
HISTORY OF SCIENCE
ИСТОРИЯ НАУКИ

The Usage of the Rorschach Test in the 20–30s in the USSR

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The present article addresses and structures the history of the application of the Rorschach test during the period of 1923 to 1936 in the Soviet Union. Hermann Rorschach visited the Russian Empire three times and was familiar with Russian psychoanalysts. His test was published in 1921 in Switzerland. By 1923 was published I.N. Dyakov's article with the description of the test. The Rorschach test was used with children with normal development, gifted children and those with various deviations in paedology, clinical psychology and psychiatry. It was used for studying the personality of a perpetrator and for examining individuals who had committed a crime. A.E. Petrova very well described the application of the test she used in studying a "primitive" psyche of children and adult perpetrators, and of patients with schizophrenia and epilepsy. L.S. Vygotsky valued highly A.E. Petrova's works and cited them in his lectures. The Rorschach test was also included in the series of tests for studying a perpetrator's personality, it was employed in the psychiatric examination to study the personality of the offender and the crime, it was also used in Serbsky State Scientific Institute for Social and Forensic Psychiatry. In 1936, after the publication of the resolution of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party on the paedological perversions in the system of the People's Commissariats for Education, the usage of the test discontinued.

Keywords: the history of psychology, psychodiagnosis, paedology, the history of juristic psychology, the Rorschach test.

For citation: Nikonova E.Yu., Rupchev G.E. The Use of the Rorschach Test in the 20-30s in the USSR. *Kul'turno-istoricheskaya psikhologiya = Cultural-Historical Psychology*, 2024. Vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 119–127. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17759/chp.2024200115>

Из истории использования теста Роршаха в 20—30-е годы в СССР

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В статье рассматривается и структурируется история применения теста Роршаха с 1923 по 1936 г. в Советском Союзе. Герман Роршах три раза посетил Российскую империю и был знаком с русскими психоаналитиками, его тест был издан в 1921 г. в Швейцарии и уже в 1923 г. появляется первая статья И.Н. Дьякова с описанием теста. Тест Роршаха применялся в педологии у детей с нормальным развитием, одаренных и с различными отклонениями, в клинической психологии и психиатрии, а также в рамках изучения личности преступника и экспертизе лиц, совершивших правонарушение. Наибольшее количество публикаций с использованием теста можно найти у А.Е. Петровой, которая использовала его при изучении «примитивной» психики у детей и взрослых преступников, а также у больных шизофренией и эпилепсией. Работы А.Е. Петровой высоко оценивались Л.С. Выготским и цитировались в его лекциях. Также тест Роршаха входил в батарею методик для исследования личности преступника и использовался в психиатрической экспертизе в кабинете изучения личности преступника и преступления и в научно-исследовательском институте судебной психиатрии имени В.П. Сербского. В 1936 г. после издания постановления ЦК ВКП(б) о педологических извращениях в системе Наркомпросов использование теста прекращается.

Ключевые слова: история психологии, психодиагностика, педология, история юридической психологии, тест Роршаха.

Для цитаты: Никонова Е.Ю., Рупчев Г.Е. Из истории использования теста Роршаха в 20—30-е годы в СССР // Культурно-историческая психология. 2024. Том 20. № 1. С. 119—127. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17759/chr.2024200115>

Introduction

The first scientific papers about the usage of the Rorschach test in the USSR are believed to date back to the 1960s and 70s and are associated with the works of M.Z. Dukarevich, B.G. Kravtsov, I.I. Belaya, B.I. Bely, Yu.S. Savenko, N.N. Stanishevskaya, I.G. Bespalko, L.F. Burlachuk, V.M. Bleikher and others. However, some publications find brief mentions of the usage of the test in the 1920s [3].

The present study has systematized the information about the usage of the test in the early years of the Soviet psychology. The Rorschach test was used in the USSR already in 1923, although it was published in Switzerland only two years earlier. The test was used in the paedological work, forensic examination, clinical psychology and in the study of the “primitive” psyche.

Unfortunately, a number of articles and books published or stated as manuscripts in the 1920s have not reached our days. Some of them were prohibited and destroyed due to the change in the attitude towards the

issue and the author. We don't have a complete picture of the usage of the Rorschach test. Yet, we can see the aspects, in which the test was used, and outline the range of tasks for its application.

Investigations based on the Rorschach test were tragically interrupted in the Soviet Union after 1936 due to the prohibition of paedology, and most of them were forgotten, and their authors, as well.

Proceedings on the usage of the Rorschach test in the 1920s have been collected in the stocks of the Russian State Library, the Russian National Library, Yeltsin Presidential Library and the State Archive of the Russian Federation.

Hermann Rorschach and Russia

Hermann Rorschach (1884—1922) begins showing interest in the Russian literature and culture since his student years. Then he communicates with political emigrants from the Russian Empire, studies the Russian lan-

guage and reads F.M. Dostoevsky and L.N. Tolstoy [19]. In 1906 H. Rorschach makes a short trip to the Russian Empire. He gets much more acquainted with the Russian culture and literature, and also begins studying the papers of Russian psychiatrists.

In 1910, H. Rorschach marries Olga Shtempelin (1878–1961), who studied with him at the University. A few months before the wedding, in 1909, H. Rorschach goes to Kazan for two months to meet the bride's family. During his stay in the Russian Empire, H. Rorschach practices as a doctor, visits not only Kazan but Chelyabinsk, Ufa and Kurgan. During the second trip, H. Rorschach meets N.A. Vyubov (1869–1920) and Yu.V. Kanabikh (1872–1939) who were into psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, just like him [25].

During 1912–1913, H. Rorschach translated and published a series of articles from the journal "Psychotherapy Review of the Issues of Mental Treatment and Applied Psychology" in the journal "Internationale Zeitschrift für ztliche Psychoanalyse". Those articles were written by Russian psychiatrists and psychoanalysts.

Owing to his contacts with Russian psychoanalysts, H. Rorschach comes to Russia for the third time in December 1913, and gets a job as a psychotherapist at the Kryukovo sanatorium near Moscow. The sanatorium was specializing in the treatment of different borderline states and neuroses and was mainly intended for the representatives of the nobility and artists [25]. Rorschach takes an active part in meetings of psychiatric societies and in the scientific conferences. In 1914, he is the only foreign member of the editorial board of the journal "Issues of Psychiatry and Neurology named after S.S. Korsakov". He posts an article in it about the development of psychiatry in Switzerland. In the summer of 1914, H. Rorschach finishes his work in Kryukovo and returns to Switzerland. However, his connection with Russian psychoanalysts does not end. One must not exclude that after the publication of the book "Psychodiagnostik: Methodik und Ergebnisse eines wahrnehmungsdiagnostischen Experiments" in 1921, several copies of that book with tables were sent to Russian colleagues.

The first translation of "Psychodiagnosis" by I.N. Dyakov

After the revolution of 1917, a sharp transition from the study of philosophical problems and subjective reactions to a more applied direction occurred in the Soviet Union. Its main purpose was the education of the new Soviet man. New applied fields of paedology and psychotechniques emerged and developed rapidly [24]. Paedology was the science about the development of the child and the possibilities of influencing him. Paedology was the interdisciplinary field which psychologists, educators, psychiatrists, neurologists, anthropologists, sociologists, physiologists and pedologists were engaged in. The psychotechnique (from Ger. psychotechnik) was a set of tools and methods aimed at applying psychology to solving practical questions in labour psychology,

professional selection, to ensuring comfortable working conditions, psychohygiene and psychology of influence.

With the rise of paedology in the early 1920s, scientists consider and apply all the available Soviet and foreign test methods to study personality and its cognitive functions which could be useful in paedology and psychotechniques. In 1923, psychologist I.N. Dyakov (1891–1937) published an article "Psychodiagnosis" in the second issue of "Paedological Journal". The article gave a brief description of H. Rorschach's methodology, features of its coding and interpretation, and addresses its applied aspects and possibilities of usage in working with children [12].

Ivan Dyakov was a student of G.I. Chelpanov. In 1915, he graduated from the philosophical department of the Faculty of History and Philology of the Moscow University. He remained at the university to prepare for the professorship, which he was awarded in 1919. In the same year, Dyakov became a teacher and then a professor at the Don Pedagogical Institute. In the same year, he returned to Moscow and became a senior researcher at the Institute of Scientific Philosophy of the First Moscow State University, the head of Pedagogical Courses at the Main Directorate of Vocational Education, and a senior research fellow and a full member of the Central Pedological Institute (1921–1923) [22].

The "psychodiagnosis" of H. Rorschach and his method attracted I.N. Dyakov, and he made a report "The method of psychodiagnosis into paedology" at the paedological section of the Second All-Russian Psychoneurological Congress in 1924 [21]. Most probably, Dyakov's studies based on the Rorschach test were intended for the book "The Tests of the Paedological Department of the Institute of School Methods" which was written together with N.A. Buchholz and A.M. Shubert in 1926 [22]. However, the book was either not published, or has not survived to our time. The scientific interests of I.N. Dyakov began changing after 1925, and he was more engaged in psychotechniques. In August, 1937, I.N. Dyakov was arrested on charges of participating in a counterrevolutionary terrorist Cossack organisation and preparing terrorist attacks against the leaders of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) and the Soviet government. A month later, he was sentenced to death.

The study of different types of personality by A.E. Petrova

The greatest number of extant proceedings including the Rorschach test in studying types of personality could be found in the works of scientist Anna Petrova (1880–1972(?)) who studied at the Imperial Moscow University and passed the examinations for Master's degree at the same time as I.N. Dyakov. In the 1920s, A.E. Petrova used the Rorschach test on different groups and gave a detailed translation of the instruction for applying the test in her monograph [16].

Anna E. Petrova was born in Moscow on 20th March, 1880, in the family of an official, received a home education. During 1903–1904, she studied at the Sorbonne

University, where she became interested in psychology, visited the lectures by P. Janet and A. Binet. In 1904, she worked in Zurich under the guidance of G. Stoerring and developed her interest in the field of the experimental psychology and psychopathology. In 1906, she entered the Imperial Moscow University as a third-party student at the philosophical department of the Faculty of History and Philology. In 1912, she graduated and remained at the university to prepare for the master's degree. In 1919, she passed all the examinations and began teaching as an associate professor until the faculty was disbanded in 1922 [9, pp. 1–15].

In 1921, in parallel with teaching, A.E. Petrova started engaging in the scientific work and became a research psychologist at the State Scientific Institute of Children's Healthcare of the People's Commissariat of Health of the USSR. As a research psychologist, she participated in the study of the personality of the criminal and the crime. She also worked as a psychologist in the psychiatric clinic of the 1st Moscow State University.

As a research psychologist, A.E. Petrova was interested in studying the personality of an individual and the typologisation of personality. She used different methods tasks from the collection of A.N. Bernstein, the atlas by F.E. Rybakov, the method of free associations, the techniques of A. Binet, the H. Ebbinghaus test, and the Rorschach test since 1923. A.E. Petrova attributed the Rorschach test to the methods which were primarily aimed at the study of fantasy, because she believed that psychodiagnosis of one's personality by one minimal mental trait (perception) is impossible [16].

A.E. Petrova applied the typology of E. Kraepelin (1856–1926) and the theory of primitive mentality of L. Levi-Bruhl (1857–1939), describing cases of "primitives" on the basis of the patterns of the test performance and features of the constitution. She worked with street children (including juvenile delinquents), different groups of prisoners and patients from the clinic (mainly with schizophrenia and epilepsy). She was collecting the research data from 1921 to 1926 and published a number of articles and a monograph "The Elementary Method of the Psychological Examination: for Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Criminologists and Educator" [16].

The application of the Rorschach test in the study of children-primitives

During the first years after the revolution, civil war and famine in the Soviet Union, many children lost their parents and moved from rural areas to cities to survive, arose the problem of child homelessness. Getting into the city, children found themselves on the streets, often fell into criminal communities, engaged in thieving and robbing, begging and prostitution, and took part in gambling and the sale of drugs [11]. Under those conditions, paedology set itself the purpose of helping street children, namely, providing medical and psychological aid, education and re-socialisation [5]. Beginning from 1922, the systems of institutions for the re-education of children was under development: juvenile reception

centers, medical observation centers, detention centers, orphanages and labour communes. That system also included the Moscow Psychoneurological and Paedological Sanatorium School.

A.E. Petrova's work "Children-Primitives" describes a longitudinal study she made from 1921 to 1925, the children are under observation were periodically tested, educated and treated at the Sanatorium School.

A.E. Petrova divides her individuals into two types according to the level of their cultural development: "a primitive" and "a non-primitive" (the child brought up in a rich cultural environment, and receiving education). "A primitive" means a normal psyche but not developed to the limits of the capabilities – that psyche is the basis for the development within the cultural and individual experience, while an abnormal psyche can under no circumstances follow that development path [14]. The child with a primitive psyche lags in the development of intelligence from the peer, has a less disease insight, a more practical thinking, a poorly developed abstract thinking, a poor imagination, a poor vocabulary, a poor knowledge of the surrounding world and an increased ego-centrism as well as the line between the real and the magical in his perception can also be blurred. It is important to learn to differentiate the psyche of the primitive from the psyche of the child with developmental delays and mental disorders in order to specify a further correctional and pedagogical work and to ensure the work of the sanatorium school.

The first described research using the Rorschach test was fulfilled with a primitive-child with an artistically gifted psyche [16]. The study showed a positive impact of the children's stay in the sanatorium school on the development of their mental functions (in the tests with ink spots, increased the number of images) and the overall development. In addition, children showed the fragility of mental functions and their rapid regression in case of falling back into an unfavourable environment.

Mentions of the Rorschach test in L.S. Vygotsky's works

The researchers of L.S. Vygotsky's works indicated that A.E. Petrova's work about children-primitives was repeatedly cited by L.S. Vygotsky and was called by him "an excellent study" [6]. L.S. Vygotsky in his article "The Problem of the Mental Retardation of the Child (the Experience of Constructing a Working Hypothesis)" of the collection "The Mentally Retarded Child", published in 1935, referred to A.E. Petrova's work and wrote about the Rorschach test: "The study of the fantasy of those children, based on the Rorschach test, entirely confirms the poverty of fantasy in the feeble-minded children" [7, p. 18].

In 1960, the unpublished works of L.S. Vygotsky "The Development of Higher Mental Functions" came out. In the section "Lectures on Psychology", L.S. Vygotsky described the experimental work of H. Rorschach in his lecture "Perception and its development in the childhood":

“It is known that Rorschach created a systematic series of such meaningless colourful symmetrical figures that he offered to his actors, and, as you know, Rorschach’s experiments showed that only in the state of dementia, particularly, in the state of epilepsy, the spot could be perceived completely meaninglessly.

It is those cases when we hear actors say that this is just a spot. In the normal state, we see either a lamp, or a lake, or a cloud, etc. Our comprehension changes but the tendency to seeing a spot meaningfully is always present with us. That tendency to comprehending any perception is experimentally used by Buehler as a means to analyse the meaningfulness of our developed perception” [8, pp. 248].

The investigations of criminals-primitives based on the Rorschach test

Another important stage in the research of the typology was the study of the primitive psyche in adults. A.E. Petrova considered the cases of criminals as the actors who underwent the psychological examination in her room for the study of the personality of the criminal and the crime.

The room for study of the personality of criminals was organized by the legist M.N. Gernet (1874–1953) in 1923 at the Moscow University. The examination of the personality of criminals was carried out thoroughly, there participated anthropologists, lawyers, psychologists, sociologists, biochemists and psychiatrists [10].

During 1921–1924, until 1936, patients with “psychopathy” were taken as insane or partially insane, and the re-education based on the psychotherapeutic and psychiatric methods was applied to them [25]. That approach brought results, and after passing the clinic, a number of criminals got a job and kept it. The study of the criminal’s personality included an extensive research work on the outpatient basis. Besides, since December 1923, in the Arbat house of detention was organized a clinic for twelve prisoners. There the scientists carried out investigations and the correctional work [23]. V.I. Akkerman (1890–1972) described the studies in the clinic as follows: “The examination of the perpetrator’s personality is carried out by a psychiatrist, psychologist, anthropologist and sociologist ... The psychological examination complements the psychiatric predominant one in the aspect of the examination of intelligent functions by means of different tests (Jacobson-Fernald, Rorschach, etc.)” [1, pp. 207–208].

From 1924 to 1929, they published eight collections of scientific articles. As to most of the collections, A.E. Petrova offered the articles that described cases and gave a detailed psychological analysis of the criminal’s personality; some of the works had mentions of the usage of the Rorschach test.

The first report on the usage of the technique of ink-blot tests in the examination of the criminal’s personality was made by A.E. Petrova at the weekly meetings of the researchers of the criminal’s personality in 1923. That report was highly evaluated and later became an article in

the collection “The Criminal World of Moscow” in 1924. The article was published under the title “The Case of Mutilating the Husband” [17] and contained a psychological analysis of the accused N., 24 years old (a primitive psyche), in the case of the castration of her husband. The article was about the examination of the criminal by means of ink spots.

A.E. Petrova singled out criminals-primitives into a special group because of the peculiarities of their psyche, a committing the crime was explained due to the general social-pedagogical neglect and an improper environment since childhood. As a rule, of all the types of crimes, the criminals-primitives stole or engaged in banditry; they committed murders “by chance”. A.E. Petrova also noted a slow adaptation of higher mental functions to changes in the environment (it might manifest in the slowdown in thinking), a high impulsivity in actions, the lack of empathy for others (which develops during the correctional work) and a high ego-centrism [15].

In 1927, the book by A.E. Petrova “The Psychological Classification of Personalities. The Elementary Method of the Psychological Examination: for Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Criminologists and Educators” was published. She summarized all the previously obtained data and deduced the typology [16]. The book described the cases from practice and the possibility of studying the features of the psyche of primitives and non-primitives by means of various methods. The author paid a special attention to the type of reaction depending on the constitution of a person; so the types were as follows: plain-emotional, efficient-abstract, intellectual-volitional and some intermediate ones in between. Further works did not pay the attention to tests with ink spots. The techniques might be used but after 1936 there was no mention of them.

After the publication of the book, A.E. Petrova remains working in the penitentiary establishments. From 1927 to 1930, she is the head of the scientific and pedagogical work of the experimental penitentiary department of the State Institute for the Study of the Criminal. From 1929 to 1931, she is the head of the political educational work in the Novinsky department of the First Moscow factory-labour prison. Since 1930, she teaches the higher courses of the correctional labour (The People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs). Since 1931, A.E. Petrova returns to investigations in the field of clinical psychology. From 1931 to 1944, she leads the psychological work in the psychiatric department of the Central Research State Institute for the Assessment of the Ability to Work and the Employment of Disabled People, holding the position of a senior researcher, and in 1935–1938, she collaborates as a psychologist with the Clinic of Nervous Diseases of the First Moscow Medical Institute. In 1939, A.E. Petrova is awarded the title of PhD in biology without defending her thesis, and in 1944, she defends her doctoral thesis on “The main compensatory factor in the epileptic and schizophrenic processes”. Since July 1944, A.E. Petrova is on retirement for health reasons, and there is no further information about her biography. The date of her death is also unknown [9, pp. 1–15].

The Rorschach test in the forensic psychiatric examination: V.A. Vnukov's works

One of the last mentions of the usage of the Rorschach test in the forensic psychiatric examination may be found in the collection "Psychopathies and Their Forensic and Psychiatric Meanings" published in 1934. The collection sums up a 12-year work of Serbsky State Scientific Institute for Forensic Psychiatry in the field of the study of psychopathy in the forensic expertise and the preventive work in detention centers and psychiatric hospitals. It also becomes the last work of the whole scientific direction. In 1934, general prisons are transferred to the Government Agency of Forced Labour Camps (GULAG) of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the USSR, and work therapy in the network of prisons became the main method of correction and preventing crimes. The era of the Great Terror began.

The Rorschach test is employed as one of the methods for the psychological testing to describe cases in the introductory article on the forensic and psychiatric examination of psychopathies by Professor V.A. Vnukov (1889-1937) and in the article about adolescent pseudologists by Associate Professor L.S. Yusevich.

Wolf A. Vnukov specialised in the forensic psychiatry and developed the field of the forensic examination and the participation of not only psychiatrists but psychologists, as well. He published his research in the collections on the study of the criminals and crimes. V.A. Vnukov graduated from the Medical Faculty of the Simferopol University in 1922 and specialised in psychiatry. He worked as a psychiatrist at the Second Moscow State Medical University (1924-1925). Since the end of 1925, he was a teacher at the Department of Reflexology at the medical and pedagogical department of the State Institute of Physical Education, a resident physician at the Institute of Forensic Psychiatry (1925-1927), an assistant at the First Moscow State University (1927-1929), and a senior assistant of the First Moscow Medical Institute (1929-1932). In 1932, he became a specialist-doctor of the sanitary department of the Joint State Political Directorate (1932-1934) and a Chairman of the Methodological Bureau which led the pedagogical and scientific work at Serbsky State Scientific Centre for Forensic Psychiatry. At the end of 1933, V.A. Vnukov became the head of the Chair of Forensic Psychiatry and a professor at the First Moscow Medical Institute (since June 1934), and the director of Kramer Moscow Institute of Neuropsychiatric Prevention [18].

Professor V.A. Vnukov's article "The Forensic and Psychiatric Examination of Psychopathies" provided the instance of the examination in 1933 of a 17-year-old girl who was caught stealing and had the tendency to a pathological fantasising. The test was employed to study the criminal's fantasy: "During the Rorschach examination, she gave poor static images" [4, p. 25]. L.S. Yusevich's article "Adolescent Pseudologists" was also about a pathological fantasising in adolescents. It described the phenomenon and cases from the forensic examination, and provided an example of the usage of the Rorschach test in the examination of a 17-year-old boy detained

with forged documents and convicted of fraud; as in the first case, the test "gives very poor images".

At the end of the collection, there is a "dictionary of special terms" compiled by Dr. S.K. Berukshtis: "Rorschach — the examination according to Rorschach. A special method of the psychological examination relating mainly to fantasy and human emotions" [3, p. 174]. That conclusion could be based on the works presented in the collection and ideas about the tests with ink spots in the works of A. Binet and F.E. Rybakov, in which blots are used as a test for the development of fantasy.

As described above, in the forensic practice, the usage of the test ceased after 1934. The Rorschach test was finally excluded from the work of a pedologist and clinical psychologist in 1936 after the publication of the resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) on 04.07.1936 about paedological perversions in the system of the People's Commissariats for Education.

Before the resolution, the textbook "Practical Work on Experimental Psychology" by psychologist P.S. Lyubimov (1902-1941) was published. It contained a brief description of the Rorschach test and recommendations for its performance; the contents related to the methods of studying imagination [13].

Many books and articles of the 1920s and 1930s were destroyed or were prohibited for readers. At the end of the 60s, Soviet psychologists began using the Rorschach test again but the connection between old and new studies was not found. Those psychologists who worked with the test before 1936 and escaped the repression preferred to remain silent about the usage of the method or publicly condemned it.

Conclusion

Analyzing the works of Soviet psychologists and psychiatrists of the 1920s-1930s, one might assert that they observed the methods published in Europe and US and put them into practice; the translation of the Rorschach test and incentive tables appeared in 1923. The test was widespread and used in the field of paedology, in clinical psychology, psychiatry, in the study of the personality of the criminal and the examination of persons who committed an offense.

The Rorschach test was a part of the sets of diagnostic techniques in the research room for studying the criminal's personality and at Serbsky Scientific Institute of Forensic Psychiatry. It was also described in the textbook on experimental psychology for students. However, Soviet psychologists did not use the Rorschach test as a method for studying personality or the types of perception but used it as a technique for studying imagination.

Due to the features of the era of transition from the NEP to the era of three five-year plans and the Great Terror, this test was used only until 1936. After the publication of the Resolution on paedological perversions in the system of the People's Commissariats for Education, the Rorschach test like other tests was considered to be bourgeois and ideologically wrong. Together with many researchers, it disappeared from the Soviet psychology and psychiatry.

Many books and articles were destroyed or disappeared from the libraries along with the names of the scientists who used the test in their work and were repressed (I.N. Dyakov) or did not overcome the regime for health reasons (V.A. Vnukov). Those researchers

who used the Rorschach test and who managed to survive the period of repressions preferred not to use the prohibited method anymore and not to mention past works with it. Sometimes, they even condemned its use (A.E. Petrova, L.S. Yusevich, G.E. Sukhareva).

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Получена 28.10.2023

Принята в печать 20.03.2024

Received 28.10.2023

Accepted 20.03.2024