

Measuring Ego Development

Second Edition

Lê Xuân Hy



Psychology Press

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First Published 1996 by
Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers

Published 2014 by Psychology Press
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Psychology Press
27 Church Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 2FA

Psychology Press is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Cover design by Gail Silverman

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hy, Lê Xuân.

Measuring ego development / Lê Xuân Hy, Jane Loevinger.

p. cm.

Loevinger's name appears first on the earlier edition.

ISBN 0-8058-2060-4 (c : alk. paper).

ISBN 978-0-805-82060-7 (hbk)

I. Sentence Completion Test. I. Loevinger, Jane. II. Title.

BF698.8.S35H9 1996

155.2'83—dc20

96-6008

CIP

Publisher's Note

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original may be apparent.

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Foreword

Part I of this volume introduces the concept of ego development and the method proposed for its measurement; it includes instructions for implementing the method and self-training exercises for raters. Part II features an item-by-item scoring manual for the 36 items currently in use (Form 81).

The forthcoming companion volume, *Technical Foundations for Measuring Ego Development*, will give technical details, including the construction of the first edition and the methods employed in its current revision, sources of subjects, and the reliability and validation of the test, including its earlier versions.

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Preface

The method for scoring sentence completions presented in this manual was originally evolved for a study of women and adolescent girls, and the first edition of the manual (1970) claimed no more. By the time it was published, however, the method had already come into use in studies of men and boys. Since then, it has been used with widely varying samples, and the test has been translated into several other languages. The wide adoption testifies to the need for such a test.

The present revision of the 1970 manual incorporates three major improvements: It is based on data from and is intended for use with both males and females; its format is easier to use, according to students; the examples cited reflect current public attitudes.

The choice of ego development as the variable to measure was not arbitrary or accidental. It is the master trait (though not what is usually called a "trait"), second only to intelligence, as a kind of "hidden hand." That is to say, no matter what a psychologist sets out to measure with a test, intelligence plays a big part in the score; next to intelligence, the variable called ego level appears to be a major determinant in measurable individual differences. There are other ways of describing it and other modes of access to it, although the manual was never seen as just another psychometric device for clinicians and researchers. Our aim in constructing the scoring manual was also to deepen knowledge of personality. Correspondingly, those who master the scoring method acquire more than just another psychometric technique; the tacit component of scoring is the same thing as knowledge of ego development. An abstract knowledge of the construct cannot duplicate the insights encoded in the scoring method.

Another volume (Loevinger, 1976) has shown some of the relations of the concept of ego development to other similar conceptions, such as Kohlberg's (1964) moralization of judgment, C. Sullivan, M. Q. Grant, and J. D. Grant's (1957) interpersonal integration, Isaac's (1956) interpersonal relatability, Perry's (1970) intellectual-ethical development, and others. In contrast to those approaches, focused primarily on single aspects, definition of ego level in terms of all of its manifestations can be viewed as a strength of the method. At the same time, it is an obstacle to the inexperienced rater or to any rater who scores by rote. The number of aspects to be kept in mind is almost impossibly large. Fortunately, most raters find themselves sufficiently attuned to the conception to discover many clues within themselves. At the same time, if intuition sufficed, our labors would have been unnecessary. Scoring without the manual is much less reliable and valid than scoring with the manual.

A surprising number of sheer clerical errors occur during scoring, even when conscientious professional psychologists are the raters. Hence we recommend working in teams of no fewer than two, at least until the technique is thoroughly familiar, and checking every step even after that. Research work should depend on the consensus of two or more raters if possible; exceptions should only be made with raters of demonstrated competence.

The test is intended for group administration. Small differences in instructions and conditions have occurred during our many studies, in some cases on purpose, and they do not seem to be important. (However, major

differences in instructions are, in effect, a new and different test.) Most subjects spend about 20 or 30 minutes completing the form. An experienced rater takes about 20 minutes scoring a protocol.

To master the scoring system takes from 2 to 3 weeks of study, of course not full time, if the rater immerses him or herself in one or two items per day. We strongly recommend that anyone who wishes to use the test follow exactly the training program outlined in chapters 5 and 6 and Appendixes A and B. As early studies have shown, the scoring system can be mastered by these exercises. There have been no formal tests of persons trying to score without following the exercises, or without using the manual, and a person who does so has no right to claim to be using this method. Most raters can profit by checking some of their scoring with an experienced rater if one is available. Failing that, two people can criticize each other, which is, after all, the method originally used.

About a year's graduate work in psychology or its equivalent in technical training is a desirable prerequisite for manual users. The corresponding intellectual level is indispensable. No amount of intuition or sensibility can substitute for a disciplined knowledge, and no amount of technical training can make a first-class rater out of someone whose personal limitations bar him or her from free access to intuition and sensibility. At the same time, a highly trained clinician or a person who insists on deep interpretation of every sign may be grossly misled in this context. Sentence completions are not read for deep, hidden, or unconscious meanings. The meaning to be scored is the one that the subject recognizes as the one he or she meant.

The logic of ego theory dictates that only those with a relatively high ego level can become good raters of high level protocols. The chief access to a person's ego level is precisely that it limits what he or she can conceive and perceive; that limitation holds for raters as well as subjects. Fortunately, the manual and experience do extend a person's range. In general, groups such as professional psychologists will have people whose scores on the Sentence Completion Test (SCT) will range from the Self-aware Level through the Autonomous Level, with most of them probably at the Conscientious or Individualistic Levels. (These remarks are based on a number of small studies drawing on such subjects.) Theoretically, persons at the Self-aware Level are not first-rate raters, at least for the highest levels; however, there are no data on that point.

In summary, the personal qualifications for raters are technical training, its corresponding intellectual level, and a capacity for introspection, together with some inner freedom or access to intuition. More of one compensates for less of another in only a limited way; indeed, an overrefined conscience can be a handicap. Unfortunately, except for the technical training, which is not strictly necessary, these are qualities that one cannot judge in oneself.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the following research workers who have generously permitted us to use their data in constructing this revised manual: Sarah Beaton, Dorothy Billington, Howard Chandler, Michael D'Andrea, Diane Novy, David Patterson, Dane VerMerris, and George Vaillant.

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—Jane Loevinger

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION AND
INSTRUCTIONS TO USERS

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The Concept of Ego Development

The concept of *ego development* has roots in ancient Greek, Hebrew, and Hindu cultures.¹ Contrary to common belief, it did not originate with Freud or with later psychoanalysts. Psychoanalysis, in fact, originated in part as a rebellion against 19th-century ego psychology. Freud (1926/1959) consciously avoided using the term *ego*; he preferred words chosen from common speech to those of Latin origin, a preference that was ignored by his translators.

Once granted that the original sources were not written in English, it follows that one must look under other terms, the I (*das Ich*), the me (*le moi*), the self, and so on, to trace the relevant literature. There have been many similar or related conceptions, variously termed *moral development* (Kohlberg, 1964), *character development* (Peck & Havighurst, 1960), *interpersonal relatability* (Isaacs, 1956), *cognitive complexity* (Harvey, Hunt, & Schroder, 1961), and *interpersonal integration* (C. Sullivan et al., 1957). Many of the foregoing authors acknowledged as sources H. S. Sullivan's (1953) *Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry* and Piaget's (1932) *Moral Judgment of the Child*. Although the definitions of the various stages and their sequence are not identical from author to author, there are many similarities, too many to be considered independent phenomena (Loevinger, 1976).

Interest in all aspects of development was stimulated at the end of the 19th century by the impact of Darwin's theory of evolution. For this and other reasons, in the early 20th century a child study movement in the United States led to the founding of child welfare institutes and incorporation of the topic of child development in texts and college curricula. The standard approaches to child development, at least in the past, tended to blur the topic of ego development. Children's growth was studied in terms of chronology, taking in order the behaviors characteristic of average and not-so-average children of each successive age.

Such atheoretical approaches have the weakness that all kinds of development are occurring together. Observation by itself will never yield a concept such as ego development nor distinguish signs of ego development from signs of intellectual development, of psychosexual development, or even of adjustment. Ego development is an abstraction, and the essence of science is that abstract ideas guide observations, and observations in turn alter abstract ideas.

A long-standing issue in the study of ego development is whether the ego is derived from and more or less explained in terms of instinctual drives, as Freud and many of his followers believed in the early years of psychoanalysis. That issue separated Freud and Adler in 1911. Adler maintained that the drives were largely subordinate to the ego and the ego strove spontaneously to develop. Freud countered that to adopt Adler's view would be to give up the hard-won gains of psychoanalytic insights, but many of his followers believed that the two views could be reconciled. Some years later, Freud returned to the topic of ego development and made major theoretical contributions whose importance is not always recognized either by psychoanalysts or by their opponents (Loevinger, 1966, 1987). At the same time, some psychoanalysts and some behaviorists found common ground in the instinct-derivative view of ego development. Although that remains a major theoretical issue, it does not bear directly on the enterprise of this book.

EGO AS FRAME OF REFERENCE

A second theoretical issue, one more closely related to the present enterprise, is whether ego development is best characterized as a gradual evolutionary process or as a set of discrete stages, with distinct jumps from one stage to the next. There are problems either way.

One of Adler's best-known concepts is "style of life," which at various times he equated with self or ego, the unity

¹The topics of this chapter are discussed more fully in Loevinger (1976).

TABLE 1.1
Some Characteristics of Levels of Ego Development

Level	Code	Characteristics		
		Impulse Control	Interpersonal Mode	Conscious Preoccupations
Impulsive	E2 (I-2)	Impulsive	Egocentric, dependent	Bodily feelings
Self-Protective	E3 (Delta)	Opportunistic	Manipulative, wary	"Trouble," control
Conformist	E4 (I-3)	Respect for rules	Cooperative, loyal	Appearances, behavior
Self-Aware	E5 (I-3/4)	Exceptions allowable	Helpful, self-aware	Feelings, problems, adjustment
Conscientious	E6 (I-4)	Self-evaluated standards, self-critical	Intense, responsible	Motives, traits, achievements
Individualistic	E7 (I-4/5)	Tolerant	Mutual	Individuality, development, roles
Autonomous	E8 (I-5)	Coping with conflict	Interdependent	Self-fulfillment, psychological causation
Integrated	E9 (I-6)		Cherishing individuality	Identity

Note. The code for the previous version used I-levels and Delta; the current code uses E-levels. Adapted from Loevinger (1976, 1987).

of personality, individuality, the method of facing problems, opinion about oneself and the problems of life, and the whole attitude toward life (H. Ansbacher & R. Ansbacher, 1956, p. 174). Seemingly, according to Adler, those terms were meant to be different ways of describing a single thing or function. That is what is here called the *ego*. That view contrasts with that found in some psychoanalytic writings, where the ego is spoken of as a collection of different functions, with its "synthetic function" just one among many. Adler's view was elaborated in somewhat different style by H. S. Sullivan (1953), who preferred the term *self-system*.

The ego is remarkable for its relative stability; it changes slowly. Accounting for this stability is not always recognized as a major theoretical problem. Simply calling the ego a structure, as some psychoanalytic theorists do, and then adding that structures are, by definition, relatively stable is not a solution.

H. S. Sullivan (1953) formulated a theory of ego stability in terms of *anxiety gating*: A major purpose of the self-system is to avoid or minimize anxiety. A person tends to recognize only what is in accord with his or her already existing self-system, that is, his or her frame of reference. Discordant observations are anxiety producing, and they are consequently avoided by selective inattention. (Fingarette, 1963, preferred to say that the failure to integrate an observation into one's current frame of reference is what anxiety is, rather than the cause of an emotion called anxiety. Anxiety, to Fingarette, was meaninglessness.)

Thus, the search for coherent meanings in experience is the essence of the ego or of ego functioning, rather than just one among many ego functions. The ego maintains its stability, its identity, and its coherence by selectively gating out observations inconsistent with its current state—granting that one person's coherence is another person's gibberish. This assumption is the theoretical foundation for the use of sentence completions and other projective techniques to measure ego development. Projective techniques call on subjects to project their own frame of reference on the test material. In contrast, objective tests constrain subjects' responses within the test constructor's frame of reference.

Thus, the issue of ego stability is illuminated by Sullivan's theory of ego (self-system, he would say) coherence; the issue of how the ego develops remains, and is perhaps made even more difficult. Sullivan called on other aspects of development, including the drives, as impetus for renewed development. In psychoanalytic theory, *mastery* becomes a key term in accounting for development, although not exactly in Adler's terms (Loevinger, 1976).

If coherence is the hallmark of ego stability, then how does one identify the stable configurations? A working list of ego stages is presented in Table 1.1. This list is almost the same as the version used in the 1970 edition of this manual. However, it differs from other authors' lists of stages, but there are large overlaps. So far it has proved impossible to show by research that some configurations called *stages* are in any demonstrable way different from patterns that have been called *transitions* between stages. In some cases, what were originally seen as transitions are now labeled as stages. For methodological reasons that are detailed shortly, no quick solution to this problem seems likely.

STAGES

One of the newborn's earliest tasks is to construct for him or herself a stable world of objects. Constructing the world of objects and constructing the self are correlative. Many authors, especially many psychoanalytic theorists, refer to this period alone as ego development, but that leaves no distinctive term for the remaining stages that are the topic of our inquiry. This stage of ego formation is called the *first stage* and is acknowledged for theoretical completeness. It is beyond the scope of our work.

E2: Impulsive Stage

The lowest stage that is accessible by our methods of study is the Impulsive stage.² The child at this stage is a creature of physical needs and impulses, dependent on others for

²Capitals are used to denote stage names; lower case the everyday use of the corresponding term. No human characteristic arises all at once in one stage and disappears on passage to the next.

control. Deep and dependent attachment to caretakers is colored by physical needs. Other people are understood in terms of the simplest dichotomies, good and bad, clean and dirty. Good guys give to me, mean ones do not. The growing sense of self is affirmed by the word "No." There is little sense of causation. Punishment is arbitrary or retaliatory. Rules are poorly understood. Lacking the ability to conceptualize inner life, the child cannot distinguish physical from emotional malaise. This is normal behavior for the very young child; by school age, children optimally have advanced beyond it, but those who do not may be diagnosed as "impulsive personalities."

E3: Self-Protective Stage

The Self-protective stage, the first step toward control of impulses and hence of character development, occurs when the child becomes capable of delay for immediate advantage. Children at this stage appreciate rules and know it is to their advantage to play by them. They are creatures of more or less opportunistic hedonism; they lack long-term goals and ideals. They want immediate gratification and, if they can, will exploit others for their ends. Seeing interpersonal relationships as exploitative, they are themselves wary and self-protective. If they "get in trouble," it is because they were with the "wrong people." Thus, blame is understood but assigned to others, to circumstances, or sometimes to a part of themselves for which they do not feel responsible ("my eyes"). In small children passing through this stage in normal time, rituals and traditions tend to be prominent, a kind of embodiment of rules and controls. Older children and adults who remain at this stage see life as a zero-sum game; they may become hostile, opportunistic, or even psychopathic. However, most adults go beyond this stage, and probably most Self-protective persons find a place in normal society and may even be successful, given good luck, good looks, intellectual brilliance, or inherited wealth.

E4: Conformist Stage

In normal development, at school age or somewhere in the school years, the child negotiates the transition from the egocentric Self-protective stage to the group-centered Conformist stage. More psychologists and philosophers have described Conformity than any other stage. At this stage, the child identifies self with the group or its authority—be it parents, teachers, or peers. Rules are accepted just because they are the rules. This is the period of greatest cognitive simplicity: There is a right way and a wrong way, and it is the same for everyone all the time, or at least for broad classes of people described in demographic terms. What is conventional and socially approved is right. That is usually true with respect to conventional gender roles. However, a person who rigidly conforms to some unconventional gender norms is still a Conformist. Friendliness and social niceness are highly valued; disapproval is a potent sanction. The

person is preoccupied with appearance, material things, reputation, and social acceptance and belonging. Inner states are perceived in the simplest language (sad, happy, glad, angry, love, and understanding), contrasting with an almost physical version of inner life at lower levels (sick, upset, mad, excited) and a richly differentiated inner life at higher levels. People, including the self, are perceived in terms of stereotypes based on social groups rather than in terms of individual differences. The way people are and the way they ought to be are not sharply differentiated. People at this stage usually describe themselves and others of their in-group in socially acceptable terms. Interpersonal interaction is seen primarily in terms of actions, not feelings, and the prototypic action is talking.

Group pressure can presumably encourage transition from the Self-protective to the Conformist stage. But what impels the transition out of pure conformity? Possibly, the young person during the primary school and secondary school years finds him or herself a member of different groups that demand conformity to somewhat disparate standards. One woman, for example, said that her mother punished her for some infraction by forbidding her to go to mass. She feared punishment in the Hereafter, but her mother was the clear and present danger. An individual can hardly endure such a dilemma without abandoning his or her absolute faith in at least one of the competing authorities.

E5: Self-Aware Stage

By whatever means, the person at the Self-aware stage has become aware that not everyone, including his or her own self, conforms perfectly all the time to the characteristics that stereotypes seem to demand. Once "what I am" is untied from "what I ought to be," the way is open to begin examination of self. The ability to conceptualize inner life expands; interpersonal relationships are described not merely as actions but also in terms of feelings. In many people at this stage, there is an acute sense of the distinction between self and group; emotions such as self-consciousness and loneliness are described. At the same time, the person perceives that there may be alternative possibilities in many situations that for the Conformist are covered by absolute rules or statements. Qualifications and contingencies are allowed, although they still tend to be stated in broadly demographic terms rather than in terms of individual differences: For example, some activity is okay if you are an adult, or if you are a boy, rather than if you are personally qualified or have a deep desire for it. Such modification of absolute rules may apply to anything from sexual mores to a woman having a career. The Self-aware stage is still basically a version of Conformity.

E6: Conscientious Stage

Growth to the Conscientious stage is another major and mysterious shift, for, as Freud (1930/1961) pointed out, so long as sanctions for misdeeds come from outside oneself,

they can be escaped, but a bad conscience is ineluctable punishment. How are people induced to make that shift? The psychoanalytic answer is by identification with others admired, loved, or even feared; the social learning answer is that in the long run a person without conscience is punished or socially disapproved. The social learning answer seems more adequate to account for growth to Conformity than to growth past that stage, and intuitively conscience seems to be less calculating than is implied by social learning theory. However, research has no clear answers.

The distinctive mark of the Conscientious stage is self-evaluated standards: I approve or disapprove of a given conduct not just because my family or my schoolmates or the authorities do, but because that is what I personally feel. Of course, most people at this level do choose to adopt conformity as an everyday rule, so the difference between this stage and the Conformist and Self-aware stages is not the behavior itself. At this stage, one is guilty not primarily, or not only, when one has broken a rule, but rather when one has hurt another person. Motives and consequences are more important than rules per se; *ought* is differentiated from *is*. Inner states and individual differences are described in vivid and differentiated terms. Long-term goals and ideals are characteristic.

The Conscientious person is reflective; self and others are described in terms of reflexive traits. The only reflexive traits that regularly appear at a lower level are self-consciousness and self-confidence. The Conscientious person is self-critical but not totally rejecting of self, as are some persons at the lowest levels (as well as depressed people of any level). The recognition of multiple possibilities in situations leads to a sense of choice; decisions are made for reasons. The person strives for goals, tries to live up to ideals, and to improve the self.

The moral imperative remains, but it is not just a matter of doing right and avoiding wrong; priorities and appropriateness are considered. Moral issues are separated from conventional rules and from esthetic standards or preferences. To make such distinctions entails greater conceptual complexity than at the Conformist level or lower. Achievement is highly valued, not only in terms of competition or social approval (which always retain some importance), but in terms of one's own standards. Work, rather than being purely onerous, is an opportunity for achievement, so long as it is not dull or boring. People at this level are more likely than those at lower levels to think beyond their own personal concerns to those of society. The conscientious character has the negative aspect that the person may feel excessive responsibility for others.

E7: Individualistic Stage

Where the Conscientious person has a vivid sense of individual differences, the person at the next stage (Individualistic) has a sense of individuality, of the personality as a whole or the style of life. There is a greater tolerance for individual differences than at earlier stages. The inner self and the outer self are often differentiated, a distinction an-

ticipated at the Conscientious level in concern about deceptive behavior. Although a concern for the problems of dependence and independence is a recurrent one, at this stage the person distinguishes physical, financial, and emotional dependence; there is particular concern for emotional dependence. Relationships with other people, which have been becoming deeper and more intensive as the person grew from the Conformist to the Conscientious stage, are recognized as being partly antagonistic to the striving for achievement and the sometimes excessive moralism and responsibility for others at the Conscientious level.

There are other new elements at the Individualistic level, more fully developed at the Autonomous stage. These ideas include psychological causation and psychological development. Below the Conscientious stage, almost no one ever mentions spontaneously the development of personality or of traits. Another new element is a concept of people as having and being different in different roles. The prime example of role differentiation—that a modern woman is expected to serve as wife, mother, housekeeper, lover, working woman, and so on—has become such a staple topic of women's magazines that it turns up at lower levels too. It illustrates the fact that not all clichés are Conformist.

E8: Autonomous Stage

Autonomy is a need that recurs throughout life in different forms. Erikson (1950) used the term *autonomous* for the stage here designated as Self-protective. The young child, even in the Impulsive stage, asserts him or herself by demanding to "do it by self." Here the term *autonomy* is reserved for a stage at the other end of the scale. Its chief characteristic is the recognition of other people's need for autonomy. There is also some freeing of the person from the excessive striving and sense of responsibility characteristic of the Conscientious stage. Moral dichotomies are no longer typical. They are replaced by a feeling for the complexity and multifaceted character of real people and real situations. There is a deepened respect for other people and their need to find their own way and even make their own mistakes. Crucial instances are members of one's own family, particularly one's children.

Conflicts between needs and desires are recognized and often acknowledged as part of the human condition, and thus they are not totally solvable. There is a high toleration for ambiguity and recognition of paradoxes. Humor is not hostile but tends instead to be existential, touching on the droll aspects of the nature of things. The Conscientious person's striving for achievement is transmuted into a search for self-fulfillment.

E9: Integrated Stage

Only a few individuals, probably less than 1% of an urban population in the United States, for example, reach the theoretical highest point, the Integrated stage. Data at present do not suffice to describe fully this theoretical high point.

Maslow (1954) probably provides what is the best description of the self-actualizing person. Because this stage is rare in most samples and there are major differences among qualified raters both as to the description of this level and application of the description in particular cases, under most circumstances it is best combined with the Autonomous stage.

There is a temptation to see the stages of ego development as a kind of ladder to be climbed and to suppose that the people at the highest stages are the best adjusted. There are probably well-adjusted people of all stages; surely, many children are well-adjusted, and they cannot be at the highest stages. In principle, ego maturity and adjustment must be described independently in order to ascertain empirically the relation between them. Those who remain below the Conformist level at maturity may be described as maladjusted from the point of view of some pillars of society; nonetheless, they may become quite successful in life. Because acknowledgment of inner conflict is one of the clearest signs of high ego level, some of those at the highest level may appear to be or may in fact be among those who are not well adjusted. On the other hand, some persons in the Conformist to Conscientious range may also have conflicts, acknowledged or not.

The relation between adjustment and ego level depends on one's definition of terms. From one point of view, each ego level has its own appropriate mode of adjustment, but in that case, not much is added by asserting a relation of ego development to adjustment. From another point of view, there are meanings to adjustment that do permit comparison of different ego levels. Then they must be defined independently, and one could argue that the result does not do justice to the characteristic adjustment of the highest levels.

Understandably, there is special interest in the lowest and highest stages, because both have some aura of mystery. The origins of the ego are fascinating for some of the same reasons as the origins of any psychological function. The highest stages are fascinating in part because they embody so much of what each of us aspires to or believes that he or she has achieved. But to describe ego development as simply the progression from the Impulsive stage to the Autonomous or Integrated stage, implying that the developmental course is a steady progression from low to high, would be a grievous mistake. The vast majority of people would not be described that way, and the process itself would be distorted, because neither the individual differences in ego development nor the dialectics of the most populous stages would be represented. What is most observable, either in slow progression or in individual differences within a cohort, is the range from the Self-Protective to the Conformist and from the Conformist to the Conscientious stages.

METHODOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES

Table 1.1 summarizes our current views on the substance of the successive stages. In one way or another it differs from what any of the other investigators in the field has drawn up

or would do when making a similar table. All of us deal with data, with hundreds or even thousands of cases, so why should there be such unresolved differences?

First, there is no one-to-one correspondence between any bit of behavior and its underlying disposition—in this case, ego level. No bit of behavior is or can be assumed to be more than probabilistically related to ego level.

Second, all kinds of development are occurring at the same times. There is no completely error-free method of separating one strand of development from another. A particular bit of behavior may, and in general must be assumed to, reflect more than one strand of development. Ego development is conceptually distinct from intellectual development and psychosexual development, but it is bound to be correlated with them during childhood and adolescence. There is not even a guarantee of “local independence”; that is, even for a group of constant chronological age, there may be a correlation between ego development and other strands of development. Thus, there is a confounding of variance that no amount of data will resolve into its component sources. If one depends entirely on empirical methods, one is at the mercy of confounded variance; so theory must always temper reliance on data, even more so because our data inevitably contain gaps.

Third, there is no error-free method of distinguishing probable signs of one ego level from signs of a probable correlate. To the extent that the correlates are other developmental variables, this principle is the same as the second one. Other correlates, such as socioeconomic status (SES), are not developmental. How can one be sure whether a particular kind of behavior results from low ego level or associated low economic and social level? In principle, with infinite amounts of data, one could decide; in practice, with the kinds of data available, one cannot be sure.

Fourth, no task can be guaranteed to display just what one wants to know about ego level. In a structured test, the investigator is projecting his or her own frame of reference rather than tapping the frame of reference of the subjects, which is what reveals their ego level. In unstructured tests, one cannot control what the subject will choose to reveal. Testers become very adept at interpreting minimal signs, but there is always the chance a person will conceal all or respond in a way that conceals usual ego level, in whatever sense others reveal theirs.

Fifth, every person in principle displays behavior at more than one level. Every behavior sample must be assumed to be diverse with respect to level. The basic tasks of psychometrics are to translate qualitative aspects of behavior to quantitative and to reduce diverse observations to single scores. There is no unique way to do either. Different psychometric procedures may lead to at least slightly different pictures of successive stages.

Sixth, there are intrinsic difficulties in assigning behavioral signs to any developmental level. A sign that appears at one level in tentative or embryonic version appears at higher levels in increasingly clear and elaborated versions. In sentence completions, a thought that appears at one level

as a cliché appears in deeper, more convincing, and more complex versions at higher levels. A paradoxical result is that when similar responses are grouped together as a category and the most representative response is used as category title, the title response will often be the one that comes from a protocol rated a level lower.

Seventh, a behavioral sign may be discriminating in one direction only; thus, there is an intrinsic ambiguity in assigning it to any level within those to which it applies.

Eighth is the issue of base rates (Meehl & Rosen, 1955). Given a particular replicated response, what is the probability that the subject comes from a given level? If one is concerned only with the particular sample, the answer is the obvious one, the central tendency of those who give the response. But test constructors are not concerned just with the sample before them. Most samples contain few extreme cases; so this rule will ordinarily yield no signs that would receive extreme scores. The proper question is more like: Given a particular ego level, what is the probability of showing this sign? Because extreme cases are rare, most decisions about extreme ratings will be based on small numbers of cases, leaving the test constructor at the mercy of the idiosyncrasies of a few people. The same considera-

tion holds for all uncommon responses at median levels. Thus, particularly for ratings at extreme levels, theory is indispensable as a supplement to data.

Finally, consider the question about clinical insight as arbiter of the appropriate level for a given sign or response type. Clinicians rarely think of data in terms of the complex probabilities detailed earlier. They tend to think of every bit of behavior as determined by the patient's particular constellation of traits and circumstances. Responses that the ground rules of this manual (see chapter 3) call for rating, clinicians would say do not reveal ego level. Indeed, that is correct, for they are equivocal. Thus, the psychometric frame of reference is different from the clinical frame of reference. There is also a deeper reason why the clinician's intuitive perceptions may be misleading. Every developmental level builds on and transmutes the previous one. The unconscious or preconscious components of the attitudes of one level are the corresponding attitudes of earlier levels. Precisely because clinicians see the patient more deeply than any test can, they may misjudge the level of a particular sign or of a patient. Hence, clinical judgment fails as a court of last appeal, though with proper precautions it is a valuable line of evidence additional to theory and test and experimental data.

Manifestations of Ego Level in Sentence Completions

A single sentence completion rarely tells even the most experienced rater the exact ego level of the person who wrote the sentence. There are no precise, explicit rules for rating. Attempts have been made to computerize rating rules, but they cannot do as well as experienced raters. The link between any rule and actual ego level is too loose, too probabilistic. A complete protocol, however, can often create a vivid picture of its writer even for a relatively novice rater. But how can one convey to the beginner the principles that govern rating? This chapter attempts to answer that question.

The purposes of this chapter are to serve as an introduction to the detailed item manuals in Part II, to bring out the aspects of response that govern scoring, and to guide rating of unclassified responses. Because replicated responses are rare at E8 and nonexistent at E9, this chapter is about as helpful as the item manuals for those levels. In the process, the abstract conception of ego development is fleshed out with the words of ordinary people.

The basic strategy of the measurement is probabilistic. There are no simple, absolute, logical rules, however appealing such a prospect. There are obstacles to such rules: Topics that appear in one level for one question may appear at a higher or lower level for another question. Nor is there a guarantee that all aspects of ego development will be displayed in sentence completions at all.

Worse yet, what appear to be some characteristic ways of expressing oneself at, say, a pre-Conformist level, may in fact be artifacts of the particular individuals or groups at that level. In particular, younger subjects and subjects from lower socioeconomic class are overrepresented at the lowest ego level. Some aspects of their responses may reflect age or class rather than ego level.

The format chosen here, individual completions taken out of context, seems at first to be particularly unconvincing. One important clue to ego level is the richness of the total protocol, which cannot be displayed in terms of individual responses.

Low-level protocols tend to give the same or similar answers to several questions, whereas high-level protocols touch on a wide variety of themes. The cumulative effect of 36 completions is more convincing than any single response, but it does not permit the dissection of the aspects of the response that guide ratings; that is one purpose of this chapter.

Scoring rules are difficult to convey because ideas do not spring full-blown at one level. Rather, they tend to appear in simplified or cliché form at lower levels, and in fully realized form at the next higher levels. For many items, it turned out that category titles, expressing what was common to a group of items, were the very responses that came from lower levels. For example, the idea that women fulfill "varied roles" is typically expressed in those words at E5 or E6, whereas responses explicitly describing role differentiation are more typical of E7 or E8. That kind of variability cannot be covered adequately in explicit rules. Thus, an intuitive rater of long experience has an advantage. But even an experienced rater will have difficulty remembering which items elicit a given theme earlier, and which later. Hence, we always use the manual.

All responses listed here occurred on someone's test protocol; none are invented. (A few responses are retained from the 1970 manual.) All are quoted verbatim and, to the extent that the data can be trusted, with errors faithfully preserved. However, most or all of the originals were handwritten and many errors were indistinguishable from typists' mistakes, which have been corrected. In general, answers will have many more misspellings and less punctuation than indicated here. Erasures and crossed-out words are not indicated except where part of the stem has been crossed out.

E2: Impulsive Stage

One of the most reliable indicators of an E2 protocol is blatant and unsocialized expression of impulses, mainly hostile and sexual ones.

My mother and I—fight sometimes
 —drink
 When I am with a man—want to shoot him
 —I get hot
 A woman feels good when—she gets screwed
 A girl has a right to—fight back
 Men are lucky because—they beat on women
 —they can screw girls
 A husband has a right to—screw around
 —drink and smoke
 When I am with a woman—I like to fuck the shit out of her

People are sometimes talked of in terms of body parts,
 as if the person lacked the concept of a self.

What gets me into trouble is—my eyes.
 A woman feels good when—she has a penis in her.

The world of the E2 person is dichotomized into good
 or bad, nice or mean, and clean or dirty. Such stereotyped
 thinking cannot be fully illustrated in terms of single re-
 sponses; many protocols at this level give the same or almost
 the same completion to several stems.

A wife should—be a good lady
 A good mother—is nice
 For a woman a career is—nice
 Being with other people—I am very mean
 —is nice if they don't do immoral things
 A woman should always—keep clean
 My conscience bothers me if—I am unpure
 When they talked about sex, I—think it's bad

Many E2 responses are either tautological or confused.
 The former often repeat the stem or something almost the
 same. The latter are illogical, whether because the subject
 fails to understand the idea of the stem or just responds to
 a single term.

Raising a family—having children
 Education—helps in school
 For a woman a career is—very good work
 —be clean
 My main problem is—trouble
 Men are lucky because—there happy [sic]
 What gets me into trouble is—school
 The worst thing about being a man—abandons his family

The E2 person wants to receive money and things. The
 implication is passive dependence.

Women are lucky because—they get nice things
 —when they found money
 A good father—should give his daughter anything she wants
 If I can't get what I want—I don't want it
 A man should always—make good money than women [sic]

Running away, running home, or going to one's own
 room are common responses, as if whatever is wrong is
 located in the place rather than the situation.

When they talked about sex, I—get mad and go home
 When I am criticized—I like to be alone
 If I can't get what I want—I run away

The most obvious of the traditional role responsibilities
 are recognized, but they come through as burdens.

A wife should—keep the house clean
 —stay home and watch the children
 The worst thing about being a woman—having babies. If you
 could stop it be alright [sic]
 —is taking care of kids
 A man's job—to go and work

The E2 person has a limited emotional range, with the
 more differentiated, abstract, or cognitively shaded emotions
 missing. Emotions are often reduced to physical states. Simi-
 larly, abstract ideas are reduced to concrete examples.

Being with other people—is very nice
 —gives me the creeps
 When people are helpless—they feel bad
 If I can't get what I want—I get mad
 When a child will not join in group activities—he/she is sick
 Usually she felt that sex—is good to me because I get hot
 Rules are—not to sex that much or do drugs
 —to help clean up the house

Dysphoric moods and aversive and negative reactions,
 stated without reasons, are more frequent than at higher
 levels.

Sometimes she wished that—I was dead
 The thing I like about myself is—not much
 I am—I don't no [sic]
 My father—stinks
 Raising a family—is hell!

E3: Self-Protective Stage

Control is the leading issue as the child develops beyond
 the Impulsive level, that is, controlling and being controlled
 by his or her own impulses and by other people. To protect
 the self, the person is on guard to control the situation as
 well as the self. One possible outcome is a manipulative or
 deceptive attitude toward others, as well as a fear of being
 manipulated or deceived.

Raising a family—I want my family to obey me
 A girl has a right to—protect herself
 When a child will not join in group activities—he should be
 forced to
 I am—very careful with whom I play with [sic]
 A husband has a right to—say over his wife
 The worst thing about being a woman—you are put upon
 Men are lucky because—they can tell their wives what to do
 Women are lucky because—they can get married and live off
 'the men
 —they can usually get by with more things than men

The worst thing about being a man—being bugged by women
 Being with other people—I will watch myself
 When people are helpless—I don't like to be bothered with them
 When I am with a man—it's none of your business
 If I can't get what I want—I'll have a tantrum
 —I beg & crying works with my father
 The thing I like about myself is—the way to handle boys
 A woman should always—be on guard
 —stay one step ahead of a man

Although the child or older person at this stage is beginning to control impulses, the same impulses that the E2 person gives way to are evident in slightly attenuated form. Hostility takes the form of a punitive attitude and retaliation for any offense or injury.

When a child will not join in group activities—he should be punished
 When I am criticized—I mean talk about him
 What gets me into trouble is—being quick to answer back
 Crime and delinquency could be halted if—you killed all the bastards who do it
 —people who commit crimes have that same crime committed to them
 If I can't get what I want—I make sure nobody else can

Sexuality is more than just a physical state, which it seems to be at E2, but it is less social than at later levels and may even be flaunted.

What gets me into trouble is—I'm too good-looking
 When they talked about sex, I—get excited
 —suggested we have it
 A man feels good when—he has more than one woman
 At times she worried about—me going out and having sex with anybody
 I am—boy crazy
 My main problem is—too many girls like me
 —I treat men too good & tend to get walked on
 When I am with a man—I feel like kissing
 —I want his bod!
 Usually he felt that sex—was the only thing in life

A characteristic of the E3 level is hostile humor; that is a discovery of the sentence completion method. The humor is not really funny, but rather sarcastic or sardonic.

Raising a family—raises your blood pressure
 —is easy on ADC
 When I am criticized—I laugh because words are wind
 When people are helpless—I laugh
 I feel sorry—[for] the nerds of this world
 —for the sucker who is going to try to make any sense of this
 I just can't stand people who—bug you to death to finish their damn survey
 —babble
 —are dweebs, dipsticks (that constitutes the majority of people in world)
 My main problem is—this

The hedonism is simple: Work is hard and, except for the money, has no attraction. Fun is better.

Raising a family—is a lot of work
 A man's job—is harder
 Women are lucky because—they don't have to go out to get a job
 A man feels good when—he has fun
 A woman feels good when—she gets home from work
 —the housework is done
 The worst thing about being a man—is having to make a living
 For a woman a career is—lots of work

Although the emotional range is limited, it is not so narrow nor so physical as for the E2 subject.

When they talked about sex, I—felt kind of shame
 A man feels good when—he is treated good
 I am—a worried mom
 When I am with a man—I feel nerves [*sic*]
 When I am criticized—I get mad

A salient feature is the emphasis on right and wrong, especially as applied to people. Trouble means getting caught and is often attributed to being with the wrong people. Thus, blame is externalized. Sometimes blame is put on a part of the self, treated as if it were not something for which the person was responsible.

My conscience bothers me if—I feel that someone is watching me
 What gets me into trouble is—being caught while doing bad things
 —running around with the wrong group
 Being with other people—makes you feel good if your with the right crowd

Interpersonal relationships are spoken about, but primarily in terms of talking.

My mother and I—are like two chatter-boxes
 I just can't stand people who—talk too much

There is little sense of agency; things just happen.

The worst thing about being a woman—is when trouble appears to happen
 Usually she felt that sex—was just something happen to a woman
 Sometimes she wished that—good things would happen
 My conscience bothers me if—I happen to lie about something

Among girls and women, physical appearance is a strong preoccupation, most often in terms of a single aspect rather than the whole person.

The thing I like about myself is—my hair
 —my smile
 Women are lucky because—they get to wear makeup

E4: Conformist Stage

The Conformist person is, almost by definition, the least distinctive type. Naturally, Conformists give many conventional responses; so do almost all other people, but relatively less frequently. Many of the E4 categories are close to the E3 counterparts; others are close to E5. E4 is the default rating for unratable responses, chiefly omissions. (However, whenever possible, fragmentary responses should be given a guessed rating.) But it is also the rating given to many nondiscriminating categories, that is, categories of response given by people of all levels roughly in proportion to their numbers in the sample. However, one cannot construct a portrait on such data.

Many clichés, often considered unratable in other content analysis systems, belong at this level.

Raising a family—is a big responsibility
 A man's job—is to be the breadwinner
 What gets me into trouble is—my big mouth
 A girl has a right to—change her mind
 Rules are—made to be broken
 —made to be followed
 I am—feeling good about myself
 My mother and I—are close
 A husband has a right to—go out with the boys

E4 responses are conceptually simple. They are often rules or absolute standards, stated without qualifications or contingencies. There are frequent sweeping generalizations containing words like *always*, *never*, or *everyone*.

Being with other people—is good for everyone
 Education—is very important for everyone
 Women are lucky because—they can get any man
 —they get free dinners and movies (the men always pay)
 A girl has a right to—anything she wants
 I feel sorry—for people who never listens [*sic*]
 Men are lucky because—they have all the breaks
 The worst thing about being a man—is that all the responsibilities are on you
 The worst thing about being a woman—is she has to do it all
 My mother and I—look just the same

The emphasis on right and wrong at E4 differs from that at E3. At E3, the group or the people are right or wrong; at E4, the behavior is right or wrong.

A good mother—teaches her children about good and bad
 A woman feels good when—she does what is right
 Crime and delinquency could be halted if—older people tell children right from wrong
 A good father—tries to do the right thing

Many E4 responses reflect conventional gender-role norms. However, alternative or nontraditional gender roles are also represented at E4 today.

A good father—makes a living for the family
 Women are lucky because—they don't have to pay for dates

—they can be feminine and vulnerable
 A wife should—take care of her husband
 —enjoy being one
 Men are lucky because—they can always choose the woman they want
 A husband has a right to—be head of the household
 A good mother—should not work, and stay home with her family
 When I am with a man—I like to be treated like a lady
 When I am with a woman—I try to be a gentleman
 A girl has a right to—compete in sports with boys
 For a woman a career is—a must!

The world of the E4 person is the world of social acceptability. A pleasing, friendly, socially acceptable personality is valued. Belonging makes one feel secure.

A woman should always—be friendly and nice
 The thing I like about myself is—no one is a stranger a smile for all [*sic*]
 What gets me into trouble is—that I always try to help everybody
 Usually he felt that sex—is normal
 I am—easy to get along with
 —a well-adjusted person
 Being with other people—makes you feel like you belong

The virtues claimed are conventional ones; the faults and troubles the E4 acknowledges are usually minor ones and occasionally backhanded compliments.

A wife should—be faithful
 I just can't stand people who—brag
 —lie
 At times he worried about—money
 —grades
 My main problem is—talking too much
 —my weight

Interpersonal relationships are often described in terms of behaviors, rather than the differentiated feelings, motives, or traits found at higher levels. Talking is prominent, as at E3, but other behaviors are also mentioned.

A man should always—be on his best behavior
 A good mother—talks with her children
 When they talked about sex, I—sit there and just listen
 —join right in
 My mother and I—have fun by teasing each other, and by cooking together

Descriptions of inner life are general and broad. Love is a thread running through many topics, and sympathy may be mentioned. That is an advance compared to the narrower emotional range typical of E3, but falls short of the richly elaborated emotional texture of higher levels.

A woman feels good when—she is in love
 A wife should—love her husband
 A man feels good when—he has a good woman at his side
 My mother and I—love each other
 When people are helpless—I feel sad

Sex and love are not often mentioned together. When they are, it is as a contrast rather than as an integrated experience.

Usually she felt that sex—was less important than love
A woman should always—be true to her husband in love and sex

Physical appearance is important for women, but it is usually the appearance of the person, rather than of one part of the body, as it often is at E3.

A woman should always—be attractive
—wear dresses

Work is still seen mostly as work, not as opportunity, but it has become more like a responsibility than a burden. To the E4, the value of an activity is in the outcome; the process is only a way to get there.

Sometimes he wished that—he had already graduated from law school
A man feels good when—he accomplishes something
A woman feels good when—she succeeds in raising a happy family
—she has the housework done and the children in bed
For a woman a career is—one way to keep happy and to have a few things she wants

E5: Self-Aware Stage

The E5 level has been called at various times Self-conscious, Self-aware, and transition between Conformist and Conscientious levels. Labeling the level as Self-conscious suggested to some psychologists that it was a more maladjusted stage than others, but there is no reason to suppose so, and it seems not to be true. There is no evidence that it is more of a transition than any other level; certainly, it is not transitory. Evidence (Holt, 1980) shows that it is the modal level in urban United States. Thus, we settled on Self-aware as name, although that is only a partial description and may not be its most obvious characteristic.

The person at E5 sees multiple possibilities and alternatives in situations that the E4 person construes as simple. Sometimes the alternatives are described as flexibility.

A good mother—comes in many different packages
A man's job—can be anything
Being with other people—sometimes makes me feel good
The thing I like about myself is—that I am flexible
Women are lucky because—they can be very flexible
Rules are—made to be revised
—needed in some settings but not all

In place of the E4 tendency to classify actions into mutually exclusive categories of right and wrong, the E5 person tends to think about appropriateness: what is right for the time, place, and situation. There are contingencies, exceptions, and comparisons, though they are usually general and

not specific. More complex and differentiated contingencies and comparisons appear at E6.

Raising a family—can be difficult for a working woman
What gets me into trouble is—saying the wrong thing at the wrong time
My conscience bothers me if—I am too critical of my child or husband
When I am criticized—it depends on what it is about
Education—is important to have, but grades are overly emphasized
When I am with a woman—varies with the woman
When I am with a man—I like, I am comfortable
Rules are—good if fairly administered
Usually she felt that sex—wasn't right until you did it with the right man
Usually he felt that sex—was a topic he'd rather not discuss
A man's job—is just as easy as a woman's job
My mother and I—are more alike than my father and I are
For a woman a career is—probably no less satisfying than it is for a man

Self-consciousness is typical for some, but not all, persons at E5. However, others describe themselves as self-confident. Probably all persons at this level are more aware of themselves as people and as active agents than persons at lower levels. There is some self-criticism and sometimes discomfort in social situations, or feelings of loneliness or of being alone.

When a child will not join in group activities—he is self-conscious
When they talked about sex, I—sometimes feel awkward
—didn't feel embarrassed
Being with other people—sometimes makes me nervous
—makes my life less lonely
I feel sorry—for people who are lonely
I am—lonely but content
—immature
My main problem is—I am very shy and don't make friends easy
Sometimes she wished that—she could be a better person than she was
When I am criticized—I keep it hidden, but inside I'm hurt
My father—is hurting inside
—is stubborn
When I am with a man—I find myself not acting like me
When I am with a woman—I feel self-conscious

The emotions reported at this level are more varied than at E4 and more intimately tied to interpersonal relationships. Probably, women at E5 discuss their feelings more often than men do; that is certainly true of feelings about their appearance.

When people are helpless—they must feel very low
If I can't get what I want—I adjust
—fight for it, then I get disappointed
A good father—is one who is not afraid to show his love
A girl has a right to—express her feelings

A wife should—always try to demonstrate her love
 A man feels good when—he knows he is loved
 A husband has a right to—share his feelings with others
 My main problem is—I worry too much about what others think
 My father—is a very affectionate man
 —never shows he cares
 Men are lucky because—we are not judged by our looks as much
 My conscience bothers me if—I don't feel guilty when I should
 A woman should always—be honest about her feelings

The person at this level is more aware of individual differences in attitudes, interests, and abilities than is the person at the E4 level. There are a few traits specially favored by those of this level. They often have connotations of moods (“stubbornness”), norms (“feminine”), or homely virtues (“honest,” “respect”).

When a child will not join in group activities—he may be interested in other things
 Being with other people—can be adventurous
 The thing I like about myself is—my personal habits and traits
 What gets me into trouble is—selfishness
 —my stubborn persistency (in certain situations)
 My conscience bothers me if—I lose my temper
 I am—a very cautious person
 —very spontaneous
 Sometimes he wished that—he could have been more assertive
 My father—is a kind man, very intelligent too
 A woman feels good when—she is given attention and respect
 A good father—earns the respect of his children

The theme of opportunities becomes important, and usually refers to opportunities for achievement, described more fully at higher stages, and contrasting with desire to just finish jobs at lower levels.

Men are lucky because—they get more career opportunities
 Raising a family—is challenging
 Education—is very rewarding
 I am—ambitious
 A woman feels good when—she has accomplished something
 For a woman a career is—motivating
 —a chance to move up in the world
 Women are lucky because—they get the better choice of clothes, guy clothes are nasty

Goals, purposes, patterns, models, and expectations are another theme new at this level and more sharply defined at higher levels. Patterns often mentioned refer to gender roles; objection to gender-role stereotypes characterizes higher levels. Persons at the Conformist and pre-Conformist levels are less likely to have the time perspective implied by purposes and goals. Models and expectations require a degree of conceptual complexity and abstraction not likely at lower levels.

Education—is a must if you have high goals
 At times she worried about—her children's future

I am—a person with many goals and a person set on achieving those goals
 For a woman a career is—the most important goal in her life
 The worst thing about being a man—is what's expected of you
 The worst thing about being a woman—is that men expect too much of you
 Usually she felt that sex—was a very important thing in her life
 —was the most important thing in a woman-man relationship
 A woman should always—behave or be a role model to children
 A man should always—act like a man

The desire for independence and equality probably is present in some form at every level, but those desires are stated explicitly at the E5 level, along with a sense of choice.

I am—a very independent person
 A girl has a right to—choose her own career
 —be as much an individual as males
 The thing I like about myself is—I am an individual
 A woman should always—stick up for her rights
 A husband has a right to—be an equal partner in the family
 A wife should—be her husband's equal
 The worst thing about being a woman—is the inequality between the sexes
 A woman feels good when—she has accomplished the same thing as a man

The self-conception or ideal self at this level is that of a person responsible and fair, a person who does his or her best, who is sincere, and who above all wishes to remain his or her own self.

A wife should—try her best at whatever the task
 A good mother—wants what's best for her children
 I am—striving to be the best that I can
 —a person who tries to be fair to everyone
 The thing I like about myself is—that I am not a phony
 I just can't stand people who—are two-faced
 —unfairly criticize other people
 A girl has a right to—be her own person
 A husband has a right to—be true to himself
 A woman should always—be true to what she feels inside
 —respect herself
 A man should always—be comfortable with himself
 —be honorable
 My conscience bothers me if—I am not completely honest and straightforward

Ordinary remarks about health, religion, God, and death are most often classed at this level, unless they include clear signs of other levels.

The thing I like about myself is—I love G-d
 Crime and delinquency could be halted if—God was the head of every home
 I just can't stand people who—make a “show” of their religion
 I am—a child of God
 A good mother—will train her children in accordance with the Bible

My father—is a loving & Godly man
 If I can't get what I want—God has a better idea
 My conscience bothers me if—I don't pray often enough
 At times he worried about—getting ill
 At times she worried about—if she would live or die
 My main problem is—my biological clock is ticking
 —my cholesterol

The punitive attitude of the E3 person, that becomes a law-and-order attitude at the E4 level, is largely replaced at E5 by a wish to supply guidance and a supportive environment for the miscreant and others.

Crime and delinquency could be halted if—parents were more conscientious in raising and educating their children
 —society would be more interested in youth
 When people are helpless—they need guidance
 A good father—gives his children guidance through life
 A wife should—support her husband (not financially)

The morality is one of helpfulness to others, altruism, and some concern for larger social issues, but mostly in general terms.

A woman feels good when—she has done something good for others
 A man feels good when—he makes a woman happy
 —his children have accomplished their goals
 A woman should always—make sure her children are taken well care of [*sic*]
 The thing I like about myself is—I am a real friend
 —my moral character
 A man's job—is to care for those who can't
 A good father—never compromises his duties
 My conscience bothers me if—I am unkind
 —I turned down a request to help someone
 I feel sorry—when I unintentionally hurt someone's feelings
 —for our destructive society
 At times she worried about—the planet
 Sometimes she wished that—she could do more for her family
 —the world was a better place

E6: Conscientious Stage

People at E6 have true conceptual complexity, perceiving complexity and also displaying complex thinking, in contrast to the conceptual simplicity of E4 and lower levels and to recognition of multiplicity at E5. Although there is ordinarily a correlation between intelligence and conceptual complexity, such simple words as *but* or *if* are often the markers, so the correlation with intelligence is not an artifact or built into the definition of the higher levels. (Many of the following responses illustrate several facets of the E6 personality, and most also illustrate complexity.)

Raising a family—is wonderful but sometimes stressful
 Being with other people—can be great if you're comfortable with them
 My mother and I—have some different views but are still very close

When I am criticized—I get mad but still appreciate it
 A good father—earns and sees the love of his children—not just their respect
 —doesn't come with instructions
 When they talked about sex, I—was embarrassed but interested
 Rules are—a necessary evil
 My father—is a good father, but wasn't always a good husband
 —tries to relate to other people, but often finds it difficult
 A man should always—be honest, fair, and considerate of others

The E6 response will often combine alternatives that are opposites or somewhat contradictory, each of which would by itself be rated at E4 or E5. These contradictions and contrasts are not as global, as stereotyped, or as evaluative as those of lower levels, which are typically good-bad, clean-dirty, or right-wrong. Above the E6 level, even these differentiated polarities decrease.

When I am criticized—I find it hard to react objectively and not emotionally
 Being with other people—can be thrilling or miserable
 A good father—will earn his children's respect, not demand it
 A wife should—be loving and understanding but should stick to her guns!!
 Rules are—good in principle, often bad in practice
 I am—productive, but feeling burnt out
 A good mother—must balance firmness and understanding
 My father—is a very loving man but irresponsible
 Usually she felt that sex—was scary but exciting!
 A woman should always—be strong but retain femininity
 A man should always—be firm yet considerate

Absolute statements and rules are often replaced by comparisons and contingent statements, less global than the corresponding ones at E5. Where a sentence stem appears to call for an absolute statement, the person may object to the stem or state refusal to answer, as opposed to simply omitting it.

Being with other people—can be great if you're comfortable with them
 My mother and I—get along when we are honest with our feelings
 A good father—is as important as a good mother
 When I am with a man—who loves me, I feel feminine
 —I am generally more open & honest with my feelings
 For a woman a career is—important, but no more important than being a mother
 A girl has a right to—be on equal terms with a boy
 When they talked about sex, I—in what way?
 Women are lucky because—I don't like this assumption
 A wife should—not let anyone "should" on her
 Men are lucky because—(meaningless for me)
 I just can't stand people who—there are people I can't stand, but I am not sure that I can categorize them into groups
 The worst thing about being a man—? What's so bad about being a man—or a woman

Because they see many possibilities in situations and alternative courses of action, the E6 subjects see life as

presenting choices and decisions. They are not just pawns of fate but are origins of their own destiny. They may even have excessive feelings of control.

What gets me into trouble is—my indecision
Men are lucky because—they make the rules
—they control their own destiny
At times he worried about—making the right decision
My main problem is—indecisiveness (I think)

The E6 subjects have a strong sense of responsibility and duties. When they feel guilt, it is more likely to be over consequences of actions than over breaking rules per se, as those at E4 and E5 do. Along with responsibility goes a sense of rights, justice, and fairness.

Raising a family—requires dedication and responsibility
A man's job—should only be one form of his support for his family
What gets me into trouble is—my irresponsibility
When people are helpless—I would like to help them but I am lazy
Women are lucky because—they can normally escape the pressure of career building
I just can't stand people who—break promises
The worst thing about being a man—are the pressures brought about by unemployment
—is having to make all the decisions in a relationship
A good mother—loves, cares for, and takes on a great responsibility in raising her children
Sometimes he wished that—he hadn't undertaken the book
—he was a better father
My conscience bothers me if—I ignore an obligation
The worst thing about being a woman—is being the default parent

Self-evaluated standards, particularly moral ones, characterize the E6 level. Justice is a widely held value. The E6s are sensitive to proportions and priorities.

A woman should always—follow her conscience and her dreams
The thing I like about myself is—my integrity
—that I try to be fair and impartial to all people
When I am criticized—I am offended if it is unjust and not constructive
My mother and I—differ in politics, values, and conviction
I feel sorry—when I see someone being taken advantage of
—that the world is often unfair, violent, etc.
A man feels good when—he does what is correct and does not just conform
Rules are—valid only when they are just
I just can't stand people who—deceive themselves and others
—are not sincere
A good mother—instills values in her children
My conscience bothers me if—I go against what I believe in to conform with others
—I am not true to myself
For a woman a career is—an option but not priority to family
Education—is high on my priority list
A wife should—understand and forgive trivial faults

Some E6 subjects disclaim or decry materialism. A few embrace open-mindedness, but that is most characteristic of the E7 level.

I feel sorry—for narrow-minded people
Crime and delinquency could be halted if—society was fairer, less materially minded
I just can't stand people who—are totally materialistic
—are prejudiced
I am—the only person I know who doesn't need "everything"
My main problem is—this corrupt world we live in
Sometimes he wished that—there were no prejudice

They have long-term goals and ideals, ideas that appear only in the most general form at E5 and are virtually absent below that level. They distinguish means from ends and are concerned in a general way with purpose in life.

Raising a family—is a long, probably never-ending process
A man's job—is to pursue his ambitions to the furthest extent (like a woman's)
The thing I like about myself is—my strong will and determination
A girl has a right to—expect her goals to be fulfilled
I feel sorry—for people when they feel they have no future
A woman feels good when—accomplishes her professional & personal goals
At times she worried about—living up to her ideal of what she should be
I am—finally setting my life in order as of from today
My main problem is—deciding what to devote my life to

The achievement motive is at its height at the E6 level; the people strive to accomplish things. As a corollary to the striving for achievement, wasting time, disorganization, and procrastination are problems.

A woman should always—reach for the stars
A man feels good when—he has done something constructive
A woman feels good when—she creates something original
Men are lucky because—they have so many diverse opportunities to make a living
The worst thing about being a woman—is that it is a man's world and we won't get the opportunities that men get
Being with other people—teaches me different ideals
Education—is very important for future goals & achievements
Sometimes she wished that—her job was more challenging
—she would have gone to college
For a woman a career is—very important. Gives her a sense of accomplishment
What gets me into trouble is—my waste of time
—taking on more than I can handle
I feel sorry—when I should of done something, but procrastinated
At times she worried about—meeting deadlines
Sometimes he wished that—there was more time to each day

People at E6 strive to improve themselves. As a corollary, they criticize themselves. Being honest with themselves becomes as important as being honest with others.

A man should always—try as hard as he can to become a better person for himself and family
 My main problem is—not keeping up the standards of my family and myself
 The thing I like about myself is—my ability to change for the better
 —that I can see my own faults
 —that I am honest with myself

The person at E6 has a richly differentiated inner life. Experiences are savored and appreciated. Where the E5 and E4 people talk about feelings, the E6 people often have more differentiated terms such as trust, respect, needs, sensitivity, and emotional support.

My mother and I—support each other
 When people are helpless—my heart reaches out to them
 Women are lucky because—they share a unique quality that men don't, "compassion"
 —they are more open about their emotions
 —they can feel the movement of a child in their womb
 A man feels good when—he knows that he can always trust somebody
 Men are lucky because—they don't seem to have as much guilt as women
 I just can't stand people who—are shallow
 The worst thing about being a man—is that you can't express sensitivity
 When I am with a man—the whole world seems just a little brighter
 —I get on the reserve side, a little afraid at times too
 My father—is a very angry and confused man

There is clear awareness of problems of impulse and control. The E6 person is aware of self, reflects on him or herself, and describes self and others in terms of reflexive traits. Self-respect is as characteristic as self-criticism. Virtues may become faults.

When I am criticized—I react in a hostile way, although I try to curb this tendency
 —I lose my self-confidence
 I feel sorry—when I lose my temper with my child
 —for people who can't accept themselves for who they are
 My main problem is—that I am too impulsive and controlling
 —my bad temper, I think about things after I have done them
 —self-doubt
 Sometimes she wished that—she'd be more disciplined
 Usually he felt that sex—controlled him, rather than vice versa
 What gets me into trouble is—I am too critical of myself
 A girl has a right to—love herself & respect herself
 A man's job—is very important to his self-concept
 The thing I like about myself is—my self-determination
 What gets me into trouble is—telling it like it is
 —hasty decisions
 —when I fail to discipline my desires
 When people are helpless—when they don't believe in themselves

A wife should—always maintain her self-esteem
 A man feels good when—he is proud of himself
 A woman feels good when—she has self-respect and high self-esteem
 Crime and delinquency could be halted if—people respected their own worth and that of others
 When I am with a man—I am aware of being a woman
 My father—is too much of a perfectionist
 I am—overly conscientious
 A woman should always—care about herself also and not just her family
 A man should always—seek self-love and acceptance

Where people at E4 and E5 report conventional emotions, people at E6 report emotional nuances. When parents are idealized at E6, there is a more emotional tone than in idealization at the E4 level. This person has individual interests and values what is interesting, thus he or she may complain about uninteresting obligations; this contrasts with pre-Conformists, who seem to complain about the sheer effort.

When a child will not join in group activities—he or she feels detached
 —find a toy that he may be interested in and play with him until he joins in
 Being with other people—makes life interesting
 The thing I like about myself is—my empathy for others
 When people are helpless—their defenses are down
 Women are lucky because—they are free in choosing their aims in life
 I am—an avid reader
 The worst thing about being a man—one can get tied down eight to five
 The worst thing about being a woman—is the drudgery of housekeeping
 —is having your heart broken by insensitive males
 For a woman a career is—an escape from the tediousness of being a housewife
 My father—is a renaissance man
 —is a beautiful soul, I love him

People at E6 have a vivid sense of individual differences in long-term dispositions. Their descriptions of people sound more realistic because they are more complex than similar descriptions at lower levels. They recognize the inevitability of human imperfections.

A man's job—should be chosen carefully to suit the man
 I am—still basically shy and reserved, a private person
 My main problem is—I can't get close to people
 A good mother—treats her children as individuals
 —is not necessarily a super-mom
 A good father—is mine—faults & all!

Relationships with other people are invested with more affect than most similar relationships with others at lower levels. Ideas such as mutuality, companionship, and sympathy may be mentioned.

A man's job—is to be a good partner
 Being with other people—helps one to appreciate others
 My mother and I—have difficulty sharing feelings
 —had a close relationship with many difficulties
 A good father—shares responsibilities with a good mother
 A wife should—be a complete marriage partner in all ways
 I feel sorry—for those who can't feel sympathy, compassion,
 love, kindness, & empathy
 A man feels good when—he knows his wife is his partner and
 not his obstacle
 A woman feels good when—she is in love with a man that
 equally loves her
 Sometimes she wished that—her family had been warmer

The ability to see matters from the other person's perspective is a connecting link between the deeper interpersonal relationships of the E6 subject and the more mature conscience.

When people are helpless—we should try and help them in a
 way not to offend them
 At times she worried about—other people's opinion too much
 —whether or not people really liked her
 My main problem is—my lack of empathy
 A husband has a right to—know his wife's goals or ambitions
 A good mother—is sensitive to her children's needs
 A woman should always—love and respect her mate for what
 he is

At lower levels, interpersonal relationships seem almost to be reduced to behavior, particularly talking; at E6, people think in terms of communication and expression, in particular, expressing ideas, feelings, and abilities.

Being with other people—creates a good flow of ideas
 My mother and I—talk on the surface often
 —are learning to communicate better with each other
 What gets me into trouble is—that I tend to hide my feelings
 Women are lucky because—they are able to express themselves
 A good father—is a man who opens up to his children
 A girl has a right to—be expressive yet with a quiet spirit
 A wife should—talk freely with her husband and should listen
 A husband has a right to—express his most personal feelings
 to his wife
 —honest communication
 A good mother—is someone who communicates with her children
 When I am with a woman—I tend to communicate easier than
 with a man
 Usually she felt that sex—was an expression of love
 For a woman a career is—a way to express herself

Behavior reveals intentions and motives to those at E6, and it has consequences. To that extent, psychological causality is understood. At E5, those ideas are anticipated by saying that behavior has reasons. Changes over time are recognized, but mostly described as growing or growing up. More complex versions of psychological causality and psychological development occur at E7.

When I am criticized—I analyze the critic's motive
 My conscience bothers me if—I have hurt someone with a
 joke, or unintentionally
 Women are lucky because—they are more likely to stay home
 and watch their kids grow day by day
 A good father—helps one to become whatever his ability allows
 A girl has a right to—grow and develop at her own pace
 I am—growing—I hope
 A good mother—can let go
 —is one who lets her child grow—emotionally as well
 as developmentally
 My father—won't let me grow up
 —has learned to let me make my own decisions
 If I can't get what I want—I pout for a little while, then go
 back to normal
 For a woman a career is—a growing experience
 A woman should always—try to grow beyond what she is
 Education—is vital to a child's development
 —life's *carte blanche*
 My mother and I—have grown closer over the years

At E6, behavior is seen in terms of patterns. Abilities and traits are patterns, but so also are expectations, roles, and social mores. General references to roles are found at this level. References to roles at lower levels tend to be clichés; at higher levels, they are more explicit and less stereotyped. Gender roles are particularly important to many people. More people object to what they see as society's assigned gender role than in past years, but this is even more characteristic and detailed at E7.

Women are lucky because—they aren't expected to have a
 career
 —it is more acceptable for them to show weakness than
 for men
 —they can choose whether to liberate or not
 A good father—is a model
 My father—is a hard worker and a good example
 A girl has a right to—decide her own lifestyle
 A man feels good when—he thinks he's being manly
 At times he worried about—his masculinity
 A wife should—avoid feeling like a "wife"
 The worst thing about being a woman—is being judged for
 your looks
 —the many "hats" you must wear
 —is the old "sex role" that goes along with it

At E6, the person distinguishes appearances from underlying feelings and is concerned about pretense and hypocrisy. The physical aspect of the person is contrasted with the mental or spiritual. At lower levels, the latter distinction is rarely made spontaneously; at higher levels, their integration and mutual interdependence may be mentioned.

My father—was the best person I ever knew. He never pre-
 tended to be anyone other than himself
 —lives in a fantasy world
 Education—outside the classroom is as important as inside
 When they talked about sex, I—pretended not to hear
 —was embarrassed but tried not to show it