

THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL BULLETIN

PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER

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Psychologists of the past decade have been much occupied with the application of their science to practical problems of life, particularly to problems of vocation and conduct. The social adjustments of the individual represented in such problems are receiving marked attention not only from clinical and consulting psychologists, but from experimental and research psychologists as well. The enticing topic of speculation, *human nature*, has been rephrased for scientific study as a problem of *individual nature*. On every hand we see that interest is becoming focused upon the study of man with the hope that by this method the problems of the mechanisms, motives, and modifications of behavior peculiar to the individual may at length be solved. This tendency is manifested by the rapid increase in the number of studies of human *personality* and *character*.

This paper is prepared with the hope that it may offer a useful summary of experimental and clinical researches, together with a review of the best of the speculative work, and so assist the reader to a clarified notion of the present status of psychological investigations concerning personality and character. For convenience the contributions to be considered will be arranged under three headings: (1) the psychological nature of character and personality (the problem of definition); (2) the composition of personality (the classification of traits); and (3) the measurement of traits by testing devices and rating scales.

I. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL NATURE OF PERSONALITY
AND CHARACTER

In this field of study we may expect richer results from experimental and descriptive work than in the direction of definition.

Indeed, the problem of definition is almost hopelessly complicated by prevalent popular uses of terms. Recently, however, there have been noteworthy efforts made to delimit carefully the concepts of personality, character, and temperament as to their psychological significance.

Paton (44) considers personality to be the dynamic or functional aspect of individuality—"the progressive synthesis of the mosaic of experiences." Individuality which is mere organismal unity expresses only structural differentia between members of a species; whereas personality is in all cases the peculiar function of the individual. This view is similar to Kempf's (31) who considers personality to be the habitual modes of adjustment which the organism effects between its own egocentric drives and the exigencies of the environment. Between the autonomic system and the exactions of the physical and social environments we find the intermediation of the central nervous system, and the customary adjustments which this system makes between the egocentric drives of the organism and the requirements of the *milieu* constitute the personality of the organism. Such a standpoint serves to call attention to the biological fact that the primitive nervous system (the autonomic) is of immense importance in determining personality. The view as stated compels us to ascribe personality to all living things, unless we limit the concept of "habits of adjustment" to the social environment, leaving out of account the numerous adaptive responses made to non-social surroundings. Limiting the concept in this way would be to consider personality as developing *pari passu* with the number and complexity of social relationships.

There are many rag-bag theories of personality, into which are dumped "all biological innate dispositions, impulses, tendencies, appetites and instincts, and all acquired dispositions" (49). Such a conception partakes of chaos, for it does not give unity or definiteness of direction to our study. It is not difficult for the self observer to recognize that his own personality is something more homogeneous and dynamic than such a definition would suggest. Nor will the observer be content with the static conception that "personality is the totality of all our previous experiences and ideas." Hartenberg (22) introduces an organizing motive into the rag-bag. He considers personality to be the peculiar organic condition of the individual, with his individual attributes of sensory and motor behavior, capped and organized by a dominant sentiment or motive.

Myerson's book (40) seeks to analyze the foundations of personality, but does not attempt to distinguish it from character or

mind, since these are all alike viewed as functions of the organic activities of the body. It is to be regretted that the author despaired of defining his field a little more accurately, for there is much ambiguity entailed by confusing three such totally different problems.

The distinction between personality and character is an important one for psychologists to observe. Webb (64) defines character as the sum of all personal qualities which are not distinctly intellectual. In this regard he agrees with Fernald (15) who suggests that the formula for *personality* is *intelligence plus character*. McDougall (34) considers character to be the organization of sentiments, which are innate, into a system or hierarchy within the individual. According to this view character is not as unitary a function as Fernald would have us believe, nor can it be thought to be measureable. Gosline (20) considers character, along with intelligence and temperament, to be inborn, though susceptible to alteration by the environment. On this assumption character becomes a behavior function comparable with intelligence as a field for psychological investigation. In contrast to these views we find that of Watson (62). Character is defined by this author as the personality evaluated according to prevailing standards of conduct. Those psychologists who accept Watson's view have no right, strictly speaking, to include character study in the province of psychology; it belongs rather to social ethics.

Watson considers personality to be the sum total of an individual's responses to his environment, that is to say, his "reaction mass" as a whole. Kantor (30) distinguishes two types of behavior within the personal adjustment habits, (*a*) actions which are direct visible signs of the individual's nature, and (*b*) more permanent action elements, such as dispositions to action which may be considered as potential behavior. Such views as these, placing emphasis upon adjustment habits, have been at the base of the numerous attempts recently made to measure traits and to study the behavior patterns which constitute the personality. (Part III of this review).

II. THE COMPOSITION OF PERSONALITY

What traits do psychological writers recognize as the elementary constituents of personality? It has long been considered that traits are mental faculties, which might be studied by reference to the characteristic configuration of head or hand. It is not within the

scope of this paper to delve into these "slums of psychology": the reader who is interested will find profitable a review by Jastrow (27) of the antecedents of character study.

Psychologists are working steadily toward a schedule of human traits which will express in the most economical fashion a true analysis of personality. Wells (66) has gathered together the classifications of Heymans and Wiersma (23), Cattell (8), Hoch-Amsden (24), and Davenport (10), and has presented a synthesized schema of traits. The result is a list of fourteen types of adjustments which are fundamental to every personality. These essential modes of behavior are then divided into ninety-four traits which submit to quantitative study according to a rating scale. Partridge (43) and Yerkes and La Rue (71) further multiply the number of qualities, and so invite upon their schemes the criticism of superficiality and overlapping. In fact, a notable weakness at the present time is the tendency to make a hasty and inadequate selection of traits.

Spaulding (55) represents one of the many recent attempts to find a practical schedule of traits for application to a special problem—in this case, the problem of delinquents. The study presents one hundred thirty-four qualities arranged under eight principal divisions of personality (intelligence, emotionality, and the like). Porteus (46, 47) has made a similar attempt to discover the qualities which are essential for the social adaptation of defectives. Business leaders, social workers, educators, moral directors, are continually publishing personal analysis charts. The same criticism can be made of one and all: the traits chosen are not psychologically basic; they represent complexes of habits (neatness, tact, and the like) rather than truly fundamental aspects of personality. Woodworth (70) presents a plan of four subdivisions, physique, chemique, instincts, and intelligence—more suggestive than the four humors upon which most of the French studies of the *caractères* are based—but still very schematic.

If we turn our attention from the classifications *in toto* to some of the special traits which are frequently advocated to be elementary constituents of personality, we may then be able to see the problem more clearly. It is dangerous to oversimplify the problem of classification, and in the discussion which follows it must be remembered that by no means all of the alleged components of personality are included. The traits chosen are merely those upon which a large number of students of personality are focusing attention at the present time.

Intelligence.—No scheme of personality denies a signal position to the intellectual capacity. Terman (57) and Webb (64) find that high intelligence correlates in general with all strong qualities of character. However intelligence may be defined, there can be no doubt that the mental adaptability for which it stands is one of the major factors in the development of personality.

Temperament.—The emotional characteristics of an individual are likewise accorded universal recognition. There is, however, little agreement as to what temperament is. The four-humor doctrine has haunted the house of psychology for twenty-five centuries. The advent of endocrinology, as Paton (44) points out, has done much to supply a reinterpretation of the theory, and as the work progresses we may find that the anticipations of Hippocrates and Galen were not so far afield. There has been a steady increase of emphasis upon the rôle which the ductless glands play in determining the emotional life. Berman (4) has recently published a mechanistic interpretation of personality almost entirely in terms of glandular influences. He speaks of the thyroid personality, the pituitary personality, and the gonado-centric personality, according as these autocoid influences seem to predominate in the individual!

Davenport (9) suggests that qualities of emotionality, e.g., a "hot temper," may be inherited according to the Mendelian principle. Heymans and Wiersma (23) are quite certain that their findings based upon a *Massenuntersuchung* show evidence of the positive inheritance of traits of character and temperament. Gates (19) has reviewed the current beliefs concerning the inheritance of mental traits in this journal.

Volitional Qualities.—Downey (12) has called attention to the significance in personality of the factors of activity and control. Myerson (40) employs this conception of the "kinetic" nature to describe personality types which seem to be characterized by a certain speed or intensity of response. Prominent among these "volitional" types we find the ascendant personality and the submissive personality, characterized respectively by habitual aggression or passivity. The analogy of the active and passive voice in these types was first suggested by Southard (54). Allport (2) has applied this conception to the problem of salesmanship, showing that timidity in the selling personality is essentially passivity, and this is to be overcome only by a deliberate building up of one's ascendant qualities. Ascendance is the essential trait of leader-

ship. Gowin (21) has found it to be correlated with physical attributes of size, weight and personal appearance.

There are other characteristics of the personality which are of great importance, but which have not been adequately studied. Such, for example, is the æsthetic nature. Again, we have the expansive personality as contrasted to the recluse. There has been no study of these traits to the present writer's knowledge, excepting his own research (3) in the Harvard Psychological Laboratory. (See Part III of this paper.)

Reference should be made to two or three notable contributions from psychiatrists and Freudian psychologists. White (69) considers conflict in the psychoanalytic sense to be the cardinal problem of character formation. The well-balanced personality is the one which effects a successful "resolution" of all conflicts. Adler (1) has advanced the theory of *Minderwertigkeit*, according to which each individual who finds himself handicapped in life's struggles because of physical or mental defects will tend to compensate for this consciousness of personal inferiority. The inherent desire of a person to be superior and powerful leads him to make many peculiar attempts at adjustment, to preserve at all costs his "feeling of masculinity," and the characteristic habits which result are true traits of personality. The biologist, Le Dantec (32) likewise holds egoism to be the determinant of all actions, and the individual's personality merely represents the "deformations" which *la vie en commun* compels him to undergo. Adler's theory has been interpreted and popularized by Tanner (56), Myerson (40) and others, until Compensation has become one of the psychological headlines of the day.

Jung (28) has drawn attention to two important types of adjustment. The extravert finds his real life one of keen participation in his environment, the introvert on the other hand living much within the world of self-consciousness and fantasy. These types, those whose adjustment is realistic, and those whose adjustment is autistic are considered in detail by Wells (65). Day-dreaming he holds to be one of the characteristic attempts at inner adjustment when outer adjustment fails.

Rosanoff (50) gives an excellent account of psychopathic personality types. There are individuals whose personality might be characterized as (1) antisocial, (2) cyclothymic, consisting of manic make-up, depressive make-up, irascible make-up, or emotional in-

stability, (3) autistic, *i.e.*, predominantly introverted, and (4) the epileptic personality, with its periodic alterations of mood and character. Normal personalities are considered by Rosanoff to differ from the psychopathic only slightly as to quality but markedly as to quantity. The schizophrenics and epileptics, it is true, evidence brain atrophy, but in regard to most traits there appears to be a perfect continuity of type from the most normal individual to the totally insane. Southard (53), has made a suggestive innovation by the application of grammatical categories to personality study. Certain features of the personality, he says, may be studied with profit by describing them in the terms of syntax: person, number, mood, voice, and tense.

III. THE MEASUREMENT OF PERSONALITY BY RATING AND TESTING

In the field of personality measurement we find an encouraging amount of meritorious research. In all probability, as has been the case with the study of intelligence, we shall be able to give reliable quantitative results before we understand the precise nature of that with which we are dealing. Even before the days of Freudian-endocrine-psychiatric enlightenment as to the probable nature of personality, Francis Galton definitely advocated psychometric tests for traits of character. He suggested, for example, that it might be profitable to construct a delicate apparatus for recording individual peculiarities of manner in sitting upon chairs. Such a device would most certainly yield important information concerning the sitter!

1. *The Rating of Traits.*—Norsworthy (42) seems to be a pioneer in the study of the validity of judgments upon character. Her conclusions, substantiated in the main by subsequent investigations, are (1) that the reliability of rating varies with the traits under consideration. Raters agree more closely upon such qualities as popularity, conceit, or leadership than upon emotionality, honesty, or tact. (2) It seems also that some individuals are easier to rate and their rank more readily determined by the raters than other individuals. We have thus a suggestion of the open personality versus the enigmatic. Cattell (8) decides that traits upon which the judges closely agree represent the individual's reactions to objective things, whereas the traits upon which they disagree most represent the individual's reactions toward other people.

A study made by Thorndike (59) sounds a warning which all dealers in rating scales may well heed. It was found in his study that those giving ratings were unable to analyze out the different aspects of an individual's nature and rate them independently of other aspects. The ratings are affected by a marked tendency to think of the person in general as good or rather inferior, and so color the judgments of the qualities by a general feeling. Thus a "halo" is provided the individual who is being rated. Moore (36) finds evidence of this halo as an influence upon the rating of college students by members of the faculty. This same source of error helps to account for the conclusions reached by Rugg (52) that the rating scale used in the U. S. Army (45) probably did not locate an officer within his "fifth" of the entire scale. The scale is reprinted in this journal, and a discussion of the theory and applications is presented in the same number by Terman (58). Rugg maintains that to render rating of human character practicable, the following conditions should be fulfilled: (1) The final rating must be the average of three independent ratings, each one made on a scale as objectified as the man-to-man-comparison type of scale. (2) The scales on which ratings are made must be comparable and equivalent, having been made in conference under the instruction of one skilled in rating scale work. (3) The raters must be so thoroughly acquainted with the person rated that they are competent to make the judgment. The question of reliability has not deterred schools and industries from using rating scales, and whichever way we turn we meet with these schemes (41, 60, 63). Wells (66) and Spaulding (55) endeavor to eliminate the difficulties of scoring by the employment of a simple + and - designation opposite each trait in their scales, indicating superiority or deficiency of the attribute as compared to the average or normal person.

Self-rating is fraught with perils. Hollingworth (25) finds that the individual generally tends to overestimate his possession of qualities which are socially valuable and to underestimate in the case of those which are socially undesirable. Thus, no person would be content to ascribe to himself anything but a superior possession of refinement or humor. Hollingworth found it to be a rule that the individual's deviation in self-ranking from the place accorded him by averaging the ratings of his associates is noticeably greater than the average deviation among the judgments of the associates themselves. The possibility should be noted that the

extent to which the self-rating deviates from the average rating by associates may be used as an index of the insight of the person studied. The lower the average of his deviations from the rating accorded him on various traits, the higher his insight. In cases where ratings are made on desirable or undesirable qualities a Self-evaluation or Conceit Index might be computed in a similar fashion.

Notwithstanding the dangers and difficulties encountered in devising and employing rating scales, we are forced to recognize this method as the only available objective criterion of personality. The sources of error must gradually be overcome by the improvement in the technique of rating. The methods of measuring objective manifestations of personality which we shall now turn attention to, are as a rule more unreliable than ratings by associates. The only method of judging the value of a particular test is by its correlation with ratings. Since both factors are generally so variable, we cannot expect more than very modest correlations from even the most refined test methods. There is cause for optimism, however, in the keen and original methods which are being devised for obtaining objective proof of the presence of a given trait and for approximate measure of its magnitude.

2. *The Testing of Traits.*—The development of the age and point scale standards for the measurement of intelligence has made clear to psychologists the imperative need for reliable methods of studying other aspects of personality. To supplement the I.Q. we need reliable measures of emotional, volitional and social qualities. Brubacher (5) suggests the concept of a Personality Quotient, and applies his idea to the qualities requisite to the teaching profession. It must be remembered, however, that differences of personality are of a qualitative as well as of a quantitative sort. This difficulty stands in the way of the development of a measurement scale based on the correlation between tests and familiar objective criteria such as those of intelligence. Methods which have been employed aim for the most part at a sampling of customary reactions, and the results obtained contribute rather more to a descriptive treatment of personality than to a quantitative analysis.

The Word Association Method.—Jung (29) brought to our attention the possibility of studying egocentric and objective types by their characteristic responses in the word reaction experiment. Wells (68) has published a bibliography of German studies which have dealt with the relation between the association method and

the study of temperament. The same author (67) has made a study of the egocentric and objective types, with the discovery that the former tends to give the more unusual responses as measured by standardized frequency tables. Complex types of introversion are studied in reference to diagnostic criteria by Hull-Lugoff (26). In this study it was found that the most reliable single indicator of the tapping of a complex is the tendency of the subject to repeat the stimulus word. Other specially valid criteria are a prolongation of reaction time (over 13/5 seconds), inability to make any response whatever, and extremely short reaction times. The findings of Dooley (11) show that long reaction times in general seem to go with the egocentric type, and that the habitually quick reaction is a sign of objectivity in the reagent. In an experiment with directed egocentric reactions, Washburn and others (61) assumed that subjects who can make a required personal association with the least delay are egocentric. The present writer in a recent experiment has not found this assumption to be justified.

Moore (35) uses the association method to test the strength of instincts. Stimulus words are arranged into constellations according to McDougall's schedule of instincts. The subject is asked to make a personal association which is scored on the basis of indicating strength or weakness in the possession of the instinct in question. Morgan and others (38) presented stimulus words to subjects for five successive mornings, and secured the response from them as to whether the words were pleasant or unpleasant in tone. An index of optimism or pessimism was thus computed which showed a certain correlation with the ratings on this trait by associates. Not unlike this method is the study of personality through an analysis of the content of images by Martin (33). Mental and physical peculiarities and preferences are considered to be subject to profitable study by this method.

Measurement of Motor Expression.—The relation of motor impulses to psychic patterns has suggested several experimental attacks. Much work has been based upon the theory that the *petites gestes* involved in handwriting are movements as expressive of personality traits as are gross bodily movements. The work of Klages, Binet, Crépieux-Jamin and other graphologists has been summarized by Downey (14). This author herself made a careful study of handwriting and concludes that it bears certain definable relations to character. Some of the types to be studied by this method are the Explosive, Obstructed, Sensory, Motor, Hyper-

kinetic, and Hypokinetic. A careful refinement of technique in the study of handwriting is necessary, for gross features are often misleading. "The broad classification of outgoing movements and movements of withdrawal as characterizing respectively attitudes of aggression and of defense cannot sustain too great a weight." Downey (12, 13) has designed and partially standardized a Test for Will-Temperament. Numerous factors such as speed, size, disguise and control in handwriting are measured carefully and weighted. The scores for the various portions of the test may be plotted into a Will-Profile. Bryant (6) in a study of delinquent boys has shown that by Downey's method it is possible to secure an approximate measurement of the volitional qualities which make for social or antisocial conduct. Ruch (51) however, finds that the actual correlations between the scores on the Will-Temperament Test and student and faculty ratings are low. The Carnegie Institute of Technology (7) has adapted the Downey test for practical use in business, one of the many indications of the current enthusiasm for applying psychological methods.

"Will power" is studied by Fernald (16) by means of an apparatus for measuring the ability of the subject to stand upon his toes for a long period of time. The problem of the shifty eye in relation to the lack of aggressiveness has been studied by Moore (37), with the conclusion that, taken together with certain other diagnostic signs, the number of eye movements noted while the subject performs a given mental problem is indicative of his ascendant or submissive attitude in general.

Represented Situations.—One of the methods of testing character dispositions definitely advocated by Galton is that of representing in miniature certain problems of actual life, and of observing the individual's adjustment to these situations. Freyd (18) employs representative problems in news getting as one of a series of nine tests for journalistic aptitude. Fernald (16) presents to a delinquent subject ten questions concerning ethical interpretations, and finds that the ability to make a discrimination according to the conventional code in the case of these samples is an approximate measure of the subject's ethical adjustment as a whole. Allport (3) has used this method as a test of ascendance-submission, and finds that the scores on sample problems representing the individual's behavior in situations which would require his taking an active or a passive rôle, correlate slightly with personality ratings by associates on this trait ($r = .40$). Myerson (39) suggests limiting

the number of possible answers to a miniature problem, say, to four. This "multiple choice" device facilitates scoring, and suggests at once which of four possible types the reagent belongs to. Ethical discrimination and humor are the traits which Myerson has most extensively studied by this method. Pressey (48) has published a test for emotional spread. Lists of mixed words, strong and weak, are presented to the subject who is required to cancel out all which have unpleasant feeling tones associated. The "affective spread," *i.e.*, the range of situations to which the individual is wont to react in an emotional manner, is a distinctly serviceable concept. Pressey's study stands out as practically the only attempt so far made to measure the complex emotional life of the individual by a simple testing device.

Questionnaires.—The questionnaire method of studying personality has, with all its limitations, definite value in checking on the results of tests, and for suggesting traits which otherwise might escape notice. One of the revelations, for example, which can be made by the answers to a questionnaire concerns the factor of compensation. This important mechanism defies direct experimentation, and can be revealed only by a historical study of the person such as a carefully devised questionnaire affords. Perhaps the completest lists of questions are Watson's (62) and Woodworth's, the latter to be found in Franz's handbook (17). Both of these questionnaires have the advantage of being couched in "behavioristic" language, and the latter lends itself to simple "yes" and "no" responses. However highly this method may be developed, as an instrument for accurate study of the personality it will always face the weakness of permitting falsification or rationalization on the part of the subject.

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