

PSYKOSYNTES I FOKUS

Andrea Bocconi



Psykosyntes i Fokus (Psychosynthesis in Focus)

Stiftelsen PsykosyntesAkademin, Stockholm

Conversation with Andrea Bocconi

Andrea Bocconi (AB)

Ann Marie Lamb (AML)

(Text transcribed from the video recording, April 2019.)

https://youtu.be/Awi_0SDNv4Y

AML: Andrea Bocconi, welcome to us today. We are delighted to have you here and I know that you have a long teaching weekend ahead of you with some of our students. We would love for you to share some of your expertise in an area that is of particular interest to you, I know, and that is education. Psychosynthesis and Education, what could you tell us about that?

AB: Well, Assagioli was very interested in the field of education. He even did some pioneering research about helping kids who were leaders in consciousness, not leaders because they had high IQ, but because they have a particular consciousness that could cause even problems for them in the school. So, he even invited me to become a teacher when I was not considering being a teacher. - And then I found myself teaching psychology to teenagers in the high school for 18 years. It was a fantastic occasion to make an experiment, teaching Psychosynthesis to teenagers. And that was the start in education for me.

Now I am more involved in education with teachers. Because working in that community, I could notice that it was difficult for many, many teachers. It is a profession that requests a lot of competencies that nobody teaches you. So in the last years, with *Verso Foundation*, we are developing a programme of using Psychosynthesis for teachers' training both in Italy, in South America and in Asia.

AML: So, do you have any ideas on how that could be implemented in more countries, here in the Nordic countries for instance?

AB: Well, we had a pioneer project (here at the academy). We did a meeting (a workshop) with a few teachers and some people who were interested in this training. Being present in the academy with all the trainees that are already interested in this field, it should be easier to move this wheel fast and to give this training, which is about four main areas of competencies.

One is knowledge and how to transmit knowledge. But more important to me is how to deal with all the emotional states about teaching. There is a lot of love in teaching, but even fear, anger, all kind of emotions that teachers sometimes are not ready to deal with. And then there is the point of evaluation, which means to be evaluated and to evaluate. It is very interesting because it can be threatening. And another point is about power in the room. If you have to deal with 25 teenagers, you must be a decent group-leader. Anyone with his or her style, but you must understand that there is a group-dynamic going on. You don't need to be a psychologist or a psychotherapist, but you must be familiar with what happens to *you* in the situation. That is the general idea about the training. Then we use the star of functions and the egg as maps of consciousness.

AML: It was a very, very good training module with the teachers that we had invited to participate. So we're hoping that we can continue to build on that somehow, for the future.

AB: It is even interesting that the module has been tested in different cultures, because working with educators of street children in Nicaragua or with Indian teachers in a very interesting project in Sarnath, in India, we have seen that the model works. Some things are universal, even if they are coloured by the culture of the place of course.

AML: It's beautiful that. Now, how about moving on to the area of creativity, with Psychosynthesis and creativity?

AB: Well, again, Assagioli wrote a short story "*Fantasia è L'Interiore*", "Phantasy is the interior thing" in which there is everything "*in noce*", (in a nutshell), everything that has developed later in Psychosynthesis.

So I believe very much that creativity is not an area, it is a way of being that can be applied to psychotherapy, to art and to science as well. But there are some laws, a little similar to the act of will, the act of creation, as stages, qualities and areas.

To be more specific, I have seen - for instance I am very interested in writing, being a writer myself - and I have seen that working with writing in a group, you go very fast and you don't need so much psychological interpretation to move on. So, the theatre, we know from the time of the psychodrama of Moreno, the power of the theatre is in moving consciousness, so if we use that part and creativity we can do a very good, fast and deep psychological process as well. So I'm very interested in combining those sides.

AML: You work also with counsellors and therapists in this field of creativity. Would you like to say something more about that?

AB: Just to make an example. I don't like the word "case-history", because people are not a case. I like the word stories. So for instance, when I do a group of supervision with younger colleagues I try to use fairy-tales.

"Tell me the story as a fairy tale. Tell me the story as an epic drama. Tell me the story like a comedy."

And this opens up some area of freedom, so we get more information and a deeper understanding of the person than if we do the traditional "*anamnesis, what have you done and what are you intending to do with the person*". So that is one way.

AML: So, Andrea, Psychosynthesis in the world as it is today, what do you see as the next step of evolution, if I can use that word, with Psychosynthesis in the world?

AB: I see two main areas. One is the sort of scientific validation of Psychosynthesis, because if you take mindfulness as an example, vipassana meditation existed for thousands of years and even the meditation in Psychosynthesis of disidentification and self-identification, which is quite close, existed for all the time since Assagioli made the proposal. But still, because there is not a scientific validation, it seems less respectable than other approaches, which is wrong in my view. So some research is necessary. And this is one area.

The other point is about, what I call ethno-psychosynthesis. I was lucky because I could work in different countries, in different cultures and so I have seen how to adapt things but I have seen that the model is strong in different cultures. But still, every culture is not a one-way teaching. There is always a contribution that you get back as well. So it is enriching Psychosynthesis with the richness of other views of the mind, the psyche, the soul. For instance, an interesting experience in this has been WYSE (World Youth Service Enterprise) because you put together for fifteen days young people from all over the world. We have learned a lot from that about what you should and you should not do, how you can adapt the model.

So, in this sense I think that those two areas are very important. Even to correct a wrong view about Psychosynthesis being some sort of spiritual psycho-sect, which comes from a big misunderstanding and it comes as well from some “new-agey” in the worst way of looking at the thing. A “new-agey” vision about Psychosynthesis. Sometimes when I look at some websites, I am embarrassed.

AML: On this note with the ethnic perspective, looking at Europe and the world today, immigration is a huge theme and more and more countries, cultures are becoming mixed through immigration. How do you think that this perspective could come into counselling or therapy more?

AB: That is a very interesting question. I have come here to Sweden to teach for a very long time and I can say that in every group there is always someone who has either a double identity, coming from Asian parents or South-Americans So, for instance, I guess that we have a sort of expectation that people must *adjust* to our view and we did not really take into consideration what we could *take from their view* on Swedish culture.

For instance, this is an old idea that I have that should be quite interesting for everybody. That is to have a meeting with all those people who are either born here or they came here from Iran or from somewhere, and to see how they see Swedish culture in respect to Psychosynthesis? Which

are the contributions? We tend to be, all of us, we tend to be what I call ethno-centric. Even with good heart and respect, we tend to have a view somewhere that we are the people who knows.

AML: I think this is a very wise and very inspiring ending to this interview. Thank you Andrea for taking your time today.

AB: Thank you for this conversation.

...

