

**The Thematic Apperception Test and the Children's Apperception Test in Clinical Use.** By LEOPOLD BELLAK. Second Edition. Grune & Stratton. 1971. Pp. xvi + 328. Price \$12.75.

This book was originally published in 1954, and is largely a descriptive manual of the technique within the framework of ego psychology. The changes in this edition are minimal, the preface providing the greatest interest. The author sees the threat from those who insisted on reliability and validity studies as now past; he thus obviously fails to grasp the essence of such necessities. Test-retest may not be appropriate for a dynamic technique where temporal changes are expected; between-scorer reliability is, however, easily estimated and should be highly stable. Validity does not have to be linked with psychiatric diagnosis; the tester is free to define his own aims and then, in a controlled fashion, see if the use of the tool aids progress towards them. The onus is not upon the disbeliever to disprove but rather on the devotee to establish the utility of the technique; seventeen years have produced no progress in that direction.

Few would fail to give heartfelt agreement to the author's opinion that the tools should be used only by those fully conversant with ego psychology; the bizarre conclusions sometimes reached by unskilled practitioners may raise the question of whose ego is being assessed.

ANTONIA WHITEHEAD.

**Handbuch der Kinderheilkunde, VIII/1, Neurologie, Psychologie-Psychiatrie (Textbook of Pediatrics, VIII/1, Neurology, Psychology-Psychiatry).** Ed. H. OPITZ, F. SCHMID. Springer-Verlag, Berlin. Heidelberg, New York. 1969. Pp. 1060. Price DM 385.

In the nineteenth-century, the Vienna Medical School led the world, and until 1930 German medicine was famous. Within the last few years the Germans have been trying steadily to fill the scientific vacuum created through the political happenings and their aftermath, and a number of superior books are appearing. This is one of them—well organized, well brought out, with first class illustrations and a good index. Neurology is well presented, and in psychiatry the authors are aware of the Anglo-American literature and achievements and take what might be regarded as a sound middle-of-the-way approach. An excellent textbook, as it should be.

MELITTA SCHMIDBERG.

#### MENTAL DEFICIENCY

**Infantile Autism.** By GERHARD BOSCH. (Translated by Derek and Inge Jordan.) Springer-Verlag. 1970. Pp. 158. Price DM 38.

**Psychological Experiments with Autistic Children.** By B. HERMELIN and N. O'CONNOR. Pergamon Press. 1970. Pp. 142. Price £3.00.

These two books make an interesting contrast; one solidly clinical, even a trifle old-fashioned, the other streamlined and modern. The authors of both books are well-acquainted with autistic children and make a useful contribution towards understanding their disabilities.

Professor Bosch is a product of the phenomenological school of German psychiatry. His book was first published in German in 1962. After presenting some very interesting case-histories (two of which, as he recognizes, are rather doubtful examples of Kanner's syndrome) he plunges straight into an existential analysis of the children's world. Bosch follows Minkowski's reasoning in deciding that the children are not autistic in Bleuler's sense. They do not turn away from reality to an inner world of fantasy; indeed, fantasy is the very last experience of which most of them are capable. On the other hand, they do not develop normal social interactive behaviour, and this impairment is manifest even during the first year of life. It therefore appears that the characteristic abnormalities which appear later, and particularly the striking speech disorder, are secondary to a disturbance 'of the system of social signals'. So far, so good, but the author does not develop the argument any further. In his 1969 Appendix, written for this edition, Bosch discusses some of the more recent literature, but he is unaware of the most relevant psychological, neurological and linguistic studies. Social signals are a form of language, just as speech and writing are. Autistic children are not simply impaired in their use and understanding of words. When the condition is at its most severe they are unable to use or comprehend *any* language, including the language of gestures and facial expressions; hence the abnormalities in the first year of life. The implications of modern linguistics for pathological language problems, and in particular the relationship between this central impairment and the multiple handicaps that children with Kanner's syndrome and related conditions show, are only just beginning to be explored (Wing, 1971), but already in 1962 Bosch had come quite close to the nub of the matter.

The author thinks that the treatment of childhood autism requires separation of the child from its home, and in other ways he reveals his unfamiliarity with