

vailed at the time of the original experiences were numerous and varied. Most commonly experienced was joy, which constituted about 30 percent of the total. Next in frequency was fear, about 15 percent, followed by pleasure, anger, grief, and excitement, all between 5 and 10 percent. Only very slight differences were noted between male and female subjects. The great variety and intensity of emotion accompanying these early experiences challenges the contention that childhood memories are for the most part banal screen memories.

Recall of pleasant events was more frequent than unpleasant or neutral events. In round numbers, pleasant memories constituted about 50 percent of the total, unpleasant memories about 30 percent, and neutral memories about 20 percent. While pleasant memories predominated with most subjects, some reversed this trend; and it was suggested that the terms, memory-optimist and memory-pessimist, used by other investigators, might also apply in this instance. The ratio of the number of unpleasant memories to the total number of memories (U/T) was used as an index of the degree of optimism-pessimism. That this trait was reasonably consistent was demonstrated by correlating the U/T ratios of the first and second recall periods. The coefficients obtained were .64 for the males and .57 for the females. It is also interesting to note that while there was a gradual increase of the number of experiences recalled with age, the relative incidence of pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral memories remained quite constant from year to year.

Individual differences in the frequency of recall and the degree of optimism-pessimism were both studied in relation to the following traits: general intelligence, memory, emotional stability, ascendance-submission, and radicalism-conservatism. The results of these comparisons were essentially inconclusive. However, it was felt that the lack of observed relationship between psychological traits and childhood memory could easily have been due to the limitations of the measuring devices employed, and were not necessarily indicative of the absence of such a relationship.

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## 8 Transformations of Memory in Everyday Life

Marigold Linton

*In 1972, Marigold Linton undertook a singular memory experiment. Like Hermann von Ebbinghaus, who had founded the classical psychology of memory about a century earlier, she was her own subject. Every day she recorded at least two events from her own life; every month she tested her ability to remember, order, and date a sample of the events she had previously recorded. Linton has presented the basic results of the study elsewhere; here she reflects on some of its implications. How can we understand the effects of "emotionality" and "importance" on memory? What are the long-run consequences of repetition? What kinds of events will be remembered best? The answers are often surprising. Particularly intriguing is Linton's very un-Ebbinghausian forgetting curve: it is linear with a slope of 5 percent a year. How can we reconcile such a pattern of forgetting with the existence of memories more than twenty years old? Linton's own explanation, based on the diminishing effectiveness of the original retrieval cues, suggests that a different forgetting function might be observed with other forms of cueing. Perhaps she is right; perhaps, on the other hand, most of our oldest memories are the product of repeated rehearsal and reconstruction. So far, these are the only systematic data we have.*

This article was written especially for the present volume.