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About the Series

To conduct a thorough and informative psychological assessment, practitioners need to master a complex set of skills that go beyond the rote procedures laid out in a test manual. The Psychological Assessment Series features brief, practical books by veteran practitioners who synthesize their professional wisdom into expert tips and insights for conducting a wide range of educational and psychological assessments. Each book provides context for using a specific test, including the history of its development and its current uses, followed by recommendations on when to use the test and how to combine it with other assessment tools, step-by-step instructions for administration, advice for navigating challenging scenarios, and guidance on how to use or adapt the test for a particular population of clients or, for example, when diagnosing a specific disorder, evaluating personality traits, and monitoring treatment or other interventions. All volumes in this series can be used as both educational tools for graduate students in assessment courses and handy references for practitioners. Each book can be paired with a companion video that features the author demonstrating the assessment process in real time, followed by an analysis that highlights significant moments from the demonstration along with key takeaways for practice. The books and videos may be used independently, but together they make an ideal learning tool for students and trainees.

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Introduction

The Rorschach Test (Rorschach, 1921/1942) is the most famous psychological test ever invented. It is also the most controversial. To become a Rorschacher, you need to resolve that cognitive dissonance. Our intent is to deal with the Rorschach's ongoing identity crisis. Once you have an understanding of what the Rorschach really is, adapting it for your specific assessment needs is a sensible next step. We will walk you through that process.

Our goal is to simplify the administration, scoring, and interpretation of the Rorschach by making the process less cumbersome, briefer, more practical, and more person centered. We begin by addressing the most nagging Rorschach question—What is it, really?—and by offering our remedy to its identity crisis (Chapter 1). In subsequent chapters, we guide you through our model of administration (Chapter 2) and our proposed method for scoring and interpreting the variables with our short-form and simplified coding

Supporting materials for this book can be downloaded from the following companion website: http://pubs.apa.org/books/supp/choca. These materials include three appendixes that summarize and compare the results of two meta-analyses, one of published Comprehensive System community norms (Muñoz, Choca, Rossini, & Garside, 2011) and the other of unpublished psychiatric norms. The companion site also features full sample case reports similar to the one presented in Exhibit 8.1. Proper steps were taken to protect the confidentiality of all individuals mentioned in these case reports.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0000075-001
Assessment Using the Rorschach Inkblot Test, by J. P. Choca and E. D. Rossini
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system that we call the Basic Rorschach (BR; Chapters 3–6).[1] Although the BR is the primary focus of these chapters, we also review the two main Rorschach scoring systems: the Comprehensive System (CS; Exner, 2003) and the Rorschach Performance Assessment System (R-PAS; Meyer, Viglione, Mihura, Erard, & Erdberg, 2011).

We first introduce scoring by reviewing the 10 broad areas that all Rorschach scoring systems focus on (Chapter 3). Then, we provide a detailed review of the individual variables that make up the Structural Summary (Chapter 4), including how to consider these variables alongside one another (Chapter 5). After reviewing the mechanics of scoring these variables, we provide a step-by-step framework as well as advanced interpretation strategies that can be used to find a deeper meaning behind these scores (Chapter 6).

We then make our plea for keeping the client in mind (Chapter 7), present report-writing guidelines (Chapter 8), and propose a shorter test called "Herm" that uses four cards instead of the standard 10, as well as expressing our hopes for the future of the Rorschach (Chapter 9). Throughout this book, we focus on older adolescent and adult assessment; specialized textbooks for assessing school-age children are available.

The Rorschach is neither an omniscient nor an infallible test, and early assessors oversold its value. At its peak, the Rorschach was estimated to have been administered a million times a year. Yet, throughout its history, the Rorschach has been a shape-shifter, adapting to whatever psychological theories were in fashion. It is certainly a venerable, multicultural, lifespan, and pantheoretical test. Unfortunately, both academic disputes and economic forces have converged in reducing its presence in doctoral training and its use in assessment practice (C. Piotrowski, 2015a, 2015b).

However, within assessment psychology, excitement reigns for all things Rorschach. There is an intense intellectual and commercial competition between the established Rorschach coding and interpretive systems, the CS (Exner, 2003) and the newer R-PAS (Meyer, Viglione, Mihura, Erard, & Erdberg, 2011). This competition has generated a sophisticated body of empirical research, some of it more complex than is useful for the casual reader. For frontline assessors, both camps have also published detailed case studies as teaching tools.

There may not be a better time to become a Rorschach assessor: The field has opened up for new ideas with the passing of John Exner, who developed the CS and published it in 1974. However, Rorschach use is decreasing, and some have predicted its ultimate extinction (Paul, 2004). We hope to help save it from that fate with proposals that restrict its use to its areas of excellence and simplify its methodology.

The primary audiences for this book are graduate students taking their initial personality assessment courses, practicum and internship students in clinical and counseling psychology, and their instructors and supervisors. Other audiences include early or mid-

[1]A computer program, called "Hermann," for entering, scoring, and computing the calculations of a Rorschach protocol can be found at http://www.choca-assessments.com.

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level clinical psychologists seeking to retool their skill set in projective assessment using the Rorschach and seasoned practitioners who feel constrained by the CS and R-PAS systems. Finally, several novel ideas of ours will be introduced in this book for beginner and veteran Rorschachers alike, including our simplified coding system (the BR) and a shortened, four-card Rorschach test (Herm).

Our recommendation to graduate students is to read this book chapter by chapter like any other textbook. More experienced assessors will likely jump to the interpretation chapters to see what any specific atypical score (marker) can mean. Either way, as textbook or pick-and-choose reference text, we welcome you to the Rorschach world.