

The History of Personality Assessment

Rick Grieve
PSY 455
Western Kentucky University

Historical Foundations

- Ancient Greeks & Romans
 - Aristotle (384-322 BC) & Plato (427-347 BC)
 - Nutritive souls
 - Sensing souls
 - Rational souls
 - Hippocrates (460-377 BC), modified by Galen (200 BC)
 - Four humours
 - Sanguine
 - Melancholic
 - Choleric
 - Phlegmatic

Pseudoscience and the Study of Personality

- Astrology
 - Based on the idea that the position of the sun, moon, stars, planets and other heavenly bodies at some point in time influence the personality characteristics of the person

Personality Characteristics Associated with Chinese Years

Animal	Years	Personality Characteristics
Rabbit	1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999	Luckiest of all signs. Individuals are talented and articulate. Affectionate yet shy, they seek peace throughout their lives. Should marry a Sheep or a Boar. Opposite is the Cock.
Dragon	1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000	These individuals are eccentric and their lives are complex. They have a very passionate nature and abundant health. They should marry a Rat or a Monkey late in life. They should avoid the Dog.
Snake	1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001	These individuals are wise and intense with a tendency towards physical beauty. They are vain and high-tempered. The Boar is their enemy. The Cock or the Ox are their best signs.
Horse	1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002	These individuals are popular and attractive to the opposite sex. They are often ostentatious and impatient. They need to be around people. They should marry a Dog or a Tiger early in life but should never marry a Rat.
Sheep	1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003	These individuals are elegant and creative, yet are timid and prefer anonymity. They are most compatible with Bears and Rabbits but not the Ox.
Monkey	1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004	These individuals are very intelligent and are able to influence people. Enthusiastic achievers, they are easily discouraged and confused. They should avoid Tigers and seek out Dragons or Rats as mates.
Cock	1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005	These individuals have pioneer spirits. They are devoted to work and quest after knowledge. They can be selfish and eccentric. Rabbits are troubled while Snakes and Ox are fine.

Personality Characteristics Associated with Chinese Years

Animal	Years	Personality Characteristics
Dog	1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006	These individuals are honest and work well with others. They are generous yet stubborn and often selfish. They should look to the Horse or Tiger and watch out for Dragons.
Boar	1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007	These individuals are noble and chivalrous. Their friends will be lifelong, yet they are prone to marital strife. They should avoid other Boars and marry a Rabbit or Sheep.
Rat	1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008	These individuals are ambitious yet honest. They are prone to spend freely. They seldom make lasting friendships. These individuals are most compatible with Dragons and Monkeys and least compatible with Horses.
Ox	1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009	These individuals are bright, patient, and an inspiration to others. They can be happy by themselves yet make an outstanding parent. They should marry a Snake or a Cock. The Sheep will bring trouble.
Tiger	1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010	These individuals are aggressive, candid, courageous, and sensitive. They should look to the Horse and Dog for happiness. They should beware the Monkey.

Personality Characteristics Allegedly Related to the Zodiac

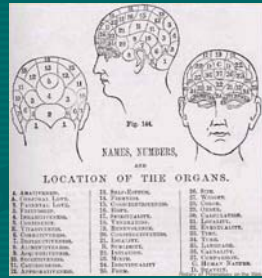
Constellation	Planet	Dates	Personality Characteristics
Capricorn	Saturn	12/21-1/20	Ambition, caution, work
Aquarius	Uranus	1/21-2/19	Humane, unconventional, high and low spirits
Pisces	Neptune	2/20-3/20	Inspiration, easily influenced, dreaming
Aries	Mars	3/21-4/20	Impulsiveness, adventure, disputes
Taurus	Venus	4/21-5/21	Endurance, obstinate, labor
Gemini	Mercury	5/22-6/21	Skill, versatility, good relationships
Cancer	Moon	6/22-7/23	Appreciates home life, imagination, indecision
Leo	Sun	7/24-8/23	Generality, pride, desire for power
Virgo	Mercury	8/24-9/23	Analytical, studious, modest
Libra	Venus	9/24-10/23	Justice, artistic sense, sensitivity
Scorpio	Mars	10/24-11/22	Critical sense, secrecy, fights
Sagittarius	Jupiter	11/23-12/20	Idealism, open-mindedness, mobility

Pseudoscience and the Study of Personality

- Numerology
 - Pythagoras
 - Various operations are performed with numbers and the results are predictive of personality and future events
- Phrenology
 - Franz Gall & Johan Spurzheim (c. 1800)
 - Bumps on the head are associated with organs of the brain which are in turn associated with personality characteristics

Pseudoscience and the Study of Personality

- This phrenology chart shows the locations on the head of major personality characteristics



Pseudoscience and the Study of Personality

- Physiognomy
 - An attempt to understand personality from outward bodily features such as the face



Pseudoscience and the Study of Personality



Pseudoscience and the Study of Personality

- Body shape
 - Proposed by Ernst Kretschmer (1925)
 - Sheldon & Stevens (1942)
 - Ectomorph
 - Endomorph
 - Mesomorph

Pseudoscience and the Study of Personality

- Graphology
 - Analysis of personality from handwriting
 - Examine handwriting as physical manifestation of unconscious processes
 - No data to support
 - Techniques are reducible to impressions from such things as pressure exerted on the page, spacing of words and letters, size, slant, speed, and consistency of writing.
 - Content plays a role, too, though they won't admit it

Take the Greater Reaction Inventory for the Excitement of the Very Energated

Results from the GRIEVE

- If you scored over 10 correct, here is your personality profile:
 - At times you are extroverted, affable, sociable, while at other times you are introverted, wary, and reserved. You have found it unwise to be too frank in revealing yourself to others. You prefer a certain amount of change and variety, and become dissatisfied when hemmed in by restrictions and limitations. Disciplined and controlled on the outside, you tend to be worrisome and insecure on the inside. While you have some personality weaknesses, you are generally able to compensate for them. You have a great deal of unused capacity, which you have not turned to your advantage. You have a tendency to be critical of yourself. You have a strong need for other people to like you and for them to admire you.
- On a scale of 1-10, how well did the GRIEVE describe your personality?

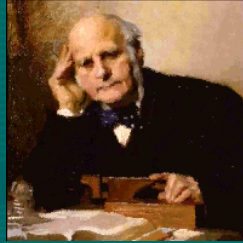
The Barnum Effect

- Coined by Meehl (1956)
- Named after P.T. (right)
- Pseudoscientific procedures in which client descriptors are made so general that they fit everyone



Modern Psychological Approaches to Personality

- Francis Gaulton
 - 1880:
 - Describes methods for the measurement of character, including word association and behavior sampling techniques



Modern Psychological Approaches to Personality

- I have no patience with the hypothesis occasionally expressed, and often implied, especially in tales written to teach children to be good, that babies are born pretty much alike, and that the sole agencies in creating differences between boy and boy, and man and man, are steady application and moral effort. It is in the most unqualified manner that I object to pretensions of natural equality. The experiences of the nursery, the school, the University, and of professional careers, are a chain of proofs to the contrary.

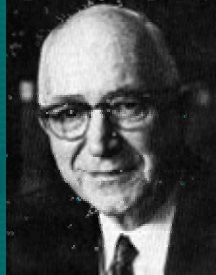
Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius*

Modern Psychological Approaches to Personality

- The switch from character to personality
 - Early days it was called character
 - Assessed in a number of ways from phrenology through psychiatry
 - William James
 - Argued that the most important personality variable to consider is thinking
 - By age 30, character has set like plaster, and will never soften again.
 - Morton Prince's *Dissociation of a Personality* popularized the term *personality*

Modern Psychological Approaches to Personality

- Gordon Allport
 - supplied one of the first definitions of personality in 1937:
 - “the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his [sic] unique adjustments to his environment”



Modern Psychological Approaches to Personality

- The historical roots of modern personality science can be traced to Allport
- Wanted to find universal and unique processes

Modern Psychological Approaches to Personality

- Kurt Lewin
 - Began experimental examination of personality in the 1920s
 - *A dynamic theory of personality* published in 1935
 - “If you really want to know about something, try to change it.”



Modern Psychological Approaches to Personality

- Psychodynamic Contributions
 - 1900: Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* published
 - 1905: Carl Jung uses word association tests to detect and analyze mental capacities
 - 1962: Myers-Briggs published



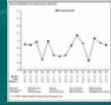
Modern Psychological Approaches to Personality

- The Advent of Projective Tests
 - Hermann Rorschach
 - 1920 Publishes Rorschach Inkblot Test
 - Interpretation of inkblots is "determined by the peculiarities of perception which, in turn, were dependent upon the underlying structure of the personality"
 - Pichot, 1984, p. 395



Modern Psychological Approaches to Personality

- The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory
 - Created in 1942 by Hathaway and McKinley
 - Development
 - Uses
- Revised in 1989 (MMPI-2)



Modern Psychological Approaches to Personality

- The Big Five Personality Theory
 - Costa & McCrae create the NEO-PI
 - Now revised: NEO-PI-R
 - Assesses five personality traits that, together, comprise normal personality:
 - Neuroticism
 - Extraversion
 - Openness
 - Agreeableness
 - Conscientiousness

Modern Psychological Approaches to Personality

- Big Five is the descendant of Eysenck's lexical work
 - He came up with the 16 PF

The Future of Personality Assessment

- Problems with personality assessment
 - Dimensions used
 - Diagnosis?
- Solutions
 - More holistic focus
