

Twenty Years Experimental Work: The Lowenfeld Mosaic Test

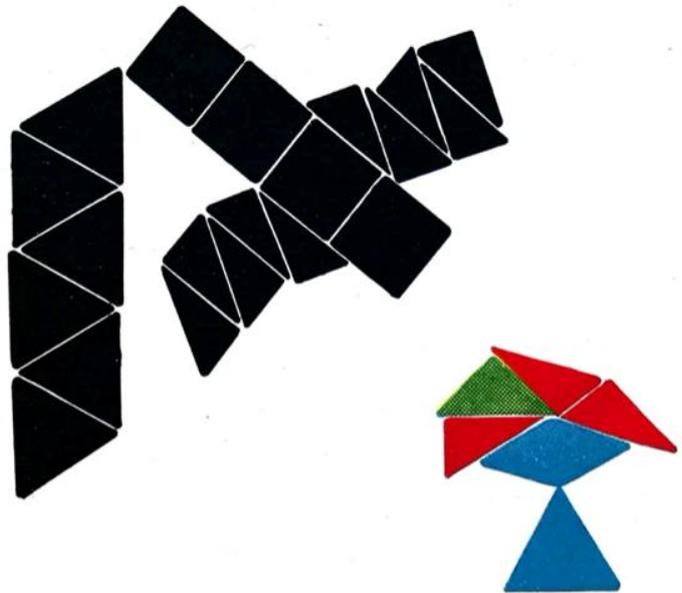
By Margaret Lowenfeld

A technique which records:

- Integration and structure of personality
- Changes during psychiatric treatment
- Differences in cultural response

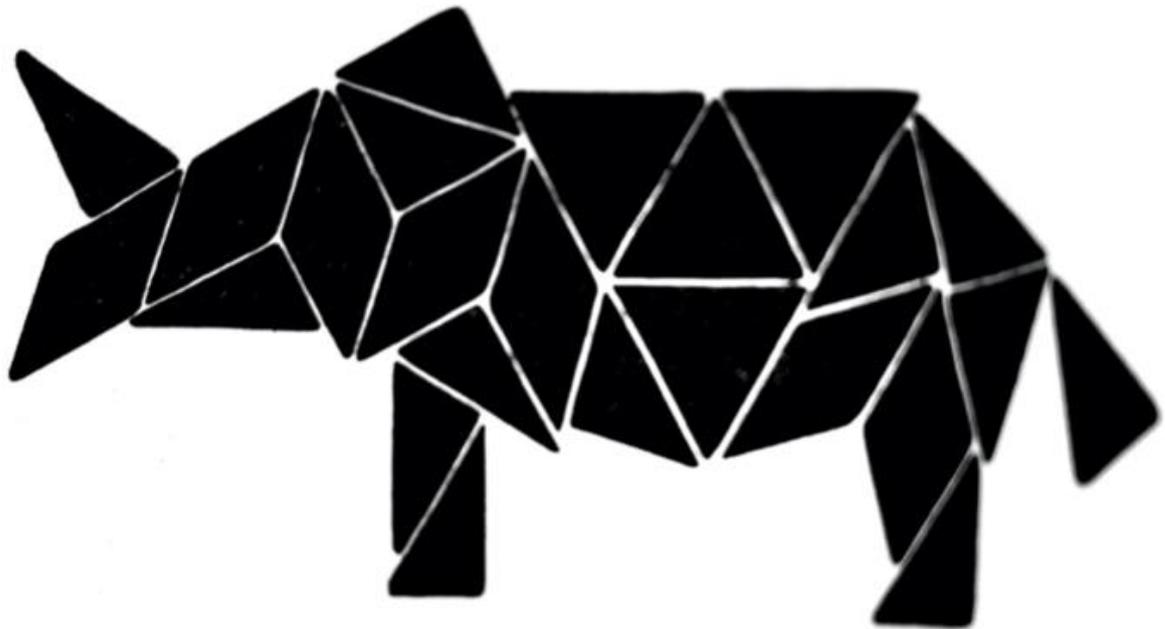
The response of an unmarried mother suffering from reactive depression.

A black wall stands between the sea and life - an aeroplane falls from the sky upon a cradle.



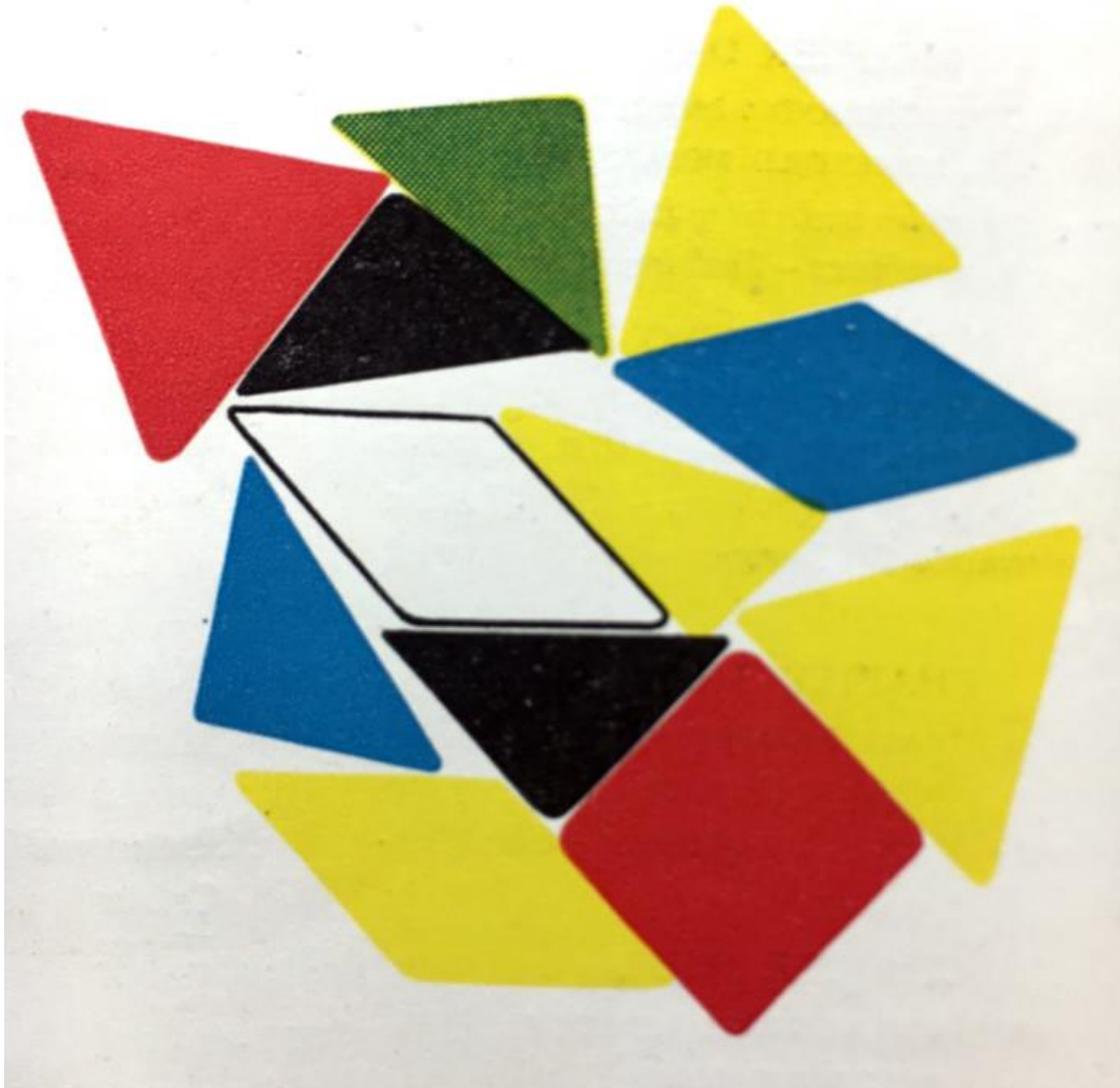
Founder and Physician-in-charge of the Institute of Psychology, London. Fellow of the British Psychological Society, the Royal Society of Medicine. Member of the International Council of Women Psychologists. Late Consultant, Columbia University, Research in Contemporary Culture. During the past twenty-five years in her practice as a child psychotherapist Dr Lowenfeld has used this test in the study and treatment of a wide range of ages and types of children, adolescents, and adults, and has taught it internationally. Since 1950 she has collaborated with British and American anthropologists in the use of the test for the study of cultural differences. She is the designer of an objective technique of psychotherapy based upon an individual study of play.

The materials of the Lowenfeld Mosaic Test are a box of 456 pieces of coloured plastic and a rectangular tray of fixed dimensions; the pieces are cut in five interrelated geometrical shapes, each shape presented in six colours. These colours and shapes are those found in European folk design. The stimulus which gave rise to the test was an interest in the question whether the diversity of these designs in any way reflected the essential characteristics of the peoples among whom they had arisen. Out of experiments along these lines came the discovery that designs spontaneously made with these pieces did in fact register differences in personality. Moreover, owing to the exact definition and the inter-relationship of the pieces, characteristics such as immaturity, neurosis, or organic cerebral illness are reflected in the design.



Part I of the book gives a description of the test itself, its origin, history and development, together with instructions for its use; each point being illustrated by a relevant coloured plate. (The 144 coloured plates are issued with the book but in a separate container.) Part 11 describes the experience gained by the designer and a group of collaborators in a number of different countries, in the use of the test in the study of normal personality, neurosis, psychosis, mental deficiency, and the development of children.

The figure on the left is an example of the black and white figures in the text; it falls into the class of response termed Representational Design, showing successful manipulation of the material where the geometrical qualities of each piece have been so exploited as to present an exact picture of the animal portrayed. This was made by a well-integrated adult.



Above is an example of one of the specially-packaged 144 coloured plates issued with the book. It shows a loose group in which the pieces appear in poor alignment with one another. Designs of this commonly appear in association with some forms of neurosis. The plate on the front page illustrates a type of response sometimes made by a psychotic patient.

One of the most interesting aspects of the test has been the discovery, since 1950, of significant differences in response between Western Europeans and a certain proportion of citizens of the USA. These differences are discussed, and a tentative correlation is suggested between them and certain attitudes found in the United States and Western Europe.

Responses to the test are evaluated directly and not by reference to tables, and successful use of the test demands the expenditure of a very considerable amount of time and care in learning its principles and gaining experience of its use.

The book will prove of value to workers in psychiatry, psychotherapy, educational psychology, anthropology, vocational guidance, and personnel management.