

This Week's Citation Classic

Holtzman W H, Thorpe J S, Swartz J D & Herron E W. *Inkblot perception and personality: Holtzman Inkblot Technique*.

Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1961. 417 p.

The Holtzman Inkblot Technique was developed and standardized on both normal and abnormal populations. This book describes the test construction and provides detailed information on reliability and validity for a wide variety of clinical and research applications. [The *Social Sciences Citation Index*® (SSCI™) indicates that this book has been cited over 200 times since 1966.]

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"As a young graduate student in psychology 33 years ago, I was fascinated by Hermann Rorschach's method of assessing personality and psychopathology by analysis of a person's response to inkblots. Although firmly established as a leading clinical instrument for psychodiagnosis, the Rorschach technique was badly in need of scientific evaluation. By 1954 I was convinced that a totally new approach employing modern methods of test construction, standardization, and validation was the only way to overcome the serious weaknesses inherent in the Rorschach.

"After experimenting with thousands of inkblots, the stimulus materials comprising the Holtzman Inkblot Technique were finally completed and reproduced. Each of the two parallel forms is comprised of 45 inkblots with two identical practice blots for the initial warm-up period. The subject gives only one response to each blot, indicating what he sees, where he

sees it, and what about the blot suggests that percept to him. A standardized scoring system of 22 variables dealing with the form, color, shading, content, and a variety of other dimensions was developed with a high degree of inter-scorer reliability.

"Initial standardization data were obtained from carefully defined samples of subjects in mental hospitals, schools for retarded children, colleges, elementary and secondary schools, and by door-to-door sampling of normal adults. Collecting, scoring, coding, and analyzing nearly 100,000 inkblot responses for almost 2,000 individual protocols proved to be a formidable task indeed. It would have been a hopeless task had it not been for the highly competent psychologists working with me on the research team, in particular, Joseph Thorpe, Jon Swartz, and Wayne Herron.

"The advent of highspeed computers made it possible to compute extensive statistics bearing upon reliability, validity, and normative tables for interpretation. Special computer programs were devised for diagnostic purposes; group methods of administration were developed to provide more cost-effective methods of personality assessment for many populations; and arrangements were made for final publication and distribution of the test materials by the Psychological Corporation.

"No other projective technique has been so rigorously developed and standardized, and this accounts for its frequent citation. The original book has been translated into several foreign languages^{1,2} and has gone through three subsequent printings. Additional books have been published more recently on the Holtzman Inkblot Technique and its applications.^{3,4} An annotated bibliography containing nearly 500 references is available upon request."⁵

1. Holtzman W H, Thorpe J S, Swartz J D & Herron E W. *Interpretación de manchas de tinta*. Mexico City: Editorial Trillas, 1971. 445 p.
2. Hartmann H A, von Rosenstiel L & Neumann P. *Lehrbuch der Holtzman-Inkblot Technik (HIT)* Bern, Switzerland: Verlag Hans Huber, 1977. 4 vols.
3. Holtzman W H, Diaz-Guerrero R & Swartz J D. *Personality development in two cultures*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1975. 427 p.
4. Hill E. *The Holtzman Inkblot Technique*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1972. 313 p.
5. Swartz J D, Witzke D M, Holtzman W H & Bishop C. *Holtzman Inkblot Technique annotated bibliography*. Austin, TX: Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, 1978. 213 p.