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DIANETICS. L. Ron Hubbard, 452 pages. Hermitage House, New York, 1950, \$4.00.

Because a considerable mass of non-medical people have been puzzled by this book, and some of them seek the opinion of physicians with respect to its value, it might be an advantage if the physician could have it appraised without being forced to read it. This review, made for that purpose, takes the attitude that Hubbard has not produced any scientific proof to support his theories, and consequently "dianetics" is unacceptable as a means of psychotherapy.

He replaces the unconscious mind of psychoanalysis by a sub-mind ("reactive mind") which is always conscious, even when the individual is unconscious. The impressions made upon this "reactive mind" by environment and experience are called *engrams*. Though dormant, engrams may be reactivated by a repetition, during consciousness, of the experience originally producing them. This reactivation gives the engram "command power" over the individual, blocking all attempts of the conscious mind to disobey such command. The upshot is that everyone's power to think is interfered with by such engram activity (pain records) so that few persons possess more than 10 per cent of their "potential awareness."

This sad state of affairs, however, ought not to give us the slightest concern because dianetic therapy deletes all the pain from a life-time, causing all aberrations and psychosomatic illness to vanish. How? In reverie, with a professional therapist nearby, the patient returns and re-lives the experience of the engrams. This simple process removes the pain and blocking effect of the engrams which are now "filed" as useful memory. The individual is thus "released" and becomes a "clear," or normal.

That the dynamic principle of existence is survival will be easily accepted by most biologists. That the fundamental and basic nature of man is *good* (which Hubbard states as an irrefutable axiom) is by no means easy to prove or deny. That even the most severe psychological blocking readily yields to a process resembling meditation is quite out of line with the experience of most, if not all, psychologists.

Physicians would be wise to advise patients enquiring about "dianetics" to leave the subject alone. Introspective activities, even when assisted by a lay or "professional" therapist, are harmful to many individuals. The book is written in a vein of such optimistic euphoria as to cast suspicion on its fundamental soundness. In all psychoanalytic experience, if one thing is agreed upon, it is this — that the blocked complex seldom is relieved easily.