



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

4516 Lovers Lane #446 Dallas, Texas 75225-6993 * Phone: 214-890-3351 * www.dspp.com

Volume XVIII Number 2

November 2001

Spring Study Group Begins January 22nd

Register Now!

*Psychotherapeutic Technique: The Practical
Implications of Psychoanalytic Theory*

The group will focus not only on how psychoanalytic theory influences what we do with our patients, but also discuss the theory of psychoanalytic technique as developed by Charles Brenner.

For questions contact: Jane Walvoord, LMSW-ACP
janewalv@airmail.net or 214-691-2171 or visit the DSPP web
site at www.dspp.com.

DSPP/Fairhill Scholarship Competition

DSPP will offer cash awards of \$1,000 each to an undergraduate and graduate student submitting the scholarly papers judged best by a panel of DSPP readers. Qualifying papers must be original works by students enrolled in accredited degree programs of area universities and colleges.

Papers should incorporate psychoanalytic theory and / or application as a major thematic component. Students from all academic disciplines are encouraged to enter.

Submission deadline is March 4, 2002

Awards will be presented at the DSPP Spring Workshop, April 4, 2002. For more information visit the DSPP web site at www.dspp.com.

Editor's Note

Last spring the Executive Committee voted to begin transitioning to a paperless format for DSPP publications. Beginning in January, the DSPP Bulletin will no longer be mailed as a print publication. Announcements will be made in the DSPP electronic mailing list each month when the Bulletin is available on the web site. If you would like to continue to receive DSPP announcements and updates, please be sure we have your e-mail address and that you are subscribed to the DSPP electronic mailing list.

OCTOBER MEETING REVIEW

with

Jane Walvoord, LMSW-ACP

At the October meeting of DSPP, Jane Walvoord, LMSW-ACP presented an excellent scholarly paper on the work of Charles Brenner entitled: *The Contributions of Charles Brenner to the Evolution of Psychoanalytic Theory*. Ms. Walvoord is an analytic candidate at the Dallas Psychoanalytic Institute and is the ideal person to present on Brenner's work because she consults with him in person on a monthly basis and has done so for a number of years. Ms. Walvoord's paper was organized around presenting Brenner's arguments against Freud's structural theory and arguments for his proposed theory of conflict and compromise. She completed the presentation with a case example.

Like Freud, Brenner considers psychoanalysis to be a natural science, differing from other natural sciences only in the fact that the data of psychoanalysis are data about meaning. As with any natural science, the observable data lead to scientific hypotheses, laws, or facts, which are inferences about cause and effect relationships. They are generalizations from observable data, but not necessarily the embodiment of "truth." It is these generalizations that make up psychoanalytic theory. As such they may be subject to doubt, tests of validity based on observable data, and change to make the theory better fit the data.

Brenner proposed to test the structural theory by addressing three questions:

1. Do observable psychic processes fall naturally into separable groups that merit the designation of structures?
2. If so, do these groups fit the definitions of id, ego, and superego?
3. If the answer is no, are there practical benefits of a revision?

Brenner contends that Freud's structural theory does not match the observable clinical data and that revision is in order. Brenner addresses id, ego, and superego as hypothesized mental structures and finds Freud's structural theory

(cont'd on page 2)

environment. Thus, Brenner concludes that these wishes are part of the ego and that psychic conflict exists between elements of the ego.

Moving to the ego, Brenner takes issue with Freud's contention that the ego is purely logical and verbal and does not tolerate contradictions. He maintains that normal as well as pathological functioning is based on ambivalence, conflict, and illogical contradictions. Thus, the level of functioning of the person - normal or pathological - depends on how well compromise functions work.

Finally, considering the superego, Brenner maintains that Freud's formulation does not fit the observable data. Per Brenner, Freud's formulation involved Oedipal conflict resulting in a process of identification where fears of retribution or punishment by one's parents are replaced by self-observation and self-punishment. In Brenner's view concerns about pleasing or displeasing parents continue and fantasies about what parents want never disappear. They cannot be dismissed as a supposed agency of the mind.

Brenner proposes an alternative to Freud's structural theory, i.e., a theory of the mind as a whole without divided structures, a theory of function about how conflict and compromise work. In a nutshell, the calamities of childhood - loss of the object, loss of love, and genital loss or injury - lead to the fourth calamity of childhood, punishment. This leads to a complex set of compromises balancing the need for instinctual gratification and defense from psychic pain but not to separate structures of the mind. Now, according to Brenner, the separate agencies of the structural theory are subsumed under "characteristics of the way the mind functions."

Having answered the first two questions he formulated in the negative, Brenner turned to the third question and proposed practical benefits of his theory for improving clinical work by resulting in more comprehensive and secure outcomes of treatment. Brenner proposes several advantages of his conflict and compromise theory. These include a more thorough analysis of mental functioning within the normal range given that all elements of mental functioning involve compromise formations. The theory also establishes new criteria for success in analysis based on patient's methods of managing conflict rather than presence or absence of conflict. According to Brenner, it reduces unrealistic expectations for change since the goal is modification of compromise formations not the disappearance of conflict. Brenner also contends

that the goal of understanding how the mind works rather than eliminating conflict may reduce the likelihood of technical errors.

Ms. Walvoord concluded her paper with a very illustrative and complex case example. The woman she described functioned extremely effectively in certain arenas of her life and primitively, chaotically, and destructively in others. Ms. Walvoord proposed that an assessment of the patient from the perspective of the structural theory would have led to the conclusion that she was not appropriate for analysis and should be seen in supportive psychoanalytic psychotherapy. However, from the perspective of the theory of conflict and compromise formation, the patient would be viewed as using some functional and some dysfunctional compromise formations, capable of understanding and altering those compromise formations, and therefore amenable to benefiting from analysis. Although the patient's analysis has proved to be arduous at times, she has worked effectively in analysis and is expected to complete it successfully.

The evening concluded with a very lively discussion debating the relative merits of Freud's structural theory and Brenner's theory of conflict and compromise. The discussion about the benefits of Freud's theory vs. Brenner's theory in working with Ms. Walvoord's patient in analysis was particularly interesting because it stood at the crossroads of theory and practice. And, as usual, bright minds did not see entirely eye to eye.

DSPP richly benefited from Ms. Walvoord's knowledge of Brenner's work on this occasion as it has in the past and will in the future. In the fall of 2000, she taught a semester long course for DSPP called *Contemporary Approaches to Classic Psychoanalytic Thought*. In the spring, 2002, she will be teaching another course: *Psychotherapeutic Technique: The Practical Implications of Psychoanalytic Theory*. We look forward to that opportunity to continue to learn from her.

Pat Wood, Ph.D.





REVIEW OF DSPP ARTS EVENT
with
Salomon Grimberg, M.D.

In his recent presentation for DSPP at the Dallas Museum of Art, Dr. Salomon Grimberg offered an entrancing and complex portrait of the French artist, Jacqueline Lamba (1910-1993). He recently curated a major exhibit of Lamba's work, which is touring Europe and the United States before returning to France.

Jacqueline Lamba's personal, psychological, and artistic history is a truly fascinating story. Yet, here, I want to write not about the story but about the remarkable gifts of the storyteller. And, a consummate storyteller Dr. Grimberg is about artists and their art. When he is interested in an artist, he becomes immersed in the subject and brings his multi-faceted skills to bear on the telling of the story in the richest possible way. He is art historian, curator, and critic. He is character analyst and psychiatrist. He is intimate friend, investigative reporter, and gossip columnist. He is archivist, promoter, and advocate.

In these roles, Dr. Grimberg befriended the reclusive artist in her late years, talked with her extensively about her life and work, and even persuaded her to sell him some of her work. He talked with her friends and associates and extensively researched her life. He came to understand the influence of her significant narcissistic injuries in childhood, her great physical beauty, and her considerable intelligence and artistic talent on her marriages, her struggles with mothering, and the development of her work as an artist. He detailed the interwoven psychological and artistic themes apparent in the fabric of her life and work as an artist. He mounted a major exhibit of her work, created an extensive photographic archive, and wrote sensitively and complexly about her life and work.

And, he served up this rich mélange to a thrilled and awed audience at the DMA. Bravo, extraordinary raconteur!

Pat Wood, Ph.D.

In the Next Issue...

Fall Workshop Review *** January Meeting Preview

Wishing you all the best throughout the holidays!

DSPP ARTS EVENT

6:00 PM

December 1, 2001



"WINGS OF DESIRE"

Directed By: Wim Wenders

DSPP ARTS COMMITTEE invites you to our next film group meeting on SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, at 6:00 p.m., to screen and discuss Wim Wenders' WINGS OF DESIRE. This wistful, haunting film is based on poems by Rainer Maria Rilke. It won the 1987 Best Director award at the Cannes film festival. Called "sublimely beautiful" by Variety magazine, "enchancing" by the New York Times, "that rare thing...a work of true originality" by Newsweek, and "a superearthly exaltation of ordinary earthly pleasure" by New York Magazine, the film is a fable combining magical realism with psychological exploration of human trade-offs between intellectual detachment and erotic emotionality, with entirely earthly consequences. A brilliant film, it combines fantasy with a poetic contemporary sensibility.

Wenders is one of the most important directors on the international scene, first coming to prominence with films that focused on postwar Germany and the Americanization of culture. The rootlessness of his characters addressed broader philosophical concerns, exploring loneliness, alienation, passionate longings, and psychological conflict in depth. His PARIS, TEXAS, the story of a drifter making peace with his turbulent past, including a son he's never known, won the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1984.

WINGS OF DESIRE will be shown at the home of Judith Samson and will be accompanied by a potluck supper. Main dish and drinks will be provided, and each participant is asked to bring a side-dish (appetizer, vegetable, bread, dessert). Dress casually and comfortably. Feel free to bring a guest, but, because of

space limitations, please reserve your place(s) with Judith at either 214-750-7692 or jgsamson@swbell.net.

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2001-2002**

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Correspondence

Send address changes or membership inquiries to:

DSPP Membership
4516 Lovers Lane #446
Dallas, TX 75225-6993

Or contact Sarah Aberg, LMSW-ACP
Sarahaberg@aol.com

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