

Commentary

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The social and intellectual climate of the late 1940s and early 1950s in America helped nourish humanistic, person-centered views of human behavior. During that time, psychologists such as Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow, David McClelland, Harry Murray, and Carl Rogers emphasized the positive growth potential in human character. The psychiatrist Harry Stack Sullivan proposed that personality can best be understood within the context of interpersonal transactions, and he provided a practical, street-smart understanding of psychiatric symptoms that was quite an advance over the traditional medical and psychoanalytic viewpoints. These ideas, along with the concept of dimensionalizing traits rather than categorizing them, inspired my colleagues and I to conduct our cooperative work on the interpersonal circumplex, which culminated in the publication of my monograph, *Interpersonal Diagnosis of Personality* (Leary, 1957).

Wow! Yes, the appropriate word is *wow!* I'm sure you will not accuse me of exaggeration if I tell you that the 1994 American Psychological Association (APA) symposium in honor of my work in interpersonal psychology and the publication of this special series are two of the great moments of my life, for which I thank Steve Strack, Bill Kinder, the wonderful panel of contributors, and the audience.

Although I am deeply touched by the honor of this series, I must say that I do not take it personally. All of us involved in this project are celebrating ourselves and our charming underground community of dedicated interpersonal searchers.

I think most readers—and certainly all of the contributors in this special section—were lucky to have been on the scene at this particular time and place in the evolution of human thought and human philosophy: The last years of the roaring 20th century and the upcoming millennium.

In preparing this commentary, I jotted down some notes about the people who have influenced all of us. It's an awesome list. First, I invoke the name of Abraham Maslow. I remember Abe, both at Berkeley and later at Harvard-Brandeis. What a radical guy! He taught that the unconscious is not this seething pool of Freudian id-like reptile creatures or woozy Jungian arche-

types (e.g., Maslow, 1962, 1964). Abe reminded us that there are wonderful things inside. Inner potential! Peak experiences! Maslow took us from the oral stage and the anal and the phallic and then beyond to self-actualization.

One of the presenters at the symposium mentioned Carl Rogers. In his own quiet way, Carl was more subversive than I. I learned it from him. He invented *client-directed* therapy (Rogers, 1951)! Wow! Is that not a counter-culture DIY (Do-It-Yourselves) idea? The next anarchic steps would be *citizen-directed* government, *self-directed* education, and so forth.

I got in trouble with the Deans of Discipline by trying to subvert the monopoly of the Medics, the Health Care Providers, and the Disease-Victim Industrialists. Not Carl! They never got mad at Carl because he was this Libertarian Humanist Anarchist cross-dressing as a gentle, dignified, sober scholar.

Many of the life-changing, revelatory adventures of my life were activated by the friendship, courageous support, and leadership of the legendary psychologist, Frank Barron. I here and now publicly thank Frank. He had been well trained in hardball Minnesota psychometrics before we became graduate students at Berkeley.

I recall that all of the psychology graduate students were asked to take the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI; Hathaway & McKinley, 1967) and then score it. This was my first exposure to the scary parade of pathological, disorder, psych-victim games. And as I watched my scores mount, I locked the door. Horrors! I was a chronic, acutely maladjusted, antisocial, crazed, effeminate, manic optimist! My God! I'm lucky I'm not in a mental hospital. No one is gonna see this! I can cover it up, I'm sure.

Then I cheered up. There was one wise person who came from muscular Minnesota who would understand what was going on. So Frank and I went to a bar and had a beer or two. And I confessed. "Frank, I got some terrible problems here. I don't think I should be in psychology. I don't think I should be running around loose!"

He picked up my profile and laughed: "Psychopathic Deviate, 80. Depression, 0. But Hypomania, very, very high." So I'm a hyperactive psychopath, for starters. And, yeah, I was pretty high on femininity. You see, I like poetry and flowers. Obsessive-Compulsive? Nope, I bottomed out there! But Schizophrenia, off the wall!

Frank looked at me with a very tolerant, older brother look—although I think I'm older than he is—and said, "It's all right, Tim. You should see my profile. Never score yourself on someone else's scale."

And then he explained to me that the Schizophrenia scale was made up of items like "I sometimes feel different from other people." Yeah. Or Paranoia: "Sometimes I feel like a special agent of God." Yeah!

Well ... I don't have to go on. I was delighted that I could continue to study pathological psychology and not commit myself to a mental hospital. But I was more delighted that I had a perceptive, sophisticated, worldly friend like Frank Barron. We all need wise pals to help us get through the bureaucratic jungle.

That was the beginning of my understanding about teamwork. Frank was very active in our research projects at Berkeley and Kaiser–Oakland. He left after a while because he was always moving on, but he was the architect of our major study on the effects of psychotherapy (Barron & Leary, 1955). We tracked several hundred outpatients coming through the clinics, some of whom had psychotherapy and some of whom did not.

We were scorekeeping. That's all it is, scorekeeping. Numbers! Numbers! Hits, runs, errors, ERA, RBI, games lost and won, triples and doubles. Correlations. Significant differences. Kaiser Foundation Hospital was a rich research location. There were all these records, scores, checklists, and questionnaires!

We Scorekeeping Quantum Psychologists were lucky. Kaiser had the first of its kind—a main frame computer!, which we all distrusted. But we could send our numbers over to the computer lab. Remember the old days? Your data were fed back on those big green and white sheets.

The results of our study were unsettling. A third of the patients got better, a third of the patients stayed the same, and a third got worse, whether they had psychotherapy or no treatment at all (Barron & Leary, 1955).

Most of us grad students wanted to be clinicians, junior psychiatrists. But not Frank. He was cool! So street smart. So worldly wise. He never wanted to be a junior or senior psychiatrist. He just did not use the disease model. Creativity and independent thinking were his obsessions. He taught me the idea of scorekeeping and coaching. Like in baseball, you have scores, and you put your scores up there. When the coach points out your weak points he doesn't think that you're a terrible person. You just strike out more often batting against left-handed pitchers.

Frank, with his Minnesota Viking tradition, taught me—and I was ready to be taught—that the basic thing here is *dimensionalizing* instead of categorizing. Scores instead of word labels. Forget that dreaded *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (4th ed; American Psychiatric Association, 1994). It lists these terrible, victimizing, labels: Histrionic, Obsessive-Compulsive, Hypomanic. Now they are coming up with new victim categories. Can you believe Double Depression? And Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder? *ADHD!*

Quantum psychology means that you *quantify* more than qualifying psychologists.

There is something nice about dimensionalizing. Higher, more extreme scores just indicate that you're a little too much of something good. So all you have to do is cool it out a little, maybe, or fine-tune. Don't let your paranoid alertness or energetic enthusiasm become addictive. In any case, we're not talking about diseases and victims. We are talking about behavior. Batting averages and percentages. Is this not a much more comforting and a much more open minded, humanistic, change-encouraging point of view? For that, I thank Frank.

And by the way, this was happening all around the country. In intellectual centers and psychological centers. We were all just surfing that post-World

War II wave. After all these 40 years, I think the best word to describe a lot of this stuff is, we were *humanistic*. That's kind of a dumb, corny buzzword today. But to be humanistic and person-oriented was very radical in the Eisenhower 1950s.

At Harvard in 1960 there was Gordon Allport, who described himself as a maverick. He was a conservative, scholarly, New England gentleman. Not what I would call a maverick. But Allport (e.g., 1937, 1955) popularized the concept of personality! Self-esteem. Self-confidence. Self-expression. Individuality! I didn't realize until later the explosiveness of these ideas.

Bob White, the elegant, courtly chairman of the psychology department, called me over one day when we started our drug research. He smiled and said,

You know, Timothy, we're watching what you and Frank Barron and Richard Alpert and Aldous Huxley are doing over there at 5 Divinity Avenue. I want to let you know that a lot of us have stirred similar controversies. About 15 years ago I wanted to do hypnosis research in Boston. I tell you, they came down on me for that—practicing hypnosis without a medical license or approval from the academic bureaucrats.

The delightful thing about these sophisticated and diplomatic Harvard gentlemen is that they were quite deliberately lobbing mind grenades over the wall into the medical victim-disease camp.

Now, let us consider David McClelland's *achievement motive* (e.g., McClelland, 1961; McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953). David wasn't talking about medical diseases. Or victims. Achievement is something that could be taught.

And now let us toast Harry Murray, a founding father of the OSS-CIA, by the way. Many people know of Murray's (e.g., 1938) work in personality theory. Right after World War II, the most sophisticated academic topic was personality psychology. Murray defined human nature in terms of *needs*. Isn't that wonderful! Human behaviors are no longer classified as victim-diseases. You have a *need* this and a *need* that: Need Achievement, Need Autonomy.

Another delightful thing about many of these Harvard people, particularly Harry Murray, was their cultural scholarship and aesthetic sensitivity—their interest in the psychology of art and literature. No question about it. Harry Murray was much more interested in Herman Melville than in the Wechsler-Bellevue. Over his office-house on Divinity Avenue he mounted the figure of a white whale.

I found out later (and this produced little bumps on my back) that we were practicing Visionary Humanism in the very spot where Ralph Waldo Emerson spun out his visions. I guess that's why they originally called it Divinity Avenue.

You know, Ralph Waldo Emerson is considered America's number one philosopher. Please do not forget that Brother Ralph was thrown out of Harvard for the same reason that Dick Alpert and I were bounced. We were

saying exactly the thing he was saying: "Don't look up to the temples. Don't get obsessed by the Bibles and theology books. Look within! Look within!"

It was interesting, too, that between our headquarters on 5 Divinity Avenue and the Harvard Yard we had to pass a tiny jewel-like chapel. I didn't notice it for a couple of years, until I finally got curious. It was the Swedenborg Chapel.

Emanuel Swedenborg? He was this big Swedish mystic who boggled the minds of his time by advocating visions and communication with spirits and angels. Emerson's father was a Swedenborgian minister.

I'm talking about our luck inhabiting the hallowed psychological terrain of these giants of American scholarship. You are waiting, of course, for me to invoke the greatest name of all, William James. The guy who founded the first psychological laboratory in America. There were the Europeans Wundt and Helmholtz and Fechner, and then James.

This is thrilling stuff. Perhaps you know that William James dabbled with right-brain activating drugs. He got into a bit of a hassle using hashish and opium and nitrous oxide. He wrote a book called *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (James, 1902), which many consider our greatest visionary tract.

Morton Prince (1906, 1914) kept the psychedelic tradition going. Prince was famous and, as a matter of fact, he was even suspect, because he introduced a new scientific study called *abnormal psychology*. Abnormal psychology!

Later I began to think about this authoritarian concept. Normal? Tell the truth: Would you rather be abnormal or normal? Every adjusted person is normal in the same way. It takes courage and imagination to maintain a unique, abnormal life style.

It seems very tame now, but it took courage and high self-esteem to come out with these risk-taking ideas a century ago.

I had never seen a picture of Harry Stack Sullivan before the symposium. As a matter of fact, as a grad student I tried very hard to find out more about him. In the 1950s Sullivan was an amazing recluse. He was like Thomas Pynchon the novelist, or J. D. Salinger. Sullivan simply would not play any of the literary academic games. You never caught him at an APA convention—or if he was there, he was probably tending bar and taking notes on the saloon talk.

Harry Stack Sullivan is still a wonderful mystery to me. So I have another great discovery ahead. Thanks to the references provided by Jerry Wiggins, I'm going to get Sullivan's biography *Psychiatrist of America: The Life of Harry Stack Sullivan* (Perry, 1982).

Sullivan's (1953a, 1953b) notions about human nature were common sense, street smart. For example, a patient comes in performing sorrow. He's a master at playing the role of a melodramatic, sad, and messed-up victim.

I can remember in the early staff meetings at Kaiser that the social worker and the psychiatrist and the internist would describe this pathetic fellow: He should be hospitalized; probably get electric shock therapy (ECT).

And then our scorekeeping technicians would come to the diagnostic conference and say,

Well, the patient is very high on hysterical dramatization and hypochondria. He is deeply committed to the victim role. Forget lobotomy or ECT. This dear, confused chap, would do anything possible to get us to recognize him as victim. He is a genius at provoking sympathy.

The interpersonal viewpoint came from the street smarts of Harry Stack Sullivan.

Let me say a few words of praise for the members of our Harvard Psychedelic Research Project: Richard Alpert; Ralph Metzner; Flo Ferguson; George Litwin; Gunther Weil; the magnetic African American psychiatrist Madison Preznell; and Walter Clark, the retired divinity professor who, at the age of 70, started taking right-brain activating drugs searching for The Illuminating Experience. They're all heroes in my book.

A reminder here: We were scorekeepers of human behavior. The scorekeeper knows the score!

Before finishing I would also like to honor my pals at Berkeley in the 1950s. What a hive of buzzing humanism there! Hugh Coffey. Erik Erikson. Jean Walker McFarlane. Group therapy. Group dynamics. Jean McFarlane started that legendary longitudinal research—the California Study. We're all lucky to share the wisdom of these people.

In conclusion, I want to again thank everyone involved in the special series for this great moment. Here's a toast to our glorious past, our lively present, and our unpredictable future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article was based on an oral commentary given at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Los Angeles, August 15, 1994, in a symposium titled "Interpersonal Theory and the Interpersonal Circumplex: Timothy Leary's Legacy," chaired by Stephen Strack.

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Received July 14, 1995