



D S P P B U L L E T I N
Dallas Society for Psychoanalytic Psychology
Exploring and promoting the psychoanalytic perspective

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Volume XIX Number 5

March 2003

MARCH MEETING PREVIEW

GERALD MELCHIODE, MD
 presenting on
The Bane of the Conjoint Therapist

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 19, 2003

The sheer ferocity of competition over needs rarely exhibits itself more than in the consulting room of the conjoint therapist. Under such circumstances, the therapist's own selfobject needs may be challenged, heightening the arena of competition over selfobject functions of all three parties. For March's meeting Jerry Melchiode will present on Phil Ringstrom's examination of the bane of the conjoint therapist. Dr. Melchiode is a practicing Psychoanalyst in Dallas, the former President of the Dallas Psychoanalytic Institute, and the former Director of Training for the Department of Psychiatry at UT Southwestern Medical Center.

Readings:

Ringstrom, P. (1998). Competing Selfobject functions: the bane of the conjoint therapist, *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 62 (3), 314-325.

FEBRUARY MEETING SUMMARY

JOAN BERGER, PHD
 presenting on
Therapeutic Impasses

Reported by
PATRICIA WOOD, PHD

Joan Berger, Ph.D. presented *Therapeutic Impasses* at DSPP'S February, 2003 meeting. Dr. Berger is a psychoanalyst, who trained at the Dallas Psychoanalytic Institute. She is in private practice in Dallas. Her presentation was based on a paper by Phil Ringstrom, Ph.D., Psy.D. on *Therapeutic Impasses in Contemporary Psychoanalytic Treatment: Revisiting the Double Bind Hypothesis*. It was the first in a series of presentations this spring on Ringstrom's work. Dr. Ringstrom will speak at DSPP's Spring Workshop, May 3, 2003.

Dr. Berger began her presentation with a summary of Ringstrom's ideas. He describes therapeutic impasses based on double binds as involving a paradox between two logical types. The logical types entail two classes of therapeutic dialogue: the repetitive and the reparative. These types have also been described as the repeated relationship and the needed relationship.

Transference and countertransference both involve aspects of the repeated relationship and the needed relationship. Both therapist and patient play out some of the mandates of childhood in the repeated relationship, and both strive for the reparative elements of the needed relationship. These bi-dimensional modes of communication for both therapist and patient are involved in their unconscious co-enactments. There is an inevitable tension between the old and new relationship, and double binds grow out of that tension. The patient and the therapist find themselves in positions where they are damned if they do and damned if they don't. The therapeutic dyad finds itself in a state of mystification and paradox.

The double bind is eventually resolved through metacommunication where the patient and the therapist can understand together their contributions to the double bind and make a shift in the co-constructed relationship. "From such a metacommunication, a new state of

MARCH MONTHLY MEETING

Date:	Wednesday, March 19, 2003
Social Time:	7:00 PM
Presentation:	7:30 PM
Location:	Pecan Creek Office Park 8340 Meadow Road Dallas, Texas
Speaker:	Gerald Melchiode, PhD
Topic:	<i>The Bane of the Conjoint Therapist</i>



intersubjectivity arises that enables both parties to recognize something about the other's subjective contribution to the bind as well as the impact each is having on the other. This new state of intersubjectivity, after all, is the precursor of all human intimacy, a state transcending each party's subjective frame of mind that compels both to recognize potentially something new about themselves and each other. "

Dr. Berger illustrated these points with a very pertinent case study, which elicited a great deal of discussion with the audience. The case involved a patient who initially made progress in treatment but continued to engage in acting-out behavior, which could have caused significant difficulty. The patient terminated treatment before the issue of acting-out behavior was resolved. Returning to treatment later, the patient acknowledged continued difficulty with risky acting out. The double bind for Dr. Berger and the patient involved emotional expression. The patient was raised in a household where emotional expression was taboo and the family was wrapped in a conspiracy of silence. Emotional expression was covert and never direct. For the patient neither emotional expression nor covert emotional expression worked. Direct expression was punished, and covert expression was denied. Similarly, Dr. Berger's own family of origin maintained a somewhat similar conspiracy of silence. This made Dr. Berger adept at reading hidden messages. However, if Dr. Berger communicated her understanding of the message to the patient, it was denied, and the patient felt humiliated. If she failed to do so, she was seen as having failed the patient. Both patient and therapist were damned if they did and damned if they didn't.

An unusual event eventually led to the dyad's ability to engage in meta-communication, which helped ultimately to resolve the impasse. The patient reported quite risky acting-out behavior, which occurred before a particular session. Dr. Berger found herself uncharacteristically talking very emotionally with the patient about the great risks involved, and she even became tearful at some point. This uncharacteristic emotional expression on Dr. Berger's part proved to be the event that broke the conspiracy of silence. Although the work was lengthy after that, therapist and patient became able to communicate about their communication patterns. Meta-communication between the patient and the therapist helped them to enhance the needed relationship and understand the double binds involved in the repeated relationship.

It seems appropriate to end this summary with an observation Dr. Berger made at the start of her

presentation. She said that in thinking about double binds, she found herself calling them double blinds. She chastised herself for the error until she realized that it actually was an appropriate description. The therapist and patient, engaged in unconscious co-enactments involving the repeated relationship are, in fact, double blind. Achieving a level of meta-communication about what is going on between them helps both to see the light and further the reparative relationship.

The DFP Presents

A Panel Discussion

War and Its Consequences: The Reactions of Children, Adults and Nations

Gerald Melchiodi, M.D.

DPI Training and Supervising Analyst
Clinical Professor of Psychiatry UTSW Medical School

Ed Countryman, Ph.D.

S.M.U. William C. Clements History Professor

B. James Bennett, M.D.

Child and Adolescent Psychoanalyst
Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry
UTSW Medical School

**Friday, March 21, 2003
7PM**

Southern Methodist University
Dedman Biological Sciences Building
Lecture Hall/Room 131

Information:

Elizabeth Buchanan, DFP Executive Director
214-566-5083
email: elizabeth@airmail.net

Mark your Calendar

April 9th Monthly Meeting

Melissa Black, PhD will be presenting on *Cultivating the Improvisational in Psychoanalytic Treatment*. The suggested reading for this meeting is available online at www.dspp.com.

Ringstrom, P. (2001). Cultivating the improvisational in psychoanalytic treatment, *Psychoanalytic Dialogues*, 11 (5), 727-754.

May 3rd DSPP Spring Workshop

Guest Speaker: Phil Ringstrom, PhD, PsyD

**Deadline for submitting items to the
April issue of the DSPP Bulletin is March 31st**



DSPP Arts Committee and the Dallas Psychoanalytic Society
present
Il Postino (The Postman)
film viewing and discussion with **Gemma Ainslie, PhD**

Saturday, April 12, 2003
6:00 - 10:00 pm

Dallas Society for Psychoanalytic Psychology Arts Committee and the Dallas Psychoanalytic Society invite you to a presentation by Austin clinical psychologist, Gemma Ainslie, Ph.D., viewing the award-winning film, *Il Postino* (The Postman), as a portrayal of a psychoanalytic process.

Film and Discussion

The film, *Il Postino*, will be shown in full at 6:00 p.m., followed by Dr. Ainslie's presentation and open discussion with the audience. The film, which was nominated for the 1995 Academy Awards for best actor (Massimo Troisi), best adapted screenplay, best music, best director and best picture, is a fictional tale of love and poetry, inspired by an incident in the life of Pablo Neruda, the Chilean poet who was briefly exiled in 1952 for his communist ideas, and set on a small island in the Mediterranean Sea. Director Michael Radford created a film of beautiful imagery, language, music, and rhythms dealing with the unlikely friendship between a good-hearted, illiterate villager who takes the modest job of delivering letters to the celebrated poet living in a secluded area. Poetry, metaphor, become their connection: "Poetry doesn't belong to those who write it but to those who need it," Mario tells Neruda after plagiarizing one of Neruda's poems in the service of wooing the beautiful Beatrice.

Dr. Ainslie's presentation, *IL POSTINO: HOPE IN FILM, LIFE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS*, will focus on fundamental, shared tenets of the psychoanalytic perspective the dynamic unconscious, the centrality of the frame and the relationship, talking as the medium, affect, insight, personal history, the symbolic function, etc.). Dr. Ainslie will ask the audience to consider the process of engaging and making use of the ebb and flow of our own and our patients' hope in the therapeutic endeavor.

Gemma Ainslie, Ph.D., who received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Michigan, is an Adjunct Faculty member of the Houston-Galveston Psychoanalytic Institute and of the Psychology Department of the University of Texas at Austin. As well as serving on the Board of Directors of the Division of Psychoanalysis (39) of the American Psychological Association, she was Founding President of the Austin Society for Psychoanalytic Psychology and has served as President of the Section of Women, Gender and Psychoanalysis of Division 39. Dr. Ainslie has presented at national and international conferences. Topics of recent interest to her include: the analyst's images in response to the patient's dream; memory, myth and memoir as factors in psychoanalytic change; metaphor and allegory in psychoanalytic process; hope in psychoanalysis; women's responses to reproductive crises. She has had a private practice in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy with adults, adolescents and children in Austin since 1981.

Location and Directions

This event will be held in the Smith Auditorium of the Meadows Museum. The Meadows museum is located at 5900 Bishop Boulevard on the campus of Southern Methodist University (for SMU campus map, see www.smu.edu/maps/campus.asp The Meadows museum is building #58 and the parking garage is #57 on the Map Index below the map). There is ample free parking under the museum. Reservations are not needed for the film and presentation, for which there is open seating. There is no charge for the film and program (reservations ARE required for the reception following the program, and there is a \$20 per person charge for the reception as detailed below).

Reception

Immediately following Dr. Ainslie's program, there will be a cocktail-buffet RECEPTION for her at MOMO'S ITALIAN SPECIALTIES RESTAURANT, at 8300 Preston Center Plaza (Preston Center East). The reception will give audience members more opportunity for relaxed conversation with Dr. Ainslie and each other.

For the reception only, there will be a \$20 charge per person for drinks, heavy Italian hors d'oeuvres, and dessert. RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR THE RECEPTION (but not for the film, presentation and discussion at SMU) **by April 5**. For reservations for the cocktail-buffet reception, please **call Judith Samson at 214-750-7692** or email to jgsamson@swbell.net, no later than April 5 (deadline required for catering). Please include a telephone number or email for return confirmation. Please bring a check to the reception in the amount of \$20 per person, made to DSPP ARTS COMMITTEE.

**Dallas Society for Psychoanalytic Psychology
2002-2003**

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