



Gestalt NEWS Foundation

INFORMATIVE AND COMMUNICATIVE SIX-MONTH ISSUE OF GESTALT FOUNDATION
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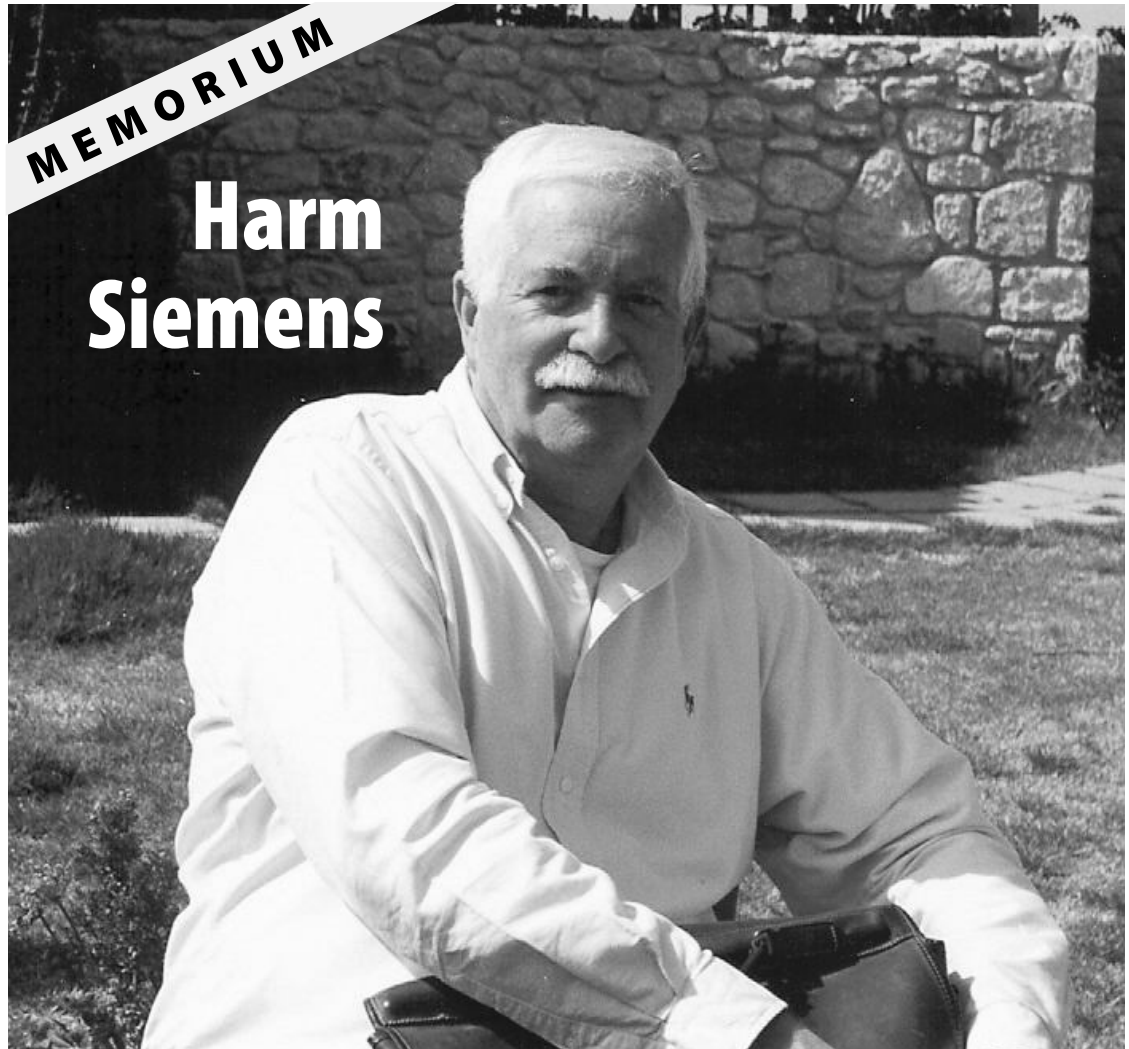
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Those of you who wish to contribute to future issues are most welcomed! Please contact Gestalt Foundation's secretariat office: Telephone: 2310 283588 or 210 7254010.

email:
thessaloniki@gestaltfoundation.gr
or athina@gestaltfoundation.gr.

Express your interest in participating or simply share with us your opinion or ideas!

We are always interested in hearing from you!



JORGE BUKAY Getting to know a mythical figure...

P. 6

book recommended

INNOVATIVE APPLICATIONS
OF **GESTALT** THERAPY

P. 2

Editorial

Shortly before our 12th four-day Workshop, trying to keep as steady a pace as possible, we

have reached our 12th issue during a hot month of May. We were planning on presenting to main stories, one on the arrival of Jorge Bucay and one on new partnerships of the Gestalt Foundation in Thessaloniki. The loss of Harm Siemens changed our priorities and our plans. Thus, this issue is dedicated to Harm, as a small indication of our love and appreciation for him. The arrival of Jorge inspired us all in Athens and Thessaloniki, which is quite obvious in this issue, both "artistically" as well as intellectually. In our book review section you can enjoy a fresh proposal by Constantinos Costas, who has taken over the column and prepares it consistently and enthusiastically. Personal testimonies by persons who experience the process of change through therapy, education and the supervision of the Gestalt Foundation bring a breath of fresh air, of hope and optimism and liven up our newsletter. I am always pleased when voluntary contributions arrive from members of the Gestalt Foundation community, in which they share their experiences and important moments with all of us, each one in the personal style of its author. Thus, we continue on our course, affected by and affecting the field around us, alert to pick up worries and hopes. When 2 years ago we dedicated one of our day meetings to the 10

years of the Gestalt Foundation in Social Responsibility, there were several interesting discussions that seem desperately timely under the current reality we are experiencing. Back then we were among the very few people who spoke out for social responsibility, solidarity and social participation. Now, those words are heard everywhere and countless magazine and newspaper pages refer to issues we have been discussing for years.

Let us hope that the crisis will become an opportunity for change and development.

We will meet again in the autumn, after the 10th European Gestalt Therapy Conference to be held in Berlin - the one after that is to be held in Athens.

Until then, I hope you enjoy this issue.

Antonia Konstantinidou
May 2010



Antonia Konstantinidou is a Social and Clinical Psychologist (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), Gestalt psychotherapist, trainer and supervisor, Member of EAGT, ECP Holder.

She is one of the co-founders of Gestalt Foundation and one of the resident members of the training program. She lives and works in Thessaloniki and Athens where she practices her profession since 1994.

«INNOVATIVE APPLICATIONS OF GESTALT THERAPY»

book recommended

[Serok, Sh. (2000). *Innovative Applications of Gestalt Therapy*. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company.]

By **Konstantinos Kostas**

Social Worker

Psychologist Psychotherapist

(E-mail: k.konstantinos@yahoo.gr)

We all know that developments in a specific scientific field are accompanied by this discipline being introduced and applied in various fields of human life. This is exactly what happened with psychology, social work and psychotherapy. The book recommended in this note, i.e. **Innovative Applications of Gestalt Therapy** by Shraga Serok, presents evidence of how Gestalt methodology may be applied under different conditions and among various populations and how it can become a tool for positive change.

More specifically, book chapters describe how Gestalt methodology is applied with positive (measurable) results in a wide range of fields, such as: Anxiety Reduction among Students Sitting Exams, Treatment of Post-Traumatic Disorder cases, Support and Social Inclusion of Refugees and Immigrants, Lowering High Blood Pressure, Support to Multiple Sclerosis Patients (Chronic Disease and Disability in general), Therapeutic Work with the Elderly, Treatment of Persons with Schizophrenia (three chapters are

devoted to this issue!), Therapeutic Work involving Prisoners with long-term sentences, Supervision of Social Work and Psychotherapy, Play Therapy, and Interventions for Peace.

Some features I liked in this book are the following:

1. It presents a wide range of topics, as described above.
2. Topics usually discussed in a more theoretical manner by older approaches, e.g. psychoanalysis, or described in conventional psychiatric textbooks are here presented within

the theoretical context of Gestalt. The author introduces some new theoretical aspects and 'revises' traditional Gestalt theory in his own brief, clear and concise manner.

3. Most chapters refer to Programmes that have already been implemented, some of which are described in detail, i.e. the discussion is based on specific, 'tangible' issues.

4. The book highlights the importance of research. Programmes presented are mainly research projects which have used both the Gestalt methodology and tools from the tradition of psychological knowledge.

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My group

By Irene Giouleka

October 2, 2008. I slowly approached the entrance of the building on Agias Sofias Street and timidly rang the bell. I didn't know what was in stock for me, who I was going to meet and many thoughts crowded in my head. What was I doing there? How could I trust people I had never met in my life? How could I share what I was hiding deep inside my soul? Would they laugh at me? Would I be left exposed? Still, I had made a decision and I owed it to myself to support my choice, whatever the cost might be, even if that meant getting hurt...

May 28, 2009. Once again, I slowly approached the entrance of the building on Agias Sofias Street. This time it was because I simply didn't want the moment to come when I would have to go through the threshold for the last time. That was the last day, the last meeting of our group; we had spent a whole year together. We

One of the many interesting topics of the book concerns the basic Gestalt theory. Besides the concept of **unfinished business/pending business**, Serok introduces the notion of **unstarted business or business planned**.

First of all, he underlines that business planned is a key-concept in the interpretation of an individual's present problems.

More specifically, non-satisfied needs and traumatic events from the past, which are left unresolved, lead to a selective, biased mode perception of individuals' current needs and goals, simply because these persons focus on their non-satisfied needs rather than needs that might be urgent in the 'here and now'. Serok, however, claims that the concept of unfinished business cannot fully explain the complications and obstacles that affect a person's ability to function effectively in the present. He supports that human behaviour is significantly influenced by **business planned**, which might or might not occur in the future. In other words, we encounter difficulties in the present because unfinished business from the past and unstarted future business prevent us from focusing our attention on what is going on at present.

According to Serok, business planned may include imaginary events, fantasies, expectations,

had come to know each other as much as one is capable of getting to know people who share the same concerns/anxieties. We had got to know each other to the extent that each one of us allowed themselves to share their most intimate moments. Moments and thoughts that had been so deeply hidden within us that not even our own selves had dared admit they existed. There had been moments of pain and other moments full of joy; yet all of them had been shared in a precious and valuable way. I had identified with some people; I had got angry with others. However, nobody had been encountered without leaving their mark behind. I had tried to seize every moment, to take advantage of the slightest opportunity. What had been my goal? To love me as I am, to be able to look at myself in the mirror and be proud of what I see, in full awareness of what I see.

There were numerous issues and deep traumas. One year is hardly enough. When one decides to open up their soul and come face to face with themselves, the pain is unbearable

wishful thinking and ideals that are going to be realised at some vague future moment, while nothing is happening aiming at this goal at present, not even on a small scale so as to transform plans into reality. An unstarted business is a thought construction, similar to a simulated situation. The construction materials used are ideas, concepts, words, figures and symbols that primarily emerge from our fantasies and spiritual/intellectual/mental life rather than from our actual experience. When people keep postponing their actions into the remote, non-accessible future, they make business plans. Some examples are people who make grandiose plans for their professional success or those who imagine themselves acquiring wealth, power, education, without ever having had such experiences and without attempting/trying to make their fantasies come true. Another example presented by Serok includes trained psychologists or social workers who keep putting off starting clinical work, while they keep themselves busy by enrolling for continuous education/training courses; they see no clients, because they envisage themselves as successful therapists of international acclaim.

Concluding this brief review, it is worth mentioning that the book contains a warm foreword by Joseph Zinker, an eminent author and Gestalt therapist who is also an artist and a poet.

sometimes one cannot stand it. I managed to bear it and go on. You were my strength. With the love and understanding you so generously offered me, you helped me put the scattered pieces of my psyche in some order. You helped me become a little stronger, a little more secure in my existence, a little more confident that I can face the world. You will be my friends forever, even if life does not allow us to meet again. I want to believe that I have also given you something; that you healed some of your traumas through my wounds, that you overcame your own anxieties. I thank you from the bottom of my heart and wish you all the best.

November 2, 2009: at the threshold of Agias Sofias Street once again.

A new group is about to start...



Blood donation 2009

I am deeply moved by the participation of all those who embraced and continue to embrace the vision of the Gestalt Foundation, all those who supported the blood bank by making their own contribution with their voluntary blood donation on 9/12/09.

It is a hopeful sign of the times we live in, that there are banks with offers of love that provide unexpected support, in a sensitive and unselfish manner, to causes of vital importance.

I would like to thank all those who participated and welcome all of those who would like to taste the joy and satisfaction of voluntary contribution.

Volunteers can visit on workdays and at weekends from 09:00-12:00 and 17:00-19:00 and give blood at Public Hospital blood drives in the name of the Gestalt Foundation. Telephone No: 6973778722.

Thank you all
Amalia Apostolou
Head of the Blood Bank for the
Gestalt Foundation

I would like to express my warm thanks to the "Gestalt" Psychotherapy and Training Centre, because, at a difficult time, when I needed two units of blood for my mother, who is a cancer patient, those in charge of the Centre's blood drive immediately responded to my request and provided me with the necessary blood. I would like to congratulate "Gestalt" Centre on their sensitivity and speedy response, and take this opportunity to underline the Centre's very important work in the psychological support of cancer patients.

Please, accept my appreciation

Anna Ch. Zerva



*"If you were to love a cloud...
you would know that the cloud is
impermanent.
But if you forget about
impermanence and
are attached to the cloud,
when the time comes
for the cloud to be transformed
into rain
you will cry, 'Oh dear, my cloud is
no longer there'...
The rain is smiling, singing,
falling down,
full of life, full of beauty.
Yet because of your forgetfulness,
you are caught in grief...
Meanwhile the rain is calling you,
"Darling, darling,
I am here, recognize me!"*

*Thich Nhat Hanh,
NO DEATH, NO FEAR*



Our beloved Harm...

...our soft and gentle cloud, you are not here anymore. But your fruitful, comforting, rain is around us. Your warm smile in our memories, your accurate and precise sight in our work, your inspirational teaching through your writings You taught us that "to be present is a present, a gift". Thank you Harm from the bottom of our hearts, for your gifted presence in our lives. You brought us light, humor, warmth, wisdom, knowledge, but mostly a unique touch of humanity.

When Bas Lokerse asked me to write a "memoriam" for Harm Siemens for the Newsletter of EAGT, I felt deeply touched

and, at the same time, very responsible. What is there left to say for a man...

*"stable as a rock
moving as a sea,
sweet as a wind,
father as the sky..."*

... as Eleni Chatzigeorgiou, a colleague from Greece, says about him.

Therefore, I have decided to share not just my thoughts with you, but also some quotations by all those people who talked about him at his funeral.

I feel this is a collaborative work and *"Harm, without dismissing his own pain and efforts,*

or those of others, used his generosity and compassion to enable him to get on with most people, and to be a connecting factor at the same time", as Michiel van den Heuvel said and continued with...

"Harm and Gestalt go hand in hand".

I think that everyone who had the fortune and the opportunity to meet Harm is able to recognize that.

For all of you, who did not have the chance to knowing him, and for all of us who did, I will provide you with some information about Harm's life, as Dick Lompa, his companion in life and in work, shared with us at the funeral.

Harm Siemens was my teacher, the one in whose footsteps I followed, in order to create my own figure. The most important thing I learned from his personal example and our relationship was the importance of long term commitment. I feel great gratitude and love. I wondered how I could honour my teacher and I found the answer in his own words.

I had the joy and honour of translating his key-note speech on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Gestalt Foundation in Thessaloniki. We worked together for hours to make the translation as good as possible. Since then I have felt that that coincidence is his legacy to us. This is why I have chosen some parts from his speech which are important to me. You can find the translated speech in its entirety in our 10th issue or our website, here is the original text translated into English:

"Commitment is not a technique. It is the procedure of staying faithful to a previous "yes"... It is a commitment to compassion... Radiance does not just belong to us. I exist in all other people and they all exist in me"... "I have a deep wish: to bring Gestalt closer to people, where they live and work; and I hope this will make Gestalt more transparent and accessible..."

To set up an international Gestalt network... The word of Gestalt is a democratic word, it speaks a normal/everyday language for all people"...

"In conclusion, there is one more personal wish that I would like to share with you... I wish that the pioneers of Gestalt and current trainers, when the time is ripe, will assign entrust their work to a new generation of Gestalt psychotherapists, who will continue to develop and expand this good work"... "A Flemish colleague once said: "As a teacher you can watch the stars of your successors shine more brightly in the sky and yours slowly fade. Trainers and Gestalt teachers should be grateful for the process of development"... I hope that the torch will be passed along several times to many new generations of colleagues who will appreciate the value of their contribution to a continuous process of commitment".

Harm, may your wishes come true. May the torch be passed from generation to generation and may your example continue to be passed on.

Antonia Konstantinidou



Netherlands at that time. In the same period, Harm continued his study and was awarded a Master Degree in Counseling Psychology from the University of Mexico. Harm was the founder of the Nederlands Stichting Gestalt and has continued to work there as an inspiration, a visionary, a teacher and a supervisor until he became ill. He had also become involved in many Gestalt training programs around the world; Greece, Russia, F.Y.R.O.M, Italy, Spain, India, Israel and Latvia. For this work, especially his work in India sponsored by HIVOS for the prevention and care of AIDS victims there, he was honored in the year 2000 with a medal and title from her Majesty Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands.

“Harm was a great inspiration”, as Ella Mulders mentioned, and *“he will remain in our memories as a teacher, a colleague, and, especially, as a friend”* as Marjan Wiegman pointed out.

Harm Siemens was born in a small town, Oude Pekela in The Netherlands on 1 July 1932. The Second World War had an enormous impact on him during his younger years. The disappearance of school friends (many of them Jewish) and many shops in his town awakened a concern and a compassion for the “other”.

He decided to study nursing as a profession and a way of helping the other. He graduated as a nurse and practiced his profession in various hospitals in the Netherlands. In 1958 he joined the Deakonen, a religious institution that was dedicated to helping and caring for the sick and the less fortunate.

He continued to work as a nurse in other countries; France, England and the United States. After this, he worked for two years for the Dutch Volunteers in a psychiatric hospital in Nairobi, Kenya.

Upon returning to the Netherlands, he entered the training program in the Higher School for Nursing Science in Leusden. After graduating from the course, he was given a position in the school as a member of the teaching staff.

In the early 70's, Harm wanted to continue his development and he applied to the Nederlands Gestalt Instituut for a three year intensive Gestalt psychotherapy training. This was a very new training program in The

I close this memoriam with a quotation from a letter by apostle Paulus to the Christians in Philippi (chapter 1, verse 6) that Eva Fischer recited at his funeral by his own wish ...

“I am convinced, that He who started a good work in you, will complete it till the end, till the day of Jesus Christ (own translation).”

With respect and gratefulness...

... one of your “befriended” by your presence...

Katia Hatzilakou

Harm Siemens...

A teacher, an associate, a mentor, a friend... How can I talk about you? Are there any words?

Images, memories, sensations, your voice and words, wise and inspired, feelings I cherish.

He was a person who was present in life and in death. Present in his nobility, in his serenity, his penetrative perception, present in contact like a child with his eyes open, present in dialogue.

He was an authentic person, authentic in his feelings, his thoughts, his conduct, his processing, up to the very last days of his life ...

“Who would have believed that I would develop cancer? I wanted to live a few more years ... but I am ready to meet my family.” Deep, apt remarks, deeply touching the core of my existence.

“How are you, Harm,?” *“I am silent... I am going to die.”*

“...I know the four of you are grateful to me, but you must know that I am grateful, too, because you gave me the opportunity to give, to develop, to continue...” My tears swell up; he looks into my eyes in silence. We meet. This is an existential encounter.

How can I talk about you? Are there any words?

I remember: *“Go for it”, “There is not only one star in the sky”, “Innovate, don't imitate”, “I see...”, “Are you ok?”, “Are you sad?”* Such rounded words, full of meaning, neither sterile nor empty.

How can I talk about you? Are there any words?

I remember you, I miss you.

Despoina Balliou

My teacher, my mentor, my colleague, my associate, my role model in all matters of professional ethics and integrity.

I cherish the experiences we shared and the things he told me; they are indelible in my memory and I often recall them. I can't forget his *“You see!!!”,* which encouraged or disapproved of people's attitude, with a unique sense of honesty and humour.

Furthermore, his «as much as» in the therapeutic process and the methodology of therapeutic dialogue, in an endless give and take with small gestures and great energy.

Farewell!

Yianna Yiamarelou

JORGE BUKAY

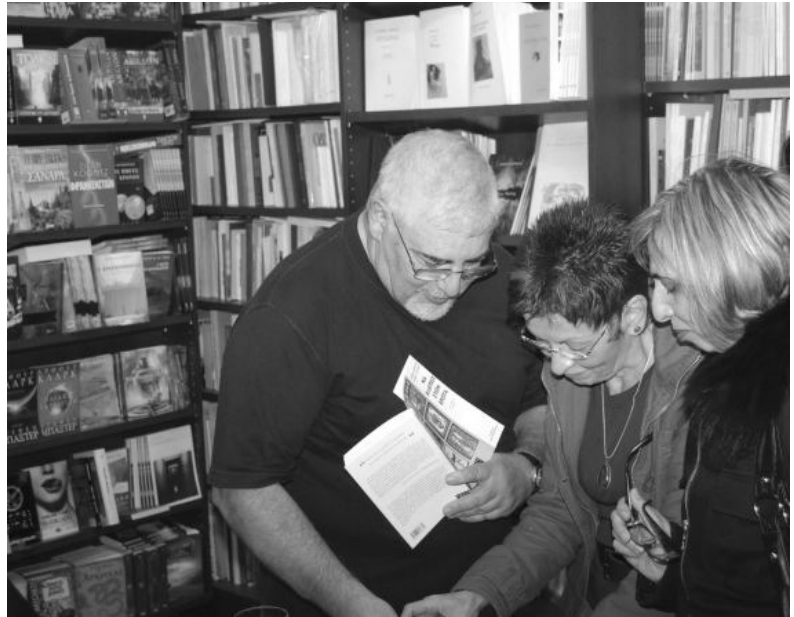
Getting to know a mythical figure...

By Ellie Freggidou, M.Sc.
Psychologist

Once upon a time...

There was once, somewhere, somehow...

Let the story begin...



...My thoughts are a tight bundle; how can I disentangle myself? I am caught and tied up, pricked by a spinning wheel am I going to wake up?

I looked, full of a child's wonder, deep into his eyes, as if to see all those he said about me, in all his mythical presence.

And then he started talking... About my compromises, my relationships, my lies that they had called perfection, my tendency to bang my head against walls simply because they had taught me that one always matures through such bumps.

I let myself sink into his rivers, without any anchorage, yet without any fear for not being able to swim. Still, I have some experience with deep waters, so I hardly hesitated.

He held my hand tightly. We walked wherever I wanted to go. Once again I got to know my fear, my first love, the love I thought had arrived unexpectedly. I laughed at my obsessions. I sweetly embraced my anger. I had a violent clash with my self-image.

I learned how to grieve about everything I let go of at every new moment in my life.

He did not whisper anything to me (even though until then I had been convinced that great truths always deserve some form of secrecy). I learned to trust my own capacity to contain. I am still in mourning, believe me, since, as he says, happiness is my duty... So all these years I had been looking in the wrong places...

I learnt that life is beautiful - and simple. Perhaps it is simple and, therefore, so beautiful.

In a similar manner, I am going to attempt smaller things and keep quiet; or talk only with mythical figures. Behind 'anagrams' there always lies something deeper and what they say is more beautiful.

This is what you told me and I responded by telling you truths, even if there were numerous steps and years separating us, even if our civilisations and cultures were so distant from one another's.

I have never felt since then that you should always be there.

Reflecting on the uniqueness of our encounter, I am offering you some of my 'essence' in these few verses:

«When you walk differently,
When your step is unlike others',
When you don't leave traces for the way back,

Only then,

Then only,

In strange villages and seas,
So incredibly beautiful,
Can you wander...»

Thank you...



Now let me tell you a story.

Once upon a time, there...

Katia Chatzilakou

Social and Clinical Psychologist

Gestalt psychotherapist, trainer and supervisor

This is how stories usually start. This is what most of us heard, when growing up, before we were told a story by grandmas or grandpas, parents or teachers.

So I chose to start my text with these words because our meeting with Jorge Bucay, here, in our town, in Thessaloniki, was itself like a fairytale. A fairytale that came true thanks to the excellent initiative taken by Mr. Myressiotis, from OPERA Publishing House, who invited the author to our country, and to the creative and excellent cooperation and participation of IANOS Bookshop and PHILOLOGOS Periodical, which made the event held at OLYMPION cinema-theatre on December 7, 2009 possible.

I had never imagined, when I read Jorge Bucay's books and was carried away by his stories and magic fairy tales, magical allegories of a particularly 'didactic' character, that not only would meet I him in person, but I would be welcoming him at the airport, I would have coffee with him, share ouzo with him, Antonia and his publisher, Mr. Myressiotis, and his associates, as if we had always known each other!

This is honestly how I felt from the first moment I met 'Jorge', as he asked me to call him, when I went to welcome him at the airport.

I was anxious; would I recognise him? What would it be like to get to know him? Would I be disappointed upon meeting Demian's 'Fatso'? I went to the airport holding one of his books just in case. There was no need for that. As soon as he came out of the passengers' gate, our eyes met and he smiled broadly; then he gave me a warm hug followed by his explanation: 'I am from Latin America!' Indeed, he is!

Full of zest and joie de vivre, passionate, courteous, but above all, compassionate. Warm, extremely accessible and open, he shared with me events and situations of his life, inviting me to 'open up' and share my own experiences and thoughts with him.

I envied 'Demian' and Jorge's clients who had the opportunity to share with him what I only got a flavour of for a brief time on that Monday morning...

Bucay calls himself a 'professional helper' and, although he studied Medicine and specialised in Psychiatry, he followed a career as a psychotherapist who chooses not to prescribe solutions but accompany the person who is asking for his help; getting to know Jorge confirms this choice.

A big, warm, personal 'thank you' to you, Jorge, for your long journey to come to us and a particularly great 'thank you' on behalf of Gestalt in Greece for finding such a simple and lively manner to bring the Greek public in contact with the deep, humanitarian, warm and holistic approach of Gestalt, which we have all loved and followed - a way of living and looking at life that we are trying to turn into action every day of our lives...





Stories are more than just tales

By Dimitra Zioga

From Freud's couch to the modern science of neuropsychology less than a century has passed. Radical cultural developments have had an impact on all fields of human relations. New methods of interaction have been discovered or devised due to the need of people for contact, for development, for meaning in their experiences. These methods sometimes result in cure, sometimes in awareness and other times in mere discovery.

In recent years, experiential Gestalt therapy clients have been encouraged to use painting, clay, collage, music, and play to express or, in other words, to experience and get in contact with feelings, roles, behaviour patterns and situations which, under certain circumstances, may be difficult to explore verbally. The same may be achieved through storytelling when the person who experiments uses their imagination, words and feelings as tools so as to focus on what they experience in relation to themselves and the ground in the here and now.

In my work as a therapist, whether in group or individual cases, I have often used stories-tales from various civilizations and different times so as to offer feedback and make clients responsible for making associations/connections and moving on. My aim is to open up to the magic and challenge of a new kind of consciousness/awareness in the treatment of the psyche, through words and the imagination, as these intertwine in Narration. During the experiment because this is what narration, in effect, is an intermediate realm is created between fantasy and reality; within it, the person in therapy encounters their projections, their unfinished businesses, their identifications. What are fairy tales? When we first hear them in our earliest days (since we are not yet able to read), we learn them easily and accept them without any particular effort to comprehend them. And although our linguistic capacity in the first years of our lives is limited, still, it allows us to 'make up' or imitate tales using more expressive means than mere speech; this is how our narrative or dramatic development starts. What is also important to note here is that a tale is the very first 'adventure' of our lives.

What is the structure and content of tales? A fairy story is an invention, an imaginary narrative that uses an animal, e.g. Puss in Boots, or a person with a specific trait, e.g. a 'smooth operator' and so on. Such a story works outside the reasoning of time and space: it happens 'once upon a time'; it personifies animals or even inanimate objects (a Wooden/Lead soldier); it allows them to speak like humans and it moves indiscriminately from the organic to the

inorganic world, from humans to animals, to trees, to the moon, to witches or fairies, to a magic flute or golden eggs. Fairy tales of all times and civilizations carry a universal meaning: that struggling against the difficulties of life is inevitable; it is part of the lives of people who have dreams, who have hopes, who grow and develop. Ordeals are part of human existence; people try to survive (Snow White), to succeed (Puss in Boots) or to love (The Frog Prince). Modern tales might include imaginary/fantastic elements, yet we could say that they are closer to reality and may be read by adults as well. Their symbolisms are more perceptible and touch upon philosophical and existential themes. A well known story of this kind is «The Little Prince», where the illustration comes from.

In his book **The Power of Tales**, Georges Jean says that «the power of all tales, just like that of narratives and quality novels is to draw each one of us into reading about ourselves, i.e. into inventing our own lives». The therapeutic value for each one of us is to 'read' the meaning of the tale and think about what the story implies for him/her self. The tale carries hope and faith and there are twists in the plot. All it asks from listeners is to let themselves decide if they are going to apply some of what they hear in their own lives or if they are simply going to 'enjoy the ride' of these imaginary events/this fantasy. Yet, even pleasure is a potent cure for psychic pain. Finally, it is worth mentioning that in the etymology of the word 'paramythi' (fairy tale in Greek) there is an echo of the word 'parigoría' (solace in Greek).

*And if I talk to you with fairy tales and parables
It is because you listen to it more sweetly
and you can't talk of horror because it's alive
Because it doesn't speak and moves*

G. Seferis

The narrator-therapist is the guide along this journey of exploration. It is important to establish an atmosphere of trust, so that narrator and listener can safely navigate into this world of fantasy and return safely to the realm of reality. The narrator-therapist also needs to be careful not to choose a story that is his or her 'own'. Just like dreams, myths and tales are internal personal processes based on symbolism. I have noticed that stories which speak a symbolic language are particularly touching for people at certain moments in their lives, when any other language except a symbolic one fails (such as in crises). At this point I am going to borrow the words of author and psychotherapist Jorge Bucay from his book *Let me tell you a story*: «...the only way to comprehend an event without directly

**«The stories that put us to sleep
are those that keep us more
awake»**

Marthe Robert (1914-1996)

experiencing it is through an internal symbolic reconstruction of the event... A myth, a fairytale or an anecdote can impress the memory a hundred times more indelibly than a thousand theoretical explanations, psychoanalytic interpretations or arguments.»

Besides dramatherapy, part of which is based on narrative, narration has also been included in Gestalt therapy in a more dynamic way. What is important is to view treatment as a continuous spectrum of health changes and developments. This is how narration can find its own place in the therapeutic process, a place where active imagination and the symbolism of a tale acquire meaning for the life and experience of the individual.



(coat of arms)
HESTIA CONSTANTINOPOLEOS
[CONSTANTINOPLE CENTRE]
FOUNDED IN 1978

Serial Registration Number: 4684
Athens, January 4, 2010

TO
GESTALT FOUNDATION
39 Georgiou Sissini Street
11528 Athens

The Board of HESTIA CONSTANTINOPOLEOS received the sum of € 300, which represents your Charity donation in support of the numerous needs of our Old People's Home. This extremely humanitarian gesture of yours is definitely in accordance with the teachings of our Christian Orthodox Faith and we would like to tell you a warm 'thank you', to express the gratitude of our residents and to wish you, with all our heart, the best of health and a rich reward in what God, the Donor of all goods gives you.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the help and support you have given us by sending and supervising psychologists who substantially contribute towards upgrading the services our Institution provides.

In deep appreciation
ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

The President

The Secretary
general

(signed)

(signed)

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Friday Supervision Meeting Session

By Mireille Dore

A Clinical Nurse from Switzerland, a Volunteer & Member of the Board of the Association of Friends & Volunteers of Thessaloniki Minors' Protection Society

When I was asked to record my thoughts about the voluntary work of our Association in prisons, my mind went over the preliminary work we did as volunteers so as to be able to offer our best to both women inmates and, until recently, minors in prison.

Part of this preliminary work of ours as volunteers is our participation in the supervision meeting that takes place every fortnight with the volunteers of the Minors' Protection Society E.P.A.Th. and the psychologists of Gestalt Psychotherapy and Training Centre who jointly coordinate and share our experiences in the weekly workshops we hold with women inmates at Diavata Prison.

Before I attempt to introduce you to the atmosphere of these meetings, I would like to present myself in the context of the association.

I have been a substitute volunteer for the last two years, having had two years of previous experience as a regular member of various workshops at a minor boys' prison. What do we mean by regular member? It is someone who not only knows everything that concerns the workshops, but also someone who is able to monitor the development of every woman inmate, so as to properly inform a regular woman volunteer; it is someone who can adapt, above all, to the possible changes induced to women inmates by the intermittent presence of a substitute, without blocking the flow of whatever is happening at any workshop.

All of us who are voluntarily involved in any capacity become observers and witnesses at every session; I would like to express my appreciation for our supervisors, because through their contribution they make it possible for us to share thoughts and ideas, to reflect on things and listen to each participant; this process offers an opportunity for all this to take place and, indeed, goes hand in hand with our voluntary work. Kindness, perceptive understanding, first-hand contact, knowledge and professionalism are some of the features of these supervision meetings, which aspire to nothing more than to find quality when approaching the persons we encounter behind bars, persons who have often been traumatised and shred to pieces in the course of their lives.

During our supervision meetings, our patient and persistent quest for supporting and responsibly standing by these women inmates helps us help them to gradually rediscover themselves, to learn to respect themselves and, for some of them, to recognise the numerous burdens they have been carrying in their lives and decide to remove some by helping another inmate; ultimately, they all learn to

support themselves by supporting each other.

I feel grateful for all those who created and keep supporting and structuring this voluntary project, because it gives me the opportunity to be properly prepared to experience all these meetings exciting, yet different and enriched every time. At supervision meetings, alternating between being the 'audience' and being the 'actress', I 'watch us'; I like sharing the pictures I have formed and to relate them to the members of my team, as I am doing with this personal note; I would like to tell them that they 'work like ants' in a unique manner.

Personally, through this preliminary work I am all the more open to go and observe, even if it is for a single moment, a rising body, a smile that often brightens a blank expression, a face turning rosy, or a glance gaining vivacity. This picture is healing and encourages us to carry on with this work of accompanying and supporting every woman inmate who comes freely, on her own accord, to the workshops held every Tuesday and Friday.

In conclusion, I would like to express my conviction, shaped through my long, personal experience as a nurse head of the clinic staff and accompanying persons who faced physical and mental pain at the end of their lives - and as a substitute volunteer at present, that every responsible volunteer has an obligation to themselves, to the members of their team and to the fellow-humans they help not only to attend but also to actively participate in a similar supervision plan so as to warrant the quality of such voluntary support services.

I thank you all those of you reading about our actions, participants, my/our fellow humans!



« AGAPE COMES ONE DAY... »

It's 8:30... a last puff on my ciggy; I put it out and I am off. «She stood me up, again», I thought and promised myself that would be the last time she ever stood me up; yet...» I left full of anger and disappointment. Is it possible that my most important friend does not come when we are meant to meet? We first met when I was 2-3 years old. «Hi, there; my name is Alexia», I said. «And mine is Agape», she answered. «Do you want to be friends?», I asked. «Forever», she answered and never turned up again. Even today people still ask: «What about that friend of yours, Agape? How is she?» «Oh, she was a day late, just like the title of the book...»

Every time we were meant to meet over all these years we haven't managed... Sometimes I was standing at the wrong spot and, however long I waited, she never turned up. Other times she cried «But, Alexia, I was across the road calling and waving to you and you did not notice... you just turned your back and left...» There were times, I saw her approaching, I ran to meet her, joyful and yearning, and when I got near it was not her. «Are you Agape?» I asked. «No, my name is Rejection», she answered. «How can you not remember me? We have met so many times», she added. And I stood there, sad and frustrated and thought «How do I manage to keep mixing them up?»

So my yearning grew more intense and I wondered «How can we two meet?» This made me sink into sadness, into a void, every time. So, one day, in my despair and loneliness, I decided to enter a new home and sit on a sofa across a new and very warm friend. Her name was 'Aid' this is what they called her. I kept talking to her about my sadness, my loneliness, the emptiness I felt because I could not meet my friend Agape... For a very long time, Aid was there and listened to me... she still does.

Until one day, I happily called Agape and told her: «I think I know how we two can meet! I think I have found the way! I think I know the very spot, the right place, the right time, and so on!!!» And she said to me: «Alexia, you don't have to go anywhere to find me... I have just reached your home... this is where we start; this is our first encounter and this is the beginning...»

And this is how I came to open the door for the very first time ...

«Welcome», I said, somewhat awkwardly.
Agape simply smiled...

Alexia Gibriri

