Personality

Humanistic Personality Theories

- Asserts the fundamental goodness of people & their constant striving toward higher levels of functioning

- Believes that life is process of opening ourselves to the world around us and experiencing joy in living

- Focus is on the *present* and *future*, rather than past

HUMANISTIC PERSONALITY THEORIES

Assumptions

- Stress potential for growth and change in present, rather than dwelling on past actions or feelings

- Believe given reasonable life conditions, people will develop in desirable directions

- Abraham Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs leads to self-actualization

Carl Rogers

- According to Carl Rogers (1902-1987), men and women develop their personalities in the service of positive goals
  - Every organism is born with certain innate capacities, capabilities, or potentialities– "a sort of genetic blueprint, to which substance is added as life progresses"
  - The goal of life is to fulfill this genetic blueprint; to become the best of whatever each of us is inherently capable of becoming
  - Rogers called this biological push toward fulfillment the **actualizing tendency,** i.e. realization of our biological potential

Carl Rogers

- Human beings also form images of themselves, or *self-concepts.*

- Striving to fulfill our self-concept, our conscious sense of who we are, is the **self-actualizing tendency** - the attempt to fulfill our conscious sense of who we are and what we want to do w/ our lives

- When our self-concept is closely matched with our inborn capacities, we become a **fully functioning person.**

Carl Rogers

- Fully functioning persons are 'on track' to actualization

- Actualizing and self-actualizing tendencies shape development

- According to Rogers, people tend to become more fully functioning if they are brought up with **unconditional positive regard**.

Carl Rogers

- Unconditional positive regard
  - The experience of being treated with warmth, respect, acceptance, and love regardless of their own feelings, attitudes, and behaviors – helps the actualization process
  - Fully functioning people were usually raised with unconditional positive regard

Carl Rogers

- Conditional positive regard
  - Often parents and other adults offer children what Rogers called conditional positive regard
    - acceptance and love that are dependent upon the child's behaving in certain ways and on fulfilling certain conditions*
    - limits the process

Carl Rogers

- Fully functioning people are self-directed

- They are also open to experience − to their own feelings as well as to the world and other people around them

Evaluating Humanistic Theories

- The basic tenets of humanistic theory are <u>difficult to test scientifically</u>

- Some view these theories as <u>overly optimistic</u> and that they ignore the nature of human evil

- Some argue that humanistic view <u>lead to narcissism and self-centeredness</u> and reflects Western values

- However, research on humanist therapies, particularly Rogers's client-centered therapy, has shown <u>they do promote self-acceptance.</u>

TRAIT THEORIES

Personality traits

- dimensions or characteristics such as dependency, aggressiveness, and sociability on which people differ in distinctive ways
- approximately 200 stable and enduring personality characteristics

Trait theories

- focus on differences in personality traits

Trait Theories

- Categorizing and describing individual differences in personality

- Can be inferred from how the person behaves

- People differ on personality traits such as dependency, aggressiveness, or anxiety

- Development of trait theories

  - Early approaches identified thousands of traits

TRAIT THEORIES

Cattel

- factor analysis used to find that traits cluster in groups
- sixteen traits account for complexity of human personality
- later added additional seven traits

TRAIT THEORIES

Eysenck

argued personality could be reduced to three basic dimensions: emotional stability, introversion-extraversion,

and

psychoticism

The Big Five

Costa and McCrae

Big Five personality dimensions, or five-factor model

personality consists of five basic dimensions: "extraversion", "agreeableness", "conscientiousness", "emotional stability-**neuroticism"** , and "culture, intellect, and openness to experience"

these five dimensions seem to capture most salient dimensions of human personality = thought to be central to describing personality

model may have some important real-world applications related to employment, socialization and school performance

TABLE 10−1   The "Big Five" Dimensions of Personality

Traits	Facets of Each Big Five Trait
Extraversion	Warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement-seeking, positive emotions
Agreeableness	Trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, tender mindedness
Conscientiousness/Dependability	Competence, order, dutifulness, achievement-striving, self-discipline, deliberation
Emotional Stability (Neuroticism)	Anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, vulnerability
Openness to Experience/Culture/ Intellect	Fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas, values

Are the "Big Five" Traits Universal?

- Evidence point to the presence of the big five traits across cultures

- Findings of twin studies suggest a genetic basis for traits

Evaluating Trait Theories

Support

- Has considerable commonsense appeal
- Scientifically easier to study personality traits than to study things like self-actualization, unconscious motives
- Well supported by research

Criticism

- Primarily descriptive: not causal
- Traits may not capture the complexity of human behavior
- Traits represent statistical averages of populations rather than individuals
- Disagreement over minimum number of traits needed to fully describe variety of human behavior

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT

Testing personality is much like testing intelligence

In both cases, trying to measure something intangible and invisible

So what might constitute a good test?

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT

Special difficulties in measuring personality

- best vs. typical behavior*
- confounding measurement variables**

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT

For the intricate task of measuring personality, psychologists use four basic tools:

personal interview
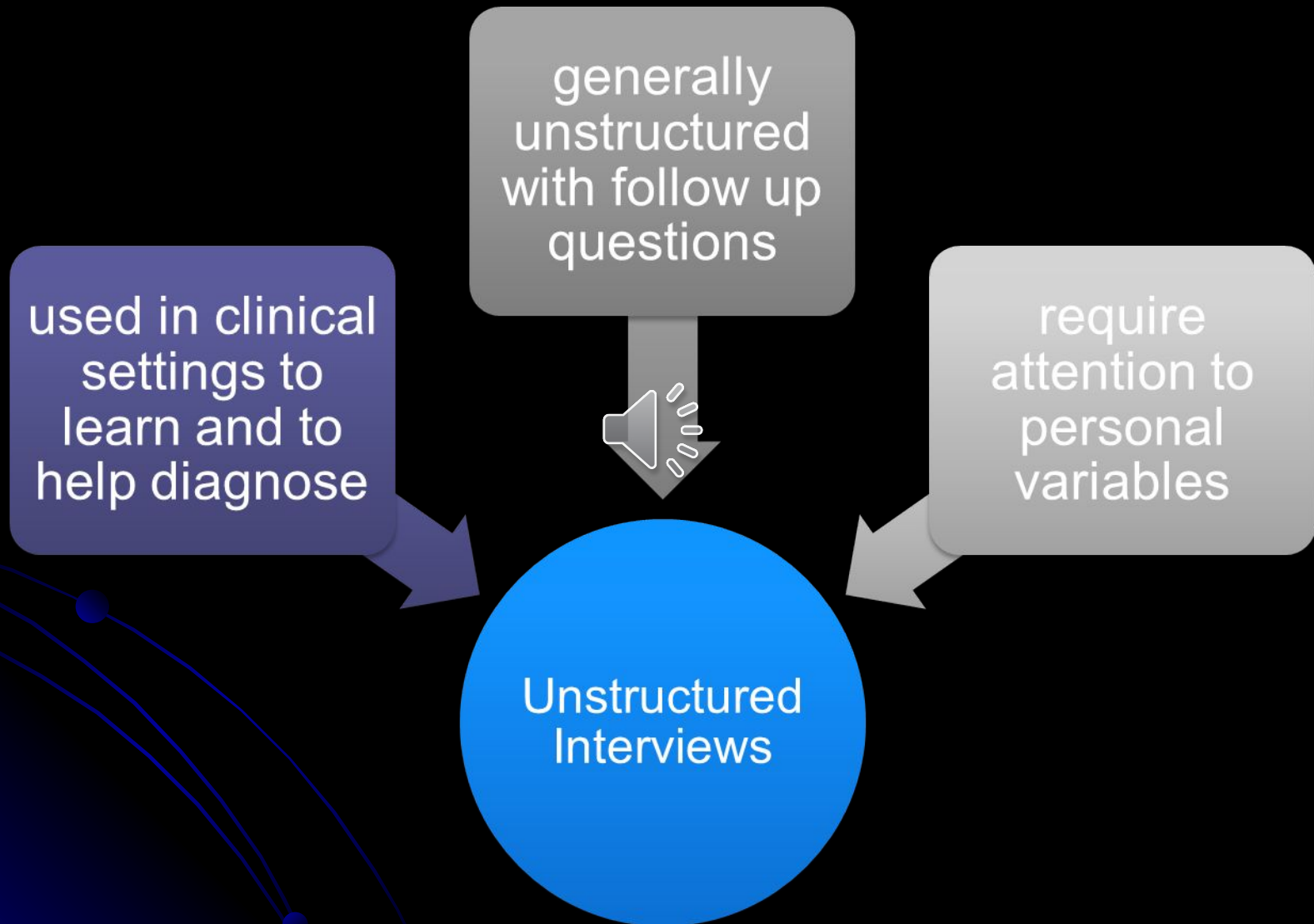
direct observation of behavior

objective tests

projective tests

Personality Assessment

- ## The personal interview

  - Structured - the order and the content of the questions are fixed and the interviewer does not deviate from the format

  - Unstructured interviews - questions about any material that comes up during the course of the conversation & follow-up questions where appropriate

The Personal Interview

generally unstructured with follow up questions

used in clinical settings to learn and to help diagnose

require attention to personal variables

Unstructured Interviews

The Personal Interview

more relies on structured interviews

comparable information from everyone interviewed

used when conducting systematic research

Structured interview

elicit information about sensitive topics that might not come up in unstructured interview
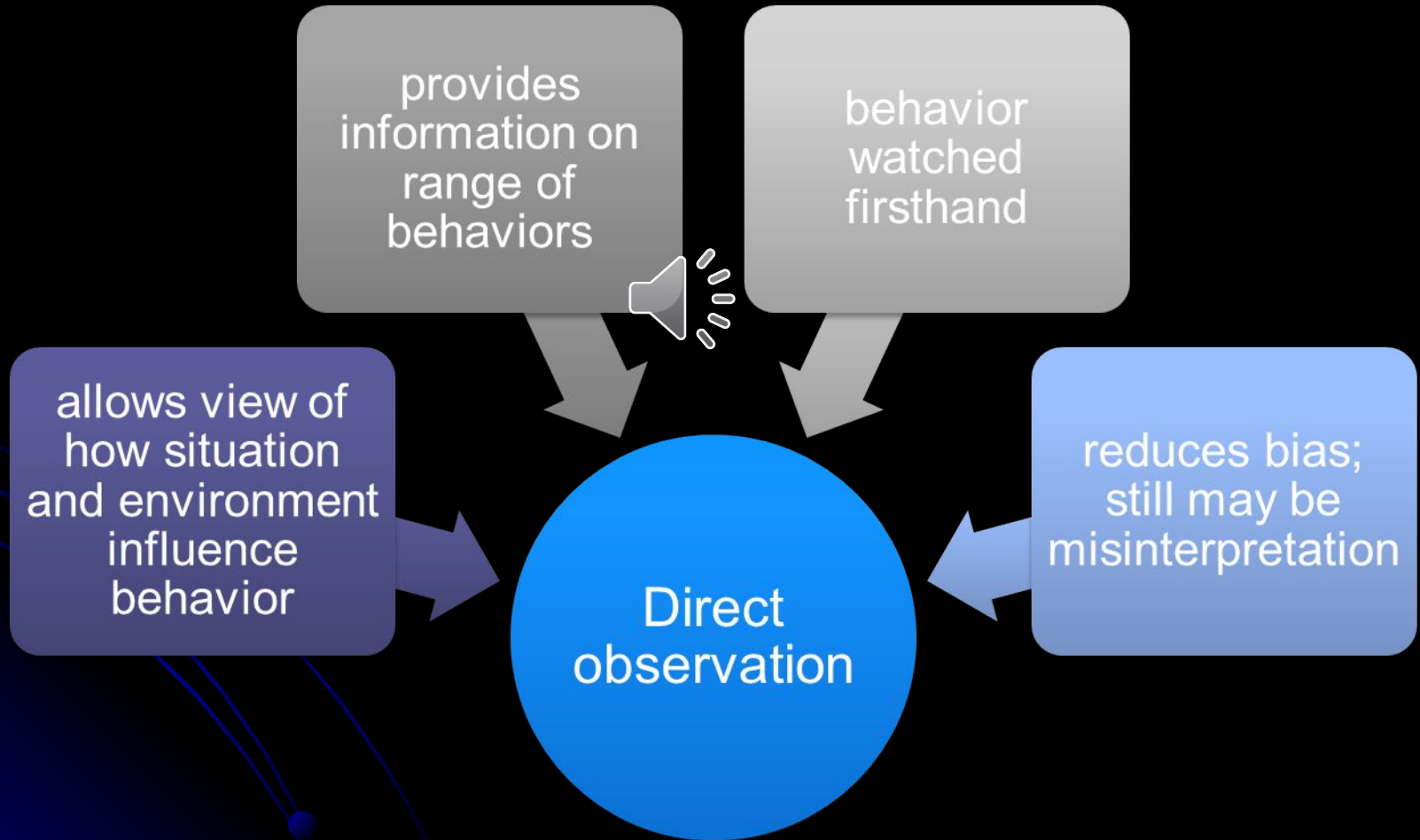
Personality Assessment

- ## Direct observation

  - Observers watch people's behavior firsthand

  - Systematic observation allows psychologists to look at aspects of personality as they are expressed in real life

  - Ideally, the observers' unbiased accounts of behavior paint an accurate picture of that behavior, but an observer runs the risk of misinterpreting the true meaning of an act*

  - Direct observation or videotape can capture person / environment interaction**

Direct Observation

provides information on range of behaviors

behavior watched firsthand

allows view of how situation and environment influence behavior

Direct observation

reduces bias; still may be misinterpretation

Personality Assessment

- **Objective tests**

  - Tests administered and scored in a standardized way

  - Most widely used tools for assessing personality

    - Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF)

    - Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI-2)

  - Entire reliance on self-report

  - Familiarity with test format may affect their responses to it
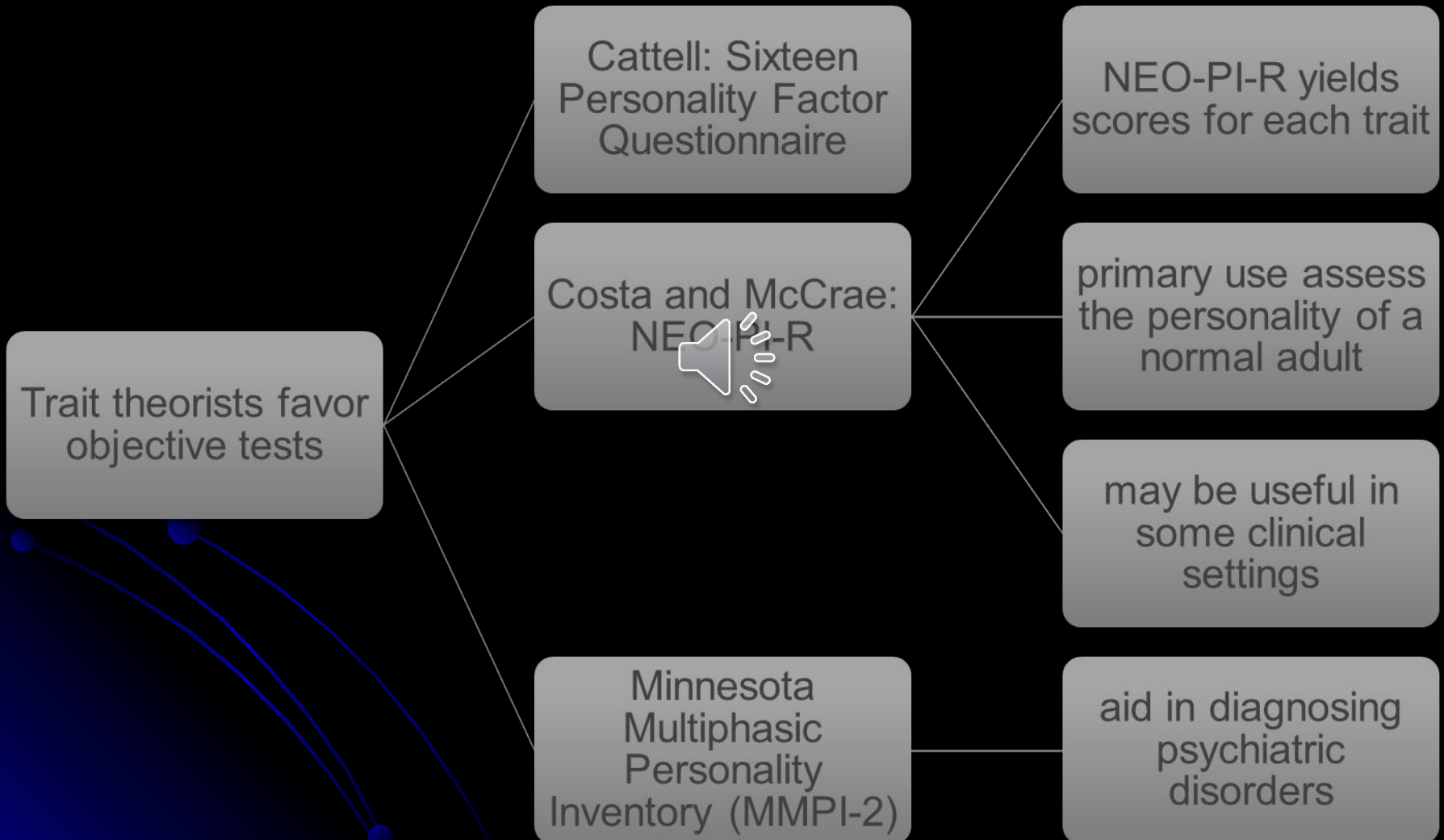
Objective Tests: Trait Theorists

Trait theorists favor objective tests

Cattell: Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire

Costa and McCrae: NEO-PI-R

NEO-PI-R yields scores for each trait

primary use assess the personality of a normal adult

may be useful in some clinical settings

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI-2)

aid in diagnosing psychiatric disorders

TABLE 10−2   The 10 Clinical Scales of the MMPI-2

Clinical Scale	Symbol	Description
Hypochondriasis	Hs	Excessive concern with physical health and bodily function, somatic complaints, chronic weakness
Depression	D	Unhappiness, loss of energy, pessimism, lack of self-confidence, hopelessness, feeling of futility
Hysteria	Hy	Reacts to stress with physical symptoms such as blindness or paralysis; lacks insights about motives and feelings
Psychopathic Deviation	Pd	Disregard for rules, laws, ethics, and moral conduct; impulsiveness, rebellious toward authority figures, may engage in lying, stealing and cheating
Masculinity–Femininity	Mf	Adherence to nontraditional gender traits, or rejection of the typical gender role

TABLE 10–2 The 10 Clinical Scales of the MMPI-2

Clinical Scale	Symbol	Description
Paranoia	Pa	Suspiciousness, particularly in the area of interpersonal relations, guarded, moralistic, and rigid; overly responsive to criticism
Psychasthenia	Pt	Obsessiveness and compulsiveness, unreasonable fears, anxious, tense, and high-strung
Schizophrenia	Sc	Detachment from reality, often accompanied by hallucinations, delusions, and bizarre thought processes; often confused, disorganized
Hypomania	Ma	Elevated mood, accelerated speech, flight of ideas, overactivity, energetic, and talkative
Social Introversion	SI	Shy, insecure, and uncomfortable in social situations; timid, reserved, often described by others as cold and distant

	L	F	K	Hs	D	Hy	Pd	Mf	Pa	Pt	Sc	Ma	Si
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
	L	F	K	Hs	D	Hy	Pd	Mf	Pa	Pt	Sc	Ma	Si
T Score	48	48	43	51	74	57	77	44	57	55	47	56	43
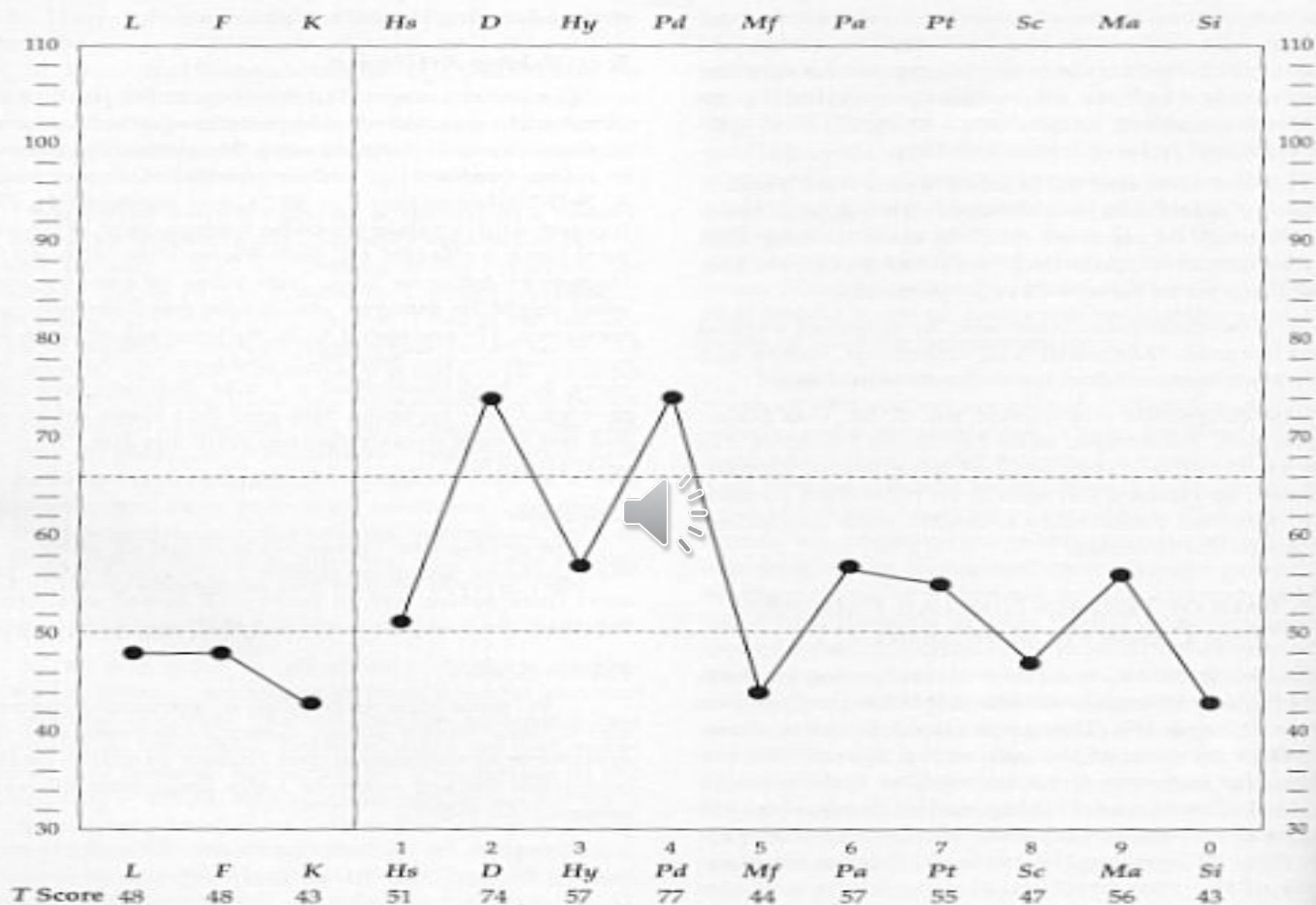
Unanswered (?) Items = 6

Welsh Code: 42'-36971/850: L:F:K:

Projective Tests

- Psychodynamic theorists prefer projective tests of personality

  - After looking at an essentially meaningless graphic image or at a vague picture, the test taker explains what the material means

  - The tests offer no clues regarding the "best way" to interpret material or to complete sentence

Projective Tests

Projective tests have several advantages

- Flexible and can even be treated as games or puzzles

- Can be taken in relaxed atmosphere, without the tension and self-consciousness that sometimes accompany objective tests

- Can uncover unconscious thoughts and fantasies, such as latent sexual or family problems

- Skill of the examiner important
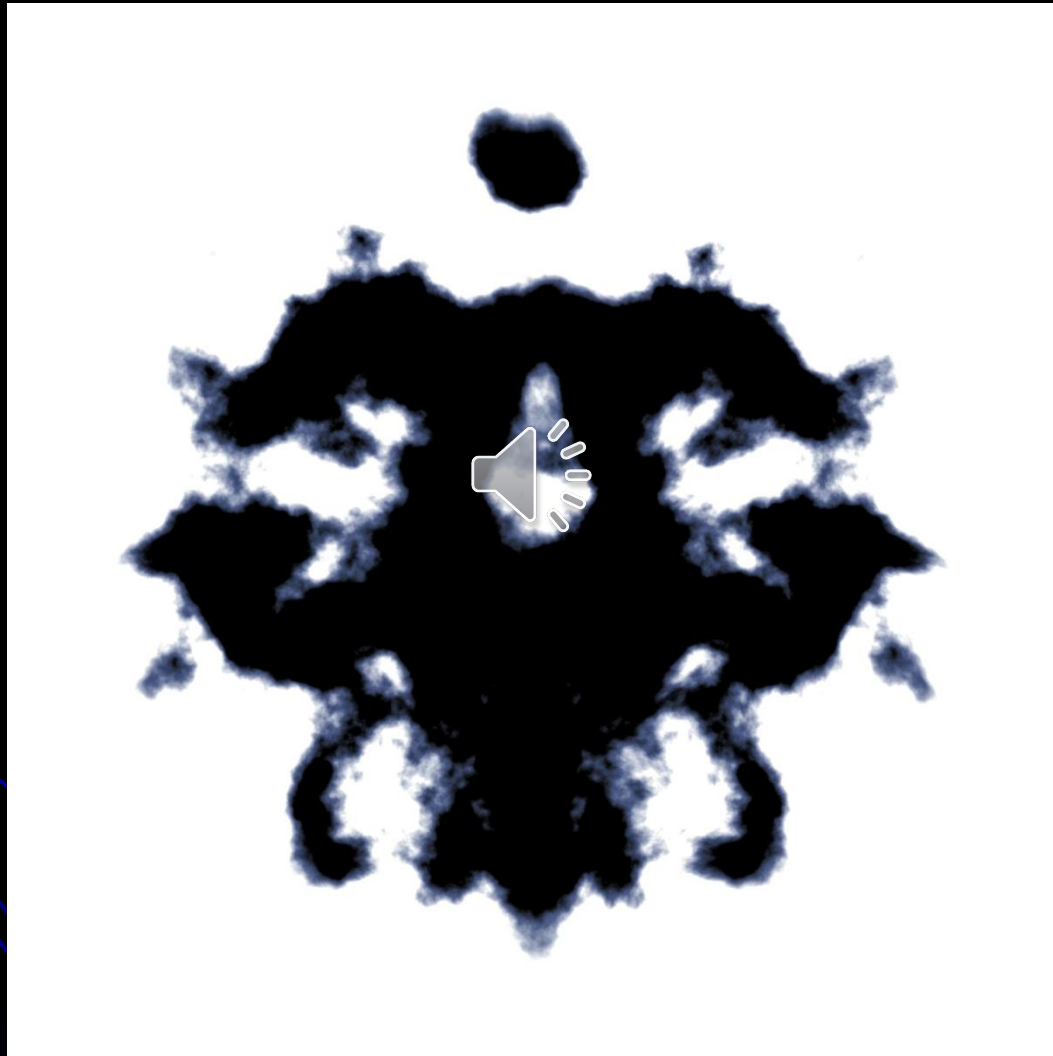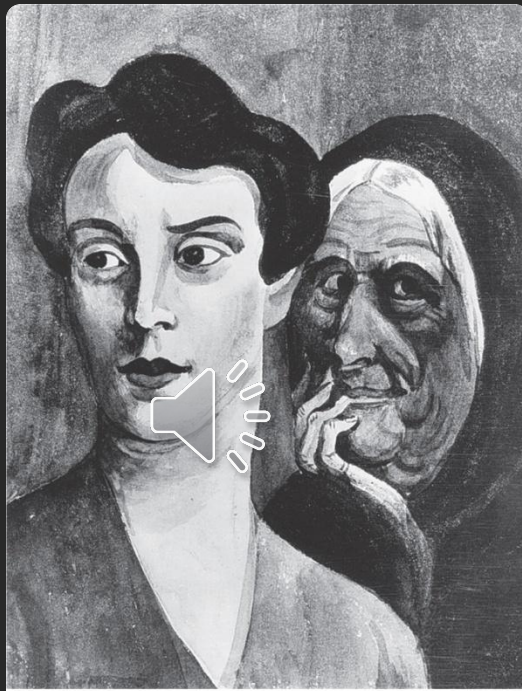
Projective Tests

Rorschach test

Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)

Inkblots used in the Rorschach projective test

Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)

Projective Tests
Rorschach and the TAT

Support

- may open up conversation between a clinician and reluctant client
- may provide insight into unconscious motives, events, or feelings of which the person is unaware

Criticism

- validity and reliability questioned, especially in cross-cultural settings