

## Clinical Utility of the Rorschach With African Americans

Gordon Presley

*Teaneck, New Jersey*

Candy Smith

*The Saint Louis Psychology Internship Consortium*

*Metropolitan St. Louis Psychiatric Center*

*St. Louis, Missouri*

Mark Hilsenroth

*The Derner Institute of Advanced Psychological Studies*

*Adelphi University*

John Exner

*Rorschach Workshops*  
*Asheville, North Carolina*

In this study we sought to identify Rorschach differences between African Americans and White Americans and to understand these differences within a social and cultural framework. Data from the Exner (1993) Comprehensive System normative sample ( $N = 700$ ) was used to form a group of 44 African Americans and 44 White Americans matched for age, sex, education, and socioeconomic status. Twenty-three Rorschach variables were chosen a priori and group differences were analyzed. The only clinically significant difference found was that African Americans offered significantly less cooperative movement. This lower frequency of cooperative movement may suggest African Americans do not anticipate cooperative interactions with others as a routine event. This may reflect a shared feeling among African Americans that most members of our society are less likely to be sensitive to or responsive to their needs relative to others. However, the study demonstrates a striking similarity between the groups, supporting the clinical use of the Rorschach with African Americans.

The need for establishing African American norms for standardized personality tests has been frequently discussed and debated (Brown, 1994; Gottfredson, 1994;

Lindsey, 1998 ). However, research into the differential response patterns of African Americans and the meaning of these group differences is scarce at best. Insight into race differences in patterns of responses of a normative group of African Americans could provide valuable and more accurate information to assist clinicians in more accurate diagnosis, treatment, and forensic decision making that rely on personality assessment. These important ethnicity issues in personality assessment are often areas in which clinicians are unaware or inadequately trained to address. Some of the hesitancy to address these ethnicity and diversity issues may be associated with the politically charged controversy related to intelligence testing. Some of the controversy stems from the use of the deficit model to understand group differences, which assumes that one group is inferior to another (Herrnstein & Murry, 1994). Such controversy can be avoided if a thoughtful, sensitive, and informed approach to interpretation of differences is provided rather than reliance on a simplistic deficit model.

African Americans must adapt to and cope with institutions that operate from the world view of White Americans. Thus, African Americans must negotiate race-related environmental stressors that may often become problematic. The process of negotiating conflicting external demands on a daily basis may create a unique set of stressors with multiple patterns of coping. It is reasonable to hypothesize that these dynamics will translate into some unique patterns of Rorschach responses different from the present normative data that is based primarily on the world view of White Americans (Exner, 1993).

A comprehensive review of studies exploring the performance of African Americans on the Rorschach was conducted by Frank (1992). Frank discovered only seven studies published on the topic in 60 years (Abel, Piotrowski, & Stove, 1944; Ames and August, 1966; Hunter, 1937; Krall et al., 1983; Price, 1962; Stainbrook & Siegel, 1944; Weatherly, Corke, & McCary, 1964). Frank (1992) noted that these studies were characterized by very restricted sampling, limiting the conclusions that could be drawn. In addition, the studies employed a variety of scoring and interpretive systems, limiting the comparisons that could be made between studies. The only consistent pattern observed among these seven studies is that African Americans gave consistently fewer responses (*R*) relative to their White counterparts. Frank interpreted this finding parsimoniously as reflecting restricted self-disclosure on the part of African Americans when tested by Whites. The finding suggests that African Americans may often mistrust White examiners due to anticipated racism (Banks, 1972; Carkhuff & Pierce, 1967; Jenkins, 1995).

Another study exploring the performance of African Americans on the Rorschach, not reviewed by Frank (1992), was conducted by Baldwin (1980) and the results have significant implications with regard to the validity of Rorschach interpretation with African Americans. The Rorschachs of 30 Black and 30 White nonclinical male participants were examined. When race was used as the criteria and the variance due to education was statistically removed, stepwise multiple regression produced three predictor variables, Conventional Pure Form ( $F + \%$ ),

Popular responses (*P*), and Content categories. These predictor variables classified 44 of the 60 participants accurately (73.3%) according to race, with African Americans demonstrating lower Form Quality and fewer Popular responses. Lower Form Quality is also revealed in a study reviewed by Frank in which Rorschach norms were developed for inner city African American children ( $N = 272$ ) and compared with similar-age children from the Exner (1993) norms available at the time (Krall et al., 1983).

If White Americans and African Americans differ significantly in their perceptions of the world, it is logical that Form Quality and Popular responses might differ between the two races because normative data on these variables is based on a consensus. For example, if 2% of the sample agree on a precept, the precept is scored Ordinary Form Quality. If a response is observed in one out of three protocols, it is considered a Popular response. Present normative data is based on a consensus that is heavily skewed in favor of White American perceptions. If the same criteria used to establish Ordinary and Popular responses is applied to an African American sample, the results may create a new set of Popular responses and responses considered to have Ordinary Form Quality. The application of this criteria to African American populations may represent a more appropriate normative sample for obtaining a valid assessment. Given this same thesis, other Rorschach perceptual variables ( $X + \%$ ,  $Xu\%$ ,  $X - \%$ ) may also differ between the two races as a result of different perceptions of the world.

Semantic language differences between African Americans and White Americans have the potential of reducing the reliability of the deviant verbalization (*DV*) Special Score of the Rorschach Comprehensive System (CS; Exner, 1993). In particular, redundancies are scored as a *DV* but within some Black cultural idioms a redundancy represents emphasis on a particular attribute and thus serves a communication function (Dillard, 1972; Haskins & Butts, 1973; Smitherman, 1977). An examiner's awareness of this subcultural idiom will reduce misinterpreting such verbalizations as a form of cognitive slippage. However, whether clinicians are actually aware of linguistic differences is doubtful and normative data would serve to reduce any risk of misinterpretation.

Not all potential racial differences between White and Black normative samples will threaten the validity of Rorschach interpretation with African Americans and some may demonstrate the value of the Rorschach as a tool for understanding the interface between personality and contemporary society. For example, a study conducted by Brown-Cheatham (1993) examined the utility of the Rorschach Mutuality of Autonomy Scale (Urist, 1977) in the assessment of two groups of 40 African American male children whose fathers were absent. Results of the study demonstrated that children whose fathers negotiated their departure reflected less object relations impairment relative to children whose fathers left involuntarily. Further, children whose fathers lived with them prior to the parent's separation reflected higher object relations attainment compared to sons whose fathers never lived with them. Brown-Cheatham's study provides valuable information about a

chronic mental health issue faced by the African American community, demonstrating the potential value of the Rorschach to contribute to increased understanding of such issues. The study also points out the impact of demographic variables on Rorschach scores.

Some differences between normative data may be due to social or racial events that impact collectively on the emotional experience of African Americans. Economic discrimination, demeaning media stereotypes, discrimination in the workplace, racially motivated police searches, racial profiling, and housing discrimination are but some events shared by many African Americans that may impact on their emotional experience in some collective manner (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Grier & Cobbs, 1968; Jones, 1991; Wilson, 1978). These frustrations may increase anger and aggressive feelings and may contribute to the elevations in hypertension and other medical conditions associated with stress and internalized anger (Armstead, Lawler, Gorden, Cross, & Gibbons, 1989; Clark et al., 1999; Grier & Cobbs, 1968; Wilson, 1978). Most middle-class African Americans cannot express anger directly, especially in the workplace where such feelings must be internalized for the sake of job security. This internalization of anger may result in elevations in achromatic color responses ( $C$ ), which is associated with the "psychological biting of one's tongue" (Exner, 1993, p. 386). Elevations in white Space responses ( $S$ ), Aggressive movement ( $AG$ ), and Shading ( $Y$ ) may also be expected due to increases in frustration and stress associated with the common experience of racism. These elevations will impact on stress tolerance ( $D$ ), the adjusted  $D$  score, available emotional resources ( $EA$ ), and the current stimulus demands ( $es$ ). The impact of race-related environmental stressors may also cause elevations on some of the primary Rorschach indexes, including the Schizophrenia Index ( $SCZI$ ; Exner, 1991), the Depression Index ( $DEPI$ ; Exner, 1991), the Suicide Constellation ( $S-Con$ ; Exner, 1991), and the Coping Deficit Index ( $CDI$ ; Exner, 1991), and may impact on other variables related to self esteem and interpersonal relations—including cooperative movement ( $COP$ ), human content ( $H$ ), Texture responses ( $T$ ) and the Egocentricity Index ( $EGO$ ; Exner, 1991).

In this study, we explore structural data from a normative sample of African Americans included in the broader normative sample of the CS (Exner, 1993). African American normative data has been separated from the broader data to establish a separate set of African American norms. This study is distinct because it is the first to establish an African American normative sample in the form of descriptive statistics consistent with that presented in the Exner (1993) CS. Based on prior empirical research, we hypothesize that differences in productivity ( $R$ ) and perception ( $F + \%$ ,  $P$ ,  $X + \%$ ,  $X - \%$ ) will be found. In addition, potential differences regarding a social or cultural aggression hypothesis (Sum  $C'$ ,  $EA$ ,  $es$ ,  $D$ ,  $Adj D$ ,  $S$ ,  $AG$ ), as well as four of the primary Rorschach indexes ( $SCZI$ ,  $DEPI$ ,  $S-Con$ , and  $CDI$ ) and other selected interpersonal and self perception variables ( $COP$ ,  $H$ ,  $T$ ,  $EGO$ ) are explored. Although the small sample size limits the degree to which one can draw inferences regarding cultural differences in the general population, this is

one of the few studies investigating racial differences on Rorschach variables that match participants on key demographic variables.

## METHOD

### Participants

The Rorschach responses of the 88 participants in this study were drawn from the normative data sample of the Exner (1993) CS. The Exner normative sample consisted of 700 protocols for nonpatient adults. For a more extensive discussion of this larger sample, please see Exner (1993, chap. 12, pp. 258–317).

This normative sample is comprised of 350 women and 350 men with a mean age of 32.36 years ( $SD = 11.93$ , range = 19–70). Of these patients, 332 were married, 192 were single, and the remaining patients were separated, divorced, widowed, or living with a significant other. The average years of completed education were 13.25. The data for socioeconomic status (SES) was coded using a 9-point variation of the Hollingshead and Redlich Scale (Hollingshead & Redlich, 1958). This variation involves three subgroups for upper-, middle-, and lower-class categories. For instance, Category 1 is upper upper class, Category 6 is lower middle class, and Category 9 is restricted to those on public assistance. The majority of participants in the Exner (1993) sample came from a middle class socioeconomic level (Categories 4, 5, 6).

### Procedure

We obtained a sample of 44 adult nonpatient African Americans from the Exner (1993) normative data. The demographic characteristics for the African Americans and White Americans are presented in Table 1. All protocols utilized in this study were matched with corresponding individual case material. This group was then matched to a sample of 44 White Americans exactly on gender. Furthermore, African Americans and White Americans were also matched closely on education, age, marital status, and SES. Exact matches were made on years of education for 36 of the African Americans. Four African Americans were matched within 1 year of education. The remaining 4 African Americans were matched within 5 years of education. Exact matches were made on age for 25 of the African Americans. The remaining 19 African Americans were matched within 5 years of age. Additionally, exact matches were made for 26 of the African Americans on marital status and 36 of the African Americans were matched on SES (lower, middle, upper). As shown in Table 1, the African American and White American groups were very similar on each of the demographic variables. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) performed on each of the variables did not reveal any significant differences in age,  $F(1, 87) = 1.50, p = .22$ ; SES,  $F(1, 87) = 0.03, p = .87$ ; and education  $F(1, 87) = 0.14, p = .71$ .

TABLE 1  
Demographic Variables

Variable Name	African American <sup>a</sup>		White American <sup>a</sup>	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Marital status <sup>b</sup>				
Single	17	39	14	32
Lives with SO	7	16	2	5
Married	15	34	21	48
Separated	0	0	2	5
Divorced	5	11	4	9
Widowed	0	0	1	2
Age <sup>c</sup> (years)				
18 to 25	20	45	16	36
26 to 35	16	36	17	39
36 to 45	8	18	8	18
46 to 55	0	0	2	5
56 to 65	0	0	1	2
Over 65	0	0	0	0
Socioeconomic status <sup>d</sup>				
Upper	0	0	0	0
Middle	24	55	20	45
Lower	20	45	24	55
Education <sup>d</sup> (years)				
Under 12	10	23	9	20
12	19	43	19	43
13 to 15	14	32	14	32
16 plus	1	2	2	5

Note. SO = significant other.

<sup>a</sup>*n* = 44. <sup>b</sup>Twenty-six African Americans were matches. <sup>c</sup>Twenty-five African Americans were matches. <sup>d</sup>Nineteen African Americans were matched within 5 years. <sup>e</sup>Thirty-six African Americans were matches.

## RESULTS

Tables 2 and 3 are included to provide a detailed account of the Rorschach findings for the African American sample. Descriptive data concerning 110 Rorschach variables and ratios for African Americans are presented in Table 2. These statistics include the mean, standard deviation, range, frequency, median, mode, skewness, and kurtosis. Table 3 presents the frequency and percentages for selected clusters of Rorschach variables for the African American sample. It should be noted that both Table 2 and Table 3 organize data in the format used by Exner (1993, pp. 260–264) to detail normative and patient populations. This organization allows direct comparisons to be made with this sample of African Americans and other groups.

TABLE 2  
Descriptive Statistics for 44 African Americans

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
<i>R</i>	21.59	4.99	14.00	36.00	44	22.00	23.00	0.90	1.88
<i>W</i>	8.59	1.73	5.00	13.00	44	9.00	8.00	0.05	0.29
<i>D</i>	11.64	4.27	0.00	20.00	43	12.00	12.00	-0.34	0.65
<i>Dd</i>	1.36	1.86	0.00	8.00	26	1.00	0.00	2.25	5.92
<i>S</i>	1.77	1.26	0.00	5.00	40	1.50	1.00	1.04	0.72
<i>DQ+</i>	6.73	2.12	3.00	11.00	44	7.00	6.00	0.08	-0.68
<i>DQo</i>	13.20	4.42	5.00	26.00	44	14.00	15.00	0.75	1.56
<i>DQv</i>	1.39	1.47	0.00	4.00	27	1.00	0.00	0.72	-0.84
<i>DQv/+</i>	0.27	0.54	0.00	2.00	10	0.00	0.00	1.92	2.95
<i>FQx+</i>	0.93	0.82	0.00	2.00	28	1.00	0.00	0.13	-1.50
<i>FQxo</i>	15.68	3.53	7.00	26.00	44	16.50	17.00	-0.16	1.03
<i>FQxu</i>	3.41	2.52	0.00	12.00	41	3.00	3.00	1.78	4.64
<i>FQx-</i>	1.50	1.19	0.00	6.00	40	1.00	1.00	1.86	4.22
<i>FQxNone</i>	0.07	0.25	0.00	1.00	3	0.00	0.00	3.71	11.09
<i>MQ+</i>	0.50	0.70	0.00	2.00	17	0.00	0.00	1.07	-0.11
<i>MQo</i>	2.80	1.61	0.00	7.00	33	2.00	2.00	0.77	0.14
<i>Mqu</i>	0.30	0.59	0.00	2.00	10	0.00	0.00	1.91	2.85
<i>MQ-</i>	0.16	0.43	0.00	2.00	6	0.00	0.00	2.81	7.91
<i>MqNone</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>SQual-</i>	0.30	0.67	0.00	3.00	9	0.00	0.00	2.54	6.49
<i>M</i>	3.75	1.71	1.00	7.00	44	3.00	3.00	0.64	-0.55
<i>FM</i>	3.66	1.49	1.00	7.00	44	1.00	1.00	-0.04	-0.69
<i>m</i>	1.07	0.76	0.00	2.00	33	1.00	1.00	-0.12	-1.22
<i>FC</i>	3.86	2.04	0.00	7.00	40	4.00	6.00	-0.43	-0.88
<i>CF</i>	2.14	1.27	0.00	4.00	39	2.00	3.00	-0.12	-1.03
<i>C</i>	0.11	0.32	0.00	1.00	5	0.00	0.00	2.52	4.56

(continued)

TABLE 2 (Continued)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
<i>Cn</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sum Color	6.11	2.68	1.00	11.00	44	6.00	8.00	0.03	-1.13
<i>WSum C</i>	4.24	1.88	1.00	7.50	44	4.25	6.00	-1.21	-1.21
Sum <i>C'</i>	1.64	1.26	0.00	5.00	38	1.00	1.00	0.89	0.15
Sum <i>T</i>	0.89	0.72	0.00	4.00	33	1.00	1.00	1.73	7.16
Sum <i>V</i>	0.39	0.72	0.00	3.00	12	0.00	0.00	1.97	3.54
Sum <i>Y</i>	0.84	0.91	0.00	3.00	25	1.00	0.00	0.90	0.06
Sum Shading	3.75	2.56	0.00	12.00	42	3.00	3.00	1.45	2.58
<i>Fr + rF</i>	0.14	0.63	0.00	4.00	3	0.00	0.00	5.68	34.29
<i>FD</i>	1.16	1.01	0.00	5.00	32	1.00	1.00	1.23	3.38
(2)	7.84	2.47	1.00	13.00	44	8.00	7.00	-0.24	0.68
$3r + (2)/R$	0.39	0.11	0.07	0.79	44	0.36	0.32	0.85	4.30
<i>L</i>	0.60	0.27	0.15	1.29	44	0.57	0.47	0.58	-0.15
<i>Fm + m</i>	4.73	1.60	2.00	8.00	44	4.50	4.00	0.04	-0.90
<i>EA</i>	7.99	2.06	3.50	12.00	44	8.00	7.00	-0.29	-0.56
<i>es</i>	8.48	3.59	3.00	18.00	44	8.00	7.00	0.91	1.54
<i>D</i> Score	-0.27	1.21	-5.00	2.00	44	0.00	0.00	-1.85	5.52
<i>AdjD</i>	-0.09	1.05	-4.00	2.00	16	0.00	0.00	-1.32	4.07
<i>a</i> (active)	6.36	2.33	2.00	11.00	44	6.00	6.00	0.35	-0.44
<i>p</i> (passive)	2.11	1.43	0.00	5.00	38	2.00	2.00	0.44	-0.47
<i>M<sup>a</sup></i>	2.75	2.72	0.00	6.00	43	2.50	2.00	0.50	-0.44
<i>M<sup>p</sup></i>	1.00	0.91	0.00	3.00	29	1.00	1.00	0.91	-0.47
Intellect	1.34	1.08	0.00	4.00	33	1.00	1.00	0.43	-0.57
<i>Z<sub>f</sub></i>	11.57	3.00	5.00	19.00	44	12.00	12.00	-0.03	0.76
<i>Z<sub>d</sub></i>	0.74	3.58	-5.50	8.00	44	0.75	-3.00	0.27	-0.47
Blends	5.16	2.08	1.00	10.00	44	5.00	5.00	0.10	-0.25
Blends/ <i>R</i>	0.25	0.12	0.07	0.67	44	0.23	0.17	1.34	3.25
Col-Shd <i>Bld</i>	0.57	0.82	0.00	3.00	18	0.00	0.00	1.51	1.89



<i>Afr</i>	0.68	0.19	0.36	1.14	44	0.64	0.56	0.88	0.34
<i>Populars</i>	6.20	1.64	3.00	10.00	44	6.00	6.00	0.19	-0.31
<i>X + %</i>	0.77	0.09	0.50	0.93	44	0.79	0.82	-1.17	1.28
<i>F + %</i>	0.70	0.18	0.33	1.00	44	0.70	1.00	0.08	-0.33
<i>X - %</i>	0.07	0.07	0.00	0.43	40	0.05	0.04	3.20	13.28
<i>Xu%</i>	0.15	0.09	0.00	0.37	41	0.15	0.13	0.56	0.40
<i>S - %</i>	0.12	0.28	0.00	1.00	44	0.00	0.00	0.24	4.74
<i>Isolate/R</i>	0.21	0.13	0.03	0.47	44	0.17	0.07	0.63	-0.69
<i>H</i>	3.14	1.65	0.00	7.00	43	3.00	3.00	0.78	0.37
<i>(H)</i>	1.02	0.95	0.00	3.00	28	1.00	1.00	0.46	-0.83
<i>Hd</i>	0.68	0.71	0.00	2.00	24	1.00	0.00	0.55	-0.81
<i>(Hd)</i>	0.18	0.39	0.00	1.00	8	0.00	0.00	1.71	0.96
<i>Hx</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
All <i>H</i> Cont	5.02	1.49	2.00	9.00	44	5.00	4.00	0.27	-0.29
<i>A</i>	7.73	2.27	4.00	12.00	11	8.00	6.00	0.44	-0.51
<i>(A)</i>	0.34	0.71	0.00	3.00	41	0.00	0.00	2.61	7.32
<i>Ad</i>	2.02	0.98	0.00	4.00	44	2.00	2.00	-0.21	-0.23
<i>(Ad)</i>	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00	2	0.00	0.00	4.52	19.31
<i>An</i>	0.61	0.75	0.00	3.00	21	0.00	0.00	1.13	0.99
<i>Art</i>	0.82	0.81	0.00	3.00	26	1.00	0.00	0.62	-0.41
<i>Ay</i>	0.30	0.46	0.00	1.00	13	0.00	0.00	0.93	-1.19
<i>Bl</i>	0.07	0.25	0.00	1.00	3	0.00	0.00	3.55	11.09
<i>Bt</i>	2.23	1.51	0.00	5.00	37	2.00	3.00	0.15	-0.79
<i>Cg</i>	0.95	0.75	0.00	3.00	32	1.00	1.00	0.43	0.02
<i>Cl</i>	0.25	0.58	0.00	2.00	8	0.00	0.00	2.25	4.05
<i>Ex</i>	0.14	0.35	0.00	1.00	6	0.00	0.00	2.20	2.95
<i>Fi</i>	0.43	0.73	0.00	2.00	13	0.00	0.00	1.38	0.40
Food	0.20	0.41	0.00	1.00	9	0.00	0.00	1.52	0.31
<i>Ge</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Hh</i>	0.80	0.76	0.00	3.00	28	1.00	1.00	1.02	1.47

(continued)

TABLE 2 (Continued)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
<i>Ls</i>	0.66	0.75	0.00	2.00	22	0.50	0.00	0.66	-0.88
<i>Na</i>	0.48	0.73	0.00	2.00	15	0.00	0.00	1.21	0.00
<i>Sc</i>	0.80	0.79	0.00	3.00	36	1.00	0.00	0.68	0.17
<i>Sx</i>	0.25	1.06	0.00	5.00	3	0.00	0.00	4.39	18.41
<i>Xy</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>DV</i>	0.61	0.75	0.00	3.00	21	0.00	0.00	1.13	0.99
<i>INCOM</i>	0.52	0.95	0.00	4.00	15	0.00	0.00	2.47	6.69
<i>DR</i>	0.23	0.48	0.00	2.00	9	0.00	0.00	2.00	3.48
<i>FABCOM</i>	0.16	0.37	0.00	1.00	7	0.00	0.00	1.93	1.81
<i>DV2</i>	0.02	0.15	0.00	1.00	1	0.00	0.00	6.63	44.00
<i>INC2</i>	0.02	0.15	0.00	1.00	1	0.00	0.00	9.00	44.00
<i>DR2</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>FAB2</i>	0.02	0.15	0.00	1.00	1	0.00	0.00	6.63	44.00
<i>ALOG</i>	0.02	0.15	0.00	1.00	1	0.00	0.00	6.63	44.00
<i>CONTAM</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Sum6 Sp Sc</i>	1.55	1.53	0.00	7.00	33	1.00	1.00	1.56	3.04
<i>Sum6 Sp Sc2</i>	0.07	0.25	0.00	1.00	3	0.00	0.00	3.55	11.09
<i>WSum6</i>	3.39	3.40	0.00	15.00	44	2.50	0.00	1.40	2.11
<i>AB</i>	0.11	0.32	0.00	1.00	5	0.00	0.00	2.52	4.56
<i>AG</i>	1.20	1.39	0.00	5.00	26	1.00	0.00	1.08	0.23
<i>CFB</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>COP</i>	1.11	1.28	0.00	5.00	25	1.00	0.00	1.10	0.71
<i>CP</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>MOR</i>	0.61	0.92	0.00	4.00	18	0.00	0.00	1.81	3.58
<i>PER</i>	1.11	1.17	5.00	5.00	30	1.00	0.00	1.71	3.96
<i>PSV</i>	0.02	0.15	0.00	1.00	1	0.00	0.00	6.63	44.00

TABLE 3  
Frequencies and Percentages for 35 Structural Variables for 44 African Americans

<i>Structural Variables</i>	<i>Frequencies</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>EB Style</b>		
Introversive	14	32
Pervasive	11	25
Ambitent	9	20
Extratensive	21	48
Pervasive	14	32
<b>Form Quality Deviations</b>		
$X + \% > .89$	1	2
$X + \% < .70$	7	16
$X + \% < .61$	4	9
$X + \% < .50$	0	0
$F + \% < .70$	21	48
$Xu\% > .20$	9	20
$X - \% > .15$	3	7
$X - \% > .20$	2	5
$X - \% > .30$	1	2
<b>D Score</b>		
$D$ Score $> 0$	4	9
$D$ Score = 0	33	75
$D$ Score $< 0$	7	16
$D$ Score $< -1$	6	14
<b>Adjusted D Score</b>		
$Adj D$ Score $> 0$	8	18
$Adj D$ Score = 0	29	66
$Adj D$ Score $< 0$	7	16
$Adj D$ Score $< -1$	5	11
<b>FC:CF + C Ratio</b>		
$FC > (CF + C) + 2$	19	43
$FC > (CF + C) + 1$	7	16
$(CF + C) > FC + 1$	1	2
$(CF + C) > FC + 2$	2	5
$Zd > +3.0$ (Overincorp)	8	18
$Zd < -3.0$ (Underincorp)	5	11
HVI Positive	0	0
OBS Positive	0	0
SCZI = 6	0	0
SCZI = 5	0	0
SCZI = 4	1	2
DEPI = 7	0	0
DEPI = 6	0	0
DEPI = 5	2	5
CDI = 5	0	0
CDI = 4	2	5

*(continued)*

TABLE 3 (Continued)

<i>Structural Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Lambda</i> > .99	5	11
<i>Dd</i> > 3	4	9
<i>DQv</i> + <i>DQv</i> / <i>+</i> > 2	11	25
<i>S</i> > 2	1	2
Sum <i>T</i> = 0	11	25
Sum <i>T</i> > 1	4	9
$3r + (2)/R < .33$	13	30
$3r + (2)/R > .44$	9	20
<i>Fr</i> + <i>rF</i> > 0	3	7
<i>PureC</i> > 0	5	11
<i>PureC</i> > 1	0	0
<i>Afr</i> < .40	1	2
<i>Afr</i> < .50	4	9
( <i>FM</i> + <i>m</i> ) < Sum Shad	4	9
( $2AB + Art + Ay$ ) > 5	0	0
Populars < 4	2	5
Populars > 7	10	23
<i>COP</i> = 0	19	43
<i>COP</i> > 2	7	16
<i>AG</i> = 0	18	41
<i>AG</i> > 2	9	20
<i>MOR</i> > 2	2	5
<i>Lvl</i> 2 Sp.Sc. > 0	3	7
<i>Sum</i> 6 Sp.Sc. > 6	1	2
<i>Pure H</i> < 2	5	11
<i>Pure H</i> = 0	1	36
$p > a + 1$	0	0
$M^p > M^a$	4	9

Twenty-three Rorschach variables were chosen a priori to examine statistical analysis of differences between the African American and White American groups by means of univariate ANOVA test. A comparison of means, standard deviations, *F* tests, effect sizes, and *p* values for the two groups are presented in Table 4. Effect sizes utilizing Cohen's *d* (Cohen, 1977) were calculated (pooled S.D. were used in the denominator) to help determine the clinical significance of these obtained results. Comparisons that reach both a statistical level of significance ( $p < .05$ ) and represent a medium effect size ( $\geq .5$ ) were reviewed for clinical significance.

An inspection of Table 4 reveals that there were three statistically significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) between groups involving *S* responses, the *SCZI*, and *COP*. Specifically, the African American group offered significantly higher frequencies of *S* responses,  $F(1, 87) = 4.88, p = .03$ , and higher scores on *SCZI*,  $F(1, 87) = 5.83, p = .02$  than White Americans. However, African Americans had significantly less *COP*,  $F(1, 87) = 8.85, p = .0004$  than White Americans. Effect sizes for these three variables were .47, .52, and .64, respectively.

Although no significant differences were found between the African Americans and White Americans on the remaining 21 Rorschach variables, trends toward significance were apparent for the *P*, Sum *C'*, *DEPI*, and *CDI* variables. African Americans produced a mean for *P* of 6.20 (*SD* = 1.64) and the White American group mean was 6.82 (*SD* = 1.48),  $F(1, 87) = 3.40, p = .07$ . On the Sum *C'* score, African Americans had a mean of 1.67 (*SD* = 1.21), whereas White Americans had a mean of 1.16 (*SD* = 1.10),  $F(1, 87) = 3.59, p = .06$ . African Americans produced a mean for *DEPI* of 2.75 (*SD* = 1.18) and the White American group mean was 2.25 (*SD* = 1.38),  $F(1, 87) = 3.32, p = .07$ . Similar results were found on the *CDI* score in which African Americans obtained a mean of 1.61 (*SD* = 1.13) and White Americans obtained a mean of 1.20 (*SD* = 1.05),  $F(1, 87) = 3.12, p = .08$ .

TABLE 4  
Comparison of Selected Rorschach Variables Between Matched African American and White American Groups

Rorschach Variable	African American <sup>a</sup>		White American <sup>a</sup>		<i>d</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
<i>R</i>	21.59	4.99	21.50	3.61	.02	0.01	.92
<i>L</i>	0.60	0.27	0.63	0.34	.10	0.22	.64
<i>F + %</i>	0.70	0.18	0.65	0.16	.29	1.90	.17
<i>X + %</i>	0.77	0.09	0.78	0.06	.13	0.10	.76
<i>Xu%</i>	0.15	0.09	0.15	0.05	.00	0.12	.74
<i>X - %</i>	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.04	.18	0.93	.34
<i>P</i>	6.20	1.64	6.82	1.48	.40	3.40	.07
<i>DV</i>	0.61	0.75	0.70	0.78	.12	0.69	.41
Sum <i>C'</i>	1.64	1.26	1.16	1.10	.41	3.59	.06
<i>EA</i>	7.99	2.06	7.93	2.39	.03	0.02	.91
<i>es</i>	8.48	3.59	8.07	2.71	.13	0.36	.55
<i>D</i> Score	-0.27	1.21	-0.14	1.00	.12	0.34	.57
<i>AdjD</i>	-0.09	1.05	0.07	0.90	.02	0.58	.45
Space	1.77	1.26	1.23	1.05	.47	4.88	.03
<i>AG</i>	1.20	1.39	1.25	1.16	.04	0.28	.87
Sum <i>T</i>	0.89	0.72	1.09	0.56	.31	2.20	.14
<i>COP</i>	1.11	1.28	1.98	1.44	.64	8.85	.004
<i>H</i>	3.14	1.65	3.02	1.50	.08	0.11	.74
<i>3r + (2)/R</i>	0.39	0.11	0.39	0.08	.00	0.07	.79
<i>S-Con</i>	2.55	1.85	1.98	1.77	.32	2.17	.15
<i>SCZI</i>	0.48	0.79	0.16	0.37	.52	5.83	.02
<i>DEPI</i>	2.75	1.18	2.25	1.38	.40	3.32	.07
<i>CDI</i>	1.61	1.13	1.20	1.05	.38	3.12	.08

Note. *N* = 88. *S-Con* = Suicide Constellation; *SCZI* = Schizophrenia Index; *DEPI* = Depression Index; *CDI* = Coping Deficit Index.

<sup>a</sup>*n* = 44.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal a striking similarity between the African American and White American samples on most of the Rorschach variables. Only 3 of the 23 variables examined reached statistical significance ( $p < .05$ ). That African Americans offered a significantly higher frequency of *S* seems to support the hypothesis that African Americans are more angry relative to their White American counterparts. However, although the difference between the two groups reached statistical significance, the obtained effect size of .47 is below the suggested cutoff of  $\geq .5$  (Cohen, 1977). Furthermore, it is questionable whether *S* means of 1.77 and 1.23 represent a clinically meaningful difference. A structural summary containing one *S* response would not be interpreted any differently than a structural summary containing two and is therefore clinically meaningless. Jacobson and Truax (1991) promoted the idea of clinical significance, suggesting that clinically meaningful differences will be dramatic and obvious from the data. This data did not meet that criteria. A significant difference was also obtained on the *SCZI* with an effect size of .52, suggesting this difference may also be clinically significant. However, the difference was  $< 1$  and the mean for each group was  $< 1$  (African American = .48, White American = .16), well below established clinical cutoff point of  $\geq 4$  necessary for this constellation to be interpretively relevant. Both of these points suggest that this difference has no clinical utility. Trends toward significance were also apparent for the *P*, *Sum C*, *DEPI*, and *CDI* variables. However, in each case these differences were also less than one and, for the constellations, each group was again well below the established clinical cutoff points (Exner, 1993).

The data concerning the frequency of *COP* responses is more compelling. The obtained effect size of .67 is well above the cutoff point of  $\geq .5$ , suggesting a clinically significant difference. The White American sample provided a mean of almost two *COP* responses compared with about one for the African American sample. Analysis of frequency data on the *COP* variable from each group further support the clinical significance of this difference. Compared to the African American frequencies for *COP* listed in Table 3, only 23% of White Americans had a *COP* of 0 and 45% had a *COP* of  $> 2$ . In contrast, 43% of the African Americans had *COP* of 0 and only 16% had a *COP* of  $> 2$ . This is an interpretively meaningful difference that appears to meet the criteria for clinical significance. For example, in a study (Exner, 1993) that reviewed follow-up data for 100 first admission inpatients, favorable progress was reported by 81% of the patients with two or more *COP* responses at discharge, whereas 66% of the patients who provided one *COP* reported favorable progress. The difference obtained between the White American and African American samples suggests that African Americans are less likely to perceive or anticipate positive interactions among others as routine events. Such a tendency may reflect the results of an anticipation of racial discrimination experienced by many African Americans (Clark et al., 1999; Grier & Cobbs, 1968; Jones, 1991). A heightened awareness of the potential for racial discrimination may have been evoked by the

testing dynamics that usually involved a White American clinician administering the Rorschach to an African American participant. Such a possibility is consistent with data concerning the lower frequency of responses often observed by African Americans that has been interpreted as a lack of disclosure due to racial mistrust (Frank, 1992). The lower frequency of *COP* responses may also reflect a general feeling shared by many African Americans that most members of our society are generally less likely to be sensitive to or responsive to their needs relative to others (Clark et al., 1999; Grier & Cobbs, 1968; Jones, 1991). Findings regarding the perceptual variables obtained by the African American group suggest that these feelings may be based on real experiences.

This study is remarkable for the similarities between the African American and White American samples on most Rorschach variables. One reason for this high level of similarity may be the matching of the groups on key demographic variables. The two samples were very similar on the gender, age, education, SES, and marital status variables, with race remaining the only known demographic variable separating the two groups. This equivalence between samples translates into a very similar pattern of Rorschach responses and provides evidence of the validity of the Rorschach CS in assessing African Americans. The results further suggest that significant differences obtained between the African American and White American samples in other Rorschach studies may have been due to the impact of moderator demographic variables that were well controlled for in our study. The variable of race alone does not appear to be a significant determinant of nonclinical personality functioning as measured by the Rorschach.

The need to consider cultural identity as a significant moderator variable has been strongly recommended (Dana, 1998; Ibrahim & Arredondo, 1986) and may represent a more relevant variable than race when considering the use of normative data with African Americans. The samples in this study were so similar on critical demographic variables that they may have shared many aspects of a common culture. The precision of the matching procedure may have come close to achieving a cultural equivalence (i.e., years of education and SES) between the two groups despite their racial difference. This sample of African Americans are very different culturally from previous samples of less educated, low-income African Americans isolated in an inner-city neighborhood with few economic or cultural resources.

African Americans are not a homogeneous group, despite the shared history of slavery and racism. Further research into race differences within the African American population will be of great value for clinicians in providing more culturally sensitive diagnosis, treatment, and forensic decision making. These within-race differences may be as valuable as between-race differences in understanding the impact of culture on mental health.

For example, Cross (1991, pp. 190–210) described the complex variability of cultural identity among African Americans. In his descriptive framework, African Americans demonstrated a range of perceptions regarding race, including those who viewed race as an unimportant aspect of their identity and experience

(“Preencounter”), those who view race as the most important aspect of their identity and experience (“Encounter–Immersion”), and those who view race as just one of many important aspects of their identity and experience (“Internalization”). Within each of these groups described in his framework, there is also wide variability, each with its potential adaptive strengths as well as potential liabilities, and each representing a different perspective or world view. Furthermore, this rich variability appears across the SES and education spectrum within the African American population. This variability does not negate the impact that the shared history of slavery and racism has on the perspective of African Americans, but it helps clarify the complexities inherent in trying to understand the nature of this impact.

Dana (1998) viewed the need to consider the cultural identity of clients before assessment as a moral imperative and our study does not diminish the need for such understanding before interpreting assessment data. With regards to race, our study demonstrates the clinical utility of the Rorschach CS with African Americans and attests to its value as a tool for increasing our understanding of the personality functioning of this group.

## REFERENCES

- Abel, T. M., Piotrowski, Z., & Stone, G. (1944). Responses of Negro and White morons to the Rorschach test. *American Journal of Mental Deficiency, 48*, 253–257.
- Ames, L. B., & August, J. (1966). Rorschach responses of Negro and White 5- to 10-year olds. *Journal of Genetic Psychology, 109*, 297–309
- Ankuta, G. Y., & Abeles, N. (1993). Client satisfaction, clinical significance, and meaningful change in psychotherapy. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 24*, 70–74.
- Armstead, C. A., Lawler, K. A., Gorden, G., Cross, J., & Gibbons, J. (1989). Relationship of racial stressors to blood pressure responses and anger expression in Black college students. *Health Psychology, 8*, 541–556.
- Baldwin, J. W., Jr. (1980). Racial differences on the Rorschach: A comparison of Black and White male Americans. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 41*(12), 4649.
- Banks, W. M. (1972). The differential effect of race and social class in helping. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 28*, 90–92.
- Brown, D. C. (1994). Subgroup norming: Legitimate testing practice or reverse discrimination? *American Psychologist, 49*, 927–928.
- Brown-Cheatham, M. (1993). The Rorschach mutuality of autonomy scale in the assessment of Black father-absent male children. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 61*, 524–530.
- Carkhuff, R. R., & Pierce, R. (1967). Differential effects of therapist race and social class upon patient depth of self-exploration in the initial clinical interview. *Journal of Consulting Psychology, 31*, 632–634.
- Clark, R., Anderson, N. B., Clark, V. R., & Williams, D. R. (1999). Racism as a stressor for African Americans: A biopsychosocial model. *American Psychologist, 54*, 805–816.
- Cohen, J. (1977). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). New York: Academic.
- Cross, W. E., Jr. (1991). *Shades of Black: Diversity in African American identity*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Dana, R. H. (1998). Cultural identity assessment of culturally diverse groups: 1997. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 70*, 1–16.



- Dillard, J. (1972). *Black English: Its history and usage in the U.S.* New York: Random.
- Exner, J. E., Jr. (1991). *The Rorschach: A comprehensive system: Vol. 2. Interpretation* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Exner, J. E., Jr. (1993). *The Rorschach: A comprehensive system: Vol. 1. Basic foundations* (3rd ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Frank, G. (1992). The response of African Americans to the Rorschach: A review of the research. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 59, 317–325.
- Gottfredson, L. S. (1994). The science and politics of race-norming. *American Psychologist*, 49, 955–963.
- Grier, W. H., & Cobbs, P. M. (1968). *Black rage*. New York: Basic.
- Haskins, J., & Butts, H. (1973). *The psychology of Black language*. New York: Barnes and Noble.
- Herrnstein, R. J., & Murray, C. (1994). *The bell curve*. New York: Free Press.
- Hollingshead, A. B., & Redlich, F. C. (1958). *Social class and mental illness*. New York: Wiley.
- Hunter, M. (1937). Responses of comparable White and Negro adults to the Rorschach test. *Journal of Psychology*, 3, 173–182.
- Ibrahim, F. A., & Arredondo, P. M. (1986). Ethical standards for cross-cultural counseling, counselor preparation, practice, assessment, and research. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 60, 349–352.
- Jacobson, N. S., & Truax, P. (1991). Clinical significance: A statistical approach to defining meaningful change in psychotherapy research. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 59, 12–19.
- Jenkins, A. H. (1995). *Psychology and African Americans*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Jones, J. M. (1991). The politics of personality: Being Black in America. In R. L. Jones (Ed.), *Black psychology* (pp. 305–318). Berkeley, CA: Cobb & Henry.
- Krall, V., Sachs, H., Lazar, B., Rayson, B., Growe, G., Novar, L., & O'Connell, L. (1983). Rorschach norms for inner city children. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 47, 155–157.
- Lindsey, M. L. (1998). Culturally competent assessment of African American clients. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 70, 43–53.
- Price, A. C. (1962). A Rorschach study of the development of personality structure in White and Negro children in a Southeastern community. *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 65(1) 3–52.
- Smitherman, G. (1977). *Talkin and testifyin: The language of Black America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Stainbrook, E., & Siegel, P. S. (1944). A comparative group Rorschach study of Southern Negro and White high school and college students. *Journal of Psychology*, 17, 107–115.
- Urist, J. (1977). The Rorschach test and the assessment of object-relations. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 41, 3–9.
- Weatherly, J. K., Corke, P. P., & McCary, J. L. (1964). A comparison of Rorschach responses between Negro and White college students. *Journal of Projective Techniques and Personality Assessment*, 28, 103–106.
- Wilson, A. N. (1978). *The developmental psychology of the Black child*. New York: Africana Research Publications.

Gordon Presley  
 141 79th Street  
 North Bergen, NJ 07047  
 E-mail: gpres19307@aol.com

Received August 18, 2000  
 Revised February 5, 2001

Copyright of Journal of Personality Assessment is the property of Lawrence Erlbaum Associates and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.