

A NOTE ON "IMPULSE REPRESSION AND EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT"

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In a recent paper, Grater (1960) has tested the Freudian theory of impulse repression as a correlate of neuroticism, emerging with conclusions which apparently contradict that theory; the more neurotic subjects were, if anything, less "repressive" than were the non-neurotic ones. This result would appear to be in line more with Mowrer's (1953) view of neurosis, according to which

the problem-solving activity which is usually referred to clinically as self-protectiveness or defensiveness . . . functions in the interest of the primary drives or id, rather than, as Freud posited, in the services of the socially derived forces of the superego (p. 145).

I have discussed the point at issue between orthodox Freudian writers and Mowrer elsewhere (Eysenck, 1957, p. 82f.), and have suggested there that the distinction which must be made in order to accommodate the known facts is one between *extraverted* neurotic behavior patterns (hysteria, psychopathy, hypochondriasis, etc.) and *introverted* neurotic behavior patterns (anxiety, reactive depression, obsessional-compulsive, dysthymic reactions). This personality dimension of extraversion-introversion is conceived of as being orthogonal to neuroticism, and I have further suggested that "impulse repression" and socialization generally are in part caused by constitutional factors closely linked with introversion. Dysthymic neurotics, according to this view, are "oversocialized," hysteric and psychopathic ones "undersocialized." This theory has been discussed in some detail in relation to the experimental evidence (Eysenck, 1957, 1960a, 1960c) and it may be concluded that it serves to reconcile a large amount of factual material.

When we turn to Grater's study we find that he has defined neuroticism in terms of

three MMPI scales two of which are measures of extraverted neuroticism (*Hy*, *Hs*), while the most clear-cut introverted scale (*Pt*) was not used at all. According to the analysis given above, therefore, we would expect neurotics (as defined by Grater's MMPI scores) to be extraverted and less given to impulse repression than nonneurotics. His results, as far as they go, bear out this prediction, although in only one or two instances do his scores reach statistical significance.

The purpose of this note is not so much to reinterpret Grater's data as to draw attention to the absolute necessity, in work of this kind, to take into account the two-dimensional nature of the test-space in which the experimenter is working (Eysenck, 1960b). Much experimental work in this field is wasted because results are quite uninterpretable, it being impossible from the data given to sort out the dimensions involved; work with the Manifest Anxiety scale is a good example of this, the resulting score having loadings both on neuroticism and on introversion (Bendig, 1960; Eysenck, 1957). Much of the theoretical disputation regarding the nature of neuroticism is sidetracked by emphasizing either the extraverted or the introverted side (Miller & Dollard, 1950; Mowrer, 1953). The evidence for *at least two* factors in this field is now practically conclusive (Eysenck, 1960b) and it would seem desirable to recognize this fact in the design and interpretation of psychological experiments.

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