



DSPP BULLETIN
Dallas Society for Psychoanalytic Psychology
Exploring and promoting the psychoanalytic perspective

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NOVEMBER MEETING PREVIEW

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 19, 2003

STEPHEN SCHERFFIUS, MD
presenting

Reality 101

The November meeting kicks off the second part of the DSPP program year. In this and the remaining monthly meetings, we will be looking at how the clinician can come to see and then grasp the opportunities that lie in facing the reality of the various limitations we find in ourselves, our patients, and our practices. The November meeting will focus on issues such as resource limitation in the form of finances (both managed care insurance and non-insurance fee arrangements), support (or a lack thereof) from outside entities (family members, employers, society, etc.), time, and confidentiality. Stephen Scherffius, MD is clinical professor of psychiatry at UT Southwestern Medical School, faculty member at the Dallas Psychoanalytic Institute, and maintains a private practice in psychiatry, psychotherapy, and psychoanalysis.

Readings:

Plakun, E. M. (2002). Jihad, mcworld and enactment in the postmodern mental health world. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis*, 30(3), 341-353.

Shapiro, E. R. (1997). The boundaries are shifting: Renegotiating the therapeutic frame. In E. R. Shapiro (Ed.), *The inner world in the outer world: Psychoanalytic perspectives* (pp. 7-23). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

NOVEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2003
Social Time: 7:00 PM
Presentation: 7:30 PM
Location: Pecan Creek Office Park
8340 Meadow Road
Dallas, Texas
Speaker: Stephen Scherffius, MD
Topic: Reality 101

FALL WORKSHOP REVIEW

FRANCIS HOFSTEIN, MD
presenting on

**A Lacanian Approach to
Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis**

Reported by
JOAN BERGER, PHD

It was a happening all right! On Saturday, October 11, 2003, at Scottish Rite Hospital, the entire alphabet soup of Dallas psychoanalytic organizations -- Dallas Foundation for Psychoanalysis (DFP), Dallas Psychoanalytic Society (DPS), Dallas Society for Psychoanalytic Psychology (DSPP), Dallas Society for Psychoanalytic Social Work (DSPSW), and the Interdisciplinary Psychoanalytic Consortium (IPC)-- under the inspired leadership of Dr. Myron Lazar, came together to jointly sponsor a fall workshop featuring Francis Hofstein, M.D. presenting, "A Lacanian Approach to Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis." A Parisian psychoanalyst who was analyzed by Jacques Lacan himself, and a jazz musician and author as well, Dr. Hofstein brought his experience as a French psychoanalyst to a community eager for clarification of Lacanian concepts and techniques. In addition to taking on that Herculean task, Dr. Hofstein added his considerable charm, intelligence, humor, and warmth to his personal experience as a Lacanian analyst to make Jacques Lacan, the man, and the analyst, come to life. Moreover, he traced the history and current organization of French psychoanalysis, which he had also discussed the previous day in Psychiatry Grand Rounds at UT Southwestern Medical Center. During the afternoon of the workshop, Dr. Hofstein reflected upon on a case presented to the group by Dr. Myron Lazar. The present report cannot do justice to the atmosphere of congenial collegiality, nor to the presentation and discussion of the complicated key Lacanian concepts and techniques, nor to the contribution of the case presented by Dr. Lazar. Only highlights of some of the ideas discussed are mentioned below. Any reader who was not present at the workshop but is interested in entering the world of Lacanian theory is encouraged to read Bruce Fink's *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Analysis*.

Addressing one of the best known and least understood practices of Lacanian analysis, encompassed in the terms *punctuation* and *scansion*, Hofstein said that what has come to be known as the *short session* would be better called the *variable session*. Following Lacan, he asserted that the analyst must "break the discourse of the 'analysand' (The word 'analysand' is preferred to 'patient' or 'client,' emphasizing the analysing function itself) and leave the analysand with something from the hour which he cannot lose." Further, he said that the *punctuation* helps the analysand to stay awake, stay surprised, and refrain from monotonous or superficial reporting. While Hofstein said that he schedules patients at half-hour intervals, the actual length of his sessions varies greatly—10 minutes, 45 minutes, even 2 1/2 hours! Hofstein shared a fascinating story of his own first session with Lacan, at which he was left waiting along with two rooms full of analysands. He reported that he watched Lacan beckon others into his office for more than an hour. Finally he called out, "you forgot me!" as Lacan came out for yet another analysand. Lacan answered, "No, no!" and proceeded to take yet another person into his office. The next time Lacan came out, Hofstein boldly marched into the office uninvited, and thus began his analysis! Judging from the amazed looks in the room, analyzing the meaning and effect of such paradoxical behavior could have occupied the rest of the workshop! Even with Dr. Hofstein's explanations, the audience seemed to be at a loss to imagine practicing in that manner! Hofstein warned that patients learn how to escape sessions early, so therefore the analyst must change session length frequently in response to the patient's expectations. He indicated that sessions should also be interrupted when the analyst is unable to listen, e.g., due to exhaustion or countertransference issues. Otherwise, he suggested, the analyst's resistance might interfere with progress. He referred to Lacan's view that "the reticence of psychoanalysis is the reticence of the psychoanalyst." In further discussion of his own approach to analysis, Hofstein said, "I am extremely present and extremely absent with my patients." He offered an example that when a patient returns for a session, he often finds he cannot recall the previous session, needing the analysand to remind him; yet he finds himself totally ready when the analysand returns to something important.

Hofstein attempted to explain the almost untranslatable Lacanian idea of *jouissance*, which relates to the ideas of pleasure in pain and satisfaction in dissatisfaction (see Fink, 1997; referenced above). Hofstein expounded on the Lacanian notion of *Other*, which signifies "that

which the analysand considers to be radically foreign, strange, 'not me'." (Fink, 1997, p. 32). *Jouissance of the Other* is an essential but mystifying Lacanian concept for those new to Lacan. Hofstein attempted to clarify the concept by reference to other Lacanian ideas and concepts. Connections (oversimplified, to be sure) made by Dr. Hofstein: *Desire* is related to *lack*; "there can be no *desire* if there is no *lack*;" "if you don't accept *lack*, you are in the *jouissance of the Other*." *Other* in this case is considered a "signifier" of anything that represents the failure to accept limitations, such as addiction. The concept of *lack* was also explained by Hofstein in relationship to the concept of *castration* -- which Lacan seemed to intend more as a metaphor for the process through which a person accepts his or her limitations and comes to function according to the reality principle. Said Hofstein, "Lacan taught that neurotics have been through *castration*, while psychotics have not."

When Hofstein was asked what he thought led Lacan to reformulate classical psychoanalysis, he mentioned two major issues: first, he felt Lacan had "opened the space of psychoanalysis for psychotics" and was supported in this effort by the Kleinians; second, he felt that Lacan had transformed the understanding of "ego." Regarding the development of psychotic structure, Hofstein emphasized the role of the mother in not "naming the father," and expanded on that idea to indicate that it is up to the mother to introduce the *father* (a term referring to the separation of the child from the mother). In an attempt to clarify Lacan's use of the term *ego*, Hofstein explained that Lacan viewed *ego* as a construction of the *self* related to fantasy and imagination. Hofstein reminded the group that the analyst might not know whether the analysand's report is reality or fantasy, but that the main point in Lacanian analysis is that the analysand "can find his way through his own history and leave it behind, while at the same time using his history as he can." Follow-up questions revealed little interest by Hofstein in the content of his patients' fantasies and no concern with pursuing fantasies that patients may have but do not offer spontaneously. Members of the group who longed for something solid found their efforts frustrated, as Hofstein noted that with Lacan nothing is exactly in a place, but rather is "both moving and at the same time strictly linked." Hofstein continued, "you cannot say something about the *symbolic* and get rid of the *real* and the *imaginary*."

The unfamiliar French concepts of Lacan, and the inexact English translations used to communicate the

concepts, made it difficult to grasp the differences in how Lacanian analysts, like Francis Hofstein, practice. Some of the listeners found it striking that the French analyst stressed such unique concepts and non-classical techniques, yet expressed directly that he had no disagreement or conflicts with the case presentation by Dr. Myron Lazar. A number of participants were baffled and left wondering whether Dr. Hofstein was merely being gracious in the face of a beautifully-presented and clearly helpful analysis by Dr. Lazar, or whether the bottom line was that there are many roads to the same endpoint. For some of the audience, language issues were impossible to overcome, despite Dr. Hofstein's excellent English and his patience in translating. He defended Lacan's value of language against criticism, saying Lacan could put on a show when he taught classes, but he listened carefully to the words his analysands used and felt it was important to use very precise language with his analysands.

Hofstein assured the group that Lacan was anything but neutral with his analysands, although his theory offered advice to the would-be analyst to be more of an *Other* than a person for the analysand. "Neutrality is a lure," Hofstein asserted, in agreement with Lacan. He pointed out that Lacan was "much too present in the lives of those he analyzed to ever be neutral." Hofstein described Lacan as "the spider in the center of the web of French psychoanalysis," emphasizing his enormous power with individuals and organizations. Hofstein reported that Lacan did not like to have analysands leave analysis and would insist that there was more work to be done. Lacan's analysands would have to free themselves from their own analysis in the face of their analyst's resistance! Again, this struck some in the audience as perhaps another paradoxical intervention; Hofstein saw it more as a reflection of Lacan's personality. Hofstein shared with the group that he had made a decision to end his own analysis after 7 years but has a friend who was on Lacan's couch for more than 25 years!

Francis Hofstein offered the psychoanalytically-informed community in Dallas an opportunity to brave linguistic barriers to encounter the most prominent theory in contemporary French psychoanalysis, a theory that has significantly impacted the broader American intellectual community as well. Clearly the participants in this workshop were challenged to continue the encounter with Lacan and were most grateful to Francis Hofstein for opening such possibilities.

Thanks to Dr. Joan Berger and Dr. Dale Godby for their generous contributions this month.

Creating Space

The Nasher Sculpture Center and the Psychotherapeutic Task

Dale C. Godby, PhD

But the image has touched the depth before it stirs the surface
--- *The Poetics of Space*¹

If beauty is the splendor of the true, as Plato tells us, then a new space for the true has been created in the center of our city. A space for the soul has opened up. What image comes to mind when you think of the soul of the city? I am tempted to tell you to stop reading at this point and go experience the Nasher Sculpture Center. Immerse yourself in its garden and permit its image to touch your depths before it stirs the surface. The center itself is a beautiful sculpture created from an exceedingly ugly parking lot that once scarred a block-long stretch next to the Dallas Museum of Art. With apologies to Joni Mitchell, "they've created paradise and ruined a parking lot." From within the garden at the Nasher, one looks out at the city as from the womb, about to be born, to engage all the life the city has to offer. It is truly one of the most beautiful places from which to view Dallas.

What does this new creation have to do with our task as psychotherapists? Step into the garden, walk down the gentle grade toward the north. As you move away from the building you will gradually descend into a garden surrounded by icons of twentieth century sculpture and a wonderful gleaming space created by the Dallas skyline. Renzo Piano², the architect, tells us he wanted to "steal this piece of land from its normal destiny." He "amiably regards the site as being in the 'mess' of the city." The garden is slightly excavated to be below street level, "imbuing the site with an archaeological ambience." Parallel travertine walls run north and south for a block and set the garden off from the rest of the city. The Tuscan-quarried stone has been treated "to reveal what Piano calls the stone's 'vibrating' texture." He sees the walls as "preexisting, as though they were remnants of an ancient building or temple, a noble ruin extant in the middle of the busy downtown. This allusion [illusion] to the past reinforces the Nasher as a special site, distinct from the surrounding shiny newness of the Dallas urban environment. Piano imagined the garden, not as a paradise on Earth, but as a place enriched by the turmoil of the city. It, in turn, would reinvent the city."

Psychotherapy for Winnicott provides the space in which to find and create again the self-experience that

we have lost.³ It is our task to help create a space with patients within which they can discover something for themselves. Winnicott warns that, "Interpretation outside the ripeness of the material is indoctrination and produces compliance." Renzo Piano has a similar caution about "style". He says, "...style signifies both a narcissistic attitude and a dangerous concept, because you end up imposing your stamp before you understand what is the reality of the place." Over a number of years Raymond Nasher with Renzo Piano and Peter Walker, the landscape architect, patiently played with a number of different designs before they arrived at the present configuration. Their imaginative thought processes were placed in a dialectical tension with the reality of the space, creating a fit, much as we do when we create an interpretation together with our patients. They have created a space that imaginatively engages the lost parts of ourselves.

How do we create this space in the therapy hour? Winnicott explains "Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist."⁴ We must be able to create a potential space in which to play. Therapy requires two people able to use this potential space. Ogden⁵ describes a common scene that illustrates the creation of a potential space: A frightened two-and-a-half year-old tenses up and clings to his mother resisting his bath. She spies some tiny cups and saucers among the bath toys and says, "I would like some tea." He shifts from his tense insistent pleas of, "My not like bath," to a narrative of his play, "Tea not too hot. My blow on it for you." His mother has some tea and the illusion created by their play provides a space in which his bath can now occur.

As we descend into the archeological past with our patients, we help them to play, we create a potential space, placing their past in a dialectical tension with the present, we create a play space where only fear and ugliness existed before. We don't leave the reality of their lives, but we create a space that reinvigorates them within the mess of their city.

So visit the Nasher, enjoy its beauty, allow it to reinvigorate you as you reflect on the interplay of the spaces between mother and infant, therapist and patient, lover and beloved, citizens and their culture, and the human community and the transcendent.⁶ Go expecting an experience of poesy⁷, a process in which something is called into existence, which was not there before. You won't be disappointed.

Endnotes

¹ Gaston Bachelard, (1964).

² All quotations concerning the conception of the Nasher Sculpture Center are from a superb piece by Mark Thistlethwaite entitled "The Art of Designing the Nasher Sculpture Center" in the catalogue published on the occasion of the Center's opening: *Nasher Sculpture Center Handbook*, Edited by Steven A. Nash, the Center's director, 2003.

³ Winnicott in *Playing and Reality*, (1971), p. 51. and Ulanov in *Finding Space* (2001), p.125.

⁴ *Playing and Reality*, p. 38.

⁵ Ogden, (1990). On Potential Space.

⁶ Ulanov, p.147.

⁷ Poesy is a seldom-used word that refers to the inspiration involved in composing poetry. Its more archaic form is *poiesis*, which comes from the Greek meaning to create. We get *poem* and *pharmacopoeia* from the same root. Murray Cox applies the idea of poesy to the art of doing psychotherapy. It is our job as therapists to create with the patient a potential space where we can call into existence something that was not there before. This creative act resonates with the creation story in Genesis. The Earth is described as "tohu va bohu", "without form and void", sometimes translated as chaos. When therapy works well, the chaos our patient brings is poetically transformed into a bountiful new creation. Murray Cox and Alice Theilgaard in *Mutative metaphors in psychotherapy*. London: Tavistock (1987).

References

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Cox, M. & Theilgaard, A. (1987). *Mutative metaphors in psychotherapy: The Aeolian mode*. London: Tavistock.

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Thistlethwaite, M. (2003). The art of designing the Nasher sculpture center. In Steven A. Nash (Ed). *Nasher Sculpture Center Handbook*. Dallas, Texas: Nasher Sculpture Center.

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Winnicott, D. W. (1971.) *Playing and Reality*. London: Tavistock

**No DSPP Meeting scheduled for December
Deadline for January newsletter is December 31st**

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2003-2004**

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