



Gestalt NEWS Foundation

BIANNUAL INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION NEWSLETTER OF GESTALT FOUNDATION PSYCHOTHERAPY & TRAINING CENTER
AUTUMN - WINTER 2023, ISSUE 36



PHENOMENOLOGY AND GESTALT THERAPY. APPEARANCE?... BEING?

- p. 2
- Editorial
- "When absence becomes presence..."
- p. 3-4
- Parenting or, I am going towards, I open myself to the Other..."
- «...Couples...»
- Taking care of trauma...
- p. 5-7
- Basic Psychology Courses,
- «Feedback report from my experience from the 4days Gestalt workshop»
- p. 8-11
- Phenomenology and Gestalt Therapy. Appearance?... being?
- «Dreams Alive»
- «Dreams»
- p. 12-13
- I am and I demand the other to be
- Experiential online group «Zoom to Zoom»
- Therapy and self-awareness group
- p. 14
- Organizational Psychology through the eyes of Gestalt
- Free expression
- p. 15
- 4days Gestalt Workshop
- p. 16
- Book Presentation



Phenomenology has been a key term in the history of philosophy. It contains, as a point of reference and starting point, the conscious experience and has played a decisive role in the development of existential thought.

Continued on p. 8

IANOS ΑΛΥΣΙΔΑ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ

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Hermeneutic Phenomenology seeks the acceptance of what is. The «being» denotes something, as omnipresent, an atmospheric presence, a property of an entire space. The «being» in which all beings appear.

In Gestalt therapy the sense of what creates the beginning of the encounter, is defined as pre-contact. Dilthey refers to contextual understanding that involves the effective story and its consciousness. Heidegger called Dilthey's method hermeneutic phenomenology, linking the two phenomenological traditions. That is, I understand what the other person shares or projects, as their way of being. Today's global conditions and online communication bring to the

foreground again the perception Greeks had about the cognition. It does not mean immersion in the inner world, but pure openness to everything. What is important is not what we see each time, but what is here and now in the sensorium of the presence of what is, where «being» and «meaning» are inseparable, they merge. (Neo means float. I float – I understand – I mean – unity).

Yiamarelou Yianna



M.A. in Clinical Psychology, Psychotherapist, trainer and supervisor Gestalt, holder of E.C.P (European Certificate of Psychotherapy). Member of EAGT (European Association for Gestalt Therapy). Founding member of the Gestalt Foundation Psychotherapy and Training Center, and of the HAGT (Hellenic Association of Gestalt Therapy). Relational Gestalt therapist (Pacific Gestalt Institute). EMDR training (trauma therapy). Losses, mourning - unrecognized grief (children, adolescents, adults, the elderly).

When absence becomes presence...

When absence turns into presence, discomfort becomes sharing, the isolation of two years becomes meeting and embracing... there the «Pain became beauty...» In the safety, the clarity, the risk we all took, coordinators and participants, bringing together the numbness of all the quarantine, «Lent our flesh» to each other, and we are now ready to do the same in front of the Other in the Healing – Supervision room. I feel grateful and inspired for all that I experienced these two days, in the workshop



«Diagnosis and psychopathology II» and at the same time I feel more open and fuller in these special times. In a society with so

much loss and deprivation, the need for a field view of psychopathology is almost necessary. Only through it we will be able to connect again, as therapists, as people and to bring back a togetherness that was once self-evident: The togetherness of belonging to the human species.

Eleni Mousleh, Psychologist (A.p.Th), Gestalt Psychotherapist & Supervisor, Member of HAGT & EAP, Mindfulness instructor

BEST SELLERS 2022

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Ο ΑΝΗΦΟΡΟΣ

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ΠΑΤΙ ΨΥΧΑΝΑΛΥΣΗ
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2009-2022



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ΜΕΣΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ
ΟΙΚΟΓΕΝΕΙΑ



MARK MANSON
Η ΕΥΤΕΝΗΣ ΤΕΧΝΗ ΤΟΥ
ΝΑ ΤΑ ΓΡΑΦΕΙΣ ΟΛΑ
ΣΤΑ...!



THOMAS ERIKSON
ΑΝΑΜΕΣΑ ΣΕ ΗΛΙΘΙΟΥΣ



ΑΛΕΞΗΣ ΠΑΠΑΧΕΛΑΣ
ΕΝΑ ΣΚΟΤΕΙΝΟ
ΔΩΜΑΤΙΟ 1967-1974



ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΧΑΤΖΗΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ
ΜΙΚΡΑΣΙΑΤΙΚΗ ΚΑΤΑΣΤΡΟΦΗ
50 ΕΡΩΤΗΜΑΤΑ ΚΑΙ ΑΠΑΝΤΗΣΕΙΣ

Parenting or, I am going towards, I open myself to the Other...

According to the Encyclopedia of Psychology and the guidelines of the American Psychological Association, parenthood is aimed at ensuring the health and safety of the child, preparing him for life, so that he can be a productive adult and in the



transmission of those values, which will accompany him in his life. We are born and come into a world that already exists, we are part of a field, which, as we say in Gestalt, inevitably affects us and we affect it accordingly. From our childhood we learn, we know the world structured and divided into dipoles, right/wrong, bad/good, black/white and we use to articulate our speech through many conjunctions: Who do you love more, mom or dad? This dichotomy takes up even more space when we perceive the world through gender stereotypes, from specific qualities we attribute to the two dominant sexes. Do these generalizations, stereotypes and prejudices affect the way I stand as a parent, my personal process and the bond with my child? And if so, in what way? Do I have the ability to question and deconstruct those stereotypes that I feel they trap me in traditional patterns, which next generations follow, without promoting human contact? In other words, do I, as a parent now, allow myself to go beyond automated and simplistic generalizations like mom equals emotion and dad equals financial security? Or in a broader sense, family equals a dad plus a mom plus a child (or children). The transition to parenthood is a complex and stressful situation that affects couples regardless of their sexual orientation (Leal et al, 2020) bringing to the surface processes that concern the quality of the relationship between the couple and their relationship with the immediate and wider environment. Preparation is a multi-dimensional situation, it includes farewells to previous roles, to a normality that seemed unique, continuous and non-negotiable, and it welcomes several Self- expanding possibilities.

A Foster Family can also be Parenthood, an alliance for the child's interest

When it is not possible for a child to live in his/her biological family for a short or long period of time, a foster family will ensure the smooth mental and social / emotional development of the child in a family environment as well as the avoidance of institutionalization. Regarding the models of foster family and the foster family process itself, here are the following links: www.paidi.gov.gr and www.anynet.gr.

Foster care, as well as adoption, are often accompanied by loss, trauma and grief (Mitchell, 2018) and this is because many children «carry» some form of trauma, large enough to become an obstacle in the process of adapting to the new environment and in general in the trust-building process between foster parent and child. The healing process takes time, space, faith in the child's personal process and the bond itself, and involves a variety of emotions, such as joy, frustration, defeat, sadness, pride and many more.



For same sex parenthood

The right of fostering to same-sex couples was given by Law 4538/2018, «Measures for the Promotion of Fostering and Adoption Institutions and Other Provisions», opening a path primarily for children to leave the structures, to leave behind the institutional life and to find hospitality and care in a home, in a family, offering at the same time to LGBT single parents and same-sex couples the right to parenthood, a universal right for all people. Internationally recognized mental health organizations, such as the American Psychological Association, the American Psychiatric Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, have for decades maintained that psychosocial adjustment, psycho-emotional development, and children's mental well-being are neither related with the sexual orientation nor with the gender identity of their parents (biological, adoptive, foster), but are largely determined by the quality of care towards the child, the care of the couple's

relationship and by internal family processes.

Indicative References

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Farr, R. H., Forssell, S. L., & Patterson, C. J. (2010). *Parenting and Child Development in Adoptive Families: Does Parental Sexual Orientation Matter? Applied Developmental Science, 14(3), 164-178.*

<https://www.apa.org/topics/parenting>

<https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/parenting>

<https://www.psychiatry.org>

<https://www.aap.org>

Irene Kutela, Advisor Psychic health, Psychotherapist Gestalt, M.Sc., I-MBA, M.Sc. litt., member of HAGT, EAGT & BACP



«...Couples...»

Educational – experiential workshop, 30 and 31 January 2021,
Coordinators: Hadjilakou K. and Farmaki M.

Look at what your partner is doing... tune in!
Look at what your partner is doing... cover it!
Look at what your partner is doing... help it!
Look at what your partner is doing... follow it!
I want to see you as one... nothing stands out. What one does, concerns both. One makes a mistake; they both pay for it. One does good, they both celebrate. My partner sitting next to me at the school desk, my partner in volleyball, my partner, my girlfriend, my partner in love, my dad, my partner in tango and then he left and I was left dancing all alone... So many couples I had never stood to see the relationship that was there... with rules, give and take, with solitude and with contact. So much effort to coordinate so that the other can coordinate, too. Only now I know how to dance as a whole together... Improvisation... Self-Improvisation... Self in relationship... through... dyad... and as it turns out... follow the music. If we like music, we will find the steps somewhere there. Katia, my partner in my Psyche root, my Nia, there with me and you... In this workshop I learned

that a couple in life is not the romantic one, but the important one. My Leah, you chose me as your sister, and I realized in this workshop that you are my partner in life, thank you.

Thank you warmly!

Irini Giulakou, Mental Health Counselor, Gestalt Foundation Graduate

Taking care of trauma...

Have you attended the trauma workshop? Not yet; Maybe it's a little scary. Just hearing the word «trauma» made me want to avoid it. But somehow the time came for me to want to attend this workshop on trauma and it is indeed true that I went with an idea (I think others also) that it is something difficult and heavy. Still, I thought it had a lot to offer me and I also trusted Despina (the coordinator). I was a bit nervous as I entered the place, but seeing familiar faces, I somehow calmed down and felt more relaxed and with a security that I was surrounded by familiar and beloved people. As if there were some constants around me that I could lean on if I got in trouble. In the beginning, enough time was given to get close, through movement, through dance, and thus the word trauma was not in my mind. On the contrary, there was a pleasant feeling that something good was happening. I thought to myself for a moment: «Do you think all days will be as beautiful as this?»

But how can one define the word «beautiful»? All the days that followed included sharing and caring. Even in difficult moments, the delicacy, the respect and the intention to be with the other, without criticism, without «why» but only with pure true caring and respect for the other and what they bring, really worked. The word “beautiful” stayed with me because of all these. Every day, little by little, through various activities we built the thread that connected us, including each one of us, with our traumas. How caring and respectful Despina's (coordinator) and Athena's (co-coordinator) rhythm was, who both dived into the depths of trauma, staying close where the other was who only needed someone to lean on to. How comforting to know that I don't have to open the wound. It can be soothing and I can take it with me in a pouch. Going to our deepest points we wove our thread. What makes us «in-thread». For all that I have experienced and learned about myself as a person and a therapist, I feel gratitude.

Thank you, Despina, Athena and fellow travelers.

Emmanuelidis Panayiotis, Gestalt Foundation Graduate, 2020

BASIC PSYCHOLOGY COURSES

«Introduction to Psychology...»

Gestalt Foundation, in consistency with its «Continuing education» mentality, has integrated basic Psychology courses into its program, thus opening up to people from the Psychology field, but also to those who have an interest in this science that concerns the individual,



the group, the society, so that it is not a privilege but an accessible field of professional and personal development.

These courses had many firsts: for the first time the cycle of Basic Courses began, with «Introduction to Psychology» being the first course, my first time being a coordinator-trainer in such a group. My purpose was to stimulate a spirit of scholarship and research, and to convey my strong interest, in a systematic and experiential way, in this subject of learning. Motivation, Language, Emotions, Memory, Conscious, Unconscious, Senses, Mind, how the individual affects the group and vice versa.

All these, and many other issues, took shape in the microcosm of the group. My desire for the course was to become a good experience for everyone, the participants to become a team, preserving their uniqueness, as this was shown by the process of their individual tasks. The topic they chose, the way they presented it, thus presenting themselves, but also the response to each other, constituted a rich course of meetings and contacts. My experience was multidimensional. A journey of discovery, knowledge, difficulties, laughter, which ended with a sense of pride, as something beautiful was created, an active team. It was an interactive experience, I taught and I was taught.

Athina Anagnostopoulou, coordinator of the 1st course:
«Introduction to Psychology» in the Gestalt Foundation's Basic Psychology course series. BA in Psychology (American College of Greece), Diploma in Counseling & Synthetic Analysis (COSCA), Training in Gestalt Psychotherapy (Gestalt Foundation), Continuing Education in Gestalt Psychotherapy - Gestalt Relational Therapy «Cycle of basic Psychology courses»

«Cycle of Basic Psychology Courses»

When I started the training in Gestalt therapy, I was concerned about whether I had sufficient knowledge for the program, as I come from a different disciplinary field. I wanted something that would give me the necessary foundation to get in touch with the world of psychology. The Psychology core course was finally just what I needed, because I was able to connect the fragmented prior knowledge and add new - extremely interesting - elements to it. The educational material was rich and really covered the entire spectrum of the subject in a short period of time. For me, however, a huge impact was Athina Anagnostopoulou, who took us step by step throughout the process, who was there to cover our questions and concerns and create new ones for us, who inspired us to search for more, to learn more, and together we met and discovered the magic of the human soul. But above all that, she really made us a group, on an equal footing with her, where there was room to discuss everything - and finally somehow connect it to Psychology. Unique experience, I would happily do it again!!

Georgia Masoura, 2nd year of Athens, participating in the entire education cycle with the «Basic Psychology Courses»

«Developmental psychology...»»»



Almost with the coronavirus pandemic the start of the «Developmental psychology» course came along. Unprecedented and demanding conditions, both in general and specifically, in my own «micro-capsule», with a 7-month-old baby and zero personal time. Within the limitations imposed by the circumstances, the challenge of coordinating this course emerged. Stress and anxiety for each meeting, until the end, together with the interest in covering more fully a vast subject and in contact with the people with whom we shared the weekly three-hour «date». The unique combination and interplay of all of this brought about the

unexpected unlocking of a creativity that had remained rusty for a long time, as well as the desire to share it with the participants, all together and individually. This process of sharing was unique, sometimes in a childlike and playful style, sometimes in an adolescent-revolutionary style and sometimes in an adult and serious one. I experienced it with joy, excitement, and even delight, along with reflection, frustration, and shame. And in a way I felt that I grew up, among the developmental theories, among Freud, Bowlby, Erikson, Piaget, Vygotsky & Salonia, among the looks, the thoughts, the feelings and the words... I felt that the same thing happened to you, my students. And what a nice feeling it is when I experience and observe how growth, paradoxical (or not) change comes, through contact and sharing... Thank you!

Dora Loukidis, coordinator of the 2nd course «Developmental Psychology» of the Gestalt Foundation's series of basic Psychology courses. Psychologist (EKPA) with specialization in Educational Psychology (MSc Professional Training in Educational Psychology-University of London), Training in Gestalt Psychotherapy (Gestalt Foundation). Member of the Hellenic & European Society of Gestalt Psychotherapy.

«Developmental Psychology»

I open my eyelids, and my being opens to life. My body, thoughts, emotions and behavior begin a long journey. Along the way they change, evolve and/or remain stable. Within a dynamically changing field my evolution process cannot but include the dynamic organism-environment interaction and how within it each individual evolves. Second psychology course. «Developmental psychology» across the life span. A stable team (15 members) with a consistently present coordinator in an unprecedented commitment for 14 meetings. A satisfying lesson that filled the Thursdays of the first quarantine and reached the middle of the summer. A group that while never having met in person, its members would meet connect with bravery and trust and each of them shared a piece of the core of their being through a screen... Sharing full of honesty and immediacy. Sharing of personal experiences, songs, books, memories, essays that were given by Dora, with immense respect, tenderness, understanding and kindness, a sharing which was channeled from everyone to everyone. We communicated through dialogue, drawings, play, we wondered about our own past developmental experiences and talked about the different developmental period that each one of us was in at that moment. In this course the discussion of the subjects combined scientific with immediacy and sometimes the poetry of the beauty of lifelong growth. The research data was taken out of the books and supplemented by vivid personal experiences of our own real life. The presentation of real cases of children and adults was completed with the simultaneous search for our own personal truth. I felt great interest, warmth, safety and comfort in the environment we all co-created as well as

great motivation to further seek out people who study different developmental stages, such as Ruella Frank, Margherita Spagnuolo Lobb and Kohlberg. This course was a rich journey towards a full understanding of human development and at the same time my own personal development. It was an occasion for the expansion of my being and this realization fills me with immense gratitude.

Evangelia Nikiforou, 3rd year, Athens, participating in the group of the 2nd course «Developmental Psychology» of the Gestalt Foundation educational cycle of «Basic courses of Psychology»..

«Theories of Personality...»

The human personality is a mystery up to this day and has been the object of study for many scientific (and non-scientific) fields. With the opportunity given to me, by the Athens GF, to coordinate the third of the basic psychology courses «Theories of Personality», I remembered again and also deepened even more into the thoughts of pioneering psychiatrists and psychologists,



regarding this issue. I was excited about what I already knew and what I learned, and I tried to transfer this excitement to the participants. Starting with Freud's psychoanalytic theory and ending with Kelly's cognitive theory, we took a journey of fourteen meetings, focusing on the most important theories so far. We saw their differences, but also their similarities. We also saw that each one was influenced both by the spirit of the era in which it was born, as well as by the personality and personal life of the person who conceived it.

So apart from the theories themselves, we got to know better the personalities behind them. And as we got to know them, little by little we got to know each other, either in person or from a distance. Our group was named «Great Personalities». And

indeed, completing this course a week ago, I felt that in addition to 30 great thinkers, I also met 11 great personalities, the team members, who inspired and motivated me equally. I learned a lot. With our commons, our differences and our personal stories, through presentations, questions, information and observations, a rich experience was co-created, and I would like to thank for this my fellow travelers and also the GF who offered me the «vehicle».

Angeliki Costalou, *Co-ordinator of the 3rd course «Theories of Personality» of the series of Gestalt Foundation basic Psychology courses. BA Psychology (American College of Greece), MSc Psychology and Health (City University, London), Postgraduate Certificate in Counseling Skills (British Association for Counseling & Psychotherapy, London), Degree in History of European Culture (Hellenic Open University), member of Hellenic and European Association of Gestalt Psychotherapy. Gestalt psychotherapist, with an emphasis on the physical process within the therapeutic relationship*

«Personality Theories...»

A course I decided to take in order to “close a circle” as I had started last year with the magical 1st (introduction to psychology) and the emotional 2nd (developmental psychology). I had no idea about the subject and when the instructor did the introductory lesson, I was disappointed! I thought: this is a lot of theory, the personality theories... But the atmosphere was relaxed, the faces around me beautiful and Angeliki (the coordinator) comfortable and with humor. She has passion and has such sufficient knowledge of the subject that she impresses me every time! I felt my classmates getting comfortable in their chairs and a nice energy flowing. I followed too, deciding to let myself go...

And how wise this decision turned out to be! In essence, we were studying people who studied people. In addition to the theory developed by each one, we saw aspects of their lives, passions, weaknesses, events that surrounded them and misfortunes (or lucks). Angeliki took the authorities and turned them into authentic people. As time passed by I began to connect and understand more and more the essence of the course. Everything became close and familiar. Our team turned into a system in which one fed the other. From our very second meeting, under the masterful presentation of Angeliki, something small inside me made an imperceptible «click». This «click» soon mobilized my entire body. Things were shifted inside me and a nice, big void was created, ready to receive the NEW. I thank all the witnesses who were present in my process and especially our skillful coordinator! Personality Theories, a revealing course!

Alexandra Giannaki, *1st year student, Athens, participant in the group of the 3rd course «Developmental Psychology» of*

the Gestalt Foundation’s educational cycle «Basic Psychology Courses».

Feedback report about my experience from the 4 days Gestalt Workshop

The 4 days Gestalt workshop, entitled «Phenomenology in The Field» was in three aspects a new experience for me: it was my first 4 days workshop in English language, my first with a non-German post-graduate group and my first workshop in this format as online workshop. “Exploring the theory and practice of the phenomenological base of Gestalt therapy” so, I had almost no idea what to expect. I decided to put my focus on dialogue and discussion. Happily, I found a group of nine gestalt therapists, very opened, interested and motivated to discover and discuss the aspects of “phenomenology in the field”. The theoretical inputs I gave were discussed thoroughly. According the tradition of Fritz Perls, who challenged the ground of psychoanalysis, we challenged the grounds of gestalt theory. We discussed the concepts of “contact” and “field” on a phenomenological base. Also, the phenomenological concepts of “Leib” (felt-body) and emotions were explored. In the end, I’ve never had a workshop that passed by that fast and easy even though it had a high intensity. This was mainly because of all of the participants who were full of interest, energy and awareness. The only thing I missed was the life-presence of all of us and – Greece! In the end for me it’s still, or even more, a miracle that online gestalt work is possible. Theoretically it is not possible. But it’s a phenomenon that it works.

Olaf Zielke, *Gestalt therapist and trainer in Hannover and Hamburg (Germany), former member of the EC of the German Gestalt Association (DVG), member of the Training Standards Committee of EAGT*

Continued from page 1

1. 1. PREFACE

..All psychotherapeutic approaches based on how the person «unfolds» in the directness of the therapy session are related to existentialism. In Gestalt psychotherapy the phenomenological method introduces description, bracketing, and horizontalization. In other words, the therapist describes what he observes without explaining them, setting aside his beliefs and by extension refraining from judgements, so that what he observes has the same meaning and significance for him.

«Appearance» is through the ages tied to «being». And the way these two come together has been a basic question of philosophy. Are they contradictory, as Xenophanes argued? Or are they simply distinct? Or are they inseparable, as Heraclitus said? What it seems, it is? And if so, then what cannot be seen, it isn't? Some will argue that physics with the discovery of atoms and subatomic particles overthrew the inverse relationship. Or did it just validate the original? Discovery is, according to Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, to see something that everyone sees and to think of something that no one has thought of. Paraphrasing, discovery is looking at something that everyone is looking at and seeing something that no one has seen. And when you see it, it exists there for you, it is. The "what" and the "how" "is" the self, the other, the relationship is a key keystone in Gestalt therapy. The here and now, the awareness, the contact, the presence are the basis for healing. But the phenomenological method is not just stepping that the therapist follows, but rather it is a philosophy of treatment, a philosophy of life. This work refers to phenomenology not so much as a way to act but also as a way of being in the therapeutic process.

2. I APPEAR, THEREFORE I EXIST

The ever-changing environment of experiences constitutes the phenomenological field of the individual. Zinker points out that the way we experience objective reality constitutes our reality. (J. Zinker, 1977). But to what extent do we experience what we live? The root for this interaction with the environment is the senses. For example, everything I know about a pencil, is what I see when I look at it, the smell of it when I smell it, the sound it makes and the sense in my hand as I write, everything I see etched on the paper... And yet I don't experience this interaction every time I write! Zinker says it's probably hard to survive in an increasingly automated world. The way of life, even the way of speaking, diminishes the experience. Zinker, says, we often treat the words as if they were the experience itself. It's as if we talk about things more than we experience them (J. Zinker, 1977). Indeed, words constitute a «social agreement» for the comprehensive and brief representation of what we experience in the interaction with the environment. As if one word sums up the average

PHENOM AND GESTALT APPEARANCE

of the individuals' total experience in the external environment! And of course, something like this is not reprehensible, but rather necessary and useful. As Polster & Polster also mention, only someone with plenty of free time can respond to every contact opportunity at every moment. What is important, however, is the possibility of contact, the awareness of this possibility and the awareness of each

choice (E&M. Polster, 1973). Phenomenology in Gestalt refers to and is based on this possibility. In the full stimulation of the therapist's senses, so that he experiences in that moment, being in touch with himself and with his client. Polster & Polster (1973) note that when the listener is listening, he knows he is in good contact and when the listener knows he is being heard, his contact comes alive. But what the speaker says is not necessarily what the listener hears. When the Gestalt therapist says «I hear you're upset that I'm late», he phenomenologically recognizes the uniqueness of this experience in time (present) and space. My phenomenological field at every moment is unique, it is happening now, and only I have the opportunity to be in touch with it. The sum of my here and now experiences is my world. No one else can live for me, says Zinker, and every experience gain value when I reflect on its uniqueness. When I die, he argues, my world will phenomenologically cease to exist (Zinker, 1977). I experience the world through interacting with it. And the experiences from this interaction constitute my phenomenological field. In this way when I cease to exist, I will cease to interact, the world will



PHENOMENOLOGY IN THERAPY. (E)... BEING?



phenomenologically cease to exist, or vice versa? Could it be that when I ignore my phenomenological field, I am unable to interact and do not live? The inversion of the sentence is excessive, but also partly apt if we consider that the neurotic lifestyle is anachronistic, as Polster&Polster argue. They also point out that any return to the here and now experience of the

individual is part of the antidote for neurosis (Polster, 1973). In this way, with the phenomenological method, the therapist gives back to the client his personal overall experience and that of the interaction between them. He describes what he hears, sees and generally observes in the patient and in the process. Thus, the therapist comes into contact with the person in treatment, while at the same time giving him a trigger, so that he himself comes into contact with what he is experiencing in the here and now. At this point it is worth pointing out that the patient cannot always have a complete awareness, as Zinker (1977) says, and someone who is now learning to stay in the here and now cannot do so, if first they don't find the way, as Polster&Polster argue (1973). Yontef argues that the phenomenology of each person is equally true and it is not necessary for the phenomenological field of the therapist to coincide with the clients. This differentiation, however, deserves phenomenological observation (G.M. Yontef). The therapist, in other words, must be in contact with himself and with the other, without evaluating, interpreting and by extension without expectations from the client. If

we consider the therapist as a mirror, the «rays» emitted by the client, and the process between them, are reflected on him, and, through the phenomenological method, an image is formed. The idol in physics is never identical, the same as the original, real object, in the same way that the therapist cannot be aware of the phenomenological field of the person in treatment, in the way he himself experiences it. However, the lens, the mirror, renders the object in its true size, it comes closer to the original object. In this way the therapist can stay closer to the «original experience», which according to Husserl is the best way to know yourself and the other. But when does this mirror bend and distort the original object?



3. TO APPEAR AND TO NOT QUESTION

As long as we seek the interpretation or cause of what we observe, we move away from the experience of the here and now, an experience which we are able to live. Interpretations, explanations, evaluations of what we observe blur our vision, weaken our senses. The mirror becomes convex, the image is distorted. As we grow older, we often «give up» our eyes, says Oaklander, emphasizing the importance of the here and now experience, which we pointed out above (V. Oaklander, 1988). We look with the curiosity and spontaneous authentic way a small child looks as he discovers the world. But what we acquire from a very young age is the tendency to look for meaning and an explanation for what we observe. In preschool age, children acquire the characteristic behavior of «why». And although Piaget argued that children of this age have not yet developed the correct reasoning of cause and effect, their tendency to search for meaning is at least phenomenologically evident (Piaget, 1930). So, growing up, we know very well how to evaluate and explain what we observe around us. Polster&Polster use the example of art to make this point clear. The public, they say, is used to asking for and learning the meaning, of what a work of art means, and is often left with a void, since its expectations are not

met (E&M. Polster, 1973). A person who goes to a therapist often has such expectations. Yontef points out that people often ask for a cure, an explanation for something that is not even clear to them. They are unaware of the obvious and look for interpretation (G.M. Yontef, 1993). A Gestalt therapist, however, does not meet these expectations. According to the phenomenological method, the Gestalt therapist consciously refrains from explaining what he observes, bracketing beliefs and knowledge. Consequently, he remains in what he observes and is unable, due to a conscious choice, to evaluate the significance and importance of what he observes. So, the therapist does not interpret what is happening to the client. The first and basic step for the person in treatment is to gain awareness of what is happening to him/her, awareness that he/she is not aware and awareness of the ways he/she prevents it, a process that will acquire a meaning for the person in the long run. And that's probably the point. To give meaning to what he/she observes and not the therapist. The therapist's goal is to teach the client to cook, not to feed him ready-made food (G.M. Yontef, 1993). And furthermore, when the therapist puts aside his preconceptions and beliefs and does not interpret what is happening, he stands as an equal to the person. In this way he renounces the role of omniscient and guide. He stands next to the patient and does not go ahead, leading him to whatever path he wants or decides. Phillipson emphasizes the application of phenomenological observation, without explanations and interpretations. In family therapy, when a member expresses anger, the therapist does not seek to interpret the anger, but rather observes the process. That is, he observes the anger, how it manifests itself and the effect it has on the other members as well as on himself and gives it back (Phillipson, 2001). When we set aside our beliefs, our preconceptions and our knowledge, we also set aside our expectations. And at the same time, «empty» of all this, we refrain from evaluating the importance of what we observe. Polster&Polster when talking about depersonalization in communication, they offer a nice example of the lack of evaluations in therapy. They argue that often people who are familiar with therapy groups have certain expectations of them and consider discussions of topics such as Vietnam or one's vacation to be trivial and off-topic, which they argue takes away the essence of life (E.&M. Polster, 1973). A therapist, according to the phenomenological method, would let such a conversation unfold, considering it is just as important as talking about one's breakup or a fight with one's father. And indeed, by observing phenomenologically what a client says, as well as the process, we can get to his need and what is there for him/her to observe. A key part of phenomenology, as we have seen, is experience. Experience happens in the here and now. The here and now is happening for the first and last time. It is important for the therapist to realize that the here and now is being experienced together

with the client for the first and last time and to put all preconceptions, beliefs, knowledge and evaluation aside. Moreover, «learned» ways of interacting are often obstacles in the person's life, and «learned conditions» are not useful to be manifested in therapy as well. Phillipson argues that by learning to pay attention to the reality of our senses and by recognizing and setting aside the preconceptions we carry in the moment, we come into more direct contact with the environment (Phillipson, 2001). Thus, we experience, and then give back to the other, our purest experience of interpretations and beliefs from interacting with them at that moment. It is a way for what I experience to come as close as possible to the experience of the other, since our experiences cannot be identical.

4. EPILOGUE

“You are and you look just like it» the children are shouting in the neighborhood. And «what appears» is a sufficient argument for their conclusion. Phenomenology is concerned with the way I see the other by looking at the obvious. The way I experience it here and now, without explaining it. The way of being in the here and now. Phenomenology does not reject past experiences and the context in which each of us lives. It simply indicates the way we are in each moment. And every moment I am different. Because the repeated condition of the here and now is a different time and space moment each time. And it touches the way we exist and meet in the here and now with ourselves and the other. Phenomenology in therapy means that as a therapist I am here, as a whole. I am alive here. I exist here and now. Also, I know I was. I also know that I will be. But all I can do is be. And I am both what I was and I am and what I will be. And you also come to me as you were and will be, but also, as you are at the given time and space. In a room, in a building, in a city, in a country, in a continent, in a planet, in a galaxy, in a universe... In a person. To another person. I see you; I hear you; I observe you. And so, we can meet. Now that there are two of us in this room. Which is in a building, which is in a city, which is in a country, which is in a continent, which is in a planet, which is in a galaxy, which is in a universe...

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Alexia Ioanna, graduate of the Psychology department of Panteion University, Gestalt psychotherapist, member of EAGT and the Hellenic Association of Gestalt Psychotherapy (H.A.G.T.)

«Dreams Alive»

Coordinating a postgraduate workshop on “Dreams” through the Gestalt approach in Greece, looked like a dream to me! But my dream came true, on 17-19 March 2022, in spite of the constraints that existed due to the pandemic of Covid 19... The night before the workshop, I had an intense dream: I found myself in a big, dark, castle-like building, without windows, full of groups of people. As a member of one of these groups I found myself standing in a cold hall. Somebody stated: «We’re going to practise yoga here». I heard myself objecting «How come? This floor, made of concrete, it is too hard». Then, a graceful lady pointed to the corner and said: «there is a book there, where we can find the answer in... «I started the workshop sharing this dream because I believe that we dream not only for ourselves but also for others. The image in the dream appeared as an opposite metaphor to the current situation. Despite the dark, cold and scary war in Ukraine we managed to distinguish the magic book... I am grateful to the multinational team of people who participated, consisting of colleagues mainly Greeks, an Austrian and a German, that we created a familiar base for all, for experiential learning. An old Gestalt tradition says that dreams used to be an intrapersonal projection. Nowadays, we are challenged to approach dreams within a dialogical framework. Dreams are not an object, but a partner to have a dialogue with. We can apply several techniques... but the key point is to deal with dreams with respect as something of value, which must be cultivated, I believe, inside and outside of psychotherapy. I am glad that the Gestalt Foundation and especially Despina Balliou invited me, trusted me and supported me in the coordination of this workshop and in the sharing of my knowledge on this topic! I hope we can meet soon on another occasion... or if not, let’s dream of it...

Martin Jara, Czech psychologist, Gestalt therapist, trainer and supervisor, member of EAGT, author of the book “Dreams Live” (2001) and the essay “Dream in Relationship and Relationship in Dream” (Quaderni di Gestalt 2/2018). Nowadays Martin is engaged in the studies of phenomenology of body, perception and dreams as well as participating in the postgraduate program of Gestalt training lead by Jan Roubal

«Dreams»

Motion and stillness. Light and darkness. Reality and fantasy. Opposite and yet interrelated concepts coexist and compose the dream process. In the sleep I sink, let go and create...

symbols vague and primal, powerful familiarity, scenes of contact... I am the creator and the creation as well... I am the protagonist, and the viewer as well. But how? How can I make sense out of such an abstract process where my background dances without my conscious «commands»? Sit still... in the chaos... if I focus, I will see forms that concern me... as in



art... the dream is a work of art! How and when does a dream come and is analyzed in therapy? What does it mean for the therapeutic relationship? Does it concern the therapy? How is it approached without losing its magic, but also without being lost in eternity? How do I approach someone else’s dream as a healer and how do I approach my dream as a healer? How can we co-exist «myself, you and this» together at the same time? A new dynamic emerges in the therapy room... Suddenly we went from two to three... and now?... My experience in the workshop with Martin and the rest of the group was unique. Both educational and enlightening... Rhetorical, abstract, substantive, methodological questions have arisen and continue to arise in me about dreams, yet I stand firm, calm and secure with them, as I do with dreams from now on... Martin broadened my perspective around dreams because he did not dwell on pure interpretations and directions but on the connection and the quality of contact... The group brought with it the field to the meeting, which enriched the ground in which we worked, the space in which we moved, the contact with the different and the unknown... We moved safely from earth to imagination, talked about creation and composed our own dream process within the present time of our encounter. I am closing feeling confident after having worked with the abstract and chaos, the charm of working with dreams and art, the harmony in communicating with the different and, feeling grateful to the people we coexisted, collaborated and co- created this beautiful experience...

Anna Makrandreou, Psychologist EKPA, Graduate Gestalt Foundation of Athens

I am and I give validity to the other to be

Which relational need does the client bring with him/her as he/she comes to my office? Through which existential need do I respond to his request? The admission of the otherness of two or more participants in a relationship will need a conscious and constant reminder from the one who bears the responsibility, the Therapist. The asymmetric relationship between the treated and the therapist is based on the responsibility of the therapist, whose goal is care. Caring is not just about taking care of the other and the self in therapy, but also involves the therapist's intention to support his client in such a way that he will be able to take care of himself outside of therapy in the future. In order to be able as a therapist to bear my infinite responsibility for the other, I will address to my community, and returning back again I will enter the «we» of our relationship, with Presence, so that I can also invite the treated person to such an Existential Meeting, with its uniqueness being able to appear in between, in the third thing we have both made. Our connection happens in the here and now of life. But, before that, there has been acceptance and trust, the way I have treated the person towards me, that is, how I have recognized not just who they are, without reducing their complexity and having attributed value to their existence, but saying, now I've met you, now I understand that this upsets you and I'll keep it in mind from now on. This is how my subjectivity is involved with self-determination, in the feeling of the other. Intersubjectivity as approached by Despina and Dimitra through the various concepts that are developed in conjunction with the relational Gestalt therapy, constituted for me the definition of the attitude and intentionality of the Therapist in the place where the person spreads his existence on me, gives meaning again and again to his personal story, he touches his trauma, where he gives himself a second chance for maturity and self-protection, having learned how to be whole within the We.

Anna Mertzani, Gestalt Foundation graduate, Athens, 2019-2020

EXPERIENTIAL ONLINE GROUP «Zoom on Zoom»

I was asked to write a short text for our newsletter, regarding the online, experiential club "Zoom on Zoom» which lasted from January to June 2022. The subject was the unfinished business which we often bring back again into our lives bring them back with in our lives, creating dead ends. However, how can I summarize in a few lines the experience of 8 two-hour group sessions, with ten women (all of them lovely) and the creation of their photographic portraits? I will give it a go. The

idea was that through those meetings each participant would come into contact with their own open account by working on it through experiential exercises based on my photographic works. The team was coordinated by Katia Hatzilakou, while I had the role of observer. Upon completion of the meetings, I undertook to photograph and later artistically depict the participants in their here and now in relation to their there and then. The online nature of the workshop gave us the opportunity to have participations from various cities in Greece and abroad. Apart from the safety "net", mutual support and care that we all wove quite quickly, the sharing of personal stories and the feelings of excitement, gratitude and redemption from the new realizations and decisions, it is difficult for me to express in words exactly what happened in our meetings, during the photography phase and in the presentation of the portraits. I will only say that once again the power of the Field is confirmed which overcomes even the objective difficulty of physical distance. What did I keep from all this? Certainly, all of the above, as well as the relationships we built between us. I also believe that through the framework of the Gestalt Foundation, Katia and I offered something different that had its positive sign not only for the participants of the program but also for me as I distinguished more clearly my own open accounts. I want to express my gratitude towards everyone for the trust they put to accompany each other on the, always fascinating, journey towards self-knowledge, mental empowerment and inner peace. Thank you all and each and every one of you!

Demosthenes Galliss, Photographer and second-year student in the Gestalt Foundation training program for Gestalt Mental Health counselors.

Therapy and self-awareness group - From online meetings to face-to-face meetings / body-to-body meetings and vice versa. What can we learn?

The online group started in November 2021. We were not fully out of the pandemic and the risk of COVID. In April and May, many of the team members would show symptoms of COVID and we would have some absences due to health reasons. However, in June, we arranged to meet face to face. The reason for this article is to share some of the lessons learned while hoping to share something of the human experience of the present flesh that I experience.

Online contact had some challenges. Microphones on mute. This means that when I want to activate them, I have to make an extra effort. I have to move my hand, go to the mouse or keyboard, activate the muscles of the second finger of my right hand (being right-handed) and speak. It took me a while to realize that this extra effort comes at a potential cost to the members and to

me as a co-ordinator. In other words, there is the possibility that second thoughts or other processes will intervene, so it will make it more difficult to connect in a direct way. How do I prepare for the online group? I usually sit in my office. I prepare by placing two small tables on top of each other so that the camera is at an eye level. I think of the background behind me so that there is a «presentable» and desirable image to the team members. Not too much information, not at all. Some basic colors and two frames. A lamp and sometimes flowers. A beautiful «image» as a reason to connect with what exists beyond it. The body of the members is only partially visible. The squares usually next to each other show the people from the shoulders up. For a couple of members, the choice is different. A cell phone camera placed some distance away creates an image where more of the body is visible – yet facial expressions become more invisible and indistinct. «Will I be able to emotionally connect with what is happening to this person?» I find myself wondering. Through the meetings, it is proven that the sound of the voice is perhaps more important than the expressions of the face, the content also and the choices of words are able to reveal something of the history of the face and the background with which it comes to be a form for the group through a small square that lights up with a yellow frame every time it speaks. How strange this online room was! How convenient and how inconvenient at the same time! I can sit in my room and with a click on a hypertext line I find myself talking to other parts of the planet! Different parts of London, Athens, Thessaloniki and Amsterdam, Italy, Mytilene, Kos, Rhodes, Sparta, Corfu are just some of the places I remember from our meetings that light up on this map of group meetings. And this sudden condition always catches me off guard even though I'm the facilitator – and I always need time to relax and allow the meeting to happen. But that changed – it became faster and more conscious after the face-to-face meeting. We met in June. A condition planned in advance as we had to fly from other countries and different parts of Greece. The people who were closer had to travel an hour to come to Agia Paraskevi, while the people who were further away, we had to go to the airport, fly by plane and wait for the time to meet. How strange the first meeting! Faces and names familiar, but the bodies? Probably not completely. The two dimensions do not give the sense of depth. How do we supplement the sense of depth when it doesn't exist? What is the phenomenological correspondence of this experience? What might I be missing from not knowing who was small in size and who was tall and all the expressions and micro-movements that a body carries and shows the background from which it comes? As if we were meeting for the first time, but somehow not. We had created a terrain that worked supportively to dive into deeply relational work with coordination and synchronization in the member process. Losing the beat and finding it again. It was like a group dance that could become dystonic at times to allow members to heal through immersion into trauma and the vibrations it creates in the field that invite the healing. I left finding new sensations. How I physically perceive the field in the proximity

of bodies – the physical sensation is different when there is no such proximity. The field is different and expresses itself differently in the two conditions – that's something we discussed. In online meetings, windows are thrown, phones vibrate, connections are interrupted for a while or more, and these phenomena are communicated up to a point. This communication (quality and quantity) defines the intersubjectivity of the relationship of the observer of the phenomenon from the position one is in and of the other members in the field. In the same room, the sound of the wind, the synchronicities of the moderator's and members' references to the elements of nature or electronic devices, have a different substance - as if they allow us to consider them as common and connecting us, regardless of whether each of us can evoke different feelings or associations based on each person's personal history. In conclusion I will offer a thought that I have as I close writing this article and thinking about the reason for writing it – as if inclusion happens differently and calls for our creative adaptation in different ways to each field created by the condition. And as we learn to adapt differently, we can each time bring more of ourselves into the here and now in the way that is most helpful to the field. To the extent that everyone can and to the extent that we can allow ourselves to change...

Naum Liotas, *ΨGestalt Psychotherapist, Supervisor, Org. Advisor, Life and Business Coach, MBA, PCC, GPA-EAGT, MBACP (reg.), EPC holder*

GESTALT IN ORGANIZATIONS

Organizational Psychology through the "eyes" of Gestalt therapy

The cycle of Gestalt workshops consists of knowledge and experiences that you expect to encounter, but also of many pleasant surprises that you do not expect to meet. Even the lack of experience in training on the fields of psychology and psychotherapy is not an obstacle for you to take the «first step» in the field of Organizational Psychology through the eyes of Gestalt. There is a good chance, speaking from personal experience, that one is both fortunate and challenged to find himself in a leadership position surrounded by a team where everyone has little to no leadership experience. If you are lucky, as it happened in my case, the managing directors of a company may arrange for an external partner to join the team, in order to give personal support to the staff, (leadership coaching) giving them the opportunity to get in touch with the concept of coaching in a real-life situation. During the journey in a leading position of a company you realize a lot. Most likely, the leadership position that has been assigned to you is something that matches your personal characteristics and strengths and makes you feel good and familiar in it. On the other hand, in a leadership position you may feel loneliness, disgust, despair, lack of acceptance and respect and this situation may lead you to other paths of changes, searches and personal discovery to motivate you to take action! In case you are on a search trip, the Gestalt workshop through theory and experiential exercises in the context of professional development of the characteristics of leaders,

FREE EXPRESSION

The sanctity of the encounter!

In the beginning is the word and the word became Form.

In the beginning is the relationship and the relationship is the

experience of meeting.

An existential encounter that moves from disconnection to connection.

A contact process in the «between» and the cure is obvious!

Man seeks to give meaning to experience. To give a name and the birth begins.

Shadows that light up. Faces of saints and demons appear, interference from other fields.

And invisible threads... lots of invisible threads.

Crumpled dreams, meteoric desires, struggling gaps, a lack of meaning waiting to be woven.

Unidentified figures touch you, cry, shout, ... and other times beg

«Look at me», «Sympathize with me»!

Battlefields with captured soldiers. Innocent victims who have no one to care for their wounds and keep asking: What's going on? What was wrong? How



becomes the most appropriate to provide the necessary supplies and respond to the demands, maintaining your personal well-being in the professional area. During the workshop, you work individually and in groups and interact with people who are experiencing similar experiences to yours, which through observation and Gestalt interpretation by the qualified trainers take shape. I have to admit that I went into the first team meeting with a bias. I thought the rest of the panelists would focus on emotions and analyze how we feel and all those intangible things that a corporate brain probably fails to connect with an organization and its management. However, I was pleasantly surprised and intrigued by the approach of integrating the whole person into the corporate body of an organization. Observing how his emotions evolve and react to changes, situations, conflicts, and how personalities influence within an organization. This is a truly exciting journey. The learning outcomes did not consist of a one-dimensional perspective, but upon completion of the course I realized the relational, phenomenological, existential and holistic approach that an organization needs to be approached according to Gestalt. All participants were charismatic! I would strongly recommend it to anyone who is interested in the development of the people of an organization and therefore the organization itself, allied at the same time to that self which is open to change, evolution, innovation and has a shared vision with the members of his team.

Joanna Domouchtsidis, Armed Forces Officer-Human Resources Management, Mental Health Consultant, Gestalt psychotherapist trainee, Gestalt Practitioner in Organizations trainee

Froso Skoteinioti, Program Manager, People Operations

was I betrayed? How much injustice?

Addictions with misleading cues of avoidance and redemption that reproduce pain. And not even a good Samaritan!

Forms that appear dimly from the Background and wait patiently for their turn and others persistent and tormenting that demand to be listened to «Here and Now».

As the Centaur Chiron limping down Olympus from his old trauma, the healer becomes a fellow traveler, becomes a helper, witness, and co-creator of a new landscape.

A stable Presence in the uncertainty of the encounter, a listener ready to support. Ready to take care.

As the two grow closer the birth pangs soften, and everything opens. Like the mustard seed. And the field is reaping.

A journey towards «Together» with the companionship of trauma, where silence becomes speech, absence is inhabited, mortuary regions come to life, and transformation is a fact!

And so, when the good time comes, where the contact is fruitful with the hinterland of existence, time exists as an open field of possibilities a Second presence of our fragile self emerges. A poetic attitude to life in our earthly world, as an open possibility of a way of being!

Konstantina Koutroufina, Gestalt Foundation of Athens, Graduate 2020-2021

4-DAY GESTALT WORKSHOP

«The human body is spirit and its soul is incarnate»

My beloved Antigone, my beloved team, my beloved body, thank you for the beautiful way you touched my soul! I stand and breathe deeply. This movement welcomes me into the world with you and at the same time defines me. It reminds me that I exist, and to exist, I need to breathe. So, in this workshop I was, and introduced myself as a body... As a body that has not learned how to support itself and hurts, as a body that has learned to be ashamed and hide, as a body that is used to doing a lot and is in a hurry... So, thank you because our existence there gave me the opportunity to know my body differently! As a body that feels comfortable letting go and being let go, seeking its comfort and rest. As one body moving slowly, almost hypnotized by the different rhythm we allowed ourselves to share together. As a body that is thirsty and hydrated, expelling all those toxins that have weighed it down and hurt it. As a body that is happy to take up space, to relax and manifest itself in front of the bodies that surround it. Finally, as a body that embraces and is embraced by such beautiful encounters as ours. I feel grateful that I chose to be there, that you chose to be there, and that my body now remembers the experience...

Lydia Kanellea, *Counseling Psychologist (Msc), Gestalt Psychotherapist*

«My body is my life»

Needs, faces, desires from the background become forms. The field interacts and I am allowed to observe, understand, feel and empathize. And this process is a wonderful dance. «It's as if a single day hasn't passed» I say to myself as I hear Antigoni Orfanou welcoming us with kindness and calmness, even though several years have passed since my last participation in something similar. Time is relative after all, when I reconnect with people and moments, when I redefine and let myself live. I work alongside people that I love, but also alongside others that I now get to know. All of us touch our personal stories, feeling our many common parts that weave in a magical way in an improvisational dance on stage and offstage all these days, body and heart together as indivisible all in a life that flows, stops and goes again. The body breathes, let's go, pushes, reaches, catches, pulls and lets go in a rhythm of contact as perpetual as life itself. During these three days I found other fellow travelers of the soul, people to love and to share with them the essence of contact, which makes me see the difficult to achieve, in the complex world we live in. I thank Antigoni Orfanou from the bottom of my heart for the occasion, the knowledge, the humanity, the acceptance, the



inspiration I felt working with her. Kon/nos Katsamakias and Katia Hatzilakou for the idea of the dance class as a rehearsal and the joy I got participating in it. I consider the meeting with all the members of the professional team as a beginning and a continuation, a sea breeze and a breath of safety, comfort and pleasure.

I hope we are all good and reciprocate!

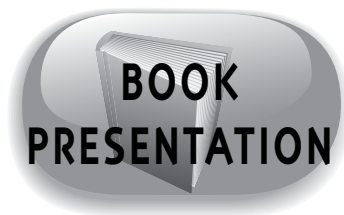
Katya Suerev, *Graduate of Gestalt Foundation. Member of the professionals group in the 24th 4days Gestalt Psychotherapy workshop*

«Body, Remember»

Throughout the 1st year in the educational program of the Gestalt Foundation I heard from past trainees and trainers how much the 4-day workshops affected them and how decisive they were for their process. I even heard that they changed their whole life. I was listening and thought that they were exaggerations. The program started with a storm of information about the lived body and how each time it is given meaning to it through subjective experience. I stood more so in Katia's speech about disability. I was moved and I admired the soul's and body's strength to heal, while being «crippled». As the day drew to a close and fatigue mounted, I felt embarrassed at my body's difficulty in keeping up. I glanced furtively at the bodies of those around me and was relieved to find the same difficulty. The theory and information kept coming and being effortlessly imprinted on my memory through presentations and experiential workshops. But what dominated every meeting, in open or closed groups, were the feelings. I laughed, I was moved, I cried, I was excited, I admired the behavior and values of the Gestalt trainers, I came one step closer to what I dream of and this filled me with joy and love, firstly for my team and in general for the Gestalt family. A unique moment of the 4th day, the presentation of our teamwork. We felt and expressed

our inner conflict, on the one hand the past which sometimes suffocates us, torments us and sometimes supports us, and on the other hand the future which causes us anxiety, fear and hope and in the middle the present, the here and now, the unique moment in which we live. I left Volos with the thought, «Remember, body» how you are, every time you cry, laugh, run to catch up, stop to listen, taste, and feel.

Christina Kouppi, *Gestalt Foundation Athens' Trainee, 1st year Class B (2021-2022)*



«**The Flow of Experience and the Necessity of Short-Term Groups in Today's Becoming. A relational perspective of the Gestalt approach.**»
ARMOS PUBLICATIONS,
ATHENS 2022.

The main motivation for writing this book concerns the awareness of mental health professionals in matters related to broadening phenomenological observation, the concept of presence in the here and now, and the re-signification of experience in present conditions. More specifically, the present conditions concern an expanded horizon that has been over-analyzed and where the boundary that defines the in-between relations is being eroded through the long-term recurring and multi-layered crises that plague the planet. They relate to climate change due to the pollution of the atmosphere by over-industrialization and over-consumption, then to the effect of the atmosphere on the human body and the balance of health with the mutation of viruses, such as the corona virus, and the chain interaction at all levels of life in relation to the environment. All the above influence and bring about changes in the political, economic, cultural, legislative framework in the global field and deconstruct the identity and communication structures all over the planet. The use of the internet is bringing about a new way of global connection, where



we are all observers of what is happening without the possibility of presence and action. Changing global conditions constantly and unpredictably create conditions of fear, mistrust and isolation. The way we perceive the world has to do with our experiences. The world exists for us through the meaning we give to the phenomena we observe. The new phenomenological perception needs to include and understand the unified nature of all possible human experiences and perspectives, as well as the understanding of history in the present.

Otherwise, it risks being trapped in the detection of patterns or principles that shape or prevent proximity instead of experiencing proximity in the present.

Short-term mental health groups can serve as an outlet for the common issue that concerns members. This is how the concept of cohesion and respect for the «other» develops. Also, the concept of time acquires a more essential existential meaning, that of space-time. The only stability that human beings experience in the present and the awareness of what they can and cannot do in the given condition. Through the group process, each member develops qualities, such as how I process what the «other» says, how I understand his difficulty and potential. This is how the concept of teamwork develops, based on mutual respect and acceptance of what the

«other» «is». Establishing trust in the group process leads to the expansion of the «I» and the development of qualities with which one knows how to disagree. A necessary process in establishing relationships that includes respect for diversity and means that even if I don't «get it», I «respect» it.

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