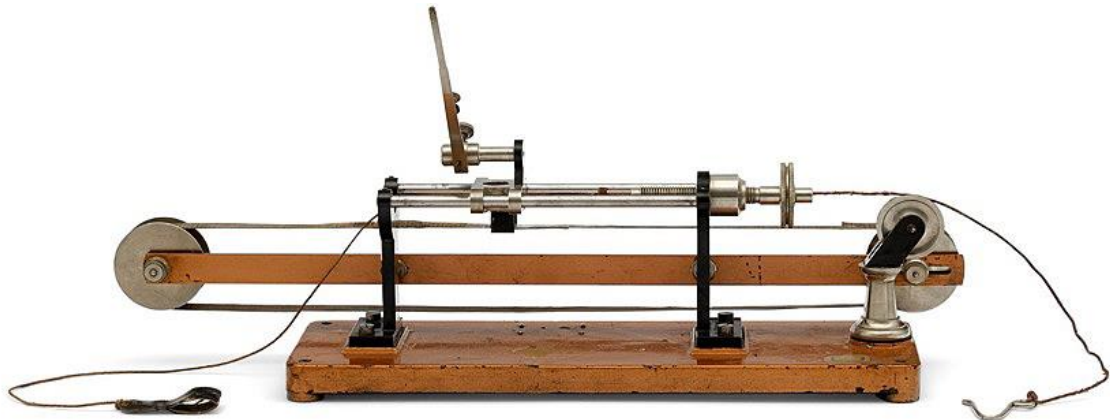


XXX INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

EMPIRICAL STUDIES IN PSYCHOLOGY

MARCH 22 – 24, 2024

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE



INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY
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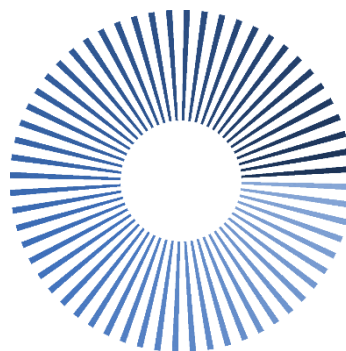
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Ergograph, after Mosso (G. Boulitte, Paris)

Device for testing the rate of fatigue under conditions of monotonous motion and loading. It consists of an arm support, a device for accurately measuring the shifts of a weight, and a set of weights (50 g – 2 kg). The subject's forearm is made immobile by firmly resting on the semicircular arm support. The forefinger and the ring finger are introduced into the tubes, while onto the middle finger a loop of a cord is fastened, carrying a weight. The lifting of the weight moves a slide. The height of a lift is traced with a metal pen and recorded onto the kymographic band. The lifting of the weight is also monitored by means of a sliding tape-measure (one meter-long). The tape rolls over two wheels unidirectionally, due to a blocker installed on the slide. Such a mechanism allows the evaluation both of a single lift and of the total amount of work expressed in millimeters. Some parts of an arm support are missing. The device was construed by Italian physiologist Angelo Mosso (1846-1910).

From the Collection of Old Scientific Instruments of the Laboratory of Experimental Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

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“DO YOU EVEN LISTEN TO ME?”: PHASES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COUPLES’
CONTACT EPISODE IN THE INITIAL STAGE OF COUPLE THERAPY

Dušanka Jovanović^{1,*} & Sanja Grbić²

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From the perspective of the dialogic approach, the initial stage of partner therapy is characterized by monitoring the dialogic exchange of partners, to identify the characteristics of relational dynamics that facilitate or hinder constructive exchange. These relational micro-processes, however, are largely unexplored. The goal of this exploratory study (as a part of larger research) is to map in-session couple dynamics in the initial stage of therapy. The question that guided us was: what formally defined phases characterize the development of partner interaction? The participants were six heterosexual couples (29–45 years old, ≥ 2 years together, 5 without children). The data was collected through videotaping the second therapy session. The material for the analysis were contact episodes: couple interaction regarding the self-selected topic, during which the therapist entered the observer role. Thematic analysis was applied by the authors, with the interpretation based on Martin Buber’s dialogical approach and theory of Gestalt therapy. Five themes, i.e., phases of the contact episode were identified, with some variations of these phases being more and some less supportive of constructive exchange. The first phase is The emergence of the need, in which the couple defines the individual or relational needs and the obstacles to their realization. Variations concern participation in problem definition (one-sided or mutual), way of defining (as relational or as personal), and communication style (e.g., criticizing). The second phase is the Habitual attempt to satisfy the needs and concerns couple’s usual problem-solving style, which can be less constructive (e.g., blaming, fruitless confrontation), or more constructive (communicating personal shortcomings and boundaries). The third stage is Impasse, in which repeated unsuccessful attempts at resolution lead to a feeling of being stuck. This could appear in the form of polarization of positions, or the form of resignation and withdrawal. The fourth stage is Novelty and regression, in which a constructive change appears briefly before it is quickly lost by returning to previous communication patterns. The fifth stage is a Constructive dialogical relationship, in which the novelty introduced by one partner brings either calmness and reflection, or empathy and validation of the other partner. The paper extends the efforts of the integrative family therapists regarding the process diagnostic in the initial stage of couple therapy, by offering tools that could be useful in the shorter time frame – within one therapy session.

Keywords: couple therapy, in-session couple dynamics, dialogical approach, Gestalt therapy, qualitative study

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