That "Disturbing Little Book" Is Back!

Paul E. Meehl
Clinical Versus Statistical Prediction: A Theoretical Analysis and a Review of the Evidence
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Paul E. Meehl is Regents' Professor of Psychology, Emeritus, and Member Emeritus of the Center for Philosophy of Science at the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis). Meehl is past president of the American Psychological Association (APA, 1982), a member of the National Academy of Sciences, a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and William James Fellow of the American Psychological Society (APS). Meehl is author of Psychodiagnostics: Selected Papers and Selected Philosophical and Methodological Papers and coauthor, with N. C. Wistrich, of Multivariate Taxometric Procedures: Distinguishing Types From Continua. Meehl has received numerous honors, including the APA Award for Outstanding Lifetime Contribution to Psychology (1996) and the APS James McKeen Cattell Award (1998).

Jerry S. Wiggins, National Research Council Senior Associate of the National Institute on Aging and professor emeritus of psychology at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada), served as president of the Society of Multivariate Psychology (1981–1982) and chair of the personality section of APA's Division 8 (Society for Personality and Social Psychology; 1982–1984). Wiggins is author of Personality and Prediction: Principles of Personality Assessment and editor of The Five-Factor Model of Personality: Theoretical Perspectives.

J ason Aronson publishers are to be commended for resuming a convenient softcover edition of what is surely among the most brilliant, inspiring, original, and above all controversial books in the literature of clinical psychology of the past 50 years. The seemingly straightforward topic of this extended essay was the relative merits of clinical (case study) and statistical (actuarial) methods of combining assessment data on a single patient to forecast future performance. Actuarial meth-
Given the current concern with such issues as cost effectiveness in managed care, one would indeed think that Meehl’s findings would be relevant. So, what can our current generation of graduate students and clinicians do about this paradoxical situation? At the very least, read this book.

References

Faust, D. (1991). What if we had really listened? Present reflections on altered pasts. In D. Cicchetti & W. M. Grove (Eds.), Thinking clearly about psychology:


