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Multiple Personality and Personal Identity

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1   Bizarre situations often help us to discover the range of a concept; by pushing it to or beyond its limits, they thereby display more clearly where those limits lie. In particular, investigations into the concept of a person use this technique regularly—one need only think of Locke's fiction of the prince and the cobbler swapping bodies, or of our contemporary fantasies of brain and hemisphere transplants, of robots virtually indistinguishable from people, and so forth. Occasionally, too, we can resort to science fact rather than science fantasy; consider the spate of recent work on commissurotomy patients (Nagel [1971], Puccetti [1973], Wilkes [1978], Marks [1980], Puccetti [1981]), where some, notably Puccetti, have argued that we have unearthed two persons in each body.

   The phenomenon of multiple personality has received little explicit attention from philosophers, although it sometimes rates a mention in parentheses or footnotes. One reason for this neglect is that it is something of a scientific embarrassment, seeming to offer an unfortunate illustration of how nature may follow art. Certainly in the late-nineteenth century, when multiple personality was taken as a genuine diagnostic category and philosophers and scientists were fascinated by it, there was a wave of reported cases; then the increasing scepticism of the mid-twentieth century seemed virtually to abolish the condition. (Of 63 patients admitted to Bellevue hospital in 1933–4 suffering from loss of identity, not one was declared to be a case of multiple personality; schizophrenia, manic depression, psychosis, aphasia, amnesia, cerebral arteriosclerosis, presenile dementia, cerebral trauma, epilepsy and carbon monoxide poisoning sufficed as diagnostic tools (Sutcliffe and Jones [1962]).) Second, there are sound methodological reasons for dropping or at least suspending belief in multiple personality as a discrete and identifiable phenomenon: the condition is an unusual and an intriguing one, so doctors greet potential cases with keen interest and attention—thereby providing strong positive reinforcement to the patient to develop distinct and distinguishable alternate personalities. It is highly likely that role playing, whether conscious or unconscious, is an essential element in the aetiology of the condition (see Taylor and Martin [1944], Orzech, McGuire and Longnecker [1958], and Congdon, Haig and Stevenson [1961]). Finally, contemporary psychiatry has largely abandoned the almost automatic resort

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to hypnosis as a method of therapy; after reading case histories it is hard to avoid the impression that repeated hypnotism often had the effect of defining and solidifying alternate personalities which, if not thus encouraged, might have dissolved away again (and seen Harriman [1943], Orzech, McGuire and Longnecker [1958], and Gruenewald [1971]).

Whether, though, multiple personality exists in the sense that it needs to be picked out by psychiatry as a separate diagnostic category, or whether it is better described as an acute and rare form of *grande hystérie* suffered by some psychoneurotic patients, it has thrown up enough startling data to challenge the concept of a person. I shall discuss the problem with particular reference to the case of Christine Beauchamp,[1] a woman studied by Dr Morton Prince for over seven years (Prince [1905]). Prince's discussion is particularly instructive because, in a work written for fellow-scientists rather than the popular market, he tries to explain his theories, justify his conjectures and make explicit his assumptions (subsequent book-length treatments were written as popular paperbacks and we miss in them Prince's theoretical and critical stance). Prince, unsurprisingly, wanted not only to study Miss Beauchamp but also to put her back together again — to find 'the real Miss Beauchamp'. So throughout the book we can watch the operation of the principle that all persons are or should be in one–one relations to bodies. This principle is one which even Prince took for granted, and it is as we shall see highly plausible. However it is not unchallengeable. Mary Reynolds is said to have switched between two personalities from 1815 right up to her death in 1854: was this one individual who was less fortunate than the cured Miss Beauchamp, or do we have two fortunate individuals? The recent case of Jonah, to which I shall return, provides an instance where putting him together again as Jusky seems to have rendered him less well able to function than he had been in his former split state (see Ludwig, Brandsma, Wilbur, Bendfeldt and Jameson [1972]).

In the next section I shall describe as briefly as possible the salient features of Christine Beauchamp's predicament; and then, with reference to this and one or two other cases, will consider some of the philosophical implications.

2 I shall call 'Christine Beauchamp' the patient as she lived until 1893. She was then eighteen; she had been a nervous, ailing, impressionable child, prone to headaches, somnambulism, daydreams and trances; she had been neglected by a mother she adored and maltreated by her father.[2] In 1893 she was working as a hospital nurse, and on one stormy night had a succession of three shocks, each alone sufficiently alarming to one of a nervous constitution.[3]

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[1] This was not her real name.
[2] A repressed, puritanical childhood, often including neglect and physical abuse, seems a pattern common to many cases of multiple personality.
[3] First, she saw illuminated in a lightning flash a patient in a white nightgown, who grabbed her; then she saw her boyfriend's face outside a second-floor window (he had climbed a ladder

The patient whom Prince saw for the first time five years later I shall call, following him, '*B* I'. This was 'the saint': a woman morbidly reticent, morbidly conscientious, a bibliophile, deeply religious, patient and longsuf-fering, with 'a refinement of character out of the ordinary' and 'great delicacy of sentiment'. She had been advised to consult Prince because of her insomnia, fatigue, headaches, nervousness and depression. Prince at once hypnotised her (such patients are typically very easy to hypnotise). *B* I's hypnotic state he called '*B* I*a*', but *B* I*a* was never considered to be a distinct personality—she *was B* I, but a *B* I with less reserve and restraint when in a hypnotic trance, and hence better able to talk fully and freely about her condition. *B* I*a* knew of, and claimed as her own, all *B* I's thoughts and actions; *B* I, as is usual under hypnotism, was amnesic for all she said and did as *B* I*a*. I shall represent this asymmetrical knowledge by an arrow: one arrow to represent knowledge of actions, another to represent knowledge of thoughts:
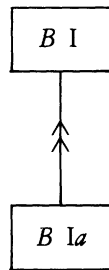
One day under hypnosis the patient referred to *B* I not, as before, as 'I' but as 'she'. When asked why she did not think of herself as *B* I (who then, having no rivals, was of course simply called 'Christine Beauchamp') she replied 'because she is stupid; she goes around mooning, half asleep, with her head buried in a book; she does not know half the time what she is about' (Prince [1905], p. 28). This personality proved to know all of *B* I's and *B* I*a*'s thoughts and actions—often indeed being able to describe *B* I's dreams in greater detail than could *B* I or *B* I*a*—but denied that they were *her* thoughts, dreams and activities. She claimed to have existed as a co-conscious personality right from Christine Beauchamp's early childhood. *B* I and *B* I*a* knew nothing of this personality. Prince at first called her by Miss Beauchamp's own name, but she disliked and despised *B* I so much that she chose eventually to be called 'Sally' instead. So we supplement the diagram:

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to surprise her); and finally—although Prince is somewhat coy about this—it seems that the same boyfriend found Miss Beauchamp and attempted what to her seemed near-rape, illuminated only by flashes of lightning.
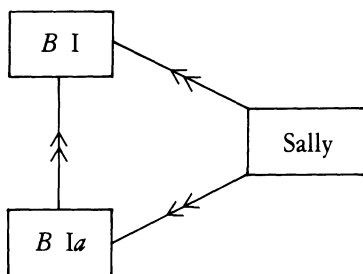
Prince was fascinated by Sally, and got her repeatedly by hypnotising BI who then either turned into Sally directly, or turned into BIa from which state Sally could easily come when summoned. She remained in a hypnotic state until one day she contrived to get her eyes open, and there she was: an unhypnotised, merry and carefree individual, in control of the body and anxious to keep it that way. Once she had managed to get her eyes open she was able to 'come' more and more often, with or without the prior hypnotism of BI. Much of this was Prince's responsibility, for he did nothing at first to discourage her—she amused him by her vivacity, irresponsibility, flirtatiousness and verve: 'there was a delightful attractive-ness in [her] absolute disregard of responsibility; she was a child of nature' (Prince [1905], p. 53).

The rise of Sally did the unfortunate BI no good at all. She knew nothing of her (it was some time before Prince informed her of the new develop-ment), and as far as she was concerned the times when Sally was 'out' were times she lost completely. For example, she lost an entire Christmas day; more painfully, she lost the whole of a ten-day period in hospital to which she (BI) had explicitly asked to be committed; Sally amused herself by pretending to be BI so the hospital staff, impressed by 'BI's' absence of depression and fatigue, discharged her. Thus BI gained not at all from her difficult and courageous decision to undergo hospital treatment. Sally in fact hated BI, and spared no pains to make her life a misery. Prince believes that the implacable hatred was fuelled by jealousy of BI's superior attainments and the love and respect she received from her friends; for Sally, although she claimed to have been present as a coexisting consciousness throughout Miss Beauchamp's life, was far less well educated—she was easily bored, so hadn't paid attention to school lessons or difficult books. She could not, for example, speak French, whereas BI was fluent (a fact Prince often used to try to forestall Sally's interference in his plans for BI); her command of grammar, spelling and syntax, and the range of her vocabulary, were much inferior to that of BI. Jealous or not, it is clear that Sally disliked BI; she would tear up her letters, conceal money and stamps, destroy sewing and knitting (or perhaps sew up the sleeves of BI's clothes); she mailed her parcels containing spiders, spent money lavishly on unsuitable clothes, and for a period kept BI on an 'allowance' of 5c or 10c a day. Her friends were

not B I's friends and her tastes differed from B I's; so B I often found herself coming-to in a circle of alien faces, with a drink or a cigarette in her hand—though she rarely drank and hated the taste of cigarettes. Sally broke B I's appointments and lost her hard-won jobs; at one time she even thought of killing her, and had to be reminded of the consequences to herself of such an action. Sally of course had all the advantages, knowing everything about B I; B I could know nothing directly of what Sally was doing and planning. Yet—perhaps unwisely—B I continued to visit Prince, as her anguish steadily deepened.[1] Disturbed by Sally's effect on B I, Prince tried to suppress her, but this failed completely.

Prince was in a way fond of Sally, 'the devil'; he was less taken by the next personality, who just arrived one day, unheralded and unexpected. This individual, labelled 'B IV' by Prince, remembered nothing that had happened since the night of trauma in 1893, six years earlier (indeed, on her first appearance she thought that it was still that same night). She failed to recognise Prince; struggling to come to terms with a situation almost impossible for her, she retreated into aloof reticence, determined to conceal by any means available her ignorance of the last six years. Sally was highly excited by the advent of B IV; she found that she was aware of B IV's actions but not of her thoughts,[2] so it was some time before she discovered that B IV's pretence to knowledge was no more than a pretence. When Sally discovered this she was highly indignant at such a deception, and contemptuously dubbed B IV 'the Idiot'—the first of her many rash underestimations of BIV. BIV's hypnotic state stood to BIV just as BIa stood to BI, and was termed BIVa; so we now have the following diagram:

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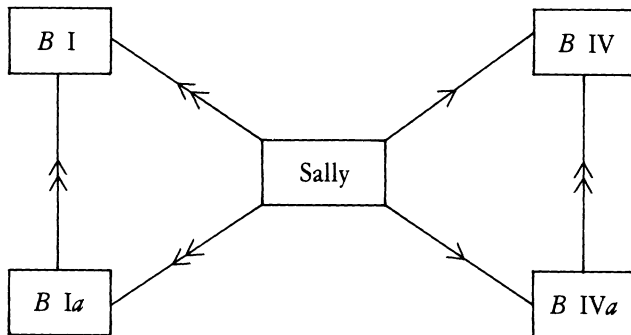
[1] In fairness to Prince one ought to say that his suggestions to B Ia often proved effective in removing for several days B I's insomnia, headaches, depression and exhaustion. On the other hand, a summer spent in Europe (and thus away from Prince) found B I almost entirely untroubled by Sally—the longest such period since Sally first came on the scene.

[2] The technical term for a subordinate consciousness that is aware of the primary person's actions but not thoughts is 'co-conscious'; one aware of both actions and thoughts is 'intraconscious' (Cutler and Reed [1975]). Thus Sally was co-conscious to B IV and intraconscious to B I (and subsequently to B II).

B IV knew nothing directly of either *B* I or Sally. Prince thought of her as 'the woman' of the trio—a somewhat invidious judgment, since he describes her as prickly, impatient, fiercely independent, aggressive, and hot tempered, ardently resenting the position in which she found herself. Quickly despising and discounting what she heard of the wretched *B* I, she set out on battles royal with Sally. Sally in these forays had the obvious advantages of knowing all *B* IV's actions (though *B* IV could often mislead her by speaking to herself in French, or by pretending to have a headache when she did not— something Sally only discovered with indignation when *B* I came 'out'). Sally could exhaust *B* IV physically, undo her arrangements, deny her sleep, hide her belongings, so tended to win the first rounds; but she in turn could eventually be brought to heel by *B* IV's sincere ultimatum: one more outrage, and *B* IV would commit the lot of them to an asylum. *B* I had to pick up whatever she could from finding letters written by Sally and *B* IV to each other, from the remarks of friends, from the jobs and places in which she found herself; she became more and more miserable.

Sally and *B* IV were forced into alliance by a development alarming to both of them. Prince discovered that *B* I deeply hypnotised and *B* IV deeply hypnotised—getting 'below' *B* I*a* and *B* IV*a*—became one and the same, *B* II. This hypnotic state claimed to *be* both *B* I and *B* IV, accepting all their thoughts and actions as her own; she seemed to combine the virtues of both with the excesses of neither. However she knew nothing at all of Sally, even though Sally knew of all her thoughts and actions. So we get:
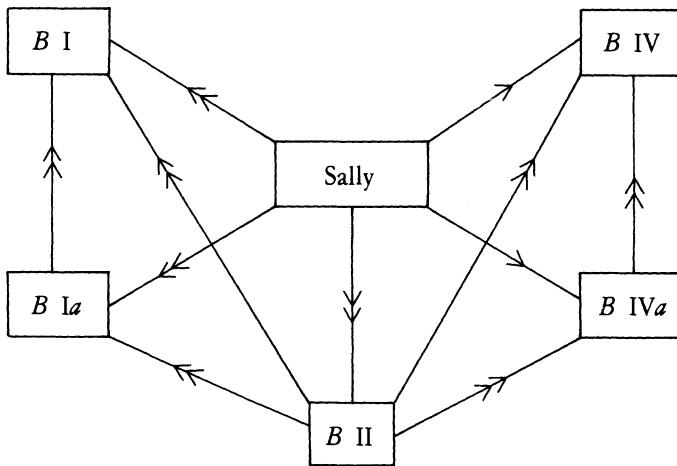
B II's memory went right back (with lacunae only for the periods when Sally was 'out') to early childhood; she seemed a sober, responsible and well-balanced individual. *B* II, Prince thought, was 'the real' Miss Beauchamp, identical with the pre-1893 Christine Beauchamp. However, whenever he tried to wake *B* II out of the hypnotic trance, she never woke up *as* *B* II but would split, *via* B I*a* or *B* IV*a*, into *B* I or *B* IV.

To *B* I and *B* IV, life as *B* II seemed to be death. From their point of view they ceased to exist when *B* II was present, despite the fact that *B* II claimed to be both of them. *B* I, characteristically, was ready to meet meekly her own extinction, but *B* IV was determined to fight. She made a partner of Sally who, although not 'killed' by the rise of *B* II would have been 'squeezed' (her own term) back to her passive status as a coexisting consciousness by a healthy *B* II, and she much preferred her active life. Thus *B* IV planned a flight to Europe, which was only just frustrated in time; they broke appointments with Prince; determined autosuggestion màde it difficult for Prince to hypnotise *B* IV to get *B* IV*a* and thereby *B* II. Eventually, though (in 1904), they were defeated; Sally admitted that she recognised in *B* II the pre-1893 Christine Beauchamp, and that it had been her subterranean influence which had 'split' *B* II back into *B* I or *B* IV whenever Prince tried to wake up *B* II *as* *B* II; she withdrew her interference and, after completing her autobiography and a Last Will and Testament, voluntarily committed herself to extinction and *B* II at last woke up as—Prince contends— Christine Beauchamp.

Then it was all over bar the shouting, and bar Sally. *B* II proved to be quite stable, only splitting back into *B* I, *B* IV or Sally when under severe strain. When *B* I or *B* IV did emerge, it was for them as though they woke up after a several month's coma; as for Sally, she returned to the position that she said she had occupied until 1898, that of a co-consciousness existing alongside Christine Beauchamp. So we can round out the full diagram[1]:
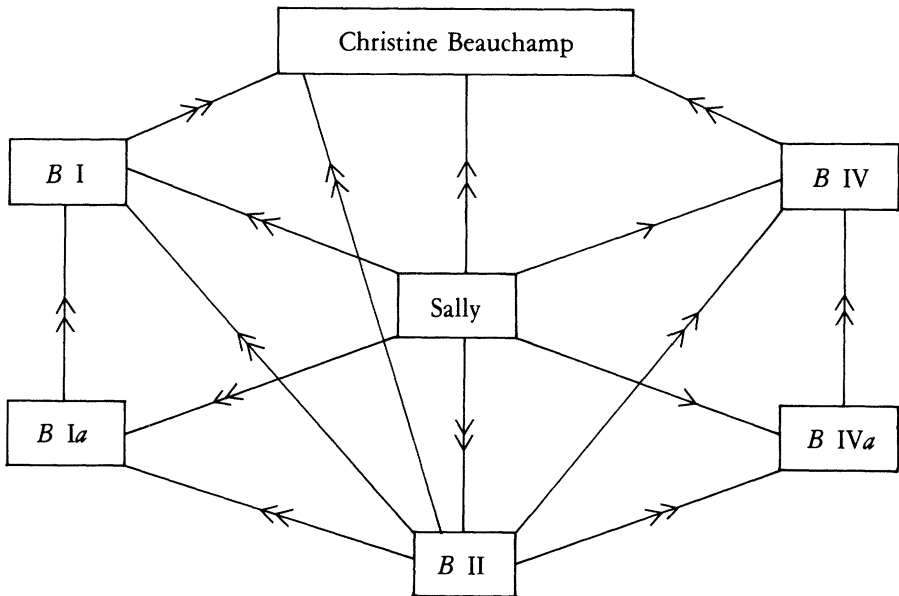
[1] This diagram, like the account offered above, is much simplified. It leaves out, for example, Sally's hypnotic state (which played no very active part in the story); it omits several further

3   The primary question (a question difficult to frame in a way that is not grammatically suspect) is: how many people was Christine Beauchamp between 1893 and 1904? It should be clear that it matters not at all for this question whether the condition of multiple personality is or is not something that psychiatry should recognise as such, whether it is or is not an avoidable phenomenon unwisely encouraged by an undue use of hypnotism; however it is produced, so long as we accept the general truth of the data provided by Prince, the question of personal identity arises urgently. It is difficult to describe the case except in terms appropriate to four persons (and I have not tried to avoid this question-begging mode of description: the debts from the begged question will be repaid); but nature need be no party to our phraseology. As we shall see, the familiar criteria purporting to tell us what it is to be a person are not decisive.

Strongly in favour of saying that there was *one* person throughout is the fact that only one body was involved: one genetic constitution, one pair of hands, one mouth and so on. Biologically speaking, there was just one homo sapiens here, one human being. Inasmuch as, most of the time, human beings and persons come indissolubly linked in one–one pairings, this is strong *prima facie* evidence for saying that there was just one person here too. However it is of course precisely the possible contingency of this one–one ratio that puzzle cases are designed to throw into doubt—just this is in question. So although we shall return to the significance of the role of the body in a different context a little later, we cannot at this point in the argument use its uniqueness as evidence for the singleness of Miss Beauchamp, for the possibility of a one-many body-person relation is precisely what we are considering.

Take next the Lockean test of continuity of consciousness. B I and B IV each claimed as her own all Christine Beauchamp's pre-1893 activities; B II claimed all of that and all of B I's and B IV's behaviour. Thus B II should be identical to B I, B IV, and the pre-1893 Christine Beauchamp. It is, to say the least, unfortunate that this identity works out as neither symmetrical nor transitive. When B I or B IV reappeared after B II's rise, neither of them knew anything of B II's thoughts or deeds—thus making the identity non-symmetric; and neither B I nor B IV knew anything, except indirectly, of each other—thus rendering the identity non-transitive. It is hardly necessary to add that Sally is left out entirely by the Lockean criterion.[1] Although she could remember Christine Beauchamp's, BI's, and BII's thoughts and actions, and all of B IV's actions, she remembered them impersonally as

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but relatively fleeting personalities; it simplifies the coding (B Ia was first called 'B II', Sally was at first B III, then 'Chris', and eventually elected to be called 'Sally'). The reader is urged to consult Prince's book in case some of the simplifications prove positively misleading.

[1] Thus Williams, who quotes B II's remark 'after all, it was always myself' (Williams [1957]) neglects the fact that this comment of B II's referred only to her past as B I and B IV, so cannot be used to show the overall unity of the new B II.

theirs and not as hers; and none of the others had any direct knowledge of Sally. So Locke's condition cuts both ways, and helps us little.

Some have tried to widen and deepen Locke's idea of the continuity of consciousness to include continuity and coherence of the whole web of psychological, character and personality traits. If we pursue this line of thought we seem to end up with a plurality of persons. Sally, *B* I and *B* IV had entirely different, though each internally consistent and coherent, characters, outlooks, moods, ambitions, tastes and habits. I have already indicated the basic features of each; Prince (on pp. 288–94) provides lists of more specific differences between *B* I and *B* IV. For example: *B* I's appetite was poor, *B* IV's healthy; *B* I liked her coffee unsweetened and black, whereas *B* IV took hers with sugar and cream; *B* I never, *B* IV regularly, used vinegar and oil in cooking; *B* I liked soups, milk, broths, brown bread, vegetables and ice cream, all of which *B* IV avoided. *B* IV was 'extravagantly fond' of smoking and drinking, but *B* I rarely drank and never smoked. *B* I preferred sober, loose clothes, with low-heeled boots and no rings or brooches; *B* IV bought tight, brightly-coloured clothes, high-heeled boots, and jewellery. *B* I read devotional books, *B* IV the newspapers; *B* I visited the sick, attended church, sewed and knitted, all of which bored *B* IV to distraction. Surprisingly *B* IV, rather than *B* I, was terrified of the dark. In short, if Prince had had available to him *EEG*s, and the batteries of psychological and psychophysical tests subsequently developed, it is likely that all three would have scored or registered differently, and consistently so. Subsequent cases of multiple personality have been given such tests; Jonah, a 27-year-old man whose alternate personalities called themselves Sammy, Usoffa Abdullah, and King Young showed, quite consistently over time, significantly different reactions *in propria persona* and with each alternate to repeated EEG tests that looked for alpha and theta wave frequency and amplitude, or the conditions under which alpha activity was blocked (*e.g.*, eye opening). The four personalities showed patterned differences on *GSR* (galvanic skin response) tests to emotionally-laden words; their *VER*s (visual evoked responses) to light-flashes differed systematically; tests of paired-word learning showed some transfer of learning from Jonah to the other three, but no transfer between the other three and none from any of them to Jonah (see Ludwig, Brandsma, Wilbur, Bendfeldt and Jameson [1972]). Similarly, Eve Black and Eve White proved to have some difference in microstrabismus (a transient loss of oculomolor parallelism—see Condon, Ogton and Pacoe [1969]); and one physical variation between the two showed up even without elaborate tests or equipment: Eve Black was allergic to nylon, Eve White was not (Thigpen and Cleckley [1957]). Hence, returning to the Beauchamp family, there is reason to suppose that had each of the personalities had her own body, there would have been not just three people, but three substantially different people.

Further, if it had happened that *B* I, *B* IV or Sally had contrived to secure sole uninterrupted control (and each indeed had been in charge of the body

for considerable periods) the uninformed outsider would have found a relatively normal individual. True, B I was sickly and depressive, but she had functioned alone adequately enough for five years, despite her ill-health; B IV could clearly cope with all eventualities; while Sally, albeit childish and irresponsible, was no more so than many childish and irresponsible people. About Sally, it should however be added that she was abnormal in other ways: she was anaesthetic to pain (Jonah's Usoffa Abdullah was practically anaesthetic too, although not completely); she experienced no pangs of hunger; and she claimed never to sleep. Nevertheless, there are several people who suffer from being unable to experience pain; two cases have been reported of individuals who seem not to sleep at all (and Prince was anyway sceptical about this claim of Sally's); and quite a few people treat food as a necessary fuel rather than as an appetite-quencher. We must admit that Sally would in at least these respects have been a highly unusual individual. But B I and B IV were far less so; and each of them, with greater or lesser strain, could have managed by herself. In this they were slightly different from several other reported cases of multiple personality, which provide examples of alternate personalities less well-rounded than the Beauchamp trio, having distinctive but circumscribed abilities and talents, and which lend credibility to the hypothesis that such alternates may be developed by the primary personality in order to deal with particular kinds of difficulty or crisis. For example, Jonah himself was conventional, 'the square'; Sammy was 'the lawyer', who turned up to cope with social difficulties; Usoffa took over as Lothario, while King Young appeared as 'the warrior' when violence was in the air. The alleged 16 personalities of Sybil were in general even more limited as to function, and it is unlikely that more than one or two of her alternates could have managed for long unaided (particularly her two male personalities); see Schreiber [1975]. Mrs A. B. had one alternate claiming to come from the eighteenth century, another from the year 2002 (see Cutler and Reed [1971])—neither of these could have managed alone without eventual difficulty. But the Beauchamp family was more interesting than any of these in that on meeting any *one* of the trio, the outsider would have found nothing particularly abnormal. Each was a well-rounded, complete personality.

   Hence the commonly used conditions on what it is to be a person seem, at least at first glance, to allow each of the Beauchamp personalities to be a full person. Each was rational—each was an 'Intentional system' (see Dennett [1971]). Each had command of at least one language, so Descartes' condition was met. Each was indubitably conscious and self-conscious. Furthermore, each was an object for moral treatment—that is, it would have been as wrong to lie to B I or B IV as to lie to any ordinary person; more than that (for animals too are moral *objects*) each was a moral agent, or at least was treated as such: Sally could be blamed for putting B I on a 5c daily allowance, Prince was angry with B IV for destroying Sally's autobiography, and he praised B I for succeeding in holding down a job.

These last considerations, about the status of the three personalities as objects for, and agents of, moral behaviour, will prove important and I shall return to them later. For the moment, though, I shall continue to offer the arguments for ascribing plurality.

We should note that Miss Beauchamp's plurality was not only diachronic—Sally, *B* I and *B* IV by turns—but was also synchronic; for whenever *B* I, *B* IV or *B* II were in control, Sally coexisted as a second consciousness, aware of all their actions and of the thoughts of *B* I and *B* II, while keeping her own counsel. In fact it was only when Sally herself was 'out' that there were not two coexisting streams of thought, and when she merely coexisted, her stream of consciousness and even her sensory experience might be very different from that of the primary personality. For example, as I have mentioned already, she claimed to know all about *B* I's dreams, even those *B* I had forgotten; she described with amusement the weird and chaotic thoughts of *B* I in delirium; she did not attend if *B* I or *B* IV were engaged in some occupation that bored her (thus when both *B* I and *B* IV decided to learn shorthand, Sally alone proved ignorant of it), but on the other hand, if *B* I was walking along in a vague trance, not noticing much around her, Sally might be attending with interest to small details of the passing scene. Thus we find the synchronic duality that is also a feature of commissurotomy patients. This is an important finding, inasmuch as it is just the evidence for two distinct centres of consciousness in split-brain patients that has led some to argue that the body must house two persons, each based in one hemisphere of the brain. Yet if the case for duality seems strong with commissurotomy patients, it is far stronger when we consider Miss Beauchamp. To show this, let us as briefly as possible run over the striking features of commissurotomy patients; under carefully designed and controlled experimental conditions they can indeed manifest marked duality. Neither hemisphere has access to any input that has reached only the other; so, for example, the left hemisphere does not know (and therefore, since the language centres are for most people based in that hemisphere, the patient cannot say) what information has reached the right. However with the left hand, which is controlled by the right hemisphere, the patient can draw or represent in a non-verbal way the stimulus the right hemisphere has received. (Suppose, *e.g.*, the left hand is concealed from view behind a curtain, and is given a penknife to hold. The patient cannot say, though he may make a guess, what his left hand has held; with his left hand however he can unerringly select a picture of a penknife when requested.) Visual, auditory, olfactory, kinaesthetic and tactual input can, with greater or less difficulty, be thus segregated; so we find hosts of examples where we seem compelled to say that the patient knows and does not know, sees and does not see, hears and does not hear . . . and, perhaps, to infer to two distinguishable centres of consciousness and hence to two persons. The disunity manifested by such individuals is bewildering and striking; but it is crucial to note (*a*) that artificial laboratory situations are required to

evoke it,[1] and (*b*) that it is a disunity restricted to particular and specific conscious beliefs or perceptions. The disunity does not extend to a true split of character and personality; even though the hemispheres to some extent divide the labour of underpinning certain cognitive or motor functions, even though there is some evidence that their capacity for emotional response varies, they cannot be said to possess different characters and personalities. Sally, on the other hand, is a co-consciousness with a rounded character richly different from the characters of *B* I, *B* II, and *B* IV.

It is true that to get a simultaneous *manifestation* of a second consciousness, or at any rate a manifestation that was not fleeting and unpredictable, artificial circumstances were required just as they are required to induce a split in commissurotomy patients. For example, after *B* IV had destroyed Sally's autobiography she was somewhat remorseful and allowed her hand to be used 'automatically' by Sally to rewrite the document; so Sally would write with *B* IV's hand, while *B* IV commented caustically upon what she read. This situation was not less contrived than are the experiments with split-brain patients.[2] But on top of this Sally provided quantities of *ex post facto* evidence of her simultaneous existence, not all of which could be dismissed (though Prince was laudably sceptical about some of it) since it helped explain and make intelligible otherwise inexplicable lacunae in *B* I's own account of her experiences. So there was evidence of duality for all, or almost all, of the time (with the sole exception of the periods in which Sally herself was 'out'), as well as marked and consistent differences of personality, ability and outlook between Sally and any of the others. Thus *if* the data from commissurotomy patients encourages one to affirm duality there, Miss Beauchamp has a stronger claim to be at least dual.[3]

The final argument for regarding *B* I, *B* IV and Sally as distinct persons appeals to intuition: to the consideration of what it must have been like from the inside, from the first person perspective. It is an interesting and puzzling fact about the topic of personal identity and personal survival that the answer one is tempted to give in answer to assorted puzzle cases may differ depending on whether the answer is framed in the first or the third person —

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[1] There are a few commissurotomy patients who manifest some disunity outside the laboratory; whose one hand may pull up his trousers, while the other pushes them down, or who may simultaneously pull towards himself a plate while pushing it away; and one patient's left hand seemed somewhat hostile to his wife. But these are rare and exceptional cases, and it is important to note that the common past history of epileptic seizure may have damaged the brain in undiscovered ways; fewer than half the commissurotomy patients have no marked *detectable* brain damage. What surprised all the early commissurotomy surgeons was precisely the *absence* of detectable behavioural disunity.

[2] This again tends to oversimplify the position. Sally was able, by a technique she described as 'willing', to induce positive and negative hallucinations in both *B* I and *B* IV; she could induce aboulia and apraxia, especially if the primary person was, as she put it, 'rattled'; she could tease *B* I by making her transpose letters in the words she was writing; and so forth. But these and similar instances cannot of themselves indicate the co-presence of a secondary consciousness as clearly as does the arranged phenomenon of her automatic writing.

[3] The writer, as will become clear, does not think that the data from commissurotomy patients should compel us to postulate any duality of minds or persons.

for example, even if it seems sensible to say of another person that after a body-swap the result would be 'more or less' him, of oneself one tends to think that either the result will be *me*, or it won't: no degrees about it. So we find, I think, with the Beauchamp family. Because *B* IV ceased to exist as far as she was concerned when *B* II was in charge, *B* II's survival for her meant death, extinction; so also for *B* I. It was little or no consolation to either to be told that they did in fact survive as *B* II, that *B* II claimed each of them as herself; and this refusal to be consoled seems reasonable enough—consider the difficulty of persuading anyone that he continued to exist over a lengthy period of time of which he had absolutely no recollection, simply on the grounds that an individual, of whom he knew nothing directly, claimed to *be* him. Intuition is often a frail and unreliable tool to use in philosophy; but when it comes to the fundamental and heartfelt claim 'that's not *me*' we surely ought not to disregard it lightly.

So much, then, for the arguments that point in the direction of a plurality of persons. We should now consider some of the difficulties involved in such a judgment.

It will be instructive to compare our reactions to an analogous set-up in a computer. Computers these days may have several distinct programs—to play chess, read Aristotle, to calculate, to recognise patterns, and so forth. Envisage a complex computer with four programs, and give the programs overlaps and unique features that parallel those of the Beauchamp personalities; *e.g.*, give all four access to the same large chunk of the information store, but to each sole access to other bits; allow one of them a scanner to monitor the functioning of any one of the others when it is active; and so on. Once the thought-experiment is completed, what is particularly interesting about it is that it sets us no *problem* at all—the example is just not puzzling. If we were asked of such a computer 'one thing, or many?' the answer would be clear: '*qua* hunk of machinery, one; *qua* program, four'. All that is necessary is to disambiguate the query; the coexistence of one and many is entirely unworrying, for that is the sort of thing that such computers are.

What is it that makes a computer of this kind so very different from Miss Beauchamp? To answer this we need to return to the idea that persons are agents and objects of moral and social behaviour. Practically all the time, with extremely rare exceptions, we have the fact of a one–one relation between person and body, between software and hardware. The norms of convention and behaviour presuppose, and are built around, this fact; and because it is almost exceptionless we, conservative in such matters, take it not merely as the norm but also as the ideal. Hence we inevitably gear our moral, social, legal, institutional, political and medical practices to this ideal, and thereby of course reinforce it. One man, one vote; if a crime is committed, one body is imprisoned; no husband of Miss Beauchamp would have been polygamous, even between 1898 and 1904. We are simply unaccustomed to individuals who may want to vote *both* Labour and Conservative, to support *and* oppose a strike motion, or who want to smoke

and do not want to smoke.[1] This strong normative pressure (that what is, ought to be) helps explain our difficulty with Miss Beauchamp—and also helps explain, incidentally, why every doctor regards the condition as something to be removed. They may be right; I comment only that this is not self-evident, and that Jonah seems to have been in many respects healthier as Jonah, Sammy, Usoffa and King Young than when 'put together' as Jusky ('Jusky' was a name democratically agreed upon by combining the initial letters of all four names).

No such norms govern computers, so computers and computer scientists are constrained by no such pressure to unify. There is, too, an important further point, easily overlooked because it may seem trivial: computers, at least at present, are far less agile than are people—their hardware enters less intimately into their software. By contrast, the aspirations, talents and attitudes of persons put substantial constraints upon their bodies; one and the same man could not fulfil both the ambition of becoming a ballet dancer and that of succeeding as a Sumo wrestler. The mobility of Miss Beauchamp—the involvement of her body in almost all her activities— fostered the problem considerably. It was infuriating for *B* IV and Sally to find themselves in church, distressing for *B* I to discover a cigarette in her hand; for all it was tiresome and time-consuming to take up to six baths a day (each personality wanted two, and if Sally had bathed first, neither *B* I nor *B* IV would know of it). So if we are to get any comparable problem with computers we would need to endow them with physical agility as well as a complex form of life governed by social, legal, moral and political sanctions—and once we had done that, it is at least arguable that our computers would then count as persons anyway, giving us no longer an analogous but an identical problem.

Applying these considerations to Miss Beauchamp, we see that the various personalities were *not* counted as persons at all; despite the vocabulary used to describe them, despite the fact that each could be blamed or praised for her own activities but not for those of the others. For Prince had little moral compunction in committing what to *B* I or *B* IV seemed like murder; fond as he often was of Sally, he had no hesitation in sending her back to the limbo from whence she came, overriding her (often eloquent and moving) protests. Presumably his attitude cannot be made wholly con- sistent: to blame or praise *B* IV one day, to work to extinguish her the next, is hard to justify strictly. It is interesting to consider his attitude before *B* II appeared. When *B* IV arrived, he thought for some time that she might be 'the real Miss Beauchamp', and worked hard to suppress *B* I and Sally; he allowed that this was, as far as *B* I was concerned, her 'annihilation' and 'psychical murder' (Prince [1905], p. 248). Yet it is clear that he did not seriously regard himself as a murderer—there is no analogy with ordinary murder, nor even with abortion or killing in self-defence, so *B* I cannot have

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[1] We are of course familiar with the fact that millions of people want to smoke while wanting *not* to smoke.

been considered a true person after all, despite the 'murder' rhetoric. Correspondingly, once *B* II had appeared, he set out to 'kill' *B* IV as hard as he had tried to 'kill' *B* I. Thus none of the post-1893, pre-1904 personalities was in fact regarded as a person at all, inasmuch as each was denied the basic right to life.

Hence it appears that the normative constraints on what it is to be a person ruled out the entire trio of Sally, *B* I, and *B* IV. Sally was 'squeezed' (her own word) back to the position of a second and subterranean consciousness; while *B* I and *B* IV suffered what to them was death—and a death made all the more unpleasant by rare and fleeting resurrections when *B* II temporarily broke down. So if we cannot say that there were several persons—if we allow the normative considerations to carry the day— can we at least say that there was one?

This is clearly difficult too, as all the above evidence in favour of plurality shows. The heart of the difficulty lies in the fact that the concept of a person is the concept of a rational agent; persons are Intentional systems whose behaviour can be explained and predicted by showing it to be intelligible and rational. Each of the trio separately met this condition, but the resulting aggregate did not. No amount of knowledge of *B* IV allowed one to predict what Sally or *B* I would do; *B* I's closest friends would have been horrified and alarmed to see her sitting naked on top of a wardrobe (one of Sally's crueller tricks). *B* I and *B* IV had little in common between 1899 and 1904, so that the understanding of one was irrelevant to an understanding of the other. Miss Beauchamp during this period was not one rational system but three, so it is difficult to call her *one* person.[1]

4   The previous section tends to encourage the conclusion that with Miss Beauchamp the concept of a person breaks down completely; for powerful and intuitive considerations militate for and against both plurality and unity. That is the negative result. More positively, the case of Christine Beauchamp should encourage one to reflect more deeply upon the degree and quality of unity that we should require of an individual who is to be considered a single person. The example of Miss Beauchamp highlights the enormous importance of the normative pressure on person-hood, without which we would surely have rested content with saying that she was several people: persons are, very centrally and significantly, what society thinks persons ought to be. *B* IV's fight against her extinction stood no chance against Prince's insistence that proper people are single and unitary people.

If society's norms are what help determine the nature of personal identity, it is not surprising that different ages and cultures sometimes have slightly

[1] There are of course many individuals who are not single rational systems: *e.g.*, those suffering from severe forms of schizophrenia or psychosis. However no member of the Beauchamp family was irrational or non-rational; the singleness of Miss Beauchamp was threatened not by the breakdown of rationality but rather by the build-up of three alternating rational systems. Thus although the condition of multiple personality is indeed abnormal, it is not the abnormality of insanity.

different constraints upon what it is to be a person. Particularly interesting is the extent of psychological *dis*unity that Homer, especially the Homer of the *Iliad*, allowed his characters while simultaneously and unproblematically regarding them as single individuals.[1] The disunity (as we would now regard it) was not just psychological, either, but extended to the body; from vase-paintings of the eighth century BC we can see that the human form was thought of as an articulated collection of limbs—the arms, legs, torso and head are pictured as prominent and rounded, while the joints are unstressed and wasp-like. This corresponds well with the absence in Greek of a singular term to designate what we mean by 'body'; apparent candidates, such as *soma* or *derma,* need to be translated as 'corpse' or 'skin' respectively. When Homer needed to talk of the living human body, he used one of two plural forms both meaning 'limbs'—*melea* and *guia.* So man was seen as a physical aggregate; more crucially for our purposes, the *Iliad* portrays him as a psychological aggregate as well, despite the fact that Homer also uses the personal pronouns and proper names in a wholly unembarrassed way. Decisions, for example, could be made by the *thumos,* the *phren* or *phrenes, noos, kradie, ker, etor,* or by the individual; action could be initiated by these but also on occasion by the hands, feet or knees. One example (there are hundreds available) will illustrate the point; in the following lines Zeus is talking of Achilles: 'Let him take thought then in his *phren* and his *thumos* lest, strong though he may be, he may not be able to endure my attack . . . his *etor* thinks nothing of declaring himself equal with me, whom even the other gods fear' (*Iliad* XV, 163 *f.*). The point to note about this and other such passages is not so much the plurality of centres of thought and motivation (anatomically and psychologically distinct though they may be) but rather the coexistence of descriptions of their activity with references to 'him' or 'Achilles'; a single individual just was a plurality of that kind.

   After Homer this 'one and many' fades considerably (indeed, it is already less noticeable in the *Odyssey*[2]). Today we seem to require a very stringent unity, a 'unity of consciousness', in a single individual (though the jargon phrase 'unity of consciousness' is little more than Locke's 'continuity of consciousness' in modern dress). It is surely worth reflecting that even though Homer may have been too liberal for our present social, legal, moral and political purposes, our present emphasis upon a unity of consciousness might for its part be unduly restrictive, so that some compromise position should be sought. In fact, 'unity of consciousness' is a tricky notion to deploy with any precision, for two main reasons. First, nobody seems to know what is meant by the term 'consciousness', let alone by the phrase 'the unity of consciousness', and if we rely on a vague and intuitive grasp on the notion, we run into severe difficulty with problems of self-deception, weakness of will, trance states, divided attention and the like, not to mention

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[1] This has often been noted before; particularly by Snell [1953], Adkins [1970], and more recently by Jaynes [1976].
[2] I am grateful to Julius Tomin for persuading me of this.

the more dramatic cases of dissociation and breakdown in mental function-
ing that we find with aphasia, alexia, aboulia, prosopagnosia, apraxia,
epileptic automatism, fugues, somnambulism, commissurotomy and mul-
tiple personality. Senility offers a problem that is worth singling out as a
difficulty for notions of a 'unity of consciousness', simply because it is so
common. Second, to stress the unity of consciousness inevitably highlights
the tip of the iceberg of mentality that is *conscious* mentality at the expense of
the vital but usually neglected preconscious, subconscious, unconscious or
simply non-conscious states, thereby fostering the bias, established by
Descartes, in favour of one particular kind of account of the self.

   Inasmuch as the extent of unity required of a person is determined in part
by social norms, it appears that we *need* no such strong and stringent
conditions as those suggested by the search for a 'unity of consciousness'.
What we require is enough unity amongst all a man's mental states (whether
conscious or not) to enable us to treat the individual as a single Intentional or
rational system; so that, for example, most of the time his behaviour can be
shown to be intelligible against the background of his past behaviour and
experience, so that most of the time we can hold him responsible for his
activities, applying praise and blame appropriately, so that most of the time
he can steer a roughly consistent and autonomous path, seeking reasonably
effective and practical means to an ordered set of short-term and long-term
goals. A unity of consciousness evidently helps enormously—if by 'unity of
consciousness' we mean *inter alia* his recognition and acceptance of past
actions, and of intentions for the future, as his own. Nevertheless adequate
functioning (which will be relative to the demands of the society) may be
compatible with extensive dissociation on this conscious level (and is
certainly compatible with the artificial and fleeting dissociations induced in
commissurotomy patients by constructed experiments).

   Were we to weaken our requirements on unity—in other words, were we
to acknowledge that persons are or might be less well integrated than 'unity
of consciousness' seems to require—there might be several advantages. It
should mean that we would have less initial suspicion of psychological
theories that, like Freud's at one stage, hypothesize a tripartite structure of
superego, ego and id, or which add to our model of the mind a postulate of a
dynamic and systematic unconscious; we would be less troubled by the
present trend among cognitive psychologists to ascribe 'characteristically
human' predicates to systems and subsystems in the brain—in the past this
has fostered the fear of the 'little man' or 'bureaucracy' in the brain. At a
different level it might help to clear obstacles from the path of some
psychological research; Geschwind [1974] suggests, for example, that
weakening our requirements on unity might benefit many branches of the
science, particularly developmental psychology (the association cortex is
ontogenetically the most recent, and hence is the last part of the brain to lay
down its connections; young children may be far less unified than we tend to
suppose). Presumably the investigation of senile dementia too may be

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similarly handicapped by the difficulty of squaring strong constraints on unity with the manifest evidence of several kinds of disunity and in-coherence. Turning to traditional philosophical issues, it is not impossible that the paradoxes of self-deception and akrasia might be eased a little.

That is all speculative. What seems less so is that nothing can alleviate the problem posed by such as Miss Beauchamp; and, more generally, that persons are not (*pace* Wiggins [1976]) a natural kind.[1]

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