

Chapter 2 — The Psychology of Complex Formation

*of The Mind at Mischief:
Tricks and Deceptions of the Subconscious and How to Cope with Them*
(1929)
by
William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S.

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Sources for Chapter 2, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) Bernard **Hart**, M.D., *The Psychology of Insanity* (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1912, 1916)
- (2) Wilfred **Lay**, Ph.D., *Man's Unconscious Spirit: The Psychoanalysis of Spiritism* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1921)
- (3) William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S., ***The Truth About Spiritualism*** (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1923)
- (4) William S. Sadler, M.D., ***The Physiology of Faith and Fear: Or, The Mind in Health and Disease*** (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1912)

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author (or a previous Sadler book) first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and Sadler pointedly differ from each other.
- (e) **Bold type** indicates passages which Sadler copied verbatim, or nearly verbatim, from an uncited source.

- (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.

II — THE PSYCHO- LOGY OF COMPLEX FORMATION

IV: DISSOCIATION (Hart 38)

If we are asked to turn our mental eye inwards and carefully observe at any given moment the content of our mind—or, as it is technically termed, the momentary “field of consciousness”—we should probably describe it as an **indivisible** whole, a **uniform stream** of thought progressing towards some definite end (H 40-41).

Yet this statement is only partially true of the normal mind, and it **hardly true** at all in the case of some of our patients (H 41).

The field of consciousness must therefore be **divided** into two portions,

in other words a certain degree of **dissociation** of consciousness must be present (H 42-43).

Suppose, for example, I **sit at the piano** and play a piece of music.

2:0.1 HUMAN consciousness is supposed to be a unit.

It is commonly regarded as being an **undivided**, more or less evenly moving, **uniform stream** of awareness.

But it is **hardly** probable that this theoretic concept of consciousness is actually **true**.

There must be more or less **division** from time to time, in what might be termed the **attention consciousness**, in most individuals.

In other words, **dissociation** of a mild order and to a limited degree, is normally present in most of us.

To illustrate: A well-trained musician **sits down at a piano** and runs through a piece of music which he knows by heart;

he can execute the performance necessary to the rendition of the music quite accurately,

SOURCE

If I am a sufficiently expert performer it is possible that I may at the same time be able to carry on a complex train of independent thought,

let us say the solution of some problem of conduct.

My mind does not under these circumstances present a uniform field of consciousness, but one divided into two parts or processes (H 42).

[See 2:6.3, below.]

I: THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS (Lay 13)

2: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

and at the same time he will be able to carry on a very intricate train of thought,

involving highly complex problems pertaining to his profession or business.

Under such circumstances, it must be evident that the stream of consciousness is somewhat divided, flowing in two more or less unrelated directions.

2:0.2 Now, if we conceive such a division of the stream of consciousness being carried to the point where subsidiary or contributory streams are able to flow in more or less independent channels—channels which are not under the immediate supervision and control of the main stream of consciousness—then we have a condition which more nearly conforms with what is technically known in modern psychology as “dissociation.”

Those persons who are troubled with “poor concentration” are in reality suffering from a mild form of dissociation.

THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

2:1.1 Perhaps it will be well, in this connection, to take a good look at those elements, or qualities, which constitute the stream of consciousness. One author (Lay) has compiled the following scheme as descriptive of the content of normal consciousness:

SOURCE

[*Note*: See Exhibit A for Lay's chart.]

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

3. COMPLEX DISSOCIATION (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 126)

[contd] Now it is believed that some individuals possess such a power of dissociation,

in connection with a peculiar and uncanny concentration of the attention,

that at any one moment the whole stream of consciousness may be so directed and so successfully diverted

that the "feeling of reality"—the sense of reality—may be so focused upon a single idea or desire

as to shut every other sensory feeling or emotional experience out of the mind's eye, or the awareness of consciousness;

and thus the whole psychic machinery would be concentrated upon this single idea of the mind.

In this way, psychologists believe that mediums sometimes come to materialize disembodied spirits in the eyes of their own minds,

to become—mind, body, and soul—possessed with the reality of the thing which they think they see outside of their minds,

but which, in reality, lives and functions on the threshold of their own psychic life and which had its inception, origin, and birth within their own subconscious mind (*TTAS* 126-27).

2: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

2:1.2 [*Note*: See Exhibit A for Sadler's reproduction of Lay's chart.]

2:1.3 Now, it is believed that some individuals possess such a power of dissociation,

in connection with a peculiar and uncanny concentration of the attention,

that at any one moment the whole stream of consciousness may be so directed and so successfully diverted

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but which, actually, lives and functions on the threshold of their own psychic life, having had its inception and birth within their own subconscious minds.

SOURCE

[See 2:5.2 and 2:7.4, below.]

XXXV: THE PRINCIPLES OF
MODERN PSYCHOTHERAPY (*The
Physiology of Faith and Fear* 405)

“COMPLEX FORMATION” (*The Physiology of Faith
and Fear* 409)

[contd] It is one of the fundamental laws
of psychology that

our sensations, feelings, ideas, movements,
and visceral functions—of any and all
kinds—when frequently repeated or when
accompanied by unusual emotion,

become bound together—associated or
grouped together in such a way that the
excitation of any one member of the group,
sets in action all the others.

This binding up together of ideas and
emotions, actions and memories, is known
in psychology as “complex formation.”

It is dependent upon the ability of the mind
to associate ideas and memories, and is one
of the links in the chain which explains
habit formation.

“Good complexes” result in the formation
of good habits of thought and action, while
“bad complexes” result in bad habits of
thinking and acting—worry, obsessions, or
even fixed delusions (*PF&F* 409).

2: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

2:1.4 And, as will appear more fully
later on, the victims of major hysteria and
even of certain types of paranoia suffer
from the same sort of subconscious
legerdemain.

THE THEORY OF COMPLEX FORMATION

2:2.1 It is one of the fundamental laws
of psychology that

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“Good complexes” result in the formation
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habits of thinking and acting—worry,
obsessions, or even fixed delusions.

SOURCE

[contd] In the normal man, the majority of these complex formations are healthful and useful.

Illustrations of such complexes, which consist both of memory of mental processes and of muscular activity, are found in

those exceedingly intricate complexes involved in writing, piano playing, and other delicate muscular movements involving an intimate association of ideas and physical processes (*PF&F* 409-10).

Complex formation further explains the peculiar and sometimes rapidly changing moods which some persons exhibit.

When the mind falls under the control and domination of a set of abnormal complexes,

the disposition and temperament are so largely and suddenly modified as almost to amount to a change in personality.

Indeed, these changing moods might very properly be looked upon as a mild form of multiple personality (*PF&F* 410).

[See 17:1.3.]

[contd] The physiological memory becomes bound up in these numerous memory complexes, as shown in Pawlow's dogs.

It was necessary only to show the dogs sand, bread, or meat, when they began immediately to secrete a saliva which corresponded to the food or other substances seen.

2: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

2:2.2 In the normal man, the majority of these complex formations are healthful and useful.

They involve memory both of mental processes and of muscular activity, and illustrations of them are found in

those exceedingly intricate complexes involved in writing, piano-playing, and other delicate muscular movements involving an intimate association of ideas and physical processes.

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Indeed, these changing moods might very properly be looked upon as a mild form of multiple personality.

This explains why some unstable neurotics are subject to such violent and sudden "mood swings."

2:2.4 The physiological memory becomes bound up in these numerous memory complexes, as shown in the case of Pawlow's dogs.

It was necessary only to show the dogs sand, bread, or meat, and they began immediately to secrete a saliva which corresponded to the food or other substances seen.

SOURCE

That is, the sight, the memory, of an article of food resulted in producing the same quality of saliva that would be secreted if that food were actually in the mouth.

This same memory association is shown in the common tendency of the bladder to empty itself when a person hears the sound of running water.

This may also explain why the sight of a rose (even a wax rose) is sufficient to give some persons an attack of hay-fever (*PF&F* 410).

V: COMPLEXES (Hart 58)

A complex may exert a pronounced effect upon consciousness, although the individual himself may be unaware of its action—

that is to say, he may be altogether ignorant of the causes which are really determining his own mental processes.

An example will help to make this statement intelligible.

When a party politician is called upon to consider a new measure, his verdict is largely determined by certain constant systems of ideas and trends of thought, constituting what is generally known as “party bias.”

We should describe these systems in our newly acquired terminology as “political complex.”

2: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

That is, the sight, the memory, of an article of food resulted in producing the same quality of saliva that would be secreted if that food were actually in the mouth.

This same memory association is shown in the common tendency of the bladder to empty itself when a person hears the sound of running water.

This may also explain why the mere sight of a rose (even a wax rose) is sufficient to give some highly suggestible persons an attack of hay-fever.

2:2.5 Regarding the influence of “complexes” upon one’s beliefs and conduct, Hart says:

“A complex may exert a pronounced effect upon consciousness, altho the individual himself may be unaware of its action—

that is to say, he may be altogether ignorant of the causes which are really determining his own mental processes.”

An example will help to make this statement intelligible.

When a party politician is called upon to consider a new measure, his verdict is largely determined by certain constant systems of ideas and trends of thought, constituting what is generally known as “party bias.”

We should describe these systems in our newly acquired terminology as his “political complex.”

SOURCE

The complex causes him to take up an attitude towards the proposed measure which is quite independent of any absolute merits that the latter may possess.

If we argue with our politician, we shall find that the complex will reinforce in his mind those arguments which support the view of his party,

while it will infallibly prevent him from realising the force of the arguments propounded by the opposite side.

Now, it should be observed that the individual himself is probably quite unaware of this mechanism in his mind.

He fondly imagines that his opinion is formed solely by the logical pros and cons of the measure before him.

We see, in fact, that not only is his thinking determined by a complex of whose action he is unconscious,

but that he believes his thoughts to be the result of other causes which are in reality insufficient and illusory.

This latter process of self-deception, in which the individual conceals the real foundation of his thought by a series of adventitious props, is termed "rationalisation" (H 64-65).

2: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

The complex causes him to take an attitude towards any proposed measure which is quite independent of any absolute merit that such measure may possess.

If we argue with our politician, we shall find that the complex will reinforce in his mind those arguments which support the view of his party,

while it will infallibly prevent him from realizing the force of the arguments propounded by the opposite side.

Now, it should be observed that the individual himself is probably quite unaware of this mechanism as it works in his mind.

He fondly imagines that his opinion is formed solely by the logical pros and cons of the proposition before him.

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This latter process of self-deception, in which the individual conceals the real foundation of his thought by a series of adventitious props, is termed "rationalization."

ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS

2:3.1 It is probably to errors in the working of the mental machinery in the realm of the association of ideas that we must ascribe the origin of much of the autosuggestion, self-hypnotism, and other self-deception which many mediums and clairvoyants learn to perpetrate and practise upon themselves.

IV: PSYCHOLOGY—HOW WE THINK
(*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 35)

ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 47)

The process [of idea-association] is usually an unconscious one, but may be highly conscious.

The association of ideas may be regarded as the clearing-house of the mind, and the great majority of all our concepts and mental images pass this way *en route* to the higher activities (*PF&F* 47).

[contd] *Intuition*

is simply the spontaneous association of ideas (*PF&F* 47).

What unlimited possibilities must exist for weal or for woe in the confines of this little-known realm of idea-association!

Association of ideas is usually wholly unconscious to the individual, but in some cases it may be highly conscious.

Association of ideas may be regarded as the psychic clearing house, as the great majority of all our concepts and mental images pass that way *en route* to the realms of higher thought activity.

2:3.2 What we call intuition,

which is so largely possessed by these various sorts of psychics—in the majority of cases women—

is simply the process of spontaneous association of ideas—unconscious association.

2:3.3 What unlimited possibilities must exist, for weal or for woe, in the confines of this little-known realm of idea-association!

How many of the delusions of the spirit-world must be concocted in this mysterious center of the mind! How many of our psychic fantasms must have had their origin by the shuffling of the cards in this region of the mind, in the case of those hereditarily unstable and neurotically predisposed individuals who form so large a part of the world of spiritualism!

2:3.4 Let the reader stop for one moment and consider

A glance at the thought-diagram (Fig. 9) will suggest the tremendous possibilities of getting wires crossed, messages tangled, impulses twisted;

in fact, it may not be out of the way to imagine thought-wrecks and other mental catastrophes and confusions,

as a result of throwing wrong switches or misreading the signals in this important realm of the mind,

or from failure on the part of some mental power to do its work in just the right way and at just the right time (*PF&F* 47).

[[contd] Imagine the possibilities for mischief when a good or healthy idea is seeking to reach the higher levels of thought and has to pass this way through a group of bad, diseased ideas (*PF&F* 48).]

the tremendous possibilities of thus getting wires crossed, messages tangled, thoughts twisted, images substituted;

in fact, it might not be out of the way to imagine thought-wrecks and other psychic catastrophes

as the result of misthrowing switches and misreading signals in this important and more or less mysterious realm of the mind.

2:3.5 Imagine the possibilities for mischief when a creation of the fantasy, in the imaginary cogitations of the student of the occult, finds its way up into the association centers of a poorly regulated and badly controlled brain, and there gets lost, sidetracked, or misdispatched in some way, so that it becomes hooked up with an otherwise normal group of ideas and memory images, and is then shoved out into the mind in this mongrel, hybrid shape.

SOURCE

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

2. DETACHED COMPLEXES (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 124)

[contd] You should understand that the human mind is represented by a very intricate organization and grouping of cells, which hold the patterns of memory and thought,

and which are undoubtedly formed after the fashion of groups, systems, constellations, and so on.

Now it is known that certain groups of mind cells or systems, commonly known as *complexes*, may be cut off, as it were, from active connection with the major mental powers,

and may behave in an insubordinate manner, playing the rôle of a psychic insurgent, as regards the mental life as a whole.

These detached complexes are undoubtedly present in some forms of insanity,

and they are able to assert themselves in such a fashion as to cause the demented individual to hear voices and in many other ways to disturb the mental equilibrium (*TTAS* 124-25).

2: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

No wonder that human beings find themselves easy victims of self-deception, when so many things philosophic, theologic, and psychologic seemingly conspire to make their deception sure.

DETACHED COMPLEXES

2:4.1 The human mind is conceived as a very intricate organization or grouping of cells, a grouping which holds the patterns of memory and thought,

and which undoubtedly conforms to certain laws after the fashion of physical systems and constellations.

It is known that certain groups of mind-cells or systems, commonly called *complexes*, may be cut off, as it were, from active connection with the major mental powers,

and may behave in an insubordinate manner, playing the role of psychic insurgent, as regards the mental life as a whole.

These detached complexes are undoubtedly present in some forms of insanity,

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SOURCE

[contd] It is highly probable that, in some cases of clairvoyants and mediums, we have a mental condition that actually borders on insanity.

These individuals may be suffering from a “complex detachment” in a very mild degree,

so that they are able from time to time to recognize these voices and other impressions that come up from this sort of dissociation, complex detachment, or double personality—or whatever name it may be called—

and they are, therefore, wholly sincere when they represent to others that they have heard these voices in the mind as from an outside source (*TTAS* 125).

[The brain is, of course, a double organ, anatomically and physiologically; and though in normal life the two hemispheres are so functionally associated that they act as one, such cases as those I have cited seem to show what most observers are agreed in concluding, that under certain conditions the partnership may be dissolved, and **one side may act independently of the other**. In some cases of insanity the patient has been observed to ask questions and reply to them, as in two different capacities, and Ireland supposes that in such instances the two hemispheres are acting alternately (C. Lloyd Tuckey, M.D., *Treatment by Hypnotism and Suggestion* [1907], pp. 154-55).]

[Contrast 1:3.2.]

2: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

2:4.2 It is highly probable that in some cases of clairvoyants and mediums we have a mental condition that actually borders on insanity.

These persons may be suffering from “complex detachment” in a mild degree,

so that they are able from time to time to recognize voices and other impressions that come up from this sort of dissociation, complex detachment, or double personality;

and they are, therefore, sincere when they represent to others that they have heard these voices of the mind from an outside source.

2:4.3 It has been suggested also that the two sides of the brain, only one of which we are supposed to utilize in our ordinary conduct,¹ may be thrown out of coordination, or balance, in some way, so that **one side might be imagined to speak to the other**.

There is much to be learned about the methods and mechanics of the two sides of the human brain. Why we should have two complete brains, anatomically, and in many ways utilize only one side in its functional working, is still more or less of a mystery.

SOURCE

[[Ireland] suggests that the existence of such conditions may prove a key to the explanation of many cases of 'spirit-possession' and hallucination (Tuckey 155).]

2: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

Some day we may learn that, in the case of these **mediums** and clairvoyants, we have an undue development in the latent side, which is able to throw impressions into the working side in such a manner as to impress the consciousness as a whole with the idea that it has received a message from an external or supra-psychic source. At least it is well to bear in mind all these possibilities, before we rush headlong into the supernatural realms in quest of explanations for commonplace psychic phenomena.

PSYCHIC INSURRECTION

2:5.1 When we come to consider the nature and significance of complex formation, we discover the vast possibilities for malevolent mischief and sinister deception that exist in the deep confines of the human mind, as touching the problems of many phases of human experience; the possibility of complex insurrection—dislocation and derangement—looms large.

2:5.2 Without stretching our imagination to the point of conceiving the existence of double personality, it is easy to see how certain groups of complexes can become so formed, educated, and trained in the sophistries of a cultivated belief as to constitute a sufficiently influential background for the perpetration of subconscious frauds upon one's own higher consciousness. In the case of a certain type of psychic researcher it is possible to form a spiritualistic mood of mind, a "spook" habit of thought, and thus in time one's own intellect would come to be a victim of one's own "spook complexes."

SOURCE

2: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

In the case of hysteria and paranoia the patient becomes the all but helpless victim of his established fear and systematized delusions.

2:5.3 There can be little doubt that some of the milder forms of insanity are due to this sort of psychic insurrection on the part of certain associated groups of complexes, and that the individual's irrational conduct is the result of a slow but sure surrender to the dictates of these associated rebel complexes.

[contd from 2:4.2] I am convinced that many mediums and other spiritistic enthusiasts have so persistently and successfully built up their "ghost complexes;"

that they have so effectively come to transfer the "reality feeling" to these "spook" creations of their own subconscious mind;

that they have so ardently welded their emotions to these spirit concepts,

that in time, this grouping of complexes, having to do with spirit beliefs and desires,

becomes so powerfully entrenched and so highly influential in the psychic life of such individuals

that they become capable of instituting some sort of psychic insurrection,

and come thus more or less fully to dominate the conscious life, opinions, and behavior of their victims (*TTAS* 125-26).

2:5.4 I am fully convinced that many mediums and other spiritistic enthusiasts have so persistently and successfully built up their "ghost complexes";

that they have so effectively come to transfer the "reality feeling" to these "spook" creations of their own subconscious minds;

that they have so ardently welded their emotions to these spirit concepts,

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SOURCE

XXXV: THE PRINCIPLES OF
MODERN PSYCHOTHERAPY (*The
Physiology of Faith and Fear* 405)

PSYCHIC INSURRECTION (*The Physiology of Faith
and Fear* 412)

[contd] Psychic insurrection, or
automatism, is the explanation of how a
group of mental habits may become so
strong and individualized as to be able to
control the behavior of mind and body,

and thus to dominate a man and influence
the formation of his character.

When our mental habits become thus
organized and employed they may be
fittingly compared to a provincial rebellion
in an empire.

They represent certain groups of ideas
which seek not only to free themselves
from the sovereignty of the will—not only
to be free and independent of all other
mental processes,

but ultimately to eliminate them, and so of
themselves to exercise complete control.

Thus it is that our habits first lead us astray,
then assert their independence of our
control, and subsequently establish a
tyrannical mastery over us, over both mind
and body (*PF&F* 412-13).

2: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

And all this only illustrates how the same
sort of psychic slavery is thrust, in lesser
degrees, upon all the victims of the
various psycho-neuroses, and more
completely upon the victims of the
psychoses.

2:5.5 Psychic insurrection, or
automatism, is thus the explanation of
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Thus it is that our neurotic habits first
lead us astray, then assert their
independence of our control, and
subsequently establish a tyrannical
mastery over both mind and body.

SOURCE

[contd] And so in the establishment of fixed habits of thought, and in the formation of deep-rooted beliefs and vivid ideas,

we are unconsciously forming those complexes which in time, if not carefully controlled, may secede from the commonwealth of consciousness and establish themselves in the role of psychic rebels—

become capable of more or less independent thought and uncontrolled habit (*PF&F* 413).

DISSOCIATION OF IDEAS (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 411)

[contd] It is entirely possible for a group or a number of groups of ideas to become so associated, established, and isolated, as to set themselves up in some corner of the mental domain as a new personality;

that is, when the mental functions are not harmoniously and uniformly bound up and held together in the state of consciousness,

or when as a result of disease, the continuity of contact, or the power of intercommunication is in some way interfered with or destroyed—

we may then have exhibitions of that remarkable phenomenon, multiple personality.

This, at any rate, is one of the well-known explanations of multiple personality (*PF&F* 411).

2: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

2:5.6 And so in the establishment of fixed habits of thought, and in the formation of deep-rooted beliefs and vivid ideas,

we are unconsciously forming those complexes which in time, if not carefully controlled, may secede from the commonwealth of consciousness and establish themselves in the role of psychic rebels—

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DISSOCIATION OF IDEAS

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that is, when the mental functions are not harmoniously and uniformly bound up and held together in the state of consciousness,

or when, as a result of disease, the continuity of contact or the power of intercommunication is in some way interfered with or destroyed.

We may then have exhibitions of that remarkable phenomenon, multiple personality;

at least, this is one of the well-known explanations of the more common form of multiple personality.

SOURCE

[contd] It often happens that a man is called upon not only to experience the common warfare between the so-called carnal and spiritual natures,

but he may also have within himself, apparently, two distinct personalities or minds—

personalities which may be diametrically opposite to each other, and which may alternate in the control of his life.

These conditions explain the difficulty some people have in controlling certain ideas or groups of ideas, which have taken fast hold of their minds (*PF&F* 411).

Complete or partial dissociation of ideas coupled with irritation and undue activity of the sympathetic nervous system constitutes the explanation of hysteria,

while common, everyday forgetfulness and absent-mindedness are illustrations and demonstrations of a mild degree and temporary phase of dissociation.

Some form of dissociation is usually present in most cases of marked neurasthenia, while such a condition is usually to be found even in mild hysteria.

Certain ideas, emotions, and conclusions may become detached from the mental stream of consciousness in the dream state.

These dissociated complexes either as minds different from the old, or as distortions of the old mind,

2: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

2:6.2 It often happens that a man is called upon not only to experience the common warfare between the so-called carnal and spiritual natures,

but he may also have within himself, apparently, two distinct personalities or minds—

personalities which may be diametrically opposite to each other, and which may alternate in the control of his life.

These conditions explain the difficulty some people have in controlling certain ideas or groups of ideas, which have taken fast hold of their minds.

2:6.3 Complete or partial dissociation of ideas coupled with irritation and undue activity of the sympathetic nervous system constitutes the explanation of hysteria;

while common, every-day forgetfulness and absent-mindedness are illustrations of a mild and temporary phase of dissociation.

2:6.4 Some form of dissociation of ideas is present in most cases of marked neurasthenia, while such a condition is usually to be found even in mild hysteria.

Certain ideas, emotions, and conclusions may become detached from the main stream of consciousness in the dream state.

These dissociated complexes, either as minds different from the old, or as distortions of the old mind,

SOURCE

may obtain such control as to produce what in the dream state would be called nightmares, but in the waking state, hysterical seizures or delusions.

Such a psychic state might be described as a case of “subconscious nightmare,” or as a condition of mind in which the patient may be said to be suffering from “fixed dreams.”

This is probably the state of the mind which prevails when certain nervous persons are said to have “brain storms” (PF&F 411-12).

[contd] Dissociation is the explanation of those interesting and remarkable cases where long periods of time are literally blotted out of the mind—at least out of the conscious memory.

In those cases where the patient is unable to remember anything that occurred in his experience for a certain period, it is known that the memories of those experiences are really retained,

for they can be recovered in hypnosis,

but as they are dissociated from the memory images which are a part of his everyday conscious life, they are apparently lost (PF&F 412).

[contd] That the deformities and paralyses of hysteria are purely functional and due to dissociation is shown by the fact that we can both produce and remove these symptoms by suggestion.

And right here is the secret of the successful treatment of such cases:

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In those cases where the patient is unable to remember anything that occurred in his experience for a certain period, it is known that the memories of those experiences are really retained,

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2:6.6 That the deformities and paralyses of hysteria are purely functional and due to dissociation is shown by the fact that we can both produce and remove these symptoms by suggestion.

And right here is the secret of the successful treatment of such cases:

SOURCE

they can be cured by building up new associations of ideas, new complexes, which shall be able to overpower and eject the old and abnormal association of ideas (PF&F 413).

[contd] It should be remembered that in discussing and dealing with the phenomenon of dissociation we are considering a perfectly normal process.

Dissociation becomes harmful only when perverted or misused.

Normal sleep is probably due to dissociation, resultant from the loosening of the physical contact between the processes of the nerve cells in the brain (PF&F 413).

PSYCHIC INSURRECTION (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 413)

[contd from 2:5.8] Again, we are dealing with a condition which is normal to the healthy mind.

Automatism is simply a scheme of economy in expression, an association of thoughts and actions into groups ready for immediate expression.

Certain explosive phrases and appropriate gestures always accompany the indulgence of emotional states of mind.

Accordingly, when these same groups of associated ideas become more or less dissociated from the main stream of consciousness, they become capable of independent and mischievous action.

The reassociation, the subjugation, of these belligerent complexes or groups of ideas is the aim of all modern methods of psychotherapy (PF&F 413).

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they can be cured by building up new associations of ideas, new complexes, which will be able to overpower and eject these abnormal associations of ideas.

2:6.7 It should be remembered that in dealing with dissociation we are considering a perfectly normal process.

Dissociation becomes harmful only when perverted or misused.

Normal sleep is probably due to dissociation, resultant from the loosening of the physical contact between the processes of the nerve cells of the brain.

2:6.8 We are discussing a condition which is normal to the healthy mind.

Automatism is simply a scheme of economy in expression, an association of thoughts and actions into groups ready for immediate action.

Certain explosive phrases and appropriate gestures always accompany the indulgence of emotional states of mind;

and when these same groups of associated ideas become more or less dissociated from the main stream of consciousness, they become capable of independent and mischievous action.

The reassociation, the subjugation of these belligerent complexes or groups of ideas, is the aim of all modern methods of psychotherapy.

REPRESSED IDEAS

2:7.1 When ideas are not in our consciousness, when they have been successfully repressed and cannot be recalled, they are said, by the psychologist, to be slumbering in the unconscious, or the subconscious. At any rate, when our ideas are not in consciousness they must be somewhere, and no matter what the actual explanation may or may not be, we are but recognizing a practical fact when we definitely assign these repressed ideas to some place in the scheme of the human mind. This place, whatever it is, wherever it is, and however it is, we call the “subconscious.”

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

2. DETACHED COMPLEXES (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 124)

An individual may bury certain unwelcome ideas or unpleasant emotions in his subconscious, from whence, as time passes, they may come forth again to plague and harass him.

So may the mediums and clairvoyants, as the years pass, bury things in their subconscious minds,

from whence these long forgotten ideas and emotions may constantly spring forth during the spirit seance

to impersonate, through the process of “projection” and the technique of “transference,” the person, mannerisms, and voices of dead and departed human beings (*TTAS* 126).

2:7.2 A neurotic or hysteric individual may bury certain unwelcome ideas or unpleasant emotions in his subconscious, whence, as time passes, they may come forth again to plague him.

So may the mediums and clairvoyants, as the years pass, bury things in their subconscious minds,

whence these long-forgotten ideas and emotions may spring forth during the spirit seance

to impersonate, through the process of “projection” and the technique of “transference,” the mannerisms and voices of dead and departed human beings.

IV: THE UNCONSCIOUS AS AN URGE (Lay 93)

§10. *Another Illustration* (Lay 123)

The proverb, “Where there’s a will there’s a way” is cryptic.

To be translated into modern analytical psychological terms it should read:

“If the unconscious wish is directed to a certain object, a multitude of ideas about means of acquiring that object

will spontaneously present themselves to consciousness” (L 127-28).

IV: DISSOCIATION (Hart 38)

Let us take, for example, the phenomenon of “automatic writing.”

This curious condition, although occasionally exhibited by comparatively normal people, attains its most perfect development in the form of mental disorder known as *hysteria*.

Suppose that we engage an hysterical patient in conversation

and, while his attention is thus diverted,

insert a pencil between the fingers of his right hand.

If a third person now whispers some question into the patient’s ear,

2:7.3 To the old proverb, “Where there’s a will there’s a way,”

the modern psychologist would add:

“If the unconscious wish is directed to a certain object, a multitude of ideas about means of acquiring that object,

or accomplishing the desired purpose,

will spontaneously present themselves to consciousness.”

2:7.4 The phenomenon of dissociation is also shown in the case of *automatic writing*.

Automatic writers are, in the majority of cases, the subjects of major *hysteria*.

In the typical case of this sort,

you can engage the patient in conversation,

thus quite definitely focusing his attention on the topic under discussion,

and at the same time if you insert a pencil between the fingers of his right hand

and allow a third person to whisper some question into his ear,

SOURCE

it may be possible to induce him to write answers to those questions,

although he continues all the time to discuss with us some totally different subject.

Under such circumstances it will be found that the patient is entirely unconscious of what his hand is doing, and is, moreover, often altogether ignorant of the events which the writing describes.

These events frequently relate to episodes in the patient's past life which he appears to have completely forgotten, and the experiment is occasionally employed with the object of resuscitating such buried memories (H 43-44).

[See Chap. 18.]

2: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

it will be possible in many cases to induce him to write out full, legible, and intelligent answers to the whispered question.

Meanwhile, he has been talking with you in a normal and thoroughly rational manner.

In most cases it will be found that this hysterical subject is quite unconscious that he has been writing.

2:7.5 With the spontaneous automatic writer, it has been found that

in most cases he is but elaborating certain ideas which have been long buried in his mind.

In brief, his automatic writings consist in a bringing forth of buried materials from the unconscious,

as will be shown in connection with the more complete study of automatic writing in a subsequent chapter.

1. The left hemisphere is much more used than the right, and in general is proportionately more developed, though in left-handed persons the reverse is said to be the case (Tuckey 155).