

ASPP NEWSLETTER

ADELPHI SOCIETY FOR PSYCHOANALYSIS AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

VOL. 1 No. 4

SUMMER 1987

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Estelle Rapoport



At the end of my Presidency, I'm glad for the opportunity to say farewell. As I leave, I feel my commitment to the Society is even greater than when I began. I believe that there are ever increasing ways that we can serve our membership and enrich our work as analysts.

The Society had been an interest of mine for many years, but this year as President has cemented relationships, given me insight into the importance of those colleagues who volunteer, and created interest and excitement for me and my family. I used abilities that I had never used before, and which I am sure will stand me in good stead. I have a great sense of pride in being the President of such an accomplished and interesting group of people.

I have particularly enjoyed working with the Board and the Committee Chairpeople. It has been a warmly satisfying experience to work with people who gave so generously and supportively of their time and energy. I thank you all.

I would like to mention everyone who gave a special effort in the Society this year. First, a very special thank you to Steve Hyman, who gave unstintingly of himself to every aspect of Society work and whose generosity and good spirited support I found invaluable. Marjorie Maltin, who was always available with support, ideas, and time to work on any project. Anna Leifer who was always willing to attack the task at hand, and who searched out the great place for our end-of-year dinner. Madeline Hirschfeld for her great arrangements for our social events and those wonderful end-of-year invitations. Carolida Steiner and the staff of the *Newsletter* for a terrific job. Manny Sanger for his excellent arrangements at Jeronimo's and his planning for next year. Rich Gotta for the good speakers we had this year. Marlene Kasman for her help with the Directory. Rick Lerner and Suzanne Phillips for their work as Liaison to the Postdoctoral Program. Mike Zentman for his support as past-President and his legislative updates. Dave Hescheles for his

legislative work. Holly Gotta for setting up the Inter-Class Liaison. Barbara Zevin for running the second year case study seminar. Bruce Kopp and his committee for smooth handling of our elections. The Postdoc Class Representatives whose input was valuable to the Board: Pat Stenger, Holly White Gotta, Michael Wald, Madeline Hirschfeld, Phyllis Palm, Michael Friedman, and Carol Lipner.

Very special thanks go to two people who are not Society members, and without whom this year would not have worked out as well as it did. Marge Burgard who is crucial to the actual running of Society business. Without her, the Society would be lost. Joan Stricker who fulfilled her original commitment to produce the Directory and went out of her way in helping us with the reorganization of our entire administrative procedures.

I want to thank George Stricker for his generous support and advice on some difficult issues that came up this year.

My family definitely shared this job with me. My children Jessica and Leslie loved having a Mommy who was President and loved socializing at the Board Meetings. My husband Daniel was, as always, supportive, helpful and creative in his advice. Thanks!

I am happy to welcome and congratulate our new officers.

Anna Leifer — President
Manny Sanger — President-Elect
Marjorie Maltin — Secretary
Steve Hyman — Treasurer
Bruce Kopp — Liaison

POSTDOC CALENDAR

FIRST NIGHT OF POSTDOCTORAL
CLASSES FOR FALL SEMESTER IS
SEPTEMBER 11, 1987

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ASPP NEWSLETTER

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| <i>Editor (1984-present):</i> | CAROLIDA STEINER |
| <i>Past Editor (1974-84):</i> | NEIL GROSSMAN |
| <i>Editorial Board:</i> | NEIL GROSSMAN ATTILIO CAPPONI RUTH FORMANEK SUZANNE B. PHILLIPS SERENA W. RESWICK |
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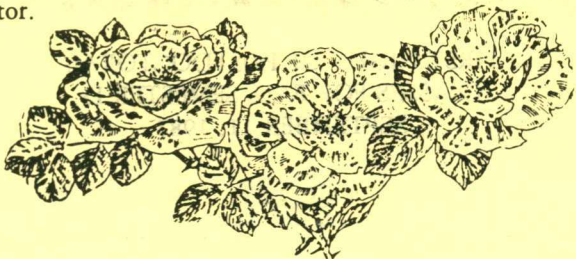
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EDITOR'S MESSAGE

By Carolida Steiner

With this issue, the *Newsletter* celebrates its 15th year in existence. Over the years, the *Newsletter* has helped us to stay in touch with one another and to stay abreast of theoretical, clinical, and practical issues affecting our professional lives. I feel privileged to have served as its Editor for the past three years. Stepping down from this position is made easier by my confidence in the ability of my successor. It is with real pleasure that I welcome Serena Reswick as our next Editor.

The effort to improve the quality of the *Newsletter* and to give it a more professional, less homespun look could not have been undertaken without the support and confidence of last year's and this year's Executive Boards. Several people deserve special thanks for their work on the new *Newsletter*. Eric Mendelsohn as "Journal Notes" Coordinator, Suzanne Phillips as Book Review Coordinator, and Gary Cox-Steiner as Presentation Coordinator made significant contributions to the quality of the *Newsletter*. I am pleased that they have agreed to continue this work next year. The "new look" of the *Newsletter* could not have succeeded as well as it has without the benefit of Serena's help and advice. I am confident she will do an excellent job as our new Editor.

**THE NEWSLETTER:
A LOOK BACK**

By Neil S. Grossman



To celebrate the 15th anniversary of the *ASPP Newsletter*, Carolida Steiner asked me to write about its history. I started working on the *Newsletter* in 1973. Two issues had been published before that with Abe Amchin as Editor.

My involvement with the *Newsletter* evolved from the enthusiasm generated by my class of candidates in the Postdoctoral Program. During this time, the Adelphi Society for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy was being formed. My classmates and I were very active in the program and the newly forming Society. The air was charged with excitement. It was a dynamic period with much happening and we were part of it. Three of my classmates and I volunteered for the publications committee. I became the chairperson of this committee and Editor of the *Newsletter*. The other members of the publications committee were: Helen Brody, Barbara Cohen, Ruth Formanek, Melvyn Katz, Harriet Knapp and Bob Mendelsohn. Everybody pitched in and worked together to produce a team effort.

The "Editor's Message" of our first *Newsletter*, reprinted in this issue, mentions the regular articles we featured. The *Newsletter* was published twice a year and a separate Calendar of Events was distributed once a month.

A Gordon Derner Story is appropriate at this point. We had a coffee break between the two Postdoc classes. During this period of time in our culture, coffee was made by the "low man on the totem pole," usually the female secretary. Gordon took on the task of making the coffee. It then became a status job with many of the students wanting to help. I would like to think that some of the enthusiasm in my class came from this approach of Gordon. Pitching in and helping with the dirty work was "in".

We also were trying to start a journal. This never proceeded very far. After two years, the task was passed on to another committee which eventually published a journal a few years ago. At this point our enthusiasm died down; we scaled down the *Newsletter* and published a version without most of the feature articles. We also changed from a publications committee to an Editorial Board. This Board screened articles submitted for publication. The *ASPP Newsletter* in this format was published monthly and continued for many years.

We made another change in the format of the *Newsletter* at the suggestion of Suzanne Phillips, a President of ASPP. We enlarged each issue and published the *Newsletter* less frequently.

(Cont'd on page 3)

The Newsletter: A Look Back *(Cont'd from page 2)*

One of the last tasks I undertook, during my time as Editor, was to interview Gordon Derner. Years were passing with more and more candidates starting the programs and graduating. People had less and less of a connection with the roots of the Postdoctoral Programs at Adelphi. In order to preserve our past, I suggested taping an interview with Gordon and publishing the transcript in the *Newsletter*. The Editorial Board approved the idea and Gordon agreed to the interview. It took a few years before we were able to find a time when both of us were available. Gordon died shortly afterwards and the interview was published in a special memorial issue.

I had wanted to retire from the editorship, but waited a year until a new Editor was selected. The work was too routine and had long stopped being a challenge. I had started to pursue two other activities which needed more time: presenting workshops on topics in family therapy and racing canoes in white-water slaloms. Do I miss being Editor of the *Newsletter*? I'm not sure. Anyway, I've been too busy to notice.

As to the future of the *Newsletter*, I think of the beginnings and hope that more of the candidates will again become involved with it.

EDITOR'S MESSAGE – 1974

This is the first issue of the newsletter produced by the newly formed publications committee. As conceived, issues will be published four times a year.

The newsletter was born with the publication of the first issue in June, 1972. It reached the infancy stage with the publication of the second issue in December, 1972. Attending at birth and during infancy were Drs. Abe Amchin, Aaron Balasny and Cynthia Glatt. Our thanks and sincere appreciation for the work they did.

This newsletter is for us, members of the Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis. The form and shape of it depend on what we want. Where it goes from here, and what it is depends on your needs and interests. Currently, the following regular feature articles will appear: committee reports, news about the membership, information about programs being offered, news of professional meetings, women and psychology, focus on us and exchange of ideas. Other articles of interest and brief professional papers are solicited from you for publication.

Our connection with the Postdoctoral Program highlights our common interest in intensive psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. But many of us also have other related professional interests. Our diverse skills and interests are reflected in the wide variety of positions in which we are employed. Let us exchange our ideas about psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, about the relation of psychoanalytic theory to other areas and about other topics that interest us. The newsletter can serve as a forum—we can have a dialogue on the various issues which concern us. This exchange does not have to be presented formally; a brief informal statement or letter style will suffice, although longer pieces are also welcome.

Before each issue of the newsletter you will receive a request for information and articles. Please help by submitting material for the newsletter. All material will be reviewed for content, style, and grammatical structure.

Neil Grossman

The above is a reprint from June, 1974.

CONGRATULATIONS!

MAY GRADUATES POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAM

PENNY BINSTOCK
FREYA GLICKSMAN
JAMES LASSITER
STEVEN LURIE
MARJORIE MALTIN
JAMES MOSS

MAY GRADUATES CHILD & ADOLESCENT PROGRAM

JOHN BERKMAN
GARY COX-STEINER
JENNY COX-STEINER
MAUREEN HOGAN
CAROL BRAUMANN LIPNER
BARRY STENGEL
CATHERINE WINDWER

AUGUST GRADUATES POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAM

DOROTHEA HAYS
JUNE ROTHBERG
ELIZABETH SLATER
CAROL WEBER

**REMEMBER THE ASPP
FALL RETREAT
THE INN AT JIMINY PEAK
THE BERKSHIRES
OCTOBER 16—18**

JOURNAL NOTES

By Jerry Gold

Mitchell, Stephen A. (1986) *The Wings of Icarus: Illusion and The Problems of Narcissism*. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 22, 107-132

The recent explosion of psychoanalytic literature concerned with narcissism as a clinical and theoretical issue has been centered around two particular approaches to this disorder, the self-psychology model of Heinz Kohut and the ego psychology-object relations model of Otto Kernberg. Contemporary writing about narcissism which uses an interpersonal model has been lacking, despite the heavy emphasis on the self and narcissistic phenomena included in the works of Sullivan, Fromm, and Horney. In the current paper, Mitchell offers an initial presentation of an interpersonal approach to conceptualizing and treating narcissistic phenomena. He places the issue of narcissistic illusions about self and others at the heart of the etiology, maintenance, and treatment of narcissism, and uses an examination of narcissistic illusions to differentiate his approach from other existing approaches.

Mitchell states that, in Freud's earliest conceptualizations of narcissism, illusions about the self and others (grandiosity, omnipotence, idealization, symbiotic fantasy) were viewed as infantile and primitive states of mind which served to distance the person from reality in a defensive, undesirable way. Mitchell suggests that Kernberg's current writings on narcissism share Freud's traditional opinion of narcissistic illusions. Grandiose self-images and idealized perceptions of others are, in Kernberg's view, compromise formations which both express and ward off explosive levels of oral aggression, envy and destructiveness. Thus, narcissistic illusions are taken to be sabotaging of the patient's dealings with reality, and are thought to be a major resistance and impediment to successful psychoanalytic therapy. Mitchell notes that Sullivan and Fromm seem to share this negatively tinged view of narcissistic illusion, despite the great differences between their theories and Kernberg's. Sullivan is quoted in this paper as labelling idealization and grandiosity as depleting and self-defeating security operations, which in therapy must be challenged vigorously in order to help the patient enter into more reality-bound interpersonal relations. A discussion of Fromm's writings indicates significant overlap with respect to his emphasis upon the analysis and surrendering illusions for the fullest experience of reality. In sum, Mitchell concludes that these major theorists concur that narcissistic illusions are regressive, defensive, intrinsically pathological phenomena which must be given up in the quest for health.

Following this discussion, Mitchell reviews the work of Winnicott and Kohut, whom he believes represent an alternative model for understanding narcissistic illusion. In the writings of these theorists, omnipotence, grandiosity, and idealization are construed as necessary developmental experiences upon which a healthy self is built, and without which self-pathology occurs. Within this model, illusions are neither resistances nor regressive defenses, but are considered "the growing edge of the patient's aborted self" (p. 115) and some of the necessary internal objects

or self-objects necessary to promote that growth. This view leads naturally to the technical innovations developed by Kohut: The newly flowering buds of the patient's incipient self, the omnipotent and grandiose illusions about the self, and the idealization of the analyst must be received in an empathic, warm, cultivating, and unchallenging way. Such an approach will lead to an eventual transformation of these illusions into a healthy, cohesive self as the normal developmental processes are reawakened.

In the remainder of the paper, Mitchell proposes a model for understanding grandiosity and idealization which falls midway between and synthesizes the competing positions of illusion as defense and illusion as growth. He states that the core constructs of this model are that it is based upon an interpersonal, relational position (that is, that psychic structure results from real experiences with significant others); and incorporates and relies upon Fairbairn's suggestion that the ties to past "bad" objects are crucial residues of interpersonal experience. Mitchell rejects the notion that experiences of omnipotence, grandiosity, and idealization of the other are specific to any one point in early development. He suggests instead that these issues are concerns which reverberate throughout life, being reworked and re-elaborated at all developmental stages. In correcting this "developmental tilt", he adds the idea that the critical factor in the narcissistically disturbed patient is the attitude that the patient takes towards illusions, rather than the mere presence of such psychic phenomena.

Borrowing Nietzsche's terms, Mitchell identifies three intrapsychic approaches to an individual's grandiosity, omnipotence, and idealizations: the Apollonian attitude, the Dionysian attitude, and the tragic attitude. Each attitude represents a characterological, interpersonally-derived way of construing, relating to, and acting upon the self-generated narcissistic illusions which are part and parcel of the intrapsychic processes of every individual at repeated points during each day, month, or decade.

The Apollonian relationship to one's narcissistic experiences is typical of the truly narcissistic patient. As illusions and fantasies are created and experienced, they are taken seriously, usually too seriously. They are believed, maintained in an active way, and brought into relationships with the expectation and demand that the illusions be made real; that is, be confirmed and accepted. This attitude requires that the patient (and participants in the patient's narcissism) sacrifice or suspend reality in the service of "an addictive devotion to self-enabling, idealizing, or symbiotic fictions" (p. 120).

The Dionysian relation to one's narcissism requires that overvaluation of self or others and all illusory experiences must be disavowed or denied in order to live in objective reality. Such a person is "addicted" to the external world and to an "objective" view of the self at the cost of any life within the self.

The third intrapsychic relationship to narcissistic phenomena, the tragic relationship, shares features of both the Apollonian and the Dionysian, but synthesizes these components into a dif-

(Cont'd on page 5)

Journal Notes (Cont'd from page 4)

ferent and, says Mitchell, more positive and healthier result. Aware of the folly of creating and recreating illusory images of self and others, the tragic individual continues to do so in the spirit of play, enjoying his or her illusions as if they are toys whose existence is certain at one moment, and then clearly absent when the demands of reality necessitate a more outward focus. The "tragic" relationship to one's narcissism allows a subtle and important enrichment of the self to occur, as illusion and reality are integrated in a meaningful dialectic between inner and outer life.

Mitchell locates the origins of these three character structures in the specific experiences between the developing child and parents. The tragic character style is fostered by parents who themselves approach their own and the child's narcissism in a tragic mode by participating in a free, playful, and passionate way in the child's experiences of omnipotent control, grandiose self-aggrandizement, and idealization of those parents. The tragic parent encourages the child's generation of illusions, adds to them his or her own fantasies and constructions, and then gently and gradually lets those illusions go. As the parent engages and disengages the illusory world of the child, he or she creates with and for that child what Winnicott has called transitional space, wherein the child can grow to cherish and to relinquish his or her narcissism.

The Apollonian (and Dionysian) character(s) grow out of parent-child relations in which parents model and insist upon absolute participation by the child in one of these modes. A parent addicted to his or her own narcissism will create a child who must be as perfect as that parent in order to be recognized, or who without fail must idealize that parent in order to attract some attention. Such efforts at reinforcing and sustaining the Apollonian illusions of the parent become the basis for object relatedness, and in this way illusions cease to be the intrapsychic toys of a healthy, creative mind. Instead, illusions are transformed into the only acceptable currency of interpersonal contact and relatedness. As Mitchell concludes,

"addictive parental illusions generate learned modes of contact in the child who will come to develop narcissistic difficulties, modes of contact which are felt to be the only alternative to the impossible option of no contact at all. The more addictive the illusion for the parent, the more unable the parent to experience the child in any other way, the more brittle is the child's personality, precariously anchored around those same illusions. If the parent is not able to play at illusion building and relinquishment, to offer a full and variegated emotional presence to the child, the latter participates in what is provided, and these forms of participation become the learned basis for all future interpersonal relations." (p. 122).

Following this formulation of the etiology of narcissistic disorder, Mitchell advances a new analytic strategy based upon the model of the tragic character. He believes that successful analytic work with the narcissistic patient requires the same interplay between the illusion and reality that is to be found in the healthy parent-child interaction. He notes that the most beneficial activity in the analysis is participation by the analyst in the patient's illusory experiences. Such participation rests on and

conveys to the patient an ability and a willingness to play and to create, to suspend reality in favor of the narcissistic mode of relationship. However, this participation must be balanced by gentle questioning of the favored role of such an integration in the patient's past and ongoing interpersonal experiences. Essentially, the analyst must promote illusory experience to the point where it can be examined, understood, and disengaged in an accepting and loving way. Mitchell believes that his approach incorporates the positive aspects of the approaches of both Kohut and Kernberg, while avoiding the negative participatory impact of either of their positions. He suggests that Kohut's passive encouragement and acceptance of illusion without some movement towards disengagement reflects complicity akin to the Apollonian parental model, while Kernberg's active confrontation and interpretation of illusion as regressive and defensive requires the patient to shift dramatically into a Dionysian mode and to forfeit the enriching and vitalizing aspects of his inner life for the analyst's addiction to reality.

Mitchell mentions Winnicott only briefly. However, I found the article to be very much in the spirit of Winnicott's work, both in its tone of respect for inner experience and for patients; and in its emphasis on play, transitional space, and the interweaving of reality and fantasy in healthy development and successful psychoanalysis. In applying some of the ideas first offered in an earlier paper on the "developmental tilt", Mitchell frees us from the need to see illusion and narcissism as necessarily infantile, regressive, and pathological; and in doing so applies Sullivan's maxim about schizophrenia, "we are all more human than otherwise", to a group of individuals (patients with narcissistic disorders) who often are discussed clinically and theoretically in a pejorative, disdainful manner. This paper is exceptionally clear and easy to read. The theory is expressed in experiential terms without superficiality or resort to any particular metapsychology or inferred intrapsychic structures, and this emphasis on experience-based descriptions makes the paper immediately more accessible and more relevant clinically. Mitchell's concerns about the potential Apollonian or Dionysian effects of analysis à la Kohut or Kernberg are provocative. His alternative approach seems viable and testable, although the paper suffers from brevity of discussion of technique and especially from the absence of clinical examples of that technique. Mitchell's proposals are important within the realm of current discussions about analytic neutrality, the role of interpretation, and the role of new experience within the psychoanalytic setting. Mitchell clearly is advocating an active, participatory approach on the part of the analyst wherein neutrality is construed as impossible; and the progression of engagement, disengagement, and mutual inquiry is emphasized over a more cognitively-oriented interpretive approach. From this perspective, "cure" results from synthesis and growth rather than through insight. The abilities to play and to be played with, to keep one foot in and one foot out of fantasy simultaneously, become necessary analytic skills. If this is true, then we as analysts will continue to alter many of our conceptions about what being an analyst is, perhaps even about how to train analysts, and who should be trained to be analysts.

Two further comments on this article should be noted before closing. First, Mitchell's ideas, though considerably different

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Journal Notes (Cont'd from page 5)

from those theorists he chose to review, are not unlike some of Horney's theories, particularly her chapter on narcissism in *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (1939) wherein she discusses the familial etiology of a rigid approach to illusions about the self and others. Secondly, Mitchell's discussion of parental Apollonian or Dionysian relationships to narcissism as the etiological basis for these character styles in the child reduces character and intrapsychic functioning to the status of sole consequences or resultants of interpersonal experience. That is, the child is shaped or conditioned in a direct, uncomplicated way to be who he or she is. Mitchell does not mention the role of internal motivation, intrinsic cognitive-perceptual style, or processes of illusion or internalization in modifying or influencing the impact of parental attitudes upon the child. We know from the developmental literature and from psychoanalytic work that children are far from passive recipients or registrants of experience, and that intrapsychic issues of disavowal, self-deception, and need will significantly color and shape the form of any experience as it is internalized. A more complex integration of the interpersonal and intrapsychic that takes account of these issues would complement what seems to be a useful and promising addition to present theories of narcissistic pathology.

~ NEWS AND NOTES ~

NEIL GROSSMAN presented a workshop, "New Directions in Psychotherapy: Combining Child and Family Therapy Techniques" in mental health clinics in Cheyenne, Wyoming, Fort Collins, Colorado, and Montrose, Colorado. In addition, he gave two workshops at the last APA Convention: 1) "Family Evaluation Skills for Child Psychologists" and 2) "Incorporating Family Assessment Information in Planning Recommendations for School Problems".

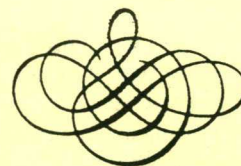
MARLENE KASMAN has become the Director of a new Eating Disorders Program at the Pederson-Krag Center in Huntington Station, N.Y. On March 30, she chaired a panel which presented an informational program on anorexia and bulimia at the Center.

ERWIN RANDOLPH PARSON was appointed as Editor of the 22-year old *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy* (now a quarterly Journal). He is interested in receiving papers on psychotherapy from Society members.

Erwin published a paper, "Transference and Post-Traumatic Stress: Combat Veterans' Transference to the Veterans' Administration Medical Center", *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis*, 14 (3), 349-375. In addition, he wrote a chapter entitled "Post-Traumatic Self-Disorders: Implications for the Treatment of Vietnam Veterans with Extreme Stress". This chapter appeared in *Human Adaptation to Extreme Stress: From Holocaust to Vietnam* by John Wilson, Boaz Kahana, and Zev Harel (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1987).

The upcoming issue of the *Newsletter* is due for publication in October, 1987. Items for the *News and Notes* column should be submitted by September 15. Since the *Newsletter* is being professionally published, items must be typed. They should be mailed to the Editor: Serena W. Reswick, 52 Nassau Boulevard, Garden City, N.Y. 11530.

HAVE A
GOOD
SUMMER



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