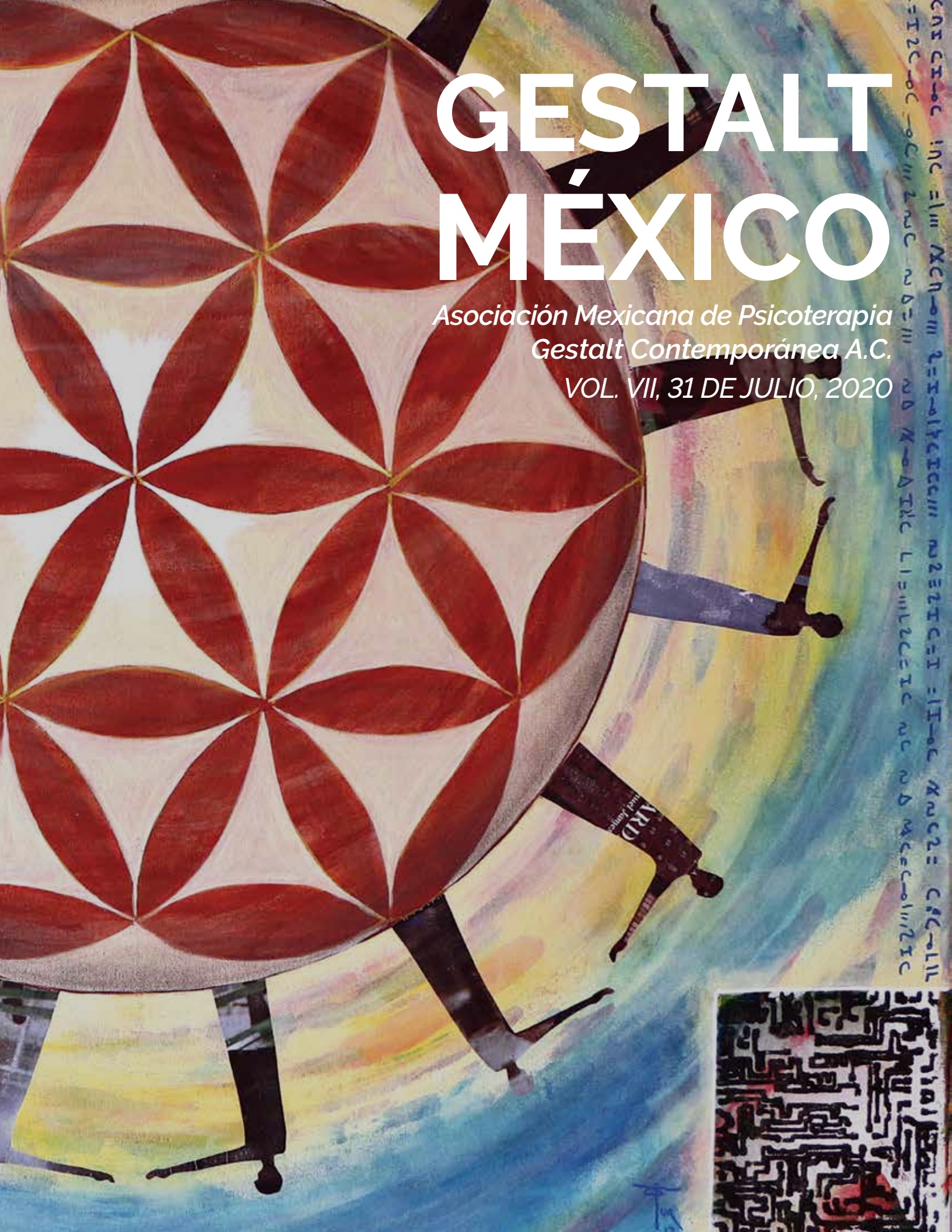


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FREE PIZZA

HEATHER ANNE KEYES

I was wondering how I was going to close this... after having spent more than a year of my life bringing it to life. I have done absolutely everything that was in my power for you all, and I almost don't know what more I have to give.

All I think I know at this point is that I have a story I would like to tell you. It's a story that I wanted to tell at the beginning of this week, a story that explains why I said that there were people who want me or us or female us killed for being here and for doing what we do. It is a bit of a "downer" but it is what I have and I would like to tell you my story if you will indulge me.

So it was a normal day in Durango, and the morning got long and lunchtime was creeping up on us. I asked the kids if they would be ok with having a pizza (cheers).

So I got online and ordered the pizza.

The one with the 30 minute or free guarantee.

Yup.

That one.

30 min come and go.

No pizza.

More than an hour goes by.

No pizza.

Finally, a motorcycle pulls up.

"meep meep". He honks.

I open the door

I take the pizza.

I close the door.

Put the stone cold pizza down on the table by my kids.

Banging on the door.

"Aren't you gonna pay for it?!"

"no. it took over an hour for it to get here. Don't worry, they don't take it out of the delivery pay."

I close the door.

Banging on the door.

Shit.

"Hey bitch, if you can't afford to feed your family, don't order food..."

Shit.

I close the door.

I feel the blood drain from my body.

I recognize the voice. It's the same guy who

brought me a cold pizza almost 2 years prior – the only other time I've used the guarantee. He said almost the exact same thing then.

But this time he called me a bitch. This time he's angry.

Shit.

And this time, my mind flashes to one of my best friends' best friends – murdered in her home in Mexico City the week before. To the women who have been raped and murdered for ignoring a catcall, for slighting a man's comment, for "making him angry".

Should I just give him the money?

SHOULD

I

JUST

GIVE

HIM

WHAT

HE

WANTS?

Fuck. No.

He revs and drives off.

But the way he looked at me. I've been looked at like that before.

It's the look of someone who not only wants to see me dead but full on feels they have a right to take my life right then and there.

Over a pizza

In front of my kids.

My 10 year old asks why he was so angry.

Because, I said, feeling like I was about to say something important

"people don't always like it when we stand up for our rights".

And so pizza became about rights and justice and fairness and ethics.

I pick up the phone to call his manager.

The illusion of safety in authority.

The manager laughs, and takes his side.

I hang up.

There are now two people whose jobs could depend on how deeply wrong what they are doing is seen to be by their boss's boss.

And losing those jobs will make them angry.

It's independence day in Mexico.

There will be drinking. There will be gunfire.

And there is now an angry man



With a motorcycle
 Who knows where I live
 Who wanted me dead 5 min ago.
 And who may lose his job
 Over a pizza.
 I breathe deep. I get calm.
 Not angry
 That deep calm that is even worse.
 I have taken a stand. And it's worth it to me. And
 I will not move from there.
 I have rights, I have a voice, I will not be intimi-
 dated, I will not back down. I will close my door
 in your face, I will hold my own space and I will
 show my children the difference between rage
 and outrage.
 The calls continue.
 Shit.
 For days.
 From the pizza place to my cellphone.
 I ignore them. I block the number.
 I see them on the call log anyhow.
 And then one day, there is a knock on the door.
 Shit.
 It's the delivery guy.
 Fuck.
 And his boss.
 And the regional general manager.
 And they brought free pizza.
 Because I was right.
 Because I had a right.
 Because I didn't just give him what he wanted,
 but had no right to take from me.
 So the point of all this, is that standing up for
 principles, for ethics, for justice and for rights of
 all kinds is a daily thing. And it can be a life and
 death daily thing. But at this point in my life, I can't
 not do it. Perhaps in my own way, maybe with
 less spraypaint than some, through more work-
 shops than others... But my ethics and my val-
 ues and my principles at this point in my life are
 who I am. They ARE how I live. And that means
 that they might one day also be a part of how I
 die – especially in a society like Mexico of 2020
 where women and our voices are silenced in a
 desperate cry to get things back “under control”
 in a return to collective values *that I was never a*
part of. Where our bodies are taken and used and
 disposed of and our personhood unconceived –
 unless the conception in question is that of an
 unborn in which case it becomes the point of our
 person in the world to carry them to life.
 So yes, this is the dark part of the closing
 address of the Habitat 2020 conference in pic-
 turesque La Paz, Baja Sur, Mexico... Where we
 have spent 5 glorious days between beaches
 and horses and whales, with people from 6 dif-
 ferent countries joining in at least 4 main lan-
 guages, where we have felt free and safe and
 protected and creative.

And I do ask that everyone feel into their feet,
 breathe into their deepest self, re live and feel
 the contact on their skin from the hands and
 tears and the shaking laughter of everyone
 else... and there are tears and hugging and
 thanks and laughter as we say goodbye and
 take it all in.



FREE PIZZA II

HEATHER ANNE KEYES

aka why I can't close a conference on a happy note/ apply positive psychology in my daily life.

Habitat 2020 has nearly come to a close – and as I consider what final words I would like to offer the international crowd that has gathered to do beautiful, fun, deep, connecting Gestalt work over the past 5 days amid carnival floats, glorious sunsets and peaceful breezes... I talk about death by motorcycle assassins, about fear, about indignation, about women murdered in their homes, about anger, ethics and principles and about being looked at by someone who would like me to die over a pizza.

What is wrong with me? Why – people ask – am I so angry? They tell me that it makes them sad that I was so solemn, so serious, in few words: a downer.

Well, because polarities. To hold a vision of balancing and reconnecting people with each other all across the world, with nature, with creative processes and growth, I must come from the depths of entropy where darkness and carnage and terror make the light so necessary. So necessary that I spend more than a year of my life creating it, caring for it, holding it, and making sure that it survives. And when it finally comes into being, and can be felt and tasted and breathed in, I cannot help be in contact with where it all came from, and so I give my speech – not from where we are, but from whence we came and to whence we will return. The “now and next”, if you will, the “field under the field”, the reality under the temporary, passing display of peace and opulence and happiness we rented and shared and revelled in for a few days.

And because I am an existentialist, a realist, a survivor – I am allergic to growth mindset positive psychology and flowey-white-garbed ceremonies. Life is short and beautiful and painful and then we die. We all die. There is pain and grief and trauma that no amount of kumbaya by the firepit will wipe away. And not everything is possible – there are such deep rooted systemic factors that the neocapitalist individualist self-enslavement model of “just work hard enough and you can achieve anything” is a crock I cannot buy into. I won't recite abundance mantras while dealing with spreadsheets full of negative numbers I am responsible for because it won't make a difference in the world. We have limits and limitations and fantasy cannot always overcome them all. All of this is also a reason I don't serve alcohol at AMPG events – I like to keep the edge on vs letting a few drinks take it off – to remember that we are strangers meeting for a brief time, rather than having a social solvent create a sense of ecstatic interpersonal communion and brotherly love beyond borders.

I prefer the starkness of zen, the deep appreciation of the perfection in what is – the space for process and authentic movement which sometime stumbles in its own body rather than a sleek choreography where we all play a perfect role.

I hold and love the imperfect human beings we all are though – the mortal, dying human beings we all are, the fools and the angry, arrogant, tense, over the top, “we” who take ourselves too seriously as we create things to fill a three hour space in people's lives which is just as absurd as any other three hours they could live anywhere else.

So... was what I gave as good as any other thing I could have offered? Perhaps. If you look at the whole – not just the cutting words. Look at the cutting words contained by a temporary community, by a gorgeous landscape of desert and sea, of sunset and sunrise, look at the eyes that start to seek connection as my harsh words remind us of the wounds that we come from and that any of us could experience again soon. We look for connection in the face of uncertainty, connection in the face of social, societal, gendered, sexed and nationalized trauma. We look to each other when we are scared and we hold each other safe. Could we appreciate each other as deeply if we lost sight of our fragility,



if we stepped outside of the fleeting sense of security that being at a gated hilltop resort can offer? Maybe. But I don't know. So perhaps I was trying to scare us together for a moment, to unite "us" as a community vs a scary "other" with different or lesser morals and values. Or maybe I was just proud of what I had managed to create in the face of adversity, just as I was proud of having discovered the principle of free pizza – the principle of being deserving, dignified, honest, forthright, brave and ethical even when under threat, intimidation, siege and attack for wanting what I have a right to for myself – and for my children – and for my community... which I confess to believing in fiercely, in spite of my knowledge of our individual solitudes and absurdities.

And so again, I take up space with sharp words and barbed-wire thoughts. But it is really because of my belief in the paradoxical theory of change. We need to pay attention to what we ARE living, not in trying to become something else. We are off-kilter as a society, though in our essence, which we can return to in a second, we are already part of a greater eco-cosmos. We are already one with the whales and the horses and with each other. But we need to come into fuller awareness of how we are betraying our place and our system if we are to have realistic point of departure for meaningful change. We need to oppose, to push back and to rebel against what we have become. BUT first, we have to see it. We cannot deliberately affect that which is outside of our awareness and so in the foreseeable future, I will most likely continue to invite monsters and misfits and demons to all the elegant dinners I host. If we are lucky and the universe balances out though, there may just be enough free pizza for us all.

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