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Research Methods and Plan for the Gradation of Emotional
and Instinctive Functions

1. Scope and objectives of the study

The basic strategy of this research has been to elaborate more fully the theoretical concepts of positive disintegration as well as to develop objective tests for the measurement of emotional development as outlined by the theory of positive disintegration. This research is a long range project consisting of several stages of development. Although the theory of positive disintegration had been essentially mapped out by K. Dabrowski (1966) there remained further elaboration of the theory in terms of various hypothesis arising from the theory. Work on the development of instruments to objectively measure stages of development as well as various psychological processes (dynamisms) as outlined by the theory still remained to be actualized.

The strategy to date has been to work on both of these sub-projects at the same time. In essence this approach will be continued but will be modified in particular instances as a result of the research findings of the last year and a half. Research work will center around the development of clinical manuals for the Rorschach (based on Perceptanalysis by Piotrowski, 1957), Autobiographical Protocols, and a Verbal Stimuli Test to provide the clinician with instruments to measure (1) levels of emotional development, (2) the extent of multidimensional growth as well as developmental dynamisms operating within the individual.

Research on the objective tests of emotional development (Verbal Items, Personal Inventory, Faces and Situations Test) will be continued and will consist of developing alternative methods of presentation as well as developing a different type of objective test based on clinically validated subject protocols.

2. Theoretical significance and practical importance of the project

The theory of positive disintegration as developed by the author is one of the few systematic attempts to elaborate a theory of the psychological development of man which incorporated values into a developmental framework. Historically, psychologists and philosophers have avoided including hierarchical components of values as intrinsic factors in the psychological development of man. Thus, the theory of positive disintegration sees much of man's behavior in a new light and has reasonably clear-cut implications, not only for the development of the individual, but for our society as a whole. This developmental approach allows a new perspective on such issues as drug abuse, hippie sub-cultures, education, mental health, and more importantly the theory suggests different solutions to problems in these areas.

This "developmental" viewpoint has already been proven useful in the explanation of some crucial aspects of creative processes, mental disturbances (psychoneuroses and psychoses), and educational philosophy. If it is confirmed and enriched in further research, it should lead to the establishment of

an empirically verifiable scale of levels of emotional and instinctive functions, which would provide a new basis for further research in developmental and social psychology as well as in the theory and philosophy of education. This developmental viewpoint provides a new explanation of psychoneurotic disorders and provides a sound foundation for a substantial revision of concepts and doctrines in psychopathology and psychiatry.

The theoretical implications of this project should also have fundamental significance for ethics and metaethics. An empirically verifiable scale of mental functions and structures may serve as a foundation for a psychological theory of valuation which could become a cornerstone for the elaboration of a philosophical theory of values (axiology). If the above outlined correlations are valid, a successful completion of this project should have theoretical impact upon all social sciences and humanities.

In reference to the widespread opinion that science is value-neutral and should avoid any evaluative ingredients, it is possible that the eventual success of the approach proposed in this project may show the necessity of a revision of this viewpoint.

The practical importance of an empirically elaborated gradation of emotional and instinctive functions extends to all fundamental aspects of individual and social activities such as education and self-education, psychotherapy and pastoral work, marriage and family life, interpersonal relations, relations among social groups, and even political problems.

Moral, educational, and political argumentation would take on a new dimension and depth. The practice of propagandistic appeal to the lowest and most primitive instincts and emotions would be more easily unmasked and counteracted. The forms of life and actions characteristic of higher stages of mental development (secondary integration) such as creativity, empathy, authenticity, and social concern would receive more understanding and appreciation.

3. Relationship to existing research and literature

As pointed out in the previous application work has been done in the area of values as they related to personality (Allport & Vernon, 1931; Claparede, 1924; Munn, 1965; and Rokeach, 1960, 1968). However, these attempts at relating values to personality do not deal with or even take into consideration the differentiation of levels nor are they concerned with the processes involved in the developmental gradation of moral and social attitudes. Although Kohlberg (1963) has developed a scale of moral development, his theory lacks the developmental dynamics which is found in the theory of positive disintegration.

Similarly various individuals have emphasized the function of values in psychotherapy (May, 1961, Maslow, 1962; and Margolis, 1966). Again we find a lack of systematic elaboration of the roles of values as they relate to developmental dynamisms in the growing individual. Further elaboration of these points can be found in the original application and in Psychoneurosis is not an illness.

4. Research plan and methods

The research consists of two interrelated projects. The first consists of the development of the objective tests as valid and reliable measures of the multilevelness of emotional and instinctive functions. The second project which is interdependent with the first involves the systematic elaboration of case histories based on information obtained from the Rorschach, Verbal Stimuli Test, Interviews, and Autobiographies of the subjects.

A. Test for assessment of developmental levels.

When this research was initiated there were no apparent existing psychological tests on the market that would assess levels of development or tap the dynamisms operating in the inner psychic milieu as outlined by the theory of positive disintegration. The research strategy at that time was to develop some objective tests (Personal Inventory, Verbal Items, Neurological Assessment and Faces and Situations Test) in conjunction with the further elaboration of information from the Rorschach, Verbal Stimuli Test, Autobiography Protocols, and Clinical Interviews. These latter sources of information have been used in combination to obtain the most valid assessment of the individual and were to provide as anchor points for the development of the objective tests. It is now apparent, but not entirely conclusive that the objective tests using free choice procedures are significantly confounded by response sets (social desirability), the nature of the subject population (students, hospital patients, more mature adults) as well as being limited in terms of tapping the richness of the inner psychic milieu.

Results to date clearly indicate that data obtained about subjects from their Autobiographies, Rorschach, and Verbal Stimuli Test results provide the necessary information which enable valid and reliable assessment of the individual's level of development. In addition these tests provide an indication of the specific dynamisms present as well as their relative strength of operation within the individual at his or her particular level of development.

It is now apparent that the maximal payoff will be obtained through the development of test manuals for using the Rorschach (Perceptanalysis, Piotrowski 1957), Verbal Stimuli Test and Autobiography in the assessment of levels of emotional development as outlined by the theory of positive disintegration. The manuals will be based on a set of empirically elaborated criteria and will consist of a set of explicit rules and examples for the assessment of each level of development with respect to the subject's responses to these three tests. The manuals will also provide a set of test cases already consensually validated by 10 independent judges.

The development of the manuals will consist of establishing a set of criteria for scoring each test. The judges will then be trained using these particular set of criteria for assessment of the subject's protocols from each test. For each test the 10 judges will independently assess 30 cases representing a wide range of development. Interjudge agreement or reliability will then be assessed. The procedures to be used will provide a complete picture of the consensus between independently arrived at ratings by judges for each test and each variable scored, i.e.

objectivity of judgments. It will also be ascertained the extent to which judges are independently reliable in scoring test responses both as single raters and as a group in terms of using the mean of their ratings for any given subject.

B. Testing of specific hypotheses.

Work to date in regard to the hypotheses has consisted of evaluation of data based upon Clinical Interviews, Neurological Examination, Autobiography, Rorschach and the Verbal Stimuli Test. Although the agreement on cases has been extremely high the procedure of assessment in regard to independence and consensus of judgment has not been as strict as it could be.

In the next phase of hypothesis testing a double blind or triple blind procedure will be used in evaluating the subjects' protocols in terms of specific hypotheses. When several types of data (i.e. from Rorschach, Verbal Stimuli or Autobiography) are to be evaluated by a group of judges, any particular judge will not (1) know the scores on any other measure for the subject's data he is scoring on a particular type of data and (2) a judge will score a different set of subjects in one type of data than he does on any other type of data. This means for example that if judge A scores subjects 1-30 on Verbal Stimuli, judge B scores subjects 31-60 and judge C scores subjects 61-90, then for biographies judge A scores either subjects 31-60 or 61-90, judge B scores subjects 1-30 or 61-90 depending on which group judge A scored, etc. Points 1 and 2 insure a double or triple blind procedure and insure that

there will be no judge carry-over effect that will artificially inflate the correlation between Verbal Stimuli and Autobiographies.

C. Revision of objective tests and development of new tests.

At present a new item pool is being derived from actual subject responses on the Verbal Stimuli Tests and Autobiographies. We plan, then, to devise new objective questionnaire tests starting with item pools consisting of statements given by subjects who have been consensually scored for level of development on response protocols excluding those very statements. The items will then be individually rated independently by judges for level of development following a similar procedure as outlined in the above section (B). The test items will consist of a series of sets of 4 statements (one representing each level) and will be administered to subjects who have already been assessed using the Verbal Stimuli Test, Autobiography, Rorschach and Clinical Interview. Subjects whose responses have been used to create the item pool will not be included. Item and validity analyses will be run sequentially and based on sample sizes of 70-75 subjects.

D. Study of eminent individuals.

In order to sample more highly developed individuals in society a test package consisting of the Verbal Stimuli Test and Autobiography will be sent to selected so-called "eminent" individuals in Canada. If possible some of these individuals will be assessed using the Rorschach, Neurological Examination and Clinical Interview under double blind conditions.

E. Correlation with other personality tests.

In order to determine if the multilevelness of emotional development can be accounted for by existing personality tests, Cattell's 16PF, Guildford's GZTS, MMPI and Rorschach will be administered to as many individuals as possible at each level of development. Individual items and scales from these tests will be rescored or interpreted, if possible that is, in terms of levels of development and will then be analyzed (cluster and factor analysis) to determine if there is any consistency within the test in regard to levels. Also the correlation between the items or scales or some combination of items or scales of these existing personality tests and the level of assessment of individuals (determined by Interview, Verbal Stimuli, Autobiographies, Neurological Examination and Rorschach) will be examined.

Description of tests in test battery:

1. Verbal Items: This test consists of approximately 45 aphorisms and quotations representing, according to the author of the theory of positive disintegration, different levels of emotional life. The subjects are asked to rate these items, on a seven point scale, thus selecting those which best express their own emotional experience.

Examples:

Level 1 item: I do not like fancy talk, philosophizing, and other empty word games.

Level 2 item: Some people I like sometimes and dislike at other times.

Level 3 item: Being moody and hard to live with actually adds to my creative needs and experiences.

Level 4 item: The "emotion" within a relationship is unique and one of life's highest values.

2. Personal Inventory: This is a biographical questionnaire containing 60 items based on the same assumptions as the Verbal Items test.

Examples:

Level 1 item: In anger I occasionally hit someone else.

Level 2 item: If I am insulted I cannot forget it quickly.

Level 3 item: If I could, I would ban sports like boxing and bullfighting.

Level 4 item: I do not accept all acts and personal traits of my friends, but I am always capable of understanding them.

3. Faces: The development of this test has been based on a projective technique designed to stimulate and reveal the dynamisms operating within the emotional life of the subject. The interpretation of responses is based upon the assumption that the consistency with which the subject is attracted to faces revealing particular sentiments or feelings or the kinds of faces the subject reacts to with intensity (whether positive or negative) indicates something about his own internal structure and his experiences, both past and present. The subjects make their choices from a set of 40 pictures.

4. Situations: This test consists of a set of 40 pictures revealing a variety of situations involving, usually, more than one person. It is based on the same assumptions as the Faces test, but presents some difficulties arising from the great number of stimuli which may be operating in a given picture.
5. Verbal Stimuli: This test presents to the subject 8 stimuli which are especially chosen to excite internal dynamisms and memory functions, emotions, and intellectual activities, both conscious and unconscious. This test is based on the assumption that the stimuli, such as 'great sadness' and 'great joy', excite different levels of responses which, in turn, reflect the unique development of the subject. On one hand, this is a test of association, not only intellectual, but also emotional association. It is also a projective test because of the indirect stimulation of conscious and unconscious material which the subject externalizes in his responses.
6. Autobiography: This test gives the individual an opportunity to tell what he knows and feels about himself and his life. He is asked to focus upon particularly significant experiences and personal relationships which have been most joyous and most sad. He is asked to relate any thoughts, reflections, fantasies and dreams he has, or has had respecting these significant experiences and relationships. And, he is asked to describe his most important and prominent personality traits. (good and bad)

As a psychological measure, the autobiography serves to probe and bring to the surface particularly potent and profound information regarding attitudes an individual has toward himself and others. These attitudes, which may reflect underlying dynamisms such as dissatisfaction with oneself, feelings of shame, empathy, responsibility, etc., are then assessed within the context of the theory.

Because, in the investigation of an individual's attitudes, attention and interpretation are given not solely to conscious processes but to subconscious and unconscious processes as well, the autobiography is to be considered partially auto-projective.

7. Rorschach: At present, attempts are being made to outline a specific method of Rorschach interpretation which would permit the recognition of the processes of positive disintegration in the psyche of an individual. There are many systems of interpreting the Rorschach. In the present research Piotrowski's perceptanalysis is the point of departure because the meanings of such basic test components as human movement, animal movement, inanimate movement, color and shading responses, whole responses and shock are more differentiated on this system than in other systems.

According to perceptanalysis every test component has two meanings: a basic and an amplified one. The basic meaning, that of each component when it is considered in itself, is rather restricted, but the amplified meaning can be manifold because the many possibilities of combination of the components.

The attempt to apply the Rorschach test to the Theory of Positive Disintegration consists first of all in looking for sets of components which could be perceptanalytic equivalents of developmental dynamisms, forms and levels of overexcitability, levels of personality, as well as perceptanalytic equivalents of inter and intra-level differences of psychoneurosis.

Although perceptanalysis plays a basic role in the research, other systems (Klopper & Alcock) are also taken into account.

8. Neurological Examination: (combined with observation of behaviour in the diagnosis of the level of development in emotional and instinctive functions)

The neurological examination, combined with observation of the behavior of the subject, is as a specific test, another method of attempting to determine the different levels of emotional and instinctive functions. This is not a direct examination, but an effort to determine, through examining the ratio between the increasing and inhibition of reflexes, the developmental level of the subject. Closely observed is the control of both the increasing and inhibition of reflexes by the psychic control of the subject, his general self-control during the examination, and his attitude toward the examiner (positive or negative). The increasing or inhibition of some localized reflexes is also closely observed.

Empirical evidence shows that reactions of excitation and inhibition, or a lack of these reactions--if these phenomena apply to the entire neurological 'area' of the patient--indicate his total involvement in either positive or, sometimes, in negative development (towards psychoneurosis bordering on psychosis or towards psychosis). For example, a marked increase in the magnitude of the majority of reflexes combined with strong inhibition leads the examiner to suspect that he is dealing with a subject who is at the second developmental level or on the borderline of the third level.

As the title indicates, two methods are combined, and intuition, used in the sense of formulating a provisional synthesis, plays a rather important part of the diagnosis. In this type of examination we not only ascertain the kind and magnitude of neurological reactions or the lack of certain reactions in a given individual, and in a given field, but are also concerned with the reaction of the individual to being examined as a general phenomenon. Of even more concern are his particular reactions to his own reactions. An effort is made to ascertain the attitude of the patient to the person who conducts the examination. The patient's reactions and behavior are to a large extent outward expressions of his inner psychic milieu and must be grasped in an intuitive way.

5. Work already completed and in progress

A. Development of objective tests.

In ~~the~~ past one and a half years a total of 1400 subjects were tested in the development of the four objective tests (Verbal Items, Personal Inventory, Faces and Situations) for assessing levels of development as outlined by the Theory of Positive Disintegration. Initial item analysis on various serial samples were fairly encouraging, i.e. the intra-level items correlated reasonably high with their respective level sub-totals, and the inter-level item correlations were non-significant or negative. However, Thurstone's "C" analysis for point item irrelevancy on the last samples of subjects (N = 500) did not yield acceptable findings for any of the four objective tests, i.e. the conditional probabilities did not fall within the expected distribution for point items. For the practical purposes of test development an insignificant number of items did not reach the relevancy criterion, i.e. they failed to consistently differentiate levels of development. Thus it was not possible to increase and cross-validate the low split-half reliabilities found for the tests.

Items are presently being revised for all four tests and will be administered to small samples of subjects using a forced-choice procedure.

B. Development of Verbal Stimuli Test, Autobiography, Rorschach, and Neurological Examination.

A total of 400 subjects were tested using the Verbal Stimuli Test to provide data for a series of interjudge reliability studies. Three untrained judges using a set of preliminary criteria assessed 70 subjects who had been administered the Verbal Stimuli Test. The assessment levels of the judges correlated significantly ($r = .45, p < .01$) with a double blind clinical and neurological assessment of the subjects. Although the correlation found is low, it is of some significance in that the assessments of the Verbal Stimuli were done by untrained judges using a rough set of criteria. Taking both of these factors into consideration one would expect to find low correlations with any other measure of level of development. On the basis of these findings an elaborated set of criteria were developed and were used in the training of 8 judges in assessing developmental level from the Verbal Stimuli Test. Verbal Stimuli protocols are presently being independently rated by 8 judges (using the elaborated criteria--I⁰). The interjudge reliability results will indicate whether immediate further elaboration of the criteria will be necessary. It is expected that a series of interjudge reliability studies will be necessary in order to produce a set of empirically validated criteria. The first preliminary set of criteria for the Rorschach has also been developed. Work is presently in progress on the development of criteria for scoring autobiographies.