

## Accession 2000.45

Gift of Natalie Shainess, M.D. (donated between 1998 – 2000)

**Bulk dates: 1961 – 1992**

1.25 linear feet (3 document boxes)

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### Introduction

Dr. Natalie Shainess is a prominent psychiatrist and psychoanalyst living and practicing in New York City. She trained with some of the important figures in twentieth century psychoanalysis, including Clara Thompson, Harry Stack Sullivan, Freida Fromm-Reichmann and Karen Horney. Engaged in private practice for most of her career, she has conducted research, written and lectured on social and psychological aspects of the female identity. She has run workshops on the special considerations of the psychoanalytic treatment of women and testified in court and before Congress on issues such as abortion rights and pornography.

Dr. Natalie Shainess' materials are primarily professional papers (published, unpublished and presented), 1961 – 1992, relating to her research and opinions on gender identity, sexuality, Shakespeare and personality traits, feminine psychology and women's rights, from her perspective as a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. Reprints, typescripts and copies of ninety-two (92) journal articles make up the bulk of the donation. Additional papers include Congressional testimonies on pornography and drug advertising; poetry (published and unpublished); book reviews; commentaries; typescripts of unpublished works; and a copy of her book Sweet Suffering (1984), a copy of which is also catalogued in the MCPHU collection. Biographical materials include her curriculum vitae, listings of publications, commentaries and other activities and a photographic portrait.

### Additional Materials

Dr. Shainess was a participant in the oral history project conducted by the MCP Archives in 1977. Copies of her tapes and the transcript are available. Her daughter, Ann Spiegel, a pediatrician, was also interviewed on this project.

### Biography<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Major portions of this biography are edited excerpts from the introduction to Dr. Shainess's oral history transcript, written by Drs. Regina Morantz and Cynthia S. Pomerleau in 1978.

Natalie Shainess was born in New York City on December 2, 1915 to Clara (nee Levy) Shainess and Jacob (Jack) Shainess, both Jewish immigrants. Her only sibling, XXX was born in 1923.

Natalie studied piano at Julliard from 1927 – 1932. During her teen-age years the idea of entering medicine began to take root, inspired in part by a local physician. After high school, Natalie's plans to enter Vassar fell through in the wake of a sudden and severe family financial setback. Living at home, she attended New York University, majoring in chemistry and finishing in just three years.

Natalie's premed advisor at NYU was less than optimistic about the probability of her acceptance to medical school, being both Jewish and female. Because he had connections at the Medical College of Virginia, Natalie applied there and was enrolled in 1935. While in medical school she undertook a summer internship at the Raybrook State Hospital for Incipient Tuberculosis in Saranac, New York.

A serious illness in her senior year curtailed her opportunities to arrange an internship and nearly forced postponement of her graduation. At the last minute Natalie secured a rotating internship at the Wilkes-Barre (Pennsylvania) General Hospital. Further family financial difficulties forced her to turn down a proffered residency in internal medicine at Flower and Fifth Avenue Hospital. She accepted instead a position on the staff of the ILGWU Health Center involving both administrative and clinical duties.

In 1944 Dr. Shainess embarked upon a long course of training in psychoanalysis at the Washington School of Psychiatry, later the William Alanson White Psychoanalytic Institute; the following year she began a psychiatric residency at the New York State Psychiatric Institute.

During this period she married Dr. Herbert Spiegel, a fellow psychiatrist and psychoanalytic trainee. A week after the end of her residency year, in 1945, she gave birth to her son David; her daughter Ann was born in 1947. For the next several years she maintained a limited private practice, while continuing her psychoanalytic training and caring for two toddlers.

Once her daughter was old enough to go to school all day, Dr. Shainess completed her residency training (at the New York State Psychiatric Institute, 1952 – 1954) and in 1955 resumed her private practice. By then the family had moved to Great Neck, Long Island, 20 miles from the Manhattan office she shared with her husband.

As her children approached adulthood, Dr. Shainess pursued new career avenues. She had continued in part-time private practice but felt her career was failing to develop as she felt it should. Additionally, her relationship with her husband was foundering, and ended in divorce.

An invitation to serve as a discussant of a learned paper led to an intensive study of the psychiatric implications of menstruation. This endeavor was the beginning of extensive research, writing and lecturing; in the early nineteen-sixties, Natalie Shainess emerged as a recognized authority on the social and psychological aspects of the female identity. She wrote over 90 articles for professional journals and dozens more for lay publications. In 1984 her book *Sweet Suffering* was published.

In addition to several other teaching positions, she was on the faculty at the William Alanson White Psychoanalytic Institute from 1961 - 1981, and a lecturer in psychiatry at the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons from 1966 - 1980.

In the late nineteen-nineties, Dr. Shainess retired from private practice, motivated in part by the "change in psychiatry to a largely drug-oriented treatment and the 'drying-up' of patients accepting analytic treatment."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Shainess, Natalie in correspondence with MCP Hahnemann Archives , December 28, 1998. Accession 2000.45, Natalie Shainess Papers.

## Scope and Content

Dr. Shainess donated her papers in batches between 1999 and 2000. The material consists primarily of copies of published materials with a small amount of biographical material and a few unpublished manuscripts. Except for one photograph, all of the materials are textual, and are arranged in three series: *Biographical Materials*, *Published Papers* and *Other Activities*, in accordance with Dr. Shainess's organization of her curriculum vitae and publications list. In conversations about her donation Dr. Shainess felt there really was little else to give beyond her papers; what little correspondence was conducted was discarded, as were drafts and notes regarding her writing and lecturing.

Her curriculum vitae, in *Series I, Biographical Materials*, are a solid description of her education and professional activities and include a chronological list of "Other Activities" – lectures, testimonies and workshops. The CV and an edited, supplemented version of the publications list are important elements of the finding aid. Publication titles, commentaries and poetry titles are numbered and filed sequentially within their respective series. Book Reviews were not listed and are filed chronologically. Where typescripts were similar to published papers, they are filed together, in *Series II, Published Papers*. Many of the listed activities correspond with published articles, as noted on the finding aid copy.

The obvious importance of all of Dr. Shainess's materials is her contribution to the scientific and social thinking about sexuality, psychology and women's rights. The beginning of her writing paralleled the re-emergence of the feminist movement in the nineteen-sixties and her published work reflects the development of her theories about gender identity, "feminine psychology," sexuality and sexual disorders and the status of women and women's rights in general. She was an outspoken advocate to legalize contraception and for the right to legal abortion.

Ninety percent of her published professional articles are represented in the collection, found in *Series II, Published Papers*. (The publications list includes lay publications but none of those articles are included in the collection – they should be found easily elsewhere.) Written versions of talks, lectures and workshops are filed in *Series III, Other Activities*. Where expert witness and hearing testimonies were not actually published, the written versions of these events are also filed in *Series III, Other Activities*. CHECK

The weakness of the materials is the absence of much correspondence, notes and lecture or paper drafts. Copies of correspondence with the MCP Hahnemann Archive, in *Series I, Biographical Materials*, provide a few behind-the-scenes comments about her published work, revealing a bit more about Dr. Shainess and her perception of her professional self. Where relevant, copies of notes or letters are included with the noted papers. The original copies are in the accession file.

Another departure from the copies of published articles is the unpublished work in *Series III, Unpublished Papers*. Some were clearly submitted and rejected; others are typescripts with little or no documentation. These, along with the poetry, both published and unpublished, provide a less public view of Shainess' perspective.

Dr. Shainess critiqued her peers' opinions, perspectives and published works in the book reviews and commentaries in *Series II, Published Papers*. These materials collectively offer an overview of some of the literature and perceptions of psychiatry, sexuality and psychology of the era.

### **Series Description**

Biographical Materials are found in Series I, including Dr. Shainess' curriculum vitae and publications list, and a single photographic portrait. Copies of correspondence with the MCP Hahnemann Archive were added to this series.

Series II, Published Papers includes book reviews, commentaries and journal articles written by Dr. Shainess. The journal articles are listed in the publications list found in this finding aid.

All other activities are located in Series III, including unpublished papers, poetry, unpublished court testimonies, and written copies of verbal presentations.