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PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CROSSCOUNTRY HITCHHIKER

Stephen Franzoi

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the first empirical analysis of the personalities of cross-country hitchhikers. One hundred and four young adults were tested in 32 states using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) as the measuring instrument. The results display the predominance of the intuitive and feeling functions among subjects, and also the utilization of the perceptual function in dealing with the environment. These findings suggest a personality which is impulsive and autonomous, having a high degree of tolerance for complexity and change, and strong interest in interpersonal relations. These young hitchhikers also differ on a number of personality dimensions from three comparison groups previously obtained by the Center for Applications of Psychological Type, but are most similar to students in psychological and counseling training services. Implications of the results in explaining this "nomadic behavior" are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a fresh awareness of an old social phenomenon — crosscountry hitchhiking. It is not new to the United States, but what causes one to take notice is the sharp increase in the number of people who travel the highway by thumb and backpack.

While "wanderlust" is not historically unique, mass tourism is a relatively recent phenomenon, dating back to only the early 19th century. Tourism, as we know it today, was a scarcity even as late as 1860, undertaken only by a privileged few (Boorstin, 1962). However, in recent years there has been an enormous increase in the number of people travelling for pleasure (MacCannell, 1976), and tourism has become a lucrative business, offering the comforts of home to the modern-day adventurer.

A notable exception to this trend toward comfortable travel is the

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hitchhiking experience of many young adults. Indeed, the familiar sight of a suntanned youth standing on an entrance ramp, bedecked in blue jeans, work shirt, and backpack is now a fixture of our culture. The aim of the present study was to investigate the personalities of crosscountry hitchhikers, and to determine in what ways they tend to differ from the larger, young adult population.

Most published information about hitchhikers has concerned personal accounts of journeys across the land by participants themselves. More recently, various writers (Carlson, 1972; Miller, 1973; Mukerji, 1978; Weiss, 1974) have recorded their impressions of the hitchhiker based on informal interviews. While these reports are rich in anecdotal material and sometimes incisive in their subjective analysis, they are not systematic or empirical in their approach.

Using Jung's theory of psychological types (1971), the present study attempted to explore the possible implications of nomadic behavior in this particular group. Can it mean that an individual is looking for ways to develop new external relationships and outer-directed interests (i.e., *extraversion*), or does it imply that the behavior is a vehicle for intensifying a preoccupation with inner-directed processes (i.e., *introversion*)? Further, which of the functions in Jung's theory would be most prevalent in the sample? Finally, what might the combination of these personality characteristics reveal about the individual's present self-concept?

METHOD

Subjects

One hundred and four subjects, 88 males and 16 females, were recruited as they hitchhiked on major interstate highways and well-travelled state roads in the United States during the summer of 1973. The mean age for both males and females was 21 years. For their participation, subjects received transportation along a portion of their route and an interpretation of their survey responses once the data had been analyzed.

Measuring Instrument

The instrument used to measure Jung's types was the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (1962). The purpose of the indicator is to ascertain from self-report an individual's psychological attitude and preferences in regard to the dimensions of either perception or judgment. The E-I dimension was designed to measure the person's preferred orientation to life, either *extraversion* or *introversion*. The S-N dimension was designed to measure the person's preferred way of perceiving things,

either *sensation* or *intuition*. The T-F dimension was designed to measure the person's preferred way of making decisions, either *thinking* or *feeling*. Finally, the J-P dimension was designed to measure the person's preferred way of dealing with the outer world, either through the *judgmental functions*, thinking or feeling, or through the *perceptual functions*, sensation or intuition. By determining the preferences for each dimension, the person is classified as one of 16 possible types: ISTJ, ISFJ, INFJ, INTJ, ISTP, ISFP, INFP, INTP, ESTP, ESFP, ENFP, ENTP, ESTJ, ESFJ, ENFJ, or ENTJ.

In a recent comprehensive assessment of the MBTI, Carlyn (1977) concluded that the indicator was an adequately reliable self-report inventory, measuring dimensions of personality which seem to be quite similar to those postulated by Jung. The indicator has been used in testing various populations (e.g., Levy, Murphy, & Carlson, 1972; Goldsmid, 1967), the most extensive having to do with the medical profession (McCaulley, 1977). Results of such studies have been impressive in terms of their explanatory personality discriminations.

Procedure

Travelling in a truck with camper, the researcher and a companion set out on a two-month tour of the country, covering 32 states and approximately 15,000 miles, with the truck serving as a travelling field laboratory. Since the study was conducted in a moving vehicle, it was essential that a reliable unobtrusive measure be used to provide a preliminary discrimination between crosscountry and crosstown hitchhikers. This was important in order to best utilize our time as well as the space in the vehicle. It was assumed that those engaging in extensive travel would carry basic provisions which could be used to identify them at a distance. Thus, any hitchhiker carrying additional paraphernalia other than the clothing worn was considered a possible subject and invited into the truck.

Once the subject was settled and we were underway, two additional indicators were employed to determine suitability. These were the hitchhiker's distance duration of travel, which was set at a minimum of 1000 miles, and a minimum time travel duration of seven days. Whenever possible, such information was elicited during normal conversation and prior to the individual's awareness of the research. Many subjects understandably had no definite plans or objectives concerning their travels, and it was necessary to use direct questioning in these instances. After questioning, if the person was judged suitable as a subject, our own interests were made known and he or she was asked to fill out the MBTI form. Following completion of the MBTI, we generally interacted until other hitchhikers were spotted or our travel routes diverged.

Subjects' gratitude to us for providing transportation, in addition to their interest in the research itself, proved to be sufficient motivation for the completion of the survey. Many of the hitchhikers seemed genuinely flattered that someone was interested in their behavior and lifestyle. Being of similar age and appearance as the subjects, we generally established an easy rapport, allowing for many frank and valuable exchanges. A good many of the hitchhikers were not only interested in the research but also were enthusiastic in volunteering information about themselves. The fact that we were "conducting research" did not appear to alienate them. Rather, it seemed to serve as a powerful catalyst in revealing aspects of their personality. While some of the road stories told to us were of the "bullshit" variety studied by Mukerji (1978), and characterized by considerable heroic, autobiographical embellishment, these were relatively easy to identify through additional questioning. As previously noted by Weiss (1974), the transitoriness of the situation made it much easier for these personal revelations to occur. Accompanying this situational aspect was the further knowledge that one of the hosts was a "researcher," a term which quite possibly had associations with such psychologically powerful roles as "analyst" and "counselor." As a result of these factors, many personal revelations and confessions were made during the course of the study.

RESULTS

Only two qualified hitchhikers refused to take the MBTI, one confusing it with another personality questionnaire and the other expressing a dislike for "tests." Four others had to be dropped subsequently: one due to illiteracy, another to random answering, and two to their unwillingness to complete the questionnaire. Consistent with the commonly held belief that crosscountry hitchhiking is a white form of travel, only one minority traveler was in the sample. Sixty of the hitchhikers traveled in pairs, 14 being cross-sex pairs and 16 being male pairs. No female pairs were found at any time during the study. Fewer than 19% of the subjects had college experience.

A chi-square analysis found no significant differences in college experience between subjects displaying the contrasting attitudes and functions, or between the complete types. In preliminary comparisons of partners' personality types with the rest of the sample, there appeared to be some indication that like-attitude partners (introverts with introverts, extraverts with extraverts) were more prevalent than would be expected from the total makeup of the sample, but upon analysis this difference did not meet the .05 criterion ($\chi^2 = 4.41$, $p < .15$).

Of the 16 possible psychological types, two, *ENFP* (*extraverted intuitive* with *feeling* secondary), and *INFP* (*introverted feeler* with *intuition* secondary), were found to be predominant in the sample. Thirty-two subjects fell into the *ENFP* category and 24 in the *INFP*, accounting for over half the sample. None of the remaining 14 types included more than ten subjects, with some (*ENTJ* and *INFJ*) not appearing at all in the sample. The data clearly display the predominance of the *intuitive* and *feeling* functions among subjects, as well as the preference to utilize the perceptual functions over that of the judgmental functions in the outer world. Neither of the two attitudes (*introversion* or *extraversion*) was unusually prominent in the subjects tested.

In order to determine whether the hitchhiker sample differed in psychological makeup from more representative populations, it was compared with MBTI data obtained from 6,738 high school juniors and seniors, 11,122 college freshmen, and 1,247 students in psychological and counseling training services, provided by the Center for Applications of Psychological Type. The ratio of the observed frequencies in the hitchhiking sample was compared to the frequencies expected on the evidence of the base populations for each of the three comparison groups. Probabilities were based on the chi-square statistic or, in those cases where hitchhiker cell frequencies were less than five, on Fisher's Exact Test. A ratio of more than 1.00 for a particular cell indicates that there are more subjects in the hitchhiker sample than would be expected from the base population. A ratio of less than 1.00 indicated fewer subjects than expected. Results are presented in Table 1.

Comparisons with the High School Population

The hitchhikers do not differ significantly from the high school sample on the E-I dimension, but significantly diverge ($p < .001$) from them on the S-N and the J-P dimensions, showing a greater preference for intuition over sensation, and a greater tendency to utilize the perceptual function in their interaction with the environment. The hitchhikers also differed significantly ($p < .05$) from the high school sample in preferring feeling over thinking.

When looking at interaction effects, we find similar differences. The NP types are significantly ($p < .001$) more likely to be found in the hitchhiking sample (65.38%) than in the high school sample (31.32%). This same analysis reveals similar significant differences ($p < .001$) for the FP interaction (71.15% versus 40.10%, respectively), the EP interaction (50.00% versus 31.79%), the NF interaction (55.77% versus 29.82%), and the EN interaction (40.38% versus 24.61%). Following a comparison of the complete types, we find that the *INFP* and *ENFP* types are significantly more prevalent ($p < .001$) in the hitchhiker

Table 1

Hitchhiker Type Frequencies Compared with more Representative Populations

	Sensing Types with Thinking and Feeling		Intuitive Types with Feeling and Thinking	
	ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
Introverted Judging	N = 3	N = 1	N = 0	N = 4
	H = 0.47	H = <u>0.13*</u>	H = 0.0	H = 1.68
	I = 0.42	I = <u>0.10**</u>	I = <u>0.0*</u>	I = 1.37
	J = 0.73	J = <u>0.16*</u>	J = <u>0.0**</u>	J = 0.94
Introverted Perceiving	ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
	N = 1	N = 8	N = 24	N = 4
	H = 0.25	H = 1.00	H = 2.47***	H = 0.96
	I = 0.36	I = 1.19	I = <u>2.53***</u>	I = 1.22
	J = 0.44	J = 2.00*	J = <u>1.28</u>	J = 0.86
Extraverted Perceiving	ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
	N = 2	N = 10	N = 32	N = 8
	H = 0.44	H = 0.99	H = 2.39***	H = 1.69
	I = 0.73	I = 1.39	I = 2.42***	I = 2.19*
	J = 0.96	J = 2.85***	J = 1.58**	J = 1.43
Extraverted Judging	ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ
	N = 3	N = 2	N = 2	N = 0
	H = 0.41	H = <u>0.18***</u>	H = 0.46	H = 0.0
	I = 0.37	I = <u>0.15**</u>	I = 0.33	I = 0.0
	J = 0.72	J = 0.35	J = <u>0.23*</u>	J = <u>0.0*</u>

Note. Underscoring of a ratio figure indicates Fisher's exact probability used instead of the Chi-square statistic. "N" equals the number of hitchhikers classified in the particular type category; "H" equals the ratio of observed hitchhiking sample frequencies expected on the evidence of the high school population; "I" equals the ratio of observed hitchhiking sample frequencies compared to the frequencies expected on the evidence of the college freshmen population; "J" equals the ratio of observed hitchhiking sample frequencies compared to the frequencies expected on the evidence of the psychological and counseling population.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

sample, while the ISFJ and ESFJ types are significantly more prevalent (at the .05 and .01 level, respectively) in the high school sample.

Comparisons with the College Freshmen Population

The hitchhikers do not differ significantly from the college sample on the E-I dimension, but significantly diverge ($p < .001$) from them on the S-N and the J-P dimensions, showing a greater preference for

intuition over sensation, and a greater tendency to utilize the perceptual function in their interaction with the environment.

The NP interaction was significantly ($p < .001$) more likely to be found in the hitchhiking sample (65.38%) than in the college sample (31.63%). Significant differences ($p < .001$) in interaction effects were also found for the FP, EP, NF, and EN types, as well as for the IP, SF, and EN types. However, unlike the other interactions, the SF type was less prevalent in the hitchhiker sample than it was in the college population.

A comparison of the complete types revealed that the INFP, ENFP, and ENTP types were significantly more prevalent (at the .001 level for the first two and the .05 for the latter) in the hitchhiker sample, while the ISFJ, ESFJ, and INFJ types were significantly more prevalent (at the .01 level for the first two and the .05 level for the latter) in the college sample.

Comparisons with the Psychological and Counseling Students

The hitchhikers do not differ significantly from the psychological and counseling students on the E-I dimension, but significantly diverge ($p < .001$) from them on the J-P dimension, showing a greater preference for the utilization of the perceptual function in their interaction with the environment.

The NP interaction was significantly ($p < .001$) more likely to be found in the hitchhiking sample (65.38%) than in the psychological sample (47.39%). Significant differences ($p < .001$) in interaction effects were also found for the FP and EP types. As with the other interactions, the SP type was significantly more prevalent ($p < .01$) in the hitchhiker sample than in the psychological population.

A comparison of the complete types revealed that the ESFP, ENFP, and ISFP types were significantly more prevalent (at the .001 level for the first type, the .01 level for the second, and the .05 for the third) in the hitchhiker sample, while the INFJ, ISFJ, ENFJ, and ENTJ types were significantly more prevalent (at the .01 level for the first type and at the .05 level for the rest) in the psychological and counseling students.

Intra-Group Differences in the Hitchhiker Sample

In a post-hoc analysis, my travelling companion and I independently classified subjects along three dimensions based on the notes each of us took of conversations with the hitchhikers. The first dimension dealt with assessments of each subject's maturity, ranging from a score of one for "immature wanderer" to a score of seven for "well-adjusted seeker." The second classificatory scheme concerned motivations for

hitchhiking, with categories of "seeking adventure," "seeking self-understanding," and "escaping from difficult responsibilities." The third classification was to characterize each subject as being more like a college student, a blue-collar worker, or a member of the counterculture. Since my companion drove the truck throughout the study and thus did not meet many of the subjects, interrater reliabilities are based on fewer than 50% of the classified subjects. The correlation coefficient between the ratings for the 49 subjects both of us classified was .97 for the first ordinal dimension. For the second and third dimensions, where nominal categories were used, there was a 94.74% and an 83.33% agreement, respectively. In view of this high level of interrater reliability, further analysis of the rest of the sample based on only my ratings seemed reasonable.

No significant differences between sex, types, attitudes, or functions were found in a chi-square analysis in terms of motivations to travel or level of maturity. Concerning the third dimension, classification of blue-collar types ($n = 24$) was clear, but both raters found it difficult to make distinctions between the college and countercultural categories. Due to a lack of clear distinctions between these two categories, they were combined, forming one category for comparison with the blue-collar group. Chi-square analysis revealed more intuitives in the collapsed category and more sensation-types in the blue-collar category than would be expected by chance alone ($p < .05$). This was also true for the NF interaction: significantly fewer NF types were classified as blue-collar types than would be expected by chance ($p < .025$), and significantly more college-countercultural types were found in the NF category. Using this same collapsed category, similar results were found when the ENFP and INFP types were compared with the rest of the sample. Here, significantly more NFP types were found in the collapsed college-countercultural category than would be expected by chance ($p < .025$) and vice versa for the rest of the sample.

DISCUSSION

The results indicate that the hitchhiking sample differs from other comparison groups on a number of personality dimensions. While there were no differences between the hitchhikers and the other groups with regard to a main effect of introversion and extraversion, all three groups differed significantly from the hitchhikers on the judgmental-perceptual dimension. That is, the hitchhikers had a greater preference for the perceptual functions (sensation or intuition) when dealing with the environment than for the judgmental functions (thinking or feeling).

The utilization of one of the perceptual functions in interaction with the environment would seem to enable the hitchhiker to adapt readily to changes on the road. In support of this view, perceptive types usually score high on measures of impulsiveness, need for autonomy, tolerance for complexity, and enjoyment of change (Myers, 1962; Madison et al., 1963; Stricker & Ross, 1962; Webb, 1964). According to Jungian theory, this type of person prefers to live in a spontaneous, flexible manner, aiming to understand life and adapt to it rather than to regulate and control events.

On the other hand, a person who relies primarily on one of the judgmental functions prefers to regulate and control events, and lives in a decisive and orderly fashion. Supporting research suggests that judging types are compulsive, having a strong need for order and a desire to have things decided and settled (McCaulley & Natter, 1974; Ross, 1966). By its very nature, hitchhiking requires quick decision-making based upon minimal information, as well as a high degree of flexibility, and thus would tend to discourage the meticulous judgmental person.

One of these judgmental persons, Dave (ISTJ), age 19, was on his way to Florida when we picked him up. He had been on the road for about five weeks and, unlike most of the hitchhikers, he did not speak fondly of his experiences. Although quiet, he made it clear to us that he did not enjoy hitchhiking and that this was definitely his last journey by thumb and backpack. Another judgmental type, Janet (ESTJ), age 20, had never considered hitchhiking until her boyfriend, a "perceptive" (ENFP), thumbed 1,300 miles to her doorstep and persuaded her to join him. Out of necessity if not predisposition, the vast majority of the crosscountry hitchhikers with whom we came in contact were noticeably spontaneous. Only 14% habitually utilized one of the judgmental functions in the outer world.

A second major finding was the significant difference between the hitchhikers and the high school and college freshmen populations on the intuition-sensation dimension. Intuition, the function overwhelmingly preferred by 71.15% of the hitchhikers versus 43.47% and 44.35% of the other two samples respectively, has been found to be associated with a high degree of tolerance for complexity and change, and a strong need for autonomy (Myers, 1962; Madison et al., 1963; Stricker & Ross, 1962). In college, intuitives are more likely than sensing types to be rated by faculty as imaginative (Ross, 1962). In further support of this view, over 90% of the creative writers, architects, research scientists, and mathematicians studied at the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research were intuitive types (MacKinnon, 1966).

The sensation type, in contrast, has been found to show an interest in the immediate, practical facts of experience and tends to stress life's

realities rather than its possibilities (McCaulley & Natter, 1974; Ross, 1961). Sensation types tend to be attracted to such vocations as business administration, sales, office management, banking, veterinary medicine, farming, and police work (Stricker & Ross, 1964). Regarding the S-N dimension, our hitchhikers were similar to the students in the psychological and counseling training services, 69.19% of whom preferred intuition over sensation, virtually identical to the 71.15% preference of our sample.

A good example of the intuitive type's restlessness and desire to continually experience new situations was Dominica (ENFP), age 18, the only female in our sample who was travelling alone. Recently having left a communal farm in Canada where she had worked at picking fruits and vegetables, she was on her way to Los Angeles to board an overseas flight to England when we met her. She had no concrete future plans other than where her next adventure might take place. Dominica's preference in travelling by herself was not uncharacteristic of the real hazards to which many hitchhikers exposed themselves while on the road, often unnecessarily. For these young adults, much of the appeal of this mode of travel may have been due to the element of danger involved and the exaggerated sense of autonomous action called for at various times when events took a turn for the worse.

In regard to the thinking and feeling functions, the hitchhikers differed significantly only from the high school sample, showing a greater preference for feeling than did this group (75.96% versus 65.07%). As indicated by their scores on the Edwards Personal Preference Schedules, feeling types appear to be extremely interested in human values and interpersonal relations (Myers, 1962; Saunders, 1960). This type of person relates well to most people because of his or her attention to the emotional climate of the surroundings and, as a result, tends to be attracted to the helping professions such as teaching, preaching, counseling, and nursing (Stricker & Ross, 1964).

Thinking types, on the other hand, tend to be objective, analytical, and logical in their orientation toward life and are attracted to scientific, technical, and business professions (Stricker & Ross, 1964). Just as hitchhiking requires flexibility and spontaneity in behavior, so does it require the ability to relate to others on a personal level. In return for a ride there is an implicit expectation between the driver and the hitchhiker that the latter will be cordial and talkative, even lending a sympathetic ear to the driver's own personal problems. The hitchhikers who do this best and who thrive on it, namely the feeling types, tend to get the long rides, the free meals, and the other conveniences bestowed upon them by a satisfied driver.

An even clearer picture of the hitchhiker emerges when we consider

the various interaction effects. The hitchhikers differed significantly from the comparison populations on the NP, FP, and EP interactions. As stated earlier, the J-P dimension indicates whether the person prefers the dominant judgmental or the dominant perceptual function in dealing with the objective world. The utilization of the perceptual function, intuition, in interaction with the outer world theoretically enables the hitchhiker not only to adapt readily to changes in the environment, but even to *anticipate* those changes before they happen as a result of being attentive to subtle cues.

The FP interaction, on the other hand, indicates that the hitchhikers are unique in preferring to use feeling in dealing with their own subjective experiences. The utilization of the feeling function in this manner would lend a distinct personal valuation to the individual's subjective nature. Crosscountry hitchhiking offers potentially rich and diverse experiences which may take the form of a "romantic mystique" to some. This romanticized outlook may fire the imagination of the subjective feeling type yet have negligible effect on the subjective thinking individual, who prefers solid analysis rather than feeling-tone memories.

Closely related to these two interactions is the EP type, which indicates that the hitchhikers differ from the larger populations in being more extraverted and spontaneous in their behavior, important qualities for one who relies upon the generousities of others and is subject to the uncertainties of the road. The IP type, a more subdued, reserved individual than the EP person but theoretically equal in adaptiveness, was more prevalent in the hitchhikers than in the high school or college freshmen populations, but not significantly more than among the psychological and counseling students.

The closer match between the hitchhikers and this latter group in comparison with the other two populations was seen also in two other interactions, NF and EN. While the hitchhikers differed significantly from these two groups in preferring the combination of intuition and feeling, they did not differ from the psychological sample. Likewise, the hitchhikers differed significantly from the former two groups in preferring the combination of extraversion and intuition but, again, did not differ significantly from the psychological and counseling students.

What does distinguish our sample from this group is the hitchhikers' greater degree of flexibility; they prefer to adapt to the world while the latter group prefers to control it. Thus, while our hitchhikers differ in many respects from all three comparison groups, they are most similar to our psychologically oriented sample. This is all the more interesting when we realize that roughly two-thirds of our sample had no college experience.

When we examine distinctions within the hitchhiker sample itself, we find that the blue-collar types preferred sensation while the college-countercultural types preferred intuition. The NF interaction was also more prevalent in the college-countercultural category and less common in the blue-collar category. This same preference occurred in the NFP types as well. The finding that our hitchhikers most closely resembled a psychologically oriented comparison population, coupled with the fact that it was those hitchhikers whom we independently classified as college-countercultural types that accounted for this similarity, suggests that the majority of the crosscountry travelers in our sample were young people intensely interested in understanding the complexities of both themselves and the world about them.

Possible Reasons for Road Travel

The age of the sample suggests that they are in the “moratorium stage” (Erikson, 1950) or are members of the “youth culture” (Keniston, 1963)—no longer adolescents but not quite adults. Erikson (1963) states that the most widespread expression of the discontented search of youth is the craving for locomotion. They may have chosen this form of travel because it meets certain requirements they feel are necessary or at least desirable in order to fully experience the widest “life spectrum” possible. Unlike modern tourism today, which has become largely a spectator sport, hitchhiking is an athletic exercise and is a throwback to the old English meaning of the word “travel”—to travail. It requires independence, responsibility, at times courage, and a good deal of tolerance for physical discomfort. Its similarities to an initiation rite are not mere coincidence. In our rapidly changing society where such rites have become blurred or outmoded, young adults must create their own thresholds to pass over. Many of the subjects in the present sample exposed themselves unnecessarily to danger. This failure to take proper precautions in hitchhiking may reflect a need to intensify the experience of successful self-direction and autonomy, characteristics normally attributed to adulthood.

Another appealing quality of life on the road, especially for a person who has not resolved the adolescent-adult dilemma, is that it is an excellent way to experience the world while not having to commit oneself to specific elements. For example, it requires little money and only short periods of time in personal involvements with undesirable people or events. Thus, crosscountry hitchhiking provides two essential services for young adventurers: it serves as a way station for those uncertain about their place in the world, and also functions as an initiation into various realms of life associated with adulthood, demarcating the person’s adolescent existence from his/her current life

space. If this process is successful, the person can then bind together the past, the present, and the future into a coherent whole so that a unity of the self-concept results.

Whether the adaptiveness, spontaneity, and affective nature of the present sample was due to personality characteristics that existed prior to the time the hitchhikers took to the road, or whether it tended to reflect the role demands of crosscountry hitchhiking, cannot be determined here. Probably it was a combination of both—attracting those who found the experience appealing and then either forcing them to become more adaptive and sociable, or weeding them out after the romantic allure had worn thin.

Certain romantic aspects of life on the road can wear thin very quickly. By choosing hitchhiking as their vehicle of experience, these young people are exposed to the largely homogenized landscape provided by this country's superhighway system. Crosscountry hitchhikers experience this watered-down version of our country out of necessity, and thus their experience of the physical world is circumscribed. However, based upon our conversations with the hitchhikers, they seemed to have had a greater interest in the people they met on the road than in the land they had passed through, an observation consistent with the personality profile of this group. Thus, the relationship between the crosscountry hitchhiker and the crosscountry automobile driver is a symbiotic one. The driver is entertained and can live vicariously through the road experiences related by the hitchhiker, and the hitchhiker has the opportunity to converse with a "committed" member of society, to once again hear and tell about the romance of the road and, in the bargain, get a few miles closer to the next immediate destination.

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