PERSONALITY AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

A HANDBOOK OF Clinical Scoring Systems for Thematic Apperceptive Techniques

EDITED BY
SHARON RAE JENKINS

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A HANDBOOK OF

Clinical Scoring Systems for Thematic Apperceptive Techniques

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PREFACE

Sharon Rae Jenkins

> The story—from *Rumplestiltskin* to *War and Peace*—is one of the basic tools invented by the human mind, for the purpose of gaining understanding. There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories.
>
> **Ursula K. LeGuin, 1979**

When I am having difficulty understanding a therapy client's problem, I usually want to ask for examples of the problem. Sometimes this works, but more often, the client's response is hesitant and fragmented. A small change in wording is invariably helpful: "Tell me a story about a time when that happened." What follows usually flows into a clear illustration of the problem and its context, antecedents, and sequelae. Omissions can be important, too. Taping the session would allow for post hoc analysis of the response using relevant scoring systems from this book.

As a field, psychology has been struggling for over half a century to integrate science and practice. As a culture, one challenge for American society from the beginning has been to integrate into a functioning social system peoples having very different nationalities, ethnic habits, and personal histories. Our technology-driven lives only increase in complexity, with resulting tensions toward social fragmentation straining all our integrative functions.

Storytelling is a quintessentially integrative function, as shown by studies of narrative memory. Stories bring people, ideas, and feelings together around campfires and research groups. Folktales build cultures; bedtime stories raise children. Stories show what people and their societies value and wish to communicate. Understanding stories helps us understand these things, which makes them useful for clinical work with clients who have trouble understanding themselves. This use of stories has a 70-year history.

The tensions in that history are in part the tensions between science and practice. The skilled clinician accrues a repertoire of analytic approaches over a lifetime of experience—but where is the objective evidence of reliability and validity? The researcher demonstrates associations between features of stories and people's career choices and long-term health outcomes—but how is this relevant for an individual client? How can we make generalizations about individuality?

A fundamental hypothesis behind this book is that structured scoring systems for thematic apperceptive techniques (TATs) are one way to bridge the scientist–practitioner gap by enabling scientifically sound, efficient, and clinically informative examination of

clients' stories to answer focused clinical questions relevant to diagnosis, estimation of prognosis, and effective treatment planning. Testing this hypothesis requires a body of research using specific systems for clinically appropriate purposes. Such research has been difficult because the scoring manuals and practice stories necessary for both clinical and research use have not been available widely, if at all. This collection of scoring manuals makes available a selection of promising ones, and the summary chapters for each explain their best uses, evidence for validity and reliability, and priorities for future research.

This book should be in the library of every faculty member and clinical supervisor who is responsible for teaching courses in psychological assessment or supervising assessment students in clinical, counseling, school, or forensic psychology, whether in academic or practice settings, practicum sites, or internships. It may also be useful as an assessment course text. In chapter 2, procedures for learning how to score will be especially useful for that purpose, as its pedagogical principles generalize to data from other less structured assessment techniques. Practicing assessment psychologists will find the book a handy reference resource, given its coverage of common clinical problems. Researchers in these areas who are interested in storytelling techniques, especially thesis and dissertation students, will find it useful for identifying interesting research problems and choosing variables, as well as for training scorers. They may also turn to chapter 3 for broader suggestions for future research.

Any movement from general to specific, or vice versa, involves a leap of inference. The traditional clinical approach to story analysis has involved large leaps of inference—albeit highly educated—using abstract theoretical constructs and frameworks to structure the assessor's understanding of the stories and thus of the particular client. This approach allows for a highly detailed and individualized understanding of the person, but might make it difficult to see the client's commonalities with others. Yet if no generalizations can be made, how can we know whether what helped the last client might help this one?

Structured scoring systems minimize leaps of inference by providing the assessor with detailed, specific descriptions of what to look for in each story: words, phrases, images, structural features, degrees of intensity. These *scoring category criteria* indicate what to do if the material described is found: assign a point or a scale rating, or make some other decision. One requirement of these descriptions is that they be sufficiently clear and detailed that most appropriately trained people, given the same rules for observation, will usually see the same thing in the same place. This requirement of *interscorer reliability* meets the scientific criterion for objectivity, that is, agreement on whether or not the phenomenon to be identified has in fact been observed.

Academic psychology has had a 55-year history of such scoring systems for personality variables, most notably the human motivation scoring systems pioneered by David C. McClelland, John W. Atkinson, David G. Winter, and their colleagues, as discussed in more detail in chapter 1. The fact that there is a parallel 55-year history in clinical psychology is less well known, in part because the lengthy and detailed materials for using these systems have rarely been published. Phebe Cramer's 1991 book, *The development of defense mechanisms* (Springer-Verlag), is a notable exception. For my Faculty Development Leave from the University of North Texas, I set out to locate interesting systems for which there was both some evidence of interscorer reliability and some evidence for validity of a clinically useful nature, as described in more detail in chapter 1. Unfortunately, from the start my search was limited by my lack of adequate competence in languages other than English, which forced the omission of Vica Shentoub's highly recommended 1990 *Manuel d'utilisation du TAT* (Dunod).

Not only were there many more systems with publication records than I had guessed, but also there were so many that I had to set priorities for choosing among similar systems! Of the 37 clinically interesting systems that were initially identified and ultimately not included, 14 were dropped for lack of at least one solid published clinical validational study or evidence of one in progress, and seven did not report evidence of interscorer reliability. In some cases, more recent systems known to me had incorporated older ones, making pursuit of the latter unnecessary; seven were redundant with and superseded by a system that met more criteria better.

The next challenge was to find the originator and to explore the possibility of chapter authorship. In that, too, I was surprisingly successful, given the ages of some of the earlier authors. Melvin Feffer was pleased and flattered to hear from me in his retirement, he said, and he gave permission for me to revise and elaborate on the manual that he had thoughtfully archived at the Library of Congress American Documentation Institute. Sadly, he died before seeing the final product. Sidney Ornduff was in a somewhat similar situation with Reuben Fine, whose manual she obtained before his death and developed for the studies described in her contribution herein. The authors who present their work here are to be commended for rooting through files that were not always ready at hand, and that in some cases might have required Stygian labors for their retrieval from basement boxes of dissertations long past.

Of the nine systems that were pursued but are not included here, two authors could not be located or did not respond to communications. Four authors declined to have their systems included. Only three systems were lost due to the tidy habits of retired authors who had discarded their materials.

The systems included here are organized into four sections, presented in roughly chronological order of their first appearance in publication, as are the systems within each:

Perceptual-Cognitive: Edith Weisskopf, Richard Dana, Melvin Feffer, George Ronan and Margaret Gibbs, Barry Ritzler

Psychodynamic: Reuben Fine, Robert Holt, Bertram Karon, Steven Huprich, Frank Summers, David Harder and Deborah Greenwald

Social-Emotional: Margaret Singer and Lyman Wynne; Antoinette Thomas; Giuseppe Costantino and Robert Malgady; Hedwig Teglasi, Constance Locraft, and Kelly Felgenhauer; David Joubert; Michelle Hoy-Watkins and Valata Jenkins-Monroe

Needs and Concerns Focused: Louis Chandler, David Ephraim

Each system is discussed in more detail toward the end of chapter 1.

Although Weisskopf died some years ago, Max Prola had preserved a version of her scoring manual as an appendix to his dissertation. With the much appreciated help of Clifford Swenson and Chris Smith at Purdue University, I subsequently located her original manual and practice stories in the collection of her papers at the State University of West Georgia. I thank Myron House and Laura Henry at the University of West Georgia's Special Collections for their assistance during a pleasant but busy afternoon in their archives.

For my personal history with TATs, I thank Richard Teevan, who chaired my undergraduate honors thesis at Bucknell University on achievement motivation and fear

of failure in groups. When I was ready to find a graduate school, Jacqueline Fleming welcomed my interest in Matina Horner's research on fear of success, taught me the scoring system, and invited me to their research group. There I met Abigail Stewart, who coincidentally came to Boston University to teach in the same week that I arrived there as a student in the new personality program. She taught me her scoring systems and supervised my dissertation using human motivation variables and her own Self-Definition/Social Definition system. Much of chapter 2 grew directly from my experiences of learning to score through individual study with Fleming and in Stewart's scoring groups.

When Carol Huffine recruited me to teach research methods courses at the California School of Professional Psychology, Berkeley/Alameda (CSPP-B/A), I was quite surprised to learn how differently my clinical psychology doctoral students approached TAT stories. It was disorienting not to have the focus of a structured scoring system's organizing principles for looking at a story. And they saw things that they said were obvious, but I could not see them! Sometimes I was not alone in that, either—so much for interscorer reliability, which did not seem to bother them as much as it did me. That was my introduction to the clinical uses of TATs, which was sufficiently provocative to interest me in learning more by taking a postdoctoral clinical certificate at CSPP-B/A, where I subsequently studied assessment with Gerald Michaels, Jacqueline Singer, David Stein, and Susan Fair.

Most of my clinical training with TATs has come from books by Magda Arnold, Leo Bellak, Phebe Cramer, William Henry, and Silvan Tomkins, with my clinical faculty and supervisors helping with the integrative functions of weaving the resulting observations into the rest of the data from the classical full battery assessment. I came to appreciate those authors' depth of insight, while also wondering, on internship working with Kevin Riley, where they could possibly find the time to take this approach with all of their clients. Clearly, the haste of modern life would not make this easy. Arguably, one advantage of structured scoring systems is that they enable well-focused information gathering with relatively less time and cogitation.

Several senior clinician scientists have been generous with their time and encouragement for this project. Phebe Cramer's 1996 book, *Storytelling, narrative, and the Thematic Apperception Test* (Guilford), was among my first sources of systems to pursue. Her willingness to spend time with me to offer suggestions about avenues to search and people to contact was essential to my rapid progress. Richard Dana became enthusiastic quickly, offering advice whenever I asked and sometimes before I was aware of needing it. His ambitions for the book inspired me. I thank Hedwig Teglasi for her 1993 book, *Clinical use of story telling* (Allyn & Bacon), another major reference source, and for her professional contributions to making TATs accessible to clinicians working with children, for our conversations, and for her enthusiasm for the work.

I am much indebted to Charles P. Smith for the careful structuring of his 1992 volume, *Motivation and personality: A handbook of thematic content analysis* (Cambridge University Press), which was the first inspiration for this project. Examining it closely shaped my thinking about how to organize this book and what features likely would help readers. His suggestions at an early stage proved strategically useful.

Virginia Demos and Chris Fowler lent their sensitive ears and inquiring minds to the early stages of my ideas for the project and its later development. Bonnie Strickland alerted me to articles of likely interest, and she and Marjorie Nott shared their home for workspace during my leave time. Bob Holt and Bert Karon were always ready to engage with the progress of the work. Irving Weiner and Drew Westen furnished stimulating ideas in writing, presentations, and conversations.

Important boosts in the search process came from Amanda Phillips, Gladys Croom, Stephanie Dudek, Clifford Swenson, Sandra Russ, Jack Gerber's Rorschach Discussion List, the Projectives Discussion List, Robert Garlan, Norm Abeles, Lee Zimmerman, and David B. Baker, director of the Archives of the History of American Psychology at the University of Akron. The assistance and hospitality of the library staff at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst's W.E.B. DuBois Library was invaluable to this guest user. The availability on their shelves of their entire collection facilitated the necessary hand search of tables of contents of the three major journals that published structured scoring systems in my pursuit of the many systems that evaded electronic indexing. My literature searches there formed the backbone of this volume.

The staff of the University of North Texas Interlibrary Loan merits special mention for handling the incoming stream of dissertations that might contain usable scoring systems. Among our Psychology Department staff, Lee Ward provided crucial support by decoding my edits, anticipating what I should have said, and formatting references with her expertise using American Psychological Association style; Phyllis Dever and Stacy Suits solved problems that, thanks to their timely intervention, never came to my attention.

Among my students, I thank Lauren Dobbs, Melissa Leeper, Luis E. Perez, Rachel White, and Derrick Carter for trusting me to guide their honors theses into potentially Herculean labors. Numerous scorers contributed suggestions and examples for the development of Ephraim's Psychocultural System, Feffer's Interpersonal Decentering, Huprich's Oral Dependency, Thomas's Affective Scale, and Weisskopf's Transcendence Index, as those authors have acknowledged. I appreciated their comments, additions, and elaborations as they pilot tested the appendix for chapter 2 on learning scoring. Diana Brown and Lizzie Woodruff were helpful in so many ways that I am sure I have not recalled them all, because they recognize how helpful unobtrusiveness can be.

At Routledge, I thank Susan Milmoe, my original editor, for her encouragement and support; Steve Rutter, her successor, for his patience with my creative approach; Nicole Buchmann, for her rapid responses at crunch time, also a time of transition for the organization; George Zimmar, Mimi Williams, Robert Sims, and the production staff at Taylor and Francis for seeing it through the final process; and Larry Erlbaum for his congenial hosting of the social hours at the Society for Personality Assessment meetings that helped me network to locate systems.

Finally, I thank Kwame Azalius Ross for the concept of *accountability to the work.*

Sharon Rae Jenkins

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SECTION I

General Principles