



## **The Handbook . . . A Personal Account By Courtenay Young**

I was approached by Halko & Gustl in the late summer of 2009, saying they wanted someone to help them with the English language version of the German: *Handbuch der Körperpsychotherapie* (which had been published by Schattauer in 2006). I had been very enthusiastic about a potential English-language version (not being able to read German) and so I agreed. Little did I know how much this task would 'absorb' itself into my life.

I was, of course, very familiar with the "field" of body psychotherapy, and twenty years earlier had helped David Boadella write and publish his book: *Lifestreams: An Introduction to Biosynthesis*. I had also already had various articles published in professional journals; my own (1st) book, *Help Yourself Towards Mental Health* (Karnac, 2010) was due to come out in the next year, and I was already editing journal articles for the *International Journal of Psychotherapy*, and the Taylor & Francis journal, *Body, Movement & Dance in Psychotherapy*. All this was as a side-line to my clinical practice as a counsellor and psychotherapist within the NHS in Scotland and my private clinical practice in Edinburgh & the Scottish Borders. These were my only qualifications: the task was fairly daunting and I was very touched and honored to be asked.

We worked out a "letter of understanding" in September 2009 and then I started in on the task. About half of the original chapters were written in English; the other half originally in German. So, for the new English-language volume, we had to translate all the (originally) German articles into English, and we also had to 'up-date' all the original English articles (already written about 6 years previously); and then create a degree of homogeneity between the two types of articles. We also looked at some of the original articles that didn't seem to work so well and decided to change the balance to suit a new English-American edition. We thus decided to commission a number of new chapters (some to replace some of the old chapters; and some to cover some new topics).

The cost of translating the German articles into English was carried by the two main Editors, Halko Weiss and Gustl Marlock, with some considerable help from EABP and the DGK, I believe. I just got the results from a

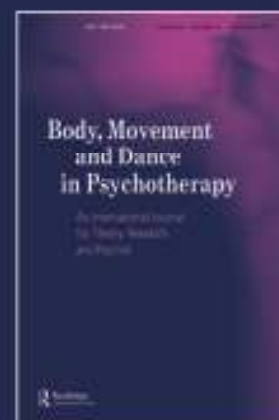
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number of different translators, with different degrees of accuracy, punctuation and syntax. The original articles had all been quite well-edited for content, but not necessarily for style, syntax or any degree of homogeneity. I therefore saw something of this as my role for this new volume.

# Eventually, holding it in my hands, weighing slightly more than a new-born baby, I had a mild epiphany: a sense of creation and achievement.

Some of the chapter's authors complained about any corrections to their style, or about any suggestions for additional input, references, etc. Most of the authors were very grateful. I (we) had to bear the rough with the smooth.

There were a few other problems with "unlocking" the PDF of the German book, so that I could copy the references; there were some issues about chapters originally written by people (colleagues) who had sadly since passed away; some of the (original) German chapters had been translated and some hadn't, so the continuity was incomplete. I had to 'invent' a massive spreadsheet with all the information, e-mail addresses, dates of contacts and updates on it; later adding word-count, and chapter revisions, etc. We also had to 'decide' upon English or American spellings and conventions, and various other details.

I will skip somewhat lightly over the next three years of slogging away, and also of stopping slogging, and not being able to bear to start up again for several months: much depended on how people responded to my overtures and also to the style of editing. Luckily, at this point, we didn't have a contract with a publisher and therefore there was no specific deadline. We managed to meet at some of the EABP and other B-P conferences and had a few Skype "conference calls" so as to keep in touch.

By this time, we had also noted some complications with the various translations and the re-shaping of some of the German

texts into readable English. So, Michael Soth was invited as a fourth editor, as he is very fluent in both languages. He became a useful "bridge", as well as contributing a couple of the 'new' chapters, nicely filling in some of the 'holes' in the now much-wider matrix.

One person, whom we also wanted to be represented in the book, felt a little daunted by what we wanted so 'invited in' a couple more authors for that particular topic. Thus, the whole 'mix' got richer. I remembered meeting a couple of other potential new authors at some of the various (EABP, ISC & USABP) international conferences I have attended. I checked this out with Halko & Gustl and we invited a couple of new chapters from them. Another colleague (who I had trained with many years ago) had written a couple of good articles on one topic, which hadn't been very well covered previously, and so was invited to write a chapter there. Another person, well-known to Halko & Gustl, was invited to cover a topic not well covered in the German edition, and 'suggested' a couple of his/her colleagues, who stepped in and did a great job. We were getting close to a "full house". (I hope you notice how diplomatic and circumspect I am being: no names; no complications!)

As the work progressed, we had also started to look at potential publishers. There were several possibilities in the UK and in the USA. We also considered self-publishing briefly, but decided against this, as we wanted the distribution facilities of and (let us own it) the kudos of being with a

commercial publisher. We approached one (very major) publisher who had published some body psychotherapy material before, and they said essentially, "Yes, but ... " - they were enthusiastic, and already had a series of "Handbooks", but these were all around the 150,000 word limit and we were already at more than twice that. So, we briefly considered splitting it into two volumes but eventually decided to look elsewhere.

In contacting other publishers, I had discovered a "format" of information that publishers seemed to want and I believe this helped immensely: publishers do not want to see the actual book or the final text. At most, they want to see only one or two chapters. But what they really want to know is: what it is about; who is it by; what have these people published before; who is it for; what is the market like and how big is it; what other (similar) books are out there; how can we help to sell it; etc. It all felt a little bit like, how can they make money out of us, but after all, that is (literally) their 'business'. In fairness, by this time, we were also hoping to make a little money ourselves.

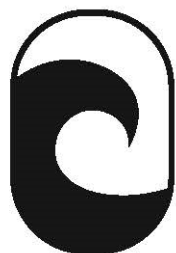
Having re-jigged our presentation, we then approached North Atlantic Books, who were definitely next on our list of possible publishers, and who had also recently published some (more) body psychotherapy books, and they said "Yes! Please!" I have to say there was (not only) a great sense of relief, and then an increasingly fantastic and very supportive relationship thereafter.

There were a few minor haggles with getting the contract fully signed, sealed and

delivered with a few delays from our side and some complications with USA tax "stuff". But, by about September 2013, we were all 'signed up' and now with a deadline. OMG! Back to work!

My 2014 "summer holiday" in a rural retreat in France (without e-mails and with very little money) was spent "finalizing" about 12-15 chapters then driving to the next village (where there was a cafe with internet) and up-loading what I had done into something that we had discovered that made a world of difference in our communications: Dropbox! With all the various versions of more than 90 chapters being passed around, this internet facility was like having a magic filing cabinet. Some of the chapters / sections were already too big to be sent as an internet e-mail attachment. How did we determine which was the latest version; and how did we all have access; and how did the publisher get all the material that we wanted to communicate? Dropbox!

I have to mention here that I live in Scotland, and travel quite a lot, mainly in Europe; Gustl lives in Germany (but was also travelling extensively, and was also caring for an aged relative); Michael lives in Oxford, with a busy teaching and client schedule, and so he also travels often; and Halko is a veritable jet-setter, teaching Hakomi in Australia & New Zealand, the United States, Germany, Spain, and heaven-knows-where-else. Many of his communications were from stopovers in international airports. Thank heavens for WiFi! In addition, nearly all our authors lived mainly in UK, Germany, USA and Australia. This whole task would have been



# North Atlantic Books

almost impossible with paper manuscripts and traditional postal services. However, there are also a few downsides to electronic communication: e-mail addresses sometimes get changed without notice; computers go down; some software – especially concerning graphics – is just not good enough; and address books sometimes get hacked.

Eventually, sometime in September 2014, everything was in. This was a couple of months later than intended. Our deadline had been July 2014, for publication in February 2015. Now it was for a later publication date. We then decided what we liked best from various cover formats. The next stage was the copy-editing process. Everything that we had sent to NAB (in MS Word .doc format) had to be reformatted according to their “in-house styles” and checked over by their copy editor; and then had to be re-checked by me! So, we are talking reading all the half-a million words all over again.

There were some minor difficulties agreeing referencing formats, and textual styles and fonts, etc., and I got a little frustrated when some of the changes I was making seemed to be being ignored, but eventually everything got sorted out reasonably well.

Then we moved to the “proof copy” stage, closer to what it would look like eventually. Up to this point, we had a “basically agreed” text, with all the various authors, dating from about a year earlier, which had then been submitted to the publishers. However, with some of the later editing and with different people working on the text, it was now time to do a final re-check with all the authors.

Many were very happy, ecstatic even; though, inevitably, some of them wanted some additional changes; and some authors didn't reply in the short time that was now available; and some . . . but there I go again – if people don't read their e-mails . . . aaarrggghhh!

Besides the authors and other editors, I also asked a couple of other people (psychology student interns supplied by Jacqueline Carleton) to read through sections of the whole text again and give a relative outsider's view.

The publication date was now set for 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015. All this came together into a final set of “proofs”. The name index and subject index was done (I suspect semi-automatically), and in just a few weeks the book had been printed and advance copies were now available. And six years had passed just like that!

Whether we succeeded, or whether we failed, or probably something in between time and sales will tell. The original German edition sold more than 3,000 copies and there is now a 2<sup>nd</sup> German edition in progress, more closely based on this English-American edition. Eventually, holding it in my hands, weighing slightly more than a new-born baby, I had a mild epiphany: a sense of creation and achievement.

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