



# Gestalt NEWS Foundation

INFORMATIVE AND COMMUNICATIVE SIX-MONTH ISSUE OF GESTALT FOUNDATION  
PSYCHOTHERAPY & TRAINING CENTER / Autumn 2011 / 15th issue

Gestalt Foundation meeting of May 2011 in Athens.

# 13<sup>th</sup>

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four-day Athens 19-22 of May 2011  
**GESTALT**  
PSYCHOTHERAPY  
*"The creative adaptation  
of society in crisis"*



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The YWCA of Thessaloniki embraced seventeen volunteers and four co-ordinators during a two-day seminar titled "How a Team Operates", co-organised by the YWCA of Thessaloniki and Gestalt Foundation in the context of their cooperation.

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# Editorial

## Moving ahead "together"

The crisis has made a dynamic appearance.

In the protests, on the street in front of Gestalt Foundation offices, on the news, in the shops that keep closing down for good in various parts of town, in our own stories or the stories of those close to us. All these are a daily reminder that we are going through a difficult year.

During this unrest, the premises of Gestalt Foundation keep hosting people and meetings. Of course, the centre's events are not confined only in its own premises. Gestalt Foundation travels, whether it is for an experiential seminar in Samothrace or an event in the centre of Athens or Thessaloniki; we travel for every right "reason" to all right "venue".

Through these meetings be they inter-personal or in groups, for training/educational purposes or for therapeutic reasons -- people get together and share their concerns and their hopes, problems and solutions. And, through such meetings, at these difficult times, we discover new meanings in the value of sharing and coming into contact with others.

It is no coincidence that almost all articles and reports from events we have received for this newsletter focus in one way or another on the value of "togetherness"; the need for contact, for sharing and for "huddling" around common values and operations, emerges during tough times. "Togetherness", active participation and

creating alongside each other are some of the ways that help us cope and grow.

New programmes, collaboration schemes and events are consistent with the principles we cherish. Our response as an organisation within our capabilities and limitations of the here and now are actions instead of reactions, creative adaptation rather than apathy, active participation rather than inertia, contact rather than alienation.

May all our meetings be positive and productive!  
Autumn 2011  
Antonia Konstantinidou.

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Antonia Konstantinidou, M.Sc. Clinical and Social Psychology A.U.TH. )Aristotle University of Thessaloniki(. Gestalt therapy Therapist, Trainer and Supervisor. Co-founder of the Gestalt Foundation Centre for Psychotherapy and Training. Recognised member of the Association of Greek Psychologists )AGP(, the European Association for Psychotherapy )EAP( and the European Association of Gestalt Therapy )EAGT(. Founding member of the Greek Association of Gestalt Psychotherapists. I have been working as a therapist with adults and groups of adults for 16 years. For the last 10 years I have been involved in psychological support for people suffering from chronic illnesses, as well as the training of volunteers.

# A tribute to Philip Lichtenberg [ Part 2 ]

Konstantinos Kostas  
Social Worker, Psychologist,  
Gestalt Psychotherapist  
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Whoever is interested in deepening their knowledge of Philip Lichtenberg's views, there are writings of his available on the website of Gestalt Institute of Philadelphia. From his books, I know two I can happily recommend.

### 1. Getting Even: The Equalizing Law of Relationship. [Lichtenberg, P. (1988). Lanham, MD: University Press of America]

The central idea running through this rather deep analysis of equality and autocracy is that all human interaction calls for negotiation between all participants; these should be of such a form, that all parties involved end up receiving more or less the same amounts of satisfaction. If an interaction occurs where one side tries to benefit more than the other participants, this almost always causes reactions in the others regarding the direction of equilibrium, and, in the end, the satisfaction level goes down for all, as accomplishments that interaction could have achieved are now lost. If, on the other hand, one person sacrifices themselves for another's needs, corrective tendencies are

awakened in the latter and this restores balance. An example Lichtenberg presents is the relationship between parent and child. If a father sacrifices his needs for his son's sake, the son doesn't simply win because of his father's self-denial, but becomes simultaneously conscious of his father's loss, and gets confused by this relationship between "you lose I win". However masked this sacrifice might be, the parent communicates it to the child who, in turn, responds in such a way that its gain comes at a higher cost.

At the same time, Lichtenberg approaches questions like: What does it mean for one to be fully alive? How is our contact with ourselves, others, and situations affected by third party influence? How do our views and predispositions affect our contact with reality and the way we process this reality? What does 'responsibility' mean? What method can we follow so that we can promote equality in the organisations where we work and the environment in which we live?

This book will prove useful to social workers,

BEST SELLERS ΕΞΑΜΗΝΟΥ

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## Summer Moments... Authentic moments

The opportunity of voluntary work with children brought us to the Football Academy Camp at the Municipality of Moschato, in Attica. It was quite unusual to have teams of children practising football, the aim being to create cohesion, trust, contact and a spirit of co-operation. The children and their coaches welcomed us from the very first moment with a positive attitude, hungry for new activities. For me, this contact with the children came as a pleasant break from my otherwise "serious" everyday life; as if I had opened a door to fun and games. Co-operating with my colleagues was also nice, since we also "played" together. There are numerous memorable moments lingering in my mind from my team: pleasant, difficult, touching, authentic. There were moments when a simple question put you in an awkward spot or showed you that anything is possible and can be done; moments when listening to a child speak was like hearing the child hiding within you; moments when you felt that, ultimately, being authentic isn't difficult, it just requires lots of hugs and smiles.

And therapy, even though sounding pretentious and difficult, might well come to you like a mild summer breeze through a window left half-open, while you've fallen asleep on the sofa.

I thank the children, the coaches, my team and my supervisor for this experience!

George Koutsogiannis

4<sup>th</sup> year trainee, G.F. Athens



psychologists, doctors, nurses, teachers and any person who wishes to be an active source of change. It is a mine of knowledge and experiences.

### 2. Community and Confluence: Undoing the Clinch of Oppression.

[Lichtenberg, P. (1994), Cambridge, Massachusetts: Gestalt Press]. This book is to be read as a sequel to the first. The basic line of questioning is still: *how can psychological introspection prove to be useful in promoting equality and positive social change?* For Lichtenberg, the study of intra-personal and inter-personal processes, e.g. in the relationship between predator and victim, the study needs to be coupled with the overview of the broader field within which they occur, which they reinforce and are reinforced by. The analysis is based on the study of the *relationship between predator and victim* and the psychoanalytic concept of **identifying with the attacker**, which was first introduced by Sandor Ferenczi, based on his analytic work with individuals who had been sexually abused as children by adults. According to Lichtenberg, identifying with the attacker is the individual's response to an unreasonable demand forced upon them by an authority they initially trusted.

In chapter 2, Lichtenberg presents an extremely interesting, clear and comprehensive analysis of the processes that take place within the victim; he includes the factor of anger towards the attacker, how it is transformed into guilt and self-loathing and explains how the victim finally reaches the point of identifying their needs and values with those of the attacker. The most interesting part of the analysis is presented in chapter 3, where the writer draws our attention to a parallel process occurring within the attacker, which he calls **projection upon a primed vulnerable other**. Crudely explained, the attacker needs the victim, the stronger needs the weaker, because through their relationship, the attacker manages to cope with their emotional inadequacies: they are forced to rely on a specific, constrained type of social relationship in order to satisfy their personal needs; their self-regulation and

## REACTION

And you said... at our last few meetings I have felt a wall has come between us and I'm trying to understand what happened, what's wrong... I feel you're reacting against me, against your psychotherapy, against what you've done/achieved... And I left, in a frosty silence. I went home... and I hurt... it was probably the first time I hurt because of this major reacting aspect of my character that alienates me.

I hurt because it's incredibly unfair for me to silently and "insidiously" fight a person who has been genuinely helping me all these years. I hurt because I've been doing this for years, in all aspects of my life. I meet somebody and I engage in secret deconstruction. Nobody is good enough. Nobody is like me (what a laugh). I want something and I reject it, not as a matter of principle, but because, like the proverbial fox... I can't reach it.

Yes, "it's not my fault". Yes, that's what I've learnt. Yes, to my child's eyes my family was a bombarded land. Indeed, it was not conscious.

Yes, but, now, this behaviour of mine is hurting me. How many reasons will I come up with in order to distance myself from others? How many times will I reject someone or something because I'm afraid to risk? Why do I hurt others? Why do I hurt myself?

I'm trying to want. I'm trying to take a stand.  
I'm trying not to walk away. I'm trying to approach.  
I'm trying not to act a part. I'm trying to **be** ... Alexander.  
I'm trying not to be afraid. I'm trying to be free.  
I'm trying to find who I am.

## ACTION

Alexander.



power over their wants and needs are fully dependent upon their controlling another person. The other must be vulnerable, that is, willing to give up the responsibility and strength required to make decisions in their own lives. In the end, both the one who projects and the one who identifies forge a relationship where they act as a tool or an extension for one another. Lichtenberg's analysis continues with equal interest in the remaining chapters, which focus on how the knowledge gained from the dynamics of a predator-prey/victim relationship can be applied in societies in general so as to promote equality and freedom from social oppression.

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four-day **Athens 19-22 of May 2011**

# GESTALT

## PSYCHOTHERAPY

*"The creative adaptation  
of society in crisis"*

### 340 km\* from the brink of contact.

It's become a tradition: every year I long for May to arrive. May = the 4day workshop. And the 4day workshop = Pelion (or, in the worst case scenario, = Litoro). When I found out that the 2011 workshop was going to take place in Athens, I went numb. Not that I have a problem with the lovely metropolis of Attica basin; it's just that I had associated the workshop with the all day long "togetherness" and, for me, for Pelion to become Athens was the beginning of a crisis... An internal crisis...

And when I found out that the topic of the workshop was going to be the crisis, I thought to myself 'hm... Something's going on here'. I started wondering what we were to do in this period of an -at least financial- crisis. Should we mourn the 4 day meetings we used to have or should we adapt to the new circumstances? And, ultimately, what was the alleged dilemma? Is it either Pelion or nothing? It might have sounded too polarised for the Gestalt philosophy way of thinking, which (I hope) has influenced me so...

What then? Well, it's Athens. It's Athens and creative adaptation to the crisis-- not only to the here and now, to financial difficulties and dead-ends, but also to the internal crisis, that of comparisons and sweet nostalgia of those beautiful 4 days close to nature, away from urban mundanity.

Somewhere in these thoughts, Philip Lichtenberg's figure and teachings came to mind. A few months earlier he was telling us that we, Gestalt therapists, had the duty to confront crisis through adapting creatively: Confront the fear of the new through, the certainty that our own homeostasis will not stop functioning. To finally face social judgements with another way of life, a different social model based on honesty, equality, communication and togetherness. The Gestalt Psychotherapy workshop began for me with these contradictory thoughts, and the view of the Acropolis from the hotel roof garden.

This was to be the 7<sup>th</sup> 4-day seminar I'd be attending, and the first one in which I'd be participating both as a team member and as a speaker. The same day the *Indignados* made their appearance in

the city squares of Spain, we were discussing the fact that we needed to take to the streets (together) and discuss amongst ourselves all that was happening around us and how affected us. That it was necessary for us to first become aware of our situation and our needs and then get mobilised and act, i.e. that ultimate action and contact can't take place unless there is pre-contact, a relationship basis.

The next day was R. Lompa's day (I was ready to write that it was Dick's day, but bit my tongue in view of the associations). What I will not forget was the way he responded to our admiration of his work. We told him what "good work" he was doing and Dick responded that it doesn't feel like work; that all he does is make himself available for communication with some people, something that fills him with joy, and, on top of that, he gets paid for it. He told us that "togetherness" was his goal and that he was certain that through it, flow, awareness, and change occur effortlessly. And, like that, he brought to light a different aspect of "togetherness" for me.

As the 4 days were coming to an end - feet hurting from last night's dancing is a tradition by now - I was thinking about my initial admission-hypothesis. May = 4 day workshop. And 4 day workshop = Pelion? Or was it 4-day workshop = Litoro? Or maybe 4-day workshop = Athens? I came to the conclusion that 4-day workshop = Togetherness. And I felt fulfilled and happy. I also felt moved, and, somewhere inside me, I noticed an increased sense of duty. This 4-day workshop gave me much more than the results of other presentations or workshops combined.

Like Philip had also said, it was our duty to share these ideas, to share our certainty that "togetherness", the respect that comes as a result of communication, can suggest a different way of life; a different, more equal and inclusive social model. And what do you know? This may be a first response to crisis, be it this one or the ones to come.

Christos Karapiperis  
Graduate of Athens Gestalt Foundation

\* That's the distance between Portaria and Athens.



## Four days in Athens

I'm sat next to the window with my papers in my hands, today, half a year since this year's workshop, and I'm trying to see what I remember, what I gained, how I've changed through this experience. The cloudy day does indeed somehow remind me of that Thursday afternoon when we set off driving to that four-day seminar to... the Titania Hotel, in Athens - for the first time ever, due to the crisis.

Yes, I'm slowly getting back the feeling I had then and I can clearly remember my grumpiness. Even before we set off, I didn't want to go. Having had the wonderful experience of two four-day workshops at Litochoro, I felt like a child whose bag of chocolates is taken from its hands only to be replaced with an apple, because we're facing a crisis. But Litochoro wasn't just a place; it was the picturesque journey to get there and back in our little groups; it was sleeping over in the same space with loved ones; it was meeting up in the hotel corridors with eyes puffy from crying and looks full of understanding; it was games next to the pool at break-time, where people attending different years of the course mixed. It was the instructors, the swallows, the coffee and the laughter. Deep down, the idea of the four-day workshop in Athens scared me: I was afraid I wouldn't be able to re-live all these wonderful moments during this odd, Athenian crisis-doused setting. How could I creatively adapt?

And now the setting is really affecting my four days. Our arrival is delayed because it took us half an hour to find a parking spot at Exarchia Square and another half hour waiting for our turn in the lift behind the endless line of tourists. "This wouldn't have happened at Litochoro."

I get into the group with Nurith so we can talk about the crisis, "the crisis which is robbing me of my established, four-day spring joy", I am thinking. There are people I love in the room; the view from the 10<sup>th</sup> floor window is magical. I don't care. I'll be grumpy. "I'm not the crisis, I just need to find my place in the crisis", Nurith says. Alright, but I've decided to be grumpy.

At night we struggle to get together with my team to go out and eat, because the obligations of daily life cannot be escaped here; we don't have accommodation in the hotel and can't protect and ensure our contact. Many of us have to leave. "This wouldn't have happened at Litochoro."

The workshop continues the next day with Katia. The proceedings are pleasant and familiar, and I'm helped by the physical movement; I eagerly participate in everything we do and, just before the break I wonder: What's the difference, essentially, in where I am? And how does that burden my relationship with who I am, what I am like and who I'm with? Soon, however, I put a stop to my contact with these thoughts, complaining about the inadequate conditions of lunch at the hotel, the space, the staff, everything. "This wouldn't have happened at Litochoro."

And then is the turn of the presentations of posters and pieces of

work; the joy of seeing other people's work, the thrill of sharing my team's and mine. And the next day came the fourth years' presentation, with warm contact and sadness for our imminent separation. I'm about to complain, to say that this wouldn't have happened at Litochoro, but it would have. I'm confused. I wished the four-day workshop had taken place at Litochoro again; I know that, it's a crystal clear wish. But what was I asking for through such a wish? What was my need probably masked by this want?

During our breaks on Saturday I observe that I, as well as others, have started to find a pace we look for one another on balconies or on the roof garden; we co-ordinate over the phone to meet and go get some coffee, as if we're discovering a new way to be. Could it be that I started creatively adapting without even realising it?

I think that Saturday's gala is the best out of the three I've experienced. Such warmth, contact, comings and goings, hugs, conversations, dancing, helping hands-- it was like the whole team won together. Looking at the people around me every so often, a realisation becomes clearer and clearer: my need was a need for contact.

On Sunday morning everybody looks warm, sweet and a little sad I'm assuming I am, too, based on the reflection off others. I hear many people have arrived at the same realisation as mine. I'm thinking that wants are closed and relentless: "I want Litochoro or nothing". Needs, on the other hand, even though they may look very specific, are followed by options that are equally open: "I need contact and I can have it at Litochoro, Athens, Mt. Pelion or the moon".

Yes, many of the things that happened in Athens wouldn't have happened at Litochoro. Thinking about it so much, though, made me almost miss the here and now. And maybe the "now" which, for better or worse, is in a crisis, was perfectly logical and fitting for the "here" of those four days to be the city where I live, rather than it being the crisis or with the crisis. Is it the same, wherever it is? Of course not; how can I not be affected by my surroundings or affect them myself? Staying in Athens this year did make me lose out on things, but there were also things I discovered. I discovered that the indeterminable beast of the crisis can become a manageable reality for me, in a simple and meaningful way: Togetherness. And, this way, I can still exist/be in the crisis without perishing.

Upon finishing our four days, I stayed with my team and we went out to eat, to share, to laugh, to come to a close and separate gently, to stay together for a bit longer. This was togetherness through choice, not because it's written down in a timetable that we have to remain at the same venue. We had this freedom because we weren't in a rush to start our journey home. This wouldn't have happened at Litochoro.

Roula Gerazouni  
Gestalt Foundation of Athens, 4<sup>th</sup> academic year student



## My name is venomous shame

The days for the four-day seminar were getting all the closer...

My last one as a trainee...

The books on shame which I had bought with such joy were staring at me in dispute, seeing that I had been neglecting them...

and I, full of shame, replied that I couldn't...

That life plays strange games when it comes to me and priorities...

Full of shame I replied that I would pass them on to others who would read them, that I wouldn't be active at this presentation...

The topic for Thessaloniki final year trainees was:... SHAME...

And my team members told me I didn't have anything to do for this year's presentation... but still, it was the last training presentation for me... I wanted a more personal touch, something truly mine... so I found this poem... which opened our presentation...

I was there at your conception?

In the epinephrine of your mother's shame?

You felt me in the fluid of your mother's womb? I came upon you before you could speak?

Before you understood? Before you had any way of knowing? I came upon you when you were learning to walk?

When you were unprotected and exposed?

When you were vulnerable and needy?

Before you had any boundaries?

MY NAME IS TOXIC SHAME

I came upon you when you were magical?

Before you could know I was there? I severed your soul?

I pierced you to the core? I brought you feelings of being flawed and defective?

I brought you feelings of distrust, ugliness, stupidity, doubt, worthlessness, inferiority and unworthiness

I made you feel different?

I told you there was something wrong with you?

I soiled your Godlikeness?

MY NAME IS TOXIC SHAME

I existed before conscience?

I am the internal voice that whispers words of condemnation

I live in secrecy? In the deep moist banks of darkness

depression and despair

Always I sneak up on you I catch you off guard

I come from "shameless" caretakers, abandonment, ridicule, abuse, neglect - perfectionistic systems

I am empowered by the shocking intensity of a parent's rage?

The cruel remarks of siblings?

The jeering humiliation of other children?

The awkward reflection in the mirrors?

The touch that feels icky and frightening?

The slap, the pinch, the jerk that ruptures trust.

MY NAME IS TOXIC SHAME

I bring pain that is chronic?

A pain that will not go away?

I am the hunter that stalks you night and day?

Every day everywhere? I have no boundaries?

You try to hide from me?

But you cannot?

Because I live inside of you? I make you feel hopeless? Like there is no way out?

MY NAME IS TOXIC SHAME

My pain is so unbearable that you must pass me on to others

through control, perfectionism, contempt, criticism, blame, envy, judgement, power, and rage

My pain is so intense

You must cover me up with addictions, rigid roles, reenactment, and unconscious ego defences.

My pain is so intense

that you must numb out and no longer feel me.

I convinced you that I am gone that I do not exist -

your experience absence and emptiness.

MY NAME IS TOXIC SHAME

I am the core of co-dependency?

I am spiritual bankruptcy?

The logic of absurdity?

The repetition compulsion?

I am crime, violence, incest, rape?

I am the voracious hole that fuels all addictions?

I am instability and lust

I am Ahaverus the Wandering Jew, Wagner's Flying Dutchman, Dostoyevski's underground

man, Kierkegaard's seducer, Goethe's Faust

I twist who you are into what you do and have

I murder your soul and you pass me on for generations

MY NAME IS TOXIC SHAME

Excerpts from John Bradshaw's book, "The Inner Child" [MAMA, I FOUND THE POEM  
<http://www.goddirect.org/mindemtn/writings/january/toxshame.htm> HERE, mind the eery music.]

VICTORIA ASKARIDOU  
Gestalt Foundation of Thessaloniki Graduate



Extract from a parallel presentation

at the four-day Gestalt Foundation meeting of May 2011 in Athens.

## The heart of the Square beats....

...to assert its own reality; to be able to hope, once again, feeling...

...Indignation

«Indignation/raze is, generally speaking, a type of spite lacking the courage of self-criticism and accepting one's own responsibility». It was the very same feeling that led and was driven to December 2008: a reasonless, emotional, disdainful, apolitical, gale, an easy complaint; juvenile delinquency and youth sub-culture, on the one hand (December 2008), and an emotional pipe-dream of apolitical protest, on the other (May 2011). Assemblies at the Constitutional Square in Athens, the White Tower in Thessaloniki and wherever else they took place, like team therapy groups, were blamed. In other words, these were attempts to jointly tackle a traumatic experience. Direct democracy relies on personal contact rather than on political discourse: I speak 'to someone' rather than 'about someone'. This is not political discourse but political action. Somaticized emotions expressed and manifested are a treasure in the here and now; they concern the emergence of the contents of conscience into consciousness, they indicate obstacles, reactions, past habits. Being aware of my feelings means I am aware of the crisis, which, of course, is not apolitical ...

The word 'crisis' in the Greek language, paints a landscape: on the one hand, the term 'crisis' denotes the breakdown of a state of affairs and, on the other, it means judgment sound judgment as in processing feelings/emotions with the help of reason reason as in logic, sound discourse and analogy or Logos.

In other words, a crisis is a shock to that which is fixed; it highlights fluidity as a threat, as chaos, yet, also, as a dynamic opportunity for retrieving our dreams.

This turning point is that of capitalism twenty years after the collapse of 'existing socialism' - dying and giving birth to new forms. If capitalism is underpinned by the exploitation of humans by humans and the senseless intervention and exploitation of natural planet resources, the system is shedding its old skin and globalisation aims at accumulating capital in the hands of the few, the hands of a supra-national elite, at the expense of the welfare of the entire society. Economic conflict is disguised as a liberator from bankruptcy - a bankruptcy that has nothing to do with citizens, but is a pretext for accumulating wealth and power among a few. It is these few who want to become all the richer and consider the planet as their raw material for exploiting humans as consuming creatures and shaping the worse form of violence, i.e. poverty. «Monetary power has become a kind of 'almighty god', because this power is not apparent, but only perceptible and it is omnipresent: its authoritarianism turns governments and political parties which at other times seemed to be a democratic warranty - into subjects », according to Santiago Carillo. In other words, the crisis is experienced as indignation against the frustration caused by the mutation of the welfare state into a mere agent of the new 'almighty god'.

A person's action whether as an individual or as a member of society in the view of the Gestalt approach is not but an operation of the organism/environment field and it is logically coherent. The Government and economic system of Greece, supports monetary power and, therefore, 'works' for the interests of a supra-nationalistic elite, of merciless, impersonal, global capitalism, widening the inequality gap between the rich and the poor, abolishing the middle classes, creating increasing poverty, violence and aggression. In this ever-changing field, the actions of each one of us whether consenting, disagreeing or resisting are grave: the here and now incorporates all: past, present and future. The crisis as an obstacle, brings to the surface all unfinished business, whether personal or social, and leads to the greatest challenge of all, i.e. that of being aware, of being conscious of the responsibility of our lives, the life of the planet, the lives of our fellow humans and our common future.

In order to assert its authority, the supra-nationalistic elite need our collaboration: in the form of passivity, manipulation, obedience, fear, life-limitations, and abolition of solidarity, equality, respect for the environment and human values. To quote Pearls: «The individual and the environment are not but the elements of a single whole, of a field; neither is responsible for the afflictions of the other. Still, both of them suffer. A society with a high number of neurotics is a neurotic society; of those who live in a neurotic society, a high number will be neurotic. A person who can live within society having good contact, who is neither swallowed by it nor detached/withdrawn from it, is a complete person. The aim of psychotherapy is to create such complete human beings». Allow me to make a modification: if the previous century allowed and imposed neurosis as an unequal solution in favour of the system, the current century runs on paranoia. The debt to whom, by whom and when is not but paranoid ideation, which forces us to split: I owe even my sanity... A similar paranoid ideation is consenting to having our lives spied on because of the International Terrorism risk!!! It is the consent of the public opinion to a politically correct war against a country that had nuclear weapons which was later proven not to have any by a country which definitely had and still has them... Neurosis is, therefore, a thing of the past; people of my generation are now entering into the relief of paranoia!!!

The heart of the Square beats: I am not going to be your accomplice. Suppression forces and collaborating instigators of unofficial violence attack with incredible cruelty. Why?



## Knowledge, experience, art, techniques

**Knowledge, experience, art, techniques: the YWCA of Thessaloniki embraced seventeen volunteers and four co-ordinators during a two-day seminar titled "How a Team Operates", co-organised by the YWCA of Thessaloniki and Gestalt Foundation in the context of their cooperation.**

*As you set out for Ithaca  
hope the voyage is a long one,  
full of adventure, full of discovery.'*

*CP Cavafy (Translated by Edmund Keeley/Philip Sherrard)*

What better way to work than to focus on interaction and sharing? Team dynamics is a challenge for any co-ordinator. Being different facilitates, baffles, brings to the surface schemes and behaviour patterns, conflicts and projections, while animation and care were the ingredients that brought the team together. There were also trust in the process and trust in our own relationships, trust each one of us has in herself, both as a professional and as a human being. I would like to thank the President, Ms. Theodosia Katsoni, from the bottom of my heart, for her authenticity and organisational skills, as well as all the members who trusted us and "opened up" their personal hope chests with difficulty as well as joy. I would also like to thank my co-therapists: Amalia Apostolou, for her ability to reframe, her care and her sweetness; Alexia Gibiriti for her "grounding" and her enthusiasm; and Alexandra Stefa for her calm strength and active listening. At a time of crisis, denial and controversy, our meeting was a reminder that we can still keep our relationship with ourselves and others alive. We can still create, trust, help others grow and grow ourselves, and, like children, we can play using our bodies and imagination. I truly hope that this meeting of ours can be the starting point for many more good contacts to come.

Dimitra Zioga, Psychologist,  
Graduate of Thessaloniki Gestalt Foundation,  
Gestalt Psychotherapist



*How can they contain citizens demanding direct democracy? How can they contain citizens who assemble and discuss their fears, who discuss their personal and social responsibility, the liability of each and every one of us in a society that is collapsing? Who discuss the unequal distribution of wealth among people and the destruction of the natural environment? Who can hardly tolerate the fact that instead of paying taxes on the basis of social standards so as to achieve greater social equality and human prosperity, bankruptcy and lending is generated aiming only at the profit of lenders to ensure rich lenders may become richer and citizens their pawns?*

*«People seem to have been born with a sense of social and psychological balance which is as strong as their sense of physical balance. Every move made at the social or psychological level is a move in the direction of balance, a move to restore peace between personal needs and social demands. Human difficulties are not born from one's desire to deny this peace, but from miscalculated moves aiming at maintaining this peace».*

*In accordance with the rationale of the founder of the Gestalt approach presented above, organic self-regulation, individual self-regulation and social self-regulation are not but a consequence of an organic sense of balance and they take place in the field. This is the sense of balance ancient Greeks called the Cosmos. Even wrong moves do not deny this balance, as we know from psychotherapy: these moves are but a process of creative adaptation, improved and corrected through being conscious of one's self, the environment and their inter-dependence.*

*The ritual of popular assemblies satisfies a deep personal need for social cohesion; it is a social value that ensures the survival of living as members of a team. In the words of Serge Ginger: what is the most important thing is not what others gain from me, but what I gain from what the others gain from me.*

*Who is listening to the heartbeat of the Square?  
Who is listening to his or her own heartbeat?  
Who is listening to the heartbeat of his/her fellow humans?  
In-out, contact-withdrawal, I-the-other, identity-differentiation*

Angeliki Kyvelou,  
Graduate of Athens Gestalt Foundation,  
Gestalt Psychotherapist  
Nikea, summer 2011



Y W C A OF THESSALONIKI

Date: 11/11/2011  
Pr. No.:120

To: GESTALT FOUNDATION

Attention of: Ms. Katia Hatzilakou

Dear friends,

We are writing to express our warmest thanks for your positive response to our request regarding the training seminar for YWCA team co-ordinators.

This two day seminar, held on 4-5 November at Thessaloniki YWCA, left a very good impression on all participants, thanks to both the serious preparation on your part, as well as its successful implementation which included an interesting range of topics. Despite the long hours, your four competent co-workers managed to maintain the interest of our members and offered a real experience on the general subject of: "How a Team Operates".

Our evaluation confirmed that this project was a successful first step, thanks to your substantial contribution of an exceptionally high professional level; we greatly appreciate your volunteering your time and services.

We hope that the comments discussed and presented on the evaluation sheets concerning topics of a more specialised character, tailored to the intricacies of different YWCA groups, focusing on a more technocratic approach, may become the subject of our future collaboration. The team that took part and gained interesting and useful experience has already expressed their sincere request for a follow-up seminar. We hope that there can be some form of substantial development following this already successful collaboration, if, of course, your circumstances allow it.

We thank you again

On Behalf of the Board of Directors of Thessaloniki YWCA

The President

The Head of the Project

Theodosia Katsoni

Calliope Stasinopoulou



# profile

The profile ceremony for Gestalt Foundation 2010-2011 Graduates was held from 1 to 3 July, 2011 at Neochori, Karditsa. We wish them all a successful graduation and a prosperous career.

## The chronicle of forgiveness...

**S**ummertime: The sun is shining, the weather is warm, and whilst most people are preparing for their summer holidays, some of us are getting ready for a different journey. We're going to participate in an experiential seminar from 7/7 to 10/7/2011, about forgiving and coexisting. The title is a play of the words 'chorus'(chorós) and space (chóros) in Greek: The word 'synchoro', which means forgive is spelt in three different ways to mean: in chorus, being together in the same space (the literal meaning of forgive in Greek), and forgive; subtitle: 'Medea's myth cycle'.... some title indeed... So, right from the start, one is aware it won't be a pleasure cruise, but rather a voyage into one's own "process".

And where is it held? In Samothrace (come on guys, can't we have the next one in Kastelorizo...?).

The co-ordinators at the seminar are Nicholas Raptis, Maria Farmaki and Katia Hatzilakou. Strangers to some, known and not exempt to others, but to me they're FRIENDS, first and foremost, a never-failing guarantee.

The instructions for those participating in the seminar were clear and explicit. We were to read Medea, but not just as "Medea", but also as "wetnurses", "messengers", "children" (in general, we were all to assume all the roles in the tragedy). What more are we going to do for this process?

Samothrace is there, ready and adorned. Mount Saos is looming above, a sleepless guard, an accomplice to what happened centuries ago, during the Kaveiria Mysteries and all ready to watch new happenings.

46 people participants and co-ordinators met up at the edge of Greece, ready and willing to forgive "the unforgivable" (someone, a situation, themselves, their families, their therapists, etc...). Familiar faces, unknown faces, many, different faces.

What a beginning!!! Merkouri's voice crying "Oh! Country!..." and Paxinou's shouting "My children..." (even now, writing about it, makes my hairs stand on end). You can imagine what happened! We couldn't get the paper tissues around fast enough...

We experienced magical moments, each one for themselves and with themselves and then sharing with the team members.

I won't describe word for word what happened at the seminar, I'll just say a few things.

There was much travelling: Chora, Therma, Vathres, the Archaeological Grounds, the old school made of stone, Karydies. Each one of these places was a small journey in itself, a step in each person's process towards the ancient tragedy's "catharsis".

At times a member of the chorus, at times the protagonist, at times a spectator, at times the chorus leader, but always a member of our own performance. Tasks were tough, painful, easy, entertaining, but, definitely, well thought out so as to play their part in the "process", too.

Wham, Whom, Whem, Whim, Whammmmmm

One of the most beautiful and intense moments of the seminar for me was the conclusion of a task (based on the myth of the spider woman), when we were all asked to weave our web together. We were to leave behind something burdening us, something we no longer wanted, and to take with us something "new". Each person's burden looked like dew drops woven in the common web; although expected to be unbearable, it was light as a feather (perhaps following the saying that goes something like "shared joy is double joy, shared sorrow is half sorrow").

I leave the wounds and keep the scars. I become the ancient tragedy's *deus ex machina* and offer my own "catharsis" (my own end) to this "tragedy".

When I decided to take part in this seminar, I thought it would have been "softer"-- that I wouldn't have been able to go deep into my process.

However, every touch, every look, every word from participants and co-ordinators had its own meaning and 'did what it had to do' for my process.

I thank you all very much for being there for us to experience all those wonderful things together. If even one had been missing, things would have been different. So (quoting the Bollywood teacher) "...from the centre of the Earth to our own centre and our hearts...THANKYOU".

Christina Hatzilakou



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Y W C A OF THESSALONIKI



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