

## Chapter 26 — The Spirit of the Subconscious

*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 26, 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) Wilfred Lay, Ph.D., *Man's Unconscious Spirit: The Psychoanalysis of Spiritism* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1921)
- (3) Morton Prince, M.D., LL.D., *The Unconscious: The Fundamentals of Human Personality Normal and Abnormal* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914 and 1921)
- (4) Pierre Janet, Ph.D., M.D., *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907 and 1920)

### 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) **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.

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7 October 2019

Work-in-progress Version 29 Nov. 2012  
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 Revised 8 July 2014 and 7 Oct. 2019

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

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

[contd] In the mind of the primitive  
 savage it constitutes but a short step in  
 reasoning (from his dream-experiences),

to lead to the belief that his “conscious-  
 ness” could be absent from the body,

and so these two ideas put together—or  
 rather, the one growing out of the other—

lead the primitive mind to believe in  
 “consciousness” separate and apart from  
 the physical body,

and thus the foundation is securely laid for  
 a belief in spiritism.

Dreams seem to endow the mind with a  
 power that is quite independent of time  
 and space,

**XXVI — THE SPIRIT OF  
 THE SUBCONSCIOUS**

26:0.1 NOT only is physiology the  
 basis of the greater portion of our  
 psychology, but the physiological  
 processes of the material body have much  
 to do with the peculiar phenomena of  
 psychics and neurotics. It therefore  
 becomes necessary in our study of  
 abnormal psychology to give considerable  
 attention to the physiology of the brain  
 and nervous system—to the physical  
 basis of sensations and emotions—as  
 factors of mind.

26:0.2 In the mind of the primitive  
 savage it constitutes but a short step in  
 reasoning from his dream experiences

to the belief that his “consciousness”  
 could be absent from the body,

traveling about the world or roaming the  
 universe;

and so these two ideas put together—or  
 rather the one growing out of the other—

lead the primitive mind to believe in  
 “consciousness” separate and apart from  
 the physical body,

and thus the foundation is securely laid  
 for a belief in spiritism.

Dreams seem to endow the mind with a  
 power that is quite independent of time  
 and space,

## SOURCE

and the fancies of the dream world are not wholly unlike those extraordinary claims and superstitions of the spirit medium (*TTAS* 130).

[contd] As far as physiology is concerned—the physical sciences—there is no spirit.

Spiritual forces are not able to manifest themselves to the instruments employed in scientific investigation.

They are immaterial, and science deals only with the material (*TTAS* 130).

## XI: PRESENT STATUS (Lay 325)

§3. *What is "Spirit"?* (Lay 327)

By the "use" of spirits what end would be gained in a universe so admirably, as far as we can see it, operating according to absolutely universal and rigid laws? Would spirits be able any the better to regulate the human body than the laws which *do* regulate it now? (L 327)

The only object of "spirit"

is to break those laws governing Nature, for the benefit of the individual when the laws hurt him (L 327).

## 26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

and the fancies of the dream-world are not wholly unlike the extraordinary claims and superstitions of the spirit medium.

26:0.3 As far as physiology is concerned—or any of the other physical sciences—there is no spirit.

Spiritual forces are not able to manifest themselves to the instruments employed in scientific investigation.

They are immaterial, and science deals only with the material.

26:0.4 The scientist therefore, finds it difficult to believe in spirits, whose very existence, according to the psychical researchers, would seem to be for the purpose of nullifying the laws of Nature.

Our universe is pretty well regulated by more or less rigid and dependable physical laws,

and yet it seems to be the purpose of spirits,

as revealed by the claims of spiritualism,

to break these laws—to defy the precepts of Nature—

and otherwise to show their superiority over the natural order.

SOURCE

26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

26:0.5 I do not doubt the existence of spiritual forces, but I believe that they are engaged in operating in the spiritual realm, and that their time is not occupied with trivial intrusion into the materialistic realm—intrusion, apparently, with no more serious mission than the performance of marvels for the mystification of mortal minds.\* [\*See Appendix.]

But psychical research has never found anything like a break in those universal [laws] which I trust I have made plain (L 328).

At least, so far as science has been able to test spiritualistic performances, they have not as yet demonstrated their ability to suspend the known physical laws governing the material universe.

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

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

[contd from 26:0.3] Science comes more and more to look upon that which lays claim to being supernatural, or spiritual, in the performance of spirit mediums,

26:0.6 Science comes more and more to look upon that which lays claim to being supernatural, or spiritual, in the performance of spirit mediums,

as being an emanation from the unconscious realms of the medium's own mind,

as being an emanation from the unconscious realms of the medium's own mind;

and that the entire performance is subject to natural explanation by the laws of physio-psychology; that the laws of physiology on the one hand,

and to explain the entire performance by the laws of physiology, on the one hand,

and of psychology, on the other, and adequate quite fully to explain these apparently supernatural phenomena.

and of psychology, on the other.

The very nature of the content of these spirit messages and revelations

The very nature of the content of the majority of these spirit messages and revelations

## SOURCE

is sufficient to brand them as wholly human, and in every way very ordinary and utterly devoid of any ear-marks of that superiority which would in any way serve to class them as extraordinary or identify them as supernatural (*TTAS* 130-31).

## XI: PRESENT STATUS (Lay 325)

### §4. *Quality of Content* (Lay 328)

Besides the trivial, ignoble and otherwise repellent content of the volume after volume of collected utterances of mediums, the spiritists themselves warn against bad or dangerous messages.

But we should be no more surprised or terrified by the evil that comes out of the unconscious *via* the medium than that which comes into the consciousness of the world in daily acts of violence and hate, if only they both be recognized as coming from exactly the same source.

If, on the other hand, we were forced to believe that the “bad” messages were caused by “evil spirits,” we should certainly be unhappily situated; we should be in a fair way to become terrorized by the thought of what would happen if the evil ones gained the upper hand in ourselves or in the world at large (L 329-30).

## 26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

is sufficient to brand them as wholly human, in every way very ordinary, and utterly devoid of any ear-marks of that superiority which would serve to identify them as supernatural.

26:0.7 Even the spiritualists themselves recognize that both good and bad, as judged by human standards, emanate from the mind of the medium as exercised and controlled in the séance room.

Science prefers to explain these good and bad messages by the ordinary operation of the human brain—

even as we recognize in our daily affairs both good and evil

proceeding from the creative centers and the imaginative spheres of the human intellect—

rather than to resort to good and evil spirits in order to explain them.

SOURCE

§5. *Infantility in Civilized Spirit World* (Lay 331)

[contd] From the fact that the primitive mind projects its unconscious wishes into the external world

and says, though it makes no attempt to prove, that there are spirits there that work in accord with his own wishes;

we should be inclined to suppose that the variety of spirits that he imagines inhabiting river, tree and mountain,

and that he imagines living after death in some Valhalla, or Paradise or happy hunting ground,

would be an infantile variety of spirits manifesting infantile characteristics, because the act of projection itself is an infantile act, in comparison with the more adult attitude implied in the reality principle.

The pleasure-pain principle on which the mechanism of projection works is infantile and itself characteristic of an infantile state of mind, while only the truly adult can be governed solely by the reality principle in all his thinking (L 331).

26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

26:0.8 The primitive mind of man tends to project its own mental images into the external world about him,

and thus these “spirits” of his own creation come to inhabit not only people and animals, but also rivers, trees, and mountains.

And since it is the undisciplined mind that indulges in this sort of “spirit” projection, it is not strange that the spirits thus conceived should be

characteristically infantile and juvenile in their attributes and conduct.

26:0.9 The psychologic basis for these spirit concepts seems to be largely dominated by

the pleasure-pain instinct of the race.

The most primitive soul desires to avoid pain and experience pleasure; and so, whether it be the **Happy Hunting Ground** of the savage or the exquisite **Paradise** of the orthodox Christian, the spirit world is supposed to be one affording its sojourner almost unlimited pleasure. Pain is banished, sorrow and death find no place in the Heaven of Happiness which is the final attainment and abode of redeemed spirits. And, as a rule,

[contd] But the world in which, in the view of the primitive mind, his spirits live, is a truly adult world, adult, that is, as far as his experience goes. The **pleasures which he imagines will be his, after he has departed this life,**

**the pleasures which we conceive as being ours to enjoy on the other side**

are all those of adults in primitive society, mating and fighting and hunting and feasting.

are the very ones for which we most long during our sojourn in this world.

On the other hand the pleasures imagined by a large part of present day civilized humanity are those which were the pleasures of childhood before the individual became adult (L 331).

## THE FEAR OF DEATH

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

6. THE FEAR OF DEATH (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 131)

[contd] The biology of spiritualism is rooted in the pain-pleasure complex of the human mind and nervous system.

26:1.1 As already remarked, the biology of spiritualism is rooted in the pain-pleasure complex of the human mind and nervous system.

For numerous reasons, the primitive mind of the savage fears death.

For numerous reasons, the primitive mind fears death.



## SOURCE

Death is usually preceded or accompanied by pain and suffering.

Death spells the extinction of all possibility of pleasure enjoyment, and therefore death becomes the symbol—the goal, or culmination—of suffering, agony and pain.

It becomes the central idea that stands for cessation of pleasure, and therefore, the primitive mind, on the basis of the desire to avoid pain and experience pleasure,

desires in every way possible, in its efforts to survive the fear of death, to prove the unreality—the non-existence—of death.

And so the unconscious mind of even the primitive tribes reaches out with a persistent longing to grasp any and all evidences and proofs that would tend to strengthen the belief of spirit survival after death,

and thus directly and indirectly, in every way possible, to prove that death is but an illusion—but the vestibule to another world—the veil behind which occurs the birth of another existence into a new and higher life (*TLAS* 130-31).

[contd] We are thus coming to that place where we are able clearly to recognize that

the key to spiritualism—that is to the non-fraudulent, non-materialistic phase of the phenomena—is to be found in the physiology of the unconscious.

## 26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

Death is usually preceded or accompanied by pain and suffering.

Death spells the extinction of all possibility of pleasure-enjoyment, and therefore death becomes the culminating symbol of pain.

On the basis of the wish to avoid pain and experience pleasure, therefore, the primitive mind

desires in every way possible, in its effort to rise above the fear of death, to prove the unreality—the non-existence—of death.

26:1.2 And so the unconscious mind even of the savage reaches out with persistent longing to the belief of spirit survival after death,

seeking to prove that death is but an illusion—but the vestibule to another and higher life.

26:1.3 We come thus to the place where we are able clearly to recognize that

the key to spiritualism—that is, to the non-fraudulent, non-materialistic phases of it—is to be found in the physiology and psychology of the unconscious.

## SOURCE

Here in this mysterious realm of the human intellect are locked up the secrets and mysteries of mediumship, clairvoyance, trances, automatic writing, and other of the real and respectable manifestations of spiritualism (*TTAS* 132).

7. WHAT IS A SPIRIT? (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 132)

[contd] Physiology is the key by which we will open the psychological lock which will enable us to begin our explorations of the secret birthplace and lodgement of the human well-springs of modern spiritualism (*TTAS* 132-33).

[contd] What then is a spirit? I would offer two definitions:

1. Spirit, in a theological sense, is an invisible, non-material entity, or intelligence,

operating in the spiritual world in accordance with spiritual laws and for the accomplishment of spiritual purposes;

and limited, in its contact with the human mind, to the making of spiritual suggestions and to communicating with the spiritual monitors which are assumed to indwell the human mind.

The proof of their existence must ever be without the pale of science, and their recognition is purely and wholly a matter of belief.

Their contemplation is a matter of faith, and their reality and existence are not for scientific investigation (*TTAS* 133).

## 26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

Here, in this mysterious realm of the human intellect, are locked up the secrets and mysteries of mediumship, clairvoyance, trances, automatic writing, and the rest of the real and respectable manifestations of spiritualism.

26:1.4 *Physiology is the key that will open the psychological lock which will enable us to continue our exploration of the secret birthplace, and abode of the phenomena of modern spiritualism.*

26:1.5 What, then, is spirit? I would offer two definitions:

26:1.6 1. Spirit, in a theological sense, is an invisible, non-material entity or intelligence,

operating in the spiritual world in accordance with spiritual laws and for the accomplishment of spiritual purposes;

and limited, in its contact with the human mind, to the making of spiritual suggestions and to communicating with the spiritual monitors which are assumed to dwell in the human mind.

Such assumed spiritual beings are not engaged in operating through natural law, nor in defying or nullifying natural law.

The proof of their existence must ever be without the pale of science, and their recognition is wholly a matter of belief.

Their contemplation is a matter of faith, and their reality and existence are not subject to scientific investigation.

## SOURCE

[contd] 2. Spirits, as recognized and studied by science, as pertaining to mediumship and the phenomena of modern spiritualism, are psychic projections—fantastic creations of the subconscious mind.

They have a biologic origin;

they are the deceptive offspring of a working conspiracy between the physiological and psychological powers resident in, and operating upon the deep and unknown deposits of human sensation, memory and emotions,

which we commonly call the subconscious mind, but which is more properly and scientifically known as “the great Unconscious” (*TTAS* 133).

[contd] The spirits, then, that we deal with so largely in the study of spiritualism, exist within the human body,

and from the realms of the unconscious centers of the mind project themselves outward for the production of their phenomena.

They do not exist without the body and come in to possess the body, and thus work upon the mind as an extraneous spiritual force.

In brief, as far as science has been able to discover, the spirit operating in connection with occult manifestations functions only in connection with the body,

and so far science has not been brought face to face with any phenomena that cannot be adequately explained on this hypothesis,

## 26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

26:1.7 2. Spirits, as pertaining to mediumship and the phenomena of modern spiritualism, are psychic projections—fantastic creations of the subconscious mind.

Science, having studied them, finds that they have a biologic origin—

that they are the deceptive offspring of a working conspiracy between the physiological and psychological powers resident in, and operating upon, the deep and unknown deposits of human sensation, memory, and emotions,

which we commonly call the subconscious mind, but which is more properly and scientifically known as “the great unconscious.”

26:1.8 The spirits, then, that we deal with so largely in the study of spiritualism, exist within the human body,

and from the realms of the unconscious centers of the mind project themselves outward for the production of their phenomena.

They do not exist outside the body and come in to possess the body, and thus work upon the mind as an extraneous spiritual force.

In brief, the spirits that operate in connection with occult manifestations, function only in connection with the body,

and science thus far has not been brought face to face with any such phenomena that cannot be adequately explained on this hypothesis,

## SOURCE

or that cannot be reproduced by psychic manipulations and in accordance with natural laws (*TTAS* 133-34).

[contd] Science, therefore, makes two challenges to the spiritualist, and they are as follows:

1. That the existence of a spirit separate and apart from the body, operating to produce spiritualistic phenomena, is as yet unproved.

The scientist calls for further proof—science asks for evidence (*TTAS* 134).

[contd] 2. Science challenges the ability of spirits, the projections of the subconscious mind, to affect any human body with which it is not connected,

except as through the ordinary agencies of suggestion and other well-known channels of psychic influence (*TTAS* 134).

[Compare 25:3.5.]

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or that cannot be reproduced by psychic manipulations and in accordance with physiological law.

## THE CHALLENGE OF SCIENCE

26:2.1 Science, therefore, makes two challenges to the spiritualist, as follows:

26:2.2 1. Science declares that the existence of a spirit separate and apart from the body, operating to produce spiritualistic phenomena, is as yet unproved.

It calls for further proof—asks for evidence.

26:2.3 2. Science challenges the ability of spirits, the projections of the subconscious mind, to affect any human body with which they are not connected,

except through the ordinary agencies of suggestion and other well-known channels of psychic influence.

26:2.4 Science is in every way willing to admit the possibility, perhaps even the probability, of spirits being present in our bodies. The human being exhibits phenomena of higher intellectual activity that enormously stretch our present knowledge of physiological law and psychological conduct adequately to explain.

While science can not recognize or demonstrate the existence of a spirit indwelling the human form, a vast number of scientists—if not a majority, certainly a very respectable minority—do believe more or less in the presence of a spirit as a part of man’s equipment as a moral being. But, it should be remembered, we simply *believe* in the existence of this spirit—we offer no proof of it, and have thus far discovered no means of obtaining scientific proof of the existence of such a postulated spiritual entity.

I: THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS  
(Lay 13)

§14. *Complexity of Consciousness* (Lay 44)

[Compare L 46.]

The psychical researcher, however, asks us to believe, for he cannot demonstrate,

that there are beings without bodies, who can act in ways unlike our present corporeal mundane ways,

26:2.5 As a scientist, therefore, I must limit my belief in spirits to a belief in my own possession of such a force or entity; assuming, of course, that other men, like myself, recognize that they also probably have such individual spirits within them.

But the spiritualists and the psychical researchers ask us to believe

in spirits that exist without bodies, that can act in defiance of natural law,

and that operate in the physical world without visible forms.

In fact, they go one step farther, and ask us to believe that these spirits are just like the spirits that dwell within us while we are living, and that they can visit us in the physical world

## SOURCE

that these beings were once connected with bodies now disintegrated

and that we ourselves will become such beings after our bodies disintegrate (L 46).

## VI: UNCONSCIOUS EMOTIONS AND WILL (Lay 201)

### §4. Repression (Lay 207)

Hear what Ludwig Frank says in his *Affektstörungen* about the **neurotic** type:

“ ... They are not the ordinary people with the herd instinct....

If such people remain healthy ... they have an extraordinary importance for their fellow-men. For they understand how to get **enjoyment out of life in a very high degree**, and to beautify it for others” (L 209).

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after the bodies in which they have sojourned have long ceased to exist as such.

## THE SPIRITUALISTIC TYPE

26:3.1 I have also observed that spiritualists are not, as a rule, the stoical, philosophical, phlegmatic type;

they are usually persons of a more or less **nervous** temperament,

often educated types

that are capable of **enjoying a high degree of pleasure.**

We are, therefore, brought back face to face with our primitive pain-pleasure instincts. Not only do our spiritualist friends want to avoid the thoughts of pain, suffering, death, extinction, annihilation, etc.; but they are likewise keenly alive to the desire to experience pleasure.

SOURCE

26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

[Compare L 67.]

Since pleasure is the opposite of pain and the antithesis of death, and since their central fear is that of death with its association of pain, the central complex for them—the very center of the solar system of pleasure complexes—becomes the “complex of life,” life never-ending.

II: EMOTIONS (Lay 56)

§6. *Fear* (Lay 65)

A corollary of this is that the pleasant emotions

26:3.2 And so the emotions of pleasure,

which we all so much enjoy, and which certain types of individuals particularly enjoy,

will be enlisted on the side of life, and every experience that through the feeling of similarity can be associated with the concept of life will be grouped together in the same individual's mind.

come to be clustered around, and associated with, the immortality complexes of the human mind;

and thus the spiritualist is enabled to experience the highest degree of psychic exhilaration, the most profound enjoyment of mental and nervous pleasure, by indulging his unwavering belief in life and immortality; all the while seeking to strengthen such a mental attitude by the affirmation of his disbelief in death.

Thus there will be two groups of ideas or experiences [death and life] in his mind, each of which will be antagonistic to the other. Large amounts of unpleasant emotion will be accumulated on the side of death, and similarly large amounts of pleasant emotions on the side of life (L 67).

26:3.3 Thus the life-death conflict is built up in the human experience.

Evidences group themselves on one side tending to prove death, annihilation, the eternal doom, the darkness of the grave. The scientific, materialistic teachings of the age tend to group themselves around these complexes. On the other hand, in conflict with this, the opposite complexes of life and immortality are fostered by the teachings of orthodox religion, and by the seeming evidences of modern spiritualism;

Therefore such a person will consciously collect

and thus the mind seeks to gather—

quite naturally, because of the greater pleasure associated therewith—

all possible evidence for the continuance of life and for the non-existence or the explaining away of death (L 67).

evidence to prove that life, not death, is the goal of human existence.

Spiritualism has on its side, and in its favor, the biologic urge of human instinct, the physiologic hunger and thirst for mortal pleasure, and the psychologic tendencies which unfailingly and instinctively lead the organism to seek out the paths of mental pleasure, while studiously avoiding the avenues of pain.

26:3.4 It is entirely true that in many individuals the fear of death is not the hub around which their pain-fears are grouped.

I might add that in other individuals not interested in spiritism the fear of some other thing than death

It may be, as it is with many people, some other form of fear;

will be found to have paired off with its antagonist and to have enlisted all the unpleasant emotions on the one side and the pleasant ones on the other.

but it has its opposite set off against it as the hub of the pleasure sensations.



## SOURCE

Only with these people it did not happen to be death (L 68).

## 26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

Life and death are not the homologues of pain and pleasure in all individuals,

but they are, certainly, in the vast majority of the present generation.

## THE PHYSICAL BASIS OF MIND—NEUROGRAMS

V: NEUROGRAMS (Prince 109)

**Conservation considered as physical residua.** (Prince 117)

Upon the [doctrine of psycho-physical parallelism] the whole of psycho-physiology and psycho-pathology rests. Mental physiology, cerebral localization, and mental diseases excepting on its assumption are unintelligible—indeed, the brain as the organ of the mind becomes meaningless (P 118-19).

Whenever we have a mental experience of any kind—a thought, or perception of the environment, or feeling—

some change, some “trace,” is left in the neurons of the brain

I need not here discuss the relation between brain activity and mind activity. It is enough to remind you that, whatever view be held, it is universally accepted that every mental process is accompanied by a physical process in the brain;

that, parallel with every series of thoughts, perceptions, or feelings, there goes a series of physical changes of some kind in the brain neurons.

26:4.1 The brain is the organ of the mind.

Whenever we experience a feeling or emotion, record a sensation, or indulge in a thought,

some actual change takes place in the brain.

Every bit of mental activity is accompanied by some sort of physical process in the brain.

Everything we experience leaves a permanent impress of some sort on the cells or neurons of the organ of mentality.

SOURCE

And, conversely, whenever this same series of physical changes occurs the corresponding series of mental processes, that is, of states of consciousness, arises.

In other words,

physical brain processes or experiences are correlated with corresponding mind processes or experiences, and vice versa (P 118).

In other words, without binding ourselves down to absolute precision of language, it is sufficiently accurate to say that every mental experience leaves behind a residue, or a trace, of the physical brain process in the chain of brain neurons.

This residue is the physical register of the mental experience.

*This physical register may be conserved or not (P 120).*

26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

It is also true that the same series of physical phenomena will recur when its corresponding series of mental processes are reawakened or otherwise resurrected into consciousness.

In other words,

as one specialist puts it,

“Physical brain processes or experiences are correlated with corresponding mind processes or experiences, and vice versa.”

26:4.2 We come to see, then, that

every mental experience leaves behind a residue—

some actual change in the neurons of the brain.

This actual change becomes “the physical register of mental experience.”

Psychologists believe that

this physical register is very largely preserved in the subconscious mind,

so that the unconscious activity of the medium has at its disposal all that vast wealth of experience, sensation, and emotion which has been accumulated throughout an entire lifetime.

But it is not until these physical registers are **stimulated** and the original brain experience is reproduced that we have **memory** (P 120).

**Chemical and physical theories of residua.**  
(Prince 122)

[contd] It is possible that, through chemical changes of some kind left in the system of neurons corresponding to an experience, the neurons **may become sensitized so as to react again** as a whole to a second stimulus applied to one element (P 122).

[See 1:6.1.]

**Memory** is but the consciousness of the **restimulation**, or awakening, of these physical registries of past experience.

26:4.3 Whether neurograms are **chemical** or **physical** is not material to this discussion.

The brain cells **may become chemically sensitized so as repeatedly to react** to the conscious recalling of an experience,

the same as they acted in the original experience.

This we can easily understand when we come to recognize how sensitive the human organism may be to the chemical action of internal secretions, or the hay-fever patient to an infinitesimal amount of pollen stimulation.

On the other hand, the brain may effect its registry of experience by means of a physical process—by having an experience stenciled, as it were, on its physical structure—and then be able, for purposes of memory, to recall past experiences somewhat after the fashion in which a stenciled bit of paper, when run through a player-piano, reproduces music.

**Neurograms.** (Prince 131)

[contd] Whatever may be the exact nature of the theoretical alterations left in the brain by life's experiences

they have received various generic terms; more commonly "brain residua," and "brain dispositions."

I have been in the habit of using the term *neurograms* to characterize these brain records (P 131).

**Physiological memory.** (Prince 135)

A beautiful illustration of this type of memory is to be found in

the results of the extremely important experiments, for psychology as well as physiology, of Pawlow and his co-workers in the reflex stimulation of saliva in dogs (P 139).

**Conservation considered as physical residua.** (Prince 117)

This is known as the doctrine of psychophysical parallelism (P 118).

26:4.4 No matter what may be the exact nature, theoretically, of these changes produced on the cells of the brain by our experiences,

they are there;

they constitute a residue of some sort which can be tapped and used variously by different individuals.

Whatever they are, we can perhaps do no better than to adopt the term suggested by Prince and call them

"neurograms."

That the mind and body do thus reciprocally behave is shown by

the experience of Pawlow, the Russian physiologist, in the so-called "sham feeding" of dogs.

His experiments serve to show the parallelism between mind and body:

how the mind can start the body to acting and the body can start the mind to acting: how images can pass in through the eye, and sounds through the ear, to arouse the mind: and how the "neurograms," or memory register, of these same images and sounds can be resurrected and start out through the mind,

so to impress the eye and ear with their reality as to lead mediums and psychics to believe that they have actually seen and heard these phenomena—to deceive themselves into accepting, as real images and sounds from the spirit world, the resurrected memories of their own consciousness.

## FUNCTIONAL DISTURBANCES

26.5.1 We find that the subconscious residue of the mind is capable not only of practising deception in the realm of spiritualism, but also of producing apparent disease disturbances of the body—actually of deranging the behavior of the organism. This is aptly shown in the case of various forms of hysteria.

### IX: THE TROUBLES OF VISION (Janet 182)

It frequently happens that hystericals, while still having a good visual acuity, cease to perceive colours, or at least certain colours.

Violet, blue, and green seem to vanish first (J 204).

[contd] Red appears to be the most persistent colour.

This fact was formerly considered as accounting for the fondness of hystericals for red.

For instance, through purely mental sources and through the agency of the nervous system,

an individual may become more or less color-blind.

Violet, blue, and green seem to vanish first,

red appearing to be the most persistent color.

This has often been given as the explanation why most hysterics are fond of red.

## SOURCE

They are fond of dressing in showy colours, of putting red ribbons in their hair.

The reason is, it was said, that these colours are the only ones they continue to see (J 204).

I think also that this loss of colours has been examined with exaggerated accuracy; a visual field of colours has been drawn, and efforts have been made to prove that in hysteria this visual field is modified in a regular manner,

the visual field of blue, for instance, becoming in this disease smaller than that of red (J 204).

Well, if you examine the visual field of hystericals, you will recognize a very remarkable fact, which very likely exists only in this neurosis; the visual field is narrowed concentrically (J 197).

The extent of the surface an eye can see simultaneously, without moving, is called the visual field... It is not quite certain, in particular, that all the points of the visual field are seen simultaneously in a single act of attention; but this definition is practically sufficient (J 195).

## 26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

They perhaps prefer to dress in showy colors

because these are the only ones they can see continuously.

In hysteria, the so-called visual field may be modified in a very definite and regular manner,

the visual field for blue becoming smaller than that for red.

In certain cases of hysteria the whole field of vision is greatly narrowed concentrically.

It will suffice to state the fact here and avoid going into the technical explanation of what is meant by the field of vision.

26:5.2 Many accurate tests are made to detect this freakish behavior of vision in hysteria, but spiritualistic mediums do not permit us to control matters so as to make such precise scientific tests with them.

## SOURCE

The **army** surgeon charged with the inspection has certainly a right to express some doubt [when a young man, wishing to avoid military service, maintains that he is **blind in the right eye** and that he is unable to take aim],

when he does not recognize any objective disturbance in this eye and sees the pupil react to light as if the retina perceived quite well. He invents subtle processes to find out what he thinks is a fraud.

The two prettiest of these processes are the **letters of Snellen** and the **box of Flees**.

On an absolutely dark ground are pasted letters cut out of paper, some blue, others red.

To the eyes of the subject is applied a pair of eye-glasses, one of the glasses of which is quite of the same blue tint as the letters, and the other of the same red tint.

Through the red glass, which lets only the red rays pass through, the red letters on the black ground can be seen, but the blue ones become as black as the ground and cannot be distinguished from it; while the reverse is true for the blue glass.

The result is that, in these conditions, the right eye can read only one-half of the letters and the left eye the other half.

A person who sees with both eyes instinctively completes one eye with the other and reads the whole word without difficulty.

## 26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

In the **army**, when the medical officers feel that a soldier is feigning **blindness in the right eye** so that he can not become a good marksman,

they put him through a simple test which soon shows whether he is telling the truth or not.

They use some such tests as the **letters of Snellen** or the **box of Flees**.

In the former—

26:5.3 On an absolutely dark ground are pasted letters cut out of paper—some blue, others red.

To the eye of the subject is applied a pair of eye-glasses, one of the glasses of which is quite of the same blue tint as the letters, and the other of the same red tint.

Through the red glass, which lets only the red rays pass through, the red letters on the black ground can be seen, but the blue ones become as black as the background and cannot be distinguished from it.

The result is that under these conditions, the right eye can read only one-half of the letters and the left eye the other half.

A person who sees with both eyes instinctively complements one eye with the other and reads the whole word without difficulty.

SOURCE

In these conditions, a one-eyed person can only read a part of the letters.

Now what does our recruit do?

With the eye-glasses on his eyes, he quietly reads all the letters on the black board (J 189-90).

X: THE TROUBLES OF SPEECH (Janet 208)

[See J 208-26.]

XI: THE DISTURBANCES OF ALIMENTATION (Janet 227)

The words “hysterical anorexy” designate a disease both mental and physiological, very long and very complicated, which consists chiefly in the systematic refusal of food,

in certain digestive disturbances, and in a consequent inanition (J 228).

Then come consultations on consultations and, of course, a lot of absurd diagnoses and ridiculous medicines.

26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

26:5.4 Under these conditions, a one-eyed person can read only a part of the letters.

What does our recruit do?

With the eye-glasses on his eyes he quickly reads all the letters.

26:5.5 We recognize in hysterical subjects—and many mediums belong to this group—that the voice may be greatly influenced by the state of consciousness. In hysteria sometimes the voice is entirely lost.

The mind can so influence the body as to cause

a loss of appetite,

not to mention serious digestive disturbances—

bowel disorders, diarrhea, constipation.

Many such sufferers have undergone long courses of medical treatment



## SOURCE

It is thought quite natural that the girl, whose stomach is diseased, should be careful of what she eats; her medical attendants would even be inclined to prescribe her to a still stricter diet. [Etc.] (J 230)

[Compare J 232-33.]

[I knew a girl of eighteen who died in consequence of her abhorrence to turnips, which she had contracted when at school. To the end she refused to eat anything, saying that everything smelt of turnips (J 234).]

## XII: THE TICS OF RESPIRATION AND ALIMENTATION (Janet 245)

[The hysterical phenomena of respiration] are of infinite variety, and we might dwell indefinitely on the *apnæas*, *dyspnæas*, *suffocations*, *respiratory disturbances*, on the varied *respiratory paralyses*, on the innumerable *tics*, *polypnæa*, *yawn*, *sigh*, *sob*, *hiccough*, *cough*, *sneeze*, *bark*, *shakes of the abdomen*, *meteorism* ... (J 245).

## 26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

and subjected themselves to strenuous courses of dieting,

all to little or no avail, sometimes subsequently to be cured in a moment by Christian Science or some other new-fangled religion—or by treatment of some quack doctor.

26:5.6 I had a patient who, several years before, had seen her father almost choke to death on a fish-bone. After that fright she was unable to take solid food for years. She was cured of this fear by a few months' proper teaching.

Many common mannerisms, or tics, are also illustrative of the projection of the mind outward on the body, as the result of sensations traveling out over the nerves from the mind.

Sighing, sobbing, coughing, hiccoughing, and sneezing are sometimes produced by the outward projection of some element of the consciousness.

## SUBCONSCIOUS NEUROGRAMS

[*Note: An earlier version of 26:6.1-3 appeared in *Worry and Nervousness* (1923 ed.) 539-40.*]

26:6.1 That the content of the subconscious may lead to monstrous self-deception and cunningly delude even the wisest of us, is a fact long recognized by the specialists in psycho-pathology—those who deal with abnormal and peculiar minds.

One authority in this field (Morton **Prince**) says:

### VIII: THE UNCONSCIOUS (Prince 229)

**The unconscious as a fundamental of personality.** (Prince 254)

In one sense, I suppose, we may say that every one leads a double life.

Let me hasten to say to you, I mean this not in a moral but in an intellectual sense.

Every one's mental life may fairly be said to be divided between those ideas, thoughts, and feelings which he receives from and gives out to his social world, the social environment in which he lives,

and those which belong more properly to his inner life and the innermost sanctuary of his personality and character.

The former include the activities and the educational acquisitions which he seeks to cultivate and conserve for future use.

The latter include the more intimate communings with himself, the doubts and fears and scruples pertaining to the moral, religious, and other problems of life, and the struggles and trials and difficulties which beset its paths;

26:6.2 In one sense, I suppose, we may say that everyone leads a double life.

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The former include the activities and the educational acquisitions which he seeks to cultivate and conserve for future use.

The latter include the more intimate communings with himself, the doubts and fears and scruples pertaining to the moral, religious and other problems of life, and the struggles, and trials and difficulties which beset its paths;

## SOURCE

the internal contests with the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The conventionalities of the social organization require that the outward expression of many of these should be put under restraint.

Indeed, society insists that some, the sexual strivings, are aspects of life and human nature which are not to be spoken or thought of.

Now, of course, this inner life must also leave its neurographic tracings along with the outer life,

and must, potentially at least, become a part of our personality, liable to manifest itself in character and in other directions (P 259-60).

More than this, and more important, there is considerable evidence going to show that conserved experiences functioning as subconscious processes take part in and determine the conscious processes of everyday life.

On the one hand stored neurograms may undergo subconscious incubation, assimilating the material deposited by the varied experiences of life to finally burst forth in ripened judgments, beliefs, and convictions,

as is so strikingly shown in sudden religious conversions and allied mental manifestations.

Through a similar incubating process, the stored material needed for the solution of baffling problems is gathered together and oftentimes assimilated and arranged and formulated as an answer to the question.

## 26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

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#### SOURCE

On the other hand, subconscious processes may be but a hidden part of that mechanism which determines our everyday judgment and our points of view, our attitudes of mind, the meanings of our ideas, and the traits of our characters (P 263).

#### 26: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

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