

XXIV CONGRESS OF THE
**INTERNATIONAL
SZONDI ASSOCIATION**

**ROOTS-
FLOWERS-
FRUITS:**

*Continuity and Renewal
in Depth Psychology*



RIMINI, ITALY



3-5 SEPTEMBER 2026

XXIV Congress of the International Szondi Association

Roots-Flowers-Fruits: Continuity and Renewal in Depth Psychology

Program and Abstract Book

3-5 September 2026

Rimini, Italy

szondiassociation.org

Organizing Committee

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We are thankful for the generous help of our sponsors.



Welcome!

Dear Szondian Friends, Dear Colleagues, Dear Participants,

A warm welcome to everyone in Rimini for the XXIV Congress of the International Szondi Association.

In recent years, the COVID pandemic forced us to hold our gatherings at times different from those originally planned, but with this year's meeting we have returned to the regular rhythm of our original three-year cycle.

This year holds particular significance for us, as we commemorate the 40th anniversary of Szondi's death. This anniversary is not only an occasion to remember him, but also a reminder of the way Szondi himself lived his life: as a continuous process of beginning anew. Whatever difficulties he encountered – war, a concentration camp, or even problems within his family – he always found a way to renew himself and, through his own choices, to live his freely chosen fate.

The motto of this year's Congress reflects this same idea: Roots – Flowers – Fruits. Szondi's intellectual legacy remains relevant to this day and continues to offer valuable insights, both in our professional work and in our personal lives. What changes is the world around us – or, in terms of Szondi's schema of fate, our social and mental environment. In this changing world, it is our task to rediscover, again and again, the ways in which we can best apply this intellectual legacy and pass it on to others.

It is a great joy for me to see new generations of young professionals in different parts of the world becoming interested in fate analysis and Szondi's work. This gives us good reason to hope that the fruits we produce will become seeds again in their hands, later taking root, blossoming, and bearing fruit in their turn.

It is not nostalgia for the past that brings us together time and again, but the experience that what we can learn through fate analysis can provide genuine and effective help to those with whom we work and those with whom we share our lives.

I hope that the seed of this year's Congress will take root in the hearts and minds of every participant, grow, blossom, and bear fruit that we will be happy to share with one another when we meet again.

Mátyás Káplár PhD
president of ISA

Program of the Congress

3rd September

13.00-14.00

Registration

14.00-14.30

Opening Ceremony

Chair: **Mátyás Káplár**

14.30-15.15

Robert Maebe (Belgium)

Le Notti di Cabiria:
Fellini, Film and Fate

15.15-15.45

Danuta Saletnik (Poland)

Sławomir Cieślowski and his
Contribution to the
Development of Fate
Psychology in Poland

15.45-16.15

Bence Szabó (Hungary)

Keep Your Mouth Shut and
Your Head Won't Ache" – Or
Will It? A Fate-Analytic
Investigation of Swallowed
Anger and Chronic Migraine

16.30-17.00

Coffee Break

17.00-17.45

Mátyás Káplár (Hungary)

Directions for Our Renewal:
How the Roots of Our Scientific
Legacy Can Bear New Fruits in
a Changing Psychological
Landscape

17.45-18.15

Tünde Bukta (Hungary)

The Role of the Self-Regulatory
Breaking Point in the Lifestyle
Treatment of Insulin
Resistance: Possible Links
Between Modern Health
Psychology and Lipót Szondi's
Theory of Personality

4th September

Chair: **Verena Flubacher**

9.00-9.45	Rolf Kenmo (Sweden)	Why Should We Help People Improve Their Self-knowledge?
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9.45-10.30	Giselle Mueller Roger Welter (Brazil)	The Szondian Legacy in Contemporary Assessment: Convergent Validity and Demographic Dynamics of the HumanGuide Test
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10.30-11.00	Coffee Break
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11.00-11.45	Andreas Edelmann (Schwitzerland)	Similarities and differences between the Szondi and the Lüscher Color Test
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11.45-12.15	Ádám Unger (Hungary)	Guided Imagery Effectiveness
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12.15-12.45	Eszter Rigó (Hungary)	What Does a Future Vision Aligned with One's Needs Provide? The Application of the BBT in the Therapy of an Adolescent with an Eating Disorder Facing Career Choice – A Case Study
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13.00-14.30	Lunch Break
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Chair: **Robert Maebe**

14.30-15.15	Tomas Geyskens (Belgium)	From behavior problem to drive-constellation. Case-study with two Szondi-protocols
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15.15-15.45	Niels De Vos (Belgium)	Moving a Mountain – Use of the Szondi Test in a Case Study of Intellectual Disability & Paroxysmal Issues
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15.45-16.15	Dorian Vida (Hungary)	When the feeling comes from your bones - Szondi based BBT method in psychological counselling
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16.30-17.00	Coffee Break
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17.00-17.45	Eszter Áfra (Hungary)	A Novel Methodological Perspective Combining the Szondi and BBT Tests in Sports Counselling
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18.00-19.00	Verena Flubacher (Schweiz)	BBT Workshop
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20.00-	Conference Dinner
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La Mi Mama Via Poletti, 32 (P.zza Malatesta)

5th September

Chair: **Danuta Saletnik**

9.00-9.30	Arthur Mary (France)	The Szondi Test as a Differential Semiotic Space: Implications for Validity and Clinical Interpretation
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9.30-10.00	Arthur Mary (France)	Effects of the Game of Go on Drive Dynamics
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10.00-10.45	Jens De Vleminck (Belgium)	'The Ostrich Tactics of the Ego' – Tausk with Szondi on Schizophrenia
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11.00-11.30	Coffee Break
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11.30-12.30	Assembly of the International Szondi Association
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12.30-13.30	Farewell and Final Coffee Break
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Abstracts

Le Notti di Cabiria: Fellini, Film and Fate

Robert Maebe (Belgium)

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Rimini is the birthplace of Federico Fellini: draftsman and cartoonist, writer of screenplays and comic sketches and filmmaker, who became known from 1952 with multi award-winning feature films. Among his early films, *La Strada*, and *Le Notti di Cabiria*, both with his wife Giulietta Masina.

Freud's use of Fechners *Ein anderer Schauplatz in Traumdeutung* (1900) evoked evidently also theatrical and filmic scenes or stages. Yet Freud was reluctant to collaborate on film projects meant to present psychoanalysis to a larger audience. Only one film, *Geheimnisse einer Seele* (Pabst, 1926) resulted from a collaboration with an analyst (Karl Abraham) and it was surely not approved by Freud himself. It is clear that psychoanalysis and psychiatry are subjects that appear in many feature films. Many other films have been commented by psychoanalysts: films, filming, acting, directing.

Very few writings in the field of Schicksalsanalyse relate to film and film making. Among them a recent book by Holger Schumacher, *Panorama des Unbewussten - Die Schicksalsanalyse in Filmproduktion, Filmrezeption und Filminterpretation* (2021) provides an overview, but it mainly is itself a comprehensive treatise about Schicksalsanalyse and Film, and it both opens and invites for new perspectives.

In Fellini's film *Le Notti di Cabiria* (1956) the heroine evokes the problem of fate and Fellini clearly was intrigued by the paths followed in many existences, both real and imaginary, his own included, as indicated by the autobiographical character of his movies.

Among the flowers in the schicksalsanalytic tree, Jacques Schotte and followers developed what was called Pathoanalysis and its correlation in the field of Mental Health care: Anthropopsychiatry. We had the opportunity to present some of it on former congresses. I will try to offer some pathoanalytic notes on the *Notti*.

Sławomir Cieślikowski and his Contribution to the Development of the Fate Psychology in Poland

Danuta Saletnik (Poland)

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This presentation is dedicated to Sławomir Cieślikowski (1926–2020) - a psychologist, Indologist, philosopher, and literary theorist - who taught fate psychology and the Szondi test at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. In addition to a biographical sketch, the presentation focuses particularly on his invaluable contribution to the development of fate psychology in Poland. It also includes observations and reflections regarding the history of our fate psychology team, which is composed primarily of his students and mentees.

During World War II, while still in his teens, Sławomir Cieślikowski helped organize a Scout assault group in Warsaw. He was imprisoned in the Majdanek and Natzweiler concentration camps, surviving by escaping from a transport bound for Dachau. After the war, he completed his psychology studies at the University of Łódź; he also studied medicine, philosophy, and Indian philology. As a student during the Stalinist era, he was imprisoned for his involvement in a clandestine student organization, and after graduating, he was banned from working in the Łódź province. He worked at numerous psychiatric hospitals and psychological clinics across Poland. During this time, he became interested in the psychology of fate; he studied the subject independently and established a correspondence with L. Szondi. In 1956, he founded Poland's first working group dedicated to the psychology of fate. Between 1959 and 1982, he conducted numerous courses on the psychology of fate and the Szondi test. From 1983 to 1987, he lectured on the psychology of fate and the Szondi test at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, where he simultaneously taught courses on literary theory and Indian poetics (1982–1991). After retiring, he continued to lead training courses and monthly seminars on the psychology of fate for psychologists from across Poland. He authored over 180 publications in the fields of Indology, literary theory, and psychology, a significant portion of which focused on the psychology of fate. He was also a poet and a translator of Indian poetry.

Keep Your Mouth Shut and Your Head Won't Ache" – Or Will It? A Fate-Analytic Investigation of Swallowed Anger and Chronic Migraine

Bence Szabó (Hungary)

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This case study presents the case of a 60-year-old man, "Peter", who suffers from chronic migraine headaches lasting for decades, numerous somatic illnesses, and physical exhaustion. In an environment dominated by an emotionally cold, egocentric father and a passive mother, the patient experienced severe deprivation and injustices. The burdened past includes a lost inheritance due to perjury, as well as the heavy emotional toll that his father regularly abused his older brother for the patient's childhood mischiefs. The dynamics of the family unconscious continue to operate in the present: Peter currently works as his older brother's subordinate, without any appreciation. The basic psychotherapeutic process, consisting of weekly outpatient sessions for the past four to five months and supplemented with autogenic training elements, focuses on the expression of emotions. To map his drive dynamics, a ten-profile Szondi test and the Drive Representation Tool (DRT) were administered. The results revealed a "hy-" (hiding emotions) and "m+" (attachment) root profile, which indicates a complete blockade of emotional expression without a discharge valve. The latency proportions (Phy- and Cm+) confirmed profound relational insecurity. His somatic symptoms may partly function as a conversion mechanism for unspoken words and repressed anger. Despite his rigid perfectionism, the therapeutic relationship provided a safe space for "venting" emotions and grieving the resignations dictated by his compulsive fate. Under the influence of therapy, the patient has taken steps toward free choice: he initiated a disability retirement process to leave his sickening workplace. Processing the accumulated anger is essential for alleviating the psychosomatic tension.

Keywords: Szondi test, compulsive fate, Drive Representation Tool, psychosomatic conversion, family unconscious

Directions for Our Renewal: How the Roots of Our Scientific Legacy Can Bear New Fruits in a Changing Psychological Landscape

Mátyás Káplár (Hungary)

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The continuing relevance of a psychological theory depends not only on the historical importance of its concepts, but also on its capacity to generate meaningful responses to contemporary psychological questions. Szondi's work offers such a possibility. Although developed within the intellectual context of twentieth-century depth psychology, several of its central assumptions resonate remarkably well with current approaches to personality, motivation, decision-making, counselling, and psychological well-being. Its emphasis on choice, self-determination, relational embeddedness, and the dynamic interaction between inherited dispositions and individual life history creates important points of contact with both humanistic and contemporary cognitive perspectives. At the same time, Szondi's thinking preserves a holistic view of the person that is increasingly difficult to maintain within highly specialized psychological models.

Renewal, however, cannot mean merely preserving theoretical concepts or traditional methods. If fate analysis is to remain a living psychological approach, its scientific legacy must be translated into forms that respond to present-day needs and can reach people in settings where psychological work actually takes place. This requires identifying those elements of the Szondian tradition that can be transformed into accessible, efficient, and methodologically coherent tools for counselling, career guidance, and self-exploration.

The presentation will outline several directions for such a renewal. Particular attention will be given to counselling-oriented methods that reduce the complexity of classical diagnostic procedures while retaining their dynamic and person-centred character. These include the two-profile Szondi Test, the DRT, and structured life-span analysis as tools for exploring current motivational conflicts, choices, and developmental possibilities. A further field of application emerges from Szondi's concept of operotropism, which offers a theoretical foundation for understanding the relationship between personality dynamics, occupational attraction, and vocational choice. In this context, the Berufsbilder-Test (BBT) provides a particularly promising bridge between fate-analytic thinking and contemporary career counselling.

The role of the self-regulatory breaking point in the lifestyle treatment of insulin resistance

Tünde Bukta (Hungary)

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Possible links between modern health psychology and Lipót Szondi's theory of personality

Insulin resistance is a condition that requires a complex treatment process. Medical and dietary support are important, but the individual also needs to monitor their own internal physiological processes and understand the different aspects of the condition. In this way, the patient can gradually develop a personal lifestyle system that can be maintained throughout life.

However, clinical practice shows that many patients are not able to maintain long-term health behaviour change, even when they have appropriate knowledge and a strong intention to change. Modern health psychology has developed several models to explain this phenomenon.

In the context of lifestyle change in insulin resistance, I use the term self-regulatory breaking point to describe a temporary state in which conscious, reflective regulation can no longer maintain behaviour that is consistent with long-term health goals. At this point, automatic motivation becomes more dominant in guiding decisions and behaviour.

Lipót Szondi's theory of personality, especially his ideas about the regulatory function of the ego and the role of the k factor, may offer a psychodynamic interpretation of this self-regulatory breaking point. This approach may also help us understand the deeper personality dynamics behind automatic motivation.

From this perspective, it becomes important to explore what goals, developmental wishes, and ideas of progress the person has in relation to creating a healthier way of life. It is also important to examine what inner resources the person has for dealing with, adapting to, or changing the outside world.

The aim of this presentation is to contribute to the professional dialogue about the possible connections between modern health psychology and the fate-analytic approach in the treatment of chronic conditions that require long-term lifestyle change.

Keywords: insulin resistance, lifestyle change, COM-B model, intention-behaviour gap, self-regulation, self-regulatory breaking point, Szondi Test

Why should we help people improve their self-knowledge?

Rolf Kenmo (Sweden)

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Many people have an unclear understanding of their own personality. What consequences might this have? Well, they

- may choose an unsuitable field of study and, consequently, an unsuitable career path
- may choose an unsuitable life partner, i.e. someone with a very different personality
- may experience unnecessary difficulties in their relationship due to a lack of understanding of each other's personalities

Improved self-knowledge can provide valuable insights, which can lead to a fulfilling life.

How can this be achieved? Well, by taking the Human-Guide test, which is a digital personality test. It is based on a simplified version of Szondi's theory.

The test can be purchased via an online shop or through a consultant. In the first case, along with the test results, you receive a micro-guide on how to use them. In the second case, you receive support from a consultant.

In both cases, you also receive support from the web app your.humanguide.se, as well as my book *Let the Personality Bloom* and my website, humanguide.com.

The problem of having an unclear understanding of one's personality is even greater for young people. The HumanGuide test has been used for several years to help them build effective teams within the 'Young Entrepreneurship' programme, which operates in Sweden. This is because they had a strong tendency to recruit their friends, which resulted in 'cloned' teams. Using the HumanGuide test led to greater diversity within the teams and better results. Unfortunately, the young people found it difficult to realise that they could benefit from their test results when making career and, consequently, study choices. This year, a successful experiment was carried out by having them take the test in paper form rather than digitally. This generated greater engagement and provided important insights for the pupils. Three to five typical characteristics (motivators) were then selected for each pupil, who then used tools such as ChatGPT to receive suggestions for relevant careers. It worked very well.

The experiment was based on the test being conducted using a deck of cards. This deck – HumanGuide Cards – can also be used for the TeamPlay exercise. This exercise has also recently been used to tackle loneliness amongst older people. That, too, worked extremely well.

The Szondian Legacy in Contemporary Assessment: Convergent Validity and Demographic Dynamics of the HumanGuide Test

Giselle Mueller Roger Welter (Brazil)

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This study investigates the psychometric robustness of the HumanGuide test, an ipsative instrument based on Leopold Szondi's drive theory, by integrating evidence of convergent validity and demographic variations. The research aims to demonstrate how classical depth psychology traditions can be articulated with contemporary models to provide a comprehensive understanding of personality and motivation. A massive sample of Brazilian professionals (N = 125.506) was analyzed to examine criterion validity through sex and age variations. Convergent validity was further explored through two specialized studies: Study 1 (n = 2.195) correlated HumanGuide factors with the NEO-PI-R (Five-Factor Model), and Study 2 (n = 1.177) compared them with the QUATI (Jungian Typology), utilizing Spearman correlations (ρ). Significant demographic patterns emerged, showing that fundamental drive needs undergo predictable shifts across the life cycle. Age effects revealed that Stability and Imagination increase progressively with maturity, while Exposure, Structure and Contacts decline, reflecting a transition from social seeking in youth to philosophical depth and internal autonomy in later maturity. Considering gender effects, females scored higher in Sensibility, Stability and Contacts, while males scored higher in Power, Structure and Imagination. Convergent patterns confirmed the instrument's theoretical alignment with major frameworks. Considering the Big Five framework, Power, Exposure and Contacts converged with Extraversion; Imagination aligned with Openness to New Experiences; high Structure and low Imagination mirrored Conscientiousness; while low Exposure correlated with Agreeableness. Considering the Jungian framework, high Contacts and low Stability correlated with Extraversion; Imagination correlated with Intuition; Sensibility and Contacts was associated with Feeling, while low Sensibility correlated with Thinking. By bridging Szondi's drive needs with trait-based and typological models, this research validates the HumanGuide as a powerful tool for contemporary psychological assessment. The findings underscore the instrument's sensitivity to developmental variables and its capacity to translate classical psychological concepts into reliable, evidence-based data.

Similarities and differences between the Szondi and the Lüscher Color Test

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While both diagnostic tests are sharing similarities in the sympathy-antipathy selection process to identify personality characteristics in a nonverbal fashion, the Szondi test is based on cognitively operating associations when the test person is exposed to the series of various face images having a built-in meaning in the context of the genotropic fate analysis. The clinical Lüscher color test, however, is a nonverbal and non-projective personality assessment based on the concept of "autoregulation psychology", a model of structural functional psychology originating from Gestalt psychology and containing elements of a "client-centered psychotherapy", even before the latter was developed by Rogers and Maslow. The test is composed of 23 different test colors and 7 test forms that are specifically arranged in 8 different test subsets. The test person evaluates colors and forms according to sympathy and antipathy, and the test structure is based on a system describing the formal structures of emotional self-experience which will be explained in detail. The test person is strictly guided through the subtests and, by performing in total 54 preference evaluations, unconsciously draws his or her individual emotional and motivational disposition against the background of the formal and imminent categorial structures, being directive vs receptive, constant vs variable, integrative vs separative. These precisely defined categorial structures, describing the connection between behavior and motivation, subsequently enable the creation of an individual personality profile of the test person. Based on this non-cognitively created profile, either emotional balance or disbalances like tensions, aversions resulting from conflict situations, or frustrations and their corresponding compensations can be identified, thus enabling further exploration in an open and empathetic dialogue following the motivational interviewing principles, which will be demonstrated on real case studies.

Guided Imagery Effectiveness

Ádám Unger (Hungary)

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Fruitfully accessing emotion in a counselling session sometimes proves difficult for clients as defense mechanisms activate. Getting help for persons in a foreign language environment requires not just the overcoming of defense mechanisms, but also language barriers. Although some theories and observations suggest that using a second language may facilitate emotional access due to fewer constraints formed during early emotional socialization, however, most findings indicate that individuals experience stronger emotions in their first language.

These previous studies relied on laboratory settings, which may not reflect real-life emotional processing. The present study addresses this limitation by examining bilingual emotional access via guided imagery, a counselling technique facilitating experience-based engagement with emotionally charged material.

The effectiveness of the guided imagery session was assessed via two 2-profile Szondi-tests. One before the session and one after, while during the guided imagery physiological responses were recorded.

To investigate the effects of the language barrier, participants were randomly assigned to four conditions: (1) guided imagery instructions and the responses of participants were both in their second language (English); (2) both instructions and responses in their first language (Hungarian). These participants also completed a second session with reversed language conditions. (3) participants received instructions in their first language and responded in their second language, while in the (4) condition, the reverse was applied. Scenarios (1) and (2) included two participants each (yielding four first-language and four second-language sessions), while scenarios (3) and (4) included seven participants each.

This design enabled both within- and between-subject comparisons. Results indicate that the used language has no effect on the effectiveness of the guided imagery, however, the first sessions were always more effective compared to the second. The forced-translation scenarios (3-4) were less effective compared to the single-language conditions. Therefore, guided imagery based interventions proved to be useful for engaging with persons in a foreign language environment.

What Does a Future Vision Aligned with One's Needs Provide? The Application of the BBT in the Therapy of an Adolescent with an Eating Disorder Facing Career Choice – A Case Study

Eszter Rigó (Hungary)

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The subject of this case study is the combined application of the BBT (Berufsbildertest) and the two-profile Szondi test in the individual psychological counseling of an adolescent client in a clinical setting. The subject of the case study is Lily, a 16-year-old adolescent girl affected by bulimia nervosa. Lily participated in psychological counseling at the outpatient clinic of the city hospital's child psychiatry department, where she worked on her self-knowledge process for a year and a half. Lily's therapy was a long journey during which included the toolkit of fate-analytic counseling and the conceptual framework of Leopold Szondi. Fate analysis enabled Lily to see behind how her need dynamics determine her behavioral patterns in certain situations—including her symptomatic behaviors. It was clearly traceable how the patterns explored and recognized in the genogram, as elements of a compulsive fate—the alcohol addiction of female ancestors across generations—appeared in Lily's mode of functioning and symptoms. Following the application of the genogram and imagination exercises, a significant improvement and change occurred in Lily's condition, as the recognition began to transform the compulsive fate into a freely chosen fate. The fate analysis was supplemented with DBT (dialectical behavior therapy) elements for the adequate formulation of emotions in the here-and-now, and for appropriate tension grounding. Furthermore, we worked with monodrama elements to resolve the conflicts of individual ego parts—role reversals, writing letters from the perspective of certain ego parts. Processing the family unconscious and personal compulsive fate brought about the stabilization of the current symptomatic picture and the anxiety associated with the free choice of the future. To clarify the vision of the future, the BBT career orientation test allowed us to channel the already explored drive needs into potential career paths. The BBT provided an opportunity not only to assist Lily in finding further education that matched her internal needs and selecting the graduation subjects necessary for university, but also allowed her independence and ego integrity to grow through a future vision corresponding to her needs. The latter was a crucial element in the therapeutic process in terms of reducing symptoms.

From behavior problem to drive-constellation. Case-study with two Szondi-protocols

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We will present the case of Benny, a middle-aged man with a mild intellectual disability who lives in a facility for adults with ID and severe behavior problems near Brussels. We will present two Szondi-protocols, one from 2017 and the other from 2021, which are surprisingly similar. It is extremely rare for two protocols—especially with such a long time-span between them—to exhibit such a high degree of similarity. In our presentation, we will not go into all the details of the interpretation of these protocols, but we will try to establish a connection between the results of the Szondi-tests and the clinical experience of Benny's daily behavior and personality. We will draw special attention at what Szondi calls the constellation of drive-factors of mania (*Triebfaktorenverband der Manie*). Benny's frantic behavior, which would otherwise easily provoke irritation in his caregivers, becomes more understandable from a Szondian perspective. The Szondian approach helps you, as a caregiver, to look beyond the chaotic, frantic behavior and get in touch with Benny's suffering and with his personal, irreplaceable way of coping with that suffering.

Moving a Mountain – Use of the Szondi Test in a Case Study of Intellectual Disability & Paroxysmal Issues

Niels De Vos (Belgium)

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Zonnelied is an institution for adults with an intellectual disability, providing different modalities (residential care, daycare center, outreach services,...) to support their ways of living & working. From a theoretical perspective, inspiration is drawn from applied psychoanalysis, institutional psychotherapy & Szondi's theory.

In this case study of a woman with a motoric & a light intellectual disability who frequents our daycare center, we highlight how Szondi's test & theory can be applied to many benefits. On the one hand it proves helpful for the multidisciplinary team, to gain a more profound understanding of her functioning & emotional inner world, which opens up new perspectives for educators in their day to day guidance. On the other side the test is used as a tool within a one-to-one psychotherapeutic context, enhancing the possibility of being a catalyst in the therapeutic process.

Both sides intertwine, influence & enrich one another, proving to be very fruitful in this particular case. A deadlock is overcome by applying the Szondi test and using the guiding light of Szondi's concept of the paroxysmal drive (specifically, in Jacques Schotte's reading hereof as a pulsional circuit). It opens up the way to new symbolic acts of the subject, steering away from compulsion & giving them an element of choice concerning their own fate.

When the feeling comes from your bones - Szondi based BBT method in psychological counselling

Dorian Vida (Hungary), Eszter Áfra, Szabolcs Bandi, Ádám Unger, Borbála Lukács, Viktor Kemény, Lili Andrea Bodor, Mátyás Káplár
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Theoretical background: Over the past few decades, a wide range of projective tests has been employed in non-clinical therapeutic settings, particularly in psychological counseling. Although the Szondi Test has long been recognized as an established projective instrument, the BBT method, despite having been developed several decades ago, is still regarded as a relatively novel approach in Hungary for addressing general counseling-related concerns. In this study, we approach three career counselling cases – two of them in a general counselling set-up – with the BBT test. Aim: Those case studies provide an overview of the BBT methodology used in psychological counselling and reflect the diversity of usage of the instrument.

Methods: A Szondi-based projective vocational test – known as the BBT – was used in all three cases in this study.

Results: The results of the test and the actual counseling work with the clients – in two out of three occasions – provide important information about the current phase and dynamics of the different cases. The BBT test is a very precise instrument to support the psychological counselling, and the method helps the counsellor to assist the clients in the procedure.

Conclusion: According to this practical example in psychological counselling, the BBT methodology can be considered a useful projective tool and can establish a basic understanding of the situation in counselling. The test can provide help to the psychologist and the client to understand and highlight the not manifested needs of the client.

Keywords: BBT, career counseling, projective test, case studies

A Novel Methodological Perspective Combining the Szondi and BBT Tests in Sports Counselling

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Theoretical background: Athletes do not operate in isolation from their everyday human existence. A fundamental premise of sports psychology is that a direct parallelism exists between an individual's daily life blocks and their athletic performance. The sporting arena serves as a perfect symbol and a concentrated canvas where universal intrapsychic crises and drive conflicts are mirrored.

Aim: This study introduces a novel methodological perspective that bridges depth psychology and sports counseling, aiming to demonstrate how combining the Szondi and BBT (Berufsbilder Test) models can uncover these symbolic parallels to optimize performance and well-being.

Methods: The study's intent to propose a conceptual and diagnostic framework utilizing the two-profile Szondi method integrated with the BBT. Rather than focusing on surface-level cognitive behaviors, this approach analyzes the dynamic interplay between the athlete's unconscious drive structures (Szondi) and their manifest activity preferences (BBT). To illustrate the practical application of this methodology, a qualitative case study of a competitive chess player is presented, highlighting how the person-environment fit manifests under cognitive and strategic pressure.

Results and Conclusion: The conceptual model demonstrates that athletic crises (e.g., rigid decision-making or sudden performance drops) are exact structural sublimations of everyday drive conflicts, such as the regulation of aggression and control. By integrating the Szondi and BBT profiles, practitioners can decode the symbolic meaning behind an athlete's behavioral blocks. This dual-test perspective opens a new horizon in sports counseling, shifting the focus from symptom-management to deep-level structural resolution through personalized crisis intervention.

Keywords: BBT, career counseling, projective test, sportpsychology

BBT Workshop

The Four Steps in the Interpretation of a BBT Test Profile

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The workshop introduces the four main steps involved in interpreting a BBT (Berufsbilder-Test) profile, demonstrating how quantitative results, verbal associations, narratives, and dialogue can be integrated into a meaningful counselling process.

The first step is the **quantitative analysis**, based on completing and evaluating the test form. This provides the structural foundation of the profile and identifies the client's patterns of preferences and rejections.

The second step begins the **qualitative analysis** through an examination of the client's verbalizations and associations. Particular attention is given to how clients describe the activities represented in the selected occupational pictures. These spontaneous associations enrich the quantitative profile by revealing the meanings, expectations, attractions, and reservations connected with different forms of activity.

The third step focuses on the **narrative dimension**. Clients are invited to create a story based on their five most preferred pictures. Analyzing this narrative opens another perspective on how individual preferences are organized into personally meaningful themes, relationships, roles, and possible directions for development.

The fourth step is **dialogue**. Counsellor and client create a reflective space in which not only explicit statements, but also nuances, resonances, and emerging meanings can be explored. The aim is not to impose predetermined interpretations, but to develop tailor-made possibilities together with the client. At the same time, clients engage in internal dialogues that may reach areas inaccessible to the counsellor. Attending to these processes can provide valuable impulses and transform the BBT profile from a test result into a starting point for self-reflection and counselling.

The Szondi Test as a Differential Semiotic Space: Implications for Validity and Clinical Interpretation

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The Szondi Test is generally described as a non-verbal projective instrument. However, although the subject is not required to verbalize, the test may be understood as a highly structured language/semiotic device. This paper proposes a structural and semiotic reading of the Szondi Test inspired by differential theories of signification. From this perspective, the subject never chooses an isolated portrait but rather occupies a position within a system of eight mutually defined terms. The meaning of a choice emerges not from the intrinsic properties of a portrait but from its differential relations to the other portraits belonging to the same drive system.

Such a conception has important consequences for the question of construct validity. The presentation develops this proposal through a set-theoretical formalization of the differential structure of the Szondi Test and examines its affinities with Lacan's notion of the "treasury of signifiers". If the test functions as a differential semiotic space, its construct validity cannot be reduced to the correlation between portrait choices and external diagnostic categories. Instead, it should be evaluated through the coherence of the relational system itself and through its capacity to reflect the subject's modes of engagement with the field of drive possibilities.

Effects of the Game of Go on Drive Dynamics

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The authors propose to present a research program linking two semiotic spaces: the Szondi test and the game of Go. This research program aims to characterize in detail the effects of playing Go on drive organization.

The presentation begins with a recent exploratory correlational study (Mary, 2026) involving 21 Go players (63 Szondi profiles and 791 games analyzed), suggesting statistical associations between playing style (territoriality, aggressiveness) and certain Szondi scores (percentage of zero responses, orientation of the p factor). The research continues along two lines.

Building on the study by Máté et al. (2012), the authors discuss the feasibility of a pre/post design in which Szondi scores are recorded before and after a game of Go. The three authors are the participants in the study (one is familiar with the test, while two are unfamiliar with it at the time of data collection). Each plays approximately twenty games. Control sessions are also conducted. The feasibility and biases involved in an intensive self-monographic approach within the framework of this pilot study will therefore be discussed. Changes in Szondi scores will be considered in light of game metrics, particularly: did the game involve playing styles characterized by greater conflictuality, territoriality/invasiveness? Can this be observed in the Szondi results? Transitions between drive states are modeled using Markov matrices, making it possible to discuss whether there are signatures specific to each player or, beyond these, an effect attributable to the game of Go.

The second line of research consists of a dyadic approach. The three researcher-participants played games of Go together. This made it possible to create a corpus of Go games in which each player completed a Szondi test before and after the game. The hypothesis is that the two-player game setting constitutes a relational setting capable of intimately affecting the players. The question then arises of identifying what may circulate and be transformed within the drive dispositions brought into relation through the medium of play. The drive-based dyadic system prior to the game encounter is therefore considered alongside the same system immediately following this encounter, within an experimental approach consistent with the Szondian framework.

'The Ostrich Tactics of the Ego' – Tausk with Szondi on Schizophrenia

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Schizophrenia – variously defined as 'the far side of madness' (Perry 1974), the 'sacred symbol of psychiatry' (Szasz 1976), and an enduring 'enigma' (Bollas 2015) – was a central concern in the work of the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Victor Tausk. Among his most significant and ultimate contributions is 'On the Origin of the "Influencing Machine" in Schizophrenia' (1919), widely regarded as 'a classic in the psychological understanding of schizophrenia' (Roazen 1991) and cited by, among others, Deutsch (1919), Reich (1933), Searles (1965), Bion (1967), and Anzieu (1985).

This paper recontextualizes Tausk's text against the background of Bleuler's dynamic psychiatry and Freud's early meta-psychological work, situating it within the broader trajectory of Tausk's oeuvre. Furthermore, the concept of the influencing machine is reconsidered as a productive lens through which to examine early psychoanalytic reflections on schizophrenia as 'the sublime object of psychiatry' (Woods 2011). The paper aims (i) to elucidate Tausk's original and sophisticated insights into both the phenomenology of schizophrenia and the constitution of the ego, in dialogue with Freud, Ferenczi and Abraham, and (ii) to reconsider both Tausk's meta-psychological and clinical insights from the perspective of Szondi's Ego-Analysis (1956).

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