

Remote Learning Module for 30 March 2020

Lecture Notes Ian Hacking's *Rewriting the Soul*, Chapters 10-12

Last time we examined the sciences of memory, with reflections on how multiplicity is measured, why memory is problematic as a diagnostic tool, and how MPD differs from schizophrenia. Our archaeology revealed that (a) the Dissociative Experience Scale was constructed in order to make it appear to be an objective fact of the matter that there is a continuum among human beings sharing one and the same kind of experience; (b) that the tension between the MPD movement and the False Memory Syndrome movement reveals a common ground—a science that can swim on top of the sea of morality and personal values—a ground on which a confrontation of theory takes place in an effort to master the soul; and (c) that Freud's account of dissociation in the early years—the phenomenon he termed “screen memories”—may be well worth reviving. Today we turn our attention farther into the past, where we will discover the very first person to have been said to have a multiple personality: Louis Vivet.

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Chapter 10: Before Memory.

(1) Before the sciences of memory reclaimed the soul from moral philosophy and religion, there were phenomena—not of multiplicity, but of a more universal manifestation: *Trance*. We shall have to be careful with our analyses because the idea of distinguishing between normal attentional states and trance states is itself not as universal as the phenomenon of trance itself. You might think of how our minds sometimes wander after hours of highway driving into a trance-like state; but this would not be the sort of sort of experience on which Hacking wants us to focus. So he considers it better to focus on the mechanism of *hypnotism* (from the Greek, *hypos*, sleep). It's broad in Western culture, and relatively easy to effect hypnotic states. But it's not an area of much scientific study; rather, Hacking contends, it's something of a *marvel*, and, like attributions of the miraculous, its grammar is notoriously saturated with “language gone on holiday” (this phrase from Wittgenstein). Nor do we have much in the way of understanding the neurophysiology of trance, although Jill Bolte Taylor's 2009 book, *My Stroke of Insight*, may be a good place to start.

(2) Continuing his archaeological excavations, on the lookout for strata where sharp breaks in thought appear, Hacking asks: Why, given the historical and anthropological significance of trance, do we nowadays marginalize it. He thinks Mary Douglas has a pretty good answer to this question by way of her distinction between the two sorts of culture she terms “enterprise,” on the one hand, and “hierarchical,” on the other hand. Enterprise cultures are populated by Lockean *persons*, whose diachronic identity is preserved by way of memory and responsibility (importantly distinguished by Locke from the genderless 17th century term, *men*, whose diachronic identity is preserved by bodily continuity). Hierarchical cultures are populated by members of collectives (think of feudal societies where everyone has a place, as opposed to the

enterprise culture of modern capitalism where it is possible for someone to fall completely through the cracks into itinerant homelessness). According to Douglas, Locke's forensic person arose from the new enterprise practices of commerce, tort (or contract) law, and property. The key to this derivation is the notion that in matters of commerce, torts, and ownership, reward and punishment must attach to the *same* person. And this latter view derives from the older mediaeval problem posed by the phenomenon of somnambulism (sleep-walking). Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle, held that the human soul is the substantial form of the human body. This idea was opposed by the Anti-Thomists, who held that one person, one body, might have two substantial forms, one for the waking state and one emerging in somnambulism. The Thomists won the debate, so the Sleepers, as they were called, were marginalized.

(3) The historical lineage pairs Hypnotism with Somnambulism, although, the pairing worked out differently on the European Continent (where the symptom language derived from sleep-walking, and theory focused on memory) and in England and the Americas (where the symptom language was that of "double consciousness," and theory was indifferent to memory

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Chapter 11: Doubling the Personality.

(1) And so, we turn to tracing the connections that came to associate hypnotism, memory and *dédoublement*. Somnambulism had been around for millennia before the 19th century, but became an object of scientific scrutiny once Eugene Azam used hypnosis to induce his patient, Félicité, to double her personality. Subsequently, hypnotism was central to the new wave of French doubles; the medical milieu was filled with fascination with hypnotism and *dédoublement*, and at the same time, every French case was described in the grammar of Hysteria (typically defined as a psychoneurotic condition characterized by violent emotional paroxysms; note well that the root derives from Greek *hysteria* = womb). Hypnotism and hysteria were phenomena; in order for *dédoublement* to become a diagnostic category connecting the phenomena, there needed to be a theory—a theory that would focus on memory. Memory, in turn, took center stage from the 19th century onwards via a philosophical dispute in France between the old Cartesians and the new Positivists.

(2) The Cartesians were, as Hacking notes, spiritualists, clerical, and monarchists, while the Positivists were materialists, anti-clerical, and republicans. Among the Cartesians, the figure of Victor Cousin loomed large. Cousin was committed to the existence of spiritual substances (God, souls, angels, Platonic ideas); he favored introspection as the proper method for conducting the business of psychology, and rejected biological reduction and material determinism. Auguste Comte (1798-1857) coined the term, Positivism, and created its philosophy. In France, during the last third of the 19th century, Comte's Positivism was championed by Hyppolyte Taine, who rejected the Cartesian Ego and Kant's noumenal self as fictions; he adopted instead Locke's forensic person (whose identity over time depended on consciousness, memory, and sensation) and Hegel's notion of historical development whereby antitheses between being and non-being are synthesized in the phenomenon of becoming. Taine

found ammunition for his view in *dédoublement*, wherein he saw *two* persons, two Lockean-Hegelian selves, each made by different memories. Azam too worked in the Positivist camp. He found his patient, Félicité, to be a spontaneous hysteric, whose trance states mediated between two selves, each of whom lacked the memories of the other. There was at this point in time no conceptual framework for the diagnosis of multiplicity; Azam's model was a doubling model. After the publication of his article on Félicité, a veritable torrent of doubles, all with one- or two-way amnesia, appeared in France—until 1910, when hysteria died out as a diagnostic category.

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Chapter 12: The Very First Multiple.

(1) Félicité had exactly two personalities. In July of 1885 however, Louis Vivet became the world's very first multiple, self-differentiating man. His case entered public consciousness on the 27th of July 1885 during a lecture by Jules Voisin, who diagnosed Vivet as a double, only to be corrected from the audience by one Dr. Bourru, who reported that in treatment at an army hospital earlier that year, Vivet had displayed eight distinct personality types.

(2) Vivet's story, as Hacking notes, is zany in itself, cements the combination of memory and multiplicity, and most importantly, reflects in the first case an artifact of treatment. The key new ingredient in all this was metallotherapy. Bourru and his co-worker, Burot, found that they were able to induce Vivet's various states by the application of various metals, via a supposed magnetic action-at-a-distance. Vivet then provided the pair with the symptomology and response to treatment that intimately and deeply connected memory with personality into the theory of multiple personality disorder.

(3) Born in 1863, the son of a prostitute (who apparently beat him as a child), Vivet was periodically in and out of trouble; he often stole clothes, suffered from paralysis and lost memory. On Hacking's view, Vivet was a con-artist who figured out what Voisin was up to with his magnets, and thereafter switched his demeanor on cue. For Burot and Bourru he produced a new paralysis for each new metal by remembering a part of his life and his mode of behavior during that period. Hacking contends that this was a form of operant behavioral modification (the first case was spontaneous, but once rewarded, repeated thereafter). Vivet was, in effect, trained to make a correlation between remembered personality states and somatic symptoms. Eventually, he learned to cycle through a series of consecutive alters. After Burot and Bourru, his two new handlers, Ramadier and Mabile, found that when his physical state entered the "normal" mode, they could arrest the cycling by administering a testicular shock (yes, they squeezed his testes), whereupon he would stop like the proverbial clock. After this treatment, he disappeared, never to be seen again. It should not be hard to determine why.

(4) In any case, the importance of Vivet's case is that it was taken for a big discovery—the realization that hysterical paralysis matched memory segments, and against the background of the debate between Spiritualism and Positivism then raging in France, this in turn made memory crucial. Why? Because memory could now be seen to unlock the identity criteria for individuating multiple selves. When there are only two (Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, for instance),

there is no need for a principle of individuation; the other is just the other. But with several, one needs criteria—a signature—and this is exactly what Bourru, Burot, and Vivet concocted: a memory-segment, combined with a metallic compound, combined with a somatic infirmity. Multiple personality could now become a diagnostic category.

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Next time, we'll continue our tour of *Rewriting the Soul*: we'll look to how *trauma* came to mean psychic hurt, how the sciences of memory developed in the late 19th century, and we'll explore the theme of Memoro-Politics.

Be well everyone, and remember: social distancing saves lives, which is presumably why we are still not in JUB 202 presently.