

Lives *and* Deaths

SELECTIONS
FROM THE
WORKS OF

Edwin S. Shneidman

EDITED BY Antoon A. Leenaars



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PREFACE

To borrow here and there from a previous preface by Edwin Shneidman to a collection of pieces by Henry A. Murray: There are few endeavors in life that meet Sigmund Freud's dictum for happiness, "love and work." This book is one such happy occurrence. This enterprise, long urged on Dr. Shneidman, finally "set sail" on January 2, 1996, but when that agreement came, it seemed such a heavy responsibility for me to assume singly that I immediately conscripted friends of his (and mine) to assist me by constituting themselves an informal "committee," the crew, to help make the final selections and to edit the interstitial materials. They are Nancy H. Allen, Pamela Cantor, Robert E. Litman, John T. Maltsberger, and Nina Murray. We corresponded several times on major and detailed issues. The form of this book reflects their efforts, and I am grateful to each of them.

The seventh member of the crew—truly the first mate—was Jeanne Shneidman. Anyone who knows the Shneidmans will immediately grasp that her efforts were essential. And finally, my wife, Susanne Wenckstern, acted as the committee's personal secretary. For many realistic and personal reasons, and because of my deep attachment to both Jeanne and Susanne, I dedicate my efforts in this book to them.

Dr. Shneidman was, of course, *ex officio* captain of the group. The list of papers was compiled on June 29, 1996 in the Shneidman galley, with an update on May 13, 1998—keeping in mind that the final table of contents represents a compromise between the press for greater inclusion and the need to restrict the list to the most representative pieces. In consultation with the committee and with Dr. Shneidman, we decided to divide the selections into five categories: Psychological Assessment, Logic, Melville and Murray, Suicide, and Death. And further, the section on Suicide might itself be divided into five parts: Definitional and Theoretical, Suicide Notes, Administrative and Programmatic, Clinical and Community, and Psychological Autopsy and Postvention. The title of this volume was my selection, associating to both Murray's and Shneidman's endeavors in studying human lives.

Since my early studies of suicide notes, Dr. Shneidman has been pivotal to my thinking. I am proud to state that he has been the most important intellectual influence in my life. He taught me that the seas of life and death are vaster than had ever been charted. I am honored now again to have this opportunity to bring a selection of his work before a new and wider audience.

Antoon A. Leenaars

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I

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

There are discernible stages of development in Shneidman's intellectual approach to suicide, a topic which has been his life-long professional focus. Foremost, he believes that, in the study of large issues like mental disorders, there is a "natural progression" from conceptualization, to understanding, and then to application and practice. Shneidman thought, "We ought to know what we are treating," and he believes that we will treat such problems as suicide more effectively only when we develop a clear vocabulary in terms of which we can assess and treat the problem. When the answers come, they may come in terms we currently cannot imagine. In mental health especially, he prefers the concept of assessment to the notion of diagnosis. (This has led him to a rather critical view of the *DSM* approach to mental pain.) Shneidman disapproves of the practice of pretending to understand a person by means of a diagnostic label, and on this point he quotes his mentor, Henry Murray: "Never denigrate a fellow human being in fewer than 2,000 words." He has

also followed Murray's lead in his interest in thematic projective techniques—like Murray's Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)—with his own Make-A-Picture-Story (MAPS) Test. He has a continuing interest in the narrative aspects of a human life, in their "unity thema" and their prominent psychological threads.

The four chapters in this section reflect some of Shneidman's interests in the assessment process. The first, dated 1943, was his first publication, when a Captain in the Army during World War II, five years before his Ph.D. degree. It is a unique study done in a live setting, specifically, an examination of the interview process in a municipal civil service setting. Somehow, he persuaded the Los Angeles Civil Service Commission to recall a number of applicants who had been interviewed (with the usual substantive questions), in relation to a city clerk's position. In the second, experimental interview, they were asked simply to respond to some Rorschach ink blot cards. (None of the judges and none of the applicants knew anything about that procedure.)

The results of the study seemed to suggest that raters' judgments did not depend on the content of the answers as much as on such items as appearance, demeanor, bearing, fluency of speech, and self-assurance, independent of the content of the interview. It was an early look at personality assessment in the employment process based on Shneidman's challenging the then time-honored question-and-answer format. In a way, it set the stamp for all his future research studies: somewhat daring, somewhat iconoclastic, and involving the application of the method of difference.

The great psychological enthusiasm of the 1940s and 50s was projective techniques like the Rorschach and the TAT. During those years, Shneidman was president of the Society for Projective Techniques, edited *Thematic Test Analysis*, and was keenly interested in the power of projective narrative methods like the TAT and the MAPS Test. Chapter 2 presents an example of his studies of projective methods. It is a case study wherein the MAPS Test was given to a young undergraduate, a participant in Dr. Murray's longitudinal studies of Harvard men. It was written as a chapter for a book intended as a sequel to Murray's *Explorations in Personality* that never made it into print. The chapter attempts to place the subject's MAPS Test responses within a larger array of psychological assessment procedures. What makes a person the whole person that he is? Shneidman has expressed a longing to know how that young man has fared in life, and what, if any, predictive power there was in that earlier MAPS Test performance, an endeavor of all assessment.

Chapter 3 relates to another long-range study—one of the most formidable longitudinal psychological studies ever undertaken, the Terman Study of Gifted Children. Lewis Terman began that study at Stanford in

1921, and it continues to this day. In 1969, Shneidman was at the Center for the Advanced Study of the Behavioral Sciences (on the Stanford campus), and obtained permission to have access to the Gifted Study files. Later he interviewed, over a period of several years, about 30 of the Terman Study men. This paper reports on 11 lawyers among them, looking to see what adjectival traits seemed to be associated with the most successful among them and the least successful among them. As Daniel Goleman has pointed out in his recent book on emotional intelligence, it takes more than just high IQ to make a grand success in life. This chapter touches on what some of those other life-enhancing attributes might be.

“The Psychological Pain Assessment Scale”—the last item in this section—is Shneidman’s latest publication on assessment. The paper is a first report of a new psychological instrument, the Psychological Pain Assessment Scale (PPAS) whose purpose is to measure psychological pain, i.e., introspectively felt hurt, inner anguish, mental aching—what he called “psychache.” The subject is asked to measure the psychological pain in 10 TAT-like pictures, depicting various pleasant, innocuous or woeful human situations and to report the psychological pain at the worst moment of his/her life. The goal of the approach is to make an operational statement of inner pain, especially as it relates to suicide. It is thus easy to see that assessment has been a core aspect of Shneidman’s career. The papers in this section, in fact, cover a half century of work in psychological assessment.



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CHAPTER

A Note on the Experimental Study of the Appraisal Interview

In the selection or promotion of candidates for positions in the public service, the personnel technician must make a sharp distinction between the written and oral parts of the examination. The latter has the unique function of appraising the candidate's general fitness or ability in terms of his personal qualifications for a specific class of employment rather than his knowledges or skills related to that work. The fact that such appraisals can be made only in the oral interview gives it a particular importance and makes the present lack of knowledge of the underlying factors which determine its course especially conspicuous.

The purpose of the present paper is to suggest a method for the experimental study of the problems of the appraisal interview. The experiment to be reported grows out of the difficulty which confronts the interviewers (usually a board of two or more persons) of creating a situation in which the appraisal of general fitness can be made without asking questions which relate to the candidate's specific knowledge, information, or skill with respect to the job.

Specifically, the purpose was to set up two interview situations: in one the candidates were questioned in the usual manner by an interview board, while in the other they were asked to react not to formal ques-

Reprinted from *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 1943, 27, 196–205. With permission. The author conducted the study while holding the position of Personnel Technician with the City of Los Angeles, California.

tions but to a set of stimuli that were neutral insofar as the job in question was concerned. In both cases the members of the interview boards appraised the candidates in terms of a specific set of traits. The neutral stimuli selected for the experimental interviews were the Rorschach series of ink blot cards. It should be emphasized that the intent was to use the Rorschach material because it presented a neutral stimulus situation for the candidates. This study was in no way concerned with the theory or methods of interpretation usually associated with the Rorschach technique. Indeed, the oral raters for the experimental interview board¹ had never seen nor heard of the Rorschach procedure before.

The use of ink blots in the interview situation creates certain definite changes in the role of the interviewer. Strictly speaking, he no longer interrogates in a give-and-take conversation, but he limits his behavior largely to the observation of each candidate. The verbal responses of each candidate—except those on being introduced to and taking leave of the oral board—are confined to his spoken interpretations of the series of ink blot cards. The situation changes in character from an interview which is social and reciprocal to an appraisal which is relatively static and uni-directional, lacking the shifting inter-play of conversation.

There were two hypotheses on which this study was premised: (1) the more uniform stimulus situations engendered by the use of the ink blots would result in greater uniformity of ratings among the judges in the experimental interviews; and (2) the standardization of the interview procedure would eliminate the criticism that a series of interviews does not present nearly identical situations to all candidates.

Procedure

The ten standardized 7¼ by 9½ inch cards which constitute the essential part of the Rorschach test, contain ink blots of different shapes. The figures on the cards are partly black and gray, partly colored. In adapting the procedure of administration of the Rorschach technique to the interview situation, the subject was seated to face the group of three oral raters, one of whom handed him the cards. Each candidate in the experimental interview, after being introduced to the members of the oral board, was instructed by one member of that body:

This interview is probably a little different from some you may have taken. Rather than ask you questions, we are merely going to ask you to interpret ten ink blots. You will be handed the blots one at a time and asked: "What might this be?" When you have finished with each blot you are to return it to us and we shall hand you the next one. There are no other instructions or rules. Here is the first card. What might this be?

When questions were asked by the candidate, he was answered with: "That is entirely up to you." No information regarding the use, purposes, or possible significance of the interview was given any candidate at that time.

The subjects were candidates in an examination for the class, Deputy Clerk—Deputy Marshal, given approximately one month before the experimental interviews by the Los Angeles City Civil Service Commission. Only those employed at that time by the Commission were used as subjects in the second interviews.

Two days before the experimental interviews and a few days after the eligible register for Deputy Clerk—Deputy Marshal became legal, the subjects, who had all been bona fide and serious candidates in the examination, were notified by the Director of Examinations that protests on the oral interview grades had necessitated the re-scheduling of the interviews with another oral board. While this kind of situation is highly improbable according to the rules under which the Commission operates, it may be assumed that the subjects took the Director's words in good faith and did not display significantly less concern, incentive, or legitimate effort in the experimental interview than they did in the first.

The traits rated were Personal Appearance, Mental Alertness, Ability of Self-Expression, Manner and Bearing, Ability to Get Along Well with Others, Adaptability to New Work, and Summary Rating. The degrees of endorsement, made on a graphic rating scale, were Inadequate, Borderline, Suitable, Good, and Outstanding.

At the completion of each of the fifteen experimental interviews, the candidate was directed into an adjoining room where he was informed that the interview was not a re-test and was asked not to reveal the nature of the interview. He was then given a page on which he was requested to check one of three possible answers to three questions relating to a comparison of the conventionally conducted interview and the interview with ink blots; to state the number of civil service interviews he had taken previously; to indicate whether or not he had ever seen the blots before; and to write any comments he felt inclined to make.

At the end of the day, after all the subjects had been interviewed, the oral examiners were asked to fill out a special questionnaire on which they indicated the degree of their general endorsement of this type of interview and wrote their comments relative to the use of ink blots as a means of obtaining an estimation of candidates' personal qualifications.

Results

A summary of the checks made on the Report Sheet for Candidates by the fifteen subjects is presented next:

1. "... I like this interview
 - (a) better than the conventional interview 4
 - (b) neither more nor less 4
 - (c) not so well as 7
2. "As compared to the conventionally conducted interview, this type of interview put me
 - (a) more at ease 3
 - (b) equally at ease 6
 - (c) less at ease 6
3. "In regard to accuracy and fairness, I would rate this type of interview as
 - (a) superior to the customary interview 4
 - (b) not significantly different from 2
 - (c) inferior to the customary interview" 9
4. The candidates indicated that they previously had taken from two to ten civil service interviews.
5. Four of the fifteen candidates stated that they had seen the blots before.

The total of the 1(a), 2(a), and 3(a) responses—"better," "more," and "superior"—is 11; the total of the 1(b), 2(b), and 3(b) responses—"neither more nor less," "equally," and "not significantly different from"—is 12; and the total of the 1(c), 2(c), and 3(c) responses—"not so well as," "less," and "inferior"—is 22. Therefore, 11 responses indicated that the interview with ink blots was preferred to the conventional interview; 12 indicated that it was neither better nor worse; while 22 indicated that it was thought inferior.

On the qualitative side, certain important points were made by the candidates. The following quotations are extracts from the comments written by the subjects after they had been interviewed.

1. Two of the candidates misinterpreted the experiment as a psychoanalytical study.

Frankly, I do not feel quite competent to judge this type of interview as I really do not know just what they are driving at. It seemed more like a Freudian experiment to me than anything else.

Because I am aware of the limitations of the psychoanalytic techniques and of the Rorschach test in particular, I would hesitate to endorse the use of such techniques in civil service examinations. . . .

2. Two of the candidates mentioned some advantages of using this type of subject matter in the oral interview.

It is an improvement, from my point of view, to give the candidate some objective problem to solve. This method brings out the characteristics of

the candidate more clearly, I believe, than the artificial situation of making conversation from topics usually drawn from the application blank.

From the standpoint of the raters, this type of interview seems to offer many desirable features. It allows them an opportunity to examine visible characteristics of a candidate (clothes, manner, etc.) at greater length and more carefully than in an ordinary interview. It also calls into play the candidate's adjustment to this type of situation. . . . Another advantage of this type of rating is that it eliminates the necessity of a rater's knowing anything about the candidate's experience or education, the knowledge of which often colors a rater's judgment of other qualities possessed by a candidate. . . .

3. Another person wrote of disadvantages and limitations inherent in the use of the ink blots.

The interchange of ideas that verbal intercourse makes possible seems to me to be of the greatest value in judging or rating personality. It seems that both the oral examiners and the candidates are at a disadvantage in this type of interview. I cannot see that it gives a person an adequate means of presenting his personality, although it may give the examiners the opportunity to determine a trait or two which more conventional interviews would not do. . . .

4. Two subjects thought that more comprehensive directions should have been given.

This type of interview would be more valuable if the candidate was aware of why he was being asked to interpret meaningless ink blots. The procedure makes the candidate feel ill at ease in that often it is really quite difficult to put any meaning into what he is asked to interpret.

I think that the ratings in an oral interview using this technique have the advantage of being relatively free from bias that they would be subject to in an interview in which experience is discussed. However, to get a good display of personal traits, I think that more comprehensive instructions should be given the subject. . . .

5. Two individuals commented on the public relations problems that would have been involved had this type of interview been used as part of a regular examination procedure.

. . . As far as substituting this type of interview for the conventional type which is associated with civil service examinations, I believe that this would be a very unwise move. The average candidate would not accept it as being practical and I think that public opinion would thus be alienated from the efficiency of the merit system principle.

. . . What the general public who heard of this would think of the Commission and would publish in newspaper columns or satirize in movies is still another problem. Certainly though, this is an interesting attempt to improve what up to now has been a weak point in the examination procedure.

6. The other comments were concerned with general dissatisfaction with, or concern about, the candidate's own behavior in the experimental interview situation.

The comments made by the three oral examiners after the fifteen experimental interviews were concluded constitute perhaps the most valuable data secured from this study. These comments are presented in verbatim form, labelled A, B, and C.

Comment A

An interesting way of conducting an oral interview. It has considerable possibilities. If the candidate can forget the interview board and concentrate on examining the blots (and several did) the examiners get a fine idea of the "workings of the candidate's mind." It does give the examiners a fine opportunity to judge personal appearance without obviously staring at the candidate. Self-expression is well brought out because the candidate is given full opportunities and does not have to be thinking of an answer to a definite question. Surely alertness is well tested in this type of examination because the examiner can observe the candidate's reactions to the various blots. I do feel that there is the possibility that the candidate is perhaps not put fully at ease with only one of the examiners giving the preliminary instructions and the other two remaining mute. However, I believe that for the purpose of this examination, and almost all others, a fair and accurate picture can be drawn of the several qualities on which the candidates are to be graded.

Comment B

Thinking of an interview a person will think of possible questions and answers. Being given something new, an examiner has a chance to see what that person will do when faced with a problem he has had no time to think through. In dealing with people, one has to change quickly from one type to another. This test gives the examiner a good idea what a candidate will do and shows the candidate's reaction to change, which is sometimes the only difference between a good and bad employee.

Comment C

There appear to be restrictions upon the candidates' opportunity to express themselves. This may be a good thing and eliminate unnecessary and confusing talk as well as more nearly standardize the scope of expression

heard by the oral board. I could not see that candidates were either more or less at ease than those I have seen in the conventional type. The rapport seemed to improve as each candidate became more accustomed to the situation, i.e., after he had seen about four cards.

The attempt at so-called objectivity in the oral situation should, it seems to me, be in terms of the situation established for both the board members and the candidates. The simple instructions, the freedom of the board members from a responsibility of "keeping questions and answers flowing," the nearly identical situations for all candidates tend to increase the objectivity. For an opinion upon the validity, I would rather see some objective correlation made, if possible. The control of the situation and the more standard stimuli among candidates seem to offer a more adequate and fair basis for judging suitability.

I like the method for these off-hand reasons: (1) Freedom of board from burden of questions and attempts to secure questions of so-called revealing nature. (2) Standard questions and attempts to secure subject matter for discussion at least on a par with "Why are you interested in this job?" (3) Ease of administering. (4) Possibility of more valid data for test research. (5) Time consumed aspect is up to candidates, not a burden on the board nor a clock watching requirement on members' part. (6) Information revealed seems to lend itself fairly well to check list form, more especially the traits Mental Alertness, Ability of Self-Expression, Manner and Bearing, and Adaptability. Appearance and Summary Evaluation would be obtainable on any method used.

The criticisms associated with standardized paper and pencil and miniature tests will be directed at this form of oral interview. Clear explanation to candidates stated in the bulletin and continued at the time of the interview can in part off-set this. To this end, I believe a few additional instructions might be used; maybe only a sentence enlarging upon the fact that this is used instead of questions and is to evaluate certain factors required for the job and listed in the bulletin.

What are the reactions and suggestions of those taking the oral today? They should be interesting and valuable.

□ Statistical Data

In the case of both the original and experimental interviews, the fifteen series of ratings of the three judges on each board were averaged for each trait, although the three ratings on each trait were considered as a sum. The rank-difference correlations between the ratings on each particular trait in the two interviews and the probable errors of these correlations are presented in Table 1-1.

The correlations between the same traits in the different interviews, computed by the rank-difference method, range from $.03 \pm .18$ to $.41 \pm$

TABLE 1-1. Rank-difference correlations between average trait ratings of original and experimental interview boards

Trait	rho	PE(rho)
Appearance	.07	.18
Alertness	.08	.18
Expression	.20	.18
Bearing	.04	.18
Congeniality	.41	.15
Adaptability	.17	.17
Summary	.03	.18

.15. The correlation of the trait of "Appearance," $.07 \pm .18$, is significant in that it is statistically insignificant. Of all the traits measured, it might be assumed, a priori, that the appearance of any candidate would be evaluated similarly by two comparable groups of raters regardless of the difference in the nature of the interview which existed in this case. At least in regard to this trait, one must conclude that the two boards rated with measurably different biases.

On the other hand, the rank-difference correlation between the two interviews on the trait called "Ability to Get Along Well with Others," or "Congeniality," was $.41 \pm .15$, the highest measure of agreement obtained. In spite of the relatively large probable error, this correlation is strikingly high in light of the fact that this trait is one of the most nebulous and vague of all the aspects of personality rated.

The rank-difference correlations between the initial interview scores and the experimental interview scores, when but seven traits are considered (with the data for "Education," "Experience," and "Interest in the Work" omitted), between the written part of the examination and the initial interview scores, and between the written part of the examination and the second or experimental interview scores were found to be non-significant.

While there was no general significant agreement between the two boards, the indices showing the relative agreement among the raters themselves demonstrate which of the two groups displayed relatively more unanimity and agreement in its appraisals. These data are presented in Table 1-2 in the form of rank-difference correlations, and their probable errors, among the three examiners of each oral interview board.

In terms of the relative reliabilities of the two groups of raters, the correlations, and their measures of significance, shown in Table 2, reveal

TABLE 1-2. Rank-difference correlations of ratings among examiners of original and experimental interview boards

Trait	Original Interview Board						Experimental Interview Board					
	A & B		B & C		A & C		X & Y		Y & Z		X & Z	
	rho	PEp	rho	PEp	rho	PEp	rho	PEp	rho	PEp	rho	PEp
Appearance	.74	.09	.47	.14	.73	.09	.50	.14	.37	.16	.49	.14
Alertness	.46	.15	.39	.16	.51	.13	.55	.13	.78	.07	.72	.09
Expression	.39	.16	.24	.17	.45	.15	.51	.14	.82	.06	.56	.13
Bearing	.81	.06	.35	.16	-.02	.18	.52	.13	.55	.13	.50	.18
Congeniality	.65	.11	.48	.14	.73	.09	.59	.12	.85	.05	.58	.12
Adaptability	.65	.11	.62	.11	.84	.06	.42	.15	.66	.10	.74	.08
Summary	.74	.08	.52	.13	.67	.10	.47	.14	.83	.06	.66	.10

that (1) the order of magnitude of the correlations is about the same in the two groups; and (2) the correlations for both groups show both considerable variability among raters and an amount of agreement and disagreement with respect to traits that is usually expected from oral interview boards. That is, both boards behaved much the same in spite of the introduction of a drastically different method of interviewing. This fact would appear to minimize the error involved in the use of the two board technique.

□ Discussion

There are certain sources of error in the experiment as a whole that may be considered in the interpretation of the statistical data.

1. The most serious error arises from the fact that the original board had an enormously greater range of experience in interviewing candidates for positions in the class of Deputy Clerk—Deputy Marshal. This board worked together for a longer period of time and thereby set up important psychological relationships that could not be present in the experimental oral board.

2. The fifteen subjects used in the experiment were a rather select group of the total number of 186 called to the initial interviews. All fifteen were employed at the time of the experiment by the Commission in a clerical-technical class, indicating that they had already successfully passed through a competitive selection process.

3. The low order of the inter-board correlations on the several traits may be a commentary on the interview process itself, indicating that the same rating form and similar instructions to raters may not yield appreciably better results than might be expected from informal, unstandardized estimates. The facts are, however, that neither the total group nor the raters in the two interviews were the same.

4. It might be expected that the correlations between ratings on the same traits in the two interviews would tend to be low because of the deletion in the experimental interview of three traits discussed and rated in the initial interview, which might have influenced other ratings made at that time. These traits were "Evaluation of Education," "Evaluation of Experience," and "Interest in the Work"—the three which obviously could not be rated from responses to ink blots. In the first interview, the ratings on "Education" and "Experience" for the fifteen candidates subsequently re-interviewed, were generally high, while the ratings on "Interest" were strikingly low.

5. Although the data presented in Table 1-2 might be taken to indicate otherwise, the difference in the kind of interviews would seem to be an

operative variable. The first interview was of the type that might be described as conversational or social, in that the verbal responses were in the nature of continual stimulation and response among the candidate and the raters. The experimental interview, on the other hand, employed not this "circular" type of response that engenders a psychological barrier between the interviewer and the interviewee, and which characterizes the true interview, but was more "linear" and mechanical, in that the verbal responses made during the interview were almost entirely from the candidates to the raters. In the second or "observational" interview situation, the same traits had to be appraised on the basis of manifestations of different qualities of response than those employed in the original interview, as there were few of the nuances of behavior that come from a social conversation.

Suggestions

With the possibility of some future experimentation along this line in mind, these major changes of procedure may be suggested: (1) The need of a large enough number of candidates to give significance to the statistical results is evident. (2) The use of the same oral raters for both the initial and experimental interviews is recommended. While it might then be possible that the raters' judgments in the second interview would be influenced by their ratings in the first, the uncontrollable variable introduced by having "comparable" interview boards would be eliminated.

Endnote

¹The original oral interview board consisted of a professor of psychology and two employment interviewers from two California State Employment Agencies. The experimental interview board included a professor of public personnel administration, a principal of a large business school, and a branch head librarian.

2

CHAPTER

MAPS of the Harvard Yard

The Make-A-Picture-Story (MAPS) Test was given to 14 undergraduates who were studied intensively at the Harvard Psychological Clinic by Henry Murray and his colleagues from 1959 to 1962. A case study of one of these subjects is presented to illustrate the use of the MAPS Test in drawing inferences about personality characteristics.

Imagine that we are standing in Harvard Yard on some spectacular New England autumn morning, and our attention is directed to a typical Harvard undergraduate as he moves briskly from one class to another. Imagine further our stopping him and asking for some directions: "Can you direct us to Wigglesworth Hall? The Leverett Towers? The Widener Library?" We note that he points out each of them (with appropriate courtesy) before he hurries on. We concluded that his cognitive maps of the Harvard Yard are well delineated and that they are, in his mind, clearly seen. But as he leaves us we wonder what else is in his head and in his heart. What constellations of personal need and press, of negative and positive affect, might be mapped out to describe the being and essence of him?

At this point, the reader may note that the title of this article involves a fair play on words in that I present some Make-A-Picture-Story (MAPS) Test findings about a group of Harvard undergraduates. All members of this group are young men who volunteered, during the 1960s, to be stud-

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ied and trained at the Baleen,¹ Professor Henry A. Murray's center for personality research. The MAPS Test is a modification of Murray's Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)—it has been called a “little first cousin” of the TAT—the essential difference being that the background pictures and the human figures are physically separate from each other, and hence subjects are required to populate each background picture before telling the story to a situation that they have in part themselves created. It might be said that the purpose of this article is to provide a slim Baedeker of the MAPS of the Harvard Yard; or in other words, for me, as a cicerone who loves his beat, to describe some local statistics and a few of the points of special interest found among 14 Harvard Yard natives who were studied with MAPS test material.

In order to move on to the next point, we have to leave the Yard and transport ourselves to the nearby Loeb Theater on Brattle Street, so that some analogies from the drama can come easily to mind. What play is being presented? What is it all about? Who is (i.e., what is the personality of) the author? Anyone who has ever looked at the photographs or stills in the foyer of a theater and tried, by imagination, to anticipate the nuances of character in the full play—or for that matter, anyone who has looked at the pictures in an illustrated book and has in this manner attempted to anticipate the plot or character development of the story—has already participated in the essential process involved in interpreting a MAPS Test Figure Location Sheet (FLS). From our glances at the photograph of that solemn young man addressing his thoughts to a skull or of a handsome British Naval Captain seemingly in benign conversation with a roly-poly female aboard a 19th-century man-of-war, we often “get the picture” as to what the total piece is about and what the characters “are up to.” Thus, MAPS Test interpreters can be said to be, among other things, part drama critic because their task is to scan the stills of the *dramatis personae* exhibited in the foyer of the subjects' psychodramatic playhouse and then to write critiques (hopefully including praise for demonstrated strengths as well as criticism for visible flaws) of the playwrights themselves.

We can continue to employ our dramaturgical analogy to describe the materials of the MAPS Test. The “scenery” is chosen from among 22 background pictures, 8½ × 11 in., printed achromatically on thin cardboard. With two exceptions, there are no figures in any of the pictures. (There is an ambiguous human head in the bottom left corner of the dream background and a humanlike lump in the bed of the bedroom background.) There are unstructured or ambiguous backgrounds such as the blank card, the abstract doorway, and the dream background; semistructured background such as the stage, the forest, the cave, and the landscape; and definitely structured backgrounds in the

remaining 15 backgrounds, including the living room, street, bathroom, and bridge.

The "company of players" is made up of 67 figures. A distinguishing feature of the MAPS method is that it offers the subject the opportunity to select the figures, as well as to enliven and interpret them. In the MAPS Test, a 6-ft human figure is 5½ in. tall; all others are scaled proportionally. Any figure can be placed on any background without violating one's sense of proportion. The figures are depicted with various facial expressions and are in various poses; some are partially clothed or nude. The types of figures include male adult, female adult, children, minority group figures such as blacks, two animal figures (a dog and a snake), figures of indeterminate sex, legendary and fictitious characters, silhouettes, and figures with blank faces.

The Figure Location Sheet is a printed form representing "pictorial synopses" of each scene, on which there are lightly printed, reduced reproductions of all the background pictures. This form enables the examiner to record the subject's total choice and exact placement of the test figures. The Figure Location Sheet indicates the dramatis personae of the subject's imaginal productions.

The Figure Identification Card, representing the "cast of characters," contains a miniature picture as well as a verbal description of each figure. This enables the examiner to identify each figure he or she records on the Figure Location Sheet by means of a simple numerical code.

It only needs to be added that if the subject's verbatim remarks are the "plays," then the psychologist's interpretations constitute the psychologically oriented assessment of the playwright.

How are these materials used in actual practice? The MAPS Test is administered by presenting the subjects with approximately 10 (of the 22) backgrounds, 1 at a time, with the instruction to populate each background picture with 1 or more of the 67 human figures that they have placed out on the table before them. After subjects have selected and placed figures on the background picture, they are then requested, as in the TAT, to tell a story to this figure-on-the-background situation, indicating who the characters are, what they are doing and thinking and feeling, and how the story turns out. The exact details of administration are published elsewhere (Shneidman, 1951).

On occasion, in clinical practice, it happens that the subject will not give any verbal responses but will be willing to select and place the test figures on the backgrounds. Examples of this phenomenon have been obtained with mute subjects (Shneidman, 1960), deaf subjects (Bindon, 1957), and very young subjects (Spiegelman, 1956). In these cases, where one must depend entirely on the Figure Location Sheet, it has been demonstrated that the interpretations still retain clinical meaningfulness.

In analyzing the FLS, the interpreter does well to attend to the “formal” aspects of the completed form. These aspects would include such items as the following: the number for figures (paucity of figures, over-inclusion, etc.); the placement of figures (upside down, off the background, in the air, at sharp angles, etc.); the appropriateness of the figures (e.g., a nude figure on the street); the general “tenor” of the figures (hostile, sexual, frightened, etc.); conspicuous absence in the choice of figures (e.g., no female figures of any kind); the relationships among figures (the kinds of figures that are generally coupled with other figures); and any differences in the “figure-handling” in the relatively unstructured backgrounds (e.g., the dream or the blank) as opposed to the ways in which the subject populates the more structured backgrounds like the bridge or the cemetery (Proud, 1956). A résumé of these formal signs, especially as they apply to schizophrenic subjects, is given in a separate monograph (Shneidman, 1948).

In general, one interprets a MAPS Test protocol in rather the same way in which he or she would interpret a TAT protocol. We know that there are many—around 36—published ways of interpreting the TAT. Murray readers will know that 17 of these approaches were brought together in a single volume, *Thematic Test Analysis* (Shneidman, 1951), where they are described by their authors and illustrated, all using the same case. In that study, it was possible to group the different methods of interpretation in terms of five primary approaches: normative, hero-oriented, psychodynamic, interpersonal, and formal. In addition, it was possible to distill some 20 “report areas” that any comprehensive psychological test report might reflect, including, for example: intrapsychic conflicts, self-concept, personality defensive mechanisms, quality of perception, idiosyncratic logical styles, and so forth. As a result, it appears that the most sensible recommendation as to a method of thematic test analysis would be the one that combined the best elements of all these approaches and included as many of the test report areas as applicable.

The dissertations and publications relating to the MAPS Test can be divided among these categories: (a) basic manuals and texts (Shneidman, 1948, 1951, 1952); (b) references having to do primarily with children and adolescents, ranging in age from 3½ to 15 (Bindon, 1957; Fraimow, 1950; Joel, 1948; Shneidman, 1960; Spiegelman, 1956); (c) references relating to use with adults, all male subjects (Conant, 1950; Fantel & Shneidman, 1947; Farberow, 1950; Fine, 1952; Hooker, 1957; McDonald, 1952; Shneidman, 1948, 1952, 1955, 1961; Smith & Coleman, 1956); (d) articles and monographs dealing with methodological and research issues (Charen, 1954; Edgar & Shneidman, 1958; Fine, 1955; Proud, 1956; Spiegelman, 1956; Van Krevelen, 1954); and (e) general review articles (Goldenberg, 1951).

Let us turn to the Baleen MAPS Test data. The MAPS Test was administered to 14 (of the 21) Harvard undergraduates studied intensively at the Baleen by Dr. Murray and his associates from 1959 to 1962. The MAPS Tests were given early in 1962, at a time when all the subjects were seniors, around 21 years of age. Of the 14 tests, 12 were administered by Dr. Daniel Slobin (Dr. Slobin is currently, 1985, Professor of Psychology at the University of California at Berkeley), who was then a graduate student in the Department of Social Relations; the other 2 were administered by me. The 7 subjects who were not tested could not meet their appointments or were not available by virtue of illness or absence from the city. No systematic selective factor seemed evident in the self-choice of the 14 MAPS Test subjects from among the total group.

The remainder of this article discusses, as an illustration, the MAPS Test protocol of one Baleen subject: the young man whose code name was Tandy.

□ Tandy

Figure 2-1 is a photographic “mock-up” of what the backgrounds and the figures actually look like, as Tandy selected and placed them. First, let us examine Tandy’s choice and placement of the figures on the backgrounds.

These comments on the figure location are speculations, surmises, and guesses on the basis of only the subject’s choice and placement of figures as to (a) what story the subject probably would have told to the scene that he has created and (b) what psychodynamic import that scene and the story might have for him in his total psychological makeup.

A tachistoscopic peek at the figure location shows two, three, or four figures on each background. No figures are in any bizarre positions, seemingly, at first glance, and they appear to be interacting in healthy, outgoing ways. One additional impression is that in the less structured backgrounds—dream, blank, doorway—Tandy seems to be able to expand his mind more freely. From this I tentatively hypothesize that he uses the structure of a situation to impose an abiding structure on himself.

What do we see when we look briefly at each background?

Living room. The focus seems to be on the competent, giving male. No competition from the female, yet surrounded by noncompetitive females (black maid, little girls). He is a hero but only by carefully arranged comparison. (The reader can compare this surmise with Tandy’s actual story, which is presented later.)

Street. Virile policeman and frightened, incapacitated woman and child. The puppy is the psychological center of the scene. The policeman

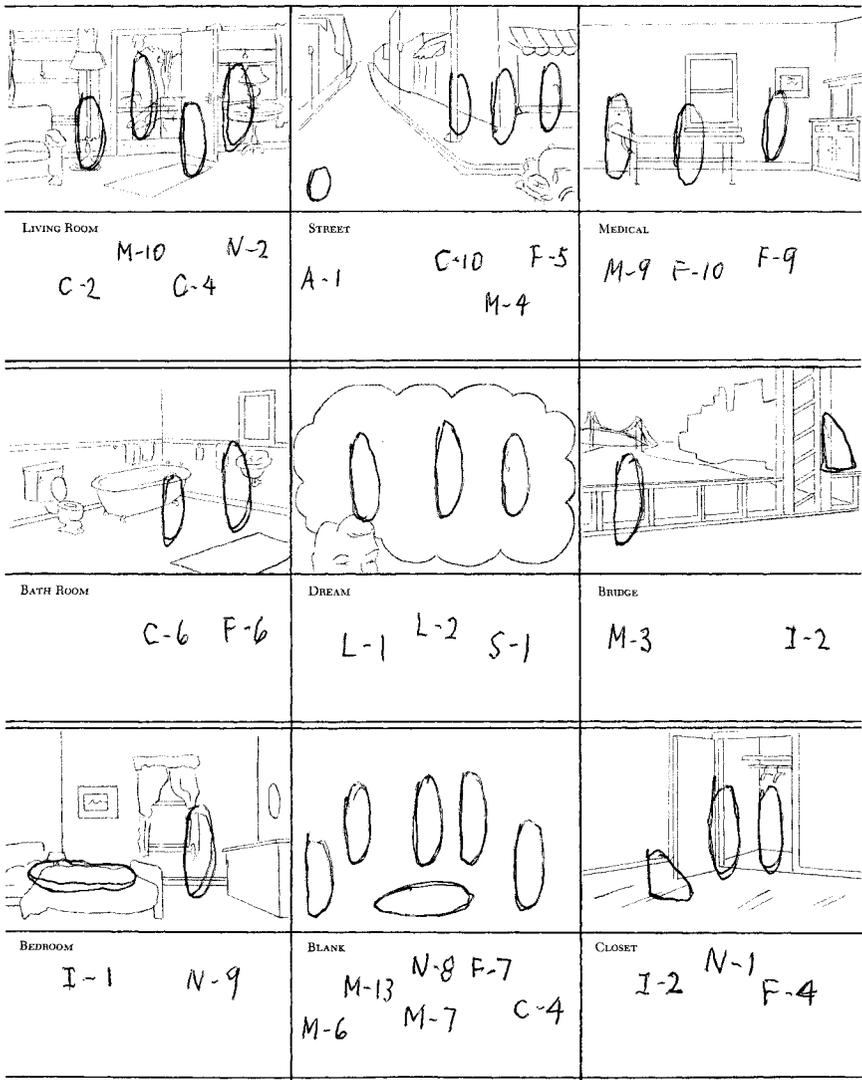


FIGURE 2-1. Tandy's MAPS Test Figure Location Sheet.

is doing something, even if it turns out to be only a trivial action. Thus, a legitimate goal of behavior can be an inconsequential difference so long as it is a difference.

Medical. Doctor (competent male) and no comparable females. Females are either too young or too old. One is his ancilla, and he will save the other, but not compete with either.

Bathroom. Young mother and young boy. The rather sexless roles are reversed. The bathroom is heterodesexualized.

Dream. He or she—the figure in the lower left-hand corner—has a dream of male omnipotence (king and pirate) and an enigmatic figure—the first silhouette of hope.

Bridge. A despondent and ambiguous figure. Despondent because ambiguous? A male military figure still is a doll. Can “it” save anyone from anything?

Bedroom. A supine and ambiguous figure and a second upright female. We know who is at home, but who is on first?

Blank. Male with gun kills and frightens all other men, women, and children. Hostility on the part of one creates helplessness on the part of another. Hostility is thus terribly powerful and awfully taboo.

Doorway. His own selection. The figures are an old black, a slattern female, and an ambiguous crouching figure. This is a curious group to use on a symbolic background, often representing hope or escape. Is the theme one of encapsulated sexuality related to the depressed figure that was used on the bridge? (See Tandy’s story.)

□ Summary from the FLS

There is an overall impression of constrained sexuality and constrained expression generally in this record of an individual in good contact with reality but in poor communication with any richness within himself. There is a kind of inertness, a malaise, a sense of psychic ennui, and a concern with tempests in teapots. He appears to ruminate as to how he can be original, but has only pedestrian notions of creativity. His FLS seems rather superficial and ordinary. It has obsessive elements, and it raises questions of his having genuine lacunae of permissible fantasy content.

Tandy’s perception style is that of the furtive glance; he is a shunner. To his perceptions he says: You are there, but I do not need to look. And to evil he says: Evil is bad; there is too much evil; it will never go away. His position with his two primate friends sitting on their haunches is one of holding his hands in front of his eyes. He is the “see no evil” member of the trio.

Now we can turn to his stories beginning with his living room story:

LIVING ROOM (Selected Figures: M-10, C-2, C-7, N-2)

Of course some of the characters are pointing the wrong way, too. Let’s see, we have a door with a car parked out in front. The maid has opened

the door. Of course it doesn't look like a house that might have a maid. Let's say there's a gentleman coming in with a gift under his arm. A baseball bat, I suppose, for his son's birthday, let's say. Not a very imaginative story. Can't very well put a girl in. That's fine. A little fellow walking toward him. Too bad it shows some determination. Should be sort of joyful. "For me, Daddy?!" A little girl off to the left, with her back turned, and a rather wry look on her face and her hands crossed before her, looking as though she were making every effort not to see her father come home, even though it's quite an occasion. Let's see, the little boy and the little girl have a fight. How complicated do they have to be? Well, the father's come home from work. There's been a squabble between the two children, which might, or might not, be usual. If there's a maid, it might be the type of family with squabbles between the children. Where's the wife? That's a good question. The man is looking as though he's expecting his wife, looking around. Maybe his wife isn't home. The children have been left at home all afternoon with the maid. Let's assume there isn't any mother. Let's assume it's just a housekeeper and babysitter as well. It's not a birthday, because obviously the two presents are different, one with a bow and the other a baseball bat. One feminine and the other masculine. Let's say, for the time being, or permanently, that the father likes each of his children equally. He's come home to a motherless house with the two children. Let's assume that the girl has her back turned by accident, you know, she was standing in that position for quite a while, well, would call it just being stubborn, contrary. The father comes in and notices that there's something not quite right. He calls to her and says he has a present for her. A present for both of the children. She runs to her father and takes her present and opens it up. The boy takes his baseball bat and goes out of the house, which immediately leaves the field free for the little girl, gives her a chance to talk out or live out her little squabble with her brother. So we've disposed of the boy who has gone out to try his new bat. I'm wondering what's in the package for the little girl. What's for a little girl like a baseball bat for a little boy? Candy would be too foolish. Clothing? A doll! Let's say this doll now gives her an opportunity to wander off somewhere and begin playing with it. Leaves the father to his dinner and to his maid who opened the door for him, to his evening of paper work. However, he doesn't have a briefcase. Let's say he's a widower. If he's a widower, he might spend the evening going out. And that's as far as I can carry this little scene at the front door. Except that somewhere in the course of it, the children come back in for dinner. [How would you title this?] Friday Afternoon at 5:30 or 6 o'clock or something like that.

Consider Tandy's titles to his nine MAPS Test stories: Living Room: "Friday Afternoon at 5:30 or 6 o'clock"; Street: "The City Is No Place to Bring up a Puppy Dog"; Medical: "The Trouble of Bringing Children into the World"; Bathroom: "The Pleasure of Doing as You're Told"; Dream: "The

Defining of Himself"; Bridge: "Fact and Fancy; Freedom and Authority; the Dream of Becoming Involved"; Bedroom: "Insistence Versus Indolence"; Blank: "The 4:10, Right on Time"; and Doorway (which he chose): "The Perversity of Being Considerate." A number of thoughts suggest themselves after reading these titles: (a) his notion of daring to be bad is a variation of being good; (b) his great manifestations of independence and courage consist of taking minor liberties with conventional dependency patterns; (c) his disdain of evil has an effect on his approach to ordinary experiences. I am reminded of something I heard a long time ago about Titchener: He was a person of rigid German temperament whose peculiar notion of being an American was to behave like a constricted Englishman. I am emphasizing Tandy's limited degrees of perceptual freedom. He is focused, and what he is focused on he sees clearly and unambiguously. But he seems to focus on discrete items, sometimes fragmenting what to most of us would be a series. He is a man who knows what he knows, but the price of this concrete precision is that he plays close to home and is fearful of extended trips of either abstract imagination or enriching inner experience. Thus, there is a dissociative quality, a discreteness, of what should be "all of a piece."

In his story to the medical background, as he begins to show a small amount of imagination, he feels constrained to say: "I'm afraid I'm fudging a little because I'm drawing on books I just finished reading. I could tell a beautiful science fiction story about this, but it would hardly be fair." And in the doorway story he states: "I'm afraid this is going to lead to nothing, as far as stories go. I can't put it in concrete form at all. Makes me recall a book I finished last night called *Portrait of a Lady*. No, that's too much, I can't impose this on that concrete situation . . ." And in the dream he concludes his story:

I don't see how thought can have consequence in action. I think this, the way I set it up, is something of a memory. Something to be smiled at or enjoyed. [What might you call this story?] It's all tied up with the fact that he sees himself rather nebulously, nevertheless most definite of all the characters. Another result of my reading *Huckleberry Finn* too carefully. Too much identity. It's very interesting because you can think of his identity being brought out, delineated, by being placed against the backdrop of others' actions. I'd like to work on the word identity, but I cannot. Title: "The Defining of Himself."

Tandy's solution to his perceptual impasse in relation to evil is interesting: He reduces the basic thematic problem of evil to activity. To embrace evil leads to the frustration of passivity and dependency, frustrated dependency brings about despair and rejection, and eventually ends up in death: "I don't want the girl involved with the corpse because she's too

carefree for that _____." The major ally of frustration is creativity, which, by unstructuring the field and potentially permitting anything, may produce despair. Because each person carries within himself the instrument of his own perturbation, individuals must be on careful guard within themselves. The way out of this trap, and the way to eschew evil, is to be cautious, passive, careful, psychologically prudent; to concentrate on the moment and on the raindrop; to attend carefully to nuances and to details: "the young boy was 17 or 18, 19, really admires his friend who plays the pirate, because obviously he must have a hairy barrel chest. And he also admires the king, because the king is exquisitely made up with a tremendous double chin, chalky white face, and otherwise rather chubby, gross features, and he has a quaint gait about him [dream]." And his first lines to the bedroom background: "Oh, oh, a bedroom. Nice, frilly curtains, a picture on the dresser, and two pillows on the bed. It's hardly a boy's room. If it's not a boy's room, let's put a boy in it and say he doesn't belong. Now we have a reason for him being there . . ."

Time and temporal sequence are very important to Tandy, but mostly the present. He uses the present to think about how he will carefully recover fragments (of memory) from the past and how he will carefully pace himself (in fantasy) into the future. The key word is fragments. "I'd like to see some connection," he says. Each subject was, after several test backgrounds, permitted to choose a background himself. Tandy chose the doorway (selected Figures F-4, N-1, and I-2) and told the following story:

Originally, when I saw this rectangle, I thought it was a door. Obviously, the future. I'm trying to think of a series of different characters all at the door to the future. The young man . . . I would have labeled "The Thinker, but not do-er." Then I would have had the little girl obviously racing into the future, playfully, tumbling along. Or I would have had the elder girl, more quietly, seriously, and considerately stepping into the future. I would like to have had a gradation of ages all in the process of entering the future. I can't find the figures. Here we go. Here's an elderly man . . . where's our old woman? . . . I want something in the future as a warning . . . therefore I want the elderly black man with his arms outspread barring her advance, or holding her back from stepping on alone. And she, by stepping on, unaware, refuses to acknowledge the existence of this warning, and steps past him, past this elderly black, and walks on alone. Now there's a young fellow, this do-nothing, sitting back here at the portal, just staring away moodily. I'd like to see some connection between the girl and him. She's going on alone and he is sitting on his seat, not going with her. Now, what would it be like if we had a fellow with his back turned, so he could be going too? A triangle, trying to make a triangle. Now what is the black warning them of? Even though he's leaving lots of space for everyone to walk around, he's nevertheless a quite potent, massive figure firing away. I

don't mean to imply that his character is connected with these two. I wish to use him as a symbol, of a premonition or of an actual fact, which, I don't know. The main thing is that the girl is going on alone, and the fellow is, for some reason, remaining, sitting in the present. The girl has more strength of character, more determination coupled with an equivalent to a quiet willingness to go on, but somehow the fellow hasn't got his legs moving, he's sitting, the brave and courageous one going after her, walking beside her, but his half of the way is barred by this elderly man. Why is it barring only his way, and not the girl's? What is there in the future that says that he can't come? What is the elderly woman doing? The elderly woman doesn't fit. How do we know that the girl is the most decisive of the three? But the young man is, perhaps after all, what shall I say, well, the most correct, doing the most proper thing, considering the circumstances. Does he want to go with her? If we took the black away, it would be said almost without the shadow of a doubt that he wishes, but can't quite bring himself, to do so. But if we leave the black there blocking his half of the way, then we feel that, well, I feel that the one who is sitting there, resting his head on his arms, is somehow justified in holding back, somehow justified in his lassitude. Now if we assume this, then the girl is being driven into the future, rather than running into the future, which must be because of something unhappy in the past, which is this side of the arch. Perhaps nothing happened on this side of the arch. They have nothing in common, they have no past, therefore they have no future. But still something holds him from going into the future. It's not the fact of growing older, because then it would have been the older woman . . . something forcing obedience, or forcing abstinence, but it's so general I can't attempt to tell you what kind of reality. If I take the block away, and have the fellow stand and walk beside the girl . . . that would apply unity. It's a curious thing. The block isn't really the idea of growing old as I said. Somehow I can't give up the feeling that his staying back is justified, perhaps I should reverse the roles and have him walking off into the future and her seated and starting and not being able to follow. I'm afraid this is going to lead to nothing.

All these are Tandy's fear about himself and are, as a matter of fact, the focus of our interest in him too.

Professor Murray has lamented about the trained incapacity of professional psychologists, specifically their penchant to reduce human personality to elements and then to describe these elements in words having mostly derogatory connotations—using “the sharper instruments of depreciation”—in other words, to accentuate the negative in attempting to encompass the person. I fear that I have not been blameless in respect to this charge and would like to put my comments about Tandy in a more proper, or at least a more positive, perspective. These MAPS Test records, as a group, should be seen as reflecting the good strengths and

vivid intellects of exceptional young men, behaving successfully in a rather special environment.

About a quarter century ago, Tandy was a senior at Harvard. Now he is about 44 years old, in the middle of his middle life. Where is he today? What did he do with his life? What are the characteristics of his outer life and his inner styles of living it?

Dr. Murray—now 92 years old—knows the precise details of these questions, but understandably he cannot reveal these confidences. But I am permitted to ask a few questions of him: Was the MAPS Test of 25 years ago anywhere near the mark for Tandy as he was then or as he is today? Or would a Rorschach Test interpreted by the incomparable Bruno Klopfer have told us much more of what we ought to know?

□ Endnotes

¹The Harvard Psychological Clinic was called the Baleen. Baleen is the mouth plate sieves (called whalebone) in the throat of the *Mystacoceti*, including the giant 100-ft blue whale. Baleen is old French for whale. (Moby Dick was an *Odontoceti*, or toothed whale.)

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3

CHAPTER

Personality and “Success” Among a Selected Group of Lawyers

As part of a larger study, eleven subjects—male, Caucasian, native-born, early 70s, lawyers, life-long (since 1922) participants in the Terman Study of the Gifted—were interviewed. From the edited tapes, seven qualified raters evaluated various measures of life success and completed a 100-item Q-sort for all subjects. In general, the very highest successes were related to contentment, self-confidence, openness and spontaneity, a wide range of cultural interests, and relative freedom from pervasive feelings of hostility, irritability and dissatisfaction. The general results are corroborated by Terman Study data available for these same subjects for years 1922, 1927, and 1940. Some implications of these findings for child-rearing, marriage and the possible governance of one’s life are explored.

This study seeks to identify certain characteristics of personality which distinguish different degrees of success-in-life among members of a relatively successful group. The group is made up of 11 practicing lawyers, average age early 70s, each of whom has been a subject (for almost all his life) in the Terman Study of the Gifted.

The Terman Study was formally begun in 1921.¹ Lewis M. Terman, then professor of psychology at Stanford University, together with his coworkers, searched the public schools of the cities of California for exceptionally bright youngsters (Seagoe, 1975). His stated purposes were “to discover what gifted children are like as children, what sort of adults

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they become, and what some of the factors are that influence their development" (Oden, 1968, p. 5). That study, begun a half-century ago, continues to this day.

Of the original 1,528 subjects, 857 were males and 671 were females. The sample was composed of children (mean age 9.7 years) with Stanford-Binet IQs of 135 or higher—the mean IQ was over 150. An enormous amount of data has been collected. At the time of the original investigation in 1921–22, the information included a developmental record, health history, character trait examination, home and family background, school history, character trait ratings and personality evaluations by parents and teachers, interest tests, school achievement tests and the like. Subsequently, there has been a long series of follow-ups, by mail—in 1924, 1925, 1936, 1940, 1945, 1950, 1955, 1960, 1972, 1977, and 1982—and with personal visits in field studies (1921, 1927, 1940, and 1950) in which the subjects and their families were interviewed and data from intelligence tests, personality tests and questionnaires were obtained. In 1982 a considerable amount of the Study data was put on computer tape.

The Terman studies have catalyzed two generations of thought, research, attitudinal changes and educational developments. Detailed descriptions of the subjects at various ages, as well as summaries of the important findings are available in a series of publications by Terman, his chief coworker, Melita Oden and Robert and Pauline Sears (Cox, 1926; Oden, 1968; Sears, 1977, 1978; Sears & Barbee, 1977; Terman, 1925, 1940).

Almost everyone in the psychological and pedagogical worlds now knows the basic findings of the Terman Study: That intellectually gifted children—far from being, as once was thought, spindly, weak and maladjusted or one-sided—are, on the whole, more physically and mentally healthy and successful than their less-than-gifted counterparts.

Subjects

In 1981, with permission from Professor Robert Sears, the author interviewed 45 Terman Study subjects. The interview sessions typically lasted about an hour and a half and were open-ended in response to the request to tell about oneself and one's life. In general, the group can be described as all Caucasian, U.S.-born males in their early 70s. (There are, of course, women in the Terman Study, but none of them was seen in this present group.) Among the 45 subjects who were seen, there were 11 men with L.L.B. degrees—all of whom were practicing attorneys at the time of the interviews, all born between 1910 and 1914. These 11 lawyers constitute the subjects for this present study.

Raters

There were seven raters (or evaluators) in this study. Four—called Behavioral Science Raters—included a marriage and family counselor, a psychiatrist in private practice, a professor of psychiatry, and the author. Three of the raters—called Lawyer Raters—are practicing attorneys. Except for the author, none of the raters knew any of the subjects personally.²

Rating Forms, Rating Results and Trichotomization of the Group

Except for the author (who interviewed the subjects) all the raters were supplied with a copy of the cassette recordings of each of the 11 interview sessions. The recordings were the sole source of data from which they made their assessments.

The Rating Page presented the raters with the task of making ratings from 1 to 9 ("Most Successful" to "Least Successful") for the following four items: Occupational Life, Marital Life (relationship with spouse), Family Life (relationship with children), and Overall Self-Fulfillment (life fulfillment as a total person).

Oden (1968), a long-time staff member of the Terman Study, compared Terman Study subjects who had been relatively successful with those who were less so. In the present study I decided to follow Oden's pattern and trichotomize the group in order to focus on the two extremes by selecting the three subjects (from the 11) who received the highest ratings and the three subjects who received the lowest ratings on occupational success and overall life success—and to compare these two groups, leaving out the middle five subjects. (Among the raters, the ratings were almost identical on degree of occupational success for each of the 11 subjects.)

It should be pointed out that *all* 11 men in this study are comparatively capable and effective. There is some temptation simply to call the two groups High and Low, or Most Successful and Least Successful, but, in each case, the second label is both mildly perjorative and not totally accurate. For these reasons, the two sets of subjects will be referred to simply by number: 1-2-3 and 9-10-11. The meaning of 1-2-3 is fairly clear: they are the highest ranked people in a small group of practicing lawyers, probably at or near the head of their profession as compared with any group of lawyers. The meaning of 9-10-11 is not so clear. That they received the relatively lowest rankings in this admittedly select

group does not tell us where they would rank in a larger group of, say, all the living 70-year-old lawyers in California, and it would therefore be inaccurate to label them simply as Low and Least Successful.

The three Behavioral Science raters evaluated all 11 subjects. After the Trichotomization was made, only six subjects (1-2-3 and 9-10-11) were rated and Q-sorted by the three Lawyers raters—with no word, of course, as to their groupings.

In the ratings for Occupational Life, the mean score (on the nine-point scale) for the 1-2-3 group was 2.11 and for the 9-10-11 Subjects 4.72; for Overall Self-Fulfillment, the two means were 2.11 and 5.50. Subjects 4-5-6-7-8 received mean ratings (by the Behavioral Science raters only) of 3.20 and 3.66 on these two dimensions.

There were no significant differences between Subjects 1-2-3 and 9-10-11 on the Family Life ratings, but there were striking differences on the Marital Life ratings: 2.33 compared with 6.55. Relative lack of success in one's professional life is matched with difficulty in the marriage.

The Q-Sort Method

The Q-Sort Method, developed by Stephenson (1953), "is a language instrument . . . which aims to permit the comprehensive description of an individual's personality in a form suitable for quantitative comparison and analysis" (Block, 1961). It focuses on the salient features within an individual's personality. It permits direct comparisons—by means of statistical correlations—between evaluations by different raters of the same individual, between evaluations (by the same or different raters) of different individuals, or between evaluations of the same individual at different times—all in terms of the same set of descriptive items about personality.

In the present study, 100 items were used. Seventy of these items are taken directly from the Q-set developed by Block (1968, 1977); the remaining 30 were devised by the author for this study to analyze the full set more appropriate for this group of subjects. The 100 items are listed in Table 3-1.

Caveat

In its essence, this study involves very few cases—two groups of three subjects—who were rated by seven judges. It follows that the findings have to be viewed as tentative and suggestive at best. Nonetheless, the findings seemed too interesting in their own light to suppress even

TABLE 3-1. 100 Q-sort items

1. absent-minded	27. *depressed	52. jealous	78. sentimental
2. affected	28. disorderly; disorganized	53. lazy	79. shrewd
3. *afraid of failure	29. dissatisfied	54. likable	80. *shy
4. ambitious	30. dramatic	55. *lonely	81. sincere
5. *angry	31. dull	56. *outgoing	82. sophisticated
6. *anxious	32. easily embarrassed	57. *over-sensitive	83. *spontaneous
7. assertive	33. easily hurt	58. *perfectionistic	84. stubborn
8. bossy	34. energetic	59. persevering	85. *submissive
9. calm	35. *even-tempered	60. poised	86. suspicious
10. *capable	36. fair-minded	61. *procrastinating	87. sympathetic
11. cautious	37. feminine style and manner	62. *productive	88. tactless
12. charming	38. *forebearing; patient	63. reasonable; thoughtful	89. timid
13. competitive	39. frank; open; candid	64. rebellious	90. touchy; irritable
14. *compulsive	40. friendly	65. *religious	91. unconventional
15. confident	41. *frustrated	66. resentful	92. undecided; confused
16. *conforming	42. guileful; deceitful	67. reserved; dignified	93. unhappy
17. *conscientious	43. helpless	68. *responsible	94. uninterested; indifferent
18. considerate	44. hostile	69. restless	95. versatile
19. *contented	45. idealistic	70. *rigid	96. *vulnerable
20. cooperative	46. imaginative	71. sarcastic	97. warm
21. *creative	47. impulsive	72. *secure	98. withdrawn
22. *critical of others	48. inadequate	73. self-controlled	99. worried
23. *critical of self	49. intelligent	74. self-indulgent	100. wise
24. cruel; mean	50. introspective	75. selfish	
25. defensive	51. *introverted	76. self-pitying	
26. dependent		77. sense of humor; witty	

100 items: 70 items from the 70-item Block Q-Set, and 30 added items which are identified with an asterisk.

though the sample was meager. The compromise was to publish these data and reflections with appropriate notice to the reader.

□ Q-Sort Results

Inspection of the interrater correlations (see Table 3-2) permits at least the following observations: That, in general, Behavioral Science raters agree more with each other than do Lawyer raters; and that both sets of raters agree more with each other on Subjects 1-2-3 than they do on Subjects 9-10-11.³

Raters tend to agree more with one another as to what is fine, good, successful than they do with each other when the Subjects are seen as slightly less so. To use an analogy: A number of men looking at one woman might agree that she is an absolute beauty but, looking at other only slightly less attractive persons they might have many minor differences about rating them as “neat,” “handsome,” “striking,” “interesting-looking,” etc. There seems to be more diversity of opinion about less-than-first-rate persons than there is about the clear “winners.”

In general, for Subjects 1-2-3, the degree of agreement (as measured by the correlations between Q-sortings) among any two of the six raters

TABLE 3-2. Interrater Q-sort correlations

Raters			Subjects					
Beh. Sc. and Beh. Sc.	Beh. Sc. and Lawyer	Lawyer and Lawyer	1	2	3	9	10	11
A-B			.71	.67	.60	.47	.63	.52
A-C			.68	.72	.75	.35	.12	.53
B-C			.76	.71	.64	.49	.27	.63
	A-D		.53	.47	.72	.42	.03	.50
	A-E		.74	.71	.68	.31	.14	.56
	A-F		.55	.65	.38	.28	.15	.33
	B-D		.54	.45	.51	.31	.09	.40
	B-E		.70	.59	.55	.12	.17	.55
	B-F		.36	.53	.52	.36	.29	.48
	C-D		.42	.45	.52	.37	.37	.67
	C-E		.77	.77	.55	.00	.19	.57
	C-F		.56	.63	.49	.41	.06	.31
		D-E	.39	.52	.58	.23	.50	.51
		D-F	.44	.34	.39	.22	.06	.34
		E-F	.64	.56	.55	.47	.10	.37

TABLE 3-3. Most characteristic and least characteristic Q-sort items for subjects 1-2-3 & 9-10-11

Most Characteristic			
Subjects 1-2-3		Subjects 9-10-11	
Beh. Sc. Raters	Lawyer Raters	Beh. Sc. Raters	Lawyer Raters
	4. Ambitious		
10. Capable	10. Capable		
	13. Competitive	11. Cautious	
17. Conscientious	17. Conscientious	17. Conscientious	
19. Contented			25. Defensive
36. Fair-minded		29. Dissatisfied	27. Depressed
	49. Intelligent	41. Frustrated	
	56. Outgoing	55. Lonely	41. Frustrated
63. Reasonable	63. Reasonable		55. Lonely
68. Responsible		68. Responsible	67. Reserved
72. Secure	72. Secure	96. Vulnerable	
73. Self-controlled	73. Self-controlled		
81. Sincere			
	82. Sophisticated		
Least Characteristic			
	1. Absent-minded		2. Affected
	5. Angry	19. Contented	
24. Cruel		21. Creative	21. Creative
	27. Depressed	24. Cruel	24. Cruel
23. Disorganized			30. Dramatic
		37. Feminine oriented	37. Feminine oriented
43. Helpless			39. Frank; candid
44. Hostile			
48. Inadequate	48. Inadequate	46. Imaginative	46. Imaginative
53. Lazy	53. Lazy	47. Impulsive	47. Impulsive
90. Irritable		78. Sentimental	
92. Undecided			91. Unconventional
93. Unhappy			
94. Uninterested		97. Warm	

was almost the same—with an average correlation of about .60 and not too much variation from the correlation. However, for Subjects 9-10-11, the correlations for the three Subjects were not only lower—with an average correlation of about .30—but also more varied among the three Subjects, with most discrepant correlations (from .63 to .03) being within the one Subject with the lowest interrater correlations. When a rated Subject is "ambiguous" or "controversial" or raises issues of life

style about which there are different commonsense points of view, then not only will the raters tend to disagree about that Subject among themselves but they may also rate him differently vis-a-vis the other Subjects whom they assess.

For each Q-sort word, there were nine judgments—three Subjects (1-2-3 or 9-10-11) times three raters. In this study, a Q-sort item was selected for comment if it appeared six or more times (of a possible nine) among the 13 “Most” or 13 “Least” items. The results are indicated in Table 3-3.

For Subjects 1-2-3, the *most* characteristic Q-sort items of the Behavioral Science raters are: Contented, fair-minded, responsible and sincere; of the Lawyer raters: Ambitious, competitive, confident, intelligent, outgoing and sophisticated; and for both sets of raters: Capable, conscientious, reasonable and self-controlled.

The *least* characteristic items for Subjects 1-2-3 by the Behavioral Science raters are: Cruel, disorganized, helpless, hostile, irritable, undecided, unhappy and uninterested; for the Lawyer raters: Absent-minded, angry and depressed; for both sets of raters: Inadequate and lazy.

For Subjects 9-10-11, the *most* characteristics items of the Behavioral Science raters are: Cautious, conscientious, dissatisfied, responsible and vulnerable; for the Lawyer raters: Defensive and depressed; and for both groups of raters: Frustrated and lonely.

The *least* characteristic items for Subjects 9-10-11 by the Behavioral Science raters are: Contented, sentimental and warm; for the Lawyer raters: Affected, dramatic, frank and unconventional; and for both groups of raters: Creative, cruel, feminine orientation, imaginative and impulsive.

Two items appear as *most* characteristic of *both* groups (1-2-3 and 9-10-11): Conscientious and responsible; and one item that is *least* characteristic of *both* groups: Cruel. Only one item is *most* characteristic of the 1-2-3 group and *least* characteristic of the 9-10-11 group: Contented.

□ Some Longitudinal Data

Much information is on file for Subjects 1-2-3 and 9-10-11 for year 1922, when they were seven to twelve years old. Included in the data are sets of “Ratings on Physical, Mental, Social and Moral Traits.” The ratings were made by the subject’s parent—the mother in five of the six ratings. Each item was rated on a 13-point rating scale, with the middle rating designed as “Average for his Age.” Ratings for several of these same items for these subjects also exist for years 1927–1928 and 1939–1940.

Findings are separated in this study if there were differences of over 2 points on a 13-point scale between the mean scores of the two groups of three subjects. The tentative nature of these findings is re-emphasized.

In 1922, at ages seven to twelve, the mothers of Subjects 1-2-3 rated them slightly higher than the mothers of Subjects 9-10-11 rated their sons on these traits: Leadership, popularity, sociability, mood stability, and musical appreciation.

In 1927, when the subjects were 12 to 17, a truncated form of 12 (of the 25) traits was used. Although there are not data for all the subjects in this present study, nonetheless Subjects 1-2-3 were again slightly higher on leadership and popularity and, additionally, on sociability.

In 1939-1940 (at ages 24 to 30)—in self-ratings—Subjects 1-2-3 rated themselves, compared with the self-ratings of Subjects 9-10-11, as slightly less moody, with more close friends, having more interest in art and music, with lower feelings of inferiority and less interest in religion.

Over those almost 20 years (from 1922 to 1940), Subjects 1-2-3, compared with Subjects 9-10-11, seemed to be more stable, more socially skilled with their peers, and more diversified in their interests. These differences, evidenced as early as age seven—and may very well have existed before—continued at ages 12 to 17 and were visible at age 30.

A previous study with Terman Study subjects (Shneidman, 1970)—which did not include any of the 11 lawyer subjects of this present study—found that the character and personality characteristics relating to at least one vital life decision—specifically, whether or not an individual committed suicide at the age of 55—were definitely discernible from the case history and rating scale materials by the time the individual was age *thirty*.

□ Discussion

What do the findings of this small study with few subjects—the Q-sort results and the trait ratings over several years—permit us to say? First, that the two groups, Subjects 1-2-3 and 9-10-11, are somewhat different. They have different qualities of personality; they function differently; and they make different impressions on others.

Most of the six raters—Behavioral Scientists and Lawyers—believed that it was *most* characteristic of Subjects 1-2-3 to be capable, conscientious, responsible and fair-minded, and *least* characteristic of them to be inadequate or lazy; further, the raters believed that for Subjects 9-10-11 it was *most* characteristic of them to be frustrated and lonely, and *least* characteristic to be creative, imaginative and impulsive.

In words other than those on the Q-sort items, the personality correlates of “success/happiness” (for those three subjects in the profession of the Law, at least) seem to be these: Energy, talent, derring-do, conscience and sanguinity. Conversely, one might infer that it is best—if one can—to eschew incapacitating hostility. The items angry, cruel, hostile and irritable—a syndrome of negativity—were *least* characteristic of the 1-2-3 Subjects.

On the other hand, caution, depression, dissatisfaction, frustration, and loneliness were *most* characteristic of the 9-10-11 group, and *may*—one must be careful not to infer causality from correlational data—have inhibited their creativity, imagination, and freedom to act on appropriate impulse. In addition, the members of the 9-10-11 group are not as sentimental, and it is uncharacteristic of them to have the “softer” orientations or interests. They would be more apt to be engaged in or found at a physical sports event than at a library or concert.

In general, the Q-sort items identified with Subjects 1-2-3 describe their social and intellectual and interpersonal capacities and skills, whereas the items identified with Subjects 9-10-11 describe their personality attributes and—to stretch a word—their “neuroses.” It seems as though in speaking about a highly credentialled and obviously successful person, one tends to speak of his professional attributes and to say things like he is competent and reasonable and fair, whereas in speaking about a person who is somewhat less successful, one might speak in rather different terms, touching more upon his psychological state and say such personal things as he is unhappy and discontented.

The other source of information, the trait-rating data, tend, if anything, to corroborate the Q-sort findings. From as early as ages seven to twelve—and how much earlier we do not know—and again at ages 17 and 29, Subjects 1-2-3, compared with Subjects 9-10-11, are rated by their parents and by themselves as being slightly more stable (less moody), more social (less isolated) and more diversified in their interests (less estranged from art and music). It would appear that the best life-long success is found in the all-around person with social skills, emotional stability, and diversified cultural interests. This general notion first propounded by the Terman Study findings in 1925—as opposed to the then-popular misconception of the bright child as being spindly and neurotic—of a healthy personality in a healthy body is borne out by this present study, even among subjects all of whom are at the higher end of a continuum of success.

Keeping in mind the social milieu in which these subjects lived—born around 1910 in peaceful (and segregated) California and living through most of this century—the following *reflections*—not necessarily causally connected to these data—come to mind: While one can assert the importance of good parents and a happy childhood for a successful life, and—