# Revised Guidelines for Urist's Mutuality of Autonomy Scale (MOA)

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# REVISED GUIDELINES FOR URIST'S MUTUALITY OF AUTONOMY SCALE (MOA)

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Research findings reported in the literature with less than 80% interrater agreement for the Rorschach Mutuality of Autonomy (MOA) scale may be problematic due to possible error. In preparation for a new Rorschach study using the MOA scale, we found it necessary to revise and clarify MOA scale scoring guidelines because they were confusing and ambiguous. A group of 19 naive graduate students improved their interrater agreement scores from 67% using guidelines from the literature, to 75% on the first revision, and these 19 raters plus 13 new raters produced an 80% agreement on a second revision. This revision, with only minor changes based on raters' feedback, is included in an appendix.

*Keywords:* Mutuality of Autonomy, Rorschach, revised scoring guidelines, interrater agreement

The Mutuality of Autonomy Scale (MOA) is a method for analyzing Rorschach responses that was developed by Urist in 1977. Based on object relations theory, the 7-level scale is a way of sorting Rorschach responses into seven categories representing the nature of relationships seen on the Rorschach plates. Categories range from relationships described as mutual and autonomous (Level 1) to catastrophic destruction of autonomy (Level 7). Although research has shown that individuals within all groups studied produce responses across the entire MOA range, the mean and the highest and lowest scores are generally used for comparisons between groups as directed by Urist. Mixed reviews of the effectiveness of the scale have been found in the literature when it is used with children and adolescents. For example, when comparing a group of adolescents who committed homicide with a group of nonviolent delinquents, Greco and Cornell (1992) found that the MOA did not differentiate between the groups. There also has been some disagreement about whether the MOA reflects differences in object relatedness or differences in pathology, as evidenced by disordered thought processes (Blatt, Tuber, & Auerbach, 1990).

Some research indicates that the MOA does appear to measure object relatedness. For example, Tuber (1983) successfully used the MOA with an inpatient clinical sample of 70 boys to predict later adjustment (as measured by rehospitalization). Later, Tuber and Coates (1989) used two separate scales to examine differences in object relatedness and thought disorders between 26 boys with Gender Identity Disorder (GID) and 18 boys in a nonclinical comparison group. Although the groups differed significantly on the more malevolent scores of the MOA (Levels 5, 6, and 7; GID with higher scores), there were no differences between the groups when all mean scores were combined, nor were the groups different with respect to the more benevolent scores (Levels 1, 2, 3, and 4). More

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recently, Brown-Cheatham (1993) successfully used the MOA to differentiate between two groups of father-absent Black male children whose fathers left voluntarily and children whose fathers left involuntarily. In another study, girls at risk for pregnancy had lower scores on self-object differentiation and empathic capacity than girls who used contraceptives (Hart & Hilton, 1988).

Other research indicates that the MOA might be revealing characteristics other than object relatedness. In his evaluation of a nonclinical sample who gave responses scored at all levels except Level 7, Tuber (1989b) concluded that the children and adolescents were able to "counterbalance malevolent scores with more benign scores." Other researchers argued that, when used with children and adolescents, the MOA is primarily a measure of pathological functioning and only secondarily assesses object relatedness (Blatt et al., 1990). In their review of the empirical literature on the assessment of object relatedness via projective techniques, Stricker and Healey (1990) suggested that the MOA may be better characterized as "an indicator of pathological functioning, but not of object relations" (p. 222). However, other researchers reported that the MOA indicated "potential for pathology" rather than pathology at the time of assessment (Harder, Greenwald, Wechsler, & Ritzler, 1984, p. 1078).

In preparation for a recent study, we had to learn to score the MOA. To accomplish this task, we searched the literature and compiled all the guidelines and scoring examples from 13 articles and 1 book. However, we found that different writers did not seem to agree on how the levels of autonomy should be scored. For example, one author wrote that only Rorschach responses that contained movement should be scored, yet he gave examples that did not (Kelly, 1997). Urist himself, appeared to reverse the guidelines for scoring Levels 4 and 5 in his second article (Urist & Shill, 1982). Furthermore, examples of responses with similar content and phrasing were scored differently by different writers. As a consequence, our own interrater agreement on practice items from actual Rorschach protocols was dismal (about 65%). Requests for assistance from other academicians who used the MOA in their own research produced even more confusion about scoring guidelines.

A closer examination of the literature revealed that reported exact agreement on MOA scoring between raters in 11 articles ranged from 52% (Urist, 1977) to 91% (Berg, Packer, & Nunno, 1993), with an average agreement of 74.3% (See Table 1). These percentages indicate that there is difficulty in scoring the MOA using existing guidelines, and poor scoring could produce useless research findings that cannot be replicated in new studies. Furthermore, funded research that incorporates the MOA as one of the measurement instruments could be jeopardized by inaccurate scoring.

Because any scoring procedure that yields an average error rate of approximately 26% is not very defensible, we rewrote and clarified MOA guidelines in an attempt to increase our rates of agreement without altering the validity of the scale or changing the levels. Using this revision, we independently scored 24 protocols and had 16 disagreements on a total of 554 responses for a 97% interrater agreement rate, or, computed differently, we had an 82% agreement rate with 16 disagreements on 90 of the 554 responses that were given a MOA score by one or both of us.

Although our scoring improved with this method, we did not know if our higher agreement rates were due to our research on object relations and determination to learn the system, or if the new guidelines, would be clear enough to help others. To be useful to beginners who, like ourselves, had not been formally trained in object relations theory or MOA scoring, revised guidelines must yield better interrater agreements than existing guidelines and this improvement must be documented as resulting solely from written instruction such as would be found in a journal article or a textbook. Furthermore, instructions for scoring must not be so closely aligned with theory that the scale cannot be scored without a full understanding of object relations. This separation of theory from scoring is what makes the Rorschach Comprehensive System valuable even for psychologists with different theoretical orientations (Exner, 1993). In 1991, Weiner, then editor of the *Journal of Personality Assessment*, set the minimum interrater agreement at 80% for variables "central to

the particular [Rorschach] study" for a manuscript to be considered for publication (p. 1). Therefore, a reasonable minimum agreement between raters on revised MOA scoring was also set at 80%.

## MOA Interrater Agreement Study One

This study was designed to examine how well naive graduate students volunteering to act as research assistants could score when using published versus revised guidelines. Nineteen master's level psychology students with no previous instruction in object relations theory, the Rorschach, or the MOA served as raters on two separate occasions. At both sessions, they scored the same 70 randomly ordered Rorschach responses on an Agreement Protocol comprised of published examples of correct scoring. Ambiguous examples that would have been scored differently by different researchers were not included, but we did not "teach to the test" when we wrote our revised guidelines. At the first session, raters listened to a brief (about three sentences long) explanation of object relation theory, but they received no other instructions. Then, volunteers were given the same four single-spaced pages of original scoring guidelines that we used when we first attempted to score the MOA. These published guidelines contained direct quotations and paraphrased summaries with citations by different writers, all put together. That is, all information from different writers describing MOA Level 1 was typed in the same paragraph, all information for scoring Level 2 was included in the following paragraph, and so on. No examples of scoring were included. One week later, the 19 raters rescored the same Agreement Protocol using the revised guidelines with no feedback about how accurate their responses had been the week before.

## Results of Interrater Agreement Study One

Following only the guidelines for MOA scoring found in the literature, graduate student assistants paralleled our poor ratings by scoring only 67% of the 70 items correctly on their first attempt ($M$ = 47.05, $SD$ = 6.18; *K-R 20* = .72). The revised guidelines on their second attempt allowed them to increase their scores to 75% accuracy, matching the average interrater agreement found in the literature ($M$ = 52.63, $SD$ = 5.08; *K-R 20* = .63). Of the group, 16 had better scores, 2 had worse scores, and 1 remained the same. Raters did fairly well scoring Levels 7 (89% accuracy), 4 (85%), and 2 (84%), but problems appeared unresolved on Levels 5 (52%), 1 (71%), 3 (71%), and 6 (76%). Although the difference in accuracy between using published guidelines and using the revised guidelines was significantly better, $t$ (18) = 4.31, $p < .001$, the revision did not help untrained raters achieve the acceptable goal of 80% or more.

## Interrater Agreement Study Two

Following a stem analysis of each item on the Agreement Protocol, we revised the guidelines once more and added 3 examples of correct scoring from the literature following the description for each level. Because a third attempt at scoring by the same raters might be contaminated by confusion generated by using the two previous versions of the guidelines, a second group of 13 volunteer raters (also all naive graduate students in psychology) joined the 19 raters in the original group. The new raters scored using only the second revision of the guidelines. The same procedure was followed at the third administration of the Agreement Protocol as had been used at the first and second trials.

## Results of Interrater Agreement Study Two

The 32 untrained raters had an average interrater agreement of 80% on the second revision using only the written second version of the guidelines. This percentage is higher than 7 of the 11 exact agreements found in the literature (Table 1). The first group of raters ($n$ = 19) had an agreement percentage of 81%, the second group ($n$ = 13) had an agreement average of 80%, and the combined group of raters had an agreement of 80%. There was no significant difference between the accuracy ratings of the first group of raters compared with the accuracy ratings of the 13 new raters who scored only the second revision, $F(1, 30) = 0.095$, $p = .760$. At each revision, raters were able to increase their accuracy on each scoring level (Table 2). However, scoring instructions on Levels 3, 5, and 6

Table 1
*MOA Interrater Agreements for Exact Hits Between Two Raters as Reported in the Literature for Below and Above 80% Agreement and 80% Agreement With Primary Research Findings*

| Interrater agreement below 80% | Conclusions based on possible error greater than 20% |
|---|---|
| 52% (Urist, 1977) | Scale development. Found significant correlations between MOA and object relations measured by written biographies and ratings by ward staff (p. 3). |
| 52% (Urist & Shill, 1982) | Significant correlations between MOA, "excerpted responses and clinical ratings of object relations" were used to demonstrate MOA validity (p. 463). |
| 62% (Donahue & Tuber, 1993) | Rorschach M+ (adaptive, well formed, and well articulated) "accounted for the largest portion of the variance in the fruit distraction and MOA scores" (p. 421). |
| 66% to 75% (between 2 of 3 raters, Harder, Greenwald, Wechsler, & Ritzler, 1984) | MOA "reflects observed pathology at time of hospitalization and over a lifetime, but not at the time of assessment." MOA "may indicate potential for pathology" (p. 1078). |
| 73% (Tuber, 1983) | Some MOA levels and Becker's Thought Organization Scale discriminated between former child patients (boys) who had been or would be rehospitalized and those who had not. |
| 78% (Kavanagh, 1985) | Compared patients treated with psychoanalysis ($n$ = 16) and psychoanalytic psychotherapy ($n$ = 17) on several measures including MOA. Psychoanalysis resulted in more change. |
| 79% (Tuber & Coates, 1989) | Boys with Gender Identity Disorder ($n$ = 26) revealed more pathological scores on the MOA and a thought disorder hierarchy than the "normal group" ($n$ = 18). |
| **Interrater Agreement above 80%** | **Conclusions based on possible error less than 20%** |
| 85% (Tuber, 1989) | Examined MOA scores from 40 "normal" children. No contrast group. Found bimodal score patterns "counterbalanced maladaptive scores with adaptive representations... avoidance of toxic, malevolent responses... gender differences, age and IQ not correlated" (p. 146). |
| 89% (Brown-Cheatham, 1993) | Black boys whose fathers were absent voluntarily from the family were compared with those whose fathers were involuntarily absent. MOA scores for the latter group revealed "less adaptive object-relations attainment status" (p. 524). |
| 90% (Ryan, Avery, & Grolnick, 1985) | MOA scores were related to "teacher ratings of interpersonal functioning in the classroom and to academic grades, but not to... achievement or intelligence" (p. 6). |
| 91% (Berg, Packer, & Nunno, 1993) | Found a "significant relationship between disturbance in internalized self/object differentiation and thought process disturbance" between people with borderline personality disorder, schizophrenia, and narcissism (p. 311). |

Table 2
*Interrater Agreements on Three Versions of the MOA Scale With Two Groups of Graduate Students*

| | Rater group 1[a] | | Rater group 1 and 2[b] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MOA scale | Time 1 | Time 2 | Time 3 | % change |
| Level 1 | 75% | 71% | 83% | 8% |
| Level 2 | 82% | 84% | 87% | 5% |
| Level 3 | 51% | 71% | 77% | 26% |
| Level 4 | 81% | 85% | 87.5% | 6.5% |
| Level 5 | 48% | 52% | 57% | 9% |
| Level 6 | 60% | 76% | 79% | 19% |
| Level 7 | 70% | 89% | 91% | 21% |
| Total Mean | 67% | 75% | 80% | 13% |
| | | | 81%[c] | 14% |

*Note.* MOA = Mutality of Autonomy scale. Time 1 = Raters used published MOA guidelines. Time 2 = Raters used revised MOA guidelines. Time 3 = Raters used second revision of MOA guidelines.
[a]$n$ = 19. [b]$n$ = 32 (19 + 13). [c]Rater group 1 only.

still yield accuracy ratings below 80%, and Cronbach's alpha for the 70-item Agreement Protocol is .63. The second revision, with only minor changes (two or three words) based on raters' feedback for Levels 3, 5, and 6, is presented in the Appendix.

## Discussion for MOA Revised Guidelines Studies

The MOA scale has been used by many different researchers working with children and adolescents since it was first developed. Although highly respected researchers have demonstrated the effectiveness of the MOA in understanding the personalities of the young respondents, interrater agreement percentages have been inconsistent, ranging from 52% (Urist, 1977) to 91% (Berg et al., 1993). Percentages, instead of kappas, were used in this study because we were comparing our results to percentages reported in the literature. In addition, we would have had to compute different weights for each of the 32 raters.

Limitations to this study are (a) the Agreement Protocol did not include any responses that were not scored as would be found in actual Rorschach protocols; (b) some of the responses on the Agreement Protocol were very difficult, but we wanted to choose responses that would give as wide a sample as possible; and (c) all the raters were volunteers who received no benefit or reward for their time (about an hour at each trial). It is possible that raters would have worked harder had there been some incentive to do so. Further research should be done to demonstrate whether Urist's (1977) MOA levels should be collapsed, or if there are other scoring categories that should be added. MOA scores for adults should be compared with other, newer tests measuring object relations such as the Bell Object Relations and Reality Testing Inventory (Bell, 1995) or The Attachment and Object Relations Inventory (Buelow, McClain, & McIntosh, 1996).

In summary, these interrater agreement studies indicate that untrained individuals with no knowledge of object relations theory or the Rorschach can score responses fairly well using the second revision of the MOA guidelines. For that reason, we would expect that psychologists familiar with both would find the guidelines easy to follow (see Appendix). Further research is needed to demonstrate the effectiveness of the new guidelines in the field.

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# APPENDIX

## Revised MOA Scoring Guideline for Specific Levels

**General rules**

1. Two objects (people, animals, or things) must be seen on the blot except for Levels 5, 6, & 7, where another object (thing, animal, or person) is the implied or actual perpetrator or victim. The second object can be a shadow or reflection.
2. All levels except Levels 4, 6, and 7 require movement using the Comprehensive System scoring (Exner, 1993).
3. If blood is seen on the blot, regardless of equality of power, status, or dominance between the two figures, score Level 5, 6, or 7.
4. Score the most severe level, and give only one score per response even though several levels may be indicated.

## Level 1: Reciprocity-Mutuality; Collaboration-Cooperation

Figures are engaged in some relationship or activity where they are together and involved with each other in such a way that conveys a reciprocal acknowledgment of their respective individuality. The image contains explicit or implicit reference to the fact that the figures are separate and autonomous and involved with each other in a way that recognizes or expresses a sense of mutuality in the relationship. Level 1 is the most adaptive response describing interacting figures in which mutual acknowledgment is preeminent. These responses reveal healthy relationships and show attainment of separation-individuation, cooperation, or reciprocity, with the suggestion of a high degree of autonomous functioning, mutual relatedness, and awareness of the other. A person who describes a highly charged verbal battle among equals could have that response scored as 1, even though the degree of disagreement, competition, or confrontation was significant. It is only when the confrontation involves an imbalanced attack on one figure by another that a more pathological score of 5, 6, or 7 is given. The reciprocal individuality of figures (human, animal, inanimate) is well-defined. Implicit or explicit reference is made regarding the separateness and autonomy of the figures, yet there is a clear sense of mutuality noted in the relatedness. Words or phrases, such as *each other*, *one another*, *both of them*, and together, are helpful in determining whether or not a response should be scored as a scale point 1, as they connote distinct individuality in the context of a mutual interaction. However, these same terms may also be used to describe other levels.

"Two bears giving high fives."

"Two people...look like they're kissing."

"Two people...carrying...picking up that object in the middle."

**Level 1 References:**
(Blatt, Tuber, & Auerbach, 1990; Donahue & Tuber, 1993; Greco & Cornell, 1992, p. 576; Kelly, 1997, p. 44; Tuber, 1992, p. 183; Tuber, Frank, & Santostefano, 1989, p. 506; Urist, 1977, p. 4).

## Level 2: Parallel Activity-Simple Interaction

Figures are engaged in parallel activity. There is no stated emphasis or highlighting of mutuality, nor on the other hand is there any sense that this dimension is compromised in any way within the relationship. There is a parallel interaction, with the two figures maintaining their autonomy, mutuality is neither highlighted nor denied, there is no violation of the integrity of either 'participant' and there is neither destructive nor constructive activity. Level 2 responses are based on the fact that there is active movement ("singing") or frozen

("photograph of a race"), or passive action ("they're just thinking"). Phrases such as *looking at* or *facing each other* meet criteria for benign parallel interactions or simultaneous action. With a response scored scale point 2, the emphasis is on relatedness of a less intimate nature, suggesting interest, but without the degree of investment or distinct mutuality. Two figures must be reported on the blot. Key words are *two*, *both*, and *pairs*.

"Two spiders walking up a little wall."

"Two elephants standing on their hind legs."

"Two guys playing saxophones."

**Level 2 References:**
(Berg et al., 1993; Blatt, Tuber, & Auerbach, 1990, p. 714; Kelly, 1997, p. 44; Stricker & Healey, 1990, p. 221; Tuber & Coates, 1989, p. 106; Tuber, Frank, & Santostefano, 1989, p. 506; Urist, 1977, p. 4).

Levels 3 and 4 "reveal an emerging loss of autonomy" (Kelly, 1997, p. 44) and, as Tuber and Coates (1989) noted, "both points imply a need for another figure to allow for a sense of structural cohesion" (p. 106).

**Levels 3, 4, and 5 References:**
(Brown-Cheatham, 1993, p. 525)

Levels 3, 4, and 5 characterize percepts in which the autonomy and interactions between figures is compromised (i.e., one figure serves to support another, implying a dependent relationship and loss of autonomy).

## Level 3: Anaclitic-Dependent

Figures are seen as leaning on each other, or one figure is seen as leaning or hanging on another. The sense here is that objects do not "stand on their own two feet," or that, in some way, they require some external source of support or direction. Level 3 responses reveal a clearly dependent relationship in which the maintenance of the self is highly related to sustenance from the other object that suggests difficulties in the cohesion of the self and the reliance on an external object for internal stability. There is the stated or implicit sense that the figures require external support. Figures described as *leaning*, *hanging*, *catching*, or *holding* connote the need for dependence and reliance on another. Figures are depicted as lacking balance, unstable, unsure of footing, or supporting each other. This includes something being held up, or held on to, by one or more objects or persons. It is important to remember that Level 3 refers to the need for dependency by one or both figures. Key phrases include *falling over*, *about to tumble*, *growing together*, *attached to*, *going to fall*, *joined together*, *stuck together*, *lifting*, and *can't stand alone*.

"Three people hanging on to each other."

"Two ladies...tired, leaning on a rock."

"Three trees joined together."

**Level 3 References:**
(Berg et al., 1993; Kelly, 1997, p. 47; Tuber, 1992, p. 182; Urist, 1977, p. 4).

## Level 4: Reflection-Mirroring

One figure is seen as the reflection, or imprint, of another. The relationship between objects here conveys a sense that the definition or stability of an object exists only insofar as it is an extension or reflection of another. Shadows, imprints, and footprints would be included here. Key word phrases include *identical*, *reflection*, *both the same*, and *identical*. Although both points 3 and 4 share a depiction of self in which narcissistic issues are central, scores of 3 suggest the availability of a cohesion-building "other," with more autonomous capability being suggested than scale point 4 responses. Additional key phrases or

words include *mirror images*, *fingerprints*, *twins*, *doubles*, *Siamese twins*, *two-headed creatures*, *cut-outs*, and *verbalizations* that the picture looks like it was folded.

"A bear climbing on a mountain and his reflection in the water."

"Statue of two lions...look the same."

"Looks like two women...both identical."

**Level 4 References:**
(Berg et al., 1993; p. 313; Goddard & Tuber, 1988; Kelly, 1997, p. 47; Urist, 1977, p. 4; Urist & Shill, 1982).

## Levels 5, 6, and 7: Maladaptive Responses

Levels 5, 6, and 7 reflect the increasing malevolence of one figure toward the other, so that the autonomy of one or more figures is intentionally violated. There is a severe imbalance in the relationship between the self and other and relationships are malevolent and aggressive. These developmentally lower responses depict percepts that involve engulfing or coercive forces (i.e., endangering the autonomy of both figures, autonomy of the figures is under assault or siege). Comprehensive System codes could include morbid (MOR) or aggressive (AG) percepts.

**Levels 5, 6, and 7 References:**
(Berg et al., 1993; Brown-Cheatham, 1993, p. 527; Tuber & Coates, 1989, p. 106).

## Level 5: Control-Coercion

The nature of the relationship between figures is characterized by a theme of malevolent control of one figure by another. Level 5 describes intent or threat or minor damage. Themes of influencing, controlling, or casting spells can be present. One figure may literally or figuratively be in the clutches of another. Such themes portray a severe imbalance in the mutuality of relations between figures. One or more of the figures may be seen as helpless, while at the same time others are omnipotent and controlling. Aggression can be occurring but there is no description of the destruction to the victim. Scale 5 depicts a clear imbalance in power in the interaction reflected by themes of control and domination without the 'victim's' or controlled object's body integrity being *severely* damaged. On these responses, malevolent control is documented along with the loss of capacity for separateness. Percepts involving manipulating and coercing are generally indicative of scale point 5. Responses such as *people fighting* are usually scored as scale point 2 responses because there is no distinct reference to a loss of intactness of either figure. On the other hand, *two people fighting with blood all over*, would qualify as scale point 5 because there is clear and distinct indication that either one or both of the objects have sustained some damage or violation of intactness, but not severe. A score of 5 is given to responses depicting coercion, one-sided fighting, hurtful influence, or threat. Level 5 is also scored when there is equal but malevolent intent (two aliens shooting poison to kill each other). Blood or minor damage to one or both objects could be reported. Blood in an equal relationship is level 5; blood in an unequal relationship is level 6. The power differential could be explicit or implicit, but there is no loss of integrity or destruction of the more passive, controlled object. One object could be taking something from, or doing something to, another object with no damage to the controlled or used object. There must be two objects seen on the blot or a clear reference to another figure not on the blot.

"Sorcerers fighting or casting spells."

"Two monsters beating each other up; the red stuff is their blood."

"A big creature...got arms out like raging at something."

**Level 5 References:**
(Berg et al., 1993; Blatt, Tuber, & Auerbach, 1990; Coates & Tuber, 1988; Kelly, 1997, pp. 46-47; Goddard & Tuber, 1989, p. 245; Tuber, 1992, p. 183; Urist, 1977, p. 4).

## Level 6: Severe Imbalance-Destruction (threat carried out and destruction)

Not only is there a severe imbalance in the mutuality of relations between figures, but here the imbalance is cast in *decidedly destructive* terms. Two figures simply fighting is not 'destructive' in terms of the individuality of the figures, whereas a figure being tortured by another, or an object being strangled by another, are considered to reflect a serious attack on the autonomy of the object. Similarly, included here are the relationships that are portrayed as parasitic, where a gain by one figure results by definition in the diminution or destruction of another. Malevolent one-sided aggression and domination is a major difference between responses receiving a scale point of 5 and those scored as 6. Not only is there a severe imbalance in the mutuality of relations between figures, but the imbalance is imbued with distinct1e object (fly swatter, truck, gun, people, animal, boulder, alien) that caused the damage, or death, is not the overwhelming force that causes the annihilation reported on level 7. The object that caused the destruction can be implied if only one damaged or destroyed object is seen on the blot. For example, if something has been shot, it can be assumed that it was shot by a creature or person with a gun, or if it has broken legs from a fight, it can be assumed that the damage was caused by a malevolent other. However, things dying of a natural death, or decaying, or aging would not be scored because there is no malevolent other. Shooting, piercing, or lying in wait would also be key words or phrases.

"Two cannibals tearing apart that animal...want to drink their blood."

"A tarantula spider...just bit somebody, bit off their legs, and this is a pool of their blood."

"A massive fly with no wings; someone must have ripped them off."

**Level 6 References:**

(Berg et al., 1993; Blatt, Tuber, & Auerbach, 1990; Goddard & Tuber, 1989, p. 245; Kelly, 1997, p. 48; Tuber, 1992, p. 183; Urist, 1977, p. 5).

## Level 7: Envelopment-Incorporation

Relationships here are characterized by an overpowering, enveloping force. Figures are seen as swallowed up, devoured, or generally overwhelmed by *forces completely beyond their control*. Level 7 is given to pathological responses in which a figure is or has been contaminated, dominated, overwhelmed, or destroyed by catastrophically malevolent, engulfing, or inhuman forces. Scale point 7 responses connote a type of relatedness characterized by total control at the hands of an overpowering, enveloping, and devouring force beyond the control of the individual and existing outside the relationship of the figures, clearly reflecting the enormity of the power and utter helplessness of the figure or figures. These responses describe annihilation and overwhelming destructiveness by a larger than life cataclysmic event usually caused by *inanimate, calamitous forces*, and they represent a primitive level of self-object fusion. Destructive forces include *explosions, raging fires, bombs, hurricanes, germ warfare, tornados, force of nature, floods, alien invasions, warfare*, and the like. Objects on the blot are usually seen as *destroyed, dead, mangled, evaporated*, or *burned*, and there are often only parts of objects, smoke, or other debris that remain.

"It's Armageddon, and the world has been destroyed."

"See all those parts and pieces of people after a nuclear explosion."

"It's a bear that has been blown apart; you can't even tell what it was."

**Level 7 References:**

(Berg et al., 1993; Blatt, Tuber, & Auerbach, 1990; Hart & Hilton, 1988, p. 121; Kelly, 1997, p. 49; Tuber & Coates, 1989, p. 106; Tuber, Frank, & Santostefano, 1989, p. 506; Urist, 1977, p. 5).