

The case Miss Beauchamp reported by Morton Prince (1908):

Prince's study of the case of 'Miss Beauchamp' reported four alternating personalities. Prince was particularly interested in the inclusivity aspect of co-consciousness that was demonstrated by the Miss Beauchamp case, and he coined the term 'co-conscious' in order to avoid confusion:

Thus a "doubling" of consciousness results of a personal self and the subconscious ideas. I prefer myself the term co-conscious to sub-conscious, partly to express the notion of co-activity of a second co-consciousness, partly to avoid the ambiguity of the conventional term due to its many meanings, and partly because such ideas are not necessarily sub-conscious at all; that is, there may be no lack of awareness of them (ibid, pp. 67-68).

Prince pointed out that all conscious states, 'belong to, take part in, or help to make up a self' (ibid, p. 76). He added that it is difficult to conceive of a conscious state that is not associated with a self-conscious self. Prince stated that it would seem 'queer' to think of a state of consciousness or sensation or perception, or idea, as 'off by itself' and not attached to anything we call the self. By emphasising the psychological, Prince insisted that he was not dismissing the physiological, and held that all thought is correlated with physiological activities. He believed that all mental phenomena would require both a psychological and a physiological explanation (ibid, p.68).

Although Prince was in agreement with Myers' concepts of secondary selves (Myers, 1903), together with a psychological explanation in addition to a physiological one, it is difficult to reconcile his notion that all secondary centres of consciousness are to be considered a part of the self.

Prince's report made no claim that outside intelligences were responsible for any of the alternating personalities, and yet personality number 3, 'Sally', insisted that she was not of Miss Beauchamp. Sally reported that she remembered Miss Beauchamp as a very small child learning to walk and talk. This implied that Sally had been with Miss Beauchamp from a very early age, but Sally herself was not of such a young age.

The inconsistencies of the Miss Beauchamp case prompt the question, was Sally a discarnate conscious spirit that was attached to Beauchamp and *not* a dissociated alter-ego as Prince assumed?

References

Myers, F. (1903). *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death (2 Vols)*. New York, Longmans, Green & Co.

Prince, M. (1908). *The Dissociation of a Personality: A Biographical Study in Abnormal Psychology*. 2nd Ed. New York, Greenwood Press.