

MULTIPLE PERSONALITY DISORDER WITH HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN SUBPERSONALITY COMPONENTS

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ABSTRACT

Clinical data are presented on a Native American patient diagnosed with multiple personality disorder. Eleven subpersonalities were found to contain four human and seven non-human components. Findings indicated child abuse was at the core of the developmental process. However, once alter components manifested themselves, cultural factors reinforced and maintained the process. Evaluation of hypnotic susceptibility indicated all subpersonalities were highly hypnotizable. Analysis of visual acuity on two occasions, separated by 30 days, indicated significant differences among a number of the alters, i.e., 20/15 to 20/50. Test/retest scores indicated the visual acuity scores were highly reliable. Evaluation of neurosensory memory on two occasions, separated by 30 days, indicated significant differences in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic test results for some of the alters. Test/retest scores indicated the neurosensory test results were highly reliable. The results are discussed in terms of a) implication of test differences, b) the reliability of test results, and c) treatment problems encountered with human and animal subpersonalities.

Multiple personality disorder (MPD) is an increasingly well documented and researched phenomena (Braun, 1986; Kluft, 1985). Reports of MPD date beyond the 17th century (Quen, 1986). These early reports included descriptions of shamans who exhibited dissociatively-based animal alter egos; i.e., MPD subpersonalities (Carlson, 1986). Unfortunately, today's clinicians have difficulty assessing reports from an era in which neither the medical nor psychological sciences could reliably distinguish those who suffered MPD from individuals affected by other diagnostic categories (Kluft, 1986). Additionally, no major published modern scientific literature exists on cases of MPD with animal alters. If such existed it would provide: a) support for the earlier reports; b) important insight into the cultural or environmental learning factors which contribute to the development of alters; and c) a broader base for understanding the general nature of the MPD phenomenon.

The current clinical report describes a single individual

who displayed both human and non-human alters or subpersonalities and met the DSM-III-R (American Psychiatric Association, 1987) criteria for MPD. Data are presented on the hypnotic susceptibility and visual acuity of the alters, the developmental process of the individual's MPD, and treatment of the alters in the course of the psychotherapy.

METHOD

Subject

The subject was a 70 year old male of Native American ancestry. While a more detailed description of his tribal affiliations would be of considerable psychological and anthropological interest, it is omitted in deference to considerations of confidentiality. He was a traditional Indian herbalist (a highly esteemed form of medicine man) by profession and a full blooded member of a Native American tribe. In addition to his presenting personality, the subject displayed four human alters: a male warrior (Man Killer), a male child (Small One), a female (Moon Walker), and an elderly male (Old One). He also displayed seven animal alters: a male snake (Snake), a male wolf (Wolf), a male owl (Bad Spirit), a female black panther (Pretty One), a male turtle (Power), a male bear (Great One), and a male hawk (Wind Spirit). The subject presented himself for treatment

TABLE 1
Hypnotic Induction Profile Scores for Subpersonalities

Hypnotic Induction Profile Scores	
<i>Personality</i>	<i>HIP Score</i>
Man Killer	9
Small One	9
Old One	9
Moon Walker	9
Snake	9
Wolf	9
Bad Spirit	9
Pretty One	9
Power	9
Great One	9
Wind Spirit	9

after the internal fighting between human and animal alters became so extreme that it interfered with his ability to perform healing rites. The treatment plan (personality integration) was a decision made by the subject after a long non-directive discussion of cultural values, the nature of dissociation, and multiple personality disorder.

Procedure

A hypnosis-free baseline period was allowed to determine the number and history of the subpersonalities. Following this baseline period the Hypnotic Induction Profile or HIP (Spiegel & Spiegel, 1978) for hypnotic susceptibility was administered to each alter. In the next sessions the Snellen Scale Letter Chart (SSLC) for visual acuity was administered to each of the subpersonalities at a distance of 20 feet. To test for reliability, the SSLC was readministered 30 days after completion of the first SSLC test series. To evaluate neurosensory learning systems and recall a neurosensory test (Smith, 1978) was administered to assess the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic memory of each of the alters. Thirty days after the initial neurosensory evaluations, the test was readministered. Finally, hypnotherapy was instituted for more detailed background information and treatment.

Statistical analysis employed the t-test for paired measures and Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test for related data.

Results and Discussion

The results for the subpersonalities' HIP tests are shown in Table 1. The data indicated that all alters scored 9 on the HIP.

These results indicated all subpersonalities were highly hypnotizable and as such highly capable of demonstrating dissociative phenomena.

The results for the Snellen Scale Letter Chart are shown in Table 2. The data indicated scores among the human

alters of subpersonalities varied according to age; e.g., Small One T-1=20/20 to Old One (elderly) T-1=20/50. Among the animal subpersonalities it appeared that scores were independent of age and appeared related to traditional Native American assumptions of visual ability; e.g., Bad Spirit (Owl) T-1=20/40 to Wind Spirit (Hawk) T-1=20/15. Analysis of SSLC-T-1 scores between subpersonalities indicated significant differences for the base or 20/20 ratings and all other scores, $t(5)=2.96$, $p<.04$. Thus, a marked difference in visual acuity existed among a number of the alters. Comparison between test-1 and test-2 for SSLC reliability indicated no significant difference, $Wt(10)=0$, $z=0.89$, $p>.37$. Thus, SSLC

TABLE 2
Snellen Scale Scores for Subpersonalities

Personality	Snellen Scale Scores	
	SSLC Score	
Man Killer	T1= 20/20	T2= 20/20
Small One	T1= 20/20	T2= 20/20
Old One	T1= 20/50	T2= 20/40
Moon Walker	T1= 20/20	T2= 20/20
Snake	T1= 20/50	T2= 20/50
Wolf	T1= 20/20	T2= 20/20
Bad Spirit	T1= 20/40	T2= 20/50
Pretty One	T1= 20/20	T2= 20/20
Power	T1= 20/40	T2= 20/40
Great One	T1= 20/20	T2= 20/20
Wind Spirit	T1= 20/15	T2= 20/15

TABLE 3
Neurosensory Memory Recall Scores for subpersonalities

Personality	Test 1			Test 2		
	Vis.	Aud.	Kin.	Vis.	Aud.	Kin.
Man Killer	9.3	7.6	10	9.5	7.8	10
Small One	10	8.1	10	9.5	7.8	10
Old One	5.1	4.6	7.5	5.3	3.8	7.2
Moon Walker	10	10	10	10	10	10
Snake	3.6	5.4	10	2.7	5.4	10
Wolf	5.1	10	10	2.7	5.4	10
Bad Spirit	5.4	7.8	9.3	5.6	8.1	8.8
Pretty One	10	10	10	10	10	10
Power	10	10	10	10	10	10
Great One	5.6	5.6	10	5.8	5.8	10
Wind Spirit	10	10	10	10	10	10

scores for subpersonalities were reliable over time across tests.

Results for the neurosensory tests are shown in Table 3. Neurosensory visual scores for T-1 or T-2 indicated they did not differ significantly ($p > .05$) among those in the high range for Man Killer, Small One, Moon Walker, Pretty One, Power, and Wind Spirit. Similarly, alters' visual score did not differ ($p > .04$) in the average range for Old One, Wolf, Bad Spirit, and Great One. One subpersonality, Snake, was in the low range. Statistical comparisons for alters in the high, average, and low visual ranges indicated they differ significantly ($p < .01$). Thus, visual neurosensory recall ability differed markedly for a number of the alters. Comparisons between T-1 and T-2 visual scores for all subpersonalities indicated they were not significantly different ($p > .05$). Thus, the replication of visual memory scores among the alters was statistically reliable. Neurosensory auditory scores for T-1 or T-2 indicated they did not differ significantly ($p > .05$) among those in the high range for Small One, Moon Walker, Wolf, Pretty One, Power, and Wind Spirit. Similarly, alters' auditory scores did not differ ($p > .05$) in the average range for Man Killer, Snake, Bad Spirit, and Great One. One subpersonality was in the low range, Old One. Statistical comparisons for alters in the high, average, and low auditory ranges indicated they differ significantly ($p < .01$). Thus, auditory neurosensory recall differed for a number of the subpersonalities. Comparisons between auditory T-1 and T-2 scores for all alters indicated they were not significantly different ($p > .05$). Thus the auditory memory data were statistically reliable. Neurosensory kinesthetic scores for T-1 or T-2 indicated they did not differ significantly ($p > .05$) among those in the high range for Man Killer, Small One, Moon Walker, Snake, Wolf, Bad Spirit, Pretty One, Power, Great One, and Wind Spirit. One alter, Old One, scored in the average range. Statistical comparison for alters in the high, and average kinesthetic ranges indicated they did differ significantly ($p < .01$). Thus, kinesthetic neurosensory recall differed for some subpersonalities. Comparisons between kinesthetic T-1 and T-2 scores for all alters indicated they were not significantly different ($p > .05$). Thus, the kinesthetic memory data were statistically reliable.

History

Historical information was provided by the individual subpersonalities and/or was reported by the memory trace personalities (MTP). There were two MTPs, one for the human alters (Moon Walker) and one for the animals (Wind Spirit).

Small One Subpersonality: This alter was described to be an 11 year old male child. All other subpersonalities were understood to have dissociated from this base (base personality). At the age of 3 the subject suffered an anal rape by an intoxicated uncle. The (human) MTP indicated the first assault occurred while fishing with the uncle. The (human) MTP and later the child reported he was playing with a turtle as the assault commenced. The (human) MTP indicated that the boy focused on the turtle as it crawled away, dissociating himself into an escaping turtle. Later the uncle increased the frequency of the sexual assaults. Small One

defensively managed the assaults with repeated turtle dissociations. At chronological age 5, Small One observed an Indian herbalist grinding up a turtle shell for use in treatment. Shortly after, an adult male member of the family contracted cancer and became bedridden. Small One recounted approaching the man, dissociating into the turtle, and touching the man. This occurred on several occasions, and within a short time the man was up walking and physicians reported he was in remission. Small One reported he was given a place of honor in the family, e.g., the mother began telling of a rainbow on his forehead at birth—a sign of great Indian medicine power. His family and neighbors began coming to him for treatment.

Power Subpersonality: This alter was described as a male turtle that possesses power from the "spirit world," which could be applied to control pain or major illness. The Power alter began its developmental process during the subject's third year of life as outlined above. Behavioral characteristics of the Power subpersonality included hunched posture, slow movement, head swaying from side to side, arms moving in a slow circular pattern, and language that was very slow and limited.

Moon Walker Subpersonality: This alter was described as a 28-year-old female. The subpersonality split when the abusive uncle began sharing Small One sexually with drunken friends. The dissociative process appears to have developed out of efforts to avoid or mollify the painful oral and anal rapes and a need to please men. The alter was a beautiful young female modeled after a neighbor. The subpersonality attempted to please, provided sex, and was seductive to males. Later this alter attracted males into herbal treatment. Its behavioral characteristics included female gait, voice and body posture.

Old One Subpersonality: This alter was described as a 70-year-old male. The split appeared after the patient began apprenticing with an elderly Indian medicine man. He was required to stay in the woods for days, enduring purification rites by starving (no food or water), running long distances until collapsing from exhaustion, and using herbs that induced hallucinations. During this period he was told if he was truly to become a great medicine man he would have to be just like the teacher. Under the traumatic experiences of starvation, extreme physical exertion, hallucinatory herbs, and constant demands for Small One to model himself upon the teacher (with severe beatings if he did not), he dissociated into the alter Old One. The Old One allowed the subject to model the medicine man and avoid the extremely cruel physical assaults. It should be emphasized that beatings are not a normal part of such apprenticeships in Native American culture. Such behavior was severely deviant. Additionally, the family reinforced the Old One's behavior patterns, for they allowed him to display more acceptable mature behavior around adults. These behaviors also enhanced his rapport with elderly patients. Old One's behavioral characteristics included the appearance, mannerisms, voice, and posture of an elderly male.

Wind Spirit: This alter was described as a male hawk. This subpersonality originated during the apprentice period after Small One was badly beaten for not properly

modeling the medicine man and "being one" with the hawk spirits. The hawk feather is a "powerful" source for "dissociative medicine" with Indian medicine men. Small One was informed the hawk was a medium between earth and the "thunder birds spirits," very powerful Indian bird spirits. Under the influence of starvation, physical exhaustion, beatings, and hallucinatory herbs Small One dissociated the alter Wind Spirit. Wind Spirit had many functions, including communication with the thunder birds to gain diagnostic information about a patient, and to obtain power for treating the patient. One power was the ability to induce bird-like lightness in patients which resulted in analgesia. Wind Spirit's behavioral characteristics included a stooped posture, head and body movements related to feather fluffing, a hop-like walk, a hawk-like sound to the voice, and the appearance of lightness in the body.

Wolf Subpersonality: This alter was reported to be a very large male wolf. The alter split during the apprentice period after starvation, exhausting physical exercise, beatings, and hallucinatory herbs. During this period he was taken to an area where wolves were present and told to learn all about them. He spent days watching the wolves without food or water. Small One was told medicine men gained some of their wisdom and cunning from the wolf spirit. He dissociated the alter after beatings for not being able to communicate with the wolf spirit. The Wolf subpersonality served to diagnose illness and deal with complex life requirements. Behavioral characteristics included the lower jaw's appearing unhinged and protruding forward, lips pulled tightly to accentuate the incisors, growling sounds, and self-cleaning with his tongue. The Wolf alter hunted small animals, particularly at night, and ate them raw. This subpersonality became hyperexcitable and very aggressive during the full moon. Also this alter, when under the influence of hallucinatory herbs and/or alcohol, assaulted adult males from time to time.

Great One Subpersonality: This alter was described as a large male bear. The subpersonality had its origin under the same conditions as the Wolf. The bear alter was employed to protect Small One and communicated with the bear spirits for wisdom related to herbal patients' needs in overcoming weakness (psychological and physical). Its behavioral characteristics included poor upright posture, bear-like gait, slow movements, and deep grunts.

Bad Spirit Subpersonality: This alter was described as a male owl. The subpersonality split under the same conditions described for Wolf. The Indian culture holds the belief that medicine men change themselves into an owl and fly to a person or location to place a hex. The mere sight of an owl places great fear in many Indian people. Bad Spirit places hexes on individuals for wronging a friend of the subject or someone coming for treatment. Bad Spirit's behavioral characteristics were similar to Wind Spirit, with the addition of light sensitivity and much blinking. This alter preferred night to day.

Snake Subpersonality: This alter was described as a male snake. The subpersonality split under the same conditions described for Wolf. In the Indian culture medicine men are believed to change themselves into snake spirits and attack

their enemies. Snake was employed to threaten or attack enemies of Small One or herbal patients.

Pretty One Subpersonality: This alter was described as a beautiful black female panther. The subpersonality split under the same apprentice conditions described for Wolf. Pretty One was a source of "traditional medicine power" which enabled the subject to capture the attention of female patients and rapidly induce hypnosis. The alter displayed a sense of confidence, strength, and graceful movements accompanied by gentle yet powerful stroking or touching behavior, that together induced rapid deep trance. Female patients reported a deep sense of bonding with the alter. They indicated the bonding was to a very powerful woman. Pretty One's effectiveness went beyond the confines of the Indian culture.

The author observed a highly educated, very skeptical non-Indian Dean of Nursing at a large southern university confront the subject over use of questionable methods as an "Indian witch doctor." Pretty One slipped into executive control, took the hand of the dean, who was severely arthritic, and within a short time she reported no pain. A year later the dean still was reporting no pain in the affected hand.

Man Killer Subpersonality: This alter was described as a male Indian warrior in his middle thirties. The split resulted from sexual assaults and teasing about being a female-male by a drunken relative. To stop the assaults and teasing the subject dissociated and created an alter who perceived himself as a great Indian warrior named Man Killer. Once established, Man Killer dealt with the male image and self-esteem of Small One. Man Killer's behavioral characteristics were those of a strong and stoic Indian male. He was articulate, intelligent, and had great physical strength. Man Killer walked in an almost overly correct upright posture. He loved hunting and fishing. This alter was very compassionate towards those who were "down and out." It was not unusual for him to have two or more families living with him at any one time.

TREATMENT

Treatment was conducted over a four-year period. The initial phase involved uncovering the history of the subpersonalities without and later with the aid of hypnosis. Once the number of alters were established the therapist attempted to penetrate the amnesic barriers. Two subpersonalities were memory trace personalities, but only in their respective categories, human (Moon Walker), and animal (Wind Spirit). Several alters, with categories, had limited knowledge of one another (e.g., human—Moon Walker and the Old One; animal—Pretty One and Great One). Some information "leaked" across dissociative barriers during periods of extreme emotionality, but this was always one way; e.g., a brief awareness by one alter of a second alter, who did not become aware of the first. An attempt was made to integrate and later fuse the subpersonalities. Even though all alters had agreed to it, several subpersonalities unraveled within a week. The given reason for loss of fusion was that the subject's wife and his patients complained of his "loss of

spiritual powers and ability to contact the spirit world." Again an attempt was made to integrate and fuse the subpersonalities. They unraveled after a patient offered him a large amount of money to obtain a hex against a co-worker. The fused subject performed the ceremony. However, the patient, having witnessed such a ceremony before the fusion, was dissatisfied and refused to pay. Bad Spirit was reestablished and repeated the ceremony. The patient paid. The same evening a female rape patient came for treatment. Pretty One reemerged.

Repeated attempts at integration and fusion met with the same short-term fate. The pressures of cultural and professional responsibility, and considerations of position, respect, and recognition repeatedly destroyed the fusion. Additionally, the animal alters had great difficulty integrating with Man Killer (warrior/hunter), and they fought repeatedly. Thus, on many occasions the animal-human problems undermined the therapeutic process.

After eight months of alters' integration/fusion and unraveling, a treatment plan was agreed to that included: a) animals integrating and fusing separately from humans; b) the animal "whole" integrating with the human "whole"; and c) the animals and humans would allow themselves to remain as a "spiritual trace" which would provide the fused personality the ability to behave or respond as the alters had in the past. The treatment plan was designed to protect the spiritual needs of the subject, his family, and the Indian people he served. His function was restored, and subjective comfort enhanced. Integration and fusion held for over a year and a half before unraveling during a period of great personal stress. The subject was readministered the treatment plan, he integrated and fused. From time to time partial unraveling was observed and refusion was necessary. The thrust of the treatment, optimizing the function and comfort of the patient and obtaining whatever degree of integration is practical, is consistent with Kluft's (1988) description of the treatment of older adults with MPD.

SUMMARY

Clinical observations are presented that document the existence of a patient diagnosed with MPD who displayed both human and animal alter personalities. Administration of the HIP to the subpersonalities indicated all were highly hypnotizable. Visual acuity tests and neurosensory evaluation both demonstrated considerable differences between some alters. The implications of these findings in a single subject, who produced data largely consistent with his cultural belief system, should not be overinterpreted. Integration and fusion attempts were somewhat successful, but required partial reinforcement from time to time. These findings provide support for early reports of shamans with animal alters. They also indicated support for the position that MPD is present as a learned defensive dissociative process to trauma in widely diverse cultural settings. Considerations of confidentiality and space preclude discussion of many of the issues raised in this case report. ■

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