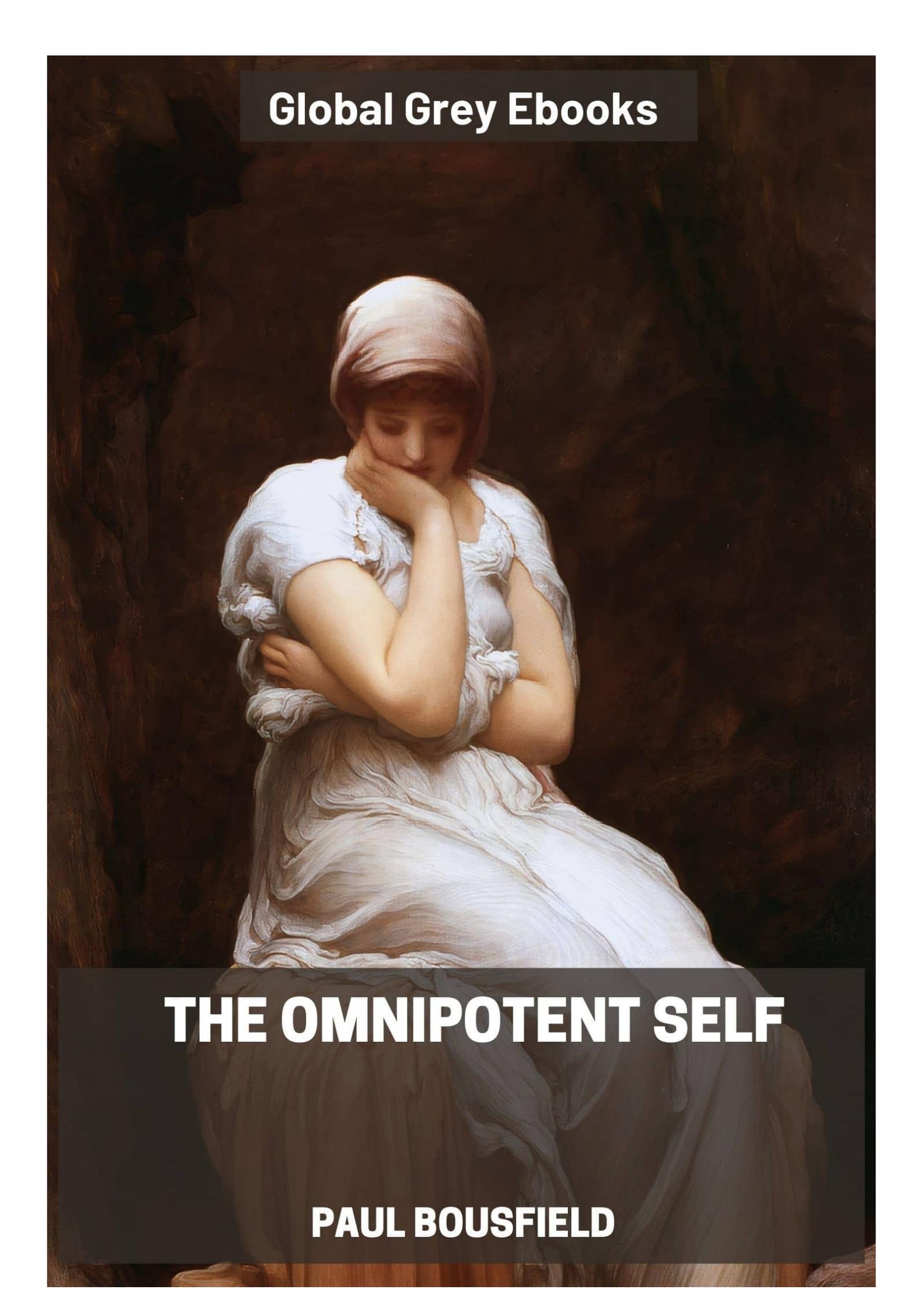


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**THE OMNIPOTENT SELF**

**PAUL BOUSFIELD**

# **THE OMNIPOTENT SELF**

**PAUL BOUSFIELD**



**The Omnipotent Self, A Study in Self-Deception and Self-Cure by Paul Bousfield.**

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will obviously have some bearing on it. These he should examine in the same way, because it is important for him to get into his conscious mind as much as possible of the various occasions in his life on which Narcissism acted, when he was not conscious of it. Not only must he see how these various occasions were exhibitions of Narcissism, but he must try and trace them back, and must compare them with his typical infantile methods of expression. These may be represented by shouting, crying, stamping, weeping or any other infantile manifestations of those omnipotent phantasies which now seem to him to be the starting-point of his more recent expression of them. He has, in fact, to lay bare before himself, as much as possible of his previously unconscious Narcissistic life; its beginnings, its evolution, and its ultimate form. This making conscious of what was previously unconscious or but partly conscious, is, in itself, a most potent factor in improvement, if he will have the patience to steadily persevere and to go over daily, for a considerable period, the material he has brought to the surface. If he does not do this regularly, it is liable to sink back, and become once again an unconscious factor and a determinant to his actions over which he has no control.

This bringing into consciousness the unconscious causes and motives under-lying behaviour is, in psycho-analysis, one of the powerful factors at work producing cures of neurotic obsessions and so forth, and it is equally potent with the minor temperamental abnormalities with which we are dealing here. For it means that previous mental conflicts which were either wholly or partially unconscious, are now rendered conscious habitually; and a conscious conflict, or rather a conflict in which the forces at work become conscious, is far easier to direct than one in which the very forces themselves are hidden and unknown. Let us take a more material example for comparison. Suppose an officer to be in command of a company of soldiers out in the desert, and attacked on a dark night by savages. It might very well be that he was well armed, that his machine guns were efficient, but that he would be quite overwhelmed because he could neither see the savages nor know their numbers, their whereabouts nor their armaments. But supposing that the War Office had thoughtfully equipped him with one or two good search-lights, which he could direct upon the savages so that the number of savages, their armaments, position, and so forth, could be brought into his consciousness, he would be in a far better position, for he could direct his machine-guns at the threatened points, instead of being forced to fire them wildly and as likely as not miss his targets altogether.

Exactly the same happens with these manifold feelings to which I have just been referring. The more one can see of them, their histories, their evolution, their beginnings, the more one holds them in consciousness, the easier does the conflict between good and evil become in the individual. Again, this method of self-help which I have given here, differs considerably from that pursued in psycho-analysis, in that it is following up only one unconscious factor, albeit, one of the most important factors; but in psycho-analysis we follow up in turn all the unconscious forces at work, great and small, and in any temperamental abnormality there are certainly many more unconscious factors than Narcissism concerned, although Narcissism may be the predominant one. Thus, for instance, alcoholism, though always possessing a Narcissistic element, frequently has other determinants present of an exceptionally strong<sup>8</sup> nature. So that while an analysis of Narcissism only, may be of the greatest value

<sup>8</sup> Alcoholism is further complicated by the fact that a habit of *physical* craving is formed, which as a rule cannot be overcome by mental treatment alone. This craving, fortunately, can now be eradicated by medicinal means. Indeed, patients of mine have been cured of all desire for alcohol in about one week as a





































