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THE TRAINING SCHOOL BULLETIN

VOLUME 47

JANUARY, 1951

NUMBER 9

CONTENTS

	PAGE
A CRITIQUE OF THE EVOLUTION OF DIANETICS Parker Davis, Ph.D.	220
TRAINING SCHOOL EMPLOYEES RETIRE AFTER LONG CAREERS AT VINELAND	230
INDEX OF REPRINTS AVAILABLE AT THE TRAINING SCHOOL	231



THE TRAINING SCHOOL BULLETIN

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2. Non-technical articles of general interest, e. g., human interest stories of the mentally retarded, restatements of technical material for the layman.
3. Book reviews and news notes.
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A CRITIQUE OF THE EVOLUTION OF DIANETICS*

PARKER DAVIS, Ph.D.

BECAUSE the histories of mentally retarded children are so often pathetic, the parents of such children are unduly susceptible to the attractions of many half-proved "cure" techniques. A new "cure" has appeared on the horizon under the name of "dianetics." In recent months this technique has achieved a popularity which does not seem to be warranted by the time spent in checking the theories of dianetics. In the book, *Dianetics*, by L. Ron Hubbard, the following assertive statement appears:

"A large proportion of allegedly feeble-minded children are actually attempted abortion cases, whose engrams place them in fear paralysis or regressive palsy and which commands them not to grow but to be where they are forever."

Purportedly, dianetics can cure feeble-mindedness. Lest the hopes of the parents of mentally retarded children be raised falsely by statements such as this, the Editors would like to call to the attention of the parents the following statement made by the American Psychological Association:

"In view of the sweeping generalizations and claims regarding psychology and psychotherapy made by L. Ron

Hubbard in his recent book, Dianetics, the American Psychological Association adopts the following resolution:

While suspending judgement concerning the eventual validity of the claims made by the author of Dianetics, the American Psychological Association calls attention to the fact that these claims are not supported by empirical evidence of the sort required for the establishment of scientific generalizations. In the public interest, the Association, in the absence of such evidence, recommends to its members that the use of the techniques peculiar to Dianetics be limited to scientific investigations designed to test the validity of its claims."

*This paper was prepared for the Panel Discussion on Dianetics, Rutgers University, November 14, 1950.

The Training School Bulletin

Dr. Parker Davis of Rutgers which went into the creation University has proffered a cri-of this technique.

tique of the evolution of dianetics. His is an attempt to evaluate the sources from which the movement springs. He is not so much concerned with the efficacy of this technique, for its scientific status is indicated by the statement from the American Psychological Association. Rather, he tries to lay before the reader the thought pro-

In the long run, the choice of the kind of practitioner to which a child will go lies with the parent of the retarded child. This article may serve as a guide for the evaluation of dianetics as a partial "cure" for mental retardation.

THE EDITORS

The first publication regarding Dianetics appeared in the May 1950 issue of Astounding Science-Fiction. In this article, the author L. Ron Hubbard describes the steps he took in his exploration of the human mind. This exploration commenced about 1938 and has occupied his major attention for the last twelve years, except during the War years. I think a review of this original article helpful in our understanding of *Dianetics*, particularly because of his statement at the end of the article. I quote: "For strictly professional publications, I can, will and have dressed this up so it is almost impossible to understand, it's so exact.

Hubbard approaches his problems with an Engineering background using Engineering terminology and Engineering analogies to describe the human mind and its operations. He describes an optimum computing machine, perfect accuracy, swift, memory banks of nearly infinite capacity, self serving, and self arming, etc. This is the human mind—the optimum brain—the *clear* after dianetic therapy—"able to differentiate between actuality and imagination with precision—able to recall any perception, even the trivial, asleep and awake from the beginning of life to death, computing with incredible swiftness and accuracy, its answers *always* right, *never* wrong—That is the brain you have potentially"—If it does not do these things it is considered to be out of adjustment. Hubbard uses the terms *computations* and *computing* to mean what we learned as thinking, in fact the broad field of mental and emotional processes, etc. Without this key one is lost in understanding such dianetic mental phenomenon as the ally computations.

The Training School Bulletin

Dianetic terminology is very different from anything we are used to in psychology and psychiatry. Dianeticists strongly advise not to mix systems—to forget all other systems is maybe good advice—I have violated that this week trying to understand file clerks, memory blanks, somatic strips, engram commands, analyzers, time tracks, bouncers, denyers and so forth in terms of other psychological systems and the ories—and as a result *my* engrams have been giving me a bad time.

First Hubbard came to grips with the deep psycho-philosophical question—The nature of existence and the purpose of life. He studied and observed throughout the world—medicine, men, shamans, cults, Hindu fakirs, faith healing, voodoo, magic crystals, Chinese apuncture, Freud, Spenecer and much more. His answer—“Life is energy of some sort. The aim of life is to survive the lowest *common* denominator of all existence”,—a very appealing philosophy to suffering people. The Frenchman Bergson has also proposed an *elan vital*—a life force and the psychiatrist Jung stresses self-preservation. Hubbard’s hypothes therefore parallel recognized scientific authority here, but Dianeticists despise Authority—they get very engramanic about Authority.

He then set out to build a Science of thought. He studied “thousands and thousands of mental cases and made a multitude of personal observations in this and distant lands”—He especially studies Hypnotism. “I knew hypnotism was, more or less, a fundamental—though a terrible unpredictable variable—“But it was clear hypnotism and insanity were, somehow identities”—Dr. Williams and Milton Adler have been hypnotizing people around here for years without anybody blowing his top. He did observe that psychotherapists have resorted to hypnosis constantly in their struggles to understand and to treat the neuroses and psychoses thru the centuries here, there and everywhere. In fact, the State Diagnostic Center at Menlo Park uses drug hypnosis today. So Hubbard used hypnosis only to discard it later in favor of the *reverie*—a mild autistic trance state. Thus, he travelled the same path as Sigmund Freud who discarded hypnosis and for the same reason—therapy proceeds more soundly if the patient retains awareness. Incidentally, both Freudians and Dianeticists use the *Couch*.

Hubbard next attacked another age-old philosophical problem—the moral nature of man—good or evil. He concluded that man is basically good—an attractive idea especially in these times—Dr. Carl

The Training School Bulletin

Rogers in evolving his psychotherapeutic school of non-directive counseling came to this same conclusion—How did Hubbard come to this conclusion? He travelled an interesting path. He turned from hypnotism to the ancient art of exorcising demons—he made a systematic classification of types of demons that inhabit human brains. As he says, “Strange work for an Engineer and Mathematician.” Now demons are another emotional stumbling block for psychologists. Here we get the beginnings of the welding of two conceptual lines of thought to understand the human mind—the engineering concept of an electronic computing machine and the supernatural, mythological, anthropomorphic types of analogy—More misery and engrams for the psychologist—Hubbard does it easily in his optimum brain—the electronic computing machine with its efficient circuits. But there are also demon circuits and these cause trouble. One day Hubbard observed a multivalent individual—a schizophrenic that is—in a temporary period of spontaneous recovery and lucidity—no demon circuits operating. He discovered “A basic personality, strong, hardy and constructively good”—and came to the conclusion that human nature is basically good—good meaning mostly mentally efficient.

At this point Hubbard makes a most awe inspiring conclusion. Basic personality is good, therefore, all evil must come from the environment—, “Somehow the exterior world gets interior.” He makes an implicit assumption that heredity is good and equal without discussion. All man’s troubles are due to what is done to him. What we psychologists think of as the Gordian knot of heredity-environment etiology is *cut*. Insanity is not due to hereditary causes. Shades of John B. Watson and Behaviorism “Give me a dozen healthy babies and I will make of them what you will.” But Watson didn’t know about the 200 engrams of the prenatal period. Dianetic philosophy is wonderful—I have sound heredity, I’m basically good, I have a marvelous brain—once thru dianetic therapy I become a *clear*—the green pastures lie just over the hill—new hope, new faith.

Hubbard moved on to new terra incognita—how does the exterior world get interior—how do the demon circuits get in? I quote: “I tried on the off-chance that they might be right, several schools of psychology—Jung, Adler, even Freud. But not very seriously. The work of Pavlov was reviewed in case there was something there. But men aren’t dogs.” These remarks are difficult to reconcile with Hubbard’s statement in *The Dianetics Book*, page 340, “Dianetics borrow-

ed nothing but was first discovered and organized; only after the organization was completed and a technique evolved was it compared to existing information."

Another great discovery is made—the falseness of the mind-body dichotomy—"It's hard to make your wits pick out things which have been accepted, unquestioned, from earliest childhood, hard to suspect them—So let's consider them a unity—(the mind and the body). It may co-ordinate its activities in a mechanism called the brain, but the fact is that the brain is also part of the nervous system, and the nervous system extends all through the body."

One must admire the audacious courage of Hubbard,—the Explorer. Another of our toughest psycho-philosophical problems solved—The ancient bugaboo—the mind-body problem. But courage is not the special gift of only a few—some of our modern behavioristic psychologists neatly dispose of the problem by simply eliminating Mind—presto—leaving only body. It is also interesting to note that simultaneously with Hubbard's work in the '40's Medicine was questioning the mind *and* body idea, and developed Psychosomatic Medicine—In fact, Hubbard recognized the movement and uses the term psychosomatic ills a great deal—those ills of the body which are caused by the troubles of the mind.

Hubbard next considers the problem of human memory. The nature of human memory and its functioning becomes the crucial hub of Dianetic theory and practice. I shall deal with this briefly only, sufficiently to round out the evolutionary picture of Dianetic theory and psychotherapy, since Memory is a special field of investigation of Dr. Hanawalt's. *Step one:* It is the body that remembers. *Step two:* The rediscovery of the ancient principle of pleasure and pain, the seeking of pleasure, the avoidance of pain. *Step three:* Consideration of painful memories and pleasant memories. *Step four:* Discovery of the Freudian idea that we avoid pain by repressing painful memories beyond ordinary recall. *Step five* is the most crucial of all. It is based on an experiment of Hubbard's in which by special techniques not stated a patient recalled completely with pain the memory of a nitrous oxide dental operation. Here, if *true*, is a tremendous discovery of Dianteics. *The unconscious mind is the mind which is always conscious.* The mind records and remembers and is affected by full experience whether made unconscious by doings such as nitrous oxide, a blow or fall which renders a person unconscious, and during

The Training School Bulletin

sleep every perception observed in a life time is to be found *in* the memory banks—not *on* the Banks. This is something really big. As Hubbard says, "This made modern psychology look like Tarawa after the Marines had landed." This idea that the *unconscious mind is always conscious* from the womb to the tomb is so central to Dianetics that if it is proved false—not true, based on erroneous conclusions from faulty and inadequate research—it will make Dianetics look like Tarawa after the marines had landed.

Hubbard moved on. He decided that man has two minds. What we ordinarily think of as man's conscious rational mind be labelled the analytical mind. What we have learned to think of as the unconscious mind he labelled the reactive mind. But it is different from Freud's unconscious mind. It is the sphere of human behavior thought of as reflex behavior, not dependent on rational thought such as the closing of the eye against a cinder. It is simple stimulus-response behavior *plus* Pavlovian conditional behavior, plus perhaps a number of other things. The concept of automatic reflex behavior is intended in Hubbard's term reactive mind. He returned to the electronic computing machine analogy, and postulated memory banks in each mind—not like a financial institution, but like the banks in a computing machine. The standard banks of the analytical mind; and the red-tab banks of the reactive mind. Then it was necessary to install a file clerk in the mind to properly file and sort memory data received and to produce these data when needed. Very understandable—what would an Engineering office be without a file clerk—blue prints, here, there and everywhere. Yes, a *file clerk*. In Dianetic therapy the auditor deals not with patient but with the File Clerk in the patient's mind commanding whatever memory data is desired. "Miss Jones bring me the blue print on job No. 52."

Hubbard moved on. He learned that sanity is associated with rationality and that man differs from animals because he is rational and has the power to think. I quote: "So it can be postulated that it is this analyzer which places the gap between a dog and a man." And "the more rational the mind the more sane the man."

But now Hubbard asks the hard question, "What makes this basically marvelous computing machine mind irrational. He says, "I was probing now for the villain of the piece." He discovers apparently on his own Sir. Wm. Hamilton's principle of *redintegration* announced in the small "remainder" of some prior experience serves to recall

The Training School Bulletin

the totality of that experience, as well as, the psychologist Hollingsworth's concept of responding to the fragment of an original experience as if the whole were present. As he states: Thus were discovered the reactive memory bank and its total content the norms and their locks. To account for redintegration Hubbard turns again to mythology—to the demons and demon circuits are added the norms and their locks. In Norse mythology a norn is a hidden witch which guides man's fate all unknown to him. This combination of Engineering and mechanistic concepts with Mythological and Supernatural concepts to explain the human mind. This combining of the Pavlovian and the Freudian is astounding.

I quote: "We had to organize a new sub-science here to think about norms properly. It's the science of perceptics." This subsience was developed apparently independently of the enormous subsience of organized Psychology—The Psychology of Perception.

Hubbard says: "There is no such thing as conditioning. What we refer to ordinarily as conditioning is actually a norm command—Dianetics can break up habits, simply by relieving the norms which command them."

The red-tab memory banks are claimed as an original discovery of dianetics—one of major importance. These differ from the well-known repressed unconscious memories of Freud in their *origin*. One must not jump to the conclusion that Hubbard is discovering Freud's unconscious mind. With Freud there is the repression of conscious memory. With Hubbard the full recording of experience while the subject was actually unconscious. But the red-tab banks *also* include repressed engramatic conscious experiences.

Hubbard's exploration now led him to the discovery—independently, of course—of the phenomenon known as *the abreaction* exploited and widely used in psychanalysis. The abreaction is the relieving of an emotional experience which permits the mind to discharge the pathological material. Psychic energy, which no longer has to be expended in repressing the pathological material is now free to be turned into more constructive channels. The psycho-therapeutically beneficial effect of the *abreaction* experience is well known to psychiatry and psychology. Pastoral religion has practiced this for centuries on an emperic basis. This is all very like the procedure of the running and erasing of engrams but this gets ahead of the development.

The Training School Bulletin

Now Hubbard meets another knotty philosophical issue—The problem of determinism—with conditioning rejected the solution is clear. Man is a self-determined individual—but he is handicapped in the exercise of this self-determinism by the norms in his reactive mind—but even so they may be dealt with somewhat, in five different ways—the individual is not completely at the mercy of the norms even before dianetic therapy. These five ways of dealing with norms are called the “black panther mechanisms.”

The writer must confess that coming close on the heels of the file clerk, the demons and their circuits, and the norms and their locks—the black panther threatened his own sense of equilibrium. Then an awful thought, a truly engramic computation entered his mind—black panther mechanisms to describe defenses against a Norse witch—Is this Rorschach’s “grass-bear”—the contamination response? True or false it provided some comfort.

We come now to the *engram*—central to Dianetics. In Dorland’s Medical Dictionary is is defined thusly:

“A lasting mark or tract. The term is applied to the definite and permanent trace left by a stimulus in the protoplasm of a tissue. In psychology it is the lasting trace left in the psyche by anything that has been experienced psychically, a latent memory picture.”

It is interesting to recall, however, Richard Semon’s *Theory of the Mneme* published in 1904. If after a stimulus has ceased, the susceptible substance of the living organism showed permanent changes, Semon called this action “engraphic” and the change itself he calls “engram”. The sum total, not only of the inherited, but also of the individually acquired engrams of a living being, he calls “mneme”. If Hubbard is familiar with Richard Semon’s work he makes no reference to it.

In all events the concept of the *engram* is well-established in Psychology and Medicine. But the development of the engram concept in Dianetics is a far-cry from this. Semon might well cry out—“Oh what have they done to my baby!” Well what have they done?—Let’s quote Hubbard directly—

The Training School Bulletin

"No, reactive 'memories' aren't memories. Let's call them a good medical term, *engrams*—a lasting trace—and modify the definition by qualifying 'lasting'. They were certainly enough pre-dianetics—The engram is received, we can postulate; on a cellular level. The engram is cellular memory by the cells and stored in the cells—They do not in the least depend upon nervous structure. To exist—We are talking about cellular recordings on the order of phonograph records, smell records, organic sensation records, all very precise.

"By engram we mean, solely the actual impression—like wax upon the body. The engram as an entire experience we call a *norn*."

Dianetics then sets as its therapeutic task the removal or erasure of engrams—assumed to be the source of all psychological ills from acne to insanity. The vast complexities and intricate procedures required of the dianetic auditor, as well as the knowledge and skill required, is not treated in this paper. Suffice it to say that engrams are treated as live things. There are many types of engrams and engram commands. The therapy is very slow, 200 to 500 hours to clear, and exceedingly painful and exhausting to patient. It is recommended that he take daily tablets of Vitamin B to keep him going.

The relation of patient and therapist is important. The hypnotist uses either drugs or hypnotic procedures, or both to control the patient. The psychoanalyst uses the transference phenomena—the falling in love—dependency relationship to hold the analysand. The Rogerians use the subtle controls of accepting the non-directive situation. Apparently the Dianeticist use the power of a strong personality to dominate and control a weaker personality seeking help. The Auditor's Bulletins No's 1 and 2 on page 12 states in discussing the removal of demon circuits and volume commands the following and I quote:

"The Auditor has to be powerful enough to control his pre-clear and get him to cooperate."

But to return to dianetic engram theory which is far-reaching—A major source of engrams is the pre-natal period—the period before birth. When the child in the womb is presumed to be knocked unconscious at various times for various reasons. There are three major

The Training School Bulletin

sources of pre-natal engrams: accidents, maternal illness, and attempted abortion which is the most important. The spoken language of the mother and those about her are transmitted as engramic material to the embryo or the foetus. An individual may acquire as many as 200 engrams in the pre-natal period. How early?—originally it was thought to be 24 hours after conception—later at conception itself the pain of sperm meeting ovum to form zygote—We have been used to thinking of birth pain and psychological trauma from the work of the psychologist Rank, but conception pain is new—In the uterine tubes, that is.

Dianetic pre-natal theory is tough sledding. One cannot help but wonder if Dianeticists are meeting their own standards of optimum mental operations, namely "the ability to differentiate between actuality and imagination with precision."

To conclude this brief critique of the evolution of Dianetics I should like to quote Hubbard's advice regarding therapeutic activity.

"Although the fundamentals and mechanisms are simple and, with some study, very easily applied, partial information is dangerous, the technique may be the stuff of which sanity is made but one is after all engaging action with the very stuff which creates madness and he should at least inform himself with a few hours study before he experiments."

A few hours study before you experiment with sanity and insanity. This has been modified somewhat—a certified Dianetic Auditor is *required* to take one month's training.

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TRAINING SCHOOL EMPLOYEES RETIRE AFTER LONG CAREERS AT VINELAND

During the last half of 1950 two Training School employees, both of whom are well-known among parents, visitors and business acquaintances of the School, went into retirement after seeing The Training School grow since 1907 and 1908.

In September Miss Emma Groff, Steward of The Training School, went into retirement after working for 43 years at the School. Miss Groff, who began her employment in June, 1907, is now residing in Oxford, Pennsylvania. Prior to undertaking the position of Steward, Miss Groff worked in the Main Office at Maxham. While serving as Steward she had charge of the purchasing of all dry goods, groceries and children's clothing in addition to supervising the semi-monthly Children's Store. During her 43 years service with The Training School Miss Groff acted for many years as Dietitian. In recent communications with Mr. and Mrs. Nash, Miss Groff sent her regards to the Children and included a gift which she directed to be used for the annual dinner for children in the Christmas play.

Miss Emma Lapp, well-known among parents for her many years as Corresponding Secretary in the Children's Office, completed 42 years service with The Training School in November. She is now residing in Philadelphia. Miss Lapp, who was for many years Professor Edward R. Johnstone's Secretary, served as Receptionist for parents and for incoming children. She became especially well-known among parents for her letters describing birthday parties and other gatherings to the parents. This became an important function because parents living in South America and other foreign countries depended on the letters for news of their child. Miss Lapp, who began her employment in June, 1908, also supervised the children's mail during her service at The Training School.

INDEX OF REPRINTS AVAILABLE AT THE TRAINING SCHOOL

Because of the great number of requests we have had recently for catalogs of our publications and also for publications which we no longer have in stock, we are presenting this bibliography of reprints, limited quantities of which are available from the Training School for free distribution.

If no journal is listed, the article has originally been published in the *Training School Bulletin*.

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