

# CONFERENCE REPORTS

## THE THIRD EUROPEAN CONGRESS OF BODY-PSYCHOTHERAPY

September 17 - 20, 1991, Lindau, Lake Constance, Germany

The theme of the conference was a topical one: Words - Touch - Transference - Aspects of the Therapeutic Relationship. It consisted of lectures in the large group, discussion groups, over 60 workshops and seminars and culminated on the final day with the meeting for candidate members of the European Association for Body-Psychotherapy (E.A.B.P.).

The three hundred participants came from all over Europe, including Eastern Europe, but also from Israel, Australia, the U.S.A., Canada, and S. America. Great Britain was under-represented with only fourteen participants and those present did not represent the diversity of body-psychotherapy being practised. Perhaps what was even more surprising was that no one participant knew all of the others from Britain. The opening address on the first evening included a warm welcome by Matthew Speyer, chairperson of the planning committee, an opening talk by David Boadella, President of the E.A.B.P. on the conference theme and a talk by Lillemor Johnsen on the "Breathing Wave, Sound Wave and Water Wave". Subsequently each day started with a warm up exercise followed by a lecture/presentation to the large group. The large group then divided into smaller discussion groups to continue

looking at the theme of the lecture/presentation.

Lectures/presentations were given by George Downing on the theme of "Transference: Choices and Techniques"; there was a presentation of a video of part of a session with a client followed by a panel discussion from Jerome Liss, Maurizio Stuppiggia, Berta Dejung, Regula Isenring and Michael Heller. Prior to the video showing Jerome Liss presented some models to enable us to reflect on ways of looking at experience and being able to do research into body-psychotherapy.

On the last day of the congress there was a lecture from Katherine Brown on "Shadows on the Moon: the Neglect of the Soul and the Feminine in Body-Psychotherapy". I found George Downing's lecture a useful reminder of ways of working with transference and my discussion group included psychotherapists who worked with transference and those who did not, so our discussion was stimulating. Surprisingly, there is little written about using the body in counter-transference.

I admired the courage of Maurizio Stuppiggia showing himself on video with a client during a typical session, but also learned a lot about how three hundred people can perceive the

same situation in such a diversity of ways. The most moving lecture came from Katherine Brown speaking from her own experience and struggle. She received rapturous applause and most of the people around me were in tears moved by the simplicity and insights she had discovered on her theme. My discussion group afterwards spent the time sharing our own sense of being moved.

I was impressed with the pioneering work going on in Athens preparing women for giving birth presented in a video by Kalliopi Prokopaki; I enjoyed and felt the space in the workshop on Hakomi Therapy presented by Halko Weiss and was impressed by the anatomical precision and understanding of muscles in child development, and ways of working with body awareness by Lisbeth Marcher and Eric Jarlnas from BODYnamic in Denmark; and Daniel Gvirtzman's presentation on "Touching Bones: Language, the Body, and Psychotic Defence" left me intrigued and wondering about a new way of working with psychotic defence. I appreciated the "dialogue-orientation" rather than "star-orientation" of the workshops, which meant that the well known figures from the world of body-psychotherapy were one of the group in the workshops. I also found it useful to have with me two articles from *Energy and Character* which outlined the origins and development of body-psychotherapy to give me a context for the different approaches. (1), (2). Around the conference there were various organised social events and there seemed to be ample opportunity to explore Lindau in free time. I spent

evenings and afternoons outside cafes discussing body-psychotherapy. It left me with a sense of permission to carry on developing my own style of work and affirmed for me very strongly that I am doing the work which is right for me.

I attended the E.A.B.P. meeting on the final day of the congress. The E.A.B.P. Code of Ethics, the definition of body-psychotherapy and minimum standards for the training of a body-psychotherapist were approved with some alterations and the understanding that there was more ongoing work to be done on them. The Board members were voted on. The following were elected to serve on the board: David Boadella, Bjorn Blumenthal, Matthew Speyer, Yvonne Maurer, Marianne Bentzen, Hans Krens, and Allison Duguid. We formed National Committees for each country with more than ten candidate members. Candidate members are body-psychotherapists. Given that registration and accreditation and an awareness of the single European market in 1992 are impending and are constant themes of journals and meetings that I attend I was disappointed and surprised that this was barely mentioned at the meeting. There seemed little apparent thought given to influencing discussions of Euro M.P.s in Brussels although Courtenay Young produced a paper on "The Politics of Psychotherapy" and the president, David Boadella, is clearly aware of the issues and produced a thought provoking paper on "Organism and Organisation: The Place of Somatic Psychotherapy in Society". (3)

1. Boadella, D., 'Somatic Psychotherapy: Its Roots and Traditions', *Energy and Character, The Journal of Biosynthesis*, Vol 21, No 1, April 1990, pp. 2 - 26.

2. Boadella, D., 'Somatic Psychotherapy: Bibliography of Books and Journals 1935 - 1990', *Energy and Character, The Journal of Biosynthesis*, Vol. 21, No 2, Sept 1990, pp. 76 - 80.

3. Boadella, D., 'Organism and Organisation: The Place of Somatic Psychotherapy in Society', *Energy and Character, The Journal of Biosynthesis*, Vol. 22, No 1, Aug 1991.

The next congress will be in September 1993. Contact Bernd Eiden, Chiron Centre for Holistic Psychotherapy, 26 Eaton Rise, Ealing, London W5 2ER or myself at Cambridge Body Psychotherapy Centre, 8 Wetenhall Road, Cambridge, CB1 3AG.

Report by Gill Westland

## FIRST INTERNATIONAL MEN'S CONFERENCE

17 - 20 October 1991 in Austin, Texas, USA

### A Journey Toward Conscious Manhood

Six hundred and sixty men from nineteen countries turned up, and the conference was well run in a large hotel. There were a lot of differences: the mytho-poetic followers of Robert Bly and the Wildman Gatherings were there; large numbers from the Recovery Movement (Alcoholics Anonymous and the like); pro-feminist men; Men's Rights men; men from co-counselling; men who were mystified and undecided. Herb Goldberg was there. But there was a surprising degree of harmony in all this: there were no fights and few arguments and mostly people wanted to listen and learn.

There was a rich selection of workshops to attend: Native American spirituality; Blocks to intimacy in gay male relationships; Men who go to war and the societies who send them; Fathering in the 90s; Awakening the heroes within; The smothering mother; Nutrition for recovery and virility; Outdoor adventures for men; The Horned God; Healing the father wounds; The healing power of relationships; and lots and lots of drumming - there were three shops selling drums, and by the end of the conference there were about thirty in use.

The energy was tremendous. We were instructed to say "Ho" if we agreed with anything said, and in the plenary-sessions six hundred men shouting "Ho" and beating their drums became almost overwhelming. The hotel had never seen anything like it! Most of those attending came from Texas, and they all seemed to be in their thirties. The youngest man there was sixteen, and the oldest eighty-three. About ten fathers and sons came together, and about the same number of pairs of brothers.

There were things to disagree with: I remember Marvin Allen saying that the reason men were so horny and aggressive was because of testosterone - seemed a bit over-simplified to me; I remember Warren Farrell saying that men were not really powerful - I rather objected to that; the whole conference was rather over-organised and over-controlled. But there was much to admire too. I got a lot out of the workshops, and met a number of interesting people, some of whom I had heard of but never met, like Michael Kimmel, a sociologist from New York.

Perhaps the most dramatic moment came in the last plenary session, when

it came out that Robert Bly had dissociated himself from the conference, on the grounds that it was premature to try to create a unified Men's Movement, and that Marvin Allen (the main organiser) was too ambitious for himself. Allen gave quite a moving rebuttal of the latter accusation, but one felt that there was a lot going on behind the scenes which never did come out.

Summing up, I felt that if we think of the whole person as existing on four levels - body, emotions, intellect and soul/spirit - the conference did pretty good justice to the body, the emotions and the soul/spirit, but was severely lacking in the intellectual department. There was no critical approach, no debate, no discussion of differences, and eminent speakers got away with awful simplifications and sheer errors of fact with impunity. Another time - and a second conference was promised for 1992 - this could be remedied.

But all in all, it was a stimulating occasion, and I wish something like that could happen here.

Report by John Rowan

