A Device for Measuring the Degree of Aesthetic Sensitivity

Norman C. Meier

State University of Iowa

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ing fork (about 300 d.v.), a rheostat connected in parallel so that the greater resistance introduced in the circuit the greater would be the intensity of the sound in the receiver, and a response key for the observer. The receiver and key for the observer was in a distant relatively sound proof room.

The characteristic reaction of the schizophrenic to the conditions of the tests is that his threshold rises during the reverie period; while that of the psychoneurotic lowers during reverie on both tests. On the visual test 14 of the 20 schizophrenics showed a raised threshold, and 18 of the 20 showed a raised threshold on the auditory test. 17 of the 20 psychoneurotics showed a lowered threshold during reverie on the visual test, and 19 of the 20 showed a lowered threshold on the auditory test.

The lowering of the threshold in the case of the psychoneurotics and raising in the case of the schizophrenics seems to be brought about by a change in mental set, attitude, or behavior pattern from the periods before and after to the reverie period due to the nature of the instructions given. In other words the changes in the threshold is a function of the particular individual's reactions to the instructions. Neurologically this particular type of opposed reactions is attributable to central changes and not to peripheral physiological changes in the receptor itself. Sherrington has shown that the phenomena of inhibition, summation, greater variability of threshold values, and interference are referable to central factors and not to peripheral structures.

It was concluded that a rather reliable means of differentiating between the psychoneurotic and schizophrenic types of individuals had been found.

STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA,
IOWA CITY, IOWA.

A DEVICE FOR MEASURING THE DEGREE OF AESTHETIC SENSITIVITY

NORMAN C. MEIER

(ABSTRACT)

Individuals differ greatly in their responses to art situations. The exact nature of this sensitivity is not known but the findings of this investigation indicate that it is more acquired than innate. The highest degree of response comes from those that combine early childhood experience of correct esthetic types with later
cognitive acquirements. The function itself is fundamental to artistic production and art criticism.

An instrument of measurement of artistic sensitivity must reduce this complex function to structural elements such as appear in all reputable works of art and are employed consciously or through background processes by all great artists. The device developed consists of some eighty comparison art works, being for the most part carefully constructed compositions of the writer's own hand, traced from the works of great artists and then altered to suit the purpose of differential response. The principle followed in modification was that esthetic rightness would be recognized by the sensitive and confused by the less sensitive.

The most abundant source of material was found in the Japanese color prints which are ideally suited to this purpose, representing as they do the tradition of centuries of experience in developing the principles of balance, harmony, rhythm, and emphasis. Themes from occidental art include Del Sarto, Titian, and Millet from the older masters and Monet, Brangwyn, and Pennell from the modern ranks. For presentation order a three part plan is followed: Simple themes, taken largely from Japanese subjects, constructed on a dual choice basis; Complex themes, made up mostly from the works of great masters, presented in dual choice manner; and finally, Complex themes in five variations. The device comprises in all one hundred and fifty drawings.

State University of Iowa,
Iowa City, Iowa.