

**Society for
Interpersonal
Theory and
Research**

SITAR Newsletter

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President's Message "Hello, I must be going..."

This is my last President's Message for the SITAR Newsletter. In fact, by the time you read this I will be settling into my new role as Past President (which goes into effect July 1st). For the past year, I have worked with a group of colleagues to whom I am truly indebted. I want to thank all the members of the Executive Council and the Society itself for their commitment, effort, and support. I had three goals for the past year: (1) oversee our evolution to a dues paying society, (2) substantially upgrade our website, and (3) debut a Society Newsletter. Thanks to all of you, these were achieved!

On May 18 and 19, 2001 SITAR held its fourth annual meeting in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Attendance was strong and the program (organized and chaired by Chris Wagner) offered a wide range of theoretical, empirical, and clinical presentations and posters. The meeting began with an opening session by Debbie Moskowitz, which is highlighted in this Newsletter, and briskly moved through



sessions on social interaction, complementarity, interpersonal aspects of personality, and a poster session. A wonderful bistro dinner in downtown Montreal capped a very busy day, giving attendees an opportunity to interact and let off some steam. It was a real treat!

Saturday started off with Len Horowitz receiving a special award in recognition of his efforts over the past 4 years as a founding father and first president of SITAR. Saturday's sessions on interpersonal theory, attachment, psychopathology, and psychotherapy

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Renew Your Membership Today!

If a membership renewal form was included with your copy of the Newsletter, it means that you need to send dues for the 2001-2002 membership year, which runs from July 1 through June 30. Take a moment right now to complete the renewal form, and send your dues payment of US\$25.00 to Steve Strack,

SITAR, P.O. Box 608, So. Pasadena, CA 91031-0608.

Recall that SITAR has only 56 members at this time. Your dues are important! Note also that only dues-paying members receive the newsletter and advance notices about the annual conference.

Ballots for Vice President Due by August 15

For the first time, SITAR members will elect the Vice President by mail ballot, as called for in the By-Laws. A ballot is included in this mailing along with an explanation of the Vice President's roles and statements from the two candidates, Drs. Lynn Alden and Kenneth Locke. Ballots are due August 15, 2001.

Interpersonal Theory in Italy: The Hidden Truth

by Rita Fioravanzo, Paola Beffa Negrini, and Gherardo Amadei

The strong psychoanalytic tradition of Italian psychology determined the way Interpersonal Theory was introduced in our country. From the beginning, there was a perceived conflict between the psychoanalytic drive model and the interpersonal paradigm, and this was stressed as insurmountable by the old psychoanalytic milieu. As a consequence, interpersonal theory was seen as antithetically-opposed to traditional psychoanalytic theory.

In spite of this hurdle, the interpersonal model could be seen to influence more and more of the clinical work of psychiatrists and psychotherapists who professed a psychodynamic orientation. This was apparent in many of the clinical case reports published in the last few decades. Unfortunately, very few



clinicians would openly admit to using an interpersonal theoretical point of view in

their treatments. This was the state-of-affairs that led our research group in Milan to call Interpersonal Theory “the hidden paradigm.”

As a means of illustrating this condition, we made a research report about the number of articles discussing interpersonal subjects that appeared in the 12 main Italian psychodynamic journals during the past 40 years. We started listing papers since September 1961, the date of the publication of the first Italian translation of a work by Harry Stack Sullivan (*Conceptions of modern psychiatry*). We are used to considering this event as the official entry of Interpersonal Theory in our culture.

Here are the results: We found only 18 articles! There are two other peculiarities we discovered during the study. First, the distribution of the interpersonal contributions was very narrow. Of the 12 journals we searched, only 5 contained papers with interpersonal topics, and 14 of the 18 articles appeared in just 2 of the journals. Seven were published in *Psicoterapia e Scienze Umane*, the journal of P. Galli of Bologna, who spent more than 10 years working in the USA during the 1960s; and 7 were published in *Ricerca Psicoanalitica*, the journal of P. Migone, another Italian psychoanalyst with a very broad American background. Second, all of the articles were published between the 1989 and 1999.

It may be of interest to note the content of the 18 papers we located for understanding the way that interpersonal theory was introduced in Italy. In chronological order they were: 1989, M. Conci and L. Pinkus summarized Sullivan’s “Schizophrenia as a human process” (at that time not yet translated); 1991, M. Conci explained Sullivan’s ideas about psychiatric training; 1991, translation of S. Mitchell’s article, “Contemporary perspectives on the self: Toward an integration (1988); 1991, Paolo Mi-

A literature search revealed only 18 published papers on interpersonal topics in the past 40 years

gone commented on the fading of differences between psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy in the light of the M. Gill’s work; 1992 saw the translation of Sullivan’s

“Theory of anxiety and the nature of psychotherapy” (1949); 1992, translation of S. Mitchell’s “The intrapsychic and the interpersonal: Different theories, different domains, or historical artifacts?” (1980); 1992, P. Battaglia discussed “Relational concepts in psychoanalysis” by Mitchell; 1993, translation of P. Bromberg’s “Interpersonal psychoanalysis and self psychology: A clinical comparison” (1988); 1995, translation

of M. Gill’s lecture at the William Alanson White Psychoanalytic Society in April 1982; 1995, M. Conci wrote about the need to develop a more international and multicultural framework for Italian psychiatry and psychoanalysis; in 1995 an interview of M. Enderle to E. Levenson about interpersonal theory was published; 1996, M. Enderle published on the relational and interpersonal turning point in the conception of human mind and psychoanalytic relationship; 1997, translation of M. White’s “Sullivan and treatment” (1952); 1997, M. Conci presented Sullivan’s effort to put psychiatry in the center of cross-disciplinary research; 1997, J. Safran discussed the interpersonal approach to clinical supervision; 1998, translation of Mitchell’s “When the interpretation fails: A new look at the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis; 1998, translation of M. Ermann’s lecture about the interpretation of dreams from a point of view instead of a content perspective; 1999, translation of I. Hirsch’s “Observing-participating, mutual enactment” (1996).

Our bibliographic research showed us other deficiencies: There have

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Dynamic Phenomena Within the Interpersonal Realm by Debbie S. Moskowitz

Interpersonal behaviors and affect fluctuate in ways that are not random. Advances in methodology (e.g., diary and time-sampling) and statistics (Hierarchical Linear Modeling or Multilevel Modeling) have made it possible to examine these fluctuations and consider their implications for the stability and cyclicity of behavior and affect across time, the contextualization of behavior and affect within and across situations, and the modeling of behavior and affect at the individual level. This presentation illustrated how interpersonal phenomena change as the emphasis and conceptualization shifts from constancy in interpersonal characteristics to an emphasis on fluctuations.

Major aspects of my recent work involve both the development of statistical methods to model intra-individual variability over time and context (Moskowitz & Hershberger, 2001) and empirical investigations of the "behavioral concor-

dance model" of personality traits, affect, and behavior (e.g., Brown & Moskowitz, 1998; Cote & Moskowitz, 1998; Moskowitz & Cote, 1995). This model posits that individuals differ in the affect associated with a given dimension of behavior, so that individuals with high scores on a personality trait experience positively valenced affect when engaging in congruent behavior compared with individuals with low scores on that personality trait. In contrast, individuals with high scores on a personality trait experience more negatively valenced affect when engaging in behavior discordant with the trait than individuals with low scores on that personality trait.

The behavioral concordance model assumes that both affect and behavior exhibit variability within persons over time. The model posits that the valence of affect experienced at a given moment depends on the interaction between stable person-

ality traits and transient behaviors. The covariation of affect and behavior is a meaningful and predictable expression of personality. This model has been supported for the traits of dominance and quarrelsomeness (the Interpersonal Circumplex) as well as for neuroticism and agreeableness. For example, agreeable individuals experience greater positive affect than disagreeable individuals when engaged in friendly behavior, and vice versa.

I am continuing to expand my research in integrative ways. I am collaborating on investigations of the possible role and variability of Tryptophan in the dynamic relationship between personality, affect and behavior. For more information about my work, please contact me at: dsm@ego.psych.mcgill.ca

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This summary of Dr. Moskowitz's opening address at SITAR's fourth annual meeting in Montreal, QC, Canada, was prepared by A. Pincus and S. Strack.]

President's Message (cont.)

followed, and we concluded with our annual business meeting.

The business meeting covered important topics and issues, including possible locations for next year's meeting, nomination of candidates for Vice President (see enclosed materials), and installation of new officers. The new officers for the coming year are Chris Wagner (President), Michael Gurtman (President-Elect), and me as Past President. Continuing in their current roles are Steve Strack (Executive Officer), Krista Trobst, Ken Locke, and Lynn Alden (members-at-large). Lynn Alden and Ken Locke were nominated as candidates for Vice-President. Following the coming election, the Executive Council will name a new member-at-large. We clearly have

momentum and enthusiasm to continue to develop and grow!

I will end this column with some comments on how I see SITAR growing. First of all, I welcome Chris Wagner to the position of President. Chris and I share many values and goals, but with a change of leadership comes a change in emphases and style. I support Chris's vision and efforts and know we are in good hands. SITAR has evolved from an idea, to a gathering, to an incorporated non-profit scientific society, and we have a core of dedicated members (please remember to renew your dues for the coming year!). Dialogue about how and where to expand and recruit new members continues to be needed. I invite anyone with opinions to use the listserv and discuss them with

the Society. Two years ago we were fortunate to have Jerry Wiggins and William Steig collaborate to develop artwork for some T-shirts and mugs as fundraising items. Just about everyone who wanted one of these got one. Whether it continues to be items such as these or a completely different approach, fundraising for SITAR needs to become a vitalized effort. Again, I invite anyone with ideas and creativity to contact us.

SITAR is moving along and I am happy to have been a part of it over the last 4 years and look forward to our future. SITAR has great potential and I encourage all members to participate. Thanks for a very rewarding year!

Aaron Pincus

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SITAR: Mission, Aims, and Activities

The Society is an international, multidisciplinary, scientific association devoted to interpersonal theory and research. By encouraging systematic theory and empirical research, it seeks to clarify the processes and mechanisms of interpersonal interactions that explain interpersonal and intrapersonal phenomena of normal and abnormal psychology.

The goals of the Society are (1) to encourage the development of this research, (2) to foster the communication, understanding, and application of research findings, and (3) to enhance the scientific and social value of this research.

The activities of the Society include: (1) regular meetings for the communication of current research ideas, methods, and findings; (2) discussion of work in progress; (3) maintenance of an inventory of data and data-gathering resources available for use by members of the Society; and (4) facilitation of collaborative research.

Cast Your Vote Concerning Amendments to the By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation by August 15

In May, 2001, the Executive Council approved minor changes to Article IX of the By-Laws to reflect differences in the fiscal and membership year, and minor changes in the Articles of Incorporation, which are needed to conform to IRS regulations. The changes were also approved by those in attendance at the Business Meeting held during the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Society in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, on May 19, 2001. Nevertheless, our By-Laws require that the proposed changes be approved by mail ballot of the membership. Accordingly, a ballot has been included with the Newsletter along with an explanation of the changes. Please return your marked ballot by August 15, 2001. Any questions about the proposed amendments may be directed to the Executive Officer, Steve Strack.

The Hidden Truth (cont.)

been only 5 works of Sullivan translated into Italian, and only 1 is still available from the publisher.

We checked books in the interpersonal field published during the past 40 years and the results were also poor: 8 translations and 2 original essays (one is our last book). Among these, 3 books were entirely dedicated to Sullivan's theory and 5 included extensive exposition of interpersonal theory while confronting different psychodynamic models. Actually, the only Italian essay entirely dedicated to illustrate the history and recent developments of interpersonal theory is our book, *Il paradigma celato. Il modello interpersonale nella psicologia dinamica* (The hidden paradigm. The interpersonal model in dynamic psychology), by G. Amadei (Milan, 2000) with two appendices by R.E. Fioravanzo: "The Interpersonal Explanation of Evolutionary Psychology of W'right" and "The Interpersonal Background of the Social Psychology of Mead".

The Interpersonal Group of Milan started with 15 people from different university departments and theoretical backgrounds who

were interested in studying and investigating Interpersonal Theory. We started very informally with Gherardo Amadei's proposal of "Saturday meetings" at the Psychological Department of the Catholic University of Milan. Gherardo promoted also, with the support of Catholic University and the great organizational work of Fulvia Ronchi, several training opportunities. Important experts in Interpersonal Theory, among them Lorna Benjamin, were invited to hold lectures and workshops in Milan. The entire group was trained in the SASB scoring system and in the application of INTREX. Afterwards we translated and validated in Italian the INTREX questionnaire and began to use it in the first interpersonally-oriented empirical studies (still in progress). We were also very pleased to have been offered the opportunity to collaborate with SITAR and participate with a poster presentation at the annual meeting in Evanston.

In the past few years we decided to transform our small group into a Society with a constitution, and open membership to a wide group of psychologists, psychotherapists, counselors and people working in the psychosocial field.

The aims of our Society, *Interpersonalità & Ricerca*, are to (a) promote an interpersonal culture among psychotherapists and psychoanalysts, and acquaint them with the tacit presence of many interpersonal assumptions in current psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic conceptualizations; (b) offer Italian researchers and clinicians an opportunity to be trained and updated on an international level in Interpersonal Theory; and (c) to exchange and confront clinical and empirical results of the application of interpersonal concepts in psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic work.

After 3 years of teamwork and training we will start in October 2001 an annual Master Course in Milan where we will offer to Italian therapists specific training in Interpersonal Psychotherapy, taught in part by foreign interpersonal experts.

Thank you for this opportunity to introduce our Society and work in the area of interpersonal psychology. We look forward to collaborating with SITAR in the future and welcome your interest in us. For more information please contact Dr. Rita Fioravanzo, Via Puccini 5, 20121 Milano, Italy; e-mail: rifiora@tin.it