

## Rorschach as a Neuropsychological Instrument

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From: Gerald Goldstein [mailto:ggold@nb.net]

Sent: Monday, December 28, 2009 08:17

To: Neuropsychology

Subject: Re: [npsych] Not Neuropsychology - Rorschach Chuckle

I have a few differences. There is no one Rorschach. Over many years since the publication of Rorschach's monograph, the test has changed dramatically, the only thing remaining constant being the blots themselves.

Theoretical frameworks, interpretation, scoring and administration have all changed over the years. Rapaport's Rorschach is different from Klopfer's Rorschach. There is no one real Rorschach.

Second, diagnosis of aphasia is far from the only purpose of a speech sample. They can be used in studies of language development and for examining various aspects of numerous disorders, notably schizophrenia and autism. Fluency is not the only consideration, and numerous measures may be used (e.g. rating of prosody, type-token ratios etc.) The ten inkblots may be good stimulus material because so much is known about normal responses to them (e.g., "Popular" responses).

It is not my belief that clinicians of the past prospectively used the Rorschach to identify brain damage. Rather, it was used as part of a more comprehensive evaluation for doing a personality, not a neuropsychological, evaluation. If the question of dementia was raised, tools like the Piotrowski signs were generally used retrospectively. Typically, data from the Wechsler scales and perhaps the Bender-Gestalt Test were used in such evaluations. Long before there was such a thing as neuropsychological assessment, these activities were conducted. Rapaport's "Diagnostic Psychological Testing" provides an extensive theoretical rationale for this approach.

I had the simple idea that the Rorschach blots would make a good set of complex visual stimuli because so much is known about how normal individuals and people with various forms of psychopathology respond to them. For example, do people with right inferior parietal lobe lesions show some unique pattern of response?

Numerous neuropsychological tests have been used as experimental procedures (e.g. repeating digits, CPT) and use of the Rorschach would be consistent with that practice.

The matter of identifying presence of brain damage is a complex issue and you might

want to look at our old paper

(Kane RL, Goldstein G, Parsons OA: A response to R. Mapou. J Clin Exp Neuropsychol, 11:589-595, 1989)

to review the controversies in this area, which apparently still exist. It is no big deal to point out that the Rorschach is not a particularly good test compared to what is now available, to identify brain damage.