

Diagnosing Multiple Personalities with the Rorschach: A Confirmation

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Abstract: The Rorschach of an authenticated male multiple personality was presented. The protocol was found to conform to recently developed guidelines for diagnosing the syndrome with the Rorschach. The rationale behind the decision rules and the psychodynamics of multiplicity were discussed.

Wagner and Heise (1974), in reviewing the Rorschachs of three cases of multiple personality, noted two differential diagnostic features: (a) a large number of diversified movement responses, and (b) labile and conflicting color. More recently, based on both theoretical considerations and accumulating clinical experience, Wagner and Allison (Note 1) presented the following expanded list of tentative decision rules for diagnosing a multiple personality:

1. A large number of movement responses (*M*, *FM*, *m*).
2. At least two qualitatively diverse human movement (*M*) responses.
3. A projection of oppression onto at least one of the movement responses in the form of percepts involving attack, subjugation, pursuit, destruction, constraint, etc.
4. At least three color responses with the sum of *CF+C* exceeding the sum of *FC*.
5. At least one color percept having positive connotations (e.g., "flower") and another "negative" (e.g., "blood").

The data for the case study presented here were obtained subsequent to the formulation of the above guidelines. This case is of interest not only because it furnishes a confirmation of the proposed decision rules but also because the subject is a male, showing that the criteria are not sex-linked.

Case History

Abel Baker is a 35-year-old, white truck driver who was referred to one of the authors (RBA) by an alcoholism

counselor following six months of amnesia during which he entered into many complicated financial dealings. Previously he had been placed in an alcohol rehabilitation center after a bout of heavy drinking. His wife complained that Abel had been very violent toward her and the children, threatening to kill them with a rifle. He had no memory of this episode nor of later returning to his wife, begging her to take him back.

When Abel returned home from the rehab center, he was amnesiac, but documents in his possession indicated that he had entered into a partnership with another alcoholic and was offering to buy various pieces of property on which he planned to build houses. However, none of the checks were good, all were returned to the sellers, and no property was ever actually transferred. He also possessed sales slips indicating he had made down payments with bad checks for a sports car, a Cadillac, a houseboat, a pickup truck, furniture, and stereo equipment. The police were looking for Abel because of the bad checks and the bank had closed his account since he had only deposited small amounts of money which could not cover handwritten entries of thousands of dollars in his checkbook not entered by a teller.

Under hypnosis, when asked who wrote all the checks, an alien voice replied, "I wrote those checks." The voice identified itself as Abel Baker but added he was different from the first Abel Baker since he gets things done. He prided himself on being much smarter and more capable in interpersonal and fi-

nancial matters. He had no interest in driving a truck and believed that he had \$280,000 buried in a box under the barn on a property which he had bought (none of this turned out to be true).

The personality was asked to pick another name to avoid confusion and decided on Charlie. A number of sessions were conducted with Charlie using hypnosis and automatic writing, and he continued to report, very convincingly, that there really was money available for all his complex land deals, complaining, "Abel screws things up in one hour and it takes me two days to get things straightened out."

Abel actually did return to the site mentioned by Charlie to dig up the money, only to find that the barn had been torn down. Subsequently, about to be sued for fraud, Abel drank excessively, took amphetamines, and then surrendered himself to the local Sheriff who in turn referred him to a Mental Health Crisis Unit. Charlie commented that he had brought about this situation just to show Abel how he could control him.

The Crisis Unit referred Abel to a hospital for treatment and the psychi-

two years before treatment, is a nature-lover and poet.

4. Mike, who originated in childhood as an electronics expert, enables Abel to fix radios even though the latter has no training in the field.

5. Peter, who emerges only when Abel has to fix a car, is the mechanic who can repair anything that has wheels and a motor.

6. Roger, whom RBA has dubbed the "Inner-Self Helper," started talking to Abel during the hospital stay and has continued to tell him what to do in order to get well and stay out of trouble.

Abel and Charlie were administered the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale by Beth Berlese, psychology intern, under the supervision of staff psychologist Fran Corton, PhD. Abel's WAIS was given first, Charlie's second. It was concluded that, while most abilities were comparable, there were a few discrepancies in intellectual skills. Charlie's Performance IQ was characterized as significantly higher than Abel's, and it was also noted that Charlie demonstrated a significantly better understanding of social relationships and consequences. It should be noted,

ist (RBA) then filed a petition for Probate Conservatorship since the patient obviously could not handle his own money. Old medical records revealed that Abel had written his first check at age 10 and had been hospitalized in another state for writing bad checks prior to eloping and then returning home. During treatment the following separate personalities were uncovered:

1. George, violent and full of hatred, who had really verged on doing away with Abel's wife and children. George was created at age 13 when a playmate grabbed Abel's hand with a tool. George then lunged at the playmate and almost killed him.

2. Charlie, created as an imaginary playmate to be all those things Abel was sure he was not and capable of fantasizing himself to be or have anything he wanted.

3. King, who came into existence

ever, that any differences obtained could easily be attributed to chance or practice effect. In fact, the influence of test-retest seems especially relevant in considering the increase in the Performance IQ and the Object Assembly score. Specifically, the two sets of test scores were as follows:

Abel:

FSIQ = 108, VIQ = 109, PIQ = 105

Charlie:

FSIQ = 115, VIQ = 111, PIQ = 118

Subtest	Scaled Score	
	Abel	Charlie
Information	9	10
Comprehension	13	15
Arithmetic	14	13
Similarities	13	12
Digit Span	7	9
Vocabulary	13	12
Digit Symbol	9	11

(cont'd)

Picture Completion	13	12
Block Design	12	11
Picture Arrangement	9	13
Object Assembly	7	13

The Rorschach test was also administered to the major (usual) personality, Abel, and is presented here in its entirety:

*Rorschach: Abel Baker

- I 12" Looks like some kind of winged — but to me almost looks like up here a man sitting on a ledge here and there with a little thing in between them. Kinda down in a valley — rocks — possibly some other men in white robes walking up on either side. Could be that. $V > V$ Almost looks like you was looking through a microscope seeing the outer shell and inner shell. (Q) Light and dark, different skin texture, deeper and more solid masses. (Q) Maybe a bug or insect. Almost like an X-ray. WS { M H
F± geol
F± thing
MCw H, app
- Could be two great big birds sitting up on the nest with their baby chickens down there. Kinda of a silhouette. (3'50") W cF X-ray
Dr { FMc' A
FMc' Ad
C'F nest
- II 17" Well — that could be some kind of spacecraft taking off with red coming back out of the exhaust there (outer blackness equals sky or space). DS { Fm imp
CmF exp
c'F astron
- V Could be the face of something you might see in a scary picture. (Q) Executioner with black hood, holes for eyes. DS Fc' Hd, mask
- Or some type of internal organ. (Q) Say your lungs if you was to take a good look. D FC anat
- Nothing more. (Q) Color. Almost looks like a hood of a person right there. The rest would be an opened up cape and white body. A face right in there. That's about all. (2'25") mask
DS FCwc' H
app
- III 5" Well — that looks like what you might see, the shadow of two natives over in Africa dancing around a pot. The face of a human there looking out between the two of them. Don't know what the red is, something hanging out of a tree or something. (Q) Flames coming up. Looks like females because of the breasts. Like a picture with sun too bright. W { Mc' H P
F obj
M± Hd
F± thing
CmF fire
- V This looks like a face, arms, — person about to strike something comin' out. (shrugs) About all I see on that one. I'm not too awfully good at this sort of thing. (Q) Mask, eyes, arms, raring up. (2'10") mask
W M+ Hd
- IV 2" Looks like a bear skin. (Q) Head, with limbs hanging down. Could be a tree in a swamp, too. (Q) Just the type of tree in a swamp, darker and lighter shade. W F obj P
W Fc tree
- V Like that looks like a bat (flying). $> V$ About all that one looks like to me. (1'15") W FM A
- V 1" Hmm... an awful lot of little butterfly creatures in here aren't there? $<$ Maybe a seagull with its mouth open. Don't get much out of this one. Kinda draw a blank. (1'35") W FM A

- VI 4" Hmm... > Well this one looks like reflection of a pond, tall grass and forest beyond, rocks etcetera down by the water. < V That's what it looks like from all directions. (Q) Shoreline above. Grass and upper part is trees, cattails and tules, shading is important. (1'30") W { cF N
cF refl
water
- VII 11" Hmm... looking at it like the shadows of two Indians looking at each other. (Q) Feathers, facial outline pointing in different directions, tryin' to make up mind about which way to go. < Like that almost like the silhouette of characteristics of a bullet in an impact study to see impact power, splatter power. (Q)(White space is bullet.) shad
W Mc' H, app
S F imp
- V This way with center filled in, one of those early American military power with one of those big furry hats coming down here if the face was in here. (Q) Almost like a pilgrim but at the Boston Tea Party like Benjamin Franklin. (1'50") DS F Hd, app
- VIII 6" Hmm... that looks like something you would take out of a doctor's book of something maybe a vital organ display, your lungs, heart and intestines. Probably from the chest down looking at it from that angle. (Q) Collarbones, esophagus and intestines. > Looking at it like this looks like if you was out early morning or whatever. Looks like maybe a field mouse or gopher jumping up in the Fall as the sun comes up. Light falling here, shadows over here. Gopher jumping up, dead branches and reflection of all this down below. (top is old dead tree) V Don't get much out of it that way. Nope. (3'30") W CF anat
W { FM A P
CcF N
FC tree
CcF refl
- IX 70" Hmm... looks like something went in here, kinda tore its path out and is coming out the other side. (Q) (changes to red hitting green as impact and then out — demonstrates) > V I don't get too much out of this one. Looks like a pillar, archway or something back underneath on that one but I don't really know what it would be. (Q) Maybe a building block with holes in the center. (2'25") D Cm exp
DS F± arch
- X 22" There's a pretty one. Kinda looks like some birds, seahorses, lobster. (Q)(color for birds) Some kind of little bitty thing there, don't know what it would be. Like couple of birds in there. V > V Looks like it might be a person in there between the seahorses. Let's see, the two seahorses and person and couple of fish. (Q) Being held up by the seahorses. Coming down a kind of draught. Two whatevers out here trying to catch the people. (Q) Praying mantis. (Q) Pot or cup. Kinda looks like a skull, the white part and — that's about all I get for this one. (3'35") D FC A
D F A P
D F A
Dr { M H
FM A
FM A
FM A
d F obj
S FCw anat

W = 11	M = 5	A = 10	R = 27
WS = 1	M± = 2	Ad = 1	P = 4
D = 5	Fm = 1	H = 6	airt = 15.0
d = 1	mF = 1	Hd = 4	W:D = 12:5
Dr = 2	m = 1/2	obj = 3	W:M = 12:7
DS = 5	FM = 8	anat = 3	FM:M = 8:7
S = 2	Fc = 1	imp = 2	ΣC:M = 9 1/4:7
	cF = 4	exp = 2	ΣC:Σc = 9 1/4:7

$F = 7$	X-ray = 1	$FC:CF:C = 5\frac{1}{2}:5:1$
$F\pm = 4$	app = 4	$A\% = 24$
$Fc' = 3\frac{1}{2}$	tree = 2	$F\% = 24$
$c'F = 2$	N = 2	$F+\% = 64$
$FC = 3$	water = 1	
$FC_w = 2\frac{1}{2}$	refl = 2	
$CF = 5$	fire = 1	
$C = 1$	nest = 1	
	mask = 3	
	geol = 1	
	thing = 2	
	astron = 1	
	shad = 1	
	arch = 1	

* Administered by Rosalie Lynn, PhD; scored by Edwin E. Wagner, PhD according to Piotrowski.

Discussion

Abel's Rorschach clearly conforms to the decision rules.

1. There are a large number of movement responses, $17\frac{1}{2}$ in all.

2. There are seven *M* responses which can be epitomized in terms of operative verbs as "sitting," "walking," "dancing," "looking," "raring up," "looking," and "being held up." Qualitative diversity is apparent in, e.g., the passive response "sitting on a ledge" as opposed to the aggressive response "...strike something comin' out... raring up."

3. A theme of pursuit and attack is expressed in the response "Two whatever (praying mantis) out here trying to catch the people."

4. There are a total of $11\frac{1}{2}$ color responses and $CF+C$ outnumber FC .

5. Color responses with obviously positive connotations are: "...Fall as the sun comes up" and "birds." Patently negative color responses are: "...a vital organ display..." and "red hitting green."

The rationale for assembling these rules was based on both theoretical and empirical considerations. The prediction that multiple personalities would have a large number of movement responses (rule No. 1) was derived from Structural Analysis (Wagner, 1971) and was previously applied to the task of differentiating between the conversion and dissociative hysterics (p. 432). Rule number 2 was explicated by Piotrowski (1977, p. 212). Both of these

criteria were met by the three cases presented by Wagner and Heise (1974) and by one of the personalities (Josephine) in the confirmatory case later reported by Danesino, Daniels, & McLaughlin (1979).

The remaining rules were formulated post hoc by noting regularities in the protocols from the studies cited above which could be accounted for within the framework of Structural Analysis.

Since it had been postulated that certain personality constellations represented by various Rorschach movement responses must be "repressed" or denied awareness when one identity emerges at the expense of another, it was assumed that a feeling of being kept down, swallowed up, destroyed, etc., would be projected onto the Rorschach. Confirmatory examples of such responses gleaned from the three cases reported by Wagner and Heise (1974) are:

"This is a big man and he's coming after some children to kill them... He's coming after these children." (Gertrude)

"That looks like a lamb jumping up in the air. These greys are real ugly. (Q) This monster has him by the foot." (Margie)

"Torso of women when they were heavily corseted and very restrained." (Camille)

Rules four and five were based on the supposition that at least some affect, represented by Rorschach color responses, would have to be present in order to actualize tendencies embodied in movement responses. Other-

wise, according to Structural Analysis, these "complexes" might remain behaviorally dormant as is often observed in schizoid personalities. Hence, a minimum of about three color responses (including color black) was deemed necessary. And since subsidiary personalities are generally immature and labile, it seemed likely that *C* and *CF* would exceed *FC*. Furthermore, following the same logic advanced by Piotrowski regarding the necessity of diverse *M*, it was reasoned that when incompatible imaginal processes break into consciousness they could be expected to combine with and be abetted by suitable affect tone. Hence, both positive and negative color could be expected in a multiple personality. Examples of this phenomenon, again quoting from the three cases previously cited, are:

"They just killed someone and there's blood all over."; "...a beautiful colored mountain." (Gertrude)

"...this looks like blood spilt out of it."; "Inside yellow looks like little poodles." (Margie)

"...looks like some kind of disease ... red and ...black is the skin."; "Bottom looks like cotton candy." (Camille)

These five guidelines may eventually prove to be too rigid. However, at this stage of validation, it is probably best to err on the conservative side and eliminate all false positives at the risk of letting some false negatives slip through the net. An examination of a few hundred clinical cases from the files of one of the authors (EEW), where both psychological and psychiatric diagnoses were in agreement, indicated that adherence to the five rules would preclude overlap with other known diagnostic groupings. Certain borderline schizophrenics come close to meeting the criteria but this has already been predicted by Structural Analysis.

As has been reported (Wagner, 1973), multiple personalities are sharply distinct from conversion hysterics inasmuch as the latter have much fewer movement responses and tend to produce either failures and/or completely

negative color, particularly in connection with anatomy, blood, and sexual content. Patients with organic brain syndromes along with most personality disorders generally produce protocols which are much less complex than the multiple personality and present no difficulty in differential diagnosis. Schizophrenics, at least those with many movement responses, can be differentiated on the basis of a low *F+* percentage and/or typically schizophrenic perceptual confusions such as contaminations and incongruous combinations (this will *not* necessarily hold, however, for the multiple personality who is seriously regressed). The more impoverished type of schizophrenic is again no problem in diagnosis because of the dearth of movement responses. Neurotics, especially those with complex personality structures, may meet some of the criteria but not all five: they may have ample and divergent movement responses but not conflicting color, or the converse may occur — opposing color but similar *M*s and *FM*s.

It would seem, therefore, that it may be feasible to use the Rorschach to diagnose multiple personality or to at least alert the clinician to the possibility that such a condition exists. This is not to say that the five prerequisites listed here are "written in stone" and should not be subject to further modification as additional data become available. But what does seem apparent is that both the dynamics of multiple personality and its manifestations in terms of Rorschach patterning can be logically explicated and defined with satisfactory rigor.

Wagner and Heise (1974) explained multiple personality in terms of the theory of Structural Analysis which differentiates between the "Facade Self," clusters of habitual action tendencies which constitute immediate contact with reality and the "Introspective Self," imaginal processes which may or may not eventuate in behavior depending upon how well they dovetail with or are stymied by Facade Self tendencies. According to Structural Analysis, Introspective Self processes, which are main-

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tion with anatomy, blood, and sexual content. Patients with organic brain

E. E. WAGNER, R. B. ALLISON, and C. F. WAGNER

149

ly represented by movement responses on the Rorschach, are strong but conflicted in the multiple personality and therefore break apart, coalesce, and alternately express themselves through a viable but weak facade which func-

tion multiple personality is to be made on a routine and consistent basis, it would be helpful to develop some reliable diagnostic procedures such as specific Rorschach patterning. It is hoped that the guidelines presented here are a step in

tions as a conduit for releasing these powerful internal forces. Whether or not this explanation is correct is debatable. But what does seem reasonably certain is that the multiple personality is overladen with oppositional life-role complexes which fester beneath the surface, sporadically erupting and "taking over" overt behavior. It is encouraging that the Rorschach not only permits an insightful phenomenological understanding of what is transpiring within the psyche but also provides objective benchmarks for at least suspecting the possibility of a multiple personality following diagnostic testing.

the right direction and that future research will help confirm, refine, and, if necessary, amend these criteria.

The need to identify and diagnose the multiple personality takes on added significance when it is recognized that there are probably large numbers of such persons who live out their entire lives without the condition ever being detected, often succumbing to suicide and alcoholism and almost always demonstrating a history of tangled interpersonal relationships and a variety of psychiatric complaints. As attested to by the Rorschach, these people are invariably bright and complex, yet their achievement seldom matches their potential. Most diagnosticians and therapists will confess to never having come across a multiple personality; yet, as Allison (1978) has observed, clinicians who are attuned to the syndrome and have become sensitized to the case history clues often report many such cases. Clearly, if the identification of the mul-

Reference Note

1. Wagner, E. E., Allison, R. B. *Guidelines for diagnosing multiple personalities with the Rorschach and illustrative protocols*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Tenth International Rorschach Congress, Washington, DC, September, 1981.

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