

Rhythmical Auditory Projection as a New Tool for Personality Assessment

Claus Bahne Bahnson, Ph.D

This study, an attempt to evaluate the validity of a portion of a new projective device, is concerned with assessment of personality through the structure analyses of reported rhythmical auditory apperceptions of equally-spaced tempi.¹ The question was posed whether the psychodynamic functioning of an individual determines the apperception of "neutral" sounds. Two different theoretical systems were fused and applied as a predictive and explanatory vehicle: neo-phenomenology, as conceived by the experimenter, and a modification of psychoanalytic theory.

Five hundred and six undergraduate university students of both sexes participated in group-testing to determine the choice of the 40 Ss for the individually-tested experiment and Rorschach criterion testing. Five males and five females constituted each of four operationally defined apperceptive groups. These represented characteristic and common apperceptive types. Six different electrically produced, equally-spaced and uniform arrays of clicks were presented in a fixed random order to each subject, who reported his structural apperceptions in writing.

Predictions were made of the expected mean performance for each of the four apperceptive groups on five original, quantitative (seven-point) Rorschach criterion scales in the dimensions: Introversion-Extraversion, Constriction-Dilation, Ego-Strength, Anxiety, Hedonic Level. Psychoanalytic topological and economic hypotheses constituted the predictive framework, with the semantic definitions of the dimensions being optimally congruous with the Rorschach scales.

Inspectional analysis of the closely corresponding relationships between predictions and results strongly supported the majority of dynamic hypotheses applied. Analyses of variance, performed independently of the predictions, produced results statistically significant beyond the .05 level of probability for all five of the personality variables.

From these results, structure analysis and dynamic interpretations of the apperceptive patterns were concluded to constitute a sensitive avenue for personality assessment, especially along the dimensions: Ego-Strength, Anxiety, and Introversion-Extraversion. The validity of using structure of auditory apperception as a part of a new projective device thus appears supported. (Standard slides or mimeographed handouts).

¹This report deals with one section, rhythmical auditory apperception, of the test. The results of affective projections and free associations to the auditory tempi are not considered here.

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