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PROJECTIVE RESPONSES OF AGGRESSIVE SCHIZOPHRENICS

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Male schizophrenic inpatients were classified into three groups according to the evaluation of their aggressive behaviors before and during hospitalization: the Undercontrolled Aggressive (UA), the Overcontrolled aggressive (OA), and the Non-Aggressive (NA). Their projective responses were analyzed with several scores based on the "ego regression" theory. The results indicated that UA patients differed from the others in that they tended to give poorly elaborated (controlled) aggressive responses, and that OA and NA could hardly be distinguished from each other on these scores.

INTRODUCTION

Several hypotheses have been proposed about the relationship between the aggressive imagery manifested in projective responses and the aggressive behaviors. Two positions among them seem to be conspicuous: the substitution theory and the behavior-sampling theory.

The former supposes that projective responses, like fantasy, are due to the residual tension which has not been discharged at the level of overt acts and so flowed into the fantasy level. Thus, overtly aggressive persons who have got many opportunities to express their aggressive drive will respond less aggressively in the projective test situation than overtly non-aggressive ones. But the majority of researches that made use of Rorschach or TAT as measures of projective aggression brought results in the reverse direction (for example, Kagan, 1956; Stone, 1956; Reder, 1957; Sommer & Sommer, 1958).

The behavior-sampling theory is similar to the substitution theory in assuming that an aggressive response should be determined by the balance between the drive-strength and the inhibition against its expression. Nevertheless, its hypothesis derived from this assumption is quite opposite to that of the substitution theory. It predicts a positive relation between the projective and the behavioral aggression, and this agrees with the empirical data mentioned above.

However, this theory seems to be burdened with some basic shortcomings. The first point to be criticized is the narrowness of its concept of inhibition. If one carefully examines conditions under which the rating of aggressive behaviors is performed, one is likely to find that aggressive acts of those rated "aggressive" are unsocialized, maladjusted ones (Bandura, 1973). Mature persons, who have developed the differentiation of aggressive drive and become capable of regulating forms of behavior in the light

of their own testing of inner and outer conditions, can express their aggressive drive in variety of neutralized forms of behavior that may elude the label, "aggressive".

Aggression should not always be suppressed, but accommodated or controlled. The concept of inhibition as a mere opposite factor against drive can not cover the manifold phenomena of aggression.

In the second place, this theory identified the projective aggression with the behavioral one. There is no doubt that a test response is a kind of behavior. Although they are both named "aggressive", their psychological meanings are not at all the same. The aggressive behavior in everyday interpersonal situations is need-satisfying. If aggressive drive is evoked by some frustrations, the following aggressive reaction is directed toward a particular object (other persons) that is looked upon as the frustrater. Is it such a need-satisfying behavior to see in an inkblot a percept with aggressive connotation or to interpret a picture as representing an aggressive scene? If one thought it to be a displacement, which presupposes the blocking against expressing drive at the overt level, one would return to the substitution hypothesis.

The author thinks that what mediates between the projective and the behavioral responses is not "aggression" itself, but a person's controlling functions which play decisive roles in the underlying processes of both responses.

What is made clear through the above discussion is that these two hypotheses lack inquiry into the qualities of the projective test situation. The outstanding ideas in this respect seem to be found in Schafer's conception of the creative regression.

Schafer (1954) applied to Rorschach Test (and later to TAT) the concept of "regression in the service of the ego," which Kris derived from his psychoanalytic explication on artistic activities (1952). The regression means downward shifts in the level of a person's control functionings, namely the relaxation of his defense structure.

According to Kris, artists could regress voluntarily, temporarily, and partially during their creative acts. Such a regression does not come to the full collapse of defense structure unlike pathological regression in psychotics. The creative process, as was viewed by Kris, consists of two phases. In the phase of inspiration artists voluntarily relax their defense organization and accept repressed unconscious materials into their conscious experience. The elaboration is the second stage on which their defense structure becomes strengthened again and the primary process materials are worked upon through the secondary process thinking, namely logical and reality-oriented thinking.

Schafer found a similar process in projective responses. In this case, however, the regression is not completely voluntarily performed. The projective test situation involves both elements of inducing subjects to regress and of sustaining their orientation toward reality. They fall into the conflict between tendencies to regress and to progress. Their responses are regarded as the results of their attempts to solve this conflict. Therefore, projective responses involve both subjects' repressed, emotional imagery and the integrating efforts by their ego.

Though there may be a variety of reactions which subjects will manifest in the face of such conflict, it is theoretically possible to distinguish three classes of reactions as follows:

1. Those who feel anxiety in the face of the regression-inducing conditions will make their defense more rigid, and therefore cannot express much emotional (e.g. aggressive) imagery.

2. Those who tend to lose greatly their defense organization in getting caught by the instigation toward regression will produce many emotional responses without consideration of objective elements.

3. Those whose control systems are flexible can regress maintaining their reality-orientation. Thus, they will produce emotionally rich responses, which still do not deviate from the objective conditions.

Rapaport *et al.* (1968) described three styles of ego-structure like the above ones: rigid, under, and well control.

In the field of aggression, Megargee (1966) divided violent criminals into two distinct personality types. The Undercontrolled Aggressive person, "is a person whose inhibitions against aggressive behavior are quite low. Consequently, he usually responds with aggression whenever he is frustrated or provoked." On the other hand, in the case of the Overcontrolled Aggressive person, "his inhibitions are extremely rigid, so he rarely, if ever, responds with aggression. The result is that through some form of temporal summation, his instigation to aggression builds up over time." Therefore, his aggressive response, when it happens, tends to be extremely violent.

Megargee's descriptions, excepting the last sentence, seem to correspond well to our conceptions about control styles inferred from patterns of projective responses.

The purpose of the present study is to compare the projective responses of three groups of persons who were selected on the ground of Megargee's descriptions, and to examine whether it is possible to distinguish these groups with projective techniques.

Hypothesis:

- (1) The undercontrolled aggressive persons and the well-controlled, non-aggressive persons will show more of aggressive responses in projective tests than the overcontrolled aggressive persons.

- (2) The undercontrolled aggressive persons will be poorer in elaboration (the index of control efficiency) of their aggressive responses than the other two groups.

METHOD

Subject:

Three groups were selected from 66 male psychiatric patients who were all diagnosed as schizophrenic without mental retardation: the Undercontrolled Aggressive (UA), the Overcontrolled Aggressive (OA), the Non-Aggressive (NA). Their ages ranged from 21 to 44. The selection was based upon the ratings of their aggressive behaviors

during hospitalization and the evaluations of their case history materials. Scales for behavioral ratings were obtained from the Interpersonal Adjective Checklist (Leary, 1957), and the reliability among five raters (four nurses and one psychiatrist) was .829. The purpose of the evaluation of case materials was to pick out patient's physical aggressions before admission.

The UA consisted of 16 patients regarded as aggressive on both the rating and the evaluation; the OA, 11 patients who were not aggressive on the behavioral rating, but aggressive on the evaluation of their past histories; and the NA, 16 patients who were not aggressive with both measures. Our OA patients did not meet one of Megargee's descriptions that OA person's aggression tended to become extremely violent. Our definition of the Overcontrol was that such persons possessed rigid defense structure involving a kind of weakness, and that therefore their behaviors were usually overcontrolled but potentially had danger of outburst of aggression.

Projective Measures:

Rorschach Aggression Score. The *Aggressive Content Categories* of Holt's Scoring System for Primary Process Manifestation (1970) were used.

Rorschach Control Scores. Mayman's Form Level Scores and the dichotomy of F(+) and F(-), which seemed to reflect the purport of Holt's DE, were applied to aggressive responses. F(+) was given to those of pure form or form-dominant responses that were rated + or ±. Other aggressive responses were scored as F(-).

TAT Aggression Score. It was the number of stories with aggressive theme.

TAT Control Scores. Four scores were used. DC I, which was similar to Holt's DD, was to evaluate the intensity or the impact value of the aggressive themes on 4-points scale. DC II, like DE, evaluated the degree of subjects' elaboration of their aggressive stories on 3-points scale. DC III was named Conformity. It evaluated how subjects mentioned the positive or negative social sanctions in their aggressive stories on 5-points scale. DC (I,II) was a combination of DC I and II. The score-8 (the worst point) was allotted to stories which expressed the most severe aggression without any elaboration, and aggressive stories which were elaborated well were given the score 0 (the best point) regardless of their strength of aggression. Full accounts of these TAT scores are given in Ohbuchi (1975).

TAT cards used consisted of those representing three levels of relevance for aggression. They were selected according to Murstein *et al.* (1961).

RESULTS

Mean scores of three groups on Rorschach and TAT Aggression Scores are presented in Table 1. Hypothesis (1) predicted that UA and NA would give aggressive responses more than OA. In Rorschach UA produces aggressive responses significantly more than OA, but NA is not different from OA significantly. TAT Aggression Scores Total shows results similar to this, that is, UA is significantly higher than OA, but NA is

not. In addition, Aggression Score for high relevance indicates that UA is more aggressive not only than OA, but than NA. Consequently, hypothesis (1) is not completely verified.

Table 2 displays the mean scores of three groups on Rorschach and TAT Control Scores. Hypothesis (2) predicted that UA would be poorer in their control of aggressive responses than other groups. Rorschach F(-) and TAT DC (I, II) succeeded in bringing about results accordant with this prediction, that is, UA was significantly lower on these scores than both OA and NA. Other control scores were found to possess little discriminating power.

Table 1 Mean Aggression Scores of three groups for Rorschach and TAT

	UA	OA	NA	UA-OA	UA-NA	OA-NA
Rorschach	(N=16)	N=11	N=16)			
Aggressive Content (%)	24.1	14.4	14.5	$p < .05$	—	—
TAT						
Aggressive Stories						
low relevance	.38	.00	.06	—	—	—
medium relev.	.56	.36	.50	—	—	—
high relev.	1.75	.91	1.13	$p < .05$	$p < .05$	—
Total	2.69	1.27	1.69	$p < .05$	—	—

Statistical testings were performed by computing z values from U test.

Table 2 Mean Control Scores of three groups for Rorschach and TAT

	UA	OA	NA	UA-OA	UA-NA	OA-NA
Rorschach Control Scores	(N=16)	N=10	N=12)	—	—	—
Mayman's Form Level	-4.4	-.5	.9	—	$p < .05$	—
F (+) %	12.4	0.4	10.9	—	—	—
F (-) %	11.6	3.9	3.5	$p < .05$	$p < .05$	—
TAT Control Scores	(N=15)	N=8	N=15)			
DC I	2.7	2.8	2.8	—	—	—
DC II	2.0	2.7	2.4	—	—	—
DC III	3.5	3.8	3.8	—	—	—
DC (I,II)	-3.0	-1.5	-1.8	$p < .05$	$p < .05$	—

Ss who gave no aggressive responses were eliminated from scoring of control scores. That is why Ns in control scores are not equal to that in aggression scores.

DISCUSSION

Several scores derived from Rorschach and TAT were compared among UA, OA, and NA patients. Although there were some scores that seemed to be useless, it would not be impossible to infer some conclusions from those scores that made significant differences among groups.

1) In both Rorschach and TAT, the aggression scores indicate a relationship among groups: $UA > OA = NA$.

2) In both tests the control scores represent $UA < OA = NA$.

The latter is in accord with a hypothesis, but the former is not. Consequently, in this study, OA and NA can not be distinguished from each other with either the aggression scores or the control scores. The response pattern of NA patients seems to indicate that their control style is of overcontrol. That is, initial three groups (UA, OA, and NA) have been rearranged into two groups (UA v.s. OA) through projective tests. One possible reason may be that our subjects are schizophrenic. Healthy persons rated non-aggressive could release their aggressive drive in non-aggressive forms of activities, e.g. works, sports, games, etc. They are worth while to be called "well-controlled". On the other hand, non-aggressive schizophrenics give the impression that they do not have such a capacity, and therefore they might be overcontrolled in essence.

TAT high relevant pictures could distinguish UA from NA and OA, but TAT low relevant could not. This result aggress with a general assumption that the high relevance is sensitive to the inhibition (control) and the low relevance to the level of drive (Epstein, 1962; Murstein, 1963). That differences among groups appeared only in high relevance indicates that these groups differ from one another in their control functionings, but not at their drive level.

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