



Gestalt NEWS Foundation

INFORMATIVE AND COMMUNICATIVE SIX-MONTH ISSUE OF GESTALT FOUNDATION
PSYCHOTHERAPY & TRAINING CENTER / Winter 2012 / 17th issue



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Correspondence



May 2012, Kamena Vourla

**14th four-day
workshop of
GESTALT
PSYCHOTHERAPY**

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LECTURES IANOS

Despina Balliou

*“Creativity and Beauty
in Human Relationships”*

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Editorial

Gestalt Foundation activities continue for the 15th

consecutive year at the beginning of this academic term! Lectures, groups, educational/experiential seminars, educational activities, training programmes and collaboration schemes with several social organisations.

This year we are launching a series of activities for children! An "Applied Philosophy Workshop" has been set up in Athens as well as educational/experiential seminars for therapists working with children. In Thessaloniki a group for school children has been set up, titled "The Dance of Emotions" and a series of open lectures organised around the theme of "Living with autism", in the context of an educational/experiential seminar.

Seeing that educational seminars on psychopathology organised by Gestalt Foundation in Athens took off so well, we are now organising a similar one in Thessaloniki.

And as far as continuing education and specialisation programmes for mental health professionals go, we have decided to focus on the "What', 'Where', 'How' & 'Why' of sexual dysfunctions".

The central theme in the current Newsletter is the four-day workshop that took place in 2012, with accounts by our first year as well as fourth year trainees. You will also find our regular columns (book reviews, best sellers, impressions of participants at our events) as well as a new column, "Free Expression", launched with a poem. Now you can send poems, short stories or articles (up to 1.5 A4

pages) that you feel would be suitable for the contents of our newsletter and have an artistic touch! We will be glad to enrich our every Newsletter issue with a little bit of art! After all, we make sure there is room left for art in our programmes, every year, just like this year's seminar in Athens "Psychotherapy GestArt... meeting on the borderline...with Alkestis..." and the seminar on movement & Gestalt in Thessaloniki "Relationships aren't choreographed...but improvised..."



You can find detailed time-schedules, news and announcements concerning our Centres both in Athens and Thessaloniki on our website www.gestaltfoundation.gr, but, starting this year, and following the times, on Facebook, as well! So, if you would like to be updated via Facebook, too, find us on www.facebook.com/gest.found.

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.

"FEAR OF FREEDOM" Part 2

[Fromm, E. (1971). *Fear of Freedom* - Translated by D. Theodorakatos. Athens: Boukoumanis' Publishing House].

Konstantinos Kostas
Social Worker, Psychologist,
Gestalt Psychotherapist
(email: k.konstantinos@yahoo.gr)

(Continued from part 1)

Fromm resorts to European history, for the most part, so as to explain the paradox of people giving up their freedom so easily. He focuses on the Protestant Reformation, and highlights three obscure aspects: 1) It boldly teaches the evil of human nature; 2) It declares the insignificance and weakness of humans, and 3) It emphasises man's need for an external power. The idea of an individual's worthlessness, of one's basic inability to rely on themselves and the need for their submission comprise, according to Fromm, the core of Hitler's ideology.

Furthermore, Fromm argues that Luther and Calvin psychologically prepared humans for the role they were to have to play in modern society: **feeling that they are insignificant and willing to submit their lives to causes that are not their own.** In his analysis, Fromm places considerable emphasis on a similarity between the medieval society of the 15th

and 16th centuries and the society of his day (1941): "Then, as now, a vast sector of the population was threatened in its traditional way of life by revolutionary changes in the economic and social organization; especially the middle class was, as today, threatened by the power of monopolies and the superior strength of capital, and this threat had an important effect on the spirit and the ideology of the threatened sector of society by enhancing the individual's feeling of aloneness and insignificance."

book recommended

(p. 55)
Fromm then goes on to focus on psychological defence mechanisms individuals develop in order to face the feeling of aloneness and weakness, which he names **Mechanisms of Escape from freedom.** He distinguishes three mechanisms of flight: **1) Authoritarianism, 2) Destructiveness and 3) Automaton Conformity.** Authoritarianism is the tendency to give up the independence of one's own individual self and fuse one's self with somebody or

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BEST SELLERS ΕΞΑΜΗΝΟΥ

ΛΟΓΟΤΕΧΝΙΑ

ΜΕΛΕΤΕΣ

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ΧΟΡΕΙ ΜΠΟΥΚΑΙ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΑΙΝΩΙΑ ΣΤΗ ΣΟΦΙΑ	ROBIN S. SHARMA ΤΑ ΜΥΣΤΙΚΑ ΤΟΥ ΜΟΝΑΧΟΥ ΠΟΥ ΠΟΥΛΗΣΕ ΤΗ ΨΥΧΗΝ ΤΟΥ	HUBERT REEVES ΜΙΚΡΟΤΑΣΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΣΥΜΠΑΝ ΣΤΑ ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΑ ΜΟΥΣΕΙΑ	HARILYN YALOM Η ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΥΦΡΟΝΙΑ ΜΟΥ
2013 ΗΜΕΡΟΛΟΓΙΟ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΝΗΣ ΚΡΙΣΗΣ	ΑΕΘΝ Α. ΝΑΡ ΕΞΕΣΤΑΣΙΑΚΗ ΠΡΟΤΑΣΗ ΤΟ ΜΕΛΛΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΡΕΛΘΟΝΤΟΣ	ΠΟΡΤΟΣ ΔΗΜΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ ΖΩΣΕ ΤΟ ΣΗΜΕΡΑ	JULIA KRISTEVA ΣΤΟΡΕΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΑΠΗΣ

ΙΑΝΟΣ

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“Redefining my History: a Doorway to the Future”

From Athens to Euboea. And from Euboea... on to Xanthi, Kalamata, Souli, Germany, Mytilene, Argentina, Africa, Sperchias, Thessaloniki, Prague, Kiev, Agrinio, Larisa, Corinthos, Proussa and Smyrna, and back “home”, back to our roots.

Losses, a struggle for survival, abandonment, isolation, violence, trauma, separations, double-dealing relationships but also care, support, fixed points of reference, love, principles, traditions, a HISTORY with depth and substance.

We bent over all the above with respect and interest. We listened to stereotypes, motifs, myths and legends, ways of life, values and sources of support handed down from generation to generation.

Every participant's family map was deployed..... and we identified with one another, felt moved, cried and laughed. And in the end we embraced and sang to the Beatles all together.

All this happened during the seminar “Redefining my History: a Doorway to the Future”, on September 14, 15 and 16, 2012 at the cosy and warm Kandyli Farm on the island of Euboea.

We would like to thank all participants.

*Despina Balliou
Yianna Yiamarelou*

Continued from page 2

something outside oneself in order to find the strength the individual self is lacking. Its most characteristic expressions are the tendency of submission (masochism) and the tendency of domination (sadism). The most frequent forms of masochistic striving appear in feelings of inferiority, powerlessness, individual insignificance and quite regularly marked dependence on powers outside the individual, on other people, or institutions. Sadistic tendencies are seen in the tendency to dominate and have control over other people. Fromm recognises three types of sadism: (1) the first one is to make others dependent on oneself so as to have absolute and unrestricted power over them, so as to make of them nothing but instruments; (2) the second is reflected in the impulse not only to rule over others in this absolute fashion, but to exploit them, to use them, to steal from them, to disembowel them, and, so to speak, to assimilate anything edible in them. This desire may refer to material things as well as to immaterial ones, such as the emotional or intellectual qualities a person has to offer; (3) the third one concerns the wish to make others suffer or to see them suffer. The sadist doesn't want to directly destroy the object of their sadism, because they are dependent on it. Masochistic as well as sadistic tendencies are the result of the same basic need arising from one's inability to tolerate aloneness and weakness. The bond which is formed between people who are compatible as far as their submissive and dominant tendencies are concerned is called 'symbiosis' and is characterised by strong dependence of one on the other. Destructiveness is the second mechanism of escape and Fromm explains it as a reaction to the prevention of life growth rather than as a typical feature of human behaviour. Nature tends towards destruction when not allowed to express itself. The more the drive towards life is thwarted, the stronger the drive towards destruction becomes; the more life is realized, the less the strength of destructiveness is.

The third mechanism for escape, one of great social significance, is automaton conformity, the solution that the majority of normal individuals find in modern

society. To put it briefly, the individual ceases to be himself; he adopts entirely the kind of personality offered to him by cultural patterns; and he, therefore, becomes exactly what cultural standards expect him to be. The discrepancy between "I" and the world disappears and with it the conscious fear of aloneness and powerlessness. The mechanisms for escape from freedom are merely attempts to reconnect with the world, which are, unfortunately, fruitless. For Fromm, the solution to the problem of freedom is man's reconnecting with the world through spontaneous activity. **Positive freedom is the spontaneous activity of the total, integrated personality.** A prerequisite for spontaneity is the acceptance of one's personality as a whole. Basic components of spontaneity are love and creative activity on which Fromm writes an interesting analysis in the relevant chapter.

To bring this note to a close, it is worth noting that almost the entire works of Erich Fromm have been published in Greek by Boukoumanis' Publishing House.

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May 2012

Kamena Vourla

14th four-day workshop of GESTALT PSYCHOTHERAPY



“I think, I feel, I observe, I experiment, I evolve...” the experience and the process in Gestalt therapy

Our four days...

We arrived in the afternoon, in good spirits, unaware of what was ahead of us. We were probably reckoning it as a holiday... But the organisers thwarted our holiday plans: Giamarelou, Dipla, Costantinidou, Balliou and Hatzilakou made sure there was no time left to spare not even for a swim in the pool. I personally did not understand why we had to rush from one workshop to the next, why we had to wake up at the crack of dawn and, generally, why things were strictly calculated to the last minute. But the moment came when my question was answered, about a month later... Ultimately nothing was incidental. Everything was so masterfully planned so there would be no time for processing. As we discovered and Gianna pointed out, “assimilating the experience is something that happens at the end of the cycle, after contact”. My account of the experience is that I thought, I felt, I observed, I experimented and, finally, I evolved... Just like the title of the four-day seminar encouraged us to do. I brought down some walls inside me and created paths, I unmasked many emotions which up until yesterday didn't have a name and, once again, I learnt that I have to listen, see and speak.

“The four-day seminar was an intense and unique experience for me, with many pleasant and unpleasant personal moments yet, all of them authentic! It still remains an experience which helped me find the strength to take a better look at myself and start to slowly and timidly allow me to just be...” -K.

“A journey and a 'journey'. The trip to Kammena Vourla was filled with so many intense emotions! Everything was cranked up to high! Very emotional, very tiring! I cannot describe what I felt and am still feeling, so I'll just cite disjointed words: crying, emotion, separation, nostalgia, joy, happiness, new friends, fatigue, nature, bonding, education, complaining (yes, I complained, and that was due to tiredness too!), dancing, partying, singing, being carefree, solidarity, farewell to the fourth-year students (we hardly had the chance to meet them and we already had to say goodbye!), sorrow, games and, once again, the journey home. I feel so lucky that through this four-day seminar I got to feel, and this made me think, observe myself in my life and motivated me to experiment so that I may evolve...” - A.

“I would write about Saturday evening... One of the most gestalt experiences of fun! Lots of dancing and high spirits without a hint of trying to keep up a serious front... A liberating experience...” - M.

Oh! Just to end, I would like to once again congratulate and convey my/our respect for the poetry the first year students from Athens created for the seminar. There are no words to describe it.

Lots of phenomenology,

Maria Nikopoulou, 1st year of Thessaloniki (2011-2012)



My experience of participating in the four-day Gestalt seminar

My attendance and participation in the training experiential four-day Gestalt seminar is undoubtedly one of the most important, noteworthy and memorable experiences of my life. Firstly, I would like to highlight and underline the “unprecedented”, “new” and “unique” quality this whole process had for me, as it essentially is an “experiential meeting” of all Gestalt trainers and trainees, a process I hadn't had the good fortune to participate in before.

Focusing now on the four days themselves, I would like to, firstly, pause and ponder on the difference in the process of these four days as compared to other training seminars; this has to do with the participation of a much larger group of people, something which made me feel comfortable, pleasant and free, as I had the opportunity to communicate with any different personalities and share various thoughts, emotions and experiences. Regarding the work and presentations by other year groups, I was particularly impressed by the presentation on the life and work of Paul Goodman, whose contribution to Gestalt psychotherapy had not previously been highlighted and emphasised as much as that of other Gestalt theorists and psychotherapists.

A third point on which I would like to pause is my own year's presentation and how I survived the whole process. Firstly, I would like to stress that I was truly stressed about how our work would be accepted or recognised, as I was certain that it was an attempt at something complex, original and creative. During the whole process I was focused on two things: the audience's reactions and the presentation video. At the end of

the presentation I was overwhelmed by feelings of happiness and excitement as our work was met with unanimous recognition by the audience, while a number of people shared with us that they were touched by our video and underlined the originality of our work. Additionally, it is important to mention that I felt very proud of all team members who had worked hard, and admiration for those members who expressed their creativity and originality through exceptionally artistic aspects.

It is also vital to point out the way Nurith Levi's way of work thrilled me. She was terribly interested in each and every one of us and the way she managed to overcome even the difficulties of language in her work was incredible. Another memorable experience from the four-day seminar was the celebration, where all year groups as well as the coordinators got together and had fun, leaving the tight time-schedule aside. “Withdrawing” like that was creative and useful for me, as it was obvious that we all needed to have fun and enjoy our time with the people we already knew and the people we had just met.

At the end of the four days I found myself tired and full of emotions, thoughts, and memories of moments and images. In fact, I had shaped a mental form defined by the diverse ground created by the whole meeting. Ultimately, it was a unique event and I am looking forward to the next one. What I have gained from it is the enjoyment of having contact with new people, expanding this contact and feeling that young/new people are sharing a common experience whilst being very different and individualistic within its context.

Kostantinos Valavanis, 1st year of Athens (2012-2012)



“I think, I feel, I observe, I experiment, I evolve...”

I think which words, sentences and ideas will work best in order for me to describe my experience of the last four-day seminar at Kammena Vourla. *I feel* nostalgic and the more *I observe* it, the more something inside me sweetens and the letters on the keyboard form words more easily. *I experiment* by taking the decision to share all this with you. And so, *I evolve*. I don't change, I don't become something I'm not or something I hoped to be. I evolve. In small steps, tentatively at first and more confidently later on, maybe even hesitantly later; I evolve and I'm enjoying it.

Four special days, just like every moment that passes, every experience, every feeling, thought, action, every emotion, every kind of stimulation... And it was a big challenge for me to (attempt to) come into contact with all these from moment to moment. But what elation when I succeeded! How steady and grounded I feel when I “simply” (and I add the quotation marks for obvious reasons) listen to me and trust my senses.

It was also special for another reason: for my team and myself it was our last four-day seminar as trainees. I had, however, managed to keep this “cloud” from hovering over me. Instead, I was stressed about presenting our team work, unsure about the final result, a headache, a knot in my stomach... And all that because of the presentation. Or so I thought, up until the moment two

words from one of my team members shook me, and I paused to see what was happening to me. And suddenly I gave the necessary space to the sorrow I felt when realising it was the end. I was emotional. Tears welled up. They were tears of relief and redemption. I was now ready to experience and enjoy every moment, to see my team members; not just look at them. I didn't stop worrying about the presentation, but the stress was significantly less: there was room for other emotions, too. I felt more whole, less restricted; I felt I was capable of more, knowing myself better and truly available for real encounters with others.

Today, five months later, I'm here. On the one hand it feels like not a single day has passed since last May: images of the people I met come to my mind, their faces, the soft breeze that cooled and refreshed me during breaks, the hotel corridors and meeting rooms, the farewells at the end of those four days; on the other hand, it all seems so far away, but not foreign: it is all mine, my experience which I will always carry with me...

Emotion, deep satisfaction, fulfilment...

Paraskevi Tramba, 4th year of Athens (2011-2012)

**Our last four-day seminar as a team...**

A point in time on a long course... To get to the training I travelled 47,832 kilometres, throughout the training period I drank 86.4 litres of coffee, smoked approximately 5,000 cigarettes, photocopied 6,000 pages and ate 57.6 kilos of sandwiches...and that's just the numerical assessment. The emotional one, which cannot be quantified, made me face stress and fear in mega doses; I pushed aside all objective difficulties and became exceptionally inventive and creative so as to make it... I built strong relationships, learned about myself and others and now feel satisfied with my choice.

May 2012, Kamena Vourla... I look at our photographs... with the girls in the car heading there, in the rooms, the sweet, pretty faces: Eleni, Alexia, Apostolia, Marina, Ritsa, Ria, Margarita - playfully sticking her tongue out at the lens, Dolly - dancing a *zeibekiko*, my dancing figures with Alexandra, our warm embraces... I can see our happiness, our authentic contact, our satisfaction and the feeling of fulfilment. I think about the process that got us there, our work as a team on a topic we all enjoyed, the short film we directed... How pleasant that was... We laughed, we cried, we got angry, we played, we created.

Our team topic was fear. “Shall we? I'm scared...We're all scared...” I think about how we presented our work. Fear is part of life and it is often that we can do nothing but move on with it, accept what is coming and, through the pain of accepting and overcoming, we can find the strength to move forward. Life is full of paradoxes and when faced with the facts of existence we often have strong and ambivalent feelings, and must deal with separation and differentiation again and again. We can develop and evolve our selves through the painful process of such separation, but we can use our fears, too.

Thus, for me, the four-day seminar marked the beginning of the end. Our education was coming to an end, our team would cross the finish line and each of us would take their own way. It would be one of the most important and determining losses as I move on, along my own path, a loss which does not bring sorrow, but joy, emotion, true connection with others, maturity. We have all changed a great deal since then, but I keep every moment in my heart, every breath, all our trainers' comments, the work we did, our contact with the group from Athens, the excellent organisation and work everybody put in at this meeting.

“...we spread our hands towards the sun and sing... the light sings in the veins of weeds and stones... It was worth our being just so we could meet...”

-Yiannis Ritsos

Stavroula Sehlidou, 4th yer of Thessaloniki (2011-2012)

**H.A.G.T (Hellenic Association for Gestalt Therapy)
Kammena Vourla 2012**

“A Dream You Dream Alone Is Only A Dream, A Dream You Dream Together Is Reality” John Lennon.

Since 2001, when I started training in psychotherapy, my participation in the 4-day Gestalt seminars has been one of the most important, essential and moving experiences.

It was there that I first heard there is an association of Gestalt psychotherapists, the goal of which is to warrant the quality of Gestalt psychotherapy in Greece and to promote the therapeutic approach I have grown to love.

This year I found myself at the 4-day seminar at Kammena Vourla 2012 as a representative of the Hellenic Association for Gestalt Psychotherapy. Participating in this capacity was different. I did not know many of the trainees...and I was representing a group of professionals. I was stressed...I was wearing a T-shirt bearing the Association logo... I wanted it to look good... I wanted them to like the most creative way we found of presenting the Association...And I wanted them to participate in creating the jigsaw puzzle...so that these Gestalt therapists could also have the opportunity to belong...if they so chose... to a group which I consider important: a professional group of a therapeutic approach, a team of colleagues complying with common principles and observing the same ethical code. There was participation in constructing the jigsaw puzzle at the Gala Dinner. It was spontaneous, focusing both on the group and the individual. It was happy and fun. Mission Accomplished?

As an Association we are a whole and each one of us, each piece of the puzzle, is separate and important. Each one of us has specific abilities. The abilities of the whole are something more than simply the sum of its parts, depending on the quality and the way we want to connect.

Right now, the Hellenic Association for Gestalt Psychotherapy is searching for an identity. Internal and bureaucratic processes, necessary for the operation of any association, are being completed. There is a clear process for registering provisional and regular members, we have a website with information and a list of therapists; we are on Facebook showing our activities. As the HAGT we are a member, and the sole representatives in Greece, of the EAGT (European Association of Gestalt Therapists) as well as members of the National Psychotherapy Society of Greece. We have Statutes and a Code of Conduct. We've acquired a structure. According to the approach we are representing, the time has come for us to turn “outwards”... as much as we want to and as much as we can, in our daily lives...the invitation will remain open and there will be plenty of opportunities for those who may want to contribute, whether regular or provisional or even supporting members.

For the Governing Board of the H.A.G.T
Joanna Kato
Treasurer



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Date: 13/09/2012
Ser. Reg. No.: 220

To: Gestalt Foundation

Mss Katia Hatzilakou, Antonia Konstantinidou

CC.: Mrs Rama Sandmon, Gestalt Foundation Supervisor

Dear Ms Hatzilakou and Ms. Konstantinidou,

having been present in Thessaloniki for the last 11 years, the YWCA Social Services continue our work in this new season September 2012-June 2013 providing the women of the wider community with counselling, amongst other services.

Recognising your important contribution to our work, we would like to thank all your trainees who intern voluntarily at the YWCA. The counselling support they provide to women who seek our services out gives them the opportunity to improve their quality of life, which is a primary objective of the YWCA Social Services.

Thus, we hope that once again we will have you with us and together we will do our best both in terms of our cooperation and the services we offer.

To a good start!

Yours in appreciation
for the YWCA Social Services
The YWCA President,
Theodosia Katsoni



Thessaloniki, 12/10/2012

To: YWCA Social Services

Attn. of: Mrs Katsoni, YWCA President & Members of the Organising Committee

Cc.: Mrs Rama Sandmon, Gestalt Foundation Supervisor

Honourable Mrs. Katsoni and members of the Organising Committee,

we would firstly like to thank you for your recognition of our contribution to the YWCA's social services and, in turn, would like to express our deep appreciation for your continuous presence and uninterrupted service to our city.

The opportunity you are giving our Centre's trainees and graduates is extremely important and we will happily stand by your side in pursuing social action which is nowadays more necessary than ever.

Yours for the Gestalt Foundation,

Antonia Konstantinidou, M.Sc

Clinical and Social Psychology,
Psychotherapist, Gestalt Trainer and Supervisor, Member of the
EAGT Association of Greek Psychologists. Holder of the ECP. Founding
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Katia Hatzilakou, M.Sc

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the Gestalt Foundation

Free
expression

THE CHILD WITHIN - 29/9/2012

Play, yet not too much
Laugh, yet not too much
Care, all the time
Think, always
Protect yourself
It's lurking behind the door

Don't let yourself go, child
Serious child,
Wise child,
Thinking
Yet not naive
Child, yet not childlike
Hide

Child within me
Eternal child
Child owed a debt by me
Angry, grabbing child
Sleep, child; I'm here
Child, I've grown up
Join me and off we go.

Alexandros

EXPERIENTIAL WORKSHOP

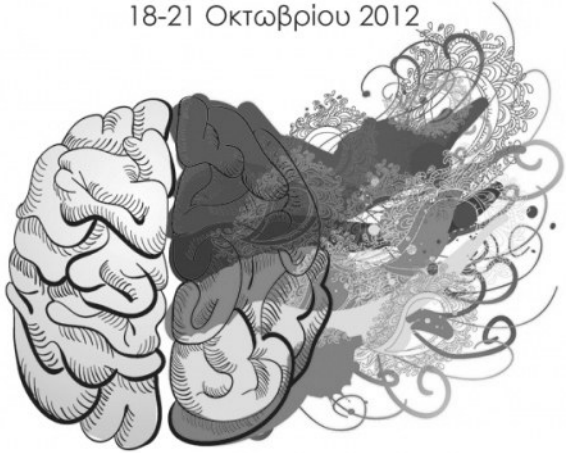
On Tuesday, January 24, 2012, between 10:00 and 12:00, Despina Balliou coordinated an experiential workshop for the students of the Nursing Institute of Athens at 'Aglaia Kiriakou' Children's Hospital, titled:

“The role of emotional awareness in Gestalt psychotherapy”

Our emotions are the essence of our being. Being aware of our sensory perception and our own emotions is what motivates, strengthens and guides our experiences and the way we act on them.

In Gestalt psychotherapy, all one has to do is focus on their present experience. That process alone can unfold their background and story, bringing important notions to the surface.

1ο ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΟ
ΝΕΥΡΟΨΥΧΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ
«ΤΡΙΤΗΣ ΗΛΙΚΙΑΣ»
18-21 Οκτωβρίου 2012



Grand Hotel Palace
Μοναστηρίου 305-307
Θεσσαλονίκη

1st Conference on the NEUROPSYCHOLOGY of the **ELDERLY**

18-21 October 2012, Grand Hotel Thessaloniki

Gestalt attended the first Conference organised in Greece on the Neuropsychology of the elderly.

The issues discussed at the conference revolved around current and recent developments in fields like learning abilities, neuro-imaging, neuropsychological assessment, emotions, quality of life and levels of intelligence prior to illness.

As Gestalt therapists we had the opportunity to present a round table titled **"The point of psychotherapy in elderly patients with mild cognitive impairment (MCI)"**, which focused on the following topics (in order of presentation):

"A description of group intervention psychotherapy in individuals with Mild Cognitive Impairment: Presenting one's self through creating collages" - Katerina Siambani, Msc Counselling Psychology, Gestalt Psychotherapist

"Responsible for myself Reaching closure in unfinished affairs/relationships" - Agoritsa Kalantzi, Trainee Gestalt Psychotherapist

"Individual suffering from Mild Cognitive Impairment and oncoming dementia through the eyes of a Gestalt therapist" - Gianna Kalota, Msc Health Psychology, Gestalt Psychotherapist

"The Elderly How psychotherapy brings the elderly in touch with their emotions" - Melina Makridou, Msc Health Psychology, Gestalt Psychotherapist

"The need to belong to a team" - Marina Theofilou, Bsc Psychology, Gestalt Psychotherapist

Results were diverse, satisfying, touching... What I have certainly gained from the conference, however, is a sense of flexibility, our "creative adaptation"; topics we have learnt about during our training in Gestalt theory and through our love for what we do at the organisations we work with, be they the Greek Association of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders or various Cancer Associations, the YMCA, the Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki... Our main guide in all these past years has been our love for our fellow humans' suffering.

As a closing remark, I would like to share an extract on love from Saint Paul's Epistle, hoping that it will touch your souls and accompany you throughout your lives...

But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

(St. Paul to the Corinthians)

Melina Makridou
Msc Health Psychology
Gestalt Psychotherapist



Correspondence

Home coming: a journey towards the authentic self. Working with interruptions in the coming home process for LGBT.

The title predicted the journey. The title delivered a self to the authentic self. The title lay down the foundations for a home. And the title created an opening for the LGBT community. The seminar began just as if someone had just a few minutes previously weaved an invisible net connecting us all, and it was on this net that we all stepped and were supported by for three days. It is this connection between people who want to be authentic, between straightforward meanings, between clear emotions that I still carry with me a few months later as I am writing this. I chose to write about the greatness of our journey to one another's home rather than something specific. About the great obstacle we name sexuality and we even give it an epithet, characterising people heterosexual, homosexual, or whatever else so that we can spread around labels and make difference an enemy. But sexuality inherently exists in everybody, it is completely natural and utterly personal and the more admitting such stereotypes, the more we hide it, we become more frightened and we end up categorising based on gender and choice. In its simplicity, the seminar revealed that sexuality is part of the human essence. That's it. Nothing more. Just like the LGBT community is part of the human community. That's it. Nothing more.

I cannot avoid but praise Katia Hatzilakou's steady and consistent essence, Maria Farmaki's care and discreet presence, Kevin McCann's barrage of quiet strength and Favorito Barbarello's exceptional complementarity. Maria was simply there (for three consecutive days, there!), Katia was an invisible frame (both vibrant and fixed), Kevin was the teacher and the visible proof of his teachings and Favorito sculpted points with humour and touch. I feel grateful for having been there with them and another twenty exceptional people.

Care, steadiness, balance, interest, value, respect, connection, loneliness, freedom, truth, path: these are scattered words which, in time, will become a text within me about this seminar. It is still too soon for me to tell you. I just learnt that home is where my authentic self lives and I have begun my journey to reach it.

Dedicated to my own Little Prince.

Katerina Papanikolaou

On Monday March 12, 2012, between 20:30 and 22:30, Despina Balliou gave a lecture at IANOS Bookshop on the topic:

"Creativity and Beauty in Human Relationships"

Most of us long to have relationships that are lively and warm, relationships that are lasting and promote our development.

In answer to the questions "Really, can there be beauty and creativity in human relationships? Can we truly highlight them in a world where we very often threaten one another? Is it even worth the effort?"

Our deepest belief, as Gestalt psychotherapists, is that YES, we can. All we need to do is be willing to work on our relationships, invest in them, take risks, and make the commitment that, regardless of how tough life can be, we will remain open to the challenges and invitations of human experience.

Creativity plays an important role in the growth and maintenance of such relationships. According to the Gestalt psychotherapeutic approach, creativity is a relational process. The moment we begin to interact, we begin to create.

Beauty, on the other hand, is an aesthetic quality which has no meaning whatsoever if not connected to the person looking at it, listening to it, focusing their attention on it. We need one another to help experiences of beauty between us emerge to the surface.

Creativity and beauty are both based on contact and creative adaptation; on contact which allows for difference, on experience and experimentation, on creative destabilisation, on maintaining the interest and on humour.

This is what Antonis Zairis, a member of the lecture audience, commented:

This is this other aspect of the Gestalt way of viewing creativity and beauty in our relationships, which tickled my interest in attending this lecture.

The area around "IANOS", with "Attikon" cinema burnt down, hardly echoed creativity or beauty. I must admit my high spirits were somewhat dampened. Despina's calm voice, however, and her simple, penetrating words travelled me to a different "dimension".

Was it, I wonder, the creative manner of the presentation that brought back instances when I had, indeed, chosen alternative ways of contact?

Was it the message that a relationship can creatively "adjust" situations of compromise and oppression and turn them into much more beautiful ways of behaviour?

Was it the simple combination of the images we saw and the deep meanings of the narrative?

Was it "The Little Prince" who, through humour and sensitivity brought us into contact with our most beautiful feelings?

Was it the understanding that the whole is something slightly more than just the sum of its parts, so that I could finally make the association with the added, multiplying value of good contact?

This is how two hours went by beautifully and creatively, just like the lecture's title. Two hours that motivated us to follow such routes of contact in our relationships. Two hours after which, upon leaving "IANOS", brought me into an "other" contact with my surroundings.

I, finally, had a choice of what to do...

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