

Art, we must recognise many conclusions that are truly and opportunely stated, however much we could wish that they had been reached by paths less devious and dubious.

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PARANORMAL COGNITION: Its Place in Human Psychology. By Laurence J. Bendit, M.A., M.D., D.P.M. (Faber; 5s.)

Dr. Bendit's book deals with a subject which appears to have been unduly neglected by the psychologists. He starts with the assumption that paranormal cognition (which term 'includes many forms and variations of cognition: such as are variously called extra-sensory perception, telepathy, clairvoyance, intuition, sixth sense, psychism, cryptaesthesia, etc.') is a fact; and he writes with two main objects—to throw new light upon the psychological problems of the mediumistic type, and to consider the possible effect upon analytical treatment of the fact that much of the material produced by patients generally may have been obtained by them through extra-sensory channels.

To quote his words: . . . the probabilities are that a very fair fraction of psychological patients have the Psi<sup>1</sup> function as a more or less active and significant though unintegrated part of their make-up. How important this may prove to the therapist is immediately obvious, since he is so much concerned with the seemingly non-objective, illusory, fantastic appearances of things to his patients, rather than with the hard facts of reality. For if the patient's intuitions or imagination should prove to be part, not altogether of a subjective autogenous world, but in some cases of a world existing *per se* and outside the individual's own psyche, and perceived by the Psi function in much the same way as physical objects are perceived, then a new problem arises in the evaluation of the material produced by the patient' (p. 16).

But is it not an empirical fact that, whatever the source from which the material for dreams and fantasies is taken—whether it be the dreamer's own experience received through the normal sense-channels, or the experience of others reached by means of the Psi function—it is invariably specially selected by the unconscious mind as being exactly suited to meet the dreamer's particular psychological requirements? Later on (p. 20), commenting on a case history, Dr. Bendit himself says: '. . . the straight fact remains, that the patient made use of material reaching him through paranormal channels from outside himself, then reproduced it in his own mind in dreams, *adapted to his own psychological ends, and as if it had reached him through normal physical sense impression.*'

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<sup>1</sup> The term suggested by Prof. Thouless to cover the unknown receptor or receptors which fulfil the same role in Paranormal cognition as the physical sense-organs play in physical sensation.

This state of affairs, in which the Psi function provides the material used by the unconscious mind of the analysant for the purpose of solving his problems, is of course very different from that in which the material received through the Psi function is the problem (or part of the problem) itself; see, for instance, the case of 'Miss A.,' as outlined by Dr. Bendit (p. 31): '. . . an undoubted hysteric who complained of being troubled by spirits who caused much physical discomfort and pain by their antics. Moreover, she was bothered day and night by voices . . . The obvious conclusion was to attribute the physical symptoms to characteristic hysteria and to call the spirit voices illusions. On one occasion in the consulting-room, however, a clue was suggested. The patient affirmed that, even as she was speaking to me, the voices were dining in her ears. I enquired what they were saying, and she repeated several names. "They're talking about somebody called Wright, who is ill. Now the names Robert, Marjorie . . .," and so'on. I remembered that at lunch, an hour or so ago, we had spoken of several friends who had these names, and, moreover, that we had spoken of Wright's health. The patient, of course, was miles away at the time.'

It would seem that, as with normal sense-impressions, those received paranormally can be found both in the psychological cure and the psychological complaint, and that, whichever way the curative material is obtained, there is no reason to fear its confusion with the complaint; nor need we suppose that it will be any the less beneficial on account of its extra-sensory reception.

Dr. Bendit touches on the liability of the medium's 'reading' of the future to be confused and distorted. His book is not least to be welcomed because it may constitute another step towards our protection by science from a superstitious attitude to clairvoyance, as well as from the charlatany of certain of its exponents.

BARBARA ROBB.

Lord Herbert of Cherbury's *DE RELIGIONE LAICI*, edited and translated, with a critical discussion of his life and philosophy and a comprehensive bibliography of his works. By Harold R. Hutcheson. (Yale University Press: Humphrey Milford; 20s.).

In this volume Mr. Hutcheson gives us the first critical edition of Lord Herbert's *De Religione Laici*—indeed it is the first edition of any kind since 1656. He has added a translation which is faithful to the text, so far as a cursory comparison can determine, and which has the additional merit of being readable—more readable in fact than the Latin original, for Lord Herbert's Latin prose style is not attractive. There is besides an elaborate bibliography of all Lord Herbert's work, of whose merits only expert examination can judge. To all this Mr. Hutcheson has prefixed an introduction which