

PERSONALITY
PROJECTION

in the

DRAWING OF THE HUMAN FIGURE

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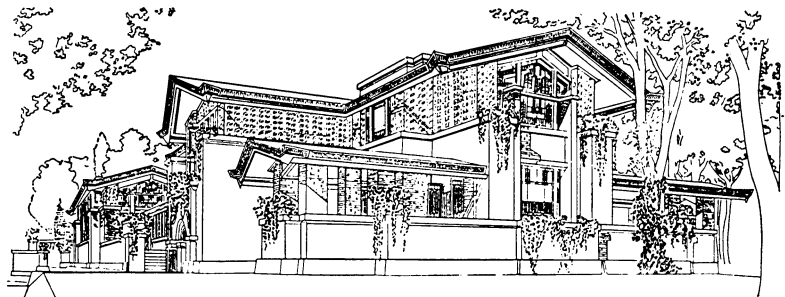
DRAWING OF THE HUMAN FIGURE

(A Method of Personality Investigation)

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PART I
PERSONALITY PROJECTION IN THE
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PROBLEM

In this book the writer will make an effort to outline a method of personality analysis based upon the interpretation of drawings of the human figure. That individuals reveal important aspects of their personality in drawing has long been recognized. What has been lacking, and I trust that the work that is now being done in drawing analysis will supply, is a degree of systematization of analysis of the graphic product which is at once comprehensive, communicable, and does justice to the intricacies of personality.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Phenomenon of Projection

Personality, we know, does not develop in a vacuum, but through the movement, feeling, and thinking of a specific body. Projective methods of exploring motivations have repeatedly uncovered deep and perhaps unconscious determinants of self-expression which could not be made manifest in direct communication. It is safe to assume that all creative activity bears the specific stamp of conflict and needs pressing upon the individual who is creating. The activity elicited in response to "draw a person" is indeed a creative experience, as will be testified by the individual who is drawing. Wide and concentrated experience with drawings of the human figure indicates an intimate tie-up between the figure drawn and the personality of the individual who is doing the drawing.

The Body as a Vehicle for Self-Expression

When an individual attempts to solve the problem of the directive to "draw a person," he is compelled to draw from some sources. External figures are too varied in their body attributes to lend themselves to a spontaneous, composite, objective representation of a person. Some process of selection involving identification through projection and introjection enters at some point. The individual must draw consciously, and no doubt unconsciously, upon his whole system of psychic values. The body, or the self, is the most intimate point of reference in any activity. We have, in the course of growth, come to associate various sensations, perceptions, and emotions with certain body organs. This investment in body organs, or the perception of the body image as it has developed out of personal experience, must somehow guide the individual who is drawing in the specific structure and content which constitutes his offering of a "person." Consequently, the drawing of a person, in involving a projection of the body image, provides a natural vehicle for the expression of one's body needs and conflicts. Successful drawing interpretation has proceeded on the hypothesis that the figure drawn is related to the individual who is drawing with the same intimacy characterizing that individual's gait, his handwriting, or any other of his expressive movements. The technique of personality analysis that is described in this book attempts to reconstruct the major features of this self-projection.