

Chapter 3 — The Psychology of Self-deception

*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 3, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) Paul **Bousfield**, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., *The Omnipotent Self: A Study in Self-Deception and Self-Cure* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1923)
- (2) William S. Sadler, M.D., ***The Physiology of Faith and Fear***, Or, *The Mind in Health and Disease* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1912)
- (3) William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S., ***The Truth About Spiritualism*** (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1923)
- (4) Wilfred **Lay**, Ph.D., *Man's Unconscious Spirit: The Psychoanalysis of Spiritism* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1921)
- (5) Morton **Prince**, M.D., LL.D., *The Unconscious: The Fundamentals of Human Personality Normal and Abnormal* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914 and 1921)

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.
- (h) **Gold** highlights key words or themes which will be discussed in the analysis of the chapter.

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I I I — T H E PSYCHOLOGY OF SELF-DECEPTION

3:0.1 IT is a fact that good-hearted people can honestly deceive themselves. There exists a definite mechanism which can be used by one part of our mind (the subconscious) to deceive and mislead the other half of our intelligence (the conscious mind). Let us now take a square look at this mechanism which so readily lends itself to the queer business of self-deception. In order to make clear this tendency of the subconscious to practise deception upon its lord and master, let us go back to the nursery and locate some of the early origins of dishonest thinking and insincere psychic behavior.

FACTS AND FANTASY

VI: FACT AND PHANTASY (Bousfield 68)

[contd] In the last chapter we emphasized the fact that one of the first products of Narcissism was the infantile difficulty of distinguishing between fact and phantasy, of realising the world outside oneself (B 68).

3:1.1 Much of the trouble that neurotics have with themselves, in trying to face the realities of life, is due to their having carried over into adult experience

the tendencies of childhood to confuse facts and fantasy.

VII: IDENTIFICATION (Bousfield 79)

We have emphasised the fact that when a child comes into the world, he is to himself the only **real** thing; the rest of the world is merely seen from his phantastic view point, and at this stage he accepts himself as the one all-powerful **centre of everything** (B 79).

VI: FACT AND PHANTASY (Bousfield 68)

Many people have the idea that a child should be encouraged to use its **imagination**;

whereas in fact

the child's imagination requires **curbing, training**, sublimating.

Such people do not realise that the early life of a child

is lived almost entirely in imagination, that it has no difficulty whatsoever in using its imagination, and that the real difficulty is in preventing it from using too much imagination directed into false channels and by-paths of permanent unreality (B 77-78).

The ordinary **fairy-tale** should be swept from the nursery;

When we are young, our developing ego tends to regard itself as the **center of the world**.

Our personality during childhood is very **real**, and we come to confuse the outside world of reality with the imaginative creations of our own world of fantasy.

3:1.2 Parents tell fairy-stories to their children with the idea of developing the **imagination**.

In the case of the average child, however, the imagination does not need developing;

it needs to be educated, **trained, curbed**, and disciplined.

The child's early life

is largely one of fantasy.

He lives in the realms of his own imagination.

Instead of being told **fairy-stories**

SOURCE

here the child does nothing but identify himself with the hero or heroine in the most impossible of situations of a purely phantastic type. There is plenty of scope for giving a child an interest in stories from the fairy-land of science, or from the lives of famous **persons** in the centuries that have passed; all of which, if properly selected and dressed up, will assist the child's directive thought (B 76).

The method of thought which he should develop in order thus to fit himself to meet the world adequately has been conveniently termed "**directive thinking**" (B 71).

It is the very opposite of phantasy thinking, which is generally indefinite, based upon a lack of perspective, and attempts continually to obtain the **fulfilment of wishes impossible of fulfilment** (B 72).

Moreover, experience has shown that if diplomacy be used, the child will be as equally interested in wonderful facts as in wonderful phantasies. The only difference is that it is **more trouble** to the **parent** or educator to search out and deal with facts himself (B 77).

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

he should be told about interesting and thought-provoking facts and **people**.

Early in the nursery days "**directive thinking**" should be encouraged.

As the child grows up,

he cannot attain the **fulfillment of his fairy-tale imaginings**;

he is destined to find that life is real, that the world is a workshop as well as a playhouse.

I think the old-fashioned fairy-story is merely something which **parents find easy and ready-at-hand to tell the children**.

It is **too much trouble** to make the facts of real life and the experiences of real people sufficiently interesting and attractive to these young minds so largely given to fantasy and so completely preoccupied with imagination.

3:1.3 Early in life children should be taught to control their thoughts and be instructed in the technique of mental concentration; and it is failure to do this in the nursery that causes much of our psychic trouble. It is the children from such nurseries who, later, when grown up, file in as so many neurotic wrecks to consult our nerve specialists, to haunt the offices of other medical practitioners, and to throng our various sanatoriums. Too early we are encouraged in the thought that we may possibly dodge the realities of life. Too early we indulge the fantasy that we may rub Aladdin's lamp and have fulfilled our every wish. Altogether too late do parents seek to turn the minds of their children into

Directive thinking is thus obviously, controlled thinking requiring an effort of attention and concentration as opposed to phantasy thinking which knows but little control save that of desire, and little effort or concentration (B 73).

“directive thinking,” controlled thinking.

3:1.4 During nursery days,

A little boy desires to possess a pony; if this be impossible his imagination gives life to a rocking-horse,

if one cannot have a real pony he can compromise on a hobby-horse

and failing that he may tie a piece of string to a chair,

or get astride a broom-handle

and indulge the imagination while

and with great pleasure and much emotion urge on his fiery untamed steed across mountain and desert (B 70).

the pony of fantasy prances over the meadow or climbs to mountain tops.

If this child grows up normally, this possibility of phantastic fulfilment should gradually disappear.

But there comes a time when he has to bid farewell to such fantasies.

SOURCE

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

If, when grown up, he would travel, this boy must get a real horse, an automobile, or perchance an airplane.

How many adults, for instance, could take a bath-tub into their dining-room, sit in it, and with the aid of a vivid imagination thoroughly enjoy a pleasant sail at sea? (B 70)

He can no longer tour the world by sailing his little boats in the bathtub—with the aid of his imagination

and the alluring pictures supplied by the tourist agencies. It will require real money and a real steamship.

3:1.5 The mind of the neurotic individual always tends to look at things in a childlike fashion, to cringe before reality and dodge responsibility as would an inexperienced youth. Our nervous sufferers dislike to face the realities of actual living. Instead of indulging in “directive thought” and intelligently meeting the difficulties of each day, they shrink from the slightest responsibility and resort for a solution of their troubles to the fantasies and imaginations of childhood. Controlled thinking is painful to these neurotics; it really hurts them to concentrate. They are filled with dismay and seized with panic when they feel they must actually confront and settle a problem. They would like to solve the problems of adult life and the real world by the methods of the nursery, by the fairy-story technique; they long for a glorified Aladdin’s lamp or an up-to-date version of the magic carpet. The physician who deals with these cases comes to see the harm of overdoing this fairy-story business of the early nursery days.

SOURCE

Yet remnants of phantasy thinking remain with everyone, and in a moderate degree, so far as we know, such remnants do but little harm if they are present in small measure only, and kept in water-tight compartments (B 70-71).

In all the business of everyday life, directive thinking must be employed; whether we are merely using our minds to decide the most trivial problem, such as the best way of eradicating weeds from the garden, or whether we are deciding upon a policy to be pursued in some great commercial or political enterprise (B 73).

We must now look at the second important element in the child's early education, which would follow logically upon the first one that it should be made to face the facts around it;

and that is, that in its games and occupations it should be encouraged, as far as possible, to take lines of directive thought, and not obtain its pleasures through phantasies only (B 74-75).

[contd] Thus, it would be much better to give him bricks to play with,

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3:1.6 Day-dreams are all right;

we are benefited by indulging in them now and then;

but when a grown-up man makes a business of trying to

weed the garden

by means of fairy assistants, there is trouble ahead, and nothing but trouble.

When the neurotic woman tries to solve her problems by merely wishing, she can expect nothing but sorrow and defeat.

3:1.7 Nervous children especially should be taught to face facts,

to play the game,

early to learn how to be good losers;

and to this end, I think it is far better that children should be given useful toys,

SOURCE

so that he may use **directive thought** in designing and building a house,

than to give him a ready-made toy, such as an **engine** wherewith he will merely carry out the phantasy of **being a driver or a passenger** and of travelling wheresoever he wishes.

A **toy wheel-barrow** which he can take into the garden and fill with real stones and earth is far better than a doll which he will merely imagine to be something to be brought up like himself, which he will endow with phantastic life and feelings which are quite unreal (B 75).

Of course, imagination and phantasy will come into its games, and are bound to do so,

but as much directive thought as possible should be added (B 75-76).

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toys that would lead to **“directive thinking.”**

How much more good a nervous boy could get out of

a **toy wheelbarrow** in which he could wheel stones about the yard and move his sand-pile,

than out of a toy **engine**, and merely imagining that he is riding about **as a passenger or driving** a locomotive over the country.

I am not advocating, **of course**, that children should be given no toys that stimulate the imagination,

but rather that they also be given toys to stimulate directive and constructive thinking.

3:1.8 **It is in this connection that I would call attention to the folly of too long prolonging those stories about Santa Claus and the stork. Fables of this sort may become so entwined in the growing child's mind that he will be tremendously upset in his mental life when these sentimental associations are torn asunder by subsequent disillusionment. He often feels that he has been deceived by those whom he trusted most, and the result is upsetting to the neurotic temperament.**

SOURCE

For though the facts with which the stories [of science and history] may deal are as wonderful as any of Grimm's fairy-tales,

they are facts of which the child will never have to be undeceived, and he will never have to have his faith shaken in the stories which he has learnt; thus the child will learn from the outset to think directly (B 76).

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

It is better early to build on fact

and learn how to make the real world more attractive to the imaginative little folks;

there is plenty that a child will never have to unlearn,

that is both fascinating and satisfying to the imagination.

3:1.9 The one great delusion of the nervous sufferer is that somehow, in some way, someone is going to solve his problems for him. He is disinclined to accept the fact that he alone can effect the cure. He steadily refuses to face the fact that his problems must be solved by real thinking and real acting, and that they cannot be solved by the fantasy-fairy technique of merely wishing and hoping.

FANTASY AND IMAGINATION

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

IMAGINATION AND PHANTASY (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 42)

The imagination is in reality the creative power of the mind.

It is ever at work forming new experiences out of our old ones.

3:2.1 The imagination is, in reality, the creative power of the mind,

and it is ever at work forming new experiences out of our old ones.

SOURCE

The powers of imagination take our ideas and fashion them into our ideals.

This is the higher or creative imagination.

Another function of this mental power, reproductive imagination, is very closely allied to memory,

in fact, it is commonly regarded as a part of memory (*PF&F* 42).

[contd] Closely associated with the imagination but entirely distinct from it, is the power of phantasy.

Phantasy must not be confused with fancy.

This peculiar power of phantasy represents what might be called the safety-valve of the mind.

It is closely associated with memory, and may be regarded as its playhouse.

Our powers of phantasy find expression in daydreams and day reveries.

Phantasy represents the self adrift.

It is the state of mind one finds himself in while resting in a hammock on a beautiful summer's afternoon,

oblivious of all surroundings, wide awake, and yet letting the thoughts drift down the stream of mind without guidance, help, or interference (*PF&F* 42).

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

It is the province of imagination to take our ideas and fashion them into ideals;

that is,

this is the higher work of the creative imagination.

Still another function of this mental power is reproductive imagination, which is closely allied to memory.

3:2.2 Closely allied to imagination, but entirely distinct from it, is the power of fantasy.

Fantasy must not be confused with fancy,

however, for the two terms are by no means interchangeable.

Fantasy represents what might be called the safety-valve of the mind.

It is the playhouse of the soul.

Our powers of fantasy ordinarily find expression in our day-reveries.

Fantasy represents consciousness adrift.

It is the state of mind one finds himself in while resting in the hammock on a beautiful summer afternoon,

oblivious to all surroundings, wide awake, and yet letting the thoughts drift down the stream of the mind, without guidance, help, or hindrance.

SOURCE

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

1. PHANTASY AND IMAGINATION (*The Truth About Spiritualism* 121)

[contd] There can be little doubt but that certain human beings possess a tremendously large “bump” of phantasy.

That is, they have the day-dreaming faculty developed to the point where it has acquired the proportions of a well-nigh separate personality.

This must be the case with many clairvoyants, mediums, and other occult practitioners.

They might be said to possess an automatic power of phantasy—one that acts quite independently of their ordinary mental processes—

and one which forms its conclusions and formulates its statements quite without the conscious knowledge of the higher powers of such individuals’ minds (*TTAS* 121-22).

[contd] As we ascend in the realms of thought, we reach more and greater possibilities of mental confusion and mind deception.

It is quite impossible for the very young child to discriminate between imagination, memory, and images.

The child of three years will vividly describe his meetings with lions and other wild beasts in the back yard, and may relate these things as real experiences which have just happened.

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

3:2.3 There can be little doubt that certain human beings possess a tremendously large “bump” of fantasy.

That is, they have the day-dreaming faculty developed to the point where it has well-nigh acquired the proportions of a separate personality.

This must be the case with many neurotics, hysterics, clairvoyants, mediums, and other occult practitioners.

They might be said to possess an automatic power of fantasy—one that acts quite independently of their ordinary mental processes—

and one which forms its conclusions and formulates its statements quite without the conscious knowledge of the higher powers of such individuals’ minds.

3:2.4 As we ascend higher in the realms of thought, we reach more and greater possibilities of mental confusion and mind deception.

It is often quite impossible for a child of three years to discriminate between imagination and memory of reality.

He will vividly describe his meetings with lions and other wild beasts in the back yard, and may relate these things as real experiences which have just happened.

SOURCE

He is really recalling the pictures of lions from his story books, or reviving the memory images of the beasts observed at the zoo;

and many of our mediums and clairvoyants are so constituted of mind that their own subconscious plays the same subtle trick upon them.

They see, hear, feel and perceive things that have not just happened, as facts, and as such portray them.

These experiences are the phantasms of a short circuited memory acting under the impulse and inspiration of a misguided imagination (*TTAS* 122).

[contd] In the case of these mediums,

the mind has grown up in some respects, but in this particular feature they have remained juvenile,

and we all know that the younger we are, the more active, vivid and uncontrolled is the imagination and phantasy (*TTAS* 122-23).

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

IMAGINATION AND PHANTASY (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 42)

But it is doubtful if even years and experience are able fully to separate these mental powers; and herein is the fruitful field

for the birth of imaginary diseases,

the production of unreal troubles,

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

He is really recalling the pictures of lions from his story books, or reviving the memory-images of the beasts observed at the zoo;

and many of our mediums and clairvoyants are so constituted of mind that their own subconscious plays the same subtle trick upon them.

They see, hear, feel, perceive, and portray as facts, the figments of their own imagination.

These experiences are the fantasms of a short-circuited memory acting under the impulse and inspiration of a misguided imagination.

3:2.5 In the case of certain hysterics and mediums,

the mind has grown up in some respects, but in this particular feature they have remained juvenile,

and we all know that the younger we are the more active, vivid, and uncontrolled is the imagination.

And herein is a fruitful field,

in the case of nervously unstable individuals,

for the birth of imaginary diseases,

SOURCE

and the creation of false difficulties—fictitious lions and bears which await us in the highway of life, and which become just as real to the diseased adult mind as are the imaginary concepts and images of the nursery to the childish mind of the infant (*PF&F* 43).

DANGERS OF DISEASED IMAGINATION (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 43)

[contd] When the imagination becomes diseased, when the phantasy unduly influences and controls the mind,

it is not difficult to conceive of a vicious combination of mental perversion in which the self drifts aimlessly over an imaginary ocean, beset with unreal dangers

and threatened with false reefs; storm-tossed, battered, and beaten by imaginary winds;

living in momentary danger of fictitious shipwreck and eternal doom—

all of which is either wholly or in part imaginary (*PF&F* 43).

[contd] What is to hinder the imagination from setting in operation false notions, resurrecting disagreeable impressions,

and, by its well-known powers of reconstruction,

creating new feelings and strange sensations? (*PF&F* 43)

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

the creation of false difficulties,

and the confounding of the mind by the sophistries of occultism.

3:2.6 When the fantasy unduly influences the mind,

it is not difficult to conceive of mental perversions in which the psychic self drifts aimlessly over an imaginary sea beset with unreal dangers,

harassed by fantastic spirits,

threatened with false reefs, storm-tossed, battered and beaten by imaginary winds,

living in momentary danger of shipwreck and eternal doom—

all of which is either wholly or in part mere fantasy.

What is to hinder an overdeveloped fantasy from setting in operation fictitious feelings and impressions,

and, by its well-known powers of reconstruction,

creating spiritistic forms, unreal apparitions, and the fantastic concepts of the spirit world?

SOURCE

The imagination is the creative power, and it is not always exclusively exercised in creating labor-saving machinery and improved conditions of living,

but it is also often engaged in creating mischief, fictitious difficulties, and even false diseases and unreal disorders of the body (*PF&F* 43-44).

[*Note: An earlier version of 3:3.1-3 appeared in *Worry and Nervousness* (1923 ed.) 542-44.*]

I: THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS (Lay 13)

§8. *Feelings are Sensations* (Lay 31)

[contd] What I wish to make as plain as possible is the evident fact that all the feelings are sensations, and have as much right to be consulted about certain truths as do the other sensations. As qualities of consciousness, one of them is, to the impartial observer, as clear and distinct as the other (L 31).

[contd] Actual truth, however, is not a matter of the qualities of the stream of consciousness,

but a matter of laws of relations of those qualities.

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

The creative power of human imagination is not always exercised in developing labor-saving machinery and improved conditions of living.

It is often engaged in producing mischief in the realms of psychic deception.

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

3:3.1 Feelings and emotions are real—

they are experiences which must be recognized and reckoned with in the stream of consciousness.

On the other hand,

demonstrated truths—scientific facts—are not necessarily a part of the stream of consciousness.

Feelings and emotions are, rather,

the statement or expression of the laws of relationship governing those qualities which exist and function in the stream of consciousness.

SOURCE

In what follows I shall endeavour to show that the spiritist accepts as actual truth the misinterpreted succession of the qualities of his consciousness

and makes on this basis deductions

that are not valid in the sphere of thought in which the spiritist states they are valid.

Thus I am willing to accept the statement of any spiritist that he saw (i.e., believes he saw) a table rise, or that he remembers certain things happening weeks or months ago; but I am not willing to accept his statement that if I, or some person who is even less than I under the influence of the unconscious, had been present, we should have seen the same thing.

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

And here is where our nervous patients fall down.

They assume certain qualities of consciousness to be facts.

They interpret feelings and emotions, projected from the subconscious mind, as realities,

and having thus fallen into grievous error so early in their process of reasoning, they go on with their successive deductions in that wild and reckless manner

which can lead only to the sorry plight of the psychoneuroses.

3:3.2 I recently attended a séance where one of the highly suggestible women present said that she saw a table rise several inches off the floor. I did not see the table rise. I am not, however, going to accuse this good woman of deliberate falsehood. It would be unfair thus to indict her, because, I am convinced, she had all the emotions and sensations of seeing the table rise. The event was in every way real to her; that is, real to her stream of consciousness. But it was not real to me. I do not believe that the table rose off the floor. Others present agreed with me in this belief.

I am, therefore, willing to say, in the common acceptance of the term, that I know the table did not rise.

SOURCE

I know the large majority of spiritists are sincere and free from taint of fraud, which could be practised only by the unbeliever.

But I also know that the interpretation of the various sense qualities of the individual who is present at a seance is a very delicate matter, and has not yet been subjected to adequate scientific tests with instruments of precision.

By this I mean that the stream of consciousness of the ordinary observer at a seance

is composed of the two elements of subjective and objective sensation mentioned above as mental image and sensation.

Also, to use an indispensable metaphor, the sensations themselves come into the mind both from the body and from the external world.

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

Thus I think that while many spiritualists, like our neurotics, are victims of self-deception, they are not consciously fraudulent. I really believe that they are many times sincere in the statements they make;

to them the incident happened, but not to the rest of the world.

The sufferings of the neurotic, in like manner, are real—to him.

It will then be clear to the reader that feelings and sensations—emotions—are in a sense *real*, and that we can easily become victims of our own feelings.

3:3.3 In the case of an ordinary neurotic individual, or at a spiritualistic séance, the stream of consciousness

consists of two distinct elements—the subjective and the objective emotions, sensations, messages, etc.

Now, sensations enter the mind through the body after having been aroused by something in the external world.

Sensations also have an internal or psychic origin. They may be aroused by memories, association of ideas, and other influences operating in the mind and nervous system itself.

SOURCE

Furthermore the sensations coming from the body itself include the only criterion possessed by humans by which to judge of the objective reality of any of the other sensations.

In other words the only criterion used in the seance is an internal feeling (the reality feeling)

which is exactly on a par, as far as objective reality is concerned, with any other internal feeling (B 31-32).

[*Note:* An earlier version of 3:4.1-3 appeared in *Worry and Nervousness* (1923 ed.) 544-46.]

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

The only standards we have by which to judge sensations are those feelings and other conscious experiences which are aroused by external sensations coming into the mind from outside the body.

So that it comes to be a fact that we tend to judge, recognize, and classify our sensations of internal origin largely by the reactions we experience to similar sensations which have a genuine external origin.

Therefore, we come to build up in our minds what someone has called

the “reality feeling”

in connection with some inward image and its associated emotions, as that image navigates down the stream of consciousness,

in just the same manner that we associate such feelings with the real images and emotions that have had their origin in sensory contact with the actual objects of the material world—

with the result that we are led into monstrous self-deception.

SELF-DECEPTION

3:4.1 I attended a séance not long ago, in which, I am thoroughly satisfied,

SOURCE

As I see and read about spiritistic phenomena, I observe more and more clearly that the accounts of them are really true enough accounts of the states of mind of the mediums and the observers. They **certainly see what they see, and hear what they hear**, and they tell us carefully what they see and hear.

But I also **see and hear** wonderful things. I can see almost anything I wish to, in my mind's eye (L 32-33).

[contd] I can hear anything I desire in my mind's ear,

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the medium **really saw and heard what she claimed to see and hear**. I have no doubt many of the believers in the spirit circle also **saw and heard what they claimed to see and hear**.

But I was unable to see or hear what they saw and heard. Moreover, I saw things which none of them saw: I saw the medium deliberately trick us on three occasions. The last time I almost failed to see it, because she was indulging in such a flow of words that my attention had come very near to being diverted, and I all but missed catching the technique of her clever trick. I came very near to seeing what she saw and what her devotees saw; but by carefully navigating my bark of attention down the stream of consciousness I avoided the rock, I steered closer to the center of the stream, and I caught the medium in the act—I detected the method of her fraud. In the meantime others navigated with her over to one side of the stream of consciousness and saw exactly what she described to them—the beautiful things on the farther shore of their suggestive and collective streams of consciousness.

3:4.2 We can **hear and see** things without going to a séance.

I am not much of a musician,

but I can sit down and imagine tunes I have one time heard. I can imagine that I hear bands play,

SOURCE

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

even melodies that have never been heard before by me or any one else,

and I am not indulging in any insane prank; you, reader, can hear the same.

I can even hear melodies in my mind that, as far as conscious memory goes, I have never heard;

but I dare say they are built up of melodies and strains I have heard at some time in my life.

I can see visions of landscapes that I have never seen. If this were not possible, how could the artist give us new paintings, and how could the musician give us new melodies?

It will be observed that

I can

most spirit mediums are highly sensitive, nervous persons, who could,

in my mind's tactual consciousness touch anything I want to, feel all degrees of temperature, all sensations of motion, all excesses of pleasure and pain, in short, any experience of whatever nature that I have had in the past or desire to have in the future, all by means of the imagery which, apparently at will, I can evoke whenever I have the leisure (L 33).

in and of their own imagination, and at will, lead themselves in fantasy to run almost the whole gamut of physical suffering and pain, of mental pleasure and psychic joy.

3:4.3 If I have the "feeling of reality" which leads me to believe that I have conversed with a spirit or seen apparitions that are spirit realities; then, reasoning from experience, I can cite such psychic phenomena as

SOURCE

But I have no interest in reporting these images as scientific truths valid for any other consciousness than my own. That they are absolutely incontrovertible scientific proofs for my own consciousness, no one will, I am sure, attempt to deny (L 33).

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

positive proof to my own consciousness

of the reality of spiritualistic phenomena.

If I can truthfully describe such emotions and feelings to others, I am offering scientific evidence of the existence of a creative imagination—of the psychic power of memory, fantasy, reverie, etc.; but I cannot offer such an experience to scientists as scientific proof of the reality of disembodied spirits. And this is where our friends, the spiritualists, fall down in their logic. They offer us phenomena which furnish abundant proof of the existence of these spirits in their own consciousness, and they ask us, as scientists, to accept this valid evidence in the realm of consciousness, as scientific evidence in the material world. We cannot do it. Sensations and emotions are real things in consciousness; but they do not constitute material proof of the actual existence of the spirits which these psychic phenomena impersonate.

3:4.4 Just as an honest spirit medium may so deceive herself as to come actually to believe in the reality of her psychic experiences, which are wholly of subconscious origin, so may the vast army of neurotic sufferers come to that point where they thoroughly believe in the reality of their miseries, fictitious pains, and other forms of imaginary disease.

It is just as difficult to talk these neurotics out of a belief in the reality of their complaints as it is to convince the honest and sincere, but none the less self-deceived, spiritistic medium that the thing which she sees and hears is not in reality a spirit apparition, but rather an outwardly projected creation of her own falsifying subconscious.

3:4.5 The technique by which the subconscious is able so thoroughly to deceive its possessor will be better understood as we go on to examine the many and diverse methods whereby an uncontrolled subconscious may come to dominate the consciousness of a neurotic individual and eventually to enslave his whole mind.

SHIFTING THE GEARS

§15. *Feeling of Reality Detachable* (Lay 47)

[contd] The feeling of reality is a floating feeling,

that is, it may become attached to any sensation whatever or failing to be connected with a sensation, it may attach itself to an image (L 47).

[Compare: But the feeling of reality not only does not coexist with every visual sensation but also actually appears at times when there is no visual impression being made on my retina at all (L 34).]

3:5.1 We come, then, to recognize that

the “feeling of reality” is a transferable, floating bit of consciousness,

which may be attached now to one group of sensations and images, now to another.

We learn that the “feeling of reality” may be attached to an image reflected through the retina of the eye from without inward—the image of a real, material thing, which has weight, dimensions, and substance; again, that this “feeling of reality” may be attached to an image projected outward, from the archives of memory, to a creature created by consciousness—by the association of ideas.

SOURCE

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

It would appear that some “psychics” and “sensitives” are able conveniently to shift the gears of consciousness as regards the “feeling of reality” and thus cause this state of mind to be attached to things both real and unreal.

3:5.2 Our more profound types of chronic neurotics and confirmed hysterics are victims of this “shifting of gears” with reference to the “reality feeling.” They are able to “ring the changes” in almost endless profusion as concerns an astounding variety of alarming symptoms and elusive ailments.

It is also a feeling that is backed up by the unconscious wish,

3:5.3 The consciousness of the “feeling of reality” tends to follow the channels of our pleasure-longings and our wish-complexes.

which, being the craving for externality, will seek, in almost any available substitute, externality or the feeling of reality that generally reports externality.

In other words the unconscious wish inevitably tends to attach the feelings of reality to something.

In other words, the unconscious wish always tends to attach this feeling of reality to something of its own choosing.

In a spiritistic seance

Now, in the seance room,

be it noted, we have a group of people who intently long—who ardently wish—for communication with the dead. This is true of both the medium and the believing spectators. Under such extraordinary conditions it must be evident that

the feeling of reality, being in the minds of the sitters removed as much as possible from those external impressions of sight, sound and touch, with which it usually lives,

this “feeling of reality,” as it floats about in consciousness,

SOURCE

is in a particularly errant and unsatisfied state

and flies with avidity to anything that occurs with sufficient vividness (L 47-48).

In short the phenomena of the seance are due to the propensity of the unattached feelings of reality on the part of the sitters

to attach themselves to other mental states than objective sensations— from external stimuli, in other words, to the subjective states of the sitters, that is, to their own mental images

which, under the conditions of the seance, are much more likely, than in ordinary life, to come from the unconsciousness, where they are ordinarily kept, and to appear in consciousness (L 49).

Here I am merely stating that the unconscious wish

forces the attachment of the feeling of reality to *something* all the time. If it cannot be attached to external stimuli, because of their being as far as possible eliminated by the conditions of the seance,

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

is in a highly unstable and unattached state,

and that it is ready to seize upon the least bit of evidential phenomena and give it the sanctity of actual evidence.

3:5.4 The séance favors bringing forth from the unconscious those images and complexes which are subservient to the wish to prove that beings live after death and are able to return to this world and manifest themselves to the living.

And in this way

numerous unattached feelings of reality are brought forth

and are able quickly to fasten themselves upon those images and emotions

which are the offspring of the unconscious mind in the peculiarly favorable and suggestive environment of the average spiritualistic séance.

3:5.5 The unconscious wish,

the unsatisfied longing for spirit communication,

in the absence of any real external stimuli,

SOURCE

it will spontaneously attach itself to **images** (L 49).

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

finds itself readily attachable to the internal **images** and emotions

aroused by the deep-rooted wish to prove life dominant over death, as well as by the peculiar psychical atmosphere of the séance itself.

TAPPING THE SUB-CONSCIOUS

[See 1:6.1.]

3:6.1 It is now an accepted psychological fact that our experiences are all more or less perfectly preserved as memories in the subconscious mind,

and there can be no question but that many spirit mediums and victims of hysteria are in possession of routes to the subconscious not used by normal individuals.

IV: THE UNCONSCIOUS AS AN URGE (Lay 93)

§14. *Unconsciousness as Omnipercipient* (Lay 138)

My thesis is that the medium is one who becomes consciously aware, more than does the average man and woman, of what has been previously unconsciously perceived by him (L 141).

In brief, genuine psychic mediums are able, at will, more or less fully to tap their subconscious reservoirs.

Major hysterics are able to do the same thing under certain favorable circumstances.

II: CONSERVATION OF FORGOTTEN
EXPERIENCES OF NORMAL,
ARTIFICIAL, AND PATHOLOGICAL
LIFE (Prince 15)

I. Normal Life (Prince 15)

Evidence obtained from dreams. (Prince 43)

[contd] Another not uncommon mode in which forgotten experiences are recovered is through **dreams**.

The **content** of the dream may, as Freud has shown, be

a cryptic and **symbolical** expression or representation of the experience, or a visualized representation or obvious symbolism, much as a painted picture may be a symbolized expression of an idea, or it may be a realistic reproduction in the sense that the subject lives over again the actual experience (P 43).

III: CONSERVATION OF FORGOTTEN
EXPERIENCES OF NORMAL,
ARTIFICIAL, AND PATHOLOGICAL
LIFE (Prince 49)

I. Normal Life (Continued) (Prince 49)

Dreams and somnambulisms. (Prince 59)

[See 21:2.1.]

Many people remember their dreams poorly or not at all, and, in the latter case, are under the belief that they do not dream.

3:6.2 Another **evidence** of the residue of memory-experiences which remains in the subconscious mind is disclosed by our **dreams**.

Much of the **content** of our dream-life is

only camouflage,

a **symbolic** parade of things suppressed but, nevertheless, literally existing in our subconscious psychic reservoir.

But these dreams are presenting themselves all through the night,

even in the case of those persons who do not recall them.

SOURCE

But often circumstantial evidence, such as talking in their sleep, shows that they do dream.

Now, though ordinarily they cannot remember the dreams, by changing the waking state to an hypnotic one, or through the device of crystal visions or automatic writing,

it is possible in some people to reproduce the whole dream (P 59).

3: THE MIND AT MISCHIEF

This is shown in many ways, such as by what is said when one talks in his sleep;

and, working on such a clue of words spoken in sleep, it has also been discovered that

through crystal vision, automatic writing, and hypnosis,

whole dreams can be reproduced in all their original vividness,

tho the dreamer could not recall them when awake.

3:6.3 As we progress in our study of the psychology of the subconscious, we shall discover that a vast number of neurotic men and women are more or less sincere as regards their own inner experiences. As neurotics, they are wholly honest in their presentation of complaints to the physician. As mediums, they are frauds, it is true, and are deceiving the public; but they are not conscious frauds. These “psychics” really and truly believe in themselves—just as certainly as the neurotic believes in the reality of his ailments. This class of mediums is self-deceived; they are ignorant of the technique of the workings of their own peculiar minds, and while they do not see spirit forms and do not hear invisible beings of one world delivering messages to the sojourners of another world, they do, in their own minds,

through the technique of the psychology I have here explained, seem actually to see the forms and hear the voices which they describe to their superstitious followers. They are deluded by the tricks of their own minds—deceived by the intricate workings of their own intellects.

3:6.4 Neurotic sufferers really experience the sensations and suffer the miseries which they so eloquently and pathetically describe to their doctors. Their imaginations may trick them, but they are essentially honest—they are unfortunate victims of subconscious self-humbuggery. And so, in dealing with these slaves of the psychoneuroses, we must recognize the fact that their ever-present and sorry plight is excruciatingly real.