

# THE DISSOCIATED EXECUTIVE SELF AND THE CULTURAL DISSOCIATION BARRIER

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## ABSTRACT

*Multiplicity is an organizational principle of the normal human mind and also of non-human systems. The psychology of modern industrial man is characterized by a suppression of normal multiplicity, with the creation of a dissociated executive self insulated from other part selves in the mind by a cultural dissociation barrier. Twenty-two properties of the dissociated executive self are discussed, and testable predictions of this theory of pathological multiplicity are described.*

In the last six years, six series of 50 or more cases of multiple personality disorder (MPD) have been published (Bliss, 1984; Coons, Bowman & Milstein, 1988; Ross et al., 1990a; Ross, Norton & Wozney, 1989; Schultz, Braun & Kluft, 1989). The validity and reliability of the diagnosis have been established in studies with two structured interviews, the Structured Clinical Interview for *DSM-III-R* Dissociative Disorders (Steinberg, Rounsaville, & Cicchetti, 1990), and the Dissociative Disorders Interview Schedule (Ross, Heber, Norton, Anderson, Anderson, & Barchet, 1989). The treatment of MPD has been described in detail in two books (Putnam, 1989; Ross, 1989), and an increasing number of papers, workshops, conferences, newsletters, and books deal with the dissociative disorders (Kluft, 1987).

During the last five years, evidence that MPD is fairly common in clinical populations has begun to accumulate from a variety of settings (Bliss and Jeppsen, 1985; Graves, 1989; Putnam, Loewenstein, Silberman & Post, 1984; Ross, 1987). Based on preliminary epidemiological research, it appears that MPD affects about 1% of the general population in North America, while the dissociative disorders have a prevalence of about 10%, making them a major form of psychopathology (Ross, in press).

If MPD is in fact relatively common, it becomes difficult to think of it as an anomalous deviation from normal psy-

chology. Rather, as proposed by a number of authors (Braun, 1985; Braun, 1986; Ross, 1985), MPD should be viewed as the extreme end of a spectrum of dissociation extending from normal through intermediate forms, to the most chronic and complex dissociative disorder. If this view is correct, what are the implications for normal psychology?

The study of individuals with dissociative psychopathology and readings in literature, philosophy, and anthropology, have lead me to formulate a general psychology of western man based on the principle of multiplicity. The purpose of this paper is to communicate the outline and main features of this psychological theory.

## THE PRINCIPLE OF MULTIPLICITY

A basic tenet of the theory is that multiplicity is a normal organizational principle of the human psyche, and of systems in general. There are many conscious part selves in the human mind outside the awareness of the executive self. These part selves function with relative autonomy, are capable of rational cognition, and make decisions about reality in a detailed, precise fashion. Multiplicity can be observed in the human mind, large corporations, modern governments, and the biosphere as a whole. Multiplicity may also be an organizational principle of the atom and the physical universe.

This tenet of the theory is not original. Theories of multiplicity and therapeutic techniques based on them have been propounded by many clinicians including Janet (1977), Breuer and Freud (1986), Jung (1977), William James (1983), and more recently Hilgard (1977), Beahrs (1982), Watkins and Watkins (1981), and Crabtree (1985). Diverse therapeutic schools including psychosynthesis, transactional analysis, gestalt therapy, and ego state therapy directly address part selves in the psyche. I will make no effort to review this literature here.

Consider for a moment the fact that a great deal of minutely organized, precise function is carried out by the brain entirely outside the awareness of the executive self or ego. Such functions, including breathing and digestion, are usually regarded as unconscious. But how does one catch a ball, for example? The mind must process, perform calculations on, and respond to a vast number of bits of information in order to catch a ball. It must direct an intricate output, in the form of instructions for physical movement, with continuous modification of that output by ongoing sensory input, in order to make a catch. This process is extremely fast, pre-

cise, and attuned to reality. Why, then, do we think of it as "unconscious"? What does "unconscious" mean, in this context?

When the catching of a ball is described as largely reflex, automatic, or unconscious, this is a statement made by the executive self or ego. The ego is saying that it has no idea how all the necessary calculations are carried out, or how the muscles are instructed to make the catch. Why should we therefore infer that the process of catching a ball is "unconscious"? All we really know is that it is out of consciousness, by which we mean that it is out of one particular sphere of consciousness, that of the executive ego.

MPD patients demonstrate that it is possible for parts of the mind to be conscious but outside the awareness of the executive ego: from the point of view of the host personality, alter personalities appear to be "unconscious." When the host personality states that behaviors for which it is amnesic were carried out unconsciously, that is actually a statement about the limitations of awareness of the host, not about whether the alter personalities are conscious or unconscious. The host is making a cognitive error when it describes other parts of the mind as unconscious (Fine, 1988; Ross & Gahan, 1988).

According to theories of multiplicity, there are many centers or spheres of consciousness in the normal human mind, many of which are outside the zone of awareness of the executive ego. These different parts of the mind or part selves can function with varying degrees of autonomy from each other. Also, they can function with varying degrees of cooperation and conflict.

## THE DISSOCIATED EXECUTIVE SELF

In western industrialized cultures, there has been an abnormal suppression of all other part selves by the executive ego. This suppression, which developed over several thou-

sand years, permeates our culture. A cultural dissociation barrier has been created and reinforced, the purpose of which is to keep other part selves suppressed, out of contact and communication with the executive self, and relegated to second class status in the mind. Figure 1 shows the relationship between the executive self, which has dissociated itself from the rest of the mind, the cultural dissociation barrier, and other part selves. Other part selves included in Figure 1 are the receiver/transmitter for extrasensory and paranormal experiences, programs responsible for running the physical body, and the deep intuitive consciousness.

The cultural dissociation barrier is an energy barrier which maintains the executive ego in a state of pathological disconnection from other part selves in the psyche. It is created by sociocultural forces as an individual grows up in a society characterized by such psychology. The dissociation barrier is not a product of idiosyncratic personal experience, personal misfortune, or the peculiarities of one individual's life. Nor is it genetically inherited.

My theory of pathological multiplicity and the cultural dissociation barrier will now be described in more detail in terms of 22 properties of the dissociated executive self. I want to emphasize that the purpose of this paper is only to outline the theory. Full explication of the theory will require much more space than is available here. In any given individual in our culture the different properties of the dissociated executive self are manifest to varying degrees.

## PROPERTIES OF THE DISSOCIATED EXECUTIVE SELF

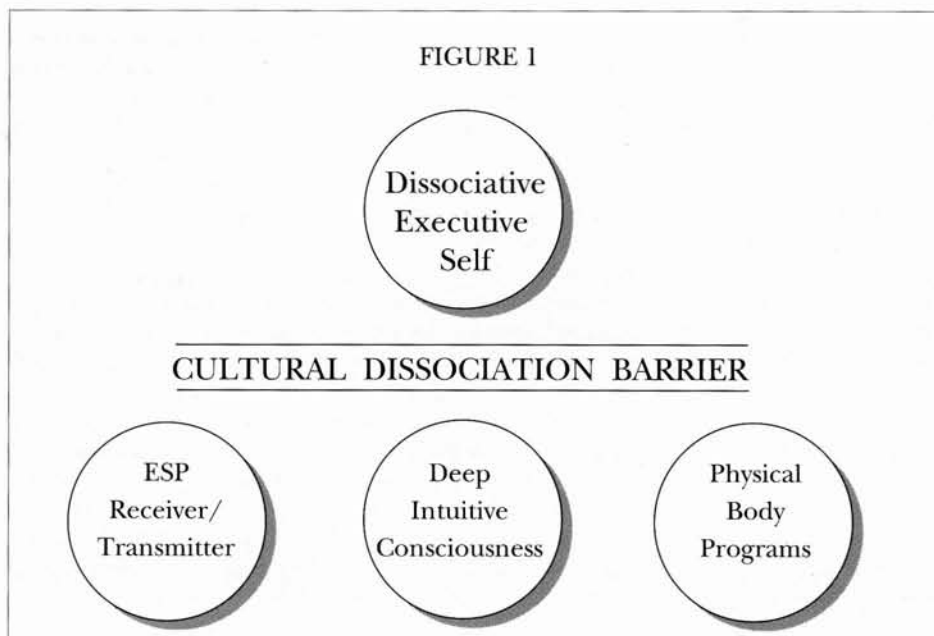
### 1. Monotheistic Religion

Societies in which the cultural dissociation barrier is inflexible and impermeable tend to be monotheistic. Because man makes God in his own image, the God of western culture is a dissociated executive self. Monotheistic God is a rarified, abstract, disembodied entity with greater awareness, power, and control than lesser beings like man. This God, the ruling Ego of the universe, is a mirroring or projection of the dissociated executive self of the western psyche. If a valid and reliable measure of multiplicity was developed, this hypothesis could be tested. Cultures with less rigid dissociation barriers have a greater acceptance and awareness of multiplicity, and therefore yield higher scores on measures of multiplicity. They tend to be polytheistic.

### 2. The Dissociated Ego Defines Its Modes of Logic as the Only Rational, Realistic, and Mature Ones

The dissociated executive self is arrogant, and this arrogance is manifest in a number of ways. The tendency of the dissociated ego is to define its

FIGURE 1



modes of logic as the only logical modes of thought. Other modes of logic are devalued as intuitive, primary process, irrational, right brain, primitive, female, childish, or psychotic. The devaluing is accompanied by a defensive overvaluing of modes of logic the dissociated ego sees as uniquely its own; the purpose of the devaluation is to reinforce the cultural dissociation barrier. The dissociated ego's modes of logic tend to be rigid and linear.

### 3. *White Supremacy*

The relationship of the dissociated ego to other part selves in the psyche, an internal apartheid, is mirrored in white supremacist views of other races. Other races are viewed by the dissociated ego as primitive, dangerous, ignorant, superstitious, and existing primarily for the use of the white race. This is partly because other races are more in touch with their multiplicity, and therefore need to be suppressed. The suppression is evident in political, economic, evangelical, and anthropological activities of the dissociated ego.

### 4. *Newtonian/Mechanistic/Reductionist Ideology*

The dynamics of the dissociated executive self are manifest in a militantly dogmatic ideology of a reductionist/mechanistic nature. The dissociated ego cannot allow the existence of mind or intelligent spirit outside itself, therefore it reduces the universe to a dead mechanism. This doctrine, when pushed to its extreme, results in a declaration by the reductionist ego that there is no mind anywhere in the universe, not even in conjunction with the human cerebral cortex. This is such a patently absurd and paradoxical doctrine that it can be understood only as a maneuver designed to reinforce the totalitarian rule of the mind by a dissociated subcomponent.

### 5. *The Dissociated Executive Self Sees ESP as Primitive Superstition*

Extrasensory and paranormal perception is a universal aspect of human experience. The dissociated ego has devalued and rejected the paranormal because it threatens its own supremacy. If ESP is real, it is evident that the mind can receive, process, and transmit information independently of the executive self. The atmosphere of the numinous and the mysterious associated with the paranormal is due to contact with other part selves in the mind: the ersatz wisdom channeled through various public figures today, for a high price, comes not from entities forty thousand years old, but from autonomous part selves. There are two main motives for the debunking of channeling by the reductionist dissociated ego: 1) actual paranormal channeling, if it exists, must be suppressed; 2) multiplicity must be suppressed, even if the "entities" are part of the channeler's mind.

It is possible that channeled entities may be wiser than the executive self, whether they are independent beings or parts of the channeler's mind. The problem is that the "wisdom" provided by current space brothers, Atlanteans, and other entities could be produced by any one of thousands of journalists and Hollywood screenwriters. It is empty and banal. There is nothing particularly rare, remarkable, or mys-

tical about channeling: a healthy mind works by "channeling" all the time, since it is based on fluid and open multiplicity.

### 6. *The Dissociated Self Sees Hypnotizability as Gullibility and Weak Mindedness*

Hypnotizability involves a surrendering on the part of the executive self, and requires faith in the other part selves. A dissociated ego which is unwilling to acknowledge the multiplicity of the mind must protect itself by devaluing hypnosis as evidence of gullibility, weak mindedness, hysteria, or other undesirable traits. This rationalization reinforces the cultural dissociation barrier and reduces hypnotizability.

According to Bliss and other students of pathological dissociation, MPD arises from autohypnosis (Bliss, 1986): only the highly hypnotizable person is capable of using trance states, amnesia barriers, and related strategies to create MPD. According to my theory, it is the other way around. Hypnotizability is the mind using its multiplicity. It is the multiplicity that comes first. Individuals who develop MPD in the face of severe, chronic childhood trauma are highly hypnotizable because they have developed and cultivated their multiplicity in a way that results in both MPD and high hypnotizability scores.

### 7. *Celibacy is Seen as Enhancing Contact with the Sacred*

One of the doctrines of the dissociated executive self is that celibacy brings one closer to God. If the entire human race became "religious" in this manner, the dissociated ego would have won an ultimate victory over the physical body and the deep intuitive consciousness. In an act of murder-suicide, the dissociated self would finally have killed off all the other part selves. The doctrine of celibacy is another technique for reinforcing the cultural dissociation barrier, insulating the dissociated executive self from sensual, natural parts of the mind, and devaluing healthy, polytheistic multiplicity.

### 8. *The Dissociated Self Sees the Physical Body as Its Property*

The dissociated executive self perceives the body as real estate which it owns. The physical body, seen through the cultural dissociation barrier, is to be used for a variety of purposes, including stimulation of the dissociated ego through sex, drugs, and alcohol in a manner which is toxic to the body and to the other part selves.

### 9. *The Dissociated Self Sees the Biosphere as its Property*

This doctrine of the dissociated mental consciousness originated in the Book of Genesis, when man was given "dominion" over nature. The problem is not with dominion as such, but with the kind of dominion exercised by the modern mental consciousness, which is toxic and abusive, and which is a distortion of Old Testament wisdom. I use the term *mental consciousness* interchangeably with executive self and dissociated ego: mental consciousness emphasizes that there are other non-mental forms of consciousness both within the human mind, and outside it. This might seem like para-



dox, tautology, or misuse of vocabulary, but by *mental* I mean the mode of consciousness characteristic of the executive self, which is probably linked to the frontal cerebral cortex. One could define the consciousness of all part selves as mental, but other part selves don't have the charge, flavor, tone, or feel of the mental consciousness.

The physical pollution of our planet is a natural outcome of the psychology of the dissociated executive self. It is coupled directly with mechanistic reductionism. The biosphere has been viewed as real estate or property, just like the human body, which is part of the biosphere. Recognition of the dangers of pollution, and the need to clean up the environment, may be linked to a gradually increasing awareness of multiplicity over the last thirty years, with increasing respect for other part selves both within the human mind and outside it. Alternatively it could be just good survival strategy on the part of the dissociated ego, with no weakening of the cultural dissociation barrier.

## 10. *The Dissociated Self Believes Itself to be the Only Self*

There is a great deal of cross-linkage between the 22 different properties of the dissociated executive self. Logic, consciousness, and rational control over the mind and body are characteristics of the self, and since the mental consciousness wants exclusive ownership of these traits, it must define itself as the only self. Other part selves are regarded collectively as "the unconscious," or reduced to reflex function only.

## 11. *The Dissociated Self Sees the Deeper Intuitive and Physical Selves as Demonic/Dangerous*

One of the rationalizations for reinforcing the cultural dissociation barrier is that the other part selves and their energies are dangerous, unpredictable, irrational, and untrustworthy. This is true whether they are defined as id, demons, or simply the unconscious: in all instances a protective barrier is required. On this point psychoanalytic theory and some forms of fundamentalist Christian theology are in agreement.

This aspect of the dynamic leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy: because the energies of the deep intuitive and physical selves have been abnormally dissociated, they have been distorted. When they leak through the cultural dissociation barrier, they are perceived by the executive self as distorted and unhealthy, which they are. The cognitive error made by the mental consciousness is that the distortion is intrinsic to the unconscious, when it is actually caused by the dissociation barrier. The pathology is perpetuated by a positive feedback loop because the solution, from the executive ego's point of view, is to strengthen the dissociation barrier.

An example of this dynamic in an MPD patient is the persecutory, promiscuous alter who can fairly readily be brought into treatment as a helper and ally once the relevant cognitive errors are corrected (Ross, 1989).

## 12. *The Dissociated Self Projects Its Own Disturbed Mentation Across the Cultural Dissociation Barrier.*

This psychodynamic is another facet of property 11. The energies of the other part selves become distorted and unhealthy not just because of suppression by the cultural dissociation barrier, but because of the projection of distorted ideas across the barrier. This is a form of dissociation but I have referred to it as projection because everyone is familiar with that term.

The dissociated ego projects its own pathological ideas into the deeper selves, where they take root and cause disturbance. The deeper intuitive selves are in effect branded as "bad actors," and then take on that role. For instance, if sexuality is viewed as undesirable and perverse, it is likely to become that, and then require additional suppression. The cause of the problem is the ideation of the executive self, but the executive self disowns all responsibility for the problem, which is one of the classical dissociative strategies characteristic of MPD patients.

## 13. *Idealization of Nature as a Way of Reinforcing the Cultural Dissociation Barrier*

Idealization and reaction formation are two effective mechanisms for reinforcing the cultural dissociation barrier. They were evident in much of the "back to the land" activity of the 1960s. In a lengthier explication, Emerson and Wordsworth will be analyzed as exemplars of this dynamic. True and open contact with the natural world favors and requires the activation of other part selves, and fluidity of communication between the mental consciousness and the deeper selves.

When nature is idealized, the mental consciousness can carry out a pretense of naturalness while maintaining the cultural dissociation barrier at full strength. Indicators that idealization is at work include the lack of any real economic connection to the natural world, a weekend, holiday, or leisure time quality to periods of contact, a forced, artificial euphoria, and concurrent devaluation of the industrial world without any real disconnection from it.

## 14. *Idealization of "Primitive" Races as a Form of Reaction Formation*

The idealization of "primitive" races by the mental consciousness is directly linked to the idealization of nature, of which the primitive peoples are a part. It is also based on the same dynamic as white supremacy, since it is a form of reaction formation. The white supremacist is more honest, however.

So-called primitive peoples may be in a higher state of psychological development than industrial man if they have preserved a healthy multiplicity. If they have, the dissociated ego will need to repress such people both politically and psychologically. This dynamic is evident in church groups who fight for native rights in North America, and who view themselves as aligned with native people against governments and corporations. Historically, at least in Canada, it was the churches that were most overtly and militantly committed to the destruction of native culture. Now that the job is mostly done, reaction formation and disavowal of culpability have set in.

### 15. *The Dissociated Self is Mathematical*

The supreme logical mode of the dissociated executive self is mathematics. If the universe can be most deeply understood in terms of mathematics, the other part selves, which are by and large not mathematical, can be ignored. The mathematician is like a dissociated monotheistic God. This does not mean that mathematics is intrinsically bad, or that a reverse internal apartheid in which arithmetic is defined as immoral would lead to psychological health. The problem in our culture is that the mathematical has joined forces with the mechanistic/reductionist to reinforce the cultural dissociation barrier.

A purely mathematical view of the universe is a technique for banishing mind, spirit, and the deeper forms of psychic energy from awareness—they become the province of "poets" but not of serious students of reality.

### 16. *Mind is Absent from the Physics of the Dissociated Self*

Modern physics is distorted by the cultural dissociation barrier and the philosophical limitations of industrialized mental consciousness: our physics cannot account for the relationship between mind and matter and does not even recognize that relationship as a serious problem in physics. Since contemporary physics is highly mathematical, this property of the executive self is directly linked to the previous one, and to properties 2 and 10.

The primary contemporary maneuver for avoiding the mind-body problem is to discount the reality of mind, an absurd strategy since that maneuver can be carried out only by mind. I am analyzing the *psychology* of this disavowal—the philosophy of the disavowal I am interested in only as a source of cognitive errors. The psychological motivation for saying that mind is not part of the physical universe is to reinforce the cultural dissociation barrier. If mind was viewed by physics as a property of matter, that is, as a serious problem in physics, the dissociated self's sole ownership of consciousness would be threatened. Since I am not a theoretical physicist, I cannot say to what extent the cultural dissociation barrier has already been overcome by modern physics.

ESP cannot be allowed to be real because if it is, we have to admit the existence of a major anomaly in our model of the universe (see property 5 of the dissociated self).

### 17. *The Dissociated Executive Self is not Hypnotizable*

This characteristic of the executive self is a corollary of property 6. It is a testable hypothesis. Hypnotizability scores should be good predictors of the degree of skepticism about MPD among mental health professionals, with ideologically hostile and extreme skeptics likely to have low scores. I have verified part of this hypothesis at a number of workshops and talks about MPD in a very loose, informal manner by having participants score each other's Spiegel eye rolls (Spiegel and Spiegel, 1978). It is not unusual for three quarters of the audience to score a 3 or 4 on the eye roll.

As argued previously, hypnotizability is a measure of multiplicity, with greater degree in fluidity of the multiplicity required for greater hypnotizability. The dissociated ego with

an extremely rigid cultural dissociation barrier will not be hypnotizable, and will be hostile to acceptance and validation of the psychopathologies of multiplicity.

I am grateful to John Curtis for pointing out that there is likely a bimodal distribution of hypnotizability scores among extreme skeptics: one group is the low hypnotizables with rigid cultural dissociation barriers, the other is professionals who have not come to terms with their own dissociative disorders.

### 18. *The Dissociated Self is Hostile to the Principle of Multiplicity*

This characteristic is an extension of the previous one. According to my theory, the fundamental resistance among mental health professionals to the diagnosis and treatment of MPD, and to the psychopathology of hypnotizability in general, is a resistance to normal multiplicity. The problem is not with MPD, but with the fact that study of MPD leads to a theory of multiplicity. Acceptance of a theory of multiplicity would threaten the cultural dissociation barrier and the supremacy of the dissociated mental consciousness.

I like this formulation of property 18 because it implies that anyone who disagrees with me is mentally ill.

### 19. *Dualism*

The dissociated executive self is necessarily dualist in philosophy. It must devalue the physical body as a mechanism from which it is disconnected in order to suppress communication with the other part selves. Historically, dualism evolved into reductionism as the mind half of the duality was devalued: dualism was a philosophical precursor of reductionism. If man wasn't dual, which is to say fundamentally dissociated, how could one half of the duality be devalued by the mental consciousness?

It might appear paradoxical to say that reductionist science devalues physical reality when it regards it as the only reality. That is the beauty of reaction formation. The purpose of the dualist philosophy, psychologically, is to enforce the doctrine that everything outside the executive self is barren, meaningless, and unconscious. Quibbles about whether dolphins can think do not disturb the psychodynamics of this particular method of reinforcing the cultural dissociation barrier.

### 20. *Intrusions of Other Part Selves are Defined as*

#### *Symptoms of Insanity*

Intrusions of other part selves into the mental consciousness are not necessarily healthy or desirable. At times they can be highly maladaptive. The cognitive error of the dissociated self, a form of dichotomization, is to define all intrusions as always pathological. This is why sane people are reluctant to tell psychiatrists that they hear voices, experience mental telepathy, or are sometimes taken over by spirits. The bias of the dissociated executive self is to define such experiences as symptoms of biological brain disease and/or mental illness.

In its extreme form this resulted in Kurt Schneider defin-



ing his 11 first-rank symptoms as pathognomonic of schizophrenia. Recent evidence suggests that Schneiderian symptoms are more characteristic of MPD than of schizophrenia (Kluft, 1987; Ross, et al., 1990b). Clinical experience shows that in MPD patients Schneiderian symptoms can often be cured with psychotherapy (Kluft, 1987; Putnam, 1989; Ross, 1989). The problem in MPD is not the intrusion of part selves as such, it is with the degree of amnesia, conflict, self-destruction, and dysfunction in the psyche. The problem is not the multiplicity, it is the degree of pathological dissociation. In MPD the part selves are personified to an abnormal degree.

There is a big difference between someone with active classical MPD, and an individual with healthy multiplicity. One should not endorse an ideal of integration as resulting in a monolithic block of rigidly constructed self—the dissociated executive self. Nor is it a good outcome to have residual independent alter personalities. The clinical challenge is to differentiate healthy multiplicity, with its normal intrusions of other part selves, from psychopathology. MPD is a form of psychopathology.

## 21. *The Dissociated Self Views Itself as the Only Conscious*

### *Region of the Mind*

Enough has been said in describing the other properties of the executive ego, that further comment on this characteristic is not required. It is listed as a separate property for emphasis.

## 22. *Both Multiple Personality Disorder and Demon*

### *Possession are Viewed by the Dissociated Self as Rare*

There is an epidemiological component to the reinforcement of the cultural dissociation barrier and the suppression of multiplicity. The dissociated executive self states that both MPD and demon possession are rare because both are disturbing reminders of multiplicity. If both were common, it would be more difficult to dismiss them as meaningless anomalies. They would be more likely to be seen as paradigm-threatening and worthy of serious study. For this to be true, it is not necessary for demons to be anything more than dissociated parts of the human mind.

Modern churches and mental health professionals make the same epidemiological error within their respective social systems, based on a shared psychology characteristic of their culture.

## MEASURES OF MULTIPLICITY

There is no available instrument designed specifically as a measure of multiplicity as defined by this theory. However standardized scales of hypnotizability and the Dissociative Experience Scale (Bernstein and Putnam, 1986; Ross, Norton and Anderson, 1988) (DES) both tap into multiplicity, and could be used as rough measures of it.

## PREDICTIONS OF THE THEORY

No psychological theory leads to water-tight data. The

DES needs further study as a measure of dissociation, for instance. Roughly speaking, DES scores and hypnotizability scores probably correlate well with each other in the general population, and both would correlate well with any other measure of multiplicity. Correlations would of course not be perfect.

My theory of the pathological suppression of normal multiplicity in western industrialized cultures yields testable predictions, given that problems of translation and cross-cultural methodology are taken into account. A sample of these predictions is as follows: 1) the distribution of DES scores is shifted left in monotheistic industrial cultures compared to polytheistic preindustrial cultures; 2) DES scores decline much more rapidly after age 10 in industrial cultures than in non-industrial cultures; 3) DES scores in children differ across cultures less than in adults; 4) DES scores are good predictors of the frequency of ESP experiences in all cultures; 5) there is a close relationship between DES scores, hypnotizability scores, cultural validation of multiplicity, and ESP experiences in different individuals and in different cultures; 6) hypnotizability scores differentiate extreme skeptics about MPD from those who see it as a legitimate, fairly common disorder; extreme skeptics tend to have low hypnotizability scores except for those with untreated dissociative disorders, who have high scores; 7) pathological multiplicity is more frequent in cultures hostile to multiplicity, given a constant amount of trauma.

Testing of these hypotheses, as I said, would require translation of the DES, development of a childhood form of the DES, and solution of many other methodological problems. If these predictions were not borne out, the theory would need revision.

In summary, multiplicity is a normal organizational principle of the human psyche. Multiplicity theory postulates the existence of independent centers or spheres of consciousness in the normal mind, each capable of operating with varying degrees of autonomy from other part selves. MPD is a pathological form of multiplicity characterized by dysfunctional, conflicted dissociation of the part selves, an abnormal degree of personalization of the part selves, and abnormal barriers within the mind.

In western industrial culture normal multiplicity has been suppressed through formation of a cultural dissociation barrier which separates the executive self or dissociated ego from other part selves in the mind. Twenty-two properties of the dissociated executive self have been described. These include monotheistic religion, non-hypnotizability, mathematical modes of logic, idealization of nature, and hostility to multiplicity. A number of testable predictions of the theory have been described including the prediction that DES scores are shifted right in the general population of polytheistic non-industrial cultures compared to norms in the industrialized world. ■

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