A Descriptive Analysis of Responses to the Religious Apperception Test

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A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES TO THE
RELIGIOUS APPERCEPTION TEST

By

Robert A. Meyer

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

March
1960
Robert A. Meyer was born in Chicago, Illinois, July 2, 1931.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express his indebtedness to Rev. V.V. Herr, S.J. and Rev. W.J. Devlin, S.J., co-directors of the Loyola N.I.M.H. Project, for permission to use the data collected on this project.

Special thanks is due to Dr. F.J. Kobler, who directed the thesis, and whose encouragement was always appreciated.

The Religious Apperception Test and the data utilized in this study are the product and property of the Loyola Project on Religion and Mental Health.
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The Religious Apperception Test was developed as part of a battery of tests used to investigate the ideas, attitudes, problems and needs of seminary administrators, faculty and students, regarding mental health. (The test) is an adaptation of the principles underlying the thematic apperception technique which in this case is designed to apply to clergymen. Ten pictures were prepared for the project in which the subject is confronted with meaningful problems of a mental health nature involving a priestly function. (Kobler, Webb, Herr, & Devlin, 1959, p. 44-45)

The purpose of this study was to analyze the responses given to the RAT by a group of normal seminarians from three different religious orders or societies. As it has been defined by the title, the analysis was descriptive only, limited to manifest content of the stories produced and did not include any interpretation of the underlying dynamics. The aim of this analysis was not to examine the stories produced for any "deep" interpretation or to study thematic sequences in the record of an individual subject, but merely to ascertain
what the subjects as a group could produce from the stimulus materials descriptively.

The unit of analysis was not the individual subject but the picture itself. All of the stories about one picture were examined as a set in order to determine what would constitute the typical, descriptive reaction to the picture. The subject was then compared with other subjects for each story. There was no comparison of the ten responses of a given subject from picture to picture. Basically, what was done was that the frequency was determined of the actual descriptions of the figures, objects, and problems and outcomes that were stated by the subjects.

The explicit purpose of this study was to establish descriptive, normative data based upon a sample of seminarians for the RAT, but it was also felt that it provided a basis for assessing the attitudes and feelings of seminarians toward pictorial situations of a psychological character. There is also the possibility of the test being used clinically, but there are not now enough available statistical data on expected responses for psychologists to determine accurately to what degree, if any, a response or comment may be unique in a normal sense or indicative of abnormality. It is hoped that the present study may be useful not only for purposes of research, in gaining knowledge of systematic data, but also in providing
a basis for clinical application. The normative or average response determined from studies of this type can be employed as a standard, and other individual responses to the same stimuli can then be compared with these typical responses in order to see if the individual response deviates significantly from these norms.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of the literature related to this thesis will be grouped under three main headings: 1) to review the literature assessing attitudes with thematic tests, 2) to discuss the reasons for developing a special apperceptive test that has a similarity between the subject and the central figure in the stimulus card, and 3) to review the literature of studies with regard to methods of establishing norms for thematic materials.

Assessing attitudes with thematic tests

Over ten years ago, it was suggested by Krech and Crutchfield (1948) that projective techniques might be profitably used in the measurement of social attitudes, particularly those which prove inaccessible to other means of measurement.

One of the pioneering studies that employed a clinical instrument, the TAT, for the purpose of assessing the development of beliefs and attitudes was that of Murray and Morgan (1945) in which the personality structures of eleven college men were studied intensively in an attempt to see the relationship among personality structure, cultural influences and sentiments (attitudes) about God, war, the family, and sex.
A similar study of religious beliefs and attitudes was conducted by French (1945-46) where she employed the TAT as part of her test battery.

Another attempt to assess attitudes toward religion was made by Godin and Goupex (1957) using specially constructed pictures involving religious situations.

Haggard (1942) studied the general attitudes of young children with a projective technique using comic-strip characters. The child was asked to name his favorite comic-strip hero. He then became the author and told how his hero would act in given situations.

Five political cartoons were presented by Fromme (1941), each with four alternative captions judged by the author to represent a full range of pro and con opinions. The subjects were required to choose the most appropriate caption for each cartoon. The choice was taken as a measure of attitude, and the discussion provoked by the procedure provided diagnostic data for projective interpretations.

Frenkel-Brunswik and Sanford (1945) used four thematic pictures especially aimed at racial attitudes as part of their study of personality factors in anti-Semitism. The pictures were of "Jewish looking people in a poor district", "an older Negro woman with a younger Negro boy", "a young couple in zoot suits", and "a lower class man accosted by a policeman
wielding a nightstick". Subjects were told that this was a test of imagination and asked to write a story about each picture. Data were interpreted qualitatively, with emphasis on the form of the attitudes toward minority group members and the role of these attitudes in different kinds of personalities.

The TAT was adapted as a projective technique for the measurement of attitudes toward labor by Proshansky (1943). He selected from magazines and newspapers a number of pictures that depicted various social conflict situations involving labor and that were ambiguous as to outcome as far as labor was concerned. Subjects, who were college students, were shown the pictures briefly one at a time and after each exposure were instructed to give a detailed account of what the picture represented and to make up a story about it. The responses of the subjects were rated by three expert judges as to the degree of anti-labor or pro-labor attitude revealed.

Various modifications of the TAT were developed for the purpose of assessing attitudes toward psychiatrists, psychiatric treatment, and mental hospitals.

Reznikoff, Brady and Zeller (1959) employed three pictures consisting of a male "Patient-Doctor" picture, an equivalent female "Patient-Doctor" picture, and a "Psychiatric Hospital" picture. These three pictures were employed to assess attitudes toward both psychiatrists and psychiatric hospitals.
Libo (1957) employed four pictures constructed to elicit stories about patient-therapist interactions. The goal of his technique was to predict whether or not a patient will return for his next scheduled interview.

Gaudill (1958) devised a set of thematic pictures that covered four general areas of hospital life: the hospital-in-general, therapy, administration, and human relations. He hoped to gather material on the similarities and differences in attitudes and role perceptions of the various groups in the hospital. His total sample was composed of 6 senior doctors, 5 resident doctors, 10 nurses, and 18 patients.

_Similarity between subject and central figure in the stimulus_ Murray (1943) in his manual on the TAT suggested that at least one card should be chosen, showing a figure of approximately the same age and sex as the subject.

Thompson (1949) employing Murray's suggestion, believed that the closer the stimulus resembles the actual subject, the more likely the subject will identify with the figure and be likely to produce more meaningful material. He attempted to do this by constructing a set of TAT cards similar to the original TAT, except that Negro characters were substituted for white ones.

Since Thompson's revision, many criticisms have been made of this new modification. It has been reported that "Negroes and whites in the North produced stories that differed
insignificantly in length regardless of whether the stimulus material was Negro or not" (Riess, Schwartz, & Gottingham, 1950, p. 708).

Korchin, Mitchell and Meltzoff (1950) used two samples of 80 Negro and 80 white male subjects, half of each group being "middle class" while the other half was of "low" socioeconomic status. Their analysis of the results showed no significant effects due to race, nor any significant interaction between race and status for story length. Only the "class" differences were significant (p < .01), with the "middle class" telling the longer stories.

Light (1955), in another study, divided 26 white students into two groups of 13 each, one-half receiving the Murray TAT, while the other half received the Thompson modification. No significant differences in story length were found.

Cook (1953) used 60 male college students (30 Negro and 30 white) divided into four groups of fifteen each. One-half of the Negro and white groups each received the Thompson modification of the TAT, while the remaining two groups received Murray's TAT. Cook wanted to examine the relationship between tendency toward ego-defensiveness as a function of a decrease in remoteness between the subject and the stimuli used. The measures of ego-defensiveness used were word count, compliance with instructions given, vagueness of stories, number of words
indicating uncertainty, number of alternatives offered, excessive use of description, and number of different themes offered. No significant differences solely attributable to the two sets of pictures were found. Cook believed that his findings indicated that the more remote the relationship between the stimulus and the subject, the less the ego-defensiveness.

Many of these criticisms have been summarized where it was pointed out that

mere similarity between the S and the central figure in the stimulus card is insufficient to expedite the projection of meaningful responses. Projection is most readily elicited when the stimulus figure is culturally high in status and yet not so similar to the S as to arouse his suspicion as to the purpose of testing. It is not similarity per se that accounts for the censoring of responses, but the new awareness of the background characteristics (i.e., purpose of the testing) which cause the S to filter his responses. Other background factors such as race of the examiner may also play a part in determining the nature of the response elicited. (Murstein, 1959, p. 11)

Lasaga y Travieso and Martinez-Arango (1946) in working with nuns, found no improvement in the diagnostic value of the TAT stories when they substituted nuns for the usual TAT central figures.

In a study previously cited (Godin and Coupez, 1957) involving "Religious Projective Pictures", fifty Catholic girls whose average and median age was eighteen years, with a range
of 15 to 21 years, were presented with two series of pictures. Series I contained seven situations and relationships that were in themselves non-religious. Series II contained five situations and relationships presenting a context bearing on objects or people materially religious. The expected results indicated that Series II produced significantly more religious associations than Series I.

**Normative studies with thematic materials**

Even though the TAT has been in use as a clinical instrument for over 15 years, still little has been done about developing norms for the test.

Murray (1943), when he developed the TAT, listed in his manual norms for male college students. He listed the average words per story and the average total score and range of scores for 28 needs and 30 or more press.

Other normative studies have been carried out with certain clinical groups; Balken (1943) and Eron (1948, 1950) with schizophrenics, Klebanoff (1947) with alcoholics, and Leitch (1947) with psychotic children. All of these studies provided some data on normal responses by reports on control subjects.

Henry (1956) lists the stimulus properties of 31 TAT cards. His description of each card contains the following categories: I. Murray's Description, II. Manifest Stimulus Demand, III. Form Demand, IV. Latent Stimulus Demand, V. Fre-
quent Plots, and VI. Significant Variations. No indication was given as to how he developed these categories or to the size of the sample he employed.

Tentative apperceptive norms for the TAT have been developed by Rosenzweig and Fleming (1949) where they tried to determine the common ways in which the cards are described and interpretively used by two groups of normal men and women with fifty in each respective group. They also reported means and standard deviations for the length of each story, the reaction time to the story, and the amount of time spent in telling each story. Their classification of the stories were under three main headings: I. Human figures, II. Objects noted, and III. Problems and outcomes.

The design that Rosenzweig and Fleming developed with the TAT was also employed by Peters and Bellak (1954) and Brower and Bellak (1953) where they developed apperceptive norms for the CAT and the CAT-Supplement.
CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

The RAT is composed of ten 8" X 10" pictures that were drawn by an artist to depict "meaningful problems of a mental health nature involving a priestly function". (Kobler et al., 1959, p. 45)

The description of each picture is as follows:
I. A priest giving a sermon in front of a congregation in a church background.

II. An older priest talking to a younger priest; both walking in a garden.

III. Two young priests standing in discussion; one holding a mental health text.

IV. A priest with a troubled look on his face in a psychiatrist's office.

V. A priest-instructor talking to a class of young priests holding a book by Freud.

VI. A priest consoling the relative of a patient entering a mental hospital.

VII. A seminarian studying a book on the "Psychology of Adjustment".
VIII. A priest visiting a patient in a mental hospital.
IX. A young priest in a counseling session with a young woman.
X. A scene in confession; a woman and a priest.

The RAT was administered individually by several faculty members of a university's psychology department to 50 Catholic seminarians who were also members of a religious order or society. Three specific groups of seminarians were chosen on the basis of size of the representative seminary (order or society). Thirty seminarians were chosen from a relatively large group of religious, i.e., approximately 8000 members, 14 seminarians were chosen from a medium size group of religious, i.e., approximately 3000 members, and 6 seminarians were chosen from a relatively small group of religious, i.e., approximately 800 members.

The subject's ages ranged from 21 years to 29 years with a mean age of 24.8 years and a standard deviation of 1.8 years.

In order to ascertain the normality of the group, the 50 seminarians were administered The Loyola Language Study (Herr, 1957). The individual scores on this test indicated that the seminarians in this sample were not a part of a psychiatric population. Another criterion that partially establishes the normality of the sample is the screening process of the religious community itself.
The formal administration of the RAT followed closely the instructions recommended for use with the Thematic Apperception Test, i.e.,

this is a test of imagination, one form of intelligence. I am going to show you some pictures, one at a time; and your task will be to make up as dramatic a story as you can for each. Tell what has led up to the event shown in the picture; describe what is happening at the moment, what the characters are feeling and thinking; and then give an outcome, (i.e., give a past, present and future). Speak your thoughts as they come to your mind. Do you understand? (Murray, 1943, p. 3)

The design used for the classification of the stories was based upon Rosenzweig and Fleming's (1949) design for their apperceptive norms for the TAT. Apperceptive norms can be defined as those items that pertain to the descriptive statements made by the subject about the stimulus materials presented to him. They are, in other words, stimulus-orientated.... The apperceptive norms thus serve not only to define the person's agreement with the group but also to delimit what is characteristic of him as an individual, thus paving the way for an understanding of him intra-individually as well as inter-individually. (Rosenzweig, 1949, pp. 477-480)

The classification of the ten stories have three main categories: I. Human figures (location on the card, sex, age, identity, and other characteristics), II. Objects noted (including landscape or background), and III. Problems and outcomes
(story content). Subheadings, especially those under Problems and outcomes, were chosen on an as needed basis according to the requirements of the particular card and productions elicited by the subjects. The actual comments of the subjects in each of the three main areas determined what items were counted in each set of stories. Some of the categories did overlap, i.e., a subject may have called the character in the picture a priest, a student, or both a priest and a student. Finally, percentages were calculated in terms of the number of times a specific category was cited. Only those categories which appeared six per-cent of the time or more were listed.

Table II gives the size of the samples, the means and standard deviations of the reaction times for the stories elicited by each card. Table III gives the size of the samples, the means and standard deviations of the total wordage for each card.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

TABLE I

FREQUENCIES OF APPEARCEPTIVE RESPONSES BY PERCENTAGES FOR RAT CARDS

(N=50 stories per card)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CARD I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Figure in foreground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undesignated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Other characterizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newly ordained and little experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Serious expression............................... 12
First sermon...................................... 16
Self-conscious..................................... 8
Lacks enthusiasm.................................. 8

B. Figures in background

1. Sex
   Undesignated.................................... 88
   Female........................................... 18
   Male............................................. 10

2. Age
   Undesignated.................................... 98

3. Identity
   Congregation.................................... 88
   Nuns............................................. 10

4. Other characterizations
   Undesignated.................................... 26
   Attentive....................................... 24
   Not attentive................................... 20
   Impressed and emotionally moved.............. 8
   Vague features.................................. 6

II. Objects

A. Pulpit
   Noted............................................ 38

B. Undesignated................................... 30
C. Church or cathedral

Noted..................................... 22

III. Problems and outcomes

A. Priest giving a sermon to his congregation 66
   Can't get idea of God to his congregation. 50
   Inspires his congregation.................... 20

B. Congregation accepts the sermon............. 10
   Only some accept the sermon................. 10

C. Priest giving his first sermon.............. 16
   Anxiously................................ 12
   Successfully................................ 8
   With confidence............................. 6

CARD II

I. Figures

A. Figure on left

1. Sex
   Male........................................ 100

2. Age
   Older....................................... 64
   Undesignated.............................. 34

3. Identity
   Priest...................................... 56
   Superior................................... 22
   Seminarian................................. 12
4. Other characterizations

Conversing........................................... 42
Giving advice....................................... 32
A religious.......................................... 22
Sympathetic......................................... 12
Unfriendly...........................................  8

B. Figure on right

1. Sex

Male.................................................... 100

2. Age

Younger................................................ 74
Undesignated........................................ 26

3. Identity

Seminarian...........................................  62
Priest.................................................. 24
Novice..................................................  6

4. Other characterizations

Conversing........................................... 36
Seeking advice....................................... 22
A religious.......................................... 28
Distressed about a problem....................... 18
Idealistic and/or enthusiastic....................  8
II. Objects
   A. Undesignated................................................. 46
   B. Landscape
      Noted.............................................................. 38
   C. Seminary
      Noted.............................................................. 22
   D. Novitiate
      Noted.............................................................. 6
   E. Cassocks
      Noted.............................................................. 6

III. Problems and outcomes
   A. Seminarians and/or priests conversing about daily problems.................. 44
   B. Seminarian asking for advice................................................. 34
      Profits from advice.................................................... 16
      Rejects advice........................................................... 12
      Accepts advice........................................................... 8
   C. A seminarian with a vocational problem........................................... 8
   D. A disagreement between teacher and pupil.......................................... 8

CARD III

I. Figures
   A. Figure on left
      1. Sex
         Male............................................................... 98
### 2. Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undesignated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td>14</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminarian</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undesignated</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4. Other characterizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characterization</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>Discussing mental health problem</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General conversation</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressed interest in mental health principles</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A religious</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding a book</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a personal problem</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

### B. Figure on right

#### 1. Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</table>

#### 2. Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undesignated</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3. Identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminarian</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Objects

A. Psychology or mental health book
   Noted........................................... 68

B. Study Hall
   Noted........................................... 30

C. Corridor
   Noted........................................... 16

III. Problems and outcomes

A. General discussion of mental health
   principles....................................... 42
   Diverse opinions expressed.................... 24
   Expression of a negative attitude........... 12

B. General discussion of problems............ 26
C. A serious mistake is made because of incompetent application of mental health principles.

CARD IV

I. Figures

A. Sole figure

1. Sex
   Male........................................100

2. Age
   Undesignated................................72
   Old.........................................24
   Young.......................................6

3. Identity
   Priest......................................88
   Seminarian................................8
   Undesignated................................8

4. Other characterizations
   Has a personal psychological problem.. 88
   Has a negative attitude toward psychiatry.....................................8

II. Objects

A. Psychiatrist's office
   Noted.........................................90

B. Undesignated................................10
III. Problems and outcomes

A. Person with a psychological problem
   seeking help from a psychiatrist
   Feels humiliated or anxious about seeing a psychiatrist
   He is helped or cured
   He is not helped or cured

B. Person seeking help from a psychiatrist for someone other than himself

CARD V

I. Figures

A. Figure in foreground
   1. Sex
      Male
   2. Age
      Undesignated
   3. Identity
      Teacher
      Priest
   4. Other characterizations
      Explaining Freudian theory
      Negative attitude toward Freud

B. Figures in background
   1. Sex
2. Age
Undesignated.......................... 86
Young.................................. 14

3. Identity
Seminarians........................... 56
Students.............................. 50

4. Other characterizations
Interested in the lecture............... 30
Undesignated.......................... 28
Diverse opinions about Freud......... 18
Psychology class....................... 8
Negative opinion toward Freud or
mental health principles.............. 6
Bored with lecture..................... 6
Scandalized by lecture on Freud...... 6

II. Objects
A. Book
Noted..................................... 78

B. Classroom
Noted..................................... 20

C. Undesignated.......................... 8

D. Table
Noted..................................... 6
III. Problems and Outcomes

A. Teacher explains Freudian theory to class. Emphasizes good points of the theory. Diverse opinions on Freud expressed. Seminarians become better priests because of introduction to dynamic principles. Emphasizes the errors of the theory. Objective criticisms made about Freud. Students are bored or hostile toward Freudian theory. Students want a more positive viewpoint presented on Freudian theory.

CARD VI

I. Figures

A. Figure in right foreground

1. Sex
   Male.................................................. 100

2. Age
   Undesignated.......................................... 88
   Young................................................... 12

3. Identity
   Priest.................................................... 98

4. Other characterizations
   Comforting a woman................................. 84
Feels helpless ........................................ 34
Feels sad ........................................ 8

B. Figure in left foreground
1. Sex
   Female ........................................ 98
2. Age
   Undesignated .................................. 90
   Young ......................................... 10
3. Identity
   Mother ......................................... 54
   Wife .......................................... 48
4. Other characteristics
   Grief-stricken .................................. 74
   Undesignated .................................. 18
   Feels guilty ................................... 6

C. Figure in right background
1. Sex
   Male .......................................... 92
   Undesignated .................................. 8
2. Age
   Undesignated .................................. 82
   Young ......................................... 18
3. Identity
   Mental patient .................................. 94
Son............................................... 54
Husband............................................ 48
Undesignated...................................... 6

4. Other characterizations
   Being committed to a mental hospital........ 74
   Undesignated.................................... 16
   Not a severe illness........................... 10
   Severe illness.................................. 6

D. Figure in left background
1. Sex
   Undesignated.................................... 70
   Male............................................... 30

2. Age
   Undesignated.................................... 100

3. Identity
   Undesignated.................................... 64
   Doctor............................................ 30
   Hospital orderly............................... 10

4. Other characterizations
   Undesignated.................................... 68
   Welcomes patient to the hospital............ 22
   Consoles patient............................... 8

II. Objects
   A. Mental hospital
      Noted......................................... 92
B. Suitcase

Noted.............................................. 6

C. Undesignated.................................. 6

III. Problems and outcomes

A. A priest consoling and giving advice in regard to a mental patient.................. 72

Priest feels inadequate about helping a mental patient................................. 28

Priest feels inadequate about helping a relative of a mental patient................. 28

CARD VII

I. Figures

A. Sole figure

1. Sex

Male................................................... 98

2. Age

Undesignated........................................ 72

Young................................................. 26

3. Identity

Seminarian.......................................... 66

Priest................................................. 22

Undesignated....................................... 12

4. Other characterizations

Reading.............................................. 62
<table>
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<th>Has a personal problem</th>
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<td>A religious</td>
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<td>Serious or pensive appearance</td>
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**II. Objects**

**A. Book (Psychology of Adjustment)**

Noted.......................................................... 100

**III. Problems and outcomes**

**A. Seminarian or priest seeking knowledge**

from a psychology book........................................ 92

To apply to his personal problem........................... 48

To apply in the future in his pastoral work................ 34

Book is not helpful........................................... 20

Book is helpful............................................... 14

**CARD VIII**

**I. Figures**

**A. Figure on right**

1. Sex

Male............................................................. 100

2. Age

Undesignated.................................................. 90

Young.......................................................... 10
3. Identity

Priest................................................................. 94
Prison or hospital chaplain..................... 8
Priest-psychiatrist............................................. 6

4. Other characterizations

Tries to help patient or prisoner................ 66
Feels inadequate.............................................. 52
A religious......................................................... 8

B. Figure on left

1. Sex

Male................................................................. 90
Undesignated.................................................... 8

2. Age

Undesignated.................................................... 82
Young.............................................................. 18

3. Identity

Mental patient.................................................... 80
Prisoner............................................................ 30
Alcoholic........................................................... 12
Seminarian......................................................... 6

4. Other characterizations

Uncommunicative.............................................. 26
Feels despair.................................................... 14
Undesignated.................................................... 12
Rejects or lacks confidence in priest. 8

II. Objects

A. Mental hospital
   Noted............................................... 60
B. Padded cell
   Noted............................................... 34
C. Prison
   Noted............................................... 28
D. Mattress
   Noted............................................... 16
E. Undesignated..................................... 12
F. No shoes
   Noted............................................... 8
G. Pajamas
   Noted............................................... 6

III. Problems and outcomes

A. Priest helping a mental patient or prisoner
   Noted............................................... 42
   Priest feels inadequate in helping a
   mental patient or prisoner.................... 52
   Priest is a help because of his psychiatric knowledge............. 6

CARD IX

I. Figures
A. Figure on right

1. Sex
   Female................................................. 98

2. Age
   Young..................................................... 50
   Undesignated............................................. 50

3. Identity
   Undesignated............................................. 58
   Wife......................................................... 18
   Mother....................................................... 12
   Club member.................................................. 6

4. Other characterizations
   Seeking advice............................................... 68
   Has a psychological problem............................. 22
   Has a marital or pre-marital problem.................... 22
   Resentful..................................................... 12
   General conversation......................................... 6

B. Figure on left

1. Sex
   Male.......................................................... 100

2. Age
   Undesignated.................................................. 82
   Young........................................................... 18

3. Identity
1. Figures

4. Other characterizations

Giving advice or counseling............. 84
Feels inadequate.......................... 20
Empathetic................................ 12
Self-composed............................. 6

II. Objects

A. Undesignated.............................. 60
B. Table
    Noted.................................... 18
C. Parlor
    Noted.................................... 10
D. Rectory
    Noted.................................... 6

III. Problems and outcomes

A. Priest counseling a person................... 96
   Advice is successful.......................... 26
   Advice is not successful....................... 16
B. Priest feels inadequate because of a lack of experience.................... 20

CARD X

I. Figures

A. Figure on right

1. Sex

Male............................................. 98
2. Age
   Undesignated.......................... 92
   Young.................................... 8
3. Identity
   Priest.................................. 98
4. Other characterizations
   Hearing confession.................... 58
   Bored or impatient.................... 28
   Giving advice......................... 22
   Feels fatigued......................... 12
   Sympathetic............................ 10
   Solemn or unpleasant expression....... 6
   Disgusted............................... 6
   Refuses to give absolution............ 6

B. Figure on left

1. Sex
   Female.................................. 94
   Undesignated............................ 6
2. Age
   Undesignated............................. 66
   Young.................................. 32
3. Identity
   Penitent................................ 94
   Wife.................................... 10
4. Other characterizations

Feels sorrowful or guilty............. 20
Seeks advice........................................ 16
Has an emotional problem.............. 16
Has a marital problem.................. 14
Sincere and holy............................. 12
Feels tense....................................... 6
Undesignated................................. 8

II. Objects

A. Confessional
   Noted........................................... 72
B. Undesignated................................. 28

III. Problems and outcomes

A. Priest giving advice to a penitent............. 64
   Advice is helpful and of a positive
   nature........................................... 28
   Advice is not helpful and of a negative
   nature........................................... 36
B. Priest feels inadequate in coping with
   penitent's emotional problem.............. 16
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CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this investigation was to analyze the responses given to the Religious Apperception Test in order to establish apperceptive norms for each of the ten pictures of the test. Certain conclusions may be drawn from these apperceptive norms as to the value of each card of the test in relation to the original purpose in constructing such an instrument. This purpose was "to investigate the ideas, attitudes, problems and needs of seminary administrators, faculty and students, regarding mental health." (Kobler et al, 1959, p. 44)

The following is a running commentary on each card of the RAT.

Card I had the longest initial average reaction time (13.8) for all of the ten cards, and it elicited the second lowest average number of words per story (184) being surpassed in this direction only by card VII. The long reaction time and paucity of words per story probably was due to the initial "shock" to the subjects when they were confronted with a new, unfamiliar situation for which they were not adequately prepared. This card did not elicit directly themes or attitudes about mental health. It stimulated the subjects to project their own feelings of inadequacy for the function of preaching
in their role as priests or ministers. Over one-half (66%) of the subjects perceived the picture as a priest giving a sermon to his congregation, and 50% of the subjects explicitly expressed feelings of inadequacy in their stories. This feeling of lack of success in preaching may stem from the fact that the subjects were all seminarians, and that their lack of experience in pastoral work makes them somewhat apprehensive about how they will function once they do become active in pastoral duties.

In card II, the focus of the subjects' projections was not directly on their attitudes and feelings about mental health. It was on the relationship between figures of authority and those subordinate to these figures. They were concerned more about their role as seminarians in relation to priests who were perceived as having some authority over them. One-third of the subjects perceived the stimulus as a seminarian asking for advice. Although 12% of the subjects projected feelings of resistance toward authority, 16% of the subjects expressed the feeling that no matter how they react to authority figures, they can still profit from any help given to them.

Card III is the first card in the set that definitely elicited any explicit opinion on mental health principles. This was true because over half of the subjects (68%) noticed the book on mental health as part of the stimulus. Half of
the subjects perceived the picture as two seminarians, and 42% of the subjects saw them as seminarians discussing a mental health problem. For the most part, their attitudes toward mental health were not explicitly stated although 24% expressed ambivalence and 12% expressed direct negative attitudes about mental health principles. The only thing coming close to any positive feelings about mental health principles was that 20% of the subjects expressed some interest in this area.

Card VI produced the lowest average reaction time (7.8s). This may have been due to the lack of complexity and ambiguity in this card. Ninety-eight per cent of the subjects recognized the card as a psychiatrist's office. Over 80% of the subjects organized a theme around a person seeking help from a psychiatrist, but less than one-fourth of the subjects committed themselves to any feelings about this situation as this could be determined by the outcome of the story. Although this card seems to be highly structured to elicit themes about mental health, it resulted primarily in producing a description of the card and less of the feelings about this type of stimulus.

Card V, because of its highly structured nature, elicited the common theme of a teacher explaining Freudian theory to a class. This was true for 82% of the subjects. However, only one-third of the subjects went beyond pure description of the card. Thirty per cent of the subjects expressed interest in
understanding Freudian theory, 28% expressed positive feelings, 10% expressed negative feelings, and 26% expressed ambivalence. In general, the card elicited more description about the picture than feelings and attitudes toward mental health.

Card VI elicited the common theme of a priest counseling and giving advice in regard to a mental patient from 72% of the subjects. Again, as in card I, feelings of inadequacy (28%) were projected in regard to functioning as a counselor. This again may be attributed to the fact that the subjects were seminarians and may be apprehensive as to their success in this activity of the priest.

Card VII elicited a common theme of a seminarian or priest seeking knowledge from a psychology book from 92% of the subjects. This card elicited more of an explicit attitude toward mental health than any of the preceding cards. Eighty-two per cent of the subjects projected their desire to know more about mental health principles either for their own personal benefit or to help them in their future pastoral work.

The theme of a priest helping a person on card VIII was most commonly elicited. Forty-two per cent of the subjects gave this theme. The fact that there was not much agreement among the subjects on the theme of this card may have been due to its complex structure. Six different objects were noted by the subjects as part of the stimulus. Again, as in cards I and
VI, feelings of inadequacy were projected in relation to helping other people (52%).

More agreement on a common theme was produced by card IX than by any other card. Ninety-six per cent of the subjects described the situation as a priest counseling a person. Although there was high agreement as to a common theme, only 26% of the subjects gave any outcome to the theme. In this card, 20% of the subjects explicitly stated that the figure they projected felt inadequate in a counseling situation because of a lack of experience.

Card X elicited a common theme of a priest giving advice to a penitent. Sixty-four per cent of the subjects agreed on this theme. Feelings of inadequacy were projected onto this card when 36% of the subjects felt that the outcome of the theme was of a negative nature and 16% of the subjects explicitly expressed feelings of inadequacy in coping with the problem that the card presented.

To summarize this, the apperceptive norms show that only four of the cards in the set elicited explicit themes concerning mental health principles (III, IV, V, VII). These four cards tended to produce a high degree of agreement between the subjects on a common theme. This may have been due to the structure of the cards. In these cards, there was some specific object perceived among the stimuli by 66% to 100% of the sub-
jects that served as a clue around which the subjects could organize a specific theme. The other six cards, I, II, VI, VIII, IX, and X, tended to elicit themes organized around the role of the seminarian and priest. Card II produced a common theme of the role of the seminarian in relation to authority figures, and cards I, VI, VIII, IX and X produced themes concerning the role of the priest in his pastoral duties.

It seems then that one of the purposes for constructing the RAT was not completely fulfilled because less than half of the cards produced themes from which attitudes and feelings about mental health can be directly assessed. Another purpose for constructing this instrument was to assess the role of the priest insofar as one could obtain information about his conception of his role, his conception of himself in this role, and his attitudes, needs and feelings as they are related to this role conception. Therefore, it is useful to see how a person perceives his role in life and then to see how this role is related to and composed of certain attitudes.

As far as the value of each card for eliciting feelings and attitudes, one-half of the cards (IV, V, VI, VII, IX) yielded more of a description rather than stimulating the subjects so that they became ego-involved in the stories they gave. From the data collected so far, it is difficult to ascertain whether this stress on card description was due to the sample
itself, the examiner, the stimuli, or some combination of these factors. This quite clearly indicates the limitations of the design employed in the present study.

Several methods for further research with the RAT, especially for determining the value of each card, are possible. The results of the present study can be compared with one or two control groups composed of an equal number of lay people or ordained priests to see if there is any significant difference between the responses. Another method might employ another group of seminarians using a different technique of recording the responses. In this method, each card can be presented, the subject's free-associations recorded, and then a careful, non-directive inquiry instituted would elicit more feelings and attitudes about the stimulus. Similarly, more specific instructions defining the stimulus explicitly might be given to the subjects. A third design might be to employ the transcendence index developed by Weisskopf (1950) in which a quantitative measure of the mean number of responses going beyond pure description can be ascertained.

In summary, the purpose of this study was to develop apperceptive norms for the RAT. The test was administered by several staff members of a university's psychology department to fifty seminarians who were members of several religious orders or societies. The formal administration of the test
followed closely the instructions that were recommended for use with the Thematic Apperception Test.

The analysis of the stories was descriptive only and limited to the manifest content of the stories given by the subjects. The resultant data, Table I, make available a tabulation of popular or common responses under the headings of Figures, Objects, and Problems and outcomes for each of the ten cards. With these norms as a basis, it is possible to determine the extent to which any new subject tends to participate in group ways of responding and in what respect he deviates more individually.

Other normative data on reaction times and total words for each card have been presented. Table II presents the means and standard deviations of the initial reaction time of the ten pictures of this study. The general mean reaction time for all ten pictures was 11.2 seconds; the range was from 1.0 to 66.0 seconds. The combined standard deviation for all ten pictures was 10.0 seconds. The means and standard deviations of the total words for each card are presented in Table III. The general mean for the total words of all ten pictures was 196 words, with a range from 45 to 920 words, and the combined standard deviation for all ten pictures was 117 words.

While it is expected that the apperceptive norms presented in this study will have some usefulness both in attitude
assessment and research, it should be recognized that these norms are tentative and incomplete, primarily because of the small size of the sample and the sample homogeneity.
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The thesis submitted by Robert A. Mayer has been
read and approved by three members of the committee.
APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Robert A. Meyer has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Psychology.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

August 1960

Signature of Adviser