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The I of the storm: Relations between self and conscious emotion experience

Tim Dalgleish

Medical Research Council, Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit, England

Michael J. Power

University of Edinburgh, Scotland

Abstract

Lambie and Marcel (2002) outline a framework for understanding varieties of conscious emotion experience (CEE). In their analysis the self plays an important role in CEE. In this critique, however, we propose that Lambie and Marcel's presentation of the self needs further specification if it is to account for varieties of conflicted emotional experience, particularly those characteristic of dissociative states. We propose that a more elaborated self-construct is necessary to account for these phenomena involving either the 'splitting off' of significant self-related concerns or the existence of multiple self constructs. These arguments are illustrated by clinical and sub-clinical case examples.

Preamble

In their impressive essay '*Consciousness and the varieties of emotion experience: A theoretical framework*', Lambie and Marcel (2002) offer a provocative discussion of a putative classification of types of conscious emotion experience (CEE). For those of us involved in the study and treatment of psychopathology, a particularly important and welcome part of their analysis is their treatment of various examples of apparent unawareness of emotion experience that have clinical relevance: anger disorders; so-called "repressors"; various psychodynamic defence processes (e.g. intellectualization, projection, denial); and, alexithymia. The most significant aspect of Lambie and Marcel's analysis of these examples is their suggestion that in each case there *is* in fact conscious emotion experience, in the form of *first-order phenomenology*, but that *second-order awareness* of the phenomenology is compromised in various ways. These two aspects of conscious emotion experience are distinguished from that which is *nonconscious*.

This way of thinking about the types of clinical phenomena that Lambie and Marcel focus on, and that are listed above, is in the broad tradition of Pierre Janet and his followers of *desagregation* or dissociation (Janet, 1920; van der Kolk & van der Hart, 1989). By this we mean that aspects of experience, in this case emotion experience, reside in consciousness but are in some way inaccessible to awareness. This contrasts to the classical Freudian view that, for example, repressed 'material' resides in what he termed the unconscious (Freud, 1915)(somewhat analogous to the nonconscious in Lambie and Marcel's terminology). The difference between these two positions is that dissociated 'material' is potentially available to awareness, but that access is impeded for some reason - it is what Prince (the founder of the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*) called "co-conscious" (Prince, 1905). In contrast, the contents of the unconscious or nonconscious, including repressed material (in Freud's terms), can only be known indirectly, through their effects on behaviour¹.

Lambie and Marcel's framework has another important aspect in common with the work of Janet and the dissociationist school in that the utility of both approaches is seen to depend to a significant extent on their success in fostering understanding of a range of clinical phenomena. As Lambie and Marcel state "What is important is the framework's broad explanatory power, in its application in the section on varieties of unawareness of emotion...." (p. 231). However, despite such similar aims, the core clinical explicanda that Janet was concerned with receive little attention within Lambie and Marcel's analysis. Janet was principally concerned with conceptualizing psychopathologies and instances of conflicted emotions that would mostly fall under the contemporary rubrics of either dissociative disorders or personality disorders, within the current edition of the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM-IV; APA, 1994). These include: Dissociative Amnesia, Dissociative Fugue, Depersonalisation Disorder, Dissociative Identity Disorder, dissociative trance states, and Borderline Personality Disorder.

This paucity of discussion of dissociative states in Lambie and Marcel (2002) is perhaps surprising given the current emphasis on such phenomena in the literature. There are a number of factors that contribute to the contemporary currency of dissociation and related psychopathologies (Spiegel & Cardena, 1991): widespread interest in the diagnostic category of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) with its associated feature of peri-traumatic dissociation; a similar rise in interest and research in personality disorders where again dissociative experiences are often a key feature; a proliferation of research on the incidence of childhood sexual and physical abuse and their relationship to later dissociative psychopathologies (e.g. Terr, 1991); an augmented recognition that hypnosis, which can mimic dissociative states quite closely, is a valid scientific area of enquiry; and, finally, the emergence of interesting and plausible cognitive models of dissociative phenomena (e.g. Brown, 2002; Hilgard, 1986; Kihlstrom, 1984; Nijenhuis, Vanderlinden & Spinhoven, 1998; Spiegel, 1990).

In this commentary on Lambie and Marcel we shall put forward the following suggestions. First, that a number of these clinical conditions that concerned Janet (and other conditions that we shall discuss) have in common the fact that emotion is consciously experienced either as relating to more than one 'self' and/or as 'non-self' in some way. Secondly, that Lambie and Marcel's analysis, as it stands, does not present a sufficiently elaborated concept of self to offer a satisfactory account of these clinical phenomena and that this relates to why they receive so little discussion in their essay. Thirdly, that the notion of self in Lambie and Marcel's framework therefore merits some elaboration in order to maximise the "broad explanatory power" with respect to clinical phenomena that they aspire to.

We shall structure our commentary as follows. First, we shall summarize Lambie and Marcel's (2002) framework for conceptualizing CEE, as we understand it. Secondly, we shall discuss the different notions of self in terms of CEE and examine the role these constructs play in the Lambie and Marcel approach. We shall then outline a more elaborated notion of self(ves). Thirdly, we shall examine a number of clinical examples, as already indicated, that require this more elaborated notion of self in order to be accommodated within the Lambie and Marcel framework.

Lambie and Marcel's analysis of conscious emotion experience

The core of Lambie and Marcel's (2002) argument is a two-level view of conscious emotion experience. First-order phenomenology, what it's like, is distinguished from second-order awareness. First-order emotion phenomenology consists of the phenomenology of either of two things. Firstly, the "evaluative description" (ED). This is a record of the result of an appraisal process (Scherer, Schorr, & Johnstone, 2001) implicated in the generation of a given emotion. Secondly, the "action attitude" (AA), this is the potential for physical action

relating to that appraisal. The content of first-order phenomenology can be dominated by phenomenology of the ED or by phenomenology of the AA or a combination of both of these.

First-order emotion phenomenology is only related to the self when attention is self-directed. Under these conditions, first-order emotion phenomenology that is dominated by the phenomenology of the ED is essentially what Lambie and Marcel term phenomenology of the “evaluated self”. This is non-propositional and in bodily form and so “such experiences of the evaluated self are of one’s body as ‘diminished’, ‘augmented’, ‘compressed’, ‘overwhelmed’” (Lambie & Marcel, 2002, pp. 237-238). First-order emotion phenomenology that is dominated by the phenomenology of the AA reflects the physical relationship between the self (body) and the world. If attention is self-directed this will consist of the representation of the bodily physicality of the AA “indexically located here”. (p. 238). “Thus, for example, in anger the self-experience may be of being impeded, pushed back, or like that of a spring that is compressed, or an impulsion to push out.....In joy the self-experience might be of one’s body buoyant and ready to interact with things (Lambie & Marcel, 2002, pp. 238) (See Lambie & Marcel, 2002, Table 2, p.238, for further illustrations). If attention is world-directed, the experience is of the world out there (hodological space): “...in anger...the corresponding world experience would be either of an impeding or compressing agent or of an object that draws one’s expansion and antagonism to itself (p.238).

There are two forms of second-order emotion awareness in the Lambie and Marcel framework that implicate the self. The first is non-propositional awareness of first-order emotion phenomenology and the second represents propositional awareness in the form of emotion thoughts. Non-propositional awareness of first-order emotion phenomenology, as related to the self, reflects the dominance of either the ED or the AA in the phenomenological space. Non-propositional awareness of ED phenomenology (see Lambie & Marcel, 2002, Table 3) may be in either mental (e.g. offended, threatened, fulfilled) or physical (in pain, diminished, augmented) terms. Non-propositional awareness of AA

phenomenology in relation to the self (see Lambie & Marcel, 2002, Table 4) can be in a synthetic form (e.g. a readiness to hit out) or in a more analytic form (e.g. fists clenched, heart beating). Self-related propositional awareness in the form of conscious emotion thoughts consists of awareness of the result of the original appraisal process (the propositional content of the ED) and of any secondary appraisal, as they relate to the self. This can be with respect to the whole self (the evaluated self) or an aspect of one's concerns. For example, a sense of being threatened or of some aspects of one's concerns being threatened.

A brief discussion of self

In our summary of Lambie and Marcel's (2002) approach above we have employed their usage of the term 'self'. However, with respect to their framework, 'self' can refer to a number of distinct things. The most common usage is its reference to the self as an object of evaluation - what underlies the content of experience. Here they seem to be referring to two things. The first is the self as owner of a set of concerns (Frijda, 1986), one or more of which may be implicated in an emotion-related appraisal. The second is in terms of "the whole self". So, for example, an event or state may be appraised as representing a danger to a particular concern (of the self) or as a danger to the whole self. The whole or evaluated self can also take many forms "...it can be mental, physical, or interpersonal, varying between individuals and cultures" (p.233). However, there are at least two other clear notions of self that can be distinguished in Lambie and Marcel's discussion. The first is the self as experiencer - what we shall call the experiencing self. In first-order phenomenology, this is the sense that conscious content has a necessarily personal quality (Nagel, 1974): "it is 'for me' and 'for my concerns' where the first-person subject is crucial" (Lambie & Marcel, 2002; p. 247). In second-order awareness, this is complemented by the attentional state of the "attending agent" - for example, detached or immersed with respect to the first-order phenomenology.

The second additional notion of self concerns something separate from experience. What we shall call the underlying self-construct. This includes concerns, the autobiographical memory database, as well as representations of beliefs, attitudes and the like. It is the underlying self-construct that is involved in the process of appraisal that leads to the ED in Lambie and Marcel's framework. It is important to note that the underlying self-construct includes concerns, beliefs and so forth both about the self (e.g. the concern to be a good person) as well as of the self about other non-self things (e.g. concern about the environment). A term such as "person-construct" or even "personality" would therefore be equally appropriate in place of self-construct.

Within Lambie and Marcel's analysis the relationship between these three aspects of self - the underlying self construct, the self as the object of experience, and the experiencing self - is not clear. Furthermore, the focus of much of their discussion is on the self as the object of experience rather than the underlying self construct or the experiencing self. It is here therefore that we feel the Lambie and Marcel framework requires elaboration. In our view the unification or disunification of experience, with respect to the different notions of self that we have outlined, is of central concern to understanding types of CEE, particularly those falling under the general rubric of dissociative phenomena. In our view, the key to offering a complete conceptualisation of such phenomena within the Lambie and Marcel framework rests with the relationship between what we term the underlying self construct and the experiencing self, and we elaborate on this idea now.

The key to the proposals outlined in the rest of the paper concerns the nature of one of these three aspects of self - the underlying self-construct. Within Lambie and Marcel's analysis it is implicit that the concerns underlying appraisals relate to a single self. This is not to say that Lambie and Marcel are committed to this unitary self view², rather it is to point out that such a view is, if you like, the default position implicit in the examples and content of their paper on conscious emotion experience. A contrasting view is that the degree of unity

in the underlying self construct can vary across individuals (and indeed across times in an individual's life) from being optimally conceptualised as reflecting a unitary self to being optimally conceptualised as reflecting multiple selves. Indeed, such a multiple-self concept in psychology has a considerable pedigree within the paradigms of social cognition (e.g. James, 1890; Mead, 1934; Higgins, 1987; Kelly, 1955); psychoanalysis/psychodynamic psychology (e.g. Freud, 1923; Kernberg, 1976; Klein, 1975; Sullivan, 1953; Winnicott, 1953), and cognitive-behavioural psychology (Beck, 1967; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Markus, 1991; Power & Dalgleish, 1997; Segal & Muran, 1993), although there is a large degree of variation in the proposed architectures of a multiple self, and what exactly is meant by the term “self”, both within and between different paradigms.

In this commentary we propose that the underlying self construct can be thought of as ranging from a unitary construct, to a self-construct where constellations of concerns, memories, beliefs and the like are 'split off' from the rest of the self, to a multiple self construct in which self-related information aggregates in ways that can best be thought of as different underlying self-constructs. It is important to be clear what we mean by these terms. The idea that certain attributes or concerns of the self can be split off from the rest of the self-construct is a key feature of many of the paradigms in psychopathology. By “split off” we mean that the subset of concerns etc. has a stronger unity of internal connectedness, as compared with the much weaker unity of connectedness found between those concerns etc. and the rest of the self construct. When the nature and extent of the split-off representations consists of a critical mass of memories, attitudes, beliefs, personality characteristics, and concerns, it makes sense to talk of that constellation of representations as a separate underlying self-construct³. Such a concept of multiple self-constructs requires a comment about the relationship between the self-construct and the other proposed facets of self –the experiencing self and the self as the object of experience (what we shall call the evaluated self from here on). Each underlying self-construct can give rise to an associated evaluated self in the context of conscious emotion experience. However, we propose that there can

only be one experiencing self at any one time – the subject of experience (Nagel, 1974; Strawson, 1997; though see Gallagher & Marcel, 1999, for a discussion of alternative arguments.). We shall use the term 'self-in-place' to refer to the cohesion at any given time of the experiencing self and a given underlying self-construct.

It is outside the scope of this paper to discuss in detail how or why such proposed disunity in the underlying self-construct might arise. Briefly, however, the consensus view is that such disunity is associated with early experience of psychological trauma such as sexual, physical, and mental abuse (Janet, 1920; Spiegel & Cardena, 1991) and that the integration of such experiences into a unified self-construct does not occur because the psychological (including emotional) associations and implications of those experiences are incompatible with a functional unitary self-construct. Consequently, disunity in the self-construct develops as a form of defence, on the part of the traumatized individual, against the psychological and emotional properties of particular autobiographical experiences (see, for example, Brown, 2002; Hilgard, 1986; Kihlstrom, 1984; Nijenhuis, Vanderlinden & Spinhoven, 1998; Spiegel, 1990, for further discussion and operationalization of these ideas).

In the next section we shall utilize this conceptualisation of the underlying self-construct to examine four types of example of CEE that include many of the dissociative phenomena referred to earlier in the commentary. The four types of example will implicate: a unitary self construct; a self-construct where significant concerns are 'split off'; a multiple self-construct where more than one self are 'co-conscious'; and a multiple self construct where different selves take turns to dominate conscious experience.

Disunity of the self construct and CEE

The first type of example concerns varieties of CEE that involve the type of unitary underlying self-construct that we have argued is the default in Lambie and Marcel's analysis. This category includes the examples provided by Lambie and Marcel (2002) in their original paper. However, as the present critique is largely focused on varieties of dissociative states it is useful to examine exemplars of such states that fall into this category but that are, nevertheless, not discussed by Lambie and Marcel.

The first exemplar consists of varieties of Depersonalisation Disorder (see Sierra & Berrios, 1997, for a historical review and conceptualisation). The DSM-IV describes depersonalisation in terms of an alteration in the perception or experience of the self so that one feels detached from, and as if one is an outside observer of, one's mental processes or body (feeling like one is in a dream)(APA, 1994; pp. 488-490). Most patients who attract a diagnosis of Depersonalisation Disorder report a relative lack of CEE (Ackner, 1954). For example, Bockner (1947) reports a patient who talked about her problems in the following terms: "I feel as though I'm not alive, as though my body is an empty lifeless shell. [I am hearing music] but there is no response in me. Music usually moves me, but now it might as well be someone mincing potatoes" (p.969). Unlike so-called repressors (see Lambie & Marcel, 2002; pp 249-250), patients with Depersonalisation Disorder seem also to have attenuated autonomic responses to unpleasant stimuli (e.g. Sierra et al., 2002). Within Lambie and Marcel's framework, Depersonalisation Disorder invites a similar conceptualisation as Patient EVR (Damasio, 1994) whom they discuss in terms of attenuated first-order phenomenology of emotion, combined with a tendency towards a detached and analytical second-order awareness of emotion experiences⁴.

A second exemplar of a form of dissociative state that rests on a unitary self construct concerns some varieties of peri-traumatic dissociation (see Spiegel & Cardena, 1991). In peri-traumatic dissociation, people describe a similar relative absence of feelings as those with Depersonalisation Disorder. The main difference being that such experiences

are linked to highly stressful and traumatic events, rather than reflecting a more pervasive difficulty with emotion experience (e.g. Feinstein, 1989; Hillman, 1981; Noyes & Kletti, 1977; Madakisira & O'Brien, 1987, Sloan, 1988). For example, Noyes and Kletti (1977) in their survey of 101 survivors of life-threatening danger, found that 72% reported experiencing feelings of unreality and an altered sense of the passage of time during the life-threat, 57% reported automatic movements, 56% a lack of emotion, 52% a sense of detachment, 35% a feeling of detachment from their bodies, and 30% experiences of derealisation. To our knowledge, research data do not exist to help with the question of whether peri-traumatic dissociative experiences of this kind reflect attenuated first-order emotion phenomenology, combined with a detached second-order awareness (similar to the account given above of Depersonalisation Disorder and the case of EVR; Damasio, 1994, Lambie & Marcel, 2002, p.249), or whether they represent 'intact' phenomenology of emotion, allied with a highly detached second-order awareness, or finally, whether they represent intact phenomenology, allied with an impaired or absent second-order awareness. The last of these putative accounts of peri-traumatic dissociation within the Lambie and Marcel framework would be similar to the account that they offer of repressors (pp. 249-250). The principal difference is that repressors seem to lack an insight into the absence of awareness of their emotion experiences whereas patients who describe peri-traumatic dissociative phenomena seem to be aware of the relative absence of emotion experience concerning an index event and are often distressed by it (see Spiegel & Cardena, 1991).

To summarize briefly, this first set of exemplars that we have considered does not involve any elaboration of the self-construct beyond that which is implied in Lambie and Marcel's (2002) original article. However, we have tried to show how their existing framework can deal with several important examples of dissociative phenomena, as a platform from which to address the next three sets of exemplars that involve elaboration of the self-construct as discussed above.

The second set of exemplars that we consider rests on a self-construct from which a set of critical concerns is 'split off'. Among the clearest clinical illustrations here are what one might call 'emotion attacks' such as anger attacks, anxiety attacks (including phobic experiences), and panic attacks (e.g. Clark, 1986; Fava, Anderson & Rosenbaum, 1993; Marks, 1969). A significant proportion of such emotion attacks are experienced by patients as ego-dystonic (e.g. Mammen, Shear, Jennings & Popper, 1997). By this, it is meant that the sufferers of such attacks describe them as uncharacteristic of their normal personality, out of proportion to the eliciting stimulus, and invoking the feeling that the sufferers were not themselves while the attack occurred. In many such cases, such descriptions of emotion attacks are only available to the sufferers retrospectively. However, for a proportion of such cases, patients report feeling that the intense emotions feel ego-dystonic at the time of the attack. There is an important distinction that needs to be made here between experienced ownership and experienced origin (e.g. Gallagher, 2000). Sufferers of ego-dystonic emotion attacks are not disputing the fact that the attacks are happening to them and are part of their experience; that is, they are clear about the ownership of the conscious emotion experience. What is less clear to these individuals is that the emotion attacks originated with themselves; that is, they are less clear about the origin behind the experiences. In the majority of such cases, it is clear that sufferers are not saying that the attacks originated with another person as, for example, thought insertions are experienced in schizophrenia (Stephens & Graham, 1994), or even that the emotions originate with another self. Instead they feel that the emotions are somehow non-self and do not "belong" to themselves.

We suggest that, in the terminology of the Lambie and Marcel framework, such ego-dystonic forms of conscious emotion experience arise as a result of appraisals with respect to concerns that are split off from the constellation of representations that make up the self-construct. Consequently, the self-as-object of evaluation element of CEE is attenuated or lost for these concerns and the related emotions are experienced as 'non-self' or ego-dystonic. The experiencing self in this case is coherent with the underlying self-construct and

together they represent the self-in-place. The self-in-place is the reference point for CEE. Consequently, emotions arising as a function of concerns that are included as part of the self in place are experienced as originating with the self and as ego-syntonic whereas emotions arising out of concerns that are not part of the self in place, in this case those concerns that are split off, will be experienced as non-self in some way or as ego-dystonic. The different CEEs (ego syntonic and ego dystonic) are therefore from the 'point of view' of the self-in-place.

These experiences of ego dystonic emotion, we propose, can occur at both the level of first-order phenomenology, where conscious emotion experience will lack some of 'by-me' quality, as well as at the level of second-order awareness. It is important to clarify here that this absence of 'by-me-ness' from conscious emotion experience refers to origin, rather than ownership. The example of emotion attacks illustrates how intense emotions can be consciously experienced as 'other' or as ego-dystonic. However, a similar absence of 'by-me-ness' is reported by some sufferers of depersonalisation and peri-traumatic dissociation with respect to the relative absence of emotion experience that they report.

The third category of examples that we discuss involves more than one underlying self-construct. In this scenario, within the Lambie and Marcel framework, we propose that appraisals can occur simultaneously with respect to concerns associated with the different self-constructs. This can lead to different and conflicting (as in they are seemingly in opposition) experienced emotions that refer to *different* evaluated selves associated with the different and conflicting appraisals of the same object or event. We propose that in this case the experiencing self is linked to a dominant or supraordinate underlying self-construct and together these are the self-in-place. The experiencing self experiences emotions arising from appraisals relating to its associated self construct as ego syntonic. On the other hand, from the 'point of view' of the self-in-place, emotions resulting from appraisals relating to the other (non-dominant) self construct, would still be experienced as owned but would also be experienced as *originating with another self*.

This idea of a multiple underlying self construct is similar to that proposed in numerous models of vulnerability to psychopathology, across different paradigms (e.g. Beck et al., 1979; Elliot & Lassen, 1997). Here, what might be called a functional self construct masks in some way a more dysfunctional self-construct; that is, the functional self-construct would exist as the self-in-place when the individual is not experiencing an acute episode of psychopathology. For instance, consider the case (common in the literature on vulnerability to depression) in which one self construct instantiates the individual's self worth in a functional and healthy way whereas another self construct is dysfunctional and represents the individual as worthless, unlovable, a failure and so on (see Power, de Jong & Lloyd, 2002). In this type of analysis, the contention is that objects/events/experiences in the world will routinely be evaluated with respect to both self constructs at the same time. So, for example, if such a person was presented with the opportunity to enter into a serious relationship with somebody who loved him or her then one might anticipate feelings of pleasure and joy (for argument's sake) as a function of the healthy functional self construct along with feelings of fear and distress as a function of the latent, dysfunctional self construct. Using Lambie and Marcel's terminology, there are two evaluated selves in this example, with different evaluative descriptions (EDs) associated with each. In one variation of such circumstances, the experiencing self would have second-order propositional awareness of both EDs relating to both underlying self-constructs and hence the person would have some insight as to the origins of his/her fear and distress at the prospect of the new relationship. However, other individuals may have no second order awareness of the ED underlying the negative emotions. This latter state of affairs is relatively common and, arguably, one important function of the talking therapies is to help people to achieve second-order propositional awareness of the evaluative descriptions and the split off concerns and/or the alternative underlying self construct that underpins them for the CEE that they do not understand.

It is important to highlight how this case differs from the example of ambivalent feelings or mixed hedonics discussed in the source article by Lambie and Marcel. Mixed hedonics, in their sense, seems to refer to a unitary self construct (and consequently a single evaluative self) for which, in this example, the prospect of a new relationship is appraised in different, conflicting ways reflecting ambivalence in goal structures (or some equivalent structures underlying appraisals) concerning relationships for that individual. In the present example, in contrast, different self constructs (and hence different evaluated selves) are each associated with differing and conflicting appraisals and consequent EDs⁵.

The final category of examples concerns cases where the self-in-place varies across time within a given individual, and where variation is directly related to the psychopathology⁶. Perhaps the clearest example of this is so-called Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID; APA, 1994). According to the DSM-IV: "DID is characterized by the presence of two or more distinct identities or personality states that recurrently take control of the individual's behaviour accompanied by an inability to recall important personal information that is too extensive to be explained by ordinary forgetfulness" (p.477). Patients with a diagnosis of DID often present with different identities that have different names, are of different ages, have different predominant emotions, different profiles of regulatory physiology, and have different degrees of memory as to what happens to the other personalities or identities (asymmetrical amnesia) (e.g. Braun, 1984; Putnam, Guroff, Silberman, Barban & Post, 1986). One of the more celebrated cases is that of Sally Beauchamp (Prince, 1905). It seemed that this individual had four clear personalities: one of these was very proper and refined, another highly flirtatious and extrovert, and a third angry and brooding.

Within the analysis proposed here, the different personalities or identities in DID would reflect relatively autonomous underlying self-constructs, each potentially allied to a related experiencing self. At any one time the self-in-place would consist of one of these self-construct-experiencing self dyads, and the experienced emotions would be in relation to an

evaluated self and/or concerns related to the 'in-place' underlying self construct. A similar account can be presented for other related forms of psychopathology including: Dissociative Fugue which is characterised by "sudden unexpected travel away from home or one's customary place of work, accompanied by an inability to recall one's past and confusion about personal identity or the assumption of a new identity" (APA, 1994; p. 477); misidentification of self, such as in Riel's syndrome (Perr & Federoff, 1992), in which an individual perceives himself or herself as another being while being able to explain the loss of the original identity; and, various trance and possession states such as amok (Indonesia), bebainan (Indonesia), latah (Malaysia), pibloktoq (Arctic), ataque de nervios (Latin America), and possession (India) (APA, 1994).

The idea of multiple underlying self-constructs that contribute to alterity across time of a self-in-place is also relevant in understanding a number of other so-called personality disorders, such as Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)(APA, 1994). BPD is a complex and controversial diagnosis that has at its core the symptom of splitting. Splitting involves an alternation between extremes of idealisation and devaluation of both the self and others (Horowitz et al., 1990). So, for example, individuals who have attracted a diagnosis of BPD might at one moment feel affection, admiration and intense positive affect for somebody they know but the next moment alternate to an experience of extreme negativity and hostility (often including violence) towards that individual. Again, this reflects more than a state of ambivalent feelings or mixed hedonics (in the Lambie and Marcel sense) concerning somebody and more logically reflects EDs that relate to different underlying self-constructs. This is a case of emotional conflict and disunity of self over time where intense CEEs alternate profoundly from positive to negative tone. What is notable about BPD is that at any one time it is hard for sufferers to achieve second-order awareness of the ED that underlies the alternative affective stance to others to the one that they are currently experiencing.

In this commentary on Lambie and Marcel (2002) we have argued that their analysis of CEE, in its present form, does not do full justice to a wide variety of clinical (and normal) phenomena that have conflict and disunity of CEE at their core; namely, dissociative states and related forms of psychopathology. We have argued that, as it stands, Lambie and Marcel's notion of the self is under-specified and is thus unable to account for the variety of conflicted emotion experience embodied by dissociative states and the like. We have therefore proposed an elaborated view of the what we have termed underlying self construct and illustrated how such a view, within the terms of Lambie and Marcel's framework can facilitate the application of that framework to understanding dissociative and related phenomena.

Author note

Tim Dalgleish, Emotion Research Group, Medical Research Council Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit, Cambridge, England. Michael Power, Department of Psychiatry, University of Edinburgh.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to: Tim Dalgleish, Medical Research Council Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit, 15 Chaucer Road, Cambridge CB2 2EF, England. Electronic mail to: tim.dalgleish@mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk.

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Footnotes

1 - But see, for example, Erdelyi (1985) for a cogent critique of this distinction between repression and dissociation.

2 – Indeed, this is almost certainly not the case. For example, Marcel (1993) states "But whatever the structure of self, there is no reason that there should not be more than one self in a single body or brain. Usually, they may have much the same experiences, or cohere, or even be singular. But, if not, then what is reported by different 'selves' may be at odds. This can be seen in multiple personality disorder....and in post-traumatic stress disorder" (p. 179).

3 – There is clearly a philosophical issue here about what constitutes a separate entity or thing. Indeed, some philosophers would argue that there are no ultimate facts of the matter about what constitutes a thing or an object and that any such judgements are ultimately subjective in character (see Strawson, 1997, for a discussion). With regards to the self, the issue is further complicated by a large literature that argues that for any given self construct, there are multiple facets of self defined by situations, roles, other persons, audiences, goals, traits and mood states or any combination of these (see Kihlstrom & Cantor, 1984).

4 - Indeed, many authors argue that Depersonalisation Disorder can be usefully characterized in terms of an underlying neurological dysfunction (for example, Sierra & Berrios, 1998).

5 - Again, some instances of depersonalisation and peri-traumatic dissociation can be most usefully conceptualised as reflecting multiple underlying self constructs. For example, Spiegel (1990) describes a patient with a previous history of Dissociative Disorder who experienced a rape. During the rape she dissociated such that she experienced the rape as happening to another person whom she called "No One".

6 - It is important to note here that Lambie and Marcel's (2002) original paper concerns single emotion episodes. Consequently, examples where the nature/identity of self changes from episode to episode do not contradict anything in their paper. However, the process of extrapolating from an analysis of single emotion episodes to episodes across time is more complex when one is working with an elaborated self-concept. For this reason, it is important to discuss some examples of it here as they pertain to dissociative and related phenomena.