

September 28, 1937

Dear Whately Carington,

I know I have many arrears of apologies in failing to answer your letters. Your last one I can and must, answer at once. I think the question of similarity of two personalities must depend on similarity relative to what? I submit that the statement "You and I are alike" means nothing save with an understood background of a population of personalities, most of whom we resemble less closely than we resemble each other.

The significance of $\frac{W}{UW}$ seems to me to indicate that, on different occasions, the same personality shows some consistency in the differences of his reaction to different words. He dwells long, perhaps on words like 'love' and 'home', but disposes snappily of words like 'chair' and 'typewriter'. Anyway, whatever he does, his subsequent performances on retesting are such as to show that they could, with some success, have been predicted from his earlier performance. What has been established so far is that words are not all alike to him, and that some of the distinctions he feels among them are persistent.

On testing other personalities we ~~find~~^{might} conceivably have found ~~xxxxxx~~ that they recognised the same distinctions among the words and all reacted to them in the same way. This would show

itself in the tests by the ratio $\frac{W}{OW}$ steadily mounting in significance as occasions were increased, while the ratio $\frac{WP}{OWP}$ wobbles insignificantly about unity, with occasional, but not sustained, excursions into the region one is tempted to think of as significant. If this were the case, it would be proper to say "the test ~~does~~ not discriminate different personalities". It would, I think, be decidedly less proper to say the personalities are all alike.

But suppose that, in some cases, $\frac{WP}{OWP}$ mounts steadily to more and more significant values as the number of tests is increased, you could say the test does discriminate these differences of personality, though it might fail to discriminate other differences which we might suppose to be none the less real. Relative to our test I think we might then say that the latter cases showed more likeness than the former; but the stipulation "relative to our test" remains an important one, since it is inconceivable that a test should be so penetrating as to reveal exhaustively all ^{the} peculiarities of ^a personality.

Yours sincerely,