

## THE MENTAL PROBLEMS OF THE MANY

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, "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 versions 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.

### **1. 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" whatever. Much as I then found it useful to do, let's 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 "pictured-postcard" clouds give the appearance of having a nice enough boundary, each white entity sharply enough 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 mere region is so messily together with so many other cloudy "parts of the sky.") But, upon closer scrutiny, as may sometimes happen when you're in an airplane, even the puffiest, cleanest clouds don't seem to be so nicely bounded at all. 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's no stark stopping place ever to be encountered. Rather, when 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 there to be 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's 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 there on the left, say, and another way over on there 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 just the other candidate, not the one first mentioned. So, each

of these two candidate clouds has exactly the same number of constituent droplets as does the other. And, each might have exactly the same mass, and volume, as does 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 path's from the considered cloud's central portion(s) to what's merely its droplet-infested environment. In actuality, there's not just one "problematic pair of opposing droplets." Rather, there'll be very many *distinct* such 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, just above, fueled some peculiar thinking. Indeed, either droplet from any one very 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 just 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 other. 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's *not* any difference at all, not even a minute difference, between any one of these complexes's 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 offered with some considerations concerning vagueness. So, in the case we've been considering, the extremely good cloud candidates aren't 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 of, but that lacks 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 plenty good candidate that *has* not just one of, but that *has 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 just a moment ago, and just one droplet larger than each of the two complexes we first considered here. 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 on 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 main matters 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, on the other, a water droplet and (at least some of) its constituting molecules, or atoms, or elementary particles. But, in relevant regards, 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, to there being 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.

Right here, where at first there seems to be just a single human body, which is just “my body,” there may really be vastly many human bodies. And, over there, 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 here. For instance, we can be clear enough about what we may correctly express when saying that none of your brains is in, nor is 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 overlaps with any of mine, of course. At the same time, it’s also clear, none of my many bodies ever nests in, nor does any ever greatly overlap with, any body that’s 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?

## **2. 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 very many brains that, just 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 whether it's 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 there's done certain rarified metaphysics, each one of these many supposed billions thinks that, at least among all the

folks on earth right now, he alone is experiencing - immediately, complexly and totally - in the precise way or fashion that, right 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're near each other in the same room. For one thing, I have a tingling condition "in my left foot" that, as 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 has the matter be 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, indeed, that's my partial diagnosis. In a way that my 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 candy 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 humanbodies) 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 candy, the situation seems far more relaxed than with the experiential tasting of anything. With such a much more relaxed 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 say, instead, 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, maybe better, from my very many bodies's 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 nonderivative. For some, this contrast will now 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 me 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 will have things be this way: As a matter of natural metaphysical fact, all the bodies "in my situation" serve to promote only me myself, and not any other sentient self. On such a Substantial Dualistic View, there may be much philosophic reason to take each of these many bodies to be one of my bodies, but no such reason to take any 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 - maybe an “extra” electron here, maybe one less hydrogen atom there. To be sure, this sounds like it’s squarely against commonsense thinking, and ordinary biological thinking. And, very possibly, it is. Still, there’s nothing that’s 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 may 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 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, still, 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, *my* causal interaction with all these systems is much more direct, it seems established, 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, similarly, 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 that’s 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 pretty 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 pretty 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 does 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 pretty plausible way for how all that may be so, even if 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. Just so, 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 experienter they promote. And, so also, there's a singular resolution of what experience, or what experiencing, is then promoted by them.

For 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, let's 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 the 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> Well, *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, 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.

### **3. The Experiencing of Split-Brain Patients Underscores This Disturbing Problem**

In the previous section, there was 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 this problem to provide a more clearly forceful point in favor of Dualism, even if not yet, perhaps, 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 set-ups, as some of them actually were, in many cases their behavior almost cries out for exotic psychological interpretation.

Contrived for illustrative purposes, here's a simple case that's relevantly like striking actual cases: Our psychological subject, a cooperative split-brain patient, is 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 the 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 hand, and arm, through one of these holes, the one 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 salient surface, there's a large solid barrier, which precludes any left-right, or right-left, crossover. Just so, the right hand is then conversely limited; with her right hand she can handle only the objects to the right of the barrier.

That's our experimental set-up. 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 two pencils, one each on her left and one on her right. Right after that, our ambidextrous subject, who can readily employ both hands at once, is 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 set-ups with split-brain patients, the subjects become involved, at once, in two quite separate experiencings, or “streams of experience.” But, of course, these split-brain episodes are very unlike what we fancifully imagined just above, for our enormously 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 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 set-up? To provide this question a sensible answer, we first place to the 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 brainstem, for a salient example - one of her hemispheres serves (most directly) to promote one sort of experiencing that the subject’s writing 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 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 what’s promoting the other; or, at the very least, the one precisely coincides with the other. Just so, the physical complex (most directly) promoting one of these experiences has a promotionally important part that’s the same as, or than 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’s a crucial part of the other.

Far be it from me to think that, in these cases, everything is neat and pretty, quite readily amenable to our customary ways of thinking about human experiencers and our experiencings. To 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's 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 there's one experiencer who writes only "cube," when reporting her experiencing, and there's another who doesn't write "cube," and who 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 set-up, an experiencing writer who is not a human person? As it certainly seems, there's *also* a difficulty for our thinking that, in this set-up, there's *not* always just one experiencer. Indeed, it might be that here there's an ever greater difficulty.

For the moment, though, suppose there's not just one, but there are two experiencers here, each tactilely experiencing quite differently from the other. Well, what happens when these two experiencers are removed from the artificial set-up, 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 (about a year, say, after she had her split-brain operation)? That suggestion seems strangely implausible. Where was she in the intervening period, this particular single 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, indeed. Did she go out of existence altogether, just when the experimental set-up was introduced, and then come to exist again, just when the differentially stimulating set-up was removed? This suggestion also seems unsatisfactory.

As a still further alternative, there's the conjecture that, not just during the experimental set-up, but, ever since her operation first affected how she experienced, our split-brain patient was engaged in not just one, but in two experiencings. Quite dramatically, during the differentially stimulating set-up 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 set-up, 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 this conjectures? And, what are we to make of various further proposals, that may also be, at once, both somewhat attractive and also somewhat problematic? I do not know. This 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.

Anyhow, at least for the meanwhile, let's continue to suppose that, during the puzzling middle period of the experimental set-up, there's a certain apparently exclusionary diversity of experiencing all at once promoted. And, let's suppose, just a little explosively, perhaps, that then there's not just one sentient being, but there are *two experiencers*. Though that thought's 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*. (Much less is it nearly as disturbing as the thought that there are billions experiencing tactilely in the first way, and also billions experiencing tactilely in the second, spherical manner.)

But, 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 awfully 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 set-up 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 - myself, I 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 largely promoted by the right. But, to avoid such a numerically explosive idea, in a properly principled fashion, we must accept, again, that there's 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 as *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, it may point to some matters of much metaphysical import. Presently, 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, still, there's 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 one 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.

#### **4. 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 nonphysical 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, as with physical brains, perhaps, may altogether serve to promote, causally or quasi-causally, a single nonphysical experiencer, or a singular mind, or exactly one individual soul, even while each of the complexes may do its promoting in what's really 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 just 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 very great many each doing it rather redundantly.

In any very direct sense or way, it will be just this promoted single nonphysical mind itself - just me myself - that has a power to experience. So, it will be only in a only very attenuated sense or way, at most, that an experiential power will be possessed by any of the concrete physical complexes that serve to promote the experientially powerful nonphysical being.

Nowadays, it's very hard for respectable philosophers to believe in mentally powerful nonphysical beings. But, even for us now, this may be *less* incredible than the thought that *just a certain one* of our considered physical complexes itself has this power - with all those other just 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 certain 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, right now, 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 any mere abstraction, or abstractum, it's just that hard for us, in this present day and age, to believe that we aren't spatially extended beings. Indeed, it's enormously hard to believe that 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's been suggesting, this Emergentism is deeply embroiled with the Experiential Problem of the Many, just as deeply as is 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 is 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's not yet psychologically possible for us, we should take it

rather more seriously, at least, 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 just a very moderately serious run for the money. So, in what's next upcoming, 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.

## **5. 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 that's far more baffling, than the disturbingly baffling Experiential Problem of the Many. It's the Problem of Too Many Real Choosers.

So that our metaphysical meditations begin most manageably, we haven't yet addressed issues concerning the choosing of our thinking experiencers. But, it's now 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 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. For just a minute, please think about that. Well, during that minute, a minute now just past, I did some demonstrative imagining: Counter to my proclivities, I just 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. Plenty often enough, I can choose to imagine experientially even counter to my quite strong imaginative proclivities

Having noticed 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 heck of it, I'll soon 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, as we're supposing, it will lack any real physical cause. And, both concurrently and in the further, 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 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 just make the *supposition* that it was a cat I just imagined. And, let's proceed to reason from that supposition.

When I just put the question of this three-way choice as a little exercise for myself, 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 that we're supposing 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 power 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, from the choice of each of the others.

With that being so, it would be an astounding coincidence, and not any credible occurrence, should all these billions of people 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, *isn't much more* prone to imagine a cat than he is to imagine a dog, or a horse.) Indeed, it would be extremely unlikely should there be, among the billions of choosers "in my situation," under ten million real choosers who imagined a dog, when I myself was imagining a cat. And, equally, it would be extraordinarily unlikely should there be, among the billions with independent powers, under ten million who chose, 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'll 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 has a tremendous proclivity toward imagining cats, as against horses or dogs. The great majority has a roughly equal propensity in each of the three specified directions. So, if under ten million of us chooses, freely and effectively, to imagine a dog, while almost all of us choose to imagine a cat, that's an unbelievably great coincidence. Myself, I wouldn't believe in such an alleged outcome. Better than that overly coincidental nonsense, I'd go back and question various propositions that we were supposedly holding true. Was there, perhaps, mass mesmerization going on globally, so that almost all of us were made to imagine a cat, with hardly any 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 none opting for a dog, or a horse, when those two are, quite as forcefully, also presented as appropriate options. 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, the Problem may undermine the Emergentist View.

## **6. 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 powers be 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 nonphysical 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 be a *more conservative* departure from Scientiphicalism, or *less of* a departure, than is 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, then, just insofar as a complex physical being's real physical features are all no obstacle to her having, as well, many nonphysical 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. For first, 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 nonphysical mental powers. Though it may be logically possible that there be a great plurality of spatially extended real choosers, each of whom may, perhaps, 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 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 isn’t a credible alternative to our besieged Scientiphicalism.

## **7. A Singular Physical Manifestation of the Power to Choose Underscores this Problem**

To make the presentation of the problem both vivid and manageable, this 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. With that already done, it now may profit us further, I imagine, to explore cases of choosing an imaginative option where, just subsequent to her starting to imagine as she chooses to do, the agent communicates to others what he’s imagining, presumably via an appropriate physical sign, or signal.

As before, again I’ll imagine either a horse, or a cat, or a dog. Well, I’m doing that right now. And, while that’s still going on, 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, now, that I'm communicating by writing on a pad in your 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, neither a horse nor 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.

Placing aside our previous worries, maybe we can somehow make it palatable to ourselves that, this time "in my situation," there were 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, imagined a dog. Each of the people, though overlapping ever so many others, really 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*, anyway, 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'll arise, or there'll remain, this parallel problem: With each of our three animal options chosen by many millions, each of them an independent chooser though he overlaps 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 those who imagined a cat? Here's one specific suggestion. Maybe it's matter of the numbers, as with a voting procedure; and, maybe more chose to imagine a dog than chose a cat, or than chose 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 time, only one gets to exercise the power; and, so on, and so on.

## **8. 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 to be a limit 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, any good candidate for being the single experiencing complex, “in the situation,” isn’t 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 certain single* one of these should have the power to experience richly, whilst 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, whilst 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’s also 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 yet more disturbing. With that Problem of Choosers, there's this: 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 all of them experience, immediately and totally, in much the same way as each other. 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 complexes, and massively overlapping complexes.

Well, then, are there other alternatives for the Scientiphically 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, ever so many quarks, or maybe superstrings, each 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 a entity must be a simply 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 Scientiphicalism, there's nothing that does much justice to my being a real chooser.

While still believing in a vast heterogenous 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 in this essay. As I'm suggesting, then, maybe we should think 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 Scientiphical Metaphysic now so widely accepted, as with many Idealistic worldviews.)

Myself, I can't yet believe in a metaphysic that departs even that much, 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 Scientiphicalism. 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, isn't much 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 they first 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, I might have, in addition to many physical and spatial parts, many of them overlapping many others, a single nonphysical nonspatial part. And, perhaps it may be that it's only in this nonphysical 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 quite strangely speculative: Though this nonphysical part of me- my mind, or my soul - may *not* have any *spatial extension*, and least not in any strict or narrow sense of the terms, perhaps it may *have* some *nonspatial 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 nontemporal 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 the clearly nontemporal 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 *doesn't* exist in space itself. This nonspatial part of me, this soul of mine, if you will, may exist in some other clearly nontemporal dimension (or in more than one) and that's *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 terribly abstract as those I've just employed or offered. Requiring 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 it 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 the our attempted resolutions are all fleeting, fashionable, and, maybe, flat-out futile as well.

## NOTES

1. In chronological order, the most directly nihilistic of these papers are: "There Are No Ordinary Things," *Synthese*, 41 (1979): 117-154; "I Do Not Exist," pp.235-251 in *Perception and Identity*, G. F. MacDonald ed., London: The Macmillan Press, 1979; and "Why There Are No People," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, IV (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 idea, for all I really know perfectly correct, 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, nor the difference between one a thinking being and the other not a thinking being.

Less directly nihilistic are a few other papers, including "The Problem of the Many," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, V (1980): 411-467. In this last publication, 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 for now, 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 far beyond, in various important respects, anything considered by that old paper. (While there are great differences between the thoughts of this new essay and the ideas of that old paper, an attempt to detail the differences looks to be more distracting than instructive.)

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

3. 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*, Volume XXIII (1999): 75-99. Using philosophically more suggestive spelling, I discuss it further in my "Free Will and Scientiphicalism," forthcoming in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 2002. 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.

4. There's a discussion of this Emergentism is in my "Free Will and Scientiphicalism." The excellent suggestion that I treat this view very seriously I owe to Dean Zimmerman.

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

6. 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).