

**MULTIPLE:  
CHARACTERS DISOWNED  
BY THEIR "AUTHOR"**



Gilbert J. Rose

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Under the impact of trauma, or of a traumatic intensity of conflict, the organism is in danger of being flooded with affects. In an attempt at containment and mastery, these affects may split off. Dostoevsky's fictional character, Golyadkin, experienced a "vertical" split of consciousness to become Golyadkin plus his newly formed double; in Shaver's real-life case, affects that had become too intense for consciousness underwent "horizontal" repression-that is, they were rendered unconscious.

Golyadkin's envy and ambition had been thinly disguised behind obsequiousness; his hypocrisy was laid bare when he was spotted by his section chief in a fancy carriage pretending to be a fine gentleman. In order to disown the affects and traits that stood revealed, he pretended that "it's not I at all, it's not I-(Dostoevsky [1846] 1950, 142). Soon his own repugnant qualities became personified in the form of the "other" Golyadkin, his double. The conscious coexistence of Golyadkin and his double within a single cohesive reality became increasingly untenable and culminated in the final break from sanity.

Shaver's rage and desire for revenge were repressed into the unconscious, and turned against himself; they appeared in the disguised form of somatic and other symptomatic torments. Occasionally they would erupt through his characteristic external submissiveness and take the

shape of brief, deliberate sneak attacks against the various women who dominated him. The rape and murder on the eve of the Fourth of July were acted out in a mental state dissociated from consciousness.

In both cases, the affects that became fragmented off-splitting away either within consciousness or from consciousness-did not live on in a vacuum but continued to seek discharge and, just as persistently, were defended against to avoid the danger of flooding the organism. This shifting equilibrium of affects and defense against them represents ongoing efforts at mastery; it exerts an “organizing” effect on thoughts and percepts and the behavior that flows accordingly.

Shaver’s explosive episode provides a highly condensed glimpse of this ongoing struggle: on the day of the crime, Shaver’s rebellion and rage grew as he became frustrated with his wife’s absence; his control over these affects diminished the more he drank; when he saw a stone-throwing little girl attacking his “body,” he misperceived her as his childhood tormentor and the old fear of being raped and killed finally erupted openly in a vengeful, preemptive act of rape and murder.

A clinical condition where the sequence of splitting and reintegration is slowed down and magnified affords a closer examination of the nature of trauma and mastery. Such a condition is multiple personality disorder, in which a number of repressed affects become split off from consciousness and organized into two or more distinct personalities; disowned by their “author,” they interact with each other, have unique behavior patterns and social relationships, and periodically dominate the individual’s thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

## **BACKGROUND**

Multiple personality disorder figured prominently in the psychological and psychiatric

literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is noteworthy that Pierre Janet (1889), who was perhaps the first to formulate a theory regarding this disorder, located its cause in traumatic events of the past (as well as in heredity). Similar views were expressed by William James (1890), and by Morton Prince (1906) in his writing about his most famous patient, Christine Beauchamp.

More recently, multiple personality has attracted considerable media attention (Thigpen and Cleckley, *The Three Faces of Eve*, 1957; Schreiber, *Sybil*, 1973; Keyes, *The Minds of Billy Milligan*, 1981), and also received renewed scientific study (for example, the first conference devoted to the study of multiple personality, at Rush Medical School, Chicago, September, 1984). Surprisingly little psychoanalytic attention has been devoted to it (Lasky 1978; Marmer 1980; Berman 1981).

In this condition, the personalities other than the original, host, or presenting personality are referred to as the *alternates*. Pascal (as quoted by Bentley 1952, xxvii) said, "There is no man who differs more from another man than he does from himself at another time." Nowhere is this more true than among the alternates, who differ among themselves in almost every respect: gender, age, and sexual orientation; wardrobes and possessions; pursuits, styles, and values; manifest problems, symptoms, and diagnoses. Their psychophysiological variations are among the most striking features: presence or absence of allergies; handedness and handwriting; voices, type of accent, and speech patterns, including the presence or absence of stammering, the knowledge or ignorance of foreign languages, and the scope of vocabulary; facial expressions, movements, and talents-artistic, musical, mathematical, mechanical, and so on; even brainwave tracings (including the refined technique of visual evoked potentials). As the alternates achieve integration within one personality, visual changes include visual acuity, ocular tension, color vision and visual fields (Shepard and Braun, 1985).

A prominent and consistent finding among cases of multiple personality disorder is that

more than 90 percent were victims of child abuse-physical, mental, sexual (including incest)-often verified.

The greater the severity, the earlier the onset, and the longer the duration of the abuse, the more intense the condition; the later treatment is undertaken, the poorer the prognosis.

General opinion, however, both within psychiatry and outside the field, tends to be outspokenly skeptical or politely dubious as to the existence of the condition. This contributes to the fact that the diagnosis is often overlooked; where multiple personality is alleged to exist, it is likely to be attributed to suggestion or gullibility on the part of the therapist, an unconscious collusion of therapist and patient joined in a folie a deux, or a conscious malingering attempt of the patient to avoid punishment for some crime.

Undoubtedly, it was with similar latent attitudes that I stepped into the waiting room to greet my next regular patient, whom I shall call Diana.

Long familiarity over the course of several years had taught me what to expect: a dour, unsmiling, fortyish woman, with wooden expression, slow, deliberate motions, conveying in manner and inflection heavy, unrelieved gloom together with the unshakable conviction that all efforts on her behalf were doomed in advance. Anhedonia-the absence of pleasure in acts that are normally pleasurable-her life seemed to have given new meaning to the term. Except for work. She was a gifted, competent, sensitive college teacher, beloved by her students and respected by her colleagues. Her married and family life, on the other hand, was grimly devoted to being relentlessly on guard against the dangers lurking everywhere ready to strike herself, her husband, or her children should her vigilance falter. In short, depression, anxiety, compulsions, and phobias had long dominated the clinical picture and constricted her life.

Her symptoms had defeated every attempt at treatment over the years, by myself and

others, and had taught me a new respect for “negative therapeutic reaction”—a prim term to describe a dreaded treatment phenomenon in which everything that should help paradoxically serves to make matters worse. Earlier efforts at psychotherapy and psychoanalysis had bogged down in intractable silence or unresponsiveness. Results with me, first in psychoanalysis, then in psychotherapy, seemed little better. Trials with numerous drugs under the supervision of a consultant invariably led to bizarre side effects which required neurological, cardiovascular, and endocrine investigations (all negative). Deepening depression with serious suicidal risk on two occasions necessitated emergency hospitalization for about a month each time. Concomitant marital and family therapy with a male and a female therapist did little to improve the quality of the home.

And yet, in spite of the succession of one dramatic crisis after another and her insistence that each was the worst so far and truly unbearable, I had the impression of overall qualitative improvement—though I could never allude to it on pain of immediate worsening of her symptoms. The dynamics of the case were becoming increasingly clear, and though it was apparent to both of us that she could at times harbor psychotic ideation and even lose control of herself at home, there was also ample opportunity to observe that much of the time her judgment was sound and her behavior reliable.

Diana, of course, steadfastly expressed only hopelessness regarding the final outcome, but she came faithfully for her sessions and resisted my efforts to have her cut down from three to two sessions weekly. I thought that it would lessen her dependence on me, and also relieve me of some of the burden of carrying such a case.

After I returned from a short vacation, Diana said she wished she could tell me that all had gone well and that she was ready to leave treatment, but, regretfully, she could not. I said it sounded as though she would have liked to have been able to give me that as a gift. She agreed.

This is where matters stood when I went out to the waiting room to ask her in for our next treatment session.

But she was not there. Or rather, it was clearly Diana sitting there but just as clearly not Diana. The features of the woman who sat there were surely Diana's, but the expression and posture were certainly not. Sitting on the sofa in a thoroughly relaxed way with her legs curled up beneath her, she flashed me a warm, sunny, engaging smile and said, "She's not here. She left." "And who are you?" "I'm Roddy." She spoke in a tiny, child's voice, bit her lower lip, and shook her head with slow, exaggerated, up and down or sideways motions to indicate "yes" or "no." She seemed the complete image of a composed, trusting but shy, polite but forthright, charming little girl.

"Diana and I were always good friends. Then her mother told her that I was really no friend of hers and she should give me up. But Diana didn't and we remained secret friends always-until her father had a heart attack when she was eleven years old. She thought it was her fault because she had been bad and kept me as her secret friend. So she let me go. But I never went. I stayed with her. She doesn't know me, but I know her very, very well. I comforted her and would take over for her and help her out. I'm eleven years old. But when I take over I can pretend to be any age I want. Oh, no-her mother is not my mother. Who would want her for a mother? I have my own mother and father. They're real nice. I can go back to them any time I want. Why did I come today? Because she was too scared. She was scared that you are angry with her and that is why you take vacations and talk to her about cutting down to twice a week. I am her special gift to you."

I thanked Roddy for coming and said that Diana was lucky to have her as a friend and helper, and now let's bring Diana back to the session. She nodded happily and agreed to come again. Then Roddy's head dropped to her chest, she unfolded her legs from beneath her, assumed a wooden, stolid position, each hand resting on each thigh, her features took their customary

heavy, stony expression, she sighed heavily, and Diana raised her head. She had no awareness of what had transpired. She looked at the clock, apologized for coming late, but things were getting to be just too much for her, time was getting away from her, and she was finding it harder and harder to keep track of things or to stay tuned in.

When I told Diana what had happened, at first she could only insist that this was bad, this was just too weird, she didn't want to have any of it, talk about it, know about it. Finally, she said she had a vague memory of having had an imaginary companion as a child. "What was her name?" "I think it was something like Roddy." "What happened?" "Mother told me I shouldn't. So I gave her up. She must have gone underground."

Thus began my acquaintance with Roddy, the first of a number of characters who began to emerge to the accompaniment of Diana's dreaming of Siamese twins, of giving birth, and similar themes.

I felt like Pirandello when he wrote his preface to *Six Characters in Search of an Author*.

I can only say that, without having made any effort to seek them out, I found before me, alive-you could touch them and even hear them breathe-the six characters now seen on the stage. And they stayed there in my presence, each with his secret torment and all bound together by the one common origin and mutual entanglement of their affairs. . . . Born alive, they wished to live (Bentley 1952, 364).

"Why not," I said to myself, "present this highly strange fact of an author who refuses to let some of his characters live though they have been born in his fantasy? . . . Having by now life in their veins, {they} do not resign themselves to remaining excluded from the world. . . . They . . . live on their own; . . . even know how to defend themselves against others. . . . Let them go where dramatic characters do go to have life: on a stage. And let us see what will happen" (p. 366).

Without wanting to, without knowing it, in the strife of their bedevilled souls, each of them . . . expresses . . . the multiple personality of everyone corresponding to the possibilities of being to be found in each of us (p. 367).

The outlines of the past history were these. Diana was born in a small Midwestern town. Her father was a junior high school principal. He had courted the gym teacher for eight years before marrying her. One child, a son, died shortly after birth. Diana was the replacement for father's sake. Neither parent had family in the area, nor did they seem to have any friends. For some reason, Diana was sent away for a month to a distant aunt and uncle's at the age of two years. When she returned her disposition seems to have changed from cheerful to sad and serious. At four years of age she spent four or five weeks in bed with a fever, possibly due to cystitis. At seven she had a tonsillectomy under ether anesthesia. Until this time she slept in her parents' bedroom. She was taught to be a model child, a showpiece for the community, as befit the parents' status. She was always dressed in long stockings and gloves and was expected to remain clean at all times. Few friends were tolerated. She had dolls, but mother controlled how they were dressed and where they were to be kept at all times. Father took no part in Diana's upbringing; she was mother's project. The family would sometimes take rides in the car together, but Diana could never be part of the conversation and would always sit alone in the back seat. They went to the movies together every week faithfully. Father had a heart attack when Diana was eleven and remained confined to the home until his death four years later. Diana was not allowed to talk to him during that time. In school she was an excellent student and made close girlfriends with whom she went to the movies each week and to every play that came to town. She attended a university in a distant part of the state. There, she formed an intense attachment

to her roommate. Following graduation, both young women came East and completed their postgraduate studies. Shortly after Diana took a faculty position in a church-affiliated institution, her roommate was killed in a car accident. A few years later Diana married her roommate's brother, a computer scientist. The onset of anxiety and phobic symptoms occurred following the birth of a daughter and became aggravated after the birth of a son.

Roddy and the various other characters who followed did not begin to make their appearance until after many years of treatment. As mentioned earlier, treatment began as psychoanalysis, changed to psychotherapy, was supplemented by marital, family, and drug treatment under other therapists, and was punctuated by two hospitalizations of about a month's duration each. Let us summarize the highlights.

Diana's first dream was, "I am mother's entire life." Detailing the many ways in which this was true and what it involved became the substance of her lengthy treatment. What emerged slowly and painfully was that, from her earliest years, Diana had been the subject of child abuse, both physical and emotional, was amnesic for much of it, and had escaped from it by blanking out and at the same time believed she deserved it. The abuser was her mother, who was probably psychotic, though no one ever knew.

Diana had no memory of kindness or compassion from her mother. On the contrary, it appeared that mother systematically deprived Diana of any possibility of pleasure, at the same time making Diana responsible for the deprivations. As soon as mother discovered that Diana enjoyed rubbing a piece of blanket, it was destroyed. Diana was accused of being "bad," punished by spanking, and told she had brought it on herself.

Since crying was forbidden, the more Diana cried, the more she was spanked and threatened. She finally learned never to cry. In treatment she often struggled against speaking because speaking might lead to tears, and they might never stop. She dreamed: "I was bleeding

profusely and screaming because I knew I had been injured, but there was no light to see. Then the door opened and you came in and put the light on. There was no blood on my hands and no injury. I guess I had been crying and not bleeding.”

The alternative to punishment and crying seemed to be silence, and that was worse. Mother would never speak to her. Diana would scream and beg to be called by name and would dream of going berserk screaming at mother. Mother refused to look at her, saying Diana did not deserve it. Or mother would say her name was “Mud.” She customarily referred to Diana in the third person only, for example: “Is she going to come in for supper?”

Much of Diana’s childhood was spent waiting for clues to what was coming next from mother. Mother would often leave unexpectedly at night without a word as to when or whether she would return. These departures always took place without warning; she would suddenly get up from her seat and leave a trolley car, for example, so that Diana had to keep up and not get lost. She recalled that her first anxiety attack was at about age five or six, fearing to lose mother in a department store crowd.

Could it have been that mother did not want Diana? That she did not want Diana alive? Diana was afraid to hear herself say this. She was her mother’s life. Mother had almost died in giving birth to her. Mother had been told that she had given birth to a son. Diana had to be grateful for mother’s sacrifices. It was just that mother did not want her to be spoiled. To care is to be indulged is to be spoiled and that is *bad*. Treatment is self-indulgence. It is disobedience to mother; it can only make things worse.

As an adult, Diana found that she could be more her own self when mother was present. When mother was away Diana would find herself yelling at her daughter and could practically hear mother’s voice, but was unable to stop it. She remembered an outburst of rage at mother throwing something at the *mirror*. She feared that she would become more and more like

mother, and her daughter more like herself. She was mortified to find herself beating her daughter-as mother beat her?

Dreams led Diana in the direction of memories she preferred to leave buried. "I saw a screaming, battered child on the store counter, black and blue. I wanted to comfort it, but was told that it was not allowed." Diana awoke with the pillow sopping wet with tears. Could it be that mother had been physically abusive to her?

In another dream, Diana was being locked in a closet with her daughter and fearing suffocation. Could she have been locked in a closet herself? She became afraid to sleep lest she dream. She was afraid to remember. All Hell will break loose! She did remember: she *was* locked in a closet; she *did* fear suffocating. Now she felt like vomiting. She did something terrible by telling me that. She was trained to keep secrets-above all from her father, who was too tired or too busy. Otherwise, she would *really* get it. This is "squealing." Now I will have her locked up. She never should have come here. {She looked terrified.}

Following this session, Diana got lost. When she went into a phone booth to call me she suddenly recognized her whereabouts. Such dissociation would often accompany or follow memories and confessions of having been abused. First she would consciously fight the return of the memories, then feel paranoid toward me, then become unable to hear me and fall silent. Silence, she said, had been her only defense against mother.

She began to remember that there had been many blank spells in her life, long periods without any memory: father's funeral when she was fifteen, many piano recitals over the years. As a child she remembered that a person would begin to recede before her eyes, then disappear. Diana feared that she was going blind and would practice walking around with her eyes closed to prepare herself. She had been afraid to fall asleep at night lest she wake up blind or deaf. She never told anyone this for fear of being blamed for it. After telling me, she became hypnoidally

detached, seemed far away, was unresponsive, and said she could not hear me.

As memories of childhood abuse forced their way into her consciousness, Diana began to discover notes at her bedside in the morning. The first was in a handwriting not her own, unless she had written it lefty, as she used to do secretly as a child when her mother was forcing her to use her right hand. It said: "One lazy afternoon I awoke to find someone in my head." After I told her that she would have to become better friends with herself and learn to shake hands, she found a second note at her bedside the next morning: "The other other can't know the other me, we only have one hand."

Other examples of automatic writing: "I can't breathe anymore its so fast it makes me hurt and shake don't make me tell anyone anymore." And: "Sick babies cry / Don't let them die / Don't make them die / Don't make them cry." And: "It's hurting too much to do it alone." And: "I am afraid to hear her. I can't see her anymore. I won't be bad a hundred times. I can't ever be." [Printed in block print].

Diana remembered that she had had an imaginary companion named Roddy, but mother said this was silly and told her to stop it. Then Diana became unable to hear or understand me. The next morning, a note at her bedside said: "She's never there. It's so empty and bare not to care." It seemed that Diana had peopled her life with prohibited imaginary companions to fill the emptiness and to comfort herself.

The pace of memories increased and could not be slowed down or held back. Diana recalled how she would try to remain with people as long as possible and try never to be alone with mother because of the incessant punishment; she remembered that her mother kept her well-dressed and all covered up with long stockings and gloves so that there would be no visible evidence of her beatings; thus no rescue was ever possible. Along with these memories, there were mounting fears of retribution. She wanted to run away, smashed a mirror at home on some

minor provocation, flung her daughter physically, struck her husband when he admonished her, and was appalled at her own behavior. Telling her that she was repeating and dramatizing her mother's irrational rages instead of remembering had no effect. Nor did daily medication with phenothiazines. She dreamed of being in a frenzy of rage against her mother, said she was afraid of herself, afraid she might kill her children and husband, and that she could not be trusted alone.

Actively suicidal and deeply depressed at the end of the second year of treatment, Diana was hospitalized for five weeks and treated with an antidepressant (Parnate) and a tranquilizer (Trilafon). She experienced the hospitalization as punishment for having been bad. It reminded her of having to be in bed every evening by 6 P.M. She said that now she no longer existed-only mother remained.

The pattern kept repeating itself during the course of the next three years: memories of child abuse coming up insisently despite great fear; "spacing out" during sessions when affect became too intense (I would fade and Diana would be unable to see or hear me); the discovery of more notes informing us of more child abuse; renewed rage at mother, followed by attempts to exonerate her and blame herself. Brief episodes of feeling somewhat better would be followed immediately by feeling worse. Recovering and sharing traumatic memories only resulted in retraumatizing herself in the process of recall. Yet, the pressure of traumatic memories demanded release.

The angrier Diana would become at her mother, the more this would trigger her own identification with her mother, and she would hate herself. The only way to be loved by mother is to be dead. [Diana began to shake uncontrollably.] Yet, it must be Diana's own fault that mother was not loving. Mother was, after all, conspicuously affectionate to other children. So Diana kept trying to transform mother into a loving person, blaming herself for failing, defending her mother. At the same time, she kept bringing in examples of mother's pathological lying, her inability to give a straight answer to anything, her irrationality, and her attempts to impose it on

Diana in the past and on her grandchildren in the present. For example, mother insisted on things Diana knew to be untrue, such as that her name had always been “X” whereas Diana knew that mother’s name had been “Y,” having seen it as such in mother’s high school yearbook.

The horror-story memories continued. While relating a dream that her air supply was being cut off, Diana would recall mother’s holding her head backward under a scalding shower, telling her the water was not hot while Diana was gagging. Or of mother forcing her to drink fluids when she was ill, then forbidding her to go to the bathroom and beating her if she wet the bed.

The matter of the bathroom deserves special mention. Diana was never allowed to be in the bathroom for more than a few minutes, and the door had to remain open. She was not allowed to use the bathroom after 6 P.M. She could never use any bathroom other than the one at home, because of “germs.” Therefore, Diana would rush home from school as fast as possible to get to the bathroom on time. Many of her nightmares centered on the fear of “accidents” and either beating someone for “accidents” or being beaten for them. In one dream, she knew that if she went to the bathroom to urinate she would hemorrhage to death. But if she did not go she would burst. So she did not go and remained in torment. Like crying, her fear of “letting go” was connected to the fear that she would then “go” endlessly and be punished endlessly for it.

Something further should be mentioned about mother’s worldview. Happiness was too good to be true. Therefore, only the bad was real. If the weather appears to be beautiful, that is a perfect way to be taken in and get sick when the weather changes. Under no circumstances must one let down one’s guard and enjoy; every apparent pleasure is a booby trap; one must always avoid hope and thus disappointment. Accordingly, if Diana began to feel somewhat better, she would become anxious. What seems good is untrue and bad; what is bad is true and good.

It was not surprising that when Diana left a session feeling good for the first time, she felt

light-headed, her speech became slurred and somewhat garbled, and she developed a frontal headache of such intensity that a C-T scan was performed. (It proved negative.) Nor was it difficult to begin to understand, if almost impossible to change, her lifelong pattern of depriving herself of whatever she wanted, since getting what she wanted would only make matters worse in both the short and long run. The primitive logic was that it must have become bad because it had been good. Moral: Never let anything become good because that will make it go bad. Admitting to feeling okay was tantamount to being caught in an illicit pleasure. On one level, even being alive was getting away with something. Hence, the constant expectation of disaster and death. Once, she admitted to herself that her life had become much freer in some respects. She immediately had a panic attack together with an intense urge to cry, as though to apologize. Thus, anxiety represented selfpunishment for pleasure—a way of beating mother to the punch and acquiring some degree of active mastery. (But, while pleasure was unthinkable, she was also consumed with anger and jealousy toward those who seemed to get away with it.)

Any transference gratification was at her peril. In a dream, I was pictured as calling her name repeatedly and softly, something her mother, of course, had never done. She kept screaming at me to stop, becoming angrier and angrier, and finally said that if I did not stop she would have to jump off the bridge she was standing on, into the dark, windy, cold night. And she did.

Summarizing some of the aspects of the treatment impasse: (1) Diana feared that if she were not moralistic and compulsive she might stop functioning altogether. (2) Retraumatizing herself by reliving memories of punishment was a way of punishing herself for “squealing” on mother. (3) Diana defined “really” as meaning the past; thus, her feeling that nothing can “really” change was due to her equating “really” with the past, and acting out the past in recurrent masochistic escapades made it “really” present in actuality. (4) She needed to support mother’s delusion of being perfect by herself retaining the role of the evil scapegoat.

Early in the sixth year of treatment there was a sudden deterioration of the shaky equilibrium. It was triggered by nightmares, then memories of being beaten mercilessly. This was followed by rapidly escalating rage at her own daughter, and then the realization of how this was almost identical to her mother's chronic rage at her. She then remembered that as a child she used to be obsessed with thoughts of suicide and had even been actively suicidal. There was a specific memory of having deliberately walked in front of a car when she was ten years of age. The car skidded to a stop, but not before knocking her down. The driver carried her home. Her mother beat her "within an inch of my life" and refused to speak to her for days.

This memory seemed to set off a new rush of yearnings for death-the only relief she could hope for, as in childhood, and as a means of rejoining her dear, dead father. When her father had died, mother's first words to Diana had been: "You finally killed him." Diana had answered: "I'm sorry." Mother hardly ever spoke to her after that. Diana could not turn to memories of her father for comfort. There were few memories and it was just as well, for she could not take the chance of losing him. She knew he was passive and ineffectual, but he probably did all he could, and he was all she had. But he was dead. She was certain there was no other way but to put an end to the useless struggle. Diana overdosed with Valium, said goodbye to me on the phone, and had to be hospitalized again.

A few days later I received a note from the hospital. It included the following: "In spite of the garbage and anger I lay on you, I know you must understand how much I appreciate your concern, understanding, sensitivity. . . . You have helped me make some important changes (will I ever be punished for admitting that?) and seeing you {in the hospital today} did indeed breathe a little fresh air into tired lungs. Thank you. ... In spite of these hospitalizations, I still have faith in . . . our work together. If I survive this latest episode in the ongoing soap opera of my life, I hope we can continue that work." Diana retained no memory of having written this.

After her discharge from the hospital about thirty days later, "splitting from the scene"

became one of the chief themes of the next few years. It became apparent to her that this had happened far more often than she had realized. She used to be afraid to blink because she would often “awaken” days or even months later. It would come as a shock that before she “blinked” it was winter, she was in the bathtub at about five years of age and the next thing she knew she was sitting in a sandbox in the park and it was springtime. Where was she in between? Home movies proved that she swam well as a young woman, yet as far as she was aware, she did not know how to swim.

Such splitting also continued in her current life. Sometimes her handwriting would change so drastically that the bank would refuse to cash her checks. She would discover that she had done much shopping but had no memory of it. She could not recall whether she had kept her last appointment with me or had been to work. She went to wash the breakfast dishes and the next thing she knew she was standing there washing the dinner dishes and did not know what day it was. One day she discovered a large amount of cash in her purse. On another day, an expensive speeding ticket.

Diana kept finding notes everywhere. They talked about her in the third person and seemed to refer to child abuse: suggestions of oral and anal invasions of her body, gagging, choking; “The pain in her gut spreads and now she can’t move her arms and legs. The tears are always salty and quiet. No one hears her.” “The scissors cut too close. Glass breaks and hurts. She’s bleeding again.” “She’s around every corner. She’s in the schoolyard-in her bed-in her body.” “Don’t pull the blindfold off.” “There is nowhere to hide. The skin looks raw.” “Don’t kick her. Please don’t hurt her. Save her.” “Under her skin she quivers. She smiles awaiting the next blow.”

One note said: “She is out of step with time. Preventing her from fragmenting becomes more difficult. Her only comfort is to disappear.” According to the notes, disappearing and fragmenting were related to each other: “Separate minds within a single body. Too much to

endure alone." "Life on the outside differs from life on the inside. The split widens. The two worlds cannot meet."

The automatic writing and the nightmares led to more memories of abuse with further details: beatings, enemas, nose-drops, oral medications-all for Diana's own good. The beatings were always carried out without mother's raising her voice, telling her that if she cried or ever complained to father it would be much worse for her, that mother was her only friend, that Diana would appreciate it one day and love her for it because it showed mother cared no matter how bad Diana was. The only let-up was mother's silence and unresponsiveness, which were worse-or the solace of playing with dolls and, later, school, the library, the movies, or listening to music.

Aside from the realistic therapeutic alliance with me, she experienced treatment sadomasochistically. She saw me sometimes as her father, caring in some distant, ineffectual way, and would rail at me to "do" something or try to terrorize me with threats of suicide, deadlines, ultimata, crises of all sorts, while shooting down every attempt to be of help.

Alternatively, she would experience me as her mother, forcing something down her throat, which only caused her to "vomit" or "defecate" a terrible mess of more anger, necessitating more punishment. She saw me as demanding that she face intolerable memories, which only made matters worse, or tearing her away from her lifeline to her mother-namely, her pain, her neurosis.

When, at times, she would recognize that she was using treatment to retraumatize herself rather than to master the past, or was abusing me in addition to herself, she would only feel more guilty and worthless for doing nothing to protect me from her anger. "Voices" in her head, which she knew to be unreal, would warn her not to speak to me, not to listen to me, not to confide in me, because this would prove lethal for both of us.

The state of affairs just before the appearance of Roddy has already been described. By now, Diana held a responsible job and was highly respected. To the outside world she was a composed and empathic person with a well-organized life as wife, mother, daughter, community member, and hostess, as well as a successful career in academia. Few knew that her family life was turbulent, and her marriage non-sexual. Only she and I knew about her past and present panics and the way she could “drop out” or “split” from consciousness. Her functioning had improved, but treatment was at a stalemate.

Enter Roddy.

## **“THE OTHERS”**

Roddy had been Diana’s imaginary companion of childhood, probably ever since Diana had been left with her aunt and uncle for a month when she was two years of age. Until that early separation Diana had been a sunny child, but thereafter she was described as serious and sad. Roddy, on the other hand, was as cheerful and good-humored as Diana had been.

Diana’s parents were not Roddy’s. Roddy’s parents were described in fairy tale terms—good, loving, perfect in every way. Thus Diana, was able, in effect, to disown her parents, kill them off as her parents, through Roddy. Roddy was free to express, and often did, her hatred of Diana’s mother—something Diana was either totally unable to do or could do only by paying the price of intense generalized anxiety, or a crippling phobia that she and/or her immediate family were in peril of some incurable, fatal disease.

Despite mother’s insistence that having an imaginary companion was silly and should cease, Roddy remained Diana’s faithful fantasy-friend and comforter until Diana was eleven years of age. At that time father had the first of two heart attacks. Diana was convinced that this was due to her own disobedience in secretly keeping her companion. Thereafter, Roddy was

repressed-but never “went away.” She remained at age eleven and frequently “took over” for Diana and “helped her out.” Diana was aware only of having blank spells-she would blink her eyes and the next thing she knew it was hours or months later. The longest blank spell lasted about a year.

Roddy served many functions. The most obvious was to permit guiltless and fearless defiance of mother. Roddy said, “Her mother didn’t bother me. She wasn’t *my* mother. I could leave at any time. I took Diana’s mother in stride. I did not let her get to me. I could always call her names [giggles and blushes]. You know, all the names that kids pick up but that Diana never did because she was such a goody-goody.”

During the course of treatment mother suffered a stroke and was partially paralyzed. Diana was almost paralyzed with guilt and walked and sat rigidly with a stony expression like mother’s. I mentioned to Roddy that Diana was acting like a “mummy.” Roddy enjoyed the joke immensely but said that Diana, of course, would never laugh at such a remark.

Diana was at her mother’s beck and call, neglecting her own family to serve her quite slavishly. By such “dedication” she was determined to transform mother into the loving person she had always wished her to be. Diana insisted that this was working: mother was becoming kinder, warmer, more loving, and spoke warmly about her. Roddy, however, said that mother was as hateful and demanding as ever. Moreover, Roddy openly expressed the death wishes Diana must have repressed, saying, “She got what she deserved! But don’t tell Diana I said so!”

In addition to being able to experience autonomy, assertiveness, and hostility, Roddy was also able to have the pleasure Diana could not permit herself. During happy occasions, celebrations, vacation, Diana would invariably blank out, leaving Roddy to enjoy the good times. Roddy would say she had a marvelous time on vacation, but Diana, of course, was miserable. “I’m not going to let her spoil things for *both* of us. She would rather die than have a good time!” When

I asked her why she did mischievous things, like losing Diana's purse or buying an expensive, brightly colored leotard that could not be returned, she said it was because Diana was such a drag, no fun, much too serious for her taste. In fact, the main reason Roddy was adamantly opposed to having to grow up beyond age eleven was that she was determined not to become a sourpuss adult like Diana! She said, "You said I had to be responsible. So do I have to spend the rest of my life taking over for her? Also, what if I begin to grow up and find I am becoming like her? Can I go back to age eleven?"

Roddy retained most of the memories of happy, assertive, or angry occasions. Diana's experience and memory were limited almost wholly to depression and anxiety. Thus, Roddy was the repository of repressed memories and soon came to be my chief source of information about the traumatic past. The torment of child abuse that the anonymous notes had referred to in various generalized ways Roddy was able to disclose in detail.

In addition, Roddy would tell me the things Diana was afraid to disclose out of fear that I would become angry and abandon her. For example, that she was screaming at her child, or was taking so much medication that it was even making Roddy tired. In these ways, Roddy served to protect Diana from conscious awareness of her own anger as well as from the danger of being exposed to the anger she anticipated from me. At the same time, Roddy was ashamed of herself for "tattling." Diana, of course, was simply furious for being "ratted on."

Although it had been clearly agreed among Roddy, Diana, and myself that I would act as the faithful go-between until such time as Roddy and Diana would be in direct touch with each other, Diana felt that I was "twisting the knife." Learning some of the details of mother's abuse also made it much more difficult for her to play the role of Florence Nightingale for her convalescent mother. On the other hand, Roddy considered it ridiculous and "crazy" that Diana had to act so saintly to her mother. Rather, "she should put a clothespin on her nose" to keep out the smell of her mother's incontinence. But Roddy, too, was often very dubious about the wisdom

of Diana's being in possession of her own memories and was forever cautioning me to be careful, not to tell Diana too much, to hold back until she was more ready to take it.

Ordinarily, if Roddy appeared, she would be there in the waiting room instead of Diana. However, there were a few occasions when Diana would "drop out" during the session and Roddy would make an appearance. During one session, Diana was insisting on the desirability of dying rather than living. Her face turned into a storm cloud of what appeared to be rage, then her expression suddenly changed and she transformed into Roddy-smiling, engaging, cheerful, and concerned as always. She said it was true that Diana really wanted to die and that Diana was angry and jealous of Roddy because I seemed to prefer her. After a while I said it was time to bring Diana back so that she could be the one to leave the session as usual. Roddy answered that she, Roddy, could leave for her. I asked if Diana would be safe in Roddy's care. She answered, "She's probably better off than in her own!"

Diana turned into Roddy during the course of another session when I told her she no longer had to live in terror of mother's killing her-that it was okay to wish to lose mother and even begin to tolerate pleasure. Roddy appeared and said, "That was too much for her to take."

From these two examples it is clear that it was intense emotion that brought on the appearance of Roddy. Overwhelming rage appeared to trigger the first instance. The second instance, however, is not clear. My assumption is that the prospect of living free of the fear of mother brought the anticipation of such pleasure that this immediately flooded her with the prospect of punishment and led to blanking out.

This should be spelled out in further detail. There are two reasons why Diana's sense of self was vulnerable to splitting on being flooded with intense emotion. (1) Her traumatization seems to have begun at a very early age (possibly with the separation from her parents at the age of two), before her sense of self and reality were firmly established. (2) Diana's mother appears

systematically to have undermined the development of the sense of both self and reality. Her mother would insist that the milk Diana had to drink was not sour, even though it smelled bad; that the bath water was not scalding, though it was steaming. She refused to look at Diana, respond to her, or call her by name, referring to her in the third person or as “Mud” or “Miss Nobody.” Diana would be tucked into bed so tightly that she could barely move, and in the morning the bedding would have to appear as unwrinkled as if “Nobody” had slept there.

Such details were supplied by Roddy. Usually, Diana had no conscious memory of them, though when they were related to her she often could supply supplementary details that served as corroboration. The stimulus for Roddy’s bringing in such material would typically be some event in the present that reminded her of memories Diana had repressed.

For example, Diana was receiving 125 milligrams of Imipramine in an effort to help control her attacks of panic. Although this is considered a low to moderate dose, she developed acute urinary retention as a side effect and, after several days, required an indwelling catheter. Roddy came to one session and said: “She didn’t come today. She doesn’t know it but what’s happening with her bladder and tubes reminds her so much of her past. I am afraid to tell because then you will have to tell her and that will make her feel bad. Also, I’m afraid you will be angry with me for being bad-I pulled the tube out last night.”

Finally she told me that when Diana was three or four years old, if father was not home mother would be likely to wake Diana up at night “to clean her insides” with tubes and enemas; she would syringe her ears with hot or cold water, swab out her genitals, cut her nails to the quick, make her vomit by putting wool in her mouth and dark brown nosedrops in her nostrils. Diana developed an infection (cystitis?) with high fever that kept her in bed for many weeks. The doctor recommended hospitalization but mother refused. Instead, she “kept cleaning Diana out,” telling her that it was doctor’s orders. Diana tried to fight mother off, but she would tie her hands and sometimes her feet and make her sleep that way. Thereafter, Diana would hold her hands out

to be tied. Mother would also keep Diana in bed till she wet the bed, then beat her and “clean her out,” saying it was her own fault for being bad and dirty.

Roddy made me promise to tell Diana this only in small doses, if at all, and to help her realize that I was not mad at her. I agreed and suggested that from now on Diana should be able to void spontaneously without further difficulty. Roddy: “Do you think so? Good!” The prediction proved accurate.

Later Roddy told me that she would often stand in for Diana during those ordeals. “I would help her out by taking over and be there instead of her. It never hurt *me*, because she was not *my* mother anyway, so why should *I care?*” Had I ever read *Sybil*? “It is so much like what happened to Diana! Diana could not stand reading it until a little while ago, then I read it very carefully at the same time she did.” (Diana had brought me the book and asked me to read it. I did so, underlining certain passages as I read. Diana was then able to read it, she said, because the underlinings were like aid stations along the way.)

Roddy let something slip: “Don’t you think it was smart of her to invent someone to take her place-not just me-others, too? Oh! I let that out by mistake. Don’t tell her there had been others, and that they became part of me and I speak for all of them.”

Patsy came when Diana started school at age five. Patsy had been the name of a large doll. When Diana started school she didn’t want to go because she would get beaten up. So Patsy went instead and fought back. She did not stay long. Jennifer came when Diana was nine. She stayed a long time and was able to play the piano for Diana in spite of mother’s yelling and the fingers that were sore from the nail-cutting.

Unfortunately, Roddy did not now speak for all “the others.” There were more alternates, which came out in the following manner. One day Diana’s daughter cut her knee. Diana

unaccountably delayed cleaning and dressing the wound for several hours. This was totally out of character from her usual overzealousness. When she did finish putting the dressing on, she suddenly experienced an intense suicidal urge. She attributed this to guilt for having delayed the first aid but could not explain the delay itself.

Roddy easily volunteered the explanation. It lay in a repressed memory that had been stirred by the daughter's cut knee. Diana was five. She had cut both her knees and bloodied her dress. Mother stripped her naked, beat her, yelled, and poured ammonia into the wounds. The ammonia application was repeated daily. The cuts did not heal for a long time and, when they finally did, left scars. Diana did not know the cause of the scars she still bore. Nor did she know that many of her nightly "nosebleeds" were actually caused by mother's having beaten her for sucking her lower lip. She still often sucked her lower lip in her sleep, and that was why it had been sore lately.

After I relayed this information to Diana, she remembered that as a child she would often awaken in a pool of blood caused by "nosebleeds." The next morning she found a long note at her bedside, written in an adult handwriting not quite her own:

Looking now at my scarred knees, knowing they are the result of unmerciful, repeated applications of ammonia, remembering the pools of blood in which I found myself after each ostensible nosebleed . . . are living nightmares.

Concentration camp survivors remember and move on. The criminal offenses committed against me are still "stories" that cripple me in the retelling. I try to remember instead the kindness of my father, but what I feel is the pain of that ammonia being poured on my wounds and the humiliation of my nakedness. It's just too grotesque.

It embarrasses me to admit that I don't think I can continue. ... I need to be made of sturdier stuff. Roddy appears to be my strength. But

Mother will probably always stand in the way of our integration-in spite of your/our best efforts.

When I looked up after reading this letter, Roddy was there in place of Diana. She smiled and said that there was, indeed, another person who was responsible for much of the automatic writing that Diana discovered at her bedside, in her pockets, and elsewhere. Her name was Emma, she was of high school or college age, was a writer, and had kept entire diaries that Diana had thrown out.

Several weeks later, when I came out to the waiting room it was obvious that it was neither Diana nor Roddy who had arrived for the appointment. Rather, an attractive young woman, sitting rather stiffly upright, poised and self-possessed, smiled in an assured yet somewhat self-conscious manner-appearing more poised than she probably felt-and introduced herself as "Emma" and said she had been curious to meet me. She handed me a written account of a dream that Diana had had but had not remembered: it involved my coldly rejecting her outstretched hand, and her sinking to the floor, dying at my feet. The report was signed, "Emma."

Emma then told me more about herself. Speaking in a soft, cultured voice with a British-American accent, she said that she was nineteen, had grown up in England, and come here to school. Her parents were still in England; her father was similar to Diana's, but her mother was just the opposite. Emma came after Diana's father died and Diana was in danger of becoming totally dependent on her mother. Perhaps because of this, Diana became overattached to an aggressive young woman who was pursuing her and was too innocent to realize that she had nearly got manipulated into a lesbian affair.

Writing was Emma's chief interest. Whenever Emma took over she would keep copious notes. She relieved Diana of her obsessive thoughts by recording them, so that Diana could get on with the rest of her life. Writing also helped protect Diana from being disturbed by time gaps. Emma would also act as a social hostess when that was called for. "I am terribly straight, not silly

like that bright child Roddy.”

Emma went on to say that Diana was very concerned that, in the event that she did succeed in committing suicide, I be absolved of responsibility. Roddy did a great deal to keep Diana from suicide. Emma herself, however, did not want to be as involved as Roddy. She preferred to be somewhat more distant and aloof. She assured me that she would be around but more peripherally and would be sure to write and report her observations.

When I informed Diana of this new visitor who had taken up most of the time in her session, she exclaimed: “It is unfair that I don’t get any time at all!” Roddy, for her part, said that Emma was a prim and proper snit. And even though it was tattling, she had to tell me that Emma was sixteen, not nineteen-that she just wanted me to take her more seriously.

Despite their jealousy of one another and their rivalry for my attention-played out in detail in many dreams-Roddy and Emma joined in preparing me to meet yet another character: Amanda.

Roddy expressed herself about Amanda in her usual eleven-year-old style: “Amanda came in the second grade. She blamed Diana for not being loved and was angry that Diana wouldn’t do stuff like having fun and getting attention because of her mother. Diana would have liked it if her mother or father would just put an arm around her. So Amanda would go out and get attention to be loved. I won’t tell you what she did. Amanda will have to tell you herself. She does what she wants-things that Diana never had the guts to ask for herself. She doesn’t really care much about Diana or anybody else. She is tough, she angers easily, she yells. She is not a goody-two-shoes like Diana. She is bad sometimes. She used to get even with Diana’s mother by not listening to her the way she never listened to Diana. That would make the mother wild and furious, but Amanda didn’t care what happened or if someone got hurt. I would be the one to get the beating, but it didn’t hurt because I just wished it away. I put myself someplace else.

"She almost came today but I told her not to because you will be going off on vacation soon. She can't stand my guts, but every family needs a boss. She is afraid that you won't like her as you do the rest of us." Roddy then gave me a call down for telling Diana too much of what *she* had told me. I defended myself, and we agreed to disagree and remain friends.

Emma, on the other hand, described Amanda in literary terms, in a written communication, contrasting her with Roddy:

"Roddy is the embodiment of youth-a time of life Diana could never know. How extraordinary that Roddy could sustain that mother's abuse and excuse Diana from so many horrendous atrocities. Roddy merely closed her eyes, obediently extended her hands, and felt nothing. Time after time after time she offered up her own body for purification to protect Diana from excruciating pain. What loyalty and endurance!

"It is Amanda, however, who feels enraged-who feels life is unfair-who aches to love and be loved, although she desperately fears and distrusts those around her. It is Amanda who creeps out to seek some form of attention in return for a signal that someone cares.

"How sad for all of us who play a role in trying to make Diana feel whole. How tremendous our effort, and yet Diana remains so many fragile, fragmented particles."

Eventually Amanda appeared in person. She was eight or nine, as when she first came into Diana's life. (Roddy had explained that "each one stays the same age. That is how it is when one makes up any rules one likes.") Amanda looked like a young punk: her shoulders hunched up, a glowering, hostile expression, never meeting my eyes, talking in a sullen voice:

"You don't know me and I don't want to be here. Except that the others say you want to meet me. What was it like there? No fun. Diana's no fun. She's a scaredy-cat. Her mother told her

not to be angry so she wasn't ever angry. She is not my mother, so I could be angry, and yell and scream. Because her mother would always lie. She would tell Diana to be in at four o'clock. When Diana came on time her mother said it should have been three. And beat her up. She was just looking for excuses to beat her. She never kissed her or anything loving. Who would want to be kissed by that woman anyway! I don't want to be here. I am not going to tell you what friends I had of my own. . . . But do you want me to come back and tell you more?" After Diana had some dreams in which I was affectionate to everyone except her and a dream of being in a beautiful home with her father, who treated her like a stranger, Amanda again appeared: "You said everyone liked Diana's father. That is not true. I didn't. He never showed any affection. He never touched, kissed, or hugged.

I didn't like that at all! If he was such a kind, nice person, he would've done all those things. He didn't know how to act like a father, except to other kids like his nieces. They even sat on his lap! But Diana never, ever. After all, he *was* her father! Diana's mother must've told him to be that way. He had to listen to her because she was the boss of Diana and he wasn't. He treated her like she wasn't his child. *My* father hugged me plenty before he went away on important business, because he was an important person. I also got others to hug and kiss me, but I don't have to tell you. I don't even have to be here. I don't care if she does kill herself. I would just go somewhere where it is more fun, where people are happy and hug each other. Diana sits in her corner, doesn't let anyone be her friend. It's just like it always was. Because she is angry and scared, she's always dying. I won't help her kill herself, but I wouldn't save her, either. Roddy would. I am not going to tattle on her. You can talk to her now. Goodbye." She barely looked at me, glowering into her lap.

Diana said: "Amanda must have been here because my hands hurt like I have been sitting on them." I then told her what Amanda had said about her father's being affectionate to everyone except Diana, and how this jibed with her own dreams about me, and that she must have repressed the anger Amanda expressed. Diana responded that I was "hammering" at her and

“twisting the knife” about her father. “He did all he could and that was more than nothing.”

Diana then became unable to hear me, and Roddy appeared in her place: “Don’t hold it against her father. He did do his best. It was not as much as she wanted, but it was all she did get. When you say you like her, she can’t let herself hear that because it reminds her of her father and she doesn’t want to feel the pain of missing him. So she checks you out. She does kind of want to talk about him, but she hears your criticism of her father as saying he was bad. She can’t hear that either.”

Diana reappeared: “Let me guess. Roddy was here, because look where I am sitting [on the sofa] and my posture [legs tucked under her, shoes off]. Why can’t I remember what my father looked like, or what his voice sounded like? If I ever had said that I missed him or loved him, mother would have been sure to say, He’ll die.”

Emma had more to say on the subject of Diana’s father. “I knew him better than anyone because he liked me best. Diana had to take care of him all the time, set out his clothes and shaving equipment. She cleared his place after dinner, kept his desk neat, turned on his music, cared for his pipes and tobacco. He appreciated it but he never did anything for *her*. So I can understand it if she were to feel anger towards him. She was just a servant for him and, for the most part, he ignored her. She was *never* treated like a child-just a miniature adult.

I can well understand that she walked in front of a car when she was ten years old.”

Emma then advised that it was most important that I go out of my way to show that I am different from Diana’s father. She said that they were all grateful to me for being an intermediary. Maybe one day they would just go back where they came from, she said, but on no condition would they ever grow up and become Diana.

Diana made it clear that she wished to know nothing of these discussions concerning her father. For the next two sessions she sat with her eyes closed, her voice barely audible. I assured her that I would wait until she was more ready to deal with it.

One day Roddy told me that I would soon meet Miriam, another companion who was a friend to Diana, though Diana did not know it. Miriam first found a place in Diana's life when her mother bought her a pair of ice skates at seven years old. Miriam was an orphan, born of American Indian parents, and was a natural athlete, fast and graceful. She did all the athletics and helped Diana "get out" her anger that way. Although Diana would, of course, know nothing about it, Miriam got to be so good at ice skating that she even taught it for a number of years.

I explained to Diana that Miriam's function was to help her discharge anger. She asked: "Whose anger is or was it? Mine or my mother's?" Roddy later added that Amanda, too, helped discharge anger but in troublesome ways, so that Diana would beat herself up for Amanda's anger, just as mother used to. I pointed out that Diana was also in the habit of letting out on her husband much of the anger she did not let herself feel toward her father for his neglect.

Miriam finally presented herself, saying: "I know you want to meet everyone, and the others told me to come. My parents were American Indians. I lived in a big old house with lots of other children. I came to Diana when she was seven, and I am still seven because that is the rule. I would help out with anger by doing sport things like jumping rope when she was little. Now she plays tennis. I mean we play tennis together and I help her out with skiing." I asked who was the better skier. She responded to my tactless question with silence and looked embarrassed.

Miriam continued: "I have come now because lately I help out by getting Diana to do exercise. She has been taking aerobics for two months and has not told you. I take the course for her and know the whole routine. Her mother never let her get sweaty, and would punish her with a hot, scalding bath and a hair wash for getting sweaty. Yesterday I didn't help her during the

exercise course. So when she realized she did not know the routine and was getting sweaty, she panicked. I could come back to help her out again, and also tell you stories. Like how her mother made her wear strange clothes and not look pretty, because she wanted her to be serious and be good at whatever she did. She took away all the pleasure."

Regarding the aerobics course, Roddy giggled and said: "I'm helping to get her back to aerobics class. I bought her a new, expensive leotard in *my* favorite color-pink. And it is not returnable!"

One day Amanda said:

"Do you know what 'Amanda' means? It means 'worthy of love.' [Diana looked it up. It was true.] Why doesn't Diana *let* herself be loved? She is making it as miserable as it always was at home. That makes me so angry sometimes! I would let Kate kill her any time and not interfere the way Roddy always does."

I: "Who?"

Amanda: "Kate doesn't come here and talk with you? You better have her come in."

I: "How?"

Amanda: "If you don't know about her I'm not going to be the one to squeal. Anyway, Kate is shy and fearful and may not want to come in."

At the next session, Roddy said she had "listened in" and heard Amanda's slip, informing me of Kate. Roddy was concerned that I not be mad at her for having told me about Kate. She then said that Kate had arrived when Diana was seven and had had a tonsillectomy. "They were both so terrible to her that day, she just wanted to die!"

Other children came in with their parents who sat with them and hugged them and were nice to them. Not Diana's parents! They just sat there for four hours and ignored her. Then when it was time to go in to the doctor's office, Diana wanted to take her red sweater with her. The doctor said that would be okay, but her mother wouldn't let her. So nothing she was wearing belonged to her. She wore the hospital gown and felt terrible. Why didn't her father say it was okay to bring in her own sweater? . . . But how can she be mad at her father? Then there would be nobody."

Diana was able to corroborate and add further details. She even appeared to hear me when I told her again that she was struggling against awareness of her anger at her father (and at me) lest it threaten her positive tie to him (and to me). She was amazed that Roddy could express anger and disagreement with me and that I did not get angry with her.

Shortly thereafter, however, Diana discovered in her coat pocket a list of characters, including many I had not met. "Will it ever come together," she asked. She feared an endless proliferation of characters and for the first time was willing to consider the use of hypnosis to facilitate integration. We discussed what integration meant: how each "character" represented a valid memory or quality of feeling that demanded recognition-for example, Amanda's standing for being "worthy of love" and the indignation for not having received it in the past. She agreed that hypnosis should be used to help her deal directly with these elements of herself rather than indirectly by hearing their "stories" through me. She also agreed that this would be more meaningful than attempting, through hypnotic suggestion, to make each character grow up and assume Diana's chronological age. Amanda's quality of indignation at injustice, Roddy's love of life, Miriam's zest for physical activity, or Emma's capacity for detached reportage may all have arisen at earlier ages, but each had an important contribution to make to Diana's adulthood.

Roddy saw it differently. She considered it important that / meet all the characters in due course and help Diana to accept them and still wish to live. She was firm that none of them would

be willing to allow her identity to be absorbed in Diana's and become her. As for my trying to promote a conversation between any of them and Diana through hypnosis, to Roddy it sounded like hocus-pocus.

Under these uncertain auspices, the first attempt at hypnosis was not successful. The ineffectiveness reminded Diana of her father and made her uncomfortably annoyed at me.

At the next attempt to induce a hypnotic trance, Diana placed her hands on the desk in front of me and I rested my fingers lightly on hers. With this direct contact she was readily hypnotized and brought back to age eleven, when her father became ill. I told her it was not her fault that he had had a heart attack. She wept disbelievingly, saying: "But he got worse." Out of hypnosis she remembered that she used to measure her own sense of badness by his deteriorating health.

This session was followed by a rare pleasant dream of both of us being happy and pleased at a portrait of a smiling young girl named Roddy. In neither this nor the following hypnotic session were we able to bring Roddy into the conversation, however. Diana expressed the fear that, if we did, I would get sick and die.

Now Emma provided important new background, stimulated by the fact of my inducing hypnosis by touching Diana's hands. Mother had forbidden Diana to touch or be touched by anyone. This prohibition included her father. She said it would contaminate her and make her dirty. Only mother was permitted to touch Diana, and was forever scrubbing her.

Having given this background, Emma related a dream: Mother examined Diana's body carefully and determined that she had allowed someone to touch her. She became wild with anger and chopped off her hands with a cleaver, leaving a bloody mess. In the dream mother said: "Now you will never be able to touch anyone and no one will ever want to come near or

touch you.” Emma went on to say: “You can understand what an act of courage it has been for Diana to allow you to touch her. However, her fear of punishment is increased each time you do. That is why she is now cleansing her hands all the time—a pattern that has recurred periodically through the years.”

When I informed Diana of mother’s prohibition against touching and the compulsive washings, she said it was no wonder there had been so little sex in her life. Yes, she had indeed been washing her hands in scalding water lately.

Roddy added that it was Diana who was always washing her hands, but it was Kate who made it scalding water and almost made the scalding water feel good. She went on to tell me that it was not yet time for her and Diana to get together; that I should hypnotize Diana more so she was less afraid of it. Also, when I did, I should get her to remember how nice it was for her and her father to walk, hold hands, and play finger games. “But it got mixed up with mother saying she must not be touched, so Diana would scrub her hands after walking hand in hand with father, lest she find out.”

During the third hypnotic session Diana was able to recall pleasant walks with her father. They would play a game in which each finger stood for certain letters, and he would tap out words to her on her fingers. But then she would rush home to scrub, in terror that her mother would “get it out of [her].” And she always did! Diana cringed and wept, remembering the tea kettle from which mother poured the hot water, telling her she was cleaning her hands for her own good.

Out of the hypnotic trance, Diana now recalled the finger games vividly, but the overriding emotion was one of terror of the tea kettle. Yet, why did the scalding water get to feel good? She was sure it was because mother had convinced her that she had been contaminated and molested and now needed to be cleansed of her sexual dirtiness.

Some time after this session a phone message was recorded on my tape: "Before the bubble bursts, I want you to know that I now have some lovely memories of my father."

Of course, the bubble did burst and Diana regretted the pleasant memories. She scrubbed, scalded, and showered, day and night. She defended her mother, wished she could cut her hands off, and dreamed of being in a oil slick. She remembered having had to wear white gloves which also had to be kept clean.

Then Kate appeared for the next session. "I met Diana the same day she went to the hospital to have her tonsils out. My father, mother, two sisters, and brother died in that same hospital on that same day. I was supposed to die then, too, but somehow I got left behind. I met her that day and went home with her. How I help her is what you won't like. I help her to want to die because I think that will be a good thing. I help her to understand that dying is good because only good things die and bad things live. For instance, her father died and her mother lived. Pretty flowers die. Diana is good and so she deserves to die, too."

My attempts to discuss this with Kate fell on deaf ears. To Diana I explained that Kate defined the core pathology: an internalization of mother's self-righteous, adamant death wish against her-an identification of Diana with the aggressor-mother. Diana's response was to dream that she had fallen into a deep ditch, that I offered her my hand to pull her out, and that she had said she was not allowed to touch my hands and thus slid further into the ditch.

Roddy encouraged me to hypnotize Diana and try again to talk with Kate, and to be firm in asking her to be fair. A fourth session of hypnosis succeeded in raising Kate, with Diana able to hear my side of the conversation only. Kate was exactly as Diana had always described her mother: totally unyielding, absolutely convinced of her view, unwilling to listen or discuss. She knew what was best, and what was best was to die. No, she would not come back again; I was nasty and only pretending to be Diana's friend. When I told her she reminded me of Diana's

mother's attitude, she said: "There is good dying and bad dying. I want her to have good dying."

Following this, Kate waged a campaign against me, arguing to the others that I was no real friend. They found her more powerful than ever, and persuasive, too. Once more Diana began to have dreams of dying-in order to live happily. I told her she was in love with dying because she was dying to be loved. And afraid, because all love, including caring or accepting the helping hand of understanding through treatment, had been sexualized by her mother and rendered taboo. I told her I was not going to cave in to Kate-that I was standing up for Diana's right to live happily as she had always wished her father would stand up for her to her mother. Diana agreed that trying to fight Kate now was identical to trying to fight mother then. But her inner feeling was that both Kate and mother were right.

Another crisis appeared to be at hand.

Let us leave Diana, still shifting widely among tormented memories of the past, reliving them in the present, and periods of splitting off from consciousness-and look more closely at the phenomena of splitting and reintegration as attempts to master trauma. This will help place a bridge between two realms of timeless imagination: the multiple imaginary personalities disowned by Diana and relegated to the unconscious, on the one side, and the imaginative characters introduced into the world of literature by the work of the novelist, on the other.

## ASPECTS OF SPLITTING

Usually Diana's splitting off into a dissociated state of consciousness would occur in the blink of an eye. When the onset was more gradual, she would become aware of a pervasive fear, associated with a profound feeling of weariness; voices sounded too loud; she feared she would be unable to "hold on" to her sense of self. In one instance, just prior to the split she had a dream that shed some light on what was going on. In the dream, Diana was being overlooked and

treated as though she were invisible. When she got up and left, no one noticed. In another dream, she had been told to “go away,” “get lost.” She did go away, got lost, then found her way to my office at night, but of course I was not there.

Splitting from consciousness, then, appears to have been her way of going away, invisibly “splitting the scene” when she felt that no one was there for her, that she was effectively isolated.

I mentioned earlier that being flooded with strong emotion seemed to be the precipitant of Diana’s splitting into a state of dissociation. This was easiest to document in the case of anger. One fugue state was preceded by an angry fight with her husband. She felt literally beside herself with rage and “saw” herself get up and stand behind herself and then leave. This was like a slow-motion version of the onset of a split which, in fact, followed. Other occasions were also clearly connected with anger. For example, she would hear her mother yelling, would wish that mother would die, and would then “check out.” Similarly, she dreamed she was getting very angry with me, and then I began to disappear.

The question thus arises whether she was so flooded with rage every time a split would occur that she was killing someone off; then, in anticipation of being killed off herself in retaliation, did the dissociation also represent her killing herself off? Certain dreams, as well as her own written description of “re-entry” following the split, suggest that this is only a partial description. Being flooded with aggression was not the only precipitant of splitting. Diana’s account of re-entry was as follows:

The first moments of conscious awareness feel most like having been suddenly awakened from a very deep sleep-not entirely sure where I am in time and space. While my body has been carefully trained to respond in half-time, my heart beats very rapidly and my mind races to integrate with the world around me. Not until both the internal and external rhythms are synchronized do I feel grounded.

During this period of re-entry, which seems interminable, I struggle on the one hand to catch up in time while simultaneously feeling strongly drawn back towards that black hole. It is the only time that I am almost aware of two separate time warps.

It is a period of great anxiety-*fears of getting caught, being found out, punished*, killed, overwhelm me. I think those *oittn pleasurable* thoughts of suicide that I experience are particularly potent during those horrendous moments of re-entry.

What illicit pleasure does the splitting off represent-a pleasure so intense that it is carried over to color the very death sentence that it calls down upon her? Two dreams about time provide possible hints:

(1)“I found my watch in the debris around a pool. I didn’t know it had been lost. In winding it, the mechanism got caught, the winding became more difficult, the face of the watch began to change into clouds, outer space, symbols of galaxies, symbolizing another kind of time. It was a secret. If people knew I knew this they would think I was crazy because they did not understand.”

(2)“A large man and I climbed or took an elevator up to the large face of a clock on the outside of a building-like Big Ben. We made love on the face of the clock. The hands of the clock were in motion faster than normal so we had to keep moving to let them move beneath us. We had sex there in broad daylight.”

We should note that the motion of the hands, somehow related to an alteration of time, is integral to both dreams. In the first dream it was the act of hand-winding the watch that led to the entry into a secret world of time that others would equate with going crazy. The second dream is more explicit in connecting the hands (of the clock) with the passage of time and sexuality.

The first dream has to do with a “watch.” Could this be a dream pun for “watching?” This possibility becomes more plausible if placed in conjunction with the “sex in broad daylight” of the second dream.

If we recall that Diana shared her parents’ bedroom until the age of eight, a reconstruction of primal scene experiences would seem called for: she was repeatedly flooded with ill-defined sexual and aggressive overstimulation, sought relief through masturbation, and was incessantly punished.

Such a reconstruction allows other facts to fall into place: mother’s taboo against all touching, her repeated examinations of Diana’s body for evidence of contamination, her tying of Diana’s hands, the cystitis at age four, the prohibition against any privacy including that of the bathroom (lest Diana touch herself), Diana’s obsessive childhood fears of blindness, and so on.

We have Roddy’s word for it to resolve any doubt: mother did, in fact, threaten to cut Diana’s fingers off and “tear her limb from limb” if she watched her parents have sex or ever reported what she saw. In this context, her tonsillectomy at seven was undoubtedly experienced as some kind of mutilating (castrating?) punishment about which she had been forewarned and thus brought upon herself, as mother intoned untiringly. It is not surprising that in her dreams dissociating herself from consciousness was often represented as dismemberment.

(1) Summarizing the first point that should be made about the meaning of Diana’s split-off states: cutting herself off from the flow of time and becoming other personalities was Diana’s response to massive sexual and aggressive overstimulation. The response had the structure of a compromise, combining both escape and expression. The former was more obvious. By means of splitting, Diana fled the grossly instinctualized environment (primal scenes and sexual-aggressive abuse) with all its secrecy, intimidation, and scapegoating. In time, this must have become a way of escaping not only from this brutalization, but also from being flooded by her

own anger and sexuality whenever they might arise. At the same time, splitting was also a covert *expression* of anger and sexuality: a killing-off of her environment and a *libidinized* self-punishment in the form of *pleasurable* thoughts of suicide.

Turning now to the multiple personalities dwelling within Diana, it is apparent that they had a number of characteristics in common: probably arising from a common source, harboring repressed memories and forbidden wishes, and transfixed in time.

(2) It is likely that all arose as the familiar imaginary companions of childhood. We know that Roddy did because Diana herself remembered it. Patsy, who appeared briefly when Diana began school, was the name of a large doll. This made her particularly appropriate to become the one who fought off the attacks of other children.

(3) All the personalities shared the same affect-loaded (pleasurable and painful) memories and forbidden wishes. The chief forbidden wish expressed by the various personalities was something that Diana could not dare hope for consciously: that she had other parents or was an orphan.

(4) All the personalities remained the same age at which they first emerged from Diana's unconscious. Roddy arose consciously at an early age and was a conscious imaginary companion until age eleven, at which time she was repressed, and thus remained eleven.

It is apparent that each personality was also unique. While none of them had any use for the mother ("Who would want *her* for a mother!") they differed in the extent to which they blamed the father. Roddy defended the father as having done his best, Amanda openly expressed anger at him, while Emma said she could well understand if Diana "were to feel anger towards him."

(5) Each personality was a combination of splitting and integration (Prince 1919). That is to say, each was a fragment that had become dissociated from Diana. Once having become split off, however, each was integrated in an individual style in respect to affects and defenses—a particular degree of distance from affects, and a particular set of defenses against drives.

For example, Roddy and Diana made a contrasting pair in regard to pain and pleasure—Roddy apparently able to derive only pleasure from most anything, Diana only pain. Amanda and Kate make another contrasting pair in their attitudes toward life and death—Amanda’s lust for life and love, Kate’s yearning for death. Similarly, Amanda’s rage at injustice might be contrasted to Kate’s depressive resignation. Miriam succeeded in neutralizing aggression through her athletic skills; Emma’s detached reportorial abilities might also be seen as successfully neutralizing aggression. Sexually, Emma was a “prim and proper snit,” English accent and all, sixteen and never been kissed—quite at the opposite pole from Amanda with her nine-year-old-hood tastes, boasting about getting all the hugging and kissing she wanted and it’s nobody’s business how.

(6) Finally, the same combination of splitting and integration that molded each personality into a distinctive entity may be seen operating in another sphere—that of time. It is striking that when Diana “checked out” or “lost time,” leaving a blank spell in the flow of time, the “edges” of time were melded together in a seamless web. The leading edge and the following edge seemed to move together as though nothing had happened. A fragment of time had simply dropped out; the surface was reintegrated so precisely that no sign of the lost fragment was visible. Some examples will make this clearer.

Diana, at fifteen, was in her father’s funeral procession, the limousine heading for the cemetery. Suddenly she realized that the limousine was approaching her home instead of the cemetery. Had they forgotten something? Then the realization came: she had “lost time”; during the blank time the interment had taken place.

Years earlier, in elementary school, Diana had left the classroom to go to the water bubbler in the corridor; she returned to the classroom and someone else was sitting in her assigned seat. For how long had she been out?

In more recent years, she had allowed herself to enjoy a few minutes of her daughter's music recital. She came to five hours later sitting in her car in the midst of traffic. The applause of the audience at the recital had "continued" seamlessly as the noise of the traffic jam.

At her daughter's school graduation the young girls were dressed in white, the outdoor setting was beautiful on a lovely spring day, and the band had played "The Star Spangled Banner." Diana was so moved by the occasion that she wept with emotion. The next thing she knew she was in the car driving home from the graduation and tears were "still" streaming down her face. She had long since learned never to move suddenly or ask "Where am I?" but to gradually gather clues from her environment in order to "ground" herself in time after "re-entry." This time she learned that her daughter was doing a humorous parody of the graduation music, everyone in the car was laughing, and the tears streaming down her own face were tears of laughter.

In each of these examples some feature common to the moments just before and just after the "lost time"-the bubbler, the limousine, the noise, the music and tears-had been seized by the integrative function of her ego to sew together the ruptured surface of conscious time.

As for the period of time, from hours to months, that had been fragmented off and dropped out of the conscious stream of time-that was the atemporal world of Roddy and the Others. Since that world had been disowned by Diana, its unwitting author, it was consigned to the timelessness of the Unconscious. The feelings and memories there remained ever as fresh as the unchanging ages of its inhabitants.

Nonetheless, significant truths of Diana's history existed there, embodied in the multiple personalities we have met. As Pirandello says in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, these imaginary characters were "less real perhaps, but truer!" (Bentley 1952, 217). In what sense can this be so? The facts of Diana's early life were too terrible for her conscious mind to tolerate their being real. But that did not prevent their being true, however much unacknowledged.

Again, one of Pirandello's characters speaks: "Our reality doesn't change: it can't change! It can't be other than what it is, because it is already fixed forever. It's terrible. Ours is an immutable reality which should make you shudder when you approach us if you are really conscious of the fact that your reality is a mere transitory and fleeting illusion, taking this form today and that tomorrow." (p. 266).

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