



Gestalt NEWS Foundation

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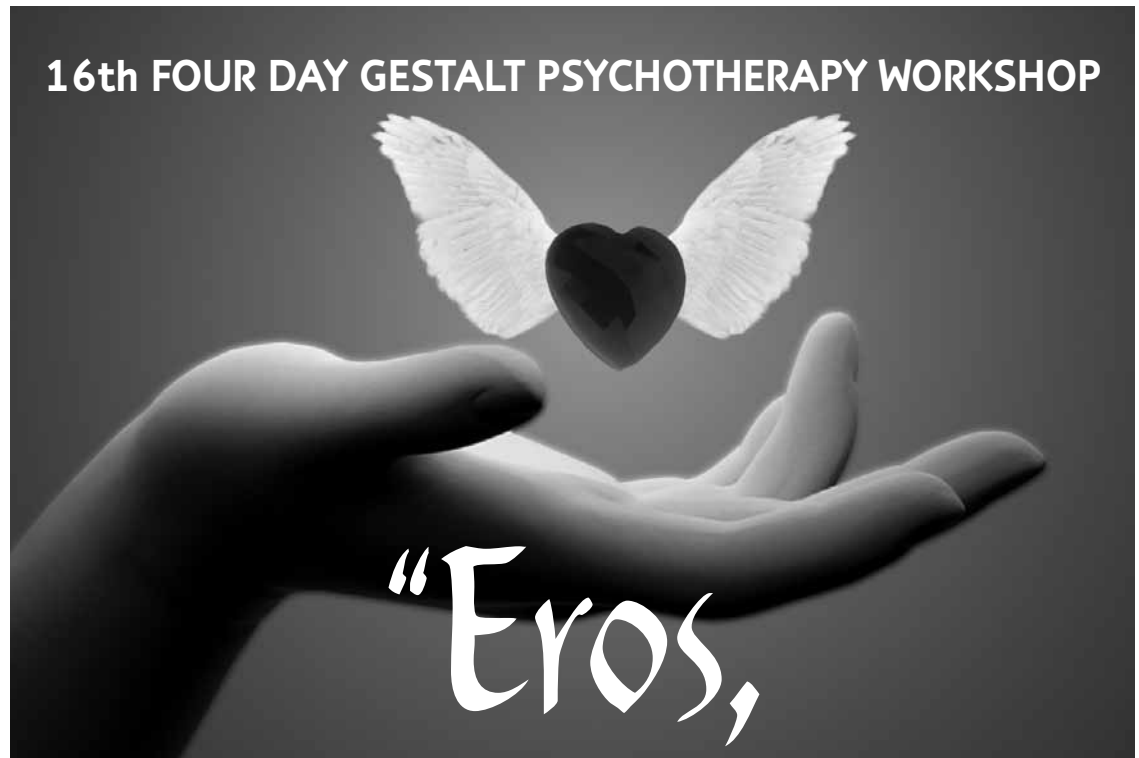
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“Eros, our Creative Force”

According to the ancient Greek mythology Eros was the first God, the one that set the universe in motion and made the birth of the rest of the Gods possible (Hesiod). Nowadays he is mostly linked to sexual desire. But if we view him in a broader and symbolic sense we will discover that from antiquity till today he represents a driving creative force, a passion for life... (p. 6)

8 - 12 MAY 2014 VALIS RESORT SPA & CONFERENCE CENTER – VOLOS

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**Continuing
Education
Program: “Relational
Gestalt
Psychotherapy**

**New activities:
Christodouleio Or-
phanage, “Society
in Action”, Mos-
chato municipality
Care Center**

**The 1st Athens
graduates
“reunion”
is a reality!**



2004 – 2014.

Antonia Konstantinidou, editor of Gestalt Foundation News, true to her vision of creating and editing, managed to publish 19 issues of

this newsletter. 19 issues is not a small feat. 19 issues where trainers, trainees, graduates, seniors, collaborators and friends come together, shared and created a community of Gestalt therapists.

Going back, revisiting these issues, I get emotional contemplating the inspiration, the effort, the topics, the wisdom and bottom-line the sharing and the sense of “togetherness” I find in them.

So, all those years, in the fringe of contact, we meet... cause “life is but a meeting” and the meeting is the process of contact which Antonia, so wisely and inspiring, tried to help develop amongst us. What else can I say but, on behalf of all of us, a heartfelt thanks!!!

This issue will mark the passing of the torch to the Athens team to organize, peak the topics, edit and publish the GF News. The Thessalonica team has earned a well deserved break and why not the chance to come back with fresh and exiting

ideas in the future.

So we welcome this 2014-2015 Fall-Winter issue. Time is moving, our programs are about to start and we are energized by their creative orgasm. This 20th issue is dedicated to the 16th 4day Gestalt Psychotherapy Workshop that took place between the 8-11th of May in Agria near Volos.

The subject: “Eros, our creative Force”.

So we invited trainers, colleagues, trainees and graduates to share with us their experience, in their own words, to help us reflect, to inspire and touch us with their knowledge and wisdom. Some will recount their experience as graduates, some their experience in an “out of town” seminar.

We will also give you all the information on our new activities and our ongoing training programs of which we are really proud and we eagerly waiting to start.

Enjoy your reading!



DESPINA BALLIOU

M.Sc. Counseling Psychology, Gestalt Psychotherapist, Trainer & Supervisor, member of EAGT. Holder of the ECP (European Certificate of Psychotherapy). Trained in Traumatotherapy's method EMDR. Accredited by the National Accreditation Center for Continuing Vocational Training. Founding member and secretary of the board of the Hellenic Association for Gestalt Therapy.

Continuing Education Program “Relational Gestalt Psychotherapy”

In the first quarter of 2015 the ongoing training program with main topic the “**Relational Gestalt Psychotherapy**” will take place.

The Gestalt psychotherapy theory is relational in terms of its cohesive core. Without the concept of the continuous and mutual relationship and influence between the organism and the environment its theory and methodology would be inconsistent in its basic principles of phenomenology, field theory and existential dialog.

In this program we will explore in depth the relations reciprocity, as the ground of Gestalt therapy, the sense of self as an inter-subjective process, the inter-subjective emergence of experience, the philosophy of Hermeneutics, the recipro-

cal and variable influence in client-therapist relationship, as well as the dialogical method in the applied work of enduring relational themes.

Furthermore we will experiment, based on the relational Gestalt therapy principles, both through our personal experience as well as through our practice and supervision.

The program will be conducted in four three-day workshops of which the first will be coordinated by the 5 lead Gestalt Foundation trainers while the rest will be coordinated by well known and well established Gestalt trainers such as **Kenneth Evans, Gianni Francesetti** and **Lynne Jacobs**.

With this program, we aspire to evolve creatively, to create the opportunity to share and making a contact, to get inspired and rejuvenated.

In the next issue we will report on our experience.

Despina Balliou

BEST SELLERS ΕΞΑΜΗΝΟΥ

ΛΟΓΟΤΕΧΝΙΑ



ΙΣΙΔΩΡΟΣ ΖΟΥΡΓΟΣ
ΣΚΗΝΕΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΟΝ ΒΙΟ
ΤΟΥ ΜΑΤΙΑΣ ΑΛΜΟΣΙΝΟ



JUAN GABRIEL VÁSQUEZ
Ο ΗΧΟΣ ΤΩΝ ΠΡΑΓΜΑΤΩΝ
ΟΤΑΝ ΠΕΦΤΟΥΝ



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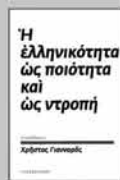
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Η ΣΧΟΛΗ ΤΩΝ ΘΕΩΝ



DR SUE JOHNSON
ΚΥΜΑ ΜΕ ΣΦΙΧΤΑ



SERGE TISSERON
ΟΙΚΟΓΕΝΕΙΑΚΑ ΜΥΣΤΙΚΑ

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The Now – For - Next in Psychotherapy

Lobb, M. (2013). FrancoAngeli,
Milan, Italy

The new endeavor from Margherita Spagnuolo Lobb, "**The now for the next in Psychotherapy**, Gestalt Therapy recounted in post-modern society", is a new and important addition to the Gestalt bibliography. New not only because it was published in 2013 but also because it attempts to describe this approach in a current ground, 60 years after it was originally established.

But before she gets to the now and as it is appropriate, the author begins with a very interesting historical review of the development of the psychotherapeutic science from its origins in the 1950 till today. She divides this period in significant segments, according to the social trends and the ability of the psychotherapeutic theories to adapt to them, till today and the 1990-

2010 periods. An era, where neighborhoods and public squares have been replaced by virtual squares, makes it all the more difficult for people to form "real" contacts, to communicate and forge relationships. These, according to the author, are the modern day challenges that psychotherapy has to face. She chooses to focus on two areas. First on the **re-sensitization of the body** (initially by breathing regulation) and second on the **search for the right tools that will allow a horizontal relational support** that might lead to the sense of acknowledgment by others.

According to M. S. Lobb, in this post-modern era, Gestalt focuses on the expediency and the boundaries of contact. The boundaries we mutually set on the basis of experience and the continuous acknowledgement of the sense we have for each other. Moreover Gestalt has no intention to lead the client to "healthy" and "mature" experiences or behaviors but rather help him regain the spontaneity in the contact.

"Most approaches consider the client-therapist relationship as a virtual tool to help improve the client's actual relationships. On the contrary, Gestalt therapy considers this relationship a "real experience" that emerges and carries its own history in the space "between" client-therapist. It is a real connection between two people that adds to the therapy. It is an encounter that allows the emergence of an innovation capable to reestablish the client's capability for contact".

The book's title "the now for the next" (a concept first used by Polsters in 1973) already introduces us to a new different aspect of therapeutic process. While the focus of the therapist remains on the "here and now" in the client- therapist relationship, the therapy is focused on the "now for next".

Within this framework M. S. Lobb presents, in this book, her clinical model and uses segments and sometimes whole sessions for this reason. As she describes, she analyzes her process that leads her to a certain interventions and why she chooses to focus on a certain issue rather than another. She also focuses on the change that occurs after the session and she quotes "to define the change is part of the

epistemology of each approach".

Basic part of therapy is the activation not only of verbal but physical tools that the client has in his disposal and the end goal is spontaneity. "Spontaneity is the art of incorporating the ability to consciously choosing (Ego Function) in two ways within an experimental ground: the acquired physical knowledge (Id Function) and the social-relational definition of self (Personality Function).

Reading this book and especially the parts that refer to the Gestalt theory, someone might gain a deeper understanding and knowledge of the basic Gestalt concepts (phenomenology, field theory, organism-environment, theory and functions of self, contact, psychopathology and diagnosis). On this point we have to acknowledge the important contribution of Philip Lichtenberg who participated with his own comments on the discussed subjects.

The book emphasizes the importance of the physical experience in the Gestalt psychotherapy. "The therapeutic practice that derives from the development of two experiential horizons, one of the therapist and one of the client, should work not on the "surface" but on the "base" of the clients awareness, almost like a tickle that he can feel to his

bones, his joints, his muscles and tenants, his eyes and his tears, his mouth and his saliva".

An innovative, for its era, idea of the Gestalt theory analyzed here, is that the confrontation hasn't only a negative effect, it can; on the contrary, guaranty the vitality and the development of human relations. In one of the most interesting chapters of this book, the author invites as back to the therapy room, working with aggression combined with interruption in contact.

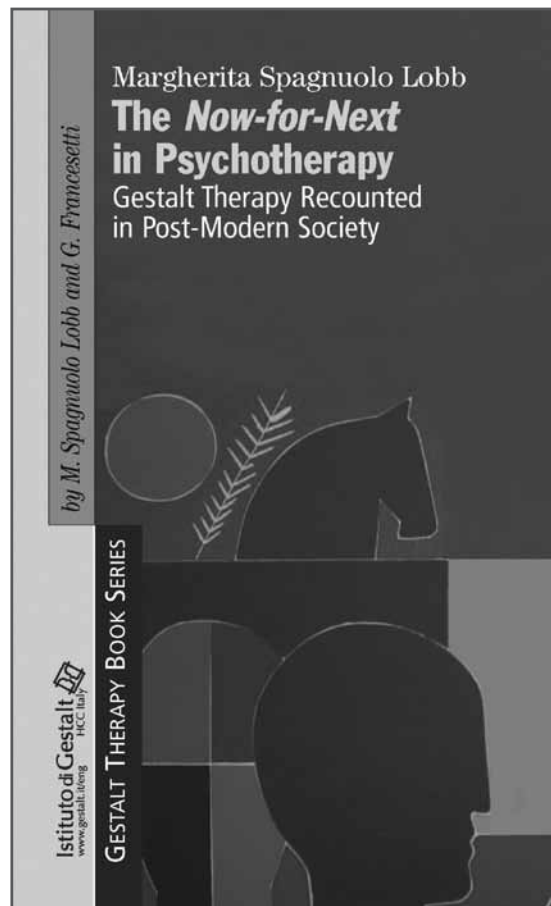
In this innovative framework we also come to the chapter on the Gestalt view on the developmental theory; where, according to the author, "development could be understood as a journey towards a complex series of contacts, rather than a progress from a less to a more mature stage. Our clinical duty is to asses not the maturity of a person's development but how this person confronts the complexity of the things he comprehends".

And as Gestalt is basically a relational approach, M. S. Lobb thoroughly researches its current practice of "relational" topics, whether it is the relationship between client-therapist and the emotions that develop between them, or couple's relationship, or relationship among the members of a family, or a group therapy

dynamic or even a trainer- trainee relationship. Each of the above finds its own chapter where Lobb describes the clinical-therapeutic model that she employs in each case, once again providing very useful examples.

In conclusion, I have to say that I can write a lot more about this book but for here and now I think I should stop. But I will share the sense that it left me by stealing a quote from the book. In the chapter dealing with the client-therapist relationship the author suggests that the therapist's goal is to "rediscover the appeal that the client has concealed". Reading this book I rediscovered the appeal that Gestalt theory and psychotherapy has on me and I got even more excited by my choice to practice it keeping in touch with its current bibliography. I hope this book will have the same effect on you.

Enjoy reading it!



NEW ACTIVITIES

Volunteer Training at Christodouleio Foundation for the Protection of Children

November 2014, our center started within its activities into the community, cooperation with the Christodouleio Foundation for the Protection of Children. Christodouleio is a legal entity governed by private law and is under of Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity. It hosts girls between the ages of 4 to 23 coming from special dysfunctional families.

It is managed by an unwaged seven member board. The state support and backing is nonexistent and this project is funded by revenues from rents of donated estates and the aid of friends and benefactors who appreciated this effort.

Recently, more people show interest in aiding the Christodouleio Foundation for the Protection of Children by volunteering their time and love. Gestalt Foundation, knowing the importance of volunteering, has organized a volunteer training team to help maximize its efforts.

“Society in Action”

“Society in Action” is an association involved in social activities mainly around the Petroupoli area. Its operation is based on the principals of volunteerism, solidarity and selfless offer.

Its goal is to provide the residents of the area with support in all kind of problems that they are facing in financial, social, spiritual and psychological level. Meantime they launch initiatives to strengthen family ties in an attempt to help them meet the current socioeconomic challenges that we experience as a society.

In this spirit of volunteerism both “Society in Action” and the Gestalt Foundation joint forces, for the second consecutive year, to realize a program of several activities focused on organizing parental support groups, self awareness groups and creative activities group. The residents’ warm reception to these initiatives motivates us to continue with undiminished interest and enthusiasm.

Gestalt Foundation in a new collaboration with the *Moschato Municipality Care Center

Our collaboration with the Moschato Municipality Care Center began in 2014. It was part of our volunteer internship program. The first thing that we found really impressive was the friendly and congenial attitude of its director. A young psychologist herself rather than the usual formal directorial attitude welcomed and thanked us for our effort within the frame of their function (which is based on volunteers and donations since the majority of residents are penniless). She told us that she trusted Gestalt and therefore us, since we come from this practice. Her trust and encouragement to take initiative motivated us and made our work much easier. Our encounter with the elderly residents provided us with unforgettable experiences that will always resonate in us, due to the particularity of the interaction with older people and especially the uniqueness of certain individuals. Slowly we began to bond with each and every one of them. From our first meeting we realized their desperate need for contact, communication and sharing. In many instances they shared their feelings of

loneliness and abandonment even though they are surrounded by people. Their sorrow and tears when we announced our impending departure was just another expression of their need for companionship and care. Especially for those who don’t have any family staying in the area and who shared how tedious they find their everyday life.

But not everything has proven easy for us. Our greatest difficulty came in the case of a woman who, from the first moment, wasn’t that friendly towards us. She seemed not able to understand why we were there and why her friend was so eager for Thursday to arrive and asked everyday about us. She told us she found it annoying. “Why does she care so much?” We didn’t know how to respond to that... She would speak to us without making eye contact, preoccupied with her needles and her knitting.

Trying to figure out something on my next visit I brought with me my own knitting. I told her “I brought it so we can do our knitting together”. “It helps me to relax although I don’t have the time to knit as often as I like”. She lifted her eyes and looked at me surprised. She started talking to me constantly. Her stories went from knitting to her expat son and back again



(the same ones each time we visited) and I was thinking “really, am I a therapist right now?”...

Several months later when it was time to go and we started our farewell process she came and kissed our hands. She told us she loved us because we cried with her when she told us her stories. In the meantime her only friend suffering from Alzheimer has passed away but she always remembered that something was going on Thursdays and she was looking forward to them.

Katerina Zarmakoupi, Irelena Papadopoulou.

*The **Moschato Municipality Care Center**, founded in 1962, is a non-profit, philanthropic association which, for more than 50 years, has continually provided volunteered social care. It is mainly funded and supported by private donations, benefactors and friends.

At the core of its operation is the running of the center’s **Retirement Home** that provides shelter, healthcare, food and a loving environment for poor elderly people while in the meantime providing cultural and social service communicating the problems and needs of senior citizens.

Gestalt Foundation wanting to actively contribute in this effort, since 2013, has initiated a collaboration with the Moschato Municipality offering psychological support in both personal and group level to the residents of the Retirement Home. Psychological support is provided by volunteers, our program seniors, as part of their internship.

This initiative was warmly welcomed by the residents and will continue to run next year with undiminished care and interest.

**FREE
EXPRESSION**

**The Parable of the Blind
Men and the Elephant**

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant-

Though all of them were blind,
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant,
And, happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me, but the Elephant
Is very like a WALL!"

The Second, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, "Ho, what have we here,
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis very clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a SPEAR!"

The Third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "The Elephant
Is very like a SNAKE!"

The Fourth reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee:
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is very plain," quoth he;
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a TREE!"

The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "Even the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can:
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a FAN!"

The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a ROPE!"

And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
They all were in the wrong!



John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887)

**Our 1st Athens graduates
«reunion»
is a reality!**

The first Athens center graduates reunion took place on November the 30th 2014. Our graduates, responded eagerly to our invitation and with their good mood and willingness to have fun, joint us on Sunday. Our venue proved very warm and welcoming! In a relaxed environment we exchanged our news, shared our experiences, we reminisced, renewed our contacts and enjoyed this sharing with the help of music, wine, tasteful treats and sweets.

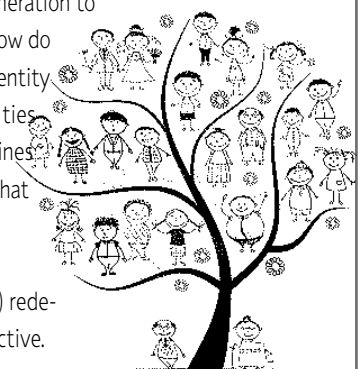
This meeting left all of us with a sweet taste and the promise to introduce and establish this initiative in the future.



We concluded the 3day workshop on **"Redefining my History: a Doorway to the Future"** that took place at the **Candili estate in Prokopi, Euboea**, between the 3rd and 5th of October, 2014.

Stereotypes, roles, myths, alliances, double messages, motives, life stance, principles and values, source of energy and support: how they originate and how they pass from generation to generation in our personal history? How do they motivate us? They give us an identity or they pin us down? When do family ties become bonds? How these invisible lines that connect us can become strains that trap us?

During the workshop the participants unfolded their family tree (genogram) redefined it and gave in a new life perspective.



According to the ancient Greek mythology Eros was the first God, the one that set the universe in motion and made the birth of the rest of the Gods possible (Hesiod). Nowadays he is mostly linked to sexual desire. But if we view him in a broader and symbolic sense, we will discover that from antiquity till today, he represents a driving creative force, a passion for life, the world, everything. He gives us wings, inspiration; he binds the existing forms and creates new ones! He is characterized by appealing and coherent energy, potentially toward any form (concept, thing, animal, human), he motivates and creates all the Forms of the tangible and conceivable world.

In this year's 4day workshop, we explored only some of Eros many facets in our relationship with ourselves, the others, the world, as well as its bearing in a therapeutic relation. We will strive to find the personal meaning that each of us ascribes to what generates Eros (love), what motivates and change us.

Eros, desirable aligning with...

The inspiration for this text came to me during the 4day workshop back in May 2014 in Agria, Volos.

Discussing the revitalizing essence of eros, it is inevitable to come across aspects that can become sources of anxiety, fear, disappointment, frustration and many other things. One of these aspects might create delusions that lead to strenuous and painful emotions such as the ones we described above.

We are talking about the "Magic of Love". This phenomenon has been described in various magnificent ways in bibliography, literature, science and psychology. What we are interested in here is to search the physical process which, combined with the psychological ground, create a delusion that might have negative impact on the person in love.

First of all we take for granted that the majority of people are willing to experience this "Magic" rather than walk a safer path deprived of "excitement". Both choices involve risk. The appeal of the "Magic of Love" is stronger and I think that no one can argue that this is rightfully so.

In essence, if we examine thoroughly this phenomenon, we will discover that indeed Love is as real as what we refer to as "Magic". It doesn't belong to the metaphysical realm. An opinion suggests that, for economy reason, we should refer to it as "chemistry", implying the mutual attraction between people. But what is the nature of this chemistry or magic? It has been proven that factors that create attraction between two people include stimulus emitted by both parties concerned that can't be detected by common sensory receptors. So pheromones, for example, are not part of our consciousness. The same applies to visual, tactile, auditory, savory and maybe other stimuli.

The way these stimuli are transported is through molecules, atoms, sub atoms and particles. If these particles are accepted by the other or if their phase is in tuned or they transmit in the same wave length, then the euphoria, the well being, the rejuvenation or what else we can call it, creates a sense of magic. Something exceptionally joyous happens, something that we cannot attribute to anything tangible. The sense of something so magnificent and unpredictable creates new delusions according to the individual's perceptions, expectations, experiences and his unique temperament.

One probability, and the one most commonly observed, is that under such circumstances the individual believes that either every following moment would be equally magical (everlasting love, the perfect companion) or that this "magic" they're experiencing makes them indestructible or able to overcome any hardship that might arise (omnipotence), or whatever you can bring to mind from your own experience.



"Eros" our creativity

In case the delusion collapses, and that happens all the time because phases can be thrown out of center, and wave lengths change (constant field movement), the serious aftermath doesn't concern so much the grief that someone might experience but the blow to his self image, self respect and self worth. This happens because we are confronted with an "All or Nothing" situation where our control of evading loss has disappeared.

To come to terms with this dipole we need to stand on "ground zero", to experience the "Magic of Love" aware that it can possibly disappear in any moment. Obviously we cannot cover such a complex issue in few words. The purpose of this text is to raise awareness; reflect and in the best case, provide a starting point for an interesting conversation.

George Diplas, Pg.D in PCA Counseling, Therapist- Trainer- Gestalt Supervisor, member of EAGT

Eros to the end!

(Child) It's so nice here in Agria! There is a pool and the sea is just outside the hotel! And the people, many people, kids and grownups, friends, strangers,



“Fos, the Force”

boys, girls. We eat together, we go to “school” together, we rest side by side, we dance all together, close, across from each other, tightly. And let’s not forget my sister is here to but she is in a different “class”.

What’s on the program for now? I don’t know! I follow the others. Fortunately mothers (ok and fathers too) from the Foundation made arrangements for us we have a program, a timeline. I don’t like being oppressed but it is what it is, I might like it in the end, at least I feel safe.

I don’t remember much more. What comes to mind is faces, colorful clothes, smells and tastes from foods, smiles and laughter. What I really remember is that I had a good time. Oh! and that it was over.

(Teenager) Seminar for mental health professionals or “advanced”. Yeah. I’m no longer a trainee, I’m... “advanced”. Of course I still have to attend seminars (again), so I guess I’m still a trainee (again). But I’m a mental health specialist. So I’m both a trainee and a specialist. Right!!!
 Favorito Barbarello! Such a good trainer! Direct and specific. I’m learning from him and with him. He is so sweet and polite, thoughtful and attentive; I want to be like him! (Later it’ll be clear that this can’t be the case. Because he is who he is and I am who I am. Still I adopted a few things. A few. Ok you know it’s not

like he is perfect). As the time and the days pass I find myself trusting him all the more. I dare to work with him: I’ve learned something but I’m not sure what. Time will tell.

But the most important thing, my team! Oh! There are others like me; trainees and experts. Some of them I already know from previous trainings, some of them I’ve heard of and others I know nothing about. I try to mingle with the diverse group. The sense of comparison is evident. It is to be expected since we are all “specialists”. I’m scared that they will find out that I’m not as competent as I project (or as I want to project!). Eventually we come closer and it’s alright! Basically we are all the same. We try!

(Adult) I was very happy and excited that Rama Sadmon and I had decided to make a joint presentation. The subject “Love, Death, Creative adjustment...” I’m so excited with our collaboration, ideas are flying, and the possibilities seem limitless (you might refer to this stage as “Love”). And then something unexpected comes up and Rama can’t attend the presentation (you might refer to this stage as “Death”). So I’m supposed to go through the presentation alone. I readjust the presentation in a way that will suit me, in a way that I can support it better (you might refer to this stage as “Creative adjustment”).

I prepare so I can be as ready as possible. There are a lot of people, some of them friends, most of them strangers. I fell anxious and happy. And a great responsibility: I have to be as good as I can, to give as much as possible, to do justice to the work I took upon, the work that I decided to do. And so the presentation begins. My colleagues are supportive, they help me out. And they participate, I see it in their eyes I see it in their moves. It’s a very creative hour. And just like that it is over. Damned, I forgot to enjoy it. Or did I enjoy it so much that I didn’t realize it.

It seems that some where touched and they congratulate me, they say a few kind words. Some seem totally indifferent. I wander: should I’ve chosen a different topic. Should I’ve chosen a different approach? This kind of thinking leads nowhere. The important thing is that I worked with good intentions and that I gave it my all. That should be enough.

(Senior) Has it really been 6 months since the last 4day workshop? I hadn’t realized it. It is as if I am a different person than the one who first went there. But still I remember a few things like it was yesterday! There were mainly my emotions, the smiles, the faces, the camaraderie, the anxiety. I’m trying to remember other things also; I’m trying to make the connections, to make sense of my experience.

I’m sad that it is over. I had a good time! Of course if it lasted any longer it would be boring. But still I’m missing something. That’s the way it goes I accept it. I look back on this experience and I felt grateful: to the people that organized it and participated, to me for participating wholeheartedly. They say that they’re going to organize another 4day workshop next year. I wonder if I’ll make it. But even if I’ll make it it won’t be the same. Maybe it will be better or it may be worse, the one thing certain is that it will be different. What is left to do till then? I carry my memories, I live for the present and I make plans. I continue to hope!

George Giaglis

Diary Notes: (Favo Barbarello)

My name is Favorito Barbarello. I live and work in Ireland both as a psychotherapist and as a Craniosacral therapist.

I have run, for the past two years, a workshop for the group of graduates and other mental health professionals, during the 4-day Workshop for Gestalt Psy-

chotherapy that Gestalt Foundation organizes every year.

The content of the workshops have been different year to year, from "Fire in the Belly", working with experiencing aggression in its energetic, creative and destructive force, from a body point of view, to "Eros" and its individual meaning in terms of body expression and psychic relatedness in our daily lives.

My personal experience of the events has been always nourishing and personally satisfying in seeing how the new recruits embraced various Gestalt concepts and experience them from a body perspective, allowing themselves to express their understanding of ideas through body movement.

This is a personal bias: How much of Gestalt Therapy has been confined to chairs and immobility? How has the intellectualism of theory disengaged from the natural morphing of concepts into body assimilation and movement?

I believe it is an important part of any training to learn, distinguish and compare different approaches and ideas, to be able to critically and intellectually assimilate perspectives in order to create a workable "I-It" of theory. But the essential uniqueness of the individual is based on the personal integration of those concepts into a body flow, an "I-Thou" between the learning field and its individual members. That's what allows us to encounter our ground, with all its ticks, tricks and postures, and we can witness how an expanded body field of awareness can enrich that ground in order to create new, freer and fresher figures of need and wishes.

The biggest threat to learning, in my opinion, is fear, real or imagined, of exposure in an environment that is perceived as unsafe or unwelcoming. That's the challenge for me, in different context and with different people, to be able to support the co-creation of a field that is supportive of experimentation and discovery. And that is what has been a pleasant and nourishing experience in Greece. Both times, from all corners of the field, participants and staff were willing, able, curious and supportive of such encounter, allowing the arising of the figure of trust from such rich ground.

The embodiment of experience is a learning curve that goes on through one's life journey, as a human being that in this learning environment is also a budding therapist.

I believe that the difference between wearing civilian clothes and the hat of the therapist is a flexible modulation. Just like we integrate awareness through a body felt sense, we bring our individual life expression of that movement into the therapy room. The difference between clients and therapists is less than a professional title and more than the right to wear the therapist hat. It's the ability to be aware of the space our body occupies between two chairs, and the physical and non physical movements between these points.

And ultimately, it's the therapist's expression of support of movement versus the stagnation of anachronistic body stances that creates the safe emergency of change.

- When the phone rang and I was asked to write about my experience in the 4day meeting in Volos, immediately and without second thought I said yes. Then I hunged up and realized that I wasn't sure I had something specific to say. It was a Tuesday afternoon and I was in the middle of bottle feeding my 9 month old son when I heard the phone. After the phone call I went on feeding Marcos and for a few moments I found myself removed from the here- and-now of bottle feedings and lullabies and I was transported to the there-and-then of the 4day meeting on the rejuvenating subject of love. The work we did with Favorito Barbarello.

The workshop for the advanced group was directed to professional therapist and the topic was "Eros and psychic relatedness in Gestalt Therapy: how do we

use our physical, erotic and mental tensions to discover the flow of process in the therapeutic relationship?" I found the subject and the 4day meeting very interesting. But the truth is that I've heard a lot of good things about Favo and I went to Volos with the expectation to observe the -different- approach of an important therapist.

Regardless I can't say that when I started writing, it was easy for me to recollect what went on in the workshop, who and when said what. What I remembered was the impression and the impact that Favo's work had on me. My expectations for something grand and let's face it, impressive, for meaningful interventions that lead someone to get in touch with profound parts of his being and erotic existence; were met by the grounding (and grounded) work of my Italian colleague.

It was very interesting for me to watch him stand, and I mean even physically; patiently, to the point of exhaustion across the other (whoever that someone was), respecting his/her rhythm. He waited without demanding anything. He asked permission even for the smallest motion. And the process moved with

small undetected steps. I recalled vividly this sense of admiration for Favo's work. An approach that had no need of spectacular interventions, that didn't offer something as its own perception in the ground of the therapeutic-training relationship, something more than the commitment of presence and unconditional acceptance. And that was what motivated the individual who worked to create his own form, to acknowledge it and make it his/her own.

Unwontedly my mind traveled to this 10 year old involvement with Gestalt. Leaving the 16th 4day workshop, the last one I attended, my memory traveled to the first one I attended, the 7th, back in May 2005 and the one that introduced me to the philosophy of the Gestalt therapy. In that 4day workshop I remember considering psychotherapy as a series of magical interventions from inspired therapist for the benefit of others. I didn't know anything about an equal relationship, about the here-and-now and all my interventions seemed to me amazing. I remember taking notes on every single "exercise" so that I could copy them

and achieve the same impressive and immediate results. Yes, I wanted the results to be immediate and certain and that was why I began my training at the Gestalt Foundation in Athens, a few months later.

As a trainee, patient and therapist, I started reading, working and trying to chase these immediate, tangible results. I tried to change. Both myself and others. I demanded that change.

And as the time passed I realized that the change I wanted doesn't come this way. The therapy itself is not that. The more you try to push for change that change doesn't come. What a paradox! As long as you push things, situations, people don't change. As long as you are present and respect the rhythm, change as life itself happens in a natural and uninhibited way. And I felt grateful for Favo's work, for reminding me this natural and uninhibited way, the flow of the psychotherapeutic process.

Then I looked at my 9 month old son Marco. He had fallen asleep. I stared at him for a while before I put him in his crib. I realized that he has grown.

since last month,

since last week,

since yesterday,

since that last phone call.

And I was just standing there-literally standing not being able to see the change before my eyes.

I found myself repeating: "change is here and it happens as long as I don't rush



it or obstruct it.

It happens so very slowly.

In small undetected steps.

It happens and the only thing I have to do is to be present to experience it".

Favo, thank for the reminder.

Christos Carapiperis, Gestalt Foundation graduate.

- After 9 years of hard work I arrived to Agria, Volou for the 4day meeting as a professional to attend the advanced program. My goals were clear: professional inspiration, personal pampering.

The conclusion of my training program gave me so much joy and satisfaction for achieving a great goal but also filled me with sadness for the goodbyes that it meant. The group that accompanied me this four years was about to dismantle. Some of the relationships formed were to follow me in my personal life; others having completed their purpose moved to the background and gave room to new ones. A circle has closed another one opened.

This time a lot of things are different. I arrived alone and not with a member of my group, as I used to. I stayed alone. I needed the sense of contact but I also needed my independence. We met in the circle. Different faces, different dynamics. Co-existence without confluence. Co-existence with deep sharing, boundaries and respect. In this group I dared to try things in an unprecedented way. I didn't take my usual time to do personal work within a group of people that were strangers. On the contrary I seized the opportunity. I didn't filter again and again my differentiation with the dynamic that a few members of the group brought. I took a step and stated my opinion. Different people but I was also a different person. It was like I was discovering new pieces of myself. It felt like I allowed new capabilities to unfold, new ways of existing.

I fell in love with Favorito's work. Our meeting managed to accomplish both goals that I had set for attending the advanced program. I watched him work and his energy captivated me. I could describe it as a piece of music played in different volume, first low and slowly increased and then slowly changing to low again followed by a meaningful pause. Slow steps and then faster, movement followed by dialectics, contact and withdrawal. New forms emerge from a ground of unlimited choices. Space for you to fully exist. Body, soul, mind. All present to declare each one's individuality. During the breaks I had the opportunity to meet colleagues from Athens and Thessaloniki and see my favorite trainers. I felt a special deep connection with them. They will always be precious to me since each one of them has touched my life in a unique way.

At the Gala, I let my eyes wander through the hall. The freshmen, in perfect confluence with the enthusiasm for something new, were wishing that the meeting could last more than 4 days. The veterans were listening with comprehension knowing that something like that would be exhausting. The trainers said their goodbyes to the graduates and welcomed the new trainees enjoying the widening of the Gestalt family, embracing the new professionals and participants in the experiential groups.

On the journey back, fulfilled by the experience, I was thinking that in front of me was a new love affair in my path in psychology. A fascination for a science, a love for the people and their soul's tribulations.

This fascination has turned into love and a perpetual relationship that lays the foundation for my work. I remember Favorito's words. To fall in love is amazing, to create a relationship that can include all your deepest wishes, thoughts and emotions are a masterpiece. I have a deep faith in the therapeutic process. I have deep faith in the power of unconditional acceptance. I feel fortunate that people have honored me with their trust, that they give me the opportunity to form a relationship with them, to accompany them through their journey in difficulties and joys. To help them discover themselves and their strength. To

watch them spread their wings and fly to the direction that they wish. Through these unique encounters I continue to rediscover myself. A never-ending journey. A journey to the core of life and human existence.

Katerina Papathanasiou-Pexlivanidou, Psychologist - Gestalt Psychotherapist.

- My experience in this 4day workshop was very different from the one I had last year. Maybe because I have changed or maybe because it seemed that everyone has more or less changed.

The first thing (and a really impressive) that I noticed was the hotel and the location. It was idyllic because the accommodation were welcoming the stuff was helpful and whenever we had a half an hour break we would walk out to the beach (something that meant a lot to me because it lightened the mood when we had to deal with heavy issues) and of course there was this men's polo team that we have to admit, lifted the spirit for as girls (I like to believe that they were a surprise from the Athens and Thessaloniki back office girls! If not please don't ruin it for me!).

Our topic was "Love and Death"... a very interesting one considering most of us wants to run into the first and avoids the second. Sometimes the opposite happens and that is what, as psychologists, characterize as a pathology.

We came close to go through an experience like that, because, I don't know how many had fallen in love, platonically or otherwise, but one of our colleagues found herself in serious danger. The situation caused a commotion but gave the whole process a different aura, with lots of contributions, inversions and the like that are always welcome and lead as on another path.

Fortunately among the participants were a few doctors, so that helped a lot, and of course the supervisors who, at least in my eyes, managed the whole situation and took care of us and the continuity of the 4day workshop.

So everything was alright in the end.

And of course there were the parties (some of them really wild as usual), great food and dancing at the Gala, casual conversations and tsipoura that helped relax the mood and lift the sense of weightiness from unexpressed feelings through this 4days. I think that it had to do with the shadow of Love and Death that passed simultaneously before our eyes, with the daze and creativity that they bring to our lives. It is something to significant to put to words. But it touched us through all the process of presentation and group work. The presentations, most of the times, were fresh and thankfully the schedule was observed.

There were a lot of activities and I attended a few of them but not all. In a specific one I found myself flirting with the both concepts of Love and Death. Mr. Giaglis surprised us all (certainly me but that was the feedback I got from others also) by taking on a part that aroused the need to make a decision to let go and die or claim life. He reminded me of orators who engage their audience making then aware that whatever choice they make there is always another side equally alluring. I will not mention the organizers by person but as a whole that managed to cover many angles. Some functioned archetypically and others with the lightness of Love. We said goodbye to the Athens team graduates, welcomed the freshmen and concluded with a short process that thankfully respected our fading strength.

Sometimes the pen is lighter as the experience cannot be measured in words. Love and Death are existential entities and they live inside us ... these 4 days we rattled them and now we wait for the results. This was a very important experience for me, it moved me and the road ahead still unfolds... We will communicate again on the next 4day meeting and we will see where it leads. Until we meet again.

E. P.

My first experience at a 4day Gestalt Workshop

When I was asked to write about my first experience at the 4day Gestalt event I hesitated. How could I possibly describe such a significant experience filled with emotional moments, joy and sadness, how could I put to paper in so few words so many emotions.

I started writing thinking that eventually I will decline the request but at least I would have tried to write down and keep for my own reading all these things that happened, but by remembering them I still feel them in the here and now. I was very anxious when I made my way to the 16th 4day Gestalt event that took place in Volos. I had to spend 4 days with people that I didn't know so well but still have shared a lot in a 1 year period.

My first encounter with the place was intimidating. There were a lot of people trying to check in, to find their rooms, to get a few things done before the start of the first experiential seminar. Thankfully everything was well organized and I found time to spend with myself, to take a deep breath and go, "Ok. Now we start".

All together... all together in a big hall, all the terms, from Athens, Thessalonica, trainers, coordinators, all together. At first I felt awkward. But this feeling, little by little, subsided and I started enjoying this unique, till then, experience. Others, bolder than me, started to work immediately. In front of me I saw a dance taking place between "trainers"- "trainees", "therapist"- "patient". All the couples, through the 4day workshop, changed in a fast

pace, like watching a tango danced perfectly by all of us with steady steps, respect, harmony and deep empathy. The interaction amongst "dancers" was unparalleled.

During breaks we found the time to reflect on what we had



experienced each in our own way and share these emotions and these images in their bright or faintly colors.

The weather was wonderful and the pool in the middle made it difficult sitting in a room under artificial light, feeling and sharing these feelings, empathizing, experiencing, while the sun outside was shining so bright. And suddenly there by the pool I experienced the most wonderful and difficult moment of the whole 4day workshop. Open space and the sunlight by the pool. The subject at hand very touchy as it changed as everything changes when there is a need to share and compromise. In such a beautiful environment, so bright, the subject was very difficult for me, so much pain and darkness... my eyes burnt with tears...but I wasn't alone. A pat on the back from a classmate, the understanding glance and care from another were enough to let myself cry trusting in myself and my environment. I'm not alone; it is all right to express my emotions of sadness in this way, at this time. Thank you...

All these emotional changes, all these unique moments, all the tension of these 4 days released in the most joyful way; with dancing. At the Gala I danced so much that I felt that my every move was "decisive". I enjoyed myself so much with the people I shared so few but significant moments. Even though we might have shared a few glances they were so profound as if they had fully captured an unspoken emotion. And now we were dancing like crazy, all together classmates, trainers, strangers till a few days ago, we were dancing and singing joyfully.

Last day... For me the most impactful of the 4day workshop. During an exercise (there by the pool under the burning sun) I meet 10 people. My classmates. I

saw in them in a way that I would have never thought I would in our 4 years of studying. And they saw me too. We gave each other a part of ourselves. I've kept these pieces together with the photographs and my memories from the 16th 4day Gestalt workshop, my first 4day Gestalt workshop.

Katerina Kosmidou, 2nd year trainee.

• Last May I participated in the 16th 4day Gestalt workshop that took place at the Valis Resort in Agria near Volos. The subject "Eros, our creative force". As a "freshman" in training, this experience was unique. In my mind it was just an excursion with a few seminars that I could attend. Slowly, it occurred to me that this was the opportunity to participate in the workshop. So, anxious and curious about what I will encounter but open to any eventuality, I packed my suitcase and bid farewell to my daily routine.

Arriving at Volos the location, the smells, the sounds and the taste of the



city strained my interest. The hotel looked comfortable and luxurious so my aesthetic view point was comforted and relieved. The weather mild spring; the sea, that enchantress; just a few steps away from my room which I shared with a good colleague. We all meet in the main hall where the first of the seminars took place.

The participants, trainers, trainees, supervisors and mental health professionals came from all over Greece – mainly from Athens and Thessaloniki-as well as from countries abroad. Moderating the first workshop was Favorito Barbarello who "lead the way" for the rest of the 4day workshop. What followed was a series of seminars and presentations in such a pace that, for me, made each moment more significant and every experience more precious in a process that reached deeper and deeper.

Besides my teachers and colleagues in training who I was familiar with and shared a special bond, I met new faces, each one a whole new world for me.

Through these new encounters I saw my friends in a new light and under a new dynamic. All this energy kept us going, coherent, present in the moment, in the workshop and I acknowledge this energy as love, a creative force!

The Gala was on Saturday and the wild partying and customary "Helping Hands" ritual was immortalized and captured for the chronicles. Last day and everybody was emotional, especially the graduates. It was time for goodbyes and withdrawals. We came full circle. I was very satisfied. Some of us could already see something new unfolding in front.

After the 4day workshop I felt rested, rejuvenated, full of life, energy and a new interest for everything around me for things that are important, valuable and meaningful. Acknowledging this emotions and this shift confirmed that my experience in the 4day workshop left me with a sense of gratitude for participating.

Pegy Tsomidi, 2nd year trainee.

Genogram

Whenever the word Genogram comes up I'm reminded of a passage from Kazantzakis "Report to Greco" I look inside me and I shiver. My ancestors, on my father's side, bloodthirsty pirates of the sea, warlords of the land, fearing no man or God. On my mother's side, blunt, naive peasants who spent their days trustfully bent over the soil, they sowed and waited without any doubt the rains and the sun, they harvested and sat on their porch, keeping their arms crossed and placing their trust on God.

How will I be able to marry those two ancestors who held their fixed place within me; fire and soil? I felt that this was my unique duty; to unify the enemies."

So with a in mind, sometime in early September I made my way to "unify the enemies". I wanted to speak with people I've never met before, to hear them recount tales of people I've never encountered. Each one would tell me a story. Most of these people had passed away but I felt like they were alive while I heard and spoke about them. But who are they and what is their connection to me? What do we have in common? And what if we don't have anything in common? Then who am I, where do I belong, where are my roots, where can I lean, where is my footing? Growing up I was so focused on me and my family that I forgot that this tree has many roots.



October 3rd we come to Candili in Euboea, the place that will host us. We arrived on an autumn Friday afternoon, filled with thousand colors and mist. We stayed in a traditional guest house with fresh

minted shits, old stoves and fireplaces, home cooked food and sweets and long wooden tables like the ones families, in small villages, used to gather around to eat. (Why do this places feel so familiar, like coming home..)

15 people, 15 women shared their history with me and I shared mine. But the room seemed filled with people from faraway places, islands, seas, mountains. Goodbyes, uprooting, old letters, secrets, truths, joy, celebrations, wars. People who loved and brought presents to some and heartache to others. Or both.

Past, present, future. Everything has a continuity and time coexist. It was the first time I felt connected to things that happened in the past. I recognize in me the existence of people I've never met. I recognize them in my sorrow and in my joy, in small and big things.

Kazantzakis continues, "and since I saw my soul got steadied, it didn't flow like water..."

I'm not alone. I didn't just arrived in this world and I feel grateful for being here today; with my wounds and presents. I have a house full of things and old objects. They are so familiar that I never wondered how they got here. Most of them don't belong to me, I inherited them. Some of them I love dearly, I feel honored to have them in my house and I'm very proud for that. I take care of them, I look after them and maybe one day I would pass them along to someone else. But there are others that I trip on and they block my way. But I don't want to through them out. Maybe I'll hide them in a closet and take them out from time to time to have a look. And then there are others, dirty and old, with crooked rusty edges. I think it's time to through them out. I need the space to bring my own new things.

The Genogram didn't end on Sunday and certainly didn't start on Friday... good luck to all of us and our continuing stories.

P.S. I would like to thank everyone who was present in this magical coexistence in time. Present in sharing my old stories. I would also like to express my warmest thanks to Gianna and Despina for, once again, taking such good care of us in our personal moments.

Anna Petra, Gestalt Foundation graduate.

Profile 2013 - 2014

Whenever I see acrobats jump in the air I feel scared. They leave their swing, perform their acrobatics and all the time they smile and seem to enjoy themselves. They trust gravity and the elasticity of their own bodies to know what to do without them having to think about it. With unbelievable ease they reach either for the swing across or for another acrobat who waits to catch them exactly at the right time.

Recorded accidents are rare, although deadly. So I always wandered: how was that possible? What is it that gives these people the ability to defy the lows that all the rest of us have to abide, whether we like it or not?

With my work during these 4 years, that concludes in June with this profile, I came to realize a lot of things. One of those is that to make something look easy you need to work hard. The somersault needs a lot of practice. You need first to have your feet stand firmly on the ground; you have to collaborate with the acrobat across from you, to learn their bodies and your own. Freedom requires virtue and courage. After 4 years in rehearsals I learned to listen and be heard, to clash without destroying myself, to let go, to hold and allow myself to be held. To stand firmly on the ground, while I'm on the ground, and let go and trust my elasticity while in the air. I studied my swing and its parts, so unique and able to hold just me. And I learned how to trust a tested partner who offers his hand at the right moment. Now as others did for me I do with those who ask for my help.

I learned to present myself, through this process of profiling, as I am in any moment, with all that I carry with me and with all my capabilities. I learned the acrobats smile to the audience.

So now I can change my opening. I used to fill scared whenever I show acrobats jump in the air. Now when I see them I wink my eye to them and smile. I share their freedom of movement and incredible somersault. I enjoy it because I know; I've paid the price of rehearsal and the odd are in my favor.

I won't fall; my body is agile and can stand the vacuum. Moreover I have people who know how to catch me and they will be there waiting with stretched arms to hold me. But even if everything goes wrong and eventually I fall and die in the meantime I would have had such a great flight, aware of something that no one would be able to take from me: the lows of physics, including gravity, are here to protect me and lead me way, they're not here to confine and pin me down. So all that is left for me to do is to express to you, my enormous gratitude and simply say a heartfelt thank you!

Katerina Iakovidou, Gestalt Foundation, graduate.





Love by my side

In this everyday hectic, full of worries life, filled with a collective

“so and so” attitude, I saw a daisy grow on a rock, a daisy that demanded my attention.

This “persistence” of Gestalt to speak to me about flowers in desolated environments, this challenge to believe again in a world and myself during chaotic circumstances is something that follows me for a long time now. And each time it manages to convince me (I don’t need much encouragement!).

So here I was in a wonderful green meadow, for a meeting talking about love... You can call it however you like, seminar, experiential group, human encounter, mirroring into the others gaze... I brought with me my “multiflavoured” loves and took my place in the circle.

I’m not going to tell you that everything was perfect, that I found my kindred spirits and other cute and pointless theories. What I saw in the eyes across from me was the pain of “giving” and the bafflement of “receiving”, the tiredness of this vicious and turbulent circle of love.

Love is not easy. That is because it hasn’t got just one color, one taste, one smell, one form. It differs. And each person I met in my group it felt as if I had loved, at one point or another in my lifetime. It also felt like they had loved me back, but we had never had the chance to meet. They were all there in front of me and I heard them recount stories that resonated in me.

I thought of all the titles I assigned to love in the past: everlasting, unique, true, beautiful. Each word added to the pedestal that I had erected to love. Then I thought that love might be a wound: it bleeds, it hurts, and it scratches before it heals. It takes care; it needs you to spend sleepless nights, someone to get you iodine, another to get you gauze. Then there is that someone who will look at you and see that you are not just an assortment of wounds, and then you’ll see it yourself and you’ll believe it.

The route through the wooded landscape of Litochoro, this communication with nature, grounded me from my everyday recurring stereotypes; it helped me across the line. It helped me find the sense and rhythm I forgot through all this chasing shadows.

Next morning I borrowed their eyes. Or rather I removed the blindfold I had over my own. And I turned to the left side of my bed; “and I met the light.

How else do the days emerge?

I search for your love
in a future continuing time.

The earth kneels.

I dress with pretences
your flawless beauty.

The wind blows prayers.

And your name,

A white bird on my bended shoulder

How else can I testify love?

A small kiss

and a faint-hearted dream.

But don’t deprive me of the least
beloved,

for me it’s the expectation of the best”.

Elli Freggidou, Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Gestalt graduate

Between Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd of June the 3day experiential seminar on “Love is” took place in the heart of mount Olympus, in the beautiful, peaceful, protective environment of the “Fakis Estate”. In this “challenging” seminar, in the words of its trainers, Katia Hatzi-lakou and Maria Farmaki, the participants were invited to attend accompanied by their loved ones (friend, child, colleague, partner, parent, themselves) and try all together to “lovingly” look into issues of “love”, in a way that it make sense to each one of them!



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