. Knill style, or we'll create a dance theatre piece together. That's aiming it.

EGS, Switzerland campus.
Training in community art-making.

This process of "Name it. Claim it. Aim it." increases the chances that what you name as important to the community shows up as a lived experience, not just an idea that transparency or diversity makes a difference. Then, the question becomes. "Okay, let's look at this. What can we do to celebrate this shared value?" Social change which often seems like a big thing can actually begin as a small, real shift from asking, "What can I do?" to "What can we do?" Together, we discover what matters to us as a community and determine how to continue to explore it creatively. We create a small, big shift that works.

One of my favorite things to do in expressive arts is community art, maybe a hundred

people at a time, when I just stand there and say, "Okay. Where are we right now? Some of us are quiet and sleepy and some of us are full of fire and can't wait to move." In the process, the facilitator creates frames for the participants to be where they are, without judging. The play range is explored, acknowledged and worked with, finding new ways again and again to hold the variety present in the community.

Similarly, within the frame of expressive arts for social change, the real change is that no one has to distort themselves to be a part of the community. Within communities like LGBTQ, for example, perhaps the greatest change now is how we're holding what has been present and ostensibly ignored for so long. Valuing presence as a starting point can create a trajectory that is full of integrity, power and deep play. "Be here now" becomes expressive arts' starting point, exploring where we are now as a springboard for our just right next.

I began working as an expressive arts therapist and educator in 1986. Now, students of students of my students are working in places where we couldn't work before. For example, when I first began, I heard stories of some of us going to India to do expressive arts with a group of women who were forced to live collectively in a house, segregated and named untouchable because they had been raped. They were living there with the children born of the rape. A local translator for the EXA group refused to go in the house. I'm sure this still exists, but now we seem to be able to enter these "untouchable places" a bit more, with longer-lasting effects. The number of EXA projects involved with marginal populations continues to increase. Other invisibles everywhere, like the homeless, the trafficked and the incarcerated are being responded to with more creative vigor, from Kenya to Nepal and from the far north of Canada to the streets of Costa Rica.

So, I do see change and it's not because I am trying hard to change anything. I am changing how I am responding to my feelings of helplessness. I am changing. We are changing. We are responding to each other with more intimacy of being and a greater capacity to celebrate coming together.

EGS Malta campus. Community art-making that is site-specific.

Specific questions I am interested in are, "How can we hold ourselves and each other differently?" and "How can we explore new options for community-building with greater engagement and response?" We humans are beautiful, and we get so distorted. I experience expressive arts for social change as a wisdom path: "How do we cultivate wisdom through deep play?" "How do we come back to what we know in the midst of the craziness?" – emphasizing the "we" in these questions. For me, the aim of expressive arts for social change is for us to look at each other and honestly say, "We can do this." We can be in this difficulty differently, together.

Markus Scott-Alexander, PhD, REAT has been teaching at EGS since 1997. He is currently the director of World Arts Organization in Edmonton, Canada and is the author of "Expressive Arts Education and Therapy: Discoveries in a Dance Theatre Lab Through Creative Process-based Research," published by Brill/Sense in their book series *Arts, Creativities and Learning Environments in Global Perspectives*.

Four Poems

Odette Amaranta Vélez Valcárcel

el sueño continúa

el brillo de la madeja
hila nuestros pasos

llegamos a la selva

oído en el silencio

sonreímos
lentamente
en el verdor del monte

es nuestra nueva casa
entre pájaros y árboles

the dream goes on

the glowing skein
threads our steps

we arrive at the jungle

hearing the silence

we smile
slowly
in the greenery of the mountain

our new home
amongst the birds and trees

profundo

en la superficie
el gato juega con las piedras

el caos aparece

abre tus sentidos
surfea lo inesperado
acaricia el misterio

portal sagrado de vitalidad

depth

on the surface
the cat plays with stones

chaos appears

open your senses
surf the unexpected
caress mystery

go through
the sacred door
of life

silencio

embriagarme con el trino del paisaje
disolverme en pluma
sombra
canto

asomo de una ola
brizna de arena
hoja
fruto en gestación

hacer poco
casi nada
nada

un ave silba
vuelvo a empezar

silence

getting drunk on the trill of the landscape
dissolving into feather
shadow
song

trace of a wave
blade of sand
leaf
ripening

doing little
almost nothing
nothing

a bird whistles
I begin again

demorar

lavar a mano tus pañales

cimbrear la dicha del detalle
presente en cada corpúsculo de luz

hacer lento mi paso
contar las hojas caídas del ponciano

suspirar a fondo cada muerte
cada indolente grito de la calle

ser estatua en plena muchedumbre

barrer cada peldaño

juntar arena tras arena

sumar silencios

de morar

delay

hand-wash your diapers

shake the bliss of detail
present in every corpuscle of light

slow down your pace
count the fallen leaves of the poncian

sigh deeply for every death
every indolent scream in the street

to be a statue in the middle of the crowd

sweeping clean every stepping stone

gathering grain after grain

adding the silence

de-laying

Translated by Natalia Parodi and Pilar Sousa. Freely adapted by Stephen K. Levine.

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From Longing to Being and Belonging

EXIT: An Expressive Arts group intervention for people who have survived traumatic events

Melinda A. Meyer DeMott

In his book, *The Body Keeps the Score,* Bessel Van Der Kolk highlights how interlinked our body and our psyche is: "After trauma the world is experienced with a different nervous system. The survivor's energy now becomes focused on suppressing inner chaos, at the expense of spontaneous involvement in their lives. These attempts to maintain control over unbearable physiological reactions can result in a whole range of physical symptoms, including fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, and other autoimmune deceases. This explains why it is critical for trauma treatments to engage the entire organism, body, mind, and brain" (Van Der Kolk, 2014).

Traumatic experience is captured in our bodies. Therefore, victims of violence and war often escape their own body–they disconnect from their body-awareness in order not to feel the pain of the memory.

EXIT–Expressive Arts in Transition–was developed by Melinda Ashley Meyer DeMott during her longitudinal work with refugees of the Bosnian war in Norway (M.A. Meyer DeMott, 2007).

Based on the therapeutic methods of Expressive Arts Therapy, the aim of EXIT is to stabilize the participants on a mental, physical and emotional level. Meyer DeMott describes the EXIT method as a rite of passage. The transition from one country into another, from a life under war into a life in refuge, is a difficult one. Refugees exist in a gap between the past and the future. This vacuum, where the refugee is neither part of the old culture nor the new culture, is similar to the "liminal phase" during a rite of passage. Arnold van Gennep identifies three phases in a rites of passage: separation, liminality, and incorporation (van Gennep, 1977):

1. In the first phase, people withdraw from their current status and prepare to move from one place or status to another.

2. The transitional (liminal) phase is the period between states, during which one has left one place or state but has not yet entered or joined the next.

3. In the third phase, the rite is completed, and a new status or identity is achieved.

Victor Turner extends this theory and highlights the importance of the liminal phase. In indigenous societies where rites of passage are practiced, the liminal phase underlies very specific rituals and rules. In this in-between state the individual is exposed to an often frightening uncertainty. He is cut off from the past and a new identity is not defined yet. Therefore this phase is extremely vulnerable.

I highlight the vulnerability of refugees during their arrival in a new country and society and point out the necessity of assisting the individuals in this phase. EXIT is meant to serve this purpose, establishing rituals and giving space and opportunity for expression, reflection

and integration.

Judith Lewis Herman says in *Trauma and Recovery* (1992) that one of the most important treatments for people suffering from trauma and PTSD is group therapy. But the factors that allow a group to function and not collapse can be very demanding for the same reasons that group therapy is so important. The most challenging symptoms are lack of trust in other people, withdrawal, depression, low presence, distorted identity and no sense of time. All these symptoms make it difficult for the trauma survivors to connect. Arriving in a new country brings up anxieties of the unknown and therefore causes regression, which can either be malign or benign leading to a new beginning (Balint, 1968). "Perhaps this is the time when playing, for the second time in an immigrant's life, has the utmost importance, because once more he has to be able to play in order to create a new 'bicultural self'" (Sengun, 2001, p.71). The arts create a bridge between the participants—they connect and engage through "the third"—the arts.

EXIT is a short term, component-based group intervention that requires active participation and integrates interpersonal, cognitive and behavior-oriented interventions. The target sample included boys between 15 and 18 years old who had recently come to the Arrival Centre (AC) for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). Many of the refugee boys had similar stories when they arrived. They did not know what countries they had travelled through. Many had been in containers or hidden under trucks for days and weeks. A research assistant working at AC invited all minors who arrived in certain periods (12 weeks in 2009, 8 weeks in 2010 and 13 weeks in 2011) to participate in the study. Only UASC boys were invited since at that time they far outnumbered UASC girls, and boys had been the least studied. Due to the costs of translation and screening instrument testing, only the six largest language groups were selected (Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Somali, Sorani and Pashto), representing approximately 50% of the total number of asylum-seeking UASC in Norway at the time (2008–2010). To be eligible for the study, the youth had to be willing to stay at the AC for 6 weeks.

A total of 71 boys participated in the EXIT group. On arrival 40% had enough post-traumatic stress symptoms to qualify for PTSD (Vervliet et al., 2014). Over a period of two and a half years, the EXIT group showed a decrease in post-traumatic stress, anxiety and depression. In addition, their quality of life increased and they became more optimistic about the future (Meyer DeMott, et.al., 2017).

The purpose of EXIT was to give the participants skills for coping with the normal symptoms of stress: sleeplessness, headaches, lack of concentration, irritability, and withdrawal. The workshop consisted of 10 twice-weekly sessions, each lasting 1.5 hours. The first five sessions focused on:

1. Welcome dance: leading and following each other's movements. A movement from an activity you like.

2. Imagining and creating a safe landscape.

3. Future projection: what will you be doing 5 years from today? Move from one end of the room (here and now) to the other end (5 years ahead in time).

4. Finding your inner resource animal. Find its movements and sounds. Dance the animal's dance and have the rest of the group mirror the movements and sounds.

5. Hello and goodbye ritual: Five new participants begin and five leave. The same structure is repeated in sessions 6–10. We called it the "train model" – five new participants come on board and five participants get off at session 5. This helped to prepare participants for the many beginnings and endings they will experience as asylum seekers.

In EXIT the point of reference is everything that is usually done during the day, all the daily rituals. We promoted more awareness of these daily rituals: how do you get up in the morn-

ing and how do you go to bed–in other words, how do you start and end the day? Routines are rituals that can provide safety and become something predictable in an otherwise unpredictable situation. They can also become a container for pain. Rituals may be divided into four phases: preparation or warming up, action, closure, and a reflection/harvesting phase. Each individual has his own rhythm.

The intervention of EXIT functioned as a toolkit for life while the refugees were in the process of applying for asylum and adjusting to a new culture. The activities gave meaning while waiting.

Some EXIT exercises generate playfulness and a lot of laughter which is instrumental for the success of the intervention. Winnicott states that when children start playing again after a traumatic experience, it means they have bounced back. They use their senses to navigate their way back to their childhood. Play is a form of communication; it is relational and can imply trust. It is also about producing, shaping and transforming something. This activity relates to using imagination and creativity that ultimately can enhance their identity and increase their "range of play."

The EXIT therapist has a psycho-educational approach, teaching the participants to help themselves, to reconnect with their identities before captivity and focus on their resources for survival. It is essential that participants be and feel respected and accepted, not once, not twice, but all the time. The groups can function as a reception ritual. This is community art, designed with a repetitive beginning and end. Creating predictability within the unpredictable is essential.

It is important that the facilitator senses the "group body" and asks: "Is this body breathing, is there enough movement and energy, is this body alive and if not–what will it take?"

The EXIT manual is resource-oriented and does not focus on the trauma story. There are

always two facilitators. The challenge is to keep the structure. The group stays in the circle for the whole session. Every group starts with calming and stress-releasing exercises. These movements help ground the facilitators and participants. A lot of mirroring takes place. The mirroring helps the participants to engage, be present and connect. The energy barometer is carried out at the beginning and end of each session. The participants place themselves on a scale from 1 – 10 on the floor according to how much energy they have in the present moment. The participants become aware of how their energy changes during the session.

Imagination is the bridge from the internal to the external world (Winnicott, 1971). In a healthy person, this relationship between inner and outer world, between fantasy and imagination, is a dialectical one, constantly moving. After trauma, the relationship is often deadlocked. The "play space" is the "transitional space" and gives the survivor of trauma the opportunity to get "unlocked" and free.

NOTE: EGS has since 2016 offered a certificate program in Global Health and Peacebuilding at Campus Malta. EXIT training is part of the 10-study point program. Participants come from all over the world. If they want to become an EXIT group leader, they carry out an EXIT group (10 sessions) when they return home and receive supervision on Skype. Today EXIT is offered to many new target groups: homeless, mentally ill, health workers and in schools.

Groups have been carried out in Europe, Africa, North, Central and South America.

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At the Edge of Wonder

Sally Atkins

In contemplating my experience of teaching and learning at the European Graduate School for the past 20 years and how this experience has shaped my thinking and practice of expressive arts, I recall my first year at EGS in 2000. I came as an Academic Fellow from Appalachian State University and subsequently joined EGS as a Core Faculty Member that year. I came with many questions: Can I teach in such a way as to make my ideas clear and uncluttered, especially to those for whom English is not their native tongue? Is this a community to which I can bring all of who I am, a Southern Appalachian mountain woman, a North American psychologist, psychotherapist, and educator? Is this a community of learners strong enough to hold and prize all the inevitable differences in values, attitudes, languages, cultures, and academic disciplines inherent in an international university. In these 20 years, I have found EGS to be such a place again and again. I continue to be inspired by my students and colleagues from all over the world. I respect and value greatly the courage, intelligence, imagination and openheartedness that we experience together.

I am a person of place, and I have come to love this mountain valley and the high peaks surrounding it just as I love the old, gentle mountains of my homeland. I believe that the landscape we inhabit also inhabits our psyche:

Here this mountain valley holds me
In a bowl of story, stirred
In a cauldron of green glacier melt.

Voices of trees, slow rhythms
Of stones, sky blood red before sun
Spills golden down the high peaks.

Here I know languages beyond words
Faces no longer strangers but lovers
Of poetry, painting, singing, moving.

All around me words and images
Poems and songs like shooting stars
Are dropping into the net of thought.

Reflecting on these 20 years, I think about all of the ideas we have explored and how our theory making in expressive arts continues to grow out of our shared practice and experimentation together. Some of the themes that have emerged most strongly for me are 1) poiesis, sympoiesis, and ecopoiesis, 2) artists in community, 3) art making as inquiry, and 4) presence and process in our work at the edge of wonder. Many of these ideas have inspired my writing in books and journal articles, and many continue to inspire my thinking about therapy, education, art, and life (e.g. Atkins & Snyder, 2018; Atkins, 2017; Eberhart & Atkins, 2014; Atkins, 2013).

Poiesis, Sympoiesis, and Ecopoiesis

When I first heard and read Stephen K. Levine's ideas about *poiesis* (1997), I felt I was for

the first time able to name what I experienced as a deep truth about a way of knowing and becoming in the world. Levine has deepened and elaborated this concept and its central importance for our field over many years, most recently in *Philosophy of Expressive Arts Therapy: Poiesis and the Therapeutic Imagination* (2019). This basic human activity of knowing by creating, shaping in response to what is given to us in the world, remains for me a fundamental idea for my understanding of expressive arts and life.

I first came across the term *sympoiesis* in *Staying With the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2018) by the philosopher of consciousness, Donna Haraway. Haraway uses the term sympoiesis to describe the reality of the creative process as communal rather than individual, thinking with, being with, creating with other planetary organisms. This is another way of speaking about the interrelationship of all beings in the world. Haraway posits that awareness and practice of sympoiesis is necessary for our survival, and indeed, the times in which we are living now suggest this idea as a moral imperative. Sympoiesis is required for us to stay with the trouble of living, creating, and dying together on this damaged planet.

Ecopoiesis: Imagining the Earth (2009) was the theme of Volume XI of the POIESIS journal. This theme inspired many writers, including me, to think more broadly about the earth, the body, nature, ecology, and our ways of thinking, inviting us to consider how we might reconceive ourselves as part the ongoing ecopoietic system of the world and how we might walk more gracefully on the earth. From lectures, writings, and discussions on these topics, and equally from my own personal experience and heritage, grew a need to share my own perspective on a nature-centered approach to expressive arts, which I define as cultivating an aesthetic response to the earth, while realizing that even in this phrase, my language is one of separation from the earth (Atkins & Snyder, 2018)

Artists in Community

The complicated idea of artists in community has been an ongoing thread in my thinking

throughout my professional career. I believe that, like the famous Black Mountain College, EGS has been one of the most innovative and fascinating experiments in the history of academic community centered in the arts (Atkins, 2017).

Paolo Knill says that EGS is first of all a learning community. In such a community, common works can hold differences together, and our common work is based upon the centrality of the arts (Knill, 2004). At EGS, I have found that we share a mutual sense of purpose and appreciation grounded in embodied, sensuous experience that transcends ideological, disciplinary, and cultural differences.

What has touched me most deeply about my experience of artists in community at EGS is that we seek a resonance between what we believe and how we live. I continue to experience EGS as one of the most exciting, challenging, and rewarding communities I have ever found, a community of scholars who honor beauty as that which brings us alive and who try to live what it is we are teaching and learning.

Art Making As Inquiry

According to Knill, true wisdom happens by constant research, by constant questioning of any canonized thing (Knill, 2004). Knill is passionate in his belief that we should always be pushing the boundaries of knowledge, experimenting with both ideas and methods. The expressive arts method of decentering in a professional session is an example of art making as inquiry in addressing individual and collective challenges and furthering ongoing learning (Eberhart & Knill (2009).

An exciting aspect of expressive arts work for me in recent years is the emphasis on arts-based research as a formal category of research methodology (e.g. Knowles & Cole, 2008; McNiff, 2013; Leavy, 2018). My doctoral students have led the way, challenging me to follow them into practicing art making as inquiry. They have taught me how the arts can not only

create and present information in beautiful and touching ways, but also can offer a depth of analysis and understanding of that research data. I use the word "data" here with acknowledgment of the origins of its meaning as *gift* and a recognition that the art we create and share together is a precious gift.

Our students are doing amazing expressive arts-based work and research projects in the world. Among my recent doctoral students are several examples. One is working to develop and examine an arts-based curriculum to help students embrace diversity in the classroom. Another is training and practicing education for peace builders who work throughout the world in areas of conflict. Still another has reported on her work to train teachers to make classrooms into places of healing for children in disaster areas around the world. Another is integrating Indian philosophy and practice with expressive arts in her international work based in Southern India. Still another is using expressive arts work with digital media to help persons with Asperger's Spectrum Disorder. Another is integrating expressive arts with an understanding of neuroscience and recognition of the importance of cultural as well as individual sensitivity in the work.

Presence, Process, and Cultivating a Sense of Wonder

When Herbert Eberhart and I published *Presence and Process in Expressive Arts Work* (2014), at the suggestion of Paolo Knill who wrote the Foreword, we chose *At the Edge of Wonder* as the subtitle. This theme reflects an idea of major importance to me as I consider what our work in expressive arts is really about. Practicing personal presence and honoring the ongoing process of unfolding can lead us to the edge of wonder. According to Herman Melville (1852), no great effect from outside of us is created within ourselves, unless an interior, responding wonder comes to meet it. I believe that much of what we teach and live is about cultivating the interior responding wonder that Melville speaks about.

This capacity to respond to our experience of the world, especially our experience of

beauty, is what we mean when we speak of aesthetic response and responsibility. This is our conception of beauty as that which takes our breath away, that which brings us alive. I believe that in each of our classes, in each of our differing ways of teaching, we are cultivating the capacity of aesthetic responding, the capacity to experience, even in these challenging times, our interior responding wonder.

Summary

These themes are among the many ideas, inspirations and questions that continue to be sparked by my experiences at EGS. This inspiration keeps me alive and constantly at the edge of wonder. In *Drinking from the River of Light: The Life of Expression*, philosopher Mark Nepo (2019) says that the purpose of all of the arts is "make life real" (p.9), to know who we are beyond the surface markers of appearance, titles, or the work we do, and to experience ourselves in relationship to all other beings in the world. I believe that in all of our work at EGS we are making our lives real.

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Reconciliation Through Working with the Expressive Arts

Margo Fuchs Knill

From the series, *Horizonte*, by Brigitte Wanzenried, mixed media on wood, 17cm x 17cm.

Awaiting

I am not this busy day you think
I am not this fleeting hour
gone by the wind.

I am root and trunk
branches and the falling leaves
I come from where you go.

I lean against your weeping tree
with a trembling voice.

I am grasped by what I cannot grasp
longing to be in tune
with what is out of tune
longing to be moon's companion
on her search for the light.

We cannot avoid mistakes, we have to live with challenges, humans glide back and forth on the health-sickness continuum. Nobody is spared (Domin, 1999).

> Some people are able to dress sadness in beauty, to find a breath of inspiration in loss and abandonment, and to crystallize tears of despair. Who would not want to join them, to make the best of life, too short-lived anyway. Who would not want to be able to say yes, I created a trace–lighting up as a shooting star.
>
> (Fuchs Knill and Atkins, 2020)

Through the expressive arts, we can give a hand to reconcile. The act of decentering through art-making (Eberhart and Knill, 2010) offers a counter-weight against what weighs us down, overwhelms, or overrides our lives as a "cloud," as Paolo Knill, the founding rector of EGS, would say.

Reconciliation is happening in the minds and hearts of each of us. I am speaking of an ability to come to terms with the past, move forward with a sense of being at peace, building on what happened with a generous sense. Reconciliation enters the expressive arts work in multiple ways:

Reconciliation through arts-based decentering

Declaration of "I need help"

We cannot do the work unless a person declares that he/she needs help. Often a battle precedes that step–should I go to therapy, or not? Do I really need it and what for? Once a person knocks at the door, an internal process has already taken place, a first act of reconcili-

ation. The person was able to make a decision as he/she came to terms with the dire straits situation he/she is in. This is already a therapeutic step that the client achieved–accepting that it is, and what is.

What else

When we initiate in a session the alternative world experience (Knill, 2005) and engage in a work of art, the thinking mode shifts. Our ordinary reality of daily life is easily dominated by judgmental thinking that can be helpful and also hurtful. The artistic process demands from us another kind of thinking. During the shaping process, we welcome what is becoming without taking sides, without beautifying one side and worsening the other side. We aim to widen the perspective. This can be done by asking the client, "What else?", and working in "takes" to allow multiple views and meanings. The "but" is replaced with an inclusive "And what else?" (Fuchs Knill and Atkins, 2020). Through committed artistic shaping and reshaping under professional guidance and intervention, reconciliation can happen. The client might be in a blaming mode, or feeling like a victim of what happened to him. Through becoming an artistic person by working with the expressive arts, the client emancipates. He /she gets in charge of his or her acts–at least in the studio during the phase of decentering. These moments of anticipation, awaiting, and artistic achievements are fulfilling. The client enables himself as an expressive artist. The artistic process is indeed also struggle, yet manageable. Each stroke on the canvas, each word on a piece of paper is part of a decision process, of coming to terms with the challenge. What seems impossible outside of a session becomes a success within a session. The client is moving beyond the sense of a "dead end," and gains a sense of moving forward, at first on the paper, on the dance floor, or on the stage.

Mercy

It is mercy
when we can arrive
when we can leave
in the right moment
before the world loses its scent
before friendship becomes a nuisance
before the words trip us up

I have this wish
to wander together through the

snow-covered landscape
without catching a cold
I have this wish
to say that we did us good

and I hold on to it

For B.

The ultimate reconciliation

The biggest challenge is to reconcile with the ultimate–death. We can hopefully learn from people who passed away and left for us a message–like Oliver Sacks who wrote a series of essays during the last few months of his

life. They are published under the title, *Gratitude.* He speaks about completing a life and coming to terms with his own death (Sacks, 2015):

> I cannot pretend I am without fear. But my predominant feeling is one of gratitude. I have loved and been loved; I have been given much and I have given something in return; I have read and travelled and thought and written. I have had an intercourse with the world, the special intercourse of writers and readers. Above all, I have been a sentient being, a thinking animal, on this beautiful planet, and that in itself has been an enormous privilege and adventure.

Hilde Domin (1992) speaks of a lesson we receive from the people who passed away. They teach us something about ourselves. Yet these lessons on the deathbed cannot be repeated, and we, as we move on with our busy lives, unfortunately forget them.

I want to listen, again and again, to honor and pay respect to the people who passed away. My closest Swiss friend, artist and esteemed EGS faculty member Brigitte Wanzenried, sadly passed away one year ago. Her last essays were written from a place of being at peace with her destiny. They speak of gratitude, friendship, the miraculous and love. The following is an excerpt from the essay titled, "Friendship." She wrote it two weeks before she passed away:

> ...And then it's about friendship with myself, with everything that is and with everything that accompanies me, right now: to befriend with everything. I start by perceiving what is...be it despair, be it serenity, be it what it is. Then of course

> I rate it, I want it or maybe I don't…I go back and forth, back and forth until I get to where I can say yes: That's the way it is now. I understand myself. I make friends with it. Or not yet? Back and forth: it is what it is. Finally here…and finally yes. Then I can go to the people, each of them, look at them with different eyes, through the eyes of friendship…I enter a field beyond right and wrong. I am a part. I take part.
>
> (translated by M. Fuchs Knill)

When we face our mortality, and admit that any day can be the last one, we also receive a reconciling force as such. Who would not want to die in peace? The older we get, the more we are faced with the passing away of family members, relatives and close friends, the more I want to take this reconciling call seriously: do what you can, do it well, as if this would be the last chance. Sometimes I might experience it as another unwelcomed pressure, other times I might gain energy from this knowing and "enter a field beyond right and wrong,'' walking through the world with "eyes of friendship" (B. Wanzenried, 2019).

Poetry as a reconciling force

Good intentions, such as "living every day as if it would be the last one" are rarely consistently feasible. We might set ourselves high or unrealistic intentions and are disappointed when we do not achieve what we have planned. Poetry can transform intentions into meaningful core statements. Through poetry, we can call for the longed for, call for courage, we can plea and pray. Indeed we cannot expect a fulfillment in a literal sense. Yet evocative writing changes our perception and perspective. Our looking backwards transforms into a looking around and forward. By working with poetry in expressive arts, we can let the evocative power of words work for us to assist us in the reconciliation process.

Using the phrase, "from now on" (Fuchs Knill and Atkins, 2020) conjures naturally a fur-

ther, a forward move. In my professional work, I sometimes invite the client to use this phrase repeatedly, then develop a "from now on" poem. Not that we wouldn't look back into an elusive past, yet through the "from now on" we look from the present moment, swing back and forth, and perturb the chronological sense of time. The poetry book, *From Now On: Poems of Encouragement*, documents a writing practice until the thoughts have no longer black edges, until the alphabet rearranges and becomes weightless (Fuchs Knill, 2019). "From now on" connects to an awaiting, pretends that something is already dissolved, and conjures proactive imagery.

From now on

I allow my legs
to make my walk slow.
From now on
I undo my time–
each minute
stills my thirst
for life.

We give and take
we rise and fall
we receive
the merciful day.

From now on
no more worries that blind
the view to the future.
From now on
my heart is in bloom.

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Aftermath
Stephen K. Levine

Out of the ashes we come,
memory pulling us back.
Is it blasphemous to go on?

How to hold it all,
this bag of life and death,
and still go forward?

Where is the lightness,
the acrobats' jump?
Do they forget the earth
Or only regret it?

O go, leap upwards!

We applaud wildly,
our lashes beating time
    like Lazarus,
come out of the grave,
    bursting with joy.

Afterparty
Ellen G. Levine

It's Party Time!!

Streaking across the floor
Strutting and Bopping and Hip-Hopping

I wind around the room with my peeps

Bigs and Littles
All sizes and shapes

Tapping/Twirling
Rapping/Whirling

Alive

We're Alive
We're Alive and we're free

Alive

Together and Free

Party On!!