

Chapter 20 — Hypnotism

*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 20, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S., *The Truth About Spiritualism* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1923)
- (2) William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S., *Worry and Nervousness: Or, The Science of Self-Mastery* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1914, 1923)
- (3) William S. Sadler, M.D., *The Physiology of Faith and Fear: Or, The Mind in Health and Disease* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1912)
- (4) Wilfred Lay, Ph.D., *Man's Unconscious Spirit: The Psychoanalysis of Spiritism* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1921)
- (5) Edmund S. Conklin, *Principles of Abnormal Psychology* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927)

Key

- (a) Green indicates where a source author (or an earlier 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) **Pink** indicates passages where Sadler specifically shares his own experiences, opinions, advice, etc.
- (f) **Light blue** indicates passages which strongly resemble something in the Urantia Book, or which allude to the Urantia phenomenon.
- (g) **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.

Matthew Block
6 October 2019

Work-in-progress Version 1 Dec. 2012
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 Revised 6 Oct. 2019

XX — HYPNOTISM

20:0.1 THE purpose of writing a chapter on hypnotism and psychic diagnosis in a book devoted to the study of abnormal psychology is this: I have stated repeatedly, in the chapters which have gone before, that much if not all of the material advanced by mediums as having had its origin in the supernatural world, is brought forth from the confines and reservoirs of their own subconscious minds. Now, it is by means of hypnotism on the one hand, and psychic analysis on the other, that we are able to obtain this proof.

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

18. TAPPING THE SUBCONSCIOUS (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 163)

Exploring the Subconscious by Hypnotism.
 Experimentally, by means of hypnosis and by the procedure of psychoanalysis, we are able as will be seen, to take these mystics, psychics, clairvoyants, and mediums,

and after they have given us a beautiful spirit seance and have transmitted to us messages from their spirit guides and controls—

after we have had most wonderful and touching converse with our dear and departed dead—

then we are able to take these unstable, hysteric, and unique individuals in hand, and by scientific processes and psychologic procedure show,

Experimentally, by means of hypnosis and psychic analysis, we can take these clairvoyants and mediums in hand,

and after they have transmitted to us messages from their spirit controls

and given us touching converse with our dear and departed dead,

we are able to prove,

SOURCE

first to ourselves and subsequently to those mediums themselves—if they are sincere—

that all this stuff, the whole sordid mess, had a purely human and wholly natural origin in the depths of their own subconscious minds (*TAS* 164).

XXIII: PSEUDO-PSYCHOTHERAPY — MENTAL DECEPTION (*Worry and Nervousness* 286)

HYPNOTISM (*Worry and Nervousness* 289)

[contd] Hypnotism may consist of the hypnoidal state,

in which the patient is really awake but in a passive state of mind, ready to receive the suggestion and teachings of the healer;

on down through increasing passivity to a profound state of hypnosis,

in which the patient is oblivious of his surroundings and under comparatively full control of the hypnotizer (*W&N* 289).

[contd] Hypnotism is basically wrong, as a method of strengthening the intellect and educating the will,

in that it leads its victims to depend more and more upon the hypnotic operator.

Hypnosis is certainly not a natural state of mind; it is highly artificial and unnatural.

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that all this stuff, the whole **sordid** mess, has a purely human origin in the depths of their own subconscious minds.

HYPNOTISM

20:1.1 Hypnotism may consist of the hypnoidal state,

in which the patient is really awake but in a passive state of mind, ready to receive the suggestion and teachings of a medium or a healer,

on down through increasing passivity to a profound state of hypnosis,

in which the patient is oblivious of his surroundings and under comparatively full control of the hypnotizer.

20:1.2 Hypnotism is basically wrong as a method of strengthening the intellect and educating the will,

in that it leads its victims to depend more and more upon the hypnotic operator.

Hypnosis is certainly not a natural state of mind; it is highly artificial and unnatural.

SOURCE

Some authorities have endeavored to show that hypnotic sleep was analogous to natural sleep, but this is certainly a mistake.

The hypnotic state may in some respects resemble the somnambulistic state, but somnambulism is not a state of natural and normal sleep (*W&N* 289).

Hypnotism necessitates the surrender of the mind and will in a peculiar way to the influence of another personality;

and we regard these procedures as unscientific and un-Christian, and in the highest degree subversive of individual strength and stamina of character (*W&N* 289).

[!]

XXXVIII: PSYCHIC FADS AND FAKES (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 457)

HYPNOTISM AND MESMERISM (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 469)

Hypnotism operates to produce a dissociation between the higher reasoning centres of the mind (the central consciousness) and the lower and automatic centres (the marginal consciousness) (*PF&F* 470).

[contd] Mesmerism is the old-fashioned method of inducing hypnosis, by making physical contact with the patient.

Modern hypnotism is usually practised without this physical contact.

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The hypnotic state in some respects resembles the somnambulistic state, but somnambulism is not a state of natural and normal sleep.

Hypnotism necessitates the surrender of the mind and will in a peculiar way to the influence of another personality;

I regard these procedures as in the highest degree subversive of individual strength and stamina of character.

But, notwithstanding all these facts, hypnotism is an invaluable agent for perfecting our diagnosis in the case of numerous abnormal psychic individuals, such as multiple personality, complex dissociation, etc., and is indispensable in the investigation of mediums.

20:1.3 Hypnotism operates to produce dissociation between the higher reasoning centers of the mind (the central consciousness) and the lower and automatic centers (the marginal consciousness).

20:1.4 Mesmerism is the old-fashioned method of inducing hypnosis, by making physical contact with the patient.

Modern hypnotism is usually practised without this physical contact.

SOURCE

All leading physicians throughout the world now recognize hypnotism as an exceedingly dangerous two-edged therapeutic sword.

They recognize that the frequent repetition of hypnotic procedures

not infrequently leads to insanity (*PF&F* 470).

We feel impelled especially to condemn the public exhibitions carried on by professional hypnotists.

The authorities should speedily bring these demonstrations to an end.

They are highly debasing and demoralizing (*PF&F* 470).

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

18. TAPPING THE SUBCONSCIOUS (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 163)

[contd from above] *Psychoanalysis*. Many years ago I became greatly interested in psychoanalysis and its possibilities in the study and treatment of nervous disorders,

but I had not gone far in the employment of this method when, as the result of an experience that came to me through the study of a spirit medium,

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Leading physicians throughout the world now recognize hypnotism as an exceedingly dangerous two-edged therapeutic sword.

They recognize that frequent repetition of hypnotic procedures,

in the case of highly neurotic and nervously unstable individuals,

not infrequently leads to insanity.

20:1.5 We feel impelled especially to condemn the public exhibitions carried on by professional hypnotists.

The authorities should speedily bring these demonstrations to an end.

They are debasing and demoralizing.

PSYCHIC ANALYSIS

20:2.1 Many years ago I became interested in psychic analysis and its possibilities in the study and treatment of nervous disorders,

but I had not gone far in the employment of this method when, as a result of an experience that came to me through the study of a spirit medium,

SOURCE

I saw I had accidentally stumbled upon what to me seemed the most valuable tool I had as yet discovered for scientifically investigating and intelligently explaining the more subtle phases and phenomena of spiritualism (*TLAS* 164-65).

[contd] Suffice it to say, in this connection, that psychoanalysis enables us, without putting the patient into hypnotic sleep, systematically to explore the superficial strata of the subconscious mind.

In this way we have been able to show, again and again, that practically all of these things which mediums bring forth as communications from departed spirits

have been palmed off on their conscious consciousness by their own unconscious, or subconscious selves (*TLAS* 164-65).

[contd] In the case of the sincere spiritualist today,

I am able to sit down and look him straight in the eye as I listen to his enthusiastic recital of the marvelous phenomena associated with his favorite medium, while I say:

“It is all very interesting, but has it ever occurred to you that I have in my own mind another, and what seems to me to be a much more reasonable explanation for what you are telling me?”

And, furthermore, if your medium is sincere and you will bring him to me, and he will honestly and fairly submit to the tests that we can put him through,

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I saw I had accidentally stumbled upon what, to me, seemed the most valuable tool I had as yet discovered for scientifically investigating and intelligently explaining the more subtle phases and phenomena of spiritualism.

I take it for granted that the reader understands something of the principles and methods of psychic analysis.

Suffice it to say, in this connection, that psychic analysis enables us, without putting the patient into hypnotic sleep, systematically to explore the superficial strata of the subconscious mind.

In this way I have been able to show, again and again, that practically all of those things which mediums bring forth as communications from departed spirits

have been palmed off on their critical consciousness by their own subconscious selves.

20:2.2 In the case of the sincere spiritualist

I am able to sit down and look him straight in the eye as I listen to his enthusiastic recital of the marvelous phenomena associated with his favorite medium, while I say:

“It is all very interesting, but I have in my own mind another, and what seems to me to be a much more reasonable, explanation of what you are telling me.”

If your medium is sincere and you will bring him to me, and he will honestly and fairly submit to the tests that I can put him through,

SOURCE

we will first prove to you that his physical manifestations and phenomena are materialistic and fraudulent;

and, second, that his psychic phenomena—his messages from the dead—take origin in the subconscious depths of his own unconscious mind.”

By means of either or both hypnotism and psychoanalysis, and perhaps in certain cases by means of automatic writing, if these mediums are sincere, this can usually be demonstrated (*TTAS* 165-66).

[See 16:2.6.]

III: PSYCHOANALYSIS (Lay 73)

§1. Ignorance about Psychoanalysis (Lay 74)

As Maeterlinck puts it in *The Unknown Guest*:

“For the present it (the spiritistic theory) simply relegates to posthumous regions phenomena that appear to occur within ourselves; it adds superfluous mystery and needless difficulty to the mediumistic mystery whence it springs” (page 55),

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I will first prove to you that his physical manifestations and phenomena are materialistic and fraudulent,

and, second, that his psychic phenomena—his messages from the dead—take origin in the subconscious depths of his own mind.”

By means of either or both hypnotism and psychic analysis, and perhaps in certain cases by means of automatic writing, if these mediums are sincere, this can usually be demonstrated.

20:2.3 I have had experience with both sincere and insincere mediums, when it comes to investigations of this sort. I have had mediums who knew I was going to discover their tricks, and they took particular pains to see that I did not. I have had other mediums who were self-deceived and who honestly believed they were channels of communication between the living and the dead. And in every one of these cases, where the mediums came to me as patients of their own volition, I have been able not only to convince myself, but also to convince them that their hallucinations all had birth in the buried memories and subconscious machinations of their own minds.

Maeterlinck recognizes this possibility when he says, in *The Unknown Guest*:

20:2.4 For the present it (the spiritistic theory) simply relegates to posthumous regions the phenomena that appear to occur within ourselves; it adds superfluous mystery and needless difficulty to the mediumistic mystery whence it springs. . . .

SOURCE

and “Before turning toward the mystery beyond the grave let us first exhaust the possibilities of the mystery here on earth” (page 57) (L 75).

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

18. TAPPING THE SUBCONSCIOUS (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 163)

[contd from above] Mediums should be warned against submitting to psycho-analysis of a thorough-going sort, if they want still to persist in the practice of their profession as a means of gaining a livelihood,

for all those of any honor will be forced to abandon their career and seek new economic paths as a means of making a living,

because any experienced psychoanalyst will shortly convince them of the autopsychic origin of their so-called spirit communications (*TTAS* 166).

[contd] Within the last year I have had not less than five cases of clairvoyants and mediums who have, after they had been but superficially studied and analyzed,

abandoned belief in the supernatural origin of their voices and visions, and who are rapidly getting themselves under control and bringing their minds into safe and normal channels (*TTAS* 166).

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Before **r**eturning toward the mystery beyond the grave let us first exhaust the possibilities of the mystery here on earth.

PSYCHIC ANALYSIS OF MEDIUMS

20:3.1 Mediums should be warned against submitting to psychic analysis of a thoroughgoing sort if they wish to persist in the practise of their profession as a means of gaining a livelihood,

for all those of any honor will be forced to seek other ways of making a living;

any experienced psychoanalyst can soon convince them of the auto-psychic origin of their so-called spirit communications.

20:3.2 Within the **l**ast year I have had five or six cases of clairvoyants and mediums, who, after they had been but superficially studied and analyzed,

have abandoned belief in the supernatural origin of their voices and visions, and who are rapidly bringing their minds into safe and normal channels.

SOURCE

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It is only fair to say that these persons—with but one exception—came for professional advice of their own volition, and that they entered upon the study with a spirit in every way cooperative. In fact, they were anxious to know what modern psychic science had to offer along the lines of diagnosing and determining the nature of their peculiar gifts.

X: SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS
(Lay 300)

§2. *Exclusion of the Unconscious Factor* (Lay 303)

The frauds have been detected in goodly numbers, and it is to the credit of the Societies for Psychic Research that

they have instantly repudiated a medium when they have found him guilty of any indirection.

But the sincere and honest mediums who take themselves most seriously and never consciously resort to any ruse, are quite as likely to be self-deceived as are their adherents, because we are all alike swayed by our unconscious wishes for aggrandizement of the ego (L 304).

20:3.3 The societies for psychic research have done much to eliminate the grosser frauds among mediums; it must be said to their credit that

they have always been quick to repudiate the mediums detected in fraud,

but they have done little or nothing to help the situation when it comes to

those honest but self-deceived mediums whom we are here discussing.

SOURCE

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[Compare L 303.]

Little progress can be made in this direction until trained psychologists and experimental psychoanalytic clinicians are brought in contact with these cases, and until the mediums themselves are brought to desire the truth, so that they will fearlessly submit to all tests requisite to the proper diagnosis of their peculiar gifts.

And it is a question if we can lead many successful mediums to do this.

There are perfectly good reasons why this has not been sought by the medium himself ... By the people anxious for spiritual aggrandizement the medium is treated with honour. From such people he receives a rich reward for his hypersensibility, which if not directly pecuniary is still material value (e.g., Home) (L 303-04).

They are making too easy a living.

XI: PRESENT STATUS (Lay 325)

§1. *The Medium's Material Reward* (Lay 325)

If a medium, who is "taken up" by a coterie of rich men

The medium who can become the idol of a coterie of rich men and women can,

within a few years,

and knows that it will mean to him a fortune of several hundred thousand dollars,

amass thousands of dollars,

and few such are

should allow himself to be analysed and let it be scientifically proved, as Miss X did, that all his messages were messages from his own unconscious storehouse of memory images, he would be a fool as the world goes.

willing to make voluntary sacrifice of themselves

SOURCE

Yet he would really be doing more **for science** than are all the automatic writers and crystal gazers who are looking for proofs that their words and visions could *not* be the result of previous impressions on their nerve and brain substance (L 325).

X: SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS
(Lay 300)

§1. *The Personal Factor in Science* (Lay 300)

The psychical researchers virtually **say to science**, “We admit that you say that there is no proof, but we are going to take your own methods and show you that you could have demonstrated this yourselves long before. The very principles you say are unquestionably against our evidence we will use to show that you are mistaken” (L 301).

§6. *The Value of Phantasy* (Lay 321)

The **true believer** is one whose mental processes go on entirely on the **plane** of **phantasy**.

He is **independent of knowledge**, and should remain so (L 323).

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for the advancement of science and the welfare of the race.

20:3.4 The spiritualists have set us an example—

they have **appealed to men of science** to substantiate their claims—

they have dared to go to science to prove their allegations.

Now the time has come for science to go back to them, to ask them to come out into the open, to shake off their trumpery and submit themselves to honest laboratory examination.

But the trouble is that

the **true believers** and honest mediums seem to live on a **plane** separate and apart from the rest of the human family.

They seek to progress **without knowledge**

and to grow without demonstrated truth.

They exist in a world of **fantasy**; everything is made subordinate to the realization of their great desire—the wish to communicate with the dead.

REPRESSION AND SUPPRESSION

III: PSYCHOANALYSIS (Lay 73)

§4. *Repression* (Lay 78)

In every soul **struggle** is found the **drive** of the unconscious toward external **expression**,

not necessarily the drive of the unconscious to attain consciousness nor the craving of the activities below the level of consciousness to enter the upper spheres of consciousness (L 79).

20:4.1 We now know that

the subconscious centers of the average individual are swarming with suppressed ideas, emotions, hungers, instincts, and longings, and that these are all **struggling** for **expression**.

We believe that a great deal of our dream-life is the manifestation of these suppressed desires.

In other words, the unconscious maintains an incessant **drive** to eliminate these repressed emotions,

and it is my belief that clairvoyance, spirit mediumship, etc., as well as spiritualism as a system of religious belief, constitute a vent for their escape; that the dogmas of spiritualism constitute

SOURCE

The repressed ideas and emotions of the medium are let out in the **only way** possible for some neurotics, from the unconscious into conscious life, and still displaced (L 79).

The medium's surroundings in a trance, and the automatic writer's quiet and repose,

are both appropriate situations for the removal of repression from certain sections of past memories,

because both shift the responsibility for what is said, done and written from the medium and automatist to some other "personality," either the medium's "control" or the dictating "spirit" (L 83).

X: SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS
(Lay 300)

§4. *Dr. Q's Case* (Lay 311)

[contd] The nearest approach to the analysis of a medium that has at the same time the merit of being truly scientific is the following one of Dr. N. Q. (L 311).

[Compare L 312-14.]

He **hypnotized** her and in the hypnosis she recalled three separate incidents which she had entirely forgotten, and gave Dr. Q. a detailed account of them (L 314).

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the **only channel** discovered hitherto whereby many of these individuals with an exaggerated ego and an unsettled nervous system can gain that self-satisfaction which accompanies the liberation of their buried emotions.

20:4.2 **The medium's surroundings in a trance, and the automatic writer's quiet and repose,**

both are appropriate situations for the removal of repression from certain sections of past memories,

because both shift the responsibility for what is said, done, and written from the medium and automatist to some other "personality," either the medium's "control" or the dictating "spirit."

20:4.3 One writer recently reported an interesting case of automatic writing

in which a Miss X. wrote some matter pertaining to art which seemed to be mysterious and which was correct;

but when Miss X. was **hypnotized**

[contd] The first was the memory of reading in a newspaper about the death of Rob Taylor.

The obituary gave his picture and told that he was a very successful art worker, also that he lived in the Yorktown Hotel (L 314).

[contd] The second was the memory of an occasion when she had herself gone one evening with friends to dine at the Yorktown.

In the lobby they noticed a very distinguished looking individual with long cape, Van Dyke beard and soft felt hat. She asked one of her companions who that man was.

“It’s Rob Taylor, the craft worker. I thought you knew him” (L 314-15).

[contd] The third memory was of some copper work done in the convent school where Miss X. went as a girl. She remembered quite clearly that one of the chemicals used in the work they did there was labelled Liver of Sulphur (L 315).

[contd] Miss X.’s automatic writing was thus entirely explained. Every bit of information that she got from the “spirit” and that was so dramatically corroborated, was in her own unconscious mental storehouse

it was found that she had once met the artist who was named in her automatic writings;

that she had read in a newspaper about his death,

and had seen his photograph;

and that on another occasion she was in a hotel in a town where this artist lived

and had him pointed out to her.

It further developed that

she remembered seeing, in a convent school, one of the chemicals noted in her automatic writings, labeled “liver of sulphur.”

Now, all these things had been forgotten by Miss X.,

but they remained in her subconscious mind

SOURCE

and was released through her automatic writing. Every bit of it was accounted for. Among other things Dr. Q. looked for and found the very newspaper account of Rob Taylor's death.

Surely it is a scientific necessity to exclude the unconscious factor (L 315).

§5. *Elsa Barker* (Lay 315)

In the introduction to the *War Letters* which were written in 1915, about the time when she says she first became interested in psychoanalysis,

she writes as follows:

“When made aware of the presence of ‘X’ I take a pencil and a notebook, as any other amanuensis would,

and by an effort of will, now easy from long practice, I still the activity of my objective mind, until there is no thought or shadow of a thought in it.

Then into *the brain itself* come the words, which flow out without conscious effort at the point of the pencil.

It is exactly as if I heard the dictation with a single auditory instrument, like a small and very sensitive sphere, in the centre of the brain (L 316).

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and were brought out in a connected and intelligent fashion in her automatic writing;

thus the employment of hypnosis served to clear up the mystery.

THE CASE OF ELSA BARKER

20:5.1 *Elsa Barker* represents the type of sincere psychics who are willing to cooperate with science in an effort toward further honest investigation of all psychic and spiritistic phenomena.

In the introduction to her work, published several years ago, she tells of becoming interested in psychoanalysis,

and writes of her experiences as follows:

20:5.2 When made aware of the presence of “X” I take a pencil and a note-book, as any other amanuensis would,

and by an effort of will, now easy from long practise, I still the activity of my objective mind, until there is no thought or shadow of a thought in it.

Then into *the brain itself* come the words, which flow out without conscious effort at the point of my pencil.

It is exactly as if I heard the dictation with a single auditory instrument, like a small and very sensitive sphere, in the center of the brain.

SOURCE

[contd] “I never know at the beginning of a sentence how it will end.

I never know whether the sentence I am writing will be the last or if two thousand words will follow it.

I simply write on, in a state of voluntary negativity, until the impression of personality described above leaves suddenly. Then no more words come. . . (L 316)

[contd] “The question will naturally arise in the mind of the sceptical reader (it has in mine), whether my own subconscious mind has not itself dictated the following *War Letters from the Living Dead Man* in the attempt to explain a world tragedy which would have seemed impossible two years ago...” (L 316).

Her experience in automatic writing is strikingly similar to my own ordinary composition.

The general idea of a book or a chapter or a paragraph is in my mind as a sort of indefinite feeling which is to become definite in the sentence or the paragraph.... At any point in the sentence I do not have in consciousness more than four or five words, so that if the sentence contains twenty words the consciousness of the last five words puts the first fifteen out of consciousness... (L 319).

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I never know at the beginning of a sentence how it will end.

I never know whether the sentence I am writing will be the last or if two thousand words will follow it.

I simply write on, in a state of voluntary negativity, until the impression of personality described above leaves suddenly.

20:5.3 This woman is undoubtedly correct—

these things do emanate from her own subconscious mind;

her experience is not greatly unlike my own.

On the majority of occasions when I am dictating,

the ideas seem to be all fully formulated in my mind.

I visualize the material in paragraphs, with all the punctuation clearly recognized.

SOURCE

[Note: In Gray's *Spiritism and the Fallen Angels* (1920), a source for Sadler's *The Truth About Spiritualism* (1923), Gray cites Pember's list of the five classes of writing mediums. The fourth class are: "Those who copy words and sentences projected before them in letters of light ...". See p. 69.]

In this sense my writing is as automatic as is that of the *Letters from a Living Dead Man*,

and I should be quite as unwilling to ascribe anything I wrote to the control of a spirit as I should any of the so-called spirit messages conveyed through the now very numerous automatic writers (L 320).

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In the majority of instances, when I am dictating to my secretary, as I have often expressed it, I am merely redictating what I see passing before my own eyes, as I would look upon the titles of a moving picture flashed upon the screen.

My experience in writing is sometimes so marked in this respect

that I could easily be persuaded that I was under the control of some external power, that my mind was being used by another author, and I am sure that if I were a devotee of spiritism,

I could even persuade myself that much that I write is indited by spirits separate and apart from my own mind and body.

I have talked with many of my patients who have the same experience in writing letters.

Most of us have had thoughts come to us with a suddenness that startled us. It seems as if they had been whispered to us from some source outside of our own minds. These are all commonplace experiences, but in the case of our psychics and mediums, they have this a little more highly developed at some point, so that they themselves become more or less confused; they continue to encourage its development because it is a means, first of producing a livelihood, and second, of gratifying the ego. We all like to be the hero whom the public is glad to worship.

WHEN IS HYPNOTISM VALUABLE?

XII: HYPNOTISM AND SUGGESTIBILITY (Conklin 234)

Of the *theories for the explanation of hypnosis* perhaps the simplest is that

(1) which explains this state entirely in terms of the psychology of suggestion.... After [the initial] attitudes are well established the procedure of induction is such as to retract the field of consciousness, thus further heightening the suggestibility which had already been prepared for by the attitudes set up, and to imply the onset of a sleep-like state (C 252).

The theory that hypnosis is but as artificially induced hysterical state (4) recalls the long-standing argument between Charcot and his followers on the one hand and Bernheim and his associates on the other (C 254).

20:6.1 It should be made clear to the reader that hypnotism, in and of itself, has nothing directly to do with spiritism. Hypnotism is purely a psychological and physiological proposition,

and in the last analysis probably consists in

bringing about a psychic state that enormously increases the suggestibility of the patient.

20:6.2 I am inclined to believe that hypnotism is a short cut to the subconscious, that it brings about such conditions of mind and body as favor the tapping of the subconscious; tho in some cases it seems to me that the patient's behavior under hypnosis far more resembles hysteria, so that it may be, after all, that in some persons

hypnotism merely artificially induces the hysterical state.

SOURCE

Moll (5) in his classical summary of the literature on hypnosis contends that

any uniform explanation of hypnosis is impossible because of the variety of states involved (C 256).

In their interpretation of hypnosis the psychoanalysts [(6)] stress

especially the habits of affective submission to the parents and the many unpleasant experiences of imperfect adjustment to life, the unresolved conflicts.... The procedure of verbal suggestion releases the childish affective habits and the unresolved conflicts so that the phenomena of hypnosis are really motivated by this pent-up emotional life (C 257).

The condition of a crowd under the spell of a skillful orator

or the behavior of a mob under a frenzied leader bears such an outward resemblance to hypnosis one often hears it said that the crowd is hypnotized (C 259).

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At any rate, I am sure that

the actual condition of the individual under hypnosis varies from person to person.

20:6.3 The psychoanalysts believe that

hypnotism is a reversion to that state in which the child shows submission to its parents—

that under the hypnotic spell the subject tends to behave much as he would have behaved as a child in the presence of his parents and elders.

There is much to substantiate this interpretation of hypnotism because we know that there does exist in the human heart a willingness to be led. In certain ways and up to a certain degree, we all enjoy submitting ourselves to the direction and leadership of others; this is well shown in

the crowd listening to an orator,

or in the case of the mob as it is swayed by some frenzied agitator.

SOURCE

Examples of convulsions, cataleptic states, tics, tremors, amnesias, etc., now familiar as hysterical phenomena, may be seen in some crowds, but as a rule only in a few individuals within the crowd. The description given us of the famous Kentucky **revivals** reveals many instances of such (C 260).

[Moll] found that hysterical symptoms might be removed by hypnosis,

but that such removal did **not constitute a cure**. It might be merely the elimination of one symptom which would be quite promptly replaced by another (C 261-62).

Freud says that the hypnotic therapy is but a **cosmetic**

which **leaves the patient fundamentally unchanged**, while the psychoanalytic method is comparable to a surgical interference which removes the cause of the disturbance (C 262).

The often alleged **“weakening of the will”** as a consequence of hypnosis is more difficult to answer. If the psychoanalysts are correct then a hypnotically established transference which becomes fixated would certainly result in a diminution of that which is commonly called independence or self-control (C 264).

There seems to be no question but that **frequent** hypnotization makes hypnotization much more easily accomplished (C 264). [See also 20:1.2 and 20:1.4.]

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We perhaps see this in the case of certain classes of religious **revivals**.

20:6.4 It should be made clear that

the removal of disease-symptoms by hypnotism is only transient.

It is **not curative**.

In this respect, at least,

Freud is right when he speaks of hypnotism as being merely a **psychic cosmetic**—

it **leaves the patient fundamentally unchanged**.

While hypnotism may **not weaken the will** to the extent that some authorities have thought,

its **frequent** repetition undoubtedly serves to bring about unnatural and undesirable dependence of the patient upon the hypnotizer.

SOURCE

Methods for the *induction of hypnosis* are very numerous, even though the differences between them are not always very great.... The *physical methods* include all those which involve the use of any special object or mode of sensory stimulation other than the voice and presence of the operator(C 235).

Apparatus manufacturers supply a small highly polished ball fixed to the end of a pliable wire, which in turn protrudes from a strap to be fastened around the head of the subject. This bright ball is then adjusted so that it is just barely visible when the eyes are turned well upward. The use of this quickly brings on *fatigue of the eye muscles* (C 235-36).

[C]ertain primitive peoples have utilized auditory stimuli by *beating drums* in monotonous fashion (C 236).

[contd] The *mental method* of induction consists in some procedure for directing the thought and expectation of the subject.... The patient is told quietly something of the nature of the hypnotic state, that it is a comfortable state of complete relaxation in which the subject will readily and willingly *coöperate in every way with the operator*, that he will do whatever the operator tells him to do ... (C 236).

The literature includes not a few reports of the use of narcotic drugs as aids to hypnotization. In such instances the state produced is a complication of the drug effect and the hypnosis.... *Drugs alone* do not produce hypnosis (C 238).

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20:6.5 Hypnotism may be *induced* by various methods,

such as gazing at a crystal,

eye strain,

monotonous *tom-tom beating*, etc.,

but it is more frequently induced by

the patient's intelligent *cooperation with the operator*.

Drugs are of no value in producing true hypnosis.

Hallucinations are easily and perhaps commonly produced in hypnosis. These are usually described as either **positive suggestions** or as **negative suggestions** (C 239).

In so far as the suggestions are consistent with the habits and ideals of the subject they will be carried out, but if they are **contrary to** these habits and ideals the result will either be a refusal to do the thing suggested or such an emotional disturbance as to arouse the subject (C 246).

If the subject is told to do something which is to him indecent or immoral he will **refuse** or **wake up** (C 246).

The most significant of the memory effects produced in hypnosis is the so-called *post-hypnotic suggestion*.... The subject may, for example, be told in the hypnotic state that some time afterward when he hears the operator use a certain designated word he will go across the room and open an umbrella which stands in the corner.

Upon being awakened the subject appears to be perfectly normal. After a time the operator in conversation quite casually uses the designated word, upon hearing which the subject promptly **carries out the directed act** (C 244-45).

20:6.6 Under hypnotism the patient responds to both **negative** and **positive suggestions**,

but will never do anything that is diametrically **opposed to** his moral and ethical standards or to his habitual mode of thought.

If you suggest a criminal act to an individual when hypnotized, he will either **refuse** to carry out your suggestion or immediately **awaken**.

It is a well-known fact that

when you tell patients under hypnosis to do a certain thing at a certain time,

in the majority of cases they will proceed, tho the spell has long been removed, to **carry out the instruction** when the time arrives.

SOURCE

What appear to be *alterations of sensitivity* were early subjected to much experimentation. It was found that anesthesia for certain areas could be so well established by suggestion as to make possible even major operations without pain to the subject. [Etc.] (C 241)

The possibility of certain *abnormal*, or at least unusual, forms of *motor functioning* have already been briefly mentioned in the description of the method for the induction of hypnosis. Such continued contractions of the muscles make possible the demonstrations of *cataleptic rigidity* so often used by traveling performers to overawe their audiences (C 242-43).

Can a person be *hypnotized against his will* is a question often asked. To be perfectly accurate the answer must be negative (C 249).

On the other hand,

a somewhat ignorant person who believed that hypnosis was due to some sort of occult power in the possession of the operator

might strongly desire not to be hypnotized and yet at the same time believe that he was perfectly helpless in the presence of the operator.

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Under hypnosis there is sometimes marked *alteration of sensations*,

and the state may be carried to *rigid catalepsy*.

20:6.7 It has often been said that

a patient cannot be *hypnotized against his will*,

and in general this is no doubt true;

but in certain peculiarly susceptible cases,

if the individual has great fear of hypnotism,

or has a profound belief in the ability of some operator to hypnotize him,

If such an operator told such a subject that he would be hypnotized, such a subject would fully expect to be hypnotized in spite of his preference otherwise, and of course in such circumstances hypnosis could be very easily induced (C 250).

Suggestion depends upon several factors or conditions. First (1) it depends upon the so-called range of consciousness.... When the range of consciousness is reduced, as in continued close attention or in states of absent-mindedness, there is a corresponding limitation of association and consequent lack of criticism. Then is suggestibility heightened.

Secondly (2) the possibility of producing suggested responses in any given case depends upon the directness or indirectness of the presentation (C 251).

The possibility of producing suggested behavior is dependent also (3) upon the prevailing attitude of the subject. [Etc.] (C 251)

Lastly (4) the health of the individual is a conditioning factor (C 252).

[See 20:1.2, above.]

it is possible that he may be hypnotized against his will.

20:6.8 Hypnotism then, is largely a matter of increased suggestibility and depends upon the individual's range of consciousness,

the directness or indirectness of the suggestions made,

and the willingness of the subject to be hypnotized,

not to mention his general health.

20:6.9 It will be apparent that I allow little place for hypnotism in the treatment of psychic and nervous disorders, aside from its value as a means of perfecting the diagnosis in cases of marked dissociation, double personality, trance mediumship, and in some cases of profound hysteria, more especially in hysterical fugue.