
**A COMPARISON OF THE METHODS OF SCORING THE
RORSCHACH METHOD: BECK, HERTZ, KLOPFER**

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In the October 1948 issue of the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* we find an article on "The Rorschach in Psychological Science". In this article we read that it is the unequivocal opinion of Dr. Louis Leon Thurstone — a

person of undisputed stature in the field of psychological tests and measurements — that persons who give Rorschachs are doing tricks and that these same persons oftentimes give Rorschachs without due consideration for what they are doing. We read also such statements as, "the Rorschach test has not been accepted by the psychological profession" and that "most students of this test do not have recognition or status in psychological science".

Whether or not one sees fit to agree with Dr. Thurstone's provocative article — an article which has much merit, by the way, since it encourages and points the ways for the refinement and strengthening of the procedure — whether or not one sees fit to agree one must, it seems, take a stand regarding this Frankenstein in our midst. The situation seems to have become such that one can no longer comfortably ignore it or be neutral about it since the demand — both public and professional — has become so great that the practicing clinical psychologist must now number the Rorschach among his other tricks, to use Dr. Thurstone's phrase.

If, as one suspects, Dr. Thurstone means by psychological science only those laboratory situations in which research is being done under tight control then that is another matter and brings us directly to the rationale and structure for this talk. Since it is no longer possible for the clinician to remain forever neutral about this technique or method, as it is called, it seems likely that many clinicians will be casting about for some information on the subject of the Rorschach. To furnish a preview, as it were, is the purpose of this paper.

There are, at the present time, three significantly different systems of nomenclature and procedure in vogue in the United States for the administration and scoring of the Rorschach protocol or record of responses. These are the systems practiced and taught by Dr. Samuel J. Beck who is situated at Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago; Dr. Marguerite R. Hertz who is at Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio; and Dr. Bruno Klopfer who is currently on the staff at the University of California. Before we consider the differences in methods and techniques used by these various persons it might be well to review very briefly the history of the Rorschach.

In a Presidential Address to the First Annual Meeting of the Rorschach Institute, Dr. Morris Krugman gives most of the pertinent history. This article has been published in several journals under the title "Out of the Ink Well." Hermann Rorschach was a young Swiss psychiatrist who began working with the ink blots soon after he got out of medical school in 1910. He worked for about ten years — making literally thousands of experimental starts and selections before he finally set upon the now accepted ten plates on which the study published in his book, *Psychodiagnostics*, is based. The thing which Rorschach contributed to the use of ink blots in personality study was his sagacity and clinical acumen in the theorizing as to the implications of various factors produced in the test. Unlike his predecessors who used ink blots as far back as 1857 to examine personality, Rorschach sensed or felt that the test as he was using it was a test of perception. He, therefore, became more concerned with how and where the subject saw his animal, or cloud, or human than with the fact that it was an animal, or cloud, or human which was seen. The *how* refers to the quality of the ink blot which pre-empted the association, that is, the color, the form, or a sense of movement, and the *where* to the actual location in the ink blot of the area associated to.

Rorschach reported the results of his years of experimentation in 1921 in monograph form. He died early the following year on April 2, 1922. As might be expected of a person of his discernment and perspicacity he anticipated most of the criticism which is being and has been made and tells specifically of the things which must be done to validate his work statistically — that is, give it scientific respectability via "t's" and "r's" and critical ratios and chi squares. That he was modestly reserved about his work is indicated by his statement: "It is always daring to draw conclusions about the way

an individual experiences life from the results of an experiment. To try it on the basis of the findings of so simple an experiment as this may, at first glance, appear absurd. In this case, however, the conclusions are supported by many diagnostic controls, and the experience types developed have been confirmed by clinical observations in the psychoses."

The Rorschach Method was introduced into the United States by Dr. David Levy in 1924. Dr. Beck was a follower of Dr. Levy and has, further, studied under Oberholzer while Oberholzer — Rorschach's co-worker — was still in Switzerland. It was also through Dr. Levy that Hertz first learned of the Rorschach Method. According to Dr. Hertz' statement in one of her seminars, her initial intention was to do a statistical study to disprove the validity and reliability of the Method. What has happened is that Dr. Hertz has now done more in the way of formalized statistical studies than probably any other, and her utterances in regard to the Rorschach are backed up by quantifiable data. I do not know just how Dr. Klopfer came into contact with the method. But, since he took his doctor's degree from a Munich university in 1922 and worked in that country for a number of years, it seems likely that he became familiar with the Method while still in Germany.

There is much much more of great interest which might be said about the phenomenal growth and popularity which the Rorschach Method has enjoyed in the last ten years and about how the more conservative element, the serious Rorschach worker, is becoming genuinely concerned lest such rapid growth be unhealthy. While it is very easy for the tyro to speak most learnedly in the jargon which Thurstone alluded to, I find myself agreeing with Dr. Beck's comment when he was asked one time to caution the beginners in his seminar group against injudicious use of the test. Dr. Beck said, in effect, "I used to give it to my friends but I quit because I liked my friends and I wanted to keep them. And, as for the person in a clinical situation who bluffs and forces his interpretations of personality in error, the supervisor or therapist who uses the results doesn't need to know the Method in order to see that there is some fourflushing going on. Usually two such mistaken interpretations are sufficient."

Seemingly, while it was Beck who in 1937 became the first to publish a treatment of the Method in English, it was Klopfer who by his efforts really made the country Rorschach conscious. This he did, according to Krugman, by lecture, by study groups, by seminar, and finally, in company with Oberholzer and Binder, founding the Rorschach Research Exchange in 1936. Dr. Hertz, a comparative late comer to the field, established herself by the extensive studies which she did under a Brush Foundation grant in Cleveland, Ohio. At that time she was dealing principally with the problem of determining shifts in personality structure between pre-pubescence and post-pubescence by use of the Rorschach Method. Out of these extensive studies grew the now justly popular Hertz Frequency Tables — a statistically treated tabulation of several thousand responses to the Rorschach plates. Each of these persons, Beck, Hertz, and Klopfer seems to be rather productive in terms of published research articles on the Rorschach. In the most extensive bibliography I was able to find on the Rorschach Method — the one contained in John Eiderkin Bell's work published this year entitled "Projective Techniques"—and which contains 796 citations, Beck is listed 27 times, Hertz 39 times, and Klopfer 26 times. The only other persons to approach this quantity of published articles are Molly R. Harrower-Erickson with 25 and Zygmunt A. Piotrowski with 20.

It is here that the seeming principle or law of nature is noticed that function arises out of structure and that structure is modified by function. You will recall that I mentioned that it was Klopfer who really popularized the Rorschach and made it available to all who were reasonably well grounded in the dynamics of behavior and who had experience in psychometric as well as clinical procedures. Thus, does it seem, from a pedagogical point of view, that the method as presented by Klopfer is the most readily communicated

to the average relatively unsophisticated beginning graduate student. The basic conceptualizations and many of the finer points of detail and procedure are covered in his book. He does not, at the same time, confine himself to beginners but goes on in the later chapters of the book to give material upon which differential diagnoses may be made. Another signal feature of the test as presented by Klopfer and one which gives it great appeal to the beginner is the copyrighted three-fold summary sheet and individual record blank which he and Helen Davidson developed for the Rorschach Institute. This record sheet renders the mechanics of scoring and tabulation virtually foolproof. Moreover, and this is an especially strong point with beginners, Klopfer does not use a numerical system for designating the various areas in the ten cards as do Beck and Hertz. Instead, the areas responded to by the subject are outlined on a miniature reproduction of each card embodied in the record blank itself. Further, there is one page devoted to an explanation of the scoring symbol. In all, these two devices serve pretty well to do away with all memory work. And, it is memory work which is most difficult in the beginning since the average student views the formulation $WF + AP$ as a new kind of foreign language he must learn or, perhaps, as something vaguely suggestive of the familiar but meaningless nonsense syllable.

It is not, perhaps, too great a stretch of the imagination to see and to understand how such a system might logically develop under the pressure of a need to simplify and to communicate the techniques of the Rorschach Method in order that fewer persons might be frightened away by the apparently great demands upon their time and energies which would be entailed by memorizing scoring formulas and location numbers.

And, again it seems equally logical that the particular techniques advocated by Dr. Hertz would be the natural outcome of one who approached the Method from the point of view of the research-oriented clinician. Dr. Hertz has 47 or so discrete items which she tabulates under "personality patterns" on the psychogram which she has developed. That is, there are at least 47 separate quantifications which enter into her consideration of the personality structure. This number of formulations is approached, so far as I know, by only one other: Dr. Joseph Zubin who did a study entitled "A Psychometric Approach to the Evaluation of the Rorschach Test". Dr. Zubin has said that there are something like fifty definable dimensions in the Rorschach. This, by the way, is not to imply that these quantifications which Hertz makes are things which the others are unaware of or which the others do not use. It is rather that the others, Beck and Klopfer that is, do not formalize the statement of all of them in their response summaries. The principal drawback to the using of the test as presented by Hertz seems to be the fact that as yet she does not have one principal publication which can be relied on for use as a text. Her presentation is in several separate research studies which must be read, digested and integrated by the serious student who wishes to become proficient. Once done, however, the techniques and procedures for the treatment of protocols possibly offers the richest rewards for the research-oriented and statistically minded investigator.

Finally, it seems rational that Dr. Beck, with his background of training under Oberholzer and his experiential background in the Boston Psychopathic Hospital and of late in the Psychological Laboratory and Clinic of Michael Reese Hospital, should be inclined to minimize the research aspect and pro-paedeutical considerations in his work with the Rorschach Method. Beck is probably the most conservative of the three when it comes to making modifications or accepting innovations in Rorschach interpretation. He prefers, insofar as possible, to adhere closely to Rorschach's *Psychodiagnostics*. Yet Beck has published two excellent volumes which can be and are extensively used as textbook material for the teaching of the Method. Even in these comprehensive books, however, one can readily note that Beck has constantly in mind one central idea: an effort to pattern out the "Ego-trend" as he sometimes refers to it in order that definitive statements may be made about (1) the

severity of the struggle and the direction it seems to be taking, and, (3) the indications for particular kinds of psychotherapy and prognosis. Or, somewhat differently stated, Beck wishes, by means of the Rorschach, to answer the question, "What may we reasonably expect to be able to do for this mentally sick person?" Beck is not insensitive to or unaware of the unanswered questions concerning interpretation. For example, both Hertz and Klopfer have taken stands on the psychological significance of some of the shading responses elicited by the black and white cards — specifically those responses which seem to have texture or a tactile sensation included. Beck, on the other hand, makes a simple admission of his uncertainty and awaits outcome of research in that area.

Now, a word in general about these three outstanding workers with and teachers of the Rorschach Method. There do not seem to be any basic differences between them as regards the broader meanings and interpretations of the psychological factors brought out in the test. There are several differences, however, in their procedural methods, refinements in techniques of administration and scoring, and other similar differences which tend, I feel, to reflect the individual differences of their unique personalities; and further to reflect the situational and functional differences alluded to above more than they tend to reflect any basic departures from the conceptualizations and basic assumptions of the author, Hermann Rorschach. It has been shown, for example, that the same protocol can be scored blind—that is, without ever seeing the subject and knowing nothing about the subject save sex and age—and interpreted by three qualified persons using different techniques with essentially the same overall results. Most of the time those differences which do appear are attributable to the differences in language and mode of expression which is used by each of us when we attempt to "say the same thing."

In summary, I have attempted to present my understanding of the essential differences, if any, which seem to obtain between the techniques of administration, scoring, and interpretation of the Rorschach Method as they are taught by the three recognized leaders Beck, Hertz, and Klopfer. It is to be hoped that this will provide at least a point of departure for those persons who are confronted with a choice of the technique to which they will subscribe. As I have suggested, it seems to me that the salient consideration is contained in the question, "What do you wish to use the test for?" In the final analysis, all three approaches yield the same net result. However, each seems to possess certain characteristics which tend to make it more adaptable to a peculiar or particular situation.

As I view the situation it seems to me that the principal features might be summarized as follows:

I. From the point of view of the classroom situation Klopfer seems to offer the most since the presentation more nearly follows conventional course structure and involves a minimum of memory work.

II. From the point of view of the psychologist who is going to do research with the test it seems to me that Hertz with her quantification and statistical treatment of the various scoring categories offers much.

III. From the point of view of the clinician who is going to be using the test in his daily work around a psychological clinic where speed, service, and demonstrated competence with the method are primary considerations then Beck, with his minimization of formulations and avoidance of complicated tabulation sheets, seems to offer the most.