

A DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY OF THE PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM FOUNDATION

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Since 1953 John Gittinger has taught his Personality Assessment System to numerous psychologists, primarily through apprenticeship and small clinical seminars. It is a multi-level, multi-factor, interactive system of describing individual differences in temperament, development, motivation and overt behavior. It fills a huge gap in American psychology where only Jung (Meyer-Briggs), Sheldon and Cattell have offered any systematic framework for dealing with individual differences.

As an elegant reflection of the complexities and nuances of human behavior, John's chosen method of teaching the PAS primarily through apprenticeship has probably been the wisest strategy over time for assuring its further development and the establishment of its real worth. Initially, (1954 - 1965), the teaching was connected with his government work. This work included modest funds for research and development of the PAS, thus involving individuals of diverse interests and abilities. In this first generation of students were such as York, Saunders, Winne, Heyman, Rodd and Malcolm of the present group, with Sheridan the ultimate conscience for getting John to write material down systematically (Opus and Atlas).

From 1965 to 1975 several types of formal workshops and courses started up outside government auspices with John's support. These led to a second generation of PAS psychologists, like the first generation, by 1975 widely dispersed and with no reliable way to keep in touch with each other for the most part (see exceptions below). From 1975 to 1979 the communication system between PAS'ers further deteriorated as John became a target of widely publicized criticism, for the most part unrelated to PAS itself. The media, especially several free-lance journalists (press and television) had obtained previously classified documents from the CIA which indicated that there had been an extensive network of prominent social scientists and medical researchers involved in a major "behavior control" project. This project included such matters as hypnosis, LSD, brain stimulation and sensory deprivation. John had coordinated much of the financial support and reporting of findings with these researchers for the CIA.

In the headlines and hysteria that followed these disclosures, John faced congressional committees and many unfounded charges, ranging from indiscriminate use of LSD on unwitting subjects to master-minding the break-in to Ellsorth's psychiatrist's office (part of the Watergate-Vietnam frenetics), and so on. As a result of this sensationalism, the sadistic pursuit of the several journalists who targeted John, and the embarrassment

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of the CIA, John left Washington and the embattled CIA for his native Oklahoma in January of 1978. Since my name was on several of the project papers released, I got a mild bombardment compared with John's, it was often rudely persistent, distorted and opportunistically self-serving.

To my knowledge, there were three major groups of psychologists who continued the use and study of the PAS after 1977. One was the group still consulting for the government, including Heyman, Saunders and Winne. Another centered around Krauskopf at the University of Missouri. The third was in Massachusetts where MacLachlan and York had started an annual graduate seminar at American International College in 1973. Other PAS psychologists like Rodd and Malcom were teaching one or two people at a time in connection with their regular clinical, consulting or research work. All those who had continued to work with the system kept wishing there were ways to be in touch with John and others who had been at one time involved.

It was a series of coincidences and some grass roots taking hold of the PAS that kept MacLachlan and York in touch with each other and eventually led to the gathering of thirty PAS'ers at Springfield, Massachusetts in May, and again at Hyannis Massachusetts in October of 1981. They first met in the summer of 1960 when MacLachlan took his Ph.D. practicum requirement with Dick at Butler Health Center in Providence, Rhode Island. Six months before, John had made his last of many visits to Butler (1957-1960) in connection with a study of social drinking, indirectly funded by the CIA. During his visits much time was spent with the whole staff on PAS so MacLachlan entered a thoroughly oriented PAS culture and promptly assimilated it with his characteristic curiosity and intensity. By then, John had completed formulation of all the major dimensions and variables although it was not until 1962 that the "Opus" was printed (dimensions considered separately) and in 1964 that the "Atlas" was printed (the I and E series).

York then worked for John at Psychological Assessment Associates, his government backed agency in Washington, while MacLachlan went to the Child Guidance Center in Bridgeport, Connecticut. When research support of PAS through PAA was cut back in 1965, York returned to Massachusetts to start a youth rehabilitation agency near Worcester, not far from Springfield where MacLachlan by then had a professorship at American International College. MacLachlan was able to consult for York for two years there. In 1968 York moved to Cape Cod and since MacLachlan had a summer home there they kept in touch, frequently discussing the possibility of a course or workshop.

With the publication of the Winne - Gittinger Monograph in 1973 and

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the section on PAS in the Matarazzo Wechsler book, York and MacLachlan visited John in Washington. This was the first time MacLachlan had met John who promptly supported the idea of a graduate credit workshop and agreed to attend several days of the first, three week, intensive course held in July of 1973. With few exceptions, this course has run annually since. John Winne also helped out several summers. This workshop was an important vehicle because it gave MacLachlan's routine Wechsler course students an advanced, organized PAS experience and served the same purpose for the colleagues and students York worked with, first at the Fall River Mental Health Center and then at the Cape Cod Mental Health Center after 1975. In this way, a third generation of PAS students grew up, roughly paralleling developments at the University of Missouri.

John had stopped coming to the AIC course in 1977 and 1978 while preoccupied with the Washington mess and resettling in Oklahoma. By this time a group of about six PAS oriented psychologists on the Cape began to meet every few months to go over Wechslers together. York and John had kept in touch by phone during the trying period of media exposure and by 1979 it seemed that John might be ready for some good positive stimulation. This would certainly be provided by, and meet the strong needs of, the Cape group and AIC related psychologists who had never met John and were eager to. At a meeting in June 1979 the time seemed right so that night we called MacLachlan to confirm that there would be at least six additional people who would come to an informal workshop, and then called John who graciously agreed to come for only his expenses.

The first Cape workshop with John was held in Orleans in October of 1979 with 15 participants for three days. John had invited Bill Rodd who was retiring to spend full time on PAS related activities. A second informal workshop was held in November of 1980 in Cataumet on the Cape. By then John was beginning to get involved at the University of Oklahoma, so plans were made for an expanded conference to be held in Springfield in May of 1981.

The Springfield PAS conference was a most remarkable assembly of first, second, and third generation PAS'ers! There were those who had been working in relative isolation for some years and those who had been working in the several widely dispersed small groups. There was an intense, wonderful process; of renewing old friendships; of people meeting who had only heard of each other through third parties; a mixing of retirees with people just starting their careers; the availability of new and renewed energies for working on various aspects of the PAS.

Then followed the October 1981 Hyannis conference, with most of

those who had attended Springfield and several more, to the number of 30. continuing the ferment of communication and group cohesion. Elegant, concise expositions alternated with trial balloons, enjoyable controversy and John's taking off on individual profiles to enlighten as is his custom. Major topics included: the fourth dimension, indirect assessment, the computer potential, applications to family assessment, gender identity and the validity study.

At Hyannis the conference group made a number of enabling decisions designed to continue this productive, integrative process. These decisions included plans for Princeton this May and related matters reported elsewhere.

I am hopeful that my exuberance as scribe has not too much interfered with the accuracy of this report.