

## Science and Ideology

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As the reader will hopefully with interest discover, Volume 24 of *Rorschachiana* truthfully mirrors the extraordinary variety of approaches to the Rorschach test that exist around the world and the uniqueness of the International Rorschach Society in its ability to welcome and respect each and all of them. *Rorschachiana* has become an open forum with two prevailing rules: ethics and science.

The ethical dimension includes respect for other authors' opinions and fairness in the appreciation of their work, as well as honesty in one's own writing. The scientific dimension is to be understood in the broad sense of coherence, logic and methodological rigor.

There is an ongoing debate on what should be considered as scientific and what should not. Is a case study "scientific"? Does the use of statistics automatically confer a "scientific" status to a paper?

Let us browse around the table of contents of this volume 24 and comment on the scientific dimension of each article.

We find an article by John E. Exner, Jr., on treatment planning and notice with amazement that there are no "results" as such and no statistical analyses. Instead, the author gives us a critical view on, and review of, treatment planning as a concept and as a challenge for clinical psychologists, and illustrates his arguments with two detailed clinical cases. Two other articles stand even further from "scientifically correct" forms: one by Helge Malmgren on the movement response in the Rorschach, and one by Jan Ivanouw presenting a conceptual approach of coding. Despite their "unscientific" approaches, these three articles should appear to the reader as highly informative and definitely thought-provoking.

At the opposite pole, we have two normative studies: one by Vera Campo on the schizophrenia index and one by Danilo R. Silva on children. These are large scale group studies with "results" and statistics which yield precious information both on the Rorschach as an instrument and on specific aspects of cultural groups.

Then again, a case study by Isabelle Orgiazzi-Billon-Galland explores mutual correspondences between the Rorschach protocols of different members of a family (child and parents) in a psychoanalytical perspective. Although some readers might be put off by the specialized linguistic and conceptual framework of the article, the interest for science is twofold:

1. Although the importance of the environment on individual psychopathology is nowadays often stressed, few studies have endeavored to explore empirically the mental functioning of parents in relation to that of their offspring. It might represent a new field of research.
2. Strictly psychoanalytical studies are usually confined to psychoanalytic journals, just as quantitative findings are confined to psychometrically oriented journals. Parallel to these highly respectable specialized journals, and deliberately different from them, *Rorschachiana* aims at being a meeting place, an open forum for all.

This openness is also to be seen in the other contributions selected: a study by Maria Célia Esgaib Kayatt Lacoski and Vera Nice Assumpção do Nascimento introduces the non-Brazilian reader to a very elaborate (and complex) system for scoring and interpreting the Rorschach, and another by Aïchan Dembri and Jocelyn Aubut presents fascinating “psychodynamic profiles” based on card symbolism. Finally, a study by Theresia Gabriel and Elfriede Opgenoorth explores the relationship between coping types and contents of Rorschach responses, and offers a new model for “scoring” content.

In conclusion, all these articles contribute in various ways and degrees to our knowledge in the fields of Rorschach and clinical psychology. We gain information either about facts, or about methods, we can learn greatly from the mistakes made by others (which usually never get published), we are stirred from our routine by intelligent speculation and/or argumentation. In other words, there are many ways in which one can contribute to the progress of “science.”

It is my opinion that “science” breeds on a variety of epistemologies – empirical, rational-speculative, phenomenological – and is opposed to and incompatible with solely ideology. Summarizing the classical definition of the scientific method given by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, we can state that science is a non-ending process composed of systematic and unbiased observations, followed by classifications then deduction of rules or “laws” which in turn are applied to new phenomena, until proven false. There is an ongoing debate, launched by the social scienc-

es, on the very notion of “systematic” and “unbiased” (observations). How can we understand these words in our field of psychology?

A systematic observation does not necessarily mean one that is repeated many times (quantitative criteria), but rather one that is performed within a deliberate and explicit method for observing. “Unbiased” does not mean that it is entirely free of preconceptions and subjectivity (which is impossible for a human observer) but that it is honestly implemented – implying that the result can be contrary to that which is expected – and that the observer is aware that biases do exist in his/her observations.

On the other hand, ideology defines approaches where the system used for observing is given as a truth – implying that no disproving observation can exist and that such an observation would, if found, be dismissed as itself plagued by biases and/or accused of ideology. In an ideological frame of mind, the alleged researcher is like a parrot endlessly repeating meaningless sounds, or like an adept of some primitive cosmology in which facts and phenomena are “explained” by a ready-made, all-encompassing, and self-sufficient irrational system. Ideology is not to be confounded with religion, because religion does not interfere with science: it does not pretend to be a science, nor scientific. An ideology, on the other hand, aims at curbing science and functions as a systematic but nonexplicit bias that undermines scientific endeavors.

The natural, as it were, inclination of ideological attitudes is both to recruit adepts and to pass for the only acceptable “scientific” approach in a field. People who do not belong to the sect, or cast, are disqualified, outcast. Philosophers, historians, and social analysts nowadays tend to consider the 20th century as the century of ideologies (and mass murders). Entering the 21st century, it might be time to shake off from our minds and hearts the heavy lead of ideologies and turn – or return – to more scientific, more humble, more respectful attitudes.

After all, scientific hypotheses are mortal, just as human beings are, and the search for alternate hypotheses is a fundamental activity of science.