

bernhard schlage

bodypsychotherapist, author



Darling harbour, where whales meet fairytales

In addition to a modern fast food company which advertises this area as: "Where woks meet frogs!"

This year the World Congress of Psychotherapy was held under the title World dreaming and this covered many different approaches such as spirituality, grounding in culture and globalisation, special transference-problems in dream work; working with trance in palliative-cure; dreamwork under Chinese moral conditions...

It was held at the Sydney convention and exhibition center, which is situated in one of the best areas of Sydney, near the harbour bridge and the well-known Sydney Opera House.



The congress was set up from WCP headquarters in Vienna. This is an accredited non-government organisation 'with special consultative status' of the UN. Dr. Alfred Pritz, who is also known as one of the founders of the EAP, and their relation to the EABP, our political structure for European-wide body psychotherapy rules and laws.

There have been more than 800 visitors from 40 countries at the congress, mostly from the area in Australia and New Zealand. About 200 were invited to give workshops. Because of a lack of

knowledge of how to manage a congress, the organisation committee did not know how to manage such a huge number of presenters. There were eight rooms for presenters other than in the main auditorium, which meant that each presenter had just fifteen minutes(!) for her or his presentation! Nothing about coming in contact with people, about personal introduction, bonding the members and all the things we know so well as body psychotherapists! (For example at the last EABP-congress in Vienna, we had more than 15 (!) different rooms for presentations, and the normal presentation-time went up to 45 mins.)

As a body psychotherapist you as a reader of this article are able to understand how the different character structures of presenters react to this situation. You even had some, who were speaking without any break under big pressure until the last minutes had gone; then, there were other characters, who we all knew, that had good relations... who managed to get double time and were also talking for over the total time, while demonstrating their power point presentation; and naturally you find those, who where in need of more time, and naturally we see those who were getting confused about what to say to whom, and so on.

Whatever the situation was, each day there was a special group for talks, given by indigenous people and a morning group of dreamers, who shared their night dreams to look at how our dreams follow the themes that were spoken about at the congress.

The congress also was the place, where the Australian/ New Zealand Psychiatric Association (ANZAP) had their yearly meeting so there were a lot of these professionals at the congress. Themes like the handling of patients with multiple personality disorders and other special psychiatric themes where presented - heavy to understand the relation to dream work, the theme of the congress.

One theme that went throughout the congress was the relationship between the so called white Australians to the native people. A big change is happening in the minds of Australian people about their history, so a lot of fighting strategies came up against the so called 'sorry-business' to the indigenous people of Australia. It reminded me of the themes that came up in German speaking nations in the past, after we started talking about the fascist period of our history. There are a lot of difficulties among

native peoples - a high rate of suicides, a lot of psychosomatic disorders. As for the Australians (nearly 40% of the youths were fed with anti-depressives and there is a lot of depression among the elders who have lost connection with their roots because of the denial of their history.

It was a great challenge to see, to feel and to compare their suffering. The Maori people from New Zealand have especially worked on that theme and discovered that the following are necessary for the welfare of the natives - also for the Aussies:

- - re-connection with their family roots, wherever they are
- - re-connection to the land they came from: visiting, going regularly and, if you have such a background, also making ceremonies in the area
- - re-connection with relatives - even if it is a one-year visit - and staying in connection.

This leads me to the 'Sigmund Freud award', which was given to an aboriginal-project (sorry, cannot find the name at the moment). Honouring these people must also be part of a healing process for all of us.

Body psychotherapy was not very well known. Even though there are a lot of psychosomatic disorders in Australia just one workshop was given about using masks in therapy.

I gave a workshop about shamanic dream work which was in addition to my first published book in English called, Living in the Dream Lodge - Shamanic Dreamwork between Wish-fulfilling and Espionage.

So when you go to such a congress, it is a challenge to meet colleagues from other countries, with other nationalities, such as from Korea (where teaching stress-control is a big theme for colleagues), from Iran (where you have a big need for family therapy, because of their rigid family-structures) or from Kenya, where the re-rooting of tribal members in their culture is of great interest) and being aware about so many developments of psychotherapy are happening in the world and that all of this belongs to being part of something, which makes the world better than it is.

This article is just some personal feed back so I hope, that I have not forgotten to honour any serious person that I do not know. Maybe I can pay tribute especially to the work of Antony Corner who was the chairperson of the whole congress....

With collegial greetings

Bernhard Schlage

(EABP-member since 2001, ECP-holder...)

contact:

bernhard schlage
bodypsychotherapist, author

gemeinschaftspraxis kugel e.v.
in der steinriede 7, hofgebäude
30161 hannover - Germany
telefon & fax 0049 (0)511 / 161 42 11
e-mail: post@bernhardschlage.de
internet: www.bernhardschlage.de