

## 8. The Mental Problems of the Many

*Peter Unger*

Many years ago, I blush to recall, I published some arguments against the existence of all sorts of commonly supposed entities—against rocks and desks, plants and planets, stars and salt shakers, human brains and bodies, and, perish the thought, against us human thinking experiencers, including even the one who's me.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, now I'm trying to develop, in a book I've been long writing, a humanly realistic philosophy, wherein my existence, and yours, has the status of a quite undeniable philosophic datum.<sup>2</sup>

As it seems to me now, certain *trying ideas* then deployed in such nihilistic reasoning may bear importantly on the question of what sort of a humanly realistic view we should adopt. These are ideas to the effect that, where I'm apt first to think that there's just this one human body,

<sup>1</sup> In chronological order, the most directly nihilistic of these papers are: "There Are No Ordinary Things", *Synthese*, 41 (1979): 117–54; "I Do Not Exist", pp. 235–51 in *Perception and Identity*, ed. G. F. MacDonald, London: Macmillan, 1979; and "Why There Are No People", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 4 (1979): 177–222. The main thrust of these papers is the articulation of a nihilistic approach to various *sorites* arguments. Typically, these arguments trade on the (for all I really know perfectly correct) idea that an extremely minute difference between two ordinary entities—minute as regards propensities as well as all sorts of other things—will never mean the difference between one of them being a rock, for example, and the other not being a rock, or the difference between one being a thinking being and the other not being a thinking being. Less directly nihilistic are a few other papers, including "The Problem of the Many", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 5 (1980): 411–67. In this paper none of the key ideas has anything much to do with any *sorites* arguments, or with "discriminative vagueness", though a casual glance at these key ideas may often give such an erroneous impression. Right now, I'll warn you against conflating these two very different sorts of nihilistic reasoning. And, in the bargain, I'll warn against mistaking, for any *sorites* argument, or any reasoning at all concerning discriminative vagueness, the trying thoughts I'm about to supply in this present essay. Finally, I signal that, while several of this essay's key ideas do arise from issues central to "The Problem of the Many", some of these presently central ideas go, in various important respects, far beyond anything considered in that old paper. (While there are great differences between the thoughts of this new essay and the ideas of the older one, an attempt to detail the differences looks to be more distracting than instructive.)

<sup>2</sup> Still in progress, the book is entitled *All the Power in the World*, to be published by Oxford University Press.

“my body”, seated in just this one chair, “my desk chair”, there are, more accurately, many billions of human bodies, each seated in many billions of chairs. And, where I’m first given to believe that there’s just one healthy active brain, “my brain”, promoting someone’s mentality, there may be many billions of brains, each of them largely overlapping so many of the others, and each serving, quite equally, to promote a thinking, experiencing and choosing human being, or human self. Maybe each brain promotes the very same mind, or self, as do each of the others, in which case there’s just one self promoted (rather redundantly?) by them all; or maybe each promotes a numerically distinct conscious individual, in which case many billions of experiencers may be, in my situation, simultaneously promoted. Right now, these remarks should seem no better than cryptic comments; but, in the course of this essay their import should become clearer.

These *trying ideas* might provide, I’ll be suggesting, much force against the Scientiphical View that each of us is a highly complex wholly physical thing, with each of our powers just some sort of (physically derivative) physical power; or, on a less popular version of Scientiphicalism, each of us is epiphenomenal on, or supervenient on, a highly complex wholly physical thing.<sup>3</sup> And they might also provide much force against a related Emergentist View, on which each of us is a physical-and-mental complex.<sup>4</sup> Without further ado, let’s encounter these trying ideas.

## RECALLING THE PROBLEM OF THE MANY

In a paper called “The Problem of the Many”, I introduced a problem for our everyday thinking, distinct from all sorites problems and, indeed, quite different from problems of “discriminative vagueness”.

<sup>3</sup> Spelling it differently, as “Scientificalism”, I first sketched this View, which is our dominant metaphysic, in “The Mystery of the Physical and the Matter of Qualities”, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 23 (1999): 75–99. Using philosophically more suggestive spelling, I discussed it further in “Free Will and Scientiphicalism”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 65 (2002): 1–25. One of the main aims of *All the Power in the World* is to explore, very critically, this Scientiphical Metaphysics that, for several decades at least, has been the dominant worldview among prominent mainstream philosophers, as well as many others.

<sup>4</sup> There’s a discussion of this Emergentism in my “Free Will and Scientiphicalism”. The excellent suggestion that I treat this view very seriously I owe to Dean Zimmerman.

Much as I found it useful to do then, let us start by considering certain cases of *ordinary clouds*, clouds like those we sometimes seem to see in the sky.

As often viewed by us from here on the ground, sometimes puffy “picture-postcard” clouds give the appearance of having a nice enough boundary, each white entity sharply surrounded by blue sky. (In marked contrast, there are other times when it’s a wonder that we don’t simply speak singularly of “the cloud in the sky”, where each visible cloudy region runs so messily together with many other cloudy “parts of the sky”). But upon closer scrutiny, as may happen sometimes when you’re in an airplane, even the puffiest, cleanest clouds don’t seem to be so nicely bounded. And this closer look seems a more revealing one. For, as science seems clearly to say, our clouds are almost wholly composed of tiny water droplets, and the dispersion of these droplets, in the sky or the atmosphere, is always, in fact, a gradual matter. With pretty much any route out of even a comparatively clean cloud’s center, there is no stark stopping place to be encountered. Rather, anywhere near anything presumed a boundary, there’s only a gradual decrease in the density of droplets fit, more or less, to be constituents of a cloud that’s there.

With that being so, we might see that there are enormously many complexes of droplets, each as fit as any other for being a constituted cloud. Each of the many will be a cloud, we must suppose, if there are even as many as just one constituted cloud where, at first, it surely seemed there was exactly one. For example, consider the two candidates I’ll now describe. Except for two “widely opposing” droplets, one on one side of two overlapping cloudy complexes, way over on the left, say, and another way over on the right, two candidate clouds may wholly overlap each other, so far as droplets goes. The cited droplet that’s on the left is a constituent of just one of the two candidates, not a component of the other; and the one on the right is a component of the other candidate, not the one first mentioned. So each of these two candidate clouds has exactly the same number of constituent droplets. And each might have exactly the same mass, and volume, as the other.

Now, all around the outer portion(s) of a supposedly single cloud, what obtains is a gradual change of droplet density, along ever so many paths, from the considered cloud’s central portion(s) to what is merely its droplet-infested environment. In actuality, there’s not just one “problematic pair of opposing droplets”. Rather, there are very many

such *distinct* pairs, that is, many pairs of peripheral droplets each of which has no droplet in common with any of the other pairs. So there's certainly nothing special about the opposing pair that, above, fueled some peculiar thinking. Indeed, any droplet from any one of the many opposing pairs might be coupled equally well, instead, with at least one of the two droplets from (almost) any other one of these very many pairs. This being so, the mathematics of combinations will have it that, in the situation where one first supposes a single concrete cloud, there are *very many millions* of clouds present. Each of these many millions of cloud candidates has precisely as many droplets as does each of the others. And, in every way plausibly deemed relevant for cloudhood here, each is the exact equal of all the others. By contrast with considerations central to sorites arguments, here there is *no* difference at all between any one of these complexes' current cloud credentials and the credentials of any of the millions of others.

Though it's not needed to generate our problem, it's sometimes fun to combine what's just been offered above with some considerations concerning vagueness. So, in the case we've been considering, the extremely good cloud candidates are not limited, of course, to the exactly equally good ones that differ only as regards two such opposing peripheral constituent droplets. In addition, there's a candidate that's plenty good enough for current cloudhood that *lacks not just one but both* of the peripheral "opposing" droplets first considered. If there are any real clouds here at all, this will be a cloud that's just one "droplet's worth" less massive than either of our first two candidates, and just slightly smaller in volume, too. And, there's another perfectly good candidate that *has not just one but both* of those peripheral droplets as constituents. As regards both mass and volume, it will be just two droplets' worth larger than the candidate considered a moment ago, and just one droplet larger than each of the two complexes we first considered above. With even just this much thrown into our cloudily explosive mix of considerations, our situation's recognized cloud population rises enormously.

While there should be limits to how far such "numerically differential shuttling" can be taken, lest sorites arguments here lead to nihilistic ideas, we won't be anywhere close to approaching those limits with differences of just two peripheral droplets in the cloudy complexes we're considering. Indeed, even with differentials of *five* such peripheral droplets, even five on *either* side of our initially chosen "tied clearest

current cloud case", we won't be anywhere close to threatening any such limits. Now, these matters concerning vagueness have been, as I predicted, some fun to consider. But, they themselves are peripheral to what are here the main issues, to which we now return.

Even as concerns the main issues, there's not an absolutely perfect parallel between a common cloud and its constituting droplets on one hand, and a water droplet and (at least some of) its constituting molecules, or atoms, or elementary particles on the other. But there's no important difference between the two. We may grant, if needs be, that there are routes from a drop's center into its mere environs with breaks that are quite clean. Even so, there'll be many others that are very much messier, quite messy enough to allow for "opposing" pairs of plausible enough constituents. With these opposing pairs of "particles", we may reason, in a relevantly parallel fashion, that there are many millions of water droplets where at first there would seem to be just one. And, as it is with water droplets, so it is also with rocks and desks, planets and plants, and human brains and bodies.

Where at first there seems to be just a single human body, here, which is just "my body", there may really be vastly many human bodies. And where I take your single brain to be ensconced in your one head, there may be very many human brains (each equally "yours"), all similarly ensconced in vastly many human heads (each "yours").

All this sounds very strange. But, maybe there isn't anything in it that should be very disturbing. So long as we're clear as to what are the relations among which brains, and which bodies, maybe there needn't be any serious problem. For instance, we can be clear enough about what we may correctly express when saying that none of your brains is in, nor are any of your brains a part of, any of my many bodies. And, we may be similarly clear about saying that each of my brains is in, and is a part of, all of my bodies. And, even as many of your brains each overlap with many other brains that are yours, none of your brains overlap with any of mine, of course. At the same time, it's also clear that none of my many bodies ever nest in, nor do any ever greatly overlap with, any one of your many bodies.

Now, even on the face of things, the problems of the many just canvassed, or rehearsed, concern nothing of much greater moment, or depth, than what's commonly found with many merely semantic issues. There seems nothing of much metaphysical moment in these problems

with common thoughts about quite grossly complex physical entities. (Nor does there seem any perplexing problems of moral moment, or any deep difficulty concerning rational concern.) Should every “problem of the many” be no worse than these noted problems—about many overlapping clouds, and brains, and human bodies—there may be no very serious philosophical problem to be found along these lines. Is there, perhaps, such a relatively untroubling situation happily in the cards for us here?

#### THE EXPERIENTIAL PROBLEM OF THE MANY

Maybe so; but maybe not. Indeed, matters may start to get much worse, I’ll suggest, should we be unable to quash the thought that, in what I take to be just my own situation, there are really very many experiencing thinkers, each promoted by a different one of the very many brains that, above, I bid us recognize as “my brains”.

But, can anything much like *that* be right? In addition to me myself, whose conscious metaphysical struggles are, apparently, producing these awkward sentences, are there many other thinkers, too, each similarly responsible, and maybe each of us then just barely responsible, for producing these strangely disquieting philosophical utterances? Right here and now, “in my situation”, are there vastly many experiencing thinkers, each with a protracted illusion of being, in this very present situation, quite singular and unique? While anything’s possible, as we say, the idea that there are, along with me, so many distinct like-minded experiencing thinkers is incredible.

Am I being, perhaps, overly self-centered here? I don’t think so. In fact, when I consider a similar “experientially explosive” suggestion about you, and about the many bodies and brains “in your situation”, I find the thought of billions of like-minded experiencers just as incredible as in my own case. Whether it’s for my own case or for yours, with our Experiential Problem of the Many there’s a very serious issue of credibility.

Just a few sentences make clear how very much such an experientially explosive supposition flies in the face of our commonsense thinking about ourselves. Possibly excepting what happens when certain rarified metaphysics is done, each one of these many supposed billions thinks that, at least among all the people on earth right now, he alone is

experiencing—immediately, complexly, and totally—in the precise way or fashion that, at the moment, he manifests, or exemplifies. As I take it, you're not experiencing in a way that's precisely like the way I'm experiencing right now, even though we may be near each other in the same room. For one thing, I have a tingling condition "in my left foot" that, I believe, is quite different from any felt condition you now suffer. For another, my perspective is different from yours, which almost certainly means a notable difference in our visual experiencing. Obviously we could go on and on; but, just as obviously, that's enough.

Matters quickly go from bad to worse; incredible thoughts compound incredibly. Am I to think that, with vastly many experiencers promoted by vastly many brains "in my situation", each may be communicating his innermost thoughts to all of the enormously many other experiencing thinkers, across the vastly many tables between us, promoted by the vastly many brains "in your situation"? Such an idea is, I think, patently absurd.

Something has gone badly wrong here. And, as we are now dealing with human thinking experiencers, with the likes of you and me, what's gone wrong concerns what's central for any humanly realistic philosophy.

Indeed, whatever philosophical projects one may find interesting, this present matter presents an issue that one should recognize as philosophically puzzling and disturbing. Part of what makes the matter so puzzling may be that it concerns what has been called, in recent years, the "subjectivity of experience". This so-called subjectivity is closely related to—and it may even be the same thing as—what was called, in earlier years, the "privacy of experience". Very sketchily put, that is indeed my partial diagnosis. In a way that may resonate intuitively, I'll try to amplify on this diagnostic idea.

The thought that there are, "in my situation", vastly many individuals each similarly experiencing the sweet taste of chocolate is, to my mind, a very disturbing suggestion. It is far more disturbing than the thought that, in this situation, there are vastly many complex entities each of whom is chewing a sweet piece of chocolate, or digesting a sweet piece of chocolate. A digesting of the sweet chocolate that's very much like my (body's) digesting it may as well be ascribed—quite indifferently, tolerably, and readily—to each of however many human beings (or human bodies) may very largely overlap me (or

mine). This contrasting thought concerning digesting is far less deeply puzzling, and far less disturbing, than the thought concerned with experiencing.

With the digesting of the chocolate, the situation seems far more relaxed than with the experiential tasting of anything. With so much more relaxed a matter, it seems little more than a matter of choosing what forms of words to use. Following common sense, even if perhaps speaking loosely, we may say that there's just one process of digesting now going on "in my situation". Or, paying less attention to common thought, and maybe more to certain principles of differential constitution, we may instead say that, with many similar overlapping entities each engaged in a very similar digestive process, there are many similar overlapping digestive happenings. As it seems, this latter description is only somewhat less intuitively palatable.

Not so, it seems, with my experiencing as I do. Rather, it seems, my power to experience will be radically different from my power to digest (or, perhaps better, from my very many bodies' powers to digest.) The latter is just a highly derivative physical propensity; it's a metaphysically superficial power ascribed, perhaps properly enough, to many such ontologically superficial complexes as are typical human bodies, or entirely physical human organisms. By contrast, a power to experience may be a radically emergent mental propensity, in no wise any mere physical power, neither derivative nor non-derivative. For some, this contrast will be both evident and even profound. But, for others, further discussion may be useful.

For the sake of the argument, or the diagnostic exposition, just suppose, for the moment, that a Substantial Dualism holds. And, further, suppose that I causally interact, quite equally, with each of very many overlapping complex physical bodies, each of which thus may be called, properly enough, one of *my bodies*. Must there be very many other Cartesian thinkers, in addition to myself, who also causally interact, quite equally, with (so many of) these same physical complexes—so that (many of) my bodies are also *their bodies*? Certainly not. Indeed, it may be a great advantage of this Dualism that its most plausible versions won't have things turn out this way. As a matter of metaphysical fact, all the bodies "in my situation" serve to promote only myself, and not any other sentient self. On such a Substantial Dualistic View, there may be much reason to take each of these many bodies to be one of my bodies, but not to take any of them to be anyone else's.

Even as I may have so many human bodies, none of which are anyone else's bodies, so I may then also have very many *digestive systems*, many of them greatly overlapping many of the others, while each such system has a slightly different group of basic physical constituents from all the rest—perhaps an “extra” electron here, or one less hydrogen atom there. To be sure, this sounds like it's squarely against common-sense thinking, and ordinary biological thinking. And, very possibly, it is. Still, there's nothing that is all that disturbing in any of it. Indeed, there's nothing very disturbing, either, in going on to think many further thoughts, elaborations on these materially explosive ideas. For instance, without very much disturbance, we may think that each of my many digestive systems may undergo, or be engaged in, a process of digestion—a digesting—that's ever so similar to the digestive processes undergone, simultaneously, by ever so many overlapping digestive systems. Readily enough, I trust, we may accept the idea that all these systems are mine, and mine alone, and all these digestings are mine, and mine alone. Though it's somewhat unnatural for us to say such profligate things, there's no grave philosophical error, I'll suggest, in being so liberal about these metaphysically material matters.

For the same reasons that I might be said to have billions of digestive systems, I may also be said to have vastly many *nervous systems*, each largely overlapping very many others, and each having slightly different physical constituents from all the rest. Indeed, it seems established that *my* causal interaction with all these systems is much more direct than *my* interaction with any of my digestive systems. Anyhow, much as we might readily tolerate the thought that my many overlapping digestive systems may be engaged in many overlapping digestive processes, so we might also easily tolerate the thought that my many overlapping nervous systems may be engaged in many overlapping neural processes.

But, may we similarly tolerate the idea that each of these many nervous systems may undergo, or may be engaged in, a process of *experiencing* that's quite simultaneous with, and ever so similar to, the experiencings undergone by ever so many other largely overlapping nervous systems? I certainly don't think so. More cautiously, may we fairly happily think that, even as each of very many particular experiencings may occur during exactly the same time as ever so many others, each may occur in very much the same place as so many others? May we think this nearly as happily, at least, as we may think parallel thoughts

about my digestings? Again, it certainly doesn't seem so to me. By contrast, this following seems a much more intuitively congenial expression of what's apparently happening experientially. More *directly* than any other comparable part of my body, or parts of my bodies, each of the many nervous systems now in "my situation" physically *promotes just a single (total) process of (total) experiencing*, which is just *my experiencing*, even as I myself am the single experiencer that's physically promoted by (any of) the nervous systems now in this particular situation. Briefly put, here's a reasonably plausible way for how all that may be so, even if it is also a rather nicely amazing way. In whatever serves to constitute my nervous systems, there's a propensity to the effect that there will be a limit placed—(almost always) a limit of just one—on how many experiencing particulars may be promoted by the optimally arranged basic physical constituents—optimally arranged, that is, for the promoting of any experiencing individuals. In the same way, we may hypothesize that each of my simple physical constituents—every single one of them—has a marvelous propensity with regards to how it may interact with very many others, so that, in optimal arrangements for promoting consciousness, there's an effective *singular resolution* as to what experiencer they promote. And so also is there a singular resolution of what experience, or what experiencing, is then promoted by them.

In the last several paragraphs, we've been supposing that the correct metaphysical view is a Substantial Dualism, not terribly different from the classical view of Descartes. Now, let's drop that supposition and, to the contrary, suppose that a more materialistic view of mentality is correct—maybe some form of materialism itself, maybe some more relaxed version of our Scientiphical Metaphysic, as with a suitable Scientiphical Epiphenomenalism. Or maybe what's correct is something as moderately different from Dualism as the Emergentism that, in this is paper's preamble, I mentioned so briefly. Now, on this Emergentist View, there are radically emergent mental powers, all right, but they all inhere in physical complexes, in the very same complex objects that also have so many physically derivative physical powers.<sup>5</sup> *Insofar as* we may maintain one of these more materialistic views, quite comfortably and intuitively, we may not find it disturbing, at all, to think that, in my situation right now, there are billions of experiencing thinkers. But,

<sup>5</sup> As noted earlier, I discuss this Emergentism in my "Free Will and Scientiphicalism".

then, *how far is it* that, all the while doing it quite comfortably and intuitively, I actually can sustain the thought that, in my situation right now, there are billions of experiencing individuals, each enjoying his very own experiencing, numerically distinct from the similar experience of all the others? Not very far at all, that's for sure. And, as I suspect, pretty much the same is true of you.

For most of us, all this should be fairly intuitive, maybe even highly intuitive. For that reason, all this should be, for most of us, a point in favor of Substantial Dualism—as against the Scientiphical Metaphysic and, as well, as against the Emergentism lately noted.

#### THE EXPERIENCING OF SPLIT-BRAIN PATIENTS UNDERScores THIS DISTURBING PROBLEM

The previous section offered a fairly succinct presentation of the Experiential Problem of the Many. Now, I aim to amplify on that. With the further considerations I'll discuss in this amplification, we may see that this problem provides a more clearly forceful point in favor of Dualism, even if, perhaps, not yet any point that's enormously forceful.

At all events, it's extremely interesting to think about human "split-brain" patients—epileptics whose main neural connection between their two cerebral hemispheres, their corpus callosum, was severed so that they might gain relief from frequent severe seizures. When these patients are placed in certain specially designed experimental setups, as some of them actually were, in many cases their behavior almost cries out for exotic psychological interpretation.

Here's a simple case, contrived for illustrative purposes, that's relevantly similar to striking actual cases. Our psychological subject, a cooperative split-brain patient, is asked to handle some regularly shaped solid figures, each object being either a cylinder, or a cube, or a pyramid, or a sphere. And, right after handling a solid object, our subject is to write down the sort of object she just handled, inscribing just one of these four common words for shapes, the one that seems suitable to her: "cylinder", "cube", "pyramid", and "sphere". Now, none of these objects is ever seen by the subject; the solids are all behind an opaque screen that obscures even the surface of the table on which they rest. Usefully, the screen has two holes in it, while each hole has an easily movable but always visually obscuring flap. At all events, our subject

places her left arm through the hole on her left, and her right arm through the one on her right. So her left hand can handle objects on the table's left side, from her perspective; but, it can't handle any on the table's right side. Why not? Well, protruding upward from center of the table's surface, there's a large solid barrier, which precludes any left-right, or right-left, crossover. In this way the right hand is conversely limited; with her right hand she can handle only the objects to the right of the barrier.

That's our experimental setup. Now, we suppose that, within about a minute of putting her arms through the appropriate holes, her right hand grasps a cube, and no other regular solid object, while the sole object her left hand grasps is a sphere. For a few seconds, she holds the two objects like that. Then, she withdraws her hands from the holes, as instructed. And, then, on the near side of the screen, she places her hands on two pieces of paper and is given two pencils, one placed in her left hand and one in her right. Then our ambidextrous subject, who can readily employ both hands at once, is asked to write, on each of the pads, just one of the four words: "cylinder", "cube", "pyramid", "sphere". Something quite amazing now happens. With her right hand, she writes "cube", while with her left hand, she writes "sphere". In this strangely diverse writing activity, our subject evinces no hesitation, conflict, or ambiguity. Rather, as far as her behavior seems to indicate, (it's as though) "a part of her" experienced a cube tactilely, and not any sphere, while at the very same time "another part of her" experienced tactilely only a sphere, and no cube at all.

Many actual cases are, as I said, very like this contrived example.<sup>6</sup> They strongly suggest that, in many actual experimental setups with split-brain patients, the subjects become involved, at once, in two quite separate experiencings, or "streams of experience". Of course, these split-brain episodes are very unlike what we imagined above for our very many "largely overlapping experiencers". With those very many overlappers, each of *very many millions* of experiential streams was supposed to be *qualitatively extremely like* each of the others; with our

<sup>6</sup> For a nice presentation of some of these actual cases, along with an interesting discussion of what might be much of their philosophic import, see Thomas Nagel, "Brain Bisection and the Unity of Consciousness", *Synthese*, 22 (1971). This essay is widely reprinted, notably in Nagel's *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 147-64.

split-brain subjects, by contrast, each of *just two* presumed experiential streams is qualitatively very *unlike* the only other.

What's going on here, with a split-brain patient in a dually productive setup? To provide a sensible answer to this question, we first put to one side all our problems of the many. That done, what's going on seems to be this: along with a good deal of the subject's nervous system that's not cerebral—her brain-stem, for example—one of her hemispheres serves (most directly) to promote one sort of experiencing that the subject's written answer indicated she enjoyed—say, her tactile experiencing as of a cube. And, in a relevantly complementary way, the other hemisphere serves (most directly) to promote another sort of experiencing, a tactile experiencing as of a sphere, and not as of a cube. Now, except as regards cerebral hemispheres, a big exception here, what's promoting the one experiencing, is the same entity—presumably the same physical complex—as is promoting the other; or, at the very least, the one precisely coincides with the other. In exactly the same way, the physical complex (most directly) promoting one of these experiences has a promotionally important part that is the same as, or that coincides with, the physical complex that's (most directly) promoting the other experience. And at the same time, of course, each complex lacks a promotionally important part, a whole hemisphere, that is a crucial part of the other.

Far be it from me to think that in these cases everything is readily amenable to our customary ways of thinking about human experiencers and our experiencings. On the contrary, the apparent simultaneous “contrary” experience is very puzzling. Here's just some of what's so puzzling. With each numerically different total momentary experiencing, there is a numerically different experiencer—or so we're strongly inclined to believe. So, in the case that's in focus, we have a certain inclination to think that there is one experiencer who writes only “cube” when reporting her experiencing, and another who doesn't write “cube”, but writes only “sphere”, when reporting her tactilely very different simultaneous experiencing. So, intuitively, there's a certain difficulty here for our thinking that in this experimental situation there's just one single experiencer.

But, that inclination isn't our only proclivity here. Can there really be two human people in this situation? Can there really be, in this experimental setup, an experiencing writer who is not a human person? As it certainly seems, there's *also* a difficulty for our thinking that in this

setup there's *not* always just one experiencer. Indeed, there might be an even greater difficulty here.

For the moment, though, suppose there's not just one, but two experiencers here, each tactilely experiencing quite differently from the other. Well, what happens when these two experiencers are removed from the artificial setup, when each hemisphere again gets very much the same stimulation as the other? Do we have only one experiencer once again, the same single person who went into the experiment (say, about a year after she had her split-brain operation)? That suggestion seems strangely implausible. Where was she in the intervening period, this one experiencer, when (as we're supposing) there were the two simultaneous different experiencers? Was she just a certain one of these two? That seems quite absurd. Did she go out of existence altogether, just when the experimental setup was introduced, and then come to exist again, just when the differentially stimulating setup was removed? This suggestion also seems unsatisfactory.

As a still further alternative, there's the conjecture that, not just during the experimental setup, but ever since her operation first affected how she experienced, our split-brain patient was engaged in not one, but two experiencings. Quite dramatically, during the differentially stimulating setup of the experimental situation, her experiencings were qualitatively very different, and not just numerically distinct. Less dramatically, before the post-operative patient was introduced to this setup, her two (streams of) experiencings were qualitatively very alike. (But, for all their qualitative similarity, these experiencings were numerically different from each other.)

What are we to make of these conjectures? And what are we to make of various further proposals, which may also be, at once, both somewhat attractive and somewhat problematic? I do not know. It is all very puzzling; and, it seems, quite *deeply* puzzling. But even in our deeply puzzled ignorance we might make, I think, some useful comments.

Let us meanwhile continue to suppose that, during the puzzling middle period of the experimental setup, a certain apparently exclusionary diversity of experiencing is all at once promoted. And let's suppose, just a little explosively perhaps, that then there is not just one sentient being, but *two experiencers*. Though that thought is somewhat uncomfortable, it's not nearly as disturbing as the thought that there are *many billions of human thinkers experiencing* as of a cube; nor is it nearly as unsettling as the thought that billions are each tactilely *experiencing*

*only spherically.* (Far more disturbing yet is the thought that there are billions experiencing tactilely only in the first way, and billions only in the second way.)

However, unless we believe in a naturally resolving limit on the experiencers promoted, how are we rationally to reject the thought that, with so very many exceptionally similar complexes of matter, there are, right then and there and all at once, so very many experiencers as *that*?

Recall the speculation that, before and after the experimental setup with our patient—or with our two “neighboring” patients—there may be two quite parallel experiencings promoted. Supposing that’s really so, a somewhat plausible explanation will run rather like this. One of these parallel experiencings is promoted by a neuronal system featuring only the left hemisphere as its distinctively highest region or part, and the other by a nervous system that, lacking the left, similarly features just the right hemisphere. Whatever one thinks of this speculation—I myself don’t think it’s all that plausible—there’s nobody, I trust, who thinks there are many billions of experiencings physically promoted largely by the left hemisphere, and billions more promoted largely by the right. But, to avoid such a numerically explosive idea, in a properly principled fashion, we must accept, again, that there is a resolving limit on what, by way of experiencers and their experiencings, is physically promoted by various mentally productive arrangements of physical constituents.

Almost everything we’ve been discussing in this section strikes me as not only puzzling, but *deeply* puzzling. Far from being concerned only with semantics, or with the application conditions of some concepts, these puzzles seem to concern, beyond all that, metaphysically deep considerations. And, if that’s right, they may point to some matters of much metaphysical import. Below, I’ll try to make these points more clearly vivid.

Recall our remarks as to how we might take it upon ourselves to say that, “in my situation”, there are many different digestive systems, each involved with a different simultaneous digesting. While that’s a rather unnatural thing to say, and while the motivation supplied for saying it may be somewhat puzzling, there is nothing in it that’s *deeply* puzzling. Nor is there any deep puzzle concerning whether we should continue always to think that, “in my situation”, there’s always just one digester, presumably a certain human organism, or whether there

are very many digesters, most of them largely overlapping many others. So, here again, we find an intuitively striking difference between our experiencing and, on the other side, such evidently physical processes as our digesting. This difference may indicate something deep metaphysically.

#### MIGHT THE SINGULARITY OF COMMON EXPERIENCING FAVOR SUBSTANTIAL DUALISM?

To deal effectively with our deep puzzles about our experiencing, perhaps we might accept, if only very tentatively and somewhat skeptically, a certain Substantial Dualism. Central to this Cartesian doctrine is the thought that each of us is a non-physical experiencer, though an experiencer who (causally) *interacts with* certain physical things.

With such a suitable Dualistic doctrine, there may be a singular resolution for our Experiential Problem—featuring just a single experiencer “in my situation” that isn’t so horribly arbitrary as to be terribly incredible. Well in line with this Dualism, we can conjecture that “in my situation” very many overlapping physical complexes—physical brains, perhaps—may altogether serve to promote, causally or quasi-causally, a single non-physical experiencer, or a singular mind, or exactly one individual soul, even while each of the complexes may do its promoting in what is really a quite derivative sense or way. In the case of each mentally promoting physical complex, the derivation will proceed, of course, from the basic (enough) physical components of the very complex in question, and from the physical relations obtaining among its particular components, to the complex’s being a (derivative) promoter of just a single sentient self. And so, in each of very many worldly derivations, it may be the very same sentient self, or experiencing mind, that the complexes in question each serve (derivatively) to promote. In a happy enough sense, then, the (physically derivative) promoting of this single mind, *by any one of* these physical complexes, will be a *causally redundant* promoting. Of course, there won’t be any complex that’s doing any of this (derivative) promoting without there being, all at once, a great many each doing it rather redundantly.

In any very direct sense or way, it will be this promoted single non-physical mind itself—just me myself—that has a power to experience. So, it will be only in a very attenuated sense or way that an experiential

power will be possessed by any of the concrete physical complexes that serve to promote the experientially powerful non-physical being.

Nowadays, it's very hard for respectable philosophers to believe in mentally powerful non-physical beings. But, even for us now, this may be *less* incredible than the thought that *just a single one* of our considered physical complexes itself has this power—with all those other slightly overlapping complexes being quite powerless experientially, even all of those others that, in mass, in volume, and in number of basic constituents, are each precisely the same as the supposedly sole experiencing physical complex. And it's *also* less incredible than the thought that just a single one of the basic (enough) physical entities here—say, a certain particular quark—has the power to experience richly—with all the other quarks “in my situation” being quite powerless in such a mentally rich regard. And it's certainly less incredible than the thought that some mere abstraction from what's physical, and nothing concrete at all, should be the sole entity, “in my situation”, with the power to experience, a power that's manifested, this very minute, in *my presently experiencing* precisely as I now do.

As easy as it is for us to think, quite rightly, that each of us is a concrete being, not a mere abstraction, or abstractum, it's equally hard for us, in this present day and age, to believe that we are not spatially extended beings. Indeed, it's enormously hard to believe anything about ourselves that's very different from how our Scientiphicalism has us be. What's more, it's hardly ever that I manage to get further from the Scientiphical Metaphysic than the nearby Emergentism that I've been trying to take very seriously. Yet, as this essay has been suggesting, this Emergentism is deeply embroiled with the Experiential Problem of the Many, as deeply as Scientiphicalism itself.

Among the metaphysical options not so embroiled with this apparently deep problem, Substantial Dualism is, so far as I can tell, the available view that departs least radically from our dominant Scientiphical Metaphysic. It's a much less radical departure, certainly, than is any fundamentally mentalistic metaphysic, whether such an exhaustively mental view be called “idealism”, or “phenomenalism”, or, as seems more fashionable nowadays, “panpsychism”. Wishing not to be radical metaphysically, I'll suggest that, in the face of the Experiential Problem of the Many, we take Substantial Dualism, in its most coherent and tenable forms, rather seriously; or, if that is not yet psychologically possible for us, at least we should take it rather more seriously than

almost all prominent professional philosophers have done in recent decades.

Professionally socialized as I am, even this much is very hard for me now to do. Apparently, I need a good deal more help, psychologically, than what's afforded by the Experiential Problem, to give any very substantial departure from our dominant Scientiphicalism, even so much as just a very moderately serious run for the money. So in the following section I'll try to provide some potentially liberating thoughts, perhaps novel enough to help us get beyond the circumscribed bounds dictated by our unquestioning allegiance to Scientiphical thinking.

#### THE PROBLEM OF TOO MANY REAL CHOOSERS

For the Scientiphical view of ourselves, and for our noted Emergentism, too, there's a mental problem of the many that's yet more disturbing, and far more baffling, than the disturbingly baffling Experiential Problem of the Many. It's the Problem of Too Many Real Choosers.

In order that our metaphysical meditations could begin most manageably, we haven't yet addressed issues concerning the choosing of our thinking experiencers. But now it's high time to explore them. When exploring these issues persistently, we may find it absolutely incredible that there should be, "in my situation", very many experiencing choosers, rather than just me choosing all alone.

As with everyone else, there are some sorts of things I'm far more prone to imagine than things of some other sorts. For example, I'm far more prone to imagine a pretty woman than an ugly plant. But, with regards to many (other) things, there's no great difference in my imaginative proclivities. For example, this may happen with my imagining a horse, or else a cat, or else a dog, where each of the options is to exclude each of the others. Equally, it may occur with my imagining something wholly red, or else something wholly blue. With many groups of real alternatives for imagining, then, I have no enormous disposition toward just one of the mutually exclusive options for me.

What's more, even with something I'm strongly prone *not* to imagine, (not always but) often I can choose to imagine it experientially nonetheless. I have just done some demonstrative imagining. Counter to my proclivities, I chose to imagine an ugly plant. And because I chose

that option for my imagining, I actually imagined a pathetic weed, very dry and brown. What's the moral of this little exercise? Dramatically put, the point is this: the domain of my power to choose encompasses a very great deal of the domain of my power to imagine experientially. Often enough, I can choose to imagine experientially even counter to my quite strong imaginative proclivities.

Having taken note of my power to choose even contrary to my strong proclivities, we turn to an easier case. Here, I'm to choose among roughly equal options for my imaginative activity, where my proclivities for each option are about equally strong. And so, just for the sake of it, I'll choose to imagine experientially either a horse, or else a cat, or else a dog. And, just for the sake of some potentially instructive reasoning, let's now suppose that the experiential imagining I'm about to perform will be a *purely mental* act of mine, entirely isolated from the world's physical realm. Not only will this imagining not be anything physical, but we suppose it to lack any real physical cause. And, both concurrently and in the future, it will have no physical effect or manifestation. (Later we'll drop this pretense of mental purity; but not just yet.)

All right, I'm now imagining just one of the three mentioned sorts of very common domesticated animal. Make a guess, please, as to which of the three I'm imagining. You might guess, I suppose, that I'm imagining a cat. Or you might guess that it's a dog I'm imagining. Or you might guess it's a horse. Whatever you may have guessed, I'm now done with that bit of imagining. Now, as you'll recall, I said that my chosen imagining won't have any physical manifestation, not even in its future. Sticking with that supposition, I won't ever communicate to you, in (physical) writing, what sort of animal it was that I actually did just imagine.

For the sake of instructive reasoning, let's make the *supposition* that it was a cat I just imagined. And let's proceed to reason from that supposition.

When I put the question of this three-way choice as a little exercise for myself just now, did billions of very similar people, all of them "in my situation", each similarly put the question to himself? And, when I made a choice among my three specified options for imagining, each an alternative excluding the others, did each of them also effectively choose? How many of them effectively chose to imagine a cat experientially, the alternative we're supposing that I effectively chose?

If there really are vastly many people in my situation, then the only plausible thing to suppose about them is that, like myself, each of them has his own power to choose. And, since this is a real power to choose fully, and freely, *each* of these thinker's powers to choose is relevantly *independent of the power of each of the others*, including, of course, my own power to choose. So it's only plausible to suppose, further, that, when I made my effective choice to imagine a cat experientially, each of them made an equally effective choice to imagine that was independent of my choice, and also independent, of course, of the choice of each of the others.

That being so, it would be an astounding coincidence, and not a credible occurrence, if all these billions of people should also imagine a cat, each freely choosing to imagine the very sort of animal that, of the three exclusive options, I freely chose to imagine. (After all, we've been properly supposing that, just as with me, none of these billions of "overlappers", each so similar mentally to me, *is not much more* prone to imagine a cat than he is to imagine a dog, or a horse.) Indeed, it would be extremely unlikely that there should be, among the billions of choosers "in my situation", fewer than ten million real choosers who imagined a dog, when I myself was imagining a cat. And, equally, it would be extraordinarily unlikely that should there be, among the billions with independent powers, fewer than ten million who would choose, quite effectively, to imagine a horse experientially. With *any less* diversity of chosen animal images than *that*, among my overlapping physical-and-mental cohort of independent full choosers, there would be *far* too little qualitative experiential diversity, among "the population in my situation" for an outcome that's even the least bit credible.

The point here is, in its essentials, quite the same as a point about choice concerning me and you, and billions of other relevantly independent choosers, thinkers who *aren't* largely overlappers, thinkers who *aren't* "in numerically the same situation". For this case of "spatially separated choosers", or choosers with spatially separate bodies, and brains, we may playfully consider the most suitable two billion subjects, for a very widespread but temporally tiny psychological experiment, selected from among the world's current population, which numbers a bit over six billion. Now, as we may similarly suppose here, very few of these two billion have a tremendous proclivity toward imagining cats, as against horses or dogs. The great majority have a

roughly equal propensity in each of the three specified directions. So, if fewer than ten million of us choose, freely and effectively, to imagine a dog, while almost all of us choose to imagine a cat, that is an unbelievably great coincidence. I myself would not believe in such an outcome. Rather than accepting that overly coincidental nonsense, I'd go back and question various propositions that we were supposing to hold true. Was there, perhaps, mass mesmerization going on globally, so that almost all of us were made to imagine a cat, with few really able to exercise his power to choose?

Whether overlapping or not, it's just incredible that billions of real choosers should all choose to imagine a cat experientially, with hardly any opting for a dog or a horse, when those two are, quite as forcefully, presented as appropriate alternatives. But at the same time it's not really credible, either, that there really was, in my situation, truly substantial diversity in experiential imagining, when I was (supposedly) just imagining a cat. So it's just incredible that, overlapping with me right now, there are many other complex entities, many physical-and-mental beings, who really do choose.

In one of its endless variations, that is the Problem of Too Many Real Choosers. Maybe I'm being overly quick about the matter, or even simply quite dense. But, in any case, I suspect that this problem may be an insuperable difficulty for the dominant Scientiphical Metaphysic. And, as I also suspect, it may undermine the Emergentist View.

#### THIS PROBLEM AND THE EMERGENTIST IDEA OF PHYSICAL-AND-MENTAL COMPLEXES

On the Emergentist view we've been exploring, each of us is a physical-and-mental complex. By contrast with our severe Scientiphical View, which has all our power as physical propensities, whatever the details of their physical derivations, on this Emergentism each of us will have, in *addition* to ever so many physical proclivities, various non-physical radically emergent mental powers. Yet, on the Emergentist View, any being that has such radical mental powers must be, at the same time, a complex physical entity. Indeed, it is precisely this aspect of our Emergentism that has it as a *more conservative* departure from Scientiphicalism, or *less of* a departure, than a Cartesian View, or any Substantial Dualism concerning mind and body.

In my “Free Will and Scientiphicalism”, I argued that Scientiphicalism is, in several ways, incompatible with our thought that we really choose from among real alternatives for our thoughtful activity. And after offering those arguments, I observed that, so far as any of us could then tell, this fairly conservative Emergentist View might be as free of such Scientiphical Incompatibilisms as is Substantial Dualism. Our Emergentism *might be* tenable, but only insofar as a complex physical being’s real physical features are no obstacle to her having, as well, many non-physical mental powers, saliently including a radically emergent purely mental power to choose. And, as it was then suggested, that might be quite far indeed; for, as it then appeared, there wasn’t any such obstacle; there wasn’t any real philosophic difficulty. Well, that was then; and, this is now.

In the light of our current discussion, there does appear to be a very real philosophic difficulty. In the first place, it appears that, “in your situation right now”, there are very many different physical-and-mental complexes (each greatly overlapping with many others)—supposing, of course, that “in your situation right now” there’s at least one complex physical entity with radically emergent non-physical mental powers. Though it may be logically possible that there is a great plurality of spatially extended real choosers, each of whom may share much of your space with you now, this is a proposition that defies belief. Indeed, this conflict becomes quite unbearable when we reflect, as we have, that the almost perfectly certain consequence of this is that, from time to time, there’ll be great qualitative diversity in the chosen mental lives of the largely overlapping physical-and-mental beings.

Nor is there, on our Emergentist View, a credible way out of this philosophic difficulty. In a “messily gradual” world like this actual one, with very many very similar physical complexes to be found “in the situation of” any alleged physical-and-mental complex being, there’s no credible resolution as to *which one*, among all the very many overlapping complexes, alone has the power to choose. Nor is it credible that, while each of the many complexes has a power to choose, there’s somehow just one physical-and-mental complex, among the billions overlapping, that, at any given moment of time, gets to exercise his power. Nor is there any other credible way to offer a suitably singular resolution of the matter. But the only alternative, we have just observed, is an incredible diversity of choosers diversely choosing experientially. So, at least in any world much like our messily gradual actual

world, the Emergentist View is not a credible alternative to our besieged Scientiphicalism.

#### A SINGULAR PHYSICAL MANIFESTATION OF THE POWER TO CHOOSE UNDERSCORES THIS PROBLEM

To make the presentation of the problem both vivid and manageable, the initial offering of the Problem of Too Many Choosers featured just such choosing as might be considered quite purely mental activity, and even quite isolated from all physical happenings. It may now profit us further, I imagine, to explore cases of choosing an imaginative option where the agent, just before she starts to imagine as she chooses to do, communicates to others what she's imagining, presumably via an appropriate physical sign or signal.

As before, again I'll now imagine either a horse, or a cat, or a dog. And, while I'm imagining it, I'm going to produce a physical signal of what it is that, because I just chose to imagine it, I'm now imagining experientially. (Pretend that I'm communicating by writing on a pad in plain view, or by an electronic instant messaging system.) Anyway, with this very physical sentence that I've just produced and that you're now reading, I tell you that it's a dog I'm now imagining, not a horse or a cat.

In producing that writing, I made a certain change in physical reality. And this change was a real result, of course, of the choice I just effected.

Putting aside our previous worries, maybe we can somehow make it palatable to ourselves that, this time "in my situation", there are millions of people choosing to imagine a horse, quite effectively, and millions of others choosing to imagine a cat, as well as the millions who, like me, were imagining a dog. Each of the people, though overlapping ever so many others, chose quite independently and very effectively, with each managing to alter his own imaginative experiencing just as he independently chose freely to do. Well, maybe that's too far-fetched really to be palatable. Even so, let's *suppose* that there are all these overlapping choosers, independently and effectively choosing images of striking qualitative diversity. If, quite fantastically, that should be true, will it help our Emergentism?

No, it won't. Even if we allow ourselves this supposition, there will arise, or will remain, this parallel problem: with each of our three

animal options chosen by many millions, each of them an independent chooser though overlapping so many other free choosers, *how is it that just those who chose to imagine a dog* managed to produce an intended (revealing) signal change—but not those millions who imagined a horse, or imagined a cat? Here's one specific suggestion. Maybe it's a matter of the numbers, as with a voting procedure; and maybe more chose to imagine a dog than chose a cat, or a horse. But, though that idea may occur more obviously than most of its equally specific alternatives, it's no less absurd than so many other terribly incredible thoughts.

All this just brings home to us how incredible is the idea that, in my situation, or in yours, there are very many real choosers. Indeed, it's absurd for us to believe anything in the neighborhood. It's absurd to think that there are many overlapping people here—but only one of them has the power really to choose. It's also absurd to think that there are many with this power—but at any one time only one gets to exercise the power; and, so on, and so forth.

#### DOES THIS PROBLEM OF REAL CHOOSERS FAVOR SUBSTANTIAL DUALISM?

Recall our remarks about how *each of many* overlapping nervous systems, "in my situation", might be one of *my* nervous systems. In what serves to constitute my overlapping nervous systems, there are propensities to the effect that there's a limit to be placed—a limit of just one—on how many experiencing particulars may be promoted by these overlapping systems. How so? Here's a way. Each of a system's simple physical constituents, as with each of its constituting quarks, has marvelous propensities regarding how it may interact with very many other simple physical things, so that, in their optimal arrangements for promoting experience, there's an effective *singular resolution* as to what experiencer they may promote. And, because there's that singular resolution, there's also a nice singular resolution as to what experiencing may be promoted by them all.

It was hard to believe, we said before, that the single experiencer thus promoted should be a complex physical thing, whether or not the complex should have radically emergent purely mental powers. For, as it surely appears, no good candidate for being the single experiencing complex, "in the situation", is any better a candidate than each of very

many extremely similar and massively overlapping others. It's hard to believe that, somehow or other, *just a single* one of these should have the power to experience richly, while all the others should be perfectly powerless in this salient regard. (Yet it's *also* hard to believe that, running very much in parallel with me, there are *vastly many* highly similar distinct experiencers promoted, rather than just me experiencing here alone.) Indeed, if a certain one of these physical complexes should somehow be the sole experiencer here, what happens when it loses one of its peripheral constituents, as will surely happen quite soon? Does this sole experiencer go out of existence? That's incredible. Does it, rather, come to coincide with a just slightly smaller complex, previously "nested" in it, while having only one fewer simple component than just before the slight loss? Will there be, then, an experiencing complex that's materially coincident with an insensate complex? That too is incredible. Will there then be, alternatively, two experiencing complexes, one previously experiencing and one just now newly experiencing? That's also incredible. Is a further alternative markedly more credible than these patently fantastic claims? I can't see any further alternative to be much more credible. In line with our Scientiphical Metaphysic, or even in line with our noted Emergentism, there's no credible resolution, I submit, to our Experiential Problem of the Many.

So, for folks so accepting of Scientiphicalism, myself included, there's a disturbing problem with the Experiential Problem of the Many. But, as I've lately been arguing, we may find the Problem of Too Many Choosers to be still more disturbing. With that Problem, there's the following dilemma: on the one hand, it's blatantly absurd to think that there are *very many* real experiencing choosers "in my situation", sometimes many choosing in a certain experiential way and many others choosing in a very different experiential way. This is yet more disturbing, I think, than our thinking there to be, "in my situation", very many experiencers, where it may always be that each of them experiences, immediately and totally, in much the same way as all the others. But on the other hand, and just as with the Experiential Problem, it's also absurd to think that there's a single *complex physical* being that's the only real chooser here; rather, any promising candidate for being such a choosing complex appears no better at all, not even the least bit more qualified or promising, than each of very many extremely similar, and massively overlapping, complexes.

Well, then, are there other alternatives for the Scientifically inclined to favor here, evidently less absurd for us to accept? While there are other logical possibilities, I suppose, I can't see any that are notably more credible options. Certainly not that *I'm a simple physical* thing. So far as I can tell, there are ever so many quarks, or maybe superstrings, each of which might be a simple physical thing. But, then, it's not at all credible that *I'm a quark*, or whatever. (The matter can't be improved by suggesting I might be a simple physical-and-mental thing. For, any such entity must be a simple physical thing, of course, whatever else also might be true of it.) And, not that *I'm a complex spatially extended entity that's not physical*, with substantial simple spatial parts that aren't physical parts. Nor is it at all credible that *I'm any other, still different, sort of spatial or physical thing*.

Now, remember, *I'm an independent real chooser, a conscious being who, at least from time to time, chooses fully and freely his own conscious activity*. So, *I'm not any mere epiphenomenal being, nor anything that merely supervenes on a base that's fully physical*. In all of our Scientificism, there's nothing that does much justice to my being a real chooser.

While still believing in a vast heterogeneous physical reality, what are we now to think ourselves to be? Among the traditionally available options, the least implausible view may be a Substantial Dualism, rather like the Cartesian View noted earlier. As *I'm suggesting*, then, maybe we should think that our mental problems of the many, especially the Problem of Too Many Choosers, mean a point in favor of such a Dualistic Metaphysic. (This may be so, of course, even if these problems also favor views that depart still further than does Dualism from the Scientific Metaphysic now so widely accepted, as with many Idealistic worldviews.)

I myself cannot yet believe in a metaphysic that departs even as much as a Substantial Dualism departs from our standard metaphysical conception. For one thing, I can't believe that I really haven't any spatial extension; at least, not yet I can't. And, as I suspect, you're in the same commonsensical boat. So, what are we to do?

Three main courses strike me as available.

First, we may go back over what our investigation has so far offered, and look for serious errors. Then, we may come to think, perhaps quite rightly, that there's no mental problem of the many, nor any other difficulty, that's truly a serious problem for our widely accepted Scien-

tiphicalism. I hope that you will try this very seriously. And, whether successful or not, I hope you may be so good as to tell me what you find. As for myself, however, at this point in time this option has been exhausted and, in the wake of my laborious struggles, is not widely available. So, for me, right now, that leaves two courses.

Second, we may ask ourselves what are the most disturbing aspects of a Cartesian View. And, after trying our best to articulate them well, we might then endeavor to show how they might really give far less cause for intellectual disturbance than at first they appear to do. Yet, this has been often tried before, by many others. So, while I think I should try to do something here, I have doubts as to how much I might accomplish in this way.

Third, and finally, there's a more novel and speculative approach, though it's not wholly divorced from the Dualistic course just noted. Perhaps, in addition to many physical and spatial parts, many of them overlapping many others, I might have a single non-physical non-spatial part. And perhaps it may be that it's only in this non-physical part of me, in my "soul", that I'm mentally propensitized and empowered. It's through my exercise of certain powers inhering in this soul, my soul, that I may perhaps choose various aspects of my mental life, and sometimes even choose how it is that my body moves.

Though it's pretty speculative, so far that's not novel, but just old hat. In bare and sketchy terms, here's something that, far from being so old hat, is even more strangely speculative: though this non-physical part of me—my mind, or my soul—may *not* have any *spatial extension*, at least not in any strict or narrow sense of the terms, perhaps it may *have* some *non-spatial spacelike extension*. In what's only a very schematic way indeed, I'll try to say something about the general tenor of this strange speculation.

Now, as it *seems* to me, *space* is the *only clearly non-temporal dimension of concrete reality* in which I exist. But that appearance may be an illusory appearance. As it might really be, space is but one of the clearly non-temporal dimensions in which I exist; as I'm speculating, there's at least one other such dimension in which, quite equally, I also participate—in which I also exist. Even as my many substantial physical parts exist in space, I may have another enduring substantial part (or maybe more than one) that *does not* exist in space itself. This non-spatial part of me, this soul of mine, if you will, may exist in some

other clearly non-temporal dimension (or in more than one) that is *extended*, all right, *but not spatially* extended.

No easy matter; it remains for us to suggest for these speculative ideas some helpfully more concrete terms, not so abstract as those I've just employed or offered. Since they require our engagement with the most profoundly radical sort of imaginative thinking, we may need to connect the offered abstract speculations with some of our (more nearly) experiential thinking, or at least with some thinking of ours that's more experientially informed. With no great confidence that I'll have much success in any such positive effort, I postpone this for another occasion. Anyway, and as with almost everything else in first philosophy, here too it may be that only the problems rightly last long with us, while our attempted resolutions are all fleeting, fashionable, and, maybe, flat-out futile as well.

New York University