

Psychotherapy 2014, Vol. 51, No. 3, 462-463
© American Psychological Association

Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice: From Psychopathology to the Aesthetics of Contact edited by Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele, and Jan Roubal. Milan, Italy: FrancoAngeli, 2013, Gestalt Therapy Book Series, 762 pp., 10 Tables, 2 Figures. ISBN: 978-88-204-2072-7. €55.00
Reviewed by ROBERT ELLIOTT, School of Psychological Sciences and Health, University of Strathclyde, Scotland

The humanistic therapies have long rejected psychiatric diagnosis and, along with that, the development of specific ways of working with specific client populations (e.g., Rogers, 1957). Although this has begun to change in recent years (e.g., Greenberg, Watson, & Lietzer, 1998), little is known about how to go about adapting humanistic approaches such as Gestalt therapy to specific subpopulations of clients. This is exactly what Francesetti, Gecele, and Roubal set out to do in *Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice*. In this historic, encyclopedic work, a group of well-known, talented Italian Gestalt therapists and trainers contribute close to half of the 33 chapters. Around this core are writers from 13 other countries, mostly European. Unusually, but true to the dialogical nature of Gestalt therapy, each chapter concludes with a critical commentary by another expert in the same topic. The result is a rich, international polyphony on the current state of Gestalt theory and practice, appropriate for inexperienced and experienced practitioners, especially those with a humanistic therapy orientation. As noted, the primary focus is on differential treatment, that is, careful adaptations of Gestalt therapy to each of 21 client populations and presenting problems, from shame to forensic populations, from psychosis to narcissistic personality difficulties. This puts the authors into dialogue with standard models of psychopathology in psychology and psychiatry, as they attempt to translate or reformulate traditional psychiatric practices and concepts like diagnosis, medication, and hysteria into Gestalt terms, with varying degrees of success. Reviewing a book like this is a bit like reviewing an encyclopedia. (...)