

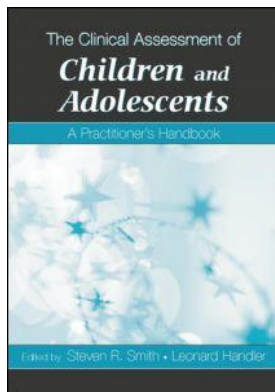
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RORSCHACH CONFIGURATIONS
OF CHILDREN WITH ADHD

Steve Tuber
Benjamin H. Harris
Kevin B. Meehan
Joseph S. Reynoso
Jasmine Ueng-McHale
City University of New York

This chapter presents both idiographic and nomothetic data describing patterns of responses from the Rorschach Inkblot Method (RIM) for a group of children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). We begin by briefly reviewing an object representational approach to children's Rorschach performance and then shift to a description of the nature and consequences of ADHD in young children. We then describe a recent study that examines the quality of Rorschach object representational paradigms in children with this disorder. We conclude with two case illustrations of children with ADHD that both amplify the nomothetic findings and suggest a possible prototype for how young children with ADHD may present on the Rorschach and why.

Psychodynamic theory and clinical practice over the past 50 years have emphasized the heuristic value of the study of the intrapsychic templates of interpersonal behavior, that is, the "object relations" of both adults and children. Within the realm of psychological testing, these relations have been examined via an assessment of the object representational paradigms expressed on projective tests, especially the RIM. In a number of studies with child populations, Tuber and his colleagues (Goddard & Tuber, 1989; Meyer & Tuber, 1989; Tuber, 1983, 1989, 1992; Tuber & Coates, 1989; Tuber, Frank, & Santostefano, 1989) found that the quality of human movement (M), animal movement (FM), and inanimate movement (m) responses on the Rorschach relate in significant ways to the quality of children's internal representations of self and others and their social functioning. Tuber (1983) found that children whose highest object relations responses, as measured by the Mutuality of Autonomy Scale (MOAS), were more adaptive and benign and were significantly more likely

to require no further psychiatric services after discharge from an inpatient residential treatment center, compared with peers who had less benign scores. Similarly, children with more malevolent Rorschach MOAS responses were more likely to require psychiatric rehospitalization over a 20-year follow-up period. Tuber and Coates (1989) reported that boys diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder had many more malevolent Rorschach responses than a control sample, and Goddard and Tuber (1989) found that boys with Separation Anxiety Disorder also had more disturbed object representational scores, compared with a control group, with a particular emphasis on clinging, and fewer autonomous responses. Tuber (1989) found that Rorschach object representational responses could be meaningfully linked to core relational conflicts in their psychotherapy, and Tuber et al. (1989) found that short-term changes in object representational paradigms could be linked to the trauma of impending hernia surgery in boys. Meyer and Tuber (1989) reported that very young children with imaginary companions had far more plentiful human movement responses than similarly aged children without such "companions" (see Tuber, 1992, for a more in-depth review of these studies). In more recent work, Tuber (2000) extended the use of this type of Rorschach assessment to the vicissitudes of child and adult psychoanalysis. That study depicted the manner in which child Rorschach object representational responses evidenced a striking continuity with intrapsychic themes in both the child and adult treatment of the same subject.

The present chapter extends this work to another common clinical syndrome in childhood, to children diagnosed with ADHD. Although the ADHD diagnosis has received widespread interest from both the scientific community and mainstream media, it remains a clinical picture that has not been thoroughly examined with the use of projective tests, guided by psychoanalytic thinking. A psychoanalytic perspective that assesses aspects of unconscious fantasy, conflict, and defense may be especially equipped to move beyond the behavioral/symptom-dominated outlook of the DSM, which does not sufficiently take into account the mental experience of the ADHD individual and does not give enough attention to the child's quality of relationships.

In a psychoanalytic context it is important to understand the severe social and interpersonal limitations of the ADHD child in light of his or her intrapsychic and affective experience difficulties (see Nixon, 2001, or Stormont, 2001, for a review). As Gilmore (2000, 2002) noted in her conceptualization of ADHD from an ego-psychological approach, with low affect and anxiety tolerance, children with ADHD can become so dysregulated by unexpected changes in their environment that they may appear either hyperexcitable and anxious, or strikingly lacking in anxiety. Children diagnosed with ADHD are often dysregulated by mutual social exchange, where there is a potential for surprise and loss of control, such as those situations experienced at school and with families. The child's reaction to overstimulation is often found to be confusing or frustrating to loved ones, and, as a result, such children may internalize experiences of significant others as frustrated, confused, and angry with them (Yeschin, 2000).

Children with ADHD symptomatology are often maladaptively sensitive to stimuli and have profound difficulty regulating their affect, arousal level, and behavioral inhibition. As such, it is expected that these ego impairments would be reflected in Rorschach variables sensitive to such vulnerabilities, namely movement and color variables, as well as ratios that depict the relationship between these variables. These include ratios that capture children's access to internal resources or ego strengths. Because children with ADHD evidence impairments in their capacity for delay and self-regulation, which impinge on their social fluency, it is also expected that that these children would respond with fewer representations of social

interactions through the use of human and animal movement (M, FM) as well as depictions of human (or human-like) figures in general [H, (H), Hd, (Hd)].

An assessment of the use of color on the Rorschach is also expected to relate to impairments in affect regulation seen in children with ADHD. Schachtel (1966/2001) argued four decades ago that an individual's responsiveness to the stimulation of the bold colors in the Rorschach is indicative of one's responsiveness to one's own internal affectivity. He hypothesized that a lack of responsiveness to color may reflect an aversion to strong, passionate affects. Because children with ADHD can become easily dysregulated by affective stimulation, it is expected that these children would tend to have one of two types of responses to color stimuli: 1) they may constrict their responses and avoid using color to form their percepts (e.g., few FC, CF, and C responses) or 2) they may include color in their responses, but swamped by the intensity of the color stimuli, they may fail to actively impose form on their percepts (e.g., CF and C dominating over FC responses). In terms of the first of these two strategies, children may seek to avoid the feeling state of being overstimulated by simplifying the stimulus demands of the blot and focusing excessively on form in order to organize their percepts, resulting in high Lambda scores. The second strategy toward affect regulation would acknowledge affective intensity, but flood and overwhelm the child.

In addition, a number of ratios that include movement and color may be relevant to assessing children's access to the internal resources or ego strengths central in ADHD impairments. Exner (1993) argues that the ability to represent human movement and color indicates an overall capacity to access internal resources, represented by a variable termed the Experience Actual (EA) score. The EA score represents the sum of the total number of human movement responses and a weighted sum of the chromatic color responses.

Exner also evaluates the capacity to access internal resources in relation to the individual's current stimulus demands, as represented by nonhuman movement determinants, shading and achromatic determinants (D score). The D score represents the EA score minus the sum of all nonhuman movement determinants, the shading and achromatic determinants. Stimulus demands are understood by Exner as externally or internally originating from and drawing on the emotional or mental activity of the person. Thus, as a measure of the difference between one's available resources and one's experienced demands, a person's D score can be thought of as indicative of capacities of control and stress tolerance. Because, as Barkley (1997) argues, children with ADHD have an impaired ability to draw on inner resources to delay gratification, inhibit behavior, and regulate emotional responses, it is expected that these children would be found to have lower scores on variables signifying resources and capacities of control and stress tolerance (EA, D score).

The small body of research on assessments of children with ADHD using the RIM (Bartell & Solanto, 1995) is consistent with these hypotheses. In one such study, Gordon and Oshman (1981) evaluated 40 boys (ages 6 to 11) and found that boys designated as hyperactive produced fewer M responses and Human Content (H) responses and more Animal Content (A) responses, compared with the nonhyperactive group. Similarly, in a sample of 24 children (ages 5 to 11) diagnosed with ADHD, Bartell and Solanto (1995) found that these children produced fewer M responses, poorer form quality ($X + \%$), and a lower EA score in comparison with Exner's (1993) norms for children of the same age. Cotugno (1995) compared the protocols of 120 children (ages 5 to 6) who comprised an ADHD group, a non-ADHD clinical control group, and a normal control group. He found that, compared with the normal control group, children in both the ADHD and clinical groups produced a higher frequency of pure form responses (Lambda), fewer color responses (FC+CF+C), more

shading responses, fewer popular responses, fewer depictions of whole humans (H), and overall fewer accurate responses ($X + \%$).

In a recent study (Reynoso et al., under review) we sought to assess ego impairments and access to internal resources in children with ADHD symptomatology, using the Rorschach. We predicted that children with ADHD would produce 1) fewer responses with human movement (M), 2) fewer representations of human figures [$H + Hd + (H) + (Hd)$], 3) fewer representations of color (FC+CF+C), 4) fewer form-dominated color responses compared with other color responses (greater CF+C: FC), 5) poorer form quality ($X + \%$), 6) a greater percentage of high Lambda responses, and 7) lower EA and D scores.

The participants for this study were 36 children (14 females and 22 males) between the ages of 7 and 10 years ($M = 99.63$ months; $SD = 10.52$ months). All children were referred to a National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) funded project at the City College of New York examining attention and language in community children (Gomes et al., 2001). Most children were referred for either behavioral or reading problems in school. All of the children were fluent English speakers enrolled in English-only classrooms, but 8 of the children came from bilingual households. Self-reported ethnicity/race was as follows: 21 African American children, 9 Latino children, 5 Caucasian children, and 1 child with no information provided. Children were excluded from the larger NIDCD study if they had a chronic medical, psychiatric, or neurological illness; were taking systemic medication; or were not attending school. Normal hearing and vision and a Performance IQ of 85 or better were all requirements for inclusion.

Children were categorized as ADHD with a "best estimate" procedure in which information from schoolteachers, parents, and tester was integrated (Schaughency & Rothlind, 1991). With the use of this procedure, 23 children were found to meet the criteria for ADHD and 13 children were found to meet criteria for the comparison group. Of the 23 ADHD children, 16 were boys, and 6 boys and 7 girls were in the comparison group. Interrater reliability for two coders was computed by kappa coefficients, with correlations of 0.90 for Location, 0.89 for Determinants, 0.70 for Form Quality, and 0.87 for Content, indicating solid interrater agreement. Scores of the more experienced rater (ST) were used in the data analysis when discrepancies between the raters occurred.

As we predicted, with regard to ratios reflecting children's access to internal resources, the ADHD group was found to have significantly lower EA scores than the comparison group ($F(1,34) = 5.895, p = .021$). There were trends in the ADHD group toward lower D scores ($F(1,34) = 3.643, p = .065$) and Adjusted D scores ($F(1,34) = 2.85, p = .10$), compared with the comparison group. With regard to movement variables, as predicted, the ADHD group was found to have significantly fewer M scores than the comparison group ($F(1,34) = 6.36, p = .017$). Similarly, as predicted, the ADHD group was found to have significantly fewer human content scores [$H + (H) + (Hd) + Hd$] ($F(1,34) = 5.369, p = .027$) than the comparison group. There were no significant differences between the groups on color responses. It is noteworthy that there were so few color responses overall that a comparison of form-dominated color responses with other color responses (CF+C: FC) was not possible. Finally, there were no significant differences between the groups in terms of accuracy ($X + \%$) or percentage of pure form responses (Lambda).

Thus the ADHD group had less access to overall resources (EA, D, Adj D) and specifically less access to human percepts (M and $H + (H) + (Hd) + Hd$). These findings were consistent with the notion that children with ADHD have difficulty accessing internal resources in the face of high stimulus demand in order to organize, process, and represent their experi-

ence. The fact that children with ADHD evidenced specifically less access to human percepts may reflect impairments in their capacity for delay and ideational resources, as Rappaport, Gill, and Schafer (1968) would suggest. It also may be the case that children with ADHD who are easily dysregulated by mutual social exchange may tend to shy away from percepts of an interpersonal nature. Last, less access to human percepts in children with ADHD may reflect impairments in their internal representations of self and others. Contrary to our predictions, the ADHD group did not differ on color variables, accuracy of percepts ($X+\%$), or percentage of pure form responses (Λ). However, these findings suggest that children with many ADHD symptoms perform in distinct ways on the Rorschach in comparison with children with other kinds of difficulties. Specifically, children struggling with many ADHD symptoms may be distinct in comparison with children with other learning or behavioral problems in that they probably have less access to internal ego resources and to human percepts in their fantasy lives, thus impairing their capacity for self-regulation.

Problems in the self-regulation of arousal and affect and deficits in executive functions disrupt the normal developmental progress that shifts sources of self-control from the external world of the child to the internal world (cf. Ruff & Rothbart, 1996). This problem complicates the internalization of experiences of coregulation with caregivers. It also leaves children with a diminished capacity to evaluate their own actions and undermines their ability to draw on inner resources to delay gratification, inhibit behavior, and regulate emotional responses, abilities that are crucial to engaging in mutual social interactions. These disruptions may result in a reciprocal cycle in which the child's dysregulation of arousal, attention, and affect; disruptions in the internalization of coregulatory experiences with caregivers; and impairments in internal resources inhibit healthy ego development and negatively affect a child's capacity to understand and represent object relations.

In terms of the nonsignificant comparison between groups on the frequency of color responses, it is also possible that the dynamic interplay between children's deficits in executive function and affect regulation as represented in color responses was not captured in the current data analyses. It may be, for example, that children who have problems with attention and impulsivity have a more complicated relationship with color stimuli that is not reflected in whether the child simply represents color or not, over the entire protocol. For children who are highly reactive to intense stimuli, it may be important to focus not only on the frequency of color scores overall, but also on the child's performance on chromatic cards relative to achromatic cards. Similarly, although it was not found that children with ADHD symptoms differed with the comparison group in the percentage of pure form responses (Λ), it may be the case that the degree to which the child relies on a strategy of simplifying the stimulus by focusing excessively on form is dependent upon the complexity and intensity of stimuli. In this conceptualization a child may have a bimodal way of coping with the world: one strategy of simplification and constriction, and a second strategy of acknowledgment of some vitality and affect, which is then overwhelming. Thus the quality of the child's response would be heavily influenced by the stimuli in the environment, as likely occurs for the child in different contexts.

To further illustrate the thinking behind our approach and to demonstrate a way to use both nomothetic and idiographic research to inform clinical practice, we now present the RIM protocols of two of our ADHD participants. These cases provide an important complement to the empirical analysis in that they vividly illustrate how dynamic and context-dependent a child's responses can be, as opposed to a static and narrow view of ADHD children as having little access to human representations and internal resources across all settings.

Case 1: Terri

Terri, an eight-year-old African American girl, was found to meet criteria for ADHD, Inattentive Type. We present Terri as an example of an ADHD child whose attentional difficulties significantly affected her ability to draw upon internal resources to organize her responses to the Rorschach blots. Accordingly, her protocol is marked by mostly pure form responses, which are of varying quality.

Behaviorally, Terri was remarkably distracted throughout the two days of testing. She had a Full Scale IQ of 85 on the WASI, although the examiner noted that because of her distractibility during the administration of the test, this score did not likely represent her full potential. During the administration of the Rorschach she would continually climb under the table to pick at lint and fuzz on the carpet, or hang off her chair to play with wires under the table. She did not spontaneously give responses to the Rorschach cards placed in front of her, but rather required a prompt almost every time. She also spun many of the cards on the table, sending them flying to the ground.

As can be seen in Table 25.1, Terri's record contains 14 responses, two fewer than a typical girl of her age (Ames, Metraux, Rodell, & Walker, 1974). When one compares her record with that of a typical child her age, it quickly becomes apparent that hers is impoverished. With the notable exception of shading, Terri used no other determinants on any of her responses. Although typical eight-year-olds do not tend to use a large number of determinants other than form, one can expect to see at least a minimal range of determinants in their responses.

In addition, subtle yet significant differences from a normative sample were noted in Terri's performance on the chromatic and achromatic cards. As can be seen in Table 25.2, on the five color cards, every one of her responses used only form, and all were of poor form quality. In contrast, on the five achromatic cards more than half of her responses were of good form quality. Furthermore, of the four responses using texture, the three responses that occurred on color cards were all of poor form quality. In contrast, the one texture response that occurred on an achromatic card was of good form quality. Thus it seems that

TABLE 25.1.
Entire Record for Terri

<i>Determinant</i>	<i>Terri</i>	<i>Typical 8-year-old</i>
R	14	15.9
M	0	1.3
FM	0	1.5
M	0	.4
FC+CF+C	0	1.7
FC'+CF'+C'	0	.9
Texture	4	.2
H+Hd+(H)+(Hd)	1	2.6
A+Ad+(A)+(Ad)	12	7.3
Lambda	2.5	1.37
X+%	29%	78%

Note: All Norms are derived from Ames et al. 1974.

TABLE 25.2.
Achromatic vs. Chromatic Cards for Terri

<i>Determinant</i>	<i>Achromatic cards</i>	<i>Chromatic cards</i>
R	6	8
M	0	0
FM	0	0
m	0	0
FC+CF+C	0	0
FC'+CF'+C'	0	0
Texture	1	3
H+Hd+(H)+(Hd)	1	0
A+Ad+(A)+(Ad)	4	8

Note: Achromatic cards are I, IV, V, VI, & VII; chromatic cards are II, III, VIII, IX & X.

although Terri has adequate ability to perceptually organize a response when presented with achromatic stimuli, she is unable to organize a good form level response in the face of color.

This difference suggests that despite the fact that Terri did not use color in her responses, the presence of the color nonetheless had a significant impact on her performance. It seems she expended so much “intrapsychic capital” attempting to be organized in the face of the color stimuli that she appeared like a much less integrated child in her responses. Indeed, Terri reacted to the cards with marked cognitive rigidity and inflexibility, in the manner of a child four or five years old (Leichtman, 1996). After expending a great deal of energy on the first few cards, Terri struggled to elaborate upon or explain her responses. A close examination of some of her responses will help to flesh out this dynamic.

Table 25.3 contains Terri’s Free Association and Inquiry. On Card I she gave the responses of a “cat,” an “elephant,” and a “ghost.” Thus she began with a well-formed object, a cat, but she was then drawn to the white space and provided a poor form quality response for which she could not account, an elephant. She then tried to organize the entire percept in a single response, but she was able to provide only a vague, global response of “the face, the face, the face,” which illustrates her less developmentally appropriate, uninterested responsiveness.

On Card II, she appeared to experience color shock, exclaiming, “Ugh! What’s that?” After struggling to organize her first two responses, “bat” and “snake,” she provided a shading response (a thought disordered furry fish), which seemed to suggest marked inner disruptiveness. It is important to note that even though color is not explicitly mentioned by her, and thus is not reflected in the scoring of this card, Terri appeared to have had a strong reaction to this stimulus.

When given Card VI, a card that often elicits shading responses, Terri initially asked whether she was finished, perhaps in recognition of the unpleasant affect the shading was stirring up in her. Nonetheless, she provided two responses, a “lion” and a “head,” although it is not clear from the Inquiry whether or not the head was part of the lion. She was clearly drawn to the shading, as she made reference to a “lion rug,” but then became angry with the examiner and yelled that the “fur” and the “fug rug” make it look like a fur coat. Although shading responses are relatively common on this card (she rejected Card IV, another common shading response card), this shading response provokes anger at the examiner, a disrupted move outside the frame of her test responses. Notably, she then rejected Card VII (another card

TABLE 25.3.
Terri's Rorschach Record

<p>I.</p> <p>1. A cat [Anything else?]</p> <p>2. An elephant [Anything else?]</p> <p>3. Mm, it look like a ghost [Anything else or is that it?] (No response)</p>	<p>1. [Where do you see a cat?] Right here (points to the middle) no; right here (points to right corner). These things, the, the ears. [What makes it look like a cat?] The ears. [Take your finger and show me where you see the cat.] (She taps the card on the ear.) [Only this part or the whole thing?] The whole thing.</p> <p>2. [Where do you see the elephant?] The face. [Can you use your finger and show me?] These, these. The white things. [What makes it look like an elephant?] The white things.</p> <p>3. [Where do you see the ghost?] The face. [What makes it look like a ghost?] The face, the face, the ears.</p>
<p>II.</p> <p>Ewe! What's that?</p> <p>4. (Rotates card 360 degrees) Oo, this looks like a cat. The other one was a bat. (She goes under the table. We have an exchange where I ask her to sit up in her seat. She picks at things on the rug. She gets up again, holding a Lego piece.) [Anything else?]</p> <p>5. A fish</p> <p>6. A bat [Is that it?]</p> <p>7. A snake</p>	<p>4. [Where do you see a cat?] Right here. [Can you use your finger and trace it for me?] (unclear what she's pointing to) [Is it the whole part or. . .] The whole part. [What makes it look like a cat?] (She doesn't answer) [What makes it look like a cat?] The whole face. (She's sitting with her face covered in her arms on the table.)</p> <p>5. [Where do you see a fish?] The bat eyes. [Where do you see the fish?] (She points to the bottom.) [Just this part?] And this, the fur (points to black section). [The fur of the fish?] (She agrees.)</p> <p>6. (She may not have responded to this inquiry or we got side-tracked. She had shown me the bat eyes earlier.)</p> <p>7. [Where do you see the snake?] Here in the middle (points to the white space). [What makes it look like a snake?] Because his face. [Where do you see the face?] Right here (points).</p>
<p>III.</p> <p>8. Tiger [Hm-hm. Is that it?] (Nods)</p>	<p>8. [Where do you see the tiger?] (Points) The whole thing, the face, and the eyes, and these are the gorillas. These are the monkeys.</p>
<p>IV.</p> <p>I don't know what's this. (Turns card around)</p> <p>9. It's a pig, a piggy, a piggy, I don't know what's that. I don't want to make a sentence about this one.</p>	

(continued)

TABLE 25.3. (Continued)

<p>V. 10. A bat. [Anything else?] (No response)</p>	<p>10. The wings. [What makes it look like?] (No response.) [Additional response:] A sword. [Where?] This part, the line.</p>
<p>VI. Are we done? Aw, I want to be done now. 11. A lion. [Anything else?] A head. [Is that part of the lion or a different thing?] (She doesn't respond and has gone under the table. She doesn't want to come out.)</p>	<p>11. [Where do you see the lion?] (points to top D) This top part, this part. [What makes it look like a lion?] Yes. And it looks like a lion coat, wait and a lion rug. [What makes it look like a lion coat or rug?] Because the, (rubs card), the fur. [Where do you see the head?] (Points to top D). [What makes it look like?] It looks like a fur coat. [What makes it look like a head?] I said a fur! A fur coat b/c it's furry and a rug b/c it has fur.</p>
<p>VII. I don't know what this one is! (Shrugs) What are you writing? (She puts her face down in her arms on the table.)</p>	<p>12. The mouth. [Where?] This, the re—no, this. [What makes it look like?] B/c it has spots. [Where are the spots?] Here. (points)</p>
<p>VIII. 12. A lion, no, not, not, not a lion. A, a, a, cheaper, cheetah (V).</p> <p>IX. 13. What is that? Oo, I know, this is a zebra. (sings zebra, zebra, zebra) [Anything else?] (No response)</p>	<p>13. It has stripes. [Where?] (She gestures vaguely toward the card.) Right here. [Can you touch the picture and show me?] I don't know where the eyes, right here. There's the eyes. [What makes it look like?] Because it has stripes and strips with whit stripes, too, and it got some hair on the back. [Where is the hair?] Right here (unclear where she's pointing). And it has a tail with some hair on the tail.</p>
<p>X. 14. What is that? There it, this way. (V) It's a gorilla.</p>	<p>14. This is the hair and it's black and it eats bananas. [What makes it look like a gorilla?] Because gorillas sometimes they get mad, and sometimes they get a mad face and they're black and they stink and they like bananas. (The examiner is wearing black.)</p>

that often elicits shading responses) and put her head down on the table. On the last four cards, she provided two more shading responses, both of which were of poor form level.

Clearly, Terri was both drawn to and overwhelmed by the shading of the cards. This conflict appears so central that it precluded her access to other determinants (i.e., movement or color), which are often reflective of the possible wealth of internal resources a child can bring

to bear on this test. It seems as if she was experiencing so much inner confusion that she could not help but be preoccupied by this tension. On achromatic cards she was successfully able to screen out inner dysphoria, whereas on the chromatic cards this strategy was less successful. Unfortunately, this left her with minimal access to other internal resources. In the absence of further investigation, including but not limited to psychotherapy, it is difficult to assess whether Terri has access to an untapped store of resources upon which to draw.

Case 2: Henry

Henry, a seven-year-old boy of Haitian descent, met criteria for ADHD, Combined type, and was found to have a Full Scale IQ of 94. At the time of the referral, Henry was exhibiting disruptive behavior at school that included kissing girls against their will and looking up their skirts. Henry's mother noted that his teacher described him as "very active and impulsive." His mother also described a pattern of disruptive behavior at home, unsolicitedly stating that Henry was "always on the go."

As can be seen in Table 25.4, with one notable exception, Henry's overall Rorschach record does not differ dramatically from that of a typical seven-year-old. He matches or approximates norms on most determinants, with the notable exception of inanimate movement (m).

However, upon closer inspection (see Table 25.5), Henry's Rorschach record also reveals a bimodal way of viewing and interacting with the world, which is particularly highlighted by the ways in which he dealt with color and blackness.

Five of Henry's total of 23 responses occurred on the five achromatic cards, all of which were whole responses. On the achromatic cards all of his responses used only pure form, but his form quality on these cards was quite good ($X + \%_{\text{black}} = 0.83$). He did not represent animate interaction in any way and rejected one of the cards (VII) altogether. In sum, on these five achromatic cards he provided a bland, deadened, and constricted record. Yet, on the five color cards, Henry responded like a different child. He gave 18 responses to the color cards, only two of which were whole responses. He provided very few pure form responses, and his form quality on these cards is significantly lower ($X + \%_{\text{color}} = 0.33$), compared with the achromatic cards.

Whereas Henry's responses to the achromatic cards were sparse, his responses to the color cards were quite full and alive. In fact, the total number of words he used on the first

TABLE 25.4.
Entire Record for Henry

<i>Determinant</i>	<i>Henry</i>	<i>Typical 7-year-old</i>
R	23	18.3
M	1	1.4
FM	2	2.0
m	8	0.8
H+Hd+(H)+(Hd)	1	2.6
A+Ad+(A)+(Ad)	7	7.6
FC+CF+C	4	2.9
FC'+CF'+C'	1	1.1
Texture	0	0.5

Note: All norms are derived from Ames et al. (1974).

TABLE 25.5.
Achromatic vs. Chromatic Cards for Henry

<i>Determinant</i>	<i>Achromatic Cards</i>	<i>Chromatic Cards</i>
R	5	18
M	1	0
FM	0	2
M	0	8
H+Hd+(H)+(Hd)	1	0
A+Ad+(A)+(Ad)	4	3
FC+CF+C	0	4
FC'+CF'+C'	0	1
Texture	0	0

Note: Achromatic cards are I, IV, V, VI, & VIII; Chromatic cards are II, III, VIII

all-color card with which he was presented (VIII) surpassed the total number of words he used on the previous four cards combined (Cards IV–VI; Card VII was rejected). His responses to the color cards contained an enormous amount of movement, especially inanimate movement (m), and CF responses. Although he provided six form-dominated responses, the remaining 12 responses were all of vague form level, a less developmentally advanced type of response, or, as Mayman (1970) writes, “(the) cheapest form level available.”

A disparity between achromatic and chromatic cards was also noted with regard to content. With one exception, the responses to achromatic cards contained very ordinary content: two bats and a butterfly. There is one response of “a human, inside” and one rejection, but those seem tame when compared with the content on the color cards: explosions, fire, volcanoes, lava, fiery chaos, speed, motion, and electricity.

Thus, Henry’s presentation was quite varied, depending upon the type of stimuli presented to him. It is only when one compares the chromatic and achromatic cards that the full picture of his Rorschach comes to light. Although Henry attempted to rely on a strategy of simplifying the stimulus by focusing excessively on form when presented with achromatic cards, the stimulation of the color cards seemed to be too great for him, leading to a “fiery chaos” of inanimate movement and vague forms. It should be noted that an assessment of children like Henry, without regard to this chromatic versus achromatic dichotomy, would lump all of his responses together, thus failing to depict his markedly different responses, depending on the degree of bold color he must wrestle with on the RIM.

Henry’s RIM protocol can be seen in Table 25.6.

On Card I, Henry began with the responses of “butterfly” and “bat,” each a pure form response. However, when the examiner presented him with Card II, with the first hints of color, he responded with “explosion” and “volcano lava.” When the examiner inquired about these responses, Henry provided a flood of color, unbound by form. Clearly Henry was overstimulated by this card, and he reacted to it accordingly. Unable to find the words to describe his reaction, he turned to action language (“Poom!”). His shift from an explosion to the slower moving “lava” seemed to be an attempt on his part to slow down the speed with which he was experiencing the percepts (although the inanimate movement was clearly still present) and to retreat somewhat by invoking distance. Whatever anxiety and/or affect had been stimulated by the color in this card seemed to be breaking through, just like the lava; his language deteriorated, his capacity to self-modulate nearly vanished, and he perseverated

TABLE 25.6.
Henry's Rorschach Record

<p>I.</p> <p>1. A butterfly. [Anything else?]</p> <p>2. A bat, that's all. [Anything else?] No</p>	<p>1. [What makes it look like a butterfly?] (points) This (a) and these things (b). [What makes those things look like a butterfly?] The eyes and the feelers. [Show the therapist feelers.] Not feelers, the decoration; these are the eyes, the little hands poking up, these are the decorations.</p> <p>2. [What makes it look like bat?] It has these for the wings, and these things (b) up there, and this (a). [What makes these things look like a bat?] I don't know what that is but it looks like a bat with those. [That (a)?] The feet.</p>
<p>II.</p> <p>3. Explosion.</p> <p>4. Volcano lava . . . I don't know any more.</p>	<p>3. [What makes it look like explosion?] (points to top and bottom D). [Explosion?] This happens, poom! (top D exploding) and this thing that's littler (bottom D) goes like that (motions lava coming out). This thing is from far distance you can see these, so from close distance it's big like that. [?] When this thing goes it's little from far distance (bottom D) but you can see this (top D) from close distance.</p> <p>4. [What makes it look like volcano lava?] (points to everything) [Volcano lava?] Because the volcano lava has this (bottom D and this thing breaks sometimes through that (top D) [?] This is the lava (the red under the black D) and this thing breaks (black D) and looks just like that (red coming out looks like top D), like you see its there and it's breaking on the side. [Breaking as if?] It has this (red) inside of it, and you can see its poking out, because you made it just like what I wanted. [?] Yeah, I know I was gonna see something like that.</p>
<p>III.</p> <p>5. That one looks like a bug, cause look it has a bow, a bow on it, and these are the eyes, the feelers, and these things are the back of it.</p>	<p>5. [What makes it look like bug?] The eyes, the mouth, the back of it, that leads to the . . . foot, the feelers. How many more do he and the therapist have to do? Do he and the therapist have to do all of these, how about one more?</p>
<p>IV.</p> <p>6. This one looks like a bat too, upside down.</p>	<p>6. Cause it has this . . . are the ears, the head, the little eyes, look the little eyes, the wing, and the legs upside down, and this is the bottom.</p>
<p>V.</p> <p>7. Bat again.</p>	<p>7. It looks like a bat because of the legs, the ears, and the wings, and this is the little hands. Why do so many look like a bat?</p>

(continued)

TABLE 25.6. (Continued)

<p>VI. 8. I don't know what that looks like . . . a human being, inside.</p>	<p>8. Cause of the hands, the head, and . . . I don't know, this, the hand, the feet. [Human being inside?] Just this (center D). [What about it makes it look inside?] I don't know.</p>
<p>VII. 9. I don't know what that is. [Take you time, it's hard sometimes but I think you'll see something.] I don't see nothing . . . (15 sec) I don't see nothing. [Nothing?] No.</p>	
<p>VIII. 10. A picture, cause of the colors, colors of a picture.</p>	<p>10. [What makes it look like picture?] The colors, and this little line, and that's it. [Lines?] These lines and the shape. [Show the therapist the shape] (points around perimeter) The shapes . . . this one looks like a cat, and this, I don't know what that looks like, but this looks like a spaceship lighting off the back of it going up, that's it. [Back of it going up?] Back of it, no, this is the spaceship, but the back has the fire, this is the fire. No, this whole thing is a spaceship, this is the front, this is the back, this is space animals, space cats, and this is the fire, this is the back of a thing, and this is the front. This is the missiles. [What makes it look like space cats?] No I just say space cats, they're not space cats, but I say it because I don't know what, I just put something there. [Going up?] The space things are climbing up the ship. [As if?] To . . . cause they're the enemies from the sky and he's gonna be brave and take out the missiles so they can shoot it. This is the missile. [What makes it look like fire?] That this goes down and this is smoke. [What makes it look like smoke?] This is the fire, this is the smoke going up, it's kinda grayish.</p>
<p>IX. 11. [Take you time, I know it's hard.] Dragonfly.</p>	<p>11. This is the speed that's pushing the air out. This is the fire that's behind it because he's going fast, cause he's going super fast, and this is the dragon in the middle, this is the wings. [Super fast as if?] It was a rocket. [What makes it look like fire?] Cause it's yellow, no orange. [Speed?] It's pushing the speed. [What makes it look like speed?] Cause you see how fast he's going? This is him, and this is where he's, the air is coming, this drops of water cause he's going fast and he's sweating, and this is the air cause, to show how fast he's going. [Sweating?] (points) [What makes it look like water?] It's little.</p>

(continued)

TABLE 25.6. (Continued)

<p>X.</p> <p>12. It's an electro-clip. [?] An electro-clip.</p>	<p>12. Cause it's got this (points to large D) and this is the clipper (top D). [What's an electro-clip?] You know when you put those electro-clips in the car (jumper cable clips)? Or if it's a toy one, you know Operation, the toy where you put the batteries in and then you pick up those little pieces? [Yes. Show the therapist again now.] This opens, and this you squeeze to go like this (imitates squeezing handles) and this whole thing is a clip, but leave this out (side D). This closes, this is the opening thing, and then this is the the thing that's like this (motions) and this has a line going across like that (center D) [?] So when it's apart, to keep it together, not to fall apart. And this things, this, looks like screws, and that's it. [Squeeze as if?] To, pretend this is what you are squeezing this, like if your taking a splinter out, that's sort of it.</p>
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from the explosion to the lava. The experience of seeing the color rendered him passive (Schachtel, 1966/2001) in that he was unable to actively impose good form on the percept.

On Card III, Henry recovered by successfully avoiding the color stimuli, resulting in responses that were bland and simple. This suggests that on the RIM, just as in his everyday life, there may be moments when he can avoid affective dysregulation by screening out stimuli that threaten to overwhelm him. With the absence of bold color on the following four cards, Henry provided relatively sparse responses to this sequence, registering only 109 words on these four cards, including a rejection of Card VII. Thus, judging from the responses on the five achromatic cards, we are left with little sense of Henry's potential resources. He does not appear to be able to access achromatic color, movement, or shading, leaving the impression that his world is quite deadened. There is no mention of human connection or affect.

On Card VIII, Henry again seemed to become derailed by the vivid color in the stimulus. He provided the vague, formless response of "a picture" and when asked about this, he again became overwhelmed by his associations. Although he initially attempted to employ the same strategy used on Card III, in which he avoided engaging color by providing a vague response (here, "a picture"), as the Inquiry progressed his associations became more idiosyncratic. A popular response, the "cats," deteriorated into a vague, achromatic color-dominated response, with "smoke" and "fire coming out of a spaceship." Furthermore, the benign cats became "spacecats" that "take out the missiles so they can shoot it." This response illustrates his internal process quite well; although he has the internal resources to form an accurate percept (the commonly seen cats), he nevertheless became overstimulated by the color stimulus and then projected his feelings of attack onto the cats, so that his benign percept then became malevolent.

On Card IX, he provided the response of "dragonfly," which upon Inquiry is understood to be a thought-disordered, contamination response of a dragon and a fly coexisting in the same space on the blot. However, Henry finally achieved some integration of his two modes of response on Card X, which he saw as an "electro-clip," such as a jumper cable that one uses to charge a stalled car battery. On the Inquiry, he provided a vivid reflection of

what he must do in the world to contain his affect and anxiety; he tries to screen out potentially overwhelming stimuli by clamping down his electro-clip "to keep it together, not to fall apart." This method of coping with overstimulation has been partially successful for Henry, but it also bespeaks the degree to which he must exert energy to hold this dysphoric stimulation and bodily discomfort at bay. Furthermore, this strategy of screening out potentially overwhelming stimuli pinches off his access to internal resources in general and to human percepts in particular. In this case, an analysis of the sequential and chromatic/achromatic response patterns better allows one to understand Henry's difficulties in the context of unconscious conflict and defense against uncomfortable affect than a simple tallying of response categories.

CONCLUSION

Over the past 25 years, we have used a Rorschach object representational approach to study children's inner experience. Our latest research has been to both nomothetically and idiographically study the Rorschach protocols of children with ADHD. We found a paucity in the production of fully human percepts and human movement and limited access to internal ego strengths important for self-regulation in children with a high number of ADHD symptoms, compared with children who had other learning or behavioral difficulties. Most prior research was content to link these Rorschach limitations to the impulsivity and restlessness of children with the DSM diagnosis, providing a Rorschach analogue to a behavioral description.

Future empirical Rorschach research would benefit from an examination of different patterns of self-regulation seen in these children's responses to the different types of stimuli presented in the RIM. It may be that careful analysis would reveal several strategies or patterns in the ways in which children struggling with ADHD attempt to manage the world around them. This would help to capture the variability we see in these children's functioning at school, home, and the consulting room. This approach to research would also help integrate the pockets of strengths and access to ego resources that these children do possess and identify the conditions that allow these strengths to emerge so beautifully. We might then move beyond our own limitations in empirical, bimodal functioning in which children are seen as either ADHD or normal, with or without associated deficits in total. To this end, the integration of empirical research and case material from Rorschach testing may provide a valuable avenue for understanding the dynamics underlying ADHD children's self-regulatory difficulties. These data may also help us to discern the ways in which these impairments affect these children's capacities to access and make use of their fantasies, to experience and contain affect, and to relate well to their peers and family members.

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