

# Some Recent Books on Multiple Personality and Dissociation

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**ABSTRACT:** In the past 15 years, psychology and psychiatry have witnessed a remarkable revival of interest in dissociation and multiple personality. Some of the new findings may be relevant to parapsychology. This paper reviews three quite different recent books on various aspects of dissociation, one of which, *The Passion of Ansel Bourne* by Michael G. Kenny, examines some cases well known to parapsychologists. The other two books are *Multiple Personality, Allied Disorders and Hypnosis* by Eugene L. Bliss and *Split Minds/Split Brains* by Jacques M. Quen.

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Since the early days of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), parapsychologists have been intrigued by the various forms of dissociative phenomena, especially hypnosis and multiple personality. They wondered what it revealed about the nature of mind and whether dissociation might shed light on paranormal mental phenomena. Some suspected that the forms of dissociation might be *bridge* phenomena, linking normal cognitive functions to paranormal cognitive functions. If so, they reasoned, discoveries about dissociation might pave the way for insights into the even more occult phenomena of parapsychology.

For example, many were fascinated by the apparently paranormal goings-on in some of the early studies of hypnosis, such as alleged apports and materializations, and more frequently, displays of ostensible clairvoyance and telepathy ("lucidity"). Was it possible, they speculated, that dissociative states were psi conducive? But perhaps the most burning issue was the possible connection between the phenomena of multiple personality disorder (MPD) and mental mediumship (and possession)—in particular, whether the latter is merely a species of the former, rather than a phenomenon indicative of survival.

But after an initial flurry of interest in these topics, parapsychologists generally moved on to other matters (although some continued to think about hypnosis, as part of a broader investigation into the relations between psi and altered states). To a considerable extent, this waning of parapsychological interest in dissociation was part of a more widespread change of intellectual fashion in psychology and psychiatry. But the times have changed once more, and in the past 15 years these fields have witnessed a remarkable revival of interest in the topics of dissociation and multiplicity. Furthermore, as the professional technical literature—and the number of apparent cases of MPD—continues to grow, parapsycholo-

gists have an unprecedented opportunity to reevaluate old issues in the light of new information.

This essay will review three quite different recent books on various aspects of dissociation. All are serious scholarly works, as well as a welcome change from the current glut of (often sensationalistic) trade books on MPD. Although some bear more directly than others on venerable parapsychological issues, they are all of potential importance to the field. I will discuss them, however, in what I suspect is their ascending order of relevance to psi research. And as it so happens, the book requiring most comment—clearly, the most controversial of the lot—is the one I shall discuss last.

*Multiple Personality, Allied Disorders and Hypnosis*

BY EUGENE L. BLISS (1986)

Bliss, a psychiatry professor at the University of Utah, has contributed regularly over the past few years to the rapidly growing bibliography of articles on MPD. Since 1980 he has been defending the thesis that MPD results from a kind of instinctive abuse of inherent dissociative abilities—in particular, from excessive spontaneous self-hypnosis. The present work is his most complete statement of that theoretical position, bolstered by additional clinical material and also by an extended historical and theoretical discussion of hypnosis.

In fact, the opening chapter on the history of hypnosis is the longest in the book (60 pages). It is a very readable and generally scholarly survey, tracing hypnotic phenomena from antiquity to the early part of this century (i.e., Janet, Breuer, Freud, Prince, and Sidis). I recommend it highly to readers seeking a good—but relatively brief—introduction to the major issues and figures in the history of hypnosis. My major complaint is that the discussion lacks complete references and page numbers; in fact, it is sometimes unclear which work Bliss is quoting from. Parapsychologists might also be irritated by his fence-sitting or skepticism regarding the allegedly paranormal aspects of hypnotic phenomena. And indeed, Bliss never even cites Dingwall's important 4-volume set devoted to that topic (Dingwall, 1967). Moreover, Bliss fails to acknowledge the writings of F. W. H. Myers (1903) on hypnosis and multiple personality. This is all the more regrettable, considering how close many of Myers' views were to those of Bliss, particularly with regard to the fundamental role of self-hypnosis (1903, especially sect. 517–519). Still, in a brief survey of hypnosis, these are relatively minor drawbacks; overall, the chapter is full of useful information.

The next chapter surveys some contemporary research into hypnosis, concerning, for example, induction techniques, age and sex variables with regard to susceptibility, and personality traits associated with high hypnotizability. But its main focus is on spontaneous self-hypnosis. Bliss

emphasizes that this is not the same as autohypnosis, a state that one consciously induces in oneself after having learned the appropriate techniques. By contrast, spontaneous self-hypnosis is "a rapid, unpremeditated withdrawal into a trance, a dissociation, untaught and instinctive, a primitive defensive reflex that people experience usually when anxious or fearful" (p. 70). The rest of the book attempts to show how the concept of spontaneous self-hypnosis has considerable utility in attempting to understand human behavior, both normal and pathological.

Chapter 3 sketches a theory of hypnosis. Although it makes some naive and needless appeals to physicalistic reductionism, the theory sketch has some interesting and novel features. Not surprisingly, Bliss argues that spontaneous self-hypnosis is the primitive or fundamental hypnotic phenomenon. And he contends that hypnosis is simply "the upper range of a [more] general skill" (p. 106)—namely, the ability to intensify and control one's inward attention.

Chapter 4 discusses the syndrome of multiple personality, and in particular the ways in which hypnosis has "the potential to create psychiatric symptoms and syndromes in hypnotically endowed people" (p. 117). According to Bliss, MPD is probably the best example of how spontaneous self-hypnosis produces a wide range of symptoms and behaviors. And, of course, Bliss argues that "the crux of the syndrome of multiple personality seems to be the patient's unrecognized abuse of self-hypnosis" (p. 125). Once again, it is unfortunate that Bliss ignores the clear anticipations of this view in the work of Myers (1903).<sup>1</sup> In any case, except for his emphasis on the role of self-hypnosis, the position Bliss takes here is pretty much the received view, at least within the community of clinicians treating cases of MPD, or in the somewhat broader population belonging to the International Society for the Study of Multiple Personality and Dissociation. Bliss rejects the claim that MPD is an iatrogenic phenomenon—that is, that it is unwittingly created in the therapeutic setting, and that personalities are merely dramatic roles adopted by the patient in an effort to please the therapist. Instead, he takes the now-standard line that MPD "begins in childhood, usually as a defense against physical, sexual, or psychological abuse" (p. 162).

The next two chapters consider, respectively, additional psychiatric symptoms attributable to hypnosis and a therapeutic method based on the earlier work of Janet and Breuer. This is followed by a short chapter, entitled "Implications," and a chapter devoted to patients' descriptions of their experiences. In fact, an interesting feature of the book generally is the generous amount of space Bliss devotes throughout to firsthand accounts of hypnotic experiences.

Bliss does not discuss certain issues considered by some to be of theor-

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<sup>1</sup> For example, "spontaneous somnambulistic states . . . may gradually merge . . . into a continuous or dimorphic new personality" (Myers, 1903, Vol. 1, p. 59). Again, "secondary states . . . [may] spring up of themselves . . . from self-suggestions" (p. 61).

etic importance in understanding MPD. For example, he has little to say about (the very small number of) neurophysiological studies of multiples; and he does not consider the relevance of studies of state-dependent learning. But one can hardly fault Bliss for not covering everything. Besides, I suspect that neurophysiological findings (when they become solid enough to be generalized—which they are not at present) can be reconciled with Bliss' emphasis on self-hypnosis. After all, there is good reason to think that neurophysiological anomalies may well be caused by certain hypnotic states. Moreover, there is no incompatibility between Bliss' view of MPD and a state-dependent learning account of how different alter personalities acquire distinct skills and memories. In fact, self-hypnosis might simply provide access to the appropriate states.

Overall, then, Bliss' book can be recommended as a solid (if not encyclopedic) introduction to current thinking on multiple personality within the clinical community and also as a handy survey of major topics in hypnosis.

*Split Minds/Split Brains* EDITED BY JACQUES M. QUEN (1986)

This volume contains the contributions to a symposium held in October, 1984, at the Section on the History of Psychiatry, New York Hospital—Cornell Medical Center. It is a well-balanced collection of 8 essays, historical, technical, and even literary.

The first 4 essays together provide an overview of the history of dissociation until the mid-twentieth century. Eric T. Carlson begins with "The History of Dissociation Until 1880," a somewhat loosely organized survey of early dissociative phenomena and relevant theoretical trends. Carlson comments briefly on shamanism, witchcraft, Mesmerism, somnambulism in Europe and America, as well as the conceptual roots of dissociation theory in the work of the British empiricist philosophers and later in the writings of Erasmus Darwin, Benjamin Rush, and Thomas Laycock, among others.

The next essay, by Hannah S. Decker, is "The Lure of Nonmaterialism in Materialist Europe: Investigations of Dissociative Phenomena, 1880–1915." It is a substantial discussion of the rise and fall of interest in dissociation, from the time of the founding of the SPR to the eclipse of Janet and the corresponding surge of interest in Freudian dynamics. Decker argues that the rise of interest in dissociative phenomena was part of a larger romanticist reaction to the limitations of, and world view fostered by, materialist science. Throughout, she displays an admirable grasp of various converging conceptual streams as manifested in philosophy, parapsychology, orthodox science, and literature. Moreover, Decker offers interesting observations on parapsychology and the spiritualist movement, focusing in particular on Myers and Flournoy.

By contrast, John C. Burnham offers a different perspective on the rise

of interest in dissociation. In "The Fragmenting of the Soul: Intellectual Prerequisites for Ideas of Dissociation in the United States," he stresses the reliance of the concept of dissociation on already entrenched mechanistic and reductionistic thinking, in which human behavior and physiological states (like disease) were explained in terms of lower-level processes or elements. In fact, Burnham suggests that an underlying anthropomorphism in turn-of-the-century mechanistic reductionism led very naturally to thinking in terms of multiple personalities. Scientists already believed in a kind of *dynamic atomicity*, according to which "the functional units of the human machine each had an independent existence and purpose of their own" (p. 75). Dissociation, then, was quite easily viewed in terms of relatively autonomous and purposeful underlying units.

Next, Adam Crabtree offers "Explanations of Dissociation in the First Half of the Twentieth Century." This excellent discussion begins by surveying M. Prince's taxonomy of meanings for the term "subconscious," and then goes on to examine in more detail the views of Münsterberg, Prince, Sidis, Myers, Janet, and Freud. Crabtree's main focus is on the varying conceptions of the second or hidden self, and he manages successfully to cover a vast territory in a short time. Even the footnotes are unusually informative—for example, a long note on McDougall's distinctions between dissociation and repression.

The next paper is Frank W. Putnam's "The Scientific Investigation of Multiple Personality Disorder," a characteristically judicious review of recent conceptual and methodological trends in the study of MPD. Putnam discusses studies based on electroencephalography and galvanic skin response, surveys some major research issues and techniques, and sketches some leading models of MPD (trance state, temporal lobe dysfunction, and state-dependent learning).

The next paper counters recent and trendy attempts to link dissociation to hemispheric differences and split-brain phenomena. In "Can Neurological Disconnection Account for Psychiatric Dissociation?," John J. Sidtis reviews commissurotomy studies and concludes that "Disconnection . . . does not provide a model for dissociative phenomena. On the contrary, one could use the example of the 'split-brain' as evidence of the strength of the drive toward a unified functional state" (p. 144). Hence, he argues, "dissociative phenomena . . . represent a process far more complicated than simple disconnection" (p. 144).

George Stade provides a change of pace with a literary study, "Horror and Dissociation, with Examples from Edgar Allan Poe." And the book ends with a brief essay by Lawrence C. Kolb, "Comments on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Dissociation," which focuses on the psychological effects of war-related experiences.

Overall, *Split Minds/Split Brains* is an outstanding collection offering much to students of dissociative phenomena and the history of ideas, and displaying an uncommon integrity in its treatment of issues and figures in the history of parapsychology.

*The Passion of Ansel Bourne* BY MICHAEL G. KENNY (1986)

Subtitled, "Multiple Personality in American Culture," this provocative book is more directly concerned with parapsychological issues than the others. Indeed, it examines cases well known to parapsychologists and even features a lengthy discussion of Richard Hodgson and his investigation of Mrs. Piper. Kenny is a social anthropologist whose principal concern is to show how multiple personality is an *idiom of distress*, reflecting the distinctive cultural pressures of a certain time and place in history. He focuses in particular on the moral and behavioral polarities implicit in the Protestant world view and conflicts arising from rapidly evolving sexual roles. Kenny's book is exceptionally interesting, very well written, and boasts (among other things) some careful digging into the histories of Mary Reynolds, Ansel Bourne, and Morton Prince's famous case of "Miss Beauchamp," in the process unearthing previously unpublished documents relevant to our understanding of those cases.

The first two chapters deal, respectively, with the dissociative phenomena displayed by Reynolds and Bourne. Kenny examines how the features of these cases make sense in light of the subjects' immediate personal histories, the broader influence of their religious, literary, and political backgrounds, and also the evolving perspectives of the medical and academic communities on the nature of the self. Kenny thereby lays the groundwork for a sustained defense of the claim that "in the main, multiple personality is a socially created artifact, not the natural product of some deterministic psychological process" (p. 14).

Chapter 3 deals with Mrs. Piper and the possible connections between multiplicity and mediumship. Kenny argues that the spiritualist movement, along with a prevailing social psychology, encouraged the manifestation of dissociative phenomena in forms that suggested the intrusive action of spirits on the minds and bodies of entranced mediums. Although Kenny does not insist that Mrs. Piper's phenomena are explicable entirely in normal terms, he is skeptical concerning their value as evidence for survival. His view is that Mrs. Piper's "spirits were imaginative constructions negotiated into existence in a supportive context of others ready to accept their reality" (p. 127).

Chapter 4 focuses on Morton Prince's cases of "Miss Beauchamp" and "B.C.A." Kenny argues that Miss Beauchamp's symptoms should be viewed, at least in part, as a response to prevailing spiritistic influences, which were especially coercive in the context of her close association with Richard Hodgson. Both cases, according to Kenny, show that multiples do not *unveil* previously hidden dissociative conditions in the therapeutic setting; rather, they are *converted* to their symptoms. The final chapter brings these points up-to-date with observations on the cases of "Eve" and "Sybil," and the growing professional community of those studying MPD.

Whether or not one agrees with Kenny's conclusions about the nature of multiplicity, one must admire the subtlety of his arguments. At the very

least, his book is valuable for its detailed depiction of an interesting period of growth and social change in America, and for its sensitive and penetrating portraits of some pivotal characters in recent intellectual history. Kenny reveals important and hitherto undiscussed or underappreciated facets of the cases under investigation, and he offers some searching observations on the connections between the societies in which we live and the ways in which we view ourselves. But although I strongly recommend Kenny's book, I believe it suffers from some significant problems.

To begin with, Kenny's central thesis is difficult to pin down. As I mentioned above, he argues that "multiple personality is a socially created artifact, not the natural product of some deterministic psychological process" (p. 14). But it is not clear what position Kenny is opposing. Part of the problem is his failure to clarify what he means by the crucial terms "deterministic" and "psychological." And connected with that are some apparent misconceptions about the nature and structure of scientific theories.

Evidently, Kenny objects to a comprehensive theoretical approach according to which individual cases of multiplicity are inferrable or derivable from a single unifying set of universal or general principles. He apparently sees this as the proper business of a deterministic psychology, and he views current attempts to explain MPD as attempts to specify a general causal process that accounts for all cases of MPD. Kenny writes: "The deterministic world view of Western psychiatry . . . would . . . look for universalistically applicable causal processes underlying disorder—however exotic the local manifestations of disorder happen to be" (p. 185).

But it seems that Kenny has set up a straw man. For one thing, a deterministic psychology needn't posit a universal or general causal process for all cases of MPD, no matter how diverse their manifestations. It need only insist that mental states occur in accordance with causal laws, or that the occurrence of a particular mental state is the inevitable outcome of the preceding state of the world. Similarly, a deterministic physiology needn't posit a universal causal process leading to the production of *headaches* or *broken arms*. We recognize that there are different kinds of headaches (and broken arms), and that they can proceed from an indefinite number of different sorts of causes. We don't need a grand unified headache (or broken arm) theory, just because we believe the phenomenon to be caused. In general, in framing causal hypotheses for a type of phenomenon *P*, we can only determine after investigation whether the causal chains leading to *P* form a motley or a systematic group. But whichever option we choose, we would still be giving causal explanations of *P*. And both sorts of causal explanations could, in principle, be accommodated by a rigidly deterministic theory—that is, one according to which occurrences of *P* are inferrable from some specifiable set of antecedent conditions and general principles (though not necessarily the same principles for each instance of *P*).

In any case, it is far from clear that the leading theories of MPD are

rigidly deterministic—although they are certainly causal theories. In fact, they seem to be causal in the same respect (or to the same degree) as Kenny's own theory. Indeed, Kenny seems simply to replace one set of putative causes with another. The standard current approach to MPD traces the disorder back to traumas in the subject's history, along with an underlying high degree of hypnotizability (or ability to dissociate). Instead, Kenny posits social and cultural trends and their connections to psychological dispositions and events in the subject's life. But neither approach is necessarily rigidly deterministic or committed to the existence of some covering law from which all cases of MPD may be predicted (given certain boundary conditions). For example, we are all subject to the sorts of societal and ideological contradictions and influences Kenny addresses, but (as Kenny recognizes) only some of us become multiples. The reason, presumably, is that a person's life is shaped by an enormously complex surrounding network of interests, influences, and interactions, some of which may conflict with or possibly even neutralize one another. Moreover, each person responds to these impinging influences with an idiosyncratic repertoire of inherent dispositions and traits. Hence, although Kenny asserts the *general* claim that multiplicity arises out of a fairly specific confluence of cultural and social pressures, he can still tailor his accounts of different cases to the peculiarities of each subject's situation. But the received view of MPD is in the same position. It can likewise accommodate diverse explanations of multiplicity within a general explanatory framework. It also recognizes that the subject's symptoms reflect a distinctive and complex causal history and idiosyncratic behavioral repertoire. That is why it is not undermined by the fact that not all traumatized hypnotizable persons develop MPD. And that is how it makes sense of each patient's distinctive inventory of alters<sup>2</sup> within the dynamics of the patient's life. In fact, one reason alternate personalities cannot be identified with hypnotic artifactual alters (such as "hidden observers") is that only the former make sense in terms of the patient's history.

No doubt Kenny (quite properly) opposes the efforts of behavioral scientists to emulate the experimental and theoretical methods of physicists. Nevertheless, physics and (say) psychiatry share an important feature, which Kenny seems to overlook. Physical laws are *approximations* based on ideal cases and artificially simplified sets of boundary conditions; as such, they do not strictly apply to real-life situations, which usually involve complex boundary conditions resulting from the interactions of multiple converging causes (Cartwright, 1983). Psychiatric generalizations, too, would *at best* only be approximately true of real cases. As generalizations, they *cannot* do justice to the richness and subtlety of actual cases. And as abstractions, they inevitably focus only on relevant parts of a case-type's causal history, not every sort of causal chain contributing to the disorder in question.

<sup>2</sup> This is now a commonly used abbreviation for "alternate personality." The intermediate "alter personality" is also used frequently.



I suspect that what Kenny really wants to oppose—at least in part—are *mechanistic* psychological theories (especially of the internalistic or physicalistic variety), that is, what are now frequently called *individualistic* psychologies according to which mental states are merely things going on within the person (e.g., things “in the head”), or states analyzable solely in terms of properties of the agent. If so, then I agree and applaud his effort. But if this is in fact Kenny’s target, it is far from clear. Kenny’s own causal explanations of MPD have to do with the ways in which situations, thoughts, actions, and ideas affect one’s experience. But these are psychological explanations. So Kenny is certainly not opposing the view that MPD results from a causal psychological process. Only if one adopts a naively mechanistic (e.g., computational) theory, according to which mental states are explained as functionally unambiguous, context-independent internal states (rather than as loosely specifiable, context-relative states and relations between persons and surrounding events), might Kenny’s explanations not count as psychological. It is, however, far from clear that most theories of MPD are mechanistic in that respect.

Furthermore, despite a number of disclaimers to the effect that he considers MPD “genuine insofar as it lives in experience” (p. 183), Kenny’s polemical style often makes it seem as if he concludes that MPD is not a genuine mental disorder. After all, he insists that MPD is “spurious insofar as it is taken to be the result of a causal psychological process” (p. 183). But even though Kenny is correct in noting how the symptoms of MPD reflect the culture, place, and class of the subject, and even though he is justified in maintaining that mental states are not intelligible as merely internal states of a person, it seems that this conclusion goes too far. The reason is not just that Kenny may be using the term “psychological” in an unjustifiably limited sense. In fact, the cultural variability of dissociational symptoms is *compatible* with dissociation being caused by purely internal processes. Even if dissociational abilities and episodes were *culture-independent*, one would still expect them to assume different forms in different societies. There are clear analogues here to familiar human characteristics. For example, a person’s ability to be musical or humorous is presumably largely inherent; and actual displays of musicality or wit may occur no matter what social or cultural setting the agent lives in. But how these traits manifest is nevertheless highly culture-bound. For that matter, manifestations of a person’s sense of humor can vary from one *audience* to the next (e.g., one cannot be equally crude or sarcastic with every audience).

Moreover, Kenny can’t avoid considering MPD as a type of disorder by noting how, in certain cases, the symptoms offered strategic advantages for the individual (e.g., by permitting the expression of feelings or behavior that would be unacceptable if the person were not “mad”). No doubt Kenny is correct that madness can afford this sort of convenient cover. But it does not follow that the signs of madness point to no underlying disorder. There are, after all, many ways of dealing with life diffi-

culties; some people handle them with greater strength, courage, resourcefulness, and rectitude than others. For example, we can usually understand in what way murders are responses to pressures of various sorts experienced by the murderer. But we can still reasonably maintain that someone who responds *in that way* to such pressures has a problem. In fact, Kenny's case selection is somewhat misleading, because his subjects were not sociopathic or virtually nonfunctional. In that respect, his examples of multiplicity seem to be anything but paradigmatic. Indeed, even when we view MPD as a response to cultural pressures and contradictions, in most cases it is decidedly maladaptive and causes the subject varieties of severe personal anguish not experienced by those with more adequate resources for handling trauma and stress.

Kenny is quite correct in noting that our concepts and descriptive categories have a history, and he does an admirable job of tracing part of the evolution of the concept of multiple personality. But it is a mistake to infer from the evolution of concepts that the *things described* by our categories are nothing but artifacts of the developments leading to the concepts themselves. Our descriptive categories evolve in order that we may more adequately systematize our understanding of the world around us, including phenomena that may occur quite independently of our descriptions. For example, plate subduction was no doubt occurring long before geological thinking evolved to the point where the concept of plate subduction was able to develop. And no doubt manipulative, hostile, and nurturing behavior occurred long before humans developed the requisite conceptual tools to describe and discuss them. These were, *all along*, real behavioral regularities. Hence, the evolution of concepts cannot be used to support an anti-realist position with regard to mental phenomena or psychiatric disorders.

One might similarly object to Kenny's claim (p. 15) that the unconscious was *created*, rather than discovered. In fact, Kenny seems to argue that the unconscious—like multiple personality (both the concept and the disorder)—was created in the nineteenth century (with the help of the previous century's mesmerists). But first of all, Kenny at best has shown only how a concept crystallized. He has not shown that unconscious processes did not exist prior to the nineteenth century. To do that, he'd have to show that people prior to the nineteenth century never did *any* of the things now commonly attributed to unconscious motivations, desires, etc. (e.g., self-defeating or inconsistent behavior). Moreover, Kenny has nothing to say about the ancestors of the modern concepts of the unconscious and multiple personality in antiquity. For example, he fails to note the deep similarity between nineteenth-century French arguments for divided consciousness (e.g., Binet, 1896) and Plato's argument in *The Republic* (IV. 436–441 C) for a divided soul.

Kenny's errors here are connected to his unfortunate and gratuitous rejection of hypnosis as a genuine altered state. He writes: "Hypnosis as a special or altered state does not exist. . . . What happens . . . is that the

hypnotic subject is convinced . . . that he or she is in a special state" (p. 168). Although Kenny never explains what he means by "altered state," this position seems highly implausible. In fact, one would think that certain hypnotic phenomena are paradigm cases of altered states. Unfortunately, Kenny never discusses the hypnotic phenomena that most strongly suggest that hypnosis is a genuine altered state. For example, he never mentions the numerous experiments in hypnotic systematized anesthesia (e.g., negative hallucinations) or the long history of major surgery performed under hypnotic anesthesia and analgesia. But clearly, one cannot simply dismiss the subject's lack of response to normally excruciating or painful processes as "an interesting cultural delusion" (p. 168). Something significant has changed in the experience of the subject. Moreover, Kenny never mentions the interesting experiments of Orne (e.g., 1971, 1972, 1977) that probe the differences between the behavior of hypnotic subjects and simulators. These results, too, cannot be squared with Kenny's rejection of hypnosis as an altered state.

Furthermore, Kenny, like T. X. Barber (1969, 1972), seems confused about the significance of subject compliance (or "task motivation") in hypnosis. If the hypnotic subject is convinced that certain unusual processes or experiences will occur, and if the processes or experiences then occur for that reason, those would seem to be sufficient grounds for regarding hypnosis as an altered state. If hypnotic amnesia and anesthesia, for example, result from my being "conned" into believing they will occur, the occurrence of those conditions is no less genuine than if they had occurred spontaneously, without induction. It almost seems as if Kenny is adopting either the preposterous position that altered states cannot be induced externally or else the equally untenable view that altered states cannot be induced with the complicity of the subject.

In fact, Kenny's errors here may be continuous with another—namely, his claim that "the 'mind' . . . [is] an empty category" (p. 186). That claim might also reflect confusions over the implications of being an anti-mechanist. As Kenny seems to realize, mental states cannot be characterized individualistically, as mere states of a person—for example, purely phenomenologically or as states of the central nervous system. They must, instead, be characterized relative to a larger set of surrounding contextual factors, local and global. But that does not entail that the domain of the mental is empty. One may view "the mind" as simply a term for the class of mental events, just as "the weather" is a term for the class of meteorological events. And although neither the mind nor the weather need be construed as a kind of *thing* or *substance*, it does not follow that "the mind" is an empty term, any more than "the weather" is an empty term. Similarly, we may talk meaningfully about a person's *health* or a nation's *economy*, without referring to a corresponding entity. Perhaps what Kenny means is that we may not properly speak of *the* mind—that is, some set of mental properties or dispositions universally attributable to all persons—for example, in virtue of which certain truths may be regarded as univer-

sally a priori. That point would at least seem to connect with Kenny's rejection of a unified deterministic psychiatric theory of MPD. But it does not follow from his rejection of internalist accounts of the mental, as Kenny appears to think.

I must also record a few additional, somewhat less important, disappointments with Kenny's book. To begin with, I found it curious that he did not even mention the Doris Fischer case of multiple personality. The omission is rather serious, for several reasons. First, it is probably the best-documented case of all time. Second, it falls squarely within the relevant period of American history, only a few years later than the Miss Beauchamp case. Third, its etiology seems more like those of current cases than the ones Kenny examines. And fourth, since Doris displayed ostensibly mediumistic abilities on several occasions, her case might well have illuminated very clearly the connection between multiplicity and mediumship (though perhaps not in the form Kenny prefers).

I also challenge Kenny's conclusion that Miss Beauchamp got "markedly sicker" (p. 143) under the care of Morton Prince. Quite probably, she *behaved* differently around her doctor than around others with whom she felt more inhibited about expressing or revealing certain problems and feelings. But that would not show that Miss Beauchamp experienced different underlying levels of distress in these different contexts or that her underlying dissociative disorder was more severe around Prince. Yet even if Kenny wants only to make the less interesting claim about the degrees to which Miss Beauchamp displayed sick *behavior*, he is still not entitled to assert that Prince's therapeutic procedures were responsible for the change. Kenny supports his view by noting how Miss Beauchamp had very few dissociative episodes on holiday one summer in Europe, but worsened considerably when she returned to Boston. But clearly, the change in Miss Beauchamp's behavior needn't indicate iatrogenesis. Rather, it might be due to stresses from returning to a *place* to which her problems were strongly associated, and which reactivated unpleasant memories, feelings, and habits of response. There is certainly too little here to support Kenny's generalization.

Kenny is also not entitled to assert that therapy "transformed" (p. 149) neurasthenia into MPD in the cases of Miss Beauchamp and B.C.A. Indeed, that claim is not supported any more strongly than the rival, and probably more reasonable, claim that the subject's condition was *reinterpreted* in a more useful way during the process of treatment and study—that is, that the underlying condition never changed. In fact, one would have expected Kenny to say that Prince's patients had not been genuinely neurasthenic to begin with. Earlier in the book he claimed that the concept of neurasthenia was merely part of a nonviable theoretical approach to mental disorders. So it is odd for him to say that a spurious condition was transformed into something else. That would be like saying that an actual chemical experiment transformed phlogiston into oxygen.

I also disagree with Kenny's claim that amnesia alone is what "makes

multiple personality into a distinctive disorder . . . ; without amnesia the phenomenon would have to be subsumed under some other category or dissolved entirely'' (pp. 14–15). This seems simply to be false. For one thing, amnesia may be found in other disorders, dissociative and otherwise, not nearly as puzzling as MPD. For another, many alternate personalities seem to know the thoughts or actions of others, and the absence of amnesia makes these alters no less interesting, important, or paradigmatic. And finally, multiplicity can persist even when amnesic barriers between alters are broken down (e.g., during therapy, but before integration). One would think that what makes MPD so distinctive is rather the apparent proliferation of centers of *self*-consciousness, with idiosyncratic repertoires of traits, skills, and functions.

Despite the above criticisms, I hold Kenny's book in high esteem. Kenny is defending a point of view that must be taken seriously, even if the case for it is not as strong as he believes. Indeed, even if all my criticisms above are correct, much of Kenny's book seems quite on target and very important. If nothing else, Kenny has successfully illuminated many of the social dimensions of MPD. On the whole, then, *The Passion of Ansel Bourne* is scholarly, elegant, often profound, and always interesting.

Of course, it remains to be seen whether any of these new books helps us finally to answer the questions about hypnosis and dissociation that interested psi researchers a century ago. Nevertheless, they all contribute (in their distinctive ways) to our understanding of the phenomena, and they deserve the attention of the parapsychological community.

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