Individual Differences in Personality

Personality Traits and States

Personality includes all the characteristics that define the individual from one time to another and from one situation to another. Is personality really as consistent as we ordinarily assume? Some personality researchers claim that people have fairly broad personality characteristics that are generally stable over time and from one situation to another. Others claim that people learn how to behave in specific situations and that the apparent consistency of their personality is mostly an illusion.

Both of these positions may be partly correct. A person may exhibit characteristics that are consistent over a variety of appropriate circumstances, though not at all times or in all situations (Alston, 1970). A consistent tendency in behavior, such as shyness, hostility, or talkativeness, is known as a trait. In contrast, a state is a temporary activation of a particular behavior. People's behavior varies from time to time because they are in different states. For example, Don, who has a trait of being highly talkative, talks in a discussion group but not in a library, because the library induces a state of silence. Donna, who has a trait of being reticent, is quiet most of the time, but talks a great deal while she is working at an information booth. Although Don and Donna's behavior changes drastically from one situation to another, they still have consistent traits that would become apparent, for example, if they both attended the same dinner party.

Note that both traits and states are just descriptions of behavior, not explanations. Suppose Susan sits next to Steve and Steve says hardly anything to her. We ask why. Perhaps Steve has been quiet all afternoon (a state) or perhaps he is always shy around women (a trait). Neither statement *explains* his behavior (Briggs, 1985). Still, it would tell us what we should *try* to explain: Are we trying to explain why Steve has been quiet all afternoon? Or why he is always shy around women?

Is personality consistent over time and from one situation to another?
What are personality traits?

In many ways all rocks are the same. If you plan to drop a rock and you want to predict when it will hit the ground, you do not need to know what kind of rock it is. If you skip a rock across a lake, throw it against a window, or use it to crack open a coconut, you can pretty well predict what will happen.

For other purposes, however, you need to know something about the rock. If you want to predict what will happen if you run an electric current through it, you have to know what kind of rock it is. If you want to determine a fair sale price for the rock, you need to know whether it is a diamond or a piece of granite.

Similarly, nearly all people behave the same in some ways and differ in other ways. Most people grow sleepy about once every 24 hours. When people sweat, they feel thirsty. When they escape from pain or danger, they feel happy. Statements of this type, which apply to nearly everyone, are sometimes referred to as nomothetic (NAHM-uh-THEHT-ick) laws (from the Greek *nomothetes*, meaning legislator). Up to this point, most of this book has dealt with such universal statements.

But psychologists are also interested in the ways in which people differ. If we want to predict how someone will spend a Saturday afternoon, or how that person will react to being with others, to being alone, to succeeding, or to failing, we need to know much about that person. We need to know what makes that one individual different from others. Statements that apply to individual differences are known as idiographic laws (Silverstein, 1988). (The prefix *idio-* means "individual.")

Concept Check

4. Two psychologists agree that a particular person is showing anxiety, but they argue about whether the anxiety is "trait anxiety" or "state anxiety." What do they mean by that distinction? How could they settle their argument? (Check your answers on page 503.)

JAMES W. KALAT

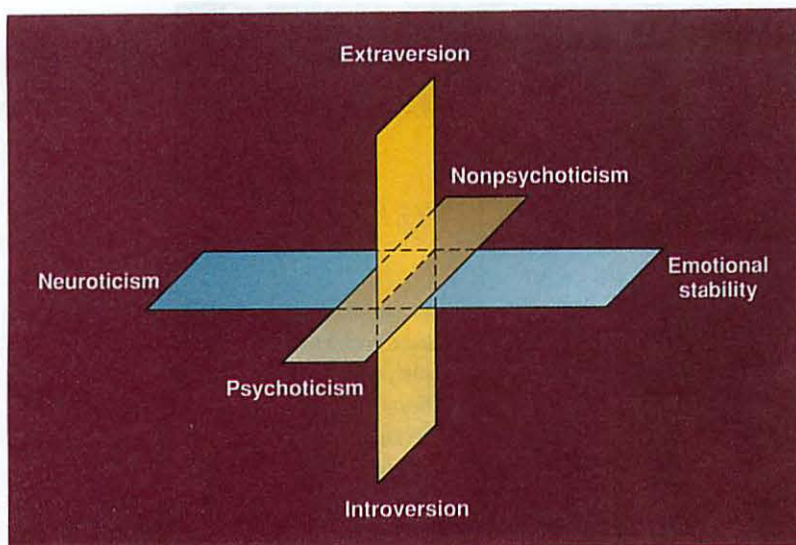INTRODUCTION
TO
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SECOND EDITION

FIGURE 13.8

In this model of personality structure, any personality can be represented as one point in the three-dimensional space. (After Eysenck, 1952.) According to Eysenck, once we have described how neurotic, how psychotic, and how introverted or extraverted a person is, we have described the main features of that individual's personality.

TABLE 13.2 Five Traits That Account for Variations in Personality

Trait	Description
Neuroticism	Anxious, insecure, guilt prone, self-conscious
Extraversion	Talkative, sociable, fun loving, affectionate
Openness to new experience	Daring, nonconforming, enjoying new experiences, imaginative
Agreeableness	Sympathetic, warm, trusting, cooperative
Conscientiousness	Dependable, ethical, productive

Source: Based on McCrae and Costa, 1987.

EXAMPLES OF PERSONALITY TRAITS

How many personality traits are there? Gordon Allport and H. S. Odbert (1936) plodded through a dictionary and found almost 18,000 words that might be used to describe personality traits. Even after we eliminate synonyms, we still face a very long list. By one count, psychologists had identified 153 personality traits by the year 1983 (Royce & Powell, 1983).

Depending on our purpose, we can classify personalities in different ways. To return to our rock analogy, how could we decide how many kinds of rocks there are? A geologist might draw up a list based on chemical composition—granite, quartz, and feldspar, for example. A landscape architect might draw up a list based on size or color, ignoring chemical composition. Someone else might classify rocks in terms of where they were found. The "right" way to classify rocks depends on how we plan to use the classification.

Similarly, we can identify either several thousand personality traits or just a few, depending on our purpose. In general, psychologists prefer the simplest classification. If "shyness" means about the same thing as "timidity," we do not need to measure both traits. Psychologists use a method called *factor analysis* to find which traits correlate with one another and which ones do not.

Using that method, Hans Eysenck (1952a) proposed that psychologists could explain personality by using just three sets of traits: extraversion versus introversion, neuroticism versus emotional stability, and psychoticism versus nonpsychoticism (normal thinking), as shown in Figure 13.8. *Extraversion* means a directing of interest toward other people; *introversion* means a turning of interest inward, toward oneself. *Neuroticism* means easy arousal of anxiety and emotional distress; *psychoticism* means disordered thinking.

More recent research has favored a model that includes these five traits: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to new experiences, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (McCrae & Costa, 1987). (See Table 13.2.) Most other traits overlap one of these five or combine two or more of them. These five traits do not account for all aspects of personality, but they describe behavior in most situations.

Still, psychologists continue to study other personality traits that describe behavior in specialized situations. We shall discuss three examples of personality traits—androgyny, locus of control, and self-monitoring—which are among the most popular topics of contemporary research.
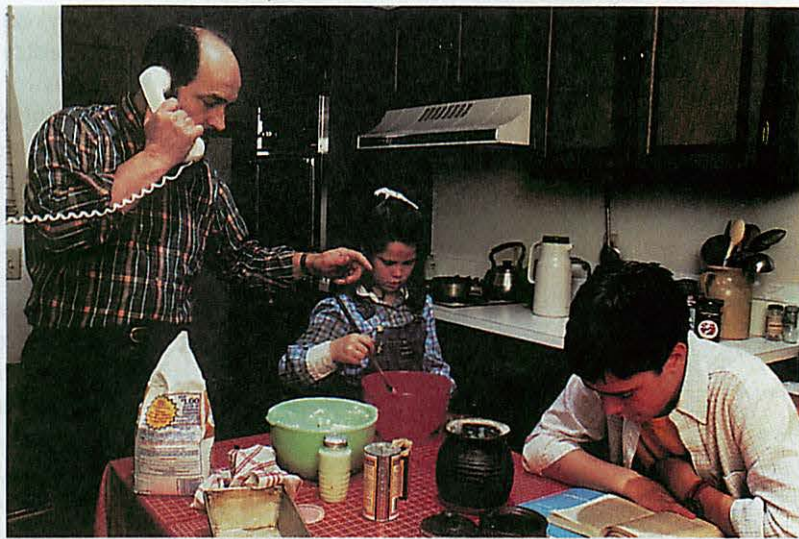
Masculinity, Femininity, and Androgyny

Two of the most obvious personality traits are masculinity and femininity, which are not the same as being biologically male or female. Not all males are equally masculine; not all females are equally feminine.
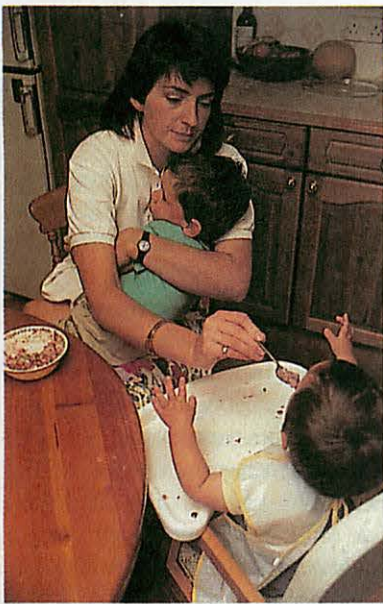
a

b

c

d

e

How would you define the traits masculine and feminine? Most people have trouble giving many characteristics; you may not consider any of them essential. But think how our words reflect attitudes. How do you use the term househusband? Do you call women "cooks" but men "chefs"? We speak of "career women," but businessmen are never "career men." If you say female sports fans are less feminine than these house cleaners (c), you need to clarify feminine. These cleaners do traditional "women's work," but they run a company to clean others' homes.

TABLE 13.3 Sample Items from the Bem Sex-Role Inventory

Masculine Items	Feminine Items
Ambitious	Affectionate
Assertive	Cheerful
Competitive	Compassionate
Makes decisions easily	Loves children
Self-reliant	Loyal
Willing to take risks	Sympathetic

Source: Bem, 1974, page 156.

According to society's definition of these terms, it is masculine to be ambitious, to be self-assertive, and to be interested in sports. It is feminine to enjoy caring for children, to be sympathetic and understanding, and to enjoy beautifying the house and garden.

Is it healthy to accept these roles wholeheartedly? Not entirely, perhaps—at least not if they limit one's choices. A man who loves taking care of children and who hates sports may worry that he is not very masculine. A highly assertive woman may be told that she is unfeminine. Perhaps people would be healthier and happier if they felt free to combine masculinity and femininity in whatever way they like—to be, for example, ambitious, assertive, interested in children, *and* sympathetic to the needs of others.

Reasoning along these lines led Sandra Bem (1974) to identify a psychological trait called androgyny (from the Greek roots *andr-* meaning man and *gyne-* meaning woman). According to Bem, androgynous people, as she originally conceptualized the trait, are equally masculine and feminine. They are not limited by one stereotype or the other; they can display masculine or feminine traits with equal ease, depending on what the situation requires.

Table 13.3 presents part of a checklist of masculine and feminine traits. To measure your degree of androgyny, check all the items that apply to yourself. If you check about the same number of masculine and feminine items, you are said to be androgynous. Such people, Bem predicted, are more likely to be mentally healthy and flexible in their behavior than are other people.

Bem's original method of measuring androgyny is probably not the best (Spence, 1984). The checklist does not measure all aspects of masculinity or femininity. It tends, in fact, to focus heavily on self-assertiveness and sympathy with other people.

Moreover, a person can make a score that is *equal* in masculinity and femininity either by scoring high in both or by scoring low in both. Someone who is assertive, self-reliant, cheerful, and compassionate has the advantages of both masculinity and femininity; such a person is likely to have high self-esteem and a good ability to get along with others. Someone who is unassertive, highly dependent, gloomy, and indifferent to others is also considered androgynous because the masculinity and femininity scores are equal (at zero). But such a person is at a disadvantage in many regards. For this reason, most investigators now define androgyny as a personality high in both masculinity and femininity.

Does androgyny confer any benefits that are greater than the sum of the benefits provided by masculinity and the benefits provided by femininity? So far, the research has failed to document any such additional benefits (Spence, 1984). Yet many psychologists believe that the idea of androgyny is a sound one and that the lack of research support is due to our current inability to measure androgyny properly.

Locus of Control

Do you think your success in life will depend mostly on your own efforts or mostly on circumstances beyond your control? People who believe they are largely in control of their lives are said to have an internal locus of control. Those who believe they are controlled mostly by external forces are said to have an external locus of control (Rotter, 1966). Table 13.4 lists some items from a questionnaire designed to measure locus of control. Many personality researchers and clinical psychologists use this questionnaire.

People's perception of their locus of control tends to be fairly consistent from one situation to another (Lefcourt, 1976). Those with an internal locus of control tend to take responsibility for their own behavior—for both their successes and failures (see Figure 13.9). When someone of the opposite sex finds them attractive, they assume it is because of their charm. By contrast, people with an external locus of control assume that the other person was just easy to please.

People with an internal locus of control know that they are not *always* in control. If they buy a lottery ticket or play a game of chance, they realize that they have no control over the outcome. In fact, they tend to be less interested in games of chance than people with an external locus of control are (Lefcourt, 1976). They not only *believe* they are generally in control but also *like* to be in control.

FIGURE 13.9

Locus of control can exist either as a lasting personality trait or as a temporary state of behavior.

Locus of control correlates with a number of other personality traits (Lefcourt, 1976). For example, people with an internal locus of control tend to work longer on a problem before giving up. They are more likely to choose a larger reward next week over a smaller reward today. People with an external locus of control are more likely to feel depressed and helpless.

Locus of control may show itself as a temporary state as well as a lasting trait. In other words, we may display an internal locus of control under certain circumstances and an external locus of control under others. For example, people generally display an internal locus of control when they are engaged in tasks that require skill, when they make choices, and when they are competing against others.

Even in a pure-chance situation, an opportunity to make a choice induces many people to exhibit an internal locus of control (Burger, 1986). For example, in one study, people were given a chance to buy $1 lottery tickets for a $50 prize (Langer, 1975). Some of them were simply handed a ticket,

Regardless of whether people have an internal or an external locus of control, some people's ability to control events is limited. These Catholic refugees have fled the North Vietnamese army. They cannot defeat the army, but rather than live in the communist state it supports, they have chosen to leave. Would you guess that people who take such risky actions have an internal locus of control or an external one?

while others were permitted to choose their own ticket. Those who chose their own ticket thought they had a better chance of winning. Days later, all the ticket holders were asked whether they were willing to sell their ticket to someone else. Those who had been handed a ticket agreed to sell for a mean price of less than $2. Those who had chosen their own ticket asked a mean price of more than $8 per ticket, and some held out for the full $50!

Self-Monitoring

You may know some people who seem to be consistently inconsistent: Whenever they face an unfamiliar situation, the first thing they do is determine what is expected of them and what everyone else is doing. Mark Snyder (1979) refers to such people as high self-monitors because they are constantly monitoring their own behavior to make sure that they are making the right impression (Figure 13.10). They may be quiet and reserved in one setting, outgoing and adventuresome in another. Their personality seems to be constantly changing.

In contrast, people who are low self-monitors pay little attention to what is expected of them or what impression they are making. If they are outgoing in one setting, they will be outgoing in other settings as well. Their personality seems to be consistent over time and from situation to situation.

High self-monitors and low self-monitors differ in their relationships with other people. For example, low self-monitors typically spend their time with a small group of friends and choose the same people to be their chemistry lab partners or their tennis partners. In contrast, high self-monitors look around for someone who is good at chemistry or good at tennis (Snyder, Gangestad, & Simpson, 1983). A low self-monitor is likely to establish a strong relationship with a dating partner, while a high self-monitor is more likely to break off a relationship with one partner in favor of a new partner who will make a better impression on others (Gangestad & Snyder, 1985).

Concept Check

5. Suppose we ask several people to express their attitudes on a variety of issues, such as drinking alcohol, cleaning up the environment, and improving race relations. Then we look for a correspondence between their attitudes and their actual behavior. Whose behavior is more likely to match their attitudes—low self-monitors or high self-monitors? (Check your answer on page 503.)

EVALUATING THE TRAIT APPROACH

Most psychologists agree that traits show reasonable consistency from one time to another. A person who is talkative at a party tonight will probably be talkative at a party tomorrow night. Someone who returns a lost wallet to its owner one time will probably do the same thing the next time. According to the results of one questionnaire, traits are reasonably consistent over as long as eight years (Stein, Newcomb, & Bentler, 1986).

Psychologists share less agreement on how consistent traits are across situations. Does a student who talks a lot at parties also speak up during class discussions? If someone is honest about returning a lost wallet, will the same person be honest in filing an income tax return? Is a "friendly" person friendly to chance acquaintances, or just toward a few close friends?

Criticisms of the Trait Approach

Walter Mischel (1981) has been the leader of those who believe that such general traits as honesty and friendliness have only a weak carryover from one situation to another. Instead of talking about "friendliness," he suggests we should specify "friendliness to next-door neighbors" or "friendliness to store clerks." Narrowly defined traits are more likely to show consistency than are broadly defined traits. According to Mischel (1973), people

High self-monitoring	Low self-monitoring
Behavior dependent on expectations of others	Behavior less dependent on expectations of others
Alters behavior to fit the situation	Behavior consistent in many situations
Has different friends for different activities	Has one group of friends for all activities
Establishes shorter relationships as needs change	Establishes strong, lasting relationships

FIGURE 13.10

Making an impression: High and low self-monitoring.

"I'm shy," you say, but are you equally shy in class, with friends, and at a party where you know few of the guests? Those who are critical of the trait approach question whether shyness is a trait or a response occurring only in certain situations.

have different personalities only because each person has learned a unique set of responses to each of the situations he or she faces.

In familiar situations, we learn to follow scripts—the rules governing who will do what and when (Abelson, 1981). The script for a lecture class, a religious service, or a round of golf specifies who will do what and when. Because nearly everyone who has learned the appropriate script will behave in about the same way, Mischel suggests that scripts and situations influence behavior more than any broad personality trait does.

Of course, people sometimes behave differently in the same situation. One reason is that they may differ in their personality traits. Another reason is that the script may assign different roles to different people. For example, the college-lecture script prescribes that the professor stand in front of the class and either talk or control the discussion. The same script prescribes that the students sit, take notes, and talk when called upon. It may even imply that seniors who are majoring in the field should participate more actively in class discussion than sophomores or juniors do.

In short, Mischel and others believe that broad personality traits, such as talkativeness or honesty, have little to do with variations in human behavior. They hold that behavior depends more on states than on traits and that, in any case, traits are usually specific to given situations.

Why then do most of the people we know *seem* to have a consistent personality? One possibility is that the apparent consistency is mostly an illusion (Schweder, 1982). When we see someone behaving in a friendly way in a certain situation, we may assume that he or she is friendly in other situations as well. When someone is shy in our presence, we may assume that the person is shy with other people as well.

Distortions of memory may strengthen such illusions. We tend to remember those occasions when people behave in a way that fits our image of them. When someone who is usually outgoing behaves in a quiet, withdrawn manner, we dismiss the behavior as uncharacteristic (Hamilton, 1979).

Concept Check

6. *Given the ways in which people distort their memories of others, why does a person have a hard time trying to escape his or her reputation? (Check your answer on page 503.)*

Defense of the Trait Approach

Other psychologists insist that personality traits are more consistent than Mischel and other critics claim. Granted, a person who is friendly or talkative in one situation may not be equally so in every situation. (We would think something was wrong with a person who always acted the same way.) But people do show considerable consistency in their personality, and it is hard to believe that our perception of that consistency is just an illusion (Allport, 1966; McGowan & Gormly, 1976).

Defenders of the trait approach suggest several reasons for regarding personality traits as more consistent than the critics claim. First, *because of the demands of certain scripts, we cannot expect personality traits to be consistent across all situations.* For example, a person who is friendly and talkative at a party sits quietly during a lecture. Is that a sign of an inconsistent personality? Hardly. The script for a lecture class is so tightly defined that all the students are locked into the same behavioral state. In situations that are governed by more loosely defined scripts, such as a get-together over lunch, a person's behavior is a more accurate reflection of personality traits.

Second, *people sometimes seem to be inconsistent in one personality trait only because they*

are being consistent in some other trait (Bem & Allen, 1974). For example, a woman has always been honest in filling out her tax returns and in returning lost wallets. Now her neighbor asks, "Why didn't you invite me to your party next Saturday?" The woman replies, "Oh, it's just a party for people from my office." That is a lie; the real reason is that the neighbor always starts arguments. Why has this otherwise honest woman told a lie? Is it because of some inconsistency in her trait of honesty? Perhaps, but only because she is even more consistent in being tactful and friendly (Kenrick & Stringfield, 1980). A person can be consistent in one or several traits, but no one can be entirely consistent in all traits.

Third, *personality traits sometimes appear to be inconsistent only because of inadequate measurements* (Epstein & O'Brien, 1985). Suppose we want to study "interest in sports" as a personality trait. We find that the correlation between "interest in basketball" and "interest in hockey" is relatively low, because many people follow one sport closely and pay little attention to the other. So we might conclude that "interest in sports" is not much of a personality trait, given its inconsistency from one measure to another.

Would that be a sound conclusion? No, because neither "interest in basketball" nor "interest in hockey" is by itself a good indicator of "interest in sports" as a general trait. People can be either interested or uninterested in a particular sport for reasons that have little to do with sports in general. Many sports fans in the southern states, for example, follow every sport *except* hockey.

Watch what happens when we take a different approach: This time we ask people how closely they follow basketball, hockey, football, baseball, and the Olympics. For those who report that they follow most of those sports closely, we conclude that "interest in sports" is a strong trait. For those who report that they follow no more than one of the sports, we conclude that "interest in sports" is a relatively weak trait. The trait as measured in this more elaborate way will prove to be reasonably stable across situations and a good predictor of how people spend their spare time, what they like to talk about, and what they watch on television.

Similarly, when psychologists observe other traits in a variety of situations, they can measure them more accurately than if they measure them just once or twice. The resulting measures correlate strongly with additional measurements of behavior (Epstein, 1979; Moskowitz, 1982).

SUMMARY

1. Psychologists seek both nomothetic laws, which apply to all people, and idiographic laws, which apply to individual differences. (page 485)

2. Traits are personality characteristics that persist over time; states are temporary changes in behavior in response to particular situations. (page 485)

3. Psychologists seek a short list of traits that describes as much of behavior as possible. Much can be explained by these five traits: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to new experiences, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. (page 486)

4. Androgyny is a trait that combines the features of masculinity and femininity. Psychologists are not sure whether it confers any special benefits beyond the separate benefits of its two components. (page 488)

5. People with an internal locus of control believe that for the most part they are in control of their lives. People with an external locus of control believe that their lives are controlled mostly by outside forces. (page 488)

6. High self-monitors mold their behavior to the demands of the situation in an effort to make a good impression. Consequently, their behavior tends to be inconsistent across situations. Low self-monitors tend to be less concerned about the impression they are making; consequently, their behavior tends to be more consistent. (page 490)

7. Some personality theorists have criticized the trait concept on the grounds that behavior seems to be inconsistent from one situation to another. (page 490)

8. Defenders of the trait concept point out that (1) we should not expect traits to be apparent at all times or in all situations, (2) people sometimes appear to be inconsistent in one trait only because they are more consistent in some other trait, and (3) traits sometimes appear to be inconsistent only because they have been measured inadequately. (page 491)

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER READING

Liebert, R. M., & Spiegler, M. D. (1987). *Personality: Strategies and issues.* Chicago: Dorsey. A textbook that covers the major approaches to the study of personality.

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT

How can we measure personality?
How can we use measurements of personality?

A new P. T. Barnum Psychology Clinic has just opened at your local shopping mall and is offering a Grand Opening Special on personality tests. You have always wanted to know more about yourself, so you sign up. Here is Barnum's true-false test.

Questionnaire for Universal Assessment of Zealous Youth (QUAZY)

1. I have never met a cannibal I didn't like.   T F
2. Robbery is the only major felony I have ever committed.   T F
3. I eat "funny mushrooms" less frequently than I used to.   T F
4. I don't care what people say about my nose-picking habit.   T F
5. Sex with vegetables no longer disgusts me.   T F
6. This time I am quitting glue-sniffing for good.   T F
7. I generally lie on questions like this one.   T F
8. I spent much of my childhood sucking on telephone cords.   T F
9. I find it impossible to sleep if I think my bed might be clean.   T F
10. Naked bus drivers make me nervous.   T F
11. Some of my friends don't know what a rotten person I am.   T F
12. I usually find laxatives unsatisfying.   T F
13. I spend my spare time playing strip solitaire.   T F

You turn in your answers. A few minutes later a computer prints out your individual personality profile:

You have a need for other people to like and admire you, and yet you tend to be critical of yourself. While you have some personality weaknesses, you are generally able to compensate for them. You have considerable unused capacity that you have not turned to your advantage. Disciplined and self-controlled on the outside, you tend to be worrisome and insecure on the inside. At times, you have serious doubts as to whether you have made the right decision or done the right thing. You prefer a certain amount of change and variety and become dissatisfied when hemmed in by restrictions and limitations. You also pride yourself as an independent thinker and do not accept others' statements without satisfactory proof. But you have found it unwise to be too frank in revealing yourself to others. At times you are extraverted, affable, and sociable, while at other times you are introverted, wary, and reserved. Some of your aspirations tend to be rather unrealistic [Forer, 1949, page 120].

Do you agree with this assessment?

This experiment has been conducted several times with psychology classes (Forer, 1949; Marks & Kammann, 1980; Ulrich, Stachnik, & Stainton, 1963). The questionnaire was a little less preposterous than the QUAZY, but everyone received exactly the same personality profile you did. The students were asked, "How accurately does this profile describe you?" About 90% rated it good or excellent. Some expressed amazement at its accuracy: "I didn't realize until now that psychology was an exact science."

The students accepted this personality profile partly because it vaguely and generally describes almost everyone and partly because people tend to accept almost *any* statement that an "expert" makes about them. Richard Kammann repeated the experiment, but substituted a strange, unflattering personality profile that included statements like "Your boundless energy is a little wearisome to your friends" and "You seem to find it impossible to work out a satisfactory adjustment to your problems." More than 20% of the students rated this unlikely assortment of statements a "good to excellent" description of their own personality (Marks & Kammann, 1980).

The moral of the story is this: Psychological testing is tricky. If we want to know whether a particular test measures a particular person's personality, we cannot simply ask whether or not that person thinks it does. Even if a test is totally worthless— horoscopes, palm reading, or the QUAZY—many people will describe its results as a "highly accurate" description of themselves. To devise a psychological test that not only *appears* to work but also actually *does* work, we need to go through some elaborate procedures to design the test carefully and to determine its reliability and validity.

STANDARDIZED PERSONALITY TESTS

Psychologists have devised a great variety of standardized tests to measure personality. A standardized test is one that is administered according to specified rules and whose scores are interpreted in a prescribed fashion. An important step in standardizing a test is to determine the distribution of scores for a large number of people. We need to know the mean score and the range of scores for people in general and the mean and the range for various special populations, such as severely depressed people. Given such information, we can determine whether a given individual's score on the test is within the normal range or whether it is more typical of people with some disorder.

Most of the tests published in popular magazines have never been standardized. A magazine may herald its article, "Test Yourself: How Good Is Your Marriage?" or "Test Yourself: How Well Do You Control the Stress in Your Life?" After you have taken the test and compared your answers to the scoring key, the article may tell you that "if your score is greater than 80, you are doing very well . . . if it is below 20, you need to work on improving yourself!"—or some such nonsense. Unless the magazine states otherwise, you can take it for granted that the author pulled the scoring norms out of thin air and never even bothered to make sure that the items were clear and unambiguous.

We shall begin with two examples of standardized tests of personality and later consider a less objective method of assessing personality—projective tests.

The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)

The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (mercifully abbreviated MMPI) consists of about 550 true-false questions. (Alternative versions vary in number.) Typical items are "My mother never loved me" and "I think I would like the work of a pharmacist." (All the items given here have been reworded.) The MMPI was originally designed to measure the 10 personality traits listed in Table 13.5. Figure 13.11 shows a profile of one individual's test scores. The items relating to each trait were scattered throughout the test, rather than clustered. Over the years, psychologists have used other combinations of MMPI questions to measure hundreds of personality dimensions.

Construction of the MMPI In choosing the MMPI questions, the original authors relied strictly on trial and error (Hathaway & McKinley, 1940). They asked hundreds of people of both sexes and all ages to answer hundreds of true-false questions about themselves. Then they posed the same questions to groups of depressed people, paranoid people, and people with other clinical disorders. They selected those items that most of the people in a given clinical group answered differently from the way most other people answered them. Their assumption was that if you answer the way depressed people usually answer, you may be depressed too.

The result was a test that works in practice. Most people with a high score on the depression scale are depressed; most people with a high score on the hypochondriasis scale complain of constant ailments.

Some of the MMPI test items fit popular theories and expectations, and some do not. For example, one question on the schizophrenia scale is "Sometimes I hear voices even though no one else is around." That item makes good sense theoretically, because "hearing things" is considered to be characteristic of schizophrenia. Not all schizophrenic people hear things, but most people who do are suffering from schizophrenia. (We shall discuss schizophrenia, a serious mental disturbance, in Chapter 14.)

However, two items on the depression scale are "I attend church regularly" and "Occasionally I tease animals." If you answer *false* to either of those items, you get a point on the depression scale! The authors of the MMPI had no theoretical reason to expect that depression would have any relationship, one way or the other, with church attendance or animal teasing. It was simply a fact that significantly more depressed people than normal people answered false to those two items. (A possible explanation is that many depressed people don't do much of *anything*; attending church and teasing animals are only two of many possible activities.)

TABLE 13.5 The Ten Original MMPI Scales

| Scale	Typical Item
Hypochondria	I have chest pains several times a week. (T)
Depression	I am glad that I am alive. (F)
Hysteria	My heart frequently pounds so hard I can hear it. (T)
Psychopathic deviation	I get a fair deal from most people. (F)
Masculinity-femininity	I like to arrange flowers. (T = female)
Paranoia	There are evil people trying to influence my mind. (T)
Psychasthenia (obsessive-compulsive)	I save nearly everything I buy, even after I have no use for it. (T)
Schizophrenia	Sometimes I hear voices even though no one else is around. (T)
Hypomania	When things are dull I try to get some excitement started. (T)
Social introversion	I have the time of my life at parties. (F)
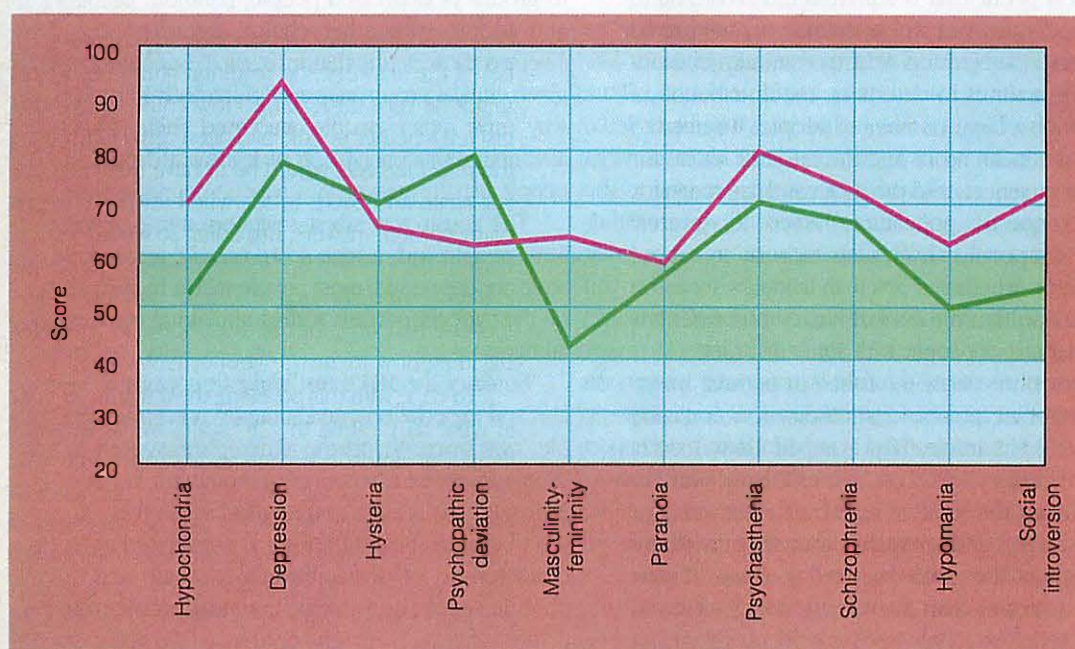
FIGURE 13.11

Profile of a personality: For the MMPI's 10 clinical scales, a score is plotted to profile an individual, as shown here. For each scale, such as hysteria and paranoia, the normal range is 40 to 60. Scores above 70 suggest disorders. The red line is the profile of a 27-year-old man with moderate to severe depression and anxiety (Graham, 1977). The green line is the profile of a 28-year-old woman with moderate depression and a tendency toward impulsive behavior (Anastasi, 1988).

Concept Check

7. *If you never go to church and never tease animals, are you on your way to becoming depressed? (Check your answer on page 503.)*

Revision of the MMPI The MMPI was standardized in the 1940s. As time passed, the meaning of certain items, or at least of certain answers to them, changed. For example, how would you respond to the following item?

I am an important person. T F

In the 1940s, fewer than 10% of all people marked this item *true*. At the time, "important person" meant about the same as "famous person," and people who called themselves important were thought to have an inflated view of themselves. Today a majority of people mark this item *true*. After all, we now believe that every person is important.

What about this item?

I like to play drop the handkerchief. T F

Drop the handkerchief is a game similar to tag. It dropped out of popularity in the 1950s, and most people born since then have never even heard of the game, much less played it.

To bring the MMPI up to date, a group of psychologists rephrased some of the items (Butcher,

1989; Holden, 1986). A different game was substituted for drop the handkerchief, and the "important person" item was rephrased to mean what it used to mean. New items were added to deal with alcohol and drug abuse, Type A behavior, stress, and marriage troubles. Moreover, the revised test has been administered to over 2,500 adults in the United States, including all ethnic groups, to determine what scores are typical of people today. In other words, the test has been restandardized. (Any test has to be restandardized from time to time. You may recall from the discussion of IQ tests that certain items once considered difficult are now considered relatively easy.)

Detection of Deception The designers of the MMPI built some very sophisticated innovations into their test. They realized that people who take personality tests sometimes lie to make themselves look good, thereby rendering their test scores invalid. How could psychologists tell whether someone was lying?

To measure that possibility, they included a "lie scale." They did not, of course, ask questions like "Sometimes I lie to make myself look good. True or false?" Rather, they included such items as "I like every person I have ever met" and "Occasionally I get angry at someone." If you answer true to the first question and false to the second, you are either a saint or a liar. The test authors, convinced that there are more liars than saints, would give you two points on the "lie scale." Almost everyone gets a few points on the lie scale, but if you get too many a psychologist will refuse to trust your answers on the other items and will throw your test away.

A similar method is used to detect deception on other types of tests. For example, many employers ask job applicants to fill out a questionnaire that asks them how much experience they have had with certain job-related skills. What is to prevent eager applicants from exaggerating or even lying about their experience? To find out whether applicants are lying, some employers include among the authentic items a few bogus items referring to nonexistent tasks:

How much experience have you had at:	None	A Little	Much
Matrixing solvency files?	—	—	—
Typing from audio-fortran reports?	—	—	—
Determining myopic weights for periodic tables?	—	—	—
Resolving disputes by isometric analysis?	—	—	—
Stocking solubility product constants?	—	—	—
Planning basic entropy programs?	—	—	—
Operating a matriculation machine?	—	—	—

According to the results of one study, almost half of all job applicants claimed experience at one or more nonexistent tasks (Anderson, Warner, & Spencer, 1984). Moreover, applicants who claimed a great deal of experience at nonexistent tasks also overstated their ability on real tasks. An employer can use answers on bogus items as a correction factor. The more skill an applicant claims to have on a nonexistent task, the more the employer discounts that applicant's claims of skill on real tasks.

Something to Think About
Could you use this strategy in other situations? Suppose a political candidate promises to increase aid to college students. You are skeptical. How could you use the candidate's statements on other issues to help you decide whether or not to believe this promise?

Detection of Errors in Answering Questions If someone answered the MMPI carelessly or misnumbered the answers, the resulting pattern of scores might be very misleading. How could a psychologist tell whether people had been careless in taking the test? One way would be to have them take the test again and check to see whether they changed many of their answers. But doing so would be time consuming and perhaps inconclusive. Many people change their answers not because they were careless the first time but because they have trouble deciding how to answer (Bond, 1986).

To cope with this problem, the test authors built in what they called the "F" scale, which includes items that almost everyone answers the same way. (It is called "F" for *feigning,* because it catches people who are faking, as well as people who answer carelessly.) Examples are "I never smell anything," and "I spent last week in Tibet." Very few people can honestly say "true" to either of those items. It is possible that you have a defective sense of smell and that you spent last week in Tibet; two points on the F scale would not disqualify your answer sheet. But if you give a number of highly unusual answers, a psychologist will assume either that you misnumbered your answer sheet or that you were clowning around. In either case, your answer sheet is worthless for assessing your personality.

Proper and Improper Uses of the MMPI The MMPI is useful to researchers who want to measure personality traits to see how they correlate with other traits or to test a theory of personality development. It is also useful to clinical psychologists who want to learn something about a client before

beginning therapy or who want an independent measure of how much a client's personality has changed during the course of therapy (McReynolds, 1985).

By itself, however, the MMPI does not provide enough information for a psychologist to decide whether or not someone has a mental or an emotional problem. Its validity is not high enough for that purpose. In fact, apparently well-adjusted people produce a wide distribution of scores on each of the MMPI scales. Occasionally, an apparently well-adjusted person scores higher on the depression or the schizophrenia scale than do most people who are actually depressed or schizophrenic. Identifying a person with schizophrenia or any other unusual condition is a signal-detection problem, as we discussed in Chapter 5. Suppose that people without schizophrenia outnumber people with schizophrenia by 100 to 1. Suppose further that 95% of the schizophrenic people scored above 50 on the MMPI schizophrenia scale and only 5% of the normal people scored that high. As Figure 13.12 shows, 5% of the normal population is a *larger* group than 95% of the schizophrenic population. Thus, if we called everyone "schizophrenic" who scored above 50, we would be wrong more often than right.

Even so, some people use the MMPI as if its validity were high enough to base firm conclusions on its results. Some employers use it to screen job applicants, selecting only those who have the "right" personality. Some companies want to hire only people with an "aggressive" personality for sales jobs. Others want to eliminate anyone who shows signs of any psychological abnormality. The test was not designed for selection among job applicants, and many psychologists question both the accuracy and the ethics of using it for such purposes.

If you were to take the MMPI, how much would you learn about yourself? Suppose you gave the following answers:

I doubt that I will ever be successful.	True
I often wake up in the middle of the night.	True
I am glad that I am alive.	False
I have thoughts about suicide.	True
I am helpless to control the important events in my life.	True

A psychologist analyzes your answer sheet and tells you, "Your results show signs of possible depression." How impressive is that analysis? Chances are, you were already well aware of feeling depressed. In most cases, the MMPI does little more than restate what you have already said about yourself. It might be news to hear that you are "schizophrenic" or

	Scores above 50 on new test	Scores below 50 on new test
People with schizophrenia (100 people)	95 (95% of 100)	5 (5% of 100)
People without schizophrenia (10,000 people)	500 (5% of 10,000)	9,500 (95% of 10,000)

FIGURE 13.12

Results of a hypothetical test that is 95% accurate in identifying schizophrenia. Because schizophrenia is uncommon, most of the people with high scores on the schizophrenia test do *not* have schizophrenia. Personality tests can be used to suggest a possible diagnosis of a person's problem, but by themselves they cannot establish a diagnosis with sufficient accuracy.

"obsessive-compulsive" but only because you were not familiar with those terms. However, this is not to say that the MMPI is useless. It can be quite informative to the psychologist, even when the results are not particularly surprising to the client.

The 16-PF Test

The 16-PF Test is another widely used standardized personality test. The term "PF" stands for personality factors. The test measures 16 factors, or traits, of personality. Unlike the MMPI, which was intended primarily to identify abnormal personalities, the 16-PF Test was devised to assess various aspects of normal personality. Raymond Cattell (1965) used factor analysis to identify the traits that contribute most significantly to personality. As we saw earlier in this chapter, other psychologists using factor analysis identified 3 or 5 major traits; Cattell found 16. He then devised a test to measure each of those traits. Because of the large number of factors, the results of his test apply to a rather wide range of behaviors (Krug, 1978).

When someone takes the 16-PF Test, the results are printed out as a personality profile, as Figure 13.13 shows. By examining such a profile, an experienced psychologist can determine the person's dominant personality traits.

Although the 16-PF Test was originally designed to assess normal personality, it does enable clinicians to identify various abnormalities, such as schizophrenia, depression, and alcoholism (Kerzendorfer, 1977). Each disorder is associated with a characteristic personality profile (see Figure 13.14).

FIGURE 13.13

Personality profiles on the 16-PF test for airline pilots, creative artists, and writers. A personality profile shows whether people are high or low on a given trait. In this sample, writers were the most imaginative group. (Adapted from *Handbook for the Sixteen Personality Factors,* copyright 1970 by the Institute for Personality and Ability Testing, Inc. Reproduced by permission of the copyright owners.)

A	Reserved		Outgoing
B	Less intelligent		More intelligent
C	Affected by emotions		Emotionally stable
E	Submissive		Dominant
F	Serious		Happy-go-lucky
G	Expedient		Conscientious
H	Timid		Venturesome
J	Tough-minded		Sensitive
L	Trusting		Suspicious
M	Practical		Imaginative
N	Forthright		Shrewd
O	Self-assured		Apprehensive
Q₁	Conservative		Experimenting
Q	Group-dependent		Self-sufficient
Q₃	Uncontrolled		Controlled
Q₄	Relaxed		Tense

- - - Airline pilots
- - - Creative artists
——— Writers

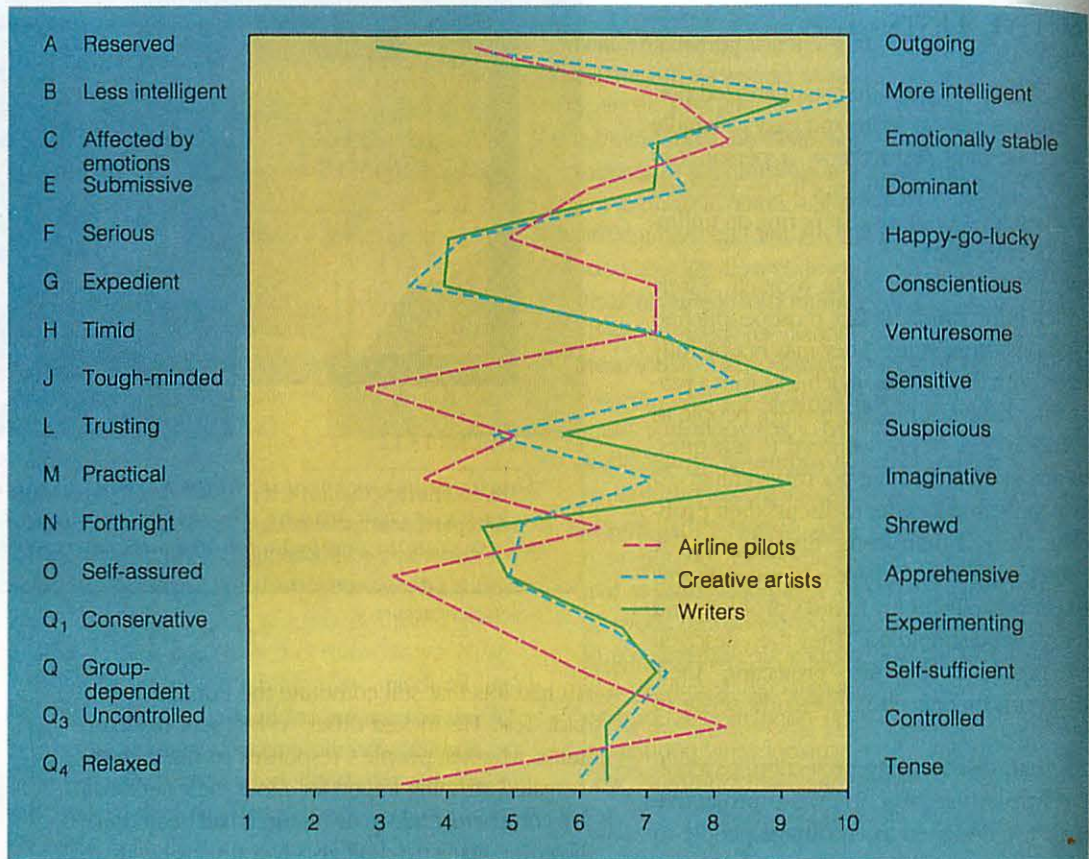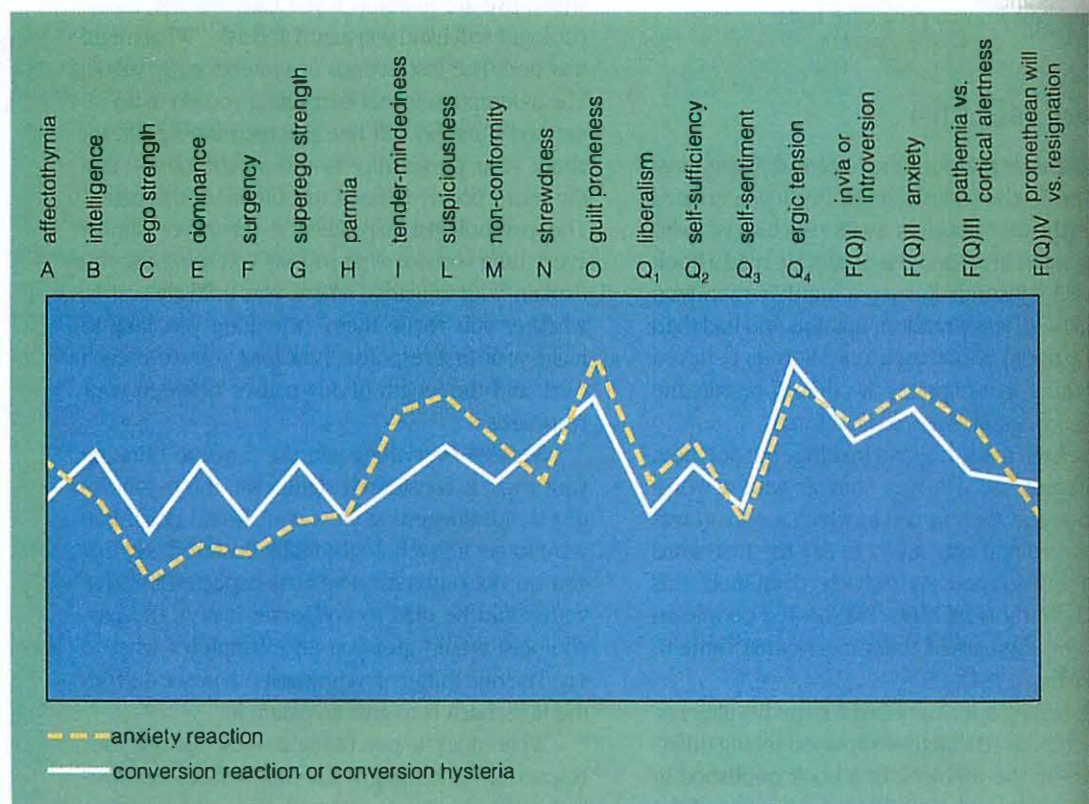1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

FIGURE 13.14

A personality profile for a person with severe anxiety, based on the 16-PF test. The profile shows that this person is high in guilt, low in "ego strength." Cattell made up his own words for familiar concepts so that he could provide a precise definition that would not be confused with the everyday and vague meaning of a term such as *depression.* For example, *surgency* means something similar to cheerfulness and sociability. *Parmia* resembles adventurousness or boldness. (From Cattell, 1965.)

| affectothymia | intelligence | ego strength | dominance | surgency | superego strength | parmia | tender-mindedness | suspiciousness | non-conformity | shrewdness | guilt proneness | liberalism | self-sufficiency | self-sentiment | ergic tension | invia or introversion | anxiety | pathemia vs. cortical alertness | promethean will vs. resignation |
| A | B | C | E | F | G | H | I | L | M | N | O | Q₁ | Q₂ | Q₃ | Q₄ | F(Q)I | F(Q)II | F(Q)III | F(Q)IV |

- - - anxiety reaction
——— conversion reaction or conversion hysteria

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PROJECTIVE TESTS

The MMPI, the 16-PF, and other standardized personality tests are easy to score and easy to handle statistically, but they restrict how a person can respond to a question. To find out more, we need to ask open-ended questions that permit an unlimited range of responses.

Simply to say "Tell me about yourself" rarely evokes much information. In fact, most people find such invitations threatening. They may not be fully honest even with themselves, much less with a psychologist they have just met. To prompt people to describe themselves freely, we need to ask questions that are open ended but not threatening.

Many people find it easier to discuss their problems in the abstract than in the first person. For instance, they might say, "I have a friend with this problem. Let me tell you my friend's problem and ask what my friend should do." They then describe their own problem. They are "projecting" their problem onto someone else, in Freud's sense of the word.

Rather than discouraging projection, psychologists often make use of it. They use **projective** tests, which are designed to encourage people to project their personality characteristics onto ambiguous stimuli. This strategy helps people reveal themselves more fully than they normally would to a stranger, or even to themselves. Let's consider two of the best-known projective tests.

Rorschach Inkblot Test

The **Rorschach Inkblot Test** is probably the most famous projective test of personality. It was created by Hermann Rorschach, a Swiss psychiatrist, who was interested in art and the occult. He read a book of poems by Justinus Kerner, a mystic writer, who had made a series of random inkblots and had then written a poem about each one. Kerner believed that anything that happens at random reveals the influence of occult, supernatural forces.

Rorschach made his own inkblots, but put them to a different use. He was familiar with a word-association test then in use in which a person was given a word and was asked to say the first word that came to mind. Rorschach combined this approach with his inkblots: He showed people an inkblot and then asked them to say what came to mind (Pichot, 1984).

After testing a series of inkblots on his patients, Rorschach noticed that they reported seeing different things in the inkblots. In a book published in 1921 (English translation, 1942) he presented the
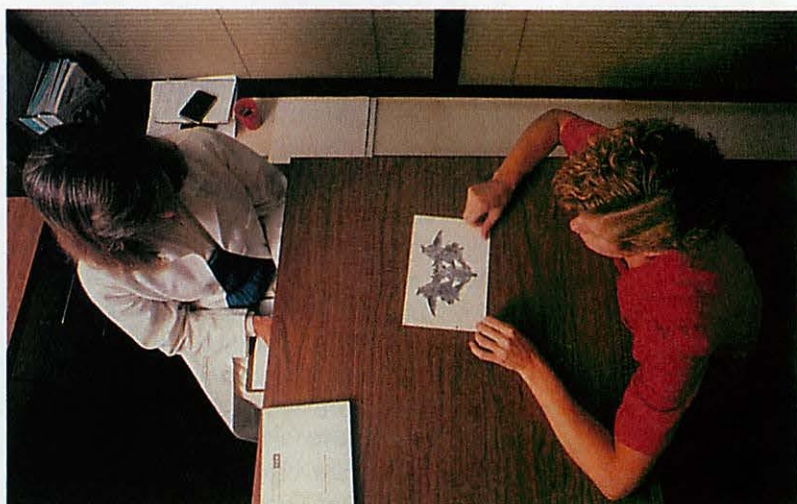
"This looks like an inkblot": In the Rorschach Inkblot Test, there are no wrong or right answers. The psychologist records the client's visual associations and behavior and later interprets them.

10 inkblots that still constitute the Rorschach Inkblot Test. He invited other researchers to determine whether people's responses to his inkblots revealed anything important about their personality. Long before adequate research had been done, however, many psychologists had already begun to use the inkblots with their patients.

The Rorschach Inkblot Test consists of 10 cards like the one in Figure 13.15. Five are black and white; five are in color. If you take this test, a psychologist will hand you a card and ask, "What might this be?" The instructions are intentionally vague. The assumption is that everything you do in an ill-defined situation will reveal something significant about your personality to the psychologist—and the more poorly defined the situation, the better. The psychologist may keep a record of almost everything you do: what you say you see, how you explain your remarks, where you hold the cards, whether you rotate them, how long you take to make your first response, how long you study each card, and the length of any pauses between your responses.

Because everything you do, down to blinking your eyes, is considered significant, the psychologist avoids suggesting what you should do. If you want to get a psychologist really flustered, say that you do not understand what is expected but that you would be glad to cooperate if only the psychologist would give you an example of what to say. The one thing a psychologist can *never* do with the Rorschach is to give an example.

What does a psychologist look for in your responses? One thing is the number of responses you make. An average person gives about two to

FIGURE 13.15

A Rorschach Inkblot.

five responses per card. Anyone who averages fewer than two per card may be depressed, unimaginative, uncooperative, or perfectionistic (wanting to give only "the best possible answer" each time). Anyone who makes many more than five responses per card may be bright and imaginative or a dull-witted person who enjoys this "easy" test. Emotionally disturbed people may see absolutely nothing in some of the cards, or may give an extremely long list of replies. People are permitted to talk as long as they want. Boris Semeonoff (1976) reports an adolescent boy who once gave an average of 14 responses per card. (The rules for administering the test prohibited the psychologist from telling him to stop!)

Psychologists are also interested in whether the person taking the test responds to the whole blot, a large part of it, a minor detail, the white spaces, or other features. They also note whether the person says anything about the color of the blot or describes any movement.

Finally, psychologists are interested in the content of the responses. For example, one woman, who was having serious marital difficulties, gave the following responses:

(Card 1) Outer looks like wings of a butterfly ... and inner details, a stolid woman. Butterfly may in a sense be pulling at the woman in two different directions. One is responsibility and obligation, and the other direction is pursuit of a [long pause] well, love, selfish but satisfying.

(Card 3) Seems to suggest two human forms ... facing each other. ... Myself, both myself ... one part tells me one way; another portion, a completely contradictory way. ... Red in center seems to suggest ... almost in a romantic sense ... the heart. ... This is feminine form, and they are connected to this, the right and the left of it. Therefore, two sides. The right meaning which is right or constructive, the left which would be the destructive or the short-sighted way. The immediate impact was two figures facing each other. Both emanate from one female form and it seemed to be concerned with the romantic affair of the heart. I'm all three" [Beck, 1960, pages 58–59].

Although the Rorschach Inkblot Test is widely used, its reliability and validity are not impressive. To determine its validity, psychologists check to see whether the test distinguishes between normal people and people with various disorders and whether it predicts whether a patient is likely to improve or to deteriorate. The test has reasonable validity for discriminating between normal people and severely disordered people. According to one

review, its reliability is about .83 and its predictive validity is about .45 to .50 (Parker, 1983). That validity is not high enough to support clinical judgments; a psychologist needs to have greater certainty before deciding how to treat a patient (Shields, 1978).

What is worse, different psychologists examining the same responses sometimes draw entirely different conclusions (Squyres & Craddick, 1982). Consequently, the reliability and validity of the test vary from one psychologist to another. The usefulness (validity) of a baseball bat in hitting a ball depends on who is swinging the bat; similarly, the usefulness of the Rorschach depends on who is giving the test and interpreting the results. Interpreting the Rorschach is more an art than a science.

Concept Check

8. Why would it be impossible to receive a copy of the Rorschach Inkblot Test by mail, fill it out, and mail it back to a psychologist to evaluate your answers? (Check your answer on page 503.)

The Thematic Apperception Test

The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) consists of 20 pictures like the one shown in Figure 13.16. It was devised by Christiana Morgan and Henry Murray as a means of measuring people's needs; it was revised and published by Murray (1943). Different sets of pictures are used for women, men, boys, and girls. The subject is asked to make up a story for each picture, describing what is happening, what events led up to the scene, and what will happen in the future. The pictures are all somewhat ambiguous but, except for the 20th card (which is blank!), they provide a better-defined stimulus than does the Rorschach.

People who take the TAT are expected to identify with the people shown in the pictures. That is why men are given pictures showing mostly men, and women are given pictures showing mostly women. The stories people tell usually relate to recent events and concerns in their own lives, possibly including concerns they would be reluctant to talk about openly.

For example, one young man told the following story about a picture of a man clinging to a rope:

This man is escaping. Several months ago he was beat up and shanghaied and taken aboard ship. Since then, he has been mistreated and unhappy and has been looking for a way to escape. Now the ship is anchored near a tropical island and he is climbing down a rope to the water. He will get away successfully and swim to shore. When he

gets there, he will be met by a group of beautiful native women with whom he will live the rest of his life in luxury and never tell anyone what happened. Sometimes he will feel that he should go back to his old life; but he will never do it [Kimble & Garmezy, 1968].

This young man had entered divinity school, mainly to please his parents, but was quite unhappy there. He was wrestling with a secret desire to "escape" to a new life with greater worldly pleasures. In his story, he described someone doing what he really wanted to do but could not openly admit.

The TAT is often used in a clinical setting to get clients to speak freely about their problems. It is also used for research purposes. For instance, an investigator might measure someone's "need for achievement" by counting all the stories he or she tells about achievement. The same might be done for aggression, passivity, control of outside events, or dominance. The investigator could use the findings to study the forces that strengthen or weaken various needs and why certain groups of people express different needs.

Standards for interpreting the TAT are clearer than are those for the Rorschach; two psychologists listening to the same answers generally come to the same conclusions (Lundy, 1985; Sutton & Swensen, 1983). To find the reliability of the TAT, investigators determine the correlation between its results and other measures of personality, including interviews and observations of behavior under natural conditions (Suinn & Oskamp, 1969). The validity varies from one application to another and from one study to another. Most psychologists agree that the test has high enough validity for research purposes but not high enough for making clinical judgments. In other words, the results do not enable a psychologist to diagnose an individual's problems or to decide what to do about them.

A person's responses on the TAT may vary considerably from time to time because the test measures "current concerns" (which change over time) rather than fixed personality traits (Lundy, 1985). Generally, TAT results correspond better to what a person *has done recently* than to what he or she *will do in the future* (Anastasi, 1988). For that reason, it might be better to say that the TAT measures "current concerns" rather than "needs."

Evaluation of Personality Tests

The popularity of certain personality tests is largely the result of habit and inertia. Many psychologists have had years of experience with the MMPI and

have assembled exhaustive data about the meaning of every possible pattern of results. They may concede that it would be possible to devise a better test or even that better tests are already available. But they are so familiar with the MMPI that they are reluctant to switch. (For the same reason, the United States has been slow to shift to the metric system.)

Given the generally modest validity of projective tests, why do many psychologists continue using them? Some say that using them is like listening to faint radio signals from outer space or like reading faded documents written thousands of years ago: To get certain kinds of information, they are willing to tolerate some ambiguity about what the signals mean. Others say that they use the tests as "interviewing techniques" rather than as measuring devices. The tests help to "break the ice," to give the psychologist and the client a starting point for discussion. When the tests are used for that purpose, their low validity is not a serious problem.

SUMMARY

1. Because most people are inclined to accept almost any interpretation of their personality based on a personality test, tests must be carefully scrutinized to ensure that they are measuring what they claim to measure. (page 493)

2. A standardized test is one that is administered according to explicit rules and whose results are interpreted in a prescribed fashion. Standards are based on the scores of people who have already taken the test. (page 494)

3. The MMPI, a widely used personality test, consists of a series of true-false questions selected by trial and error in an effort to distinguish among various personality types. (page 494)

4. The MMPI and certain other tests guard against lying by including items on which nearly all honest people will give the same answer. Any other answer is probably a lie. An unusual number of "lying" answers will invalidate the results. (page 496)

5. The MMPI reveals information about personality, but its results do not by themselves justify a diagnosis of psychological disturbance. (page 497)

6. The 16-PF Test, another standardized personality test, measures 16 personality traits. Although it was designed primarily to measure normal personality, its results do distinguish between normal and abnormal personalities. (page 497)

7. A projective test—such as the Rorschach Inkblot Test or the Thematic Apperception Test—lets people describe their concerns indirectly while talking about "the person in the picture" or about some other ambiguous stimulus. (page 499)

8. Although the reliability and validity of projective tests are generally unimpressive, their results can be useful in

FIGURE 13.16

Picture this: An item from the Thematic Apperception Test.

getting a conversation started between a therapist and a client. (page 501)

Suggestions for Further Reading

Alex, C. (1965). *How to beat personality tests.* New York: Arc. Though intended for amusement, this book contains useful information about personality tests.

Anastasi, A. (1988). *Psychological testing* (6th ed.). New York: Macmillan. A good textbook on both personality testing and IQ testing.

Terms to Remember

anal stage Freud's second stage of psychosexual development, in which psychosexual pleasure is focused on the anus

androgyny a combination of the features of masculinity and femininity

catharsis the release of pent-up tension

collective unconscious according to Jung, an inborn level of the unconscious that symbolizes the collective experience of the human species

defense mechanism a method of protecting oneself against anxiety caused by conflict between the id's demands and the superego's constraints

denial the refusal to believe information that provokes anxiety

displacement the diversion of a thought or an action away from its natural target toward a less threatening target

ego according to Freud, the rational, decision-making aspect of personality

Electra complex according to Freud, a young girl's romantic attraction toward her father and hostility toward her mother

external locus of control belief that outside forces are responsible for most of the important events in one's life

fixation in Freud's theory, a persisting preoccupation with an immature psychosexual interest as a result of frustration at that stage of psychosexual development

genital stage Freud's final stage of psychosexual development, in which sexual pleasure is focused on sexual intimacy with others

high self-monitors people who constantly monitor their own behavior and change it readily to make a good impression

humanistic psychology a branch of psychology that emphasizes the capacity of people to make conscious decisions about their own lives

id according to Freud, the aspect of personality that consists of biological drives and demands for immediate gratification

ideal self a person's image of what he or she would like to be

idiographic laws laws that apply to individual differences

individual psychology the psychology of the person as an indivisible whole, as formulated by Adler

inferiority complex an exaggerated feeling of weakness, inadequacy, and helplessness

internal locus of control belief that one's own efforts control most of the important events in one's life

latent period according to Freud, a period in which psychosexual interest is suppressed or dormant

libido in Freud's theory, a sexual energy

low self-monitors people who make relatively little effort to mold their behavior to the expectations of others

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) a true-false standardized personality test

neo-Freudians personality theorists who have remained faithful to parts of Freud's theory while modifying other parts

nomothetic laws laws intended to apply to all individuals

Oedipus complex according to Freud, a young boy's sexual interest in his mother accompanied by competitive aggression toward his father

oral stage Freud's first stage of psychosexual development, in which psychosexual pleasure is focused on the mouth

peak experience an experience that brings fulfillment, contentment, and peace

personality all the stable, consistent ways in which the behavior of one person differs from that of others

personality profile a graph that shows an individual's scores on scales measuring a number of personality traits

phallic stage Freud's third stage of psychosexual development, in which psychosexual interest is focused on the penis or clitoris

projection the attribution of one's own undesirable characteristics to other people

projective test a test designed to encourage people to project their personality characteristics onto ambiguous stimuli

psychoanalysis Freud's approach to personality, based on the interplay of conscious and unconscious forces

psychodynamic theory a theory that relates personality to the interplay of conflicting forces within the individual, including some that are unconscious

psychosexual development in Freud's theory, progression through a series of developmental periods, each with a characteristic psychosexual focus that leaves its mark on adult personality

psychosexual pleasure according to Freud, any enjoyment arising from stimulation of part of the body

rationalization attempting to prove that one's actions are rational and justifiable and thus worthy of approval

reaction formation presenting oneself as the opposite of what one really is in an effort to reduce anxiety

regression the return to a more juvenile level of functioning as a means of reducing anxiety or in response to emotionally trying circumstances

repression motivated forgetting; the relegation of unacceptable impulses or memories to the unconscious

Rorschach Inkblot Test a set of 10 inkblots used as a projective test of personality

script a set of rules governing behavior in a particular situation

self-actualization the achievement of one's full potential

self-concept a person's image of what he or she really is

16-PF Test a standardized personality test that measures 16 personality traits

social interest a sense of solidarity and identification with other people

standardized test a test that is administered according to specified rules and whose scores are interpreted in a prescribed fashion

state a temporary activation of a particular personality tendency

striving for superiority according to Adler, a universal desire to seek a personal feeling of excellence and fulfillment

style of life according to Adler, a person's master plan for achieving a sense of superiority

sublimation the transformation of an unacceptable impulse into an acceptable, even an admirable, behavior

superego according to Freud, the aspect of personality that consists of memories of rules put forth by one's parents

Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) a projective personality test in which people are asked to make up stories about a series of pictures

trait a relatively permanent personality tendency

unconditional positive regard complete, unqualified acceptance of another person as he or she is

unconscious according to Freud, an aspect of the mind that influences behavior, although we are not directly aware of it

Answers to Concept Checks

1. Someone with a strong id and a weak superego would be expected to give in to a variety of sexual and other impulses that other people would inhibit. Someone with an unusually strong superego would be unusually inhibited and dominated by feelings of guilt. (page 474)

2. a. Displacement; b. denial; c. reaction formation; d. projection; e. repression; f. regression; g. rationalization; h. sublimation. (page 476)

3. In Adler's theory, a person's style of life is his or her method of striving for superiority. (page 480)

4. "Trait anxiety" is a tendency to experience anxiety in a wide variety of settings. "State anxiety" is anxiety evoked by a particular situation. Psychologists could observe whether this person's anxiety declines sharply when the situation changes. If it does, it is state anxiety. If not, it is trait anxiety. (page 485)

5. The correlation between expressed attitudes and actual behavior is likely to be higher among low self-monitors than among high self-monitors. The behavior of high self-monitors depends more on the situation than on enduring traits. (page 490)

6. People tend to remember the occasions when someone's behavior matches his or her reputation. They regard occasions when behavior does not match the reputation as exceptions. (page 491)

7. Probably not. Everyone is expected to agree with at least a few of the items on the depression scale. A suspicion of depression arises only when someone agrees with substantially more of these items than most other people do. (page 495)

8. The Rorschach Inkblot Test must be administered in person by a psychologist who observes how you hold the cards, whether you rotate them, and anything else you do. The psychologist may also ask you to explain where you see something or why it looks the way you say it does. (page 500)