

Social Context and Psychotherapy by Giovanni Salonia
in
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: 4,356	8. Social Context and Psychotherapy by Giovanni Salonia
Loc: 4,364	Emile Durkheim (2007) opens up new research horizons with regards to the relationship between individuals and society through his identification of social influences as concurrent causes
Loc: 4,368	his insight offers a useful starting-point for considering the connections and correlations between cultural contexts and psychotherapies.
Loc: 4,369	historical nosology reveals the existence of different pathologies in different cultural contexts:
Loc: 4,370	pathologies brought to light by Freud
Loc: 4,371	were connected to the historical and social context of the Austro-Hungarian Empire
Loc: 4,371	new pathologies (narcissism, borderline) are widespread in the post modern era.
Loc: 4,373	New patients, then, and the re-emergence of familiar pathologies
Loc: 4,373	correspond to specific cultural changes
Loc: 4,374	during the last century, not only were there significant changes made to the existing modes of psychotherapy but new ones also emerged.
Loc: 4,375	the Fifties, for example,
Loc: 4,378	A new type of human being was appearing on the horizon: one interested in self-fulfilment rather than in the community and to the pronoun “I” rather than the “we”;
Loc: 4,379	and inclined to “chew” rather than “introject” laws and the pronouncements of authority.
Loc: 4,380	About twenty years later, other psychoanalysts, having recognised this transition, proposed new theories
Loc: 4,381	with the objective of bringing the classical psychoanalytical models “up-to-date”.

Social Context and Psychotherapy by Giovanni Salonia
in
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: 4,382	Even social psychology becomes aware that each society generates a specific personality model to which every theory of health or pathology needs to be related.
Loc: 4,385	the relationship between individual-society is a given: it is found at the centre of a vast panorama of theories
Loc: 4,389	1. The Basic Relationship Model (BRM) as the Key to Understanding the Relationship Between Cultural Contexts and Psychotherapies
Loc: 4,392	we take relationships
Loc: 4,392	as the key to understanding the complexity of the relationship between individual and society
Loc: 4,395	The Basic Relational Model (BRM) (Salonia, 2005a) answers these needs
Loc: 4,398	based on the idea that any society, in order to respond to its own survival needs, decides who has priority between the individual and society and gives, according to the context, priority to one or the other.
Loc: 4,401	1.1. The BRM/ Us
Loc: 4,403	Society's interests are paramount when there is a period of common fear (caused by war, starvation or epidemics)
Loc: 4,407	"we" is given precedence, and the model we define as BRM/Us predominates
Loc: 4,408	very little interest is manifested towards people's inner lives
Loc: 4,409	and all the teachers impart is learnt precisely and in a repetitive manner
Loc: 4,410	The only aspects of subjective experience that can be freely expressed, and seen positively, are those of the leader, of the hero
Loc: 4,413	The leader
Loc: 4,414	has absolute power and is thanked when he exercises it clearly,
Loc: 4,415	is willingly obeyed and much is forgiven
Loc: 4,415	because he has the destiny of society.

Social Context and Psychotherapy by Giovanni Salonia
in
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: 4,417	This BRM/Us model comes to dominate, as we have already said, in situations
Loc: 4,418	when something new comes into being
Loc: 4,419	The group becomes “Us” in unity with the leader whose exceptional qualities and acknowledged
Loc: 4,420	“We are great and special because our leader is
Loc: 4,421	there is no room for dialogue, for subjectivity, for the self-exploration of the single individual
Loc: 4,422	It is not useful to dedicate space to difference
Loc: 4,423	but it is essential to support convergences
Loc: 4,424	the “Us” is perceived as the limit that separates us from “Them”, from others seen as enemies or as unimportant:
Loc: 4,426	The “Us” is created either by the enemy
Loc: 4,427	or by a narcissistic sense of belonging
Loc: 4,428	In these social contexts, psychopathologies are characterised by fear in its multifarious forms: a sense of guilt rooted in the fear of separation, phobias or obsessions as fear of feelings and action
Loc: 4,429	there is a fear of emerging from the community in order to be oneself, to become independent
Loc: 4,432	1.2. The BRM/I
Loc: 4,433	When the generalised source of fear
Loc: 4,434	Is over
Loc: 4,434	Society-community
Loc: 4,434	Experiences complexity
Loc: 4,435	followed by fragmentation
Loc: 4,435	subjectivity begins to emerge

Social Context and Psychotherapy by Giovanni Salonia
in
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: 4,435	progressively manifests the need to legitimise itself
Loc: 4,436	to attain full self-realisation
Loc: 4,436	this process occurs slowly
Loc: 4,436	goes through specific phases
Loc: 4,437	namely, rebellion, narcissism and
Loc: 4,437	confusion
Loc: 4,438	this stage is characterised by the “I” pronoun: BRM/I
Loc: 4,438	interest for the common good becomes greatly diminished whilst personal points of view are given great importance,
Loc: 4,439	people are more concerned with their rights than with their duties
Loc: 4,440	the leader is neither recognised nor accepted,
Loc: 4,440	People wish to grow without the effort and mistakes involved in learning, and anything that might end in humiliation is avoided.
Loc: 4,443	Experience – the main expression of subjectivity – becomes the place where learning occurs as well as being the criterion for making judgements.
Loc: 4,445	Any diversity is legitimised and can be presented to the world without prior ontological evaluation.
Loc: 4,446	weakening of ties leads to the fragility of social cohabitation
Loc: 4,449	Much space is dedicated to listening to oneself, both in creative forms of expression
Loc: 4,449	as well as in that request for help that is called “accompanying” (of therapists or family guidance, of of philosophers or in spiritual matters).
Loc: 4,452	Unequal relationships are reduced to a minimum.
Loc: 4,452	it is not a social role which endows authority, but the individual caregiver who has to inspire
Loc: 4,453	sense of belonging is perceived negatively as representing a limit to individual potential.

Social Context and Psychotherapy by Giovanni Salonia
in
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: 4,456	The only places in which an “Us” relationship model is accepted – even if living in a context dominated by BRM/I – are places in which one’s life is at risk: on a plane, in an operating theatre, etc.
Loc: 4,459	Let us conclude.
Loc: 4,460	with a recent example which demonstrated once again how it is society which determines the Basic Relational Model.
Loc: 4,460	in New York in the aftermath of 11 September 2001 noticed that for a long time New Yorkers, like many Westerners, had suddenly rediscovered “Us”.
Loc: 4,462	People had reverted to thinking in terms of “Us”, of accepting the reduction of their liberties and rights in order to be protected.
Loc: 4,463	danger had revolutionised relational thought.
Loc: 4,463	sociologist (Ackerman, 2008) wrote recently that we ought to learn a better way of living unconnected to situations of danger or war.
Loc: 4,466	Forms of psychopathology in the BRM/I undergo radical reassessment:
Loc: 4,467	term “psychopathology”
Loc: 4,467	is called into question
Loc: 4,467	emphasis is placed on the positive value of illness as a creative choice and survival strategy in situations of extreme danger
Loc: 4,468	Rather than
Loc: 4,469	psychopathology
Loc: 4,469	“malfunctions” or “personal functional styles” are preferred.
Loc: 4,470	The most basic form of anguish consists in the fear of being suffocated by the community,
Loc: 4,471	Without experience of strong ties, it becomes difficult to construct one’s identity and both create and maintain significant relationships. Pathologies
Loc: 4,473	post modern pathologies range from confusion (borderline) to identity crises (panic attacks), to significant relationship phobia (narcissism). Depression, an antique malaise, acquires new significance in BRM/I societies and demands that therapeutic practices be thought through anew.

Social Context and Psychotherapy by Giovanni Salonia
in
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: 4,476	2. Social Changes and Developmental Theories
Loc: 4,478	changes in base relational models
Loc: 4,479	give rise to
Loc: 4,479	a different concept of maturity
Loc: 4,481	I If we look at child development theories of the last century, we realise that there have been changes in them, too;
Loc: 4,482	they also reach divergent conclusions as to what constitutes
Loc: 4,483	developmental maturity.
Loc: 4,483	Freud, the goal of growth was the attainment of the genital phase,
Loc: 4,484	that is, to love and to work which one reaches by becoming aware
Loc: 4,485	of one's instincts (drives) and their repression operated through fear of the Super-ego.
Loc: 4,486	Maturity is
Loc: 4,486	seen as a compromise between social factors (and the Super-ego) and those of the individual.
Loc: 4,488	In the Fifties, Gestalt Therapy conceived of maturity as "creative adaptation"
Loc: 4,488	to "bite" in order to learn how to combine adaptation (belonging) and creativity (subjectivity)
Loc: 4,490	Mahler, in the full bloom of a narcissistic society, elaborated an infant development model which emphasised personal freedom in the act of learning to walk
Loc: 4,492	but as the ability to move away
Loc: 4,492	and defined maturity as "object constancy"
Loc: 4,493	Jonathan Livingstone Seagull who leaves the group because he feels special (Bach, 1973)
Loc: 4,495	In the post-narcissistic period the need to take others into account returns with a vengeance

Social Context and Psychotherapy by Giovanni Salonia
in
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: 4,496	Daniel Stern (1987; 1999) proposes a developmental theory connected to the theory of self
Loc: 4,497	the narrative Self, of the ability to narrate and narrate oneself, to live relationships with others in the triadic dimension of openness.
Loc: 4,499	he adopts some basic tenets of Gestalt Therapy
Loc: 4,499	any type of maturity is relational maturity.
Loc: 4,500	self, in fact, is always and everywhere in relation.
Loc: 4,500	In Gestalt Therapy developmental theory, maturity is defined as “contact competency”
Loc: 4,501	New hermeneutics emerge: the Oedipus complex, for example, is no longer seen as a problem for the child, but as the expression of a problem in the couple
Loc: 4,502	the new anthropological setting,
Loc: 4,502	which sees males and females both in the home and working outside it,
Loc: 4,503	a new developmental prospective emerges which considers growth in relation to the declination of the primary triangle and also of co-parenting
Loc: 4,504	To summarise
Loc: 4,505	it would appear that in times of war children are brought up to “take part”, to obey, and to swallow the rules
Loc: 4,506	in a narcissistic period they are brought up to be independent and to express... Some highlights have been hidden or truncated due to export limits.
Loc: 4,506	in a narcissistic period they are brought up to be independent and to express their full potential; in a post-narcissistic period, to express themselves within relationships.
Loc: 4,509	3. Psychotherapies or Psychotherapy?
Loc: 4,511	can one hold that a clinical model is good for all periods and in every context?

Social Context and Psychotherapy by Giovanni Salonia
in
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: 4,511	can clinical models which were created decades ago, in completely different historical and social contexts, still meet the needs of a world which has completely changed?
Loc: 4,514	For some, the theory and practise of their model has a value which is beyond questions of time or space,
Loc: 4,515	For others (for instance, DSM IV), objectivity is reached through a descriptive approach to psychopathology, forgetting that every description is an interpretation
Loc: 4,516	to create integrated models
Loc: 4,517	is also a way of denying the necessity of continually up-dating any therapeutic model.
Loc: 4,518	it is precisely the lack of connection between psychotherapy and social context that renders a psychotherapeutic approach weak.
Loc: 4,519	take the example of psychoanalysis
Loc: 4,523	a follower of Freud's who acknowledged
Loc: 4,524	that we have gone from the Guilty Man to the Tragic Man (Kohut, 1976a)
Loc: 4,524	the horizon in which Freud's patients lived was the guilt of not being able to separate themselves
Loc: 4,525	today's patients
Loc: 4,525	(from the last twenty years of the Twentieth century onwards)
Loc: 4,526	suffer from the tragic lack of a relational identity
Loc: 4,526	they cannot succeed in feeling part of a community which they perceive as being both "necessary and impossible" (Esposito, 1998).
Loc: 4,528	Among the approaches which have always deemed the continual process of addressing socio-cultural changes to be an integral and decisive part of their work, we find Gestalt Therapy.
Loc: 4,529	the epistemology of its experiential-relational model, it makes use of hermeneutics (Sichera, 2001) because,

Social Context and Psychotherapy by Giovanni Salonia
in
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: 4,530	tools, it is possible to achieve a process of understanding which includes, in an inevitable and illuminating circularity,
Loc: 4,531	Text,
Loc: 4,531	author,
Loc: 4,531	reader and
Loc: 4,531	cultural context
Loc: 4,531	On ... one hand
Loc: 4,531	is, the therapist, the patient and the model
Loc: 4,532	on the other, the model itself and the context in which it grew out of as well as the context in which it is being applied.
Loc: 4,533	the socio-cultural contextualisation of understanding psychological malaise
Loc: 4,534	is an indispensable condition, if not an all-embracing one, of any therapeutic process
Loc: 4,535	take an example from the history of Gestalt therapy to clarify
Loc: 4,535	for making the choice in favour of hermeneutics.
Loc: 4,536	Perls
Loc: 4,536	synthesised his theory in the so-called "Gestalt prayer" (1980, p. 12)
Loc: 4,537	<i>«I am I – you are you. I am not in the world to live up to your expectations and you are not in this world to live up to mine. And if by chance, we find each other, it's beautiful. If not, it can't be helped».</i>
Loc: 4,538	the context in which Perls wrote it
Loc: 4,539	people could not manage to separate themselves from from dysfunctional relationships,
Loc: 4,539	these affirmations had a therapeutic value.
Loc: 4,540	in a different context (e.g. in the narcissistic Seventies) they become a non-sense. "Don't tie yourself" and "Follow your own path" is precisely what people who live their relationships narcissistically are experts at:

Social Context and Psychotherapy by Giovanni Salonia
in
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: 4,541	What they find difficulty in doing is quite the opposite,
Loc: 4,543	another clinical example. Fritz Perls, with great clinical intuition, asked patients who continually asked questions
Loc: 4,544	to transform their questions into statements:
Loc: 4,545	in a narcissistic culture, instead, it is opportune to ask patients (who are self-referential and so have difficulty in asking) to turn statements into questions.
Loc: 4,546	Another
Loc: 4,547	consideration is that the contextualisation of psychological malaise
Loc: 4,547	redefines its significance: a person who has a relational model of dependency will attribute a different relevance to his malaise
Loc: 4,549	in a context in which belonging is highly prized
Loc: 4,549	or one which rates self-fulfilment more highly
Loc: 4,550	The Basic Relational Model is
Loc: 4,551	the first and decisive paradigm for understanding any psychological malaise and,
Loc: 4,551	for being able to determine the direction the therapeutic process should take.
Loc: 4,590	4. Gestalt Therapy as Psychotherapeutic Model for the Postmodern Cultural Context
Loc: 4,593	psychopathology and Freudian treatments are part of the hermeneutics proper to BRM/Us (strong society-weak individual)
Loc: 4,593	Gestalt Therapy, emerging at the beginning of the BRM/ I, elaborates a novel hermeneutics and a new clinical practice for the treatment of psychological malaise;
Loc: 4,597	psychological malaise arises “from” and “in” a disturbed relationship, and it shows itself in the inability to form healthy relationships; it is cured “with” and “in” a (therapeutic) relationship.

Social Context and Psychotherapy by Giovanni Salonia
in
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: 4,599	GT hermeneutics, the fundamental concept of psychopathology is, in fact, the inability to encounter the other, that is – on a phenomenological level – the fact that a desire (intentionality) for contact is interrupted and does not come to fruition.
Loc: 4,601	genuine contacts do not occur if one dominates the other or submits to the other but by arriving at the “contact boundary” with an intact self
Loc: 4,602	capable of seeing the fullness of the other, too
Loc: 4,604	Contact
Loc: 4,604	gives an existential sense of completeness and pleasure. The ability to create nourishing contacts is innate, but it is developed and is sustained
Loc: 4,604	The ability to create nourishing contacts is innate, but it is developed and is sustained
Loc: 4,605	by parental figures in the moments in which one learns – at the level of bodily relations – the schemata of being-with
Loc: 4,607	GT psychotherapy is the description of the various ways in which one fails to reach the other.
Loc: 4,608	The different types of classic psychopathology or the various styles of malaise
Loc: 4,609	are distinguishable on the basis of the moment in which the subject, on his way towards nourishing contact in the environment, interrupts his journey.
Loc: 4,610	gravity of the illness is found
Loc: 4,611	in the difference between integrity of contact and fullness of the contact.
Loc: 4,614	In the cipher of relations
Loc: 4,614	which in GT is central and decisive
Loc: 4,614	the symptoms and cure of psychopathology are discernable in body-relationship experiences
Loc: 4,615	GT focalises the relationship between the subject and others in lived relationships
Loc: 4,616	which, in turn, has an inevitable bodily matrix

Social Context and Psychotherapy by Giovanni Salonia
in
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: 4,616	“how I feel with respect to the other”
Loc: 4,617	the phenomenological matrix of Gestalt Therapy finds its place precisely in this affirmation.
Loc: 4,617	failure or success of contact intentionality are “visible” in the body or, better, in the body in relation.
Loc: 4,618	the “inter-body-ness”.
Loc: 4,619	between the child’s body and the parental figure’s first, and that between the patient and the therapist subsequently, where the fluidity or the interruption of a contact episode is perceived.
Loc: 4,620	It is from the body that the first slow but significant movements of opening up of words and body come
Loc: 4,623	Comment by Philip Lichtenberg
Loc: 4,625	Salonia locates personal functioning within one’s larger social existence, including one’s place in history.
Loc: 4,627	He places psychological theories within the history of ideas
Loc: 4,627	shows how early theory of Gestalt Theory
Loc: 4,628	emphasizes claims to individuality and personal self-regulation.
Loc: 4,629	he adroitly notes that now we must attend to self-regulation of relationships
Loc: 4,630	he suggests we go beyond “basic personality” in a society to a “Basic Relational Model” that the society promotes.
Loc: 4,631	Salonia places mental health and psychopathology within the relational model.
Loc: 4,631	“contact competency” differentiates these aspects of personal functioning very well.