



For Mental Health Professionals Interested in Psychoanalytic Perspectives

A local chapter of the Division of Psychoanalysis of the American Psychological Association

www.pspp.org

Spring, 2009

## Message from the President

*Jeanne Seitler, Psy.D.*

As the winter snows fade and the first notes of spring begin to play, I reflect on the riches we have experienced already this year. PSPP members began the year with our Fall Meeting at the lovely Rosenbach Museum. The idea of the new setting, along with a cocktail party in place of a dinner, was initiated in the fall of 2007, and seems to have invigorated the membership interest in the Fall Meeting. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's riveting presentation at the Rosenbach was followed a month later by an inspiring program featuring Jody Messler Davies jointly sponsored with the Philadelphia Center of Psychoanalysis. Our "Spring" Program graced us early this year as our speaker, Nancy McWilliams, was available in January rather than in the spring. We enjoyed a wonderful day with Nancy at the beautiful Campus of Saint Joseph's University on Saturday, January 31, 2009. The program entitled, *Helping People with Paranoid Dynamics: What the DSM Doesn't Tell You*, was cosponsored by the Counseling Center of Saint Joseph's University. Our rela-

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## PSPP 2009 Winter Meeting

# Nancy McWilliams on Helping People with Paranoid Dynamics

*Robin M. Ward, Psy.D.*

Our winter meeting (a slightly earlier variety of the traditional spring meeting) occurred on the campus of St. Joseph's University on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009. The topic of the day-long presentation by Dr. Nancy McWilliams was working with people with paranoid dynamics, with the morning focusing on theory, etiology, and pointers for clinical work, and then, in the afternoon, a case presentation by Dr. Burton Seitler. In the following, I will provide a synopsis of some of Dr. McWilliams' major concepts.

As a template to think about paranoid dynamics, Dr. McWilliams suggested the following. Consider the behavior of a dog when it is sick, where the dog will behave as if it has just been scolded for poor behavior: ashamed, tail between its legs, head down hangdog. The dog confuses its

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**President's Message** (continued from page 1)

tionship with the Counseling Center at Saint Joseph's has deepened over the years. I want to personally thank Saint Joseph's for their warm hospitality and our long-time PSPP member, Beverly Cutler, for being our liaison "par excellence" with the university. The PSPP "Winter Meeting" program was well attended, with a large student enrollment due to the efforts of Barbara Goldsmith, Dan Livney, and Karen Dias. Nancy McWilliams, Ph.D. and Burton Seitler, Ph.D. delivered impactful papers which the meeting attendees reviewed enthusiastically. The warmth and respectful mutuality between the speakers and amongst the attendees was evident. I want to thank all those involved, with a special thanks to our speakers, Nancy McWilliams and Burton Seitler, and program committee members, Julie Nemeth and Ellen Balzé, for a most satisfying, rewarding, and engaging program.

Along with the outstanding programming we have produced and enjoyed thus far this year, the board has been hard at work focusing their efforts on the goals I enumerated in my previous message to the Membership. The board met in November with past PSPP presidents to discuss questions of mission, collaboration with other psychoanalytic entities, and how to creatively meet the challenges facing psychoanalysis and PSPP in today's economic, political, and cultural climate. The meeting was well attended and the enthusiasm and ideas flowed generously. It was clear that our "growing pains" repeat cyclically and that many of the questions with which we struggle currently, earlier boards also confronted. I wish to extend the sincerest thanks from myself and from the current board to the past presidents for your continued commitment to PSPP and for sharing your energies with the presiding board.

Since that meeting, the PSPP board has been working on and is close to finishing a "flowchart/timeline" of the yearly board responsibilities and events so that our monthly agendas and committee tasks are streamlined and our publications and programming are more efficient, timely, and coordinated with local organizations. Ellen Balzé, our PSPP treasurer, has worked concertedly to develop a budget to inform our yearly programming, setting of yearly dues, and any special projects. The board is in the process of reviewing and considering the 2009 budget and hopes to approve and implement it at our March, 2009 meeting. Thanks to Dr. Balze for her commitment to this process and for the excellence of her work.

Our goal of updating the PSPP website is underway thanks to the more

**Transportation to PSPP Events**

Have you had difficulty finding transportation to PSPP events in the suburbs? We can help! When signing up for PSPP events, please let the contact person know if you are either able to provide a ride or need a ride to that event. With this information, the contact person can help to make the necessary arrangements.

than capable midwifery of Rod Murray, PSPP's Webmaster. Karen Dias, student representative, has taken on the role of Rod's co-webmaster, to train under Dr. Murray, and take over, in time, most of the details of PSPP website oversight. We are very excited by the work that has been done and how, with time, members will be able to interface with each other and other psychoanalytic groups and programming in more and more interesting and creative ways. Already our directory is on the website, and members can update their information as needed rather than once a year. Next to be developed is the ability to pay for programs and membership with credit cards. It is all very exciting!

The large tasks yet to be accomplished by the end of the year:

- Review and update the PSPP bylaws.
- Continue work to invigorate and develop board committees.
- Continue mission and vision discussions, especially as concerns collaboration with other psychoanalytic entities in Philadelphia.

While reading the PSPP By-Laws this fall, I found that the original vision of the founding board members was that the PSPP Board would oversee a much larger committee structure than now exists. I extend an invitation to PSPP members to contact me if you are interested in contributing to the efforts of the board in any of its capacities: vision/mission, programming, professional collaboration, social activities, publications, media (website), or fundraising/endowment. Recently, the board was delighted to receive a request from a psychoanalyst moving to Philadelphia from New York City who had heard of PSPP and wanted to become active in the community. At our last board meeting we welcomed Ellen Singer Coleman to the board. Ellen is especially interested in contributing her efforts to the program committee. We have much talent in our membership. I hope each of you will consider how you might contribute to the efforts of the board. We would love to have more involvement from more of our membership.

An area of personal mission for this president has to do with fundraising and endowment. Although I, personally, have no professional experience with this subject, I have watched, in the fourteen years I have been involved with PSPP, the organization struggle with the bind of trying to underwrite exciting, cutting-edge programming with the sole revenue source being yearly dues. Historically, PSPP programs are not "money

makers." Many of our programs lose money or break even. This year's programs "made money" due to the generosity of several speakers who donated their time and due to the success of the winter program. The PSPP Board is committed to keeping dues and fees low for students and retirees and for trying to keep membership accessible to all. This greatly limits our ability to fund social events, develop scholarships to promote psychoanalytic endeavors of various types, and for promoting more outreach and more cutting-edge programming.

As part of my Presidential Mission, I intend to find creative, respectful, professional, and comfortable ways to generate financial stability for PSPP and to assemble financial "pockets" to help us fund the dreams of our board and our membership. Some PSPP members have no financial resources, so give of their time and talents. Some members may not have time to contribute to board activities, but may be able to help fund a scholarship or contribute to a special program fund. I will be presenting the board with my ideas about how to proceed with this mission. I encourage all members who have ideas to e-mail them to me. With the economic times as they are, no one knows what the future holds. As your president, I am willing to carry the torch of optimism and plug ahead to see what we can build together.

By the next issue of *Currents*, I hope to be able to have a structure in place for those with financial resources to invest in our PSPP missions. Our membership hovers at about 220 individuals a year. If each member gave an extra \$10.00 tax deductible contribution when they paid dues each year, our treasury would grow by \$2200.00 annually. If each gave a \$100.00 tax deductible contribution when they paid dues each year, our ability to give scholarships and produce richer programs would increase by \$22,000.00 a year. Now, I know not everyone has the resources to give an extra \$100/year or even \$10.00, but any amount is more than what PSPP generates currently. With only dues, our reach is limited. With some effort put into fund-raising, we MIGHT get out of our dues-bound corset. It is important that any such efforts be professional, tasteful, and sensitive. I look forward to working on this project over the rest of my tenure, along with my continuous goal of increasing connections between PSPP and others—groups and individuals.

In the spirit of that goal, I hope to see many of you in San Antonio for the Division 39 meeting where we can continue to collaborate, educate, and enjoy.

# Committee Reports

## Membership Report

*Leilani Crane, Psy.D.*

Our biggest news is that our directory is now online and LIVE, meaning that you may access your directory information and edit it yourself. You may choose which information to share with other members and with the public at large. The only information you cannot change yourself is making your listing “active” if your membership dues payment is pending. Once we have received your check, we can now quickly change your status to “active” and you can access your listing. Exciting, yes?

Not only are you in control of your directory listing, but with our new rolling admissions system, you will be notified by email when your dues are due. You also may check your directory entry to obtain the same information.

Even more exciting is Phase 2 of the online membership process, in which we (hope) to make both new memberships and membership renewals available completely online through a PayPal system. Stay tuned for this option as it is currently in development.

Since our online membership system was activated

last week, we have already received several electronic submissions. Of course we also have received a number of new members the old-fashioned way. Please welcome:

Neil Altman	Laura Kirsch
Melissa K. Anderson	Amy Paris
Renee Balthrop	Natalie Petyk
Jacquelynne Cunliffe	Elizabeth Roland
Margaux Des Jardins	Allison Schiefer
Laura A. Favin	Deborah C. Seagull
Stephanie A. Heck	Ellen Singer
Leslie Hempling	

Our current membership stands at 210 active members, and 43 members who may become active as soon as we receive their dues payments. We are hoping that the new online system will streamline both the membership process and directory updates.

Please check out the new website and online directory and let us know what you think! I look forward to working with you online.

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## Treasurer’s Report

*Ellen Balz , Ph.D.*

The PSPP treasury balances are as follows, with 2008 balances shown for comparison:

<b>PSPP Account Balances</b>	<b>3/25/2009</b>	<b>3/25/2008</b>
Checking Accounts .....	\$12,930	\$ 4,740
3-Yr. Rising Rate Certificate of Deposit .....	\$ 5,675	\$ 5,415
<b>Total Funds .....</b>	<b>\$ 18,605</b>	<b>\$10,155</b>

We have approved our first budget in the new budget process, and I’d like to thank Jay Moses and Patricia Rice (the Budget Committee) along with the entire Board for the hard work that went into making this happen. The budget process will allow us to make more meaningful estimates of how we are doing financially—and allow me to provide better information to you than the “bank balance” reports I’ve done in the past. PSPP’s bank balance is a snapshot that’s mostly informative in the context of knowing where we are in terms of expected income and expenses.

So here are a few notes on how we’re doing in meeting the budget targets for 2009: Because the Winter Program with Nancy McWilliams and Burton Seitler

was so well-attended, we ended up netting about \$2,000 more than we had projected.

The conversion to the new PSPP website (still [www.pspp.org](http://www.pspp.org); I recommend you check it out if you haven’t yet.) has cost more than we had projected. These are mostly one-time start-up costs and the Board’s sense is that the enhanced web capabilities (still being rolled out) will be well worth the investment. That said, we are estimating a need for at least \$2,000 above the budgeted website expense amount, so the “McWilliams & Seitler surplus” is already spoken for and then some. We will be working to rein in other expenses to cover the additional website costs.

# Mentoring: Nurturing the Next Generation of Psychologists

Barbara Goldsmith, Psy.D.

I am happy to report that the PSPP mentoring program is growing. The program began in the 2005-2006 academic year and, since then, approximately 50 students have participated. Mentoring satisfies an important developmental need in preparing graduate students for successful entry into the profession. Mentors serve as role models, guides, nurturers and teachers to the next generation of psychologists. A national survey (Clark et al (2000). *Mentor relationships in clinical psychology doctoral training: Results of a national survey. Teaching of Psychology, 27*,262-268.) of recent graduates of clinical psychology doctoral programs found that students who were mentored were more satisfied with their training experience than those who were not.

Here is how the program works: Mentors and mentees are matched based on common interests and geographic locations. Mentees meet regularly with their mentors for one hour each month during the academic year at the mentor's office (summer meetings are optional depending on mutual interest and availability). Mentoring is not the same as supervision and all students involved in the program should have supervisors responsible for their clinical work. Mentors function as consultants rather than as supervisors.

We would like to continue to widely advertise the program in order to increase the number of student-mentor pairs, so please spread the word. It appears to us that students are especially eager for more exposure to psychoanalytic thinking and practice. If you know of graduate students interested in psychodynamic mentoring, direct them to our new PSPP website, [www.pspp.org](http://www.pspp.org), for further information.

## If you are interested in finding a mentor

- Go to the PSPP website, [www.pspp.org](http://www.pspp.org), click on the Mentorship link and read "Welcome to the Mentorship Program" and download the "Graduate student questionnaire."
- Complete the "Graduate Student Questionnaire" (Please prioritize your interests on the questionnaire)
- Email the completed questionnaire to Dr. Barbara Goldsmith at [barbgsmith@aol.com](mailto:barbgsmith@aol.com)

## If you are interested in becoming a mentor

- Email Dr. Barbara Goldsmith at [barbgsmith@aol.com](mailto:barbgsmith@aol.com).
- Please include your contact information, location where you would like to meet, areas of interest/expertise (both scholarly and clinical), as well as any other information that might help ensure a good match.

Thanks to those members below who have volunteered this academic year to mentor students:

Susan Adelman, Ph.D.  
Marjorie Adis, LCSW  
Karen Berberian, Ph.D.  
Eileen Casaccio, Psy.D.  
Dennis Debiak, Psy.D.  
Barbara Goldsmith, Psy.D.  
Bill Grey, Psy.D.  
Linda Guerra, Ph.D.  
Audre Jarmas, Ph.D.  
Sandra Kosmin, LSW  
Beverly Keefer, Ph.D.  
Corinne Masur, Psy.D.  
Rachel McKay, Ph.D.  
Jay Moses, Ph.D.  
Susan Nestler, Psy.D.  
David Ramirez, Ph.D.  
Robin Risler, Ph.D.  
Diana Rosenstein, Ph.D.  
Norman Schaffer, Ph.D.  
Laurel Silber, Psy.D.  
Sherry Sukol, Ph.D.  
H. Panill Taylor, Psy.D.  
Jane Widseth, Ph.D.  
Jed Yalof, Psy.D.

# A Group Dynamics Approach to Understanding America's Current "Collapse"

Charles Ashbach, Ph.D.

In 1921 Sigmund Freud published his famous monograph *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. Driven by the madness, savagery and destruction of the First World War, he set about expanding psychoanalytic principles to explain the dynamics of social cohesion. It's worthwhile that the original German title of the work was better translated as "Mass" or "Horde" psychology than "Group."

In a similar way this essay will attempt to apply the principles and understanding developed by both Freud and Bion to help explain the social-psychological processes that have brought the United States to a condition of near "collapse" and economic "crisis."

Freud combined his study of the libido with the mechanism of identification to explain how a group of separate and heterogeneous individuals combine to form a common emotional bond and construct a cohesive social system capable of a wide range of both creative and destructive acts.

He observed that it was through a process of introjective identification that individuals sharing a common purpose, need, or function were able to constitute a psychological group. Each individual internalized the image of the central leadership figure, experienced in the unconscious as a representative of the father. This process of common connection and investment of the leader had the effect of allowing all members of the group to now possess a common love object.

Furthermore, and most importantly, the installation of the leader's image inside the individual's super-ego-ideal created a common conscience and experience of morality. The leader, now functioning as the ideal, brought about a revalued narcissistic sense. Ideals and aspirations of the leader, and his ideology, become central to the individual member of the group. A single love object, shared conscience, and unified ideal combine to provide the members of the group a common sense of reality and purpose. Out of the many, the One was formed: *E Pluribus Unum*.

The common features possessed by each member, the psychic "gyroscope," make cohesive action possible; at the same time the re-valuation of the values, beliefs, and ideals of the group members leads to a decrease of diversity, complexity, and reality testing.

The sense of oneness, which generates feelings of inclusion, connection, and safety works against the freedom of thought, feelings, difference, and doubt.

Once unified under a common banner the group must face the task of dealing with the aggression that is the consequence of human ambivalence. Splitting and projection are the prime mechanisms used to place the dangers of love and hate into the external, non-group environment. In fact, one of the central functions of any group is the discovery or creation of "enemies" in order to solidify boundaries and contain threats to the common ideal.

The feeling that a "group" exists, apart from the members who make it up, reveals the massive regression that is the consequence of sharing a common conscience and ideal. The by-product of this regression is a substantial reduction in reality testing and moral perspective. The group's cohesion places demands on the individual members to maintain their sense of identity in the face of its homogenizing force. The pressure to define what is "true" by what is "shared" is intense and ongoing.

In the 1950's Wilfred Bion offered a series of important developments in the theory of group formation and dynamics. Rather than locating the central group conflict in the Oedipal complex and family "romance" as Freud did, Bion sought the deeper dynamics of the group in the primitive emotional and phantasy experiences characteristic of the infant's earliest connection to the mother.

For Bion, this meant the anxieties of attachment and the dangers of annihilation preceded concerns about competition and castration. Specifically, psychotic anxiety and dread were now posited as the core dynamic force that the group had to encounter and resolve.

Bion considered the group-as-a-whole to be the primary object of concern for the members of the group. While the leader provided structure and organization, the group as "mother object" provided the true source of comfort and protection against the dangers and challenges that the members faced.

The group as common object is created by the membership through a process of projective identification,

not, as Freud thought, through introjective identification. In essence, each member places varying elements of the self within the group-object and then internalizes that “created” entity.

Leader, group-as-a-whole, and member now are seen to exist in a complex field that is constituted to protect the psyche and emotions of each member through a complex structure where phantasy and reality are continually acted upon, at the deepest levels of unconscious experience, to insure the maintenance of the group’s central illusion or ideology.

Bion then added a crucial concept to group dynamics. Not only is the group formed, but the members are able to use it to create a common phantasy condition, shared, unconsciously and anonymously, by all members of the group. This common “disposition” or attitude followed the group’s need to protect its narcissistic cohesion and sense of shared reality. Bion called this regressive condition the group’s *basic assumption*.

He felt that embedded in human nature were three organizing paradigms that provided the primary forms that collectives arrange themselves in to function and survive: *Dependency*, based upon the infant at the breast; *Fight/Flight*, based upon the paranoid and delusional experience of a threat to the integrity of the group; and *Pairing*, which had to do with phantasies of the primal scene and the conception of a child, who would then be perceived to be the Messiah, coming from the future to bring a solution to the group’s struggles.

The basic assumption was based on a regressive state, in flight from reality and dedicated to maintaining both a sense of regressed object relating and a sense of narcissistic wholeness and invulnerability. In order for a group to survive, it must have a structure and function that supports reality testing, thought, development, and growth. This group configuration Bion termed the “work group.”

The work group is in constant oscillation with one or more of the basic assumption states as the group deals with the challenges and demands of internal and external reality. Members reclaim their individuality in the work group, and yield it when they become the unthinking agglomeration of the basic assumption group.

The basic assumption state reveals a different definition and understanding of leadership. Rather than the leader imposing his or her idea, ideals, or vision on the members, Bion sees the membership selecting one particular individual because of that person’s susceptibili-

ty to carrying out the phantasies and emotions central to the operative basic assumption state.

#### *The Group’s “reaction” to the catastrophe of 9-11*

Having presented this overview of group dynamics, it is my contention that we can better think dynamically and symbolically about how the group, the United States, has gotten itself into the terrible set of circumstances it now faces. The problems of the group’s fear of “terror” and the worries about “collapse” and “depression” seem best illuminated by Bion’s paradigm of the basic assumptions.

The psychological effects of the tragedy of 9-11 included the shattering of the nation’s sense of invulnerability and of the absolute sense of safety of the American homeland. Those internal experiences and beliefs evaporated as surely as the steel and concrete of the Towers were immolated in those terrible fires.

As clinicians we’re aware that trauma results when events violently exceed the expectations, boundaries, and experiences of an individual. The fall of the Towers and the shock of the unknown pushed the group toward a state of overwhelming dread and disorientation. The group’s regression into the basic assumption state of *Fight/Flight* was the defensive adaptation to fend off the fragmenting anxieties and dread generated by these unprecedented events.

The regression was quickly revealed by the country’s stated goal of waging a war “on terror” — not on terrorists, not on para-national groups, but on terror itself. If any therapist had a patient present for treatment with the stated goal of destroying terror, per se, we would be taken aback and suggest that the person consider coming in 3 or 4 times a week to help them through their crisis.

At the national level we started organizing our resources and might to destroy a ghost, demon, or chimera. Billions, no trillions, of dollars and thousands of our soldiers have been sacrificed on the altar of this crusade against “terror.”

The *Flight/Flight* basic assumption allows for the mobilization of enormous states of aggression in a condition of “innocence.” Attempts to think about the nature of events, our involvement in the complex geopolitical forces that had emerged, and the emotional forces set in motion were extremely difficult to accomplish.

The enormity of the trauma caused the group to split itself. We became the “good and innocent” victims and the “terrorists” became the evil perpetrators. So

much trauma, anxiety, and guilt were generated that no process of national reflection was possible. The idea of guilt surfaced, but only in the form of accusations by fundamentalist preachers blaming the country for its "sins."

To this day, no significant discussion of our feelings of guilt and responsibility has occurred, and no thorough process of finding meanings in all of this suffering and chaos has emerged. When the good object is lost, the absence is filled with the presence of the bad object, and doubt becomes persecutory.

Might we unconsciously fear that some angry deity punished our attempts to build our version of the Tower(s) of Babel and this catastrophe was the manifestation of the deity's ire and dismay?

The group, in its manic movement into *Flight/Fight* mode, sought and seemingly found the moral high ground that then was used as a platform to engage in any behavior or action we deemed justified by the extent of our trauma. The group reshaped its morals and ideals in light of the trauma and in light of the need for guilt-free vengeance.

Since we sought to destroy internal objects in the guise of external enemies we created a deep sense of confusion and disorientation. To show how "good" and "grateful" we were as members of the basic assumption group, we idealized all those who protected us, and all were called "heroes." The endorsement of leadership became total. In spite of the obvious and shocking deficiencies of President Bush, the group embraced him and reinforced his power to continue to lead us in our *Fight/Flight* state.

While many now criticize and lament President Bush's failed and tragic leadership, we would do well to keep in mind the group's creation of him to fulfill our basic assumption needs. Bush was our dummy; we, the collective, were the ventriloquist. As we now seek to assign blame, our collective responsibility lies in the shadows of our indignation.

The absence created by our flight from reality was filled systematically with all forms of distraction, stimulation, and charade. Not the least of which was the creation of a war. War served both the need to attack our actual, external enemies, but, more importantly, to contain the sense of inner badness by projecting it into the enemy. In this phantasy mode, war was also a means of offering up sacrifice to the angry "god" who "punished" us on 9-11. On that altar we destroyed billions from our treasury and thousands of our children. It is no accident that soldiers are described as *infant-ry*.

The economic bubble that was created can now be seen to contain a manic action that would encourage consumption as an antidote for the grief, guilt, and confusion that has never left the American psyche. We should probably think of all of this manic economic behavior, especially the housing "bubble" and the middle class's use of credit cards, as a kind of air-bag deployed to protect us from banging into the hard edge of the reality lurking in our collective unconscious.

Certainly the madness of the banks, with their abandonment of economic and fiscal reality, has to be seen in the shadow of the overall flight from the stress, conflict, and suffering that the group was avoiding. The use of the word "depression" seems to be a symbolic means of introducing the group's real problem, guilt over the injury or destruction of good objects, into the national psyche. As yet we have not been able to approach the depressive position that might allow us to re-claim our responsibility for the madness and destruction we have authored.

Eventually, the group, like manic individuals, ran out of its perverse energy and crashed. The seven plus years of running from the internal threats and demons finally became too much for the group. It seems that the group had literally and figuratively depleted itself. Once we heard the clarion call of Obama's vision of reality, hope, and justice, we began to contact some of the deeper layers of grief, guilt, confusion, and shame. Though, certainly, the sense of imminent Messianic transformation shows the group shifting from the *Fight/Flight* to the *Pairing* basic assumption.

In *Pairing* basic assumption the group believes that two individuals or forces will come together and create a "messiah" who will come from the future to save us in the present. Of course, the messiah must never be allowed to show up because his presence would disrupt the hope for magical transformation with the demands for actual work and change.

Messiahs almost always are killed before they fulfill their missions because of their demand for change and responsibility. We can easily think of JFK, Martin Luther King, Bobby Kennedy, John Lennon, Malcolm X as representatives of that pattern.

Obama's ascent seems to mark a recovery of the group out of the basic assumption state and toward the work group. Obama represents equity, justice, thought, and lucid articulation. His attempts to "tell the truth" to the American people represents one polarity of the group (Work) while at the same time the yearning for Messianic magic seems to be the embodiment of both

*Dependency and Pairing.* Somehow all will be solved for us, and Obama, along with whom (Hillary? Michele?), will produce a miraculous resolution to the 30 years of indifference, corruption, and the “dirty dealing” that has skewed the national agenda away from justice and equality and more toward favor of the rich and super-rich.

The bi-valent approach of Obama, toward more reality on the one hand, and toward manic stimulus on the other, suggests that he’s trying to serve some of the basic assumption needs of the group while attempting to engage the work function. The rabid resistance of the radical right shows the persistence of the *Fight/Flight* assumption and the seductive paranoid pull toward fantasy—away from reality testing. The lure of ideological psychosis persists in the core of the society. Somehow, this position says, we should be able to

solve our problems through hate and splitting without entering into a dialogue with reality.

We will soon see what elements of the group emerge and dominate the national agenda.

Charles Ashbach, Ph.D. is a psychologist in private practice in Wyndmoor and Philadelphia. He is a founding faculty member of the International Psychotherapy Institute in Chevy Chase, MD, as well as chair of the Philadelphia chapter. He is co-author of *Object Relations, the Self and the Group*. His areas of interest include the study of Klein and Bion, narcissistic states, and the extension of group theory to social movements. He can be reached by phone at 215-233-9229 or email at cashbach1@verizon.net.

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## Announcing Upcoming Fall Events

### Change in Psychodynamic Psychotherapy: A Closer Examination of the Boston Change Process Study Groups Understanding of Change

This is the first in what will be a Continuous Conference on Change. It is a conference that is made up of two parts that are interrelated and is sponsored by PCPE (Philadelphia Center for Psychoanalytic Education), PSPP (Philadelphia Society for Psychoanalytic Psychology), and PCOP (Philadelphia Center of Psychoanalysis).

#### Part I—Theoretical Discussion:

Oct. 23rd & 24th, 2009, PCOP will be hosting Ed Tronick, Ph.D., an internationally renowned researcher on developmental issues in infants and children from Harvard, and member of the Boston Change Process Study Group, for a presentation on The Dyadic Expansion of Consciousness Model.

#### Part II—Clinical Process:

November 14th, 2009, PCPE and PSPP will be hosting a clinical conference with Karlen Lyons-Ruth, Ph.D. (of Harvard and Boston Change Process Study Group) and Jacqueline Gotthold, Psy.D. of

the Institute for the Psychoanalytic Study of Subjectivity, NYC, who will be presenting on and integrating the findings of the Boston Change Process Study Groups to the understanding of the transformation within child therapy (with applicability to adult treatment). Part I will be a focus primarily on the theoretical aspects while Part II will be an application to clinical work.

Participants will have the choice to register for one conference or both as well as consider joining study groups that will be offered for professionals in the Philadelphia area. The purpose of three study groups is to further discuss the findings of the Boston Change group that will be made available before and after the two conferences. This is a unique collaboration among the Philadelphia psychoanalytic organizations and will be a rich theoretical and clinical endeavor.

Save these dates and look forward to more information on these important conferences. For additional information, please contact Dr. Laurel Silber at

laurelsil@aol.com.

# Conquering Paris with an Apple: The Life and Art of Cézanne

*Bev Cutler, Ph.D.*

The current exhibit at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, *Cézanne and Beyond*, features paintings, watercolors and drawings by Cézanne, displayed alongside works by several artists who were inspired by Cézanne. This brief background of Cézanne's life and art is intended to help the viewer understand how Cézanne came to be such a watershed figure in the history of modern art, how the art of the anxious, eccentric, emotionally volatile Cézanne effectively destabilized centuries of traditional representation and anticipated every art movement since his death.

The Cézanne, considered by Picasso as "my one and only master...the father of us all," was also internally tormented by unrelenting feelings of inadequacy, phobic reactions to being touched, intense fear of women, struggles with lust and rage, and unresolved Oedipal issues. He was born on January 19, 1839, in Aix-en-Provence, to Louis-Auguste, a hat trader turned banker, and Anne-Elisabeth, an intelligent and lively woman who supposedly encouraged Paul's talent, supported him when arguments erupted with his father, and secretly supplemented his allowance after he left home. Schooled in the classics, Cézanne acquired an excellent knowledge of Latin, Greek, and ancient and modern French Literature. His classical tastes in literature endured all his life.

At school in Aix, 13-year-old Cézanne befriended the sickly, fatherless, bullied Emile Zola (1840-1902). In fact, the day after the bigger, stronger Cézanne first came to Zola's defense, Zola brought some apples as a present for his protector. The bond of friendship that was forged lasted for thirty-four years until the two stopped speaking to one another (the result of a general cooling-off period of mutual disapproval over one another's lifestyle followed by the publication of Zola's novel, "L'Oeuvre," about a promising artist thinly disguised as Cézanne who suffered multiple afflictions and eventually hanged himself because of creative impotence). Zola evoked their cherished memories of shared boyhood by writing, "From the time they were fourteen they were solitaires, enthusiasts, ravaged by the fever of literature and art." The boys spent their days exploring the countryside around Aix and their summers swimming in the Arc River, "...when our agile arms Like serpents swam Over the gentle waves,"

Cézanne poetically wrote to Zola. When asked in the Cézanne family game, "Confidences," what he considered to be the most estimable virtue, Cézanne replied, "friendship," and his favorite leisure activity, "swimming." No doubt, apples and bathers, frequent artistic subjects of Cézanne's, symbolically and nostalgically reverberated back to his fond boyhood days with Zola.

When, at the age of seventeen, Zola moved with his mother to Paris, the aspiring writer and painter kept up a fervent correspondence. Louis-Auguste Cézanne, a self-taught man scorned by the aristocracy of Aix because he was not a native and because two of his children had been born before marriage, had ambitions for Paul to embark on a brilliant legal career and one day preside over the court of appeals in Aix-en-Provence. Initially, Paul bought into this classic 19<sup>th</sup> century route to social advancement, but he simultaneously enrolled in law school and a professional painting course. It wasn't until he won second prize for a figure painting that his father allowed him to continue as a painter, the most discredited of all professions in the bourgeois mind. Zola's letters encouraging Cézanne to come to Paris to study art were frank, persuasive and to the point: "What then is your behavior? That of a lazy person...You are forced to do work that is distasteful to you, and you want to ask your father to let you come to Paris to become an artist...You neglect your law studies and go to the museum. Painting is the only work you find acceptable... You lack character ...but, by Heaven! If I were in your place, I would risk all to gain all, and not hesitate any longer between two such different choices for my future, between art and the law" (July, 1860).

Persuaded, Cézanne settled in Paris in 1862, living on a meager stipend provided by his father which was discreetly supplemented by his mother. He attended the Salons with much interest and practiced copying the works of the masters at the Louvre. Louis-Auguste, resigned to Paul's choice, encouraged him to enroll in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, the only respectable pathway for artists. To understand Cézanne and his accomplishments, his life and his art have to be cast in context with the Beaux Arts/Salon Process that was in place during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. European art in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was defined by the Beaux-Arts system. The rigid dictates of



Cézanne's *Still Life with Basket of Apples*, 1890-1894

the Academy were to respect the hierarchy of genres, with more value placed on history paintings of religious, mythical or historical subjects; to support the supremacy of drawing over color; to study the idealized nude from sculpture and live models; to prefer the workshop to the open air; to make finished pieces look smooth, i.e. licked; and to imitate the masters and copy nature. Most artists accepted its rules and generally won public and critical favor. Others, like Cézanne, who failed the entrance examination and suffered repeated refusals at the Salon, developed their skills on its fringe and consequently met more difficulties in having their work accepted. Eventually Cézanne would pulverize the Academy's traditional representations, as if to say, "I refuse to follow your edict." (Note how his indictment of art schools is a speed tour in reverse through Freud's Psychosexual Stages: "Teachers are all castrated bastards and assholes. They have no guts!")

The style of Cézanne's early art was ferocious and savage, characterized by quick appliqués of thick pigment, the vigorous use of a palette knife, and violent, brutal motifs: abductions, murders, hangings, rapes, orgies. His reference to his brush style as "couillarde" –painted with the balls–acknowledges the fusion of sexual energy with the act of painting. As he matured as an artist, he abandoned his fascination with misogynistic fantasy to become more interested in the observ-

able world, like the impressionists. He no longer relied on narrative content or the action of his painting tool to depict emotional tension.

When Cézanne and his mistress, Hortense Fiquet, had a baby, the couple fled to Aix to keep his father from finding out, and went to live near Pissarro in Pontoise. There Cézanne developed a mentor relationship with Pissarro that transformed his style. From Pissarro, he learned to capture the effects of light and air, taming his passion with the more intellectually controlled impressionist technique. Over the next few years, Cézanne would divide his time between Paris, L'Estaque, and Aix, worn out by the critics' scorn and ridicule. He never broke with impressionism completely, but was the first to venture beyond, to paint what he saw and *as* he saw: "I paint as I see and as I feel, and I have very strong feelings." Guided only by his inner convictions, observation of reality was his jumping off point for a highly subjective form of painting. He worked incessantly on the problem of how color could make form. His heretical break with conventions that had been established as far back as the renaissance came to include multiplicity of viewpoints—which would preoccupy cubists for years to come—competing focal points, interpenetrating planes, disruption of scale, fragmentation of form, dissociation of drawing and color, and the introduction of abstract elements to fill out the composition.

By 1895, Cézanne had shown only a few canvases in group exhibitions. He exchanged some of his paintings for paints and supplies with an enterprising paint dealer in Montmartre. It was there that the maverick art dealer, Ambroise Vollard, saw Cézanne's paintings and dedicated himself to making Cézanne's work known. With difficulty, Vollard tracked down the reclusive Cézanne and subsequently became an enthusiastic advocate of his work. Vollard organized several exhibitions in Paris, culminating in a major retrospective exhibition in 1907, a year after Cézanne's death. These exhibitions attracted and galvanized a new generation of painters, including Picasso, Matisse and Braque, laying the foundation for cubism and the mul-

iple strands of modernism. Cézanne's revolutionary abandonment of traditional illusory perspective as a given in art had opened the way for modern art to emerge.

Cézanne died while painting outdoors on October 23, 1906, in Aix. After lying in the rain for several hours, he was found and brought home in a laundry cart. Earlier that year, a statue of Zola was dedicated in Aix. Several people in the crowd recognized Cézanne as the weeping, grizzled old man at the edge of crowd. Three years prior, he wrote to Vollard, "I have made some progress. Why so late and with such difficulty? Is art indeed a priesthood that claims the pure of heart and takes them over completely?"

## The Heart of Darkness; The Soldier's Combat Experience and Individuation

*Combat experience, if it is to be survived competently, involves a brutal confrontation with the shadow and a radical and potentially traumatic redefinition of one's self and a confrontation with moral horror. The persistence of a calling to own and integrate a fuller humanity*

*is one aspect of PTSD. Responding consciously to this call for individuation is the burden of all soldiers, if they are to retain their humanity in war and their self-respect when they return home...*

*Roger Brooke, Ph.D., ABPP*

Friday, *May 15th*, 2009, 1:00pm to 5:00pm

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Dr. Roger Brooke is a Professor of Psychology at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, and clinical psychologist in private practice and psychiatric units for nearly thirty years. Member of the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts, adjunct faculty of the CG Jung Institute Analyst Training Program of Pittsburgh, author of *Jung and Phenomenology* (Trivium 2008; orig. Routledge 1991) and contributing editor of *Pathways into the*

*Jungian World* (Routledge 1999). Formative professional years spent in the upheavals of South Africa in the 1980s, where he worked with trauma survivors on both sides of the political conflicts. Veteran paratrooper himself, he has a son in the 82nd Airborne, and has been developing a network of services for veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

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## Member Publications, Awards, and Activities

**Jules C. Abrams, Ph.D., ABPP**, presented at the annual conference of the National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico on January 22, 2009. His topic was Leadership Exemplified: Narratives: True Grit Stories from the Edge.

**Susan Levine, L.S.W., B.C.D.** has recently published her book *Loving Psychoanalysis: Technique and*

*Theory in the Therapeutic Relationship* (published by Jason Aronson early this year). She and her husband were the featured speakers at the Lucy Daniels Foundation Art and Psychoanalysis weekend in North Carolina on Feb 14th and 15th. She also gave a paper on chaos theory and psychoanalysis as an invited presenter at the American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work (AAPCSW) conference in New York this winter.

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### Winter Meeting (continued from page 1)

internal feeling state (that is, the discomfort associated with the physical illness) with some external, socially mediated cause (that is, in its doggie-way, it 'thinks,' "I must be being punished for bad behavior to explain my bad feelings"). And it is just this type of dog that is most likely to bite—to fend off the imagined external aggressor assumed to be the source of its pain. Similarly, the paranoid individual confuses his or her inner and outer worlds, where unwanted feelings and thoughts are projected onto others; the pain inside is assumed to be coming from without.

Broadening the DSM definition of paranoia, Dr. McWilliams suggested the inclusion of the following subcategories, each examples of paranoid phenomena: persecutory paranoia (they're out to get me); paranoia of hatred (source of various '-isms,' with efforts made to recruit others to get the hostility "out there"); erotomania (idealization and desire projected onto an other); paranoia of jealousy (unwanted desires projected onto the other, for example, homoerotic desires in Freud's day); meglomania (projection of idealized self-concept coupled with the denial of limitations), and paranoia involving projection of intent (an inability to imagine others' intentions as having nothing to do with the self).

Regarding etiology, Dr. McWilliams suggested that a common factor among many paranoid individ-

uals is a history of humiliation that cannot be warded off effectively or even named. These un-symbolized experiences of humiliation lead to serious confusion around self and other. Along similar lines, she suggested that persons with paranoid tendencies often come from families where distrust and contempt are significant forces and have social histories involving a high degree of teasing, taunting, and ridicule.

Following from her analysis of paranoid dynamics, Dr. McWilliams recommended several approaches to treatment as well as suggested some to be avoided. For example, she suggested that clinicians not encourage a great deal of regression with paranoid persons. Instead, one should focus on the challenges of daily life, with the clinician working to suggest alternative explanations for the behavior of others. Also, therapists should avoid trying to demonstrate their "goodness" as such ostensibly beneficent behavior could increase the anxiety of paranoid clients (leading them to ask, "What is this therapist trying to hide from me by being so nice?"). As a guiding principle, Dr. McWilliams recommends an attitude of respect that includes more self-disclosure than with other types of clients, where the purpose of the self-disclosure is for the therapist to present a model of how to deal with undesirable feelings or experiences without shame.

# Neurology and Gender: Is Biology Destiny?

*Karen Berberian, Ph.D.*

## **Editor's Note:**

*The following is the first of two pieces summarizing recent meetings of the PSPP Child Development Study Group with a focus on different ways to conceptualize attentional problems. The second piece should be included in next issue of Currents.*

Both psychoanalysis and developmental psychology have a long history of debating whether nature or nurture has a greater impact on development. At the January 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the PSPP Child Development Study Group, Jo Ann Cohen, Ph.D., and Jerry Evans, M.A., M.S. discussed how biological and environmental factors interact in explaining why, in recent years, girls and women have been surpassing boys and men in their rates of graduating from high school and college. Their presentation was entitled "Cortical Differences Between Genders and How They Affect Learning." Dr. Cohen, director of the Lihn Center for Psychology in Havertown, is a clinical psychologist and a neuropsychologist. Mr. Evans teaches upper level science courses at La Salle College High School, an all-boys school in Wyndmor, PA. In addition, Mr. Evans and Dr. Cohen are learning specialists at La Salle College High School, where they provide learning support for students with learning and attentional difficulties.

After reviewing neuroanatomy and neuroimaging methods, Dr. Cohen and Mr. Evans discussed gender differences in brain development. These differences, which begin at conception, include earlier maturation of the left hemisphere and the prefrontal cortex in girls, faster myelination and a larger corpus callosum in girls, gender specific patterns of cerebral blood flow, and differing levels of hormones and of neurotransmitters. These differences confer many advantages on girls. In general, girls tend to surpass boys in the verbal domain (including reading), as well as in the areas of memory, attention, planning, and multitasking, all of which contribute to academic success. Research supports the observation that boys more often than girls excel at mechanical and visual skills, including upper level math and science courses. However, these skills are not used until students are older. By that time, many boys have reached the conclusion that school is

difficult and that academic tasks are overly challenging.

Dr. Cohen and Mr. Evans traced the history of education from the beginning, when only wealthy boys attended school, to the current day, with public, coeducational schools and colleges. Today, women outnumber men in professions other than engineering and are more likely to graduate from high school and college. Many studies show that more boys than girls are diagnosed with learning disabilities and attentional problems.

The advent of the computer age has had a major impact on gender differences in academic and career success. Secretaries disappeared from many business offices, and linguistic skills became essential for upper and midlevel management. After the business world began to adapt to new ways of communication using word processing, the internet was introduced, which meant that the importance of linguistic skill reached an even higher threshold in both business and education. School systems became aware of the importance that verbal skills played in employability and began to demand better reading skills at a younger age. Since the verbal domain of the female brain matures more quickly, girls adapted more easily to curriculum changes that stressed reading and writing. Additionally, their hormonal physiology made them more amenable to the cooperative environment of the class. Thus, the combination of biological predisposition and modern technology conferred advantages on females.

Mr. Evans and Dr. Cohen discussed boys' educational needs at length and suggested some useful strategies. These include teaching memory techniques, emphasizing relevant vocabulary, reading about the topic before the lecture, and reviewing lecture notes within one hour after class. Boys should be given reading assignments on topics that interest them (such as sports), should be allowed to move around in the classroom, and should carry out hands-on projects. It is important to challenge boys to perform, for example, "I wonder if any of you can get all six problems correct?" Set goals to create a sense of pressure, because this helps boys focus their attention and increase their moti-

vation. Ideally, early grades should use a Montessori approach, allowing students to progress at different rates by using materials they find appealing. This will lessen the competition between boys and girls. Studies show that boys do best in an all-male school where male learning needs are understood. Mr. Evans and Dr. Cohen consult with schools that wish to improve their ability to meet boys' needs.

After the formal presentation, I asked Dr. Cohen how she incorporates these neuropsychological findings into her work as a therapist. She said that when she works with parents, it is helpful to explain cortically based gender differences so that parents have appropriate expectations for their children. It helps to recognize that boys are more disorganized and active than girls of the same age. Dr. Cohen said, "Boys tend to have attentional issues even when they do not meet the full criteria for ADHD because boys have a slower development of the frontal lobe, less blood flow to the center of the brain, and a slower growing myelin sheath. Boys are often put on medication unnecessarily and instead should be given more structure and supervision to overcome their attentional issues. Teaching time management and organization techniques and finding ways to increase focusing are particularly beneficial for boys."

When she is working with couples, Dr. Cohen reports that the cortically based differences between males and females do not disappear as individuals grow older. These differences are reflected in behaviors that often contribute to marital conflict. For example, due to differences in the size of the left hemisphere (larger in women) and the cerebellum (better developed in men), women are more likely to use words to express their distress. Men may not even have a desire to use verbalization to solve problems. Males are action oriented and want to "fix" the situation. They are often mystified by female venting and view it as an ineffective strategy. This leads to situations where women do not feel listened to and comforted and where men feel unsatisfied because there is no identifiable solution.

Additionally, because the corpus callosum is 20-25% smaller in males than in females, men have less ability to multitask and tend to compartmentalize emotional factors as well as cognitive issues. Men are more likely to see each situation as an isolated event and to "forget" previous negative experiences in the relationship. Men tend to view themselves in a positive light.

Women, in contrast, hold on to negative emotion and are more likely to feel guilty and to see themselves (and their husbands and boyfriends) in a negative light. Dr. Cohen says that teaching couples about cortical differences can make them approach problems differently and can help dissipate marital conflict.

Dr. Cohen also sees children and adolescents in individual therapy. She feels that treatment goes better, and patients stay in treatment longer, when there is a gender match between therapist and patient. She told me that "this is especially important for boys who often are in single parent families and usually have teachers who are female."

In conclusion, educating teachers, parents, and patients about cortically based gender differences and incorporating this information into educational curricula, parenting strategies, and psychological treatments will help produce optimal outcomes for both genders.

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