

Dualism 301: A Case for Multiple Soul Residency

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Abstract

Psychological dualism (or dualism herein) purports that there is a complementary, non-material/physical, mind-active component associated with a living organism. Thus mind would not simply be an expression of brain function as confidently believed by neuroscience (and science in general). As earlier work has suggested that confidence can be brushed aside by considering some accepted unusual behaviors. One simple dualism-consistent example is terminal lucidity in which people return to psychological coherence shortly before death despite having been lost to “dull, unconscious, or mentally ill” conditions, in some cases for years. Arguably framing these challenges to materialism, though, is genetics’ unfolding “missing heritability” crisis in which many expected DNA origins have not been found despite extensive searches. An associated soul-consistent explanation is that instead of DNA origins these innate characteristics reflect continuity associated with the earlier lives of incarnating souls (and of course with this some other particular explanations). Herein arguments for the existence of souls are considered for the very surprising case of multiple soul residency in a single organism. Discussions on this possibility focus on the stunning experiences of some heart transplant patients, and also the very difficult condition of Multiple Personality (or Dissociative Identity) Disorder. These two phenomena pose very difficult challenges for materialism (and brain function), and on the other hand are suggestive of the influences of additional souls. Finally, some of the implications of these extraordinary possibilities are briefly considered.

Keywords

Dualism, Neuroscience, Souls, Materialism, Metaphysics, Reincarnation, Heart Transplants, Multiple Personality Disorder

1. Introduction—The Landscape of Materialism and Neuroscience

A concise depiction of the import of science’s materialistic vision of life was given by the prominent biologist, Ursula Goodenough. In her terse depiction:

[T]he workings of life are not mysterious at all. They are obvious, explainable, and thermodynamically inevitable. And relentlessly mechanical. And bluntly deterministic. My body is some 10 trillion cells. Period. My thoughts are a lot of electricity flowing along a lot of membrane. My emotions are the result of neurotransmitters squirting on my brain cells. I look in the mirror and see the mortality and I find myself fearful, yearning for less knowledge, yearning to believe that I have a soul that will go to heaven and soar with the angels (Goodenough, 1998: pp. 46-47).

Additional fallout from science’s confidence showed up in the novelist Julian Barnes’ fine 2008 book, *Nothing to be frightened of* (Barnes, 2008). Barnes’ perceptive work addressed death (and quite a bit of life). It opened with, “I don’t believe in God, but I miss Him” (Barnes, 2008: p. 3). The book’s unquestioned intellectual foundation is scientific materialism (or physicalism). With this perspective, Barnes can still philosophize around some—including having some fun with atheists, philosophers, and also modern lifestyles. But to little end as he surmised. Barnes also went on to suggest the futility of religions and free will. In a relevant quote:

We discover, to our surprise, that as [Richard] Dawkins memorably puts it, we are “survival machines—robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes”. The paradox is that individualism—the triumph of free-thinking artists and scientists—has led us to a state of self-awareness in which we can now view ourselves as units of genetic obedience. My adolescent notion of self-construction—that vaguely, Englishly, existentialist ego-hope of autonomy—could not have been further from the truth. I thought the burdensome process of growing up ended with a man standing by himself at last—*homo erectus* at full height, *sapiens* in full wisdom—a fellow now cracking the whip on his own full account. This image... must be replaced by the sense that, far from having a whip to crack, I am the very tip of the whip itself, and that what is cracking me is a long and inevitable plait of genetic material which cannot be shrugged or fought off. My “individuality” may still be felt, and genetically provable; but it may be the very opposite of the achievement I once took it for (Barnes, 2008: pp. 93-94).

Science is anchored in a molecular-only description of life, including of course the mental aspect. Additionally, this fixation extends well beyond science to effectively pervade academia. But there appear to be at least two under-appreciated challenges to this vision. First, the foundational role of (the big molecule) DNA as a vehicle for inheritance is running into the very formidable missing heritabil-

ity problem (Christopher, 2020; Sheldrake, 2012). This is most tangible with the inability to identify the DNA basis for numerous health and behavioral tendencies, but is also likely present with regards to some amazing instinctive behaviors (Sheldrake, 2012; Christopher, 2022a). Secondly, materialism appears inadequate to describe a number of unusual but accepted behavioral phenomena, including those of prodigies (Christopher, 2020). Of more general significance, our innate religious belief package strains the plausibility of evolutionary/DNA origins (Christopher, 2022b; Barrett, 2012).

Nonetheless, neuroscience is fixated on materialism. This is apparent even in popular books like V. S. Ramachandran's (with S. Blakeslee) *Phantoms in the Brain* (Ramachandran & Blakeslee, 1998). Therein we are informed that over the "last three decades" neuroscientists "have learned a great deal about the laws of mental life and about how these laws emerge from the brain" (Ramachandran & Blakeslee, 1998: p. 256). Ramachandran wrote about the "exhilarating" progress that had been made but acknowledged that this process had left many "uncomfortable" in that:

[i]t seems somehow disconcerting to be told that your life, all your hopes, triumphs and aspirations simply arise from the activity of neurons in your brain. But far from being humiliating, this idea is ennobling, I think. Science—cosmology, evolution and especially the brain sciences—is telling us that we have no privileged position in the universe and that our sense of having a private nonmaterial soul "watching the world" is really an illusion (Ramachandran & Blakeslee, 1998: p. 256).

Ramachandran and Blakeslee went on to offer the empty consolation that this nihilism was aligned with an intellectual take on "Eastern mystical traditions".

This popular take on mental life, though, is easily questioned via later much more authoritative assessments on how little is actually known and how much future work appears necessary to confirm the materialist vision (Yuste & Church, 2014). Yuste and Church also pointed out how superficial and deceptive many popular presentations of human brain experiments are. And in a simple example they pointed out:

[d]espite a century of sustained research, brain scientists remain ignorant of the workings of the three-pound organ that is the seat of all conscious activity. Many have tried to attack this problem by examining the nervous systems of simpler organisms. In fact, almost 30 years have passed since investigators mapped the connections among each of the 302 nerve cells in the round worm *Caenorhabditis elegans*. Yet the worm-wiring diagram did not yield an understanding of how these connections give rise to even rudimentary behaviors such as feeding and sex. What was missing were data relating the activity of neurons to specific behaviors.

Regardless of possible far-reaching, future research efforts, some accepted behavioral phenomena appear to stymie any conceivable neural-molecular expla-

nation. One such phenomenon appears to be hyperthymesic syndrome in which experiencers display an ongoing massive day-by-day recall of their lives and also significant events. Such memories were found to be “highly organized in that they are associated with a particular day and date” and that this occurs “naturally and without exertion” (McGaugh & LePort, 2014). Readers might try replicating this process across a single week (whilst of course not exerting). Embedded in hyperthymesia is the remarkable ability to map arbitrary dates to the corresponding day-of-the-week (termed calendar calculation). How this could have fallen out of natural selection, been encoded in DNA, and ultimately been realized in brains is quite difficult to imagine.

Additionally, consider the following description of a musical prodigy found in Darold A. Treffert’s *Islands of Genius*:

By age five Jay had composed five symphonies. His fifth symphony, which was 190 pages and 1328 bars in length, was professionally recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra for Sony Records. On a *60 Minutes* program in 2006 Jay’s parents stated that Jay spontaneously began to draw little cellos on paper at age two. Neither parent was particularly musically inclined, and there were never any musical instruments, including a cello, in the home. At age three Jay asked if he could have a cello of his own. The parents took him to a music store and to their astonishment Jay picked up a miniature cello and began to play it. He had never seen a real cello before that day. After that he began to draw miniature cellos and placed them on music lines. That was the beginning of his composing.

Jay says that the music just streams into his head at lightning speed, sometimes several symphonies running simultaneously. “My unconscious directs my conscious mind at a mile a minute,” he told the correspondent on that program (Treffert, 2010: pp.55-56).

Treffert’s book contains a number of such examples supporting his conclusion that prodigal (including prodigious savant) behavior typically involves “know[ing] things [that were] never learned”. Such behaviors provide rebuts to the scientific vision of materialism. Treffert also considered the phenomenon of acquired savant syndrome in which savant behaviors appear in the wake of central nervous system setbacks. Needless to say, it seems unlikely that brains would acquire skills as a result of physical damage.

A final introductory phenomenon is suggestive of dualism. It is terminal lucidity and it was previously mentioned along with a possible dualist explanation (Christopher, 2022c). Terminal lucidity was initially described in the modern era by German biologist Michael Nahm (Nahm, 2009) as (and followed up very nicely in (Nahm et al., 2012)):

[t]he (re-)emergence of normal or unusually enhanced mental abilities in dull, unconscious, or mentally ill patients shortly before death, including considerable elevation of mood and spiritual affectation, or the ability to speak in a previously unusual spiritualized and elated manner.

2. Personality Changes in Heart Transplant Recipients

There have been a number of reports suggesting that in some cases heart transplant recipients received more than a functioning heart (Leister, 2020; Verny, 2021; Pearsall et al., 2005). In fact the “transfer of personality characteristics from one person to another” following such surgeries has been noted for over 50 years (Leister, 2020; Lunde, 1967). In particular such reports suggest that this transference process involves four categories: “1) changes in preferences, 2) alterations in emotions/temperament, 3) modifications of identity, and 4) memories from the donor’s life” (Leister, 2020). For simplicity I will largely report on this based on the writeup “Organ Transplants and Cellular Memories” in *Nexus Magazine* (Pearsall et al., 2005). The authors, Paul Pearsall, Gary E. Schwarz, and Linda G. Russek (all PhDs) also authored earlier relevant articles listed in their Endnotes, and Pearsall had authored a book, *The Heart’s Code* (Pearsall, 1998). Furthermore there have been several follow-up efforts since, but the *Nexus* article neatly captures the remarkable nature of such reports and its cases appear to be regularly cited in later work such as a *Medical Hypothesis* paper (Leister, 2020).

The authors introduced the reports along with their suggested explanation-route, cellular memories, which I will consider later. One common feature of a number of the cases is that recipients knew very little with regard to the identity of the donor. In all of the cases the recipients were diagnosed with some form of impending heart failure and for brevity I will remove the associated medical descriptions. I will forgo Pearsall et al.’s introduction by directly considering their Case 4 (there are 10 in all). The donor for Case 4 was black male 17 year-old who had been fatally shot in an apparent drive-by shooting. His mother described his final moments in which while walking to violin class and after being shot he “hugg[ed] his violin case”. He apparently loved classical music despite being teased by peers and his mother simply stated that his teachers were impressed and further that she felt “he would have been in Carnegie Hall someday”.

The 47 year-old white foundry worker recipient pointed out that in the aftermath of the transplant surgery that “I used to hate classical music, but now I love it”. Additionally, he added “So I know it is not my new heart, because a black guy from the ‘hood wouldn’t be into that” and that “[n]ow it calms my heart”. And finally in the quoted excerpt the foundry worker mentioned that with regard to classical music “I play it all the time”.

The recipient’s wife added that in addition to socializing now more with black co-workers, her husband was:

Driving me nuts with the classical music. He doesn’t know the name of one song and never, never listened to it before. Now he sits for hours and listens to it. He even whistles classical music songs that he could never know. How does he know them? You’d think he’d like rap music or something because of his black heart.

In Case 5 the donor had been a 19 year-old woman who had been killed in an car accident. The donor's mom said of the donor/victim that she was a "most loving girl". She "owned and operated her own health food restaurant and scolded me constantly about not being a vegetarian". She was "[w]ild" but a "great" kid. She had been into "the free-love thing and had a different man in her life every few months". Her mom claimed that she had been "man crazy" even when she was a "little girl". When she was dying she communicated to her mother that she "could feel the impact of the car hitting them" and that she felt it "going through her body".

The Case 5 recipient was 29 year-old woman and she reported that "two things happened" after the transplant surgery. The first claim was that "I could feel the accident my donor had" in fact "I can feel the impact in my chest", although her doctor "said everything looks fine". Her second post-surgery claim was that "I hate meat now" saying she just "can't stand it". She went on to claim "I was McDonald's biggest moneymaker, and now meat makes me throw up" and that when "I even smell it, my heart starts to race". Her doctor was dismissive of this change and claimed "it was due to [her] medicine".

Additionally, the recipient went on to claim she had effectively had "a gender transplant" as she had no desire to "be with a woman". Although she had been committed to being gay, after surgery she found that her new "boyfriend turns" her on and "women don't". She in fact got engaged to be "married to her boyfriend". The recipient's brother, in addition to confirming her dietary preference change, reported that "she was gay and her new heart made her straight". In fact the brother claimed that the recipient had thrown "out all her books and stuff about gay politics and never talks about it anymore", despite previously being "militant" on the topic. The brother even added that after previously lecturing on the evils of men, after surgery she even "talks girl-talk with my girlfriend".

Case 7's donor was a 3 year-old girl who died in a tragic accident in the family pool that apparently involved an inattentive (phone-occupied) babysitter. The only testimony that Pearsall et al. obtained was from the recipient's side of the transplant surgery. The recipient's mother claimed that her recipient son didn't know about the donor or how they died. She reported "that [her son] is now deathly afraid of water" whereas previously "[h]e loved it". In fact they "live on a lake and he won't go out in the backyard" and he "keeps closing and locking the back door".

The Case 7, nine year-old recipient claimed that "he talks to her [the donor] sometimes" and that she "seems very sad" and "very afraid". He added that "[s]he says she wishes that parents wouldn't throw away their children" but the boy recipient doesn't know "why she would say that". Perhaps consistent with this the recipient's mother pointed out that although the recipient didn't know about the donor or their death, "we [his parents] do". The recipient's mother said that the donor's parents had had a subsequent "ugly divorce" and a key point—and likely source of guilt—had been the lack of time spent with their

daughter.

The Case 6 donor was a 14-year-old girl who died in a gymnastics accident. The donor's mother spoke in glowing terms about how fit and energetic her daughter had been. She did, though, have an apparent anorexic-like difficulty with food; which despite her energetic life she had little interest in. Additionally, the donor when embarrassed emitted a "silly little giggle" which "sounded like a little bird".

The Case 6 recipient was a 47-year-old man. The recipient's brother reported that after his surgery the recipient "is a teenager". He added that "[h]e's a kid or at least thinks he is a kid" and that when they are bowling "he yells and jumps around like a fool". The brother also added that the recipient somehow obtained a "weird" laugh, one sounding like "a girl's laugh". On a final note of concern the recipient's brother pointed out that the 47-year-old after surgery "was pretty much nauseous almost all the time" and as a result there were then health concerns, including "[h]is doctor" being "concerned about his weight".

The recipient in Case 6 reported that after surgery he felt "like a teenager" and "actually" felt "giddy". He acknowledged that he "had this annoying tendency to giggle that drives my wife nuts". He also mentioned his subsequent difficulty with eating and feeling nauseous.

Finally, Case 10 involved a 34-year-old male donor who had been murdered as he tried to arrest a drug dealer. The donor's wife mentioned that her husband had died from being shot in the face and that the (un-arrested) suspect's appearance was later depicted as looking "sort of like some of the pictures [drawings] of Jesus".

The Case 10 transplant recipient was a male 56-year-old college professor and he provided a striking report. He said:

[i]f you promise you won't tell anyone my name, I'll tell you what I've not told any of my doctors. Only my wife knows. I only knew that my donor was a 34-year-old very healthy guy. A few weeks after I got my new heart, I began to have dreams. I would see a flash of light right in my face and my face gets real, real hot. It actually burns. Just before that time, I would get a glimpse of Jesus. I've had these dreams and now daydreams ever since: Jesus and then a flash. That's the only thing I can say is something different, other than feeling good for the first time in my life.

The recipient's wife concurred about her husband's disturbing dreams and added "God we wish they would stop."

3. Initial Heart Transplant Psychological Effects Discussion

The above sincere accounts challenge science's vision of life and of course are simply amazing. The authors tried to suggest a materialist approach with their hypothesis in which the cells of the donor's heart somehow pass along memories to the transplant recipient. They offer a general and seemingly reasonable concept starting with "all dynamical systems store information and energy to var-

ious degrees”. We can pass on the energy storage point here and instead consider storage of information in the “dynamical systems”, which here would be heart cells. Could there be storage of information in such cells? Yes, perhaps in a simple way and epigenetic storage mechanisms might allow such cells to better adapt to a changing blood chemistry environment. But such storage of information which for example might help with simple adaptation to physical changes (maybe in salinity levels), doesn’t seem remotely close to the complexity needed to store high level information like the appearance of Jesus or classical music scores.

If heart cells maintained such a memory capability then why wouldn’t there be some analogous phenomena associated with blood transfusions? Blood cells are of course routinely transferred between individuals.

Moreover even if somehow the heart cells could store high level information (seemingly redundantly with the brain from a scientific perspective), there still would be the problem of accessing this new information in the recipient’s body. The neuron-based model of memory is supposed work in a networked associative way. Thus for example, if someone were to mention the movie “Bullitt” to me that reference would likely bring to mind memories of a gritty late sixties crime drama starring Steve McQueen. In turn some other actors in that drama would likely emerge including Robert Vaughn (playing the nasty political figure) and of course the setting, San Francisco. Additionally the very famous car chase scene would certainly come to mind, including its use of a Dodge Charger and a Ford Mustang. The latter might even elicit some personal memories of arguments with other kids over the performance of those vehicles since I grew up in a very car conscious family.

That kind of sequence is supposed to reflect an underlying associative structure in which memories are somehow connected together. Neuroscience is sure that reflects the many interconnections of many memory-active, distributed neurons. From this perspective a summation of tiny environmentally-induced weightings in the synapses of neurons would somehow make possible the above sketched out unfolding of my memories with regards to “Bullitt”. The difficulty with the heart hypothesis is simply how could a newly transplanted (presumed memory-bearing) heart get adequately interconnected to effectively come “on-line” with the recipient’s complex network of memories? The same argument would seem to apply to transplanted brain tissue. Adding memory to an electronic computer—via for example an external hard drive—is conceptually and empirically easy. Incorporating external memory within an existing super-interconnected and associatively-built brain network (maybe visualizable as a very big bowl of super thin spaghetti), would likely be extremely difficult.

Pausing here for a relevant aside. In his book, *Science Set Free*, Rupert Sheldrake has a chapter entitled “Are Memories Stored as Material Traces” which examines and questions the brain-based vision of memory storage (Sheldrake, 2012: pp. 187-211). Two points Sheldrake made therein are noteworthy. One, even insiders like Francis Crick questioned the plausibility of the long term sto-

rage of memory within brains. Crick had noted that given the transient nature of molecules within the body that would appear to be a real obstacle to maintaining information over long periods. But perhaps more damning evidence challenging the neuronal-model of memory is that there were extensive (and brutal) experiments in which portions of the brains of trained lab animals were removed so as to be able to infer the relevant structures housing memories. These failed repeatedly (with trained performance not declining) and this even convinced a skeptic in the matter to conclude that “memory is both everywhere and nowhere in particular” (Sheldrake, 2012: p. 191).

But going beyond doubts in the brain’s potential capacity to store memories, there appear to be more basic problems with a heart cellular memory hypothesis. There is more going on in such transplant cases than an unexpected increase in memories, there in fact appears to be three additional categories of changes (see earlier description). When someone gets a big swing in dietary preferences or the inexplicable acquisition of an attachment to classical music, that would seem to represent more than an increase in personal memories. Additionally, our basic sexual preferences package is supposed to be mostly innate (and thus based on genetic roots), not something conditioned and as such stored in memory.

Finally, as a succinct challenge to the cellular memory hypothesis consider the haunting nightmares that one recipient experienced. According to the authors’ theory those would have been based on memories acquired in the shooting death of the donor. But that tragic incident as described happened in an instant and would likely not have provided a basis for any memories. A routine occurrence with serious head-impacting accidents is that memories of the time leading up to the trauma are lost and “likely never will” be obtained (Sheldrake, 2012: pp. 196-197; MSKTC, 2016).

In the closing section I will consider a traditional soul-based explanation for this phenomenon.

4. Multiple Personality Disorder

The condition of multiple personality (or dissociative identity) disorder will be considered via an in-depth *Scientific American* article, “A New Therapy for Multiple Personality Disorder Helps a Woman with 12 Selves”, by Rebecca J. Lester (Lester, 2023). Secondly, interested readers can find an online follow-up discussion with Lester (Fischman et al., 2023). Lester is a licensed social worker specializing in trauma and one of the challenges she works with is personality disorders. Lester is also a “cultural anthropologist with expertise in the intersections of culture and mental health”. The patient her article chronicled was described with the fictitious name, Ella. Here from Lester’s opening paragraph was an introduction:

[s]he was sitting comfortably in a chair, her hands folded, her back straight and her feet flat on the floor. There was no dramatic change, no shuddering or twitching. But then I saw it: in slight shift in how she held her body. Her

face softened almost imperceptibly. I heard it, too: her voice sounded different, pitched just a teeny bit higher than usual, with a new singsong quality. At first I found it curious. As it continued, I felt a growing sense of unease. Acting on a hunch, I asked her how old she was. “I’m seven,” she said. Ella was 19.

Ella had been referred to Lester by a professor who taught her in a class. They met and worked together two and then three times a week. Their collaboration was described as having lasted 4 and a half years. Ella had originally been described as needing help with complex post-traumatic stress disorder. She had experienced “long-term, severe abuse by a trusted religious leader”. As a result she had had flashbacks, anxiety, nightmares, and was involved with self-harm. Standing out more, though, was that she:

regularly missed pockets of time. She “spaced out” unexpectedly, “waking up” wearing different clothes. She experienced intense thoughts, motions and urges that felt like were coming from someone other than herself.

All together, Lester after many meetings concluded that Ella had multiple personality disorder (MPD). A condition in which there are multiple “personalities that regularly take control of the person’s behavior, as well as recurring periods of amnesia”. Ella referred to her personalities as “parts” and there were reported to be 12 of them whose ages ranged from two to sixteen (perhaps better to have described her as experiencing 13 personalities, one of which of course was her original one). The situation is truly remarkable and also very difficult. It is also believed to be not that rare, though, with global prevalence estimates of about “1 to 1.5 percent of the population.”

Each of Ella’s parts appeared to have its own name and collection of memories or experiences. They also portrayed “distinctive speech patterns, mannerisms, and handwriting”. Some of the parts used words for communication, while other parts “were silent, conveying things through drawings or using stuffed animals to enact scenes”. And amazingly, “[m]ost of the time the different parts were not aware of what was happening when another part was ‘out’.” This was not surprisingly a recipe for a very “fragmented and confusing existence.” As an example, Ella reportedly “would sometimes ‘wake up’ in the middle of a conversation with someone and realize she was somewhere other than the place in which she last remembered being.”

Rebecca Lester also reported that MPD is a “highly controversial” diagnosis. I suggest here that anything that challenges materialism—as MPD certainly does—is likely to be controversial if not simply ignored. Nonetheless the condition as Lester observed, is profound and represents a huge challenge.

Lester claimed to having gone to great lengths to verify the consistency of Ella’s multi-faceted personality and behaviors. Extended fraudulence by Ella would seem to have represented a big personal setback since her parts “would sabotage one another, ruining relationships and threatening her school performance”. As

an example, Ella reported that two of her more prominent parts, an easy-going 7 year old (Violet) and a demanding 16 year old (Ada), at times came into serious conflict. The older Ada usually prevailed over Violet and as punishment “would sometimes hurt ‘the body’ by hitting and biting her arms and legs and holding pillow over her face until she passed out, behaviors experienced as a reenactment of the abuse that created her.”

Continuing, Lester went on to report on her strategy of viewing Ella as consisting of a team or community. Thus her challenge as a therapist—and agreed upon by Ella—was to try to get that community to be more cooperative. Lester also gave an anthropological backdrop and in so doing pointed out that some traditional cultures believed in humans being occupied by multiple souls. For example Lester pointed out that a group in West Africa (the Dahomey) “believed that women had three souls and men had four”. She claimed that “the possibility of more than one entity residing in a body at a time is a widespread human belief.” Such a belief might reflect experiences with MPD or analogous anomalies, but excepting for the routine divisiveness associated with our competing desires, normal human behavior does not appear compatible with a multiple self interpretation or model.

5. Initial Multiple Personality Disorder Discussion

The above sincere account is certainly a challenge to interpret scientifically. Rebecca Lester took a stab at this in normalizing Ella’s situation by claiming that she isn’t that “different from the rest of us, except, that she has barriers between her parts that disrupt the sense of continuous consciousness most of us take for granted.” I don’t see how that is realistic. For her parts to have separate identities including memories, speech patterns, and handwriting represents a big conundrum for any (single) brain interpretation. Functions like handwriting and speech patterns, as neuroscience imagines them, should be localized in the brain. How could such neural neighborhoods be effectively partitioned to support distinct features of multiple selves?

An additional mystery is how some of the components or parts appear to be frozen in time (or state of development). How could the seven year-old Violet not cognitively age or at least stay crudely consistent with Ella’s bodily age and development?

One suggestion here is that there is an overlap between the experiences of some heart transplant recipients and those experiencing MPD. In both cases one reasonable interpretation is that an additional identity or self is somehow introduced and incorporated. The traditional soul-based interpretations will be considered next, but here it is worth simply appreciating the challenges posed to neuroscience’s materialist vision.

6. Soul-Based Interpretations

A potential backdrop to the discussion here was given in the earlier “Dualism

101: Terminal Lucidity and an Explanation” (Christopher, 2022c). Therein the remarkable transient return of mental coherence (frequently in a “spiritualized or elated manner”) after a long shutdown, was suggested to reflect the re-engagement of an underlying soul. As reflected in the name of that mysterious phenomenon, this has been observed to happen shortly before death. As pointed out therein a conceptually simple explanation can be obtained by utilizing some observations from Chris Carter’s medium communication discussions (Carter, 2012). Those communications suggested that the loss of mental engagement reflected a breakup or dissolution of a (apparently nonphysical) cord running between the soul and the individual’s brain. Consistent with that medium-based observation, a possible terminal lucidity explanation is that the tentative link (or ethereal cord) is briefly reestablished as the resident soul senses their impending death and makes a final determined push for some communication.

Moving along now to a possible multiple soul-interpretations of psyche-impacted, heart transplant recipients and also the difficult MPD situation. In these somehow additional souls could have been introduced to an already occupied human body. Once in residence they could then come “online” via establishing something akin to an ethereal cord link-up with the brain. One basic question would be how much would such a model require separation between the online periods of different souls? Another question would be can different souls actually share a single cord? The heart transplant cases considered here would seem to suggest that such communication/personality linkages might be shared. Those cases appeared to show that the donor input was pretty well integrated (although puzzling at times to the original soul).

A particular question related to the heart transplant mystery is how frequently do such psychological effects occur? One survey of 47 heart transplant patients in Austria found three groups of patient responses [Discover, 2014]. 37 patients (79 percent) claimed they had not experienced any changes. But that group also displayed “massive defense and denial reactions, mainly by rapidly changing the subject or making the question ridiculous.” 7 patients claimed that they had experienced changes “but not because of the donor organ, but due to the life-threatening event” (but note that the donor’s had also experienced a life-threatening event). Finally, 3 patients “reported a distinct change of personality due to their new hearts.” Somewhat predictably then, *Discover Magazine* felt compelled to label those 3 patients’ changes as due to “incorporation fantasies” (why not simply write it off as adverse medication effects?). These findings suggest that there can be significant pressure on transplant recipients (and obviously scientists) to reject the donor influence hypothesis, and also based on the 37 (“No!”) patient cases that perhaps a possibly denied donor influence is stressful.

With Ella’s multiple personality experiences there was a lot of segregated or individual soul-driven happenings. That situation was also very stressful and divisive. MPD must be a real test of fortitude for all those involved.

I turn here (as previously) to some traditional reincarnation sources that I am

familiar with. The traditional rebirth draw for an incarnating soul according to Buddhist teachings includes a draw to one or both parents and a particular draw to them having sexual intercourse (or union) (Wallace, 2012: p. 103; Fremantle & Trungpa, 1992: p. 200). That same rebirth dynamic might be consistent with the introduction of an additional soul in some MPD cases. Lester in her article pointed out that MPD “is diagnosed primarily in young adult women, many with a reported history of severe child abuse, especially sexual abuse”. Such a scenario might then be hypothesized to be a receptive one for a soul trying to be reborn. You might in that scenario have a very vulnerable female (and female soul) combined with perhaps an aggressive male (and male soul). Instead of setting itself up to be reborn, such an incarnating soul might then find itself sharing an existing (possibly multiple) occupancy of a human female. In Jim Tucker’s *Life Before Life* there was one report from a young child with regard to their earlier unsuccessful efforts to get born via an already soul-occupied pregnancy (Tucker, 2005: pp. 164-168).

On a more subtle point, the mind state or desire of the entering soul is within Buddhism seen as critical to its future trajectory (Fremantle & Trungpa, 1992). For a detailed discussions see (Thondup, 2005), in particular Chapter 4. Thus a Buddhist scholar pointed out, “when [rebirth] desire is accompanied by craving, hostility, and delusion, the results are painful” (Wallace, 2012: p. 103). This interpretation might be consistent with some of the big difficulties or challenges associated with MPD condition. Given the stressful state of a possible (in fact criminal) union the incoming soul might bring its own difficult history. But stepping back for a potentially positive big picture take, Buddhism sometimes views difficulties as potentially helpful—either as a vehicle for burning through bad karma (Sogyal, 2002: p. 100, 382), or simply in a more lay-oriented interpretation, as an aid to learning difficult life lessons (MacFarquhar, 2013).

In the case of the heart transplant scenario maybe the donor souls were looking to hang onto life—perhaps in particular given their unexpected sudden deaths—and thus followed their heart to the transplant site. A number of the medium reports in Chris Carters’ *Science and the Afterlife Experience* contained an initial post-death scenario in which the confused soul hung around their old body. Consistent with that a number of the delug experiences (apparently extended near-death happenings in Tibet) in Tulku Thondup’s *Peaceful Death, joyful Rebirth* contained initial descriptions of the (released) soul’s hanging around their body. One interpretation is that one way and another a soul tends to become very attached to the body and thus can experience difficulty in moving on. In the heart transplant scenario an escape route might then be available in simply following their (physical) heart. The possible emotional quality of such a merger might be mixed. On the one hand both the recipient’s soul and that of the donor get to extend their lives. The recipient, in particular, could be very grateful as the cases in Pearsall et al. suggest. On the other hand, both the nightmares in Case 10 and the sorrow in Case 7 might be consistent with a shadow of suffering following the donor’s soul.

In a personal communication, Rupert Sheldrake suggested that morphic resonance could be responsible for the reappearance of the donor's personality after the transplant (the donor's particular DNA somehow pulling in memories and the personality from the previous donor's life). One question with that interpretation is again why wouldn't this also happen with the much more common practice of transferring blood? Another question would be is there an analogous explanation of MPD in which there is no known transference of body elements? The phenomena considered herein can not only be very demanding for the people involved, they also pose extraordinary intellectual challenges.

A general suggestion in terms of a soul-based understanding is that it is supposed to be a good strategy within Buddhism to try to pursue good activities along with good intentions in one's life. Leading a morally-oriented life might then be good both in the short and long run. That could well be a basic teaching in many other religions. But having a multiple occupancy situation would be a big complication and challenge from a spiritual, a practical, and even a legal perspective (think about prosecuting a suspect who experiences MPD). A somewhat crude physical analogy is with conjoined (attached) twins, and using an earlier suggested reincarnation model perhaps they had gotten too dependent in a previous life (Christopher, 2017a). Ultimately, though, the pursuit of well-being—for oneself and others—seems to encourage, if not demand independence. In the case of heart transplant recipients this might be a good short term (this life) compromise. In Ella's case, she and Rebecca Lester worked very hard to move towards a healthier, community-oriented system. But in terms of a life-after-life perspective in either case, the constituent souls would seem better off pursuing a post-death divorce.

7. Conclusions

For those interested in questioning the “biochemistry and biophysics”—only vision of life there are many established approaches including (Sheldrake, 2012; Carter, 2012; Kelly et al., 2007; Stevenson, 1997; Tart, 2009; Alexander, 2012; Tucker, 2005; Radin, 2006; Mayer, 2007; Gober, 2018). Each of these approaches provides some support for a form of dualism. I suggest, though, that in order to really breach materialism and its effective nullification of deeper visions/meaning, one needs to take on DNA and its assumed foundational role for specifying life and evolution (Christopher, 2020). Somewhat in parallel, you can see Sheldrake's work with regards to morphic fields, although therein he arguably offers an extended form of materialism involving novel physical fields.

Previous work by the author has suggested that the traditional reincarnation model appears to offer a good starting point to explain some mysteries including the general missing heritability problem (Christopher, 2017a, 2017b). Additional work in this journal considered some evolutionary phenomena and their possible reincarnation-based explanations (Christopher, 2022a, 2022b). Furthermore, beyond this there seem to be numerous other amazing—and under-appreciated—

mysteries.

The position of science on the mind was made in clear in a newspaper article in which the neurologist author stated, “[t]he brain is what makes you, you” and “there is no evidence of an active mind without living brain” (Stanley, 2022). I add that there is also no evidence that neuroscience has any sustained interests in phenomena challenging their position (like the two phenomena considered herein).

Both the psychical follow up found in some heart transplant patients as well as the perplexing experiences of Multiple Personality Disorder seem to offer some support for a form of dualism. When you have the stunning and otherwise inexplicable appearances of additional personalities, it might be good to consider the intuitive hypothesis involving additional souls. Additionally, at a bare minimum such experiences, bolstered by sincere accounts and in the case of MPD an apparent legacy of general recognition, make plain the tendency of science to write-off or marginalize significant challenges to their vision.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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