

Commentary

on Marjorie Huebner's review:

The Life and Teachings of Elsa Gindler.

By:

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I am writing to comment on the wonderful article that Marjorie Huebner wrote in the previous issue of this journal (Huebner, 2010; <http://rosenjournal.org/journal/4/5.pdf>). It was refreshing and inspiring to read the review and to learn what someone *not* in the Sensory Awareness Foundation has to say about Elsa Gindler. I was interested in the connections Marjorie found in what she researched and I loved the way she brought together so many quotes and thoughts and related them to Rosen work. I wish all Sensory Awareness practitioners could also read this review.

My other response to this review is my desire to inform everyone of something that I realize not many people know and I am happy to be able to share with the readers of the *Rosen Method International Journal*: Marion Rosen and Charlotte Selver did meet. They met two times. In fact there are video recordings of both of these meetings. One was an evening, May 3, 1992, in which we, the Somatic Psychology Program faculty at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), arranged to bring together Marion, Charlotte and Ilse Middendorf. I called them "the three grande dames of the somatics field."

This gathering happened because each of them was doing a workshop that very same weekend in the San Francisco Bay Area. (Marion was doing a weekend workshop at CIIS, Charlotte was also doing a CIIS workshop, and Ilse was giving her own workshop in Berkeley.) I had seriously studied with each of these amazing women; they were each my teachers, and I was upset that I could not attend each of their workshops. At a faculty meeting prior to this weekend I was moaning because I couldn't manage to be with each of them, and we decided to bring them together as a school event. I am the one who video taped that evening. I am sure the Berkeley Center of the Rosen School has a VHS copy of that precious event.

The other meeting between Marion and Charlotte was at the *1995 International Somatics Congress – The Living Body* conference in San Francisco, October 18-22. The presentation that time was Marion and Charlotte talking and Elizabeth Beringer was the moderator. I have a video of that presentation also, and I think the Berkeley Center has a copy of it as well. It was a wonderful coming together of two special elders in the somatics world.

There is another issue I feel I need to communicate to the Rosen community. I am hesitant to do so because it is a very confusing and upsetting point. I have just recently become aware of it myself while co-writing an article with two colleagues from Europe. The article was on the influence of Elsa Gindler on Wilhelm Reich and body psychotherapy throughout the world, and I of course wanted to include the influence that Gindler had on Marion Rosen's work through her teacher Lucy Heyer. I had always taken as gospel what Marion said about Lucy Heyer's influence from her studies with Gindler. I have actually stated that fact in several of my articles.

In this instance however, without clear details, dates, etc., my colleagues were not willing to accept my anecdotal comments as proof nor would they accept the statements about this that Elaine Mayland made in her book, and so we researched further. One of the authors is German and so he could go to references that I could not read. I must admit now that to this date, no one has been able to find any proof that Lucy Heyer studied with Elsa Gindler. I was shocked and after more than one year I am still, frankly, uncomfortable with this. Unfortunately the facts are leaning to the other side and consequently in our article I had to agree that we write: "...but, as Gindler never left Berlin, and Lucy Heyer never lived in Berlin, it seems to be very unlikely. It could be that she took part in courses that Gindler gave outside Berlin, e.g. on the island of Sylt in the North Sea, but there is no confirmation from autobiographical statements of Heyer, nor from people staying with her together in a Gindler class, nor from any written records" (Geuter, et al. 2010, Vol. 5, No. 1, Pp 59-73).

Geuter et al. also write that Lucy Heyer "...was the wife of psychotherapist Gustav Heyer, but separated from him in 1933. Consequently she did not follow Heyer to Berlin in 1939..." "From 1932 to 1945, Lucy Heyer practiced in Munich as a psychotherapist. After the war, she became known in Germany for a book on psychotherapy and breath training (Heyer-Grote, 1970)."

Even after the publication of our article we are still researching. In September of last year I received an email from one of my colleagues with whom I wrote the article. It said, "today I got mail from historian of psychoanalysis Regine Lockot who years ago had two long oral history interviews with Lucy Heyer-Grote. She has checked for us all her handwritten notes of the two interviews and wrote me that she found no mentioning of any training in Berlin or with Gindler" (email communication from Geuter, 2009).

It seems that we do have an upset here. In one way it is very frustrating that things we believed may not be true or that we can't put all the little pieces together neatly and clearly. The knowledge and the links, if we have them, certainly enrich and deepen our backgrounds and the field of work. And on the other hand, in my humble opinion, it really doesn't matter who did what in the past and exactly what connections we can or cannot make. I think it is wonderful that we are able to find correlations. It is mostly inspiring and exciting to me that some very fine teachers (in this case, women, coming from the same country), in doing their own work in their own individual ways and singular histories, found common tracks and voiced similar opinions and developed wonderful, deep, sensitive work to pass on to their students. Of course how could it *not* be similar? If we are working for the benefit and wholeness of the human being it is not a surprise to me that we would come up with similar ways of working. The importance to me is that the work was created and developed and that it is being passed on to others. And may it go out into the world in myriad ways!

References

- Geuter, U., Heller, M. C., & Weaver, J. O. (2010). Elsa Gindler and her influence on Wilhelm Reich and body psychotherapy. *Body, Movement and Dance in Psychotherapy*, 5, (1), 59-73.
- Huebner, M. (2010). The life and teachings of Elsa Gindler. *Rosen Method International Journal*, 3, 17-21.