

A METHOD FOR INVESTIGATING FANTASIES

THE THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TEST

CHRISTIANA D. MORGAN

AND

HENRY A. MURRAY, M.D.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Psychoanalysis attempts to represent the underlying dynamics of personality as an interaction of forces. Each force is a need which impels the individual person to pursue a certain course of activity—a course of activity which usually involves a certain kind of object. An inhibited or repressed force with its associated impressions of objects may manifest itself in the guise of a fantasy which the subject can report on, or its presence may be inferred by the analyst on the basis of other phenomena. In the latter case the analyst is apt to speak of it as a repressed unconscious fantasy. Since the exposition of such hidden fantasies is one of the fundamental aims of analysis and since, at best, the customary technic for accomplishing it calls for a long period of watchful waiting, it seems that it would be helpful if a more expeditious method could be devised. For, if the analyst were cognizant at the very start of the fundamental fantasy constructions of his patient he should be in a better position to apperceive and to interpret the dynamic relations of what, in the beginning of an analysis, is ordinarily fragmentary and obscure. He might also, at a later stage, have a better idea of what might be considered irrelevant as well as what important latent trends had yet to be disclosed.

The method which is to be described is based on the well recognized fact that when some one attempts to interpret a complex social situation he is apt to tell as much about himself as he is about the phenomena on which attention is focused. At such times the person is off his guard, since he believes that he is merely explaining objective occurrences. To one with "double hearing," however, he is exposing certain inner forces and arrangements—wishes, fears and traces of past experience. Another fact which was relied on in devising the present method is that a great deal of written fiction is the conscious or unconscious expression of the author's experiences or fantasies. The process involved is that of projection—something well known to analysts. It is utilized in the Rorschach test.

From the Harvard Psychological Clinic, Harvard University.

PROCEDURE

The procedure which suggested itself was this: to present subjects with a series of pictures, each of which depicts a different dramatic event, with the instructions to interpret the action in each picture and give an imaginary reconstruction of the preceding events and the final outcome. It was anticipated that in the performance of this task a subject would necessarily be forced to project some of his own fantasies into the material and so reveal some of his more pressing underlying needs.

Since for purposes of comparison it is desirable to make such a procedure as uniform as possible, that is, to present every subject with similar stimuli and similar instructions for response, the attempt was made to find a standard set of pictures. Each picture should suggest some critical situation and be effective in evoking a fantasy relating to it. The set should also be comprehensive. Ideally, there should be a picture which would act as a trellis to support the growth and unfolding of every root fantasy. It was considered, and the idea was later confirmed by experience, that there should be at least one person in each picture with whom the subject could easily identify himself. Such an object may be termed an evoker, that is, one who evokes empathy in another. Thus, there should be a separate set of pictures for males and females, and also for children, young adults and elderly persons. Since in the present experiments the subjects were all young men between the ages of 20 and 30, most of the pictures to be described included at least one figure of that sex and age. After a preliminary selection from several hundred pictures and an elimination of those which on repeated trials proved unproductive, we found a set of twenty which gave good results. This test was one of many to which fifty subjects were exposed. It formed a part of a comprehensive study of personality in which about twenty experimenters participated.

The subject was seated in a comfortable chair with his back to the experimenter, and the following directions were read to him:

"This is a test of creative imagination. I am going to show you a picture, and I want you to make up a plot or story for which it might be used as an illustration. What is the relation of the individuals in the picture? What has happened to them? What are their present thoughts and feelings? What will be the outcome? I want you to do your very best. As this is a test of literary imagination you may make your story as long and as detailed as you wish."

The subject was then handed picture 1, and the experimenter wrote down everything that he said. If, in giving his story, the subject omitted the antecedent circumstances or the outcome, he was reminded of it by such remarks as, "What led up to this situation?" "How will it end?" etc. When the subject finished his story he was handed picture 2 and asked to proceed as before. There were twenty pictures in the series, but as the test was stopped after an hour most of the subjects did not have time to make up stories for more than two thirds of them.

The test was given once to forty subjects as a group test, the stories being written. The time saved by this method was considerable, but the results were less satisfactory.

After a few days had elapsed each subject was interviewed. This time the experimenter explained that he was studying the imaginative process in the construction of literary plots and that he wished to know if what professional writers had told about their creative experiences was true for every one. The subject was then asked if he would cooperate by trying to remember whether his story had come from something which he had seen or read; whether it had come out of the experience of friends or relatives, or whether it had come out of his own private experience. The subject was then reminded of the plot of each story in turn and encouraged to speak freely and openly.

RESULTS

An examination of the stories concocted by our subjects in conjunction with material obtained from introspections, autobiographies, hours of free association, interviews, etc., reveals the fact that there were four chief sources from which the plots and the items of the plots were drawn: (1) books and moving pictures, (2) actual events in which a friend or a member of the family participated, (3) experiences (subjective or objective) in the subject's own life and (4) the subject's conscious and unconscious fantasies.

Although the material from the first two of these four sources may seem at first blush to be of little importance, it was discovered that even here much of significance was revealed. This, it seems, may be explained by referring to the tendency exhibited by most subjects to enjoy observing most and to remember best the external events which resemble their underlying fantasies. Thus, when a subject gives a vivid account of an occurrence one may profitably consider whether or not the theme of the event is a clue to his latent personality.

That every subject almost immediately projects his own circumstances, experiences or preoccupations into the evoker was only too obvious. For instance, in one experiment six of the eleven college men who took the test said that the youth in picture 4 was a student, whereas none of the twelve noncollege men who acted as subjects described him as such. One subject, whose father had been a ship's carpenter, wanted to go to sea himself, to travel and see the world. This was his dominant fantasy. Three of the scenes in his stories were laid on board a ship and two were in the Orient. In regard to picture 17, which illustrates a middle-aged man talking to a younger man, the subject said: "The older man is educated and has traveled a lot. He convinces the other to travel, to take a job that will take him to different places." In commenting on a picture which illustrates a young man sitting in a chair brooding rather disconsolately, this subject said: "This is a business man who runs quite a business in town. He is weighing the possibility of a European trip. He has been arguing with his wife on the subject. She got angry because he would not go and finally took up her hat and left. He is thinking it over. He changes his opinion, goes out and buys tickets." In interpreting another picture, illustrating two laborers engaged in conversation, the same subject said: "These two fellows are a pair of adventurers. They always manage to meet in out of the way places. They are now in India. They have heard of a new revolution in South America, and they are planning how they can get there. . . . In the end they work their way in a freighter."

Many other examples of this sort of thing could be cited. No subject failed to exemplify it. Some of them, in fact, gave stories which were frank and unabashed autobiographies, one example of which will be sufficient.

When presented with picture 5, depicting a young lad gazing pensively at a violin which is resting on a table before him, our subject said: "A very sensitive boy—sensitive lips—who is musical by nature. His mother wants him to be a violinist, but his father, who is in business, is averse to it. The father came home one night and heard him squeaking—'squeaking' to him but beautiful to the mother—and told him to stop. He is a highly irritable father with a bad temper, and he

partially destroys the violin. The boy is rudely shocked. He is over his grief now, but is studying the violin with tenderness and sorrow. This upset makes him all the more fervently musical. It gives him new sorrow, making him more mature. It takes away the light spirit of a child and makes him a better artist. His mother buys him a new violin in spite of the father. He continues his playing and so goes on to the life of an artist. By this experience he will have nothing in common with other children of his age. He is more sensitive and will find his greatest happiness in solitude. He becomes a genius, appears at concerts and is acclaimed by critics because he is so precocious. Then his popularity wanes. He deviates to musical expression through the medium of language—literature. He becomes a poet. At 14 or 15 he has had none of the contacts of ordinary youth. He is called a sissy and is quite unhappy. But he glories in the happiness of the consciousness of his own superiority. Others of his age he thinks are silly. School is a limitation. He feels its thorns. His father is interested in his marks rather than in the development of his mind. His mother wants him to be what she couldn't be, but she doesn't influence his intellectual development. She is a pillar of strength to fall back upon, but she doesn't feel deeply. The boy looks on her as inferior but necessary. He goes into philosophy and the arts. If he is not careful he will become sexually abnormal. At nineteen he has written great poetry with great imagination and imagery. He puts deep philosophic thoughts into great language. . . ."

In his introspections this subject admitted: "All of this story is autobiographical." He said further: "My father isn't like that, but he could be. Only by keeping my mouth shut [the subject did not speak until he was 3 years old] is it possible to keep the atmosphere one of indifference. The conflict of the business man and the poet [the subject himself has written poetry and intends to dedicate his life to this calling] is so intense that it could flame out between us as great hostility. There is a lot in it about sorrow. Well, I'll tell you, though you will probably think it foolish. You see I feel that I really want to be like Byron. I want to be highly sensitive as he was. You know the girls in high school ridiculed me when I read them my poetry. I want to expose myself to their scorn and ridicule. I want to be sensitive and expose myself in order to suffer, because it is only through the greatest suffering that we can know anything of life and be strong. . . ."

In his autobiography the subject said: "I have no close attachment to the family and [as a corollary to this condition] no favorite parent. Probably I do favor my mother, however, because I see more of her but the attachment is inconsequential. . . . I was timid and easily beaten in fist fights. I suffered from the barbaric joys of young boys. . . . My favorite story and hero was Robinson Crusoe, lonely and self-sufficient. . . . Writing is my chief aim of the immediate and distant future. I also aim to develop more mature sex relationships. I do not care to try to remodel the world; it is much more intriguing to fathom the one I have found. If I could remodel it, I would like to be the greatest writer—equivalent to prophet—and receive the acclaim of an intelligent populace. Above all, I would like to have the world more alive to and aware of its own beauty."

Although some of this material is suggestive of certain underlying infantile experiences and fantasies, it is not to demonstrate such trends that this case is cited. It is our intention merely to indicate how much important biographic data may sometimes be obtained from a single story and the introspections which follow it. This kind of information,

however, can often be obtained by direct questioning, and the present test would be quite unnecessary if it were only this that one wished to discover. What we have to show is that subjects project their deepest fantasies into such dramatic pictures and thereby reveal directional tensions of which they are quite unconscious. Though some of their stories are elaborations of conscious fantasies, others are not recognized by the subjects as having any personal reference. It is these—in which the personal reference is suggested by other data—that have been ascribed to unconscious fantasies. Of course, the stories as given are conscious fantasies. Like dreams, they must be interpreted if one is to arrive at the unconscious trends which determine them. Before presenting typical case histories to support this assumption, however, it will be necessary to outline the conceptual scheme which we have adopted for the classification of fantasies.

Psychoanalysts have found it convenient to name some of the more common fantasies—the oedipus fantasy, king-slave fantasy, foster-parent fantasy, etc. This naming represents the beginning of a classification—the initial step in the construction of any science—and the practice should be continued until all important fantasies have been so recognized. If this is to be done in a systematic fashion every fantasy must be analyzed into the factors which compose it, so that the groupings may be made in terms of similar fundamental elements.

Our own reflections have led us to the conclusion that every fantasy may be analyzed into a series of events, each event, in turn, being an occurrence which is usually analyzable into: (1) a driving force (or fusion of forces in the subject), (2) an object (or group of objects) toward which or away from which the force is directed, and (3) the outcome of their interaction expressed in terms of subjective feeling—satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This mode of analysis is applicable not only to a fantasy but to an actual event as well. Sometimes it is preferable to speak first of the object, i. e., the environmental press or stimulus situation, and second of the subjective trend, i. e., the response. Stated in this way, our mode of representation resembles the familiar S-R formula of the behaviorists, except that with us the stimulus is more than a single sensation or perception. It is a temporal *Gestalt* of stimuli which bear the same dynamic meaning—the press. And with us the response is ordinarily represented not as a particular muscular movement or reflex but as a need or general course of action, the tendency of which is to produce a certain effect.

To incorporate fantasies into a scientific system of psychology, then, we propose to classify them according to the single events which compose them, every event, as we have pointed out, being classified according to its essential structure. To refer to the dynamic structure or plot of a fantasied event—or, for that matter, of an actual event—we

have found it convenient to use the term *thema* (th.). A simple *thema* we shall define as the abstract formula for a single event. It consists of a particular press-need combination. The term complex *thema* may be used to describe a commonly encountered temporal association of simple *themas*, some of which may be dominant and some subsidiary.

In some events only the press is known or the press is of primary importance (something happens or an object does something and the subject merely experiences it or adapts to it), whereas in other events nothing is known of the press or the press is merely the usual environment and it is the subject's action which is significant. In the former case the press alone will constitute the *thema*, and in the latter case, the need alone. For instance, "p punishment" will describe an event in which the subject is punished by an object, and "n punishment" or just "punishment" will describe an event in which the subject punishes an object. Strictly speaking, a *thema* is the structure of a momentary event, but the term may also be used to describe a long continued press followed by a long continued response, provided the intervening events are more or less irrelevant. For instance, "p family discord" may be used to describe the fact that a child is frequently exposed to quarrels between his father and his mother, and "revenge" may be used to describe a subject's long enduring resentment and a series of retaliative actions.

This brief exposition of the concept of *thema* (th.) was necessary, it seemed, in view of the fact that we have analyzed our material in this way and have proposed a name for every significant *thema* which could be clearly identified. The names, of course, should be regarded merely as suggestions, for they may prove to be inadequately descriptive when more fantasies of the same kind are examined.

Since the subjects who take this test are asked to interpret each picture, that is, to apperceive the plot or dramatic structure exhibited by each picture, we have named it the "thematic apperception test."

REVIEW OF CASES

We shall now present the essential details of two typical cases in order to indicate the sort of data which one obtains with this test. It should be noted that though each subject presents a few *themas* which are strikingly similar and others which are dynamically interrelated, the *themas* of one subject, taken as a whole, are very different from those of the other. That is to say, in these cases there are clear individual differences.

CASE 1.—G. was a restless, energetic undergraduate student who was planning to go to the business school. He wanted "to get a position in a big firm" and ultimately to devote part of his time to civic and educational enterprises. "My favorite parent," he wrote in his autobiography, "especially in my early years,

was my father, probably because he rarely punished me. You see my mother was more strict with me." The father was an ardent Republican, but G. could not say enough against this party or, for that matter, against all parties and all government officials—congressmen, politicians and utility magnates. "The only childhood habits I had," he continues, "were thumbsucking (sucking th.) and finickiness about food (oral rejection th.). [For a long time he hated lunch and supper. He had "the life nagged out of him to eat."] . . . At times I was fearful of others, especially of those bigger than myself. Further, I was very sensitive and still am."

It seems that G.'s pride must have been recently wounded by one or more of his friends, for he hinted at a serious quarrel and said: "It pays neither to ridicule nor criticize."

"Personally, I would prefer to use the word 'acquaintance' and not 'friend,'" he wrote, "I have looked at this matter objectively and I have come to the conclusion every one is out for what he can get. . . . Hence, I'm really careful to make no really deep friendships and just try to keep all at a certain distance." Later he added: "One's estimate of one's own social world is a most difficult thing. It usually depends on how one has been brought up and how the world treats one. . . . My attitude toward this social world is one of disgust and indifference. . . . The world's estimate [of me] is yet unformed, or should be. Yet, I am young, and till I'm at least 30 I will refrain from passing final judgment on myself and my character." From this one receives the impression that the subject had suffered some rebuff or had been unjustly blamed and as a result had become a Timon. As he said, he was "very sensitive."

G. gave a negative sex history. "My early practices as far as I can remember were none; in fact, I have never even masturbated for no reason that I can discover." When asked how he got on with the girls in his high school, he answered: "Bored. I didn't even look at them while I was there." He was generally scornful of women. He recalled with pleasure the way his father rebuked his mother when he was teaching her to drive. His mother, however, was the stronger of the two and did all the punishing. One of the subject's similes was: "As dangerous as a woman learning to drive." In giving his childhood memories he omitted to mention, but later recalled, an important event which occurred when he was 9—the death from infantile paralysis of a cousin. This cousin was very accomplished for his age; he was adored by his parents and was the constant playmate of the subject. His death was a great shock to the subject. In the clinic the subject, though cooperative and responsive, was indirectly aggressive. He expressed his scorn of the government, university institutions and some of the experimental procedures. When he was left in a room with a self-effacing fellow-undergraduate, however, he was outstandingly agreeable and sympathetic. His behavior under these circumstances seemed to fit in with his avowed intention to devote himself in later life to those who were less fortunate than himself.

Thematic Apperceptions.—Picture 4. On the floor against a couch is the huddled form of a boy with his head bowed on his right arm. Beside him on the floor is an object which resembles a revolver.

Subject: "This seems to suggest a normal young boy who has done something wrong. He has been playing with fire or smoking. Father has given him a serious talking to and boy has taken it much to heart. Is thinking it over, crying, thinking of his sins. He will try to be a real good boy after this and obey his parents." (Minor crime [incendiary, smoking] → p punishment [verbal] → reform th.)

"Or, he may have broken some valuable furniture in the house. He is sulking because it was an accident. He did not do it on purpose. He feels an injustice has been done to him." (Minor crime [vandal] → p [unjust] punishment → sulk th.)

"Or, the third possibility is that he has been forsaken by his friends. He is feeling the injustice of a world which has treated him rottenly. It is one of those young troubles we all have. He is thinking, 'I will live by myself now and not associate with them if they have treated me that way.'" (Timon th. = p [social] rejection → [social] rejection th.)

In the last two of these three stories the feeling of "suffered injustice" is encountered. The root of such a feeling is often some infantile experience of deprivation—birth trauma, weaning trauma or rejection trauma. Here the two circumstances occasioning this feeling are censure and rejection. The causes of punishment are playing with fire and breaking valuable furniture (minor crimes of destruction) and smoking (sin of oral sentence).

Picture 6: The silhouette of a man's figure against a bright window. The rest of the picture is totally dark.

Subject: "This is some person who has lived in poverty. He has never tasted success or happiness. He was an orphan who never had a good start. He tried to build himself up, but failed and is now considering suicide. He has walked to the window. It is a spring day. The flowers and trees are in bloom. He thinks of the wonders of life—the beauty of nature. This brings him back, and he thinks if he should try hard he might be a success. He is young. Every one has disappointments. If he struggles he can overcome the deficiencies in his education. He can go to night school. He forgets the squalor of his surroundings; forgets the people around him, degenerate and degraded. He feels he will get out of that circle. He will keep to himself until he gets out of it. When he makes a fortune he becomes a philanthropist. He becomes very civic-minded, spending money on playgrounds, charities, friends and orphanages. He endows a professor in college, helps a library. He realizes the difficulties he has been through. Though he has had to suffer, others shouldn't. He adopts an orphan, that is, if he didn't get married and a man like that wouldn't. He dies with a smile on his face, having benefited mankind." (Orphan → achievement, failure → suicide; and p deprivation [economic] → traumatic [deprivation] retraining, suprajecction th. → achievement [economic] → charity, adoption of child th.; misogyne th.)

The orphan thema is always suggestive of some infantile experience of suffered deprivation—birth trauma, weaning trauma or rejection trauma. Here it leads (by succor-projection) to the charity thema, that is, pity for a self-like object (narcissistic object choice). The rejection of marriage—"a man like that wouldn't marry"—suggests a retaliative rejection (misogyne th.) or possibly homosexuality.

Picture 11: A young man with his head buried in the lap of a young woman who bends over him with a tender expression.

Subject: "The young fellow is in love. A young lady of a better station has jilted him. He is very unhappy. His mother is consoling him, telling him there are other girls, that he is young, that there is plenty of time. He takes mother's advice, but feels embittered about women. He pays no attention to them after this. He lives as a bachelor. He adopts a girl—or no, a boy. He wants to be a father, and it is easier to be a father to a boy. He gives the child money. His mother is happy over this. He feels motherly toward his adopted son and

they live happily ever after." ([Superior] marriage wish → p [erotic] rejection → dejection, misogyne, adoption of child, mother identification, charity th.)

Here is another variety of the Timon thema—rejection followed by counter-rejection. But in this instance it is specifically the suffered rejection of erotic love followed by woman-hating (misogyne th.). This points to the mother as the original depriver and refuser—birth trauma, weaning trauma or rejection trauma. Again, one finds adoption of a child as the objectified solution of narcissistic self-pity. One might suppose that the subject—after feeling excluded by his mother—determined to become his own loving mother (partial mother identification), and later this endopsychic drama became a fantasy of benevolence to an unloved boy.

Picture 12: A young man helplessly clutched from behind by two hands, one on each of his shoulders. The figure of his antagonist is invisible.

Subject: "This suggests a fellow of less than medium means. He has had to struggle all his life as a clerk in a store, making just enough to keep himself and his wife alive. They have no child. His only happiness lies in marriage, for he sees no chance of rising in his firm. He feels sad and downhearted until he comes home. His wife cheers him. But he finds that she has been unfaithful to him, and he decides to leave. In the picture she is trying to hold him back. She tries to make him listen to reason. She slipped, as we all do, she says, but really loves him. But he goes off with nothing to live for. Now he just works to eat instead of eating to work. He mopes around, very dejected and sour. He doesn't look at life kindly since it gave him this raw deal. She tries to patch things up. But he leaves her again. He often wonders why he did this. It might have been better if he had stayed, but he can't bring himself to do it. The memory of her unfaithfulness always comes up. He dies young, as he has nothing to fight for. He gets sick and lets himself go, and that is the end." (p deprivation [economic] → achievement failure → dejection th.; p. rejection [infidelity] → rejection [erotic, misogyne], dejection, death th.)

In this story erotic rejection is the consequence of suffered infidelity. Perhaps the subject was jealous of his father; perhaps he was shocked when, as a child, he discovered that his mother had sexual intercourse with his father. He left her, partly to heal his wounded pride (retaliative rejection) and partly to revenge himself. (Imposed guilt th., suffering in order to arouse guilt feelings in the object.)

Picture 10: A dimly indicated figure of a man clinging to a rope. He is in the act of climbing up or down.

Subject: "This man is escaping from a dungeon in some foreign country where prisoners are looked on as criminals and there is no mercy. It was a political crime and no mercy was shown. He is out to get even with the world, for the world threw him into jail. Finally he succeeds in getting free after enduring much misery—running through swamps, killing animals with his hands and eating raw meat. He kills a soldier who supports the government and gets his uniform. He reaches a big city and gets a position. He earns money for some new clothes. Then he goes on to the capital and lays plans for revenge. He gets in with the Reds, doing it entirely for revenge. He must get even. The planned revolt is discovered, and he has to flee. This time he has enough money. Then he returns and plans to make his revenge more subtle. He gets a position in the government and gets in contact with the man who was responsible for the original injustice to him. He decides to kidnap this autocrat's child. He makes this man suffer plenty. He kills the child and sends her back. Then he gives himself up in remorse for having taken the life of an innocent child. A priest

comes. He asks forgiveness. He dies with the words on his lips that at least he had made his enemy suffer." (Infraggression [rebel] → [unjust] punishment [prison] → escape, crime [vengeful] biting, murder and kidnapping → atonement th.)

Here is a rather unusual motif—the biting thema, or cannibalism—suggesting that the original form of aggression was directed toward the mother's breast. Perhaps it represents a partial frustration of the child's original reaction to oral frustration—the weaning trauma. Again, one finds the feeling of suffered injustice, but in this case it leads not to separation (misanthrope th.) or aggression through masochism (imposed guilt th.) but to something more primitive—a vengeful counteraggression. After the hero kills an innocent child, however, he feels guilty, suffers remorse and repents.

Picture 7: A short elderly woman stands with her back turned to a tall young man. The latter is looking downward with a perplexed expression, his hat in his hands.

Subject: "This fellow is a good friend of the old lady and her son. The boys were brought up together, played and went to school together. They were always together. They lived in the same house. Then the son of the old lady is killed in an accident. In this picture he had to break the news to her. There is much grief on both parts. He realizes that his friend was her only support, so he feels it is his duty to adopt her as his mother. They run a boarding-house together. He tries to substitute himself as her dead son. Then he wants to get married. But if he does she will object. He doesn't feel that he will be doing right to his friend. It would be an injustice to his friend's memory. The girl, not knowing the facts, is angry at the idea of being thrown over. They have a fight and end it. He is quite pleased now that he has made the decision. If the girl is that kind of a girl he did well not to marry her, for the marriage would never have been a success. The old woman dies. This time he finds a nicer girl. She feels for him in his sorrow over his friend. She feels he did wonderfully to have done as he did. He marries her. The story ends happily." (p death [friend], p bereavement, bearer of sad tidings → self as substitute offspring, better parent th.; love → [erotic] renunciation from loyalty → quarrel → rejection [erotic]; love th.)

Here again the subject brings in the adoption of child thema, but with this picture the subject can maintain his active attitude toward adoption only by having the hero adopt the mother. This suggests the possibility that at one time the subject wanted to be adopted (better parent th.). There is also the possibility that the intense loyalty which binds the hero to his dead friend is based on a previous homosexual attachment.

In his introspections after studying picture 3, the subject referred to his young cousin—a boy who had died. He said: "Aunt and Uncle had a boy just my age. He was a very handsome and gifted child. He died of infantile paralysis when he was 9. Although Aunt and Uncle had two girls, they were heart-broken. They thought of adopting an orphan. They used to take great interest in a boy in an orphanage and in the orphanage itself. I was very much impressed at the time. My parents never talked about it, but I picked up a good deal."

Since the adoption of child thema is an unusual one and since it appears three times in this subject's stories, one must suppose that it plays an important rôle in his unconscious psychic structure. Moreover, since the idea of adoption was presented to him just after the death of his gifted playmate, there is reason to suppose that the adoption of child thema took root at that time. The story evoked by picture 7 suggests that after his cousin's death the idea occurred to

him that he might be adopted by his aunt and uncle. Two factors may have conspired to produce this fantasy—dissatisfaction with his own parents and guilt over his cousin's death. The evidence in favor of the former is rather strong—a deep-seated feeling of suffered injustice. (p. rejection, Timon th., [erotic] rejection th., misogyne th., dejection th.) These trends point to an early oral trauma. One fantasy formation after punishment may have been that of aggression through masochism—"I hope I shall die so that my parents will suffer. They will grieve and feel remorseful because of the way they treated me" (imposed guilt th.). If the subject did concoct this common fantasy, his aunt and uncle grieving over their son's death would have appeared to him in the guise of ideal parents.

The data pointing to guilt experienced by the subject after his cousin's death are fragmentary and inconclusive. We have learned that the cousin was more gifted than the subject, and hence the latter may have been envious of him and may have entertained and repressed aggressive fantasies toward him. When infantile paralysis set in the subject may have felt that his death wishes were responsible. In the subject's apperceptions the only act which was followed by guilt was the murder of an innocent child. In picture 7 the hero "feels it is his duty" to adopt the elderly woman as his mother. What except guilty feelings could make him feel that this was his duty? By replacing the lost son and being a model boy he could achieve salvation.

Picture 17: A young man sitting opposite to an older man. The latter has his hand out as though emphasizing some point in an argument.

Subject: "Prodigal son out of college. Father is determined that he must work for a living. He tells him pointblank that he won't give him a job. He must start from the bottom. The boy feels disgusted and angry, but he takes a job and after two months begins to take an interest. He is promoted. In two years he has made quite a success. His father is beaming all over. The boy is living by himself. He meets a working-class girl. She is not what he is used to—not a "deb"—but he falls in love with her. Father hears of this and decides that things have gone far enough. He wants him to come back, but the boy tears up his father's letter and marries the girl. He is now head of the department. Has children. His wife is intelligent—she has studied, has taste for art, music and literature. She is a really good companion. The father meets the girl by accident, is taken with her and finally takes them back. They come to live with the father. But the son refuses to enter his father's business. He demands that the father sell his business and endow a university. Father does this. The son now becomes president of his company." (p deprivation [economic] → achievement → [inferior] marriage → p dominance [coercive opposition] → autonomy → achievement → p pardon → imposition of atonement, charity th.)

The principal point of interest in this story is the charity thema functioning as an atonement for injury done to others. This supports the assumption that the charity thema as well as the adoption of child thema represents a way to salvation.

The following relevant root experiences and reaction formations are suggested by this subject's seven stories:

(a) Oral deprivation and later deprivation of parental love. The subject said that he was very sensitive. He was babied as a child. In the clinic he made many movements of his lips and many hand-to-mouth movements while he was working. He said that as a boy he knew that women were different from men because they had "mammary glands." He thought then that children grew from a seed planted by God in a mother's "heart." He had a number of memories

relating to food, and he used a number of expressions with food associations, such as "he couldn't earn a crust of bread." He liked girls who were "sweet and understanding," and he said that a "sympathetic understanding was the basis of any profitable procedure." These fragmentary items, added to the evidence supplied by the thematic apperceptions, and the autobiography, made the assumption of an oral deprivation trauma rather plausible.

(b) Counter-rejection of love, oral aggression. The subject's mother did most of the punishing, and it is probable that aggression was primarily directed against her. The subject had a scornful attitude toward women. "O, women, how fickle!" he said on one occasion. He spoke of "biting someone's head off" and of "blasting things to bits." He was at all times verbally very aggressive, as has been pointed out. The hypothesis proposed is that his aggression was initially a reaction to oral frustration and later a retaliation for unjust censure by his father. We also suggest the presence of envy aggression against his more talented cousin.

(c) Death of cousin, guilt and the wish to be adopted. The arguments to support the significance of these factors were previously presented (discussion of picture 7). The hypothesis proposed was that the wish to be adopted was a fusion of the wish for ideal parents and the wish to atone for his guilt.

(d) Achievement. The subject has high ambitions, and he works with great zest and industry. He wishes to make a lot of money in business. This may be explained as restriving after economic deprivation as a substitute for love and as a way to philanthropy.

(e) Charity, and the adoption of a son. These trends were in the service of his own "orphan feeling," which would be relieved by helping others, and also represented ways of atoning for his former aggression. He wants to be of service to the community. He said: "If I had money I would endow scholarships; give it where it would do the greatest good for humanity, for people."

CASE 2.—B. was an undergraduate student concentrating on music. Though habitually diffident and reserved, he was responsive and submissive to those whom he respected. The muscles about his eyes were frequently contracted as though he were photophobic. This gave him an expression of puzzled anxiety. He was neatly dressed, and his social personality was unobtrusive and banal. He came to the clinic complaining of a symptom which had worried and hindered him for two years—the recurrence of stereotyped images which interfered with normal imaginal processes. He was particularly bothered when he tried to read, for the automatic imagery prevented the generation of such associations as the printed words would ordinarily have suggested. The result of this was that imaginative understanding was blocked and memory for meanings greatly diminished. He found, however, that he had a photographic memory—that the image of the printed page was retained, though the sense of it was lost. This enabled him to get high marks in his examinations.

The stereotyped images were mostly of two sorts: scenes of the distant past—buildings, woods, pastures and brooks in and about his native town in the South—and scenes recently observed—Harvard Square, the Boston State House, etc. The images were static and did not contribute to a fantasy. No human or animal figures appeared, and the presentations seemed to be entirely innocuous.

There was nothing in B.'s autobiography or in the information that he volunteered during the preliminary interviews which seemed to bear directly on the symptomatology. He said that he was born and brought up in a small southern town and was the son of strict Methodists. He had no favorite parent, though his disposition resembled his father's, and he was more influenced by him than

by his mother. His father was an impressive figure—a large man with high ethical standards and an explosive temper to reenforce them. There was a baby sister who died two years before Berry's birth, and another sister, three years his junior, with whom as a boy he frequently quarreled. He remembered being punished for scratching his sister and talking back to his mother. In his childhood he was afraid of many things—water, animals and automobile accidents. He had recurrent nightmares of being chased by a bull.

He described himself as timid, sensitive and reticent. He had frequent inferiority feelings. He played with dolls with his sister until he was 9. At school he avoided participation in organized athletics. He said that he had a strong possessive instinct and that he took great pains to keep his belongings neatly in order. He was extremely sensitive to smells.

As a child he thought frequently of death. He recalled seeing the corpse of a man who had been killed by falling off a hayrick. He remembered his grandmother's funeral—his breaking into tears and being pitied. He was intensely afraid that his parents would die. Though his mother nagged him, she also lavished her affection on him—more, in fact, than B. was inclined to reciprocate.

He did not masturbate until he was 18. He has never had sexual intercourse. He slept with his father between the ages of 7 and 15, and his sister slept with his mother, all on the same porch. At 12 years of age a cousin of his told him about the mating of animals and of human beings. He was terribly shocked to think that his parents would do anything so vile. He held the theory of anal intercourse. He told of several experiences of fellatio occurring at about the age of 10, but said that there had been none since.

He was once inclined to music as a career, but now he is thinking of going into business.

Thematic Apperceptions.—The subject was given the thematic apperception test twice, once before and once after four months of an orthodox psychoanalysis.

Picture 14: The nude figure of a man clinging to a pole.

Subject: "This man is evidently climbing a mast. He is a sailor who has been discovered in some morbid crime—some homosexual crime. He has been chased out of the cabin. He climbs the mast and is shot down." (Crime [homosexual assault] → p aggression [revengeful murder] th.)

After four months of analysis the subject gave the following somewhat modified story:

"The mast of a boat in the Arctic. The fellow is a sexual pervert who has been on the ship. One night he tries homosexual relations. He is unsuccessful. He runs out and, half insane, climbs the mast. His features are distorted and carnal. He commits suicide by leaping into the sea or onto the deck below." (Crime [homosexual] → suicide th.)

This is a frank homosexual story suggesting fellatio or sodomy. In the first story the hero is killed by an external agent, in the second story by an internal agent, the super-ego. In interpreting picture 10 (a man clinging to a rope) the subject has the hero—a former criminal—lose his grip and fall to the ground. This is the vengeance of fate. Four months later he said that the rope to which the man clung was attached to a winch operated by a man who disliked him. "His enemy contrives to let him fall so it appears to be an accident." Thus a criminal career is ended sometimes by punitive measures from without and sometimes by punitive measures from within. In his introspections the subject said: "I have always hated high places. I have a great dread of them. I can't think of a worse situation than having your enemy at the other end of a winch."

Picture 5: A young boy contemplating a violin which rests on a table in front of him.

Subject: "This is a picture of a boy violinist. He has a thoughtful expression, getting more introspective and philosophic. He thinks about what makes the tone. Recital follows. It is a great triumph for him. Later, he receives an injury to one of his hands or fingers and he is forced to abandon music." (Achievement th.; p injury [mutilation] → achievement failure th.)

This story suggests castration. After four months of analysis during which time the castration material had been worked over the subject was shown the same picture by another experimenter. This time he said:

"A boy violinist in the early stages of violin practice. He has been playing the score before him. Then, from fatigue or curiosity, he stops and attempts to figure out the physical properties of his instrument. There is no outcome. It is just a momentary episode." (Curiosity th.)

Picture 4: On the floor against a couch is the huddled form of a boy with his head bowed on his right arm. Beside him on the floor is an object which resembles a revolver.

Subject: "A contemporary youngster. In a fit of rage he has shot a pet—a horse or a dog. The animal angered him. He killed it. Overcome with grief he rushes into the house and falls into a fit of remorse." (Supraggression [animal murder] → remorse th.)

In his introspection the subject said: "This recalls a youngster who chopped off the head of a kitten. I had a pet pony myself once."

Four months later the subject presented the following modification:

"A boy with a weapon. He has done something and is sorry. His parents gave him a dog and in a fit of anger he injured the dog with a knife. The dog ran off whimpering. The fellow is sorry. It makes an impression on him in later life. (Supraggression [animal mutilation] → remorse th.)

In his introspections the subject said: "I once had a dog. I used to have to beat him. I always felt sorry afterward."

Children often beat animals after a parent has punished them—something which is usually interpreted as an identification with the parent as well as a catharsis of their own aggression against the parent. A certain acceptance of the parent's authority and an identification with him are often involved, the punishment of the animal being an externalized self-punishment. This is suggestive of true sadism—the infliction of pain on weak and defenseless objects (supraggression). p Bestiality should also be considered. After giving the first story the subject was reminded of "a youngster who chopped the head off a kitten," and in the second story he substituted a knife for the revolver. This is again suggestive of castration (p mutilation).

Many of the other stories included unspecified acts of violence, and there were also misdemeanors vaguely described as "getting involved with some girl." In three stories, however, the subject definitely directed the violence against a woman.

Picture 25: A girl standing alone. The expression on her face is obviously one of terror and anxiety.

Subject: "Girl about to be attacked by a demented person. She has gone on a picnic with him. A coming storm increases the carnal instincts of the boy. He attacks the girl." (Sadism th.)

Picture 18: A malicious-looking man grasping the arm of a young girl who appears to be trying to pull away from him. He clutches her throat, and her expression denotes terror.

Subject: "The old fellow is an experimental scientist. The girl is his secretary. He has placed her in that position for his own ends. When the time comes he takes her to attack her or to use her for some evil purpose." (Sadism th.)

In his introspections the subject said: "It recalls a moving picture I once saw of a mad scientist who made statues of human bodies by filling their veins full of ossifying material. This might be the same. The pronounced sexuality of the girl might have a bearing on his intent."

The associations to this picture suggest a necrophilic trend, the sadism being of the anal type.

In one picture the hero's wife has had a difficult labor; in another she is dead or seriously ill, and in a third the hero finds that both his parents have been killed in an accident. Taking these associations in conjunction with the preceding story (picture 18), is there a basis for guessing that the subject fantasies a woman (his mother) being killed by intercourse—*injection of fluid*, or accident—as well as by childbirth?

In two stories the double personality thema appears.

Picture 12: A young man helplessly clutched from behind by two hands, one on each of his shoulders. The figure of his antagonist is invisible.

Subject: "Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde. It is a case of double consciousness. The man is weak by nature. The hands on his shoulders are those of his other consciousness—either higher or lower." (Conflict [id. vs. super-ego] th.)

Picture 19: A gaunt, poorly dressed and disheveled man stands behind and to the right of a well dressed, prosperous-looking man.

Subject: "The man on the right is a banker. The man on the left might be a brother who has gone bad—a degenerate. He has come back to torment the man on the right. Probably it will end by the murder of the brother by the banker. The banker will commit suicide after the murder." (Crime [murder] → suicide th.)

Four months later the subject presented this version:

"This is double consciousness. The man is a banker. The ghost of his sadistic self is in the background. The lower side is not always controllable. It is sure to have a tragic end, or it is a bad brother with a mental defect. The bad man is guilty of violent crimes of a sexual nature." (Sadism th.)

Picture 21: An obscurely outlined figure, which might be male or female, sits musing in the firelight, hands folded.

The subject outlined another conflict: "It is a monk like Abélard," he said, "who has taken the vows and renounced all worldly desires. He becomes repentant over this in the monastery. It is a tragic situation, for there was no lessening of the conflict after making the vows." (Renunciation [erotic] for holiness → conflict [erotic id vs. super-ego] th.)

Perhaps the subject, though preoccupied with sexual fantasies, has inhibited his impulses. Considering this interpretation in conjunction with the double personality thema, one may suppose that his erotic self was repressed and dissociated because of its aberrant—homosexual or sadistically heterosexual—character.

In addition to the pictures, the subject was given a number of inkblots (different from those used by Rorschach) and asked to tell what figures he could make out of them. Three of his associations were pertinent.

Blot 6: "This looks like an illustration from a medical book, like a cut-away dissection of either male or female."

Blot 10: "Appears to be a cross-section of a female pelvis as seen in medical books."

Blot 13: "Man at left seems to be engaged in some sexual act. It might be an embryo or a portion of a miscarriage."

Here again one finds a preoccupation with dead bodies (necrophilia). One finds, moreover, the conjunction of intercourse and miscarriage.

Besides these pictures and these blots, the subject was asked to write a story about a minister who suddenly appeared in his pulpit one Sunday morning wearing a black veil as in "The Minister's Black Veil," by Hawthorne.

The subject had the minister unexpectedly return to his home one evening and find his brother in "compromising circumstances" with a woman whom he had brought there. "The shock of the discovery," he wrote, "and its theological implications affect the vicar to such an extent that he appears the following Sunday in his pulpit with a black veil over his face. The brother meanwhile quietly disappears, and the minister continues the wearing of his strange garb until his death in a few years."

This story is interesting because guilt is located in the eyes—the minister saw something evil and thenceforth blinded himself (repression of voyeurism). Since the subject's symptoms are located in his eyes, it seems that the traumatic experience for him might likewise have been the perceiving of something. This suggests the primal scene. In view of the large amount of sadistic heterosexuality and the suggestion of necrophilia appearing in this subject's appreciations, one might suppose that the sexual act was originally confused with murder.

In brief, then, the data furnished by the pictures suggest: necrophilia, sadism of the anal type, voyeurism, fear of heights, castration anxiety, homosexual perversion (oral or anal) and dissociation resulting from interference of the superego. The relations between these trends, however, are not apparent, perhaps because the stories are too short and concise. The subject was not sufficiently encouraged to elaborate them.

Psychoanalysis.—At the date of writing, the patient had had five months of analysis. During this period the following trends have manifested themselves in the order named.

(a) *Fellatio Fantasies:* About the time of the first appearance of his symptoms the patient was having fantasies of his first sexual experiences—acts of fellatio at the age of 10 years. Oral sensations accompanied these fantasies. He had felt very guilty about them and attempted, finally with success, to repress them entirely. He was afraid that he was homosexual and wanted to be assured that he was not. Since some of his static images depicted the surroundings in which these fellatio experiences had occurred, it seemed that his symptoms might be regarded as a compromise formation. It was a fellatio fantasy with the sinful part dissociated—a rather typical hysterical mechanism. There was no relief of his symptoms, however, after the analysis of this material.

(b) *Anal Sadistic and Masochistic Trends; Castration Complex:* The patient said that he had slept in a double bed with his father between the ages of 7 and 15. Though he had feared that during sleep he would touch his father's body and had taken special precautions against nocturia, he had had his first emission while lying against his father. He had fantasies of anal copulation with the analyst and similar fantasies in connection with others. He told of his early fear of sharp instruments, dreamed of being beheaded and spoke of his father's ungovernable temper. His father was an enormous man, over 250 pounds (113.4 Kg.) in weight. He was frequently represented by a bull in the subject's dreams. A good deal of anal material and some passive feminine trends were revealed.

(c) *Womb Fantasies, Sadistic Trends and Necrophilia*: As a child the patient tried to picture himself in his mother's womb and also in his coffin, the two retreats being closely connected. He saw an embryo in a glass jar once, and this started a series of fantasies about pregnancy and birth—illegitimate children and children born blind. He dreamt of opening up a woman and filling her womb with straw. As a boy he had a fantasy that he was pregnant. Shortly afterward he became constipated and lay doubled up on the floor groaning with abdominal pain. In one analytic session he fantasied the head of a child sticking out of the back of a limousine and then cried out that the analyst was pressing him. He experienced a terrific emotional panic, held his head, kicked out with his feet, rolled over on his side. Later, he said that he had lost his breath. This experience suggested a reenactment of the birth trauma. The patient's most exciting fantasy pictured him opening graves and copulating per anum with one corpse after another. Since the subject had slept in his parents' bedroom during his early years, it seemed that this fantasy might be partly explained by supposing that he had witnessed their sexual congress and conceived of it as a murder or necro-sexual act. It seemed that birth, death and sexual intercourse were closely related in his mind. He remembers nothing about his sister's birth, which occurred when he was 3 years of age, although he does remember that he was frequently scolded afterward for poking his fingers in her eyes when she lay in her crib. He quarreled with her frequently during his early years. He seemed to hold a deep resentment against his mother. He said that she nagged him and made exorbitant demands for his affection.

Guilt seems to have become connected with his eyes, for his symptoms were located there (conjunctivitis, stereotyped images and photophobia), and even before they appeared he was compulsively taking certain precautions against ocular infection. This followed his reading about gonorrheal conjunctivitis at the age of puberty.

The relations between these unconscious trends have yet to be worked out. We have evidence of fantasied sadistic assaults on women (wombs and corpses) and children (his younger sister); of fantasied anal-erotic relations with men, active and passive (castration anxiety) and of fellatio experiences and wishes. But the genesis of these tendencies and their dynamic connection with his symptoms are problems which still remain to be solved.

Since B. is the only subject who has undergone analysis after the thematic apperception test, we have but little data on which to base any general conclusions. In this single instance, however, the thematic apperceptions adumbrated all the chief trends which five months of analysis were able to reveal.

CONCLUSIONS

We have been able to present only a small fraction of the evidence which supports our general conclusion that the thematic apperception test is an effective means of disclosing a subject's regnant preoccupations and some of the unconscious trends which underlie them. The advantages of the test are that it is a simple procedure which may be completed in two hours or in an abbreviated form in half that time, and that it may be performed in a casual and informal fashion. Since the subject is led to believe that it is a test of creative imagination, even when it is given in a clinic, he is unaware of the fact that he is revealing his innermost thoughts. The subject's attention is not on himself, and

so in many instances he indirectly confesses to things which he would not be willing to mention directly. But, more than this, he exposes latent tendencies of the existence of which he is entirely unconscious. For the fantasies by being projected may be inwardly disclaimed and thus avoid complete repression.

Of all the short procedures and tests which we have tried, the results of this one have given us the best understanding of the deeper layers of a personality. It is undoubtedly a useful method for the investigation of fantasy production under various conditions. Whether it is of any value as a preanalytic measure remains to be seen. It may, perhaps, aid a physician in deciding whether a given patient had better be analyzed by a man or by a woman, or it may give some clue to the probable course or length of an analysis.

Our results suggest, however, that the present test will be most helpful when used by trained analysts in cases in which the patient does not need or cannot afford a complete analysis. Undoubtedly many neuroses may be avoided and many spiritual dilemmas solved by proper guidance at the right time. This is particularly true for young persons. In our experience the minimum amount of preliminary information which a therapist should possess for such guidance may be supplied by a ten page autobiography, an hour of relaxed reminiscing about childhood experiences and fantasies, the thematic apperception test and an hour of direct questioning. Of these, the thematic apperception test is frequently the most helpful, for it brings to the forefront just those underlying issues which are of immediate consequence.

At the present time a young person who shows a few mildly neurotic symptoms or, like all inwardly developing persons, is temporarily overburdened by mental conflict generally has, if he wants expert assistance, but two choices. He may be analyzed, or he may consult a psychiatrist with no experience in analysis. This is the case because most trained analysts are apt to limit their practice to complete psychoanalyses. There are numberless young men and women who need the kind of help which perhaps only a therapist trained in psychoanalysis is in a position to give and yet who do not need, or want or cannot afford an analysis lasting for a year or more. They need to confess, to discuss their problems, to attain insight, but in most cases it is better for them not to impede their progressive efforts by having to revive and relive their past. It is in such cases that the thematic apperception test may provide the psychotherapist with the information necessary for the fulfilment of his function as a guide and healer of men.