

# Chapter 1: Introduction

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## Basic Concepts

- What is a psychological test
  - measurement device or technique
  - quantifies behavior
  - data is used to make predictions
  - usu. composed of individual items
  - often scored w.r.t. normative data

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## Why use tests?

- Why use tests? vs. the alternative -- just measure the thing directly
  - faster - saves time
  - more convenient, portable, virtual
  - standardize across space & time
  - less dangerous (e.g. brain surgeon)
  - more accurate(?)
  - \$\$\$\$ profit

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## Arguments against testing

- UnReliable -- inconsistent results
- InValid -- doesn't measure what it claims
- Biased -- treats sub groups differently
- Enforced conformity -- punishes creativity
- People & Institutions adapt -- "study for the test", expensive tutors
- Expensive -- few large private companies hold most of the business
- Privacy & Security & Cheating

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## Test types: domains

- Ability, Capacity or Potential
  - Achievement
    - learned skills or knowledge in specific area
  - Aptitude
    - ability to learn new skills / knowledge in specific area
- Intelligence
  - general ability

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## Test types: domains 2

- Personality
  - Structured ("Objective")
  - Projective
- Military & Civil Service
- Vocational Counseling
- Industry / Business
- Clinical Psychology / Psychiatry
- Health Psychology
- Neuropsychology
- Research

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## History : China

- Han Dynasty (206 BCE thru 220 CE) had test batteries for law, military, agriculture, geography, etc.
- The “Imperial Examination”

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## Gold, silver, brass, iron

“Citizens, we shall say to them in our tale, you are brothers, yet God has framed you differently. Some of you have the power of command, and in the composition of these he has mingled gold, wherefore also they have the greatest honor; others he has made of silver, to be auxiliaries; others again who are to be husbandmen and craftsmen he has composed of brass and iron; and the species will generally be preserved in the children. But as all are of the same original stock, a golden parent will sometimes have a silver son, or a silver parent a golden son.”

-- Plato, *The Republic*, circa 380 BC

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## History : 18th - 19th Century

- The zeitgeist : colonialism, independence, contact between new races & ethnicities. Slavery.
- The needs: justify slavery, inequality.
- The techniques: very crude statistics, physical measurements
- Evolution vs. Creationism

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## Racial Attitudes of the 1800s

“[...]There is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will for ever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.”

-- 1858, in a debate with Stephen Douglas

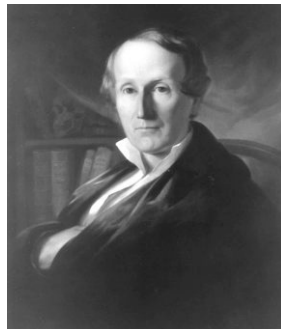
Abraham Lincoln

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## Samuel George Morton

- Theory of Polygenism
  - Humans are composed of different species, created by god
- Craniometry
- Biological Determinism
- “Scientific Racism”
- The “American School”
- d. 1851



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## Species

- Old definition:
  - group of organisms that can breed
- Modern definition:
  - “Species are actual or potential interbreeding populations sharing common gene pool, reproductively isolated from other groups.”
- Example:
  - male donkey + female horse = mule (sterile)
  - female donkey + male horse = hinny

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## Species

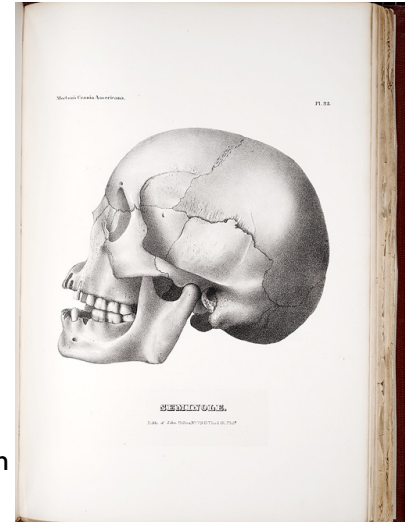
- Hybrids
  - Mule = male donkey + female horse
  - Hinny = female donkey + male horse



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## Crania Americana

Samuel George Morton  
1839



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## Visible differences?

### Indigenous

Australian  
Melanesia  
African  
European

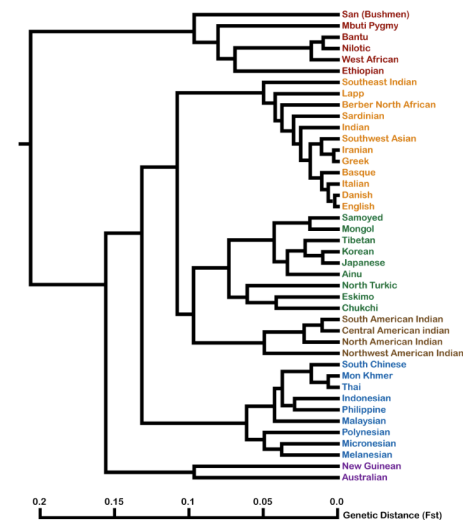
Australian and  
Africans are  
most genetically  
different



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## Genetic Differenc

- Sub-Saharan African
- Indo-European
- East Asian
- Native American
- South Asian
- Aboriginal



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## History : 19th - 20th Century

- The zeitgeist : Industrialism, world conflict, communism, capitalism
- The needs: healthcare, war, government -- desire to identify unusually high & low functioning people
- The techniques: Advanced statistics, measurement theory
- Theories of psychological development, intelligence, genetics.

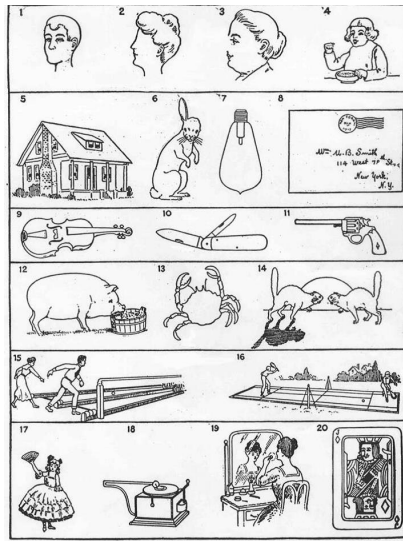
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## Early 20th century

- Notable events in history:
  - Binet-Simon Scale
    - introduced idea of IQ as ratio of mental age to actual age
    - use of standardization sample
  - Army tests -- WWI
    - Alpha -- literate
    - Beta -- illiterate

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## Army Beta



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## History 3: IQ tests

- Charles Spearman : “g” -- theory of general intelligence factor underlying all other special abilities.
- David Wechsler: WAIS and WISC tests
  - Subtests - Verbal vs. Performance Scales
  - Large normative group -- IQ = performance as related to peers
- Thurstone, Cattell, Guilford, Gardner, others: further theories of intelligence (covered later)

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## WAIS: Block Design



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## HRB: Grooved Pegboard



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## History 4: Personality Test

- Traits vs. States
- Structured (“objective”):
  - WPDS (early)
  - MMPI, CPI (modern)
  - 16PF (modern, based on factor analysis)
  - NEO (NEO-FFI: NEOAC)
- Unstructured / “projective”:
  - Rorschach (inkblot test, Exner’s scoring)
  - TAT (Thematic Apperception Test)

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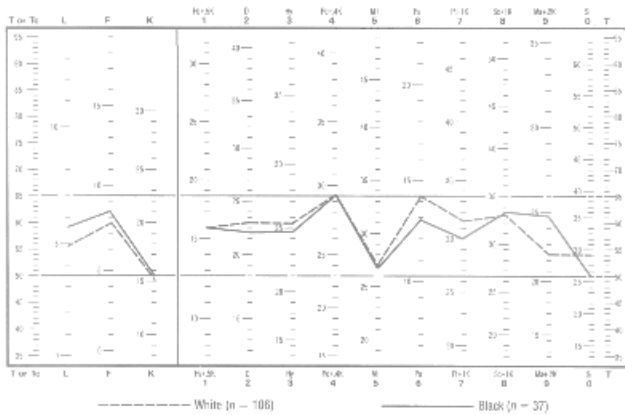
## MMPI

1. I like mechanics magazines
2. I have a good appetite
3. I wake up fresh & rested most mornings
4. I think I would like the work of a librarian
5. I am easily awakened by noise
6. I like to read newspaper articles on crime
7. My hands and feet are usually warm enough
8. My daily life is full of things that keep me interested
9. I am about as able to work as I ever was
10. There seems to be a lump in my throat much of the time

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# MMPI



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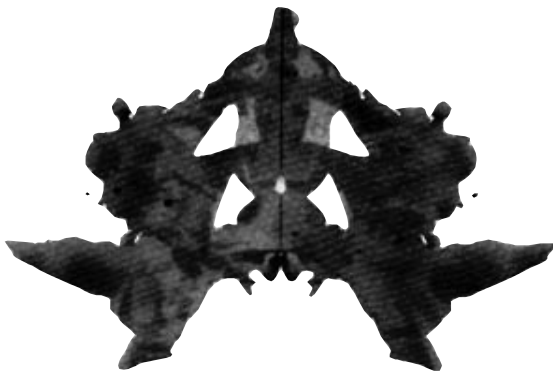
# TAT



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# Rorschach 1



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# MMOM - Themes

- Biological Determinism - a theory of limits
- Measuring intelligence as a single quantity
- Plato: dialectic. Church: dogma. Now : science.
- “Book is about the scientific version of Plato’s tale”
- “Socrates knew that he was telling a lie”
- Science (and scientists) are not objective
  - social endeavor
- fraud, but also (and worse) unconscious bias

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# MMOM - Fallacies

- Reification
  - naming a thing gives it disproportionate power
- Ranking
  - over-simplifying complexity by ordering on a single scale

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