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Multiple Personality and Moral Responsibility

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Abstract: The philosophical literature on multiple personality has focused primarily on problems about personal identity and psychological explanation. But multiple personality and other dissociative phenomena raise equally important and even more urgent questions about moral responsibility, in particular: In what respect(s) and to what extent should a multiple be held responsible for the actions of his/her alternate personalities? Cases of dreaming help illustrate why attributions of responsibility in cases of dissociation do not turn on putative changes in identity, as some have supposed. Instead, it is argued that traditional criteria of rationality and behavioral control apply also to cases of dissociation. It is noted, however, that one can distinguish different kinds of responsibility in cases of dissociation, and that one is responsible for one's dreams in a different sense from that in which one is responsible for actions one can control and evaluate. It is also argued that in cases of multiple personality it is important to distinguish control over switching of personalities from an alter's control over its own behavior. Moreover, the author considers reasons for thinking that amnesia is less relevant to attributions of responsibility than many have supposed.

Keywords: dissociation; dreaming; rationality; amnesia

Introduction

The philosophical literature on MPD/DID [1] has focused primarily on problems about personhood, personal identity, and the nature of psychological explanation. Presumably, that is because multiples appear to be (or to harbor) more than one person or more than one distinct moral or prudential agent. But philosophers have had almost nothing to say about problems of responsibility in these cases--in particular, the question: In what respect(s) and to what extent should a multiple be held responsible

for the actions of his/her alternate personalities (or *alters*)?

Unlike questions about personhood and identity, this question is not simply an abstract matter that we may ponder at our leisure. Clinicians treating multiples *must* decide whether it is appropriate--or even just therapeutically beneficial--to hold their patients (or specific alters) responsible for behaviors which they seem unable to control or remember. Similarly, and with increasing frequency, our courts must decide whether a defendant claiming to be a multiple may be held guilty for the actions of one or more alters. In fact, the legal issues can be quite dramatic, and even bizarre. Consider: What sort of individual is standing trial? An alter or the multiple as a whole? Should courts accept the claim that the subject being questioned on the stand is not the same as the subject who committed the crime? If so, other questions come immediately to mind. For example, would it be appropriate for each alter of a criminal defendant to have separate legal council?

Undoubtedly, some will have trouble taking that last question seriously. But no matter how **[End Page 37]** clear its solution may appear to one's moral or legal intuitions, those intuitions are seldom as straightforward as they seem. Indeed, one cannot explain or defend them without taking a stand, at least provisionally, on a wide range of thorny philosophical problems. Moreover, the aforementioned questions are merely the tip of the iceberg, and our answers to them have implications extending beyond the courtroom. For example, with regard to forensic contexts Slovenko (1991) asks,

> Should a search or arrest warrant be issued for each personality? Must a *Miranda* warning be given to each personality of a suspect with MPD? May the other personalities exclude evidence on the ground that they were not properly read their rights at the time of the arrest? Would each one of the personalities have to waive his or her rights, or would one waiver be sufficient? Does the doctrine of double jeopardy bar the trial of a personality when another has been put to trial? Must each personality testifying at trial be sworn in and administered the oath? (22, 25)

These questions have obvious analogues in clinical situations, and also in personal contexts, say, between friends or members of a family, one of whom is a multiple. For example, to what extent should a DID patient be held responsible for the sociopathic (or simply counter-therapeutic) behavior of a single alter? Moreover, considerations about sexual consent arise not only in connection with the alleged date rape of a multiple, but also in the context of a marriage to a multiple. And just as the legal community must consider the propriety of punitive measures for multiples in criminal cases, parallel questions arise when a multiple's friend (or spouse) wonders how to deal with the hostile (or insensitive) behavior of a single alter. Is anger appropriate, and if so, toward whom should the anger be directed? Here, too, we may be unsure how to assign responsibility for an alter's behavior, and to what extent we should treat different alters as if they are distinct moral or prudential agents.

Initially, one might think that we should settle questions concerning responsibility for an alter's actions by appealing to the identity (or lack of it) between the alters themselves or between the alters and the multiple as a whole. The underlying intuition here is as follows. In general, we don't hold a person responsible for the actions of another. So if alters are indeed significantly distinct--both as subjects and agents--from each other and also from the multiple as a whole, then the same standard should apply: barring certain kinds of exceptions, they should not be held responsible for things done by

another individual.

However, this strategy may not be very promising. To see why, let us begin by considering how problems of responsibility arise in cases of dissociation less dramatic than DID. In particular, let us consider if we should hold an individual responsible for things experienced during a dream. An alternate strategy might be to consider responsibility for behavior that occurred prior to a major change in attitude or character, of the sort that tends to occur in the transition from youth to adulthood or by means of an ideological or religious conversion. But since the primary focus of this paper is on problems of responsibility in connection with an extreme form of dissociation, I suspect that the case of dreaming provides a richer basis for comparison.

Responsibility and Dreaming: Augustine's Dilemma

Suppose that I dream about wanting to kill my spouse, or that I have a dream in which I perform the action of killing my spouse. Am I responsible for the murderous thoughts or actions in the dream? Or (in a truly grim scenario), suppose that while dreaming about killing my spouse, my body moves so violently in my sleep that I inadvertently beat or smother my spouse to death. Can I be held responsible for that death?

In his *Confessions* (*X*, 30), Saint Augustine worried about such matters (although he was concerned more with carnal than with homicidal impulses). Noting that--at least with regard to his sexual urges and rational capacities--he thinks and acts quite differently during his dreams than he does when awake, he wondered if he is not himself (in some crucial respect) while he is dreaming. Although he doesn't resolve that question clearly one way or the other, he nevertheless concludes that the difference between sleeping and waking is so great that "because of this difference, **[End Page 38]** I was not responsible for the act [dreamt during sleep]." But then he adds, "although I am sorry that by some means or other it happened to me." [2]

Augustine's concern about whether he is the same person while asleep falls within a venerable philosophical tradition regarding the concept of identity. Since antiquity, philosophers have wondered whether (or at what point) the inevitable changes to a thing over time should be construed as altering the identity of that thing--that is, whether in virtue of those changes it becomes a different thing. That is why Heraclitus asserted that one cannot step into the same river twice. Although it is unclear whether Augustine believed that his identity changed as he moved from waking to sleeping (and vice versa), he seems clearly to take that possibility seriously, and he certainly regards the changes as profound enough to justify his disavowals of responsibility for what occurred during sleep. So let us suppose that Augustine decides he is *not* the same individual when he sleeps, and that it is because of that shift in identity that he disavows responsibility for what happens during his dreams. This will help us to bring important issues into focus.

Notice, first of all, that on this reading of Augustine his expression of regret seems rather peculiar. We are understanding him to say that Waking-*A* is not the same as Sleeping-*A*, and therefore that the former is not responsible for the feelings or actions of the latter. But then Augustine (i.e., Waking-*A*) says that he regrets the experiences and deeds of Sleeping-*A*. Now granted, we often say that we regret things done by others. But Augustine's regret is not the externalized regret of a mere spectator. After all, Waking-*A* concedes that the experiences and deeds of Sleeping-*A* "happened to me" (i.e., Waking-*A*). Hence, Augustine seems to be expressing what Bernard Williams (1976) called "'agent-regret', which a person can feel only toward his own past actions (or, at most, actions in which he regards himself as a participant." (123), and which can

be directed not only to voluntary, but also to involuntary or accidental forms of agency. But then it seems that Augustine's position is inconsistent. On the one hand, he disavows responsibility for dreams of fornication and ensuing erections or orgasms on the grounds that it was not he who did those things. But on the other hand, he regrets the dreams and their physical or physiological by-products because they were *his* dreams, *his* erection, etc.

Now I would expect many readers to sympathize with certain features of Augustine's dilemma. They might agree that we may not be responsible for thoughts or actions during sleep, even when we are justified in feeling regretful, remorseful, or guilty over them. Apart from the concerns over possible changes in identity, Augustine's case seems analogous to Williams' example of the truck driver who, through no fault of his own, runs over a pedestrian. Even if we do not hold the driver responsible for the pedestrian's death, we would expect the driver to regret his involvement in the tragedy. In fact, we would probably consider him to be morally defective, or at least we would regard him with suspicion, if he felt nothing but the sort of external or detached regret that a spectator would feel over the incident. But then how should we resolve Augustine's dilemma? How can we disavow responsibility for the things *we* did and which *we* regret, etc., without counterintuitively claiming at the same time that *someone else* was the agent?

Of course, it may be that different sorts of moral assessments rest on rather different kinds of presuppositions, and that feelings of remorse, guilt, etc. are justified along different lines than assignments of responsibility. So it may be that different identity assumptions in the two cases are not really incompatible, provided they are made relative to different backgrounds of needs and interests. That is, from one perspective it may be appropriate to assert that two individuals are identical, while from a different perspective we might plausibly and appropriately deny that identity. In that case, Augustine's position would be no more logically or conceptually suspect than acknowledging that two alters may count as different within the contexts of gift-giving and establishing friendships, but the same as far as social security numbers and voter-registration is concerned. Indeed, it is commonplace and unproblematical to regard two things as the same for certain purposes but not for others. **[End Page 39]**

On the other hand, it is questionable whether Augustine ever considered affirming and denying his identity to Sleeping-*A* relative to different (and apparently incommensurate) contexts. After all, it is within a single context of evaluating *his own* dream that Augustine simultaneously disavows responsibility and feels regret. Perhaps the lesson to be learned here is that issues of sameness or identity over time simply do not play as pivotal a role in the determination of responsibility as Augustine makes it appear. So long as Augustine (Waking-*A*) concedes that Sleeping-*A*'s thoughts (or erection) happened to him (i.e., Waking-*A*), then perhaps he need not (and should not) disavow responsibility for Sleeping-*A*'s thoughts or deeds on the grounds that Waking-*A* and Sleeping-*A* are profoundly distinct. There may be some other reasonable justification for disavowing responsibility in such cases, one that would eliminate the need to adopt distinct and at least superficially incompatible positions regarding one's identity over time.

That is not to say that concerns over problems of identity have no place in moral deliberations. Indeed, some philosophers have argued that these concerns arise even in relatively humdrum cases. [3] Rather, it is to suggest that, at the very least, this sort of concern may not be as appropriate or fruitful as some have thought. In fact, so long as agent-regret of the sort experienced by Augustine is understandable and even *commendable*, it may not even be coherent to disavow responsibility for one's earlier

offenses by denying that one is identical to the offender.

Hence, an obvious alternative strategy is simply to avoid notoriously tricky issues of identity altogether and to rely instead to more widely recognized necessary conditions of responsibility. Not surprisingly, writers on responsibility are divided over which (if any) of these more familiar conditions is most important, and they differ over how, precisely, those conditions should be formulated. But ignoring those debates and subtleties for the moment, it is fair to say that requirements for attributions of responsibility tend to fall into two broad classes. [4] To be responsible for one's actions, one must satisfy both a metaphysical (or causal) requirement and a cognitive requirement. According to the first, an agent is responsible only for actions that are voluntary or (more generally) states of affairs that the agent could have controlled and prevented; and according to the second, agents are responsible only if they possess certain reflective or rational capacities--for example, the capacity to evaluate the relevant moral and non-moral features of actions and to act *on the basis of* moral reasons.

Therefore, one way to avoid Augustine's dilemma would be to say that dissociative agents can be held responsible only for thoughts and actions they can control or evaluate rationally. That is why we routinely disavow responsibility for mental states or behavior that were produced coercively or surreptitiously--say, by overwhelming physical force, drugs, or brainwashing. And it is why we say that children, who can't properly evaluate their actions, are not morally responsible for what we would regard as intolerable behavior in adults.

Hence, this approach adheres closely to our customary and relatively trouble-free methods of assigning or accepting moral responsibility. Ordinarily, what matters is whether the agent could control and rationally evaluate the state of affairs in question; considerations about identity seldom (if ever) play a role. In fact, that is true even in the case of dreaming. Generally speaking, when I maintain that thoughts or actions during a dream were my own, I make no unusual assumptions about personal identity. Indeed, questions about identity over time are usually irrelevant to our moral self-assessments, no matter whether we are dealing with the things we do or feel while dreaming, or the things we did or felt while awake five minutes ago or yesterday. In both cases we tend to be straightforwardly concerned with things *we* did or experienced.

The importance of Augustine's dilemma, then, is that it illustrates a major drawback to deciding matters of moral responsibility in cases of dissociation on the basis of controversial assumptions about identity over time. By following Augustine's strategy, it becomes at least superficially difficult to account for one's quite reasonable remorse, guilt, etc. over things one supposedly did not do or experience. But as we have just seen, we can **[End Page 40]** avoid this awkward position altogether (rather than simply accept it grudgingly) by assigning responsibility, as we usually do, on the basis of our ability to control and evaluate our thoughts and actions.

Responsibility and Dreaming: A Freudian Ambiguity

Freud's approach to the issue of moral responsibility for our dreams leads to a rather different set of insights (Freud, 1925/1961). Unlike Augustine, Freud was not troubled or confused by problems about identity over time. Instead, Freud stumbled over an ambiguity in the term "responsibility." Although it is not clear what Freud's view might have been had he recognized the ambiguity, his discussion raises issues that merit our attention.

First, Freud argues that there is no problem of responsibility for the *manifest* content of

dreams. "[T]he manifest content is a deception, a *façade*. It is not worthwhile to submit it to an ethical examination or to take its breaches or morality any more seriously than its breaches of logic or mathematics" (131). The relevant dream content for which moral responsibility is an issue, he notes, is the set of *preconscious* thoughts that express themselves in the symbolic or otherwise deceptive manifest content of the dream. Then, after arguing that most dreams are either straightforward or indirect "fulfilments of immoral--egoistic, sadistic, perverse or incestuous--wishful impulses" (132), Freud writes,

> Obviously one must hold oneself responsible for the evil impulses of
> one's dreams. . . . Unless the content of the dream (rightly understood)
> is inspired by alien spirits, it is part of my own being. . . . [I]f, in defence,
> I say that what is unknown, unconscious and repressed in me is not my
> "ego," then I shall . . . perhaps be taught better . . . by the disturbances
> in my actions and the confusion of my feelings. I shall perhaps learn
> that what I am disavowing not only "is" in me but sometimes "acts" from
> out of me as well. (133)

According to Freud, then, one cannot disown these evil impulses any more than one can disown the id from which they originate or the behavior caused by and expressing or revealing those impulses.

Finally, Freud makes some interesting comments about what it is to have a moral conscience. Although his remarks seemingly apply to ordinary persons whose need for and powers of self-examination and self-criticism fall rather short of those of Saint Augustine, they nevertheless extend surprisingly well to Augustine's moral torments. Freud writes,

> if I . . . tried to decree that for purposes of moral valuation I might
> disregard the evil in the id and need not make my ego responsible for
> it, what use would that be to me? Experience shows me that I
> nevertheless *do* take that responsibility, that I am somehow compelled
> to do so. Psycho-analysis has made us familiar with a pathological
> condition, obsessional neurosis, in which the poor ego feels itself
> responsible for all sorts of evil impulses of which it knows nothing,
> impulses which are brought up against it in consciousness but which it
> is unable to acknowledge. Something of this is present in every normal
> person. It is a remarkable fact that the more moral he is the more
> sensitive is his "conscience." . . . This is no doubt because conscience
> is itself a reaction-formation against the evil that is perceived in the id.
> The more strongly the latter is suppressed, the more active is the
> conscience. (133-134)

Freud and Augustine apparently agree on at least one important point. They both hold that we feel regret or remorse for the content of our dreams because we recognize that they are *our* dreams--that is, that the person who feels regret, etc. is the person who had the dream. But whereas Augustine (apparently inconsistently) disavowed responsibility for the dream content on the grounds that the dreaming self is *not* the same as the waking self, Freud maintains that we are responsible for dreams because what is dreamt "is a part of my own being."

But Freud's position suffers from a serious ambiguity, which both his followers and detractors sometimes appear to have overlooked. Consider the following comment by

Halleck (1990).

> Freudian therapy . . . [holds] patients to a negligent, as well as
> intentional, standard of responsibility. The patient in psychoanalysis is
> repeatedly reminded that he/she is responsible for what he/she forgets,
> and is even held responsible for slips of the tongue. (307)

Whether or not Halleck presents an accurate picture of psychoanalysis (or at least
current psychoanalysis), his remarks help bring the relevant ambiguity **[End Page 41]**
clearly into focus. To begin with, there should be no doubt that slips of the tongue often
reveal one's hidden thoughts and feelings. However, it seems equally obvious that
people might be unable to control or avoid making Freudian slips. But then if slips of the
tongue are outside the agent's conscious control, in what sense can we justifiably hold
someone responsible for them?

Undoubtedly there are a number of worthwhile ways to draw distinctions between kinds
of responsibility. But for present purposes we need to identify only two forms of
responsibility. According to the first, which may call *weak responsibility*, we can say that
S is responsible for X provided that X is both properly attributable to and is caused by
S. According to the second, which we may call *strong responsibility*, S is responsible for
X only if S can control whether or not he/she Xs. These two senses of "responsibility"
correspond to two respects in which a mental state or action is (to use Freud's
expression) "part of my own being." We could call them *weak ownership* and *strong
ownership*, respectively. Presumably, strong responsibility (ownership) entails weak
responsibility (ownership), but the latter does not entail the former.

Hence, although it is sufficient for S's being weakly responsible for X that X is properly
attributable to and is caused by S, that is not a sufficient condition for strong
responsibility. In that case it is also necessary that S be able to control whether or not
he/she Xs. That is why a person may be weakly, but not strongly, responsible for
Freudian slips or for things experienced or done while dreaming. Moreover, the ability to
control whether or not one Xs is still not sufficient for being strongly responsible for X. It
is still necessary that the agent possess and be able to use certain reflective or rational
capacities. Nevertheless, the criterion of control seems to be the crucial criterion
distinguishing strong from weak responsibility. That is because the difference has to do
with whether (or to what extent) S should be regarded as an *agent*. Although the
inability to evaluate one's actions is clearly important to many legal and moral
deliberations, one's moral ignorance, naiveté, or depravity does not (or at least need
not) *undermine* one's behavioral control. It determines only how, or to what extent, that
control is guided by one's values or one's ability to make moral discriminations.

Now it should be clear that although we may be weakly responsible for the content of
our dreams or for Freudian slips, that may not be a form of *moral* responsibility.
Culpability, blameworthiness, and praiseworthiness are moral categories that seem to
apply only to cases in which we are strongly responsible for our thoughts and actions
(that is, able to control or evaluate them). But in that case, the title of Freud's little
essay, "Moral Responsibility for the Content of Dreams," is misleading, because the
sort of responsibility he identifies is merely weak responsibility. He does not argue that
people can control or prevent the impulses of the id, slips of the tongue, etc. Hence,
Freud's position turns out to be closer to that of Augustine than we might have
expected. Both Augustine and the Freudian ego feel regret, remorse, or guilt over
states for which they may be weakly--but not strongly--responsible.

We can see, then, that the distinction between weak and strong responsibility offers

another way of stating the solution to Augustine's dilemma: We may understandably regret or feel remorse or guilt over things for which we are weakly responsible and for which we would rather have been bystanders than participants. But no culpability attaches to dream contents or their by-products (e.g., erections) unless we are also strongly responsible for them. Similarly, one way to clarify Freud's position would be to note that although we may be weakly responsible for impulses of either the id or the ego, we are strongly responsible only for those we can control or prevent.

I should also emphasize that a sufficient condition for weak responsibility is a *conjunction* of two related but distinct conditions--namely, (a) that X is properly attributable to S and (b) that X is caused by S. Hence, it is unclear what to say about a case in which only one of those conditions is satisfied, say, when X is properly attributable to S even though we would not identify S as its cause. For example, suppose we identify a prison cell-mate or a scheming lover as the cause of S's homicidal thoughts (i.e., as the person who, so to speak, put those thoughts into S's head). **[End Page 42]** Should we hold S to be weakly responsible for those thoughts? Augustine might say 'yes' on the grounds simply that they happened to S, whereas Freud might demur on the grounds that the thoughts were not so much the product of S's id as they were the products of another person. I prefer to leave this matter unsettled here (and I certainly do not wish to become embroiled in matters of Augustinian or Freudian scholarship), because no matter which approach to weak responsibility we accept, our primary concern is with strong responsibility and the associated issues of culpability and control.

Hence, the value of Freud's view for the present discussion is that it supplements the lesson learned from Augustine's dilemma. By--inadvertently--highlighting the distinction between strong and weak responsibility (ownership) for one's thoughts and actions, it illustrates in a different way that one can disavow moral responsibility for a dissociated state without attributing that state to a different individual.

Comments on the Clinical Literature

In a moment, we shall consider how the foregoing considerations shed light on the problem of responsibility in cases of DID. First, however, we should note how the topic has been handled in the clinical literature. Two recent articles in particular merit our attention, the first by a legal scholar, the second by a psychiatrist.

In the former (Slovenko 1991), we find the following contentious passage.

> How should multiple personality or other dissociative disorders be regarded under the law? The law is based on the concept of an individual as a unity. Whatever the psychological validity, legal theory requires "one body, one person, one personality"; otherwise, society would be unmanageable. Ultimately a person must take responsibility for whatever number of personalities he may have, if for no other reason than that the core personality is dominant in apparently all cases of multiple personality. (25)

This passage is problematical for several reasons, empirical and philosophical. First, it seems to be clinically naive. Slovenko mentions a core personality; but it is unclear whether he is referring to an alter or to some clearly identifiable underlying descendant or residue of the pre-dissociative self (i.e., some unifying self undergirding the phenomena of DID). In either case, however, it is false to say that "the core personality is dominant." If by "core personality'" Slovenko means an underlying unifying self, *that*

self (if there is one) is certainly not dominant in any interesting sense; that is why the person is a multiple. (In a moment, I shall return to the question of what "dominant" might mean here.) Moreover, considering that a multiple's attributes get distributed among alters and (even more important) the fact that a multiple's inventory of alters tends to evolve into novel functional divisions, nothing about a multiple qualifies clearly as a descendant of the pre-dissociative self (Braude 1995). Of course, by "core personality" Slovenko might be referring to an alter personality; but if so, the claim is still false. In many cases of DID there simply *is* no single dominant alter personality (Putnam 1989; Braude 1995). Hence, if Slovenko's ambiguous claim about a core personality is a crucial presupposition of his overall position on responsibility in cases of DID, that view rests on thin ice, indeed.

Moreover, even if the claim were true, it is unclear why anything would follow about the multiple's responsibility. Slovenko says that the multiple "must take responsibility for whatever number of personalities he may have." Considering that Slovenko is concerned about responsibility for criminal behavior, that claim is at least curious, and it seems to miss the point. One would have expected Slovenko to focus on the multiple's responsibility for the actions of his/her alters, not for the number of alters in the multiple's system of personalities. But it does not matter which sort of responsibility Slovenko meant to single out. In either case it is implausible to claim that the multiple is responsible *because* some core alter personality is dominant. To begin with, saying that an alter personality is dominant means only that it is in executive control of the body at present, or perhaps simply most of the time. But that sort of dominance indicates nothing about whether the multiple could control how many **[End Page 43]** alters he or she has. Similarly, it indicates nothing in particular about the degree of control or influence the dominant alter has (or had) over other alters. In many cases, it appears that no such control exists. Indeed, an alter's dominance at a given time may result from nothing more than a fortuitous set of external conditions that triggered the alter's appearance; that alter might be relatively unimportant to or ineffectual within the total system of alters. Besides, dominant alters are often dominant only for relatively short periods of time, seldom over the entire period of multiplicity.

Furthermore, it is equally unclear what it would mean to say that an underlying core self (*not* alter) is dominant in cases of DID. The most plausible interpretation of that claim would be that the adaptational nature of DID must be explained relative to an underlying unified self. Now that claim seems correct (Braude 1995), but it does not presuppose or require that the multiple has any relevant degree of control over the processes of alter formation or switching. It means only that any adequate causal explanation of alter formation and switching must take into account the underlying experiences and needs of the multiple. However, those adaptational aspects of multiplicity should perhaps be understood as more brutely instinctual than computational, or more automatic or involuntary than a process subject to anything like the sort of control we can exert over most of our everyday behavior. In fact, in cases where there is reliable evidence for the chronic or ritual abuse of multiples, it appears that alter formation and switching may have been deliberately and coercively controlled by the abusers. Hence, to the extent that one can make sense of Slovenko's claim that the core personality is dominant, it does not follow that the multiple has control over and responsibility for "whatever number of personalities he may have." That conclusion, in any case, seems plainly false.

It is less clear what to say about the multiple's control over switching and the subsequent behavior of alters. There is a growing consensus among clinicians that DID patients *can* be induced to control "acting out" or other forms of counter-therapeutic behavior, including (presumably) unsolicited switching and additional alter-creation (see, for example, Coons 1991). But it is still unclear which agent(s) are responsible for

that control--that is, whether the control should be attributed to one or more influential alters or to the multiple him/herself. Besides, clinical reports do not suggest that multiples (or their alters) have a similar level of control *outside* the relatively safe therapeutic setting in which the multiple both trusts and depends on the therapist. But in that case, they might still not qualify as responsible agents prior to therapy or in forensic or everyday settings, where switching may remain generally spontaneous and uncontrollable. Hence, in these contexts at the very least, Slovenko's claim that the multiple is in control seems to be unwarranted. But even if that claim were true, it is still a non sequitur; it does not follow from the claim that alter formation and switching must be explained in terms of the multiple's needs and interests. The appeal to a background of needs and interests helps explain both controllable and uncontrollable behaviors.

Interestingly, Slovenko's comment about a core personality closely resembles a remark made by French and Schechmeister (1983), about which alters can and should be represented by council. They claim,

> We find no legal basis for exclusion of the second personality as a representable entity. . . . [I]t appears that any personality presenting itself for representation before diagnosis of MPS [multiple personality syndrome] may gain at least initial representation but once a diagnosis of MPS has been established, the socially identified primary personality will be represented and all others will be ignored as symptoms of his illness. Indeed, "He who hesitates is lost"! (24)

The trouble with this position is that the very *concept* of a primary personality is suspect and unclear, as many clinicians now realize (Braude 1995). So there is no reliable way to implement the authors' recommended criterion of representability.

Let us return, however, to Slovenko's article. At the beginning of the passage quoted above, Slovenko seems to be arguing that the concept of legal responsibility (possibly unlike that of moral **[End Page 44]** responsibility) rests on the presupposition that there is only one person to a body. However, there are several respects in which Slovenko underestimates the complexity of the issues. For one thing, the concept of a person is hardly unambiguous, even from a legal point of view (Braude 1995). Moreover, Slovenko improperly suggests that there is a clearly identifiable entity, *legal theory* (or *the law*), to which one may appeal in this case. Granted, there is a single body of laws which we may consider to be *the* law, although of course different jurisdictions have different statutes. But more importantly, no set of laws uniquely determines its own meaning; our laws are open to numerous different interpretations. Indeed, it is the job of the courts to continually interpret the laws it enforces, as situations dictate. But in that case, legal theory, perhaps even more so than scientific theory, is an evolving and provisional set of statements whose interpretations are never universally accepted. In fact, one may regard the landmark decision in the Billy Milligan case (Keyes 1982) as one of a number of recent attempts to refine and reconsider what, exactly, the law requires in connection with DID. And because subsequent court decisions about DID in criminal cases have not uniformly adhered to the precedent set in the Milligan case (see, for example, Lewis and Bard 1991; Perr 1991), one could argue that *the law* (or legal theory) has no clear requirements at all in this area. Hence, Slovenko's appeal to what "the law is based on" and what "legal theory requires" likewise seems rather naive and simplistic. Indeed, it seems little more than a bare statement of just one of a competing set of legal intuitions.

A later article by Slovenko (1993) avoids his earlier contentious claims about core personalities and what the law requires, and it also presents a more balanced and thorough review of legal issues and opinions. However, it indicates little (if any)

evolution in Slovenko's grasp of the data of DID. For example, when describing the characteristics of alter personalities, he writes, "In each personality of the multiple personality, there is a distinct id, ego, and super-ego" (330). But that claim is patently false, as are others that overestimate the complexity, differences, and relative independence of alters, especially in polyfragmented cases (Braude 1995). That is particularly unfortunate, because one would think that the distinctness and independence of alters is relevant to various questions concerning criminal responsibility. But Slovenko does not venture beyond the important but unanswered question: "To what extent is a sub-personality allegedly a minor really like a minor?" (338).

A rather different set of issues emerges from Halleck's article (1990). On the surface, Halleck seems sympathetic to the position that responsibility is linked to an agent's control over behavior, or (as Halleck puts it) the "capacity or lack of capacity to choose one form of conduct over another" (303). And he argues that "behavior that is highly susceptible to environmental influence . . . [is] under the control of the will" (303). But that criterion for deciding whether behavioral control exists is unconvincing and probably false.

To begin with, in defending his criterion, Halleck resorts to a vague illustration of "environmental influence" that (at best) has only limited utility, and which in fact seems to be rather misleading. He writes,

> If a patient demonstrates noxious behavior only in a permissive, but not
> in a restrictive environment, we generally assume on empirical as well
> as on an intuitive basis that the individual has the capacity to control
> that behavior in either environment (although we may acknowledge that
> it is a harder choice for him/her to do so in a more permissive
> environment). (303)

Halleck is probably thinking of various familiar sorts of annoying behavior, and certain moderately permissive or non-permissive environments in which people probably do have some control over their actions. He seems to be thinking of the sort of behavior we are strongly tempted to indulge in when we can get away with it, but which we clearly have the ability to control, and which we do in fact control when we are pressured to do so. For example, if an unruly child acts in a hostile way toward siblings except under threat of punishment, it is reasonable to suppose that the child can choose to act in a non-hostile way whether or not the threats are made. Similarly, it may be very difficult for some to control the **[End Page 45]** temptation to shoplift when golden opportunities present themselves. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to suppose that such behavior is controllable whether or not those situations arise.

But in other sorts of cases, Halleck's claim seems transparently false. Consider a bad marriage, for example, in which one or both spouses are unable to behave in a loving or sexual way toward the other. It may be true that in a more nurturing relationship they could behave differently. But one cannot conclude that within the presently existing repressive (non-permissive) context of the marriage that either spouse could behave in a more loving or sexual way, even if they desperately wanted to. It would be pragmatically empty to say that control over those aspects of behavior is possible under the circumstances. That would be like the claim one often hears from some religious (and New Age) pundits, that all people are basically good, no matter how evil or reprehensible their behavior has been and no matter how incorrigible they seem. The claim is empty because for many people nothing we could reasonably be expected to

do will elicit that alleged goodness and change their behavior.

One problem, then, is that the term "environmental influence" is broad and covers many sorts of cases in which responsibility and control are actually diminished. Both control and permissiveness come in degrees, and (as the above examples suggest) some environments are considerably more non-permissive than others. Indeed, they may be coercive, or so restrictive that the individual has little or no control over relevant aspects of behavior.

Perhaps it is not surprising, then, that Halleck fails to note that behavior that can be triggered by external cues is likewise behavior "susceptible to environmental influence." And that behavior may be no more controllable than behavior occurring in other highly repressive environments. Granted, the coerciveness of behavioral triggers may differ from other forms of coercion--for example, being physically forced to fire a gun despite one's best efforts to struggle against it. Nevertheless, as far as moral responsibility is concerned, the coerciveness of environmental triggers is equally significant. That is because one's reactions to them may be involuntary and automatized (as the result, say, of chronic or ritualized abuse, or brainwashing).

But perhaps more importantly, Halleck appears tacitly to endorse an indefensibly skeptical position regarding DID, which he betrays in his emphasis on permissive environments (and apparently rather routinely permissive environments at that). He treats the phenomena of DID as if they were analogous merely to types of naughty behavior, as if they occurred in a setting that allows patients to *get away with* behaving like a community of alters. But that approach is antecedently biased against taking DID seriously. It fails to countenance the clear body of evidence indicating that DID is adaptational and that trauma or abuse *impel* subjects to develop the symptoms of multiplicity, at least in the initial stages of the disorder. It also seems to ignore cases in which new alters are created iatrogenically in response to intensely frightening situations arising in the course of treatment, whether competent or incompetent (see, for example, Kluft 1989; Torem 1989). Granted, once a multiple has entered therapy and the majority of alters recognize that they are alternate personalities, the multiple (or those alters) may be able to exert at least some control over switching and other unacceptable behavior, as well as the future splitting into additional personalities. At that point clinicians presumably have some influence over how much self-destructive, counter-therapeutic, or simply self-indulgent behavior the patient can "get away with." But that situation is quite different from times when the patient develops and utilizes alters in a desperate struggle for psychological survival. Hence, it would have been more illuminating, sensitive, and responsive to the data for Halleck to consider the relevance of coercive and other highly *non*-permissive environments. Indeed, it is quite ludicrous to think that we permit people to *become* multiples in anything like the way we allow children to misbehave or potential felons to shoplift.

Responsibility and DID

Let us change course, then, and consider whether our earlier discussion of Augustine and Freud guides us toward a sensible position on **[End Page 46]** DID and responsibility. There, we explained the appropriateness of regret, etc., for our dreams and slips of the tongue by observing that they are things that happen to *us* even if we can't help ourselves. We noted, in other words, that they are things for which we are at least weakly responsible. We also saw that we can justifiably disavow responsibility for our dreams and Freudian slips without denying that they are ours--indeed, without raising classic puzzles about identity through change or over time. In those cases it is sufficient to note that we simply couldn't help ourselves--that is, that we were unable to

control the things we now regret. Hence, we've seen that we can determine responsibility in certain cases of dissociation without making unusual assumptions about identity. Now we may consider whether we should take a similar position with regard to DID.

On the surface, however, it may seem as if DID demands a different and possibly more radical kind of treatment, because DID is more deeply and dramatically dissociative than dreaming. After all, it is merely a figure of speech to say it was not I who had that dream, or that "I was not myself" when I dreamt those things. Moreover, in some therapeutic and everyday contexts we *are* justified in treating alters as distinct subjects and agents. So although the possibility of behavioral control may still be important in assigning responsibility for an alter's actions, in the case of DID problems of agent-identity seem to loom larger.

Nevertheless, I submit that the familiar criteria of control and rationality are still the main criteria in deciding matters of responsibility in cases of DID, despite the dramatic nature of the phenomena. I suspect that we simply tend to forget this in connection with DID, and suppose instead that issues about identity matter more. Perhaps that is because DID seems to raise questions about identity *quite apart from* the contexts in which we are concerned about moral responsibility. But those are the sorts of questions about identity perhaps only a philosopher could love. They are generally too arcane and too abstract to play a role in more urgent clinical and everyday deliberations about moral responsibility. At those times what really matters are refractory empirical questions of control and rationality. For example, can alter A (or the multiple him/herself) control alter B's thoughts and behavior? Can alter B evaluate its own behavior, or can alter A or the multiple him/herself do so instead? In fact, these sorts of questions matter *whether or not* we are *ever* justified in identifying A (or the multiple) with B.

But that means only that the similarities between DID and a vast range of other cases (dissociative and non-dissociative) are more extensive than some might have thought. In virtually all cases (dissociative and non-dissociative), moral responsibility for a certain thought or action X hinges (to varying degrees) on the possibility of being able to control or evaluate X. Granted, it may not be easy to decide when those conditions are satisfied. But that problem is hardly unique to cases of DID. DID is simply one of a large variety of cases in which it is difficult to determine the extent of an individual's ability to control and evaluate his/her thought and behavior.

At any rate, if rationality and behavioral control (rather than identity through change) are what matters in determining responsibility in cases of DID, then we may be in a position to understand the relevance of amnesia to those deliberations. Of course, on the surface it seems as if we must again raise questions about personal identity. Amnesia appears to be a situation in which a temporal stage S_{t1} of a person does not recall something done by an earlier temporal stage S_{t0}. But is this important to moral assessments because it suggests that in some crucial respect $S_{t1}(S_{t0}$? One might think so, because in the history of philosophy the most ancient concern about identity is whether changes in a thing's temporal stages are changes in the identity of the thing itself. However, if we have been on track in downplaying the importance of identity considerations in connection with moral responsibility, perhaps we should adopt a similar strategy here. But if so, then in what respect can an agent's amnesia for past actions play a role in moral evaluation?

Before answering that question, however, we should note that in cases of DID, amnesia is not really what is at issue. In fact, the term "amnesia" tends to be used improperly in connection with **[End Page 47]** dissociation, and it certainly is not the appropriate term to describe the epistemic barriers apparently existing between alternate personalities.

As Crabtree (1992) observed,

> If dissociation is a sorting process, then the various psychic units or personalities that exist within the individual are *not* subject to "amnesia." In dissociation there is no forgetting, no loss of memory. To forget one has to first be aware of something and then lose the awareness of that thing. That is not what occurs in dissociation. The various psychic units *never had knowledge* of the experiences as signed to the other units and so could not *forget* them. (8)

Crabtree seems to be right about this. Forgetting presupposes losing something one had already--not simply an occurrent state, but a disposition or an ability to recall. However, alters (psychic units) do not seem to stand in that sort of epistemic relation to the mental states of other alters. Instead, an alter's access to the mental states of another alter is more like that of one *person* to another. That is why dissociation in cases of DID is so interesting and so extreme as compared to other forms of dissociation. It seems that alters do not forget what other alters know any more than I can forget what you know.

Of course, when you and I know the same thing (i.e., piece of information or proposition), there *is* a sense in which I can forget something you know. But strictly speaking, what I forget in those cases is the information or proposition *I* previously knew. I should add, however, that some alters (psychic units) seem to have knowledge of the *experiences* of other alters as they occur. Moreover, this knowledge seems to be different from the way I can know of your experiences. In fact, descriptions from multiples make it sound more like a kind of telepathy; it is as if the experiences are had from a different first-person viewpoint (see Braude 1995). But even in these cases (assuming they are described accurately) it would be wrong to say that one alter strictly speaking can forget the experiences of another. That would be possible only if both alters had exactly the same first-person viewpoint.

At any rate, if the term "amnesia" applies at all to cases of DID, it would presumably describe an epistemic relation between the multiple and some (but not all) alters. Suppose alter *A* commits a crime. Suppose also that alter *B* is aware of *A*'s action but that alter *C* is not. We might say that the multiple has amnesia for the crime *with respect to C* but not with respect to *A* and *B*. Although this way of describing things will undoubtedly sound strange to some, perhaps it is really not objectionable. We might simply have to concede that, at least in cases of DID, some of a *person's* epistemic states have an otherwise unprecedented and complex relational structure.

At any rate, the epistemic barriers between alters are similar in a crucial respect to the amnesic barriers occurring between earlier and later stages of a single person. Just as S_{t1} is presently denied epistemic access to certain states of S_{t0}, alter *A* has no epistemic access to certain states of *B*. But of course it is precisely that barrier that seems to raise questions of responsibility and also of identity. So whether we call it amnesia or not, our present concern is whether that kind of epistemic inaccessibility plays an important role in moral evaluation.

One reasonable answer is that is raises issues, not of moral responsibility, but rather of *accountability*. These terms are often used interchangeably in the legal and clinical literature. But there is an important distinction to be made by treating them as distinct technical terms. To see why, let us tentatively accept Jennifer Radden's formulation of the distinction (Radden 1989).

> X is accountable for A just when there being reason to believe X did A
> entitles us to an explanation and justification of A. X is [morally]
> responsible for A just when it is appropriate to blame X for A. (66)

For simplicity, let us talk simply of amnesia as if the term applied, not only to cases of ordinary forgetting, but also to the aforementioned epistemic barriers between alter personalities and between a multiple and specific alters. And let us begin with a paradigm case of amnesia (i.e., genuine forgetting). Suppose that S_{t1} now has amnesia for actions performed earlier by S_{t0}, and suppose that S_{t0} had been able to control and evaluate those actions. In that case we might want to say that if S was responsible at the time for those earlier deeds, S is responsible for them now. But, **[End Page 48]** we might add, S is not presently accountable for the actions. After all, a person unable to remember a past deed certainly cannot explain or justify it. It would appear, then, that moral responsibility for past deeds does not require continuity of memory. By contrast, accountability for one's past actions may be undermined by nothing more than temporary amnesia. (Of course, as Radden has argued, accountability might also be undermined by other and sometimes more devastating forms of impairment or incapacitation.) Accountability thus seems to be fragile and potentially intermittent in a way responsibility is not.

However, responsibility and accountability have an important feature in common. Although it is easy to construct imaginary cases (perhaps not plausible ones) in which our attributions of responsibility and accountability depend primarily on considerations about identity, in the vast majority of cases--and certainly real-life cases--concerns over identity play only a peripheral role at best. Generally speaking, we do not have to contend with nagging puzzles about personal identity when we hold a person responsible but not presently (or no longer) accountable for things which *that person* did previously.

Now if these considerations are on the right track, then we might also want to say that a multiple may be held responsible for actions of which he/she now has no memory, or of which some alters but not others have no memory. Here, too, epistemic inaccessibility undermines accountability only, although how and to what extent it does so is by no means clear. We might say that certain alters are not accountable for the actions of others, and perhaps we could even say that the multiple him/herself is accountable with respect only to certain alters. But however interesting these matters might be, our present concern is with moral responsibility and DID. All we need to observe for now is that moral responsibility does not seem to be undermined by the epistemic inaccessibility found in amnesia and in a slightly different way in cases of DID. Those losses of memory would presumably affect a multiple's ability to testify in court or aid in his/her own defense. But they do not seem to bear on the multiple's guilt or culpability.

So how *do* we determine responsibility in cases of DID? Considering the complexity of DID and the appropriateness in some contexts of treating alters as distinct agents and subjects, it looks as if we should countenance distinct and possibly conflicting *levels* of responsibility. In fact, we might identify different levels of responsibility not only within the system of alters, but also with respect to the multiple as a whole. In the first case, responsibility for an action might attach to some alters but not others, and in the second case the multiple might be responsible relative to certain aspects of the case rather than others.

The first of these two options is the more straightforward. But we should remember that it applies only to contexts in which we can justifiably treat alters as distinct moral or prudential agents. Suppose, for example, that alter A is either ineffectual or ignorant with regard to another alter, B. That is, suppose (on the one hand) that A is unable to

control B's behavior or (on the other) that A is either unaware of that behavior or else cognitively or morally immature or naive--hence, unable to evaluate B's actions. In that case, we might want to say that A is not responsible for what B does. Nevertheless, we might want to hold B responsible for its actions and insist that our anger, condemnation, etc. for unacceptable behavior is appropriate when directed toward B.

But how, if at all, should we assign responsibility to the multiple him/herself? This, after all, is the pressing question that clinicians and courts must confront when weighing various treatment strategies and penalties. If the multiple has no influence over which alter is in executive control of the body--for example, if switching is generally an instinctive or involuntary response to contingent and uncontrollable external conditions, we might decide that the multiple cannot then be held responsible for what an alter does. That seems to be the thrust of the decision reached in the Billy Milligan case. One could also adopt what we might call the *luck-of-the-draw* strategy. That is, we could decide that the multiple's responsibility should be relativized to the alter currently in executive control, and therefore that a multiple's responsibility for his/her actions can **[End Page 49]** change over time. Hence, if the alter is morally or conceptually retarded, naive or unsophisticated, or if the alter is the victim of uncontrollable impulses to act, we might say that the multiple is not responsible for the alter's actions. But if the alter in control is able to govern and evaluate its own behavior, we could hold the multiple responsible for the alter's behavior. That seems to be the decision reached in the Grimsley case, in which the court ruled,

> The evidence fails to establish the fact that Jennifer [an alter] was either unconscious or acting involuntarily. There was only one person driving the car and only one person accused of drunken driving. It is immaterial whether she was in one state of consciousness or another, so long as in the personality then controlling her behavior, she was conscious and her actions were a product of her own volition. (quoted in Lewis and Bard 1991, 744)

The luck-of-the-draw strategy, however, seems rather simplistic and insensitive to the dynamics of the switching process. Most notably, it is difficult to apply to cases in which neither the multiple nor the presently dominant alter can prevent an intrusive alter's appearance and subsequent behavior. If it is true, as it often appears, that the multiple cannot govern which personality controls the body at a given time, then it seems unfair to hold the multiple responsible for actions committed at that time. In what respect, we might wonder, could the multiple have done otherwise?

To help clear this matter up, we should note that at least two types of control seem to be at issue. The first is control over the switching process, or (more precisely) control over which alter is weakly responsible for the multiple's behavior. The second is control of that behavior by the alter weakly responsible for it. What needs to be considered, then, is (1) whether the multiple can control switching to alter A and (2) whether A can control its own behavior. Theoretically, at least, there are four options to consider. First, both the switching and the behavior are controllable. Second, the switching is controllable but the behavior is not. Third, the behavior is controllable but the switching is not. And fourth, neither the switching nor the behavior are controllable.

The easiest cases to deal with are obviously the first and last. If both switching and behavior are under control, then (other necessary conditions being satisfied) it seems reasonable to hold the multiple responsible for an alter's actions. And if neither switching nor behavior are under control, it seems equally reasonable to say that the multiple is not responsible for the alter's actions. Case two is also fairly straightforward. Suppose, first, that the multiple is able to prevent alter A's appearance and, second,

that *A* cannot control its own objection able behavior. In that case (other necessary conditions being satisfied) it seems reasonable to hold the multiple responsible for *A's* behavior. After all, even is *A's* behavior is out of control, the multiple could have prevented *A* from acting by preventing *A* from emerging or by switching to another alter.

Case three, however, is the perhaps the most troublesome. Suppose, first, that the multiple is unable to control the comings and goings of alter *A* and, second, that *A* can control its own behavior. Suppose, for example, that *A's* appearance results from uncontrollable environmental triggers. Suppose, also, that once *A* has emerged the multiple cannot switch to a different alter until *A* voluntarily relinquishes control or until contingent external conditions trigger the process. In that case it seems reasonable to conclude (*contra* Grimsley) that the multiple should not be held responsible for *A's* actions, even if in some sense or in some contexts *A* deserves to be held responsible for them. After all, alter *A's* behavior would presumably not have occurred if the switch to *A* had not taken place or if the multiple could have switched to another alter before *A* did any harm. But by hypothesis the multiple had no such control over *A's* appearance.

Of course, in all these cases we are pretending that we can determine whether a multiple is able to control the switching process or the behavior of an alter. Obviously, real-life deliberations about responsibility would be greatly simplified if only there were a reliable way of figuring that out. Unfortunately, however, it remains a intractable empirical problem. As I noted earlier, some clinicians argue that when challenged to behave responsibly (say, under threat of cutting off treatment), **[End Page 50]** the multiple's (or renegade alter's) behavior changes accordingly. Hence, they conclude that the multiple as a whole has the ability, and therefore the responsibility, to make the entire system of alters conform to reasonable (or desired) standards of behavior. However, as I also observed, it is still unclear whether (or to what extent) the subsequent compliant behavior should be attributed to the person as a whole (or unity), or to one or more influential alters. But perhaps more important, it is still unclear to what extent the multiple has a comparable level of control outside the therapeutic setting. That level of control may only be possible within the fragile context of trust and dependency with a therapist. And if so, it may be false to say that the multiple is responsible *generally* for what his/her alters do.

Moreover, many of the clinicians who adopt this hard-line approach also concede that it may still be difficult to elicit compliant behavior from the multiple. It may simply be that the strategy of demanding compliant behavior is the best strategy currently known. Hence, we might be justified, from a largely pragmatic point of view, in regarding the multiple as only marginally (or perhaps only theoretically but not practically) responsible for an alter's emergence and subsequent behavior, especially outside the therapeutic setting. And in that case we might prefer to determine moral responsibility only at the level of behavior of specific alters.

As if these options and complications were not enough, another difficulty merits consideration. Some writers on responsibility argue that people may be so corrupted or impaired by life that they have lost the ability to properly evaluate the moral and non-moral features of their actions. As Clarke (1992) puts it, they may be "morally malformed" through no fault of their own. For example, some might respond to childhood trauma by becoming insensitive to their own feelings and the feelings of others, and therefore also incapable of psychological intimacy. To the extent that people suffer this sort of numbing of sensibilities or character, they seem unable to act on the basis of moral reasons. They seem unable to appreciate fully and take seriously the contexts in which they act and the effects of their behavior on others. Hence, some would argue that such people are not responsible for their actions.

In the case of DID, however, it is unclear to what extent *and to which subject or agent* such numbing has occurred. Some alters seem better able than others to appreciate moral reasons and also to evaluate the relevant non-moral features of their actions. But then it is not clear to what extent the *person* can make those evaluations satisfactorily. One might think (in the spirit of the Grimsley ruling) that if any alter can make those assessments, the person can, since ultimately the alter's abilities are those of the whole person from which they are drawn. But it may be that no alter has an adequate ability to evaluate its actions, no matter how robust their personalities might seem over relatively short stretches of time. Although some alters are obviously more clear-headed and aware than others, one must remember that all multiples exhibit what I have termed "attribute-distribution" and "attribute-depletion" (Braude 1995), in which

> the traits and abilities manifested by or latent in the pre-dissociative personality begin to get distributed throughout the members of the personality system. Moreover, as alters proliferate, they apparently become increasingly specialized, and one is less likely to find any personality having the complexity or range of functions presumably possessed by the subject prior to the onset of splitting. (Braude 1995, 57)

But in that case one would think that every alter is likely to be numb along some moral or relevant non-moral dimension. And if so, there are two reasons for saying that the person as a whole is too morally impaired to be held responsible for his/her actions. First, the multiple can act only *as* or *through* an alter (at least much or most of the time). So if each alter's evaluative capacities are inadequate, then neither the alter nor the multiple should be held responsible for the alter's behavior. Second, and perhaps more important, if the multiple's full repertoire of evaluative capacities is divided among different alters, then it may be that the multiple as a whole cannot judge actions in a suitably integrated and comprehensive way.

While we are on the topic of a person's ability to evaluate his/her actions and the contexts in **[End Page 51]** which they occur, another issue merits our attention. Consider, first, the following interesting example (borrowed from Clarke 1992) of acting under a coercive threat. Suppose Pam is kidnapped and then ordered to participate in a crime. At first, she refuses, but then her captors threaten her. Initially, they threaten to harm Pam, and when that doesn't work they threaten to harm her family. Although Pam feels she can tolerate any suffering inflicted on herself, she can't bear the thought of her family being harmed. So she surrenders to her captors' demands and participates in the crime.

Suppose, however, that any outside observer, free from the stress Pam was experiencing, would have been able to tell that Pam's captors were bluffing when they threatened to harm her family. Suppose that the observer would have known from the way the kidnappers were talking that they didn't even know where Pam's family was. But because Pam was under such stress, she missed all the obvious verbal and behavioral clues and could not tell her captors were bluffing. We may suppose, then, that Pam's decision to commit the crime was based on a rational and intelligent evaluation of her predicament. She did the best she could under those trying conditions. Of course, Pam's assessment of her situation was seriously mistaken. But under the circumstances it was the sort of mistake for which she could easily be excused.

This is a case in which a person has the relevant rational capacities (or ability to rationally evaluate a situation), but in which it would be unreasonable to expect her to avoid making the evaluative mistake she in fact makes. And if that is right, we are presumably not entitled to hold Pam morally responsible for her participation in the

crime. As Clarke puts it, "We expect people to act responsibly in difficult situations, but only up to a point of difficulty. In extremely difficult situations, we sometimes excuse behavior we would ordinarily condemn" (1992, 60).

If this is correct, it has interesting implications for many cases of DID in which the multiple behaves objectionably under the pressure of psychological coercion or threat, whether real or imagined (e.g., as the result of expectations formed through a history of abuse or trauma). These, too, are cases in which even rationally well-endowed individuals might have trouble sizing things up properly. Of course, there are reasons for questioning the integrity of an alter's--or multiple's--evaluative capacities. But the importance of the example is that, even if multiples *do* have the ability (at least under less stressful situations) to evaluate their behavior, they might not be able to make the right decision under the conditions in which they actually find themsleves, and that no one would be held responsible for the actions that result from those mistakes.

This reinforces the caveats, mentioned above, in connection with the success of the hard-line approach to therapy. I noted earlier that even if patients stop acting out when their therapists demand it, that does not mean that they can always control their behavior. The dynamics (and relative safety) of the therapeutic environment might be uniquely conducive to behavioral control. But for similar reasons, that environment might also be one in which multiples are better able to evaluate their behavior rationally. If so, then it would be a mistake to assume that multiples are responsible agents outside of therapy, when they must deal with a wide range of contingent, unexpected, and potentially intimidating situations and environmental triggers.

The possibility that a multiple's evaluative capacities may be systematically impaired raises another pragmatic issue. It complements the considerations underlying the hard-line strategy adopted by some clinicians treating DID, and it may also apply to friends or relatives of multiples. Suppose that we cannot find any philosophical justification for treating multiples as responsible (whole) individuals, even in the therapeutic setting. Nevertheless, there is a reason why we might be justified in treating DID patients *as if* they are morally responsible individuals. It rests on the distinction between what we could call *causal responsibility* (weak or strong) and *taking responsibility* (i.e., taking charge). To see why, consider a strategy often taken with children as a means of developing their moral instincts and perceptions. We often recognize that small children lack the reflective capacities needed to **[End Page 52]** evaluate and understand their actions and their consequences. But we often treat them as if they had those capacities, and we hold them blameworthy when their actions are objectionable. Usually, we recognize that this approach helps them to develop the judgmental capacities and perceptual antennae (so to speak) necessary for acting responsibly later on. We assume that our strategy is an effective way of teaching children to *become* morally responsible individuals. We assume, in other words, that by treating children as if they are causally responsible we are helping them to learn how to take responsibility.

Perhaps a similar strategy would work with at least some cases of DID. When a child responds defensively to traumatic experiences by developing alternate personalities, it is reasonable to think that the trauma might also leave the individual morally and cognitively damaged or immature. So perhaps some multiples need help in developing the reflective capacities and dispositions necessary for acting responsibly, both in and out of the therapeutic setting. Perhaps we can help them to become responsible by treating them as if they are responsible agents now. Of course, successful implementation of this approach would be no easier to interpret than it would be in the case of the hard-line strategy discussed earlier. That is, we may be unable to determine whether success is attributable to one or more alters or to the multiple him/herself. But

that theoretical frustration must take a back seat to more urgent practical matters.

One final point, concerning a rather specific type of moral responsibility. As before, let us begin by considering the topic of dreaming. In many cases we are justified in treating our dreams as revelations (even if only symbolic) of otherwise hidden needs and impulses. But suppose those dreams indicate the existence of potentially dangerous (e.g., homicidal) impulses within me. Is there a sense in which I might be morally responsible for the dreams, even if I cannot control or prevent them? One plausible answer would be that we have a responsibility to acknowledge and in some way deal with or neutralize those impulses. That is, to the extent we are able to control those impulses in the future and prevent them from leading to a wrongdoing, we have a responsibility to see that those impulses cause no harm to another person, and perhaps also to ourselves.

It also seems reasonable to adopt a similar position with regard to DID. Although clinicians are divided on the issue, let us grant (at least for the sake of argument) that a multiple (or an alter) might be unable to control or prevent another alter's actions. Even so (we might argue), once a multiple (or alter) has knowledge of, say, a dangerous alter, that generates the obligation *to do what one can* to prevent harm from occurring. Hence, to the extent that this sort of knowledge is genuinely empowering, a multiple (or alter) might have a kind of moral responsibility for an individual's future--but not past-- behavior. But then we are faced once again with a nagging and possibly unanswerable empirical question: How much control does this sort of knowledge actually give a multiple (or alter) over another alter's actions?

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Notes

1. Multiple personality disorder has, according to the recently publishedDSM-IV, been reclassified as *dissociative identity disorder* (DID), a move that has not met with either universal acceptance or widespread acclaim (see Braude 1995). Still, one should not underestimate the value of trendiness, and I shall accordingly use the term "DID" to refer to the condition formerly referred to (and still known generally outside the U.S.) as MPD.

2. Compare this translation from R. S. Pine-Coffin (Penguin Books, 1961)with that of V. J. Bourke (Mentor, 1963), who renders the passage as follows: "by the very remoteness of our state now and then, [we] discover that it was not we who did something which was, to our regret, somehow or other done in us." The former stresses the concept of responsibility while the latter emphasizes that the dreaming and waking self are not identical. A more recent translation by H. Chadwick (Oxford University Press, 1991) does neither. In Chadwick's version, Augustine says, "From the wide gulf between the occurrences and our will, we discover that we did not actively do what, to our regret, has somehow been done in us." However, Chadwick's translation (like the others) makes Augustine's concerns about identity a few sentences earlier quite clear. Moreover, all three translators seem to agree that Augustine wished to express remorse or regret of some sort for what happened to *himself* during sleep.

3. See Parfit 1973, 1984, for example, and see Wolf 1986, for aninteresting criticism.

4. See, for example, Clarke 1992; Fischer 1982; Frankfurt 1969, 1978; Gertand Duggan

1979; Greenspan 1978; Mele 1990; van Inwagen 1978; Wolf 1980, 1990; Zimmerman 1988.

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