

Forensic Psychology



Summary

Forensic Psychology

- Eyewitness Testimony
- History of Forensic Psychology
- Psychological Testing

Forensic Psychiatry

Serial Offenders: Profiling

Sexual Offenders: Treatment vs. Prison

- § 30s through 70s thought treatment could solve this “psychological problem”.
- § During 80s, many “treated” released offenders continued to commit crimes
- § Many states switched focus to incarceration.

Psychology vs. Psychiatry

Psychology - The science that deals with mental processes and behavior.

Psychiatry - The branch of medicine that deals with the treatment of mental disorders.

Psychology vs. Psychiatry

§ Psychiatrist has medical degree (M.D.)

§ Before 1980s, psychologists testimony rarely used.

Forensic Psychologist

- § Can be a specific degree, which includes background in law and criminal behavior
- § Many forensic psychologists subspecialize.
- § Certified by American Board of Forensic Psychology.

Forensic vs. Clinical Psychology

Clinical psychologists accept patients
description of thoughts

In forensic psychology, accused patients
have reasons to lie:

- § proclaim innocence

- § psychological defense

Psychological Testing

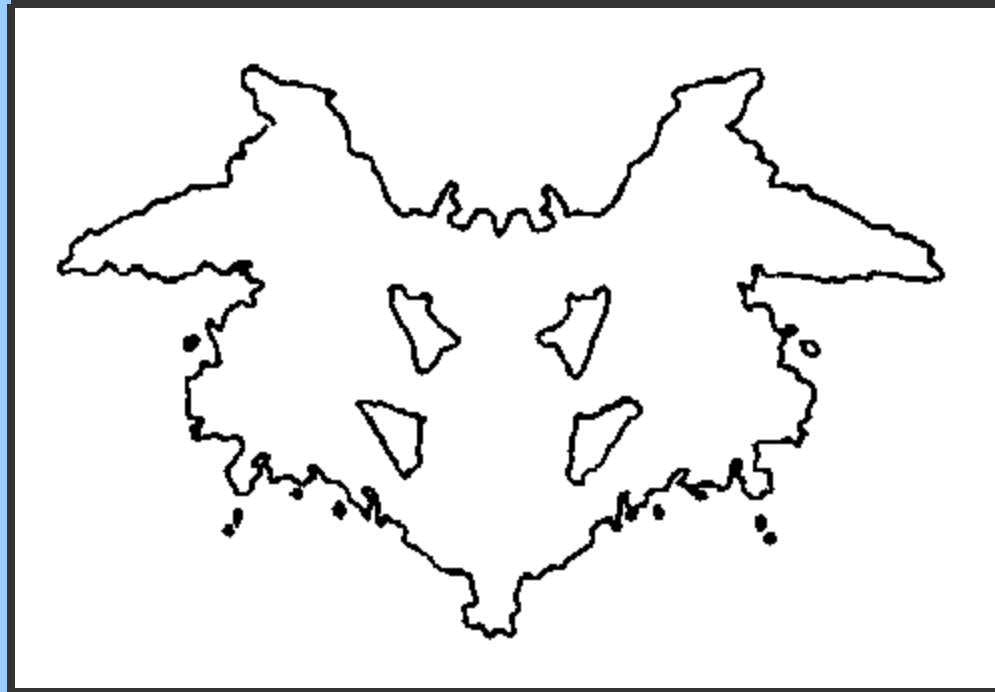
Attempt to remove subjectivity of clinical analysis

Criticism of tests:

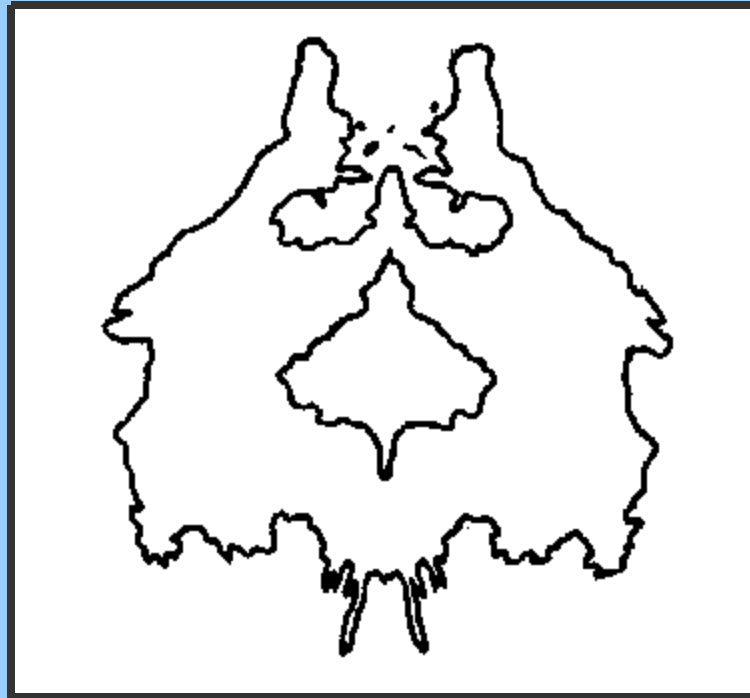
- § Don't address legal issues.
- § Might not be accurate for one person.
- § Cannot test psychological functioning at time of the crime.

Psychological Testing (Projective Tests)

§ Rorschach test (inkblot test)



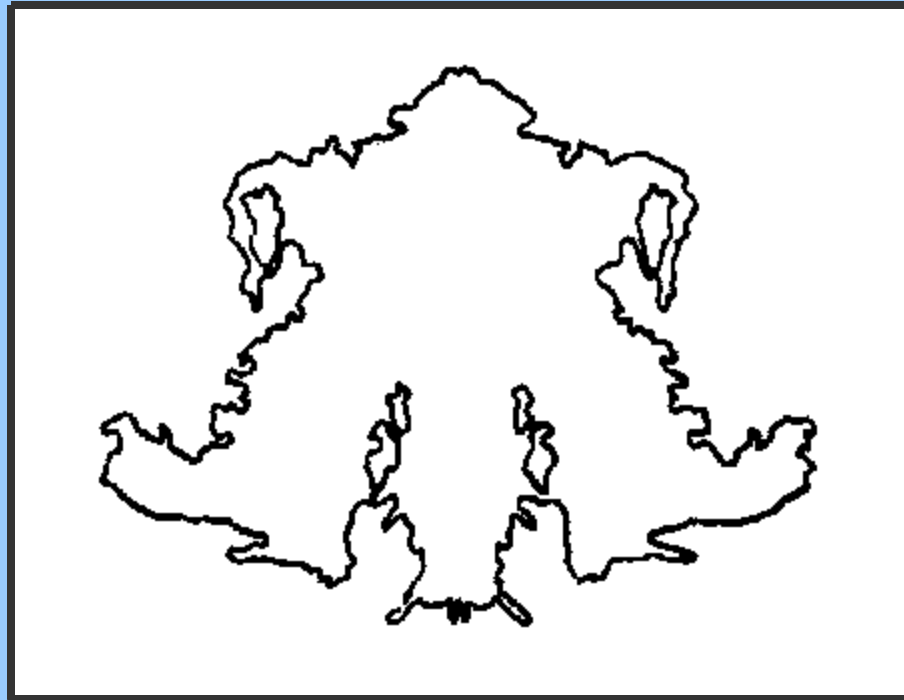
Rorschach test (inkblot test)



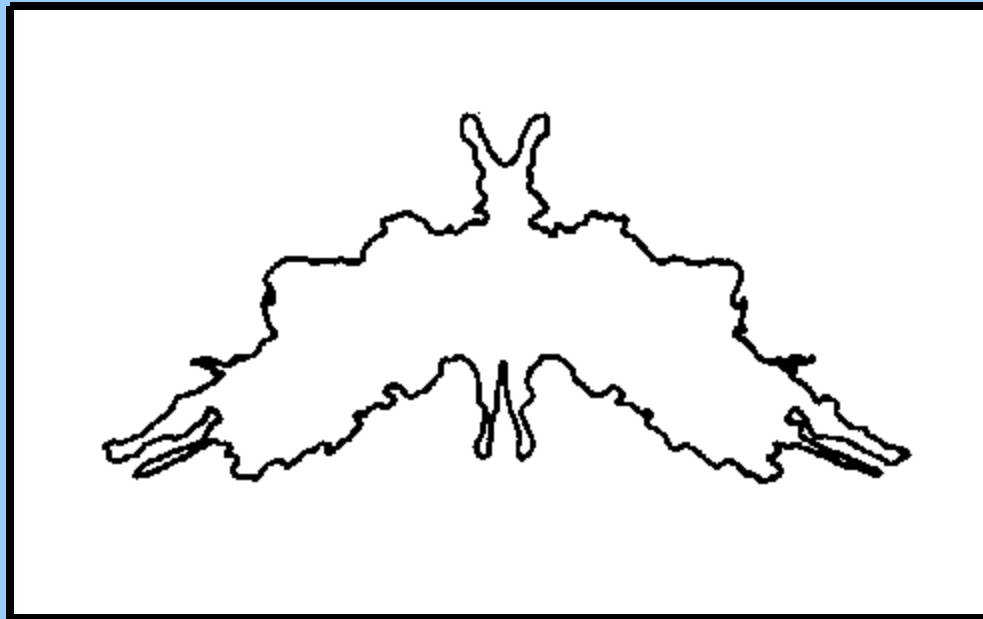
Rorschach test (inkblot test)



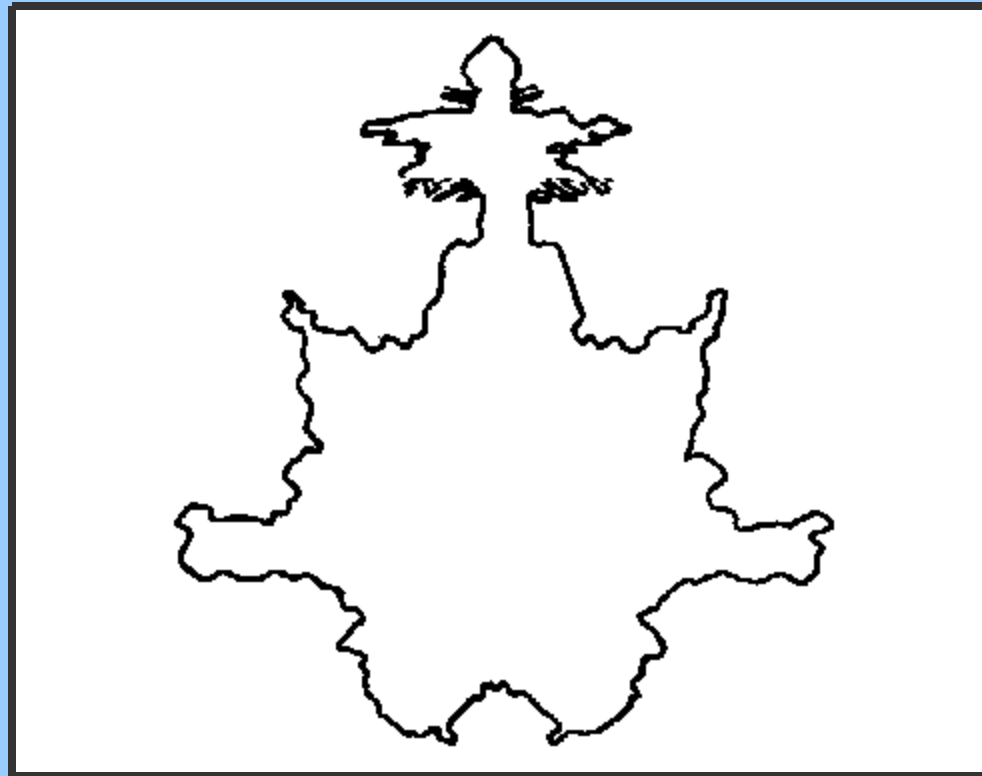
Rorschach test (inkblot test)



Rorschach test (inkblot test)



Rorschach test (inkblot test)



Rorschach test (inkblot test)

Psychological Testing (Projective Tests)

§ Rorschach test (inkblot test)

§ Thematic Application Test (TAT)

Picture is shown; subject makes up story

Forensic Psychology



Thematic Application Test (TAT)



Thematic Application Test (TAT)

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Thematic Application Test (TAT)

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Thematic Application Test (TAT)

Psychological Testing (Projective Tests)

§ Rorschach test (inkblot test)

§ Thematic Application Test (TAT)

Picture is shown; subject makes up story

§ Projective figure drawings

Psychological Testing (Other Tests)

Other personality tests assign a general personality or address a specific disorder.

Forensic Applications:

- § Competence to stand trial
- § Competence to waive Miranda rights
- § Legal insanity

Altered State of Consciousness

Narcoanalysis (sodium amytal = truth serum)

- Determined to lie; will lie under serum

Hypnosis is also not clear cut

Neither useful for recalling fact.



Eyewitness testimony

Psychological research on eyewitness testimony suggested it may be flawed.

One study in 1974 stated that eyewitness testimony is **faulty** 90% of the time.

Flaws with eyewitness testimony

§ Unreliability of human information-processing system (research)

§ Biased law enforcement procedures
Biased questioning, line-ups, mug shots, etc.

Courts reluctant to accept flaws of eyewitness testimony, until DNA proved of some false convictions.

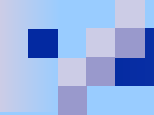
Related topics

§ Earwitness testimony also can be unreliable

§ False confessions: more common than previously thought

Forensic Psychology > Eyewitness Testimony





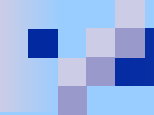
Forensic Psychology > Eyewitness Testimony

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Psychiatrists also assess:

- § Competency to stand trial
- § Legal insanity
- § Sentencing issues

Psychologists may also be involved with evaluating these issues.

Competency Assessment

- Examination only evaluates **present** competency.
- § Previous records required for evaluation of past and present.

Competency to Stand Trial

- Defendant must understand the charges.
- § Many states have a list of questions.
- § If incompetent, treated until competent.
- § After 1-2 years, may be deemed incompetent for foreseeable future.

Legal Insanity

McNaughten rule – England 1843

- Not guilty by insanity if the person did not know what he was doing was wrong



After Hinckley, some states adopted “guilty but mentally ill”.

Training in Forensic Psychiatry

- **25 accredited** programs in US
- **Certification** by American Psychiatric Association (APA)
- Involves taking a 1-yr. accredited program and passing examination
- Forensic and correctional psychiatry are separate fields

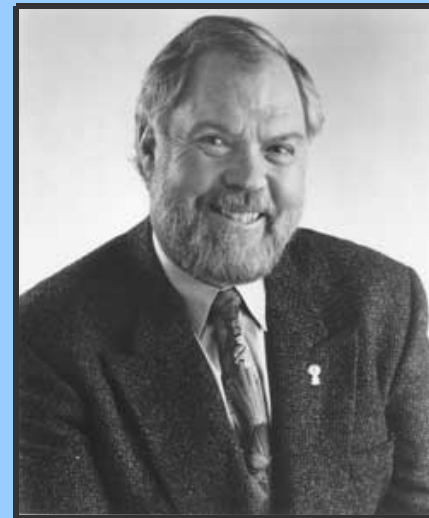
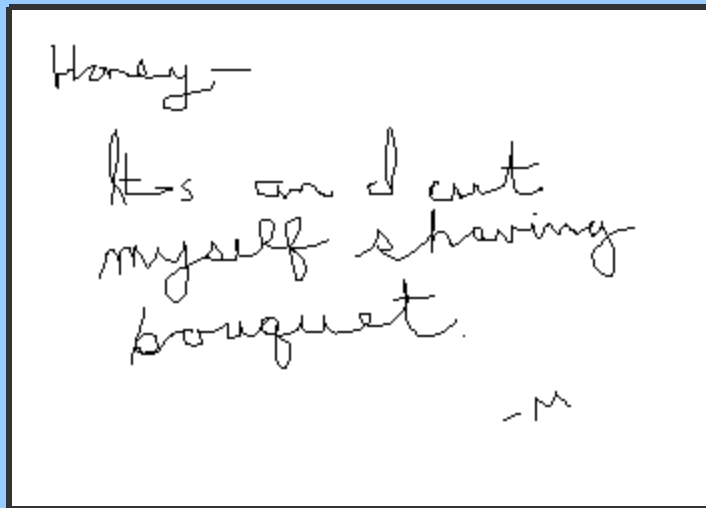
M.O. vs. Signature

Modus Operandi = criminal's way of operating

- Composed of many categories (Time of day, tools used, accomplices, etc.)
- Some aspects of MO **can** change over time
- Includes trademark or **signature**

Signature = an unusual act in connection with a crime.

M.O. vs. Signature (Example)



Dead housewives are turning up with a bouquet of flowers and letter left at scene

M.O. vs. Signature (Example)

- M.O. = murders usually done during the day, no forced entry, sharp tool used to cut throat, no weapon left behind, no property taken, flowers and card left behind

§ Signature: Flowers and card

Personality Profiling

Purpose

Supply characteristics to help narrow the field of suspects.

History

- § Began in FBI's Behavioral Science Unit (BSU)
- § Officers met to “brain-storm” difficult cases with psychologists at the FBI.
- § BSU interviews with convicted offenders.

Case Submissions

- FBI BSU
- National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime

Profiling

- § Identification of certain characteristics of an unknown offender based on the way he committed a crime.
- § Profile includes categories of description.

Profiling

Profiling is an **investigative tool** and not usually acceptable for courtroom presentation.