Maladaptive Daydreaming and Therapeutic Neutrality

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Dr. Miller’s comments are mostly focused on ritual abuse, mind control, the false memory wars, and therapeutic neutrality, which were not the focus of my paper on maladaptive daydreaming (MD) and Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). However, I would like to make a couple of points for clarification.

I stated in my book, *Satanic Ritual Abuse: Principles of Treatment* (Ross, 1995) that alternative hypotheses of ritual abuse are alternatives to the memories being historically accurate. An example of such an alternative hypothesis is the “cover story for pedophile and pornography groups” hypothesis that Allison Miller endorses. In my view, considering such alternative hypotheses is reasonable and is a potential strategy for managing counter-transference in Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA) cases.

Any potential overlap between SRA and MD involves clear differences between them. For example, SRA internal worlds are far more conflicted, gloomy and unhappy than most MD internal worlds, which tend to be positive. Also, SRA internal worlds do not have the quality of a consciously controlled fantasy. MD internal worlds, however, often do have an involuntary, compulsive or addictive quality to them, so they are not entirely under voluntary control at all times, and therefore, they share some of that involuntary quality with SRA inner worlds.

In terms of my fictional case example and therapeutic dialogue, my discussion of therapeutic neutrality with the client is brief and refers to a previous, more lengthy conversation with the client in a previous session. The purpose of the vignette is to provide a compressed illustration of a therapeutic principle in a fictional case in order to make a point. There are
many styles in which therapeutic neutrality can be explained to clients; the style in my case vignette is only one of many.

One of the points illustrated in the vignette is the need to proceed carefully with orienting the cult alters to the body and the present, given that, in this fictional case, the High Priest cult father has died in the interim. The cult alters are holding the positive attachment to the father, have no idea he is dead, and will experience a lot of grief when this sinks in, for which they are unprepared. Working with opposing viewpoints of different parts does not mean “picking and choosing” which memories to believe and which ones not to believe. It means working with the ongoing inner realities of dissociated alter personalities and forming a treatment alliance with all parts of self as early in the recovery process as possible.

I think it might be useful to discuss ritual abuse, mind control and therapeutic neutrality in a different setting, either at a conference or in the pages of this journal. My intent in my paper on MD and DID was to focus on a possible overlap between the two disorders.

REFERENCES