

# “Through the Trapdoor with Bob Neale”: Nine Session Exploring Thirteen Themes in Selected Works by Robert Neale



Hosted by  
Michael Smith and Geoff Grimes

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## Session 3: Paul Pruyser's "Three Worlds" & Imagination

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- 1) Neale and Paul Pruyser
- 2) The Place of the Imagination in Neale's General Theory of Magic



# Session 3:

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## The Index— Identification of the 13 “themes”

Play

The Trickster Spirit

Paul Pruyser’s Three World Perspective

The Imagination

Wonder

Illusions

Magic

The Magician(s)

Off-Stage/On-Stage Magic

Performance

Psychological Classification of Magic

The Ethical Heart of Spiritual Illusions: “The Four Falls”

Life and Death and . . .

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## The Robert E. Neale Index

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A Resource for the Study of Robert E. Neale’s  
Trilogy of Magic

Prepared by Michael Smith and Geoffrey Grimes  
9/5/2018

# Paul Pruyser – Psychologist and Psychoanalyst

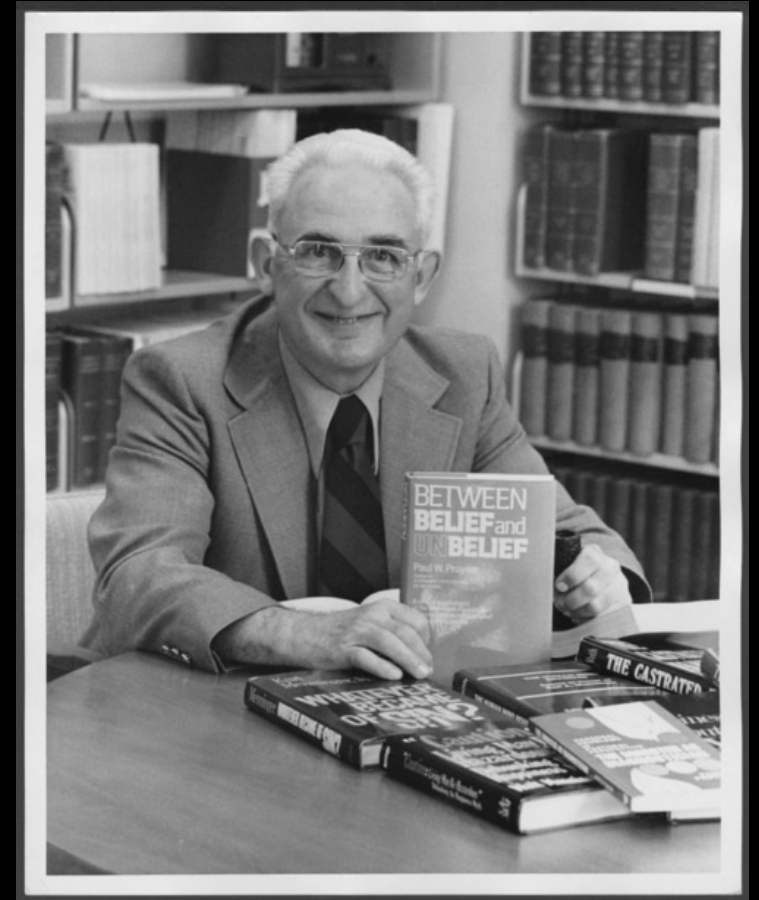
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Pruyser's "Three World Perspectives":

- 1) The "Realistic"
- 2) The "Illusionistic"
- 3) The "Autistic"

Source:

*The Play of the Imagination:  
Toward a Psychoanalysis of Culture (1983)*



# Paul Pruyser and Bob Neale's Discussions

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Pruyser's "Three World Perspectives":

*The Magic Mirror* (2002)

*Magic Matters* (2009)

*The Magic of Celebrating Illusion* (2013)

*An Essay on Magic* (2015)

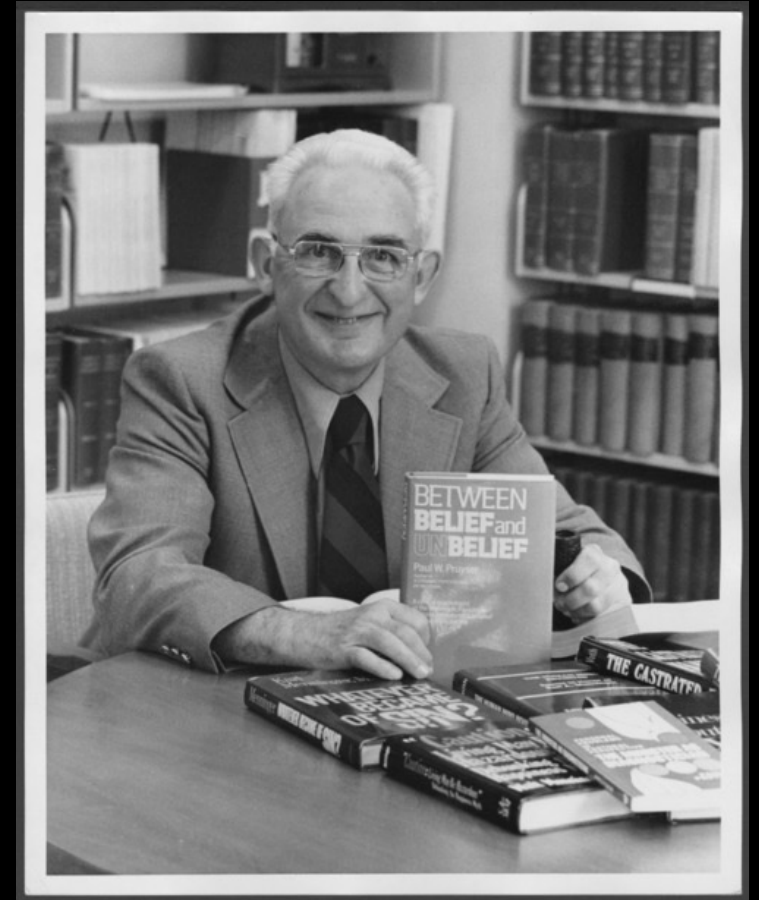


# Paul Pruyser's Three World Perspectives

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## Realism – A Definition

*The attitude or practice of accepting a situation as it is and then dealing with it accordingly*



# Paul Pruyser's Three World Perspectives

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## Characteristics of the "Realistic" World

Sense Perception

Hard Undeniable Facts

Logical Connections

"Look-and-See" References

Actual Entities or Events

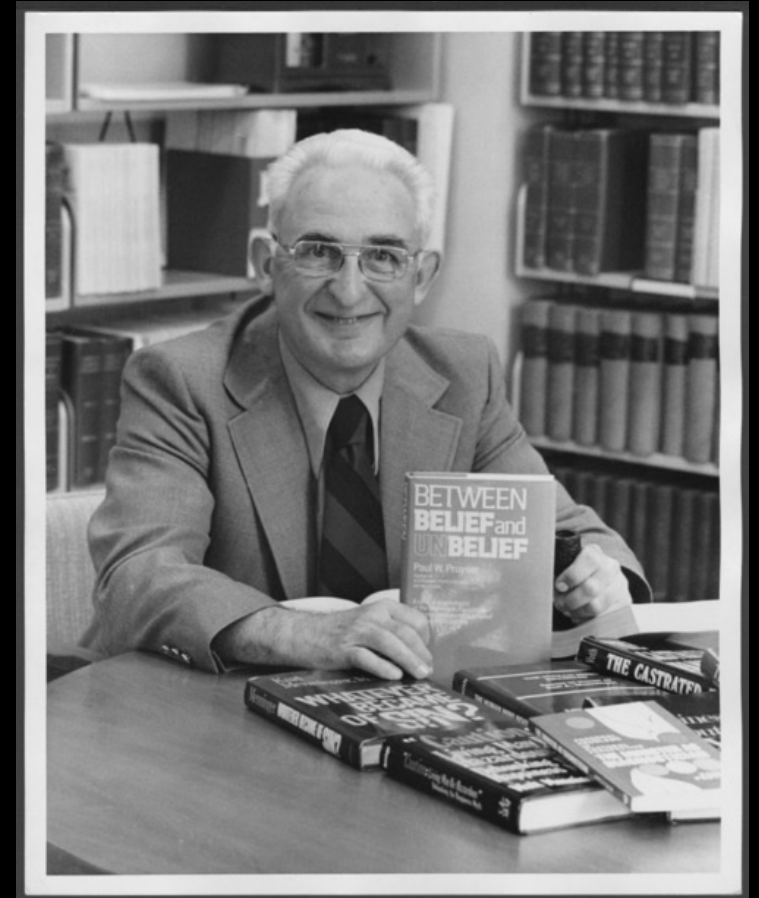
Factual Needs

Signs, Indices

Working

Resourcefulness

External Objects

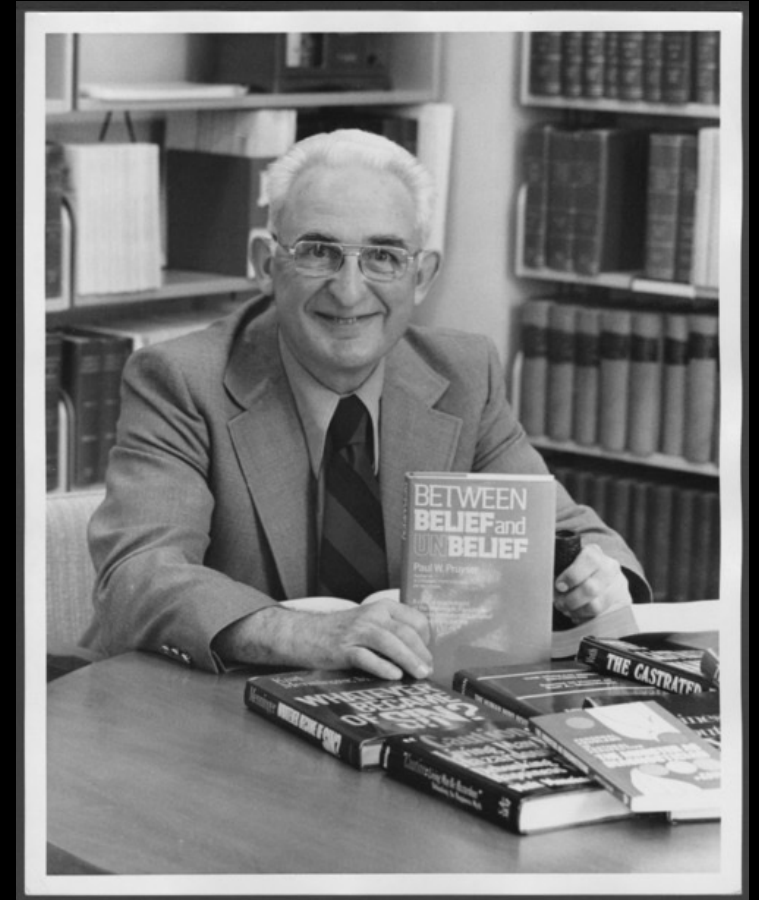


# Paul Pruyser's Three World Perspectives

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## Illusionism – A Definition

*The use of artistic techniques to create the illusion of reality, especially in a work of art*





# Paul Pruyser's Three World Perspectives

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## Characteristics of the "Illusionistic" World

Tutored Fantasy

Adventurous Thinking

Orderly Imagination

Inspired Connections

Verbalized Images

Imaginative Entities or Events

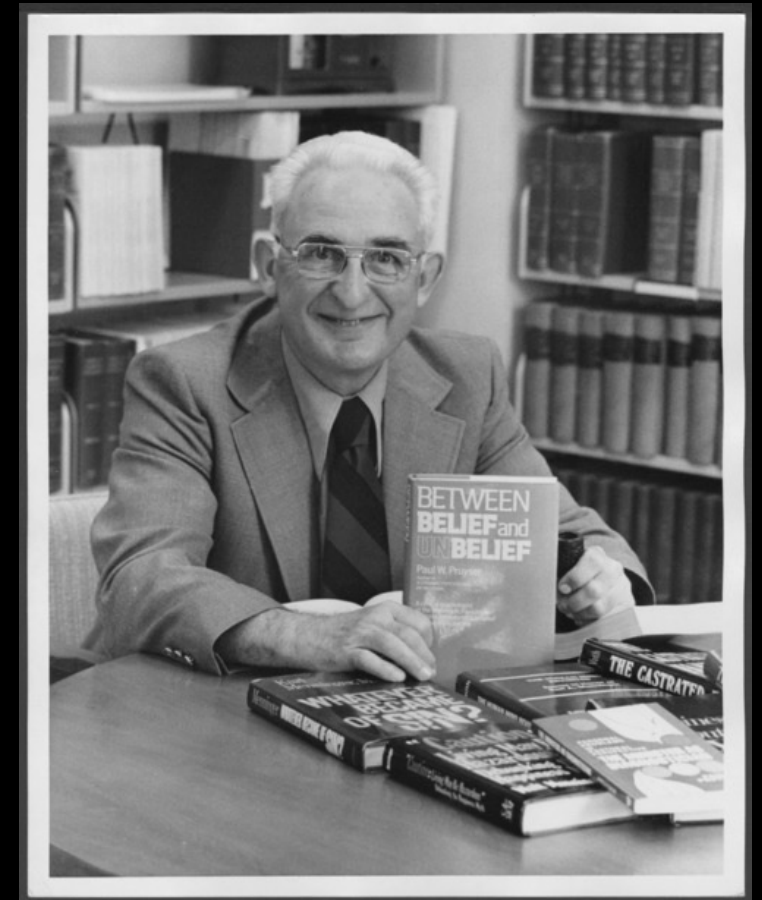
Cultural Needs

Symbols

Playing

Creativeness

Transcendent Objects

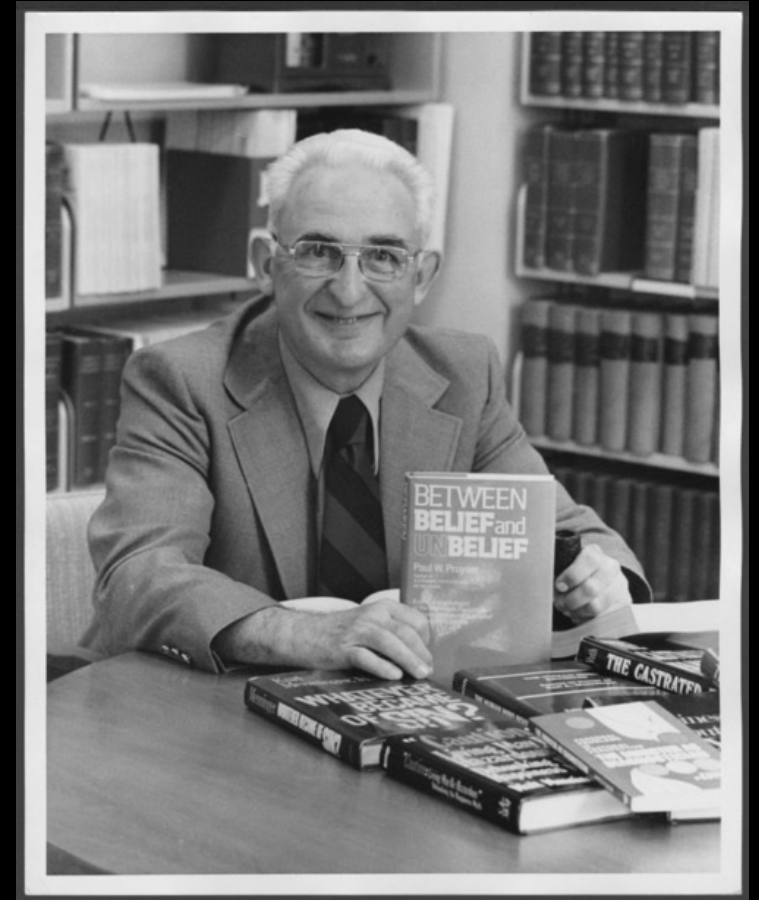


# Paul Pruyser's Three World Perspectives

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## Autism – A Definition

*A persuasive neuro-developmental condition which interferes with a person's ability to communicate and interact with others*



# Paul Pruyser's Three World Perspectives

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## Characteristics of the "Autistic" World

Untutored Fantasy

Omnipotent Thinking

Utter Whimsicality

Free Association

Ineffable Images

Hallucinatory Entities or Events

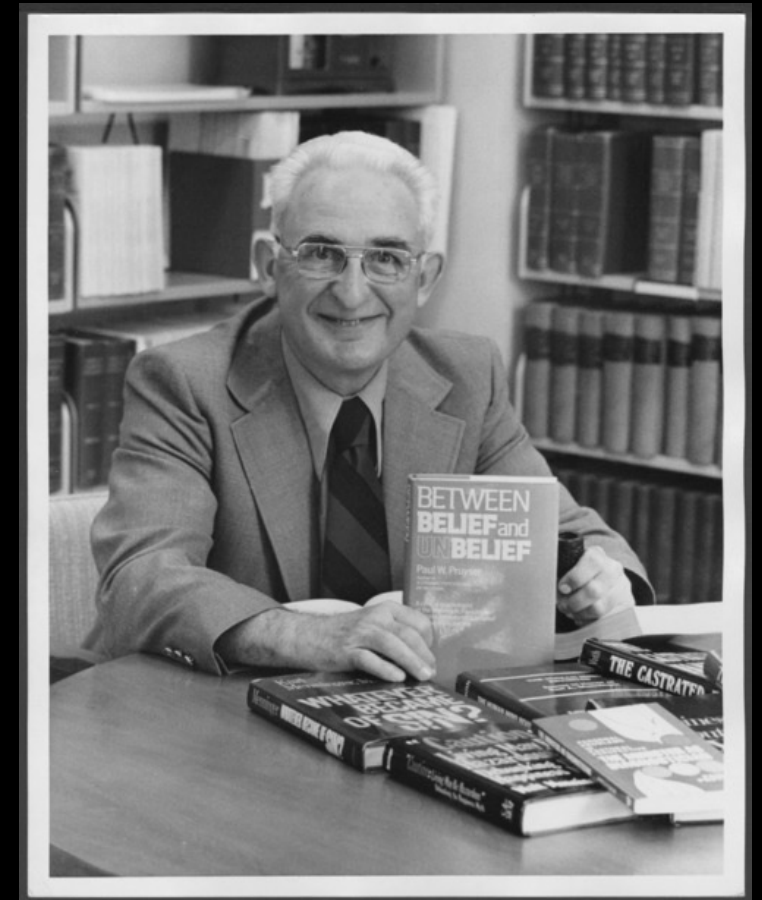
Private Needs

Symptoms

Dreaming

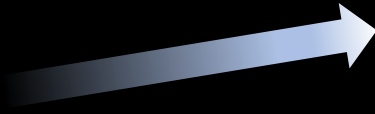
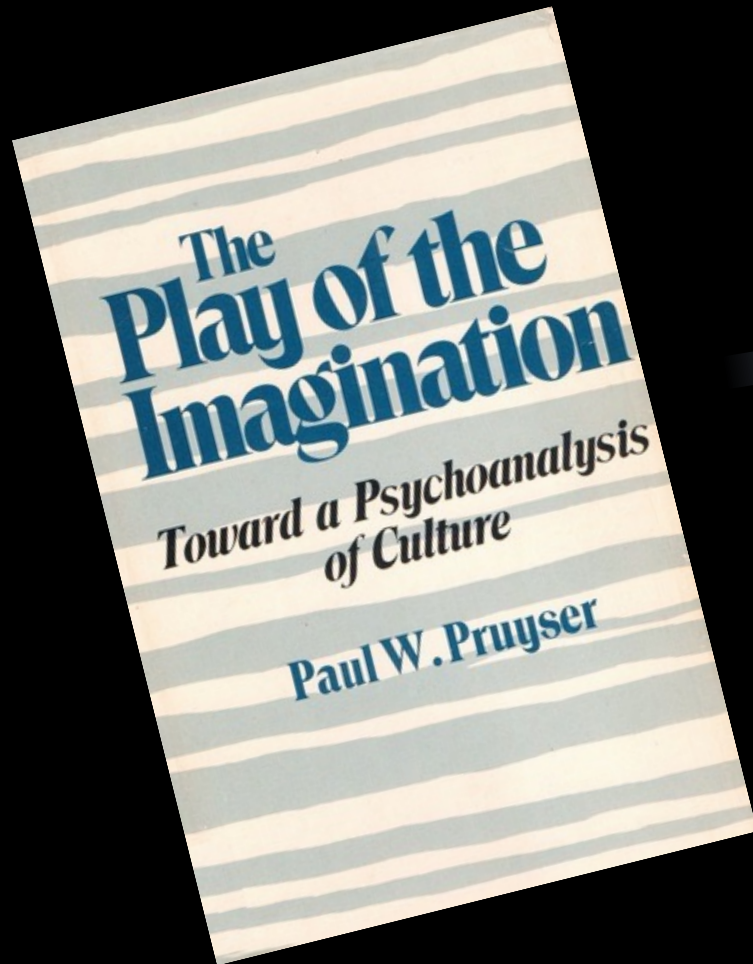
Sterility

Internal Objects



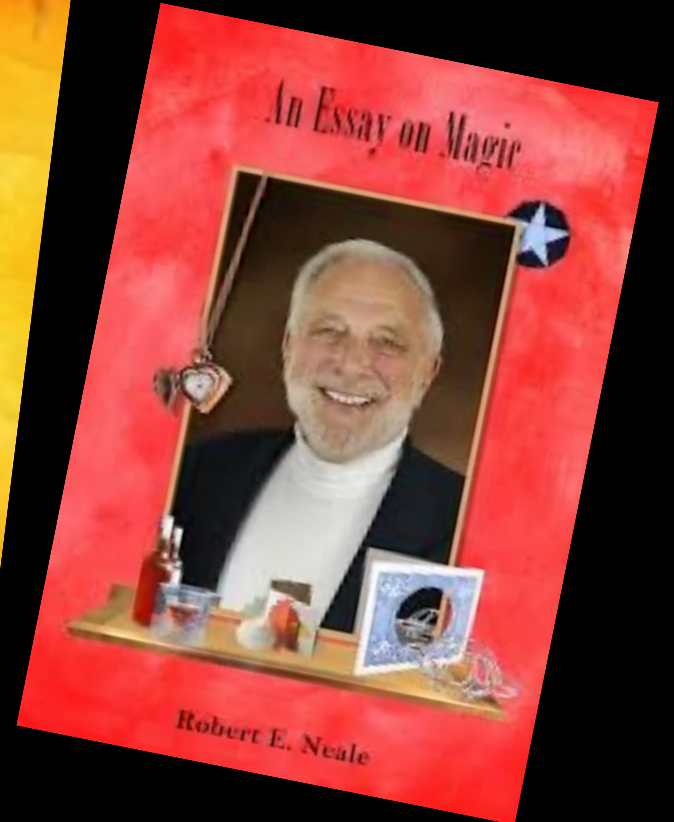
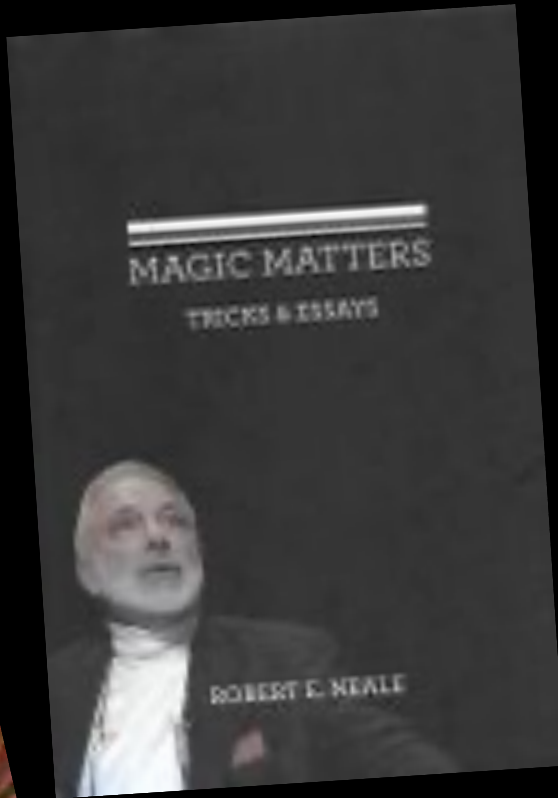
# Pruyser's Influence on Neale's General Theory of Magic

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# From *The Magic Mirror*

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# Pruyser's Influence on your own magic?

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Can you see Pruyser's **illusionistic terms** at play in your performance magic?

Which is strongest?

Which could be made stronger?

# The Imagination - from *An Essay on Magic*

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From Neale's (partial) definition of magic:

“Magic is the performance exercise of imaginative mastery... and the practice, maintenance, and display of mastery.”

“The mastery is of the imagination. It is not mastery of oneself, other people, or the environment, both the imagination itself.”



# The Imagination - from *An Essay on Magic*

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The “Magical Thesis”:

“The universe is one and no part is separate from any other part.”

“Indeed, every part contains the whole, and the individual human being is a replica of the universe, the microcosm in the macrocosm.”





# The Imagination - from *An Essay on Magic*

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## Life Magic and the Imagination

“I understand *life magic* as a special use of the imagination... called magical thinking... just something what we human beings do.”

“The imagination is the creation and application of images.”



# The Imagination - from *An Essay on Magic*

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“Its use in primary *life magic* is different from the use in science, that arts, and everyday life.”

“The means for magical mastery is the imagination.”

“The art of magic is a development of the ability... to evoke, call forth images. Or, that we can invoke.”



# The Imagination - from *An Essay on Magic*

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“Magical thinking in the ceremonial-religious context is the manipulation of an inner image in order to manipulate an outer thing that is seen or otherwise impossible.”

“The magical imagination... links the created inner image to something outside the image in such a way that doing something to the inner image also does something to the outer image.”



# The Imagination - from *An Essay on Magic*

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## The Imagination as “Performance”

“The magical use of the imagination by adults under conditions of desire and uncertainty is a kind of performance.”

“When the individual is curtailed under the circumstances of strong desire and powerful uncertainty, the imagination can offer another kind of control in performance.”



# The Imagination - from *An Essay on Magic*

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Imagination – The source of *make-believe*

“Magic, like religion, involves myth and ritual.”

“The stories that are myths are usually taken to be either true or false, to be believed or disbelieved. But there is an alternative from the play perspective – such stories are *make-believe*.”



# The Imagination - from *An Essay on Magic*

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Three Attributes of a Child's Use of the Imagination to Create Order:

- 1) Inner images can affect the outer objects.
- 2) Outer objects are alive.
- 3) Inner entities of the imagination are real.



# The Imagination - from *An Essay on Magic*

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# The Imagination - from *An Essay on Magic*

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Conclusion:

“Magic is a significant and powerful kind of performance because it is fueled by desire and uncertainty, guided by the imagination, and focused on the themes that relate to life and death.”



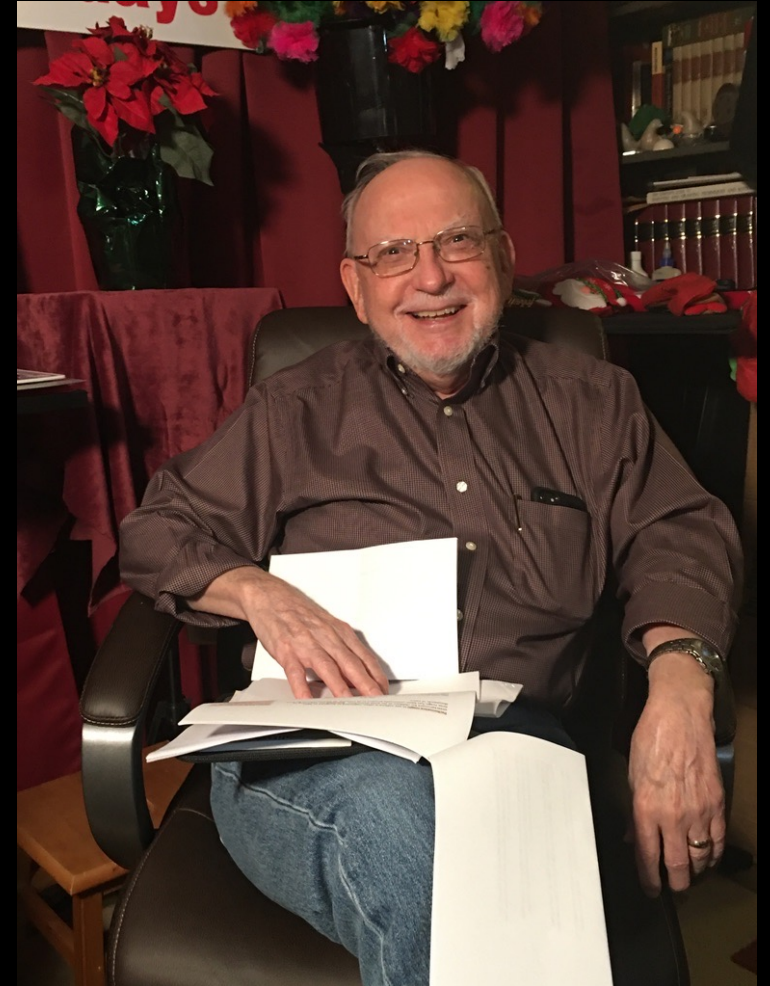


## Session 4: *Wonder*

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Looking ahead . . .

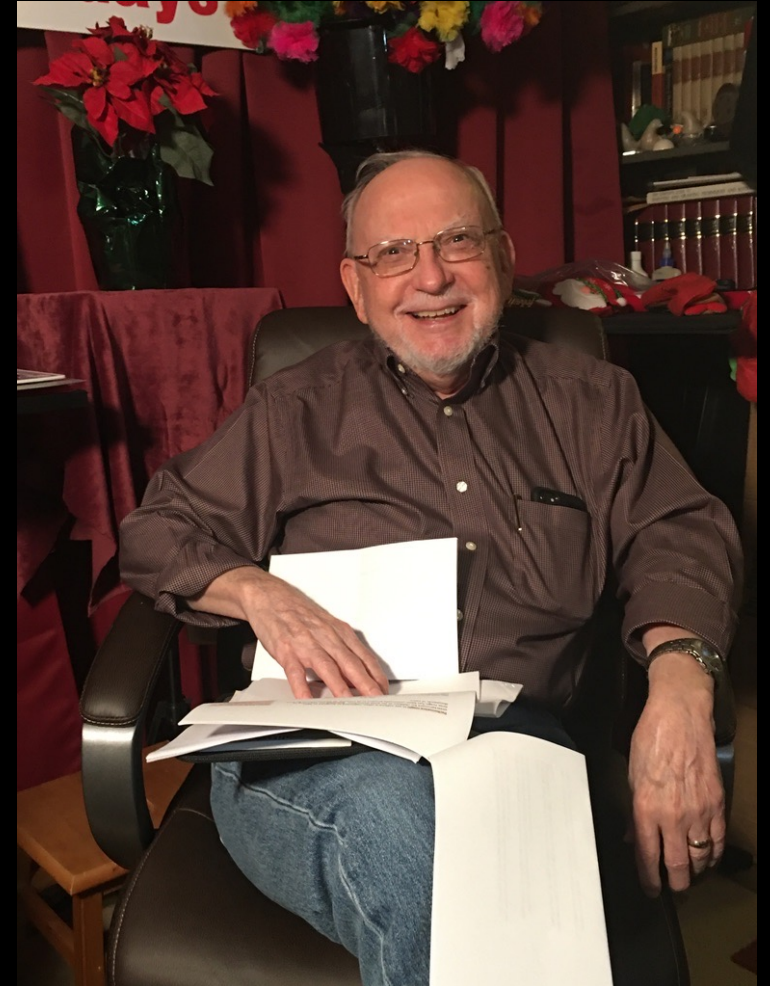
*The Sense of Wonder*, the second volume in the Neale trilogy, is the focus of the fourth class on the major themes of Bob Neale's "general theory of magic."



## Session 4: *Wonder*

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This book may be the most challenging book in the *Trilogy* in that Neale explores the philosophical and psychological concepts of “surprise, admiration, astonishment, marvel, doubt, curiosity, uncertain expectation, and anxiousness to discover” —only some of the manifestations of this response to the unexpected.



# The Next Session:

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Check us out:

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The Website —

“Celebrating Illusions”

A Website Dedicated to the  
Magic of Robert E. Neale

[www.nealemagic.info](http://www.nealemagic.info)



Special thanks to Jeff and Abigail McBride for providing Bob Neale almost thirty years ago a safe space for him to play!

Consider becoming a member of what the BBC has described as "the world's most prestigious magic school."

Go to:

[www.magicalwisdom.com](http://www.magicalwisdom.com) and click on "Become a member"!



A very special thanks to

Dr. Robert “Bob” and Gail Neale for their encouragement and blessing for this workshop

Dr. Larry Hass, Dean, The McBride Magic and Mystery School, Publisher, *Theory and Art of Magic Press*, host of the “Index” and for all his support and encouragement.

David-Reed Brown, Instructor, The McBride Magic and Mystery School, whose inspiration and support has made this seminar series possible

And the friends of Bob Neale who have contributed to the recording and transmission of Bob’s work over the years.

