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A Study of The Gallows Transaction

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A Study of The Gallows Transaction

(TITLE)

BY

Sandra S. Maxedon

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Arts

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1978

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A STUDY OF THE GALLOWS TRANSACTION

BY

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ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology at the
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Abstract

The purpose of this paper was to study what effects the gallows transaction has on performance. The gallows laugh or the gallows smile occurs after a special kind of stimulus and response called the gallows transaction, Berne (1972). Gallows transactions include laughs or smiles directly following statements which are actually painful to the individual. The distinguishing mark of humor in the gallows transaction is that it isn't funny. To date, there has been little scientific research on the gallows transaction.

Subjects were 96 psychology undergraduate students. Subjects were divided into four groups, 24 subjects with confronted gallows transactions, 24 subjects without gallows transactions who were confronted, 24 subjects without gallows transactions but who were confronted, and 24 subjects without gallows transactions who were not confronted. Each group was given a total of two trials each.

The analysis of variance was used to compare the differences between the gallows and non-gallows groups. A t test was used to compare male and female performances for gallows and non-gallows subjects.

It was found that gallows subjects scored significantly lower and performed less well ($p < .01$), than non-gallows subjects.

In the confrontation of gallows subjects it was found that the confrontation of gallows increases subjects performance which was significant [$F(1,184df) = 9.10, p < .01$], while confrontation of non-gallows subjects does not increase performance and was not significant [$F(1,184df) = .03, p = n.s.$].

No significant differences were found between male and female performances for gallows or non-gallows subjects.

The results suggest that confrontation of gallows does improve performance levels when subjects become aware and stop using the gallows transaction.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to study the gallows transaction. The gallows transaction is apparent in individuals when they smile or laugh at things which are actually painful to them. Individuals receive reinforcement for their gallows laugh or smile when the people around them smile or laugh along with them, which encourages their failure. To date, there has been little scientific research on the gallows transaction. Therefore, the following study is designed to see what effects the gallows transaction has on performance.

The gallows transaction is defined by Berne (1972) as: "a transaction which leads directly toward the script payoff," (pg. 335, 1972). The gallows laugh is defined by Berne (1972) as: "the laugh or smile which accompanies a gallows transaction, and which is usually shared by the others present," (pg. 338, 1972). The gallows laugh or the gallows smile occurs after a special kind of stimulus and response called the "gallows transaction." Berne (1972) states that:

"the gallows laugh (which results from a gallows transaction) means that if a individual laughs while recounting a misfortune, and particularly if other individuals join in the laughter, that misfortune is past of the catastrophe of the subject's script. When the people around him laugh, they reinforce his payoff, hasten his doom, and prevent him from getting well," (pg. 337, 1972).

Campos and McCormick (1972) define the gallows transaction as: "the tightening of a noose around your neck by getting others to laugh at your mistakes, so that they help you fail," (pg. 21, 1972). They site the example's of, "a shoplifter who gets his friends to admire his cleverness at stealing, is setting up the gallows transaction," and "a drinker who plays drunkenness for laughs as asking others to help him become an alcoholic," (pg. 22, 1972).

Steiner (1974) defines the gallows transaction as: "the gallows transaction takes place when a person, in one way or another, cons the group members (and sometimes the therapist) into smiling at his script behavior," (pg. 257, 1974). In hamartic (i.e. losers, tragic scripts) individuals, self-destructive behavior is always associated with a smile. The person who explains the smile by saying, "I'm smiling because it's funny," "I'm smiling in order not to cry," or "I'm smiling because I am embarrassed," is falling prey to unsound and misleading reasoning. In short, avoiding the gallows transaction allows the group to laugh (or individuals to laugh) at whatever is joyful, rather than at what is tragic in the person, and discourages the self-destructive aspects of behavior by denying the strokes the individual expects, and usually gets. In other words the gallows smile serves to tighten the noose and destructive behavior is reinforced.

Steiner (1971) states that:

"Transactional analysts will especially avoid that indulgent smile of warm understanding often given the alcoholic just off a binge, as he humorously relates his latest escapade. Colloquially termed the gallows transaction, that smile is an unwitting but very powerful reinforcement of the alcoholic's self-destruction, equivalent to helpfully adjusting the noose around a condemned man's neck," (pg. 99, 1971).

In psychotherapy a therapist dealing with self-destructive individuals must determine which behavior is self-destructive or script-bound, and must never smile in response to it. When the gallows transaction is explained in a group and is thus prevented from occurring, the effect on the client is startling, and he or she often reacts as if the therapist is a party-crasher who made away with the goodies. An unwillingness to smile at the tragedy has been seen as unfriendly. However, this refusal indicates, once again, that the therapist has not resigned himself to considering the individual's hopelessness. This leaves him free to smile at whatever is joyful rather than tragic.

Berne (1961) refers to early history which speaks of the gallows laugh as the dying man's joke, or famous last words. The crowds of spectators at the Tyburn or Newgate hangings in the eighteenth century used to admire people who died laughing. The same thing occurs in a minor way at almost any group-treatment session, or in normal everyday conversations, when people laugh and reinforce a subject when he laughs or smiles after saying

something that is actually painful to him. Thus, among Transactional Analysis therapist's the saying, "it is not all right to laugh at the things that are hurting you," is prevalent. The distinguishing mark of humor in the gallows transaction is that it isn't funny. Some clinical examples from Steere (1970) are:

"Mrs. A., in the process of divorce: 'My husband never did anything' (ha, ha, ha)..... he left me without money for the house payments (ha, ha, ha).....my lawyers won't help me at all (ha, ha)."

"Mrs. B., who divorced her first husband when he 'went psychotic,' lost her next husband-to-be through death, and has an affair while her third, faithful husband is away: "I'm very insecure.....I'm sure everything will 'dump on me'.....I guess (ha, ha, ha) I'll just end up a lonely old lady."

"Mr. C., a competitive tennis player who tends to 'choke' and double-fault in tournament play, just when he is ahead: 'It started in the finals of the state.....I served two aces and then (smile) came three straight double faults.' (A remembered maternal saying: 'Pride cometh before a fall.' His father showed him how to be great and then fall)," (pg. 5, 1970).

The above examples all illustrate the gallows laugh and smile.

The earliest source on the gallows transaction is Dr. Sigmund Freud (1928). From 1928 until 1942 Obrdlik dealt with gallows humor in a sociological framework. Until 1961, there is no available research on the gallows transaction. The gallows transaction reoccurred in history in 1961, when Dr. Eric Berne (Transactional Analyst) began to observe the gallows laughs

and smiles in human behavior, and in psychotherapy. Steiner (1971) noted the significance of the gallows laughs and smiles in his work with alcoholics.

Freud (1928) gives a prime illustration of the humor of a criminal, being led to the gallows on Monday, quipping, "Well, this is a good beginning to the week." In essence, the criminal's humor is to spare himself the affect to which the situation gives rise. For Freud, such jest had two liberating elements: (1) a denial of the claim of reality in which the narcissistic ego asserts its invulnerability, impervious to wounds dealt by the outside world, and (2) a triumph of the pleasure principle which rebelliously asserts itself in the face of adverse, real circumstances. In his work on wit, Freud described a humorous attitude toward others as assuming the superior role of the grown-up, reducing other people to the position of children. Here he suggests the criminal is actually treating himself like a child while, at the same time, playing the part of the superior adult in relation to this child.

Humor, for Freud, was a contribution of the superego, in contrast to wit which originated in momentary abandonment of conscious thought to elaboration by unconscious, primary process thinking. The superego, in this respect, became the inheritor of the parental function. It still treated the ego as the parents treated the child in early years. In the case of the criminal, it was the superego that spoke such kindly words of comfort to the intimidated ego: "See here, this seemingly

dangerous world amounts to nothing but child's play."

Steiner (1971) sees the humor of the "witch laugh" as Parental pleasure in the child successfully executing his self-destructive injunction. Freud saw the humor of the gallows joke as an internal transaction involving a nurturing superego taking care of an intimidated child. Crossman (1967) has described the conditions that may be affixed as mother responds to the child's first primitive request, "Protect me." Our criminal did not have the kind of mother who responded, "I'll protect you----- provided you smile back at me." Instead, mother probably suggested, "I'll care for you so long as you play 'it's fun to get hung.'" Freud sensed the continuing parental care disguised by humor. Not having distinguished separate ego states, he attributed this nurturing and preoedipal function to the superego, an agency normally reserved for censoring with all the punitive weight of castration. And he pointed out we have much more to learn about it. This precise combination of destructiveness and nurture accounts for the life and death quality in all tragic scripts.

Freud (1912) argued that laughter is associated with the "gain of lust" obtained when the tension due to inhibited tendencies (e.g. aggressive, erotic) is released in the morally innocent form of a joke. But it is beyond doubt that not all laughter can be explained in this way. The first article to deal with humor in a sociological framework was Obrdlik's (1942)

gallows humor. This work stemmed from Obrdlik's first hand experiences in Czechoslovakia during Nazi Germany's occupation of that country. He cast humor in the role of influencing the social characteristics of the Czechs and Nazis as groups and the pattern of relationship between them. In describing it as gallows humor, Obrdlik emphasized its peculiar nature in having emerged among the Czechs from a particularly precarious and tragic situation. This led him to conclude that humor associated with such structural features (in this case, the dominant-minority relationship) is always intentional and has both positive and negative effects. For the oppressed, it operates to bolster morale and hope; the humor becomes a compensatory device, making the fear and tragedy of the moment seem perhaps only temporary. Humor therefore serves as a means of controlling behavior of those sharing the burden. Obrdlik defined the negative effect of gallows humor as the influence it had upon the disintegration of the occupying forces against whom the humor was directed.

Johnson and Szurek (1971) reported the case of a father-son situation in which a father who had lost a job which had allowed him to drive all around the country, brought into treatment a young boy with a truancy problem. They stated:

"It was striking to observe this father asking Stevie to tell of his most recent escapade, and, when the child guiltily hesitated, supplying an intriguing reminder. The account obviously fascinated the father, who easily prompted the child from time to time. Then, suddenly the father angrily cut off the child," (pg. 73, 1971).

Later in the same interview the father said, "Stevie's really a good kid-----he would follow me around the top of a wall fifty feet high." A smile (gallows) often belies a parent's complaint of impulsive and daring behavior of a child brought for treatment. The above was an observed gallows transaction in which the parent is encouraging behavior that will later become troublesome.

Another ironical example of the situation was given in the case of a young boy who was brought into treatment for stealing. Johnson and Szurek (1971) found the mother surreptitiously secured, i.e. actually stole, the key from the boy's diary, and discovered a well-ordered bookkeeping system of amounts extracted from guests' purses. Here again is an example of how the mother sanctions the duplicity of the son through her behavior.

Johnson and Szurek (1971) found case after case in which sexual aberrations, sexual promiscuity, and murder by young patients were clearly traceable to the unconscious fantasies, hopes, and fears expressed by their parents and reinforced by the gallows transactions, i.e. laughing or smiling at the child's self-destructive behavior. They accurately observed and implied in their writings that children were basically at the mercy of their parent's wishes and noted that parents not only permitted their children to act out, but actually enjoined them to do so. Because of Johnson and Szurek's psychoanalytic background, they related their observations to superego functioning

and postulated that parental attitudes caused "superego lacunae" in the child.

This information implies that the more subtle methods by which children are induced to accept actual people or parents as prototypes of good and will consists of minute displays of emotion and gallows transactions. The parents themselves, rather than merely the words used, the meaning intended, or the philosophy implied, transmit to the human child the outlines of what really counts in his world, and how to live it.

In psychotherapy, little research has been completed on the effects of the gallows transaction. Erskine (1974) found that data that can be classified into one distinct category or another can be graphed rather simply. At a marathon, for example, a client made a contract to become aware of and to stop using a gallows smile. Another person at the marathon contracted to observe the client every time he had a transaction with other people, and to record whether the client used a gallows smile during each minute observed. After each observation period, the results were graphed and displayed in a prominent place. This way, the client got feedback on his use of a gallows smile. The graph indicated that there was a sharp reduction in the number of gallows smiles and an indication that the trend was stable. The lack of pretreatment data precluded a complete comparison of cyclical tendencies, however, post-marathon observations made during the ongoing weekly treatment group

verified the tentative conclusion that the client had met his contract. This study shows, and indicates that, while the subject becomes aware of his gallows smile and changes it, he improves on performance, and thus improves his behavior in constructive ways, rather than destructive ones.

It is important to insert that some Gestalt therapists are currently recognizing the gallows transaction in psychotherapy. This is the only other known traditional approach that uses the gallows transaction.

In reviewing related literature on laughing and smiling it was found that of all the human expressive activities, laughter had undoubtedly most fascinated philosophers and scientists from antiquity to the present. While it appears reasonable to explain most human expressive movements and postures as functional elements of the various forms of behavior by which the individual interacts with its environment or as manifestations of a general or specific state of activation, laughter, and crying too, seem to defy such an explanation. In the case of laughter many authors have been baffled by its reflexoid stereotypy and automation on the one hand and the subtle spirituality of the stimuli that can release it on the other, and have considered it as a specifically human attribute. Sudden relief from strong tension may bring on laughter, whether the tension appeared justified after all. Freud (1912) saw laughter merely as a means to discharge surplus tension or mental excitation, which accumulate if their adequate use is prevented. He implies that

laughter restores the normal physiological equilibrium.

McComas (1926) and Hayworth (1928) found that the elaborate forms and varieties of laughter could be understood only if we assumed that social selective pressures has contributed to their development.

Van Hooff (1972) found that laughter and smiling appeared to shade into each other quite smoothly. They were undoubtedly highly associated temporally, and they were at least to a certain extent contextually interchangeable. From a purely morphological view-point our laughter could be considered as an intermediate of the classical primate "relaxed open-mouth" display and the "silent bared teeth" face (e.g. the chimpanzee open mouth form), and the smile as a weaker form of it.

Van Hooff (1972) stated that it was clear that the variations within the smiling-laughter continuum could only be described in terms of a multi-demensional model. A closer analysis is needed to reveal to what extent such expressive elements as the eyes (degree of opening, dynamics of looking), head posture (straight, slanting), vocalizations (relaxed, pressed, 'giggle') and various body movements could vary independently. it is conceivable that such variations could be related to changes in the general tendencies of withdrawal and aggression or to changes of more specific tendencies (e.g. nervous laughter, derisive laughter, etc.) and it is conceivable that variations could be directly related to the gallows transaction.

Zelazo (1972) emphasized the cognitive components of smiling and vocalizing, and implied that these are reflections of basic characteristics of cognitive activity. It appeared that the specification of the properties of smiling may help refine the process of recognitory assimilation, while the study of elicited vocalization may lead to an understanding of cognitive discrepancy. Smiling and vocalizing appear to reflect different features of the schemata formation process but unfortunately neither is well understood. It is considered that the relation between smiling to a nonsocial stimulus at any one age appear to reveal more information about an infant's cognitive status than the accepted practice of recording whether or not a smile occurs to a single stimulus presentation.

Spitz (1946) conducted a one year study on the smiling response in infants, and came to the following conclusions. Laughing occurs later chronologically than smiling and is more stereotyped in its form on first occurrence. Laughing was far more stereotyped in its behavior pattern throughout the year and could not be differentiated, even suggestively, at the different age levels. Following its appearance, the incidence of smiling and laughing was not a correlate of chronological age, relative rate of mental development, nor physical condition. No relationship was demonstrated between physical type and type of expressive behavior.

In the United States we frequently hear individuals using the phrase, "grin and bear it." This seemingly contradictory statement encourages self-destruction (tightening the noose) while smiling, (the gallows smile while hanging oneself). The origin of the saying is unknown; however, it would be interesting to know how many individuals, including alcoholics, have been given the message at an early age in their life scripts, and have received reinforcement for it.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of the gallows transaction on performance. Thus, the major aim of this study is to investigate what happens when people become "aware" of their gallows transactions and change them. It has been suggested, Erskine (1974), that when people no longer use the gallows transaction their performance improves and their behavior is channeled into constructive, creative, successful ways of living, rather than self-destructive behavior.

It is therefore hypothesized that the gallows transaction is significantly related to performance on a dart throwing task.

- I. Subjects with gallows transactions will score significantly lower on a dart throwing task than those subjects without gallows.
- II. Subjects scores on a dart throwing task will improve significantly after they stop using the gallows transaction.

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects were 96 undergraduate psychology majors, male and female students, from Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois. Subjects included freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, who were divided into 4 different groups of 24 subjects each. Group I was 24 students with confronted gallows transactions, (laughter or smiles). Group II was 24 students with gallows transactions who were not confronted. Group III was 24 students without gallows transactions, but who were confronted, and Group IV was 24 students without gallows transactions who were not confronted. (See Table I Experimental Design). There were 9 males, and 15 females in Group I, 13 males and 11 females in Group II, 14 males and 10 females in Group III, and 16 males and 8 females in Group IV.

Apparatus

The apparatus used in this study was a standard, round 17 inch diameter cork dart board, manufactured by Trio-Hollander of London, England. The apparatus is shown in Appendix A. Each of the 20 pie-shaped segments joining the center of the bullseye were numbered from 1 through 20. Eight darts, five inches in length, which accompanied the set, were used.

TABLE I
Experimental Design

GALLOWES				NON-GALLOWES			
Group = I		II		III		IV	
Gallows Confronted		Gallows Non-Confronted		Non-Gallows Confronted		Non-Gallows Non-Confronted	
Pre Trial 1	Post Trial 2	Pre Trial 1	Post Trial 2	Pre Trial 1	Post Trial 2	Pre Trial 1	Post Trial 2
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Group 7	Group 8

Procedure

Students were asked to volunteer for an experimental study. Freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior undergraduate students from Eastern's Psychology undergraduate courses were selected from a random sample of volunteers. Volunteers were informed that the experiment would require approximately 10 minutes of their time. All volunteers were asked to choose a time and date to meet, from a sign-in sheet which was presented to the undergraduate psychology classrooms. The sign-in sheet indicated the room number and building for the experiment. After the volunteer sign-in sheet was circulated throughout the classrooms all volunteers were then told that the entire study would be explained to them after its completion, but, until that time no more would be said concerning the experiment. Therefore, the students were aware that they would be a part of an experimental study, but they did not know the purpose of the experiment. This was done to limit contaminating effects of the students preparing themselves for the experiment. All volunteers were told that the experiment would take approximately 10 minutes of their time, and instructions concerning the meeting room for the experiment in the psychology department were repeated to them to assure that they knew the experimental room number. Volunteer students continued to be selected from undergraduate psychology classrooms until 24 subjects were found for each experimental group.

As each subject arrived for the experimental trials, he

or she was taken into a 10' X 12' room. The experimental room included the dart board, which was placed on the wall exactly 8' away from the throwing line. The center of the bullseye was exactly 5' 8" from the base of the floor. A standard sized card table and chair, with pencil and paper, was placed to the side of the room for the experimenter to use while recording the number of points received on the dart throwing task. For trial 1 and trial 2 the experimenter recorded each subjects time, score, and errors.

Before trial 1 each subject was asked how well they believed they would perform on the dart throwing task. The experimenter asked each subject the same question, "well how are you at throwing darts?" "What do you think your score will be?" Each subjects behavior and prediction of how well he or she would perform on the dart throwing task was used to indicate the presence or absence of the gallows transaction. Any negative comment followed by a laughing or smiling response to a subjects estimate of how well he or she would perform served as a gallows transaction. For example, gallows was evident when the subject responded verbally by saying, "oh, I could never hit the bullseye.....ha, ha," (laugh). Or, "I could never do that.....," or, "I never do well on tasks like this.....," (smile). In other words any negative response that was followed by a laugh or a smile was a gallows transaction. Subjects without gallows would not respond with a laugh or a smile. To determine which group all gallows

and non-gallows subjects would be placed in the experimenter used a half dollar coin flip. For subjects with gallows transactions heads was used for Group I, and tails was used for Group II. For non-gallows subjects heads was used for Group III, and tails for Group IV. (See Table II Experimental Design and Procedure).

Each subject was asked to stand behind a clearly marked line, which was located on the floor, exactly 8 feet from the dart board. Each subject was instructed not to move over the line while involved in the dart throwing task. The experimenter observed to see that each subject stayed just behind the marked line. All subjects were told that they would perform the task twice, with 2 separate trials, and that the experimenter would record their scores, and errors, and would time their task. The following standard instructions were read to each subject before they performed the dart throwing task.

This experiment involves the task of throwing darts at the cork dart board located on the wall just ahead of you. (The experimenter would point to the bull's eye showing each subject exactly the right location of the bull's eye). There will be two separate trials, and I will tell you when to begin each trial. Here is one practice dart for you to throw to get the feel of the task (the experimenter hands a practice dart to the subject). Go ahead and try it one time. (The experimenter gives no reinforcement). There is no time limit on either trial. Remember, you must stand behind the line marked on the floor. While we are performing this task there will be absolutely no talking. Are there any questions? Let's begin.

TABLE I I
Experimental Design
And Procedure

Group	Trial 1	Experimental Operation	Trial 2
Group I Gallows	Trial 1	Confronted	Trial 2
Group II Gallows	Trial 1	Non-Confronted	Trial 2
Group III Non-Gallow	Trial 1	Confronted	Trial 2
Group IV Non-Gallow	Trial 1	Non-Confronted	Trial 2

In the event that the subject did ask a question in the middle of his/her task performance trial, the experimenter repeated the instructions that no talking was allowed while performing the task. If a subject stepped over the experimental line, on either trial, the experimenter asked the subject to begin the trial over again.

The experimenter confronted each subject in Group I (the confronted gallows group) by explaining to them that when they were asked how well they would perform they exhibited a gallows transaction. Each subject in this group was asked once again to estimate how well they would perform on trial 2, and were asked to stop using the gallows transaction. The standard question for all subjects in Group I, on trial 2 was, "will you estimate once again how well you think you'll do on trial 2?" Each subject was then asked if there were any questions before beginning trial 2 and were reminded to be sure to stand behind the marked line on the floor, and that there would be no talking during experimental trial 2.

Subjects in Group II (gallows laughter non-confronted) did exhibit the gallows transaction on trial 1, however on trial 2 they were not confronted and they were asked the standard question, "will you estimate once again how well you think you'll do on trial 2?" Each subject was reminded to stand behind the marked line on the floor, that no talking should occur while performing trial 2, and they were asked if there were any

questions before proceeding with experimental trial 2.

Subjects in Group III (non-gallows confronted) did not exhibit the gallows transaction. They were read the standard task instructions on trial 1. On trial 2 all subjects in this group were confronted even though they did not exhibit the gallows transaction on trial 1. The confrontation question for all Group III subjects was, "are you aware that you said that your score would be _____?" (The experimenter used each subjects individual predicted score from trial 1 for confrontation purposes). Each subject was then asked before trial 2 the standard question, "will you estimate how well you think you'll do on trial 2?" All subjects were reminded that there would be no talking while performing their task, to stand behind the marked line on the floor, and if there were any questions before beginning trial 2.

Group IV subjects (non-gallows non-confronted) did not exhibit the gallows transaction. On trial 1 each subject was read the standard task instructions. On trial 2 all subjects in Group IV were not confronted. They were only asked the standard question, "will you estimate once again how well you think you'll do on trial 2?" All subjects were asked not to talk while performing trial 2, to stand behind the marked line, and if there were any questions before beginning trial 2.

Upon completion of the experiment all subjects were debriefed by explaining that the purpose of the study was to

see if a gallows transaction actually existed, and if it did, how it affected an individual's performance on a given task.

All subjects were told that the study was related to the field of psychotherapy, and that it was the first known laboratory experiment on the gallows transaction. The experimenter explained that it was her intention to write a brief synopsis of the study for publication. The subjects were asked not to discuss the experiment with anyone until its completion. This was done to avoid contamination of the remaining experiment. The subjects were then thanked for participating in the study.

RESULTS

The major hypothesis that the gallows transaction is significantly related to performance on a dart throwing task was supported by the results of the present study. In addition, both minor hypotheses were supported by the results. Hypothesis I: Subject's with gallows transactions will score significantly lower on a dart throwing task than those subjects without gallows, was supported because gallows subjects scored significantly lower on the dart throwing task ($p < .01$) than did non-gallows subjects.

Hypothesis II: Subject's scores on a dart throwing task will improve significantly when they stop using the gallows transaction, was supported by the analysis of variance and the multiple comparisons reported below.

The analysis of variance (see Table III) compared the differences between the groups. Differences were significant for the main effects [$F(4,184) = 42.06, p < .001$] and also for gallows confronted and non-gallows confronted subjects [$F(3,184) = 49.58, p < .001$]. The results also indicate a significant difference between confrontation and time [$F(1,184) = 19.50, p < .001$]. Mean scores for each group are shown in Table IV.

Both the 2-way interaction ($F = 3.10, p < .028$) and the confrontation X time interaction ($F = 3.10, p < .028$) are significant. There was a significant interaction between time (before and after) and confrontation for the gallows subjects [$F(1,184) = 9.10, p < .01$] (see Figure 1). However, the same

interaction (i.e. time and confrontation) for the non-gallows subjects was not significant [$F(1,184) = .03, p = n.s.$] (see Figure 2). Multiple comparisons were made using Duncans New Multiple Range Test (see Table V).

Differences between Group 1 and Group 2 were significant ($p < .01$) as were the differences between Groups 5 and 6 ($p < .05$). However, differences between Groups 3 and 4 were not significant ($p < .05$). Differences between Groups 7 and 8 approached but did not reach significance ($p < .05$).

A t test was used to determine the differences between males and females performances. Differences between males and females performance for gallows was [$t(38 \text{ df}) = 1.70 \text{ n.s.}$], and for non-gallows [$t(34 \text{ df}) = .97 \text{ n.s.}$]. No significant differences were found.

The results suggest that confrontation of gallows subjects does improve their performance levels.

TABLE III

Analysis of Variance for Confronted and
Non-Confronted Gallows and Non-Gallows
Subjects

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Significance of F
Main Effects	75835.563	4	18958.891	42.057	.001
Confrontation	67047.016	3	22349.005	49.578	.001
Time	8788.547	1	8788.547	19.496	.001
2-Way Interaction	4196.016	3	1398.672	3.103	.028
Confrontation, Time	4196.016	3	1398.672	3.103	.028
Explained	80031.578	7	11433.083	25.363	.001
Residual	82944.542	184	450.786		
Total	162976.120	191	853.278		

TABLE IV
Mean Scores

GALLOWS				NON-GALLOWS			
I		II		III		IV	
Gallows Confronted		Gallows Non-Confronted		Non-Gallows Confronted		Non-Gallows Non-Confronted	
Pre Trial 1	Post Trial 2	Pre Trial 1	Post Trial 2	Pre Trial 1	Post Trial 2	Pre Trial 1	Post Trial 2
Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Group 7	Group 8
Mean = 72.7	Mean = 99.1	Mean = 80.7	Mean = 81.0	Mean = 102.0	Mean = 117.7	Mean = 121.3	Mean = 133.0

TABLE V

Duncans New Multiple Range Test
For Confronted and Non-Confronted Subjects

Groups	1	3	4	2	5	6	7	8	Shortest Significance Range
Means	72.7	80.7	81.0	99.1	102.0	117.7	121.3	133.0	
72.7		8.0	8.3	26.4	102.3	45.0	48.6	60.3	R2 = 12.15
80.7			0.3	18.4	21.3	37.0	40.6	52.3	R3 = 12.76
81.0				18.1	21.0	36.7	40.3	52.0	R4 = 13.16
99.1					2.9	18.6	22.2	33.9	R5 = 13.46
102.0						15.7	19.3	31.0	R6 = 13.71
117.7							3.6	15.3	R7 = 13.93
121.3								11.7	R8 = 14.11

Shortest Significant Range .05 Level of Significance

GALLOWS

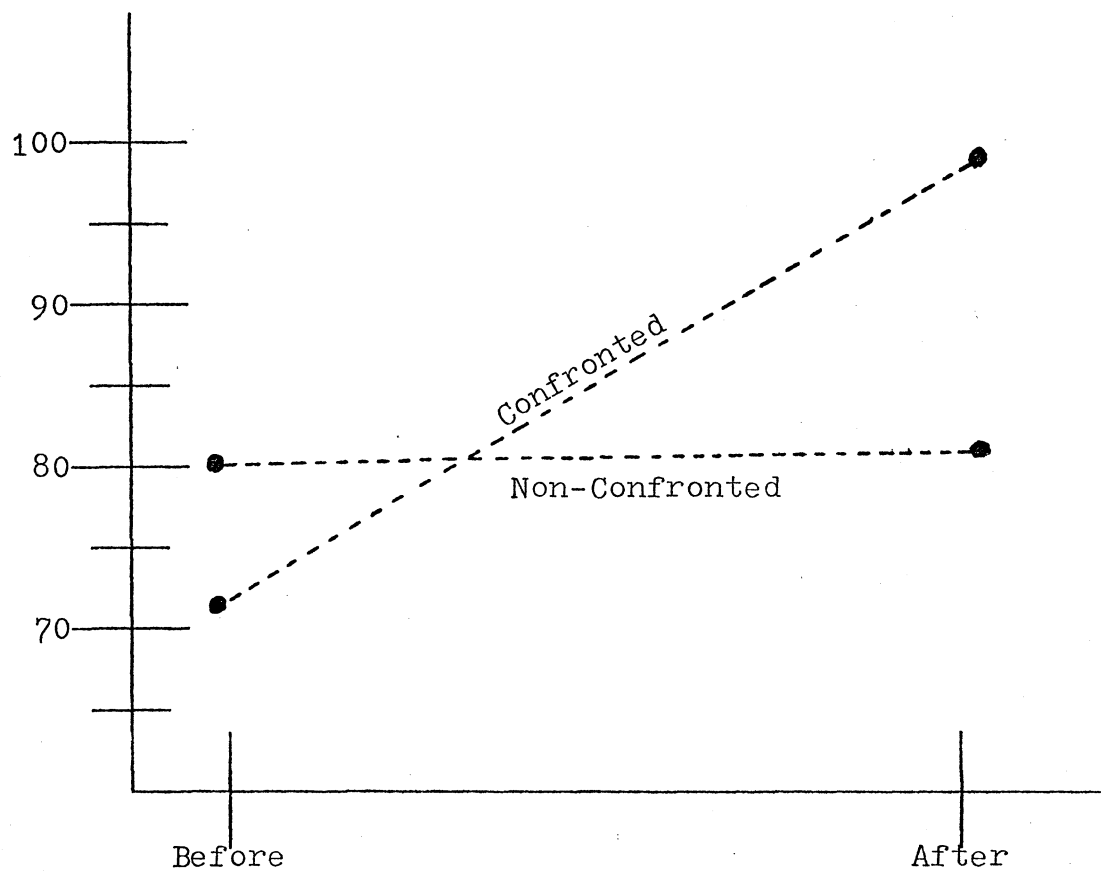


FIGURE 1

Interaction Between Confrontation
and Time for Gallows Subjects

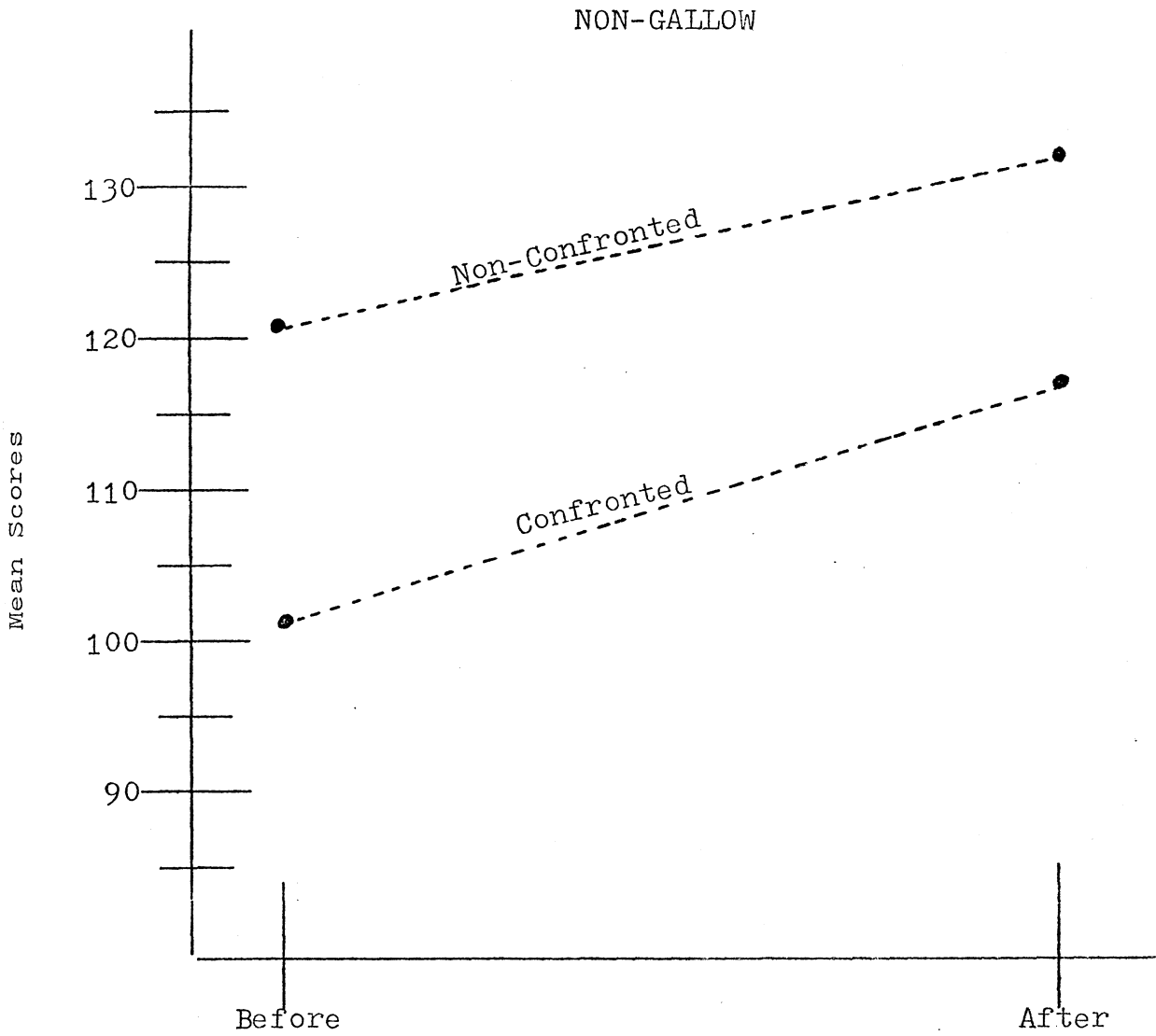


FIGURE 2
Interaction Between Confrontation
and Time for Non-Gallows Subjects

DISCUSSION

The present study was designed to see what effects the gallows transaction had on performance. The gallows transaction, Berne (1972) is the gallows laugh or the gallows smile which occurs after a special kind of stimulus and response called the gallows transaction. The gallows transaction is apparent in individuals when they smile or laugh at things which are actually painful to them. The distinguishing mark of humor in the gallows transaction is it isn't funny.

The present study supports the gallows theory. It was found that gallows subjects scored lower and performed less well than non-gallows subjects. In the confrontation of gallows subjects it was found that the confrontation of gallows increases subjects performance, while confrontation of non-gallows subjects does not increase performance.

Campos and McCormick (1972) refer to the gallows transaction as the tightening of a noose around the individuals neck, and that the gallows smile or laugh serves to tighten the noose and the gallow individuals destructive behavior is reinforced. In this study it was observed that all gallows individuals either laughed or smiled before their performance trials. Their gallows behavior had direct effects on the outcome of their performances when compared to non-gallows subjects

performance. The results from Group I, gallows confronted subjects, suggests that when gallows subjects are confronted it makes a significant difference in their performances when gallows subjects become aware of their gallows behavior.

The present study is also consistent with Erskine's (1974) findings. Erskine postulated that when a subject becomes aware of their gallows smile or laugh and changes it, performance and behavior improves in constructive ways rather than destructive ways. All gallows subjects scores in Group I improved significantly after confrontation in trial 2, thereby suggesting that when these subjects became aware of their gallows behaviors, that their performance scores improved with gallows awareness. This study supports Erskine's theory that when subjects with gallows behavior are confronted, and when they become aware of their gallows behavior, their performance was positively correlated with significant improvement on their over-all performance levels.

Steiner (1974) discusses the gallows transaction and in short, avoiding the gallows transaction allows individuals to laugh at whatever is joyful, rather than at what is tragic in the person, and discourages the self-destructive aspects of behavior by denying the strokes the individual expects, and usually gets. The confrontation in this study was directly related to the gallows subjects awareness and change in their over-all performance levels.

Subjects with gallows smiles and laughs in Group II, gallows non-confronted, but who were not confronted on trial 2, did not improve their scores which suggests no apparent change in their performance when they are not confronted, and they are not aware of their gallows behavior. Subjects in Group IV, non-gallows non-confronted, scores indicated that whether they were confronted or not that their performance increases. These subjects did not change their performance levels even after being confronted. This suggests that confrontation has an effect, but only for subjects with gallows. The results also suggest that for non-gallows subjects confrontation itself is not sufficient for improvement.

Freud (1912) argued that laughter is associated with the "gain of lust" obtained when the tension due to inhibited tendencies (e.g. aggressive, erotic) is released. In the present study it is apparent that laughter and smiling behaviors were prevented and the tension was not released.

Johnson and Szurek (1971) related the gallows transaction between children and their parents. They found case after case in which sexual aberrations, sexual promiscuity, and murder by young patients were clearly traceable to the unconscious fantasies, hopes and fears, expressed by their parents and reinforced by the gallows transaction, i.e. laughing and smiling at the child's self-destructive behavior. They accurately observed and implied in their writings that children were

basically at the mercy of their parent's wishes and noted that parents not only permitted their children to act out, but actually enjoined them to do so. This information implies that the more subtle methods by which children are induced to accept actual people or parents as prototypes of good and will consists of minute displays of emotion and gallows transactions. In the present study it is not known how many of the gallows subjects have been carrying self-destructive, behavioral, parental messages, or how these messages have effected their behavior and performances in all aspects of their lives, (i.e. losing vs. winning, failing vs. achieving, success vs. non-success, performing well vs. not performing well etc.). It might be possible that with the initial awareness confrontation in gallows individuals that they could apply this new information to all negative, self-destructive, aspects of their lives, and create constructive, beneficial change in their lives.

Berne (1961) refers to early history which spoke of the gallows laugh as the dying man's joke, or famous last words. The crowds of spectators at the Tyburn or Newgate hangings in the eighteenth century used to admire people who died laughing. The same thing occurs in a minor way at almost any group-treatment session, or in normal everyday conversations, when people laugh and reinforce a subject when he or she laughs or smiles after saying something that is actually painful to him. In observing

gallows individuals in the present study it was noted that in some gallows subjects that their laughter was very loud (almost self-dooming), and when the experimenter didn't laugh or smile back at them in some cases the subjects appeared to be puzzled. And with the awareness confrontation there was an observable difference in their behavior and their approach with the dart throwing task.

Limitations

Several factors that could have effected the outcome of the present study must be considered. There was a possibility that males might have performed better than females, however, there was no significant difference between the two.

In reviewing other alternatives in the present study it is not known if the confrontation for gallows subjects vs. non-gallows subjects was equally the same. Also, personality factors of all gallows and non-gallows subjects was not taken into account in the present study, or traumatic or non-traumatic life experiences were not examined before the study. Another factor which was not examined was of all participating subjects in the study, both gallows and non-gallows subjects, was how many subjects had previous experience with the dart throwing performance task. Prior experience in the task of dart throwing could have directly effected the outcome of scores in either sex.

Another factor might have been with the task itself. The task might be changed by using a different performance task. In the present study the dart throwing task was a performance measure and some other measure of interpersonal effectiveness might prove to be a more sensitive measure of the gallows transaction.

Also, the age of all subjects in the present study was not taken into account and age itself may or may not have effected the results.

In summary, the purpose of the present study was to investigate the effects of the gallows transaction on performance, and to research what happened when subjects became aware of their gallows transactions and changed them. The study suggested that when subjects no longer used their gallows transactions that their performance improved and their behaviors could be channelled into constructive, successful ways of living, rather than destructive ones. Subjects who exhibited gallows behavior did score significantly lower on their performances, than did those subjects without gallows, and their scores did improve significantly when they stopped using the gallows transaction.

Suggestions For Further Research

The present study might be conducted using only males or only females. Also specific age groups might be utilized for a more intense study.

The utilization of a video tape machine in future gallows studies would allow instant feedback to all subjects, and would be a potent awareness device. The video tape machine would utilize vision as an additional aid to the senses. A tape recorder would also be a useful device for immediate subject feedback concerning confrontations and discussion. Both of these mediums would strengthen the initial confrontation.

Further research would be interesting in regards to gallows transactions and choice of careers. Gallows subjects may choose very different careers when compared to subjects without gallows transactions.

Also, gallows transaction research regarding success in college vs. non-success in college would be an interesting study on the effects of the gallows transaction.

Research on the gallows transaction when compared to various personality factors would also present an interesting study. Personality factors in regards to the gallows transaction could also be researched on males only and on females only, and then researched on both sexes together.

Finally, there are numerous ways of possibly researching and examining the gallows transaction. The theory could be applied to almost any area of behavioral concepts where it would yield interesting research data. The extent of researching

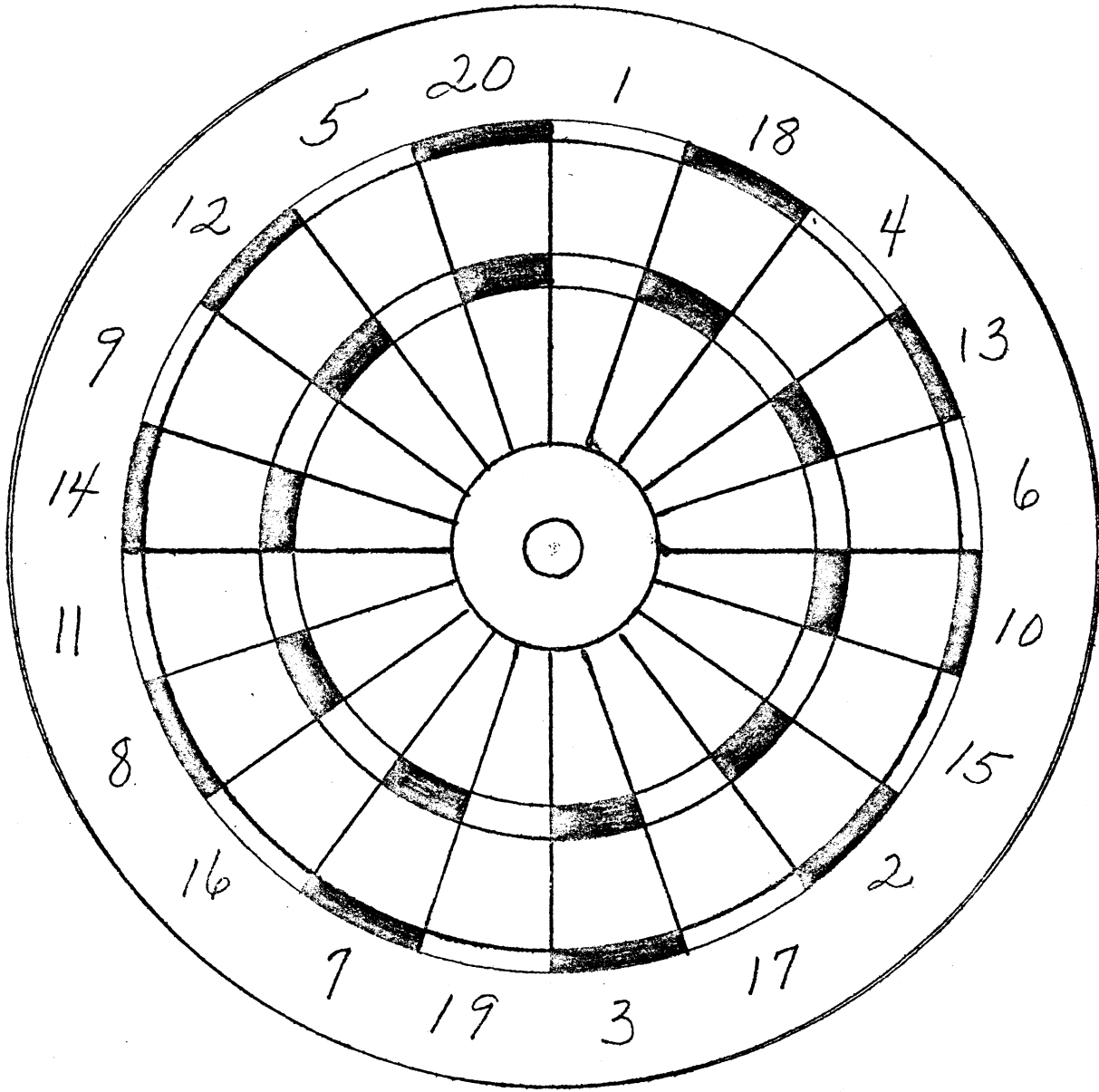
the gallows transaction in any life aspect would be directly contingent upon the imagination and creativity of the experimenter.

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APPENDIX A



Appendix A