

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF PROJECTIVE TESTING

by

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For over half a century, clinicians have made use of a method of personality assessment that consists of a set of picture cards. The picture cards are presented, one by one, to the examinee, who is required to tell a story about each card. The validity of the method, the thematic apperception test, is derived from the “projective hypothesis” (Rapaport, 1942/1967), which assumes that the responses reveal the examinee’s innermost thoughts and feelings.

Following the publication of Murray’s *Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)* (Murray, 1943) in 1943 and, several years later, the *Children’s Apperception Test (CAT)* (Bellak & Bellak, 1949/1991a), thematic apperception tests evolved as a specific category of assessment instrument. In spite of a decline in interest during the 1960s and 1970s, the *TAT* and *CAT* have continued to be popular instruments for child and adolescent assessment to the present day (Archer, Maruish, Imhof, & Piotrowski, 1991; Piotrowski, Keller, & Ogawa, 1993; Sweeney, Clarkin, & Fitzgibbon, 1987; Watkins, 1991; Watkins, Campbell, Nieberding, & Hallmark, 1995). The 1980’s brought a new surge of interest in thematic apperception tests and a “second-generation” of instruments for children appeared. Today, various thematic apperception tests from various periods are commercially available, and the instrument is widely used in child and adolescent assessment.

In this chapter, I aim to clarify the nature of the thematic apperception test through a discussion of the historical context. This overview describes the backdrop of projective testing in which the instrument evolved as well as general trends in the discipline of psychology that led to the development of numerous thematic apperception tests for children and adolescents.

THE RISE OF PROJECTIVE TESTING

The origins of projective testing can be found in the work of Wundt, Galton, and Cattell around the turn of the century, which laid the foundations for psychology as a scientific discipline. The period from 1890 to 1905 has been termed the “laboratory period” in the history of mental measurement (Sattler, 1982). Experimental methods developed by these early researchers eventually resulted in “tests” that were used to measure individual responses, and these methods gradually found their way into the emerging practice of psychology (Chandler, 1990).

Some of this early work already pointed in the direction of projective testing. Wundt and Galton conducted experiments with human subjects, in which they explored associations between ideas. Their experiments may be seen as the precursor to the word association method, a projective method in which the examinee responds to a series of stimulus words by saying the first word that comes to mind. Galton recognized the projective nature of these responses as early as 1879, when he wrote that the responses *lay bare the foundations of a man's thoughts with a curious distinctness and exhibit his mental anatomy with more vividness and truth than he would probably care to publish to the world* (Galton, 1879, cited in Semeonoff, 1976, p. 10). Galton's statement reflects the essence of the “projective hypothesis,” which assumes that the examinee may reveal significant mental content without being aware that he is doing so.

The exploration of projective methods for personality assessment was spurred by the development of psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud, who had set out his ideas about the unconscious in *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900 (Freud, 1958), used methods such as free association and hypnosis to gain access to the patient's unconscious in psychoanalysis. A word association list, developed by the

Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Gustave Jung, was published in English in 1910. For Jung, a significant aspect of this method was the reaction time to each word, as he assumed that words related to the patient's complexes would lead to the blocking of his response (Jung, 1910). Another word association method, published in the same year, was the *Kent-Rosanoff Word List* (Rosanoff, 1938; cited in Semeonoff, 1976). This word list was developed in a normative study and was intended for diagnostic use with psychiatric patients.

Nowadays, the method of word association is not much used. However, an extension of this projective technique has remained popular, namely, sentence completion. This method requires that the examinee completes a series of sentence stems (e.g., *My mother...*; *What worries me...*; *My ambition...*). The first sentence completion method appeared in 1928 (Payne, 1928, cited in Haak, 1990) and various forms are available today.¹ Although the sentence completion method is generally categorized as a projective method, it may be argued that the projective hypothesis does not entirely apply to this instrument, since a method that involves a highly structured stimulus and a very limited written response can hardly be expected to reveal the examinee's inner world. Instead, the sentence completion form has more resemblance to an open-ended self-report questionnaire (Semeonoff, 1976).

A landmark in the history of projective testing was the publication of the *Rorschach* in 1921. Hermann Rorschach, another member of the group of Swiss psychoanalysts, introduced a technique consisting of a series of cards depicting symmetrical inkblots. The examinee was asked to respond to each inkblot with spontaneous associations and interpretations. No structure or limits were imposed; rather, the examinee was encouraged to generate his own unique responses. With Rorschach's premature death at the age of 37, further development of the original

¹ For a review, see Haak (1990).

method was halted, and for many years the *Rorschach* was used exclusively within a small circle of psychoanalysts trained in the highly complicated system of interpretation. This changed following the publication of the English translation of Rorschach's classic work *Psychodiagnostik* in 1942 (Rorschach, 1921/1942), followed by two standard *Rorschach* handbooks: the Beck scoring system (Beck, Beck, Levitt, & Molish, 1944) and the Klopfer method (Klopfer, Ainsworth, Klopfer, & Holt, 1954). These scoring methods represented two different schools of Rorschach assessment. The Klopfer method, which was used in training courses at the Tavistock Clinic in London and was generally accepted in Britain, emphasized phenomenological interpretation. The Beck scoring system, which became popular in the United States, was more standardized. Many years later, the *Comprehensive System* appeared (Exner, 1968). Exner's scoring system, which is based on a psychometric approach and has been updated regularly with extensive data collection (Exner, 1982, 1986, 1991), was embraced as a reliable and standardized method for *Rorschach* scoring (Ritzler, 1995). However, it is anathema to supporters of the more content-oriented, psychoanalytic *Rorschach* tradition (Aronow, Reznikoff, & Moreland, 1995; Lerner, 1996).

The differences in Rorschach interpretation that evolved on either side of the Atlantic reflect a divergence in developments in personality measurement in general (Zubin, Eron, & Schumer, 1965). Over the years, the European approach to personality assessment retained links to a philosophical tradition focused on the study of individual differences, pursuing methods of introspection that had been laid down by the work of the German psychophysicists Herbart, Weber, Fechner and Wundt. European methods of personality measurement stood in stark contrast to the approach that evolved in the United States, where the work by Galton and Cattell on the measurement of individual differences laid the basis for a nomothetic, empirically based discipline.

THE HEYDAY OF PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUES

Clinical psychology developed rapidly as a profession during the first half of the twentieth century. This period saw the development and application of all kinds of techniques for personality assessment, partly in response to the need for the selection of military personnel during World War II.

Psychologists were particularly interested in techniques that would assumedly reveal the unobservable, covert aspects of the personality (Bellak, 1992; Rabin, 1960), leading to the publication of numerous projective tests and methods. In 1939, Lawrence Frank published *Projective Methods for the Study of Personality* (Frank, 1939). This paper was the first systematic statement on projective testing. However, the impetus for the development of projective techniques came primarily from clinical observations and psychotherapy, and there was little interest in rigorous theoretical or scientific research (Semeonoff, 1976).

The multitude of projective methods that were developed in this period have been described in various handbooks (e.g., Anderson & Anderson, 1951; Rabin & Haworth, 1960; Semeonoff, 1976). These projective methods were quite disparate as to type of materials and task required of the examinee, but all were based on a common denominator: the projective hypothesis. The following summary demonstrates the considerable variety in kinds of projective methods that appeared during the first half of the twentieth century, some of which became firmly entrenched in assessment practices and are still in use today.

Drawing tasks

Various drawing tasks were devised as projective tests. The examinee may be asked to simply draw a person, as in the *Draw-A-Person* technique (Machover, 1949). The *House-Tree-Person* technique (Buck, 1948) requires the examinee to make separate drawings of a house, a tree, and a person, and to explain each

drawing after completion. Two well-known drawing tasks from Europe are the *Baumtest* (Koch, 1949), which requires the drawing of a fruit tree, and Van Lennep's (1958) drawing task, in which the examinee draws three trees: a fruit tree, a fantasy tree, and a dream tree. A technique developed for use with children is the *Familie in Tieren* [Family as animals] technique (Brem-Graser, 1957), in which the examinee is instructed to draw each member of his family (including himself) as an animal. Raven's *Controlled Projection Test* (1944), a British method now out of print, combined drawing with storytelling: the examinee is requested to make a drawing and, while doing so, tell a story about it. The *Wartegg Test* (Wartegg, 1939) is a structured method consisting of a series of dots and unfinished lines that the examinee is instructed to "complete."

Arrangement, construction and sorting tasks

Various projective methods from this period involved arrangement, construction, or sorting. The examinee is provided with wooden blocks, mosaic squares, or other materials. Well-known methods were the *Mosaic Test* (Lowenfeld, 1954), the *Kahn Test of Symbol Arrangement* (Kahn, 1956) and the *Tomkins-Horn Picture Arrangement Test* (Tomkins & Miner, 1949). The *Three-Dimensional Personality Test* (Twitchell-Allen, 1948) entails both arrangement and storytelling: the examinee is instructed to choose any number of plastic objects and tell a story about them. In a similar vein, the *Make-a-Picture-Story (MAPS)* (Shneidman, 1947), still in use today, combines a construction task with storytelling: the examinee places loose card figures before a background picture and then tells a story about the material.

Play materials

Projective methods used in the assessment of young children often involved play materials. In accordance with the projective hypothesis, the arrangement of the material was seen as a reflection of the child's inner world. Play methods designated as "world tests" consist of a set of small wooden houses, trees, animals, and figures which the examinee uses to form a village scene. Three well-

known world tests that are still in use today are Bühler's *World Test* (Bühler & Kelley, 1941; Bühler, Lumry, & Carrol, 1951); the *Sceno-test* (Von Staabs, 1951) from Germany; and the *Test du Village* (Arthus, 1949) from France. In the *Structured Doll Play Test* (Lynn & Lynn, 1959), designed for very young children, the material consists of flat press-out figures mounted on a thick card, in combination with various objects such as a feeding bottle and toy food.

Verbal tasks

Verbal tasks were also developed for projective assessment. In the *Despert Fables* (Despert & Potter, 1936), the examinee is asked to retell a famous fairytale such as the Little Red Riding Hood or Goldilocks. The *Paper-Pencil-Projective Method* (Sargent, 1944) requires the examinee to respond to 15 written situations involving a person of the same sex. The *Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study* (*PF-Study*; Rosenzweig, Fleming, & Rosenzweig, 1948) consists of a series of cartoon-like pictures that show a child in frustrating situations with another person. The examinee is required to write down the depicted child's verbal reaction in the empty balloon. The *PF-Study* is comparable to the sentence completion method insofar as the examinee provides a limited written response to a highly structured stimulus.

Inkblot cards

Although not widely known in English-speaking countries, two variants of the *Rorschach* became popular in Germany in this early period of personality assessment, namely, the *Fu-Ro-Test* (Drey-Fuchs, 1958), which has inkblots that make a "flatter," more lithographic impression than the Rorschach inkblots, and the *Behn-Rorschach Test* (Zulliger, 1956), a version with somewhat smaller inkblots that was developed specifically for young children. The *Structured-Objective Rorschach Test* (Stone, 1958) contains the original Rorschach cards, but each card is presented together with a triad of responses. This forced-choice response format was introduced in an effort to improve the *Rorschach's* scoring reliability.

Choice tasks

Projective methods from this period include various tasks that require the examinee to make a choice or value judgment. In the *Szondi Test* (Deri, 1949), the examinee is shown cards portraying individuals who assumedly represented eight different psychiatric pathologies and is asked to select the “most liked” and “most disliked” pictures. Similarly, in the *Self-Valuation Test* (Liggett, 1959), also known as the *Faces Test*, the examinee is required to choose from sets of pictures showing distorted faces. Another projective test involving choices is the *It-scale for Children* (Brown, 1956, cited in Rabin & Haworth, 1960), which purports to analyze the examinee’s sex role preference. This method has picture cards depicting various toys, articles, costumes, and activities that represent typical male or female roles, and the examinee is required to choose the attributes that “It,” an asexual stick figure, would prefer. Arguably, choice tasks can hardly be considered as projective methods, since it is doubtful whether consciously made choices and value judgments reveal the deeper layers of the examinee’s personality dynamics (Anderson & Anderson, 1951).

Finally, a projective method published in this period combined four different tasks from the above categories. In the *IES Test* (Dombrose & Slobin, 1958), the first task involves story completion with a set of picture cards; the second requires the examinee to devise a title to a picture card; the third employs a question-and-answer format with pictures showing various faces; and the fourth consists of a drawing completion task. This projective method, used mainly in adult assessment, purports to measure the psychoanalytic concepts of id, ego, and superego.

This brief overview demonstrates the proliferation of projective methods during the first half of the twentieth century. By the mid-century, as Semeonoff (1976) wrote, projective testing had arrived.

MURRAY'S THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TEST

A landmark in projective testing following the *Rorschach* was the publication of the *Thematic Apperception Test* (*TAT*; Murray, 1943) in the United States. The *TAT* method is similar to the *Rorschach* in that the examinee is asked to respond to a set of test cards. However, instead of the abstract figures of the *Rorschach* inkblots, the *TAT* cards developed by Murray were more or less representational pictures, with some cards showing realistic situations and others depicting fantasy scenes. Another important difference is the nature of the instructions to the examinee. With the *Rorschach* method, the examinee is asked: *Was könnte dies sein?* [What might this be?]. With the *TAT*, in contrast, the examinee is instructed to tell a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. "Thematic apperception test" has since become the generic term for a specific instrument for personality assessment that incorporates these two elements, namely, (1) the material consists of a series of picture cards, and (2) the response required of the examinee involves storytelling.

The use of storytelling in response to picture cards as a means for understanding the individual's personality was not entirely new. Prior to the publication of the *TAT*, two experimental studies had reported on the use of this method. Brittain (1907) and Libby (1908) developed picture cards in studies to determine developmental differences in children. Brittain's approach, in particular, clearly anticipated present-day clinical usage in that he analyzed the responses for use of the first person, amount of detail, length and explanatory power of the story, and moral and social elements of the story contents (Zubin, Eron, & Shumer, 1965). The earliest report clinical assessment based on storytelling in response to picture cards is by Schwartz (1932), who worked with juvenile delinquents. Schwartz used eight pictures depicting scenes of a moral nature and asked the examinee to describe the situation and the thoughts of the boy in the picture. However,

Schwartz' assessment method did not become well known.

The *TAT* was the outcome of several years of work by Henry Murray (1893-1988). In 1935, Murray and his colleague Christiana Morgan reported on the use of a series of picture cards as a method of personality assessment (Morgan & Murray, 1935). The cards were based on photographs, magazine illustrations and paintings that suggested an important theme. The pictures, some of which were redrawn by Morgan to make them more ambiguous and give them a more uniform appearance (W.G. Morgan, 1995), were printed on black-and-white cards. During World War II, Murray led teams of psychologists at the Army's Office of Strategic Services and his *TAT* cards were included in assessment procedures for recruitment. The third version of the set of 31 cards, referred to as Series D, was published in 1943 and is still in use today. The *TAT* manual recommends the use of 20 cards divided over two separate assessment sessions, with an equal number of cards showing fairly realistic scenes and cards with more *unusual, dramatic, and bizarre* pictures (Murray, 1943, p. 2).

The development of this new assessment method was strongly influenced by the psychoanalytic ideas of the day. Murray was a physician trained at Harvard, who later consulted Jung in Zurich for a period of psychoanalysis and came to embrace Jung's ideas about the influence of ancient myths on the psyche. The idea of using a storytelling method emanated from Murray's strong interest in literary creation. He assumed that *a great deal of written fiction is the conscious or unconscious expression of the author's experiences or fantasies* (Murray, 1938, p. 289). He was convinced that picture cards would assist in eliciting such fantasies and the *TAT* would thus provide *an X-Ray into the inner self* (Murray, 1943, p. 1).

Although Murray was psychodynamically oriented, he was not committed to a specific school of psychoanalytic thinking (Semeonoff, 1976). Following a study using the *TAT* cards with a group of 50 male undergraduates at Harvard

Psychological Clinic, he outlined his theory of personality in *Explorations in Personality* (Murray, 1938). Analysis of *TAT* responses is based on this theory of personality. Central are the concepts of “needs,” which are the driving motivational forces in the individual, and “presses,” which are objects in the individual’s environment. Murray defined a “thema,” the term included in the title of the *TAT*, as the interaction of these needs and presses. A thema is “apperceived” when the examinee recognizes and responds to the stimulus material because of its deeper significance. Interpretation of the examinee’s response rests on two basic assumptions, namely, that the attributes of the hero in the story represent the needs or motivational tendencies in the examinee’s personality, and that the situations in which the hero finds himself represent the forces in the examinee’s experienced world (Murray, 1943).

The *TAT* was soon widely used in clinical assessment. From the start, however, clinicians tended to ignore Murray’s need-press system of response interpretation (Holt, 1951). Various alternative scoring methods for the *TAT* were published over the years. Some scoring methods (e.g., Bellak, 1954; Holt, 1951; Rapaport, Gill, & Schafer, 1946/1970; Rosenwald, 1968) were firmly rooted in psychoanalytic theory, while others (e.g., Arnold, 1962; Henry, 1956; Tomkins, 1947; Wyatt, 1947) had a more eclectic approach.² Over the years, no single method has been generally embraced (Dana, 1982) and even now *TAT* assessments are often based on subjective interpretation alone. Possibly, practicing clinicians tend to interpret *TAT* intuitively, because they consider available scoring methods too cumbersome and time-consuming (Vane, 1981).

As opposed to the *Rorschach* technique, which long remained an esoteric method used exclusively in psychoanalytic environments, the *TAT* became a popular

² Reviews of various scoring methods can be found in Bellak (1992), Semeonoff (1976), Shneidman (1951) and Vane (1981).

instrument for personality assessment. Various factors contributed to its popularity. In the mid-1930s, journal publication was starting to become important and the development of the *TAT* -- the product of a study at an elite American university -- was well documented (Semeonoff, 1976). Some researchers at Harvard Psychological Clinic, who were later to become leading figures in clinical psychology, promoted the clinical and experimental use of the *TAT* (Zubin, Eron, & Shumer, 1965). Another factor that contributed to the popularity of the *TAT* was that its use was not limited to psychologists who had been psychoanalytically trained (Zubin, Eron, & Shumer, 1965). The *TAT* became a standard instrument for clinical assessment as well as personnel selection.

In the 1950's, the *TAT* also became a respected research instrument. McClelland and his colleagues used the *TAT* in their extensive research in the field of achievement motivation (e.g. McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953). Researchers developed various adaptations of the *TAT* for studies with specific populations. In these adaptations, the original pictures were not changed substantially. For example, in the *Thompson-TAT (T-TAT)*; (Thompson, 1949) for black subjects, the adaptation consisted of little more than the darkening of the characters' skin (Bailey & Green, 1977). Likewise, an adaptation used in research with handicapped examinees simply consisted of giving crutches to some of the figures in the *TAT* pictures (Zubin, Eron, & Shumer, 1965).

In contrast, adaptations of the *TAT* for cross-cultural research were usually quite radical. These researchers aimed to portray the *TAT* themes in a culturally specific manner, and hence the original cards were barely recognizable. Cultural adaptations were developed for Indian populations (Chowdhury, 1960), American Indian, Micronesian, Chinese, and Congolese populations (Henry, 1951; Semeonoff, 1976) and Mexican rural children and South African (Zulu and Bantu) populations (Zubin, Eron, & Shumer, 1965).

EARLY THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TESTS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Following the publication of the *TAT*, seven thematic apperception tests for use with children and adolescents were developed in the 1940s and 1950s. Only two of these instruments are still available today. It is noteworthy that three of these early instruments were developed in Europe. This group of early thematic apperception tests for children and adolescents will be discussed chronologically.³ An alphabetical list of these instruments is shown in the box below.

EARLY THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TESTS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS, LISTED ALPHABETICALLY

<i>Blacky Pictures</i> *	Gerald S. Blum (1950)
<i>Children's Apperception Test (CAT)</i>	Leopold Bellak & Sonya S. Bellak (1949/1991a)
<i>Four Picture Test (FPT)</i>	D. J. Van Lennep (1948/1983)
<i>Michigan Picture Test (MPT)</i> *	G. Andrew, S. W. Hartwell, M. L. Hutt & R.E. Walton (1953)
<i>Object Relations Technique (ORT)</i> *	Herbert Phillipson (1955)
<i>Symonds Picture Story Test (PST)</i> *	P.M. Symonds (1948)
<i>Test of Family Attitudes (TFA)</i> *	Lydia Jackson (1952)

* out of print

³ Instruments designed specifically for adults, such as the *Travis Projective Pictures* (Travis, 1957) have not been included in this overview.

Symonds Picture-Story Test

In 1948, a thematic apperception test designed specifically for adolescents appeared. The *Symonds Picture-Story Test (PST)* (Symonds, 1948) was developed in a study on adolescent fantasy (Symonds, 1949) and consists of 20 pictures divided into two sets. The pictures are very dated -- even more so than those of the *TAT* -- because of the 1940s style of dress of the figures. Semeonoff (1976) suggested that the rather gloomy cards would elicit a response with predominantly negative affect. A reviewer in the *Mental Measurements Yearbook (MMY)* doubted whether the *PST* had any additional value over the *TAT* (Newton, 1959a). Although the *PST* attracted a great deal of attention at the time of publication, no subsequent research work was pursued, and the test is no longer published.

Four Picture Test

In the same year, a thematic apperception test emerged from Europe. The *Four Picture Test (FPT)* (Van Lennep, 1948/1983), published in the Netherlands, was not designed specifically for children, but the manual allows for its use with examinees aged 10 years and older. The *FPT* consists of four postcard-sized plates with vague watercolor pictures. The pictures are presented to the examinee, who is required to write a story involving all four pictures. Although some English publications about the test appeared (e.g., Van Lennep, 1951), the *FPT* did not gain widespread international recognition. Reviewers in the sixth *MMY* concluded that the *FPT* was a poorly documented method, and its use was discouraged (Lee, 1965a; Schepers, 1965). Nevertheless, the test is still available in the Netherlands today.

Children's Apperception Test

The first thematic apperception test designed specifically for children appeared in 1949: the *Children's Apperception Test (CAT)* (Bellak & Bellak, 1949/1991a). The *CAT* has ten picture cards portraying various animals in an anthropomorphic style, the assumption being that pictures of animals would promote projective storytelling

in young children. The *CAT* was conceptualized around important psychoanalytic developmental themes, such as feeding problems, toilet training, Oedipal conflicts, and aggression. Responses are evaluated for the evaluation of certain content and form variables, as described in the manual. In 1952, a set of supplemental cards, the *CAT-S* (Bellak & Bellak, 1952/1991b), was made available for the assessment of children with special needs. Today, the *CAT* still ranks as a highly popular instrument for child assessment (Elbert & Holden, 1987; Watkins, Campbell, Nieberding, & Hallmark, 1995), and cultural adaptations have been developed for various countries including Japan, India, and Indonesia (Bellak, 1992).

Blacky Pictures

Another thematic apperception test for children that uses picture cards portraying animals appeared a year after the publication of the *CAT*. The cards of the *Blacky Pictures* (Blum, 1950) show cartoon-like drawings of a dog named Blacky and his dog family. The *Blacky Pictures*, subtitled “a technique for the exploration of personality dynamics,” was explicitly grounded on Freudian libidinal theory. Each picture represents one of the Freudian concepts of psychosexual development, such as oral eroticism, anal sadism, Oedipal conflict, and castration anxiety. The examinee’s response to each card is followed by a series of questions with multiple-choice responses. This structured response format was used to increase the reliability of the instrument. Arguably, however, a multiple-choice response format is not compatible with the projective hypothesis, which requires spontaneous storytelling. Reviews of the *Blacky Pictures* were not favorable. The unmistakably Freudian psychosexual content of the cards and the structured administration of the test prompted one reviewer to remark that the *Blacky Pictures* “make the responses fit the theory” (Newton, 1959b, p. 836). The test was last reviewed in the sixth *MMY* (Buros, 1965) and has since gone out of print.

Test of Family Attitudes

A thematic apperception test from the U.K., the *Test of Family Attitudes (TFA)*; Jackson, 1952) appeared in 1952. The *TFA* was developed by the psychoanalyst Lydia Jackson for use with 6- to 12-year-olds. The set of eight postcard-sized plates shows fairly realistic scenes of family life. Unfortunately, the manual does not present a specific theoretical rationale. One *MMY* reviewer, remarking on the name of the instrument, wrote that the *TFA* appears to measure the examinee's attitudes toward the family, not family attitudes (Bell, 1959). In spite of Jackson's efforts to provide normative data in a later study (Jackson, 1964), sale of the *TFA* has been discontinued.

Michigan Picture Test

In 1953, a thematic apperception test for children that was closely aligned to the *TAT* was published: the *Michigan Picture Test (MPT)*; Andrew, Walton, Hartwell, & Hutt, 1953). The *MPT*, designed for children aged 8 to 14, has picture cards that are similar in style to the *TAT* cards, showing realistic scenes of people in everyday situations, and some original *TAT* cards are included. In contrast with the *TAT*, however, the manual provided normative data. For this reason, the *MPT* was welcomed by *MMY* reviewers as a "semi-objective" method (Henry, 1959; Shneidman, 1959a). Another improvement over the *TAT*, one reviewer remarked, was that the cards elicited more positive emotions (Kagan, 1960). The *MPT* became a popular for child assessment at the time; nevertheless, the instrument is now out of print. Hutt published a revised version, the *MPT-R* (Hutt, 1980), 30 years later, but the *MMY* review was negative because the normative data had not been updated and the scoring system was considered cumbersome (Bauserman, 1985). The *MPT-R*, too, is out of print.

Object Relations Technique

The *Object Relations Technique* (*ORT*; Phillipson, 1955), another instrument from the U.K., dates from 1955. This instrument was developed for use with examinees aged 11 years and over. The *ORT* is grounded in object relations theory from the psychoanalytic school of Klein and Fairbairn. The material consists of three series of four ambiguous pictures, including one blank card. The manual provides a detailed case study to illustrate the interpretation of the test protocol, as well as some limited normative data. The *ORT* was last reviewed in the fifth *MMY* review (Westby, 1959) and is no longer commercially available.

THE DOWNTREND IN PROJECTIVE TESTING

The above review demonstrates the growth of thematic apperception tests for children and adolescents as well as numerous tailor-made variations for different ages and ethnic groups. Many deplored this development. As one reviewer sighed, *... the NAT... and the UAT... are joining the CAT..., VAT... and the rest of them. Soon we'll get to the ZAT, and there I hope the new variants will stop, because zat's enough* (Shneidman, 1959b, p. 942). The Psychological Corporation remarked that in this period *...the flowering of the projective technique of studying personality ... brought to clinical psychology a somewhat dandelion-like broadcasting of seed* (cited in Anderson & Anderson, 1951, p. 13).

The unbridled proliferation of projective techniques, including thematic apperception tests, came to be viewed with increasing skepticism for various reasons. King (1960) argued that in the fertile years of projective testing numerous methods had been published hastily, heedless of requirements of reliability and standardization. Projective methods from this period, with their emphasis on clinical utility, were based on a miscellany of vague clinical hypotheses, and methods of interpretation were largely qualitative and subjective (Bellak, 1992). Many deplored the development of this kind of material and concerns about the

conceptual problems of projective testing grew (Shneidman, 1959b).

Increasing skepticism toward projective testing was part of an overall change in attitude toward psychological assessment, which may be attributed to developments in psychology and psychiatry as well as changes in society at large (Howes, 1981; Weiner, 1983). Various trends, described here briefly, had a major impact on the development of thematic apperception tests for children and adolescents in the following years.

An important change in the 1960s was the advent of the community mental health movement, which focused on the social aspects of mental illness instead of individual psychodynamics (Bellak, 1992; Millon, 1984). The anti-psychiatry views of Laing and Szasz held that society was the cause of the individual's psychological difficulties, and that mental illness resided not in the individual, but in repressive social structures. From this point of view, the psychological testing of an individual was considered not only irrelevant but also harmful, since it maintained the illusion that the problem lies within the individual.

At the same time, personality assessment became a controversial issue within the discipline of psychology. Humanistic psychologists attacked assessment on ethical grounds, while socially minded psychologists, who viewed diagnosis as synonymous with labeling, argued that testing was dehumanizing and counter-therapeutic (Weiner, 1972). Moreover, many psychologists started to embrace therapy instead of testing, and this led to a significant change within the profession (Howard, 1989; Leiter, 1989). It has also been argued that the decrease in testing was accelerated by pragmatic factors, such as the considerable time and costs involved in the administration of tests. In addition, psychologists' anxieties regarding their increased liability in litigation may have played a role in their reluctance to pursue testing (Korchin & Schuldberg, 1981; Tuma & Elbert, 1990).

These changed attitudes and practices affected psychological assessment in general, but personality assessment suffered even more because the paradigm for personality functioning was changing. Interest in a psychodynamic model of psychological functioning diminished in the 1960s, as psychologists and psychiatrists turned their attention to psychopathology (Blatt, 1986).

Psychopathology assumes a medical model, which views mental disorders as disease entities, often with the assumption that these disorders have a primarily biological etiology. In line with this medical model, the classification of mental disorders was pursued with the publication of a second edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-II)* in 1965.

Perhaps the most significant factor leading to a decline in personality assessment was the rising influence of behaviorism in the 1960s (Blatt, 1986; Leiter, 1989; Weiner, 1972). Behaviorists stressed stimulus-response connections and were not interested in personality traits or unconscious dynamics. Since cognitive processes and subjective experience were not observable, these concepts were relegated to the impenetrable “black box” and could not be pursued as the subject of scientific study.

Thus, the 1960s became an era in which empiricism and positivism ruled in psychology. As Millon (1984) observed, only observable facts were considered relevant. Personality theories and psychodynamics went out of vogue, and the very foundations of the personality construct were challenged (Mischel, 1968).

At the same time, the 1960s witnessed another development that would have a major impact on personality assessment. Test theory evolved as a specific discipline (King, 1960), jumpstarted by the seminal work of Cronbach and Meehl. In particular, Cronbach’s (1951; 1960) publications on statistical methods for establishing test reliability, and Cronbach and Meehl’s (1955) delineation of types of test validity exerted a considerable influence on future test development. Fueled

by Meehl's (1954) tenet that clinically based predictions were inferior to statistically derived ones, opposing factions in psychological assessment became embroiled in the controversy over projective testing. It was inevitable that fierce attacks from the psychometric front were directed at projective tests for their lack of reliability and validity (e.g., Anastasi, 1968; Jensen, 1959; Meehl, 1959), and the use of such methods for psychodiagnosis with children was vehemently rejected (Klein, 1978).

In the following decades, the development of thematic apperception tests was seriously affected by these trends. Two major works on the *TAT* were published in the 1960s in an effort to address the conceptual and methodological problems of the method. It was a sign of the times that both authors de-emphasized psychodynamic processes and propagated an "experimental" or stimulus-response approach to the thematic apperception test. Bernard Murstein (1963) focused on the stimulus properties of the *TAT* and the effect of situational variables (e.g. examiner characteristics) on the response. Joseph Zubin and his colleagues (Zubin, Eron, & Shumer, 1965) elaborated on the perceptual components of the response. On the whole, however, research interest in the *TAT* slackened (Klopfer & Taulbee, 1976; Polyson, Norris, & Ott, 1985; Reynolds & Sundberg, 1976).

THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TESTS IN THE 1960S AND 1970S

In this period of controversy over the validity of projective testing, there was nevertheless a demand for thematic apperception tests from clinicians who continued to adhere to these methods (Howes, 1981; Polyson, Norris, & Ott, 1985). Nine thematic apperception tests for children and adolescents appeared in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴ These instruments, three of which are still available today,

⁴ The *Hand Test* (Wagner, 1962) has not been included in this review, as the cards do not portray a representational scene – an essential characteristic of the thematic apperception test.

are discussed below in chronological order. The alphabetical list is shown in the following box.

THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TESTS IN THE 1960S AND 1970S, LISTED ALPHABETICALLY

<i>Columbus</i>	M.J. Langeveld (1969)
<i>Family Relations Indicator (FRI)*</i>	J. G. Howells & J.R. Lickorish (1962/1984)
<i>Le Test Patte Noire</i>	L. Corman (1961/1992)
<i>Pickford Projective Pictures (PPP)*</i>	R.W. Pickford (1963)
<i>School Apperception Method (SAM)*</i>	I.L. Solomon & B.D. Starr (1968)
<i>Separation Anxiety Test (SAT)*</i>	H.G. Hansburg (1972)
<i>South African Picture Analysis Test (SAPAT)*</i>	B.F. Nel & A.J.K Pelsler (1960)
<i>Tasks of Emotional Development Test (TED Test)</i>	Haskel Cohen & Geraldine R. Weil (1971/1975)
<i>Themes Concerning Blacks (TCB)*</i>	R.L. Williams (1972)
* out of print	

It should be noted that five instruments from this group were developed in Europe. Here, personality assessment remained more strongly linked to the tradition of a clinical, ideographic approach. Attitudes toward projective testing were far less critical than in the U.S.A. and there was less concern for the rigorous empiricism that dictated standardization of test instruments, and this was clearly reflected in the presentation and manuals of these thematic apperception tests.

South African Picture Analysis Test

The first thematic apperception test for children to appear in the 1960s was the *South African Picture Analysis Test (SAPAT)* (Nel & Pelsler, 1960). Although the name suggests otherwise, this instrument was published in the Netherlands. The *SAPAT*, designed for children aged 5 to 13 years, has fairy-tale pictures showing elves and children together in various scenes. The guidelines for response interpretation set out in the manual reflect the European tradition of phenomenological psychology. The *SAPAT* was severely criticized by one *MMY* reviewer for its vague existentialist language and metaphysical references (Lee, 1965b). This thematic apperception test is no longer commercially available.

Le Test Patte Noire

Another European instrument, the *Patte Noire* (Corman, 1992) appeared in 1961. This thematic apperception test from France was designed for children aged 5 years and up. The *Patte Noire* consists of 17 small cards that the examinee combines to form a single story. *Patte Noire* is a piglet with a black hind leg. Like the *CAT*, this thematic apperception test assumes that young children identify more easily with animals. The *Patte Noire* is based on Freudian psychosexual theory, and the cards represent different aspects of the oral, anal, and Oedipal stages of development. Although the *Patte Noire* has an elaborate manual, it makes for difficult reading and interpretation of the responses requires a thorough knowledge of psychoanalytical concepts. The *Patte Noire* is still commercially available (French manual only), but the instrument has never been reviewed by the *MMY*.

Family Relations Indicator

A thematic apperception test from the U.K., the *Family Relations Indicator (FRI)* (Howells & Lickorish, 1984), was first published in 1962. The *FRI* consists of a booklet with a set of cards showing simple line drawings of family scenes. This

instrument is not based on a specific personality theory, and the manual states that it aims only to categorize the behaviors that the examinee attributes to the characters in the picture. The *FRI* received mixed reviews by the *MMY* (Barbour, 1972; Kline, 1972). A revised edition based on 24 cards appeared in 1967, and another reprint dates from 1984. Today, however, the *FRI* is no longer commercially available.

Pickford Projective Pictures

A British thematic apperception test that became quite well known at the time was the *Pickford Projective Pictures* (*PPP*; Pickford, 1963), published in 1963. The *PPP* was designed for children aged 5 to 15 and was developed primarily as a tool for therapy. The instrument consisted of 120 cards showing line drawings; the large number of cards enabled the therapist to use a new set of six pictures in 20 consecutive therapeutic sessions. The *PPP* was not standardized as a diagnostic tool and evidence for its validity as presented in the manual was considered unconvincing by one *MMY* reviewer (Rabin, 1972). The *PPP* is now out of print.

School Apperception Method

The *School Apperception Method* (*SAM*; Solomon & Starr, 1968) dates from 1968. The *SAM* was designed for children from kindergarten age to grade 9. It has 22 cards with black-and-white drawings showing scenes at school. The manual lacks both a theoretical rationale and guidelines for response interpretation. Although one *MMY* reviewer (Sundberg, 1972) appreciated the structured stimulus material of the *SAM*, the instrument was rejected because of the lack of validation data. This thematic apperception test is now out of print.

Columbus

The *Columbus* (Langeveld, 1969), a thematic apperception test from the Netherlands, appeared in 1969. This instrument was designed for examinees aged 6 to 18 years and was published with an English manual. The *Columbus* consists

of 21 black-and-white cards and 3 colored cards. The clinician selects a series of cards suited to the age or developmental stage of the examinee. Like the *SAPAT*, also from the Netherlands, the theoretical framework of the *Columbus* represents a phenomenological approach to assessment, and the manual provides some brief guidelines for an impressionistic interpretation of the responses. One critical *MMY* reviewer remarked that the author's sparse attention to issues of validity and reliability was typical of a European approach toward test development (Vandenberg, 1972). The *Columbus* has continued to be a popular assessment instrument among child psychologists in the Netherlands to this day (Evers & Zaal, 1982).

Tasks of Emotional Development Test

The *Tasks of Emotional Development Test* (*TED Test*; Cohen & Weil, 1971/1975a) first appeared in 1971. Cohen and Weil developed this thematic apperception test at the Children's Hospital in Boston. The *TED Test* consists of sets of parallel cards for latency-age boys, latency-age girls, adolescent boys and adolescent girls. The sets consist of 12 cards and one additional card that is used with both adolescent sets. Each *TED Test* card shows a black-and-white photograph representing one of the developmental tasks that children are expected to master in the course of their emotional development. The administration of the *TED Test* is structured and the manual provides elaborate rating scales for objective scoring of the response to each card. The normative data provided in the manual are limited to the first six cards. *MMY* reviews of the *TED Test* were positive from a clinical viewpoint, but less enthusiastic from a psychometric perspective (Ammons & Ammons, 1978; Gotts, 1978). Nevertheless, the *TED Test* is the only non-European thematic apperception test for children from this period that is still in use today.

Separation Anxiety Test

The *Separation Anxiety Test* (*SAT*; Hansburg, 1972) appeared in 1972. The *SAT*

manual, which was developed at a clinic for foster care, provides an elaborate theoretical rationale, outlining Hansburg's aim to operationalize the psychoanalytic concept of separation anxiety based on the work of Mahler, Bowlby and Anna Freud (Hansburg, 1986). The *SAT* has 12 black-and-white drawings, with a short statement on the separation situation at the bottom of each card (e.g., Card 5: "the child is leaving his parents to go to camp"). The examinee is asked to tell a story about the pictures. After each picture, the examinee is shown a list of 17 statements and asked to select any number of statements that describe the feelings of the child in the picture. This format was introduced in an effort to increase the reliability of the instrument, but a structured response precludes spontaneous storytelling and is arguably not compatible with the projective hypothesis. In 1980, the revised *SAT* was published as the *Adolescent Separation Anxiety Test (ASAT)*; Hansburg, 1980). However, a review in the ninth *MMY* (Mitchell, 1985) concluded that the validation research of the *ASAT* was inadequate (Hartsough, 1985). The *ASAT* is no longer commercially available, but has appeared as a research instrument in various studies (e.g. Fonagy, Redfern, & Charman, 1997; Klagsbrun & Bowlby, 1976; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985; Slough & Greenberg, 1990).

Themes Concerning Blacks

Another instrument that appeared in 1972 was *Themes Concerning Blacks (TCB)*; Williams, 1972), designed for black examinees aged 4 years and over. The *TCB* consists of 20 cards. The manual suggests that, besides the customary administration, the *TCB* may be used as a story completion method: a story outline is read to the examinee, followed by an incomplete story for each card which the examinee is required to complete. According to the manual, the development of the *TCB* was needed because blacks have their own specific culture and value systems and therefore find it difficult to relate to established instruments, but this idea was questioned by one *MMY* reviewer (Daum, 1985). The instrument is now no longer commercially available, although there have been some reports on the

use of the *TCB* as a research instrument (Dlepu & Kimbrough, 1982; Hawley & Williams, 1981; Triplett & Brunson, 1982; Weaver, 1981; White, Oliveira, Strube, & Meertens, 1995).

CHANGING TIMES: THE 1980'S AND 1990'S

The growing criticism of projective methods severely impacted on the development of thematic apperception tests for children, which came to a standstill in the early 1970s, and no new instruments were published during the next decade. Then, once again, there was a turning point. Various trends combined to create a favorable climate for the emergence of a new generation of thematic apperception tests for children.

The 1980s have been hailed as the renaissance of personality assessment and personality theory (Millon, 1984). Renewed interest in personality assessment was in conformance with the trend toward a more pragmatic, cost-conscious approach to mental health that required reliable assessment based on conceptual understanding as well as empirical data (Bellak, 1992).

The most significant factor that contributed to the change in attitude toward personality assessment, however, was the reformulation of behaviorism as psychology entered the "cognitive revolution" (Gardner, 1987). This paradigmatic shift allowed psychologists to turn once again to mental processes and investigate how cognitive structures develop and how these cognitive structures guide and influence behavior. In short, the 1980s brought a renewed interest in the individual's unique ability to construe meaning (Bruner, 1985).

At the same time, this change in attitude toward personality assessment was promoted by developments in psychoanalytic theory (Blatt, 1986). By the early 1980's, psychoanalysis had moved beyond the Freudian paradigm in which drive

reduction is viewed as the primary motivational force of human behavior. Revised theoretical formulations placed greater emphasis on developmental issues such as bonding, attachment, exploration, and play, which were viewed as relatively independent of basic biological needs and drives. Increasing attention was given to the role of caring interpersonal relationships in the development of the young child's internal representations (Blatt, 1990). Efforts were made to incorporate the empirical contributions of developmental psychology into psychoanalytic theory, and these psychodynamic theories of child development (e.g., Tyson & Tyson, 1990) were more amenable to child psychologists in general.

The cognitive revolution and the revitalization of psychoanalytic theory in the 1980s went hand in hand with a renewed regard for personality theory. The construct of personality, based on the assumption that people exhibit certain distinctive and enduring characteristics, regained its respectability, and personality theories came back in vogue (Millon, 1984). Accordingly, interest revived in the development of tests that allowed an evaluation of the "whole" personality, such as the *MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory)*; Hathaway & McKinley, 1943), as opposed to narrow-band instruments that measure a single pathology or concept (Barnett & Macmann, 1990). Also, the domain of personality assessment was extended to include cognitive behavioral assessment, clinical interviewing based on reliable structured interviews, and environmental assessment with a focus on family functioning (Barnett & Macmann, 1990).

The sum of these trends created a favorable climate for the emergence of a new generation of thematic apperception tests for children. Instruments published from the 1980s onward seemed to have taken on board the criticism of the difficult years, representing a whole new breed of instrument.

SECOND-GENERATION THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TESTS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

The first new thematic apperception test for children since a decade appeared in 1982, followed by five more instruments. This group of second-generation instruments, all published in the United States, is discussed in order of chronological appearance. The alphabetical list is shown in the box below.

SECOND-GENERATION THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TESTS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS, LISTED ALPHABETICALLY	
<i>Adolescent Apperception Cards (AAC)</i>	Silverton (1993),
<i>Children's Apperceptive Story-Telling Test (CAST)</i>	Schneider (1989)
<i>Children's Self-Report and Projective Inventory (CSRPI)</i>	Robert L. Ziffer & Lawrence E. Shapiro (1992)
<i>Family Apperception Test (FAT)</i>	Sotile, Julian, Henry, & Sotile (1988).
<i>Roberts Apperception Test for Children (RATC)</i>	McArthur & Roberts (1982).
<i>Tell-Me-A-Story (TEMAS)</i>	Costantino, Malgady, & Rogler (1988)

It should be noted that this discussion of second-generation thematic apperception tests does not include thematic apperception cards that were specifically designated by the developers as therapeutic aids. In the early 1980s, there was increased demand for creative projective material that could be used in

psychotherapy or play therapy. Some storytelling cards published in this period focus on specific problem areas (e.g. abuse, violence and bed-wetting in the *Projective Storytelling Cards* by Caruso, 1993) or specific groups (e.g. the *Adoption Story Cards* by Gardner, 1978). As therapeutic material, these thematic apperception cards lack the basic theoretical or empirical validation that is required for methods used in child assessment.

Roberts Apperception Test for Children

The first of the new group of thematic apperception tests for children that appeared in the 1980s and 1990s was the *Roberts Apperception Test for Children* (*RATC*; McArthur & Roberts, 1982), for children aged 6 through 15, is The *RATC* has 16 cards showing realistic drawings of children in everyday situations, and the test includes a parallel set for black children. Typical of this new generation of instruments is the standardized administration, which requires that all the cards are presented to the examinee in a set order and structured inquiries are made, the detailed system of response scoring, and the normative data, as described in the manual. Unfortunately, the *RATC* lacks a specific theoretical framework for understanding the examinee's responses. Some validation studies are described in the manual, but the data were considered disappointing by one reviewer for the *MMY* (Sines, 1985).

Tell-Me-A-Story

Tell-Me-A-Story (*TEMAS*; Costantino, Malgady, & Rogler, 1988), which appeared in 1988, was designed for use with inner-city children aged 5 to 18 years. Like the *RATC*, the *TEMAS* cards depict realistic scenes, but they are brightly colored drawings that show children interacting with each other in the streets and at home. The *TEMAS* includes a parallel set for Hispanic and black examinees. The manual has elaborate instructions for response scoring and provides normative data, but also provides an elaborate theoretical rationale that has incorporated various developmental theories and the test developers have reported regularly on further

validation research (Malgady, Costantino, & Rogler, 1984; Costantino, Colon-Malgady, Malgady, & Perez, 1991; Costantino, Malgady, Colon-Malgady, & Bailey, 1992; Costantino, Malgady, Rogler, & Tsui, 1988). For this reason, the instrument was reviewed positively in the *MMY* (Lang, 1992).

Family Apperception Test

In the same year, a thematic apperception test focusing on family relationships was published: the *Family Apperception Test (FAT)*; Sotile, Julian, Henry, & Sotile, 1988). The theoretical rationale of this instrument is derived from systems theory. The *FAT* cards show realistic drawings of family scenes. Standard administration of all 21 cards is required, and the manual provides a method for the scoring of variables of family functioning. However, the validation research reported in the manual was not considered as strong evidence for validity or reliability, according to a *MMY* review (Cosden, 1995).

Children's Apperceptive Story-Telling Test

In 1989, another thematic apperception test for children appeared: the *Children's Apperceptive Story-Telling Test (CAST)*; Schneider, 1989). The *CAST* was designed for children aged 6 to 13. The set of 31 picture cards, which includes some parallel cards for boys and girls, has colored drawings of contemporary scenes showing family, peer, or school situations. Like the *TEMAS* and the *RATC*, the *CAST* requires a standardized administration with structured questioning. The manual describes the standardization research based on a large nationwide sample and the *CAST* was praised by the *MMY* reviewer as a psychometrically sound instrument (Aronow, 1995). A drawback to the *CAST* is that some clinicians may not be familiar with the Adlerian theoretical framework on which this instrument is based.

Children's Self-Report and Projective Inventory

The *Children's Self-Report and Projective Inventory (CSRPI)*; Ziffer & Lawrence E.

Shapiro, 1992), published in 1992, is an assessment inventory made up of different methods, including a set of picture cards used as a thematic apperception test. The 12 cards have simplified black-and-white drawings of characters whose faces have been left blank, and each cards represents a specific theme (e.g., self-image, needs and fantasies, autonomy). The manual provides guidelines for response evaluation, but no normative data are reported. The *CSRPI* has not been reviewed by the *MMY*.

Adolescent Apperception Cards

The new generation of thematic apperception tests also included an instrument designed specifically for adolescents: the *Adolescent Apperception Cards (AAC)*; Silverton, 1993). The *AAC* cards show black-and-white drawings of scenes that represent issues relevant in adolescence, such as peer interaction, gang activities, and sexuality. The set of 11 cards has some parallel cards for boys and girls, and that *AAC* includes a parallel minority version. The manual briefly describes the test's cognitivist theoretical framework, but does not provide a system for the scoring or evaluation of responses or any normative data. The *AAC* has not been reviewed by the *MMY*.

THE THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TEST TODAY

It is clear that changes within the discipline of psychology have had a significant influence on the development of thematic apperception tests over the years. The initial enthusiasm for projective testing, which brought the early generation of thematic apperception tests for children, was severely dampened during the behaviorist years in the 1960s and 1970s. New instruments that appeared in this period were severely criticized and few have survived to this day.

Since the 1980s, however, the almost sectarian division between psychometric test developers and clinical adherents of thematic apperception tests has become

less prominent. A renewed interest in personality assessment, coupled with the reformulation of psychodynamic theory and the shift from behaviorism to a more cognitive emphasis on mental functioning, has fostered a more benign climate for this instrument for personality assessment. Now, psychologists are once again interested in the individual's construction of meaning (Bruner, 1985; Goodman, 1984; Howard, 1989), and the thematic apperception test fits comfortably into this new cognitivist orientation (Blatt, 1990).

An index for this renewed interest is that no less than six new thematic apperception tests for children appeared in the 1980's and 1990's. These instruments represent a distinct divergence from previous generations of thematic apperception tests. Newer thematic apperception tests for children, have highly structured stimulus material, with cards depicting recognizable contemporary situations. Such features reflect the needs of clinicians, who favor cards depicting ordinary people in realistic everyday settings instead of cards with fantastic or unreal settings and gloomy figures as in the *TAT* (Holmstrom, Silber, & Karp, 1990). In contrast with older instruments, moreover, there is now more concern about bias toward minority groups (Gordon & Terrell, 1981; Moran, 1990), and for this reason clinicians prefer instruments with ethnic characters on the cards (Dana, 1985b). Consequently, most of the thematic apperception tests for children that were developed in the 1980s and 1990s carry parallel versions for children from minority groups.

Another distinctive feature compared with earlier thematic apperception tests is the focus on test reliability and validity. Instruments that were published in the 1980s and 1990s have given special attention to the standardization of administration and scoring and the development of normative data. Clearly, developers of thematic apperception tests for children now aim to produce instruments that satisfy psychometric standards (Barnett & Macmann, 1990; Polyson, Norris, & Ott, 1985).

FURTHER READING

- The historical overview presented here shows how thematic apperception tests have changed over the years. Notably, instruments developed recently have more modern stimulus material, often with parallel versions for ethnic minorities, and a more structured approach to administration and scoring. The changes reflect a shift in some basic assumptions regarding the process involved in responding to a thematic apperception test. These issues are discussed in *CHAPTER 4: THE PROJECTIVE HYPOTHESIS AND THEORIES OF PROJECTION* and *CHAPTER 5: FOUR COMMON ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TESTS*.
- Characteristic of recently developed thematic apperception tests for children is their “actuarial” approach, in which response scoring is based on a specific system involving numerical scores and validation is grounded on statistical procedures. This shift from a clinical to a psychometric approach in the development of thematic apperception tests has taken place without much notice from academic psychology (Masling, 1997). The implications of a psychometric approach to thematic apperception tests are discussed in *CHAPTER 6: HOW RELIABLE ARE THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TESTS?* and *CHAPTER 7: ARE THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TESTS VALID INSTRUMENTS?*
- Clinicians can choose from a variety of thematic apperception tests for child assessment. *CHAPTER 3: CURRENT THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TESTS FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS* reviews the instruments that are now on the market and discusses their relative merits for child and adolescent assessment. Some conclusions pertaining to the use of thematic apperception tests in child assessment in *CHAPTER 8: USING THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TESTS IN CHILD ASSESSMENT*.

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