

„Coming Together“
6th International Congress for System Constellations
25 – 28 Mai 2007 in Cologne

Once again, a lot people from all over the world and interested in the constellation work had come together in Cologne in order to meet each other, to teach and to learn. More than 750 participants including many couple and family therapists, counsellors and organisational experts had arrived on Pentecost at the Maritim Hotel for attending the 6th International Congress for System Constellations. They renewed or formed friendships, informed themselves in a variety of lectures, workshops and panels on the different views and approaches of the constellators' work, exchanged opinions on the range of topics between therapy and counselling, phemonological perception and the impact of a spiritual overall wholeness... In doing so, it became clear: Exposed to unforeseeable processes of change and lacking the father figure Bert Hellinger, the scene is looking for a new self-conception of its work.

This time, Heinrich Breuer's inaugural address held in the big hall of the Cologne Maritim Hotel turned out to be short. And its tenor was rather attenuated. Hardly surprising, because the DGfS chairman had to report that Michael Weber scheduled definitely as a lecturer had died subsequently to a serious operation. Sorrowfully, the audience received Breuer's second message as well: Bert Hellinger, the father figure of the constellators' scene, had withdrawn his participation at this year's Cologne Congress. One could tell from looking at the Congress organiser that this announcement had hit him hard. "I would have liked to have Bert with us so that he himself could have presented his Movements of the Spirit. Many of us would like to ask him questions..." On the one hand, there was disappointment, on the other hand there was honest gratitude. Thus, Breuer appreciated in touching words the heritage of the absent mentor and "what unifies us, i.e. the love for the constellation work, the love between all of us and, naturally, the love for Bert." At the same time, Breuer referred to new chances that are now emerging. "I have the impression the scene has grown up and it has developed to such an extent that Bert would never have thought of."

That was the keyword: The initial uncertainty felt in the audience gave way to curious anticipation. Even more so, when Heinrich Breuer stoked anticipation for "our family meeting" in the coming days...

And the family has become immensely big: a global family, so to say.

Thus, the Congress organisers Heinrich Breuer and Wilfried Nelles could welcome guests from almost all EU countries, from Russia and other East European states, from the Far East, from Latin America, from the USA as well as from Australia (a development which has lead meanwhile to the foundation of a new international association: The "International Systemic Constellation Association (ISCA)" with Hunter Beaumont as its first chairman).

Besides, it goes without saying that "all the notbales from the constellators' scene" gathered in Cologne. Breuer's pleasant anticipation revealed as being well-founded: more than 100 events in four days – lectures, workshops and panels – proved once again the variety and scope of the constellators' work, reflected the different views

and approaches with their strengths but also their limits. In this context, two concretions became apparent from my point of view: on the one hand, the rediscovery of the importance of basic relationships and ties within the systemic context (couples, parents-child, the client and the physical...), on the other hand, the appreciation of a spiritual scale initiating movement – in a sense, as the relationship of the individual to the overall wholeness. The fact that the “relationships” on different levels would be significant for the event had already foreshadowed in the hidden question of Heinrich Breuer’s inaugural address: How the relationship to Bert Hellinger can be, should be and will be designed in the future?

Classical Family Constellations and the “Movements of the Spirit”

The very first plenum on the opening day was already characterised by the aforementioned basic themes, where the attendants (Wilfried Nelles, Jakob Schneider, Sneh Victoria Schnabel, Siegfried Essen, Hunter Beaumont and Carola Castillo who has arrived from Venezuela), tried to range from the classical family constellation to the “Movements of the Soul and the Spirit” discovered by Bert Hellinger. While the “old stagers” in the round talked of their first initiatory meetings with Bert Hellinger and their own subsequent developments (Siegfried Essen, for instance, always constellates the “Ego” and the “Self” considering the relationship between them), Mrs Castillo reported on her arduous way between the worlds. “I hated me for being white.” After a constellation with Bert Hellinger she knew why. Her great grandmother was an Indian, her great grandfather a black slave. Whites once had killed the Indian natives of their country, whites had kidnapped and enslaved Africans... Hunter Beaumont, in turn, reaped laughs when he outlined with pleasure how the constellation work had ruined his life. He spoke of the feeling of loneliness surrounding him (and actually all constellators), “because I’m living in a world different from the one of most other people, and because my conception of what a human being is has changed.” Since there were no more certainties for him, no pretexts and no belonging as well (“it is particularly difficult to be an American in these days”). Ultimately, only reality counted. But that was not bad. Since from these experiences “other new possibilities emerged for my life”. Thus, Beaumont had deflated the emerging seriousness within the hall.

Hence, the overture was successful, and the participants swarmed open-minded and curiously to the the different inspiring and exciting workshops and panels. Many events, as mentioned before, dealt with basic relationships of different types, contents and (systemic) impacts. Here a small choice.

What are our relationships all about?

Jan Bily, native of Prague, dissected relaxed and enriched by simple exercises our **relationship with money**, a relationship which is above all marked by money beliefs. Such money beliefs are e.g. “Banknotes are bad...” If a child puts a bank note in his/her mouth the mother says :“Yuck, that’s dirty!” Such things a child never forgets. But if the child (just) puts a coin in his mouth it is mostly tolerated. Please note: Coins are not that dirty! And it continues: There are money beliefs originating from our parents and suchlike stemming from the system. For instance,

if the grandfather has lost all his money in a currency reform (virtually the family money), he has made himself guilty towards the family system. What happens? The grandchild develops a compulsion to spend immediately all the money he gets – for fear of losing it... Or he runs into debt beyond all measure in order to compensate that the grandfather became guilty towards the system. That means: Guilt leads to debt!

Just as thrilling was the workshop of Jane Peterson (founder of the Human Systems Institute, USA) presenting her "Constellation as an **Embodied Practice**". Peterson demonstrated in a very simple way how the "greater forces" find their expression through the body. She reported that, therefore, it was very important to examine the subtle corporeality during a constellation. What does the body of the client want to tell us? And: Only the space between two constellated persons is endued with intelligence and, as a consequence, with a certain meaning that we know by intuition. We can bridge space in three ways: by looking, speaking and touching. And while doing so, there is a great difference whether someone standing a good distance in front of me addresses me or someone standing right behind me says something.

According to Sigfried Essen, the perception of the corporeality is becoming increasingly the centre of interest. „Embodiment is spirituality“, he said in his lecture. And: "Representing is more fundamental for our soul than finding the so-called solution"...

The Dutch constellator Hetty Broeders considers the body as a "medium" as well, but in another sense, i.e. in combining the cranio sacral therapy with family constellation also known as "somato emotional release" (created by John Upledger, USA). In her workshop, she showed how gentle touchings, visualisation and trance work can lead to releasing assumed, hostile patterns and ties.

In constellations, the body and the **symptom** development form a joint reference system. In this context, many suggestions were made as well. For instance, a panel was called "Disease, Symptoms and Constellation Work" held by Gunthard Weber, Friedrich Ingwersen (as a physician specialised in psychosomatics and psychiatry and thus particularly predestined for this topic), Stephan Hausner (homeopath), Dagmar Ramos (Brazil) and Netrou Chou (Taiwan). Particularities of symptom constellations in clinical contexts were discussed enriched by short case studies. Ingwersen himself deepened his own clinical experiences in a separate workshop on the symptom work. To him, symptoms are important „scouts“ following a trace to the background but are not always reliable. Therefore, according to Ingwersen, we sometimes are better off when we acknowledge the secrets behind the symptoms and bow to them. "Heavy symptoms are sometimes like a Sphinx jealously watching over the family shame and its secret. A solution only is possible if the shame is respected and, in a subsequent constellation, an exposure of the last secrets avoided."

The workshop of the nonmedical practitioner and homeopath Stephan Hausner also dealt with "Constellation Work with Disease and **Symptoms**" meant as a "support for the holistic medicine". Right at the beginning, the lecturer pointed out that he constellated himself (as an observer) when starting a constellation in order to clarify his own projections and to make sure whether he can work with the respective client. Because: "It's important that I feel good , before and after the constellation."

As for the solution steps, he continued that the client should be offered many free spaces, i.e. recognise other possibilities for being near the father and the mother or an ancestor than just assume his/her symptoms (actually, it was a matter of a female client suffering from panic attacks and a terrible fear of not getting old; it became apparent that her father had already suffered from anxiety disorders and had died at the age of 60). Just as indispensable remains for Hausner „the reserved and, at the same time, compassionate attitude of the therapist which is characterised by the respect towards the disease resp. the symptom of the client.“ After all, we know: the disease and/or the symptom is *the* client's way of looking for a solution. But each solution has its price consisting of releasing the disease or the symptom. Against this, the client often shows resistance because he feels that the disease maintains a balance within the family. Which means: The therapist has to respect this resistance.

Naturally, the classical **couple relationship** was not missed out within the field of topics of the Cologne Congress. Particular attention deserves the panel: "What does love at second sight need?", which examined carefully our day-to-day life as couples. The panel organiser and presenter Wilfried De Philipp had invited Eva Maria Zurhorst*, Marion and Werner Küstenmacher**, both big hitters and renowned lecturers from outside the scene; they were joined by Jakob Schneider who was to establish a relationship with Family constellation. The event turned out to be a highlight and would have deserved far more participants (unfortunately it overlapped with the similarly thrilling panel "Psychotherapy and Spirituality"). Remarkable was the easy and playful way in which the (meanwhile honorary) protestant parson Werner Küstenmacher managed to win favour with the audience and to take it along on his relationship journey. By means of his cartoons, he put in a nutshell what happens between couples – during and after the phase of amorousness (the love at second sight). Eva-Maria Zurhorst's frog metaphor caused amusement, i.e. the alleviating realisation "that we are all frogs and that the other we look for and find is just a frog as well and no prince who rescues us; once we have realised this, it's like magic and we are becoming curious about the other frog... Just a space is needed where devotion is possible."

Reserved, modestly and in simple sentences, Eva-Maria Zurhorst talked about her own matrimonial experiences, crises and insights. She gave rise to moved muttering when she said referring to her role as a woman: "We need a man on our side so that we are allowed to return to our qualities as women: Devotion and opening up." Jakob Schneider established the connection to family constellation. He pointed out that each of us, while meeting the other enamoured, brought along "a lot of information". He continued that only later on, at the second sight, some of this became significant and eventually led to the crisis. "The constellation work enables us to refrain again from past-originated ties, so that it (what ties us) can disengage."

The workshop "Argentine Tango" held by Michael Knorr and Tanja Vieten dealt with couple relationships as well, but on another level. The therapists demonstrated by visualising how the very specific dynamics of Tango are, at the same time, the authentic expression of each couple. The enthusiastically dancing attendants also became aware of the fact that there is no real standstill in a relationship – because, like in Tango, the stop can be considered as a part of the motion. From this stillstand, it will be decided in which direction to proceed... Furthermore, according

to Knorr, the Tango shows what is of utmost importance for succeeding in couple relationships: "The woman takes something from the man that she hasn't got and applies it in her way. That strengthens her femaleness. The man takes something from the woman that he hasn't got and applies it in his way – and that strengthens his maleness. Both win through the other. Jointly, they create a dance, a common motion in space which is unique for every couple. Both give something of their own and, in doing so, they are on a par."

Another topic was the **Parents-Child-relationship**. For instance, in the workshop of Heinz Stark who vividly reported on the impact of exclusion of unborn family members, e.g. if a child was aborted or a twin soul remained in the womb or was born dead which leads, most of the times as we know, to heavy feelings of guilt in the surviving twin. As a rule, there are two forces having effects on him/her: one force attracts him/her to the formerly deceased, another force wants that he/she keeps on living... Stark reported from his own respective experiences; that it had been a great alleviation for him when he heard his dead twin sibling say in a constellation: "The only thing I want is that you are alright." To him this was like a "rebirth".

Then, Stark draw the attention to children who were procreated anonymously from sperm banks or even from frozen sperm cells (which may be possible soon). What impact does it have on the child, when the father is unknown? What impact on the family system in general? Thrilling questions...

Interesting in this context was the workshop with Gerhard Walper (The way children love), dealing with causes of learning difficulties and behavioural problems. What affects a child when it suffers, becomes aggressive or unconcentrated? This field of topics fitted well with the setting "Adoption from the systemic point of view" with Peter Bourquin. The lecturer made clear that the decision itself to adopt a **child** is mostly systemically motivated, i.e. resulting from the past of the couple.

Finally, the workshop with Dietrich Weth who conducts Family Constellations with children of "any age". Because he knows: „Children are the greatest gift. They lead me to the feelings which I don't want to look at, and they are very consistent at it. ... When they cry or scream they often cry my tears and scream my anger. For they do not have another choice as to act out something for me..." He is convinced that children are not overstrained in constellations. Because they are aware, even of the evil, long before it is pronounced. "Children go sensitively and sort of by the way with the swinging; we can experience with children what is currently happening within a group." However: I am uneasy about this. Is it really necessary to virtually "exploit" children in this way?" I think, as adults we should find solutions from our own sources and on our own responsibility...

In this context, the workshop of Günter Schricker also fitted well who dealt with issues from upbringing and school. Here as well the different, the systemic view opens new perspectives and practical solutions. By means of exemplified experiences, reported with plenty of humour and self-irony, Schricker demonstrated how injuries from the school days can still have impact on the present. Some parents fight out with their children the conflicts they themselves had in school... (it is basically like this: Those who feel hurt feel to have the right to demand something of someone. The question is, however: Can we heal early childhood wounds in another way than just claiming something, for instance by developing gratitude?)

Finally, the lecture of Angelika Wolf ("Constellations for **Man and Animals**") which was very well received should not remain unmentioned. Wolf showed how people can work for their ill or disruptive animals in a small constellation. The best way to do it is by applying the "two-chair-technique" which everyone can perform – i.e. the pet holder changes repeatedly the roles (chairs) whenever he has perceived something. Important is here "to enter the history of the animal *and* the history of the person." Example: The cat of a participant suffers from eczema, it is licking itself sore again and again. The client feels helpless. Where does this feeling come from? What happened to the cat? ... Animals can reflect "the themes of their owners and, at the same time, resume them in an easy way" (Wolf). The lecturer added that it was helpful to connect oneself, before starting the session, in a sense shamanically with the pet resp. the energy.

It goes without saying that, during the Cologne Congress, there were sufficiently and well attended events dealing with **organisational and management constellations**, for instance in the context of a workshop of Henriette Katharina Lingg, Claude Rosselet and Georg Senoner, or within the field of topics of another international panel that elaborated the differences between different countries. Another event dealt with the "Correlations between Family systems and Working Systems", held by the lecturer Constanze Potschka-Lang, founder of ARTE SYSTEMICA, a French training institute for system constellations. Gunthard Weber also conducted a workshop on this topic. He dealt with the question: What does leadership mean in the systemic context? Answers were demonstrated by means of constellations. Exceptional was the course of the workshop of Dr Thomas Siefer, specialist in counselling family companies. Siefer showed vividly-relaxed how colour symbolism and auxiliaries developed by him (such as sticks) in combination with constellations can be used for personal and professional development. The participants put their hearts and soul in it.

Similarly attended again were the panels and workshops on the topic of **peace work** and "**Intercultural Constellation**". Thus, we learned, for instance, during a discussion round with the Palestinian pedagogue and peace researcher Sami Adwan (University of Bethlehem) and the Berlin therapist Sakino Mathilde Sternberg about the progresses made by the PRIME project in Palestine and Israel. The lecturers also reported of how much the combination of story-telling and constellations could contribute to solutions in the event of conflicts.

At the same time thought- and hope-provoking was the workshop "Reconciliation between Turkey and Greece" with Mehmet Zararsizoglu. The lecturer related how, for the first time in the history of both countries, it was possible to bring 20 Greeks and 20 Turks together in Istanbul in order to work, by means of constellations, on old conflicts and traumas. Sure enough: The work turned out to be difficult, there was still too much subliminal hate on both sides. The lecturer concluded that anyhow, a trustful ambiance could be created in which all controversial issues were addressed and solutions became visible. The lecture of Vlado Ilic: "The right to be – War Traumas and Constellation Work" dealt with the follow-up and the aftermath of the war between Serbs and Croats at the beginning of the 1990s. Thus became clear: nothing has really been digested. There were still "the mines in the people waiting to explode", Ilic said. But even if the task was difficult: Constellations can

help to defuse the mines "so that everyone feels his right to life", and love can flow again?

The Dutch Daan van Kampenhout also addressed the "peace work" – in his lecture entitled: "The Tears of the Ancestors." He showed how the constellation work can reasonably be modified when dealing with persecution, genocide and collective tramatisation. The lecture and the subsequent workshop were very serious, very concentrated. Many a person left the room because "the air grew too densely".

How spiritual are constellations?

"Being in the flow", that is the second keyword which leads us to the second meaningful Congress topic: **Spirituality and Constellation Work** (actually a relationship topic, too, which relates the therapist, the client, the representatives and the "overall wholeness" impacting from behind. Emphasising the topic of spirituality in constellations is no surprise because Bert Hellinger had already delivered the discussion-worthy pattern: by introducing his "Movements of the Spirit" and his new (as he names it) "Spiritual Family Constellation". In the lecture of Jakob Schneider "How do System Constellations work?" this subject was broached. Parting from case studies from his own practice (as we are accustomed to), Schneider bridged the actual problems and the related experience on the one hand and the impacting reality in the background on the other – highlighting: "Truth just makes sense if it is linked to love." To show the difference between soul and spirit, Schneider used a catchy image. The soul means tie, the spirit release. The soul ties and connects people unrelentingly and beyond time. It looks for releasing the tension, timelessly. To be able to release anything, the soul needs the spirit. The spirit looks at the ties from a higher point of view and helps something can be released. Schneider: "If the daughter, for instance, wants to disengage from her mother, she can say: You don't lose me if I live my own life... The spiritual power behind is what releases. And: Spirit is possibility. It pries open the facts and something new can come up. Something new that becomes possible just now." Actually, according to Schneider, everything is connected with this **greater spirit**. But the movement has more power when it „penetrates the facts from below across the ties.“ In other words: The movement goes to the „spirit“ but we should always keep in mind what has actually happened in our life... (unlike Bert Hellinger who seems to ask for the facts just in exceptional cases, the "spirit" is enough).

Bertold Ulsamer also went on the "Search for **Spirituality in Constellations**". According to him, "the spiritual potential of constellations lies in resolving contradictions, such as being separated and togetherness, morality and immorality, life and death..."

In the panel "**Psychotherapy and Spirituality**" the participants Michael Knorr, Wolf Büntig, Siegfried Essen and Sneh Victoria Schnabel asked: What can spirituality mean in the therapeutic work with people and in the process of meeting their souls? This event was particularly moving. The reason for that was above all that the participants addressed the topic without any concept and intention trusting in (inner and outer?) guidance. In doing so, they applied the method of spiral dynamics, a development system which describes the processes emerging in

constellations as well (see Praxis der Systemaufstellung 1-2007 p. 46, article by Hans D. Gruenn). During the panel, it worked in such a way that every participant passed the microphone to another confiding in what was coming... And there came increasingly more which served everyone being present. A visitor of this event remarked delighted: "At the end, one could feel the **unity**, this entireness from which the spoken words were fuelled... I have won unexpectedly deep insights."

A special approach to the spiritual level was offered by the Workshop with Astrid Habiba Kreszmeier who presented in a slide lecture the planoalto project (Institut für systemisches Handeln und initiatorische Naturerfahrung – Institute for Systemic Action and Initiatory Nature Experience). She talked about how sanatory the combination of nature therapy resp. "nature space work" with the systemic constellation work can be. Above all on a spiritual level lying behind: In the nature space, people experience themselves as beings in good hands of an overall **wholeness**.

Harald Homberger, in turn, related the family constellation, above all the „Movements of the Soul“, to the Far East traditions of meditation. "You stay with yourself and look with the others on this field wherein space and time are dissolved; in this context, this movement is a **"meditative process"**. That means: I am with myself and I am going, at the same time, outwards...

In his workshop, the Austrian theologian, psychologist and "urban shaman" August Thalhammer demonstrated another thrilling approach: He showed how Indian-shaman rituals can help heal relationships – "by invoking **the good spirits**." A woman in the plenum relates that she suffers from anxiety attacks. Thalhammer darkens the room. Drumming. Rattling. "One does not interpret shamanism but accepts what emerges."

Guni Leila Baxa also moved in shaman fields during her working group entitled "Touching the invisible – Constellating **Holistic Concepts**". Citing Eugène Ionesco ("We just believe to make experiences but it's the experiences that make us"), she spoke of how we get, through constellating holistic concepts from different traditions – Indian Medicine Wheel, energy chakras, constellating spiritual sentences etc. – tangible insights into this invisible, into this wholeness.

A similar direction took the workshop with Sneh Victoria Schnabel ("Of the Lotus that only thrives in the mud and of orders that need chaos"). Lively and unorthodoxly as usual, she demonstrated how constellations work when the whole group is involved and thus contributes to finding the solution. She remarked that, inspired by her spiritual teachers and winged by the knowledge of indigenous cultures, her conception of solution processes developed in another direction, actually to the idea "to use chaos as a potential for constellations" – as "dung for the roses" or as "mud for the Lotus"...

Anything else than chaos marks, however, the subject which Otto Scharmer ("**Collective Wisdom**, Management and Leadership") focussed. This was, very prosaically, about forces impacting in organisations from the background. Scharmer asked: "Which resources do systems and managers draw upon?" In this context, he has detected a "blind spot" containing the hidden collective conscience present in

each group. He wants to focus on this spot by means of the "presencing" (=bringing into presence) method developed by himself: "When we manage to use this knowledge we can let us guide by the future rather than by the past."

In the end, the lecture highlight of Sunday: Scientifically exact but still fascinating and in convincing and calm clarity, the American physicist Dr Arthur Zajonc (at the same time, professor for interdisciplinary studies at Amherst College, Massachusetts) presented his "Epistemology of Love" – a voyage full of miracles between **Science and Spirituality**. His insight on this contemplative way of knowing appears truly spiritual: release things so that they can come. This posture is found in the wonderful metaphor of "cognitive breathing". Zajonc quotes, in this context, Goethe's unendingly wise remark: "One should only not see anything further behind the phenomena: they themselves are the theory." – „Man suche nichts hinter den Phänomenen; sie selbst sind die Lehre...“

Individual work, Imagination and Trance Induction

The complex and diversified Cologne programme was enriched by some informative workshops on individual work, such as those of Wilfried De Philipp ("Couple Counselling in **Individual Sessions**"), of Klaus-Peter Horn and Regine Brick ("System Level Change in the Individual Work") or of Sieglinde Schneider ("Family Constellation with Toy Figures in Individual Settings").

There were other charming contributions to approaches completing the field of topics of the Congress – and hardly leaving open any wishes. Thus, e.g. the workshop of Freda Eidmann ("Put the Inner Child in a safe place!") dealt with how **fantasy processes** and system constellations can effectively help in psychotraumatology. She pointed out that the "classical" constellation form often reached its limits when we worked with traumatised clients and led to mental overloads and re-traumatisation instead of offering solutions. In the workshop, possibilities of using therapeutically imagination and dreams for the constellation work were presented and discussed.

Just as entertaining and instructive was the workshop with Heinrich Breuer ("**Trance** Phenomena in Constellation Work"). Relaxed as usual, Breuer demonstrated to the prick-eared audience that there are a variety of trance phenomena in constellations that are hardly paid attention to. For instance: If the body falters it does not mean necessarily that the person wants to fall down. Actually, it is often „just“ a normal trance phenomenon caused as a quasi automatic reaction, mostly when the foot position is too narrow. However, when we consciously use these trance phenomena in constellations – for instance by applying simple patterns of hypnotic language – we can clarify and deepen experiences. Breuer continued that e.g. in a father-son-relationship one could better focus on what should "come up" and be pronounced. But this could only work if the client (resp. the representative in a constellation) was prepared for that.

In a certain sense, the "**Energy Psychotherapy**" as well has to do with (self-induced) trance. That was made clear in the workshop with Dagmar Ingwersen

("Energy Psychotherapy and Constellations in Individual Settings"). Ingwersen is convinced, backed by her own experiences in clinical therapy, that the activation ("tapping") of acupuncture points according to Fred Gallo accompanied by affirmations of self-esteem "play a major role in the treatment of even serious traumatic disorders". This also went for the kinesiological muscle test, she continued. With its help, the therapist and the patient could get a process-oriented access to important, unconscious information of the system. A particular role in this context played, according to Ingwersen, the so-called "psychological reversals". This means the incongruity between intention and actual doing (e.g. I want to do something good for me but then just do the opposite) which ultimately appears to be a form of self-sabotage. Catalysts of this are acquired energetic states backing up a certain attitude. This attitude prevents us from, e.g., taking fortune: Unhappiness is experienced to be more harmonious than fortune. Ingwersen continued that given such patterns of "psychological reversals" the energy psychology could pave the way to a solution – when the patient establishes a favourable, self-esteeming access to himself/herself. However: When the soul is not prepared to end the reversal one should, according to Ingwersen, "respect (it) and try to start working step by step", by means of constellations as well, which might bring to light where the assumed psychological reversal ultimately stems from.

At the end of our voyage through the manifold events of the Cologne Congress 2007, the workshop of Hunter Beaumont should be mentioned: "Our vulnerability to Narcissistic Grandiosity". That Hunter Beaumont of all people chose this topic made many an attendant smile to himself. But whoever knows Hunter also knows his self-mockery, that is why he was the right person to talk about this trap we are trapped in repeatedly as constellators. His remarks reflected in a sense what will probably move the scene effectively, i.e. the necessary **"Return to more clarity and simpleness"** and to what is really important – and that is not the therapist resp. the constellator."

It just remains to praise the two "doers" Heinrich Breuer and Wildried Nelles for the probably sustainable impact of the event. Both are (since 2003) a well attuned team apparently effortlessly complementing and supporting each other in order to unfold their respective capacities. Maybe it is not a contingency that this kind of team work has accompanied the constellation work passing the barrier from fixation on the founder to co-operation under equals who are, at the same time, very different.

Friedrich A. Maier

* Eva-Maria Zurhorst: Liebe dich selbst und es ist egal, wen du heiratest, (Love yourself, and it does not matter who you marry) Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, Munich 2004.

** Marion and Werner Tiki Küstenmacher: Simplify your Love. Gemeinsam einfacher und glücklicher leben, (Living together easier and happier) Campus Verlag Frankfurt 2000; another book: Simplify Your Life, published at Campus as well.

Atmospheric impressions

In the first hours of the Cologne Congress, the whole left by Bert Herllinger's absence was tangible. A certain nervous uncertainty pervaded the halls. The literally euphoric enthusiasm felt two years ago at the same place – was like blown off.

Then, gradually, the atmosphere eased but remained expectant and like disenchanted. Which naturally had to do with the fact that there came much less people than the last time. A visitor considered this to be chance: "It is more transparent than before, maybe we can now re-focus more on the essential...". It seems to me that, in this sense, the Congress reflected quite evidently a remarkable development: The time of growth and of great resonance of the constellation work seems to be over. This has, as mentioned before, its advantages as well.

So, many Congress attendants noted „a dense working atmosphere“ of the events (even if, virtually as usual, insufficient translation arts sometimes stopped the flow of the speech). Above all, the manifold combinations of the constellators' work with other therapeutic methods was felt to be inspiring.

Basical is, so the conclusion in the debriefing, that this year's Cologne Congress navigated in the area of tension between "more simpleness, the return to the essential" and the movement towards being embedded in an "overall wholeness" that we can trust in. This seems to be important to me, because becoming aware of this (alleged) polarity could open the way to a new clarity which sees the essential, in this context also the phenomenological, embedded in a suprapersonal transcendent unity... Thus, the plain „bodily“ reality is perceived as a part of the whole. It goes without saying, that compared to the „new“ approach of Bert Hellinger inconsistencies become evident – and are probably necessary. Unfortunately, as a participant sighed, in all this the "classical family constellation had been missed out a bit" He is right, a kind of basic training would have been certainly useful and important for all newcomers in the constellators' community (they still exist, don't they?).

Conclusion: Whoever wandered, as an impartial attendant, through the event halls saw without any doubt, especially after the separation from Bert, the constellators' scene in search of a new self-conception. It appears understandable that this redefining process proceeds with grinding one's teeth. The ideal world does not exist any more. When you looked closer you became aware of a humbler and more modest posture than some years ago – uncontinuous but tangible. Thus, many a lecturer said good-bye to the hybris that the constellation work is an allrounder and better than every other therapy. Instead, he started to file it whereinto it belongs: into the methods' cabinet figuring as one good method amongst others.

Maybe „we experience here something like: Back to the Roots“, as a Congress visitor got to the point. Actually, the atmosphere reminded him of the beginning of the family constellation, of the time between 1985 and 1990, he concluded. It is like that, we know it: The contemplation of our own origin can be sanatory! This also goes with a (re-)contemplation of the very elementary questions of family constellation: What is it actually all about? – and where is the sensorium to detect what it is all about?

The Congress danced

Again, the final party on Sunday evening was an absolute highlight. The very overture with the Cologne brass band „Dicke Luft“ accompanying the dressed up guest cohort with rousing rhythms into the Big Ballroom aroused pleasant anticipation about some easygoing hours of sociable being together – “absolutely constellation-free”, as someone called out to me laughing.

What the overture augured really turned out to be unclouded enjoyment: the buffet manifold and very delicious, the welcome address short and amusing, the clown touchingly comical – and the music simply fantastic. Just as two years ago, the “Stefan Spielberg Band” provided unfailingly with sudorific mood. Anyway: The many best-tempered party people started dancing and rocking painting the town red. A particular goody was presented by Wilfried Nelles. He snatched an e-guitar and belt out exaltedly some oldies and Cologne-bred popular songs proving like this that some therapists are even good entertainers with unexpected talents. Dear Heinrich Breuer, thank you very much for this magnificent party! It has once again strengthened the bonds of the constellators. And this year, it was more important than ever.