

RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH NEWS

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

William R. Cupach

I think it is safe to say that IARR has moved beyond its transition phase. All the key symptoms indicate our association is healthy and vital. We have a strong base of membership, and there appears to be potential for significant growth. The financial standing of the organization is solid. The Board of Directors approved a modest increase in membership dues, largely to cover the costs associated with our nifty automated membership services. Still, IARR membership remains a tremendous bargain given the benefits it offers—including our flagship publications, *PR* and *JSPR*.

The continued growth and success of IARR requires the engaged involvement and commitment of its members. I strongly encourage you to *participate actively* in IARR. There are many ways you can contribute to the association: (1) Why not serve on one of the association's committees? If you are interested, drop a note to president-elect Terri Orbuch or secretary-treasurer Chris Agnew. (2) IARR always needs new venues for meetings and volunteers to serve as local hosts. Consider hosting a conference or a new scholar's workshop. (3) Many IARR members deserve recognition for their impressive accomplishments in scholarship, teaching, and service. Nominate a colleague for one of the association's ten awards. (4) Lots of folks who study and teach about relationships are not currently IARR members. Help publicize IARR and recruit a new member to the association. (5) Support our publications by submitting an item to *Relationship Research News*, sending your best scholarship to *Personal Relationships* and the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, and serving as a manuscript referee. If you are interested in reviewing, contact Paul Mongeau (*JSPR* editor) or

Susan Sprecher (*PR* editor). (6) Nominate yourself or a colleague to serve a stint on the Board of Directors. (7) Soon we will be holding association-wide elections. Three Board positions will be filled: President-Elect, Publications Chair, and Program Chair. Please be sure to vote!

Congratulations to Susan Boon, the newly selected editor who brings you this newsletter. Please join me in expressing gratitude to Kathy Carnelley and Kory Floyd, the outgoing editors of *RRN*. They did a fabulous job of keeping our newsletter interesting, informative, and innovative.

Our bi-annual conference in Madison is just around the corner. Aside from being a delightful city, Madison represents a special venue as the seeds of IARR were sewn there more than two decades ago when a small group of scholars assembled to share ideas about the study of relationships. My how we have grown! The number of submissions for the upcoming Madison conference exceeds that of the very well-attended 2002 Halifax conference by 25 percent. Thanks to the considerable labor of Scott Christopher (program planner), Linda Roberts and Denise Solomon (local hosts), the meeting in Madison promises to be exceptionally stimulating—both intellectually and interpersonally.

My term as President expires this summer when Terri Orbuch takes over the reins. My tenure on the Board of Directors has been immensely gratifying, particularly because it afforded me the opportunity to collaborate with such talented and dedicated colleagues. To all my fellow Board members, committee chairs, committee members, and editors of our publications, my sincere thanks for your hard work, collegiality, and good cheer.

IARRC 2004 ON-LINE

See the IARRC web site at <http://IARRC/commarts.wisc.edu>, or use the link to the conference web site from <http://www.iarr.org>.

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Relationship Research News is published twice a year, once in September and once in April. Contributions are very welcome and will be published as space permits. Announcements, letters to the editors, cartoons/humor, teaching tips, and other information relevant to IARR members are all appropriate. If you would like to contribute a feature article or personal commentary, please submit a brief (one paragraph) description to the editors first (please do not send manuscripts). Submit all materials to Susan Boon, Department of Psychology, University of Calgary, 2500 University Dr. NW, Calgary, AB T2N 1N4, Canada; sdboon@ucalgary.ca. The deadline for final copy is September 1 for the Fall issue and April 1 for the Spring issue. (Inquiries regarding Feature Articles are welcome at any time.)

FROM THE EDITOR'S**DESK**

by Susan Boon
University of Calgary

It is truly an exciting time to be a relationship researcher! As Bill Cupach's article indicates, IARR is thriving and poised for continued growth and expansion in the coming years. The long list of accomplishments celebrated in the Member News and Updates section provides clear evidence to support his claims, attesting to the vitality of our field and its promise for the future. 2004 also marks the 20th anniversary of the first international interpersonal relationships conferences held in Madison, Wisconsin in 1982 and 1984. This year's IARR conference—also to be held in Madison—thus commemorates more than two decades of scholarly meetings that have brought together the best and brightest relationship researchers from around the world and across disciplines.

We have a wide assortment of pieces for your reading pleasure in this issue of Relationship Research News. In the spirit of our belief that the field of relationship research faces new and exciting challenges in the years that lie ahead, the new RRN editorial team offers you their first feature article, "Relationship Research in a New Millennium." The article presents a cross-section of members' opinions concerning what the nature of these challenges and opportunities might be, as well as a thought-provoking response to members' prognostications, written by Steve Duck.

We also have two columns in our Lighter Side section. Dave Kenny, veteran Lighter Side contributor, argues for implementation of a

Gottman-esque "videotape test" to determine which dating couples should be allowed to proceed to marriage and which should be prevented from "walking down the aisle" (the couple from "My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiancee" come to mind for the latter category...). And Nad Yranac, with his first (but hopefully not last) piece for the Lighter Side, presents a compelling case for expanding our research foci to include the study of monosexuality, or the relationships we have with ourselves.

Paul Wright also offers his insights on the life and occupations of a retired relationships researcher in his new column, "Ruminations of a Relationship Researcher Retiree."

You will find several book reviews in this issue of the newsletter, as well. IARR members have been busy writing and editing books on various topics of interest to both relationship scholars and the general public and we include reviews of several of these here for your interest.

We also bring you updates on the 2004 Madison Conference, just a few months away now. Scott Christopher (Program Chair) and Linda Roberts and Denise Solomon (Local Arrangements Co-chairs) are gearing up for a conference certain to provide the intellectual and interpersonal stimulation we've come to expect from these conferences. Be sure to check out the details at the back of this issue. And be sure to plan to attend. I know that I, for one, can't wait to see what Steve Duck and Robin Gilmour looked like 20 years ago (see the conference memories bullet in the conference update feature).

This is the first issue of RRN to be published under my tenure as editor. I would like to thank the IARR Board for thinking well enough of my abilities to recruit me for this position and Kathy Carnelley for her gracious assistance with queries on virtually every imaginable aspect of the production of this newsletter. She and Kory Floyd and previous Newsletter editors have left my editorial team and I big shoes to fill. We hope that you will find that the current issue of

RRN follows in the tradition of excellence these earlier editors and their editorial teams began.

Finally, I'd like to thank my associate editors for all their help. I couldn't have done it without them.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Relationship Research in a New Millennium

With a commentary
by Steve Duck

Earlier this year, the RRN editorial team sought members' input concerning the challenges that relationship researchers will face in the next few decades. Below are responses from a cross-section of members—some who responded of their own initiative to our call for contributions and some who's contributions we solicited in an effort to include an assortment of perspectives reflecting the diversity of our field and our membership. Special thanks to each of the contributors for offering their thoughts and "predictions" about where the field will or should head as we continue our entry into the New Millennium.

Following the last of members' contributions, you will find a short invited commentary by Steve Duck. Steve offers some critical reflections on the act of predicting the future and ends with a call for increased "interdisciplinarity" in our research endeavors. We invite you to read the various contributions and Steve's commentary and form your own plans and visions for the future.

Comments by Franz J. Neyer (Psychology, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) and Frieder R. Lang (Psychology, Martin-Luther Universität Halle -Wittenberg)

The 21st century promises to be one of tremendous political, economic, demographic and social changes, most of which have their origin in significant developments that occurred over the last century. All of these changes exert direct and strong influences on people's personal life histories, patterns of living, and social relationships. First of all, we think that people are not only passive victims of these changes but also, and to a substantial extent, active creators of their ecological, cultural, and social environments. This is not to say that everybody can be the architect of his or her own fortune regardless of external constraints, as we know about the deleterious effects of environmental and other disasters. However, we believe that social scientists, and among them most importantly, relationship researchers, need to acknowledge that people live their life and create their environments through actively constructing, shaping, and maintaining their social and personal relationships. Starting out with these premises, we see five major challenges for relationship research in a rapidly changing world:

First, relationship researchers need to more fully take into consideration that **people bring their nature** to their relationships. In rapidly changing societies, it seems important to think of relationships from a broad evolutionary perspective, which accounts for how relationships and social behavior have emerged through human evolution. This implies to ask for the functions of seemingly obvious relationship phenomena such as preference for close partners and for equitable exchanges. For example, kinship within and beyond the immediate family points to the core of evolutionary theory, although the social and behavioral implications of kin relationships are still not well understood. Evolutionary perspectives on relationships may become especially relevant for better

understanding of how individuals respond to changes of human and economic resources in their social worlds.

Second, relationship researchers should consider that **people bring their socio-historical and cultural tradition** to their relationships. Cultural diversity will be a central topic of relationship science, because migration has rapidly increased during the past decades, and there are now more migrants in the world than at any time in history. Relationship science should not only address the risks and benefits of cultural diversity, rather research should investigate intercultural differences in relationship domains. For example, attachment bonds are believed to be ubiquitous. However, very little is known whether and how attachment styles differ between cultures. Culture also implies processes of group membership and of intergroup relations that govern the rules of interpersonal relationships. All people are members of a myriad of diverse social groups, which – more or less – determine their self-definitions and their social behaviors.

Third, relationship research should not forget that **people bring their individual personality** to their relationships. When people become committed with each other and form relationships, they bring their most important resources to their relationships. People's personalities constitute of what makes people unique and different from one another, i.e., their basic temperaments and dispositions and their identities as reflected in their personal narratives. Relationship research should more profoundly appreciate the contribution from such more or less enduring individual differences, because these make dyadic relationships different from one another.

Fourth, relationship research should acknowledge that **people bring their adaptive and self-regulatory capacities** to their relationships. Over the life course, individuals continuously acquire new skills for and adaptive strategies in mastering the expected and more

unexpected challenges and tasks in everyday life. Individuals select, enhance and mold their social relationships in accordance with their goals and standards, but they also adjust and reorganize their internal standards and expectations to the opportunities in their social environment. Any relationship of two individuals, thus, always, involves the efforts of two individuals to master urging challenges and demands that occur within and outside that relationship context.

Finally, because relationship research should integrate nature, culture, and personality, the scientific **study of relationships should be interdisciplinary** and guided by a multi-method approach. Moreover, relationship researchers should account more for the fact that any relationship involves at least two individuals that may have diverse perspectives, and that relationships have a history, which have often unfolded over long periods of time.

Comments by Ofra Mayseless (Social and Developmental Psychology, University of Haifa)

What do you think are the major challenges relationship researchers will face in the next 100 years?

1. To combine psychological/communication/ sociological study of relationships (areas which have already started speaking with each other) with biological and neurological research. Basically, finding the biological substrata of various relationship dynamics.

2. Map the different kinds of ways in which people are important to other people in a comprehensive way to arrive at an language of relationships that will be broad and acceptable to different disciplines. Basically come up with a more general theory of how and why "people need people"

3. To combine relationship research with spiritual strivings of people which seem to rise steeply in the last decade.

What advances in relationship research do you think will enable researchers in our field to make important contributions to science (basic or applied) in the 21st century?

1. Major advancement in measurements.
2. Offering broad more encompassing conceptualizations which still take into account what we have learned so far about relationships.
3. Try not to study the trivial or more expected outcomes (e.g., intimacy is good for you).

Comments by Elaine Hatfield (Department of Psychology, University of Hawaii)

Deep down, when thoughts of mortality arise, we all think: “If only it were possible to fly back 500 years from now to find out how X came out” . . . (Fill in any great debate in relationship research.) If only we could come back and find the answer to the scientific questions that have plagued us. Well, in Social Psychology, I think we are about to be given that chance—or its near equivalent. There are times when technological change allows scientists to take giant strides forward. This is certainly one of those times. You can see answers to long debated questions hovering there on the skyline.

Let me give you some examples from my own field—research into passionate love and sexual desire.

When Ellen Berscheid and I wrote *Interpersonal Attraction* (in 1969), we discovered that almost nothing on passionate love existed. It was pathetic. We had to speculate about the nature of love with little or no data . . . and precious little experience of our own . . . to guide us.

What a change has occurred in 30+ years! Today, scholars from a variety of theoretical disciplines— social psychologists, anthropologists, evolutionary psychologists, neuroendocrinologists—are addressing the same issues we have struggled with. They are employing an impressive array of new techniques as well: they are studying primates in the wild and in captivity and pouring over fMRIs. Historians are now studying history from the “bottom up” rather than the “top down.” Studying the lives of not kings and queens but the lives of the majority, utilizing demographic data (marriage records, birth and death records, records of divorce, architecture, medical manuals, church edits, legal records, songs...

In the very near future, I suspect that relationship researchers will be well on the way to answering questions such as these:

- Is passionate love, in fact, a cultural universal?
- When in the phylogenetic scale did passionate love begin?
- What is passionate love? A cognition? An emotion? A behavior? All three?
- Why are people in the throes of love so crazed, not being able to think of anything else? Why are their feelings so tumultuous—traveling from elation to blackest despair in a matter of seconds? Why are they willing to take such stunning risks for love?
- Do men and women love with equal passion? In the same way? Are such differences genetic or cultural?
- Are passionate love and sex the same thing? Kissing cousins? Or totally different constructs? The Christian troubadours and Arab singers, for example, make a sharp distinction between romantic love and sex.
- Are there some people who never love? Who

are love blind? Or are they just unaware of their feelings?

- How long can love last?

Today's relationship research is truly revolutionary and the answers we are getting just at this moment are stunning. Not surprisingly, I suspect that we will walk away from hearing of this research filled with new ideas and exciting questions. It was ever thus.

Comments by Sue Johnson (Psychology and Psychiatry, Ottawa University)

I am a clinician first so my thoughts on the future of relationship research have a bias - I think there will be more and more integration between basic research and clinical interventions - developmental, social and clinical will come together - that attachment research will be a major major part in this integration - and that clinical studies will begin to feedback into basic research - for example in the studies on EFT (www.eft.ca) we are looking at a concept we call attachment injuries - moments of abandonment at times of high need - when we help couples resolve them - trust and relationship satisfaction goes up - forgiveness goes up - attachment anxiety goes down - and now we are going to look at exactly how the therapist helps couples do this.

The "hot" topic of the next century will be adult attachment

- understanding it and USING it to intervene in distressed families and couples and in promoting individual growth in individual therapy - integrating basic research into clinical practice is the big challenge
- having a theory of adult love offers the couple and family therapist a map and a clear goal for change
- have to be able to measure attachment behaviors more accurately and easily

Lots of challenges

- putting individual disorders into a relational context
- showing that changing relationship quality impacts individual depression and PTSD for example

Comments by Holly Latty-Mann, Ph.D. President, The Leadership Trust Former Executive Professor of Leadership Development, Wake Forest Babcock Graduate School of Management

An area of research that has been sorely neglected yet takes prominence in the news (having affected so many lives) is leadership and ethics. What characterizes our most effective leaders? What is it that they are doing that their ineffectual counterparts are not doing?

As for ethics, that will be a more challenging construct to measure. Furthermore, given we can no longer employ Milgram-type experiments, this will demand tremendous methodological creativity.

Finally, there is tremendous work going on in the applied world without the benefits of research. For one, the leadership industry has changed dramatically in the last generation because what used to work no longer does. Interviewing those who have worked with hundreds/thousands of leaders could offer a nice starting place for those who have an interest in this important yet neglected area of study.

Comments by Elizabeth A. Suter (Communication Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln)

The challenge I see that will be the greatest is addressing diversity in relationships. My own line of research looks at how identities are constructed in talk. Currently I am looking at how gay and lesbian families communicatively manage their identity. How their family ties are

challenged by others and how they respond to these challenges. This is just one example. Social diversity demands our attention. I believe that as we recruit participants to reflect the reality of today's relational demographics, we will need to revise our research questions, theories and models to reflect underlying erroneous presumptions, such as the presumption of heterosexuality and the presumption of access to marriage.

Comments by Rebecca Adams (Sociology, University of North Carolina at Greenboro)

Lately personal relationship researchers have been paying more attention to the impact of social structural and cultural context on personal relationships. As a sociologist, I am hoping that this trend continues and develops further. Two specific challenges related to this general one will be to study virtual and cross-cultural relationships. A great deal of personal relationship theory assumes that the participants at least initially interact face-to-face; now that this assumption is clearly no longer valid, scholars will need to modify old theories and develop new ones if we are to understand the impact of contemporary developments in communications and transportation technology on social life. Although family researchers have conducted studies in a variety of cultural settings, most of the research on friendship and other types of non-family close relationships has been conducted on general North American populations. We therefore do not yet currently understand how culture shapes relationships among those who share the same values, beliefs, and norms, let alone what happens when people form and maintain relationships across cultural or subcultural boundaries.

Comments by Pearl Dykstra (Social Demography, Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute)

Challenges for relationship researchers as the 21st century begins: A few quick thoughts

It will be all the more important to study personal relationships against the backdrop of *social change*. Examples of kinds of social change to consider:

- *Extension of life*. People are living longer lives. They are aging together. It is not uncommon for lives (friendships, siblings, parents and children) to overlap 60 or 70 years. Ironically, relationship research tends to focus on the early stages of the life course. It's time to expand our focus to later stages of life or to pay greater attention to intergenerational ties (e.g. friendships between people belonging to different generations). Do people with cross-generation friendships age better?
- *Changing marriage patterns*. Family networks are becoming more complex with the rise in divorce, repartnering, and childbearing in successive partnerships. Are people's networks expanding (with stepies, halfsiblings, ex-partners, etc)? How do people negotiate 'complex' family ties (i.e. biological and non-biological kin)?
- *Informal partnerships*. Not all couples opt for marriage, preferring to cohabit unmarried or to have separate households. How different are these kinds of partnerships (e.g. in terms of commitment, the outcomes for children, participation in friendship networks, relationships to in-laws).
- *Migration*. European countries are becoming 'receiving' countries, which is a strong change from the past when people left Europe for other continents. The population is becoming less homogeneous. The groups to which people belong differ not only by activity (school, work, family, leisure, church) but also by ethnicity. How do people manage the different kinds of relationships? Are relationships compartmentalized within groups? What are the implications of multiple group memberships for identity formation, values and beliefs?

- *Electronic communication.* Email, cell phones, sms, computer chatting are very recent developments. What is their impact on personal relationships? Do electronic communities and 'web newsgroups' help prevent social isolation? Are people becoming increasingly focused on their private worlds (now that communication is possible at all times and in all contexts)? what is the impact of electronic communication on the separation between the public and private spheres of life?

The previous list is an *ad hoc* collection of types of social change that presumably affect personal relationships. Given that research on personal relationships as a separate 'field' has been around for 20 or so years, we will be able to examine changes in relationships in a *historic* sense. I am trying to say we will have 'historic' data. Researchers should try to make use of data collected in the '80s and '90s and to see how current relationship patterns differ from what was observed toward the end of the 20th century. An example: Life course researchers refer to increasing *individualism* (the so-called 'do-it-yourself-biography'). How much evidence do we find of increasing individualism in relationships?

I see relationship researchers in the 21st century continuing to make use of *methodological* advancements or sophisticated research designs, such as:

- multilevel analysis (for the analysis of couple data, network data, family data, cross-nationally comparative data, longitudinal data)
- collection of multi-actor data: using data collected from multiple network members, both members of a couple, and so forth
- the use of representative samples
- the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods
- cross-national comparisons.

Comments by João Moreira (Psychology, University of Lisbon, Portugal)
Some reflections on the future of personal relationships research

One of my most revealing experiences when it comes to predictions about the future dates from the late 1970s, when I, then a young adolescent, was going through some old issues of Readers' Digest in my parents' collection. For some reason, they purchased more or less regularly the issues of the Portuguese (in those days, actually Brazilian) translation during most of the 1950s, although I could find issues dating from between WWII times to recent, 1970s ones. But the one most relevant to our current concerns was a 1950 or 1951 issue in which the author, which I believe was some kind of engineer, offered his predictions about what the world would be like in 25 years, that is, in 1975. Considering that this date had recently passed at the time I was reading the article, it made it all the most interesting. For... well, I could not exactly recognize my current world in that eminent man's predictions. To name just a few, he claimed that by 1975, cars moved by atomic energy would be trivial. Lamps and light bulbs would be a thing of the past, as light would now be emitted from the walls and ceiling. Most people would fly their own helicopter, and spending vacations on the moon would raise no eyebrows from anyone. Needless to say, I never again could look at predictions in the same way, especially when these regard something in the future.

Of course, all of this boils down to saying that this kind of exercise actually amounts to nothing more than a sum of extrapolation from current trends with a variable degree of wishful thinking. Even though they might have some limited validity for short time spans, the farther future always makes a point of making us all appear like idiots. (Wasn't it Bill Gates who said the Internet was a passing fad?)

Having made my point concerning the serious reservations I have to any such exercise, I gladly

put my wishful extrapolative capacities to work and line up a few ideas of what I think the future of the personal relationships field holds for us.

- 1) A greater weight to the study of relationships, instead of individuals. Even though the field is devoted to the study of relationships, most of the data collected in most studies seem to refer to individuals first, to individuals in relationships second, and only on rare occasions to actual relationships. In my main field of interest, adult attachment, this has been pretty clear, as attachment style has quickly become the fundamental variable, and conceptualized as a personality trait. Only recently has this assumption been questioned, and have researchers begun to examine attachment style in different relationships. I believe we will see similar changes occurring in different specialty areas within the field, also in connection with some of the other changes I mention below.
- 2) A greater use of more sophisticated and less transparent data analysis techniques. As part of a trend that was established when the wide availability of computers made the use of techniques like factor analysis and multiple regression available to all researchers, even those of limited statistical proficiency, I believe the upcoming years will see a much increased use of sophisticated data analysis techniques, like structural equation modeling, latent class analysis, hierarchical linear modeling, and so on. It seems quite likely that in a few years a majority of research articles that are not militantly qualitative will employ this kind of technique. In part, this will meet the needs raised by the previously mentioned change, as the study of relationships will require different and more sophisticated techniques than the study of individuals in many cases.

Another change implied by this one is that greater numbers of researchers will employ techniques that they do not fully understand. In that regard, technical expertise in handling the software required for such analyses will become a highly valued asset among researchers, and those more knowledgeable in this domain will probably be harassed by requests for support, and may act as brokers in providing access to essential tools for many of their less trained colleagues.

- 3) Greater use of computers in collecting data. As computers become cheaper, lighter and more powerful, they will be used more and more for collecting data instead of just storing, analyzing and printing them. I believe data collection at a distance, mostly by using the Internet, will be increasingly used. With data, in formats similar to traditional questionnaires, being increasingly collected by computers, new methods derived from Item Response Theory models will see much increased use, especially in the form of adaptive questioning, and in the use of person fit functions to ascertain the quality of data (e.g., random responding). Other potential applications will be computer-assisted interviewing, with computers directly making questions by the use of their sound systems, and participants responding directly through the keyboard, mouse, write pads, or even a voice-recognition device. Hand-held computers or cell phones may also be used to collect diary data, for example, through the use of SMS or e-mail messages.
- 4) A greater theoretical role for culture. Provided that worldwide catastrophic events do not prevent the continuation of this trend, increased traveling and immigration will boost the number of

relationships between people of different cultural origins exponentially. This will encourage interest in cross-cultural relationships and in the role of culture in relationships in general. The development of the subfield, however, will be hindered by the lack of a strong theoretical approach to the concept of cultural. We may witness important developments in this respect, or else studies of relationships and culture will remain fragmented and without an integrated framework, possibly leading to loss of interest by researchers after some time.

- 5) No more studies of relationships maintained by technological means. This is my Bill Gates' style one. Frankly, I do not see much future in studies of on-line relationships, which will probably fade, just like studies on dating agencies did. By and large, the general conclusion seems to be that people use whatever means they have at their disposal to maintain contact with people they are related to, but the way these means are used and the needs they fulfill are basically the same, generation after generation. Studies of internet friendships will probably only replicate studies on pen-pals. The next generation of technological communication means will probably originate another generation of studies, probably coming to the same conclusion.

Well, this is about all I can put forward with a minimum degree of conviction. I am quite uncertain about the extent to which studies in the neurosciences, of genetic factors or of increasing social inequalities will have a significant impact on the field, and exactly in what direction. Another interesting thing to look at will be the evolution of publishing and diffusion of scientific information, as it moves from paper to electronic formats, and the implications this

change will have for accessibility, particularly for students or researchers not affiliated with well-funded institutions. About this, however, I do not dare to speculate.

Which is probably the same I should have said about the other points. Of course, if you ask me 25 years from now, I will vehemently deny ever have written such silly things!

Comments by Greg Morrow (Psychology, Edinboro University)

I see one of the challenges in the future to be a better understanding of the interplay between sexual behavior and interpersonal relationships. I have been teaching a traditional human sexuality class for years and recently decided to redo the class with a focus on intimate relationships and sexuality. What I have found is that the sexuality texts pay only lip service to relationships and the relationship texts do even less with sexuality. I find this fascinating, given the prominent role sexual behavior often plays in our lives and relationships. I think one of our challenges is to better understand how these two areas are interrelated and to understand the variety of roles, meanings, purposes, etc. that sexuality plays in various relationships. One of the basic problems which has been pointed out by Baumeister and others is that there is a lack of theory behind much of the research in human sexuality so this is an area that needs further exploration.

Comments by Harold D. Grotevant (Department of Family Social Science, University of Minnesota)

As we move into the 21st century, several challenges facing the field of relationship research have become apparent; let me briefly highlight three. Each provides opportunities for relationship researchers to move the field ahead in important and interesting ways.

First, we must do a better job of incorporating new discoveries and insights about biology into our understanding of relationships. Researchers focusing on relationship processes and patterns have largely ignored the possible contributions of biology to their areas of inquiry. Through “genetically informed” research designs, behavior geneticists are helping us see how genetics and environment work hand in glove across the course of human development. Today’s behavior geneticists are moving beyond heritability estimates. For example, in *The Relationship Code* (2000), Reiss and colleagues argued, “Our proposal is not simply that the environment has a general and non-specific facilitative or preparatory role in the behavioral expression of genetic influences, but rather that specific family processes may have distinctive and necessary roles in the actual mechanisms of genetic expression” (Reiss, 2000, p. 420). This is a powerful claim – one that runs counter to our most typical strategies of ignoring biology altogether or assuming that it simply has a general stage-setting effect. In order for us to make progress, relationship scholars will need to become more familiar with emerging work in behavioral genetics and developmental biology. Likewise, behavioral geneticists will benefit from more sophisticated understanding of the relationship processes that might have biological underpinnings or might affect gene expression.

Second, we need better concepts and tools for understanding what I call “complex families,” families whose relationships go beyond the traditional nuclear parent-child definition of family. I am thinking of “intentional” families, formed by individuals not related biologically; adoptive kinship networks, composed of a child, his or her extended families of rearing and of birth, some or all of whose members may have contact with each other; blended families, combining children from different marriages into one household; families headed by same-sex partners; families whose children are produced through assisted reproductive technology, and so on. How are we to characterize the most important relationship

processes in such families? When do we need to expand our lexicon to address the new relationships and issues challenging such families? How do we capture process at the level of the network? (For example, we have written about “collaboration” as a quality of the relationships among the adults in a child’s adoptive kinship network).

Finally, we need new methods that make it possible to study more effectively the reciprocal processes, interactions, and system-level dynamics discussed in contemporary relationship and family theories. Research methods and statistics have not kept pace with our increasingly complex understanding of relationship dynamics – including reciprocal and time-lagged effects, equifinality, and multifinality.

One of the strengths of relationship science is that it is inherently interdisciplinary. The three challenges outlined above play directly to that strength, arguing more than ever for the importance of interdisciplinary training and sustained interdisciplinary collaboration as the bedrock of relationship research.

Comments by Daniel J. Canary (Hugh Downs School of Human Communication, Arizona State University) *We Need More Observational Research of Actual Interaction Behavior*

As with other disciplines in the field of personal relationships, *communication* is varied in its approaches. It includes both humanistic and scientific theories and methods. And within these two broad traditions, communication scholars adopt very different notions of how to examine communication behavior. So, I cannot speak for my discipline. But I can speak of what I would want to improve the ways that communication in personal relationships can be investigated.

In my view, we must observe people’s actual interaction. Here I refer to observation of

interaction that occurs in real time. Research on interaction patterns in marriage clearly shows that what relational partners actually say and do dramatically affects their relational quality. However, observational research peaked in the 1980's and has lost favor among communication scholars. Instead, questionnaire studies have proliferated—and I am one of the communication scholars who aided this proliferation.

Ironically, much of what occurs in actual interaction escapes the attention of people. Using observational methods, Sillars and colleagues (*JSPR*, 2000) reported near zero correlations for married people's awareness of what the other person is trying to accomplish during interaction. And what people do attend to they quickly forget; research on conversational memory by Laura Stafford and her colleagues has shown that people only recall about 10% of their interaction an hour later. In a word, people are poor experts about their own behavior.

Of course, people have the right and responsibility to make sense of their own behavior. And here is where survey research helps. But my claim is that we need greater emphasis on models and methods that link actual behavior to relational outcomes, lest the majority of our knowledge about the communication-relationship link be built on a mass of paper and lead.

In terms of advancing models, various kinds of baserate behaviors and patterns of interaction should be investigated. That is, it appears that communication sequences complement the mere frequency of behavior (e.g., Margolin and Wampold's 1981, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* article). It is clear that people cannot detect the microscopic patterns of interaction but these are the very behaviors that affect their relationships, as Gottman's work has shown. My own research on conversational argument shows that sequences of how individuals develop their ideas in terms of

elaborating their own and their partner's assertions dramatically affects how they perceive their partner, though participants have little if any awareness of the technical ways we define and observe conversational argument (e.g., Canary et al.'s 1995 *Communication Monographs* article).

In terms of advancing methods, one simple step can be taken. An anthology of a variety of observational coding schemes that have been used recently in relationship research should be published. These schemes could include the latest versions of Weiss' MICS, Sillars' conflict coding scheme, my own Conversational Argument Coding Scheme, among others. One reason why researchers are not using observational methods resides in the fact that such schemes are unpublished and hard to obtain. An anthology of observational coding schemes, complete with instructions and decision rules, would be a real boon to the study of communication in relationships.

Commentary: Relating with each other: A future of the field

By Steve Duck (Dept of Prophetic Studies, University of Iowa)

The tendency for crystal gazers is to see a future that conforms with whatever we view as personally important, but of course the direction of history is very often a matter of compromises mixed with the unexpected as much as it is formed by intelligent and wishful projection from the present state of affairs. Sociobiologists see the future proving the wisdom of an evolutionary approach, sociologists note that structural forces are finally being recognized as crucial, social psychologists cannot conceal the pride associated with the increasing recognition that personality variables are vital to

relationships and communication researchers register their approval of the evident trend towards recognizing the significance of communicative practices in relationships. Twas ever thus and those colleagues who were brave enough to respond to the editorial call for exposure of their views should be congratulated for pointing out noteworthy trends in their disciplines. I wish there had been more of them, for we all have visions of the growth of the field, and the range of topics begging for attention is ultimately infinite, whether one focuses on topics (such as nontraditional relationships, or non-custodial parents, Rollie, 2004), styles of theory (sociological/ neurological/ biological/ linguistic), societal (Social change in relationships, gay marriage, for example) or research focused (real interaction or electronic surveys rather than questionnaire studies, Dindia & Kennedy, 2004). It is a healthy sign when creative minds can see so much missing from our present fund of knowledge!

My own comments do not escape the human tendency for attempting to reproduce oneself ideologically. I have always believed in the value of communication between scholars from different backgrounds and my vision of the future naturally indicates that this will be a major force in the future. Relationships are such complex things that we can all find some resonance of our own disciplinary emphases in their processes. They can be analyzed and comprehended from so many different angles at once without “dissing” any other approaches. Each of us can happily pay off our mortgage working our own furrow, but one prediction I’d make is that 10, 50, 500 years from now researchers and human beings alike will still, despite our strenuous efforts, be trying to understand relationships.

Since relationships are complex I have always doubted that a full understanding of them will emerge from the efforts of only one discipline. Each will fill in its allotted part of the puzzle; none will complete it alone. Progress will be accelerated when commentators note favorably

the work of disciplines and approaches other than their own and have the visionary perspective that places the work they know up against equally insightful work with whose bases they are perhaps less familiar. This after all is the Great Change that got us where we are and formed the field in the first place. The move was the change to see our own work as part of a grander picture to which other disciplines contribute.

Many of the commentaries here focus on what we need to study rather than on how we need to address it, and such a focus does not fully capitalize on the *interdisciplinary* possibilities that were rolled out at the Madison Conference in 1982 when we first started talking to one another, knew of fair amounts of work outside our own home discipline and, most importantly, began to credit it.

Thus for me looking ahead [as it was then Robin and I first spoke about the possibility of setting up the 1982 conference], the most important developments in the study of relationships comes from the communication of scholars sharing their knowledge and passing their best ideas around people with similar interests but different backgrounds, who then polish the stone even further before passing it along to someone else who can make it even brighter.

Yes of course we all need to get tenure in our home department but overlooked in disciplinary-focused commentaries are two key points about relationship research. 1) It was true in 1982 that the discipline was young, in fact was not even a discipline, but hey! Look around. Youthful apostles of the new discipline in 1982 are now grey and worn, and the argument about tenure is now proportionally less important than it was; 2) relationship research is now more fully recognized in its own right by several disciplines, within which there are now debates as to whether the elimination of relationship focus would actually leave anything else for those disciplines to study! In 2002 the Central States Communication Association devoted a

whole session to the issue of whether relational communication was any different from interpersonal communication as a whole; and the British Psychological Society has declared 2005 "The Year of the Relationship" in its Bulletin, which is devoting all of its next volume to reviews and discussions of relationships research. It's here folks. We have arrived. Hence our focus for the NEXT 20 years should be not on establishing out homestead but on working with our neighbors.

What does this mean in practical terms? 1. Keep doing the research you are doing but seek allies from other disciplines and traditions who can add to the sophistication of both theory and method (read Acitelli 1995 first). 2. Find people on campus who can support and work with you in developing a relational course structure. 3. Propose panels at disciplinary conferences that involve the insights of researchers from other disciplines and have them meet your buddies who do not look outside their own corridors. 4. Show colleagues in your discipline how relationship dynamics underpin what they do. Business relationships, education, law, clinical work, health studies and marketing are all areas where relationship work has begun to appear as a smudge to the radar. The Association for Consumer Research has a panel in October 2004 on "relational contracts" as the basis of understanding business relationships; anti-tobacco researchers have focused recently on the social relationships of adolescents as factors in smoking experimentation, and legal consultants have recently attended to the relational basis of jury decision making (Searcy, 2004). The list could go on.

Whether we prefer to contribute to these trends from a biological, sociological, or attachment perspective seems to me to be less critical at this point in the discipline's growth than is the fact that we, as a group of researchers should contribute to debates and knowledge growth elsewhere. The world needs, and would benefit from, us more than perhaps we – and certainly

more than they – presently realize. And that is a Very Good Thing for our future.

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STUDENT & NEW PROFESSIONALS COLUMN

E Pluribus Unum

João Moreira
University of Lisbon, Portugal

A few weeks ago I received from Susan Boon a request for some written thoughts "about the challenges relationship researchers will face as the 21st century begins." After having put my (obviously wrong!) foresights down on a doc file, and as I was thinking about this column, it came to me as a good idea to link the two texts,

by sharing on this occasion some of my thoughts on how new scholars can both cope and thrive in the environment of the years to come. I also wanted to keep present, however, the lines of action I had put forth in my previous column, and the goal of furthering the development of our association and of the field of personal relationships.

To my relief, it suddenly occurred to me that these two levels of concern, far from being contradictory, were actually synergistic, in the sense that it is to a major extent by helping one's own interest and career that one can also make a valuable contribution for the discipline.ⁱ I therefore lay here (and will continue to do so in future columns) some of the suggestions I would give to anyone coming to me and asking for advice on how to enhance one's career prospects as a scholar in this field. Of course, I do this from a particular position, personally as much as geographically and culturally. You should take my ideas, therefore, with a grain of salt. Just take what you need and leave the rest. (And I don't mind you taking the very best!)

1. *Spread the word about the scientific study of relationships.* It is my firm conviction that the scholarly study of relationships will continue to be a growing field in the years to come. It is therefore to your advantage to be associated with it, not only in your actual work, but also in your reputation. By doing this, not only will you be thought out when someone knowledgeable in this domain is required, but you will also help its growth by making people more aware of the work we do, and perhaps enticing some people to join us. This is probably most useful in institutions where the study of relationships is not highly developed, and includes not only fellow students, but also faculty members and people in other capacities (e.g., administrators, clinicians). Some people may actually be interested in

relationships, or doing work related to them, and not know that something resembling a formal discipline exists, with scientific journals and an international scholarly society. So let them hear the good news!

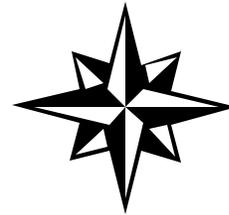
2. *Become actively involved in the field of personal relationships.* This means a number of things, and can be accomplished in a number of different ways. One obvious way is by increasing your involvement with association matters, by running for an office position, volunteering to help at conferences, submitting articles to the newsletter, etc. For those preferring to emphasize research contributions properly, one obvious way would be to submit papers or posters for presentation at conferences, and actively participating in discussions, both within and without the presentation sessions. And when I said "become involved in the field of personal relationships," I also meant building up relationships with other similarly-minded colleagues. This has been one of the most fulfilling aspects of my attendance of INPR and ISSPR conferences in the past, and I am sure this will continue to be true of IARR in the future. Ours being relatively small conferences, and with many of the same people attending every year, long-lasting friendships are easily developed and maintained, with the help of the casual, relaxed atmosphere that prevails. Believe me (and I guess most of you already know this), the most important thing one gets from conferences is not science or knowledge about relationships, it is the relationships themselves, and all they bring in support, opportunities for collaboration and partnership (in research, I mean, but who knows?), role modeling and inspiration. So please attend the next IARR conference and

those that will follow, and squeeze the juice out of it! But IARR is not the world, and there are many other excellent conferences around. Why not present your work on relationships in some of them, particularly those where the theme is less known, and help spread knowledge about our discipline, making a strong impression at the same time?

And even further, there are other outlets for your work besides conferences, of course. Putting up your own personal website to let people know of your work seems like a very sensible idea to me. And then there are the journals. It is always great to see an fine research article published by a graduate student, and you know how important this will be on your vita, so please consider embarking on a research project that may lead to an article worthy of publication in JSPR or PR. Articles authored or co-authored by students have frequently appeared in both journals, and editors and reviewers usually go out of their way in giving extra feedback on work submitted by students, so please consider the association's journals as possible outlets for your work or for that you co-author with other students or faculty members. Finally, you should seriously consider volunteering to review for our journals. I have recently contacted Paul Mongeau, the new JSPR editor, and Susan Sprecher, the PR editor, and they have assured me that students not only are welcome as reviewers, but have been regularly solicited in the past. One of the major limitations has been the small number of students who seem to be available to participate as reviewers. So, if you would like to see the publication process from the inside, want to hone your critical assessment skills (and are ready for some upward social comparison on this), contact any of the editors and let them know of your willingness to serve as a reviewer. Believe me, again from my experience, this is a terrific learning experience, and I hope more of you will take advantage of it in the near future.

¹ I do not mean to make any ideological statement with either this sentence or the title of this column. I

first thought of the title because it is the motto of Benfica, one of the leading soccer teams in Portugal and widely known throughout Europe. A little Internet search has taught me, however, that it also appears in the Great Seal of the United States. The phrase actually means "Out of many, one", and refers to how a great thing can be built by joining together the efforts of many and diverse people. I would like to make it clear that I am a supporter of Sporting, the second major soccer team from Lisbon and the great rival of Benfica.



THE LIGHTER SIDE OF RELATIONSHIPS

The Love Meter

By David A. Kenny

The day before Valentine's Day this year, there was considerable press coverage of the work of one of the premier relationship researchers John Mordechai Gottman of the University of Washington. You might want to check out his website at <http://www.gottman.com> where he quite accurately describes himself in the following way: "His style of presentation is clear, informative and chocked with humor. He is

beloved by his audiences everywhere.” With James D. Murray and Kristin Swanson, and the mathematics of differential equations, they developed the “Dow-Jones Industrial Average for Marital Conversation” or “Love Meter” that analyzed 15 minutes of interaction between a dating couple. They claimed to be able to predict with 94 percent accuracy whether couples would be divorced.

I was, as we used to say in the 60s, “blown away” by this number. Consider that some couples who are struggling should get a divorce, but they never do. For example, one member is killed by the other; both members belong to a religion that forbids divorce, or the couple listens to Dr. Laura and they stick it out for the kids to teach them the lifelong lesson that marriage is misery. So a 94 percent accuracy is virtually 100 percent or maybe even 150 percent.

We might wonder whether, if besides a blood test, should a couple be required to take a videotape test? Prospective couples would be videotaped, it would be sent to Seattle, and after careful analysis and probably a few double lattes, the researchers would allow some of the couples to marry. Would it not be a good idea to end divorce as we know it and send all the divorce lawyers to the unemployment lines?

Well maybe not. If no one got divorced, how could we get through the doldrums of our everyday life without stories of Brittany Spears’ one-night wonder marriage, the fairy-tale divorce of Charles and Diana, the on-again-off-again marriages of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, and the verbal combat between Frazier and Lilith (ok, they are not real but they seem very real to most of us)? If we knew that our favorite movie stars would stay married “‘til death do they part,” how could we cope in our everyday life bereft of the delusional fantasy that some day that star would knock on our door and run off with us? For instance, my wife insisted on a provision in our prenuptial agreement, that she be free to leave me if ever Anthony Hopkins

proposes to her. I agreed to this condition when she said I could do the same, i.e., marry him if he ever proposed to me. So maybe celebrities should be exempt from the videotape test.

Much more problematic than unrealistic celebrity fantasies, no divorces and only happy couples would be a disaster not only for country music lyricists but also for us relationship researchers. Take a look at our journals. What do we study? Our favorite things to study are arguments, conflict, jealousy, and that ultimate gold standard of poor outcomes in relationships: divorce. What a disaster it would be! Think of health researchers without disease, epidemiological research without death, clinical psychologists without psychopathology. These pale next to the prospect of relationship research without divorce.

Given the high divorce rate, it would seem likely that many would fail the test and so many more of us would remain single. While it might be a financial boon for owners of bars, makers of inflatable dolls, and laundromats, the lowered marriage rate would spell disaster for makers of disposable diapers, the Disney Corporation, McDonalds, and life insurance salespersons.

If the videotape test were instituted, (perhaps mandated by constitutional amendment) we would find ways to circumvent it. Those of us who failed it would just cohabit and be miserable ‘till death do we part.’ Alternatively, we could hire a surrogate to take the test for us.

But do not worry, and be happy. The videotape test will likely never be required for marriage. Why? Marriage today is considered to be a person’s right, at least a straight person’s right, and people have a right to marry whomever they want, even if they want to marry someone who will cause them daily misery and agony. Liberals would be against the videotape test because they strongly believe in the civil right to make fools of ourselves in whatever way we choose, and conservatives would also be against it, because they want to defend the right of

marriage, at least for some (e.g., 14 year-old cousins in Mississippi). Not sure whether it is a sad or a glorious commentary about the human spirit, but we do not want to know beforehand that we are about to fail at something; rather, we want the chance to put our own stamp on that failure.

Coming to Grips with Monosexuality

By Nad Yranac

Relationship researchers have made great progress in examining various kinds of relationships, both traditional and non-traditional forms. Yet, one relational type has escaped notice. I am talking about a person's relationship with himself or herself. Freud and Mead discussed it in psychological and sociological terms, so this topic is not new. But we should be asking questions about developing and sustaining one's relationship with oneself.

How does one increase intimacy with oneself? It probably begins with small talk in front of the mirror, accompanied by an increase in nonverbal immediacy (e.g., increased eye gaze, open body position). Or perhaps on a rainy day in front of window, a person accidentally notices for the first time how beautiful s/he really is. Regardless, it is clear that even these initiating attempts at intimacy need to be explored.

Escalating the physical intimacy with oneself is nothing new. It is the *relational implication* of such intimacy that is too often ignored. How can a person trust himself or herself, especially when alone? No lessons exist for people on this front. So the uncertainty that accompanies physical intimacy with oneself is immense. And following the first event, a person must learn to identify with the experience or be forever a stranger to himself or herself.

Of course, I am talking about *monosexuality*. Biological experts refer to it as *autosexuality* or *indioexclusivity*. And yes, I was once a monosexual for a brief period in college. I would often leave school to take myself for a drive in the country or a picnic on the beach. I would surprise myself with presents, though I could barely afford them. And I would enjoy a nice glass of wine in front of a fire, warming the cockles of my heart.

Following increased trust and intimacy, one must decide whether or not to commit to oneself. Such a choice is not easy for the monosexual. It means forgetting past relationships, enduring ridicule from friends, and answering that incessant question, "Why can't I set you up with my friend, Kinko?" In terms of the investment model, the comparison level is non-existent, the alternatives are many, and the investment is high. So there is nothing you can do but hang on when others around you are going on.

Of course, the investment model is robust, but how might equity theory or social evolutionary theory inform the study of *monosexuality*? And imagine what dialectical theory might offer: The autonomy-connection tension alone would burst at the seams! And how can we measure how people escalate and (sadly) terminate relationships with oneself?

Clearly, the time has come for relationship researchers to legitimize this neglected relationship form. We should provide a box for membership that allows people to study *monosexuality*, and we should publish special issues and books on the topic. Until we do, the study of personal relationships will remain a class-based reminder of the hegemony of dyad-based systems that marginalize people who simply prefer to be alone.

RETIRED PROFESSIONAL'S COLUMN

Ruminations of a Relationship Research Retiree

By Paul Wright

“*H*ow,” the discerning reader may ask, “did a strange entry like this find its way into *Relationship Research News*?” I’ll tell you. It was an invited contribution. Well, sort of. What happened is this:

In the course of corresponding with a highly esteemed colleague, I included some personal stuff about pesky problems I was having as a retiree with writing, non-writing and ideas for writing, especially the last. She found it humorous and urged me to write something similar for *Relationship Research News* because (a) the newsletter needs some light material and (b) a hefty number of IARR members are facing retirement in the not-too-distant future. Invoking, perhaps, the old saw, “many a true word is spoken in jest,” she suggested that some of these soon to be retired colleagues might find some helpful hints about what to expect.

The recommended project took me aback. For one thing, my grumblings about writing were totally serious. But then, come to think about it, they were funny *because* they were serious. If I’d been trying to be funny, I wouldn’t have. Silly maybe, but not funny. Then, too, there are any number of relationship scholars who think everything I’ve ever written is pretty funny. No matter. Regardless of my admiration for my esteemed colleague, I soon forgot the idea and went back to stewing over “writing, non-writing, and ideas for writing,” especially the last.

Then it happened. A note came from Kathy Carnelly saying she’d heard from a colleague that I liked to write funny stuff and asking me if I’d consider doing something light about retirement for the newsletter. Wow! You have to admire my esteemed colleague for her persistence and initiative. So, sure, why not? Let’s give it a try. But Kathy was safe on this one. She was about to finish her editorial term and had only to pass the suggestion on to the next in line. “Whew!” I thought, “That was close. But I’m off the hook. A low priority project like this will surely get lost in the changing of the guard.”

Wrong! Susan Boon was Jenny on the spot. She got in touch, so here we are. But how, exactly, did we get here? I’m not sure, but I think it started when all my cogitating over “writing, non-writing and ideas about writing” kept taking me back to early 1995 when I’d decided the next year or so was going to be “it.” Then the big R. I spent some time thinking about what retirement would be like. What did I plan to do with all that unencumbered time? Well, lots of things. But one thing for sure. Write.

At this point, I should have asked a couple of questions. Why write? And write what? I didn’t think to ask these questions. Nevertheless, the feeling that I ought to be writing has been there all this time, like a hidden computer program running (barely noticed) in the background. As it turned out, when I finally asked the questions, I did so hind-end-to. I didn’t ask the “why” question until events forced me to confront the “what” question. Early in retirement, what to write was not an issue. I had some loose ends on a research “programmette” to tie up and publish, and an already published encyclopedia piece to revise for a new edition. Those things done, I had to ask myself, “Okay, what to write next?”

Easy answers eluded me. Hey, even hard answers eluded me. So then, out of frustration, I

asked the first question. “Paul,” I asked me, “why write anything? Why don’t you just let it go and rest on your laurels?” I answered me (with an unsuccessfully suppressed sneer), “What laurels? Look, man, if laurels was an outdoor hammock, you’d be resting on the cold, hard ground.”

BINGO! There was the answer to “why write?” To wit, to make up for some of the good stuff I should have written earlier but, for reasons both good and not so good, just didn’t take the time to do. Anyone who’d care to check my vita would find that my publication record is pretty meager. So now, in retirement, perhaps I should take up some of the slack left over from my “more active” days.

But the “what” question lingered. It seemed neither realistic nor appealing to suppose that I could add much to the quantity of my written output. So what’s left? Well, why not concentrate on something modest in scope that would be beneficial to PR aficionados, especially students, and represent a contribution that only I am in a position to make? Hence, the first of two misbegotten ideas, i.e., a collection of essays illustrating the “personal” side of the study of personal relationships.

It has long been apparent to me that most students and some colleagues are fascinated when discussions of one’s PR theories and research include allusions to personal experiences and informal observations that have had a marked but unacknowledged influence on the work. But here I may be under the sway of the “egocentric predicament.” I have always been both delighted and enlightened on those rare occasions when I’ve learned of the blending of the personal and informal with the “objective” and formal in my colleagues’ work.

Well, guess what? I could easily fill a book with essays on ways personal experiences have affected and been incorporated into my own formal work. So why not? I even had a tentative title for such a collection. It was a

“natural” based on a memory harking back about 14 years to a seminar in PR. One of the older students was in a “let’s get real” mood and asked, “Right up front, Paul, where did that idea really come from?” A younger student with a reputation for a quick wit and a smart mouth laughed uproariously and blurted out, “HA! Listen to that. Dave wants Wright to be up front.” So how’s this for a title? Wright up front: Personal essays from a journeyman relationship scholar. Okay. No one needs to e-mail telling me what’s wrong with this idea. I can already spot at least two fatal flaws. But misbegotten idea #2 was even worse –a novel about the study of interpersonal attraction.

The setting for this novel was going to be a research project set in the early 1960s modeled after Newcomb’s classic dormitory study. The key characters were going to be two social psychologists who disagreed on just about every aspect of the study of attraction –research philosophy, theory, methodology. Besides this, they differed on a lot of other things –politics, religion, personal dispositions, major attitudes. These two characters were going to be thrown together as joint principle investigators (Don’t worry. I had this unlikely collaboration covered) on a project based on the kind of theorizing in vogue back then –attitude similarity, personality complementarity, personality similarity, Murstein’s SVR theory, Levinger’s overlapping circles. Well, in the course of collaborating (not at all smoothly), plus spending increasing amounts of time interacting in ways not directly related to the project, these two “incompatible” persons end up being very good friends. The way this “unlikely” friendship developed was to have illustrated guess whose impeccable theory of friendship.

Believe it or not, I got about three chapters into this novel before all my characters, including the principle ones, turned against me. One of the fun things that happened as a result of this misbegotten and ill-fated endeavor was that I had to invent a theoretical model to account for

the fictional (but supportable) outcomes emerging from the project. These outcomes showed apparent inconsistencies. Different results, taken alone, supported contradictory hypotheses. So I had to come up with a model that reconciled them. And I did. Was the model any good? Who knows? All I can say is that I sure wish I'd thought of it way back when I wrote my dissertation.

What killed the novel? Well, lots of things. The main one, I guess, is that John Grisham I ain't. One time, when I still had myself fooled into thinking I was serious, I asked an experienced novelist about how to handle stuff like character depiction and plot development. He said, "Don't worry about it. After about three chapters, your characters will take over the novel." He was right. They did. After three chapters, they all got together and decided they didn't like what I was doing, so they voted unanimously to quit.

So I was back to square one. What to write? The problem has, I am happy to report, been temporarily solved. Another book revision is coming up that will require my re-doing a chapter. When that's finished and I face the "what" question again? Well, wish me luck.

Oh, one more thing. There was some talk about making my retiree ruminations a regular feature in Relationship Research News. Any reader wishing to express an opinion about this should contact Susan Boon. Or better yet, contact Kathryn Dindia.

Why Kathryn?

(Smirk)

Guess



Net News

Lisa Baker
Purchase College, SUNY

The IARR Web site (www.iarr.org) continues to provide helpful information for members. You can always come to the web site for links to conference announcements and information on IARR-sponsored publications.

One feature that has been especially popular is the listing of graduate programs that have an emphasis on personal relationships. If your graduate program is not yet listed, please send me the link (lbaker@ns.purchase.edu) and I will be happy to post it.

Another resource that has continued to grow is the listing of IARR members' home pages. Members were asked for this information when they completed on-line renewal in the fall, and we currently have 69 members listed. If you see that your home page is not listed, or the link is out of date, please send it to me. The listing of home pages is a great way for us to see what each other are doing and keep in touch with each other.

And as always, anyone can contact me at any time with IARR-related information to post on the Web site.

Lisa Baker (lbaker@ns.purchase.edu)
on behalf of the Web Site Committee

BOOK REVIEWS

Growing Together: Personal Relationships across the Lifespan

By F. R. Lang & K. L. Fingerman (Eds.)
Cambridge, England: Cambridge University
Press, 2004, 414 pp.

Reviewed by Timothy J. Loving
The University of Texas at Austin

As a social psychologist recently transplanted into a Human Development and Family Sciences program, I must admit I approached my review of Lang and Fingerman's edited volume with a fair amount of personal scholarly interest; it offered me the potential for an introduction to life-span development issues that were seldom addressed during my graduate training. The basic inspiration behind the book is that "close relationships are resources for and outcomes of individual development," and as such the focus of the book is defined as: "three levels of change and continuity in personal relationships, involving 1) the individual, 2) the relationship, and 3) the larger social network." Fingerman and Lang detail this vision of the volume in Chapter 1, culminating with the introduction of their "cube model of classifying perspectives" in which they provide a visual representation of the interplay of relationship structures, processes, and outcomes across time. Unfortunately, I felt that as I progressed further and further into the next 14 chapters of the volume this initial depiction of the book's scope became further and further removed (or at least not explicit), which I believe was forecasted by the editors in the first chapter when they highlight the challenges, both methodological as well as disciplinary, faced by lifespan perspective

scholars. That said, I was altogether impressed by the diverse perspectives employed by the contributing authors and ultimately believe the volume will serve as a useful resource for scholars new and old to the ideas, concepts, and challenges in approaching relationships science with a keen eye towards developmental change. Below, I offer brief review of the majority of the volume's fifteen chapters.

Noack and Buhl's chapter (3) on child-parent relationships was a particularly accessible chapter with an informative discussion of child-parent relationships across the lifespan, stressing the need for a biographical perspective as well as consideration of the context of these relationships. Bedford and Volling (Chpt. 4) address the issue of emotion regulation development from a dynamic ecological systems perspective, specifically focusing on sibling relationships. Borrowing principles of synergistics (or, as they explain, "the physics of complex systems"), they propose a model by which siblings practice emotion regulation. Although it took some time to pick up on the relevance of the application, their use of sample data and descriptions of sibling relationships near the end of the chapter tied it all together nicely.

Chapter 5, broadly titled "Romantic and Marital Relationships" (Bierhoff and Schmohr) almost exclusively focuses on the development and shifting focus of love types during the life course. This chapter also includes a good discussion of the intersection of love and attachment. Drawing on both cross sectional as well as longitudinal data they argue that individuals should demonstrate a tendency towards more companionate love and less passionate love as they age, which they suggest reflects a natural shift from selective to compensatory control strategies. In the end, they report greater support for the hypothesis that passionate love would decrease than the hypothesis that companionate love will increase over time.

Blieszner and Roberto's chapter (7) on friendship across the lifespan was one of my favorite chapters in the book. In addition to providing a comprehensive review of both the function and phases of friendships, their review of what is known about friendships at various life stages will serve as an excellent resource for anyone interested in the topic. Most impressive, however, was their discussion of future research recommendations in which they succinctly detail five different levels of investigation for studies of relationship development, progressing from individual levels of analyses to more complicated nested, or hierarchical levels of analysis.

Chapter 8 (Fingerman) on 'peripheral relationships' discusses social relationships seldom given much empirical attention. In addition to defining the functions of peripheral networks, which incorporates aspects of basic social psychological principles, Fingerman also includes an excellent discussion of how peripheral ties may change at different stages of life. The chapter concludes with concrete suggestions for future research.

Chapters 9 (Rook, Sorkin, and Zettel) and 10 (Charles and Mavandadi) cover the topics of stress and social support, respectively. Rook and colleagues focus on interpersonal stressors and highlight the need for substantially more work on how individuals cope with these types of stressors. They focus on two specific stressors: a) interpersonal conflicts and disappointments, and b) losses and disruptions of social relationships, and detail coping responses, goals, and effectiveness of each. Charles and Mavandadi provide a compelling argument for the notion that emotion regulation is central to understanding the link between social support and physical health. They draw on work from diverse literatures, including those utilizing animal, infant, and adult samples and summarize potential physiological pathways as well as emotion and cognitive pathways that may account for this elusive link at each life stage. While it is likely that emotion regulation is not

the only potential mediator, they make a strong argument and attempt at filling the void.

Blanchard-Fields and Cooper (Chapter 11) tackle the issue of how age differences might account for social judgment biases when individuals are faced with relationship dilemmas. In Chapter 12, Neyer provides an excellent review of the interchange between individual personality and relationships. Drawing upon the concepts of mean-level stability and change and rank-order stability and change, he provides an eloquent discussion of the effects that personality has on relationships and vice-versa, concluding with the argument that "personality effects are more powerful than relationship effects."

The book closes with a chapter by Adams and Stevenson on the role of technology in the development and maintenance of relationships. I currently teach a large introductory course on Family Relationships and have become accustomed to hearing my students ask, "How does this apply now that people have entire relationships on the internet?" or, my personal favorite, "if physical attraction is so important for relationship initiation, then how/why do people develop relationships on-line?". While Adams and Stevenson's chapter does not necessarily provide answers to these provocative questions, they do highlight the fact that greater attention towards this new relationship context is warranted.

Overall, I found the majority of individual chapters informative. When evaluating texts or other writings, I ask myself whether or not I believe I'd find myself pulling the book off my shelf in the future. My reply is an unequivocal "yes". Although some of the chapters are fairly dense, leading me to conclude that the book is not particularly accessible to the general public or undergraduates, *Growing Together* will surely find a place in the libraries of more advanced close relationships scholars.

Thrice Told Tales: Married Couples Tell Their Stories.

By D. Holmberg, T. L. Orbuch, and J. Veroff (2004). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 231 pp.

Reviewed by John H. Harvey
Department of Psychology
University of Iowa

SURVEY RESEARCHERS EXCEL AT STORY-TELLING

The title of this review telescopes the essential contribution of Holmberg, Orbuch, and Veroff in reviewing narrative evidence from their long-running Early Years of Marriage project. In *Thrice Told Tales*, these accomplished survey researchers have provided their own interesting story about their respondents' stories regarding the early years of the respondents' marriages. The title of their book refers to the 3 major data points involved in their study.

Overall, the Early Years project was begun by Veroff and now has been ongoing for over a decade in the Detroit area, with Orbuch now serving as the principal investigator at the University of Michigan Survey Research Center. This project has one of the most productive longitudinal research programs in the history of work on the dynamics of marriage. The narrative part of this project was designed to glean in-depth knowledge from couples and to allow them to tell their own stories in their own words. The Early Years project involved soliciting over 373 newlywed couples, with narratives available from 344 of the couples. For 144 couples, narratives were available for all the major time points at which data were collected, with the most intensive interviews occurring a few months after the couples' weddings, and then in years 3 and 7 of the marriages. The couples were relatively young,

with the stipulation that the wife be 35 or younger; no such stipulation was put on the age of the husband. Given the diverse nature of the population in the Wayne County area of Michigan, Holmberg and colleagues were able to collect evidence from virtually equal numbers of African-American and White couples.

In the research, couples were interviewed individually and simply asked to tell the story of their relationship from the beginning to the present. They were paid \$25 for each interview and told their stories to different interviewers over the course of the 7 year project. The investigators for this narrative study used an imaginative story-line sheet to help respondents organize their thoughts and comments. This story-line involved these points in the relationship: how we met; getting interested in each other; becoming a couple; planning to get married; the wedding; right after the wedding; how things are now, and the future. Through systematic coding of the narratives, the investigators were able to spotlight themes emerging, such as key events, behavior, attitudes, and feelings, and the overall tone or valence of interactions in the marriage.

The reader will learn much about the early years of marriage from this book. As the authors note, the very first narrative evidence, soon after the wedding, sometimes contained input about the strain of the celebration, but usually was fairly pragmatic in tone. As time went on, however, it was expected that the dramatic nature of the narratives would increase. Surprisingly, that was not true. It was as if telling the story of the first meeting, decision to marry, wedding, and honeymoon was more compelling for the respondents. For the 3rd year interviews, for example, the narratives tended to be more mundane and descriptive. Neither drama nor interesting storytelling, usually, was a part of these later year narratives, until problems arose. It was as if the couples felt less need to make meaning (which is a central motivation overall, according to the authors, in these stories) during the 3rd and 7th years. Most of the couples by the

7th year had turned their attention to having children, and if they had children to the needs and issues involved in raising children. The needs and issues of the couple's relationship were becoming more secondary in focus.

Chapter 6 is critical to the presentation because it begins the treatment of the role of narratives in differentiating happy and unhappy marriages. Was that role diagnostic or causal or both? The researchers seem to be of two minds on the answer to this question. On the one hand, they conclude that storytelling may be diagnostic about marital happiness. They provide examples of narrative evidence indicating stories about perceived lack of commitment at the 3^d year may serve as an early warning of unhappiness by the 7th year. They also report that narratives showing the wife as a pursuer/initiator at the 3^d year also may be foreboding regarding unhappiness by year 7. On the other hand, in their conclusions for this chapter, the authors note that it is possible to argue that the stories guided and influenced feelings about the marriages.

There are other valuable lessons in the data and interpretations provided in this volume, including: (1) In relating their evidence to the literature on reconstruction of memories, couples' current perspectives on their relationships can reach back and color their relationship narratives in predictable ways; the authors interpret evidence to suggest that couples seem to recall specific events fairly accurately, but through a process of selective attention they discuss only those particular events that fit well with their current relationship perspectives. (2) Happier men reconstructed narratives where there was relatively more emphasis on agency, and less on communion or connection, as compared to less happy men. (3) Gender played a role in the narratives. Wives showed more spontaneity in freely talking about feelings in each section of their story, both positive and negative ones. Further, wives' styles were judged to be less dramatic in telling their stories as compared to their husbands'

styles. For relatively unhappy men at the 7 year mark, they tended to recall the wife as being the initiator of the courtship (and marriage) relative to the recall of happier men. (4) Ethnicity also was a factor of interest in the stories. While the stories of African-American and White couples were quite similar overall, religion played a stronger role in the way African-Americans talked about their marriages than was true for Whites. Religion was particularly important in the courtship and wedding stories of African-American respondents. It should be noted that data were excluded in this narrative study for couples who were close to divorce, and more of these couples were African-American than were White.

The book is filled with useful tables and summaries. It is well-written, eloquent, and inspiring at times. For example, in their conclusions about what they have learned from the narratives, the authors say, "...we could not help but be impressed by the quietly positive tone that couples wove in telling their stories. Their tales may not have been filled with hearts and flowers and wild romance, but they definitely were suffused with a quiet sense of caring, of a genuine satisfaction in the relationship and in each other. We might have expected something different, with the divorce rate as high as it is. Our sample certainly was no exception, with more than 30% getting divorced over the 7 years of the study. For most couples, however, we did not seem to be capturing much in the way of building resentments or festering disappointments" (p. 152).

Overall, Thrice Told Tales represents one of the few, if only, studies of changes in narratives over time. This type of evidence is vital to our understanding of how people view the complex temporal patterns that evolve in their marriages and family life. Thrice Told Stories suggests the rich mine of data that have been collected to date in The Early Years of Marriage, a mine that no doubt will continue to be probed for years to come.

***Everyday Mind Reading: Understanding
What Other People Think and Feel***

by W. Ickes (2003). Amherst, NY:
Prometheus Books, 349 pp.

Reviewed by Konstantinos Kafetsios
Psychology Dept., University of Crete &
APU-Cambridge

Due to the subject matter, as relationships researchers we have the opportunity and perhaps the duty, to communicate findings of relevance to lay audiences. However, the 'translation' of good relationship research for non-experts is an admittedly arduous task since scientific and lay discourses remain boldly fixed to their respective grounds. William Ickes' 'Everyday Mind Reading' is commendable in that it attempts to bridge this gap taking the reader into a journey of exploring good relationship research programs in accessible terms.

The volume distills twenty years of work on Empathic Accuracy (EA). This is no easy task for it involves discussing one of the more elaborate methodologies of our field: the dyadic interaction paradigm for the experimental assessment of two peoples' 'mind reading abilities.' This involves assessing the behaviors, perceptions, feelings and metaperceptions of two persons' thoughts and feelings during spontaneous social interaction. In this volume Ickes tells the story of conceiving and developing the dyadic interaction method and the ensuing findings from well-planned programmatic research. Beyond being an historiography of EA research the volume positions this work into a wider context of concurrent research on phenomena related to 'mind reading' abilities (relational communication, autism, psychotherapy and other).

The book's title may lead unsuspected readers to expect another of the recently popular publications on emotional abilities and Ickes is quick to dispel any such misconceptions. Chapter one (entitled 'A master of intrusiveness') discusses the achievements, incredible skills and most of all, mind reading abilities of Sir Richard Francis Burton, the 19th century British traveler and entrepreneur, only to warn readers they should not expect to become like Burton. Instead, they should expect to profit from a thorough, thoughtful examination of well-planned social psychological research on empathic abilities in individual, interactional and relational levels of analysis. Like many other places in this volume, this chapter includes literary references to promote its arguments. This is a welcome feature that keeps the reader's interest and highlights the proximity of the scientific with the everyday perspectives.

The second chapter (entitled 'An apprenticeship') takes the reader through the historic context of the dyadic interaction paradigm creation. Literary references continue as Ickes reveals one of his main inspirations in conceiving a method to study "How, when and why we are able to 'read' other people's thoughts" (p.20), John Fowles' 'The Magus'. This happened in the mid 1970's, a period of angst and revisionism in social psychology and it is hardly surprising it coincided historically with the creation of a few other innovative methods to study social interaction (e.g. the Talk-table, the Rochester interaction record, the Standard content paradigm).

This chapter, like the rest of the book, is full of all those interesting and important details normally missing from scientific discourse. The reader learns about the author's inner motivations ('Wanted to study people's naturally occurring behaviors' p.22), criticisms of established social psychological paradigm (The researcher as observer, not a manipulator, p.26), and interpersonal maneuvers in order to achieve desired research goals ('What I didn't tell Rick, however, ...that my intuitions in this case were

guided less by theory than by a literary metaphor', p.39).

The volume's perhaps most technical presentation appears early on (Ch. 3, 'The Waiting room'). The chapter reviews evidence from the first EA studies that attempted to measure the content and valence of participants' thoughts and feelings. It presents findings from initial validity checks on the dyadic interaction procedure and related personality traits. For example, a series of initial studies found attractiveness and shyness to be significant predictors of the quantity of self and other thoughts and feelings in the interaction. The chapter also contains inspiring first-hand experiences about the decisive steps researchers' have to take in order to promote their novel ideas.

Affinities between the dyadic interaction paradigm and previous empathy research are succinctly described in the fourth Chapter ('Measuring mind reading'). The reader can find a brief and informative summary on the history of empathy research and the various grades of 'mind reading' abilities (e.g., compathy, empathy, mimpathy, sympathy, transpathy and unipathy). It also examines further the development of the dyadic interaction method to measure accuracy in perceiving other people's thoughts and feelings.

The fifth chapter ('Getting to know you') explores in more detail the processes that make 'mind reading' possible. Ickes discusses a study where pairs of male friends were found to be significantly more accurate (almost 50% more) than male strangers. Initial observations are not treated as the answers but rather the questions for further research testing alternative hypotheses (e.g. comparing immediate information in the interaction versus previous knowledge between the participants). For example, further studies found immediate information to influence EA of strangers whereas previous knowledge was found to influence interactions between friends. The

chapter closes with a detailed discussion of an interesting, counterintuitive finding from EA research: early stages of relationships are characterized by partners' higher empathic accuracy whereas the significance of EA decreases as relationships unfold in time.

Chapter six ('Where is women's intuition?') is a typical example of the value of systematic research even when the question at hand is not the most intuitive: Why did a set of seven initial studies EA fail to support research findings on women's superiority in 'mind reading'? Why did another set of post-1994 EA studies reveal such differences? The chapter unveils like a Le Carré novel as the answer comes from the least likely places of all: the research design and a small change in the answer sheet used to collect participants' thoughts and feelings. Ickes persuasively argues that this change elicited respondents' meta-perspective on theirs and their partners' empathic abilities and motivated women (more than men) to exercise their empathic accuracy abilities. This discussion will certainly interest research methodologists working in the intriguing world of cognition, emotion and motivation in self reports (e.g. Schwartz, Groves, & Schuman, 1998). The remainder of the chapter reviews the gender-ability difference hypothesis in a sensitive and in-depth fashion. The chapter reflects the passion of the researchers and will certainly be read with interest by gender/sex differences researchers.

The seventh chapter ('Empaths wanted, inquire within') examines individual differences in Empathic ability. Ickes collates findings from normative and non-normative populations focusing in particular on Baron-Cohen's autism research. This section could also incorporate recent developments that link theory of mind and emotion. But the chapter goes further to build bridges among a number of not obviously related areas: Maragoni's work on psychotherapy and empathic ability, Davis and Kraus' work on self-reported empathy, Royers, Buysse's and colleagues' work on autism and

empathic accuracy and Thomas and Fletcher's work on attributional complexity.

The penetrating influence of Goffman's and Mead's ideas permeate Ickes' thinking throughout the volume and are clearly reflected in chapter eight ('Framing your thoughts'). Goffman's frames are used as a theoretical backdrop of the influence of contexts that determine behaviors in interactions. Framing social interactions is equally important with what happens in the interaction itself. In this respect, relational contexts are significantly related to partners' thoughts and feelings in interactions and their accurate communication.

Chapter nine (Motivated misunderstanding) holds a small surprise for the reader as the focus shifts to the darker sides of EA. The discussion reveals perhaps one of the main advantages of the dyadic interaction paradigm: a dynamic method able to unveil both perceptual and motivational mechanisms in relationships. In this chapter the reader learns about cases where misunderstanding can be used to promote relationship closeness. Research by Ickes, Simpson and colleagues found very low empathic accuracy levels in couples where partners were insecure and interdependent. Ickes eloquently explains these findings in terms of motivated misunderstanding and fights off alternative explanations. However, some attachment researchers would be wondering whether parts of these findings may also be explained in terms of patterns of affective and cognitive biases in social perception (Magai, 1999).

Chapter ten continues many of the research threads of the previous section. As the title suggests ('Who wants to know who doesn't'), it focuses on individual differences in motivated inaccuracy. Ickes examines yet another personality trait related to low empathic abilities, that of abusive men. The rest of the chapter continues the adult attachment thread from the previous chapter. The reviewed data suggest a strong gender interaction effect: women high on

the anxious attachment dimension are prone to processing relational threatening information in contrast to avoidant or secure men and women. Despite its explosive research past, attachment research has elaborated less on couple communication processes and from this perspective the chapter offers a useful perspective.

The last two chapters (Perceptive professionals & The sixth sense) move forward to discuss possible applications and implications of EA research in everyday life. Chapter eleven contains some innovative ideas on how empathy research could help identify and train related professionals (psychotherapists, policemen, medical professionals etc.). The final chapter is stimulating discussion of topics that could pave the future of EA research (e.g. physiological synchrony, the neuropsychology of empathy).

I found Ickes' new book delightful and inspiring. The volume achieves many of its obvious objectives: to provide an accessible historiography of twenty years of EA research on the basis of the dyadic interaction paradigm, to inform reliably about cutting edge research on intersubjectivity in social interaction and to remove the excess weight of scientific mannerisms for the sake of a wider audience interested in reliable relationships research.

Ickes offers the reader the chance to sneak peak behind the façade of the psychological discourse proper into the inspirations and development of his research ideas. Like all good storytelling it cunningly allows the reader to put herself in the researcher's place and follow well-rehearsed lines of argumentation. Moreover there is frequent reference to the all important relationships that make good relationships research possible (with graduate students, colleagues, reviewers, participants, the research process itself).

However, the book also falls prey to its own success with the above. Many of the more

demanding, scientific oriented audiences may feel dissatisfied with the limitations with the amount of detail included. Certainly, there are chapters where EA research implications with more recent research threads could be discussed (e.g. emotion, emotional intelligence or communication literatures). There are also chapters where the connecting thread is unclear or overstated (e.g. chapter 7 inclusion of autism research or chapter 10 on attachment research). Finally, there are chapters where a lay audience may find it over-technical (i.e., chapters 3 & 4).

Admittedly, it is difficult to strike the right balance between scientific and lay discourses. Everyday mind reading is a timely book which provides a model of how good scientific research could be communicated simply and effectively. More than anything else, it will be an inspiration for young researchers embarking in social relations research and I recommend it with no hesitation.

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Understanding Close Relationships

By Susan S. Hendrick (2004). Boston: Pearson. 286 pp.

Reviewed by Terri L. Orbuch
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Story-telling is one of the fundamental means by which we interact and relate to others in our personal lives. Stories also help us organize and make meaning of the world around us, including our relationships with others. In a recent book written for undergraduate students entitled "Understanding Close Relationships," Susan S. Hendrick uses story-telling and stories as the primary vehicle by which to explicate and illustrate important concepts, theories and research findings in the field of close relationships. The stories are taken from real life situations and are full of vivid details and descriptions.

Hendrick hopes that these stories will draw students into the field of close relationships, help them understand relational processes and issues within their own lives, and give them some practical skills to improve their relationships. Although not the only means by which Hendrick discloses information on relationship processes and issues, I think the stories are very effective in this book. Hendrick writes to and for the student. The book is geared particularly for the beginning undergraduate student, the neophyte who is unaware of how and why relationships are important in his/her life. I have no doubt that students will enjoy reading this book. They will find it interesting and informative, and they will most likely take it home to share with their partner, family member or friends.

The topics in the text follow the development of a relationship and are no surprise to those of us who study or teach courses on interpersonal relationships. The book is short, but it provides general overviews of information relevant to relationship topics in each chapter. Students are able to see recurrent themes, debates and controversies in the literature. The primary objective of the book is to synthesize material

from the expansive and in depth literature on close relationships into a form that is accessible to first and second year undergraduate students. The book will excite students to pursue additional courses or readings on interpersonal relationships.

More specifically, the book contains 11 chapters; each chapter has a consistent organization and presentation style. The chapters begin with an outline and 1-3 personal stories that illuminate the topics discussed in the chapter. What is especially useful to both students and instructors are the probing questions listed after the vivid and personal stories in each chapter. These questions are excellent discussion topics for smaller classes and useful tools to get students to apply and analyze information in the chapter. The numerous “up close” boxes in each chapter also take an “experiential-interactive” approach and permit students to learn more about their own relationships, often times by filling out survey questions designed to assess important relationship processes (e.g., sexual attitudes, relationship quality). Many of these exercises (e.g., strategies for handling conflict) take a therapeutic approach yet are firmly grounded in research findings presented in the chapter. Finally, each chapter ends with a summary of key terms and a list of suggested readings for students who want further information.

There are two chapters that are unique and valuable to any textbook on interpersonal relationships at this level. As a sociologist, I appreciated these important chapters. The chapter on Diverse Relationships (Chapter 9) examines remarriage and blended families, lesbian and gay relationships, and multicultural/multiracial relationships. Chapter 10 (Gender) examines interpersonal relationships and relational processes from the context of being male or female. There are too few undergraduate textbooks that encourage students to depart from a universal approach to relationships and instead provide a forum within which they can begin to think about the many

contexts within which relationships can vary (gender, ethnicity, age, life course stage). Although each of these relational contexts could be a chapter in and of itself, Hendrick does an excellent job of integrating and transitioning from one topic to another, while at the same time highlighting connections.

All of the stories at the beginning of the chapters are vividly poignant. I was especially taken by the story at the beginning of Chapter 4 on Love. Sandy and Joe’s plight (experience) with breast cancer is a dramatic portrayal of a life challenge that tests and illustrates the boundaries and significance of companionate love. The stories are definitely a highlight of the book. By the end of the book, students (and instructors!) will truly understand how important close relationships are to our lives and the lives of those around us. Hendrick is both a psychologist and a marriage and family therapist, and the text admittedly (and to our benefit) reflects both of those approaches. Overall, this is a very user-friendly book for undergraduate students who are just being introduced to the field of close relationships. Perhaps the dedication in the book says it all, “to my students.”

JOURNALS UPDATE

A Report on Journal of Social and Personal Relationships

**Submitted by the Editor,
Paul Mongeau**

I am awed and honored to be the next editor of the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*. *JSPR* is one of the strongest journals in all of the social sciences and my goal is to maintain that record of excellence. It is difficult for me to believe that I am only the third editor in the journal's history, following in the (very large) footsteps of Steve Duck and Mark Fine, both of whom have been a great deal of help to me.

Editing *JSPR* is a major undertaking. It would be impossible for me to perform all of the editorial tasks alone. As a consequence, I am fortunate to work with a group of excellent Associate Editors:

Duncan Cramer, Loughborough University, UK
 Kory Floyd, Arizona State University, USA
 Stanley O. Gaines, Brunel University, UK
 Sally Lloyd, Miami University, USA
 Valerie Manusov, University of Washington, USA
 Stephen Marks, University of Maine, USA

I appreciate all the hard work that they put in on the journal. I also appreciate the unflinching support I received from my Department Head (Jess Alberts) and Dean (Anne Schneider). Finally, my editorial assistant, Kristin Davis, is helping me stay organized and keep my head above water.

While I am very pleased to work with such a hard working and collegial group, I would like to have *at least* one more Associate Editor, particularly from Sociology, Family Studies, and/or Developmental Psychology. The ideal Associate Editor would have several characteristics. First, the ideal candidate would be an experienced scholar of some renown both inside and outside his/her home discipline. Second, the ideal candidate would have experience on editorial boards and as an ad-hoc reviewer. Third, the ideal candidate would have an appreciation of (though not necessarily

expertise in) a variety of methods, theories, areas of research, and perspectives. Finally, the ideal candidate would have tenure (or the equivalent) at their home institution.

I prefer that Associate Editors agree to stay on for two years (though that is negotiable). If anyone is interested in serving as Associate Editor, or if anyone has questions about what it entails, please contact me at JSPR@ASU.edu.

One quality of IARR (and its predecessors) that I have always appreciated is the support they provide for students and young scholars. One concrete manifestation of that support is their inclusion as manuscript reviewers. I certainly want to continue that tradition; however, this group is not as prominent as senior scholars are. Consequently, any student or young scholar who might want to serve as reviewer for *JSPR* should contact at the above address.

Editing *JSPR* is a once in a lifetime opportunity to serve the multitude of disciplines and scholars that compose the study of personal relationships. This is not a role that I take on lightly. Producing a journal is not a solitary task. It takes authors, reviewers, Associate Editors, production people, and many many others to produce a high quality journal like *JSPR*. I look forward to working with these groups in producing the best journal possible.

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Sexual Experiences

Thank you to all of you who have been making
Personal Relationships a success by submitting your
work and reviewing manuscripts. If you are
interested in reviewing manuscripts, please contact
the editor (Susan Sprecher) at sprecher@ilstu.edu.
For other information on the journal (including
submission instructions), go to:
<http://lilt.ilstu.edu/personalrelationships/>

MEMBER NEWS & UPDATES

Congratulations to the following members for their outstanding recent accomplishments:

BARBARA J. BANK (U Missouri), with the
assistance of Harriet M. Yelon, has a new book
entitled "Contradictions in Women's Education:
Traditionalism, Careerism, and Community at a
Single-Sex College," published by Teachers
College Press (2003).

Members LESLIE A. BAXTER (U Iowa) and
KENNETH N. CISSNA (U South Florida)
recently published "Dialogue: Theorizing
Difference in Communication Studies" with Rob
Anderson of Saint Louis University (published
by Sage, 2004).

ELLEN BERSCHIED (U of Minnesota) and
PAMELA REGAN (CSU Los Angeles) have a
new book out, entitled "The Psychology of
Interpersonal Relationships" published by
Prentice-Hall/Pearson. As an interdisciplinary
field, relationship science covers vast terrain and
presents a challenge to instructors who generally
are themselves interested in only certain subsets
of relationship phenomena. This book is
intended to provide students with a broad and
comprehensive foundation in relationship
science, thereby allowing instructors to
emphasize their own disciplines in lecture. The
text emphasizes the relationship field's
intellectual themes, roots, and milestones;
discusses its key constructs and their
conceptualizations; describes its methodologies
and classic studies; and, most importantly,
presents the theories that have guided
relationship scholars and produced the field's
major research themes.

JENNIFER L. BEVAN graduated from the
University of Georgia in May 2003 and started
as Assistant Professor in the Hank Greenspun
School of Communication at the University of
Nevada, Las Vegas, in August 2003.

JONATHAN BOWMAN (Michigan State U)
recently received the university-wide Excellence
In Teaching Award for his commitment to and
understanding of undergraduate education.

JESSICA CAMERON recently graduated with a
Ph.D. from the University of Waterloo. She is
now an Assistant Professor at the University of
Manitoba in the Psychology Department in the
Personality/Social Division.

JOHN CAUGHLIN (U of Illinois) won the
Franklin H. Knower Article Award of the
Interpersonal Communication Division of the
National Communication Association for his
2002 article entitled "The demand/withdraw
pattern of communication as a predictor of
marital satisfaction over time: Unresolved

issues and future directions," published in *Human Communication Research*, 28, 49-85.

WILLIAM R. CUPACH (Illinois State U) and BRIAN H. SPITZBERG (San Diego State U) debuted their newest book at the Western States Communication Association Convention in Albuquerque in February. The book is the third in their "dark side" series, but unlike the first two, this book (1) is co-authored rather than co-edited, and (2) is focused on a single topic of relationship pursuit rather than examining a wide variety of topics. The book is: William R. Cupach & Brian H. Spitzberg. (2004). *The dark side of relationship pursuit: From attraction to obsession and stalking*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

LARRY GANONG and MARILYN COLEMAN (U Missouri-Columbia) would like to announce the recent publication of a trio of books:

Ganong, L., & Coleman, M. (2004). *Stepfamily relationships: Development, dynamics, and intervention*. New York, NY: Kluwer/Plenum.

Coleman, M., & Ganong, L. (Eds.). (2004). *Handbook of Contemporary Families: Considering the past, contemplating the future*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Coleman, M., & Ganong, L. (2003). *Points and counterpoints: Controversial relationship and family issues in the 21st century*. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing.

WIND GOODFRIEND has accepted a position as an Assistant Professor at Boise State University, to start August 2004.

RAEANN R. HAMON (Messiah College) and B. B. Ingoldsby have edited a new book entitled, "Mate Selection Across Cultures," published by

Sage Publications in 2003. *Mate Selection Across Cultures* provides a contemporary, global perspective on the couple formation process in fourteen countries throughout the world including Ecuador, Kenya, Israel, Spain, the Netherlands, and China. Practices, customs, traditions, rituals and ceremonies associated with the formalization of these relationships are also presented.

MANFRED HASSEBRAUCK (Bergische Universitaet Wuppertal) received a grant from the German Science Foundation for research on the effects of women's fertility on information processing in close relationships.

ELAINE HATFIELD and SUSAN SPRECHER would like to announce that Time magazine will be coming out with a feature on Helen Fisher's new book, *Why We Love*, a text describing the neuro-anatomical and chemical correlates of passionate love and sexual desire. Nicely, as part of this feature, Time has reprinted their Passionate Love Scale. The article appears in *Time*, January 19th, 2004 in the "Love, Sex, and Health" section. If you access Time.com and open up "Love Potions," the Passionate Love Scale is in a box on the right hand side.

SUSAN HENDRICK (Texas Tech U) has published a new text entitled "Understanding close relationships." Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon (2004). The text is available in paperback and there is also an online Instructor's Manual and Test Bank, prepared by Susan, that includes various types of test questions, in-class and out-of-class exercises, etc.

SOPHIA JOWETT, School of Sport and Exercise at Loughborough University (UK), was awarded a grant from Nuffield Foundation for a research project with title "Coaches' and athletes' perception of rules in the coach-athlete relationship."

VALERIE MANUSOV (U Washington) is the Chair of Interpersonal Communication Division

of the National Communication Association. WALID AFIFI (Penn State) is the Vice Chair and Steve Wilson, Purdue, is the Chair Elect.

LINDA L. MARSHALL (U North Texas) was appointed Chair of the Department of Psychology in 2003.

SANDRA PETRONIO (IUPUI) won the The Gerald R. Miller Book Award of the Interpersonal Communication Division of the National Communication Association for her book: (2002). *Boundaries of privacy: Dialectics of disclosure*. New York: State University of New York Press.

LYNDA SAGRESTANO (Southern Illinois U) received tenure and promotion to associate professor.

CATHERINE A. SANDERSON (Amherst College) would like to report that she got tenure, is expecting her third child in May, and her health psychology textbook was just published by Wiley.

ELAINE SCHARFE (Trent) would like to announce the birth of Benjamin Archer-Scharfe, May 19, 2003, 3 lbs 4 oz.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chris Agnew is pleased to report that a total of 136 new members have joined IARR since mid-August of 2003 when the on-line enrollment process was implemented. This includes 70 new regular members, 60 new student members, 3 new associate members and 3 new domestic partner members. Please join us in welcoming these new members to IARR!

Terri Orbuch would like to announce that Leanne Knobloch has taken over as Chair of the Future Conferences Committee. Congratulations Leanne! Leanne can be contacted at knobl@uiuc.edu.

CALLS FOR PAPERS

Psychology of Sport and Exercise Journal

Special Issue in 2005 on Interpersonal Relationships in Sport. Guest edited by Sophia Jowett and Paul Wylleman. Manuscript deadline: 1st July 2004

There are an abundant number of interpersonal relationships that are formed in sport, exercise and physical education settings. Such relationships include coach-athlete, athlete-parent, and friendships among others. Research in sport and exercise psychology concerning sport performers and relationship issues has only the last years generated a number of high quality research studies marking the beginning of a new era of scientific interest. The objective of this special issue is to publish a selection of seven papers that illuminate the role and significance of relationship issues in sport psychology.

Instructions to authors can be found at: www.elsevier.com/locate/psychsport

Informal enquiries are welcome and should be addressed to: S.Jowett@lboro.ac.uk

Authors should prepare and submit manuscripts in accordance with regular PSE guidelines and submission procedures. When submitting, please indicate that it is for the Special Issue. Please address your papers to:

Sophia Jowett, PhD
School of Sport and Exercise Sciences
Loughborough University
Leicestershire
LE11 3TU
United Kingdom

Communication Theory

Communication Theory is a journal of the International Communication Association that is published by Oxford University Press. Theoretical manuscripts are currently being sought that address issues related to human communication and interaction, social relationships, organizational and small group behavior, cognition and social behavior, computer mediated communication, health communication, personality and interpersonal behavior, and mass media, to name but a few areas that fall within the journal's editorial scope. The journal publishes original essays that present novel theoretical developments aimed at advancing understanding of human communication and interaction. *Communication Theory* is an eclectic journal that accepts manuscripts from a variety of epistemological perspectives, with or without original data. IARR members are particularly invited to consider *Communication Theory* as an outlet for their theoretical manuscripts. The journal is currently edited by Chris Segrin (University of Arizona), who is a long time member of IARR. Manuscripts must be prepared in APA style (5th ed.) and can be submitted electronically as attachments. Inquires can be directed to ctheory@u.arizona.edu. Detailed instructions for submission can be found at:

<http://www3.oup.co.uk/jnls/list/comthe/instauth/>

MAKE PLANS NOW FOR THE 2004 IARR CONFERENCE IN MADISON, WISCONSIN JULY 22 - JULY 25, 2004

IARRC 2004 ON-LINE

See the IARRC web site at <http://IARRC/commarts.wisc.edu>, or use the link to the conference web site from <http://www.iarr.org>.

Relationship scholars won't want to miss the 2004 IARR Conference in Madison, Wisconsin! Opening ceremonies are set for Thursday July 22nd, to be followed by three full days of panel, poster, and symposia presentations; round table and interest group discussions; and a line-up of invited speakers that includes Michael Cunningham, Laura Guerrero, Robert Milardo, Harry Reis, and Anita Vangelisti.

And the nights in Madison are equally exciting. On Friday evening, conference attendees will gather at the Frank Lloyd Wright inspired Monona Terrace for a spectacular lake front reception and dinner. Saturday is a free night so that visitors can enjoy any of Madison's exceptional restaurants and the vibrant night life along the State Street pedestrian zone. On Sunday, the conference culminates with the IARR Awards dinner and dance at the historic Memorial Union. This evening is all the more special as we commemorate the first international conferences on personal relationships held at this location in 1982 and 1984. In the perfect blending of past and present, we (reunite) on the shores of Lake Mendota to celebrate the best contemporary scholarship on personal relationships.

Details on the conference program, registration, hotel accommodations, and more are available on-line at <http://IARRC/commarts.wisc.edu>, but here are some important highlights:

- *Registration for IARRC 2004 is fully on-line.* Registration materials / announcements will be distributed via email and posted on the conference website. The on-line registration and printable forms are also accessible through the website. Not only does web-based registration save money on conference fees by eliminating the costs of mailing out hard copies, it's also easy and fast. The early registration deadline is June 23rd, so log on and register today!
- *The conference headquarters is the Madison Concourse Hotel.* The Concourse Hotel is located in the heart of downtown Madison, just a short walk away from both State Street and the Saturday morning Farmer's Market on the Capital Square. The Concourse offers spacious rooms, and IARR secured excellent nightly rates for conference attendees (Single: \$114; Double: \$124; Triple: \$134; Quad: \$144). The association will also receive a discount on the meeting rooms for the conference, contingent on enough people choosing the Concourse for their stay in Madison. Whether making reservations by phone or on-line (see the conference website for details), book your room by June 23rd and be sure to identify yourself as part of the IARR room block.
- *IARRC offers a flexible format for interest group discussions.* Interest group breakfasts are scheduled for each morning of the conference to bring together scholars studying step-families, human sexuality, or compassionate love. A limited number of additional rooms are also available during the breakfast hour for other groups that form before and during the conference. Conference participants

IARR BOARD

who would like to reserve space for an additional interest group breakfast prior to the conference should contact Linda Roberts or Denise Solomon. Because sometimes interest group interest doesn't emerge until scholars gather on site, the conference registration desk will maintain an updated list of spaces available for breakfast meetings.

- *Conference participants can share memories of ICPR 1982 and 1984.* This year's conference marks the 20th anniversary of the first international conferences on personal relationships held in Madison in 1982 and 1984. To commemorate those first meetings, memorabilia from the conferences will be on display, and the Awards Dinner comes complete with a birthday cake. If you have items or photos from the 1982 or 1984 conferences, please go to the conference website to learn how you can share those memories at IARRC 2004.
- *A post-conference excursion showcases the Wisconsin countryside.* IARR members who stay an extra day in Madison (Monday July 26) can join in a wonderful excursion that highlights what makes Wisconsin special. Participants will travel by air-conditioned coach about 45 minutes west of Madison to tour Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright's estate in Spring Green, Wisconsin. Taliesin is regarded as an eminent example of Wright's vision of Organic Architecture, and encompasses work from every decade and phase of his career. Then, the group is off to the quaint community of Mazomanie for lunch at the Old Feed Mill, a charming restaurant in a 150 year-old building that originally housed a water-powered flour mill. After lunch, the tour continues to the International Crane Foundation (ICF) outside of Baraboo, Wisconsin. The ICF introduces visitors to the techniques used to preserve some of the rarest birds on earth, and it is the only place in the world that is home to all 15 of the crane species. The deadline for reserving your space for this outing is June 23rd, so be sure to check out the IARRC website for details.
- Feel free to contact Linda Roberts (lroberts@wisc.edu) or Denise Solomon (dsolomon@wisc.edu), your local hosts in Madison, if you have further questions.

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email changes via our website:**

**Please go to www.iarr.org and
click on “Membership”**