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THE DIVIDED SELF AND THE FRAGMENTED SELF

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Abstract: The ideas of R. D. Laing are explored and found to be consistent with Lester's multiple self theory of the mind, finding the same behaviors in those diagnosed as schizoid or schizophrenic as in those who are not diagnosable (i.e., us). The concept of a truly fragmented self in normal people is discussed.

Lester (2015a) proposed a theory of the mind (commonly labeled a theory of personality in university psychology courses) in which the mind is viewed as made up of several subselves. (For an earlier version of the theory, see Lester [2012].) Lester set out his theory as a series of postulates and corollaries. Here are some of them (numbered and labeled as in Lester (2015a).

POSTULATE 1: The mind can be construed as made up of several subselves
COROLLARY 1a: Not every individual has a multiple self.

Lester included Corollary 1a because apparently some people may have only one subself. For example, Baumeister (1998) argued that a multiple self did not exist and was merely an illusion held by some people. "The multiplicity of selfhood is a metaphor. The unity of selfhood is a defining fact" (p. 682). Apparently, Baumeister is one of those individuals with only one subself.

POSTULATE 2: At any point in time, one subself is in control of the mind. It may be said to have executive power.
COROLLARY 2a: When one subself has executive power, the other subselves are said to be suspended.

Postulate 2 is a reasonable proposal for, if we freeze a person in time, it is extremely likely that only one of his or her subselves will be in control of the mind.

COROLLARY 2d: A subself may have executive power for anywhere from seconds to hours or longer.

In the majority of situations, each subself has executive power for a reasonable period, perhaps extending for hours. If subselves are associated with

roles, a person may teach a class (in a professorial role) for two hours and then drive home to a family where he or she switches into a spouse role (hopefully). On the other hand when people have internal dialogues within themselves, debating whether to take some action, each subself has executive power for the time it takes to argue one side of the argument.

In both of these situations, the behavior is rational. Of course, occasionally an inappropriate subself may assume control of the mind. Once, one of my colleagues who was up for tenure at my university experienced a break-up in his marriage. His students complained to me that he was breaking down and crying in class and talking about his marital crisis. One of his subselves was in control of his mind, but it was an inappropriate one for giving a lecture. It would have been appropriate if he was talking to his psychotherapist or a good friend but not when talking to his students.¹

I proposed my theory for people who are judged to be psychiatrically normal. In contrast, R. D. Laing analyzed what I call subselves in those who are psychiatrically ill, primarily schizophrenics.

The Divided Self: Thoughts on Laing's Thesis

Laing (1969) titled his book *The Divided Self*. What did he mean by a divided self? His book cover refers to a man who is estranged from himself and does not experience himself as real. This problem seems to be delusional. The book cover refers also to someone who develops a false self with which to confront the world. I would argue that everyone develops one or more false selves which are given executive power in different situations. This, of course, raises the question of whether everyone has a core self behind their false selves..

Andras Angyal (1965) proposed a systems theory of the mind with a healthy system principle and a neurotic system principle. The healthy system principle was made up of two subsystems. The drive toward autonomy involves furthering oneself in terms of knowledge, power, materials goods, etc. The drive toward homonomy involves integrating oneself with other people. The unhealthy system principle, a neurotic system principle, also consisted of two subsystems. The pattern of non-commitment describes roughly the obsessive personality, while the pattern of vicarious living describes roughly the hysteric personality. Angyal did not address the question of whether his unhealthy system principle might apply also to psychosis. The ideas of Laing suggest that the pattern of

¹ After he was turned down for tenure, he became a psychotherapist and then lost his license to practice psychotherapy for having a sexual affair with one of his clients, another boundary violation.

vicarious living may apply to schizophrenia and that, therefore, one unhealthy system principle will suffice.

The Schizoid State of Mind

Laing described the schizoid individual as experiencing himself in isolation from others and does not experience himself as whole person, but rather as person split into two or more selves² but, as noted above, I see the majority of people as split into two or more subselves. Laing, however, does acknowledge the existence of a sane schizoid state of mind. Rather than seeing the majority of us as sane and a few of us as schizoid (insane), Laing seems to prefer seeing all of us as schizoid (insane) and a few of us as sane.

However, Laing also argues that we should be able to think of, construe or experience another as a personal form of unity (p. 22), but I would argue that we are not one unity, but rather a community of subselves.

The basic concept for Laing was experience, and Laing noted that people are often not permitted by their parents, family and society to have authentic experiences. What is the cause of this alienation from experience and this destruction of the self? Laing focused primarily upon the parents' behaviors toward the child which he felt destroy most of the infant's potentialities. We are taught what to experience. We learn the right way to behave and the right way to feel. Laing sometimes used the term *ego* to refer to the false self that adjusts to an alienated and alienating social reality.

In the case of Mrs. D, Laing noted that she had never been able to do anything correctly for her parents. She never discovered what they wanted her to be. She grew up not knowing who or what she was. Yet, as an adult, she sounded to Laing like a querulous mother complaining about a difficult child. Her mother's personality seemed to possess her. Her real self was lonely, lost, frightened and bewildered and, when she acted as her mother had, she did not feel frightened any more.

The False Self and the Disembodied Self

It is interesting to note that Laing does not define or describe the false self of normal people. It is as if he takes it for granted that we know what it is (p. 101). However, all people adopt a pseudo-self, a false outer self, a façade self. All you can see of me is not the complete me, or perhaps not the real me.

² Laing also suggests that he may feel that his mind is split from his body.

The hysteric “characteristically dissociates himself from much of what he does” (p. 102) although the aim of his actions are the gratification of his needs. This is different from the false self of the schizoid person which does not serve to gain fulfillment or gratification of the self. For the schizoid person, the false self is compliant to the will of others.

The schizophrenic feels a split between the mind and the body, and usually identifies the self with the mind. Thus, the real self becomes disembodied. To be disembodied means that you have no sense of being biologically alive. Your body is but another object in the world. This disembodied self becomes hyperconscious, forms its own ideations and images, and develops a complex relationship with the body.

The schizophrenic has, therefore, a disembodied real self, which is hidden behind the false self system, and the real self is shut up, isolated and impoverished. Ontological insecurity makes the real self fear engulfment by the identity of others and makes the person more concerned with preserving himself rather than gratifying himself.

Laing described three sources of anxiety for the schizophrenic.

- Engulfment to the extent of losing his existence
- Implosion as if the world will crash in and obliterate one’s existence
- Petrification (being turned to stone or an object) and depersonalization (being treated as if one had no feeling).

He may even fear being destroyed by others. Thus, the schizophrenic's false self system is erected in order to protect the real self from attack. The schizophrenic does not gain any gratification from the activities of the false self. Hysteric people, in contrast, do gain much gratification from the actions of the false self, although they may deny this.

For the schizophrenic, the inner, disembodied real self hates and fears the false self. To assume an alien identity can be a threat to your own identity. People with catatonia try to strip themselves of all behavior in order to deal with this fear of take-over, and they fall into stupors. Schizophrenics, therefore, have adopted a false self system in order to protect their real self from our observation, but they are then threatened by the presence of the false self system that they have erected. Their false self becomes a prison. The false self becomes more extensive, more autonomous, and more dead, unreal, false, and mechanical, while the real self

becomes impoverished, empty, dead, and more charged with fear and hatred because it is cut off from communication with the outer world.

Laing describes the inner self in the schizophrenic as follows:

- Its orientation is a primitive oral one, concerned with the dilemma of sustaining its aliveness, while being terrified to "take in" anything. It becomes parched with thirst, and desolate.
- It becomes charged with hatred of all that is there. The only way of destroying and of not destroying what is there may be to destroy oneself.
- The attempt to kill the self may be undertaken intentionally. It is partly defensive (If I'm dead, I can't be killed); partly an attempt to endorse the crushing sense of guilt that oppresses the individual (who has no sense of a right to be alive).
- The "inner" self itself becomes split and loses its own identity and integrity.
- It loses its own realness and direct access to realness outside itself.
- The place of safety of the self becomes a prison. The would-be haven becomes a hell. It ceases even to have the safety of a solitary cell. Its own enclave becomes a torture chamber. The inner self is persecuted within this chamber by split concretized parts of itself or by its own phantoms that have become uncontrollable. (Laing, 1969, pp. 173-174)

Laing, like Angyal, described a particular form of psychopathology involving the split between the real inner self and the false self system, much as in Angyal's description of the pattern of vicarious living. Laing added a more complex description of the types of false self systems and real (inner) selves that can arise, in particular, differentiating between those found in the hysteric and those found in the schizophrenic individual. Thus, although Angyal saw the pattern of vicarious living as part of the neurotic system principle, Laing's theorizing suggests that the same pattern can be used to explain and describe what is going on in the psychotic individual, which represents an important step forward in our understanding of human behavior, both normal and abnormal.

The Core Self

There are many possible schemes for categorizing a person's subselves. Some theorists have suggested that there is a core self (Kelly, 1955) versus what has been called a social self, pseudo-self, false self, or, preferably, façade self (Laing, 1969).

The core self may be defined as the subself that has executive control when we are alone and not responding to a social situation. Even this core self may have many versions, for example, when we are depressed and when we are happy. Most people would be able to describe these core selves, but not all people have a core self.

Laing described Mrs. R who became anxious when she *felt alone* although she could be alone. As a child, she felt that no-one noticed her. Her parents were too engrossed in each other. She grew up wanting to be important and significant to someone else. “If she is not in the actual presence of another person who knows her, or if she cannot succeed in evoking this person’s presence in his absence, her sense of her own identity drains away from her” (p. 60). She lacked ontological autonomy.

Anne Sexton (1928-1974) was an American poet who died by suicide (Lester, 2026). For Anne Sexton, suicide was almost a way of life. A rough listing of her attempts (all with medications) is 1949, November 1956, May 1957, November 1961, July 1966, August 1970, September 1973 (two), Winter 1973-1974 (two), February 1974, and Spring 1974. Interestingly, she switched methods to car exhaust for her final successful suicidal act.

Anne remained in psychotherapy from 1956 until her death in 1974, and she was hospitalized on many occasions (at least seven times between 1956 and 1964 and at least four more times between 1971 and 1974). She took antidepressants and Thorazine (and suffered from some of the side effects, including tardive dyskinesia), but never received electroconvulsive therapy.

For those with a hysterical personality (or pattern of vicarious living) as described by Andras Angyal (1965), the child grows up unliked for himself/herself. Therefore, he/she assumes a personality that he thinks will get him approval, and he suppresses his real personality. Once this tactic has been adopted, the person needs continual attention and approval from others to support his assumed personality. It also leads to feelings of emptiness because of the suppression of the real self.

Anne fits well with her first therapist's diagnosis of hysteric neurotic. She was critically dependent upon attention, help and love from others. Alone, she panicked and fell into depressions. Like some of Laing's case examples Anne seemed only to exist when there were others to notice her. Her promiscuity fits well into this pattern. For a person like this, they seem to have many social selves which can have executive power depending upon the social situation, but no core

self which take over executive power when the person is alone by themselves. It could be, of course, that the core self exists but is suppressed or repressed rather than not existing.

The Fragmented Self

Laing suggested that the false self system and the inner self can also split into fragments, which leads to intrapsychic chaos. This molecular splitting, even of the sequence of behavior, is common to schizophrenics (whereas, in the hysteric, the splitting is molar -- that is, occurs between subsystems). In occasional cases of psychosis, Laing notes that what appears to have happened is that the false self system has been suddenly stripped away, revealing the ontologically insecure and disembodied inner self.

In Laing's description of Julie ("the ghost of the weed garden"), Laing noted that her:

self-being had become so fragmented that she could best be described as living a death-in-life existence in a state approaching chaotic nonentity...In listening to Julie, it was often as though one was doing group therapy with the one patient. (p. 212)

Many discussions of the fragmented self involve psychiatric pathology. For example, in a blog post, Calm Again Counseling described a fragmented self in the context of complex PTSD and dissociative disorder.³ Other discussions simply refer to the existence of two or more subselves (which is not true fragmentation) while others remain obscure in their definition. For example, Stav, et al. (2020) created a scale to measure the fragmentation of the self with items such as *I often feel lonely* and *It is hard for me to accomplish things without external reinforcement*, which seem to have little relevance to any definition of fragmentation.

A truly fragmented self can occur also in non-psychotic people. Lester (2025) wrote an essay on Hubert Aquin (1929-1977), a French Canadian writer, filmmaker and intellectual, known for his novel *Next Episode* and for being involved in the the Quebec independence movement.

Aquin's adult life seemed to be a staged dramatic performance, including his suicide (clean car, wearing a suit and tie, staging the suicide at the school that

³ <https://www.calmagaincounseling.com/the-blog/cptsd-and-dissociation-navigating-the-fragmented-self>

his first wife attended, and leaving a disfigured face).⁴ Aquin comes across as a fragmented person, going through strong emotions during a meeting with someone, from elation to aggressiveness, from support to verbal attack to indifference, from depression to elation, etcetera. However, there is no mention of physical violence. He drank a lot and often behaved as if he liked being a drunkard (crawling on the floor and being aggressive). He liked to shock others. In his relations with women, Aquin again appears to be fragmented, changing from affection to hostility moment to moment.

Comment

The intent of this essay was to introduce the concept of a truly fragmented self in which the organization of the subselves seems chaotic even in relatively normal people.

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⁴ For understanding the staging of suicide see Lester (2015b; Lester & Stack, 2015).

RUNNING AMOK AND THE MULTIPLE SELF

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Abstract: Research and commentary on the cultural syndrome of *amok* is reviewed and investigated for whether it fits into a multiple self theory of the mind

The word *amok* stems from the Malaysian behaviour of amok (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989, Vol. 1, p. 407), mentioned for the first time in 1516. Amok was, in the past, regarded as a culturally-specific syndrome which has been known for centuries in Malaysian culture. However, amok has also been reported in Indonesia and the Philippines (Schmidt, et al., 1977). There are many derivatives of the word, such as, for example, amuck, amok-driver and amok-runner. Over the centuries, the definition has undergone major changes as documented by Imai, et al. (2019).

The behavior was normally characterized by typical phases: an early stage of loss, insults or frustration, followed by gloomy brooding and a withdrawal from the social environment. The period of brooding and withdrawal is seen by commentators as critical for diagnosing amok. The amok individual engages in wild, explosive, often deadly attacks against other people, usually starting in the family, with acquaintances or the conflict partner, and subsequently including other persons who are often present only by chance, followed by a later stage of sleeping or stupor with subsequent amnesia (Gimlette, 1901; Adler, 2001, 2002; Adler, et al., 1993). However, the post-assault amnesia is inconsistently reported, and many observers have suggested that the amnesia may be claimed by the perpetrator in order to avoid penalties (Gaw, 1992). Pseudo-amok is a weaker form of this behavior, which involves mock attacks against persons in the vicinity. In pseudo-amok, inhibitions about killing are not overcome (Knecht, 1999).

Murder-suicides are killing acts followed by the suicide of the persons who killed (Gunn & Lester, 2023). *Mass murders* involve the killing of several people typically within a few hours at the same place (Lester, 2004). *Spree murderers* are persons who kill others over a short period of time (several days) at different places (Füllgrabe, 2000). In the USA, the concept of *rampage killer* is popular. A rampage killer is defined as a person who kills as many people he or she can

without motive (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000). A typical example is the case of Charles Whitman at the University of Texas in 1966 (Baker, 2003). If killing is involved, amok may fit into the categories of rampage murder or mass murder.

The criteria used in the media to describe an event as an amok event is often the quick successive sequence of events (killings) with, at first glance, no detectable motive. Amok persons are typically described as males, young or middle-aged, killing other people in a state of rage without visible motives (Adler, 2002). Recent reports do not confirm the previous opinion that females do not run amok (Baechler, 1981; Murphy, 1982; Westermeyer, 1985).

Hatta (1996) noted that two kinds of amok were originally described. The first type has a pathological background of insanity, epilepsy and temporary mania (produced occasionally by malaria), while the second type is the true amok. Others have proposed further types of amok or pseudo-amok, and the behavior of the person running amok has changed over the years is affected by the culture in which it appears.

In most definitions, it is normally not necessary that the act itself is performed with suicidal intention (Adler, 2002). However, Hagan, et al. (2015), after reviewing scholarly research on amok, argued that amok is not a culture-bound disorder, but rather a form of mass murder driven primarily by suicidal desire and is best categorized as murder-suicide. Often, the person running amok is killed in order to protect possible victims and, at one point, Britain decided to punish amok by execution in the countries that it governed. Hagan, et al. noted that about one-third of amok runners died by suicide or were killed by legal authorities (Adler, et al., 2006).

In psychiatric classification systems, amok may be fit under different syndromes. In ICD-10, amok itself is not mentioned but, in DSM-IV, amok is described among the culturally-bound syndromes or among the dissociative disorders. Hagan, et al. (2015) argued that amok is not a dissociative disorder because because it involves premorbid brooding and indiscriminant homicidal violence.

If amok has to be fitted into DSM-IV, then it can be described as psychotic disorder not otherwise specified or as a dissociative disorder not otherwise specified. Hatta (1996) distinguished between *dissociative trance disorder*, a single or episodic disturbances in the state of consciousness, identity or memory that are indigenous to particular locations and cultures and *possession trance disorder* involving replacement of the usual sense of personal identity by a new

identity, attributed to the influence of a spirit, power, deity or other person, often associated with amnesia.

Endogenous and exogenous psychoses were assumed to be present by Kraepelin (1904), Baechler (1981) and Ellis (1983). Gaw and Bernstein (1992) argued that amok best fits the description of culture-specific *isolated explosive disorder*, a category in DSM-III that was deleted from DSM-III-R.

Arboleda-Florez (1985) hypothesized the existence of mostly schizoid and paranoid disorders in young male amok murderers. In contrast, Murphy (1982), Füllgrabe (2000) and Schulz (2002) proposed emotional instability along with passive-aggressive and antisocial traits. Many others suggest disorders of impulse control, such as “explosive” disorders (e.g., Bach-Y-Rita, 1971, Maletzky, 1973). However, it remains questionable whether the latter diagnosis is a kind of "contaminated diagnosis" (common also in suicidology, where knowledge of the act affects the diagnosis given (Lester, 1972)). The percentages of psychiatric diagnoses reported for amok murderers are usually higher than those for “rage-type-murders” (Cartwright, 2001). Often amok killers are also described as unsuccessful or compensating for failure with regard to their job.

Today, amok incidents normally result in great media coverage in all parts of the world. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to test the hypothesis whether or not amok events themselves can be imitated as a result of these media reports. Using monthly data on mass murders and murder-suicides for the period 1968–1980, Stack (1989) found that publicized mass murder/suicides were significantly associated with increases in the suicide rate while, in contrast, the homicide rate was not affected by publicized mass-murder/suicides.

Westermeyer (1972, 1973) described 18 cases of amok in Laos in which the men used grenades. All the murderers were male, and fifteen were soldiers. Sixteen had fathers who were farmers. The men were living away from home, drinking at the time, and ten of them killed themselves after the attack. Most of the attacks took place at night, on weekends, in crowded places and were a reaction to loss (of a loved one, money or prestige). These attackers were younger than other murderers in Laos, killed more victims, killed more often in crowded places, and more often used a grenade. They were more often living away from home and on active duty in the military. They were more likely to have been drinking and to kill themselves after the murders than were other murderers.

Kiev (1972) described amok as a homicidal mania, but he felt that it could occur in states of delirium, agitated depression, and acute anxiety. Andriolo

(1998) thought that the psychiatric state preceding amok was a bipolar affective disorder. The outburst appears to be somewhat manic, and the state of exhaustion afterwards depressive, but I do not see any close correlation between manic-depressive disorder and amok, and certainly no psychiatrist has ever diagnosed those who run amok without already knowing about their outburst. This knowledge certainly biases the diagnosis that they assign the person.

A Case of Amok

Burton-Bradley (1968) has provided an eye-witness account of such a case.

The subject approached some of his relatives and the witness at dusk one evening while they were sitting outside a house. The subject had a spear, which he threw at one of the relatives, who was hit in the side. The victim was carried inside the house by some of the others. While this was being done, the subject threw another spear which hit another relative, who removed it herself. All ran away, defending themselves in the process. The eyewitness reported that the subject said, "Where are you all? I am coming after you." The witness hid until daybreak. He then found two bodies, one inside the house and one outside. With five other villagers, he searched for the subject and found him in the bush wounded in the chest, with five spears stuck in the ground beside him. He was then overpowered by the villagers. In addition to having attack and killed people, he had damaged and destroyed yams in the yam house.

When arrested, the subject said that he had been in the bush for two days without food prior to the offense. He claimed to have amnesia for his acts but admitted that it was said that he had killed a man and a woman and speared three others. However, he later admitted that at the time of the offense he was aware that his actions were wrong in the eyes of his own people and of the administration, and that they might lead to his death. He was evaluated at a psychiatric hospital, but no mental disorder was noted.

Related Cultural Behaviors

Many cultures have behaviors (or syndromes) in which people become violent toward others and are themselves killed. One of the common terms in our language for this is "going berserk." MacDonald (1961) has discovered that this term comes from Norse (Scandinavian) mythology in which Starkadder (who had eight hands) and Alfilde had a grandson named Berserk, who was named for the furious way he went into battle without wearing armor, increasing the chances, therefore, of being killed. His name Berserk derived from the bearskin he wore as

a shirt (ber sark) and was applied to groups of marauders found in the Viking community from 870 AD to 1030 AD, after which their activities were banned by law.

These men who went berserk were characterized by a wild fury which increased their strength and made them insensitive to pain. They behaved like wild animals and killed everyone they met, friend or foe. Afterwards, they would be exhausted and physically feeble for days. Fabing (1956) has suggested that this state was brought on by eating toxic mushrooms which brought on temporary psychoses, but he notes that others have suggested that it was simply an ecstatic form of fury appearing in a group of aggressive psychopaths.

Crazy-Dog-Wishing-to-Die

Andriolo (1998) described a number of cultures in which people commit suicide by getting others to kill them. For example, among the Plains Indians, such as the Crow, a man who was tired of living would tell his kin that he wanted to seek death in battle (*Crazy-Dog-Wishing-to-Die*). His relatives would try to dissuade him but, if he persisted, would go along with his choice. The man was now accorded special status. He wore special clothes, used a special rattle and danced and sang special songs. In these he would talk "crosswise," that is, expressing the opposite of his real intentions and doing the opposite of what he was told. He could eat whatever he wished and have sex with whomever he desired. His death in battle would then become a glorious memory for the tribe to recall and re-tell. If he failed to be killed, he was released from his vow and accorded high prestige. If he changed his mind or fled, he was ridiculed and scorned.

Andriolo noted that this form of suicide was not open to women. The women in these societies who killed themselves did so in conventional ways and were stigmatized because ordinary suicide was frowned upon. It appears, therefore, that in these societies men were considered of superior worth than women, and their interests were favored by the cultural norms!

This method of committing suicide has been called *indirect* suicide, *vicarious* suicide or *masked* suicide. Masked suicide is a public performance and, therefore, a public property. The suicide conforms to the cultural norms and values and thus confirms them. The suicidal person of this type does not act impulsively, but rather seeks a cause, and the scenario offers solemnity, symbolism and purpose. The ritual induces control and calmness in to the suicidal act. Lowie (1913) provided an example.

Hunts-to-die knew of another Crazy Dog, who lived in his grandfather's time. He was the handsomest Indian ever seen, and was called *Good-crazy-dog*; his real name was *He-strikes-the-enemy-with-his-brother*. At one time the Sioux attacked a Crow band, killing all, including some of Good-crazy-dog's relatives. Good-crazy-dog said, 'I am going to die, I will be a Crazy Dog.' He bought red flannel for the sashes, making one for each side. He made a rattle out of a buffalo paunch, and tied eagle feathers to one end of it; inside he put beads and little stones. He wore a fine war-bonnet on his head and tied skunk skin ornaments to his moccasins. His necklace was of bapà'ce shells, and his earrings of sea-shells. In the back he wore a switch and in front little braids of hair. He rode a fine spotted horse with docked tail; for its trappings he sewed together red and green flannel. When he rode through the camp, he began to sing and the old women cheered him. He was killed in battle. (Lowie, p. 194)

Juramentado

Andriolo noted also that in Muslim societies, which typically disapprove of suicide in general, dying in the context of a *jihad*, a religious obligation, is considered a glorious death which enables the deceased to enter heaven immediately. In *juramentado*, a man who wished to die would go to place where there were many Christians and kill as many as possible before being killed.

Andriolo gave examples from the Muslims of the Philippines and, today, these deaths are seen in the suicide bombers in Middle Eastern countries, who tie bombs to themselves or drive cars loaded with bombs to a crowded street and die in the explosion.

This patterns is also found in the Jivaro of Peru and the Yanomano of Venezuela.

.....when a [Jivaro] man "no longer wants to live," he does not commit suicide in the ordinary sense, but rather suddenly starts leading assassination raids against the men who are his enemies, insisting on taking the principal risks, such as being the first to charge into the enemy's house. Sooner or later, of course, he will himself be killed, which apparently surprises no one.....(Harner, 1972, p. 181)

The Wiitiko Psychosis⁵

⁵ This is also called the Windigo psychosis.

According to Parker (1960), the Wiitiko psychosis is a behavior pattern found among the Algonkian-speaking Native-Canadians in the forested central northeastern Canada, including the Sauteux, Cree, Beaver and Ojibwa Indians. Kiev (1972) viewed it as a "classic depressive disorder," but he felt that schizophrenia and manic-depressive disorder could also be involved.

It affects mainly males who have spent time hunting unsuccessfully for food in frozen forests. Initially the subject feels morbidly depressed and nauseated, and he experiences distaste for ordinary foods. He may have periods of semi-stupor. Gradually he becomes obsessed with the paranoid belief that he is bewitched, and he starts having homicidal and suicidal thoughts. He feels that he is possessed by the Wiitiko monster. As the psychosis develops, he begins to see those around him as fat, luscious animals whom he desires to devour. Finally, he enters a stage of violent, homicidal cannibalism. The Native-Canadians believe that if he reaches this point, he is incurable and must be killed.

There may be genetic factors, brain damage and individually idiosyncratic traumatic experiences which contribute to the "cause" of this disorder. However, Parker focused on the stress from the environment and the child-rearing techniques in the Ojibwa culture.

The Ojibwa child is at first handled permissively and indulged but, between ages of three and five, a drastic change occurs. The child is weaned from his dependency and prodded to assume adult responsibilities. He is hardened by such practices as being made to run naked in the snow, he is goaded by the adult men to become a hunter, and he is taught by his mother how to trap animals. By age nine, he has his own hunting grounds, and by age twelve he is a competent hunter, staying away for long periods, hunting in the silent, frozen forests. The boy is made to fast until eventually he can go for long periods with only one meal a day. Punishment is often a matter of withholding food. Finally, at puberty, he is sent out into the forest without food and expected to remain there until he is able to communicate with the supernatural by means of a vision.

Parker summed up the important results of this experience as follows:

1. The period of indulgence followed by harsh weaning from dependency leads to the development of covert dependency cravings,
2. There is a close association of food, eating and self-esteem in which to be hungry is an expression of defeat and shame,
3. Power, acceptance and affection are secured by self-denial and suffering, and

4. Security and self-esteem are vulnerable and must constantly be reaffirmed by the external symbols of success.

As adults, the Ojibwa are characterized by a high level of interpersonal hostility, which they express in indirect ways such as hypersensitivity to insults, exaggerated pride and a paranoid tendency.

The Ojibwa's childhood experiences lead to unsatisfied dependency cravings and repressed (unconscious) hostility. However, the social structure of Ojibwa society does not allow acceptable outlets for these needs, and the grown-up Ojibwa treads a narrow path between his quest for affection and his desire to give vent to his rage. Failure in hunting can easily lead to a psychiatric breakdown. Failure to obtain food threatens starvation and loss of self-esteem. The paranoid feelings may result from the belief that your bad luck is the result of others practicing magic against you, a belief which develops easily in those who have repressed their anger. Failure as a hunter is a stress which leads to breakdown of the normal defense mechanisms. Rage and aggression are then expressed in a direct and overt manner rather than being turned inward as depression. In the full-blown Wiitiko psychosis, the symptoms of homicidal cannibalism serve to allay dependency cravings by becoming one with the object of dependency (by eating it) while simultaneously aggressing against this frustrating person (by killing and devouring it). The cultural belief in the Wiitiko monster symbolizes the wide circle of significant others (especially the parents) who continue to frustrate the dependency cravings of the adult and who still threaten his self-esteem.

It is notable that a mild case of Wiitiko psychosis can be treated successfully by having other people prepare a dish of melted bear grease and berries which the patient drinks. This action simultaneously lessens hunger by providing a good many calories (important in the old days when the long winters were particularly stressful for the Ojibwa) and satisfies some dependency cravings since the person is fed and cared for by others as he was when he was a child. There may also be some significance in the choice of bear grease since bears are considered by the Ojibwa to be magically important animals.

Running Amok in America: Does it Occur?

Running amok is found in those living in under-developed countries and in times past. Can it happen in America today?

Some commentators say, "No."

For example, Baechler (1979) argued that amok must be ritualized by the culture. The culture must have a name for the phenomenon and specify the circumstances in which it is expected to occur. There must also be a typical way of running amok, that is, the sequence of behaviors and symptoms shown must be predictable.

Of course, if amok is viewed as a type of mass murder, this type of murder occurs in America and in many countries around the world. Many of the mass murders which have taken place in America and in other countries in recent years do seem to have a standard pattern. A man, often dressed in military fatigues, takes several guns and kills others in a manner that resembles a war-time attack. In this way, mass murder has become ritualized and has an expected course.

Arboleda-Florez (1979) agreed that amok can be found in modern America. He too noted that many mass murderers fit into the definition of amok quite well. There should be a brooding period, a homicidal outburst, persistent homicidal behavior without any apparent motives, and a claim of amnesia after the outburst. However, since many of the mass murderers are killed by police or commit suicide, the presence of amnesia is hard to confirm.

Arboleda-Florez described the case of a Canadian sniper who on June 16, 1977, dressed in army fatigues and carrying several guns, walked into a shopping mall in Calgary and wounded eight victims. He was captured alive, tried and convicted and given a psychiatric evaluation by Arboleda-Florez. His memory was "hazy." He remembered going downstairs, having big pockets in his clothes (he was wearing army fatigues), going outside and feeling that the cars and people were closing in on him and that he had to shoot his way through. He felt that he was "out of himself," saw lights and colors and heard a boom. That was all.

Arboleda-Florez suggested that amok would appear in societies undergoing rapid social change. The murderer will have feelings of alienation and a need to be assertive. Arboleda-Florez thought that Charles Whitman was a classic case of amok. (See Lester [2004] for a description of this case).

Other Issues

Imitation

Cantor and Sheehan (1996) documented possible imitation of amok events. They compared the modus operandi of two amok killers and found astonishing similarities. On August 9th, 1987, in a suburb of Melbourne, Australia, a gunman

killed six persons, seemingly unknown to him, and injured at least 18 others. Ten days later in a town in England, another gunman killed 14 people, injured 16 others and died by suicide. Analyses of the press reports indicated major similarities of features associated with the two events.

Stigma

Okamura (2010) noted that the ways of stigmatizing Filipino residents of Hawai'i included claiming that they were prone to run amok. In the case of a Filipino man who committed a mass murder, his lawyer suggested, as part of his defense, that he was engaging in the cultural behaviour pattern of running amok. The man was, however, found guilty of murder.

Pseudo-Amok

In their reporting the case of man in Germany who engaged in a spree killing, von Heydendorff, et al. (2017) saw his behavior as narcissistic and designed to reach the attention of the public, and they viewed this as the motivation behind tothers who run amok. They labeled the man's behavior as pseudo-amok.

Comments

As I have noted in my essay on possession (Lester, 2026), the existence of multiple selves seems an appropriate description of amok as it is for possession. Amok individuals are angry at others, and this anger is expressed during the episode of running amok. The cultural labeling of this behaviour as amok, in part, absolves the individual from blame. This is enhanced if the individual claims amnesia.

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THE PLURAL SELF

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Abstract: This essay reviews research on correlates of scores on Altrocchi's Self-Pluralism Scale. Even the short 10-item scale appears to measure several components and has only moderate reliability. Scores on the scale are associated primarily with negative aspects, such as higher neuroticism and less life satisfaction, but also with higher openness.

Altrocchi (1999) devised a Self-Pluralism Scale (the long version has 30 items and the short version 10 items) which he thought measured the structure (and not the content) of the self-concept. High self-pluralism indicates a perception that one's feelings and behaviors are relatively different in different situations and at different times. This essay reviews research on the Plural Self Scale.

Psychometric Properties of the Plural Self Scale

Zeyrek and Lester (2006) gave Altrocchi's 10-item Plural Self Scale to American and Turkish undergraduates. A factor analysis of their responses identified two orthogonal (independent) factors (see Table 1). Factor I had high loadings from five items reflecting the subjective perception of a single versus a multiple self. Factor II had high loadings from three items, reflecting how other people perceive the respondent. The fact that these two factors are independent indicates that subjective perceptions of a plural self are not necessarily congruent with the perceptions of others. In two separate studies, Lester (2003a, 2004a) found three factors and only moderate Cronbach alpha reliability.

Łyś, et al. (2022) translated the plural self scale into Polish and found high internal reliability and test-retest reliability for the 10-item version and the 30-item version. The 30-item version produced four factors, and Łyś, et al. created their own 10-item scale based on the strongest factor.

Lester and Carter (2013) found that scores on the plural self scale were only weakly associated with scores on Carter's Multiplicity Scale (Carter, 2008) ($r=0.23$, ns). Campbell, et al. (2003) found that two measures of self-concept pluralism (self-complexity and compartmentalization) were unrelated to each

other. McReynolds, et al. (2000) found a positive association between scores on the plural self scale and the Lennox-Wolfe Cross-Situational Variability Scale (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984). Therefore, associations between the many measures which tap multiplicity merit further research.

Table 1: Factor analysis for the Plural Self Scale: items with loadings >0.50 are listed

Factor 1: subjective perception

Positive loadings

4 I get along best when I act and feel like a totally different person at different times

9 There have been times when I felt like a completely different person from what I was the day before

Negative loadings

2 I act and feel essentially the same whether at home, at work, or with friends

3 I'm the same sort of person regardless of whom I'm with

5 I'm the same kind of person in every way, day in and day out

Factor 2: perception by others

Positive loadings

6 People who know me say that my behavior changes from situation to situation

7 People who know me well say that I act quite differently at different times

Negative loadings

1 People who know me well would say I'm pretty predictable

Correlates of Plural Self Scale Scores

My Studies Using the Plural Self Scale

In their study of Turkish and American undergraduate students, Zeyrek and Lester (2006) found that having a unified self was positively associated with having a Taoist orientation toward life as measured by the Ego-Grasping Scale of Knoblauch and Falconer (1986), for the combined sample and for each national group separately, and for both males and females. The association was stronger for the first factor identified by Zeyrek and Lester for the Plural Self Scale (the subjective perception of the self) than for the second factor (how others perceived you). Park, et al. (2007) found that a unified self was associated with having a Taoist orientation in Korean high school and university students, but McCollum, et al. (2006) did not find any association in a small sample of Asian students studying in Thailand.

Lester (2003a) carried out a similar study on a sample of American undergraduates. He found that having a unified self was associated with a Taoist Orientation. Lester gave the students the REP Grid Test of George Kelly (1955)

and scored the grid for how many independent factors could be extracted, and he also asked the students to identify their subselves. The score on the Plural Self Scale was not associated with either of these measures (nor with the percentage of variance account for by the first factor on the REP Grid). Thus, scores on these self-report scales may not be valid measures of having a multiple self.

Lester (2004b) administered the Plural Self Scale along with the FAVT, a scale devised by Doucette-Gates, et al. (1999) to measure the extent to which people hear inner voices which utter violent thoughts (which presumably come from subselves of the mind). The FAVT has several subscales: social mistrust, thoughts of being disregarded, negative critical thoughts of the self and others, and thoughts and expressions of overt aggression. Scores on the Plural Self Scale were positively associated with all four subscale scores, indicating that the higher the plural self score, the more the respondents heard violent inner voices.

Lester (2007a) found that scores on the plural self scale were positively associated with scores on a test of self-monitoring, that is, a measure of being “highly responsive to social and interpersonal cues of situationally appropriate performance” (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000, p.530), and lower scorers on a test on tolerance of ambiguity. This was a rare study which identified positive aspects of having a multiple self. Lester (2011) found that plural self scores were positively associated with scores for openness, self-deception and neuroticism and negatively with conscientiousness. but not associated with extraversion or agreeableness.

Lester and Carter (2013) found that plural self scale scores were positively associated with neuroticism and openness but not with tolerance for ambiguity, conscientiousness, extraversion or agreeableness.

These studies are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Lester’s Research

<u>Study</u>	<u>Result for unified self</u>
Lester (2003a)	no association with number of self-identified subselves
Lester (2004b)	lower score for hearing violent inner voices
Lester (2007a)	higher scores for self-monitoring and lower scores for tolerance of ambiguity
Lester (2011)	higher scores for openness, self-deception and neuroticism; lower scores for conscientiousness
Lester & Carter (2013)	higher scores for neuroticism and openness
McCollaum, et al. (2006)	no association with Taoist orientation in Asian Ss
Park, et al. (2007)	a Taoist orientation in Korean students
Zeyerck & Lester (2006)	a Taoist orientation in Turkish and American Ss

Other Researchers⁶

In a study of college students, Altrocchi and McReynolds (1997) found that scores on the plural self scale were positively associated with scores on Rosenberg's stability of self scale, Campbell's self-concept clarity scale, and Donahue et al.'s self-concept differentiation scale. In a study of dieters, they found that self-pluralism scores were not related to sex, body mass index or obesity. Older subjects had lower self-pluralism scores, and those with greater weight variability (although not overall weight) had higher self-pluralism scores. In another study, they found that self-pluralism was not associated with how your spouse rated you on that construct. Altrocchi and McReynolds (1997, 1999) found that self-pluralism was associated the measures of college maladjustment, dissociation experiences, neuroticism, low self-esteem and low ego-strength. Patients with dissociative identity disorder scored very high on the scale.

In a comprehensive review, McReynolds, Altrocchi and House (2000) summarized their research, reporting positive associations between self-pluralism scores and measures of self-concept instability, self-concept differentiation, private (but not public) self-consciousness, cross-situational variability, self-monitoring, neuroticism, trait anxiety, and college maladjustment and negative associations with self-concept clarity self-esteem, agreeableness and conscientiousness, and social desirability.⁷ On the whole, then, self-pluralism seems to be associated with parallel measures (such as self-concept differentiation) and with maladjustment.

In a long-term study of people over a period of eight years, McReynolds, et al. (2000) found that self-pluralism scores were correlated with the extent of long-term real life changes. The greater that extent of changes in life, the great the self-pluralism score, but it is, of course, impossible to determine the direction of causality in this association. In that study also, self-pluralism scores were associated with maladjustment, including perceived stress and depression positively and self-esteem and general well-being negatively. Finally, McReynolds et al predicted the self-pluralism scores should be lower in older adults, and this was confirmed in a cross-sectional study.⁸

Dunn and Castro (2012) argued that postmodern society encourages a plural self. The use of modern technology requires a multiple self. Interactive

⁶ A search was made of all citations to Altrocchi's (1999) article. Most did not conduct research using the Plural Self Scale, and many were not available online.

⁷ Self-pluralism scores were not related to verbal intelligence or sensation-seeking scores.

⁸ McReynolds et al. replicated all of these results obtained with the 30-item scale when using the 10-item scale instead.

video games entice the players into simulacra or hyper-realities. The Internet exposes people to contradictory information and knowledge. Online interactions promote cyber-selves which people can use to enact a multiplicity of selves. In addition to this, Dunn and Castro argued that materialism attaches symbolic meanings to the objects of consumption and, if objects are used to construct one's self-concept and identity, materialism can easily result in multiple selves. Dunn and Castro viewed television and media exposure as associated with materialism, and so predicted that exposure to modern technology would be associated with materialism.

In their study of about two hundred respondents, they found that scores on the 10-item self-pluralism scale were associated with scores on a measure of materialism and on exposure to general technology, television, video games and the Internet. In a path analysis, they found that general exposure to technology increased self-pluralism directly and also indirectly through the mediation of materialism. Overall, age, technology use and materialistic values accounted for 29% of the variance in self-pluralism.

In a study in England of mostly college students, Churchyard (2013) found that scores on the plural self scale were positively associated with scores for anxiety and depression, negatively with scores for life satisfaction, and not associated with scores for sensation seeking and the tendency towards habitual behavior.

In a large Polish sample, Łyś, et al. (2022) found that self-pluralism scale were positively associated with scores for self-concept inconsistency, self-concept differentiation, dissociative experiences, internal dialogue activity and neuroticism and negatively with conscientiousness.

Baird, et al. (2006) found that self pluralism was negatively associated with life satisfaction.

Comment

Two conclusions seem warranted from this review of research on the Plural Self Scale. First, having a plural self (as measured by this scale) is not necessarily good for the individual. For example, levels of anxiety and depression may be greater. However, there are advantages, such as being more open.

Second, there are many measures that claim to measure the existence of multiple selves, and the correlations between their scores are not always very

strong. Much more research is warranted on these measures in order to tease out the different components that they measure.

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CAN A MULTIPLE SELF MAKE RATIONAL DECISIONS?

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Abstract: Moldoveanu and Stevenson viewed the multiple self as a problem, resulting in conflict and incoherence in the cognitive processes of the individual. I would argue that a multiple self can be conceptualized as analogous to a small group which may result in better and more rational decisions than a single individual. A multipleself may, therefore, fit the concept of economic man better than a unified self.

Moldoveanu and Stevenson (2001) explored the implications of two models of the self: the self as a unified system and the self as a fragmented entity. The multiple self is portrayed by Moldoveanu and Stevenson as an “ever-changing, possibly internally conflicting entity” (p. 295) and as possibly a “split-self – or schizoid approaches – recognize the internally incoherent nature of selfhood ...” (p. 318).

This possibility of a multiple self, incoherent and internally incoherent, poses problems for the economic conception of rational humans making decisions based upon the information that they have, but the present essay notes that multiple selves may not necessarily be incoherent and full of conflict. If humans have a multiplicity of selves, these selves may not necessarily function as an uncontrolled horde. Let us look at some alternatives.

Alternative Conceptions of the Self

James Ogilvy

Ogilvy (1977), a philosopher, suggested that a multiplicity of selves could be organized as a social hierarchy with a single powerful self which rules the mind or as a decentralized organization. For Ogilvy, a multiplicity of selves, a pluralized pantheon of selves, as opposed to a single monotheistic ego leads to freedom. Each self is a source of differing interpretations of the world, based on differing interpretive schemes.⁹ These intrapersonal selves

⁹ The ancient Greek pantheon of Gods has many advantages over the single God of Christianity by giving adherents a variety of choice in whom to worship and to whom to pray!

have different personalities. The person is the result of mediation among this collection of individual, relatively autonomous intrapersonal selves. The goal is to prevent any one of these selves from taking over control as a monarch or single administrator. Ogilvy saw the ideal as avoiding a hierarchical organization of the selves, having instead what he called a heterarchical organization (McCulloch, 1965), nicely illustrated by the coordination and integration of the different parts of the body. Heterarchy does not necessarily lead to anarchy

J. M. M. Mair

Mair (1977), a psychologist, also suggested that, rather than viewing the mind as an individual unit, we can consider the mind to be a *community of selves*. Mair suggested that it is useful in psychotherapy to encourage people to conceptualize their mind as a community of selves, some of which may be persistent while others are transient, some isolates while others work as a team, some who appear on many occasions while others appear only rarely, and some of which are powerful while others are submissive.

Mair gave three clinical examples of individuals who were readily able to conceptualize their minds as a community of selves. One man used a political framework, viewing his mind as made up of a Cabinet of Ministers in a Government, another used the notion of political factions, while the third used the notion of a troupe of actors. The range of analogies used suggests that we may find useful concepts for understanding the mind from politics, group processes, diplomacy, debate, propaganda, industrial organizations, labor relations, international trade, law, theater, literature, arts and sciences.

Mair stressed that he considered this to be a metaphor. Our minds sometimes behave *as if* they were communities of selves. He shrank from postulating that they *are* communities of selves.

Shapiro and Elliott

Shapiro and Elliott (1976), psychotherapists, listen for evidence of conflict in the patient and then try to separate out the different parts of the person involved in this conflict. The therapist's role is that of coach or facilitator, helping the subselves emerge and training the patient to deal with them in constructive ways. It is critical that none of the subselves be rejected. Each must be understood and integrated back into the self- organization.

Shapiro and Elliott try to identify or develop a mediator for the subselves. It may be called a chairman of the board, or some other term best suited for the particular patient. The goal is to transfer energy and power to this mediator. The therapy permits the patient to identify and label the subselves, rather than fitting them into a predetermined set of subselves.

These subselves can interact in a *drama* (or life script), as a *family*, as an *organization* or *task group*, or as a *discussion group*. It is important for the psychological health of the client for the subselves to get along with one another. An internal civil war or great conflict and tension can lead to psychological disturbance. The group of subselves should be democratic, with a minimal amount of partisanship, favoritism, and moralistic judgments. The energy of the subselves should also be rechanneled away from fighting into constructive problem-solving under the leadership of the Chairman. In addition, the Observer should be developed to act as a consultant to the total self-group.

Discussion

The notion that the mind is composed of multiple selves can be found in many theorists, including [Carl Jung \(1971\)](#) who spoke of complexes (including the ego, shadow, persona, animus and anima and archetypes) in his Analytic Psychology, [Eric Berne \(1961\)](#) who spoke of ego states (Parent, Adult and Child) in his theory of Transactional Analysis,¹⁰ and [Michael Gazzaniga \(1985\)](#) who initially described the different functions of the left and right hemispheres of the brain, but who later suggested that the brain consists of a number of functioning units called *modules*.¹¹

Some of these models of the mind as made up of subselves imply that decision making might be irrational. For example, if the Child ego-state, as defined by Eric Berne in Transactional Analysis, were in control of the mind, then decisions would be made by a subself which resembles the mind of a small child. Such a model could run counter to idea of *economic man* acting on pure rational economic motives and disciplined self-interest. But not all models of the mind as a group of subselves necessarily result in the possibility of irrational decisions.

¹⁰ A tripartite (or triune) division of the brain was proposed by [MacLean \(1989\)](#) which corresponds to the three subdivisions corresponding to three consecutive evolutionary eras: the reptilian, the limbic and the neocortical. Some theorists, such as Claude Steiner (www.emotional-literacy.com/triune.htm) have suggested that this quasi-physiological division of the brain may correspond to Eric Berne's classification of ego states: Child, Parent and Adult ego states, respectively.

¹¹ For other conceptions of the multiple self, see [Lester \(1995\)](#).

Lester (1995) suggested the usefulness of viewing the various subselves in the mind as a small group, in which case many of the principles and research on the functioning of small groups becomes applicable to the functioning of the mind. Group decision-making can sometimes be more rational and effective than decision-making by individuals. For example, juries in the criminal justice system are predicated on the assumption that a number of, often naive, individuals can reach a mature and rational decision.

Lester noted that small groups with a hierarchical structure are often more productive, but their members are less satisfied. On the other hand, some structure is often useful. The goal is perhaps to have a dominant subself, but not one which is overly dominating. Research on group dynamics indicates that increasing the size of the group eventually increases the chances that a dominant member will emerge and force conformity from the other group members. Thus, there is a limit to the size of a group for effective functioning. In writing on subselves, Allport (1961), Rowan (1990) and Shapiro and Elliott (1976) have suggested that from 4 to 10 subselves is ideal. How many subselves do people report? Rowan's (1990) sample reported a mean of 6.5, while Lester's (1992) sample reported a mean of 3.5.

Lester noted that research on group dynamics indicates that egalitarian small groups typically produce more and better solutions to problems than individuals, but that they take longer to reach decisions and are more likely to make decisions which are risky. Perhaps these same principles might apply to people with many subselves.

In summary, the concept of *economic man*, which is at the basis of mainstream economics, implies a self-interested, rational and temporally-stable individual. A person who is made up of multiple subselves may, at first glance, run counter to this concept. But small groups often make better decisions than individuals acting alone, and thus a mind that is a multiplicity of selves who function much like a small group may make better decisions than a mind which is a unified, single self. The result may not be conflict and incoherence. If this is the case, then people with multiple selves may make more rational and more adaptive decisions in economic affairs than people with a single unified self in some situations. Thus, a multiple self may fit the concept of economic man better than a unified self. There are situations, for example, when a company is best led by a dominant and forceful individual, and other situations where a board of directors acting as a group is better. The task in the present case is to ascertain which decisions are best made a single unified self and which by a *pantheon of selves* and which pantheons are the most effective.

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Studies on Multiple Selves, 2026, 1(2), 35-38**Book Review: Metaeconomics: Tempering Excessive Greed, by Gary
Lynne****David Lester**
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To provide context for this review of Gary Lynne's book *Metaeconomics: Tempering Excessive Greed*, I will note that I am a psychologist who has proposed a subself (or a multiple self) theory of the mind (or as it is called in Departments of Psychology, a theory of personality). What would a psychologist make of Lynne's book?

My first surprise was reading, in Lynne's review of previous work in economics, how many economists and other scholars have proposed the distinction between acting in self-interest and acting in the interest of others (greed versus empathy in Lynne's terminology). It is indeed high time that someone has reviewed the disparate proposals and united them in a formal model, as Lynne has done.

Unlike many of the others he reviews, Lynne has personally conducted research to test his dual motive theory. To give just one example, in examining the motives to recycle, Kalinowski, Lynne and Johnson (2006) explored how much people would pay extra to buy recyclable products. In general, it is important to test theoretical ideas by doing empirical research, as Lynne has done.

Lynne's thesis is thought provoking. Let me give some illustrations. In his chapter on recycling choices, Lynne provides an example of how we can apply his metaeconomics. The different recycling behaviors motivated by self-interest versus other-interest were clear. But, consider what happens in real life. Assuming we have both motivations, do we compromise and recycle *somewhat*, but not maximally? Lynne seems to draw this conclusion in his set of indifference curves (in Figure 4.1). However, perhaps we act on greed on some occasions and act on empathy at other times. A superficial look at the life of Bill Gates's life comes to mind, where he seemed to be motivated more by self-interest in the earlier part and more by other interest in the later part. Moreover, if the dual motivations create a conflict in the mind, perhaps the person will make no decision (like the donkey who cannot decide which of two buckets of food to approach and dies of starvation). For recycling, but not necessarily for all decisions, not deciding will probably mean not recycling.

Lynne notes the parallel between his two subselves (greed and empathy) and the two trends proposed by the psychiatrist Andras Angyal (the trends toward autonomy and homonomy). For Angyal (1965), these two trends were only part of the picture: they form the healthy system principle. The unhealthy system principal¹ also has two patterns, the patterns of vicarious living (the hysteric personality) and non-commitment (the obsessive-compulsive personality).¹² Therefore, as we might fault classical economics for assuming that people are rational, so we might also fault metaeconomics for assuming that people are psychologically healthy. Could we not expand metaeconomics to incorporate pathological subselves? Leading individuals in business are not immune from psychopathology. A prime historical example is Howard Hughes, but casual observation suggests many people in any country are psychologically disturbed.

Lynne cites Abraham Maslow, someone I knew personally.¹³ Maslow proposed five basic needs: physiological, safety, belonging, esteem and self-actualization. Behavior motivated by physiological and safety needs is clearly self-interest, but behavioral choices might differ depending which of these two needs is operating. Lynne's distinction of two selves raises the question of whether, thinking of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, recognizing five subselves might be useful. For esteem needs, Maslow did distinguish between self-esteem (which hints of self-interest) and esteem from others (which hints of other interest). What about self-actualization? It sounds like a self-interest motivator, but self-actualization might well involve taking an interest in others.

Both physiological needs (for example, hunger) and safety needs (such as avoiding danger) are self interest needs, but the physiological needs take precedence over safety needs, according to Maslow. Therefore, to satisfy a need such as hunger, we would sacrifice safety. The same might be true for other-interest objectives, that is, two other-interest objectives may conflict, and one empathic objective may have to give way to another.

Lynne does propose that two subselves (greed/empathy) may not be sufficient (p.111). He uses Transactional Analysis (Berne, 1961) to propose two self-interest subselves, the adaptive Child and the free Child,

¹² Angyal called this the neurotic system principal, but others have applied it also to psychoses.

¹³ I was Maslow's teaching assistant in 1966.

two other-interest subselves, the critical Parent and the nurturing Parent, and two compromising subselves, the algorithmic Adult and the rational Adult. Lynne also hints that self-interest and other-interest may be operating in the unconscious (p. 143).¹⁴

Lynne applies his thesis to people's voting behavior, to financial policy at the micro and macro level (from greed and cronyism in Wall Street to the financial collapse in 2008), to food policy (issues such as sustainability, conservation, and food safety), to health policy (vaccinations and the behaviors of people during the corona virus pandemic, such as panic buying), and to other issues.

Moldoveanu and Stevenson (2001) argued that the possibility of a multiple self, which they believe is necessarily incoherent and internally conflicting, poses problems for the economic conception of rational humans making decisions based on the information that they have. In contrast, psychologists have been more accepting of the possibility that a multiple self may be capable of rational thought. Using the parallel of a group of subselves making a decision as analogous to a group of people in a committee making a decision, Lester (2010) argued that it often happens that group decisions are better than individual decisions.

Lynne's book, as I have indicated, is stimulating in that it provokes many ideas in the reader's mind. Lynne draws together similar ideas proposed by others and contrasts them with his own, provides a mathematical presentation for those so inclined, and provides an excellent starting point for the future elaboration of these ideas.

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¹⁴ Lynne uses the term *subconscious*.

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THE UNITY OF THE SELF, HAPPINESS AND DEPRESSION: A REPLICATION

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Abstract: In a sample of 133 American undergraduate students, scores on a measure of having a plural were negatively associated with having a unified self and with happiness and positively associated with depression.

Zeyrek and Lester (2006) found that having a Taoist orientation toward life was positively associated with scores on Altrocchi's (1999) 10-item scale to measure the unity of the self. Altrocchi originally constructed a 30-item scale to measure the unity of the self, from which he derived the short 10-item version. The present study was designed to check on the association reported by Zeyrek and Lester using the 30-item scale and to extend the study to a measure of happiness and depression.

A questionnaire was given to 35 male and 98 female undergraduates enrolled in social science courses ($M_{age} = 23.6$ yr., $SD = 7.2$), containing Altrocchi's (1999) 30-item unity of self scale, Knoblauch and Falconer's (2006) 20-item Taoist orientation scale, and Joseph and Lewis's (1998) 25-item scale to measure depression and happiness. Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1, along with Pearson correlations.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and correlations

	Mean	SD	Pearson r with unity of self	
			Unity of self	Taoist orientation
Unity of self	9.8	6.1	-	
Taoist orientation	12.0	4.0	+0.42*	-
Depression	17.5	7.1	-0.40*	-0.64*
Happiness	26.3	6.0	+0.41*	+.63*

* two-tailed $p < .001$

Scores on the unity of self scale were positively correlated with having a Taoist orientation and also with depression and happiness. Scores on the Taoist orientation scale were positively associated with happiness and negatively with depression.

The results conformed the results of the earlier study with the short unity of self scale. Scores on the unity of self scale were positively associated with having a Taoist orientation and happiness and negatively with depression. The conclusion seems to be that having a plural self is not necessarily associated with happiness.

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A DISCUSSION OF THE DIALOGICAL SELF

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The idea of a multiple self is not new. Lester (2010, 2015) has proposed his own version of a theory of the mind based on the existence of multiple selves and reviewed the many other psychologists in the past who have had similar ideas. Recently, Hermans has written extensively on his version of this idea and has attracted other psychologists to explore the idea. This brief essay reviews this version of multiplicity.

Hermans' Ideas

Hermans (2001a) has written extensively on what he has called the *dialogical self*. Hermans mentions William James in the background of his ideas, citing James's proposal of the "rivalry and conflict of the different selves" (James, 1890, p. 309).¹⁵ Hermans liked the distinction that James made between *I*, the self-as-knower and *Me*, the self-as-known.

The *I* constitutes our personal identity and has a sense of sameness over time. The *Me* is far less clear. Hermans says that James thought of *Me* as the empirical elements consider as belonging to oneself, and sounds more like the self as perceived by others rather than an aspects of oneself. But, then, one does not expect a theorist writing in the 1890s to make sense to the modern commentator. However, Hermans does view the *I* as the unifier of the different aspects of *Me* which, for a theory of multiple selves, suggests an interesting subself that some individuals might possess.

Hermans, et al. (1992) proposed that the mind is "a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions" (Hermans, 2001a, p. 248). These I-positions can talk with one another (hence the term *dialogue*) and are limited by space and time. Perhaps this means that, at any one time, one I-position is in control of the mind, and this may be impacted by where the individual is (at home, at work, etc.). Hermans likes the idea of the mind as a community of voices or agents, an idea proposed by many others in the past.

¹⁵ Hermans also draws on the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian philosopher and literary critic (1895-1975).

In his most recent article, Herman (2025) defines his theory in this way: “a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions with the possibility of conducting dialogues among I-positions within the self and with the I-positions of other people” (p 2). The I-positions form a *micro-society*.

Not everything that Hermans proposes makes sense. Hermans (1996) suggested that the poles in George Kelly’s (1955) description of constructs could be viewed as two parts of the self. “I consider the two poles of a personal construct as if they were characters involved in dialogical relationships (p. 4). One could do this, but it makes little sense for it implies that each pole of a construct in Kelly’s theory is a subself. It means that, if I have a construct trustworthy-untrustworthy, then I have two subselves one of which is I view as my trustworthy self and another which I view as my untrustworthy self. Is this true? Since an individual may have many constructs (the REP Grid makes allowance for 22 constructs), this means that the individual can have as many as 44 subselves. It is likely that many of the constructs in a REP Grid are related. Perhaps the responses to a REP Grid could be factor analyzed and clusters of related constructs identified, with each cluster being a subself.

More interestingly, Hermans (2001b) suggested a psychological assessment tool (the Personal Position Repertoire [PPR]) in which the person chooses internal positions and external positions. A look at one of Hermans’ case studies shows that internal positions (up to 50 can be chosen by the individual) are personality characteristics and traits, while external positions (up to 40) are people with whom the person interacts. There are no subselves here. The external positions are social situations that the person encounters in which a subself may emerge and take over executive control of the mind. The PPR has little relation to a multiple self theory of the mind

What is noteworthy is that Hermans (2001) does not come up with any hypotheses or proposals about the multiple I-positions, although he discusses social and cultural influences on the individual. Theorists like John Rowan (1990), and myself (Lester, 2015) have done a better job of turning multiplicity into a substantial theory. He, has however, drawn many psychologists to his ideas through edited books, special issues of journals and conferences, and, thereby, brought many others to write about the multiple self theory of the mind.

Clinical Applications

The more interesting aspect of Hermans’ proposal is the clinical ideas that have come out of it. For example, Gkantona (2023) developed an Internal Multi-Actor Performance method (IMAP) which explores a client’s multivoicedness

between different I-positions. The client is presumed to have several inner voices and is encouraged to articulate and explore them using a mind-stage with imaginary actors. New I-positions emerge, and the therapist can help the client imagine create new I-positions. Nir (2012) has also described a technique for different subselves to negotiate and devise alternative tactics for issues that confront the person.

What is also interesting about this is the failure of these writers to cite (and maybe even be aware of) all the others who have proposed similar things. Hasn't Gkantona read what Transactional analysts (Goulding & Goulding, 1978), Fritz Perls (Perls, et al., 1951), Lisa Firestone (2005) and many others have done?¹⁶

Oleś and Puchalska-Wasyl (2012) constructed an Internal Dialogical Activity Scale (IDAS) which measures internal dialogues with items such as “Sometimes I debate with myself about who I really am,” and Oleś, et al. (2025) proposed a revised version of this scale. Once scales exist, research flourishes.

Discussion

The dialogical self is clearly not a new idea. The ideas of others who have proposed a multiple self theory are reviewed in my books (Lester, 2010, 2015). What is noteworthy about the dialogical self is that the idea has attracted many psychologists to explore the idea, devise research and propose therapeutic tactics.

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**MAYANK'S PATTERN TIC THEORY AND THE MULTIPLE SELF:
A REFLECTIVE COMPARISON****Mayank Sharma**

Contemporary psychology has increasingly questioned the assumption of a single, unified self. Both clinical observation and everyday experience suggest that human behavior often reflects internal plurality, contradiction, and shifting perspectives. David Lester's work on Multiple Self Theory (Lester, 2015) contributes to this growing body of thought by proposing that the mind consists of several selves or positions that influence behavior in context-dependent ways.

Mayank's Patterntic Theory (Sharma, 2024) arose independently from prolonged reflection on human behavior, emotional inconsistency, and the limits of insight-based change. Rather than framing internal plurality in terms of selves, the theory proposes that behavior emerges from interacting psychological patterns formed across different stages of life.

In Patterntic Theory, three categories of patterns are proposed: P-Patterns, which originate before birth; OL-Patterns, which develop through observation and learning; and E-Patterns, which emerge from the interaction between the first two and operate largely outside conscious awareness. These emergent patterns often dominate behavior in emotionally charged situations, even when individuals possess conscious insight.

A conceptual bridge can be drawn between E-Patterns and the subselves described in Multiple Self Theory. What Lester refers to as a self or position may be understood, within the Patterntic framework, as a dominant pattern configuration that temporarily organizes perception, emotion, and action. Internal conflict, from this view, is not a struggle between rational and irrational forces, but a competition among well-established patterns.

Where Multiple Self Theory emphasizes phenomenological experience and internal dialogue, Patterntic Theory places greater emphasis on origins and persistence. It seeks to explain why certain internal positions continue to exert influence despite awareness, reflection, or therapeutic effort. This may help account for the frequent gap between knowing and changing.

Both theories converge on the idea that psychological distress is not necessarily pathological, but often a natural consequence of internal plurality.

Whether conceptualized as selves or patterns, the mind appears to function as a dynamic system rather than a unitary agent.

In conclusion, Patterntic Theory and Multiple Self Theory offer complementary perspectives on the fragmented yet coherent nature of the human mind. By viewing subselves as emergent patterns, Patterntic Theory provides a structural lens that may enrich phenomenological accounts of internal multiplicity. Continued dialogue between these perspectives may contribute to a more nuanced understanding of human behavior and inner conflict.

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Author note: The author is an independent learner and conceptual thinker with a deep interest in the human mind. This essay reflects exploratory thinking rather than formal clinical or academic training.

