

2 Time and the dialogical self

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Introduction

Although time is recognized as an important factor relating dialogical selves, space is the primary metaphor used when discussing alternative *I*-positions in dialogical relations (e.g. Hermans 2001, 2002; Hermans and Kempen 1993; Raggatt 2000). However, more recently, there has been a growing theoretical interest in the temporal dimension of dialogicality (e.g. Bertau and Gonçalves 2007; Bhatia and Ram 2001; Gillespie 2005, 2007; Hermans and Dimaggio 2004; Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010; McAdams 2006; Märtsin 2010; Raggatt 2010; Valsiner 2001). This interest has taken several forms. For instance, Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) devote a chapter of their review of dialogical self theory (DST) on the historical development in the West in conceptions of self, from traditional, to modern, to postmodern, all of which they see as embedded in our current understanding of the self. Taking a more ontogenetic approach to the temporal dimension, Bertau and Gonçalves (2007) recently edited a volume of papers devoted to the early development of the dialogical self and the forms it takes from preverbal to early verbal development. A longer, life-historical perspective on temporal transformations in the representation of the dialogical self is found both in clinical (e.g. Hermans and Dimaggio 2004) and in non-clinical case studies (e.g. Gillespie 2005; McAdams 2006; Raggatt 2010, in press). Finally, although short-term change through time in dialogical relations has often been described, the micro-dynamics of change through time in dialogical relations and structural variations of *I*-positions has increasingly become theorized in a variety of models of change (e.g. Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010; Märtsin 2010; Valsiner 2001).

In a previous paper, I presented a three-dimensional model of the dialogical self (Barresi 2002a), which added a reflective dimension and a temporal dimension to a spatial dimension of *I*-positions. The vertical dimension of the model represents the individual's degree of self-reflection,

where hierarchically subordinate selves are sometimes organized under higher-order integrative selves. The horizontal dimension focuses on how the individual conceives of the temporal extension of selves, which can be temporally narrow or extend throughout a lifetime. Finally, the lateral dimension represents the individual's understanding of how personal selves connect with the selves of others. Sometimes these selves are conceived as distinct from each other, but at other times the boundary between self and other is indistinct or integrated in a shared 'self' or 'we-position' of a group or culture. The main focus of my discussion was on how this three-dimensional model of selves emerges in early development and transforms throughout the lifetime of the individual.

In the present chapter, I will first provide an updated version of this model, which takes into account more recent discussions of the *temporal* dimension and how it relates to the *reflective* and *social* dimensions of self. I am particularly interested here in the theoretical distinction between what is called a meta-position and what I will call a primary *I*-position. A meta-position is an *I*-position which refers to other *I*-positions, typically primary *I*-positions, though it can also refer to other meta-positions (cf. Barresi 2002b, 2007a; Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010; Lysaker and Lysaker 2005). Whereas primary *I*-positions tend to focus on action with respect to an immediate sense of self (a self that may itself be a product of lower-level primary *I*-positions integrated through a meta-position), meta-positions often take a reflective and temporally extended view of self in determining one's course of action. As a consequence of taking this extended view, it is from meta-positions that we typically engage in imaginative reflection on other *I*-positions and sometimes provide them with voices of their own. It is often assumed that at any particular point in time, the person can be disposed to reflect over a range of *I*-positions and facilitate dialogue among them. However, because of issues involving dominance in *I*-positions and lack of empathy with the point-of-view of other *I*-positions that sometimes occurs, we cannot generally assume that the person, when occupying a particular *I*-position, even a quite general meta-position, can freely imagine and give voice to other *I*-positions, both in self and in others (Barresi 2002b; Cooper and Hermans 2007). Also, typically, life moves on from one to another *I*-position, without any or much reflection. As a result, 'dialogue' between *I*-positions is more often implicit in their transitions and reorganization than explicit as inner voices of one *I*-position to another, or empathic representation of alter-positions through a meta-position (e.g. Barresi 2002b; Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010; Lysaker and Lysaker 2005; Märtsin 2010; Valsiner 2001). After providing an updated version of the

three-dimensional model in light of these advances in theory, I will go on to consider a case study of multiple personality previously considered in another context (Barresi 1994) in order to illustrate in a radical and concrete way certain temporal aspects of the model and important theoretical issues associated with temporality that are not generally acknowledged.

The development and transformation of a three-dimensional model of the dialogical self

According to the present revised version of the three-dimensional model (Barresi 2002a), the infant in early development neither unifies the many primary *I*-positions of self into a unified meta-position representing the *embodied self*, nor distinguishes between the embodied *I*-positions of self and other. Different body parts are involved in a variety of situational object-directed activities (what Barresi and Moore 1996, call ‘intentional relations’), but only rarely are several body parts integrated with each other into a single coordinated *I*-position and directed at a common object. Sometimes activity involves the infant alone, but at other times it involves the infant with an adult. In these latter circumstances the infant participates in the socially interactive situation, without any reflective consciousness of its distinction from the other person. Gradually, the infant becomes more fully acquainted with the powers of its own body, and also becomes aware of variations in its coordinated and joint activity with another individual. At this point, from the middle to the end of the first year, the infant is becoming pre-reflectively aware of its self both as an integrated being with a common orientation or *I*-position towards the world immediately presented to the infant and sometimes as part of a larger, goal-oriented unit or *we*-position involving another person. But the infant still does not have reflective awareness of itself as a distinct individual with its own particular *I*-positions that differ from the *I*-positions of another person (Barresi 2007a, b; Barresi and Moore 1996; Moore and Barresi 2009).

It is around the middle of the second year that the toddler begins to distinguish itself as an individual with its own distinct first-person *I*-positions from those of other individuals (Barresi and Moore 1996; Moore and Barresi 2009). This is an important achievement, because the toddler is now able to adopt a reflective meta-position that can localize concurrent primary *I*-positions that are different between self and another person, and can represent them as occurring in different individuals. In order to do this, the toddler needs a concept of ‘self’ and ‘person’ that can be applied not only to self, but also to another person



(Barresi in press). This concept of person and self attributes to each individual a first-person perspective as well as a third-person appearance to other persons. Yet, even with this distinction in hand, the difference between self and other, as *embodied selves*, each with its own distinct first-person *I*-positions, is often nested within a distinction between ‘we’ and ‘they’ at a non-reflective level. As a result, there are many shared *we*-positions with close others that are not yet identified as such and distinguished from *we*-positions of strangers. This embedding of partially reflective *I*-positions within non-reflective *we*-positions occurs at even higher group and cultural levels as well, and it becomes a lifetime task to be able to reflect on collective *we*-positions as they appear from positions outside our immediate group or cultural context (see Barresi 2008 for an example involving racism; Hermans and Hermans-Konopka 2010, for a general overview view of intercultural and global positioning).

Early in the development of the dialogical self, the focus is on spatial relations of *I*-positions, where each primary *I*-position represents a particular sense of self, with its own action orientation and voice. This occurs both for parts of a single embodied self that become connected to each other by meta-positions in an individual’s deliberated actions, and for self and others as distinct embodied locations of *I*-positions acting separately or in unison at a point in time. Dialogicality occurs when these different object-oriented positions interact and are joined together or distinguished at one time. There is little dialogical activity that stretches across time. Because of linguistic development during this period, these various positions of self and other become articulated in interaction, and as a result dialogical relations become more complex than preverbal relations. However, they are still mainly spatial, with memory for past positions and anticipations of future positions developing slowly from the second to the fourth year.

However, a major change occurs during the fourth and fifth years of development. It is at this time that self-reflection enters more fully into the temporal domain and the child becomes capable of moving imaginatively among *I*-positions not only across space but also across time (Barresi 2001; Moore and Lemmon 2001). The child of this age becomes able to represent self and others and their points of view at a particular time and their changes across time. The child is able to conceive of its own past and future representations of reality as distinct from its present representations, and it begins to appreciate itself as well as others as beings extended in time. It is at this time that a temporally extended *mental self* is formed. Before this time, experiences unfold but are not connected together into an autobiographical stream. Now, retrospective memory and anticipation of the future has this structure.

Free-floating imagination, which develops at this time, becomes the key tool for representing diverse points of view and *I*-positions that vary not only across space but also across time (Barresi 2001; Martin and Barresi 1995; Moore *et al.* 1998; Thompson *et al.* 1997). As William Hazlitt pointed out long ago, '[Imagination] must carry me out of myself into the feelings of others by one and the same process by which I am thrown forward as it were into my future being, and interested in it' (1805/1969: 3; quoted by Martin and Barresi 1995: 466). Indeed, it is imagination that makes possible reflection upon distinct, relatively stable *I*-positions from different times and forms new, temporally extended meta-positions and eventually narrative meta-positions out of them. Once the child conceives of self as extended in time, he or she can conceive of situational or dispositional selves or *I*-positions that also extend through time or reappear from time to time. As the child becomes older, these extended dispositional and situational self-positions from different times become dialogically related to each other as conflict arises between them in choice situations, or inconsistency is perceived in reflection. However, until adolescence, no serious attempt can be made to resolve inconsistency, or to structure a coherent narrative representation of self, due to the lack of ability to represent self abstractly.

A process of self-conscious formation of integrative meta-positions that constitute our identities as *narrative selves* typically begins in adolescence (McAdams 2006). Narrative is used as a reflective strategy to integrate various primary *I*-positions and meta-positions, whose origins range from the distant past through to the present, into coherent meta-positions for the future. It becomes a lifelong struggle to acquire and maintain unified, and fairly continuous reflective meta-positions that can make sense of, and to some extent control, our actions across the diverse situations that we face as adults, who continue to transform as biological, psychological and social beings until death terminates the process. While there may be no single narrative meta-position that provides unity to our lives, often we work at a variety of stories of self with significant temporal extension. These stories bind together primary *I*-positions, which are continually changing, into coherent wholes that persist as narrative meta-positions that contribute significantly to future actions. The younger adult tends to live mainly in the present and, through intense reflection on possible interpretations of past and future positions, tries to form an integrated narrative identity, but, inevitably, that adult generates inadequate and inconsistent stories that displace each other or enter into dialogical relations with each other and lead to new stories. By contrast, mature adults are centred in their lives and, from a variety of relatively stable narrative



meta-positions that have minimal conflict with each other, can look backward and forward with almost equal vision. In old age, the look backward from reflective narrative meta-positions takes on special importance, and narrative reconstructions of the past that extend through the life of the individual and hold it together in a meaningful way are stressed. With respect to the future, the emphasis in old age turns on living well in the present, rather than in orienting to a distant future – at least with respect to one's own lifetime.

In sum, from a temporal point of view, the dialogical self that is seen at a particular point in time is composed of *I*-positions whose origin, transformation, and significance are distributed across time, both from the past and into the future. As we develop, and, in particular in adulthood, various primary *I*-positions are integrated into reflective meta-positions of varying temporal extent, with positions of both sorts displacing each other across time in a variety of new syntheses that are ever transforming through time (Barresi 2002b). Some meta-positions that emerge early in development become primary positions for further development by meta-positions with wider scope. Of particular importance is the development of meta-positions that are inherently temporal in structure. The temporally extended mental self that develops in the fourth year is such a compounded meta-position, as are versions of narrative self that emerge during adolescence. In order more fully to understand the dialogical self, we need to uncover this temporally organized transformational structure. In the next section of this chapter, we will consider a case study in which the temporal organization of the dialogical self becomes especially apparent through dissociation of phenomenal mental selves, each with their own temporally integrated narrative meta-structure and with changing dialogical relations to other mental selves.



B.C.A.: a case study in multiplicity and temporality of phenomenal mental selves

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Boston neurologist, Morton Prince, treated two cases of multiple personality or dissociative identity disorder. B.C.A. was the name given to the patient in Prince's second case. Her case is less famous than the Beauchamp case (Prince 1906), but from an empirical and theoretical point of view, she is the more interesting. Prince published a number of studies of her case (e.g. Prince 1910, 1914/1921, 1919, 1923) and Nellie Parsons Bean, the patient, published two autobiographies in the first person from reflective narrative meta-positions of two of the three main personalities in the

case (B.C.A. 1908, 1908–9). Nellie also corresponded with Prince from all three main personality or reflective meta-positions, *A*, *B* and *C*, during the course of her therapy, and continued to do research on dreams with Prince and his associate Dr Waterman, after she completed therapy. At one point she hoped to write a book of her own on her dreams, but that never came about. Much of the material on her case is currently at the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine at Harvard University, and I have previously used this material to provide a more exhaustive psychogenesis of her case (Barresi 1994) than that provided by Prince (1919). Here, I will draw on this previous analysis, as well as on other materials in the collection.

In the case of B.C.A., the event that caused the dissociation of personality was a kiss that Nellie received from a man in a sanatorium while recovering from mental illness after her husband died. The man was also a patient there. The kiss apparently burst her apart through the complex of emotions it elicited. What remained were two relatively stable personalities or phenomenal mental selves that were later called *A* and *B* by Prince. The original person was recovered two years later, when these two personalities and their various partial syntheses, called *C*, finally fused sufficiently that the original Nellie before the kiss was revived and the memories associated with *A*, *B* and *C* as dominant alternating personalities were restored to her (Barresi 1994).

A and *B* emerged out of relatively stable *I*-positions that had a long history well before forming separate personalities with their own stable reflective meta-positions. Before the split, Nellie experienced these two conflicting sides of her personality from a single, self-conscious meta-position as part of her phenomenal stream of consciousness and temporally extended mental self. It was only after the split that Nellie in her two distinct, self-conscious meta-positions *A* and *B* would reflect back on her past and see their pre-existence as opposing *I*-positions in Nellie. In this reflection backward, Nellie as *A* saw herself as the dutiful wife, while Nellie as *B* saw herself as the happy young girl who never committed herself to marriage, so was always pulling Nellie apart, wishing to escape this responsibility. After her husband's death this pulling apart ceased during a period of mourning, while the committed wife position dominated, but she also became ill from overwork and depression. Meanwhile, the other side was building subconscious strength. So when she was finally sent by her doctor to the sanatorium, this latter side, the young, happy and healthy *B* side, who did not take on the responsibilities that so dragged the wife down, began to appear suddenly for short periods of time when Nellie would forget about her duties to her son Robert and her sisters, and instead would tramp through the woods as



she had done before marriage, but would never do as the mature, dutiful wife, or her extension as *A*.

Immediately following the kiss and break-up of the personality, Nellie, in these two distinct *I*-positions, *A* and *B*, took turns being the dominant consciousness, while the other side was subconscious, but also often co-conscious. So, at least some of the time, each of these *I*-positions was aware of what the other self as a dominant, conscious *I*-position was doing, and would critique it from her own co-conscious position. At these times, there was one continuous stream of conscious activity in Nellie but one inhabited by two stable and continuous *I*-positions existing concurrently but in fierce opposition, one being dominant for a period of time and overriding the motivations of the other. In a sense it was the way Nellie had been before her husband died, only more extreme with more distinct and incompatible *I*-positions that, apparently, were now two distinct, temporally extended, mental selves. Before his death, there was some sort of compromise between the two sides, each having a voice that would be listened to by the other and integrated into a common, temporally extended, reflective meta-position that was Nellie's mental self. Now there were no more compromises; the inner voice was probably not even heard by the dominant *I*-position, and the two sides had become distinct mental selves.

Eventually, these two sides became reflectively aware of their distinct *I*-positions and became distinguishable to themselves as mental selves. This occurred after Prince began treating Nellie, when the two *I*-positions reorganized as two clearly independent streams of consciousness, with separable memory systems and alternating states of dominant consciousness. After one particular session of hypnosis, Nellie as *A* no longer had memory for any of subsequent activities that she did when *B* was dominant, though Nellie as *B* remained co-conscious of *A*'s activities. But both sides were now able more clearly to distinguish events following the kiss, where one or the other *I*-position dominated behaviour to the exclusion of the other, while the other as a co-conscious *I*-position criticized it, but had no apparent influence on the dominant *I*-position's behaviour. Nellie as *A*, in particular, viewed activities that she could remember from her *B* state as 'insane' and not her, and she was terribly embarrassed by what she, as *B*, did in that state, while Nellie as *B* thought that *A* was suicidally depressed and dangerous both to herself and to *B*.

Some professionals would claim that Prince 'created' the two personalities through hypnosis, but I have argued previously (Barresi 1994) that hypnosis only facilitated the formation of a memory barrier between the two pre-existing personalities, and I have agreed with Prince (1919) that dissociation of these personalities and mental selves occurred with

the kiss. Because of its focus on *I*-positions, not consciousness, DST cuts through this issue. In contrast to those professionals who emphasize memory and apparent unity of consciousness, DST focuses on intrinsic differences between core *I*-positions. It seems less important to identify the source of the dissociation in this case, than to understand the history of that dissociation with respect to *I*-positions that developed in Nellie and the role that various reflective meta-positions played in Nellie's transformations in phenomenal self-consciousness.

This is a distinct advantage of DST. Whatever their source, *B* and *A* (who is later replaced by the partially synthesized *C* from elements of *A* and *B*) represent *I*-positions that individually develop through time and stand initially opposed to each other. Their first appearance as opposing *I*-positions began with Nellie's marriage and her difficulty dealing with her sexual responsibilities. But at this time a single, continuous, phenomenal, self-conscious meta-position and mental self, aware of the opposing motivational positions, held together the two *I*-positions. Much later the kiss led to a more permanent separation of the two *I*-positions, with one subconscious and the other conscious, and a loss of the meta-position that held these two sides of Nellie's personality together. Once the memory barrier was formed, these *I*-positions became clearer in their self-understanding and in their conscious opposition to each other. But they also at that time attempted individually through narrative reconstruction, as well as collectively, through automatic writing in a question-and-answer mode and commenting on each other's writings, to make sense of their emergence out of Nellie's life history, and to resolve their conflicts. Indeed, the final re-emergence of Nellie two years after the dissociation occurred in the context of *B* writing her autobiography and thinking about the kiss and its aftermath. She was also feeling more empathic than previously with the partially synthesized *C* personality that currently coexisted with her. Both were working on autobiographies, and because Nellie in both of these *I*-positions was devoted to Prince and helping him, these *I*-positions were no longer so far apart. Indeed, as B.C.A.'s later dreams show, this devotion to Prince was beginning to turn into love, a love that may have played a significant role in the process of putting Nellie back together.

Self-recollection, appropriation and the development of *I*-positions in B.C.A.


There are a number of theoretically illuminating aspects for DST in the development and expression of the multiple *I*-positions of B.C.A. One that we have already encountered, and worth further discussion, is

the activity of reconstructive self-analysis. Morton Prince, as therapist, was, of course interested in the prehistory of the emergent personalities of *B* and *A*, and this may have been part of the stimulus for Nellie in her *B* and *A* *I*-positions to reconstruct their origins in the life history of Nellie before the dissociation. But Nellie in each of these *I*-positions became quite involved in this reconstruction, and it is mainly through these self-analyses that Prince was eventually able to write his own psychogenesis of the case (Prince 1919). Of particular importance were the letters and autobiography of *B*, as she was both the most unusual part of B.C.A. and the part of Nellie that more or less had continuous consciousness throughout the period of dissociation, and even beyond. Even after re-synthesis *B* continued to appear as an accessible hypnotic state of Nellie that provided information about Nellie's dreams.

In one of *B*'s important letters that contributed to her autobiography, Nellie as *B* describes her origin in the 'shock' of marriage and Nellie's 'shrinking' from the sexual relations with her husband:

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' . . . [S]omeway that shrinking became part of the system of thought we are calling 'me' (*B*). (letter, undated, Bean, 1907–1913; cited by Barresi 1994: 18)

Nellie as *B* then describes how this shrinking may have reduced for a while in her marriage until her husband became ill:

[W]ith that  this undercurrent 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. . .

I think the rebellion was myself *Dr. P.* but *A* knew.

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

I think all this division springs from that one cause [i.e. sexual desire] – 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 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 [the sanatorium]. I ruled *A* for weeks before I came – 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, and these thoughts and impulses and acts were mine not hers. (letter, undated, Bean, 1907–1913; cited by Barresi 1994: 18–19)

One of the interesting aspects of this narrative is how Nellie as *B* appropriates to her self, some but not all of the motivations of Nellie, whom she calls *X* in her original form. But she knows that *A* remembers these rebellious motives, as well as she does. *B* also describes how these motivations and the *I*-position associated with them became her as a separate self or '*T*', but one that did not originally think of her self as an '*T*'. In more typical individuals, where we do not have dissociations like this and we can remember past experiences more or less continuously without gaps, there is an experience of having a single stream of consciousness and one temporally extended, phenomenal, mental and embodied self. Regardless of whether we presently wish to take ownership of past motivations or not, we accept them as past states of our embodied and temporally extended mental self, as *I*-positions that we have been in, not as positions of an 'alter' who is not self (cf. Cooper and Hermans 2007). But *B* here claims that things she remembers as happening to Nellie, can be divided into her 'own' thoughts and those of *A* or *C*. A typical person adopting a meta-position of reflecting on the past and constructing a self-narrative that links past memories to the present self might select some motivations and actions as more truly her self or as an emergent part of her current *I*-position; but she would also acknowledge other actions as what she was like in the past, though not part of her current narrative sense of self. But Nellie as *B* here is quite specific in setting boundaries between memories that were her own and those that were not. Moreover, she views this history from the point of view of the ontogenesis or psychogenesis of her 'self' as a distinct continuous '*T*', or reflective meta-position (her mental self). Early on, these motivations are seen as an *I*-position of the pre-dissociation Nellie, one of her opposing *I*-positions, but later they are seen as her own 'self' or reflective *I*-position, an *I*-position that had grown in strength and eventually became a dominant and independent personality and mental self, which became dissociated from the rest of Nellie with the kiss.

In the letter we have been considering, Nellie as *B* traces her history to the beginning of Nellie's marriage, with a gradual development from that time. A month later she has different idea:

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. [the man who kissed her] 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. (letter, 28 November 1907, Bean 1907–1913; cited by Barresi 1994: 20).

What is different and intriguing about this idea compared to her previous letter, is that, developmentally, she feels that she did not mature beyond 19 after marriage, until she reappeared as a separate, independent, *I*-position at Nashua. However, after her reappearance, she continued to mature. It is as if this happy girl side of Nellie's personality that had no knowledge of and no interest in sexuality did not get a chance to develop once she got married, and the responsible wife became the dominant *I*-position. However, this side could reappear and could continue to mature after her husband died. In the end the depressed wife *I*-position of *A* disappears, and various *C*s appear that at least partially integrate the happier, and younger, side of Nellie's personality, with the mature *A* side of her personality. However, this new integration still differs from *B* in that sexuality is included and also matures.

After Nellie, as she was at the time she was kissed, reappears two years later, and recovers continuous memories of *A*, *B* and *C*, she continues to develop and looks back on her life in a way that seems to have integrated some of the happy young girl, but now one that also has a different attitude to sexuality. In a letter written five years after her dissociation, she writes:

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, riding, tramping, gymnastics, etc. As far as pleasures are concerned I stopped living when I was little more than thirty [probably when her husband's illness began], 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. (letter, 29 July 1911, Bean (1907–1913); cited by Barresi 1994: 37)

What is important to note here with respect to the issue of time and the dialogical self is that each relatively stable *I*-position has its origin in time and can have its own unique developmental history. Some *I*-positions that might be formed in childhood never outgrow their childish perspective, while other positions mature because they have become dominant *I*-positions, or an integrated part of dominant meta-positions. In therapy, or due to life events, some undeveloped

I-positions can become part of later integrated meta-positions, thus being allowed to develop once again. This seems to have happened in Nellie's case. After Nellie's period of mourning for her husband, and the period of dissociation of personality, when *B* had a life of her own for a while, the happy girl that *B* thinks of as herself, finally got a chance to mature. When pre-dissociation Nellie who disappeared at Nashua re-emerged, it was a new Nellie, one who, after incorporating her experiences as *A*, *B* and *C* during the intervening period, could develop a different orientation to sexuality and to happiness from the unhappy and guilt-ridden widow.

Dissociation and early development in B.C.A.: the history of love

Nellie had a long-standing phobia of cats and many of Nellie's dreams involve cats. They appear whenever anxiety or fear is a major emotional response in her dream state. In many of the earlier dreams, cats often surround her. In one described in Prince's (1910) article on her dreams, she is being chased by wild men with clubs and is told by one of them that she must walk through a sea of cats in front of her without speaking a word. When faced with cats in her dreams, she always shudders and 'shrinks' from them. Consistently in her dreams, there is a strong analogy between her feelings about cats and her feelings about sexual relations with men.

A revealing picture of the relationship between cats and men in Nellie's mental structure is depicted in a dream published by George Waterman (1910). In this dream, love is depicted as a 'monstrosity':

He had a long striped body like a tiger. His legs were short, like an alligator's legs, so that his body lay close to the ground; the feet had long claws; he had a long neck like a giraffe; the head was that of a man and yet seemed different, more as if it belonged to a statue of marble, a sort of Apollo. It was horrible and terrible . . . She said, 'Who are you?' and the animal replied, 'I am Love.' She was frightened and ran away. (Waterman 1910: 204)

Symbolically, the giraffe-like neck above a low body appears as a graphic representation of the erect male organ. But the figure also combines the aggressive feline properties of tiger-like stripes as well as long claws. In discussing the dream she said, 'that she would not portray Love as a gentle and protecting angel [as in a picture she recalled], but as a figure made up of the body of a lion, the claws of a tiger, and the head of an angel; because, while love attracts and lures one on, it always rends and tears one' (Waterman 1910: 206).

How did cats and sex come to have this meaning for Nellie? And does it have anything to do with her dissociation of personality? When she was about five years old she was left in a room alone with a white kitten that had an epileptic fit. Although she apparently screamed for help, no one came immediately to rescue her. The result of this experience was a permanent phobia of cats – in particular of white cats. Young Nellie was apparently overwhelmed by this emotional experience and developed amnesia for the event. As an adult, she could no longer recall the event even under hypnosis. Prince (1914/1921: 16–19) discovered the event which caused her phobia through the use of automatic writing.

It might be wondered how such an event could have the causal power to produce Nellie's dissociative identity disorder. Certainly, many frightening events occur to children and even produce phobias without ever producing personality dissociations. It is not my claim that this event alone produced Nellie's adult personality dissociation. We have already discussed other causal factors that entered into her final dissociation with the kissing incident, and I discuss other factors in my previous paper (Barresi 1994). What I am claiming is that the cat seizure provided a traumatic shock that shattered Nellie's phenomenal sense of self when it was still too fragile to defend itself against the emotional consequences of the cat's fit. She was at the age when a mental self, extended in time, is first formed. The result of the event was dissociation of the experience, and, as a result, dissociation of other experiences became available to her as a means of defence for later emotional traumata of a similar sort. Eventually, she used it in her conflict over sexuality as described above.

However, because of the close relation of love for a kitten and love for a man, there is a closer connection between the earlier and subsequent dissociation. In the dream that depicts love as a phallic cat, love is not just a metaphor of love between men and women for Nellie, but also seems grounded in her earliest experience of love – her love for the epileptic cat that 'lured' her on, but 'rent and tore' her. Still, as we saw earlier in Nellie's letter to Prince about B.C.A., her attitude towards love and sex changed over the years. She was more ready for sexual love than she had ever been in her marriage, and if the opportunity arose she felt that she could love 'with a depth and passion impossible to [her] at any time before in [her] life'. Unfortunately, she never did remarry, and may not have been able to satisfy this passion.

Theoretically, I think that the main lesson to be learned from this example is that the *I*-positions that we see in adult personalities can have long histories that go back to early childhood. Conflicts that arise

at that time between alternative motives and affective relations to particular objects can later generalize to similar objects, but at new levels. What was once a child's ambivalent love and fear of a kitten turned into ambivalence over sexual relations with Nellie's husband, and eventually into a dissociation of Nellie's personality. But as time passes and situations bring forth particular *I*-positions in conflict, there is also an opportunity to resolve this conflict. In the present case, the kiss that caused the later dissociation led to a new reintegrated Nellie, who was now open to sexual desire, and a change in her attitude toward love.

Conclusion

In the present chapter, I have tried to introduce some theorizing about the temporal dimension of the dialogical self that is often ignored because of the usual focus on space rather than time. I have provided a sketch of a developmental and life historical account of how time enters into the psychology of a person with respect to different aspects of self. In the example given, I have tried to focus on a more limited set of issues. The first issue is how reflective meta-positions appropriate and incorporate primary self-positions for which they have empathy, as part of their *I*-position, while *I*-positions, for which they do not have empathy, are not. B.C.A. presents an extreme version of this appropriative activity. Nellie in her several personalities recognized different actions from the past as their own actions, while others were viewed as evidence either of temporary insanity or of some other self. Secondly, dissociation here provides a window on how reflective meta-positions grow through time as phenomenal selves. James (1890) described how the stream of consciousness of a single personality grows through the process of appropriation between neighbouring thoughts (cf. Barresi 2002b). Usually, in the typical case, we have only one such continuous stream of consciousness and with it one continuously developing mental self. But in the case of dissociation, several such mental selves occur. In the present case, we have traced the development of such mental selves. The third issue that I have focused on in the case of B.C.A. is how development occurs with respect to changing orientations to ambivalent objects that elicit opposing primary *I*-positions and sometimes meta-positions. To illustrate this, I have traced the history of love for another living being, starting with a kitten, in the life history of Nellie Bean. While there is much more to say about the temporal properties of the dialogical self that is not pursued here, I hope that this chapter will facilitate further work on time and the dialogical self.

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