

- 34 Heckman JJ, Ichimura H, Todd P. Matching as an econometric evaluation estimator. *Rev Econ Stud* 1998; **65**: 261–94.
- 35 Normand SLT, Landrum MB, Guadagnoli E, Ayanian JZ, Ryan TJ, Cleary PD, et al. Validating recommendations for coronary angiography following acute myocardial infarction in the elderly: a matched analysis using propensity scores. *J Clin Epidemiol* 2001; **54**: 387–98.
- 36 Muthen LK, Muthen BO. *Mplus User's Guide (7th edn)*. Muthén & Muthén, 2012.
- 37 Lyons JS, Uziel-Miller ND, Reyes F, Sokol PT (2000) Strengths of children and adolescents in residential settings: prevalence and associations with psychopathology and discharge placement. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry* 2000; **39**: 176–81.
- 38 Tackett JL. Evaluating models of the personality–psychopathology relationship in children and adolescents. *Clin Psychol Rev* 2006; **26**: 584–99.
- 39 Meltzer H, Ford T, Goodman R, Vostanis P. The burden of caring for children with emotional or conduct disorders. *Int J Family Med* 2011; **2011**: 801203.
- 40 Podsakoff PM, MacKenzie SB, Lee JY, Podsakoff NP. Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *J Appl Psychol* 2003; **88**: 879–903.
- 41 Rudolph SM, Epstein MH. Empowering children and families through strength-based assessment. *Reclaiming Children Youth* 2000; **8**: 207–9.
- 42 Cox KF. Investigating the impact of strength-based assessment on youth with emotional or behavioral disorders. *J Child Fam Stud* 2006; **15**: 278–92.
- 43 Wolke D, Waylen A, Samara M, Steer C, Goodman R, Ford T, et al. Selective drop-out in longitudinal studies and non-biased prediction of behaviour disorders. *Br J Psychiatry* 2009; **195**: 249–56.
- 44 Epstein MH, Sharma JM. *Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale*. Pro-Ed, 1998.



## psychiatry in the movies

### Watchmen's Rorschach

Joseph Kane

Set in an alternate history, *Watchmen* tells the story of a group of retired crime fighters rendered redundant by a society in the midst of an ever-escalating Cold War. Adapted for the screen in 2009, it is arguably the most celebrated graphic novel of all time.

*Watchmen's* chief protagonist is Walter Kovacs, the son of a cold, abusive mother, who did little to shield young Walter from her life as a prostitute. Author Alan Moore interweaves fact and fiction as the 1964 murder of New Yorker Kitty Genovese prompts Kovacs, disgusted at the apathy of the 38 witnesses that reportedly failed to intervene in the crime, to adopt his alter ego, Rorschach. Named after German psychoanalyst Hermann Rorschach, *Watchmen's* antihero dons a distinctive mask that features moving, symmetrical patterns resembling the famous inkblot tests created by his namesake, reflecting his black and white view of a society that repulses him.

Consistent with the archetype of the masked vigilante, the character is reminiscent of, among others, Batman, Don Quixote, and Charles Bronson's portrayal of Paul Kersey in the *Death Wish* series of films. Scarred by his past and motivated by a tenacious dedication to his moral crusade, Rorschach exacts violent retribution on the criminals he perceives as animals: 'Men get arrested. Dogs get put down'.

When Edward 'The Comedian' Blake is murdered, the other members of the Watchmen, many of whom have abandoned their crime-fighting personas, dismiss Rorschach's hypothesis that a 'mask killer', hell-bent on assassinating former heroes, is at large. Viewed by his former colleagues as a loose cannon, paranoid and out of touch, Rorschach's characteristic implacable pursuit of the case uncovers disturbing evidence that an even greater conspiracy exists.

Rorschach's tense consultations with forensic psychiatrist Dr Malcolm Long, shortly after he is framed and imprisoned for the murder of a former criminal kingpin, give the reader their first glimpse of the man behind the mask. Long, although well-meaning and adamant that he can rehabilitate his patient, is greatly disturbed by Kovacs' justification for his actions and beliefs, eventually leading him to question his own principles and wreaking havoc on his private life.

The story climaxes in the Watchmen's confrontation of the mask killer while the USA and the USSR teeter on the brink of nuclear war. As both the reader and each of the main characters are confronted with a challenging, thought-provoking ultimatum, Rorschach maintains his unwavering philosophy to the very last: 'Never compromise. Not even in the face of Armageddon'.

The British Journal of Psychiatry (2015)  
206, 25. doi: 10.1192/bjp.bp.113.142125