

**Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of  
Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series 2)**

**Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, Jan Roubal, and Leslie Greenberg**

Loc: 5,377	<a href="#">11. Gestalt Therapy and Developmental Theories</a> by Giovanni Salonia
Loc: 5,385	The existence of different developmental theories
Loc: 5,387	makes us fully aware of the risk of perceptual selectivity
Loc: 5,389	it is important not to underestimate how therapist's theoretical premises as well as his subjectivity could constitute an obstacle to an accurate perception of the patient's experience
Loc: 5,391	above all when this risk involve children's development and non verbal communication.
Loc: 5,392	we are just wondering if it is not perhaps true that several developmental theories are just descriptions of the different ways in which adults relate to children.
Loc: 5,394	the description of the socio-cultural context could orient in the elaboration of any theory.
Loc: 5,395	Adults' perception of children is determined by the socio-cultural context they live in and, specifically, by the Base Relationship Model
Loc: 5,398	When a society experiences a shared sense of a common danger, then it gives priority to the sense of belonging, to the "We"
Loc: 5,400	fall»): in this context the child is raised through models of introjective obedience and of passive adaptation.
Loc: 5,401	when a society does not perceive the existence of an imminent and all-pervading danger,
Loc: 5,402	the push towards belonging is relaxed
Loc: 5,402	society becomes "fluid")
Loc: 5,403	emphasis is laid on subjective experience and creativity:
Loc: 5,404	value is placed on listening to the child's needs and to encouraging the expression of his creativity.
Loc: 5,406	in the BRM/We
Loc: 5,407	growth will be aimed at creating functional introjections

**Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of  
Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series 2)**

**Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, Jan Roubal, and Leslie Greenberg**

Loc: 5,407	reckon with fear, rules as well as a sense of guilt
Loc: 5,408	in the BRM/I the child will be perceived and educated within a hermeneutic subjectivity, of the body and of creativity;
Loc: 5,409	reckon with the duty of self-fulfilment
Loc: 5,410	and his own fulfilment with those of others.
Loc: 5,411	new developmental theory does not contradict the previous ones but enriches them.
Loc: 5,413	This paper
Loc: 5,414	in the first,
Loc: 5,414	previous and current developmental theories are being read trough Gestalt hermeneutical keys;
Loc: 5,415	the second part,
Loc: 5,415	Gestalt Therapy's innovative contribution to the elaboration of a developmental theory with its clinical declinations
Loc: 5,418	<a href="#">1. A Gestalt Re-Reading of Developmental Theories</a>
Loc: 5,422	the first great intuition of its founders:
Loc: 5,422	the decisive obviousness of the fact that dentition is a way of assimilation
Loc: 5,424	a model for working with children (Oaklander, 1988; Bove Fernandez et al., 2006) and a description of child's body growth phases (Frank, 2001) was developed by Gestalt theory and practice.
Loc: 5,429	The hermeneutical cipher with which Gestalt Therapy approaches the human animal organism, might be summed up in a triadic paradigm which weaves together the body (the theory of the Self with its functions: Id, Personality and Ego), the relationship (the theory of the contact with its ways and times: the Gestalt contact cycle) and time (the theory of growth and its relational time experienced).
Loc: 5,433	<a href="#">1.1. Sigmund Freud: Body, Relationship and Time</a>
Loc: 5,443	the revolutionary principle which asserts that child's relational thoughts and style emerge from the body is implicitly affirmed: depending on the part of the body activated (by the libido), the child-caregiver relationship is modified

**Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of  
Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series 2)**

**Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, Jan Roubal, and Leslie Greenberg**

Loc: 5,444	(dependence, counter-dependence, independence, interdependence).
Loc: 5,445	pleasure – the signaller of these stages – reveals itself to be a three-dimensional experience:
Loc: 5,446	experience of one’s own body,
Loc: 5,446	opening to the reality of the body of the other
Loc: 5,446	the experience of time as transitory duration.
Loc: 5,447	from the pleasure that the experience of lived intercorporeality
Loc: 5,447	(perception of one’s own and the other’s body) and of the lack of the other’s body (that becomes expectation) are being made by a corporeal memory,
Loc: 5,448	builds identity and bodily tension opening to otherness.
Loc: 5,449	every stage remains “memorised” in the layers of the body as muscular tension and as quality and style of breathing.
Loc: 5,449	the child’s body has found adequate primary support in the body of the parent figure, the progression of stages follows in every wider waves and generates a sense of wholeness (body-relational identity).
Loc: 5,451	the body of the caregiver does not provide adequately primary support, then fears will be layered in the child’s body, as bodily tension destined to produce various types of interruption of the contact.
Loc: 5,452	the progression of stages occurs spontaneously
Loc: 5,454	constitutes the physical base of the concept of the Organism Self-Regulation
Loc: 5,458	Freud indicates as markers of the stages (mouth, anus, genitals),
Loc: 5,458	not be considered as isolated and juxtaposed
Loc: 5,458	rather as each being endowed with libido (attention and pleasure)
Loc: 5,459	and intimately connected with the entirety of one’s own body
Loc: 5,460	and with the body of the other.
Loc: 5,460	breathing patterns record the quality of the experience: depending on the fluidity of the experience, it expands or is held in and it becomes deeper or shallower.
Loc: 5,462	various stages succeed each other

**Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of  
Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series 2)**

**Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, Jan Roubal, and Leslie Greenberg**

Loc: 5,464	spontaneously and harmoniously and they progressively build the child's corporeal and relational identity.
Loc: 5,465	(first stage ) oral sphincter concerns the receiving of something from the environment
Loc: 5,466	into the body;
Loc: 5,466	suckling cannot be reduced to the pleasure of feeding
Loc: 5,467	but – at an intercorporeal level – it resembles a relational dance which involves various parts of the mother's body with equal intensity (nipple or bottle) and the baby's mouth (and entire body).
Loc: 5,470	play with the mother's breast (not as a simply feeding experience) has in this way a relational identity and function.
Loc: 5,471	second stage
Loc: 5,472	the anal sphincter.
Loc: 5,472	action of defecating represents a new relational modality learning:
Loc: 5,473	sensation of one's "own" power to expel or hold in something (faeces) that the child produces and the environment awaits (relational dimension).
Loc: 5,474	In this stage the child in fact learns how to relate to the environment with a greater power of negotiation
Loc: 5,474	the possibility of expressing anger by holding in the faeces or using them to soil things)
Loc: 5,475	feeling embarrassment (people eat together but defecate alone) or shame (when he is incapable of controlling his sphincter).
Loc: 5,477	in the third stage
Loc: 5,477	great attention to peeing and discovers his genitals as a site of personal pleasure and as the difference between males and females.
Loc: 5,478	the phallic stage,
Loc: 5,479	Penis envy
Loc: 5,480	is merely cultural:

**Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of  
Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series 2)**

**Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, Jan Roubal, and Leslie Greenberg**

Loc: 5,482	In this stage the change in the relational model concerns the acquisition of major independence on the child's part because now he knows how to procure himself pleasure alone (autoerotic stage).
Loc: 5,484	any equal relationship of intimacy: to go towards the other not from a position of dependence
Loc: 5,493	(the transition from the dyadic mother-child to the father-mother-child triangle)
Loc: 5,493	characterised by the overcoming of the Oedipus complex:
Loc: 5,494	For Freud,
Loc: 5,494	is during the oedipal stage that the child's growth or pathology are delineated.
Loc: 5,519	<a href="#">1.3. Daniel Stern: the Child Talks!</a>
Loc: 5,521	Stern's developmental theory is situated in changed cultural and social coordinates.
Loc: 5,522	see a developmental theory which shifts attention towards the Self of the child, to describe how the subject-in-contact with the world evolves.
Loc: 5,524	Stern's theory is the developmental translation of Kohut's theory of the Self (1977;
Loc: 5,526	in an unaware way, Stern (1985; 1995; 1998) incorporates some passages from Gestalt Therapy
Loc: 5,527	a theory of the Self rather than of the child,
Loc: 5,528	study of "healthy" child in his interactions
Loc: 5,529	the attention towards the interpersonal
Loc: 5,530	world; the relational styles
Loc: 5,531	and the "being-with" schema ("the other is a self-regulating other for the infant"; Stern, 1985, p. 102).
Loc: 5,533	acme of a child's development is the Narrative Self.
Loc: 5,537	He asserts in fact that the Self is polyphonic and therefore every stage adds a new music to the preceding ones,
Loc: 5,537	stages are not correlated in a hierarchical order.

**Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of  
Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series 2)**

**Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, Jan Roubal, and Leslie Greenberg**

Loc: 5,544	1.4. Infant Research: Mother-Child Self-Regulation
Loc: 5,545	From the Nineties onwards, research into developmental theories has concentrated on observing the child and his interactions (Stern, 1998).
Loc: 5,552	A particular concept which emerges from their research (Infant Research) is the systemic paradigm of self-regulation:
Loc: 5,553	a process of reciprocal self-regulation is always in action
Loc: 5,567	2. Developmental Theories in Gestalt Therapy
Loc: 5,569	Gestalt Therapy emerges in the Fifties as one of the most important models of the humanistic movement.
Loc: 5,570	characteristics of this
Loc: 5,570	is the emphasis placed on the present, within an epistemological framework that underlines the depth of the surface
Loc: 5,571	aims at reducing an interest
Loc: 5,571	in the patient's childhood.
Loc: 5,576	The coeval (or contemporaneous) Carl Rogers' Person-centred therapy (1951) concentrates in few pages a synthetic and shortened developmental theory.
Loc: 5,581	Gestalt Therapy emerges from a brilliant intuition concerning developmental theory.
Loc: 5,582	psychoanalysts – Fritz and Laura Perls – whilst they were observing their children found that the teething (the capacity and the necessity of destroying food), develops much earlier than Freud had predicted (Perls, 1947).
Loc: 5,585	The duration of the introjective phase is reduced,
Loc: 5,588	Perls' observation of teething became a departure point for the creation of a new paradigm of understanding the human condition
Loc: 5,590	as well as the child development.
Loc: 5,593	Healthy aggression (not primarily connected with destruction and frustration) is experienced, both in therapy and in life, as a self-regulation and it renders recourse to an external entity (such as the Super-Ego) completely useless,

**Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of  
Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series 2)**

**Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, Jan Roubal, and Leslie Greenberg**

Loc: 5,595	the patient becomes the protagonist of the therapeutic treatment as a “co-construction” relational experience (and as the Cognitivists will say thirty years later).
Loc: 5,612	In the Eighties, there is a resurgence of interest in developmental theories (Salonia, 1989 or. ed.; 1992; McConville, 1995; Wheeler, 1991; 2000a; Frank, 2001). This was not a reawakened interest in the past but, first of all, it arose from the need to try and outline the stages through which the Gestalt contact competency is formed.
Loc: 5,618	The model emerged was called: “From We to I-You” (Salonia, 1989 or. ed.; 1992) and was circumscribed in the ways and times of the contact cycle’s phases: the “We” of primary confluence, the “You” which one depends upon (introjection/orientation phase), the “You” towards whom energy is directed (projection/manipulation), the Ego (“I”) of self-sufficiency (retroflexion), the “I-You” of contact: finally, at the contact boundary two presences have brought to fruition the work of maturation.
Loc: 5,625	<a href="#">2.2.1. A Gestalt Developmental Theory of the Self</a>
Loc: 5,627	Gestalt developmental theory concentrates more on the child’s Self concept rather than on the child’s intrapsychic world (Stern will call it the “interpersonal world”
Loc: 5,629	in harmony with the Gestalt principle that the organism is always in relationship and into a relational movement:
Loc: 5,629	the reciprocal relational intentionality
Loc: 5,630	between child and his caregivers
Loc: 5,632	<a href="#">2.2.2. The Between-ness: a Gestalt Developmental Theory of the Contact Boundary</a>
Loc: 5,634	Gestalt developmental theory refers to the development of the contact boundary
Loc: 5,635	between the child and his parent figures,
Loc: 5,637	different levels of contact boundary
Loc: 5,637	evolving and depending on the developmental phase of the child and on the parental feedback.
Loc: 5,638	the primary confluence,

**Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of  
Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series 2)**

**Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, Jan Roubal, and Leslie Greenberg**

Loc: 5,639	a sense of presence/absence of the other's
Loc: 5,639	progressively emerges:
Loc: 5,639	the child experiences how his own body is hungry,
Loc: 5,640	which body wants
Loc: 5,640	and how to live without the other's
Loc: 5,641	"we reach ourselves" when the "I" feels there is a "You"
Loc: 5,642	takes place through the development of the succession of different levels of contact boundary,
Loc: 5,644	Stern uses the term of "being-with"
Loc: 5,644	applying phenomenological categories,
Loc: 5,644	Gestalt Therapy prefers to say "being-there-between"
Loc: 5,645	"between" refers to the category of organism-environment contact boundary
Loc: 5,645	"there" refers to the phenomenological curve of the here-and-now
Loc: 5,646	as well as
Loc: 5,646	the experienced interaction between two bodies
Loc: 5,648	Intercorporeality represents a central concept in Gestalt Therapy,
Loc: 5560 - 5652	For example, a parental prohibition becomes a block (and a dysfunctional introject) if it is transmitted by the tension which passes from the parent's body to the child's one: the parental figure's words become significant not just for their content but for the tone of the voice or tension/ relaxation of his/ her body (Salonia, 2008a). . Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series) (Kindle Locations 5650-5652). Istituto di Gestalt HCC Italy. Kindle Edition.
Loc: 5,648	category of intersubjectivity
Loc: 5,649	child and parent's bodies live a physical "between-ness",
Loc: 5,649	where different growth blocks or breakdowns could occur.
Loc: 5,654	<a href="#">2.2.3. At the Beginning of Primary Confluence</a>

**Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of  
Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series 2)**

**Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, Jan Roubal, and Leslie Greenberg**

Loc: 5,656	Gestalt Therapy defines the Confluence as the primary relational modality.
Loc: 5,657	(both Autism and Mahler's Symbiosis are now considered obsolete).
Loc: 5,658	confluence is an original perspective of the primary "being-there-between"
Loc: 5,659	respects the
Loc: 5,659	child's early independence
Loc: 5,660	a relationship of confluence
Loc: 5,661	is established in the sense that both experience a reciprocal coming together of their perceptions:
Loc: 5,662	both experience a sort of "perceptive obsession" of the other,
Loc: 5,666	if the caregiver's support is not "good enough", some breakdowns can occur
Loc: 5,667	the child will remain stuck
Loc: 5,667	not acquire the needful primary competency of the full contact.
Loc: 5,668	this model in clinical practice with seriously ill patients (Conte, 1998-1999; 2008) and in psychiatric communities (Argentino, 2001) has shown the usefulness and value of a Gestalt developmental perspective.
Loc: 5,672	<a href="#">2.2.4. Oedipus as a Crossroads</a>
Loc: 5,673	The Oedipus complex
Loc: 5,674	is certainly one of the most delicate points of any developmental theory.
Loc: 5,676	there are two different ways of answering the question that lies at the heart of the epistemology of development:
Loc: 5,676	should the presence of possible "incestuous" (and dysfunctional) desire be seen as physiological and universally present or does it reveal a relational dysfunction in the primary triangle?
Loc: 5,678	By considering incestuous desire as physiological, Freud has to invoke an external regulative principle (the Super-Ego)
Loc: 5,682	Humanistic therapies have always held, in fact, that the concept of the Super Ego can be bracketed off because of the organismic self-regulation.
Loc: 5,683	Gestalt Therapy goes even further

**Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of  
Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series 2)**

**Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, Jan Roubal, and Leslie Greenberg**

Loc: 5,684	the relationship regulates itself;
Loc: 5,685	and it represents the forerunner of what is called “co-parenting” nowadays.
Loc: 5,686	The Gestalt triangle expresses an epistemology in which relationships are self-regulating. As it is clear, there are irreconcilable epistemological differences
Loc: 5,687	From the first perspective, the therapeutic work will be centred around containing the child’s incestuous desire;
Loc: 5,688	in the second perspective, the focus will be on the co-parenting relationship.
Loc: 5,693	the primary triangle concerns more relationships than behaviours.
Loc: 5,698	<a href="#">2.2.5. Towards New Developmental Perspectives: the Intrapersonal Contact Boundary</a>
Loc: 5,703	Being present to oneself – in the sense of “reaching to yourself” or “giving you to yourself” – is not a given but the point of arrival of the primary developmental pathway.
Loc: 5,704	this destination is defined in different ways
Loc: 5,705	in a traditional repressive society, it will be the overcome of the Oedipus complex (Freud, 1962);
Loc: 5,707	in post-modern individualism, the capacity to engage in a dialogue (the narrative self; Stern, 1985);
Loc: 5,707	Gestalt Therapy of the Eighties, it will be the “relational competency” which goes from the From We to I-You (Salonia, 1992).
Loc: 5,708	today’s
Loc: 5,708	society, we propose the “re-reading” of a fundamental element of Gestalt Therapy that might be called the intrapersonal contact boundary. In other words, coherently with Perls’ great idea of replacing the “free association” technique instead of the “concentration” one («What are you feeling?»), GT emphasises now «Who are you, who are feeling this?» other than «What are you feeling?».
Loc: 5,712	In a fluid society, the challenge of feeling
Loc: 5,712	(Ego’s function)
Loc: 5,712	has to be integrated with the task of becoming

**Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of  
Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series 2)**

**Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, Jan Roubal, and Leslie Greenberg**

Loc: 5,712	(Personality function);
Loc: 5,713	this is particularly complex because of the tendency to «put down anchors rather than roots»
Loc: 5,713	that reduces the phase of the assimilation as well as the sense of belonging.
Loc: 5,715	in this re-reading, the theory From We to I/You needs to be integrated, emphasising the “Ego of the retroflexion” (of the gender phase, of rapprochement, of the verbal self) which emerges from a relational background
Loc: 5,719	The Ego of the intrapersonal contact boundary is the Ego made mature by relational experience: the awareness which comes out from the womb of the full contact.
Loc: 5,720	Dysfunctions, as breakdowns of the development process of contact and of the intrapersonal boundary competency, will be expressed as being outside oneself or lagging behind oneself, as losing one’s way and as a non-functional contact boundary (a parental figure who does not hold the child’s body or hampers its spontaneity).
Loc: 5,725	<a href="#">Towards a Triadic Paradigm of Between-ness</a>
Loc: 5,726	The difference between saying to one’s child: “Cover up because it’s cold” and saying: “How do you feel the temperature? If you feel cold, cover up” refers to very different paradigms:
Loc: 5,728	the first affirmation, the intrapersonal between-ness is denied,
Loc: 5,728	in the second it is fostered. The child – in the latter paradigm – will have to learn for himself not only to listen to his parental figure but also through this (that is, by approaching the contact boundary), in a genuine and untouched sense, learn how to listen to himself.
Loc: 5,732	Talking to oneself about everything that has happened is, in the end, an awareness of intrapersonal between-ness
Loc: 5,734	Inside a relational perspective, however, the internal or intrapersonal dialogue emerges from the interpersonal dialogue.
Loc: 5,738	The circularity between “intra” and “inter” personal dialogue is learnt in the primary “Between-ness”.
Loc: 5,743	Intrapersonal between-ness is,
Loc: 5,744	the preliminary condition of interpersonal between-ness

**Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of  
Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series 2)**

**Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, Jan Roubal, and Leslie Greenberg**

Loc: 5,744	we learn to talk to ourselves in an
Loc: 5,744	primary between-ness).
Loc: 5,745	primary between-ness
Loc: 5,745	is the special contact boundary created between the child and the parental figure.
Loc: 5,745	The Ego, in order to reach itself, needs to be expressed by a parental figure not once but many times.
Loc: 5,748	the child's development
Loc: 5,748	as the development of a special between-ness in which an Ego, capable of interpersonal between-ness, takes care of a You in which this between-ness is taking shape
Loc: 5,750	as the parental figure is able to express his own experience to himself, he will facilitate in the child the emergence of a "proto-dialogue",
Loc: 5,752	if the parental figure has a block in his own intrapersonal between-ness and so that does not have the words for themes of the Self, he will provoke in the child a partial or total inability "to give you to himself"
Loc: 5,754	Primary intrapersonal between-ness
Loc: 5,754	is required as the condition sine qua non of any relationship in which somebody looks after somebody else
Loc: 5,756	Any block in growth and in care giving, in fact, goes back to a block in the intrapersonal between-ness of the care-giver.
Loc: 5,758	Reflecting on intrapersonal between-ness, as a basic moment of interpersonal between-ness (it emerges from it and leads to it), allows us to refine with greater depth the intimate and final sense of the libido. In a succinct but expressive manner, for Freud the libido is the pursuit of pleasure, for the Object relations theory it consists in the search for objects, and for the Gestalt perspective it is the search for one's own soul.
Loc: 5,767	<a href="#">Comment</a>
Loc: 5,775	«we reach ourselves when the "I" feels there is a "You" before it».
Loc: 5,777	«development takes place at the contact boundary»,

**Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of  
Contact (Gestalt Therapy Book Series 2)**

**Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, Jan Roubal, and Leslie Greenberg**

Loc: 5,778	the “exterior” contact boundary between the self and others,
Loc: 5,778	“interior” contact boundary between the conscious self and the multiple aspects
Loc: 5,779	whole self
Loc: 5,779	the senses,
Loc: 5,779	the body,
Loc: 5,779	feelings
Loc: 5,779	thoughts.
Loc: 5,780	The common tool for
Loc: 5,781	contact,
Loc: 5,781	is language:
Loc: 5,783	is supported in a number of ways by seminal work in this area by Vygotsky.
Note   Location: 5,784	Vygotsky L.S. (1966), Development of Higher Mental Functions, in Leontyev A.N., Luria A.R. and Smirnov A., eds., Psychological Research in the USSR, Progress Publishers, Moscow. Vygotsky L.S. (1978), Mind in Society, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA.
Loc: 5,784	«Human learning presupposes a specific social nature
Loc: 5,787	While Piaget may have focused more on the maturation of the individual
Loc: 5,788	Vygotsky’s focus was on the dialectical effects of the human organism within a social environment: