

Rorschach Alphabets

Introductions

This unfinished work will never be finished or completed.

The introductions are composed of insights written by masters of philosophy, psychoanalysis, researchers in neuropsychology, and the Rorschach. Attached are brief comments by the writer in brackets [].

The alphabets contain fragments of interpretations each associated with scorings. The alphabets' contents cover works of well-known authors. These introductory comments contain more fragments of thoughts the writer thinks are important to understand what is involved in responding to the visual forms on the Rorschach which lead to interpretations of who and what, and how a person is.

The reader can sort through the alphabets at their leisure. Some of the interpretations may be of use in understanding the persons they have assessed.

John L. Wallace, Ph.D.

Experiential Event Horizons

An experiential event horizon of a black hole is the boundary ('horizon') between its 'outside' and its 'inside'; those outside cannot know anything about things ('events') which happen inside.

(Ledford, 2009) (Ledford, 2009)

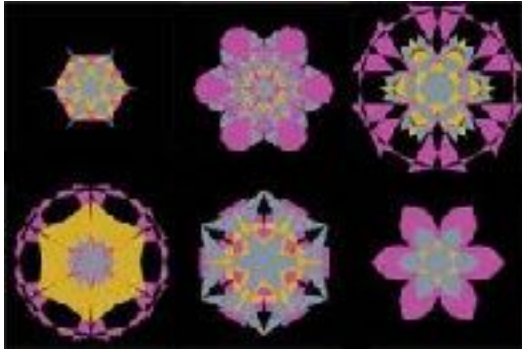
Images Slip Unnoticed into the Brain

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(Husserl, 1913)Hidden memories guide choices

Images slip unnoticed into the brain.

Heidi Ledford



Volunteers were shown kaleidoscopic images during the tests. *Nat. Neuroscience*

Memories that we are not aware of may be just as accurate as those we recall, researchers have found. In addition, they provoke unique changes in the brain's electrical activity during recall.

The researchers have looked at a type of memory called 'implicit' memory. Whereas 'explicit' memory is full of the things we consciously remember, implicit memory contains memories we do not realize we have formed. The phenomenon are demonstrated in patients with amnesia, who can, with training, learn to solve specific puzzles more quickly despite insisting that they have never seen the puzzle before.

In a study published in *Nature Neuroscience*, Joel Voss from the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and Ken Paller of Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, report that implicit memory may be at work when we recall images that we have seen before¹.

"What is exciting is they are sort of bringing an experimental lens to the most twilight aspects of our memory," says neuroscientist John Gabrieli of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge.

Have I seen you before?

Voss and Paller showed 12 people a series of kaleidoscopic images. Participants were allowed to devote their full attention to half of the images, but were distracted by a number task while viewing the remaining half. That distraction made it harder to consciously remember the pictures.

Then, 45 seconds after studying the images, participants were tested on how well they could distinguish an image they had previously seen from a new, but very similar picture.

Each time they selected an image, they were asked to gauge how certain they were of the choice. Did they clearly remember the picture? Was it merely familiar? Or was it simply a guess?

Overall, it seemed that a guess was not always a guess. When tested on the images they had seen, participants 'guessed' correctly more often than they 'remembered' correctly. But Voss says it is too soon to tell whether the findings will have implications for real-world scenarios – such as exposure to subliminal messages. So far, he has only tested the phenomenon using non-sensical, kaleidoscope images. And

he has only given subjects a choice between the image they had seen before and a very similar one. Images that bear some meaning, for example, would be more likely to be remembered explicitly.

Electrical connection

The authors have reported similar results before². But this time, Voss and Paller also measured changes in electrical signals in the brain as the people completed their tests. They found that a unique signature appeared 200 milliseconds after the image was shown that was associated with correct 'guessing' of an image originally viewed while distracted.

"The timing is interesting," says Gabrieli. "This effect is occurring in the early push of processing, as opposed to when more time passes and you have more time to think about it." A brain-imaging experiment, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging to observe changes in blood flow to different regions of the brain, could provide more information about where in the brain these signals are originating, he adds.

The results are "striking", says Daniel Schacter, a professor of psychology at Harvard University. An earlier imaging study³ conducted by Schacter and Scott Slotnick, who are now at Boston College, found differences in brain activity when participants correctly or incorrectly believed that they had seen an image before. Those differences were found in the visual cortex, a region of the brain that processes images, and Schacter speculates that the electrical signature Voss and Paller observed has similar origins.

References

1. Voss, J. L. & Paller, K. A. Nature Neuroscience. Advanced online publication doi:10.1038/nn.2260 (2009).
2. Voss, J. L., Baym, C. L. & Paller, K. A. Learn. Memory. 15, 454-459 (2008). | [Article](#) | [PubMed](#) |
3. Slotnick, S. D. & Schacter, D. L. Nature Neuroscience. 7, 664-672 (2004). | [Article](#) |

Source: Nature

<http://www.nature.com/news/2009/090209/full/news.2009.88.html>

Vision's Melody

A Jungian analyst, Edith Wallace, was captured by "The Light", i.e., the illumination coming from the depths, deep down in her psyche. All the words in the world have but one purpose. That is to evoke and often provoke visions of the mundane and ethereal world that all of us experience reflexively. Those neuronal-processes which are huge repositories of neural events whose reason *raison d'être* is to surprise us by making us aware of their presence.

Here this is called 'Vision's Melody'. It points to the vast utility of the evocations of vision based projective tests or 'Tests of Visual Imagination'. Everything we experience is capable of eventuating in a visual experience. Thinking for many is a continuous moving picture with subtitles, which are evidenced with the soundings of words and music.

The 'Melody' is the music of the emotions carried in the experiences bonded to the visual images. The fusion of these two, which came together originally, was cleaved asunder when the advent of words drove them apart.

Wordless Recognition

Wordless recognition is the recognition of an object without recalling the word for the object. The meaning and significance to the person of the object is present and available to the person perceiving the object. Wordless recognition fulfills the requirement for meaning and intended uses of objects. It negates the need for the binding of the cognition with words that relate to the objects. The objects, unnamed, set off trains of associations, which undergird reflections. Words lag far behind the intuitions initiated by viewing of the objects. (Edith Wallace, 1969) (Edith Wallace, 1969)

(Husserl 1913, pp. 715-716)

Primacy as Sight Based Predators

People are anatomically configured as sight-based predators with eyes facing forward, responding more quickly to visual stimuli than to auditory stimuli.

Picture Thinking

“Picture Thinking” people have an extremely vivid visual sense. “Picture Thinking” refers to a type of concertistic thinking that relies upon **signs** which are pictures carrying total conviction of a visually experienced reality. “Picture Thinking” people keep their past available to them as frozen framed pictures. These pictures are available instantly without intervening effort (Deri, S. 1984, pp. 182-183).

Deri, Susan K. (1984) *Symbolization and Creativity*. International Universities Press. New York. (Kaufmann, 1990; Edith Wallace, 1969)

IMAGINATION as PROJECTION

Edith Wallace, M.D. PhD

“The subject is **imagination**, but the word is used with several different meanings. In order to give you what it means to me I have avoided describing and explaining: describe fictionally, explain conceptually. I present simply what it means to me on the deepest possible level as I experience it.

This has been difficult and time consuming because the “experiential” approach on the deep level requires imagination itself to ‘speak up’, imagination the instigator and inspirer of the new, the different, even the true. For that, we have to humbly wait and learn while presenting.

This short introduction is for the purpose of making it easier for the reader for open-minded listening, opening to their ingenuity, knowing that it is one way of looking at imagination. I believe it to be the deepest and the original way. I am talking about the Creative Process. This is not only in the arts but also in everyday living, living simply needing to use imagination thereby being more alive, enjoying life with the use of one’s vitality, one’s gifts, being healthy.

Maybe we need what some people fear in the manifestations of the Millennium, namely the return to a simpler, a less mechanized life with the chance and need to use imagination. The filmmaker Kurosawa shows this artfully in his film Dreams.

We lack the use of imagination in our mechanized age.

For example:

1. In the condominium where I live, we are from time to time, jolted out of the beautiful quiet by a noisy blower, noise pollution! The use of a broom may be considered antediluvian, but it might keep us healthier, able to use our faculties better.

2. The plumber came to clean a faucet, but he had no ‘calcium off’ so he did a very inadequate job. I decided to use vinegar and an old toothbrush, and it worked very nicely!

I will present imagination here as I have experienced it, sometimes contrary to descriptions and popular use. I have learned to trust in it, which has made it into the strongest helping force in my life. I am now old enough to understand and see more clearly and ready and willing to talk about it and share so that others may find that necessary trust for a good life and a good death! It takes imagination, the kind that leads to truth not to the soothing of illusion. The use of this gift brings beauty into

our lives. None of the Arts would exist without imagination. Words contain and create image...but it is more than image. Just now I am dancing around the image, spin a tale, sing a song, invent, and come up with something new. Imagination comes from another world and leads to another world.

There are those who use imagination as if it were mere fantasy, equal to something made up by us, instead of something more profound given to us. On the road to truth, of truth the journey of the spirit and in search of the survival of the soul one has to be careful and very precise. How can we make the proper distinctions here? Three examples:

1. Magician - puts on a show for effect
2. Jester - uses insight to keep the play going.
3. Shaman - guided by Higher Power.

Their different purposes:

1. Uses imagination for his own purpose
2. He is the stage director: 'All the world is a stage and we are the actors upon it.'(Calderon)
3. Healing - imagination here is knowledge given to be used creatively, and it may be used in its profound meaning.

Sometimes imagination is used as if it were mere fantasy. Fantasy is human invention while imagination is a divine gift, to be considered and used as such. I used to say: "I started to paint because I had an itch in my arm, but it was the imagination that produced the itch!" Nowadays I allow the imagination to direct things. William Blake put it this way: "I cease not from my great task, to open the Eternal World, to open the Immortal Eye of man inwards into the Realms of Thought, into Eternity, ever expanding in the Bosom of God, the human Imagination."

And Sir George Trevelyan in *A Vision of the Aquarian Age* (p.154) stated "We are truly becoming focal points for reflecting the higher worlds of thought. This may be apparent in imaginative pictures, and there is indeed a place in meditation for allowing the creative imagining to work."

Imagination does not just make our lives more interesting. It starts new things, it initiates. On the negative side it can frighten us, build a negative scenario, only if we catch it wrong... we may be confronted with negative possibilities. Imagination gets

us into it as well as out of it. All excitement, dramatic build-up is the play of imagination, a good novel, a new game, and any invention.

Sometimes we say: “You have a vivid imagination.” What do we mean? I imagine = I have a hunch, and it is more than that. It is important to know that fact if we want some comprehension what imagination is about. It prods me. There is nothing that I have consciously but I have constitutionally, a gift, in greater or smaller measure. I may have stretched the meaning of imagination. My friend who makes it possible to go in search and find; find even destiny. We need to live our creative potential. It keeps us alive and healthy as well as being helpful. It makes us helpful servants who may create beauty and thereby enrich life.

Sometimes imagination presents us with that which is puzzling. It is worthwhile to stay with what is presented until it speaks to us, gives us some guidelines which we then have to use, put in action.

This whole process is the ‘active’ in ‘Active Imagination’.

Active Imagination is a technical term C. G. Jung has given to a specific process. See my article in “Approaches to Art Therapy” which has an extensive bibliography.

‘Active’ here means catching what the unconscious presents in image, movement, writing, music, etc. and receiving messages from the unconscious. This aspect is the opposite of what we wish to do in meditation. Jung himself used it for research of both unconscious and the makeup of the human psyche. This process can lead to a trust in the unconscious, which can then become a guide because we listen or look.

Wallace, Edith (Wallace, 1987) (Podell, 2001) (Donald W. Winnicott, 1971), M.D., Ph.D. (1987). ‘Healing Through the Visual Arts, A Jungian Approach’. In J. A. Rubin (Ed.), *Approaches to Art Therapy* (pp. 114 - 133). New York. Brunner Mazel.

My paintings by now have become my teacher and I ‘allow’ the process. In this context, I might say, I am again with the itch in the arm. Only now I step out of the way deliberately, let it be, use mostly my aesthetic sense, like, which color to use, where to put the second stroke after the first one was put down, etc. None of this would happen without imagination in the first place. Imagination is in the impulse activated individually with whatever medium according to the specific gift.

When we use imagination for understanding or spinning a yarn it is ‘only’ imagination. When we allow the Great Unknown to understand or create it, it could be called Imagination as I am doing in this essay. Imagination creates resourcefulness. Angelus Silesius, in “The Cherubinic Wanderer” stated:

“The arrow will not hit the mark,
will never enter
if it is I who take aim,
instead of that which is my center”

So we are associating with our resources.

The philosophers are hot on the trail of imagination, shuttling between mental scientific and intuitive experiential. Can we find the middle ground? When we move in the world of **imagination** and become active in it, it can be all-absorbing. Practical matters of the world of forms, in which we live and operate, may be neglected or just considered an interfering nuisance! What is the attraction? It comes from and creates for us a link to another world, a world of truth, but the World of Truth, as long as we live here, comprises both worlds.

Synchronicity is an example of a meeting of inner and outer world. When one is preoccupied with a subject, examples crop up everywhere.

[...] “What is the meaning of man’s creative need? These objects themselves have their places in the outside world, but their genesis and meaning flow primarily from the inner world where they were conceived; it is this world alone, or rather the creation of this inner world, that can share in the dimension of man’s creativity and on the creative organ that is the Imagination”!

“Accordingly, everything will depend on the degree of reality that we impute to this imagined universe and by that same token on the real power we impute to the Imagination that imagines it; but both questions depend in turn on the idea that we form of creation and the creative act.”

And now I understand what I have been doing and attempting to say. This has been difficult and time consuming because I have endeavored to be neither conceptual nor fictional. I am only hoping that it won’t be difficult reading. It should be more like life, and who has ever said life was not difficult? The best ideas come after you think you have run out of them.

To emphasize once again: I have tried to speak of imagination itself as an experience and to describe the experience rather than imagination itself which could conceptualize and ‘describe’ what in itself is indescribable. It could make it more difficult to follow because it presents it neither purely mentally nor purely emotionally and the reader needs to meet it with his/her own stimulated (aroused) experiences. Imagination is first cousin to intuition: unexplainable, often hard to

follow. So, may what I have said invite you to listen to imagination and follow its guidance with discrimination in devotion.

More thoughts on Imagination: Jung states, "The Image represents the Meaning." Imagination originates in the 'other world' with the ability to produce manifestations in the world of forms. We call these manifestations creation.

In this Millennium to be properly tuned in, we cannot say any more: "I am right, you are wrong" because we are all seekers of the truth and we are in the dark. We are not supposed to know but to seek for knowledge. Our helper in this search may very well be Imagination! It is now necessary to take a look at other, different uses of imagination. Everything is legitimate, even helpful when in search of truth, but not effective when for effect. All this should lead to a better understanding of the human psyche and its functioning."

Corbin, Henry. (1969). Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi (Page 3). Princeton University Press.

Corbin, Henry. (1969) Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi (Page 180), Princeton University Press, Next: In Search of Truth. Differences between Magician and Shaman; The Occult and the Esoteric; Manipulation versus Guidance (Edith Wallace, MD, Ph.D, 1999).

[Dr. Edith Wallace was the writer's analyst. She was an exceptionally gifted woman, kind, quite, warm, imaginative, and one of those rare 'real females'. She is missed.]

Visions Traverse from Novelty to Familiarity

The NVLD diagnosis makes the assumption that a brain organizes information on the basis of a verbal-non-verbal dichotomy. According to "theory," supported by scientific data, nothing could be further from the truth.

The brain organizes information on the basis of a "phylogenetically old" novelty versus familiarity principle. This can be demonstrated in all vertebrate species, dating back at least 500 million years, and verbal-nonverbal has nothing to do with it. **A brain takes that which is novel and tries to makes it familiar** because that principle has a decisive advantage for adaptation, and in fact, the principle is of such significant value that nature has been organizing brains in that way by lateralizing

hemispheric specialization for at least 500 million years! This is inferred from reviewing numerous experimental studies across different classes of vertebrate species. This organizing principle did not change when hominids started to speak. Verbal/language functioning is a special instance of the familiarity principle, while "nonverbal" is really a special instance of novel problem solving.

Problem solving is the ability to determine the stimulus-based characteristics of the unfamiliar problem situation and then to apply that information to solve the problem, so that it is now familiar. I have written at length about this in prior posts on this list serve. Please check the archives. I will attach one paper of significance from an evolutionary point of view demonstrating that the novelty-familiarity principle is biologically consistent across all vertebrate species, as is this type of hemispheric specialization, including within "the monkey that talks," and I'd urge you to read the citation I'm listing below. This topic is also reviewed in Chapter 6 of *Subcortical Structures and Cognition*, Springer, 2009. I am sure you will enjoy the attachment - very interesting and thought provoking.

Podell, K., Lovell, M., & Goldberg, E. (2001). Lateralization of frontal lobe functions. In S.Salloway, P. Malloy, & J. Duffy (Eds.) *The Frontal Lobes and Neuropsychiatric Illness* (pp. 83-100). Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric.

Playing and Reality

Donald W. Winnicott

1971

Routledge, London

“With his theory of the transitional objects, Winnicott jolted all ponders on human nature into a realization of the **never-ending oscillation** between the inner and the outer worlds (p. xiii).”

“... in his paper on ‘The Use of an Object’... Winnicott gives us a new awareness of personal factors in the creation of reality (xiii)”.

“... the ‘seen’ world is a constructed world, not a passively perceived one (xiii)”.

“... psychic reality, which is personal and inner, and its relation to external or shared reality (xv)”.

Transitional objects are the things are the first introduction to the reality of the surrounding world, which the infant uses to create their sense of self and other people and things.

“Its fate (the transitional objects fate) is to be gradually allowed to be decathected, so that in the course of years it becomes not so much forgotten as relegated to limbo (p.7)”.

[The linkages between the transitional objects and the present persist in spite of the original memories and actions contained therein becoming ‘forgotten’ and inaccessible to the individual. The Rorschach imagined images carry the power of the original objects even as they expand by life’s experiences. The original experiences meanings are retrievable from the images].

“... the transitional phenomena (after they have been created) have become spread over the whole intermediate territory between ‘inner psychic reality’ and ‘the external world as perceived by two person in common, that is to say, over the whole cultural field.... (p.7)”.

“... success in infant care depends on the fact of devotion, not on cleverness or intellectual enlightenment (p. 14)”.

“When I begin to see... that this use of me might be not only a defensive regression, but an essential recurrent phase of a creative relation to the world...”, Milner 1952, Winnicott p. 52.

Milner was referring to a ‘prelogical fusion of subject and object’. I am trying to distinguish between this fusion and the fusion or defusion of the subjective object and the object objectively perceived. I believe that what I am attempting to do is also inherent in the material of Milner’s contribution. Here is another of her statements: (p. 52).

‘Moments when the original poet in each of us created the outside world for us, by finding the familiar in the unfamiliar, are perhaps forgotten by most people; or else they are guarded in some secret place of memory because they were too much like

visitation of the gods to be mixed with everyday thinking' (Milner 1957, Winnicott p. 52).

".... playing is an experience, always a creative experience, and it is an experience in the space-time continuum, a basic form of living" (p. 67).

[This playing continues throughout life. It is captured in the Rorschach plates' imaginations as the subjective repository of the individual's movements through their life.]

Milner on Madness

(excerpts) (Rizzolatti, 2011) (Lee, 1960) (Deri, 1984)

"One of her central interests was the "Suppressed Madness of Sane Men," the title of a collection of papers published in 1987. This madness is, in her view, a matter of being cut off from the instincts and the body. It was her contention that the hard-won mental and emotional achievements of separation - of self from other, of feelings from things, of symbols from things symbolized - can be overvalued" (Brearley 1998).

Kuspit on the World's Indifference to the Inner Life of the Individual

"To express unconscious desire spontaneously is to defy the world's denial of spontaneity as a threat to consciousness. This is another manifestation of the world's indifference to the inner life of the individual. The world cannot imagine anything beyond the small field of consciousness that it systematically cultivates. It brings desire itself into the field, conventionalizing it into a system of meaning, believing that it has diminished or domesticated it. The world can accept spontaneity only in stylized form (not just in a strictly controlled situation). Like a Prometheus throwing off his chains, the spontaneous eruption of desire destroys the world's systems of meaning, rebelliously replacing them with madness - the 'meaninglessness' - of unconscious desire." (Kuspit 1993, p. 62 in Rodman 2003, pp. 384-385 "In this densely packed meditation on the modern and post-modern, Kuspit give a proper context to the struggle that Winnicott faced from within psychoanalysis, a struggle that undoubtedly began in the context of his experiences in early life" (Rodman 2003, pp. 384-385).

The Idea of Creativity

"It is the creative apperception more than anything else that makes the individual feel that life is worth living. Contrasted with this is a relationship to external reality which is one of compliance, the world and its details being recognized but only as something to be fitted in with or demanding adaptation. Compliance carries with it a sense of futility for the individual and is associated with the idea that nothing matters and that life is not worth living. In a tantalizing way many individuals have experienced just enough of creative living to recognize that for most of their time they are living uncreatively, as if caught up in the creativity of someone else, or of a machine" (p. 87).

Transitional Object

“The transitional object represents the mother’s ability to present the world in such a way that the infant does not at first have to know that the object is not created by the child” (p. 109).

“The study of the pure distilled uncontaminated female element leads us to BEING, and this forms the only basis for self-discovery and a sense of existing (and then on to the capacity to develop an inside, to be a container, to have a capacity to use the world in terms of introjections and projection)” (p. 111).

Borderline Personalities

“...the kind of case in which the core of the patient’s disturbance is psychotic, but the patient has enough psychoneurotic organization always to be able to present the psychoneurosis or psychosomatic disorder when the **central** psychotic anxiety threatens to break through in crude form. In such cases the psychoanalyst may collude for years with the patient’s need to be psychoneurotic (as opposed to mad) and to be treated as a psychoneurotic” (117). [Continued on the page is the depiction of what psychoanalysis can expect to achieve and then fail to achieve.]

“... the essential feature in the concept of transitional objects and phenomena (according to my presentation of the subject) is *the paradox, and the acceptance of the paradox: the baby creates the object, but the object was there **waiting** to be created and to become a cathected object*” (p. 119)

[The cathexis process: “In object-relating the subject allows certain alterations in the self to take place, of a kind that has caused us to invent the term ‘cathexis’. The object has become meaningful.” (p. 117-118)]

Reality

“To use an object the subject must have developed a capacity to use objects. This is part of the change to the reality principle,” (p. 119).

Trust in Rorschach Assessments

“The capacity to form images and to use these constructively by recombination into new patterns is - unlike dreams or fantasies - dependant on the individual’s **ability to trust**: (Fred Plaut 1966, Winnicott p. 137-138).

“... perception takes the place of apperception, perception take the place of that which might have been the beginning of a significant exchange with the world, a two-way process in which self-enrichment alternates with the discovery of meaning in the world of seen things” (p. 151).

Apperception

1. Conscious perception with full awareness.
2. The process of understanding by which newly observed qualities of an object are related to past experience.

Wikipedia

[J. F. Herbart](#), whose model of mental functioning involved the notion of ideas combining to form powerful 'masses' that dominated the mental life of the individual. Apperception occurred through the assimilation of new ideas by an existing complex of ideas.

The phenomena that apperception had been intended to explain were more effectively reinterpreted in the framework of [Gestalt psychology](#). Thus the term went out of use rather quickly and permanently. Contemporary cognitive science has revived an interest in many of the problems that the theory of apperception had been concerned with, but the term itself has not been resurrected.

The Mirror that the Rorschach Presents as a Challenge

“... to look at a painting by Bacon is to look into a mirror, and to see there our own afflictions and our fears of solitude, failure, humiliation, old age, death, and of nameless threatened catastrophe” (in the forward by John Rothenstein in Ronald Alley’s book *Francis Bacon: Catalogue raisonné and documentation*, 1966, Winnicott p. 157).

The person taking the Rorschach brings with them and gives back those of their images evoked by the blots to examiner. The examiner witnesses and records them.

Wordless Recognition

Wordless recognition is the recognition of an object without recalling the word for the object. The meaning and significance to the person of the object is present and available to the person perceiving the object. Wordless recognition fulfills the requirement for the meaning and intended uses of objects without the cognitive contents being bound to words that relate to the objects. The objects, unnamed, set off trains of associations, which undergird reflections. Words lag far behind the intuitions initiated by viewing of the objects.

(Husserl 1913, pp. 715-716)

Life before Motor Neurons

From the intellectual standpoint, it is man’s most precious organ because through it reality becomes possible. **One glance of the eye** can tell us more than hours of auditory or tactile description. Optical stimulation produces a change in electroencephalographic rhythm more readily than auditory stimulation, and as we take into consideration the fact that the eye is, embryologically, derived from the brain, the only part of the nervous system exposed to the outer world, we can

appreciate its more direct intellectual significance. Social relations are made possible through the eye. The visual presentation of the movements of another is apt to evoke the representation of a similar movement in our own body (Hart 1941). (Hart, 1949)

These observations occurred before the discovery of mirror neurons.

Mirror Neurons,
Kinetic Melodies,
And
Mirror Mechanisms,
And Movement Responses
Giacomo Rizzolatti (2011)

Mirror neurons enable “...our minds (to) share in the action being performed by someone else...” the mirror mechanism.

The mirror effect is seeing “... a person doing something, the same action which this person performed entered inside my motor system and I have a copy of it.”

This sequence of seeing and reacting to the person’s movements is “action understanding.”

A person seeing, “... a physical action, mirror neurons transform this information into a code of the motor act. The next time the brain sees this same act, it can draw up the diagram to understand it.”

“We can activate the same motor schema when we want to do an action, when we **imagine** the same action in our mind, or when we observe somebody doing it...”

“This mechanism can combine the most important part, **goal understanding**, with the details of **vision**...”

“... mirror neurons reflect emotions as well as they reflect action.”

“If you see an expression, a face which is laughing or is sad, you understand emotion...”

“The mirror mechanism also seems to comprehend the **intention** of an action.” An act predicts its goal and outcome.

“... intention is built into all phases of an action; in short, a gesture has a ‘**kinetic melody**’ that forecasts its end at its beginning.”

Rizzolatti, Giacomo. Keynote Address Reflecting on Behavior, Giacomo Rizzolatti takes us on a tour of the mirror mechanism; Association for Psychological Science, July/August 2011, Vol. 24, No.6. [And this is ‘real’ science.]

Points of View

To quote from *To Kill a Mockingbird*: "First of all," he said, "... if you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things **from his point of view**... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it (p. 33 in the hardcover edition)."

Lee, Harper (1960) *To Kill a Mockingbird*. HarperCollins (Perennial Classics edition: 2002). [ISBN 0060935464](https://www.harpercollins.com/9780060935464)

Mathematical Psychologies' Stripping Meaning

From

Visual Experiences

Modern science has devolved man into a thing stripped of the positive of existence. The indifference of modern science to the human condition is its contribution to contemporary psychology's nihilism. Modern nihilism is infinitely more radical and more desperate than any nihilism preceding it. That today's science does not care, one way or another, about the case of humans, is the true abyss. That only man cares, in his finitude facing nothing but death, alone with his contingency and the objective meaninglessness of his projecting meanings, is truly an unprecedented situation. The indifference of science to the human condition makes no sense. Life with its awareness of itself, its caring, and its knowing self has been tossed out by natural science.

So radically, has anthropomorphism been banned from the concept of nature that even man must cease to be conceived anthropomorphically if he is just an accident of that nature? As the product of the indifferent, his being, too, must be indifferent.There is no point in caring for what has no sanction behind it in any creative

intention. But if the deeper insight of Heidegger is right - that, facing our finitude, we find that we care, not only whether we exist but how we exist - then the mere fact of there being such a supreme care, anywhere within the world, must also qualify the totality which harbors that fact and even more so if "it" alone was the productive cause of that fact, by letting its subject physically arise in its midst.

The disruption between man and total reality is at the bottom of nihilism. The illogicality of the rupture, that is, of a dualism without metaphysics, makes neither its fact no less real, nor its seeming alternative any more acceptable: the stare at isolated selfhood, to which it condemns man, may wish to exchange itself for a monistic naturalism, which, along with the rupture, would abolish also the idea of man as man.

[How people exist is evoked in the pictures of nature all persons experience.]

(Jonas 1991, pp. 339-340 Jonas, 1991)

Cassirer

Essence and the Functional

"The philosophy of symbolic forms starts from the presupposition that, if there is any definition of the nature or "essence" of man, this definition can only be understood as a **functional** one, not a substantial one (Cassirer 1956, p. 93)".

The Language of Numbers

"Science no longer speaks the language of common sense-experience; it speaks the Pythagorean language [of numbers]. The pure symbolism of number supersedes the symbolism of common speech (Cassirer 1956, p. 270)". "... mathematics is a universal symbolic language-that is not concerned with a description of things but with general expression of relations.... Cassirer 1956, p. 273."

Mathematics is the highest absolute abstraction of which the mind is capable. This capacity cannot grasp the subjectivity of a human mind; it overlooks man altogether.

Intellect's Sway

“...the law of sufficient reason is really nothing more than the **urge of our intellect** to bring all our perceptions **under its own control**. **Our intellect** is the faculty of forming general conceptions. **It has nothing to do with our sense-perceptions and experiences unless it is able to form general conceptions or laws...**Besides our intellect there is no other equally systematized faculty, at any rate for comprehending the external world. Thus, we are unable to conceive a thing; we cannot imagine it as existing (Helmholz, H. L. 1925, pp. 33-35)”.

Language

“Linguistic symbols and forms must have a stability and constancy in order to resist the dissolving and destructive influence of time. Nevertheless phonetic change and semantic change are not only accidental features in the development of language. They are the principal reasons for this development. One of the principal reasons for this fact is that language has to be transmitted from one generation to another. This transmission is not possible by mere reproduction of fixed and stable forms. The process of the acquisition of language always involves an active and productive attitude.In a comparatively early stage of its development the child seems to have gained a certain feeling of the general structure of its mother tongue without, of course, possessing any abstract consciousness of linguistic rules. It uses words or sentences that it never has heard and that are infractions of the morphologic or syntactic rules. But it in these very attempts that the child’s keen sense for analogies appears. In these he proves his ability to grasp the form of language instead of merely reproducing its matter (Cassirer 1956, pp. 282-283)”.

The Spurious Use of Words

Deri speaks of Mephisto’s “.....” in Goethe’s Faust (Walter Kaufmann’s Translation),

Im ganzen-haltet Euch an Worte!
Dann geht Ihr durch die sichre Pforte
Zum Tempel der Gewissheit ein.
Denn eben wo Begriffe fehlen,
Da stellt ein Wort zur rechten Zeit sich ein.
[Yes, stick to the words at any rate,
There never was a surer gate

Into the temple, Certainly.

For just where no ideas are,

The proper word is never far.]

“...due to the “magic” (black magic?) of (Lachar, 1968) (Cassirer, 1956) words...” conveying great certitude as to the meaning of a visual experience misleads the reader. Alluding verbally to an incorrect sensory experience, vision, ends with incorrect analytic conclusions (p. 115).

Deri, Susan K. (1984) Symbolization and Creativity. International Universities Press. New York. (Kaufmann, 1990)

The Poet

“... every great artist in a certain sense makes a new epoch. We become aware of this fact when comparing our ordinary forms of speech with poetical language. No poet can create an entirely new language. He has to adopt the words and he has to respect the fundamental rules of his language. To all this, however, the poet gives not only a new turn, but also a new life. In poetry, the words are not only significant in an abstract way; they are no mere pointers by which we wish to designate certain empirical objects. Here we meet with a sort of metamorphosis of all our common words. Every verse of Shakespeare, every stanza of Dante or Ariosto, every lyrical poem of Goethe has its peculiar sound. Lessing said that it is just as impossible to steal a verse of Shakespeare as to steal the club of Hercules. And what is even more astounding is the fact that a great poet never repeats himself. Shakespeare spoke a language that has never been heard before - and every Shakespearean character speaks his own incomparable and unmistakable language. In Lear and Macbeth, in Brutus or Hamlet, in Rosalind or Beatrice we hear **this personal language which is the mirror of an individual soul**, Cassirer 1956, pp. 283-284”.

[The mirror reflects the images carried within the person who allows inquiry into what they are, how they exist, and what they may mean. The language of the individual belongs to them, not the examiner, not the Rorschach researcher, and definitely not the mathematician].

“Thus we can readily learn all that Newton has set forth in his immortal work on the Principles of Natural Philosophy, however great a head was required to discover it; but we cannot learn to write spirited poetry, however expressive may be the percepts of the art and however excellent its models (Kant 1892, pp. 188-190)”.

The Measure is the Individual

“The relationship between subjectivity and objectivity, individuality and universality, is indeed not the same in the world of art as it is in the world of the scientist. It is true that a great scientific discovery also bears the stamp of the individual mind of its author. In it, we find not only merely a new objective aspect of things but also an individual attitude of mind and even a personal style. But all of this has only a psychological, not a systematic relevance. In the objective content of science, the individual features are forgotten and effaced, for one of the principal aims of scientific thought is the elimination of all personal and anthropomorphic elements. In the words of Bacon, science strives to conceive the world ‘ex analogia universi,’ not ‘ex analogia hominis’ [‘...all perceptions as well of the sense as of the mind are according to the measure of the individual and not according to the measure of the universe’] (Bacon (1620) Aphorism LVI) (Cassirer 1925, pp. 285-286)”.

“Human culture taken as a whole may be described as the process of man’s progressive self-liberation. Language, art, religion, science are various phases in this process. In all of them man discovers and proves a new power—the power to build up a world of his own, an “ideal” world (Cassirer 1925, p. 286)”.

[A world reflected back at us in the Rorschach].

Cassirer, Ernst (1956). *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture*. Doubleday & Company. Garden City, NJ.

James Hillman’s work forms notions about how the images come into being in the creation of a human’s awareness of themselves and the world they inhabit. Hillman’s formulations are stunning, haunting, and hugely imaginative. Anyone who confronts the richness of Hillman’s ideas vaults them along in their own development.

[Paul Meehl and Howard Gard, both mathematical psychologists, contributed to destruction of the immediate experiencing of the visual world. The debunking of projective test data wrecked the whole of the interpretive process.]

Nomothetic vs. Idiographic Interpretative Differences

Gregory J. Meyers

I have seen people who produce a reflection or two (usually those with apparently more benign nature reflections) who do not show obvious signs of narcissism. Could I have missed it? Certainly.

But I’m left with several questions:

1) What is the difference between the individuals for whom the problem is obvious and the ones where I miss it? And, more important,

2) Given validity coefficients around .4, when is it appropriate to simply dismiss the variable as unrelated to the standard interpretive comment?

With respect to question two, I think rejection of standard or generic interpretive comment is more often than not in the course of a good assessment. The generic interpretation of a variable is sort of an abstracted and distilled version of a concept that applies across people. Yet **we're not interested in that nomothetic version of the construct when conducting a clinical assessment.** Rather, we want the version of the construct that is shaped and **pruned by** the idiographic context and other characteristics that are part and parcel of the person we're trying to understand. That is, we want the version of the construct that illustrates the individual in his or her **uniqueness.**

As this discussion of reflections has revealed, the tailored interpretation that fits for person 'A' may look and feel quite different from the tailored interpretation that fits for person 'B'. While both of the tailored concepts emerge out of the core or abstracted interpretation for Fr, that nomothetic version of the construct has been rejected in favor of an Idiographically more accurate version.

Psychometrically, making these sorts of mental refinements is part of what diminishes a validity coefficient. That is, the very process that makes an idiographic judgment more accurate is what makes a nomothetic association weaker. Why?

Nomothetic research treats the idiographic context as error variance; the context dependent and unique expression of a score for person 'A' is not shared with person 'B' and 'C', etc., and thus cannot become an element of the nomothetic association between the score and a criterion.

The article in the American Psychologist by the Psych Assessment Work Group discusses this issue in a bit more detail.

Doesn't a coefficient of .4 suggest that such errors are likely?

Yet, for some reason, Rorschachers rarely talk about that. Am I missing something?

I agree that we should be tentative about what we think we know from any single variable or any single method of assessment. Life is too complex. And it's worth keeping in mind that a value of $r = .40$ is too high if we're talking about the average validity coefficient for test scales (across all types of tests) or the average potency of therapeutic interventions. Cohen believed that the average effect size in the behavioral sciences was about $r = .30$. Large surveys of the empirical literature have suggested this is generally correct, though on the generous side, as average effect sizes across various domains of research fall in the range between $r = .20$ to $r = .30$

(Hemphill, 2003, American Psychologist). For instance, Lipsey and Wilson's large scale review of meta-analyses examining the effectiveness of psychological, educational, and behavioral treatment interventions found an average effect size of about $r = .25$.

Greg

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Sent: Saturday, July 12, 2003

[The important issues of the adequacy of the language used in the idiographic focus on an interpretation are rarely, if at all, raised in the Rorschach literature. The skills of novelists, poets, and others engaged in the presentation of the individuals' reactions to life's vicissitudes is not called upon to assist in the programmatic of interpretations. The interpreter is left on the nomothetic side with boiler plate text to serve as guides in making some sense of the Rorschach verbal responses and scores as all of this information relates to a unique person. The going gets tough now.

This and these issues have not been clarified. There are computer programs for the interpretation of Rorschach data which do not overcome the linguistic limitations of the nomothetic vs. idiographic conundrum. Poets and novelists are needed to guide the writing of these descriptions and the writing of the persons' narratives. It is curious that these linguistic masters have not been invited to the Rorschach party. They certainly should be asked to contribute.

The adequacy of the ecological validities or usefulness of the interpretations to formulate treatment objectives, methods, and goals are not addressed in the Rorschach literature. The interpretive accuracy between the scores and the interpretations offered on the research side of the assessment procedure are not quantified at this time, which is a project for the future. The question of how accurate is the research-generated statements as judged by the clinicians receiving them needs to be assessed.

David Lachar addressed this issue working with the MMPI while serving in the U.S. Air Force in the 1970s. The formal interpretations of the MMPI assessments were then followed by a questionnaire requesting the clinician to rank the accuracy and applicability of each interpretive statement. These data was used to establish the usefulness of the hit rates generated through this form of inquiry.

Lachar, D. (1968). MMPI Two Point Code Type Correlates in a State Hospital Population. *Journal of Clinical Psychol.* 24, 424-427.

The last suggestion the writer wishes to put forward addresses the creation of new administrative equipment and procedures. The advances in the computer fields with the introduction of the iPad and similar internet devices offer a tantalizing possibility for administering the Rorschach. The devices would be capable of recording *per verbatim* the individual's responses as well as capturing the video performance of the administration. Response timing would make possible the clarification of the issues surrounding the question of the classical 'shock' phenomenon. The true *desideratum* of obtaining the 'whole' record with all of its data intact free of administrators mistakes even those that are most unwitting ;-)

The data would be transferred to computers via dictation software, then analyzed, and interpreted using the computers vast computational power. The researchers and poets would be exceptionally proud of themselves].

The End

This is the end of the speculations and fragments for now. The hope is that some of these interpretive statements may be of some use to the examiner and interpreters who struggle with making sense out of the Rorschach images and the real life idiographic data presented to them.

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