
>Subject: Hoax hypothesis looking bad

Todd Wrote:

U>Not that anyone is interested, but I just got a copy of Mind at
>Mischief through Inter-Library Loan, and turned immediately to the
>famed Appendix.

Todd, I've got five copies of MAM and about a dozen other Sadler books as I have become a bit of a collector. I am sure that they are going to be heirlooms eventually. 1st edition UBooks are worth over \$150, second edition around \$75. A serious collector would pay even more. I would guess that a mint condition series of all printings would also be of value. Look at what Gutenberg Bibles sell for. There were only 10,000 sold each of the first two editions.

U>But my real reason for borrowing this book was to form my own opinion
>about Sadler's writing style, compared to that of the UB. I opened the
>book (Sadler's) at random, and found the following passage: "All
>victims of fear must learn to travel on the sunny side of the street; to
>look on the bright side of things; but they must not forget that merely
>wishing is useless."

As one who has read nearly a dozen of Sadler's books, I concur that his writing style is more like a cross between Paul Harvey and Norman Vincent Peale with some Dr. Dean Adele thrown in. I found his "Theory and Practice of Psychiatry" a real snoozer; nowhere near the caliber of any of the Urantia Papers. But Leo's point of similar phrases bears further review. I do recall many in TAPOP that paralleled the UBook.

U>I shall read a bit more of Mind at Mischief, if I can stand it, but I
>can no longer take seriously the idea that Dr. Sadler wrote the UB.

Sadler's books, IMHO, are collector's items at best. They are snapshots into the era of the 1920s-40s giving us a sense of emerging science and social prejudice. To take his opinions at face value or with any reverence of awe is ludicrous. I take particular exception to his portrayal of speech impediments as a sign of neurosis and insanity. Modern speech therapy recognizes the biological origin and treats it as a mechanical problem, not a personality disorder.

There are numerous other examples of Sadler's complete misunderstanding of health and behaviour. His attribution of nearly all problems to the endocrine function and his repeated disdain of women's problems is particularly disturbing. Listing most female problems as hysteria and dismissing them as neurosis is also disheartening.

Personally, I find his works disgusting and my conclusion is that he was a racist, chauvinist, pontificating jerk. But maybe I am too kind due to the restrictions of the electronic medium I am writing on. He incorporated too few of the Book's teachings into his writings and his works did not seem to improve over the years. I seriously doubt that he was an, or the, author of the Urantia Papers.

Anyone want a copy of the Mind at Mischief? only \$50... Cheap!!

Jim McNelly~~~

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jim.mcnelly@granite.mn.org

Date: 04-Feb-94 20:25 EST
From: INTERNET:rfprince@netcom.com
Reply to: Re: Hoax hypothesis looking bad (fwd)

From: rfprince@netcom.com (Richard Prince)
To: cap7e@darwin.clas.virginia.edu (Christine Prince)
Cc: 76440.1416@CompuServe.com (leo elliott)

Forwarded message:

From: "T. Moody" <tmoody@SJUPHIL.SJU.EDU>
Subject: Re: Hoax hypothesis looking bad
To: Multiple recipients of list URANTIAL <URANTIAL@UAFSYSB.UARK.EDU>

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> -----
> Todd, and all,
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> I completely agree with your assessment of Sadler's writing versus the
> UB's writing. I made just this point both from the perspective of
> style and substance to Martin Gardner, when he was pumping me for info
> on the early history, but he was not convinced at that point. I don't
> know what he believes now - probably that Willford Kellogg was the
> sleeping channeler.

As I see it, the hoax hypothesis is one that at least deserves to be carefully considered; it should not be dismissed out of hand. After all, the Book of Mormon is out there, as well as Eckankar's Shariyat Ki Sugmad, both of which I believe are hoaxes and both of which have a loyal following of believers.

It really is difficult to understand why Sadler or anyone else would concoct a hoax as elaborate as the UB but that difficulty, by itself, does not rule it out. Again, the Book of Mormon is also rather elaborate. What adds greatly to the implausibility of the hoax hypothesis is the fact that Sadler had so much to lose and little to gain by it. Here the contrast with the Book of Mormon and Eckankar is striking. Joseph Smith and Paul Twitchell were obscure individuals with no reputation at stake. They had much to gain by attracting a following, and both of them acted in a manner that aimed at just that. Sadler's career would have been ruined if he had been found out: he would have become the laughing-stock of the psychiatric community and villified by the religious community. Also, I do not have the impression that he ever tried to attract a large following to himself or the UB.

The stylistic difference between Sadler's published work (from about the same period) and the UB is simply the final nail. Anyone who claims that Sadler wrote or heavily edited the UB must explain why he adopted such lower editorial standards for work published under his own name. Incidentally, I don't mean to imply that Sadler was a terrible writer, only that he was not at the level of the UB and tended to employ a very different idiom. I have looked more at Mind at Mischief and am more convinced than ever of that.

Despite the eloquence of both Jims on the importance of judging the UB by its internal spiritual merits, I still believe that we do have a responsibility to think carefully about the source, even though we cannot ever remove all doubt. I think that it is important to satisfy oneself of its authenticity on all levels. The UB points out that

Date: 04-Feb-94 18:55 EST
From: INTERNET:jim.mcnelly@gcbb.granite.mn.org
Subj: Hoax hypothesis looking b

To: 76440.1416@COMPUSERVE.COM

Date: Fri, 4 Feb 1994 10:48:59 -0500
From: "T. Moody" <tmoody@SJUPHIL.SJU.EDU>
To: Multiple recipients of list URANTIAL <URANTIAL@UAFSYSB.UARK.EDU>

Folks,

Not that anyone is interested, but I just got a copy of Mind at Mischief through Inter-Library Loan, and turned immediately to the famed Appendix.

Now I know where the sleeping contact personality idea comes from.

With reference to the hoax hypothesis that I sketched without too much conviction, this Appendix definitely counts against it. If the Urantia Papers, in some incunabular form, were just something that WSS was writing to amuse himself and tease a few friends, he would not have risked his reputation by writing this Appendix.

But my real reason for borrowing this book was to form my own opinion about Sadler's writing style, compared to that of the UB. I opened the book (Sadler's) at random, and found the following passage: "All victims of fear must learn to travel on the sunny side of the street; to look on the bright side of things; but they must not forget that merely wishing is useless."

If we make the plausible assumption that Sadler would put out his best writing in works on which his name would appear, I think we can safely conclude that Dr. Sunnyside is not the author of the Urantia Book. Dipping elsewhere into Mind at Mischief, this impression is only strengthened. Sadler has a marked tendency to use folksy locutions and bromides. So far, I have found only one such locution in the UB: the "bullets to ballots" passage whose location I don't recall. Sadler's writing style, as it appears to me so far, doesn't even suggest that he had a major editorial role.

Regarding Leo Elliott's comparison of words and phrases between Sadler and the UB, I had an interesting experience recently. I was working on a draft of a paper and, as I was tinkering with a paragraph, I noticed that I had used the word "matchless." I don't think I have ever used this word before, and I soon realized that it leaked into my writing from the UB, where it occurs a number of times. If anyone wishes to draw the obvious conclusion that I wrote the UB, I won't deny it. I was 2 when it was published, but very precocious. Ask my mother.

I shall read a bit more of Mind at Mischief, if I can stand it, but I can no longer take seriously the idea that Dr. Sadler wrote the UB.

-- Todd

Date: 04-Feb-94 19:16 EST
From: INTERNET:jim.mcnelly@gcbb.granite.mn.org
Subj: Hoax hypothesis looking b

To: 76440.1416@COMPUSERVE.COM

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revelation is an adjunct to philosophy, by means of which philosophy can reach past its inherent limits, not a replacement for it. By philosophy, and balanced skeptical thinking in general, one cannot establish the authenticity of revelation, but one can establish its possibility, by failing to critically eliminate it.

> But Leo (and Martin) seem to have an axe to grind perhaps
> relating to their Catholic (or Christian) upbringing. For Martin
> Gardner, and I suspect many others in the future, the UB is a threat
> to traditional religion; for Leo, the UB is a threat to his recently
> acquired feeling of ESCAPE (from Catholicism) and now from the
> supposed constraints of being captured by a strong religious belief in
> the UB and subservience thereto.

I don't know much about either of these people, and was surprised to learn that Gardner was a former Seventh Day Adventist. For my own part, I'm sure it would provide great ego satisfaction to be able to debunk the UB. It would certainly free up a lot of spare time. But I can't honestly do it, and the case in favor of its authenticity is getting stronger as I keep reading, both as a result of my response to the material and my failure to make good on any debunking hypothesis.

Onward.

-- Todd

Date: 05-Feb-94 23:40 EST
From: INTERNET:tmoody@sjuphil.sju.edu
Reply to: Re: notes from the escapee

To: 76440.1416@compuserve.com (leo elliot)
Cc: urantial@uafsysb.uark.edu (Urantia Book list)

Leo Elliott writes:

> And just like, imo, I don't think
> Vern consciously thought of himself as "perpetrating a hoax" in the sense of
> a consciously-planned-out-from-the-inception type of fraud, just as I think
> Vern (et al) really believed that he was hearing voices from divine sources,
> and acted thereon, so do I think did the Doctor and his close coterie.

Leo, I hope you don't mind me "going public" with this onto Urantial.
I'm guessing that others there would find it interesting.

I'm not sure I understand your theory. You believe that the "sleeping
subject" business was a lie, but Sadler himself had auditory
hallucinations which he took to be revelation? Or do you believe that
Sadler just wrote it but believed that he was somehow divinely inspired.
Maybe it was something like Helen Schucman and A Course in Miracles,
is that the idea?

Todd wrote:

> > What adds greatly to the implausibility of the hoax
> > hypothesis is the fact that Sadler had so much to lose and little to
> > gain by it. Here the contrast with the Book of Mormon and Eckankar is
> > striking. Joseph Smith and Paul Twitchell were obscure individuals with
> > no reputation at stake. They had much to gain by attracting a
> > following, and both of them acted in a manner that aimed at just that.
> > Sadler's career would have been ruined if he had been found out: he
> > would have become the laughing-stock of the psychiatric community and
> > villified by the religious community. Also, I do not have the
> > impression that he ever tried to attract a large following to himself or
> > the UB.

> A few queries off of the above:

> -- If Sadler had such a great and sterling reputation, how come his
> collected works have been cited so infrequently in professional
> publications, journals, books, etc. (My impression is that while the Doctor
> may have been rather well-connected in the Chicago social and medical scene,
> as a psychiatric or psychologic theorist, his status was minimal.)

Great and sterling? Did I say that? I don't think so. My impression
is that he was solidly successful, fairly prominent in his day, but not
one of the great forces in clinical psychology. The point is that he
had a reputation to lose; he was at risk. A comparison with Helen
Schucman is relevant. She was less well known and published than
Sadler, but nevertheless had a good professional reputation, about which
she was understandably concerned.

> (And what became of his reputation after the inquest into his handling of
> the death of his grandson -- or is this another one of those little items
> the hagiographer's failed to mention?)

I don't know anything about this. Neither do I know who the
hagiographers are. Please understand that I am **not** steeped in the
lore of the Urantia Movement. So what happened, and what **did** become

of his reputation?

> -- How much of a career does one have left at age 80, which is Sadler's age
> at the time of publication of the UB in 1955? Ever wonder just why, really,
> the publication was delayed so long from the referenced inditement dates of
> 1934 and 1935? Sure, all the money had to be raised, and all the midwayers
> were worried about WWII, and then there was Korea... I mean, the timing has
> to be perfect, no? And I'm sure the Doctor's personal reluctance, for the
> very reasons cited (concern for professional reputation) had nothing to do
> with the delay? Again, how much professional ruin do you have to fear at
> age 80? And if he was such a professional success, why was he bickering
> with Bill II over money and mortgages to pay off 533?

Actually, I was referring to 1929, when Mind at Mischief appeared.
Why write that Appendix at all? Why draw public attention to what was,
at that time (if you are correct), a private hoax? I have no idea why
publication was delayed; I don't even know the **alleged** reasons. It
makes sense to suppose that he **was** concerned about his reputation and
stalled for as long as he could (with others, perhaps, pressuring him to
publish). This doesn't address the point of why he would undertake such
a **risky** hoax in the first place.

> -- What religious community would have been so concerned to villify the
> Doctor, were he "found out"? Again, this was not, imo, a conscious fraud,
> say, like Uri Geller, but the Doc was, again imo, every bit as clever, and
> believed every bit as much as Vern Grimsley or Ellen White or M.B. Eddy that
> they were divinely chosen.

The mainstream Christian community, I should think.

By the way, I think "unconscious fraud" is an oxymoron. Fraud involves
the intention to deceive. If Sadler was afflicted by what he called
"auto-psychism" then it no fraud, but a delusion. Your thesis, then,
must be that the man who wrote several books on this affliction was
himself one of its most spectacular victims. But I really don't
understand your view. Elsewhere you have advanced the view that Sadler
wanted to make Christianity scientifically respectable and to purge it
of "sordid spiritualism." These aims suggest **conscious** fraud to me.
Maybe you could just explain what you think really happened.

> -- And as far as the Doc ever trying to attract a large following to
> himself or the UB, what do you call the Forum, just a small circle of
> friends?

Yes, in comparison to the hordes that E.G. White and M.B. Eddy
attracted. Both of these women aggressively fostered a religion and
there was no mistaking that that was what they were doing.
Wouldn't you say that Sadler kept a rather lower profile?

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> > same period) and the UB is simply the final nail. Anyone who claims
> > that Sadler wrote or heavily edited the UB must explain why he adopted
> > such lower editorial standards for work published under his own name.
> > Incidentally, I don't mean to imply that Sadler was a terrible writer,
> > only that he was not at the level of the UB and tended to employ a very
> > different idiom.

> A chacun son gout! Re final nails, if I am wrong about Sadler's crafting
> the UB you can all line up to hand me my morontia hat for slow digestion.
> If I am right, well, perhaps your hats will someday need a little shrinking.

> Surely more homey bromides, but as far as editorial standards, other than
> repeating himself slightly more than the UB does, I see a plethora of very
> similar idioms. Ah, the mythic "level of the UB" -- anyone for a little
> transubstantiation?

There are specialists in this sort of thing who could shed more light on it than we are likely to. I stand by my impression, however, that the individual who wrote the Mind at Mischief did not write the UB. I can't say, of course, that some *other* mortal didn't write it, but that's another matter. I am not yet prepared to defend the thesis that the UB was composed/indited by celestial beings. Hell, I still have 900 more pages to read.

Your lists of compared words and phrases are most interesting. Thank you. The majority are not, in my opinion, very significant, since they are common enough terms, but a few are unlikely enough to demand explanation: "cults and isms," for example. And it would be interesting to determine whether there is much vocabulary in the UB that Sadler *never* used in his own writing. I wonder, for example, if Sadler ever used "mindal." As I mentioned, "matchless" has already invaded my own idiolect, and I've only been reading the UB for 5 months. On the hypothesis that Sadler was assiduously studying the Urantial material as it was spoken and transcribed, the "reverse pollination" hypothesis cannot be dismissed.

The stylistic level of the UB is quite high, in my view. It is generally clear and authoritative, though not simple. It is mostly free of colloquialism (which Mind at Mischief is riddled with). I have found only one outright honker or word usage: the use of "comprised of".

> > For my own part,
> > I'm sure it would provide great ego satisfaction to be able to debunk
> > the UB. It would certainly free up a lot of spare time. But I can't
> > honestly do it, and the case in favor of its authenticity is getting
> > stronger as I keep reading the material and my failure to make good on
> > any debunking hypothesis.

>
> As I'm sure there remains great ego satisfaction in finding oneself to be a
> confessional member of the advance guard of humanity-uplifters entrusted
> with the sacred obligation to preserve and protect and propagate the Fifth
> Epochal Revelation of Divine Truth to the mortals of Urantia. How noble and
> fortunate to have received it and perceived it ahead of its time, to wait in
> benign smugness as the lesser mortals of the inferior races slowly come to
> the acceptance of this sublime gift. Just keep reading and reading and
> reading and reading and reading... sort of becomes hypnotic after a while.
> In any case, sure makes one feel good to be around a bunch of
> fellow-feelers.

Well, I won't argue with you on this. In the end, we believe what we find empowering, and we call it Truth. You and I are not exceptions. Beliefs, even rational beliefs, are wildly underdetermined by reality.

I should add that although my response to the UB is latterly more positive than it was at first, I still have some content issues with it. It remains to be seen whether I will feel that they have been resolved by the time I reach the end of the book.

-- Todd