

Chapter 8 — Unsatisfied Wishes and Sublimation

*of The Mind at Mischief:
Tricks and Deceptions of the Subconscious and How to Cope with Them*
(1929)

by
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Sources for Chapter 8, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) Paul Bousfield, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., *The Omnipotent Self: A Study in Self-Deception and Self-Cure* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1923)

[Note: Sadler probably used the American edition, published by E. P. Dutton & Company, New York, in 1923.]
- (2) T. W. Mitchell, M.D., *Problems in Psychopathology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., Inc., 1927)
- (3) Edmund S. Conklin, *Principles of Abnormal Psychology* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927)
- (4) Louis E. Bisch, A.B., M.D., Ph.D., *Your Inner Self* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1922)
- (5) William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S., *The Truth About Mind Cure* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1928)
- (6) William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S., *The Truth About Spiritualism* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1923)
- (7) Wilfred Lay, Ph.D., *Man's Unconscious Spirit: The Psychoanalysis of Spiritism* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1921)
- (8) William A. White, "Higher Levels of Mental Integration," in *The Unconscious: A Symposium* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1927)

- (9) James Winfred **Bridges**, Ph.D., *Psychology: Normal and Abnormal* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, **1930**)

[*Note*: This book was published one year after *The Mind at Mischief*; Sadler apparently used an earlier, not-yet-identified publication by Bridges that contained the same text.]

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author (other than Sadler) first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Magenta** indicates an earlier Sadler book.
- (c) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (d) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (e) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and Sadler pointedly differ from each other.
- (f) **Pink** indicates passages where Sadler specifically shares his own experiences, opinions, advice, etc.
- (g) **Light blue** indicates passages which strongly resemble something in the Urantia Book, or which allude to the Urantia phenomenon.
- (h) **Red** indicates either: (1) an obvious error on Sadler's part, brought about, in most cases, by miscopying or misinterpreting his source, or (2) Sadler's use of an earlier text of his that contained time-bound information which he didn't revise when presenting it in *The Mind at Mischief*, resulting in a historical impossibility, or (3) Sadler's use of an earlier text of his which he revised in such a way as to contradict that earlier text.
- (i) **Gold** highlights key words or themes which will be discussed in the analysis of the chapter.

Matthew Block
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VIII — UNSATISFIED W I S H E S A N D SUBLIMATION

III: THE FORCES SHAPING CHARACTER (Bousfield 27)

The character of an individual is the sum of his thoughts, ideas, capacities, desires, feelings and actions, and the general forces moulding it may be briefly summarised as follows:

1. The primitive instincts inherited from his ancestors, and held back in the unconscious mind.

2. Environment and education.

3. That pride in his own greatness, to which we referred in the last chapter, which modifies all the other forces at work, according to the direction of its development (B 27-28).

It is the object of education and environment to modify and utilise the force of the primitive instincts with which the child comes into the world in the best possible way (B 29-30).

[contd] *Three things may happen to any particular instinct.*

8:0.1 THE essential forces entering into the development of human character are

the primitive inherent instincts,

and the early environment, education, and training,

together with what might be called pride of personality.

While these influences may be regarded as the major factor in character formation, we cannot overlook the fact that our desires and wishes enter very largely into the fabric of personality growth and development.

8:0.2 One of the great objects of all education and child culture is to assist the child in getting control of his instincts.

As we regard our inherent instincts and emotions we recognize that,

concerning any one of them, three possible things may happen—

SOURCE

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repression, substitution, and sublimation.

8:0.3 1. *Repression*—

Firstly, it may remain unchanged and unrepressed, in which case the individual will be said, on reaching adult life, to be perverted in some way.

The instinct may remain natural

or it may be more or less repressed.

Let us take as an example that instinct which exists in some animals, and which urges them at the mating season to exhibit their genital organs to their fellows of the opposite sex, with the perfectly natural and proper end in view of propagating the species.

There is in all very young children a tendency to exhibit themselves.

Our modern sense of modesty is not inherent; it is wholly an acquirement.

We occasionally find adult human beings in whom this instinct has remained unchanged and uncontrolled, and they generally find their way, sooner or later, into prison. The psychological term for the offence they commit is “exhibitionism” (B 30-31).

If the instinct to “show off” is not modified in the child by education and training, we have a case of more or less reprehensible exhibitionism;

yet in this necessary suppression of a primitive instinct we often engender serious conflicts in the human mind.

[See 8:0.10, below.]

The infantile urge to exhibit one’s person may later manifest itself in the proud exhibition of one’s elaborate mansion and its unique porcelain collection.

8:0.4 One of the most interesting cases of repression that I ever dealt with came to my notice about a dozen years ago. A young woman of thirty-two was suffering from recurrent spells of nausea and actual vomiting. This went on for a year, until the patient was reduced almost to skin and bones. Six weeks in the hospital made little change in her appearance. All efforts to stop the vomiting had been unsuccessful, and it was in this extremity that emotional analysis was resorted to. The patient insisted there was nothing on her mind, and no doubt she was sincere in this affirmation; but in less than a week of patient probing we succeeded in uncovering the fact that about four years previous to this trouble she had begun to entertain a secret affection for a certain unmarried man who resided in a town not far from the village in which she lived. She saw this man frequently in both a social and a business way. He had never paid any special attention to her, but she gradually grew to be very fond of him. After this secret love had been indulged for about a year, she decided it was only folly on her part to lose her heart to someone who didn't care for her, and she resolved to conquer it. She began systematic repression, and believed she had succeeded. Her appetite was poor for a few months, but after another year had gone by she found herself in apparently good health and going along quite unmindful of her futile romance, and this status prevailed for a year or two—until one day when she received the announcement of his marriage. The moment her eyes fell upon the engraved card, a sickening feeling struck her in the pit of the stomach.

She tried to pull herself together, and she insisted that it was some time after that—at least several days, if not several weeks—before the nausea began to creep upon her, to be later followed by persistent vomiting. By the time she called medical help, she had become convinced that she was the victim of some malignant internal disorder. It did, indeed, look as if this woman was going to vomit herself to death. Between twenty-five and thirty physicians were consulted at one time or another, and all recommendations had been of no avail.

8:0.5 When her attention was called to the fact that her nausea came on simultaneously with the receipt of the news of the marriage of this man, she began to see the light, and her mental life was adjusted accordingly. Within three weeks the vomiting had ceased. The patient began to gain in weight, and she made, from that time on, an uneventful recovery. She said, when finally dismissed, “Doctor, even yet I can hardly realize how a buried idea could produce such grave physical symptoms.” And that is exactly it.

[See 6:2.7.]

An ordinary normal individual may suppress emotions ad infinitum and not have the health seriously affected, but in the case of certain people with delicately balanced nervous systems, when their wishes are unfulfilled and are forcibly suppressed, this repression begins to manifest itself as a physical symptom of some kind—nausea, dizziness, trembling, weakness, and so on.

SOURCE

[Secondly, our primitive instincts may be *displaced*, and the displacement must be such as to conceal them from our conscious thoughts, in order that they may be tolerated by the conscious mind. For instance, the normal adult will not ... display desires of sexual exhibitionism in a conscious manner. But he, or more frequently she, will displace these ideas, and will only call attention to the sex of her body indirectly by exhibiting the neck or arms, or more indirectly still through the medium of clothes, designed to suggest, (for the most part unconsciously) erotic ideas (B 31).]

[Compare 6:5.4-6.]

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8:0.6 2. *Substitution*—

Through training, the tendency of the child to exhibit oneself and take pride in one's body is gradually replaced with another emotion, *acquired modesty*,

and when this is done gradually and at an early age, the resultant psychic conflicts are minimized and usually are of little consequence. And this psychic transformation is greatly helped if the youth possesses an older and confidential friend, or if he lives day by day on confidential terms with his parents or some other adult member of the family.

8:0.7 A few years ago I came across a so-called "social climber," but she was not climbing very successfully. She really lacked the background and endowment for a social career, aside from the fact that her husband's income was wholly inadequate to sustain her in the realization of such an ambition. She had come to the place where she could see that her aspirations were doomed to failure, and she was all broken up over it. Life wasn't worth living unless she could cut a wide social swath of some kind. The wreck of her ambitions occasioned the wreck of her nerves. She had all the fifty-seven varieties of symptoms that go with so-called nervous exhaustion, everything from dizziness and tremors to nausea and palpitation of the heart, and even insomnia.

8:0.8 While everything within reason was done to help her physically and nervously, it didn't amount to much until I outlined a career of social service, starting as a club woman and working into avenues of activity that would gratify both her desire to serve and her ambition to show off and be somebody among her friends and neighbors. This was a career she was fitted for and was financially capable of pursuing; she entered into it with avidity, and she succeeded. In a year or so she was again perfectly normal—healthy, happy, and useful—far more useful than she could ever have been had she achieved her ambition to be a social leader.

8:0.9 This is what we mean by substitution. Instead of harmfully suppressing our wishes, let us sort out those which are incapable of fulfillment within a reasonable time, and put in their place the nearest equivalent we can discover which is in the realm of immediate possibility of achievement.

8:0.10 3. *So-called Sublimation*—

This is the third way in which an inherent instinct may be disposed of or modified—by a glorified type of substitution or transformation into another form of activity.

[See 27:6.9.]

[contd from 8:0.6] **Thirdly**, a much higher state may be reached by some people in which the primitive instinct has now lost entirely its erotic meaning, instead of being merely disguised and displaced as in the last case.... This is known as *sublimation*, and instead of the desire of our exhibitionist to show himself or herself physically, the person may attain the desire by showing a fine character, by designing a fine building, achieving some high position, or anything in fact of an ideal or non-erotic nature (B 31-32).

SOURCE

[contd] Exactly the same process takes place in the opposite of exhibitionism, which in its primitive form we term **observationism**. “Peeping Tom” is a celebrated example of this.

We have a *displacement* of observationism in the fairly average young man, who likes to observe all that he can of the charms of every woman he comes into contact with, who takes an eager interest in her shoulders, breasts, underclothing, and any part she may exhibit. And we have the third or **sublimated** stage in the **scientist**,

who has turned most of his primitive sexual instinct of “looking” in the sexual sense into looking down the **microscope**, or searching for the secrets of Nature, and delving amidst her hidden laws, instead of using the same primitive desire to look in an unsublimated and rather more infantile manner (B 32-33).

Suffice it to say, that many of our higher activities and desires are sublimations of lower and more primitive instincts, which we are learning to develop and control; *and that **education** and environment have, as their object, the training of the child by turning the forces at work in his primitive instincts*

*through the stage of displacement into the final one of **sublimation*** (B 33).

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Take, for instance, the perverted urge known as **observationism**, typified in the case of a “**peeping Tom**” who figured largely in the newspapers a few years ago.

Now, this desire to pry into the forbidden, if it were **sublimated**, could be converted into the pursuit of the **scientist**,

who indulges his observation urge in useful work, in peering through a **microscope** to discover the unknown causes of disease and to unravel her mysteries of science.

8:0.11 It is the purpose of **education** to guide youth in its early efforts to carry its natural impulses, based on inherent instincts and emotions,

up through substitution and **sublimation** into the ideals of our higher thinking.

SOURCE

In all probability there is only one ultimate psychic energy which, like physical energy, can be directed into different channels.... For example, an individual feels “restless,” he then desires to play tennis; the afternoon is wet: he plays chess instead. His **psychic energy** has been **diverted from one channel to another** with its accompanying excitement and satisfaction of desire: with its final feeling of fatigue and repletion (B 35).

[See 8:8, below.]

IV: DETERMINISM AND WILL POWER (Bousfield 41)

The second factor which determines the mode of expression of this out-burst of repressed energy is known as the *law of regression*. This means that if the adult outlet of energy becomes dammed up or is insufficient, *the energy will flow through an **earlier channel** which has once been used* (B 47).

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There is no question but that **psychic energy** can be **diverted**; it can be transferred or transmuted.

Proper mental training does enable one to effect transference of desire from one object to another or **from one channel to another**.

But more about sublimation in the final section of this chapter.

REPRESSED WISHES

8:1.1 Parents and teachers should direct their efforts to teaching sublimation as a corollary of repression. The disturbances resulting from a repressed emotion should be transmuted by means of sublimation attained through progressive displacement.

8:1.2 When this emotional problem is not properly handled there is very apt to occur—in connection with some period of stress and strain in later life—a reversion of emotional behavior to some **older** and unsublimated **channel**,

and it is this back flow of repressed emotions that produces so much of our nervous trouble and emotional derangement.

THEORY OF THE INSTINCTS (Mitchell 97)

On the one hand we have the Behaviourists, and others of similar ways of thinking, who deny that there is any such thing as an instinct at all;

who would explain all forms of animal and human behaviour in terms of reflex action,

and would relegate to the category of conditioned reflexes all that is usually called instinct (M 97-98).

One of the most noteworthy contributions to the problems of instinct, in recent years, is that which is found in the writings of Professor McDougall, and the sense in which he uses the term is perhaps that in which it is used by the majority of psychologists in this country.

He defines an instinct as “an innate disposition which determines the organism to perceive (to pay attention to) any object of a certain class, and to experience in its presence a certain emotional excitement and an impulse to action which finds expression in a specific mode of behaviour in relation to that object” (M 98).

8:1.3 The behaviorists deny the existence of all instincts.

They explain everything in terms of reflex action.

What the rest of us call an inherent instinct, they are wont to designate as a conditioned reflex.

While there is some truth in their idea of reflex training, we cannot fail to observe that the different forms of protoplasm, as harbored by the different species of plants and animals, are possessed of unique, specific, and inherent endowments of reaction potential.

I think McDougall's definition of instinct is as good as any.

He defines an instinct as “An innate disposition which determines the organism to perceive (to pay attention to) any object of a certain class, and to experience in its presence a certain emotional excitement and an impulse to action which finds expression in a specific mode of behavior in relation to that object.”

SOURCE

[Compare M 100-01.]

In his recent works ... Freud has had a good deal to say about instincts that are inhibited in respect of their aim.... The most important example of this is the change in the attitude of a child towards its parents which accompanies the repression of the Oedipus complex. The infantile sexual aims are renounced, yet the child remains tied to his parents by instincts which are the same as before, but are now inhibited in their aim. This is Freud's explanation of the origin of **tender emotion**, and he regards this inhibition of sexual aim as a form of **sublimation** and the most important element in **love** as contrasted with merely sensual desire (M 103).

Freud takes a **mechanistic view** of the origin and nature of life and sees in the animation of inanimate matter merely the setting up of a tension which immediately strives to attain equilibrium. Thus the **first instinct of life** is a striving to return to lifelessness—a **death-instinct** (M 107-08).

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8:1.4 One of the difficulties we have in dealing with either the behaviorists or the Freudians is that they have different definitions for all our psychologic and biologic terms. They are wont to promulgate their theories by means of their own special terminology.

For instance, Freud classes the **tender emotion** as an inhibited Oedipus complex and regards **love** as the **sublimation** of the sex instinct.

Philosophically speaking, the whole Freudian doctrine is wrong, in my opinion, in that it contemplates life as evil, while the goal of death is all that is ideally good.

It is, moreover, a wholly **mechanistic view** of life.

8:1.5 In my opinion there is no death instinct in the case of normal minds, as suggested by Freud. The first law of all living things is self-preservation; the urge to live is inherent in all normal organisms. The so-called death instinct is an error in the Freudian philosophy.

[Compare C 16 and M 114-15.] [See 7:0.5.]

The mistake of Freud and of some of his later rivals is that they recognize in the human mind only two contending groups of instincts, whereas we believe there are no less than five possible groupings of human impulses of such dignity as to enable them to precipitate psychic conflict. Freud regards his libido—the sex group of impulses—as the mischief-making complex, the instigator of all our psychic conflicts; but we could with equal propriety select any other one of the five groups of human emotions and build upon it a new school of psychoanalysis, in the end making five different schools.

8:1.6 It is a great mistake for a man or woman already tainted with discontent constantly to indulge in the day-dreaming type of wish. It is harmful continually to give expression to wishes which are wholly impossible of fulfillment. The constant indulgence of these impossible wishes, and even their verbal expression, only assists in the accumulation of unfulfilled wishes in the subconscious mind, and this is certain to be productive of mischief in subsequent years.

SOURCE

[If a man says to himself: "I wish I had a place in the country!" and does not express himself further in word or act, we may be quite sure that unconsciously (that is, with the greater part of his personality), he does not want a home in the country. In fact the conscious verbal expression of this wish is many times, though not always, a direct indication of the man's unconscious desire not to be bothered with suburban or rural ownership. For, if he really did want it, ideas would continually occur to him showing him how he could take steps to get his house (Lay 122-23).]

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A great many people are contributing to their future unhappiness by giving expression to such statements as "I wish I had a million dollars," "I wish I had this, or that."

Of course, the degree of mischief depends upon the seriousness with which the wish is indulged. The half humorous expressions of this sort which some people are in the habit of making need not disturb the psychologist, but I think if we allow ourselves to wish for the impossible we are indirectly contributing to the sum total of our future psychic conflicts.

I: INTRODUCTION: SOME PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGY, NORMAL OR ABNORMAL (Conklin 3)

Psychoanalysts think of the normal as well as the abnormal psyche as being tripartite.

It is composed of that which we know as conscious,

of what they call the fore-conscious (occasionally referred to as the pre-conscious) and of the unconscious (C 13).

The fore-conscious is supposed to contain memories which we can voluntarily recall or which may be easily aroused and also incompleting trains of thought which have been interrupted by intrusions from the environment (C 13).

8:1.7 We must not lose sight of the theory that the mind is divided into three phases of consciousness:

8:1.8 1. The conscious—the realm of conscious awareness.

8:1.9 2. The preconscious (also called foreconscious)—

the domain of recallable memories—

the domain of the theoretic Freudian censor.

SOURCE

Later psychoanalytic literature has profited by the criticism of the **editor** concept. Now it is more frequently referred to as the censorship and is thought of as the **conflict** between the sex group of instincts, which seek immediate satisfaction, and the ego instincts, which are involved with the ego ideal and which with it seek an ultimate pleasure or satisfaction (C 16).

It will be observed that what many describe as the subconscious is here assumed to be differentiated into the **fore-consciousness** and the **unconscious** (C 13).

In the earlier Freudian literature the censor was frequently referred to as lying **between** the **fore-conscious** and the unconscious and as having a marked inhibitory effect upon all unconscious impulses (C 15).

[The will is not a **distinct mental power** in the sense that judgment, reason, memory, etc., are powers of the mind.

The will **represents to the mind what the sum total does to a column of figures** (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 57.)]

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In reality the psychic **editor** is nothing more nor less than the *fact of conflict*.

8:1.10 3. The **unconscious**—the real bulk of the mind commonly known as the subconscious.

Practically speaking, the subconscious embraces both the **preconscious** and the **unconscious**.

8:1.11 In discussing the Freudian view of the subconscious it should be made clear that

what the psychoanalyst calls the censor, the psychic critic, is supposed to reside in this borderline region of **pre-consciousness**.

This psychic term, censor, is in many ways like the term will.

It designates a psychic function, but does not connote a **discrete psychic power**.

The will, we know, is the sum total of all positive mental activity.

It **represents to the mind what the sum total does to a column of figures**;

and so, since the censor is the sum total of all the critical, censorious, or conscientious ideas and ideals of human intellect, it is convenient to have a term to express the functioning of this group of mental activities which are at the bottom of all psychic conflicts, just as it is convenient to have the term will to use in designating the summation of psychic choice and decision.

PSYCHOANALYSIS

FREUD AND PSYCHO-ANALYSIS (Mitchell 25)

[Compare M 25-26.]

8:2.1 The word psychoanalysis has come to be connected with Freud's concept of nervous disorders and emotional upheavals, and while the Freudian philosophy, at its foundation, is not sound, in my opinion, nevertheless, we are beholden to Freud for very much that has been helpful in our concept of the neuroses, and we are highly indebted to him for the technique of psychoanalysis,

[See 6:6.2, 7:0.6, 7:5.6, 7:5.12, 10:8.11, 24:4.11, 27:2.]

tho some of us prefer to use the term "emotional analysis," in view of the fact that we do not agree with Freud's exclusive sex idea as to the origin of all these nervous troubles.

[Compare M 29-30.]

8:2.2 The idea of repression, as generally accepted by modern psychotherapists, is that sooner or later, in the career of a developing mind, unacceptable wishes are destined to come up into consciousness.

SOURCE

A general indication of the nature of the forces at work in repression was obtained from an examination of the kind of experiences which were forgotten by the patients he had treated.... They were always related to some **wish** which had arisen in the patient's mind and had come into conflict with his ethical or æsthetic **ideals**.

The mechanism of hysterical symptoms began to be clear. It seemed to derive its motive power from a series of mental events—first of all an **unacceptable wish**, then mental conflict, then **repression**,

and, finally, **symptom** formation (M 30).

It is sometimes supposed that a memory tends to become inaccessible because of the painfulness of the affect **which accompanied the original experience**, but as Dr. Broad very truly says: "The essential factor is the emotional effect which the *memory* of the experience *would* have if it arose **now**." ... As has already been pointed out, the truly pathogenic memories are to be found in every case **far back in childhood**,

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These are the **wishes** of a primitive biologic nature, and they are out of harmony with the **ideals** acquired by education;

and so there must necessarily ensue conflicts between the primitive urge of old Mother Nature and the acquired standards of civilization.

If these **unacceptable wishes** are unsatisfied, **repressed** without proper assimilation or elimination, not suitably sublimated,

then, in the case of certain hereditarily predisposed individuals, nervous **symptoms** sooner or later make their appearance.

8:2.3 It cannot be doubted that many experiences of **early childhood**, gone entirely out of conscious memory, figure in these repression complexes.

Again, we repress our complexes not so much because of any pain or disgust **which accompanied the original experience**, but because of the fact that such things, if not suppressed, would cause us pain or embarrassment at the **present time**.

and they are often memories of experiences which were by no means unpleasant to the child ... (M 41).

It is noteworthy that when the unconscious wish tends or threatens to enter consciousness it always gives rise to **anxiety** (M 48).

Thus we see that in all three forms of psycho-neurosis [*i.e.*, conversion hysteria, anxiety hysteria and obsessional neurosis] the formation of **symptoms** is a mechanism of defence against the occurrence of **anxiety**,

just as we saw that **repression** is a defence against **unbearable ideas or wishes**.

Both in repression and in symptom-formation it looks as if the Ego were trying to escape from or defend itself against **something which it fears** (M 48-49).

I: INTRODUCTION: SOME PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGY, NORMAL AND ABNORMAL (Conklin 3)

It must be further understood that psychoanalysts always think of mental processes as **dynamic**. General psychology sometimes gives the student the notion that he is studying a more or less **passive** sequence of events. This is never the attitude of the psychoanalyst (C 14).

8:2.4 Overmuch suppression seems to engender **anxiety**, an attitude of generalized apprehension,

and it is not unlikely that many of our nervous **symptoms** are but a defense reaction against this indefinite and harassing **anxiety**.

Our **repression** is a defense against the **unbearable ideas or unwise wishes**.

In both cases, it would appear that our real self, the conscious ego, is trying to escape from **something which it greatly fears**.

8:2.5 It should be remembered that the psychoanalysts do not visualize the memories and complexes of the subconscious as peaceful and **passive** complexes slumbering in harmless rest—not at all.

They rather look upon these latent and submerged memory-feelings as **dynamic** repressions—

SOURCE

With prehuman beings or very primitive man there was no thinking, no reasoning, no constructive imagination, just the undifferentiated consciousness of intense drives or impulses, of rages, hungers, fears, passions (C 14).

VII: SAFETY DEVICES (Bisch 68)

Another student complained that his eyes pained when he read nights. He was worrying because he couldn't study (B 74).

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as rages, hungers, fears, passions, and drives; as the residue of the primitive prehuman animal mind.

8:2.6 As an illustration of the working of psychoanalysis let me cite the case of a young man eighteen years of age, who had a subtle form of eye trouble, which none of our experienced oculists had succeeded in curing. There was no question that there was some trouble, because his eyes would water whenever he tried to study.

He said it felt as if there were some very fine particles of sand on the lids. Again and again the oculist said he did not have granulation of the lids. Time after time his glasses were changed, but his eye trouble was such that he had to give up school.

8:2.7 It is interesting to note that this lad, when he was eight years of age, had the measles, and that there was some real transient eye trouble which made it necessary for him to quit school. Here we have the starting point of this eye complex. He knew that if his eye trouble were sufficiently serious he would not have to go to school. He hated school. He was a dreamer, highly imaginative and impractical. He liked to write poetry in the spring and tramp through the woods. He read along the lines in which he was interested, and it was this fact that gave me the clue to his case. He could read any number of his favorite books without difficulty.

SOURCE

An hour's analytical conversation proved conclusively that the trouble which interfered with study was not his eyes.

The crux of his trouble was his being in love with a girl

who said she wouldn't marry him until he had been graduated. If his eyes "went back on him" he would be excused from going on with his college course and could marry so much the sooner (B 74).

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8:2.8 I made up my mind that his eye trouble was largely a subconscious defense reaction against going to school—that his subconscious had determined to maintain it as an alibi.

His parents, tho they could ill afford it, had provided private teachers, and, in a way, had kept up his education. He liked this private tutoring much better than being with the common herd in the school-room.

8:2.9 But now, at the age of eighteen, he fell violently in love;

and, of course, things began to happen right away. The young lady was not enthusiastic about him.

She frankly told him that, if his eyes were so bad, he could not get a college education and so could hardly hope to make a living for her and for the family they might have to raise.

This put a powerful displacing idea into the subconscious mind of the boy; an effective idea, since it was a sex notion—one of the master emotions. It didn't take this new idea sixty days to begin to displace and rout out the old eye complex. The young man suddenly decided that he was eating too much starch, and that this wrong diet was responsible for all his eye trouble. He all but cut starches out of his diet, and immediately his eyes began to improve. They really improved—several physicians admitted it. They ceased to water. He was extraordinarily keen in carrying out the program of making up his studies and preparing to take his college entrance examinations in the fall.

He is now in his junior year. He has had one or two attacks of indigestion and a few other nervous upsets during these two and one-half years of his college career, but he is never bothered with his eyes. In fact, in all correspondence with the young lady of his choice he is ever telling her how strong his eyes are.

8:2.10 My purpose in narrating this case is to show that old Mother Nature is somewhat of a psychoanalyst herself; that the ordinary contacts of society and the experiencing of certain emotions are, in and of themselves, effectively carrying on, betimes, this same program of emotional displacement and sublimation that the medical psychoanalyst is wont to carry out in his practise of mental medicine.

THE FREUDIAN LIBIDO

[See 27:6.1.]

8:3.1 In discussing Freud's libido, let me begin by saying that I do not recognize the existence of such a thing in the Freudian sense. As already stated, I am disposed to recognize five great groups of human impulses or urges.

THEORY OF THE INSTINCTS (Mitchell 97)

The [early Freudian] conception of Libido, as the energy behind all manifestations of the sexual instinct in this extended sense of the word, was formulated, and a distinction was drawn and an opposition recognized between self-preservative or Ego-instincts and race-preservative, sexual or libidinal instincts (M 115).

8:3.2 Freud would include in his libido the urge for race preservation in contradistinction to, and in conflict with, the ego, the urge for self-preservation;

and, practically speaking, there is some truth in the contention.

SOURCE

8: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

But it is a mistake to try to explain all nervous symptoms on this basis. The fact that the Freudian doctrine works out in practise now and then merely serves to indicate how often the sex complex is the one which has been unwisely oversuppressed.

[I do believe that of all the single causes of nervous disturbance, sex suppression (sex perversion, sex misunderstanding, etc.) is the greatest. I find (as already noted) in the careful study of, say, a thousand neurotic sufferers, that sex is the major factor in the trouble of about one-fourth of the cases. In the other three-fourths, I discover some other form of emotional suppression to be the chief offender, though sex may appear as a minor factor even in many of these cases.

I do not dispute the fact that sex difficulties of some sort may be present in possibly one-half of our cases of neurasthenia, hysteria, etc., but I do dispute the contention that it is a chief and fundamental factor in all, or even in a majority, of cases (*The Truth About Mind Cure* 39-40).]

In the study of a thousand cases of emotional suppression, I found that in slightly over five hundred it was the sex complex that was the offending cause.

Because sex is such a prominent feature in human experience, the Freudians have succeeded more or less, even tho operating on a somewhat erroneous hypothesis.

[See M 114-15, where Mitchell explains that Freud's conception of the Libido embraces the energy not only behind adult manifestations of the sexual instinct but also behind experiences of childhood not ordinarily considered to belong to the sexual life.]

8:3.3 There is no doubt that we should have a proper place for Freud's libido if we could limit it or confine it more directly to a purely sex meaning.

THEORY OF THE LIBIDO (Mitchell 51)

Thus we see that there may be fixation of the Libido at any of the stages passed through on the way to its adult organization, and there may be fixation upon early love-objects or types of object-choice. And when the Libido turns back, in the face of obstacles to its satisfaction, the regression may be towards one or other or both of these forms of fixation (M 63).

[T]he peculiar pleasure derived from the act of sucking very soon becomes an aim in itself, irrespective of any nutritional need.

And when the baby discovers that in the pursuit of this kind of pleasure its own thumb forms a satisfactory substitute for the mother's breast, the oral Libido reverts to the auto-erotism which characterizes infantile sexuality in general (M 60-61).

There is undoubtedly some truth in his contention that in the development of the emotional nature

the sex wish, or, if we may so express it, a limited libido, may become fixed upon some person or even some object, and that at a later time the emotional nature may regress to this point of fixation

and thus set in operation an entirely new and apparently inexplicable group of symptoms.

8:3.4 It is easy to overemphasize the importance of the early emotions having to do with the physical contact of the child with its parents.

Undoubtedly there is some sort of pleasure connected with the contact of the child with the mother's breast aside from the satisfaction of the nutrition instinct;

but I fail to see why so much sexual significance should be attached to this,

as the child certainly shows the same sort of avidity when it sucks its own thumb.

The sucking instinct is strongly inborn as a part of the nutrition instinct, and it is probably connected with some sort of personality satisfaction; but I see no reason for such labored arguments to prove it has a sex significance.

8:3.5 Thus, while I recognize the existence of such a grouping of psychic powers in the human mind as Freud designates by the term libido, I do not assign to it anything like the all-dominant role that Freud does. I prefer to discuss each case in the light of the actual findings in it—findings which can be naturally and easily recognized, and which do not require that we assume so much of Freudian philosophy and terminology.

THE FREUDIAN EGO

THE EGO IN FREUDIAN PSYCHOLOGY (Mitchell 73)

8:4.1 In the study and treatment of a certain group of psychic conflicts, it is sometimes well to view the human mind after the manner of the later Freudian concept of a limited libido and the ego.

[T]wo sets of forces seemed to be concerned in all the mental processes which the analyst had to study.

This concept of psychic activity consists in dividing the mental life into the following two groups:

SOURCE

On the one hand were all those impulses and desires which have behind them the driving force of the **Libido**; on the other hand were all those forces, whatever they might be, which are opposed to Libido-strivings and lead to repression. Since the final goal of Libido-striving is **race-preservation**, the repressing forces were identified with those underlying the biological antithesis of race-preservation, namely self-preservation;

and the forces ministering to **self-preservation** were given the name of **Ego**-instincts in opposition to the sexual instincts which are the carriers of the forces of the Libido (M 73).

Before it is born a child has no unsatisfied wishes: all its wants are provided for in a world that exists solely for its enjoyment; but in the process of being born this state of bliss is rudely interrupted and a terrifying experience is undergone.... **Hunger** sets in, and here again the helpless infant can do nothing but cry (M 78-79).

The Ego is really a part of the Id which has been modified by the influence of the outer world, brought to bear upon it through the system of perceptual **consciousness**. The contact with reality thus effected **compels** the Ego to adopt the **reality-principle** and to abandon the pleasure-principle which holds absolute sway in the Id (M 87).

8: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

1. The **libido**—the sexual group of instincts and emotions—those thoughts and feelings which have to do with **race preservation**.

2. The **ego**—the non-sexual emotions and instincts—those feelings, reactions, and ambitions which are concerned in **self-preservation**.

8:4.2 Of all the emotions representative of the ego group of instincts,

the earliest to be experienced is probably **hunger**.

8:4.3 Very early in life the child is forced to abandon its conception of the world as merely a pleasure resort.

It is **compelled** increasingly to give up its life of fantasy and to accept an existence of **reality**;

Before the love-attachments of the Oedipus situation arise, however, an earlier form of emotional tie between child and parent is found. A small boy takes his father as his **ideal; he wants to be like him** and to do as he does (M 90).

Identifications with the parents form the nucleus of the **Ego-ideal**, and the formation of the Ego-ideal is the outcome of that phase of sexual development which is dominated by the Oedipus relationship between child and parent; indeed its formation is primarily brought about by the need for mastering and repressing the Oedipus complex (M 92).

The most important change in the development of the Ego is the occurrence of a differentiation within the Ego itself, whereby a **criticising faculty** arises,

opposed to the complaisant Ego which too readily adopts as its own the aims of the Id (M 88).

It is the development of a differentiated portion of the Ego which [Freud] calls the *Ego-ideal* or *super-Ego*; the Ego-ideal is the source of the **moral conscience**, of self-observation and self-criticism, of the forces of repression and the censorship of dreams (M 88-89).

and concomitant with the development of this concept of the reality of the world there comes gradually to be built up this ego system of non-sexual complexes. It is the system of **conscious** urges which is coordinated with the enforced recognition of the reality of existence.

8:4.4 In its early days the child looks upon its parents as the **ideal**. It desires to **be like them** when it grows up.

It is largely imitative of them,

and further, through this process of **identification of itself with its parents**, it comes gradually to build up the domain of **idealism** within the **ego** system of complexes;

and this domain of the ideal is the birthplace of the psychic **ensor**,

that mental power which early dares both to criticize the ego group of complexes and to censor the libido, the sexual system of complexes.

Later on, this censorship of the mind becomes expanded into **conscience** in connection with recognition of the **moral** standards of right and wrong,

and with the expanding appreciation of things spiritual and supreme.

And so the ego urges continue to develop;

[A]ll the infantile perfections which had gratified [the child's] self-love become the objects of criticism and admonition from his elders, and a dawning sense of his own unworthiness completes the overthrow of his early narcissism. But this frustration of his self-love is a privation which he cannot endure; he sets up within his Ego an ideal of what he would like to be, and this ideal he can love as he loved his real Ego when he was his own ideal.

and with the early overthrow of Narcissism, or self-worship, the censor complex comes into existence;

and eventually, with progressive expansion of the realm of consciousness,

But self-love cannot now be gratified unless the Ego lives up to the standard imposed by the Ego-ideal, and to ensure this gratification a "conscience" must arise which watches the Ego and imposes upon it the demands of the Ego-ideal (M 89).

conscience itself begins to materialize.

8:4.5 If, then, we are going to recognize man's mind as consisting of these two domains of psychic activity, we are forced to admit that

[contd] Freud sometimes speaks of conscience as if it were a special institution in the mind, distinct from both the Ego and the Ego-ideal; but his account of how the Ego-ideal arises is in keeping with his definite inclusion of conscience as one of its functions (M 90).

conscience resides with the ego complex and not with the libido.

This is clearly shown by the fact that in the dream-life the most conscientious and upright individual will permit himself to indulge the libido instincts to their fullest extent, without a dream-blush of shame. Clearly, conscience is not at home in the libido realms of the subconscious.

The criticizing function of the Ego-ideal may be unconsciously performed, so that a patient may suffer from an intense **sense of guilt** without being able to say what he is guilty of;

8:4.6 We often find cases in which this developing conscience, this psychic censorship of our feelings and emotions, is carried to the extent that an individual becomes possessed of some generalized **feeling of guilt**. He just simply feels guilty of something.

This state of mind is often associated with the inferiority complex.

and further, the sense of guilt may itself be unconscious, so that the patient does not feel guilty, but **ill** (M 92-93).

In other cases, instead of an indefinite feeling of guilt, the individual becomes possessed of a strange feeling of **illness**.

We have, indeed, a series of oppositions which have successively been brought to light in the development of psycho-analytic theory; primary system versus secondary system, pleasure principle versus reality principle, unconscious system versus preconscious system; and there would seem to be some factor common to them all which perhaps finds its fullest expression in the formula:

8:4.7 When we undertake to reduce the actual warfare and the sham battles of the psychic nature to the lowest possible terms, we visualize the conflict as occurring between

Libido versus **Ego** (M 81).

the **libido**—the sex emotions, the domain of race preservation—and the **ego**—the nonsexual emotions,

[See Chap. 7.]

or those which we have otherwise classified as the life urge, the power urge, the worship urge, and the social urge.

THE PSYCHONEUROSES

THEORY OF THE NEUROSES
(Mitchell 119)

The most important [conceptions of the neuroses] are the theory of mental dissociation expounded by Janet, and the kinds of mental process which Freud has described in his theory of the neuroses (M 119).

[Janet] ascribes the occurrence of any and every form of psycho-neurotic illness to two main factors: (1) the failure of the psychical tension which ordinarily acts as a synthesizing force and preserves the integrity of the "personal consciousness",

[Janet ascribes the occurrence of dissociation to lack of a hypothetical psychical tension which normally keeps the mind a synthetic unity (M 21).]

and (2) the liability of the tendencies most recently acquired, and of the acts most difficult of accomplishment, to become enfeebled or to drop away from the personal synthesis when the psychical tension falls too low (M 122-23).

The most fundamental concept of Freudian psychology is that of mental conflict and repression. Everything else is secondary and derivative (M 124).

8:5.1 Janet would have us believe that the neuroses are largely due to a subtle form of dissociation.

He believes that our nervous symptoms are largely the result of failure to maintain a certain subtle cohesiveness of consciousness.

As he expresses it, there is lack of normal tension,

and with this relaxation and letting down of the normal state of holding consciousness together,

there is bound to occur a loss of control over certain of the more loosely held complexes,

followed by those symptoms which we recognize as the neuroses.

Freud wants to account for all our nervous disorders on the ground of repression and the subsequent conflict;

SOURCE

[See 7:0.4.]

Perhaps the most important and most permanent part of Janet's work in abnormal psychology is his wonderful series of studies on the dissociations of **hysteria**; more especially of those massive dissociations which become manifest as somnambulisms, fugues, and **multiple personalities** (M 124).

The **diminution of psychical tension** which leads to neurosis is a result of **exhaustion** produced by emotion or by excessive expenditure of energy in the accomplishment of acts belonging to a high order in the hierarchy of tendencies. Janet does not admit the part played by **repression** in inhibiting the output of energy, and he seems to imply that all failure to energize a particular act is always due to real exhaustion (M 123).

8: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

and I suppose the behaviorists would account for our nervous manifestations by saying that we have so many experiences for which we have no corresponding verbal symbols that we are suffering from a wild riot in the domain of the un verbalized psychic life.

8:5.2 And who can say that there is not some truth in all three of these theories? I am inclined to believe there is.

Janet seems to me to be most nearly right when it comes to the study of **hysteria** and a certain group of definite personality disturbances, going on down to **multiple personality**.

I am inclined to think that Freud is right in the more common, every-day group of neuroses, the so-called fears, dreads, obsessions, and anxieties, along with the fatigue and brain-fag of so-called neurasthenia.

8:5.3 Janet teaches that **diminution of psychic tension** results from emotional **exhaustion**,

but he is not very clear about what produces the emotional exhaustion. Perhaps, after all, we have to fall back on Freud's concept of **repression** and conflict to account for the exhaustion.

SOURCE

[contd] Janet divides the neuroses into two great groups, Hysteria and Psychasthenia (M 123).

In hysteria, for reasons which he has insufficiently explained, the lowering of the level of psychical tension is localized, so, that instead of a general diminution of function, there is a retraction of the field of consciousness and a consequent mental dissociation (M 123-24).

As we have already seen, he ascribes the symptoms of psychasthenia to a general lowering of psychical tension whereby the highest and most complicated mental functions are deprived of the force necessary for their fulfilment (M 123).

[The author has had the greatest success in treating these patients by the direct and honest conversational method, first recommended by Prince and Dubois. This consists in systematically and judiciously laying the real facts before the patient, and ... the real dependence to effect a cure is placed upon this regime of reeducation (*Worry and Nervousness* 281).]

8: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

Janet seeks to put all our nervous troubles into two great groups—

first, hysteria, which he regards as a localized lowering of psychic tension;

and second, psychasthenia, in which there is generalized lowering of tension.

8:5.4 In my own dealings with nervous people, I find that I am constantly utilizing both of these concepts of the neuroses. While I do not accept the basic Freudian philosophy, I find that I am all the while successfully utilizing the Freudian technique when it comes to exploring the mind, and in some respects when it comes to treatment,

tho the methods of treatment which have proved most successful in my hands have been those of Dubois's scheme of reeducation—freely and frankly telling the whole truth to the patient.

SOURCE

[See 27:6.1.]

8: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

8:5.5 While I am very favorably disposed toward Freud's theory of repression and conflicts, I am not able to go so far as to accept his hypothesis that everything undesirable in human nervous behavior is due to conflict between a hypothetical libido and the more generally accepted group of ego complexes. I find that when I postulate five groups of possibly dominant complexes in the psychic life, I am able to utilize much more of the Freudian philosophy in an effort to understand the symptoms and vagaries of neurotic patients.

There is no doubt that when one psychic complex becomes dominant over its fellows, these subordinate urges begin to utter protest in the form of certain nervous symptoms; and it is highly probable that

Freud says: "The purpose of the symptom is either a sexual gratification or a defence against it; in **hysteria** the positive, wish-fulfilling character predominates on the whole,

and in the **obsessional** neurosis the negative ascetic character... (M 128).

when they temporarily gain the upper hand of the tyrannically overlording urge, they seek gratification along **hysterical** lines;

and that when they fail thus to assert their individuality to the point of gratification, they set up a continuous protest as manifested in various **obsessions**, fears, and even generalized anxiety.

8:5.6 We must not forget, in this connection, the rôle of buried or latent childhood fantasy.

Freud, in his early work, took [phantasies] at their face value, and believed that his patients had actually had the infantile experiences which they related to him in analysis. Later, however, he became convinced that as a rule these scenes of infancy were not real experiences ...

... Further experience of neurotic patients did not lessen the frequency of such stories, and it came to be realized that, although they very often were phantasies and not memories of actual experiences, they nevertheless played the same important part in the production of neurosis as had been originally ascribed to them (M 130-31).

[A great deal of nervousness, fear, worry, and even obsession, is found sometimes to have originated in connection with dreams (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 408).]

The repressed Libido, now entirely unconscious, takes advantage of the mental processes peculiar to the unconscious,

and by means of condensation and displacement, and consequent distortion and disguise, can secure some sort of satisfaction

in neurotic symptoms which are symbolic substitutes for repressed libidinal wishes (M 141).

You can start up a neurosis by the subconscious indulgence of a childhood fantasy, just as much as by passing through some actual and distressing experience.

I am of the opinion that many times a dream, tho it is unremembered on waking, is the starting point of certain obsessions and nervous manifestations.

8:5.7 Our repressed wishes survive secretly in some realm of the subconscious,

perhaps at a point of fixation developed in the emotional experiences of childhood;

and ultimately these forgotten impulses seek to escape or find expression in certain modified forms—in the language of the psychotherapist, by displacement, distortion, and disguise—as well as by the symbolism of dream-life

and more definitely by means of the nervous symptoms and psychic obsessions associated with the so-called neuroses.

SOURCE

[Contrast 15:12.]

[See 9:2.4, 9:7.3-4 and 9:8.2.]

8: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

8:5.8 Generally speaking, I think we have three great groupings of the neuroses, and they are:

8:5.9 1. *The psychic group*—The neuroses that are definitely intellectual. They are based largely on suggested fears, and embrace the dreads, phobias, inferiority complex, etc.—the chronic worries as distinguished from the anxiety states. This group also includes our hypochondriacs and others who chronically spy upon themselves.

8:5.10 2. *The emotional group*—The group definitely exhibiting the anxiety state. This includes those patients in whom complex suppression is manifesting itself in physical nervous symptoms, such as tremors, weakness, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and the like. This group finds its most striking expression in those symptoms which are on the borderline of hysteria—what we might call the physical group of the neurotic manifestations. Here are also to be found all cases of nervous tension, mental conflicts, or brain fag, together with the anxiety neuroses or what is sometimes called psychasthenia. There may be more or less emotional depression in this group, but it is usually of a periodic nature, and fatigue is often the prominent feature, causing these patients to be regarded as victims of nervous exhaustion or so-called neurasthenia.

[See 14:5.2 and 14:5.5.]

8:5.11 3. *The behavior group*—We have a whole class of nervous manifestations which represent a **defense reaction on the part of the patient—an effort to get away from an unpleasant environment** or to dodge doing something he dislikes doing. These are the cases of **maladjustment** and more or less chronic indecision. They are procrastinators. They don't want to face the problem and solve it now. They want to dodge the issue. They are the people who have brain-storms and mood-swings. They have more or less dissociation, as Janet would say, and the typical representations of this group are **hysteria**, on the one hand, and double or **multiple personality** on the other. **Paranoia** may even belong in this category.

[See 22:13.6.]

8:5.12 All of these groups taken together are more properly denominated the psychoneuroses, tho they are often spoken of as neurotic disorders, neurasthenia, etc.

[See 15:12.5.]

8:5.13 It is entirely possible for one person to be simultaneously afflicted with more than one of these neurosis groups. In fact, we see individuals right along who are afflicted with all three. They not only have a mild psychic type of fear and dread, but they are also afflicted with the emotional phase, and in some cases even with the tortures of the behavior or dissociation group.

8:5.14 It is these composite neuroses that puzzle the doctor and so terrify and harass the patient, not to mention what they do to his friends and family. All are capable of analysis—of being worked out, run down, segregated—and then, if the patient will intelligently cooperate, they can be eliminated—cured.

SOURCE

8: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

Practically speaking, all are curable, but not by any ordinary form of treatment, medicinal or physical. While therapeutic measures are sometimes of transient help in the management of these cases, the real cure consists in discovering the truth and facing it with manhood and womanhood, and staying on the job until new habits of nervous reaction are developed to displace the older and deleterious reactions.

DESIRE FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY

V: THE PSYCHIC PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 121)

5. THE PHYSIOLOGY OF SPIRITUALISM (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 130)

Spiritualism panders to that egotistic human desire for excitement and adventure.

The average man likes to dabble with the extraordinary.

We tend to overlook the remarkable nature of the common occurrences of everyday life, and we long to make contact with big things and unusual events.

We enjoy the exhilaration of talking through the air; wireless telephony and radio appeal to our imagination; and we long to project the experiment one step further—to hoist our spiritual aerials and get the wireless waves from other worlds.

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SOURCE

The one seems little more impossible than the other, that is, provided we but lead ourselves to admit the existence of a spiritual world and the reality of spiritual forces (*TTAS* 131).

V: THE MECHANISMS (Lay 147)

§17. *Miracles* (Lay 189)

The performance of the antennae or the coherer in the wireless is no less remarkable than the hypersensitivity in the medium in receiving spirit messages. In the restricted sense of the word believe, I believe in both impartially; but there is a sort of universality and ready controllability in the wireless apparatus, a systematization

such that any boy can set it up, if he follows definite directions, and can receive messages coming from hundreds of miles.

8: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

The one seems little more impossible than the other—provided we lead ourselves to believe in the existence of a world of spirits.

8:6.2 But we must not overlook the fact that in the case of wireless telegraphy we have been able to master and understand, more or less fully, the laws which underlie and govern its successful operation.

There is a universality about it.

Any man, under given conditions, who will comply with the physical requirements pertaining to wireless telegraphy, can both send and receive messages.

It is not a matter of personal endowment or peculiar gifts. And herein is the great weakness of the spiritualistic claims. No laws are discoverable, no rules are known, except those self-imposed dogmas of the mediums pertaining to darkness, etc., all of which lend themselves so favorably to the perpetration of fraud. No universal precepts are forthcoming, which will enable the sincere spiritualistic inquirer to make reliable contact with the shores of another world.

SOURCE

8: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

The “rules of the game” are wholly ephemeral; we have no reliable code, the following of which will insure successful communication with the spirit world.

8:6.3 Science does not assert that such laws will not be discovered.

[And the apparent contradiction of the law of gravitation which we see in tacks, iron filings, etc., rising vertically from the earth to a magnet suspended above them is no less wonderful than the levitation and other materialization phenomena. The difference is only the rarity of the latter, should the latter be scientifically proved real (L 190).]

The scientist, while recognizing the universal presence of the law of gravitation, does not for a moment deny the fact that a magnet will cause a handful of iron filings to rise directly upward, and thus defy gravitation. Science admits that magnetism can overcome the general law in this case.

What science asks, in reference to the spirit world, is merely that it be shown some dependable rule of action, which obtains and operates there. Science recognizes that magnetic attraction can levitate certain metals and suspend them above the earth, and it does not for a moment maintain that there are not in existence spiritual forces and powers which could levitate the human body. Science merely contends that such forces have not yet been discovered.

8:6.4 The skepticism of science only serves to make the occasional phenomena of spiritualism, which baffle us, the more fascinating to the average person.

§18. *Desire for the Extraordinary* (Lay 191)

The general run of people are content with the average dimensions so to speak of their individualities. Consciously they desire to increase them neither in space nor time; but for a certain type of people the unconscious craving for mere extension of ego is shown in their conscious interests in the so-called marvels of spiritism (L 191-92).

We are constantly meeting with people of a certain type, who are burning up with an unconscious craving for “an extension of ego,” and these become ready and willing victims of the propaganda of spiritualism.

SOURCE

[Compare L 192-93.]

§19. *Desire for Excitement* (Lay 193)

[contd] It is more than likely that besides the unconscious desire for the amplification of the ego manifested in all spiritual phenomena, there is also an additional factor in the unconscious **wish for excitement** (L 193).

That the ordinarily invisible should become visible, the unheard heard, and that the material body should have a spiritual body accompanying it and all the other phenomena of spiritism are so strikingly at variance with average experience, as to belong really to that class of ideas known as **newspaper stuff—the strange, odd, freakish, outré, excessive, sensational** (L 193-94).

8: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

They are not satisfied with making contact with the material world about them; they want that extension of ego which reaches out to worlds beyond. They long to conquer regions that are invisible and unknowable. They are not content with the limitations of the finite; they want, as it were, to touch elbows with the infinite.

8:6.5 Other persons are favorably inclined toward the phenomena of spiritualism through pure curiosity and the commonplace **desire for excitement**.

We all have to admit that it appeals to the spirit of adventure to hold hands around the mystic circle, in the dim light of the séance room, and expectantly await messages from an unseen world.

It is **unusual, odd, freakish, even sensational**, and that is what appeals to the average mind.

The daily press, for the same reason, plays up in its headlines only those occurrences which are out of the ordinary. The **newspapers** have discovered that this is what the average person is interested in reading.

THE DEATH WISH

VII: BELIEF BEFORE WISH (Lay 247)

§5. *Belief and Wish* (Lay 259)

The wish for the death of some definite person which is unconscious in the mind of the adult was a conscious wish in the mind of the same adult when he was a child (L 259).

[Compare L 261.]

[Contrast L 259.]

8:7.1 In connection with our discussion of pain-and-pleasure and life-and-death wishes and complexes, attention might be called to a more strictly psychologic phase of this question,

namely, the fact that when we are young we so often wish that certain disagreeable persons were out of our way;

we should be glad never to see them again, and commonly give expression to this wish by saying, "I wish you were dead."

The child early discovers that the dead do not come back to bother us, and, in his frank sincerity, wishes that individuals who pester him were dead and buried. But as we grow older, especially around the time of adolescence, we begin to worry over all these people whom we wished dead. We learn from the Bible that "Whoso looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart," and if we are of a religious nature we come to the conclusion that we have already committed a host of murders in our hearts. We now come to regret these murderous wishes of our childhood days, especially against those who have really died in the meanwhile; and so we seek to find some way to help the situation, to mollify the conscience.

SOURCE

§6. *Sadistic Wish* (Lay 260)

The way in which the sadistic death-wish tension is relaxed is through the compensatory wish for the continuance of the life of the person **wished dead** (L 261).

This then is the explanation of the believers in spirit existence, and the stronger the unconscious sadism the profounder the belief and in some cases the more energetic the attempts to **prove** scientifically the existence of something that scientifically cannot be even conceived (L 261).

V: THE MECHANISMS (Lay 147)

§9. *Attitude Toward Departed* (Lay 170)

[contd] Now if we confine our discussion to the feelings of the survivors concerning the dead, we shall find from a study of **funeral rites and mourning customs among primitive peoples** that, in all of these rites and customs factors are present which show both love and hate, friendliness and hostility, both actual and projected.

The friendliness and love are shown in the **ancestor worship**, and the hate and hostility in the belief in evil spirits and demons; and we shall see that all of these are projections on the part of the survivors (L 170-71).

8: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

8:7.2 There comes, then, as a comfort to us, this doctrine of spiritualism—that our friends whom we **wished dead** are not in reality dead at all, but very much alive, having simply found a portal to a higher and better life.

We therefore take a keen but more or less unconscious delight in **proving**, through spiritualism, that the victims of our death-wish are happy, alive and enjoying pleasure;

and thus we hope to antidote the psychology of our regrets and to appease an accusing conscience.

8:7.3 That we mentally follow our friends and associates to the other world is shown by

the **funeral rites and customs of primitive peoples**.

The Chinese **worship their ancestors** and seek to live on good terms with them.

SOURCE

[contd] It may well be the case that the departed was a character of mingled **good and evil**, as indeed we all are,

but the thoughts that occur about him tend of their own accord to integrate themselves into systems and for a short time after his death the departed savage is regarded as a hostile spirit, who has to be **appeased** in every possible way

so that he may not do harm to the survivors (L 171).

[Compare L 169.]

§11. *Science and Projection* (Lay 173)

It is unquestionable that spiritism is an anthropomorphic tendency, while science might be called cosmomorphic. All the petty details of the nature of the **clothes spirits wear**, of their being sexed or sexless, of their diversions, even of the cigars they smoke and the food and drink they enjoy,

are, on the face of them, projections as **crass** as the houris of the **Mohammedan** paradise, and the bows and arrows of the American Indian **happy hunting ground**;

8: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

The savage knows that his compatriots are composed of both **good and evil** traits of character, of things which give him now pleasure, now pain,

and so after the departure of his friend to another world he seeks in devious ways to **appease** him, and otherwise to show himself friendly,

so as to prevent the newly departed spirit from wreaking vengeance on those who still live.

His mental conception of the spirit of the departed member of the tribe he projects outward, seeming to recognize it as a real thing in the mist, in a hazy cloud, in the shadowy forest; and in many other ways he imagines he is able to detect the spirits of the departed.

8:7.4 It cannot be said that modern spirit mediums have done much to refine this primitive concept.

They tell us about **the clothes that departed spirits wear**, and other material things in their environment.

The spirit land of to-day seems just about as grossly **crass** as the Paradise of either **Mohammedan** or Jew, and just about as material and **puerile** as the **Happy Hunting Ground** of the North American Indian.

SOURCE

and they have far less poetical appeal than the Hellenic phantasies of ambrosia and nectar and of the golden apples of the Gardens of the Hesperides (L 174).

The ancients frankly indulged in their fondest dreams and projected them into their myths (L 174).

[Compare L 174-76.]

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In fact, this spirit land can hardly approach, in beauty of imagination, the mythological spirit abode of the Greeks.

The ancients freely and frankly indulged their most fantastic dreams and then projected them out to constitute the stories of their mythical folk-lore.

The ridiculousness of the modern spiritualistic concept is born of the fact that we feel constrained, in these days, to preserve a semblance of scientific thinking, and so we only become the more ridiculous when we seek to combine scientific reasoning with the fantastic imaginings of spirit beliefs.

THE PRACTISE OF SUBLIMATION

IX: "HIGHER LEVELS OF INTEGRATION" (*The Unconscious*, William A. White 242)

The possibility of two diametrically opposed tendencies working together for a common end is the crux of the whole subject of integration and progressive development.

In other words, in order that progress, development based on integration, should take place a resolution of the forces involved must take place after the manner, as I have indicated, of the parallelogram of forces (W 247).

Solution [of a conflict] means a stepping up to a higher level by the resolution of the forces involved (W 248).

8:8.1 Sublimation is nothing more nor less than the coordinating of two diametrically opposed tendencies so that they will work together harmoniously for a common end;

in other words, the union of contending influences in mind or body, so that their more or less perfect integration makes for progressive development.

It is an effort to push our activities up from the lower levels to the higher levels of integration,

SOURCE

The theory of emergent evolution, therefore, from the mental hygiene point of view, means that for every new adjustment, every solution of an intrapsychic conflict that raises the level of adjustment, a new world, small or large as the case may be, opens to view with all the possibilities that implies for a fuller life (W 250).

The first and fundamental conclusion is that conflict lies at the very basis of life, in fact that the fact of life has its being in conflict.

The second fundamentally important conclusion is that this conflict is between the two diametrically opposed tendencies—the race preservative and the self-preservative (W 253).

Just as conflict is at the basis of life so it is also of consciousness (W 254).

8: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

and when harmony reigns where formerly conflict raged, we speak of the completed process as sublimation.

And this is all consistent with the theory of progressive and directive evolution,

which teaches us that higher organisms are evolved from the lower groups.

8:8.2 We must recognize, to begin with, that conflict lies at the very basis of life.

Elementary life is never peaceful, and it is not strange, therefore, that

conflicts should arise between the self-preservation urges and the higher urges of race preservation,

as well as between other groups of psychic complexes.

Just as certainly as conflict is the basis of physical life, it is early manifested as a part of the developmental phase of psychic life.

If we postulate as primitive instincts such impulses as self-assertion and self-abasement, we can hardly refrain from recognizing that such emotions are destined ever to be in comparative conflict.

XXII: MENTAL CONFLICT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES (Bridges 370)

Sublimation. (Bridges 379)

[contd] Repression with its usually undesirable consequences is not, however, the only possible result of mental conflict.

A conflict may be solved in such a way that both conflicting elements attain a degree of satisfaction.

This form of resolution of a conflict is called "sublimation."

The conflict between mystical and scientific ideas may be resolved by modification of both views so that they are included in a more comprehensive system of ideas called "a philosophy."

The conflict between actual inferiority and the wish for power or superiority may be resolved by accepting our limitations and making the best of the abilities we possess.

The general conflict with reality may be resolved by accepting it temporarily as it is, and then trying to make it conform to our ideals.

Similarly, authority may be accepted and at the same time questioned (Br 379).

Pugnacity may be sublimated into so-called scientific boxing

according to definitely formulated rules.

8:8.3 Repression is not the only possible result of mental struggle.

The conflict may be solved in such a way that both of the conflicting elements attain a degree of satisfaction;

and this form of resolution of the conflict is called sublimation or integration.

The war between poetic and scientific ideas may be resolved by a modification of both views, producing a more comprehensive system of ideas called philosophy.

Conflict between actual inferiority and the wish for power or superiority may be resolved by accepting one's limitations and making the best of the abilities one possesses.

The general conflict with reality may be resolved by accepting it temporarily as it is, and then trying to make it conform to one's ideals.

Similarly, authority may be accepted and at the same time questioned.

8:8.4 Pugnacity may be sublimated into so-called scientific boxing,¹

commercial competition, and social rivalry,

all carried on according to definitely formulated rules.

SOURCE

To do a thing according to rules or regulations is always to some extent a sublimation.

Pugnacity may also be sublimated into competition in school examinations.

It may be expressed in writing polemical pamphlets, or in a political campaign (Br 380).

In these various sublimations the subject lives out his pugnacity and at the same time conforms to the social order in which he lives (Br 380).

I: INTRODUCTION: SOME PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGY, NORMAL AND ABNORMAL (Conklin 3)

Anger becomes righteous indignation;

mere sex passion is transformed into romantic and marital love;

the impulse to torture others becomes the harmless teasing or joking of maturity (C 20).

8: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

To do a thing according to rules is always to some extent a sublimation.

Pugnacity may also be sublimated into competition in school examinations and athletic contests.

It may be expressed in the combat of political campaigns.

In these sublimations the subject lives out his pugnacity, and at the same time conforms to the social order in which he lives.

Our anger is up-stepped to a higher form of resentment called righteous indignation;

our bestial sex impulses are advanced to the more glorified phases of romantic courtship and marital devotion;

our early and barbaric instincts of torture and cruelty become transmuted into our comparatively harmless proclivities of teasing, bantering, and joking.

Thus are our early and inhuman urges finally transmuted into our play-life and civilized humor.

XXII: MENTAL CONFLICT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES (Bridges 370)

Sublimation. (Bridges 379)

[contd from above] Other primitive impulses may be sublimated in a similar manner, and this is the ideal resolution of mental conflict;

because in this way a person avoids anxiety, repression, mental ill-health, and the formation of undesirable traits of character (Br 380).

8:8.5 Other primitive impulses may be sublimated in the same way, and this is the ideal resolution of mental conflict.

In this way a person avoids both mental ill health and the formation of undesirable traits of character.

8:8.6 Common illustrations of the sublimation of the normal sex impulses are to be found in those religious orders which demand celibacy. The priest up-steps his sex emotions to the highest levels of love for humanity and devotion to his calling. At least, the vast majority of the individuals belonging to these religious orders are able to do this to some degree. How many times we hear of a woman disappointed in love taking the veil! Such women, no doubt, are many times successful in displacing their ordinary sex feelings with a higher and largely sublimated affection for the sick and the friendless.

8:8.7 Many an overambitious business man who has discovered the undue development of selfishness and greed in his drive to amass wealth, has sought relief from an oppressive conscience by engaging in a program of philanthropy and social benefaction. There may, indeed, be more or less pride and self-satisfaction entering into the charitable and humanitarian endeavors of many of our well-to-do citizens; nevertheless, there is also in them much sublimation of the baser emotions of greed and property acquisition.

8:8.8 I can remember meeting, in my student days, a young man who was an inordinate scrapper; he was all the time fighting, quarreling, contending. He was unpopular among the students and always in trouble with his teachers. I recall a heart-to-heart talk in which he told me that he longed to get over this fault, but that whenever he tried to put it away, it would come up in some embarrassing situation, and he would fly off the handle, hit somebody, or do something else that was foolish. He was always suffering from remorse and filled with regrets as a result of these emotional sprawls and temperamental outbreaks.

8:8.9 This young man had a difficult time deciding what to do in life. Eventually, in connection with the revival efforts of a well-known evangelist, he “got religion” and decided to become an evangelist. He jumped into his training for the ministry in dead earnest; he enlisted in a very active and somewhat spectacular campaign of fighting sin and the devil. As the years have gone by, I have watched him. He exhibits a changed disposition. True, underneath his religion he still has a highly irritable and unstable temperament; but it is usually controlled now, and he is not ill as a result of emotional suppression. He has made a profound transformation of his pugnacious temperament. He is still a fighter, but now he is fighting evil. He has sublimated his former high-tempered, fiery disposition into the righteous indignation of a man of God who is engaged in making continuous assaults upon the strongholds of sin. He has found the psychic equivalent to give balance to his former disagreeable and scrappy disposition.

[See 9:6.4.]

8:8.10 I could fill this book with stories of the successful sublimation of undesirable traits of character. When one has a strong wish, a profound desire of some sort, it is dangerous to undertake to suppress it bodily into the subconscious. Far better to start out on some sort of campaign for direct and frank displacement, or for this more round-about or glorified form of substitution which we call sublimation.

1. In his 1922 article, "Psycho-analysis," published in *University of Toronto Monthly* (Vol. 22-23), Bridges wrote:

Pugnacity may thus be sublimated into *scientific boxing*, games of rivalry, competition in school examinations, or the strenuosities of political life. This is the important contribution of psycho-analysis to mental hygiene (p. 294).

This indicates that the Bridges source used in *The Mind at Mischief* probably appeared between 1922 and 1929.