

The Organization of Personality

H. J. EYSENCK

*Department of Psychology, Institute of Psychiatry
(Maudsley Hospital), University of London*

SCIENCE, as ordinarily understood, attempts to discover general rules or laws under which individual events can be subsumed. It attempts to describe the multiform world of experience through the formulation of abstract laws and the creation of abstract categories. This process of abstraction is absolutely fundamental to science, without abstraction there can be nothing but observation of particular occurrences. But "science is not interested in the unique event, the unique belongs to history, not to science." As Whitehead puts it,

the paradox is now fully established that the utmost abstractions are the true weapon with which to control our thought of concrete fact. To be abstract is to transcend particular concrete occasions of actual happenings. The construction with which the scientist ends has the neatness and orderliness that is quite unlike the varied and multiform world of common sense, yet, since science grows out of and returns to the world of common sense, there must be a precise connection between the neat, trim, tidy, exact world, which is the goal of science, and the untidy, fragmentary world of common sense.

If, then, we would construct a science of personality, we must seek for abstract models, concepts, mathematical functions, or what have you, which will adequately represent our knowledge—meager though it be—of existing facts, and which at the same time will point forward to new facts which can verify, modify, or refute our theoretical model. What are the main facts regarding personality which must be incorporated in such a model? I believe that a rough and ready answer at least can be given to these two questions, and that this answer must be phrased in terms of factorial analysis.

We find most of the main elements which our model must contain in Allport's well-known definition of personality as the "dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment"

been done by Cattell (3) into possible lines of progress. But regardless of the actual number of independent dimensions which our picture of personality may require, it is clear that categorical diagnoses of the "either-or" kind are not warranted by the experimental findings, what is required is a separate assessment and measurement of each dimension in turn. It is not claimed that more than a beginning has been made in this complex, time-consuming, and difficult proceeding, it is believed, however, that results to date are fully in agreement with the general model of personality on which our procedures have been predicted.

SUMMARY

A hierarchical model of personality organization has been presented which is believed capable of representing the majority of experimentally determined facts regarding personality structure. The method of factorial analysis, with particular stress on the method of "criterion analysis," has been suggested to be best suited to help in the solution of the problems which arise in relating experimental facts to this model. A number of criticisms of the factorial method have been discussed, and its relation to concepts like "uniqueness" and "wholeness" has been clarified. Lastly, an example has been given of the application of the theoretical concepts and practical methods advocated here to the problem of psychiatric diagnosis.

REFERENCES

- 1 ALLPORT, G. W. *Personality: a psychological interpretation*. New York: Henry Holt, 1937.
- 2 BURT, C. The analysis of temperament. *Brit J med Psychol*, 1937, 17, 158-188.
- 3 CATTELL, R. B. *Description and measurement of personality*. New York: World Book, 1946.
- 4 CATTELL, R. B., AND SAUNDERS, D. R. Inter-relation and matching of personality factors from behavior rating, questionnaire, and objective test data. *J soc Psychol*, 1950, 31, 243-260.
- 5 CROWN, S. An experimental study of psychological changes following prefrontal lobotomy. *J gen Psychol*. To appear.
- 6 CROWN, S. Psychological changes following prefrontal leucotomy. A review. *J ment Sci*. To appear.
- 7 EYSENCK, H. J. General social attitudes. *J soc Psychol*, 1944, 19, 207-227.
- 8 EYSENCK, H. J. *Dimensions of personality*. London: Kegan Paul, 1947.
- 9 EYSENCK, H. J. Primary social attitudes. I. The organization and measurement of social attitudes. *Int J opm & atitt Res*, 1947, 1, 49-84.

- 10 EYSENCK, H J Criterion analysis—an application of the hypothetico-deductive method to factor analysis *Psychol Rev*, 1950, **57**, 38-65
- 11 EYSENCK, H J Personality tests 1944-1949 In G W T H Fleming (ed.), *Recent progress in psychiatry* London Churchill, 1951.
- 12 EYSENCK, H J *The scientific study of personality* London Routledge, 1952
- 13 EYSENCK, H J Cyclothymia-schizothymia as a dimension of personality I Historical *J Personal*, 1950, **19**, 123-153
- 14 EYSENCK, H J Cyclothymia-schizothymia as a dimension of personality II Experimental *J Personal* To appear
- 15 EYSENCK, H J Primary social attitudes and the "Social Insight" test *Brit J Psychol*, 1951, **40**, 114-122
- 16 EYSENCK, H J Primary social attitudes as related to social class and political party *J Sociol*, 1951, **2**, 198-209
- 17 EYSENCK, H J, AND CROWN, S An experimental study in opinion-attitude methodology *Int J Opin & Attit Res*, 1949, **3**, 47-86
- 18 GUILFORD, J P Unitary traits of personality and factor theory *Amer J Psychol*, 1936, **46**, 673-680
- 19 KENDALL, M G, AND SMITH, B B Factor analysis *J roy stat Soc*, 1950, **12**, 60-94
- 19* LUBIN, A Some contributions to the testing of psychological hypotheses by means of statistical multivariate analysis Ph D diss Univ London, 1951
- 20 PETRIE, A A preliminary report of changes after prefrontal leucotomy *J ment Sci*, 1949, **95**, 449-455
- 21 PETRIE, A Personality changes after prefrontal leucotomy Report 2 *Brit J med Psychol*, 1949, **22**, 200-207
- 22 PETRIE, A Clinical aspects of leucotomy *Proceed roy Soc Med*, 1950, **42**, 39
- 23 PORTER, A W *The method of dimensions* London Methuen, 1933
- 24 SCOTT-BLAIR, G W *Measurements of mind and matter* London Dennis Dobson, 1950
- 25 VERNON, P E *The structure of human abilities* London Methuen, 1950
- 26 WOLFLE, H A fundamental principle of personality measurement *Psychol Rev*, 1949, **56**, 273-276.