

## RORSCHACH TEST BEHAVIOR AND RELATED VARIABLES

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Traditionally an individual's behavior on the *Rorschach Ink Blot Test* has been conceptualized as a function of the individual's "basic" personality structure and as such, to be relatively free of external influence. An individual's Rorschach constellation was considered to be essentially invariant, aside from basic changes in the personality structure itself. Later, this became known as the doctrine of immutability and gave the Rorschach test a unique status in the area of psychological testing. This conception of Rorschach behavior has been held by such leading proponents of the method as Beck (2), Klopfer (20), Hertz (15), Halpern (13), and Piotrowski (25). For example, Klopfer (20, p. 26) states: "The Rorschach method does not reveal a behavior picture, but rather shows — like an X-ray picture — the underlying structure which makes behavior understandable."

Following the lead of the experts, the clinical psychologist who utilizes the Rorschach in his work interprets Rorschach behavior in light of the above stated considerations. This is exemplified in the statement by Kurtz and Riggs (21, p. 465):

In using a projective technique, the clinician usually starts from the premise that the formally scored variables reflect relatively central or permanent aspects of the personality. He does not expect momentary situational factors or the subject's casual expectations about the task to distort or even seriously color, these scored variables.

The viewpoint that Rorschach behavior is relatively free of external influences and reflects primarily the individual's basic personality structure has met with increased criticism in recent years and has been undergoing some rather intensive experimental investigation. In general, the results of these investigations make the assumption of the doctrine of immutability rather untenable. As early as 1934 Bleuler (4) pointed out from his extensive clinical experience that a number of external factors could influence a person's set, which in turn would alter his behavior on the Rorschach decisively. Some of the factors he emphasized were the influence of hospitalization on the occurrence of anatomy responses, the familiarity of the particular clinical setting, and the personal relationship between the individual and the test administrator. A review of the literature since Bleuler's publication indicates that most of the experimental investigations of external influences on Rorschach behavior have been carried on since 1945, with the majority of the work being done in the last six years.

One of the early attempts to investigate the influence of instructional set was Fosberg's study (11) of the susceptibility of the Rorschach to falsification. One group of Ss was given instruction to make the best impression, and another group to make the worst impression. Fosberg concluded that the "permanent underlying personality" emerged and that the Rorschach could not be faked. However, Cronbach (8) has pointed out that the statistic used by Fosberg was likely to give spuriously high correlations and at the same time mask real