

**The Hermann Rorschach Archives and Museum
Berne**

**Inventory Fonds Emil Oberholzer
Location: Rorschach Archives**

Reference Code: Rorsch EO

**Prepared by Rita Signer
Compliant with ISAD
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Table of content

| | |
|---|---|
| Introduction | 3 |
| General Information | 4 |
| Reference Code | 4 |
| Use | 4 |
| Address | 4 |
| Contact | 4 |
| Links | 4 |
| Hierarchy | 5 |
| Inventory | 6 |

Introduction

Rorschach's colleague and friend Emil Oberholzer (1883-1958) worked as psychoanalyst in private practice in Zurich and played an active part in Rorschach's inkblot experiments. Both were members of the executive committee of the Swiss Psycho-Analytical Society (Oberholzer as president, Rorschach as vice-president).

General Information

Reference Code

Ref. Code: Rorsch
ISIL: CH-000956-2

Use

The use of the Rorschach Archives and Museum for scientific purposes is open to all, but notice is required in advance. Access to the fonds may be limited due to conservational requirements or for reasons of the protection of personal rights.

Address

Universität Bern
Institut für Medizingeschichte
Archiv und Sammlung Hermann Rorschach
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CH-3000 Bern 9 (Switzerland)

Contact

<http://biblio.unibe.ch/rorschach/en/allginfo.html>

Links

The Hermann Rorschach Archives and Museum

<http://biblio.unibe.ch/rorschach>

HAN: Manuscripts and archives

http://aleph.unibas.ch/F?func=option-update-Ing&file_name=find-b&p_con_Ing=ENG&local_base=rorschach

Hierarchy

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Fonds Emil Oberholzer (Fonds) | 1 |
| 1 Correspondence with Hermann Rorschach (File)..... | 2 |
| 2 Letters from and to Emil Oberholzer (File)..... | 3 |

Inventory

1 Fonds Emil Oberholzer (Fonds)

3 cm. - Ref. Nr: Rorsch EO.

Content: The fonds consists of the correspondence between E. Oberholzer and H. Rorschach in the years 1916 to 1922 and Oberholzer's correspondence with various persons, mainly with Walter Morgenthaler.

Arrangt.: Organised in 2 files.

Access: Only on inquiry.

Biogr.: Emil Oberholzer was born of Swiss parents on 24th December 1883 in Zweibrücken (Germany) where his father managed a factory. The family went back to Switzerland when Emil was still young. He grew up in Zurich and there in 1902 began his medical studies which, after intermediate semesters in Geneva and Basle, he completed in Zurich in 1908. Thereafter, for over two years, he was assistant to Eugen Bleuler at the Burghölzli in Zurich where he met his future wife Mira Gincburg (1887-1949), also an assistant. Later on both worked at the psychiatric hospital Breitenau (in Schaffhausen). In October 1911 Oberholzer joined the Group of Zurich ("Zürcher Ortsgruppe") affiliated to the International Psychoanalytical Society, and in 1912 went to Vienna to be analysed by Sigmund Freud.

From 1916 on the couple worked at the nerve sanatorium of Dr. Brunner in Küsnacht (Canton Zurich) and in 1919 went into private practice together in Zurich. In the same year the Swiss Psycho-Analytical Society was founded and Oberholzer was elected as its first president. In 1928 he formed the Swiss Medical Society for Psychoanalysis, this action being the outcome of dissensions over lay or wild analysis. Oberholzer trained many analysts, and so did his wife, who had been with Freud in the early 1920's. In 1926 their son Emil Hermann was born. Worried about the growing menace from Nazi Germany – Mira was Jewish – in 1938 the couple emigrated to New York, where they worked as psychoanalysts in private practice. In 1941 Oberholzer became an honorary member of the New York Psychoanalytic Society.

According to the psychoanalyst Frederic S. Weil Oberholzer "was not a simple man. He was intense and incisive, proud and passionate and prone to stand back independently if he could not agree. He withdrew more and more, even from close friends, and more so after his wife's death in 1949" (From a manuscript "In memoriam Dr. Emil Oberholzer" 1958, kept by the Institut für Medizingeschichte in Berne) Oberholzer died on 4th May 1958 at the age of seventy-five.

Emil Oberholzer made a number of contributions to psychiatry in various fields (heredity, sterilisation, epilepsy) and to clinical psychoanalysis. His main interest, however, was the Rorschach Test. Oberholzer and Rorschach met each other probably as early as in their student days in Zurich, but they became friends only in 1919. Oberholzer took an active part in Rorschach's experiment. Using Rorschach's cards he conducted tests on his own clients and sent the recorded answers to Rorschach for evaluation. In 1923 he published posthumously his friend's lecture "Zur Auswertung des Formdeutversuchs für die Psychoanalyse" (The application of the interpretation of form to psychoanalysis, 1924) which Rorschach had presented to the Swiss Psycho-Analytical Society a few weeks before he passed away. Until the end of his life Oberholzer worked on Rorschach's test incessantly. He did extensive consultation work and was a recognised authority on the test.

Reprod.: Only with agreement of the Rorschach-Archives.

Acq.: Donated by Emil Oberholzer, Jr., Ph.D., New York (son of Dr. med. Emil Oberholzer), transmitted by Walter Morgenthaller in August 1958.

Creat.: Oberholzer, Emil. 1883-1958.

2 **1 : Correspondence with Hermann Rorschach** (File)

82 letters. - 1916-1922. - Ref. Nr: Rorsch EO 1.

Ed.: 1916-1922.

Lang.: German.

Bibliogr.: The letters are to a great extent published in Hermann Rorschach: Briefwechsel. Bern: Huber, 2004.

Aut.: Oberholzer, Emil. 1883-1958.

Aut.: Rorschach, Hermann. 1884-1922.

Addr.: Rorschach, Hermann. 1884-1922.

Oberholzer, Emil. 1883-1958.

3 **2 : Letters from and to Emil Oberholzer** (File)

63 letters bound together. - 1930-1941. - Ref. Nr: Rorsch EO 2.

Ed.: 1930-1941.

Content: The file contains correspondence mainly with Walter Morgenthaller, but also with Olga Rorschach and others.

Lang.: German.

Aut.: Oberholzer, Emil. 1883-1958.

Addr.: Oberholzer, Emil. 1883-1958.