

## SOME RECENT CRITICISMS OF THE DIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF PERSONALITY

By

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IN recent issues of THE JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE there have appeared two critical papers (5, 7) dealing with some aspects of the dimensional analysis of personality which the writer has put forward. As replies to these papers separately would seem to require a good deal of repetition, it seemed better to frame a joint reply. This has been kept rather short on purpose, primarily because the writer does not believe that arguments are very helpful to the advancement of science, unless they are accompanied by new data of an experimental kind. In the main, therefore, this reply has restricted itself to simply pointing out that many of the points raised are factually incorrect, or, although they might be correct in themselves, are not relevant to the theory they are criticizing.

To begin with we may deal briefly with a paper by Hamilton (5), who reports obtaining 15 sets of results from 11 tests, which for some unstated reason he appears to consider as measures of one and the same personality trait; he does not give any correlational data to support this view. Apparently 12 of these 15 scores differentiate between his neurotic and his normal control subjects; in addition significant differences were obtained between various neurotic groups. Most numerous are the differences between anxiety states and hysterics (seven); least numerous those between obsessionals and hysterics (three); the number of differences between anxiety states and obsessionals (six) is intermediate. Hamilton considered these results to be "at variance with the conceptual experimental and statistical framework that is usually associated with the work of Eysenck". He seems to base his conclusion on two implicit hypotheses: 1. the tests used by him are measures of extraversion-introversion, and 2. the measures used are relevant to the theoretical analysis made by me of this concept. If this were so then indeed we might be mildly surprised that the number of significant differences between obsessionals and hysterics is not larger than it is, obsessionals usually being grouped with anxiety states as part of the dysthymic group. However, neither hypothesis is tenable. The theory of extraversion-introversion in terms of the excitation-inhibition balance, which I have advanced (2), does not permit of any predictions with respect to the majority of the tests used by Hamilton, and indeed he makes no effort to show that any such deductions can be made. It follows that the results can only have the most tangential relevance to the theory I have suggested. In the second place, Hamilton's own results show quite clearly that his tests are tests of *neuroticism* rather than of extraversion-introversion; it will be remembered that nearly all his tests differentiate significantly between normals and neurotics. This suggests the possibility that his various neurotic groups may have differed with respect to degree of neuroticism. The very perfunctory analysis of the data given by Hamilton makes it impossible to discuss his results any further; it





