



# Gestalt NEWS Foundation

Informative and communicative six-month issue of the Center of Psychotherapy and Training Gestalt Foundation • November 2004 • 1st issue



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# Welcome to the Reader!

Especially dedicated to the Gestalt Foundation News!  
The note we asked from Harm Siemens in order to inaugurate our first issue.

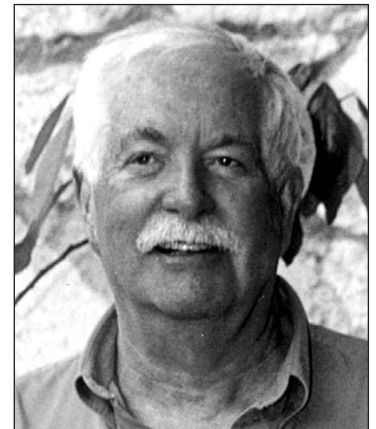
This is the first edition of the newsletter published by the Greek Gestalt Foundation. It is a contribution to the profession of Gestalt therapist working in different fields such as Gestalt therapy, psychotherapy in general, health care, education and management. The Gestalt Foundation of Greece is an attractive and modern school of Gestalt therapy education. The school has teachers and learning facilities in two locations, in Athens and in Thessaloniki. The foundation was established in 1998 as an answer to the need for a professional Gestalt education program. The school has developed rapidly in search of its own identity. The Gestalt Foundation has earned and taken their place in the Greek community. This is not only the case in Greece as the Foundation has earned and taken their place in the Greek community. This is not only the case in Greece as the Foundation is also an active partner in the European Association for Gestalt Therapy (EAGT).

The faculty of the foundation has participated in different decision-making processes for the advancement of Gestalt therapy on a European level. The

Foundation is convinced of the importance of the exchange of trainers within the European community. As an example of this, trainers from other countries are regularly invited to teach Gestalt psychotherapy in Greece.

The faculty of the Foundation are also involved in projects in different fields in order to support health care workers, teachers and managers to maintain a fresh outlook in the practice of their profession. "Quality time" is an important goal in the approach of the Gestalt Foundation. Faculty, students and former students are well aware of their role in a rapidly changing society.

I am very honored that I was, and still am, a partner with the Gestalt Foundation in the further development process of education and therapy. I am also

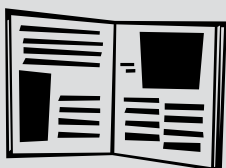


pleased to invite you to read and enjoy this newsletter, which will continue to reflect the form and content of the workings of Gestalt Foundation. In conclusion I would like to express my gratitude for the exchange of professional work that has been beneficial to us all and left me with a close circle of friends.

**Harm Siemens, M.Sc.**

Harm Siemens the last years has been one of the essential collaborators of the Gestalt Foundation and a permanent trainer who has helped us and continues to do so, with his valuable presence and expertise in the psychotherapists' training field.

A few words about Harm Siemens: M.Sc. of Consulting Psychology, he was trained for the Gestalt therapy in the Training Center Polster & Polster (one of the most famous Gestalt therapy training centers) and was supervised for many years by Isadore From himself who is one of the founders of Gestalt therapy. Gestalt Psychotherapist, Trainer and Supervisor in many European countries (Holland, Italy, Russia, Checkhia, Skopia, Greece), Program Director of the Training Program of the Netherlands Gestalt Institute in Amsterdam, one of the very first members of the E.A.G.T., he has helped with his work HIV and AIDS high-risk groups in India and in Holland and he has promoted family therapy in schools. In recognition of his offer the queen of Holland awarded him with the title of the "Knight in the order of Orange-Nassau".



If you wish to participate in the following issues of the newsletter you are all welcome! You may contact the Gestalt Foundation (telephone: 2310 282588, 210 7254010, email: [gestaltf@otenet.gr](mailto:gestaltf@otenet.gr), [gestyd@hol.gr](mailto:gestyd@hol.gr)) and express your interest in participating or just tell us your opinion or your ideas.

**We are interested!**

## Publishers' Note



**O**ur first issue is ready! We have been wishing for it for two years and now we witness its conclusion with joy and with a lot of extra work from the publishing team.

We are still in the beginning and our ambitions are great: we want to see the Gestalt News expressing our thoughts and our worries and to become the stand for communication and dialogue; we want them to become our voice.

Welcome to all of us!

This newsletter has set as its aim to facilitate the communication both among the Gestalt Foundation members (trainees, graduates, trainers, friends, etc.) and between the Gestalt Foundation and the people who had not had the opportunity to know us in a different way.

In this, initially, six-month issue we wish to develop an alternative way of communication not direct but more accessible and "condensed". Besides the news and the activities of our center you will also find permanent columns relevant to the sectors of application of the Gestalt Therapy such as Gestalt and Child, Gestalt and Organizations, along with informative theoretical texts.

We decided to dedicate our first issue on an important event for the Gestalt therapy european community, the 8th E.A.G.T. European conference in Prague in September 2004, which takes place every three years. Within this dedication you may find information regarding the European Association for Gestalt Therapy and about the history of the Gestalt Foundation and its parallel course with other European training and psychotherapy centers.

We hope that this will be the first issue with great interest to professionals in the field of mental health and to people who enjoy thinking! I invite you all to participate in the exchange of opinions.

I thank all the people who helped with their goodwill and efforts make this newsletter true.

**I hope you enjoy it!**

On behalf of the publishing team,  
Antonia Konstantinidou

*A few words about Antonia Konstantinidou: Antonia Konstantinidou is a Social and Clinical Psychologist (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), a Gestalt Psychotherapist, Trainer and Supervisor. She is the co-founder of the Gestalt Foundation and one of the permanent members of the training program. She lives and works in Thessaloniki where she holds her private practice since 1996.*



## Gestalt Therapy and Bibliography

*In this column we wish to inaugurate a space of discussion and dialogue. Send us your comment on a theoretical text (book or article) that made an impression on you regarding the Gestalt Therapy and share it with us!*

*For our first issue we chose the comment on the introduction of the book *Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in Human Personality* by Perls, Hefferline and Goodman, Souvenir Press, London, 1951 because it is considered as one of the most important Gestalt therapy books (its nickname is "the bible"! ). We hope to promote its reading.*

**T**he book "Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in the Human Personality" written by F. Perls, R. Hefferline and P. Goodman, began as a manuscript written by Frederick Perls. The material was developed further by P. Goodman (volume II) and put to practical application by R. Hefferline (volume I). Therefore, it represents the result of the cooperation of three authors. In the introduction of the book, the authors give out the philosophy and the roots of the therapeutic approach they discuss in their book and outline the basic concepts, which permeate the theory as well as the application of Gestalt therapy in clinical practice. They also make a reference to the influences they have taken in from other therapeutic approaches but they estimate them in a critical way.

Their purpose is to develop a theory and method that would extend the limits and applicability of psychotherapy. Based upon the insights of Gestalt Psychology and the work of Wertheimer, Koehler, Lewin etc. they undertake to lay the foundation for a unique description of Gestalt theory as it applies in psychotherapy as it is, according to their saying, the only theory that adequately and consistently covers both normal and abnormal psychology.

Already, in the beginning of the introduction, the reader comes face to face with a paradox task: to understand the book he must have the Gestalt attitude and in order for him to acquire it he must read the book. The problem comes to resolve the philosophy of Gestalt itself, as it represents the original, undistorted, natural approach to life; that is, to man's thinking, acting, feeling.

The dualistic way of thinking, which characterizes the modern, Western life and makes us think based on contrasts: good - bad, body - mind, infantile - mature, is, actually, the result of the way we all have grown up and the values we have introjected. The Gestalt outlook talks about the resolution of this fixed split, of the integration of these opposing entities into a new Whole.

The concern is, now shifted from the

psychoanalytic interest for the unconscious to the function and the problems of awareness.

"Awareness is characterized by contact, by sensing, by excitement and by Gestalt formation. Its adequate functioning is the realm of normal psychology; any disturbance comes under the heading of psychopathology.

Contact as such is possible without awareness, but for awareness, contact is indispensable. The crucial question is: with what is one in contact? The spectator of a modern painting may believe that he is in contact with the picture while he is actually in contact with the art critic of his favorite journal.

Sensing determines the nature of awareness, whether distant (e.g. acoustic), close (e.g. tactile) or within the skin (proprioceptive). In the last term is included the sensing of one's dreams and thoughts.

"Excitement" seems to be linguistically a good term. It covers physiological excitation as well as the undifferentiated emotions. It includes the Freudian cathexis notion, Bergson's *elan vital*, the psychological manifestations of the metabolism from Mongolism to Basedow, and it gives us the basis for a simple theory of anxiety.

Gestalt formation always accompanies awareness. We do not see three isolated points, we make a triangle out of them. The formation of complete and comprehensive Gestalten is the condition of mental health and growth. Only the completed Gestalt can be organized as an automatically functioning unit (reflex) in the total organism. Any incomplete Gestalt represents an "unfinished situation" that clamors for attention and interferes with the formation of any novel, vital Gestalt. Instead of growth and development, we then find stagnation and regression.

In the above abstract, we have a complete description of the elements that constitute awareness, which is the basic instrument a gestalt therapist has at his disposal in order to help his client to reach his real self. The relationship between the gestalt formation and the ground is another basic concept. A gestalt is always in accordance to the context, the ground against which the "figure" stands out." In health, the relation between figure and ground is a process of permanent but meaningful emerging and receding. Thus the interplay of figure and background becomes the center of the theory as presented in the book: attention, concentration, interest, concern, excitement and grace

**continued at page 3**



By Ksenia Kanavitsa

### In this issue worked:

Siemens Harm • Giamarelou Giana • Kanavitsa Ksenia • Karagani Katerina • Kiletsi Irini • Konstantinidou Antonia  
• Lavranos Spiros • Mavridou Maria • Mpalliou Despina • Farmaki Maria • Hatzilakou Katia

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## Gestalt Therapy and Bibliography

continued from page 2

are representative of healthy figure-ground formation, while confusion, boredom, compulsions, fixations, anxiety, amnesias, stagnation and self-consciousness are indicative of figure/ground formation which is disturbed.

In neurosis, and much more in psychosis, the elasticity of figure/ground formation is disturbed. We often find either rigidity (fixation) or a lack of figure formation (repression). Both interfere with the habitual completion of an adequate Gestalt."

The authors regard the already known therapeutic approaches with an eclectic, critical attitude. They use psychoanalytic terms such as Superego, repression, introjection, projection etc. but they disagree with its practical application, which they regard as inapplicable and ineffective.

The demands a psychoanalyst puts upon his client to relax and neither to censor, nor to defend, as a prerequisite for his therapy, comes to opposition to what the client already does. He already knows how to do it, he has forgotten how not to do it and he is unwilling to get rid of it.

As far as Cybernetics and Reich's orgone theory are concerned, the author's basic disagreement lies upon the fact that they consider them to be at best half-truths. They deal with the organism in isolation and not in creative contact with the environment. Nevertheless, they recognize Reich's contribution, as he, in his theory of the motoric armor, managed to make the concept of repression, concrete and tangible. Furthermore, he shifted the interest from the recovery of the "repressed" to re-organizing the repressing forces. He introduces an outlook and a way of work close to Gestalt's philosophy and practice. On the other hand, they don't believe that the mere dissolving of the character armor may lead to the recovery of the self. The motoric armor is the mean by which a client suppresses his needs. If this suppression is to stop and not to be replaced with awareness e.g. contact, sensing, excitement and gestalt formation, the true self cannot emerge.

Finally, in the discussion about Behaviorism, they agree that the mind consists of a mass of associations and that our behavior consists of reflexes. Nevertheless, "the creative activity of the organism is as little explained by associations, reflexes and other automatism as the planning strategy

and the organizing of war is explained by the automatism of the disciplined soldier".

Sensing and moving are both outgoing activities, not mechanical responses, whenever and wherever the organism meets novel situations. The sensoric system of orientation and the motoric system of manipulation work interdependently, but as reflexes only in the lower layers, which are fully automatized and require no awareness.

The Gestalt proposal, as far as therapy is concerned, uses the concepts of awareness and figure/ground formation, in order to comprehend the situation as well as to perform in a therapeutic way. "In an earlier book (Perls: Ego, Hunger and Aggression) the following theory was put forward. In the struggle for survival the most relevant need becomes figure and organizes the behavior of an individual until this need is satisfied, whereupon it recedes into the background (temporary balance) and makes room for the next now most important need. In the healthy organism, this change of dominance has the best survival chance. In our society, such dominant needs, for example, morals, etc, often become chronic and interfere with the subtle self-regulating of the human organism". The dominant need of the neurotic, in order to survive, is to defend, censor, become tense etc. "Instead of pulling means out of the unconscious we work on the uppermost surface. The bother is that the patient (and too often the therapist himself) takes this surface for granted. The way the patient talks, breathes, moves, censors, scorns, looks for causes, etc. - this to him is obvious, is constitution, is nature. But, actually it is the expression of his dominant needs, e.g., to be victorious, good and impressive. It is precisely in the obvious that we find his unfinished personality; and only by tackling the obvious, by melting the petrified, by differentiating between blah-blah and real concern, between the obsolete and the creative, can the patient regain the liveliness of the elastic figure/ground formation. In this process, which is the process of growth and maturing, the patient experiences and develops his "self", and we intend to show how he comes to this "self" via the means at his disposal: his available amount of awareness in experimental situations".

"In order to do this, we change our

outlook toward the therapeutic situation by acknowledging that every non-dogmatic approach is based upon the trial and error method of nature. That way the clinical becomes an experimental situation. Instead of putting explicit or implicit demands upon the patient - pull yourself together, or: you must relax, or: do not censor, or: you are naughty, you have resistances, or: you are just dead - we realize that such demands would only increase his difficulties and make him more neurotic, even desperate. We suggest graded experiments which - and this is of the uppermost importance- are not tasks to be completed as such. We explicitly ask: what is going on if you repeatedly try this or that? With this method we bring to the surface the difficulties of the patient. Not the task, but what interferes with the successful completion of the task becomes the center of our work. In Freudian terms, we bring out and work through the resistances themselves."

As mentioned above, the book Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in the Human Personality is divided in two parts, a theoretical and a practical one. The reader is encouraged to begin with the first, the practical part and to try to do the experiments that are suggested, as conscientiously as possible. The book aims at bringing to the layman a systematic course for his personal development and integration. Afterwards, he can start on a systematic working out and assimilation of the theoretical part.

Fifty-three years after its first publication in U.S.A., the F. Perls, R. Hefferline and P. Goodman's book is considered a fundamental work. It consists a systematic presentation of the theory and the practical application of Gestalt therapy that addresses both to professionals in the field of mental health as well as to the layman who wants to get a deeper insight of his self.

Kanavitsa Ksenia

A few words about Ksenia Kanavitsa: Ksenia Kanavitsa is a psychologist and a Gestalt Foundation graduate. She lives and practices as a psychotherapist privately in Larisa. She is one of the therapists and collaborators of the Gestalt Foundation.

## Gestalt in the Working Field

*In the U.S.A. and in Europe an important and continuously expanding Gestalt application is relevant to management and organizations. Here is an introductory and informative note concerning this issue.*



By Lavranos Spiros

### Gestalt in Organizations

The Gestalt approach began to be applied in public beneficial organizations and trade businesses in the U.S.A. since the 1960. Nowadays, 40 years later both in the U.S.A. and in Europe, it has become a powerful tool towards the effective output and the function of the beneficial organizations and the small and greater businesses.

The issues about which the organizations ask for help are mainly the need for change and the resistance to it, the existence of many conflicts, the lack of acceptance of the conflicts within the organizations, the problematic internal communication, the teamwork, and leadership issues.

The counselors who deal with those problems are mostly therapists; that was evident in the Prague conference. They need though a special training so as to be able to correspond to the rising needs of the corporations.

A relevant debate regarding the training issue has already started from an E.A.G.T. group in which we participate.

I would also like to mention that in Prague for the first times a group of colleagues from all over Europe was constituted who work professionally with organizations and businesses and they are numbered 30 people. It is certain that in the next conference in Greece the sector "Gestalt in Organizations" will be of great interest and will have a dynamic presence.

A few words about Spyros Lavranos: Spyros Lavranos is a member of the greek core who strives for the application of the Gestalt theory in the working field. He works as a business counsel in greek and foreign firms for more than ten years. His main interest lies in the issue of the change management and his relationship with the Gestalt Foundation started in 1998.

# PRAGUE SPECIAL ISSUE

## Stockholm 2001-Prague 2004



By Kiletsi Irini

As I start to write my experience from the two E.A.G.T. conferences, I go back in time, I go back to September 2001. I had just concluded my Gestalt psychotherapy training and had just made my very first steps as a therapist, when I was informed about the 7th European conference that was about to take place in Stockholm. My experience until that time was relevant to Greek gestalt therapist' conferences within the gestalt training program. Consequently, the idea of a conference with professionals from all over Europe and U.S.A. was indeed challenging. Gestalt psychotherapy is not broadly known in Greece, at least not in the way we have come to know it as therapists. Therefore, I was wondering about the situation in other European countries, about the training programs there, whether the gestalt therapists' professional prospects were satisfactory, whether there had been done in particular. I was also curious to see how this knowledge

any research and in which fields it could be practically applied and which organizations undertook the realization.

Along with my curiosity grew my enthusiasm, and to be honest, my anxiety. The Greek participation with less than ten people was by far outnumbered in comparison to other participations. The Greek Gestalt was hardly known to the foreign participants and of course none imagined the high Greek therapists' training level. I admit that neither did I! I was pleasantly surprised to see that I attended at the conference certain lectures and workshops with which I was already familiar and that I had a very respectable presence in anything new and different from what I already knew. My anxiety thus started to subside and it was succeeded by joy and satisfaction because of the foreign colleagues' questions regarding our training and the existence of Gestalt in Greece.

I also realized that in Sweden the Gestalt approach is broadly applied in the mental health field and in many organizations and businesses. I was disappointed when I reflected on the Greek reality and I considered that since the same situation prevailed in other countries in the past then the situation in Greece could evolve.

When I left the 7th European conference, I had an idea of Gestalt in Europe; I had contacted the cooperating net that has developed among all those different countries that strive to achieve common goals. I already felt I was part of something greater. In this conference rose the need for the constitution of a Greek organization for Gestalt psychotherapy. This is a goal that all the members of E.A.G.T. try to achieve. I left with the hope that the next time, in three years, the Greek participation would be broader and the Gestalt's work in Greece more known.

Three years later, after the 8th European conference in Prague my dream has come true. The participants' number was multiplied, the Greek colleagues left the best of impressions and the "Greek Organization of Gestalt Psychotherapy" is a fact. The course and the development of our training, the course and the development of each and every one of us have an impact and make us capable and responsible for all that we hope to achieve in the future. In this way we become responsible for the realization of the next E.A.G.T. conference in 2007 in our country.

When I left Prague I had in my luggage the certainty that we are fully qualified and quite experienced to continue our course with wisdom and success!

*A few words about Irini Kiletsi: Irini Kiletsi is a psychologist, a Gestalt Foundation graduate and one of the therapists and collaborators of the Gestalt Foundation. She lives and works in Thessaloniki practicing individual and group therapy in her practice.*

A great event for the European world of Gestalt Therapy is already behind us, however, on our way back to Greece we felt as its echo was still with us.

The 6th European conference of Gestalt Therapy, September 2004 and Prague with its beautiful landscape, the imposing bridges becomes itself a bridge of communication for the psychotherapists coming from all over the world to meet there after three years alongside with other professionals as well as with trainees.

We were impressed by the diversification of the conference subjects. Theoretical components such as awareness or the id-function became the focus of attention for many psychotherapists, who proved that such concepts are always up-dated and are found in the heart of interest for the current trend in psychotherapy.

Additionally, the applications of Gestalt therapy, for instance in education, in mental illness, in dreams, have also been the main point of many presentations, whereas group psychotherapy was also highlighted.

Throughout the 4-day conference participants had also the chance to attend different workshops in which there was a reference on the relationship

between Gestalt therapy and religion, sex, sexuality, the role of parenting and intimate relationships. Other announcements were relevant to ethics focusing on the radical changes that take place in the sociopolitical level in which Gestalt approach is trying to adjust creatively.

I would say that the general areas around which the workshops, the panels, and the announcements

## 8th European conference of Gestalt Therapy "Tradition and Renewal"

were constructed were the dialectic aspect of Gestalt therapy and the meeting point between different schools in Europe and the States as well as the globalization as an international phenomenon.

What was mentioned during the 6th European conference was the global aspect of Gestalt therapy as a holistic approach which is considered to be in dialogue with other approaches in psychotherapy such as

## From Prague to Athens with a Stop at Israel

Five hundred people, men and women from all over the world, all together in a huge conference room in Prague, all of us Gestalt trainers, trainees, therapists, supervisors coming from a different socio-cultural background. We are here to vote by hand the country that shall undertake the next European conference in 2007. The nominated countries are Israel and Greece and their representatives is Nurith Levi on the behalf of Israel and Despina Mpalliou on the behalf of Greece.

Nurith presents her proposition and the reasons for which her country should be preferred. The reactions are intense: Will Palestinian therapists be able to participate in Israel? Are there any Palestinian therapists that might participate?

I freeze. Never had I faced such a conflict within Gestalt considering the fact that we were in an intercultural group of five hundred people. Momentarily I was afraid that there would be no solution. Gradually I started having confidence in the process and in the possibility of a solution through the clear position of the members who on the one hand exposed their reasons of their negation and on the other and they took care of their colleague, the therapist, and the trainer, our beloved Nurith. And so, there it was! The conflict was resolved without great injuries, without polarization between right and wrong. The 2007 conference will take place in Athens.

The moment of "con-sent" is unforgettable. When I saw this huge group in which I also participated, solving the issue, uniting and strengthening our relationships without destructing, I was in awe. This encouraged me and provided me with confidence for the future and for the power of the Gestalt approach that I serve.

The way that Nurith and Katia shook hands, the way that the Gestalt Foundation trainees and graduates embraced moved Nurith, the way that Nurith wished us "Good luck" with a bottle of red wine, these are memories carved deep in my mind. We all left in awe because of this contact and with the hope that the same achievement is possible for the fighting peoples all over the world in the future.



A few words about Giana Giamarelou:

Giana Giamarelou has a M.Sc. in Clinical Psychology; she is a co-founder of the Gestalt Foundation, a Gestalt Psychotherapist, Trainer and Supervisor. She is also a member of the E.A.G.T.

Giamarelou Giana

drama therapy and psychoanalysis and at the same time is enriched by elements and tools that derive from the art of theater and dance, from the creative play as well as from other sources of human expression. This is what Malcolm Parlett (Gestalt trainer, Organizational consultant and publisher of the British Gestalt Journal) referred to in his wonderful speech: "we should not forget that Gestalt is one out

chosen as the next candidate to accommodate the 7th European Conference of Gestalt Therapy. This news had actually challenged us to look deeper into the ethical, social and political agenda and to become aware of how vulnerable and at the same interdependent we are, as part of the field. However, the wonderful way according to which the dilemma was solved regarding a choice between Greece or Israel, reminded us all the meaning of the "here and now" in Gestalt Therapy.

Katerina Siampani (Trainee in the 4th year of Gestalt Foundation) commending upon this experience stated that: "the conversation that had taken place was a very strong experience for me because during that time of decision-making I felt myself passing through a range of emotions very quickly. I felt that I had been offered a precious gift and now a month later I can recall moments from conference which make me feel joyous, satisfied, nostalgic and rich).

Probably it was the first time that the Greek Gestalt Psychotherapy was represented so widely in a European conference. Forty-eight Greek participants attended the 6th European Conference of

of many other approaches that exist".

A main question for many participants during the conference was: "How might the changes that take place around ones' world affect a psychotherapist?". An additional question was: "What is the role of Gestalt therapy in the current frame of reality?"

I think that there was no answer until the end of the conference and until the moment a country had to be



By Maria Mavridou



#### A few words about Despina Mpalliou:

Despina Mpalliou has a M.Sc. in Counseling Psychology; she is a co-founder of the Gestalt Foundation, a Gestalt Psychotherapist, Trainer and Supervisor and a member of the E.A.G.T.

–English, French, German, Dutch, Russian- smells, tastes (extraordinary Czech ones), embraces, kisses, smiles, crying... the sensations.

Thoughts, opinions, disagreements, novelties, questions, plans, programs... the logic and the seeking.

Five hundred people, Gestalt therapists, students and teachers, were in a process of searching, meeting, and contacting. A "meeting" where we are all present with our bodies, our language, our values, our experiences, our beliefs, our needs, our expectations. Common background, Gestalt therapy as common ground, and yet these elements are differ according to the training, the teacher, the experience, the country, the society, the culture of every single one.

The expression "The encounter of differentiality" that is frequently used in our field, describes the reality of the Prague conference. Gradually I am reminiscent of small and great moments. Important memories. And so, I remember...

I remember the meetings of the E.A.G.T. members as they tried creatively to evaluate, to develop and to promote the Gestalt therapy. I remember moved the presentation under the title "Facing the facts of life" by K. Hatzilakou, G. Kalota, M.Makridou, A. Konstantinidou, M. Mavridou, M. Triarico and F. Meulmeester.

The presentation had as its figure people with chronic illnesses that try to cope with their "reality". As a background to this presentation were the possibilities provided by the Gestalt therapy in combination with the "harsh", well-organized therapists' group.

Neither do I forget the debate after the presentation "the social and political dimensions of Gestalt theory" by Höll, P. Lichtenberg, E. Kniff, M. Parlett, P. and E. Titus. It was a debate with intense participation. How do we face as therapists the social and political issues that bring our clients? How can the Gestalt therapy help towards an ampler realization and sensitivity of the therapists, trainers and clients as citizens?

I also remember the group process at the end of the day. We found ourselves coming from Greece and searching for our common points of reference that is the profound bonding and the familiar interaction; we also found ourselves expressing our dilemmas, our questions, our anxieties, and our enthusiasm.

I would like to conclude with this enthusiasm because it refers to the next conference that will take place in our country; this enthusiasm was succeeded by hope, anxiety, and responsibility. I have but to wish to all the people that I have and have not encountered: "Until our next meeting"!

**Despina Mpalliou**

*continued from page 4*

Gestalt Therapy and they were trainees in the Gestalt approach, psychotherapists and of course the Gestalt Foundation trainers.

The presence of the Greek society was highlighted during the conference with three presentations. The first one concerned a joint presentation of the Gestalt Foundation Training Center and the Belgium Institute Multidimens. The title of this joint presentation was: "facing the facts of life".

There was also a presentation of the two main projects regarding the voluntary work of the Institute. Katia Hatzilakou (trainer and supervisor of the Gestalt Foundation Training Center) presented the historical dimension of psychology and psychotherapy in Greece. Gianna Kallota and Melina Makridou (psychotherapists-graduates of the Gestalt Foundation Training Center) presented the work regarding the provision of psychological support which runs in co-operation with the Greek Society of Alzheimer and other disorders.

In the second part of the presentation Frans Meulmeester (Gestalt Psychotherapist and trainer) focused on the existential aspect of Gestalt Therapy which can support people who face facts of life

# PRAGUE SPECIAL ISSUE

## Moments from the Prague Conference

How could I isolate moments when the "whole" is more important than the "parts, the moments"?

Thus I shall begin from the total sensation that I have from the Prague conference because I believe that this is the way for me to go through the moments, the impressions, the memories.

Sharing, joy, anger, bitterness, freedom, anxiety, enthusiasm, sadness... these were the emotions.

Colors, movement (running all over!), sounds

*"I slept and dreamed that life is joy  
I woke up and realized that life is duty  
I fought and I found out that duty was the joy"*

**Theodor Tagor**

I came across Tagor's phrase in high school, some years ago, when our literature teacher wrote it on the board as an essay title.

I think though that I had been in touch with the meaning of this phrase's content much earlier, almost ever since I can recall myself. If you wish to call it introjection or exhortation or prompting coming from my family, you may do so. However, I consider that the above phrase has affected me deeply and it is possible that it still does so in many important aspects of my life.

In what way are all these related to Antonia's request to write a piece for the first review of this newly developed newspaper in order to express briefly the way I have experienced my work in E.A.G.T. and in Gestalt foundation the last couple of years? In what way are all these related? I would dare say that there is a strong relationship because of the fact that what has motivated me and still motivates me in my development and work regarding the Gestalt approach is the faith and the conviction that the strive for what has to be done, for what I need to achieve and ought to offer, I consider it as a reward for whatever I have received and it is joy.

I used to sing "... offering is joy...", when I was a scout, when I later became leader of a small group, when I later on became leader of wider groups. I worked with the content of this phrase extendedly and profoundly in my individual therapy, "I chew it" over and over again on my mind and soul and I think that finally I kept the creativity, the joy, the enthusiasm and the excitement for the new, the development, and life that in their totality derive from giving.

This is my job in E.A.G.T. as "Chair of the extended Board" from September 2004 and as "Treasurer" from July 2002 to September 2004. This is also my job in the Gestalt Foundation since 1998. This is because I have always considered that the Gestalt Foundation and the E.A.G.T. share concepts such as: vision, faith in human, hope, offer to the community, trust in the process, being with others, joy, growth, aim, journey.

Vision for the future, with faith in human being and its' endless potential; respect in difference, and acceptance of pluralism that comes from group work; trust in the process that contains both the conflict and the frustration; the joy and content that results from creativity; the effort to adjust in constantly changing situations; development and use of human resources in an endless course towards evolution.

I want to thank you personally, Antonia, Gianna, Despina, for sharing with me this journey and for having chosen me as your partner. I want to thank you personally, Daan and Margherita for the fact that you suggested that I could be the right person for this position. I want to thank you personally Bas, Daan, Dick, Ester, Joppe, Ken, Nancy, and Peter for the fact that you teach me through our partnership. Finally, I want to thank all of you people as trainees and as partners for the fact that you keep on providing me with feedback and ideas and also for the fact that you honor me with your trust regarding your thoughts and anxieties. Besides all, you are the Gestalt Foundation and the E.A.G.T.

**A few words about Katia Hatzilakou:** Katia Hatzilakou has a M.Sc. in Social and Clinical Psychology, she is a co-founder of the Gestalt Foundation, a Gestalt Psychotherapist, Trainer and Supervisor and President of the Extended Board of the E.A.G.T.



**By Katia Hatzilakou**

including death and chronic illness.

Furthermore, Antonia Konstantinidou (trainer and supervisor of Gestalt Foundation) presented the important role of supervision regarding the formulation and the supervision of psychological support groups for cancer patients. The role of supervision and its' significance was also mentioned regarding the supervision of the leaders of the psychological support groups some of whom are still trainees in the Gestalt Foundation.

Finally, MariAngela Triarico and Maria Mavridou (Psychotherapists graduates of the Gestalt Foundation) presented the work of the psychological support groups which have taken place for the last two years in collaboration with the Association of Cancer Patients in Northern Greece.

The other two workshops were set by Anastasia Varsamopoulou and Petros Theodorou who are currently in their 4th year of training in Gestalt Therapy. More specifically, Anastasia Varsamopoulou (psychologist in the Greek Association of Alzheimer) presented the application of the therapeutic program which is provided to persons with dementia through the use of art.

Petros Theodorou (composer) presented the

workshop with the title "Applications of the stage performing and its use in Gestalt Therapy".

The representation of our country in the administration of the E.A.G.T. by Katia Hatzilakou was considered another success. More specifically, Katia participated in the administration board of the conference as president of the extended board of E.A.G.T., which aims to the representation of national associations of member countries.

Additionally, Maria Farnaki (psychologist, Gestalt psychotherapist) acted as a representative of the Greek Association of Gestalt Therapy.

A moment to celebrate was also when Despina Baliou (trainer in Gestalt Foundation) supported Greece participation to accommodate the next E.A.G.T. conference.

Overall, the participants from Greece felt warmly welcomed in Prague. According to MariAngela Triarico the presence of the greek mission in the 6th European Conference regarding the organization and the presentations was of high quality. Additionally, Melina Makridou mentions, "it was the first time that I participated in a world conference. I realized that in Gestalt Foundation the training and the work produced is of high value. During the conference through my

participation in different lectures I met other professionals, trainees and trainers from all over the world and I realized that my level of knowledge and experience relevant to Gestalt therapy is sound and sufficient. I also felt familiar having so many Greeks around but most of all what Malcom said made sense: "cultures, religions and people may differ but they share the same roots of Gestalt theory".

Thus, Gestalt theory is considered the common place and our next meeting point is Greece. The 7th European conference of E.A.G.T. is ahead of us. Our appointment in 2007 in Athens has been set and we would like to invite you all, professionals, trainees, and people who met the Gestalt approach to be present there where the European Tradition will meet the Greek Renewal!

**Maria Mavridou  
Psychologist, Psychotherapist**

*Maria Mavridou is a psychologist (graduate of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki). She is also a psychotherapist. She has attended and successfully completed the four year training in Gestalt approach in the Gestalt Foundation Training Center in Thessaloniki. She works in the Center of Social Support in Evosmos in the field of the counseling services.*

# The History of the Gestalt Foundation

## Its Course and its Landmarks!

What other would our first issue contain, if not our history! I have tried to collect the most important events and activities of the Gestalt Foundation during the seven years of its function that in my opinion manifest the philosophy and the attitude of our center. Rather than a theoretical text I opted for this kind of register that shows the development and our organization throughout the years.

**1997-1998** Creation of the Psychotherapy and Training Centre "Gestalt Foundation"!

- The creation of this centre was a result of the liquidation of the unique at that time Gestalt therapy training centre by the name "Gestalt Psychology and Education Centre" run by Toula Vlahoutsikou, Gianna Giamarelou and Despina Mpalliou. After the liquidation two training centers for the Gestalt therapy in Greece: the "Institute of Psychotherapy and Methodology" by Toula Vlahoutsikou and her collaborators in Athens, and the "Psychotherapy and Training Center Gestalt Foundation" founded and run by Giana Giamarelou, Antonia Konstantinidou, Despina Mpalliou, and Katia Hatzilakou in Athens and Thessalonica where it still functions.

- Our first concern was to plan a training program as complete as possible, able to correspond to the European training standards as they are defined by the European Union for the Gestalt Therapy (E.A.G.T.). Indeed, on the commencement of our training group and after we presented our program, E.A.G.T. recognized our training program as well as our center as its recognized member. The journey has begun!

**1998-1999** The training program continues in Thessalonica and in the meanwhile the Gestalt Foundation besides the training program organizes events:

- Conference with the subject: "Facing the important losses of our lives" (Thessalonica, 26/02/99) with coordinators Iro Ypsilanti and Giana Giamarelou.

- 1st Workshop of Gestalt Theory and Methodology with central subject "Psychopathology and Gestalt" (Portaria-Pilio 22-25/04/99) with coordinators Harm Siemens, Gianna Giamarelou, Despina Mpalliou where there are included experiential workshops, theoretical presentations and poster presentations both by the trainers and the trainees.

**1999-2000** The training program continues and has by now two training groups (group A and group B for the older ones!) in Thessalonica. Besides the training program and the rest of the events, the Gestalt Foundation starts extending its activities with its participation in the 7th summer seminar

for Individual Psychology of the "Addlerian Psychology Center of Thessalonica":

- Experiential seminar of seven monthly 4hour meetings with the subject: "How to recognize the losses and to accept the changes that they bring on to my life" with coordinator Giana Giamarelou (Thessalonica, November 1999-May 2000)
- 2nd Workshop of Gestalt Theory



and Methodology with central subject: "Therapeutic Relationship" (Portaria-Pilio 13-16/04/00) with coordinators Harm Siemens, Gianna Giamarelou, Antonia Konstantinidou, Despina Mpalliou, Katia Hatzilakou.

- Participation in the 7th Summer Seminar of Individual Psychology of the "Addlerian Psychology Center of Thessalonica" (Thessalonica 12-14/05/00) with two announcements: "What does my body tell me" by Katia Hatzilakou (13/05/00) and "The uniqueness of existence and the creativity of co-existence" by Antonia Konstantinidou (14/05/00) and an experiential three-day seminar with the subject: "The Flow of Communication" coordinated by Antonia Konstantinidou and Katia Hatzilakou.

**2000-2001** This year the Γ' Group is created in Thessalonica and gradually the groups take the form of training classes. This year the training groups are initiated in Athens too! The Gestalt Foundation activities are extended through the cooperation on a voluntary basis with Y.W.C.U. (Young Women Christian Union).

- The voluntary activity of the Gestalt Foundation members begins with the cooperation with Y.W.C.U. in Thessalonica through a series of educational seminars in communication for the volunteers of Y.W.C.U. and self-awareness groups for the members and friends of the organization.

- Systematic function of annual self-awareness groups in Athens and Thessalonica.

- Two-day Training-Experiential Seminar with the subject: "Gestalt

Therapy Methodology-Awareness and Phenomenology" with central speaker Richard Lompa and groups coordinators along with Richard Lompa, Gianna Giamarelou, Antonia Konstantinidou, Despina Mpalliou, Katia Hatzilakou (Thessalonica, 10-11/02/2001).

- 3rd Workshop of Gestalt Theory and Methodology with the subject: "Transference-Antitransference" coordinated by: Gianna Giamarelou, Antonia Konstantinidou, Despina Mpalliou, Katia Hatzilakou (Portaria-Pilio, 29/3-1/4 2001)

- Training-Experiential Seminar with the subject: "Facing the losses in my life" (Thessalonica, six 4hour meetings, October 2000-May 2001) and two-day seminar with subject "Small and great Losses" (Athens 19-20/05/01) coordinated by Giana Giamarelou.

- Training-Experiential Seminar with the subject: "Abuse, consequences, confrontation" (Thessalonica, five 4hour meetings, March-May 2001) and "Violence in the family" (Athens, five 4hour meetings, March-May 2001) coordinated by Despina Mpalliou.

- Training-Experiential Seminar with the subject: "The uniqueness of existence and the creativity of co-existence: Working with the difference" (Thessalonica, four 6hour meetings, November 2000-February 2001 and Athens, 28-29/04/01) coordinated by Katia Hatzilakou.

- Training-Experiential Seminar with the subject: "Communication in the interpersonal relationships" (Thessalonica, five 4hour meetings, February-May 2001) coordinated by Antonia Konstantinidou.

**2001-2002** The training program expands and the "classes of attendance" commence (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th in Thessalonica and 1st and 2nd in Athens). With the first Gestalt Foundation graduates we set off towards the challenge of implementation and expansion of the Gestalt therapy within the local community! A difficult year for the Gestalt Foundation "personnel" who suffered personal losses that affected the activities of the center, which we continued as creatively as we could. The most important new steps made that

year were the commencement of the training programs for pedagogues (Gestalt and Education) and the beginning of our collaboration on a voluntary basis with the "Alzheimer and Dementia Organization of Northern Greece"! With our participation in the European E.A.G.T. conference in Stockholm we become more and more involved in collaborations with European colleagues and the Gestalt Foundation participates to the E.A.G.T. board through Katia Hatzilakou who is the Treasurer. Our goal is to promote the European cooperation and exchange within the Gestalt community, and to participate actively and consciously!

- Presentation by the Gestalt Foundation in the E.A.G.T. European conference in Stockholm (Stockholm, September 2001) with the subject: "Dialogues with women in vulnerable situations in Greece" during which samples of work on an individual level were presented (working with immigrants, Antonia Konstantinidou), on a group level (support group for Kurd women who came to Greece, Despina Mpalliou) and on a level of intervention in the community (presentation of our cooperation with Y.W.C.U. of Thessalonica, Katia Hatzilakou)

- Commencement of the training seminars "Education and Gestalt" (Kamena Vourla, 25-26/05/02) coordinated by Sjanneke Meijer.

- Continuation of our cooperation with Y.W.C.U. and commencement of a pilot program for individual short-term support for women and members of the Organization. A "great" campaign begins for the registration of the mental health services in Thessalonica, which results to a type of database for the Organization. In this effort the work provided by the Gestalt Foundation seniors and the graduates is substantial!

- Commencement of our collaboration on a voluntary basis with the "Alzheimer and Dementia Organization of Northern Greece" with a series of lectures and a support group.

- A two-day Training-Experiential Seminar (Thessalonica, 10-11/10/2001) with subject: "Deontology in the Gestalt Therapy" with central speaker Richard Lompa and coordinators along Richard Lompa: Gianna Giamarelou, Despina Mpalliou, Katia Hatzilakou.

- A two-day Training Seminar (Thessalonica, 2-3/03/02) with subject: "The theory of the Self-Theory of Growth" coordinated by Margherita Spagnuolo-Lobb.

- 4th Workshop of Gestalt Theory and Methodology with central subject: "Human Relations" (Kamena Vourla 23-26/05/2002) coordinated by: Harm Siemens, Nurith Levi (participating for the first time in our workshop), Gianna Giamarelou, Antonia Konstantinidou, Despina Mpalliou, Katia Hatzilakou. This year the Gestalt Foundation seniors have a very active role!

*continued at page 7*

# The History of the Gestalt Foundation

continued from page 6

**2002-2003** The training program is enriched by an abundance of new collaborators from European training centers. We cooperate with trainers from Holland, Israel, U.K., Switzerland and Spain! Additionally, training seminars begin regarding Gestalt in the Professional field (Gestalt in Organizations) and a Greek core is formed that starts to elaborate the implementation of the Gestalt theory in the professional life. A group of Greek colleagues is created in order to promote the Gestalt theory in education (Gestalt in Education). Our primary concern is the preparation of the members and the first thoughts towards "action" in Greece. Another fresh start this year within the annual workshop, are the "advanced" seminars addressed to the Gestalt Foundation graduates and to the professionals in the mental health field. This year also commences our cooperation with the "Cancer Organization of Northern Greece" and we initiate support groups.

- For the first time the Center initiates two two-day training seminars for the Gestalt application in the work field (Gestalt in Organizations). One of them is addressed to students with subject: "From Therapy to the work field: Adjusting Gestalt Methods and Mentality". The other is addressed to professionals with the subject: "Applying Gestalt in working with Communication and Conflict in Organizations". Coordinators are Malcolm Parlett and Sue Clayton (Chalkidiki, 23-24/05/02 and 25-26/05/02).

- The seminars for the pedagogues continue (three training-experiential two-day seminars) with central subject: "The Gestalt approach in the pedagogical act" coordinated by Sjanneke Meijer (Thessalonica, 30/11-1/12/2002, 21-22/12/2002 and 17-18/05/2003).

- Lecture with the subject: "Patients with H.I.V. and their environment" by Harm Siemens (Thessalonica, 1/11/02).

- A 6hour experiential workshop: "Sexuality and Homosexuality" (Thessalonica, 4/11/02) coordinated by Harm Siemens.

- Training-experiential seminar: "Family violence and child abuse" coordinated by Despina Mpaliou (Thessalonica, December 2002-April 2003)

- Training-Experiential seminar: "Therapy and Consulting for addicted individuals: Basic principles according to Gestalt therapy" coordinated by Peter Schulthess (Athens, 11/04/03 and Thessalonica 8-9/02/03)

- Training-Experiential seminar: "Lets salute the Never and the Always" coordinated by Maria Farmaki and Katia Hatzilakou (Thessalonica, 22-23/02/03)

- Lecture: "Conflict in the couple" by Nurith Levi (Thessalonica, 27/02/03)

- A 6hour experiential seminar: "The forgotten child" coordinated by Nurith Levi (Thessalonica, 28/02/03)



- 5th Workshop of Gestalt Theory and Methodology with central subject: "Here and Now: exploring modern issues in today's society" (Chalkidiki, 23-26/05/2002) coordinated by: Harm Siemens, Nurith Levi, Sjanneke Meijer, Christine Stevens, Carmen Vasquez-Bandin, Gianna Giamarelou, Antonia Konstantinidou, Despina Mpalliou, Katia Hatzilakou. The new element in this workshop is the group of the mental health professionals who have a different program.

- A three-day training-experiential seminar: "The process of grief according to Gestalt therapy" coordinated by Carmen Vasquez-Bandin (Thessalonica, 25-27/07/03).

**2003-2004** The training program is enriched by an abundance of new collaborators and trainers, the seminars for professionals (Advanced Group) continue, and we move forward to organized events and activities both in the educational field (Gestalt and Education) and in the work field (Gestalt in Organizations). For the first time this year the "end ceremony" of the training program, known as "the Profile", includes the graduates from Athens and Thessalonica. A moment of great emotional tension and importance for the "directors" of the Gestalt Foundation and our seven year old course!

- A two-day seminar: "Prevention and pre-school age. Building the bases for later..." coordinated by Maria Farmaki and Katia Hatzilakou (Zakinthos, 26-27/9/03)

- This year we organize "Open Lectures" in Athens and Thessalonica during the academic year: "Stress and Depression in Gestalt therapy", "Gestalt therapy and Dementia", "Working with couples according to Gestalt Therapy" (Athens), "The intelligence of our feelings", "How i face the stress", "The power of joy", "Self-esteem – acceptance of the differentiability", "Working with shame in Gestalt therapy", "How I face the anger", "How I face the loneliness" (Thessalonica), coordinated by Gianna Giamarelou, Antonia Konstantinidou, Despina Mpalliou, Katia Hatzilakou.

- Commencement of the training seminars for Gestalt in the Pedagogical Act by the Gestalt Foundation graduates who have worked and still do within Gestalt and besides Gestalt with children, Antigoni Orfanou and Maria Farmaki. Two two-day seminars take place in

Athens and Thessalonica. The response to this initiative is enthusiastic and encouraging!

- Gestalt's first appearance both to the "outer world" and in the work field through its participation in the event "Money show" that took place in Hyatt-Regency (Thessalonica, 12/9/03) with a lecture by Sue Clayton regarding "Conflicts in the work field".

- The training-experiential seminars continue: "Intervention in Crisis", "Working with abuse", "Working with Losses according to Gestalt therapy" by Gianna Giamarelou, Despina Mpalliou, Maria Farmaki, Katia Hatzilakou respectively in Athens. Nurith Levi coordinates two 6hour workshops in Athens and in Thessalonica: "Dreams and Gestalt therapy". Two more training two-day workshops begin in Thessalonica: "Addictions and Gestalt therapy" by Peter Schulthess, and "Gestalt therapy and chronic illnesses" by Frans Meulmeester.

- Besides the training seminars that address to mental health professionals and students, this year in Thessalonica two experiential seminars were organized. The first one was influenced by art therapy and by the Jungian standpoint had the title "The Living Mask" and was coordinated by Sue Clayton. The second one was an experiential seminar based on the Gestalt point of view regarding the family with the title "Family Table" and was coordinated by Antonia Konstantinidou and Katia Hatzilakou.

- We host and we participate in the 4th E.A.G.T. conference for Writers (4th Writers' Conference) and among other things we present our ideas about our imminent presentation in the European conference in Prague (Thessalonica, 9-12/04/04).

- 6th Workshop of Gestalt Theory and Methodology with central subject: "The Experience of the Self: Gender, Identity, Character" (Portaria-Pilio, 15-18/04/04) coordinated by Harm Siemens, Nurith Levi, Richard Lompa, Peter Schulthess, Christine Stevens, Gianna Giamarelou, Antonia Konstantinidou, Despina Mpalliou, Katia Hatzilakou. In this residential workshop the donation of participation is inaugurated through the event "Helping Hands" in honor of Harm Siemens for his long lasting help towards the Gestalt Foundation.

**2004-2005** In the beginning of this year, we participate both trainers and trainees in the E.A.G.T. Conference (Prague, September 2004). There we showed a dynamic presence, which is described in the section concerning the conference, and we made a presentation that made a great impression! The subject of our two-hour presentation was "Facing the facts of life" in which we described our work with in prevention and support of people with chronic illnesses during the last five years through our cooperation with respective organizations. With us was Frans Meulmeester, a colleague and a collaborator, who is experienced in this field. The group that made the presentation represents many more people who have worked and still do so in this field: Giana Kalota, Antonia Konstantinidou, Melina Makridou, Maria Mavridou, Mariangela Triarico, Katia Hatzilakou. On our return we brought with us not only the satisfaction of participating in his event, but also the honor and the responsibility of the organization of the next European conference in 2007 in Athens!

## Something like an epilogue

Reading what I have written after trying to collect this above mentioned information, I have the sensation of a long, tiring, creative and productive struggle of the Gestalt Foundation to promote Gestalt therapy and the principles of our center, which is based on cooperation, on helping each other, on substantial and frank dialogue, on the effort for horizontal relationships and on the offering to the communities in which we live and work.

After this "report" I feel; the need to thank all of our collaborators for helping us from the very beginning up to today to make our ideas and our dreams reality, and for continuing to support with their active presence the promotion of the Gestalt therapy in Greece in the field of psychotherapy, in consultation, in pedagogical issues, in the working area and in the involvement of the specialists in the Community.

I would also like to thank the trainees and the Gestalt Foundation graduates because with their support they were part of the realization of our programs.

Finally I wish to thank all the people who have trusted us from the very beginning and they continue to do so by participating enthusiastically in every event that we happen to organize.

Without all of you the above long list would be nothing but plans and dreams!

We thank you and we hope that we may continue to correspond and to reciprocate the respect and the support that you show us!



## Gestalt Child and

# The relationship between educator and state

The Gestalt Therapy has many interesting views and opinions regarding the child, both in the pedagogical act and in psychotherapy. We inaugurate this column hoping to offer the Gestalt therapists who work with children a modern and lively space for discussion. We also invite the members of the Gestalt community who work with children to express in this column their opinion and their experience. In our first issue we host a comment regarding the relationship of the educator and the state.



Της Μαρίας Φαρμάκη

Every pedagogical act has its very own character:

a) The pedagogical activity is a result of a personal choice and it is therefore relevant to a subjective act

b) The pedagogical activity is exercised through institutional organizations (ex. School) from the society and it is therefore an expression of social

choices (Soulis, 2002). The educator is directly related to the state's institutionalized instrument, the school. According to Soulis this is a contradictive relation and this is why there is such a difficulty in the application of a systematic reformation.

Nevertheless in this article I wish to focus on the common elements in the two poles of this relationship so that they may become the basis of its involvement. The common elements are the goals that both the educators and the state set:

- The multilateral growth of a person (on a cognitive, social and emotional level)
- The cultivation of the responsibility in

every person

-The development of conscious citizens, that is, of people who respect themselves and their fellow human.

The Gestalt approach that focuses on the dynamic between the person and his environment, proposes a way with which this relationship may be functional. This way is based on the recognition of the human existence as a whole, on the recognition of the responsibility that every person bears for his own life, and on the respect towards the equality of our relationships through the dialogue. The relationship "educator-state-school" is also constituted by differences. Satir argues that our similarities bring us closer and our differences help us grow up.

I shall conclude this article with a proposition by Perls: "The proposition 'I tell you what you need' may be replaced by 'I listen to what you want-desire' and thus the basis for the beginning of a logical conversation is set" (Perls, Hefferline, Goodman 1951)

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### A few words about Maria Farmaki:

Maria Farmaki graduated the Nursing School of the Athens Technological Institute in 1984. She has worked for 15 years in the municipal nursery school of Athens in various childcare centers. She participated in many organizations striving for the amelioration of the pedagogical field. In 1996 she began her studies in the Psychology department of the Philosophical School of Athens and she also began her training as a Gestalt Psychotherapist. Since 2002 she works as a psychologist in the Counseling Center at the municipal nursery school of Athens, which she presides. She also practices as a Gestalt psychotherapist in her own practice.

## CORRESPONDENCE...



## CORRESPONDENCE...

The aim of this column is to gather correspondences from the Gestalt Foundation events! If something touched you, impressed you and if you want to express it to the rest of the "Gestalt community", you may send us your article and we will probably publish it! We begin with the correspondence from the 6th Residential Gestalt Workshop.

A hundred and fifty selves are gathered here in Pilio exploring and expanding. An encounter where psychologists, trainers, trainees, participants and observers, organizers and visitors met up.. The trainers came from Greece, Holland, England, and Israel. Every single one of them guides us towards the approach of the "self" from a different point of view.

Everything that I learn during these days corresponds to my everyday contact with the people that I co-exist. Everything that I learn about the Self-functions in the seminars, in the presentations, in the theatrical events, is somehow combined with the reality in which I relate to myself.

I remember Christine Stevens' words, also present at the conference: "Contact is the creative adjustment of the Self in its environment,

it is the constant sensation of existing in the world. In this creative adjustment there are five dimensions:

1. The Response that leads to responsibility. Response is the capacity to be functional both individually and socially.
2. The Interaction is the capacity to relate to others creatively
3. Self-awareness is the process of recognizing our Self. It is also the acquisition of the sensation of our identity and the experience of place, which we take up in the field.
4. Integration. This is the holistic commitment with our Self. The sense of the Self is that we are a whole as existences.
5. Experimentation allows us to try out new Self-sensations and to adopt new behaviors. Goodman argues that the character is a static behavior whereas the Self is a dynamic one. Our goal is to become less of a character and more of a Self".

Along with the third year group of which I am a member, we all lived in a different way for four days within these five dimensions. That was evident in our presentation, our conflicts, our laughter, and everything novel that we

created.

In retrospect I remember the coordination of the Play Bach Theatre, the imaginative artistic expositions concerning the Gestalt theory by the Gestalt Foundation freshmen and sophomores, the delicious initiation in the issue of sexuality by the third year trainees from Thessalonica, the exquisite presentation by the senior trainees about losses, and finally all the people who attended this conference in order to experience fully their Self and in doing so they supported us with their constant presence in our events. Remembering all that, makes me feel that everything was worth the effort. It was worth the ten-hour sessions sitting in a chair; it was worth our explosive group-process; it was worth my struggle to coordinate creatively with my group during the preparation of our presentation; it is even more worth carrying along that heavy suitcase in the small roads of Portaria until finding my hotel...Next year I will be there with more Self and less luggage.

Katerina Karagani

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