

In memoriam Andreas Wehowsky



Andreas Wehowsky died last February succumbing to an aggressive tumor. He was an important member of EABP, even if he may never have belonged to a body of the association.

I knew Andreas in the midst of the 1990ies during my training in Biosynthesis, where he was presented to the group as “number 2” of that Institute. He had been in contact with David Boadella, the founder and director of Biosynthesis, since the beginning of the 1980ies. Indeed, David’s empathic approach to Body-Psychotherapy was more appropriate for him than his former training with John Pierrakos. He had great knowledge and a great capacity to use it therapeutically with clients and trainees. He spoke openly on what he thought and felt – however, as a quite typical German of the very North, he was not given to intimacies, and when i asked for some of that, he answered classically “Why do you want to know this?”

So i was quite shocked when, in 1998, David Boadella accused him of unethical behaviour, ‘excluding’ him of the Institute. At that time, i had an equidistant relationship to both of them, with the distance and respect appropriate to one among many trainees. As Andreas had also a very strong personal relationship with David, this exclusion and its circumstances came as a great trauma in his life – on the professional as well on the financial level, as his main work were training and supervision in Biosynthesis, and writing many unpaid texts for *Energy and Character*, whose English language version he edited.

As i myself disagreed with some procedures in my training group, i was worried to know how this organization handles dissidence. So i innocently wrote to both of them. Andreas said the issue was about his demand to give Biosynthesis trainings in Northern Germany on his own, in order to get a more reliable income. David’s letters didn’t satisfy me, so i wrote four times altogether, always getting quite flabby answers. The accusation of unethical behaviour was dealt with in the Biosynthesis Ethical Committee, which arrived to the conclusion that it was not justified. The exclusion, however, remained. The issue got honors of theoretic debate between these eminent thinkers: David accused Andreas (without naming him) of paranoid narcissism - a horrible character where even mediation cannot be granted, we learnt in *Energy and Character* (1999, no. 19, german edition, p. 7-46) -, whereas Andreas dissected different levels of unethical behaviour in David: *Diagnosis as care – diagnosis as politic* (*International Journal of Psychotherapy*, vol. 5, issue 3, 2000, p. 241-255). Fortunately, courts don’t go by ‘character’, and so Andreas was able to put a limit to insult.

From that time on, Andreas concentrated on work with clients in the Northwestern corner of Germany where he lived, occasional trainings in the Csek Republik and Russia, and the building of a full training in *Integral Body-Psychotherapy* with me, in Portugal (*Asas e Raízes*). Andreas was a fan of Ken Wilber and his extraordinary (“unmatched”) theories of “all”, which enabled us to distinguish quadrants, levels, states, axes and styles of consciousness. He melted it with Julius Kuhl’s theories on motivation and personality, and with recent discoveries in the neurosciences. In his *Competencies Compass for Self-Navigation* he established the model for this approach to Body-Psychotherapy, specifying appropriate strategies and interventions for different moments in the client’s life. **Left and right brain, experiential and behavioral, more affective and more rational aspects, self and planning/executing are seen in an overall perspective.**

Asked what i got from him, besides theoretic elaboration and a very reliable relationship as Institute owners, it’s easy to say: a *high sensitivity for ethics*, which seems exaggerated to some. This includes a clear contract with the client, who has to assume responsibility for their demand. Just as in life. In 1999, Andreas gave a workshop in Porto, where he had great difficulties to get in touch with the group: He asked the participants what they wanted from him, what were the issues they brought there. Nobody gave an answer which satisfied him. People or were not conscious, responsible, on what they wanted, or (almost the same) were already used to start with some energetic/body exercise, so ‘something will come up’, and the therapist would work with that. But this was not Andreas’ way. He just didn’t work! All felt frustrated, he included. The next day, by my suggestion, Andreas asked the group what they wanted him *not* to do. He finally got an answer from everybody ... this was the end of the two days!

This means mainly: When there is a conflict between the therapist/trainer and the client/trainee, it is easy for an experienced professional to relate the client's behavior to their life story. Behind the protective shield of "transference" analysis, the therapist is out of view and cannot be questioned. Quite comfortable! Andreas did it just the other way round: First comes the real relationship between two persons, the respect for the different opinion, the needs, interests and rights of each. And only in a second time – when both agree – the possible hidden motives can be analyzed.

Andreas was very demanding – from others, but first from himself. His was a very large general culture, from music to sciences to our professional work. He managed a high degree of work load throughout the year – interrupted by sacred holidays with his wife Agnes. Sacred ... he had a strong relationship with Buddhism, in its original *Bon* form, insisting, however, on the fundamental differences between psychotherapy and a spiritual path. He wrote three contributions for Marlock/Weiss' *Manual of Body-Psychotherapy*: about the energy concept in Body-Psychotherapy, agency factors and affective-motoric schemes. Andreas was an important contributor to the congresses of the German *Gesellschaft fuer Koerperpsychotherapie* in Berlin, defying established patterns in our young profession.

Besides therapy he worked as a coach and trainer in the business world in the framework of his firm *PROkompetenz*. What fascinated him in the last years of his life was Bio- and Neuro-feed-back. He went to congresses on these subjects, got training, bought 3-D-projectors and super-potent computers, and started working with clients. This was, however, a direction i didn't want to follow him – i continue to stick to the personal relationship at the heart of psychotherapy.

Thomas Riepenhausen