

Part II.—Reviews.

Introduction to the Rorschach Method. By SAMUEL J. BECK, Ph.D.
Monograph No. 1 of the American Orthopsychiatric Association.

A monograph of this nature has been anticipated for a long time. Whether this expectation has been fulfilled will depend largely on the subjective, or psychometric, bias of the investigator. One of the major criticisms to be levelled at this work is that while describing the application of the Rorschach method as an art, the author labours to a large degree the objective validation of the test. The table of characteristic responses will be of great use. They are fuller and more diversified than those in Rorschach's text-book. This enumeration of responses in a different clinical category is the most useful part of the book, and, as it comprises most of the work, the monograph as a whole is to be considered as of value. I cannot but think, however, that the European standards of interpretation as to accuracy or otherwise of form perception would be quite different in many cases. One feels that objective validation is a collective ideal in about the same state as the League of Nations.

The author believes the *Sukzession* to be worthy of greater study than has previously been accorded it. I personally found it one of the most fallacious of the Rorschach dogmas.

There is one statement in the book which frankly amazes me. It is to the effect that European observers have accentuated too much the value of the *Erlebnistypus* factors. These seem to me to be the most valuable core of Rorschach's work. In my own efforts with this test I have found them to coincide most regularly with Rorschach's claims for them. The more intellectual factors accessible by the test, of which the *Sukzession* is one, have always seemed to me among the most fallible.

I think Dr. Beck's use of the term "art" in the application of the Rorschach test is most unfortunate. Not because one decries the use of art in any medical connection, believing as one does that medicine is an art applying science for its purposes. But while indicating the need for the investigator's skill, Dr. Beck in his thirst for an objective validation is converting him, so far as the Psychogramme is concerned, into the reader of a sort of ready reckoner. I do not think the Rorschach test lends itself to this degree of accuracy. It has, within its proper limits, no more enthusiastic supporter than myself, but I consider its main uses lie in the elucidation of broad outlines of personality and in differential diagnosis of personality types, in which operations I would rely mostly on the *Erlebnistypus* components which Dr. Beck decries. The reason for this difference of opinion lies, I think, in the divergence between conservative European orthopsychiatry and American psychometry, the virtues of each of which depend exclusively on domicile.

I cannot but think that a book less ambitious as to minute accuracy and more devoted to the clinical correlations of Rorschach's system, and the assessment of the claims for some of the newer types of response, might have been more useful—at any rate to Europeans.

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