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Morton Prince and B. C. A.: A Historical Footnote on the Confrontation Between Dissociation Theory and Freudian Psychology in a Case of Multiple Personality

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When Sigmund Freud made his triumphant debut in North America with his Clark University lectures of September, 1909, the state of abnormal psychology in America was dominated by the French school of psychopathology. The leader of this school, Pierre Janet, had already visited America on several occasions and had recently completed a course of lectures at Harvard University. Janet’s concepts of “dissociation,” “subconscious,” and “fixed ideas” pervaded American thought. The French masters—Ribot,Binet, and Janet—had a number of their works already published in English when the first sampling of Freud’s papers, mostly on hysteria, were translated by Brill in 1909 (Freud, 1909). His most important work, The Interpretation of Dreams, was not to be published in English until...
1913. Yet, because Freud’s lectures “On the Origin and Development of Psychoanalysis” had been translated into English and published in the American Journal of Psychology early in 1910 (Freud, 1910), and because several of his most important English-speaking students, including Ernest Jones and A. A. Brill, were now in North America, Freud’s psychoanalysis began to spread. After a period of intense conflict, it soon dominated abnormal psychology in America. Janet and the French school became no more than a footnote in the prehistory of the psychoanalytic movement.

History has a way of rewriting (or righting) itself however, particularly when concepts, such as those developed by the French school, capture a reality that their replacements are not able to handle. Hence, after several generations dominated by the psychoanalytic perspective, we must try to reconstruct a psychology of dissociative disorders when the original source material of this alternative psychology has been “repressed” in our culture’s memory and when its substitute finds it difficult even to recognize the original phenomena of such disorders—for instance, hypnotic dissociative states and multiple personality. Therefore, a historical introduction to some of the work of a leader of this opponent view to Freud’s, that of Morton Prince, the leading representative of French psychopathology in America, and of his early encounter with the onslaught of psychoanalysis, might help us to see the nature of the original conflict that still needs to be resolved between these two great approaches to abnormal psychology.

As often happens in historical quirks of fate, while Freud, Jung and Ferenczi were in Worcester, Massachusetts, describing the wonders of the “unconscious” and of “psychoanalysis,” Morton Prince was still in Europe after giving a talk at the Sixth International Congress of Psychology in Geneva, where the major theme was the subconscious and where Janet, the originator of this concept, had given the keynote address. At the congress, Janet explained the “subconscious” as an empirical, clinical concept and distinguished it from the “unconscious,” which he viewed as a philosophical concept.

Dr. Morton Prince, who was then a Professor of Nervous Diseases at Tufts Medical School, spoke on his new concept—the “co-conscious.” In a published symposium on the subconscious, Prince (1907) had introduced the concept “co-conscious” to replace “subconscious” for conscious mental activities, outside of the consciousness of what was then termed the “personal consciousness,” and which we would now, after Freud, probably call the “ego.” That such co-conscious mental activities were indeed a reality was evidenced by the existence of a variety of mental states accessible through hypnosis, automatic writing, crystal gazing, and other dissociative methodological techniques. Probably not the least important factor leading Prince to make his distinction between co-conscious mental events and other “physiological” versions of subconscious or unconscious mentation was that he had an acquaintance with a personality, “Sally Beauchamp,” who claimed to be co-conscious while another personality of the Beauchamp “family” was in charge of the “personal consciousness.” Prince had written up this multiple personality case several times already, but it was his 1906 book, The Dissociation of a Personality, that had immortalized this personality disorder by bringing it in a popular form to the general public, while at the same time introducing the wonders of psychotherapeutics in the form of hypnotic suggestion and the resynthesis of this fissioned personality.

In the same year, 1906, Prince founded the Journal of Abnormal Psychology, which played an important role in the diffusion of psychoanalysis to the English-speaking world and was the main center for the confrontation of Freud’s theories with his French competitors’ theories. In its first issue, a paper by J. J. Putnam, a professor of neurology at Harvard and eventually one of the leading converts to the Freudian fold, appeared in the Journal (Putnam, 1906), describing psychoanalysis and giving it a tentative negative evaluation. That paper was written as a substitute for one by Freud himself, who refused Prince’s offer to publish an article by him. Some of Jung’s work on associations also appeared in the first volume and, not
surprisingly, the lead article of the *Journal* was written by Pierre Janet. This journal became a forum for discussion of psychoanalysis and carried in single issues amazingly brutal statements in articles, replies to articles, conference proceedings, and so forth, from both sides of the controversy. The *Journal* makes a living reality of the conflict for anyone who reads it from its inception to 1921 when Ernest Jones resigned his post as associate editor, which he held from 1910, and the *Journal* became the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. Shortly thereafter the *Journal* was given by Prince to the American Psychological Association to become one of its main organs.

There are a number of fascinating stories that might be told from the *Journal*’s pages about the early years of the rise of psychoanalysis and the decline of dissociation theory, and of Prince’s role in these developments. However, in this chapter, I focus our attention on a single patient of Prince’s during this important period of his confrontation with psychoanalysis. B. C. A. is the second case of multiple personality that he treated. From a scientific point of view, Prince felt that this case was more important than the earlier Beauchamp case, and I quite agree with him. He studied B. C. A. more closely, performing experiments and generating detailed case material. The patient herself, who developed a strong interest in abnormal psychology, contributed enormously to this work, including two remarkable autobiographies written by two of her personalities and published in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* (B. C. A, 1908, 1908/1909). These have yet to be matched by anything in the literature on multiple personality. Furthermore, as I have discovered by studying the Prince papers at the Francis A. Countway Library at Harvard, the patient, whose name is Nellie Parsons Bean, became deeply involved in Prince’s research, probably in part as a transference phenomenon. (Kenny, 1986, in his interesting study of multiple personality as a sociocultural phenomenon, seems to have been the first to reveal B. C. A.’s identity.) She learned shorthand and typed out session notes and Prince’s manuscripts, as well as commenting on them. She also wrote out her own dreams and interpreted them. It seems that she planned to write a book that would include her autobiographies, as well as other material, in particular her dreams. Apparently nothing came of it, except indirectly in Prince’s work. Prince formally thanked Mrs. William G. Bean in the preface of his 1914 book, *The Unconscious*, for her “great assistance... in many ways.” In addition to thanking her for her practical assistance, he also stated that her “unusually extensive acquaintance with the phenomena has been of great value” (p. xii). When Prince finally published the psychogenesis of her case in 1919, he had inspected her autobiographies and letters and other case material and “found that when the pieces of evidence were pieced together they allowed of only one conclusion, namely, that which the subject herself in the main reached independently as the facts were laid bare and brought into the field of her consciousness...” (Prince, 1914/1921, p. 553). As we shall see shortly, Nellie Bean, in her several personalities—but especially as the co-conscious, B—worked out a theory of the psychogenesis of her dissociation of personality, based on an analysis of those memories of past events available to introspective analysis. Morton Prince merely organized this material, and provided a more detailed articulation of it, in his own psychogenesis of the case.

Since my visit to Boston to study the Prince collection with a particular focus on the B. C. A. material, I have collated the pieces of evidence that remained in this collection and have been able to look over the shoulder of Prince in his treatment of and research with Nellie Bean. In the main, I agree with Prince’s statement that she contributed enormously to his understanding of her case. However, both Mrs. Bean and Prince contributed to our misunderstanding of this case as well, because, by suppressing sexual content, they left her case description less than fully disclosed. Had this censorship occurred at another time and place, it might not have mattered as much, but it was at this very time that Freud’s sexual theories were causing the greatest difficulties in assimilating psychoanalytic thought. Hence, Prince’s reserve in publishing this material more fully, even though based on Mrs. Bean’s desires, or insistence (see,
errors caused by Freud’s almost demonic influence on its development, to the exclusion of non-Freudians of the stature of Janet and Prince.

NELLIE PARSONS BEAN (A.K.A. B.C.A.)

When Nellie Parsons Bean came to Morton Prince for help in December 1906, she was in a very bad state. As Prince described it: “[She] presented the ordinary picture of so-called neurasthenia, characterized by persistent fatigue and the usual somatic symptoms, and by moral doubts and scruples” (B.C.A., 1908, p. 204). She was the widow of a railroad executive, William G. Bean, who had died on June 29, 1905, 4 years after his first cerebral hemorrhage. For almost a year after his death, she was depressed but courageous; she worked hard on her business affairs and acted responsibly toward her teenage son, Robert, as well as toward her mother and two unmarried sisters. However, because nervous exhaustion developed, her doctor sent her to a sanatorium, Nashua, for a rest cure. The rest did not succeed; instead, her situation worsened. At first she seemed to get better, though she exhibited an almost manic recovery from her earlier state.

But then something happened that changed her—it made her into an entirely new personality, who Prince later called B. She was no longer the widow who constantly wore black, but a gay young 18- or 19-year-old unmarried woman who no longer cared about any of the responsibilities that wore down Mrs. Bean. This personality, which first appeared after a young drug addict, Mr. Hopkins, kissed Mrs. Bean on July 26, 1906, disappeared and was replaced by a second personality, named A, a month later when a second shock involving Mr. Hopkins and money affairs occurred. This second personality was an exaggerated version of the responsible, but seriously ill, Mrs. Bean. During the fall of 1906, the two personalities alternated a number of times, but because they shared memories to a great extent, neither personality was clear about her status as a shattered piece of the original Mrs. Bean who went to Nashua.
Apparently, however, Dr. Cummings, her general practitioner, realized that something strange had happened, for he suggested in October of 1906 that she see Dr. Prince, and she finally did, as A, in December.

Not long after she came under Prince's care, an amnestic barrier was created between the two personalities. Prince, who was using hypnosis on A to relieve her of some of her symptoms, found her switched to the personality B while A was in a hypnotic state. He realized then that she was a multiple personality. After this encounter, all subsequent switches between the two personalities involved amnesia for A of B's alternating activities, though she retained memory for most of B's activities prior to this time. For B, her status as a co-conscious, as well as alternating personality became clearer at this time. As Prince described it:

Complex A had no memory for complex B, but the latter not only had full knowledge of A, but persisted co-consciously when A was present. B was therefore both an alternating and a co-conscious state. Besides differences in memory, A and B manifested distinct and marked different characteristics, which included moods, tastes, points of view, habits of thought, and controlling ideas. In place, for instance, of depression, fatigue, and moral doubts and scruples of A, B manifested rather a condition of exaltation, and complete freedom from neurasthenia and its accompanying obsessional ideas. With the appearance of B it was recognized that both states were phases of a dissociated personality, and neither represented the normal complete personality. After prolonged study, this latter normal state was obtained in hypnosis, and, on being worked up, a personality was found which possessed the combined memories of A and B and was free from the pathological stigmas which respectively characterized each. This normal person is spoken of as C. The normal C had, therefore, split into two systems of complexes or personalities, A and B (B. C. A., 1908, pp. 240-241).

Actually, the fusion of A and B into C was much more difficult than Prince indicated. Although he expanded on this point in his introduction to the second autobiography, he never made clear the troubles he had in finally obtaining a fusion that would persist for more than a few days or weeks. It seems to me that progress was made in forming stronger fusions only as Nellie herself, in all of her personalities, came to appreciate the direction in which fusion lay—in other words, what kind of balance of A and B characteristics would be most adaptive to her current and future life.

Because the role that hypnosis plays in forming multiple personalities is still very much an issue that concerns us, it is important to be clear about the status of the A and B complexes of Nellie before Prince's hypnosis created an amnestic barrier. Were A and B already different personalities before this dissociation of memories, or not? If episodic memory of one's past life is used as the diagnostic criterion, then Nellie might not be considered a multiple personality until Prince hypnotized her and B appeared. Although, because she did have amnesia for a short period following the traumatic incident that seems to have divided the original personality into A and B, even using this criterion sensitively, she might be classified as a multiple personality. If multiple personality is defined in terms of mutually incompatible and distinctive mood and motivational complexes that appear and disappear suddenly, each occurring for an extended period of time and alternating with the other, then Nellie was a multiple personality before the amnestic barrier appeared. But even here it is possible to question the diagnosis and difficult to separate it in the present case from manic-depressive disorder until more is known about the details of the case.

I next present the details that support the diagnosis of multiple personality through letters written by the patient herself, in her several personalities, to Prince after she came under his care in December 1906. It may help the reader to refer to the chronology in the appendix to this chapter in order to keep track of the incidents in the case. By viewing the case through the points of view of Nellie's several personalities, it is hoped that the reader will gain greater insight...
into multiple personality disorder (MPD) than if I merely described the case in my own words.

In a letter that Nellie wrote on August 9, 1907 in her A state, but didn’t mail, and that later formed part of the basis of C’s autobiography, she wrote what she was like the previous summer when the B complex and personality first appeared:

As B I was very happy, lively and light-hearted, ready to do anything for pleasure—ride on the electrics, walk in the woods, or a long walk anywhere, canoeing—I was ready for anything; and enthusiastic. I felt perfectly well, more vigorous than ever in my life before. I had no headache, never felt tired. I think it would express it so say I was filled with the “joy of life.” The whole world looked different to me. I seemed more alive. I realized the beauty of the world keenly—the blue of the sky, the clouds, the green of the woods, the sound of the wind in the pines all filled me with a sort of ecstasy. It was so beautiful to me—life seemed so good. As far as that went it was all right and much as I used to be before Mr. Bean was ill and before I had so much trouble, but there were other things which were not all right and not like me. I seemed to lose all sense of responsibility; to my son [Robert], to my mother and sisters, to my business affairs. I became absolutely indifferent. . . . It seems to me that I was like B all that time though I place her coming at a certain moment later than the time I am describing. I certainly was not myself. I certainly was not A. I was not yet what we call B. What was P? I was dominated by what came to be a “fixed idea”—I must help Mr. H. I could save him and I must. Nothing else influenced me or carried any weight . . . .

Then came the time when I was wholly B [July, 26, 1906]. Everything but my own pleasure was cast to the winds. I felt and acted like a girl of eighteen and I know that I looked years younger than I do now.

But all this time I was conscious of an undercurrent of disapproval—as I look at it now I was living a double mental life—B ruling my life—A subconscious to her. I think there were two trains of thought much of the time and I seemed to myself to be two persons. I can remember of saying so many times—but that had seemed so for a year or two—more than that, three or four years . . . .

When in Sept. [1906] I became wholly A—B dropped out of sight entirely and I was like a person who wakes from a dream or delirium. I don’t mean that it seemed unreal to me or that, at first, I regretted it but I was buried with the shock of my discovery and suddenly realized that I had known it would be so all the time. I could not believe I had been so wholly mistaken and deceived—would not—that is nearer right—and I also realized how strangely I had acted—and what my friends would say if they knew etc etc. I don’t think I can describe the time from the middle of Sept to the middle of Dec. [1906] very clearly. I was submerged in a sea of . . . . humiliation, regret. I realized more and more clearly how strange I had been—how unlike myself . . . I burn with humiliated pride now when I think of the things I did. I shall never understand why and it seems very wrong and cruel that such a thing should happen to me . . . (letter, Aug 9, 1907, Bean, 1907-1913)

A claimed that it was she who behaved oddly and was confused in the fall of 1906 before Prince started treating her in December. In an undated note, B gave a somewhat different interpretation:

C disappears at time of shock [the kiss by Mr. Hopkins on July 26, 1906] leaving A and B. A being subconscious. B stays till Sept, but B has her moods—grave as well as gay. B came to Boston and stayed that time—it was B in this mood all through Sept. A did not come till Oct. Then A and B’s grave mood alternated till sometime in Nov. A began to come then but A has so many moods—the A who went to Dr. P. in Dec. was not as she is now. B happy. B/I 1ad [or B/A if B/I 1ad = A]. (undated note, Bean, 1907-1913)

What one sees in the divergence of these two descriptions is that when there are no clear amnestic boundaries to separate personality states, the subject, herself in either of her alternative ego-states, is unsure how to evaluate changes of mood from changes of ego-state.
And it may be that the personality states themselves slide gradually from one to the other. Indeed, for final fusion it seems that the mutual approach of the ego-states might be a necessity.

Although there is some confusion between moods and ego-states when global amnesia is not involved, I believe that Prince was right to assume that alternating personalities occurred in this case before the amnestic boundary between them was formed. Furthermore, it was a particular incident, the kiss of Mr. Hopkins, that was the precipitating cause of the first appearance of B as a separate personality and later after another shock also involving Mr. Hopkins, that A appeared. A referred to these events in one of her earliest letters:

I place the date of this change in me as July 26 [1906] I could tell you almost the minute it came. I understand some things about this better than you think, perhaps, but have not reached the place where I can discuss it from a scientific point of view. It is too intensely personal...just a line more. It seems to me, as I think over what you said to me yesterday, that the shock of finding what Mr. H., really is changed me again [in Sept. 1906]—made me as I was when you first saw me, and as I am now. Perhaps I am not really myself now any more than during the time I forget. Is that possible? These two selves seem extreme and neither one is as I used to be. There must be a straight thread through this tangle—if we can only find it (letter, June 8, 1907, Bean, 1907-1913)

It was not long after this letter that Prince was able to synthesize the first C in hypnosis (on June 13 or 14, 1907). To return to the incident on July 17, 1907, A wrote in another letter: "I wish you would ask C if she knows exactly what happened about eight o'clock in the evening on the twenty-sixth of last July. It seems to me that is the time all this came about." A apparently had amnesia for this event or at least for what happened shortly thereafter (cf. Prince, 1914/1921, p. 509). B wrote on October 10, 1907, "You have no idea how that word (kiss) makes A writhe—and she doesn't know anything of all that followed." Three days later, A wrote:

You have asked me if I know what changes me to B. I don't know, always, but often I lose myself from experiencing a certain emotion. I lose myself many times when I do not have this emotion but always when I do. Now this emotion I never experienced until last year and a half—in fact, it came when B came; but I have always thought that she was governed by it and that is why I am so afraid of her, but she disclaims any knowledge of it; says she knows nothing about it and indeed she says my thoughts on that subject are like a foreign language to her—she does not know what they mean. It is very queer. B has been writing to me, using my hand to answer my thoughts. It is very curious and I can't help being interested in spite of the fact that it rather frightens me. Does this explanation make things any clearer and easier? (letter, Oct. 13, 1907, Bean, 1907-1913)

It was at about this time that she was seeing another man and thinking about marrying him. He was rather a "stick-in-the-mud," as Prince apparently called him. B wrote on November 7, 1907:

Send for A. [She is] thinking of getting married—ridiculous. She doesn't really care anything about him. [She plans to] tell him about Mr. Hopkins silly thing! As if that made any difference. Is she the only woman who ever kissed any man except her husband and is kissing a crime? and she didn't do it anyway—I did it—myself and it never hurt me a bit—I am glad of it—and she didn't have a husband anyway... (letter, Nov. 7, 1907, Bean, 1907-1913)

Another undated letter by B and probably written during the fall of 1907 is also of interest in this context:

Something is happening to me Dr. Prince. I don't know what it is, but I am frightened. I am afraid I am going to be a woman just like A and C. I don't want to, Dr. Prince, I can't. I want to be just what I always have been—just "B", free as the wind, no body, no soul, no heart. I don't
want to love people for if one loves one must suffer—that is what it means to be a woman—to love and suffer. I never felt so strangely. I hardly knew what it is—it is what C calls the “heartache” I guess—and I can’t have it, I won’t. Please help me not to feel anything... B (letter, undated, Bean, 1907-1913).

A did not end up marrying this man. Later in November, Prince and Mrs. Bean went to New York to do an experiment with Peterson using psychogalvanic techniques to demonstrate the physiological effects of co-conscious knowledge (Prince & Peterson, 1908). During this trip a new C synthesis was formed—more complete than the earlier C—though also not long lasting—she fell back to the earlier C and alternated still with B. Apparently the difference in the two C’s dealt with the kissing incident, which the new C had more detailed memory of; she also remembered better her letters to Mr. Hopkins written in the B personality (letter, November 27, 1907). A seemed to drop out of the picture at this point, only making reappearances at times of deep depression or anxiety. But it was not until May of 1908, when another Mrs. Bean spontaneously appeared as B was thinking about the kissing incident at Nashua, that the final synthesis was formed. This new Mrs. Bean remembered nothing after the kissing incident, when the shock of this experience presumably formed B as an alternating personality with the subsequent A phase. This Mrs. Bean of Nashua was the original personality which had ceased to exist after the shock of the kiss, and whose return signaled the restoration of Nellie Bean to a fusible state once memory for the missing time was made available to her. From the time of her disappearance on July 26, 1906, to the time of her return on May 21, 1908, Nellie Bean alternated among a variety of incomplete, fissioned, and partially fused personalities, predominantly those of A and B.

It should be apparent that it is a sexual emotion that A talks about in her preceding letter, that B knows nothing about—yet fears she will in her letter—and that Nellie Bean first experienced at the time of the kiss. But the kissing incident probably also generated anger, fear, guilt, disgust, remorse, and so forth. These conflicting emotions burst her apart, and in a moment she was B who thought the kiss a “lark,” only later to switch to A in September, 1906, when Mr. Hopkins provided another shock by disappointing her in money affairs. Prince’s psychogenesis describes these psychic traumas rather extensively, as does B’s published autobiography, though it leaves out the particulars related to the so-called “X affect”—or in other words the sexual emotion (Prince, 1914/1921, pp. 545-633; B.C.A., 1908, 1908-1909).

I turn now to Nellie Bean’s theorizing about the prehistory of the A and B personalities, which to me is the most fascinating and instructive part of this case history, particularly in regard to the relationship between repression and dissociation. The very first theory relates directly to this issue. It was put forward by A a few days after the first C was synthesized. On June 20, 1907, or so A wrote:

Is there not danger in working up another one: C—Have you any theory as to how B came into existence. Could B be a part of myself which has long been suppressed? She seems a good deal as I used to be before Mr. Bean was ill, before I had any trouble. After that time I was never happy—never had any but anxious apprehensive thoughts, but rebelled bitterly, internally against the inevitable. I could not bear to think that life was over for me, and that I must give up all that made it sweet, and I did not want to do but I made myself do then because I had sworn myself never to fail. Mr. Bean in any way again (sic). I felt that perhaps I had and that I might be somewhat to blame for his illness, so I did my best but I suffered a great deal and life was extremely hard for me and all the time it was a battle with myself. This was about 6 years ago. Then when everything was over and I was physically better could it be possible that this long suppressed part of me—the part that longed so to be gay and happy and light hearted—came to life, so to speak, and dominated me? It seems something like that to me. Then the same old battle went on
only the strength was on the other side. Would those years of suppression allow for B's seeming younger? (letter, June 20, 1907, Bean, 1907-1913).

A year later, when her son, Robert, had failed from Andover, Nellie was so distressed that she went to bed wishing to forget her own name—Bean—and literally did (see, Prince, 1914/1921, pp. 74ff, 512ff, who described this event). On May 17, 1908, only a week or so before her final synthesis, C wrote about this event:

I have a theory of my own about all this and am going to write it out for you (sometime). You know I do not read German so I can't read Freud, but from what I have been able to learn of his theory of suppressed ideas it is exactly the same as the explanation which I have applied to me [sic] own case. I have here a paper which "B" wrote a long time ago, before I had ever heard of Freud, in which she advances the same theory in explanation of her existence. It is rather queer, is it not? (letter, May 17, 1908, Bean, 1907-1913)

I will get to the letter by B that I think is referred to in the preceding one shortly, but first an earlier theory by B written in an August 4th letter is worth considering:

As you are on the hunt for a "real person" and I can't seem to persuade you that I am that individual let me give you a new theory. I think I am the real one only somewhat changed. In my mind it is like this: go back 6 years, before Mr. Bean's illness, for that was when the foundation for all this trouble was laid, say that the original personality had 2 parts, A and B—not the A and B you know, but the two elements in her character—and that B was the stronger, more natural element. She was naturally very lighthearted and happy, buoyant. The day Mr. Bean was taken ill she received a terrible shock. He had a cerebral hemorrhage. Then she began to change, very slowly—you know something of the four years that followed. She rebelled bitterly, she could not have it so and it was so, no one knew what his illness was and she bent every energy to conceal his true condition. She blamed herself for it and after a time she began to have that sense of being double. More than anything else she wanted to be happy. She saw all happiness going and she could not let it go—it must not—she would be happy and couldn't. It was a fight with herself all the time. We were A and B then just as much as we are now—A doing all that a devoted conscientious wife could do, determined that her husband should never miss anything of love or care, and B rebelling against it all, not willing to give up her youth—longing for pleasure, and above all for happiness. To be happy—that was always the cry—and it was not possible.

Then after Mr. Bean's death B—the original B you know—sank completely out of sight and she was all A—not this A—but the original A—. I am afraid I don't make this very clear. This old A [pencil note by Prince—"i.e. C"] was different from A now for though she was sad, and worn and ill, she still had plenty of courage. She did not want to die, she expected to live on in just the same way, and she worked herself nearly to death over business affairs and got so ill she was sent away to that sanitarium. Then after a little she began to get better and she became something I will call C—not your C, I don't know anything about her—but sort of a combination of the A and B I am talking about. I think she was natural enough at that time only shaken from the long nervous strain, the self-reproach, the grief etc.—But there came a time when something happened to her [she kis and its consequences]—you know—and she did change completely and you can never get that old original B, for she does not exist. I came, but I am not exactly like the old B—I have lost something—and this A is not exactly like the old A—-we are both quite different though we represent the same elements. But beside all this there is a new element which is, I think, a part of the real personality. This new element don't mix with either of us—I don't know what it is—and A can't bear it—it changes her to me. We are all shaken apart like the pieces of glass in a kaleidoscope can you ever get the pieces back in the original pattern? You see I know all that A thinks but I do not feel her emotions. . . (letter, Aug. 4, 1907, Bean, 1907-1913)
The new element that B speaks of here is, of course, the sexual element, which being aroused in Mrs. Bean of Nashua, led to her fissioning into two personalities, one for whom sexuality did not exist at all (i.e., B), and one for whom it was abhorrent (i.e., A). B's further investigation into this new sexual element led to a deeper understanding of her origins. In a letter that was probably written in October 1907, and referred to by C earlier, B discussed this theory:

Time division marriage: shock, unhappy, will call that one X [as the original personality] to avoid confusion.

After marriage we began to pull different ways. I can't make it very clear—the division was nebulous but I think I am now made up of all the impulses which began to come then. I was not an I then you know but to understand what I write you will have to call me so. I remember them now as my thoughts but at that time had never thought of myself as a "self".

You know, Dr. P., I don't understand some things very well. I know the condition; I know, in a way, what the words mean, but the thoughts which fill A with such horror and break her up so—and they break C [an early incomplete synthesis] up too—I do not really understand.

I know such things are not spoken of but I can hardly see why—but anyway A or X, shrunk from the relation of marriage. Perhaps I ought not to tell you this—it may make lots of trouble when A and C find it out but I do think that the whole trouble came from that.

I don't know why she felt so—it was nothing about Mr. B. don't think that. He was a man out of a thousand—an any woman might be proud of—and X was very proud of him—of his success in his business, ... but she did not really what is called—love—him. And somehow that shrinking became part of the system of thought we are calling 'me'(B).

After Robert came she was happier in him but very frail in health. I have already written you something of that time. Then we came to W[inchester] about 12 years ago. She was much happier for a while and in better health, and I don't think there was much division—only that same shrinking from the obligations of marriage and accusing herself because of it.

Then came Mr. B's illness more than six years ago, and with that all this undertorrent seemed to become synthesized and a true division took place: not that I was an I even then but there was a double train of thought—she, X or A, is conscious of that, you know. All that shrinking became intensified—she suffered very much—and this internal rebellion increased more and more, and also the intensity of her self-reproach. As Mr. B's mind became slightly affected it was worse and ... she used to long to die.

I think the rebellion was my own Dr. P., but A [she means X] knew.

Then after his death she thought she had killed him you know.

I think all this division springs from that one cause—first because she had no feeling of that kind and now because she has. So you see, it seems to me that I was there, as a separate [sic] train of thought, from the time of her marriage—pulling a different way all the time from the way she had to go and not wanting to live the life she had to live, but I really came as a self at Nashua. I ruled A for weeks before I came [there was a period before the kiss when the moods and behaviors later associated with B dominated Mrs. Bean, but not as a separate personality]—she can't understand about that time, she was so well and strong and happy—but it was I. She has told you about that [cf. the August 9 letter and C's autobiography, 1908-1909], and these thoughts and impulses and acts were mine not hers.

A good deal of it is so mixed up I can't make it out myself. A [Mrs. Bean at Nashua], as herself, began to feel differently about that time and so she thinks I feel that way, but I don't feel anything, you know—and because I like to talk to the men I know better than to the women, she thinks that is the reason. I like the men better because they talk about more interesting things. A likes to talk to them best too. Why should she think I mustn't? But that is one reason she worries so about the time I am here.

It is awfully mixed up—the shock that brought me as a personality woke that feeling in A [Mrs. Bean of Nashua now converted to A], and so she [A] thinks that feeling belongs to me, but it doesn't. I don't know
anything about it except what she thinks . . .
I did like Mr. H. Dr. Prince, better than I ever liked any man but I never wanted to marry him. I wouldn’t marry anyone for the world.
As ever, B
(letter, undated, Bean, 1907-1913)

This critical letter seems not to have been mailed to Prince—he obtained it at a later date; however, I believe that A’s letter of October 13th, mentioned earlier, indirectly refers to it. On November 13th, B had begun to write her autobiography, which was published a year later and which she didn’t finish until just about the time of the final C synthesis in the spring. But B’s insight into the case went even further, for in one more theoretical letter, on Nov. 28th, she foresaw the final synthesis:

I am here once more—I hope you don’t mind. Poor A has been here too and I followed her. The C you got this time was not quite right—as she wrote you. I call her the magic lantern C because her memories are like pictures. She has emotions also and A came. A longed to speak to you—she cried when she thought of you—but she is sure you are tired of trying to make her well. She felt pretty bad, of course, and after a while I came.

Now I have a theory about all this. I suppose you will laugh at it but it seems sensible to me.

I think the real one, the one you are hunting after, is that lost creature whom I once saw here and who came once at your office [Mrs. Bean of Nashua]. I don’t know how you can get her or what she can do to restore her memories—perhaps she can never have them—but I think she is the one, and that she is like the C you got in New York, only the New York C is too much mixed up with me to stay. I think the real one won’t know anything about me, and C does you know.

My theory is this. I think that long ago—twenty years, you know, at the time of that shock [i.e., the sexual act with her husband]—I became “split off” from the main personality (is that right?) and that I dropped into the subconscious region—wherever that is—I disappeared; and I was nineteen years old. Then a shock of something the same nature brought me back and, as I had had no independent life—now don’t laugh—I was still nineteen. That is why that affair with Mr. H. seemed all right and why I was so well and gay and happy—as a girl of nineteen would be. Do you see how I reason it?

Now I am quite different from what I was a year ago. You see that, do you not? My point of view is different—I am much older.

Now all those twenty years, (or whoever she was) knew nothing about me and when you get the real one she will know nothing about me. Do I make my idea clear?

But whoever you get, I shall be there just the same, Dr. Prince, always and forever. As a subconsciousness I shall always exist (Oh, dear. It’s so hard for me to write this(?)) and even if you get the real personality, well and strong, I know I shall always be able to communicate with you. I know it, and if I can prove it we can have some interesting experiments, can’t we? Perhaps everyone has a subconsciousness if we only knew about it. I am going to try and go away now and get C back because I think you would rather have her here, but I don’t believe I can get her. This an awfully long letter. I hope it won’t bother you. As ever B
(letter, Nov.28, 1907, Bean 1907-1913)

As usual, B was right, for the final synthesis was based on the Mrs. Bean of Nashua who knew nothing about her. Furthermore, even after the final synthesis, B’s existence didn’t terminate, for she was still accessible during hypnosis and, as late as 1912, there are session notes with experiments on the subconscious involving b, the hypnotic version of B.

One of these session notes is particularly interesting. In July, 1911, when Prince was apparently working on his psychogenesis of the case, he interrogated the hypnotic state b about the critically important undated letter described earlier, trying to trace back b’s knowledge of sexual experiences and of her origin, even further than before marriage. Her responses were made in automatic writing—the most intriguing of which has a figure of overlapping circles with
words in them. Unfortunately, I cannot make much sense of what she wrote, and it is not clear whether Prince got much out of it either, other than her verification of what was said in the letter. But what is important here is that Prince did try to trace B’s origin to possible earlier causes of the repression of sexual motives and to the original inciting cause of this dissociation. It may be that Prince’s dissociative techniques were too crude to solve this puzzle. When repression is very strong, it may be that the inhibition of episodic memories makes them inaccessible to dissociative techniques and that only long term free-associative interviews (or psychoanalysis) would finally uncover the material. I am unsure about this issue, but do think it is an empirical one worth investigating. However, it also appears that some material is easier to access through dissociative techniques than through free-association, and it is suggested by Klutf (this volume) that treatment of MPD using traditional psychoanalytic therapy is less effective than therapy using the dissociative hypnagogic method. It may be that the relative effectiveness of the two methods is the surest sign of the real differences between amnesia due to traumatic dissociation and amnesia due to ego defense and repression. At any rate, the dream material that I discuss shortly hereafter is at least suggestive of the limits of dissociative interview techniques in interpreting dreams.

Prince’s own theoretical interpretation of the case (Prince, 1919, 1914/1921) relied heavily on Nellie Bean’s two autobiographies and on the letters presented herein. As a result, his interpretation begins with Nellie’s marriage and ends with the personality synthesis of Mrs. Bean of Nashua in May, 1908, and is fundamentally a restatement of Nellie Bean’s own interpretation. In the next two sections, I present an account that extends beyond these self-conscious narratives of the patient. I consider earlier events in a theoretical account of the dissociation of personality in the next section. In the following section I give a historical account that describes the period subsequent to Nellie’s synthesis in 1908.

A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MULTIPLE PERSONALITY DISSOCIATION OF NELLIE PARSONS BEAN

Both Nellie Bean, in her several personalities, and Morton Prince agreed in assigning the occurrent cause of her dissociation of personality as the kiss by Mr. Hopkins on July 26, 1906. I agree with this determination. Before that event, Nellie at Nashua seemed to express two opponent complexes of personality traits—the grieving widow, and the playful unattached girl—but they had appeared concurrently as a dual consciousness or as temporary mood states of a single personality. It seems that she became attached to Mr. Hopkins because he satisfied the two conflicting urges that became prominent in her marriage to Mr. Bean. On the one hand, Mr. Hopkins satisfied her need to be a devoted, helping person committed to caring for another who was in need of her care. Previously, the person had been her dying husband, now he was this young drug addict. However, his youth cultivated the second, relatively unexpressed part of her personality as well, the playful teenager desirous of fun and freedom, which had been suppressed and partially repressed since marriage. The two aspects of her personality had been under great stress since her husband became sick, when their mutual demands on her gave her the feeling that she was a dual consciousness, or two persons in one. Each seemed to demand of her a coherent mode of living, the first as the devoted, conscientious wife, and the second as the carefree, funloving young woman. The first, of course, won out, but the second was carried along as a separate, partly dissociated stream of thought that she could not entirely repress; she was aware of the suppression of it, though she constantly worked to push it entirely out of her consciousness. After her husband’s death, this second stream of thought seemed to disappear for a while as she became the grieving widow, but it
returned at Nashua, in that relaxed, apparently country environment, which reminded her of the woods she seemed to have loved in her youth, and grew to dislike in later life. Here she met Mr. Hopkins, who became a substitute object for Mr. Bean, but with the difference of arousing in her youthful feelings, and perhaps even passions, which she had not felt freely for many years.

However, when Mr. Hopkins kissed her she burst apart because of the conflicting set of emotions and motivations that she felt in that crucial traumatic moment, and it was not until 2 years later that she was able to bear as a unified personality the conflicts aroused by that kiss. Until then, her several personalities bore stigmata that indicated their incompleteness. The courageous widow turned into A, the carrier of pain and the pursuer of duty at any cost, an individual who seemed to prefer death over life and who was apparently prevented from committing suicide several times by alter-ego B. A's reaction to the kiss was a feeling of revulsion and anger at Mr. Hopkins. While this part of the original Mrs. Bean became submerged at the time of the kiss she reappeared when Mr. Hopkins in September showed his darker side. Yet she did not immediately terminate her relationship with him. Rather, her sense of duty and commitment continued to tie her to him; she had "promised," and would not go back on her word. As far as the kissing event and its consequences, A had amnesia for the immediate consequences, but apparently had little amnesia for B's other activities, until the amnestic barrier between A and B occurred after Prince began to use hypnosis. Along with Prince and Nellie, I believe that A existed as a separable alternating personality from the time of the kiss, and that the amnestic barrier that developed between A and B merely clarified for both of them the existent differences between their personalities.

The second personality to appear as a result of the kiss was B, an even more restricted personality than A, though in many ways the more interesting of the two. For her the kiss had no serious meaning; it was a "lark." B was anesthetic to sexual arousal as well as to pain; she could only feel pleasure. Whereas A thrived on pain and unhappiness, B thrived on play and happiness. A was an old woman and B was a young girl. Although A seems at least a continuous, if exaggerated, form of the widow, Mrs. Bean, B seems to have arisen from nowhere. Yet this is not quite true, for we do have the story of her development from her own letters and autobiography. She was the playful part of the original Nellie Parsons that became suppressed in marriage. Apparently, Nellie found the sexual encounter with her husband traumatic and repulsive and never grew to enjoy sex in her marriage. Yet she saw it as a duty to engage in sex with her husband and so she became the conscientious, yet rebellious, wife depicted in her letters and B's autobiography. The playful, happy young girl became the mature woman and wife but with the young girl still existing in a suppressed part of her personality. This playful girl, who denied the reality of sex and was thus anesthetic to it and to the pain and suffering engendered by it, and who could not commit herself to this and other duties of marriage, became the subconscious seed out of which B emerged. It is not clear whether Nellie's response to sex with her husband involved repression of her own sexual arousal or merely an abhorrence of the act itself. It seems likely that both emotions were involved, but neither Nellie nor Prince ever fully clarified exactly what happened when Nellie got married.

Prince's (1919) analysis of the case seems to suggest that both emotions were involved, but he did not pursue the "X affect" very far, and, as we have seen, his interview of B in July, 1911 did not produce much—at least in his notes. In Prince's (1923) last empirical article based on the case (though not identifying the patient as B.C.A.), he talked of a "life-long repression of the sexual instinct" and gave a wonderful account of how the repression of this instinct results in a general anesthesia to all sensation as an associative response, with the exception of the auditory modality. He applied this explanation to Mrs. Bean of Nashua—I believe—in a hypnotic state, and regretted that he did not investigate it further at the time. (This session notes of May 1908 first refer to this phenomenon with reference to Mrs. Bean of Nashua, though B reports the same state as a co-
It seems apparent that the emergence of B was the result of this anesthetic response to the conflicting emotions aroused by Mr. Hopkins' kiss. It was a re-enactment of the traumatic event at the time of her marriage, only this time the rebellious, playful, anesthetic response had grown into a personality all its own, rather than remain as a subconscious self. Over the years it had accumulated strength in its conflict with the dominant personality characteristics exhibited in Mrs. Bean's marriage, and the stress of her husband's illness had solidified this complex into a self-consciousness that could emerge as a separate mode of being after his death. With Mr. Hopkins' kiss, the whole mass of this complex emerged as a discontinuous, separate, incomplete personality in the form of B. This personality was 19, had the dominant characteristics of the young Nellie Parsons, and completely denied her marriage to Mr. Bean as her own, also denied that Robert was her son, and had no sexual sensitivity at all, for sexuality and all its problems had no existence for her.

Whereas, before the kiss, the dual elements of Nellie Parsons Bean's personality were joined in an unstable compromise with Mr. Hopkins as its focal point, the kiss destroyed this unity and resulted in two complementary but incomplete personalities and left the shocked Mrs. Bean of Nashua behind. B and A then played out their respective roles until first A and then B disappeared and various forms of a fused personality including these two personalities appeared, when finally Mrs. Bean, as a whole being, was ready to face again the kiss at Nashua and the conflicts that it raised. Only then did the original personality reappear ready to be synthesized with the dominant stream of consciousness of the missing 2 years of her life.

On May 22, 1908, Dr. Prince had the hypnotized Mrs. Bean of Nashua recall the evening of July 26, 1906. She remembered: "I walk up a hill to a pine grove. Mr. H. is with me. I smell the pines... It is very dark. I see Mr. Hopkins. I can't think what he says or does.[2] that part eludes me—sudden (shrinks-shudders etc etc [Prince's notes]) Oh I remember Oh Oh Oh no I remember Dr.

Prince I can't bear it... (session note, May 24, 1908, Prince, 1907-1912)." But she did bear it this time, and as a result was able to be synthesized with the subsequent events and the strange personality transformations that she experienced during the 2 years that followed this traumatizing kiss.

Thus far, I have only considered the period from Nellie's marriage to her re-fused state in May 1908, the period that is the focus of the autobiographies and Prince's psychogenesis of the case. My account has not differed substantially from theirs. Perhaps the major difference is that Prince believed that he fused the personalities by using deep hypnosis to find the core personality and waking her. By contrast, I believe that this hypnotic technique could only succeed when Nellie was ready to face the traumatic kiss as a unified person.

I want to deal now with the period before Nellie's marriage as part of the present theoretical account of her dissociation of personality. The critical question in any causal account of Nellie Bean's life history viewed as a case of multiple personality, must be why she became a multiple personality. I have argued so far, along with Prince and Nellie herself, that she became a multiple personality with the kiss by Mr. Hopkins. Furthermore, we have traced the causal antecedents of that event as far back as the initial shock of sexual activity with her husband and the conflicting motivations that were the consequence of that event. What we still need to explain is why Nellie had such a strong reaction to sexual activity in her marriage and why dissociation, and not some other normal or abnormal reaction, was the ultimate consequence of her apparent aversion to sexual activity. Based on the positive evidence available in the case, I believe that these two questions can be given independent answers (though later I suggest a possible deeper connection, p. 121). As to why her sexual relations with her husband created the conflict that eventually resulted in the dissociation of personality with Mr. Hopkins' kiss, I believe that Prince's theory of a lifelong repression of sexual motivation is essentially right. There is abundant evidence in the case that Nellie Bean was a prude. Probably the most
important evidence for our present purpose is some of the associations that Nellie presented to the “Jewess” dream reported by Prince in his study of her dreams (Prince, 1910). Among these (unpublished) associations she stated: “I think of a time years ago when I was about sixteen and a boy tried to kiss me. I was awfully angry; told my mother and cried. (Laughs). (That is probably why I hate kissing [a later editorial comment]). My sister was quite a flirt; lots of fellows round; I did not approve of it, I was eight years younger and prudish . . .” (session notes, Dec. 4, 1909, Prince, 1907-1912).

That her prudery is tied—at least in her own consciousness—to class differences is also apparent in her associations to the dream. She thinks that people, such as Prince and herself, of a higher class than the Jewess is helping “are never tempted,” and the whole context of the dream and its analysis at the time focuses on temptation, particularly sexual temptation. So it seems fairly evident that Nellie had a highly restricting Victorian moral code and, probably long before her marriage, had repressed all sexual motivation.

However, even if we credit Nellie with a well-developed Victorian sexually repressive character, her reaction to sex in marriage and her later dissociation of personality still need an additional causal factor. Why did she go beyond hysteria and neurasthenia and become a multiple personality? The dual consciousness of her married life and her later dissociation of personality requires another ingredient. What is necessary is some factor that will make Nellie prone to use dissociation as a coping mechanism for dealing with conflict rather than other ego-defense mechanisms that result in other symptomatic expressions of sexual repression.

I believe that there is evidence of a causal factor of the appropriate kind in the present case. When Nellie was a child of 5 or 6 she was left alone in a room with a white cat that had an epileptic seizure while she was playing with it, and she was unable to get help. This apparently terrifying experience gave her a permanent phobia of cats—especially white ones—though she could not remember the original cause of this phobia. Prince unearthed it using automatic writing, involving another dissociative state labelled “alpha and omega.” This dissociative state has much in common with what we call the “hidden observer” after Hilgard (1977). The state claims not to be a person at all, but is, in a sense, the collection of the thoughts of all the personalities. I believe the cat trauma planted the seed out of which the later dissociations grew. This psychic trauma occurred during that critical period when the ego is being formed, and was of a sufficient intensity to overwhelm it and probably to put young Nellie into her first dissociative state. Once she experienced dissociation, the seed was planted for later dissociations to occur as a method for coping with internal conflict as well as externally generated trauma.

It is interesting to note that childhood traumas occurred in the Beauchamp case as well. Rosenzweig (1987), in a very interesting article that tracks down a number of the traumas that entered into the Beauchamp case, has suggested that an early traumatic experience involving the death of a baby brother was the primary incident causing Sally’s emergence as a co-consciousness. If these hypotheses based on two of Prince’s patients are correct, then perhaps we should think less that childhood sexual trauma or abuse is the main instigator of dissociation, as is often held, and instead try to determine what kinds of situations are likely to prove traumatic enough to overwhelm the growing ego, predisposing it to use dissociation as a coping mechanism to later, perhaps less traumatic, experiences. In the present case, I have found no positive evidence in favor of either sexual or physical abuse, and because there is positive evidence that the cat incident caused dissociative amnesia for the event as well as the phobia, I see no reason for us to speculate that these other factors might have been involved. Nor is there any reason to suppose that she had a hypnotic sensitivity that predisposed her to her first dissociation. Such speculation should be reserved for cases where evidence tends to support the hypothesis, or where no other alternative hypothesis can account for the data in an adequate
manner. This is not so in the present case, where the cat incident combined with Victorian prudery might very well have been sufficient antecedent causes to lay the groundwork for later developments in the case.

PRINCE AND B. C. A. VERSUS FREUD ON DREAMS

Before concluding this chapter, I turn to one last topic involving Nellie Bean, that is the research that she and Prince engaged in for several years, and particularly, the research on dreams. Early in his treatment of Mrs. Bean, Prince suggested that she might be able to help him. This is first mentioned in a July, 1907, note from B to A:

_I can tell you why you don't hear from Dr. Prince—it is because he is tired of you and no wonder... you say you want to die—well, die then—just stay away—I can manage things all right and am glad to—I want to live... you are a trusting little fool and believe everything you are told. Dr. Prince only got us to study short-hand to interest us in something and you believe you are going to help him in some vague way. I guess it will be vague. He means nothing you are only a 'case' to him can't you see that?_ (note, July 1907, Bean, 1907-1913)

But Prince seems to have been quite serious, perhaps not realizing the “transference” possibilities of maintaining such a relationship with a patient. At any rate, Prince and Nellie Bean did engage in research, and all of the personalities, including B, came to depend heavily on this meaningful activity. Nellie read Prince’s first book at this time (Letter from C, July 13, 1907, Bean, 1907-1913) and started an extensive reading program in abnormal psychology. By the fall of that year, Nellie’s several personalities were engaged in research with Prince that was to lead to two important empirical articles on co-conscious mentation (Prince, 1908; Prince & Peterson, 1908), and at least B had begun to write her autobiography. By May 21, 1908, B, in her very last letter, written the day before Mrs. Bean of Nashua appeared, stated:

_C [is] only peaceful when she is working over your book [The Unconscious Lectures]—busy happy and hopeful but as soon as finished [she is] restless nervous and unhappy. Is this perhaps because when she is studying and working I am interested also and there is less pulling in different ways? That is why I always say she will never get well unless she is happy. If she could be happy we would come nearer to being one, don’t you see? I am studying her all the time now. I want to help, I don’t want to live like this, and I know I shall always be co-conscious anyway—I can never be blotted out—you can always get me when you want me—but I want to finish what I am writing for you first [her autobiography], can’t I do it now? _ (letter, May 21, 1908, Bean, 1907-1913)

B concluded the letter by describing C’s reading, which included Janet, Binet, James, Sidis, Munsterberger, Hyslop, Prince and the _Journal_, and she wrote that C was “planning next winter to go to some lectures... and she wants very much to do some experimental work with you. I wonder if you put that into her head in hypnosis.” I assume that Prince did not, but the role that he began to play in her life was so large that it could hardly have differed if he had mesmerized her into working with him.

By February of 1909, after the autobiographies were published, Nellie Bean, Morton Prince, and his assistant, Dr. George Waterman had begun a series of sessions that would terminate in the 1910 publication of two articles in the _Journal of B. C. A.’s dreams_ (Prince, 1910; Waterman, 1910). Little did they realize what dangerous waters they had steered into. In the dreams that they reported, as opposed to those they decided against using, there is little overt reference to erotic motives, and the little that remained is discreetly left out of one dream by imposing a gap. But as anyone in the least bit acquainted with Freud’s theory should have known, the “manifest
content" is not all one must concern oneself with if one wishes to be discreet; furthermore, discretion and science often don't mix very well. As Jung (1911/1974) put it in his critical review of Prince's article:

The gap in the dream is a praiseworthy piece of discretion and will certainly please the prudish reader, but it is not science. Science admits no such considerations of decency. Here it is simply a question of whether Freud's maligned theory of dreams is right or not, and not whether dream-texts sound nice to immature ears. . . . "The analysis of this scene would carry us too far into the intimacy of her life to justify our entering upon it" [Prince, 1910, p. 164]. Does the author really believe that in these circumstances he has any scientific right to speak about the psychoanalytic dream-theory, when he withholds essential material from the reader for reasons of discretion? By the very fact of reporting his patient's dream to the world he has violated discretion as thoroughly as possible, for every analyst will see its meaning at once: what the dreamer instinctively hides most deeply cries out loudest from the unconscious. For anyone who knows how to read dream-symbols all precautions are in vain, the truth will out. We would therefore request the author, if he doesn't want to strip his patient bare the next time, to choose a case about which he can say everything (p. 79).

Jung then went on to find sexual wishes in this dream as he found them in all of the other dreams that Prince presented. The article was written 2 years before Jung rejected Freud's sexual "reduction" of all mental life, when he was still heir-apparent to Freud's throne and under the sway of Freud's thought. Jung went too far in finding sexual content in every dream symbol—for instance, he interpreted a dream that ended with Nellie fearfully walking through a sea of cats as a dream involving a repressed sexual desire because in a previous patient of his own, cats symbolized the sexual act. Although he constantly jumped to such conclusions in his interpretation of Nellie's dreams, I think he was often close to the truth—especially in his transference interpretations, where he suggested that she was unconsciously in love with Prince and wanted to give herself to him. Several of the unpublished dreams in the Prince collection support this interpretation. Moreover, Nellie also fell in love at a later date with Dr. Waterman, for in 1912 she had a vision, reported in The Unconscious (Prince, 1914/1921, p. 204 ff), involving a man and woman kissing that resulted in a poem ending with the line "And my rent soul." The date of this vision was about the time that Dr. Waterman must have announced his forthcoming marriage to the woman we know as Miss Beauchamp, who also seems to have fallen in love with the debonair Morton Prince, and transferred instead to his assistant (Kenny, 1986). However, Nellie was to have neither doctor and was to remain an unmarried widow until she died at 85 in 1950 (Kenny, 1986).

Let us return now to Prince's dream article and to the Jones-Prince debate over it (Jones, 1911; Prince, 1911). Unlike Jung's paper, which analyzed the dreams, Jones' critique—which appeared in the Journal—was much more reserved and focused on the main issue, that Prince's research was an inadequate test of Freud's theory because he didn't fully adopt the psychoanalytic method. At the time of his research, Prince did not, in fact, know Freud's theory of dreams very well. In December of 1908, Prince had invited Jones to visit Boston from Toronto to talk about psychoanalysis to the Boston psychopathologists, and at that time asked him to become an assistant editor for the Journal. Early in May of 1909, as Prince's dream research was in the process of development, Jones had lectured again at the psychotherapeutics conference on psychoanalysis, where Prince also gave a paper (Jones, 1909; Prince, 1909). But it was not until December 1909, at the American Psychological Association meeting, that Jones gave an extensive lecture on Freud's dream theory that was published in 1910 in the American Journal of Psychology in the same volume that contained Freud's Clark lectures (Jones, 1910). It was at this same meeting that Prince first presented his study on B. C. A.'s dreams. Moreover, as Jones reported in several letters to Putnam,
Prince told him that he had not read (or at least finished) Freud's book on dreams when he wrote his own article, and Prince seemed indirectly to confirm this in a letter to Putnam (Hale, 1971b).

It is not surprising, therefore, that Prince misrepresented the Freudian method and theory in his article, just as Putnam had done several years earlier. But this misunderstanding caused him to miss the valid side of Jones' critique of his article. Instead, he noticed that "attitude of mind" insufficiently critical of their own concepts that made Freudianism appear more like a religious cult than an empirical science. So he wrote an antagonistic reply to Jones' paper. At this point Jones, who had been hopeful of converting Prince—as he had Putnam—to psychoanalysis, almost quit the Journal as assistant editor. But Putnam seems to have cooled both men down, and so Jones and Prince continued to play out their respective roles in keeping the psychoanalytic controversy alive in the pages of the Journal until much later when Jones founded the International Journal of Psychoanalysis in 1920 and finally left the Journal in 1921.

In the original article on dreams, Prince used dissociative techniques to interpret the dreams, though one of these techniques, which used free-associations, he called psychoanalysis. B. C. A. at this time could not remember her dreams, yet she often awoke with fragments of images from them and on many occasions she exhibited hysterical symptoms caused by them. Waterman's (1910) article focuses on this latter fact—that the dreams seemed to cause the hysterical symptoms of temporary blindness, nausea, headaches, aphonia, and so forth, and that these were able to be removed by suggestion. Prince also mentioned this fact, but focused more on the interpretation of the dreams. In the research for both articles, the dream was recovered by hypnotizing B. C. A. and putting her into the b-hypnotic state, in which she recalled the dream as well as the pre-dream thoughts. Prince (1910) described how B. C. A. was then asked to free-associate to the elements of the dream in three different states—the normal personality, that personality hypnotized, and, finally, in the b-hypnotic state. Then Prince reconstructed the meaning of the dream based on these associations, in light of the pre-dream thoughts.

The procedure is interesting, and it provides an excellent account of the manifest content of the dream and, to some extent, reaches into the latent content from a Freudian perspective. But, as Jones pointed out, and as Jung demonstrated, there can be deeper layers that have not been accessed using this superficially psychoanalytic technique. In the original article, Prince claimed that he only found one incidence of repression, only occasional wish-fulfillment, and no resistance. Yet, in a later article, Prince (1917) reversed his opinion of one of the dreams—admitting that repression was involved. And there is plenty of evidence of resistance because, in the original notes and in other reports, it is noted that the b personality often could not describe the main personality's thoughts because "alpha and omega" prevented her from speaking and she would get aphonia or lose consciousness when trying to speak on certain—usually sexual—issues related to the dreams (Prince, 1914/1921, p. 471ff). In his book, The Unconscious (1914/1921), Prince again looked at the process of dreaming and admitted that the interpretations given in his original article were not definitive and that other, more sexual ones had been proposed as alternatives (p. 220). He also provided new evidence on dream constructive processes—a classic example of which is the "temple dream," whose source, B. C. A., is unacknowledged. This dream had, as its basis, the hypnotic suggestion: "You want to do a good piece of work and your dream tonight will be the fulfillment of the wish" (Prince, 1914/1921, p. 197ff). The poetic vision that occurred at the time of Waterman's wedding announcement, about a month before the temple dream, also contributed to Prince's understanding of the dream process. He used these sources of evidence to suggest that dream thoughts use symbolization and plot to express themselves, and that the activity of dream construction goes on in a region of the subconscious or unconscious that is inaccessible to recall using dissociative interview techniques.
the coffin she saw herself dead but looking as she did at the age of twenty-five. She was dressed only in a negligee. Then Dr. [Prince] said, "The rose that once has bloomed forever dies." [Session notes, July 12, 1910, apparently obtained from Dr. Waterman, Prince, 1907-1912]

The dream depicts the fear that she would never be loved again so that she might as well be dead. But perhaps more interesting than this aspect of the dream is the role that the white kittens played in it—as if her love, the roses, and the white kittens were intimately connected. My own interpretation of this element is that Nellie’s understanding of love—that “love means suffering” and that it “hurt” and “rent and tore” her in other contexts—was intimately tied to her first experience of love, her love for a white kitten. This kitten’s epileptic fit gave her a “rent soul,” which was never entirely healed by subsequent experiences, and hence continued to inhibit her full capacity for trust and for love.

Although none of the dreams seems to have fully resolved these conflicting motives in Nellie Bean’s life history, Nellie as a conscious personality seemed sufficiently synthesized on July 29, 1911, probably after a recent interview with Prince about the role of sex in her psychogenesis, to write the following description of herself:

... One fact, which I am sure is true and which may have some bearing on the case of B. C. A., is that I matured very slowly... I enjoy things which women who are past forty do not usually care for—dancing, tramping, gymnastics, etc. As far as pleasures are concerned I stopped living when I was little more than thirty, and it seems sometimes as if all the pleasure I should have felt, but did not, was pent up within me unused. If the conditions of my life were different I should be very active and gay.

Then as to love, I loved my husband truly and deeply, and I love him just the same now; he was one of the finest men I have ever known; but nevertheless, if love should come to me again, if I should meet the “right man” I could love him with a depth and passion impossible to me.
at any time before in my life. It is a little as if I had not been really awake before.

It seems almost too bad, doesn't it? that I can never experience the fullness of life which I feel within me. I feel quite sorry for myself sometimes. I have experienced the heights and depths of bitter suffering, but ecstatic joy and happiness have been denied me. A certain part of me isn't more than thirty years old—you can understand this, can you not? Possibly the change in my health explains some of these things for I am stronger than I have ever been before. If this is of no help in solving the problem of B. C. A. just destroy the letter . . . (letter, July 29, 1911, Bean, 1907-1913)

Thankfully, Prince did not destroy this letter, nor any of the others included in the collection upon which the bulk of this chapter is based. Although Nellie Bean apparently never did find the "right man", I imagine, with her spirit and intelligence, that she ultimately made a meaningful life for herself. The last act that I know that she performed in the service of psychology is in its own way an interesting symbolic note upon which to conclude this section. In 1914 the Journal of Abnormal Psychology published a translation of Janet's devastatingly bitter critique of psychoanalysis, in which he viewed it as an unnatural extension of his own "psychological analysis" (Janet, 1914-1915; cf. Ellenberger, 1970, for a fair treatment of the relationship between Janet and Freud). The translator of the article was Mrs. William G. Bean.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have tried to draw the reader into that exciting period at the beginning of the present century when those two major views of mental activity outside of the "personal consciousness," that is, the subconscious (Janet), or co-conscious (Prince), and the unconscious (Freud) first confronted each other in a North American context. Prince, as the leading figure of the dissociative school, tried to keep open the doors to Freudian psychology through public confrontations between the two perspectives in the pages of the Journal of Abnormal Psychology. He also tried to incorporate some of Freud's new insights into his own work, beginning with his lectures on the unconscious (Prince, 1908-1909), which resulted in his 1914 book. Although in this and his later works, he continued to try to separate the wheat from the chaff in Freudian theory, he never gave up his predominantly structural dissociative perspective for Freud's dynamic approach; nor did he accept most of Freud's terminology or his wide ranging speculations. An empiricist at heart, he cared very little for what he saw as interpretations heaped on interpretations. From the point of view of the Freudians, Prince seemed not only conservative but indeed "stupid." In retrospect, at least from the perspective of psychology as a science, Prince's assessment of Freud's positive and negative contributions to psychology seems just (see, e.g., Prince, 1921). It is difficult, however, even to evaluate this question fairly because we have all been infected with the Freudian perspective, from which it is difficult to extricate ourselves. The followers of Freud became legion, and we all grew up under his influence on our culture, even if not on our science.

Prince's weakness, if anything, was that he assimilated too slowly the positive Freud and reacted too quickly to the negative Freud. Prince never accepted—at least publicly—the importance of sexuality in the B. C. A. case, though it was critical to a fair evaluation of the relevance of Freudian theory to his own work. Furthermore, to see Prince's floundering in his analyses of Nellie's dreams because he has failed to finish reading Freud's greatest single work, The Interpretation of Dreams, is to see a man drowning in a sea of concepts that are slippery but of great depth, who swims quickly to the safe shore of descriptive concepts of more certain but shallower meaning. Without doubt, Freud's work is seriously flawed when viewed from a scientific perspective, yet the genius of it cannot be denied. Prince was, by far, the better empirical scientist of the two, but Freud's creative imagination and ability to synthesize ideas more than made up for
his scientific weaknesses when it came to the proliferation of ideas. It is unfortunate that the controversy between Freud and his competitors turned into an either/or, a pro- or con-Freud, and that the Freudians won. If Prince and others had kept pace with the Freudians, assimilating the good while rejecting the bad, and if they had organized as well as the Freudians, perhaps today we would not be in the confused state that we are in vis-à-vis the problems of dissociative and Freudian psychology.

In my interpretation of the B.C.A. case, I have tried to combine these two perspectives to some degree. I have talked of dissociation and of repression. I have integrated both structural and dynamic descriptions of the case. Finally, I have focused on the all-important sexual component that Prince and B.C.A. tried to avoid discussing overtly. However, my use of the terminology of the two traditions has been necessarily imprecise. There is a good deal of overlap in the material that is labeled dissociated and co-conscious in one tradition and unconscious and repressed in the other. What is needed is the development of a more refined vocabulary that integrates these two traditions, but that does not buy wholly into one or the other. However, the development of such a language will take time, as we attempt to reinstate the lost dissociation psychology in a more up-to-date form. I believe that the B.C.A. case and all of Prince's work can contribute toward this development. Thus, I strongly recommend to those who want to understand how the two great traditions of abnormal psychology might be integrated that they go back and read the original works of Janet and Prince. Freud's ideas have been engraved in our brains; may Janet's and Prince's ideas be painted on top of them, and may illuminated brains result.

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The chapter is based on manuscript material in the Morton Prince papers at the Francis A. Countway Library, which reserves rights to the use of material not previously released for publication. With the exception of material obtained from the Morton Prince papers, most of the unreferenced historical material in the paper derived from the following books: Ellenberger (1970), Hale (1971a, 1971b). The dates provided in the Appendix have been estimated based on several conflicting sources; hence they are only approximate. Kenny (1986) was the source for Nellie Parsons Bean's birth and death dates, and the Prince material was the source of other dates. The author wishes to thank Richard Wolfe, Curator, Rare Books and Manuscript Collection, Francis A. Countway Library, Harvard University and his staff for their generous assistance in obtaining access to and in using the Prince papers. I also wish to thank the Dalhousie research development committee for a grant to support travel to see these papers.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX

B. C. A. Chronology

1864 – Birth of Nellie Parsons.
1869/70 – A white cat has a fit causing first dissociation and cat phobia.
Feb. 22, 1885/6 – Marriage to William G. Bean.
1887/8 – Robert, son, born.
1900/1 – William has first cerebral hemorrhage.
June 29, 1905 – William dies.
Spring or Summer, 1906 – Nellie goes to Nashua sanatorium for rest cure and meets Mr. Hopkins.
July 26, 1906 – Mr. Hopkins kisses Nellie, she dissociates and B appears as separate personality and remains until September.
Sept., 1906 – Mr. Hopkins disappoints her on a money matter and A appears for the first time.
Sept.–Dec., 1906 – Confused period where A and B alternate but share knowledge of each other’s activities and not clearly aware of the dissociation.
Dec., 1906 – Nellie, as A, sees Prince for the first time; B appears in hypnosis of A sometime after the first meeting; A alternates, B is co-conscious and alternates.
May 2, 1907 – First letter from Nellie, as A, in the Prince files, which refers to another letter by B.
June 13, 1907 – First fusion into a short-lived C occurs.
Summer, 1907 – A great deal of alternation between A and B occurs following C’s permanent disappearance.
Fall, 1907 – Research on co-conscious mentation begins.
Nov. 13, 1907 – B begins working on autobiography.
Nov. 19/20, 1907 – Prince and Nellie go to New York to do psychogalvanic study with Peterson, and a new C synthesis develops.
Nov., 1907–May, 1908 – C and B alternate, with B co-conscious; A appears only briefly on a few occasions.
May 21, 1908 – Mrs. Bean of Nashua appears as B is thinking of the original kissing incident, and her autobiography is nearly complete.
May 22, 1908 – Mrs. Bean of Nashua is fused with the period from July 26, 1906 to May, 1908 at Prince’s office; she remains fused after that date, though B, the hypnotic state of B, is still accessible.
Fall, 1908 – Autobiographies of the final fused “C” and B are published.
1909 – Prince and Nellie engage in research mostly on dreams.

Summer, 1909 – Prince and Nellie go to Europe to the conference on the subconscious, and miss Freud’s lectures at Clark in October.
1910 – Dr. Waterman takes over Nellie’s case and research on dreams (Waterman, 1910), while Prince is in California.
July, 1911 – Prince interviews B about sexuality for case history.
Spring, 1912 – Waterman announces engagement and Prince helps Nellie; poetic vision and temple dream.
1950 – Nellie Bean dies at 85, having never remarried.