

DOI:10.14394/eidos.jpc.2024.0010

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The Problem of Being Someone

Abstract:

There is a genuine and profound problem about what it consists in for anything to be yourself. Once (perhaps *per impossibile*) all the empirical and modal facts about a particular human being are in, it still remains unexplained both what being you is, and why that human being is yourself. Being you seems an “extra” feature of anything. The problem admits of no scientific solution, and “being you” resists any purely logical analysis. It is argued that the problem is metaphysical, and that because metaphysical problems have theological answers, being you, and why anything is you may only be explained theologically. You are this soul, this immaterial presence, created by God. A new argument for the existence of God, the Autological Argument, is briefly presented.

Keywords:

self, mind, consciousness, identity, presence, soul, God, limits of science, explanation, metaphysics

[1]. Introduction

There is a genuine and profound problem about what it consists in for anything to be yourself. Once (perhaps *per impossibile*) all the empirical and modal facts about a particular human being are in, it still remains unexplained both what being you is, and why that human being is yourself.¹ Being you seems an “extra” feature of anything. The problem admits of no scientific solution, and resists any purely logical analysis. It is argued that the problem is metaphysical, and because metaphysical problems have theological answers, what it consists in to be you may only be explained theologically. You are this soul, this immaterial presence, created by God. In [2] “Who are you?” it is explained what the problem of being someone consists in. In [3] “Doppelgänger” it is asked what distinguishes you from someone qualitatively identical to you, but numerically distinct. [4] “Being someone else” is about whether you had to be who you are. In [5] “Understanding the problem of being someone,” it is asked why the problem is difficult to understand. In [6] “Science,” it is shown why the problem cannot be solved scientifically. In [7] “Phenomenology,” phenomenology is used to clarify the problem and rule out certain solutions. [8] “Can the problem of being someone be solved?” is about empirical, logical, and theological approaches to the problem. In [9] “The Existence of the Soul,” it is argued that the problem may be solved if you are an immaterial soul. In [10] “The Autological Argument for the Existence of God,” it is argued that if something is you, the only ultimate explanation is that God made something you. Therefore, God exists.

1) The following insight of the New York philosopher, Thomas Nagel, has been met with blank incomprehension by contemporary philosophers: “One acute problem of subjectivity remains even after points of view and subjective experiences are admitted to the real world – after the world is conceded to be full of people with minds, having thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that cannot be completely subdued by the physical conception of objectivity ... the fact that a particular person in it is himself. What kind of fact is it – if it is a fact – that I am Thomas Nagel? How can I be a particular person?” Thomas Nagel, *Nowhere*, 54. Nagel goes on to ask: “How can a particular person be me?” (54), and “How can I be merely a particular person?” (55). I have spoken to many distinguished philosophers about Nagel’s problem. They cannot understand it. Imagine the patience Nagel had to exercise toward people who could not understand this thought.

[2]. Who Are You?

Whose face could you never see?

There is one face which you cannot see, no matter how you move or redirect your gaze: You cannot see your own face. If you think “I could use a mirror“ the point already is missed. You need a mirror only in your own case. This “own” of “your own case” needs explanation. It is whatever being you consists in.²

Could “Why is this particular human being you?” be answered empirically?

Part of our mistake is that we think we already know how to answer the question “Why is this particular human being you?” For example: We find out when and where you were born. We ask about your parents, early nurturing, what sort of schooling you had, your peer group, your economic constraints, and opportunities. We look into your genetic make-up and brain states, your unconscious and conscious desires. We deploy the empirical and mathematical methods of the natural and social sciences to conduct these investigations.

I am now going to say something that appears obviously false:

All the well-known empirical facts about your genetic make-up, family, and educative background, social and economic influences and neurological states contribute nothing whatsoever to answering the question: Why is this particular human being you?

This claim seems outrageous. How can it be?

The answer is that all these well-known causal influences, which I fully accept are there, answer this entirely different question: Why is this particular human being the way it is? If all the empirical facts are in, the following question has not even been broached: Why is this particular, socialized, educated, human being who is reading

2) Sartre and Merleau-Ponty provide descriptions of the body as *l'être pour soi* but because they are engaged in a phenomenology that putatively eschews metaphysics they offer no explanations of the asymmetry between oneself and everyone else. “One particular human being” presents (roughly) the phenomenological features described by Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenologie* and by Sartre in *L'Être*. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'Être*; Stephen Priest (ed.), *Jean-Paul Sartre*; Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenologie*; and Priest, in *Merleau-Ponty*.

this book now, you? The fact that you are this particular human being or view the world from this particular human being, or are centered on it, has not been touched. By “this particular human being” I mean the being you take yourself to be, common-sensically and scientifically. Once all the empirical facts about a certain human being are in, not all the facts about you are in.

Why can you not see your own face?

It is not right that you cannot see your own face just because of the contingent arrangement of the eyeballs. If the optic nerve could extend as a stalk, and the eyeball turn to look at the face, the same problem would arise all over again for the eyeball instead of the whole face: The eye that sees does not see the eye that sees.

You cannot see your own eyes because being someone is an obstacle to observing that person: The I that sees does not see the I that sees. In something’s being you we need to know the nature of this “being” and this “you.”

The being-you of your existence is so close to you that you normally take it for granted. Because you are you, you are infinitely close to yourself, a proximity which creates a difficulty for self-knowledge: Your being whatever it is you are prevents your encountering it.

For example, your partly being your face prevents your being presented with it in the manner of someone else’s face; as “over there” as visible, as an object or a side or surface of an object. This is not an obstacle in the sense of something “in the way.” (Quite the reverse. We could call the difficulty a substacle.) You are too intimate to be readily detected by yourself, too near to yourself to be an object to yourself. This is an opposite of the difficulty of some physical object being too remote to be seen: being a subject so not an object, being too much oneself to be only other, (another opposite is being close enough to be seen).

You think of your eyes and your face as though they were the eyes and the face of another, objects you have come across and seen before you. This thinking is inadequate. Even though your eyes are visible to others, they are not the eyes of another and not presented to you in that way. You see through them. You do not see them. Many layers of conditioning were necessary for you to habitually think of your eyes as seen by another. Thinking of your eyes only as if they were seen is a recuperation of a third person perspective and its application to the first-person singular. This recuperation is

a sophisticated achievement of socialization into the pragmatic, the objective, and the scientific (as is the fact that it goes almost wholly unnoticed). Habitually thinking of yourself as another hides the stark reality of your own existence: that which grounds your life, that which is intimately you, that which faces death.

The expression “this particular human being” is used to refer to the human being you view from the special phenomenological perspectives described above.

Looking down, you can see this particular human being’s stomach, the fronts of its legs, the tops of its feet, and its forearms.

This is not the visual perspective you have on any human being who is not you. We see any other human being as a whole, even though we do not see the whole of the human being. There are many others, only one you.

In just the body of this particular human being, you experience sensations. In the mind of this particular human being, you have thoughts. You have direct access to the psychological interiority of this particular human being. You have no direct access to the inner phenomenological space of any of those billions of human beings who are not you.

Is non-reflexivity essentially mental? Non-reflexivity may be physical: the hammer that hammers does not hammer the hammer that hammers. (Imagine a purely mechanical hammer.) There could be a hammer with a spring, or flexible section, in the haft so that it would be true of that hammer that it could hammer itself. Then the feature of non-reflexivity shifts to the hammer-face. If whatever is essentially mental is not physical then non-reflexivity is not essentially mental.

Could you meet yourself?

There is one human being you cannot (in the normal course of things) encounter, the one you are. You cannot come across yourself as one amongst others in the external world. This, on the other hand, is how we encounter other human beings; as living, speaking, expressive, but as over there.

Why can you not meet yourself?

The very idea no doubt seems preposterous, nonsensical. But what is the source of this seemingly very strong impossibility? You could, at least theoretically, make the acquaintance of anyone else on the planet. Why are you an exception?

On one level, the impossibility is one of reflexivity: the motor car crashes into another motor car but cannot crash into itself (even though it does crash). This answer seems sufficient for “you cannot meet you,” but is not. Anyone can only meet somebody else but only you cannot meet you.

You cannot meet you because you are you: a turn of phrase which seems senseless, or only tautological, but is the true and informative answer. Being you prevents you from encountering yourself as an object “over there,” in the world. Not being any of the others frees up the possibility of encountering them. But what does it mean for this one to be you?³ Out of all the human beings, past, present, and future, you view the world from just one of them. Only one is you and not anyone else. Why? Who is this you? We do not yet understand this “else” in “anyone else.” Anyone else is anyone who is not you. Anyone else is over there, not here. But what is this here?

Why is reproduction interdite?

You cannot see the back of your own head but you can see the back of anyone else’s head. Why? The Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte paints the problem in *Réproduction Interdite*. (*a fortiori*, some philosophical problems can be painted.) Why is your perception of yourself not like that in *Réproduction Interdite*? What is the source of the prohibition in *Réproduction Interdite*?

Anything physical or mental about you could be altered or duplicated; you could be cloned, simulated. Nevertheless, in a fundamental sense, you would remain wholly unaltered. The reproduction would not be you. Of course, “no reproduction is ever the original” but the problem is much deeper than that: You would still view the world from the original human being but the reproduction could be in your visual field. You could encounter the reproduction but not the original. The fact that the copy is never numerically identical with the original hides a further barrier: There cannot even be a copy of you. (This is not to deny that we could copy your body and

3) Sartre thinks the “impossible” human project of being a synthesis of being-for-itself and being-in-itself, the desire to be God, is absurd. Sartre fails to notice that his own account entails that any human being is already a synthesis of *pour-soi* and *en-soi*. Besides, the being of God (whether construed traditionally as “a” being or Fundamentally as Being) is not a synthesis of being-for-itself and being-in-itself, but being-for-itself. The absurd is a *Leitmotif* of the philosophical literature of Albert Camus and Samuel Beckett (1906–89) and of the “Theatre of the Absurd.”

even your mind.) The impossibility of reproduction shows that you essentially consist in something that is neither mental nor physical.

“You could suddenly view the world from the reproduction and ‘leave the original behind’.” Yes, but the problem would arise all over again. The original human being would then be an object in your visual field but you would “be” the reproduction. You would remain you so *réproduction* is still *interdite*. We need to know what is true of anything when you are it.

Something about you is utterly unchanging and unreproducible. It is not mental or physical. Nevertheless, it is you.

Being you, being essentially unchanging and resisting duplication are properties essentially ascribed to the soul. It therefore follows that you possess three of the necessary conditions for being a soul.

If you are only psycho-physical then it is inexplicable why *réproduction* is *interdite*. If you are a soul then reproduction is necessarily impossible. Being a soul would be being the original.⁴

Do you exist?

If we were to interview people on the street, with the question “Do you exist?” the answer, perhaps delivered with impatience, would be “Yes: Obviously.” Their answer to Why do you exist? would be “Because I was born.” On the other hand, few people are aware of their existence in the heightened ways just described. Once noticed by you, the fact that you exist is at once obvious and extremely puzzling.

We are brought up to fundamentally believe in only what we can see in front of us. Rupert Brooke speaks of our being blinded by our eyes. You are not in front of yourself so you have not previously noticed yourself with existential immediacy. The “dark night of the soul” of St. John of the Cross is the darkness behind your own eyes. There is a proof that there is such a being as you because: you are looking through the eyes of this particular human being at this page now.

You are numerically atypical. All other people, past, present, and future, are not you: billions of them. It stands in need of explanation that someone is you. It is odd that

4) Mach drew himself as he appeared to his own subjective view, and included part of the inside of an eye socket and one side of the end of his nose. In non-objective senses, you are behind your eyes, and you partly are your eyes. See Mach, *Sensations*.

someone is you. Here you are, viewing the world from one of the human beings right now. It is an irony of the problem of other minds (which is a genuine problem) that other minds are typical minds. That a mind is one's own is aberrational and mysterious. The proximal is sometimes too invisible to be raised as a philosophical problem.

[3]. *Doppelgänger*

Why are you not your doppelgänger?

Your *doppelgänger* is qualitatively identical to you except for not being you. If you and your *doppelgänger* exist then there are two human beings not one but, in a completely abstract way, it is not built into this situation which is the *doppelgänger* and which you. The view from nowhere, the *vue de nulle parte*, does not show up who is you and who the *doppelgänger*. No difference is apparent. For example, if we ran a film of you and your *doppelgänger*, who is whom would not show up.

In the view from now-here the difference is utterly obvious. Suppose you meet your *doppelgänger*:

You view the *doppelgänger* from this particular human being. The *doppelgänger* is an object in your sensory field. You do not view the world from the *doppelgänger*. You are not an object in this particular human being's visual field. The *doppelgänger* is a perceptually discriminable item you could tour. This particular human being is not a perceptually discriminable item you could tour.

In the view from now-here you are never mixed up about which human being is you and which your *doppelgänger*.

Argument that you are not your *doppelgänger*:

- (1) You view the world from this particular human being.
- (2) Your *doppelgänger* is an object in your visual field.
- (3) Any human being you view the world from is you.
- (4) No object in your visual field is you.
- (5) Therefore, you are not your *doppelgänger*.

It completely misses the point to state the obvious truth that your *doppelgänger* views you from their human being and you are an object in their sensory field. Although true, staying with this truth fails to abdicate the view from nowhere. Within the view from now-here, the *doppelgänger* knows that he is not you. He sees you in front of him. This does not cast doubt on the distinction. It confirms it.

There are special cases where a mix-up is not in principle impossible. For example, you and the *doppelgänger* play the children's game of intertwining fingers and, momentarily at least, cannot tell whose fingers are whose just by looking at them. Also, by readopting the view from nowhere we can be confused: "Did I do that or my *doppelgänger*? I can't remember." In the lived reality of the present: one human being is presented to you as you, the *doppelgänger* presented as another.

(1) One human being is present to you as you. The *doppelgänger* is present to you as other.

(2) You are centered on this particular human being. The *doppelgänger* is not centered on this particular human being.

(3) The *doppelgänger* is there [*da, dort*]. You are not there [*da, dort*]. The *doppelgänger* is not here [neither *Hier* nor *Hiersein*]. You are here [not just *Hier* but *Hiersein*].⁵

(4) You are not visible to you in front of you. The *doppelgänger* is visible to you in front of you. You do not present to yourself in all those aspects a human being (ordinarily) presents to you. The *doppelgänger* presents all those aspects you could not (in the ordinary course of things) present to this particular human being. You are not your *doppelgänger* because you are you.

Which one are you?

You are the one you view the world from. You are here, both: *he-re* (the man-thing, the per-son-al thing, the thing-through-the-son), *her-e* (the female existent, per-sonal existing, the thing-through-the-sound, through the word). You are not just *Hier* but *Hiersein*. To put it starkly: here is not just where you are but what you are. Here is not just where you happen to be wherever you are but also the space of your own being.

5) Heidegger should have written "*Hiersein*" not "*Dasein*," even though, "*da*" already carries some connotation of being present in the here and now (See: Inwood, *Dictionary* p. 42); and "*Dasein*" appropriately suggests *Geworfenheit* ("thrownness"). "*Hiersein*" expresses the existential immediacy of being all-here-now. Benedikt Göcke has suggested "*Jetztsein*" as expressing the now-ness of existing.

Suppose you and your *doppelgänger* exchange spatio-temporal locations. In the ordinary sense of “here” each is no longer “here” but where the other was. Each calls the new place “here.” At a more profound level, the pervasion of the new “here” by the space of your own existence makes it here. Without metaphysical meaning there is no empirical meaning, without *Hiersein* no *Hier*.

Which one is not you?

You are not the one you view before you in the world. You are not the one over there, *the-re*, (the *re*, the thing), [*da*, *dort*]. It misses the point to state the obvious truth that this particular human being is in one spatio-temporal location but your *doppelgänger* in another. This is neither here nor there. We need to know of a human being in any spatio-temporal location what is true of it if it is you (or the one you are closely associated with).

Two qualitatively identical human beings might face one another and neither of them be you. That one of them is you is an extra fact about that one, a fact which shows up in phenomenological asymmetries available to the view from now-here. You view the world from it. You are centered on it.

What if everybody looked the same?

They do not, of course. If you are impatient with thought-experiments, consider: (a) They are necessary for exposing the cracks in the root paradigms which block explanation. (b) They might not look like thought-experiments in a million years’ time (if anything looks like anything in a million years’ time). (c) What is the real source of your impatience? Is it conditioned? Is it because you subscribe to a world view in which philosophical questions cannot be answered or even posed?

Suppose every other human being had exactly your face, your age, your sex, your clothing and so on. Suppose every human being was qualitatively identical in every physical respect and every mental respect. You could still tell who was you and who not you. You still would not mistake yourself for anyone else. You would not be mixed up about who is you and who is not you. You would be the human being you view the world from. Everyone else would be over there.

This is not only a phenomenological description or just an epistemological fact. It is an ontological asymmetry: You would still be you and no one else would be you.

Other people would still be discriminable objects in the world around you this human being, presented as at a distance from it. On the other hand, you this human being would still be presented as at no distance from you or, at least, far less distance.

Indeed: if everyone appeared exactly the same, you could easily mistake any two people for one another unless one of them is you.

Your being this one, and not being any of the others, would still be a fact. In the possible world in which there is no physical or mental difference between you and anyone else the difference between you and any other human being still obtains. You are yourself but every other human being is someone else. Our being who we are survives (over-lives, out-lives) the possible qualitative identity of all the human beings.

What is the difference between you and anyone else?

Whatever being you consists in, it is qualitatively distinct from whatever being anyone else consists in. The difference between you and anyone else is a different kind of difference from the difference between anyone else and anyone else.

Although these differences are all differences between one person and another, they are different differences or either no-one would be anyone or someone would be everyone. Everyone is someone, so someone is someone and no-one is everyone so there is a difference between you and anyone else that is not a difference between anyone else and anyone else.

[4]. Being Someone Else

Could I become you? Could you become me?

These are logical and metaphysical possibilities:

(1) We exchange bodies but retain our own minds.

This should be easy to imagine because there are many cases in fiction. I view the world from your body. You view the world from mine. You wake up in my body. Looking down, you have those peculiar and partial visual perspectives that you had on your old body but on a new one. In this exchange, you take your mind with you.

(2) We exchange minds but retain bodies.

So, either:

(2a) You have thoughts qualitatively identical in content to thoughts I have and *vice versa*. You think what I think. I think what you think. We think each other's propositions. (We contingently think any thought content.)

Or:

(2b) You engage in acts of thinking I engage in and *vice versa*. We exchange type attitudes. You have my hopes, fears, wishes and so forth in a sense which, on the one hand is not their content but on the other hand is not your or my token thinking of them. They are your thought tokens not mine, in the sense that you do the thinking of them.

Or:

(2c) Both (2a) and (2b). We should not take it for granted that (1) and (2) give an identical result. To do that is to assume that there is nothing more to us than body and mind.

It is a presupposition of these thought experiments that you are identical with your mind at the level of that which thinks, at the level of that which has a capacity to think.

(4) I become you or you become me.

We could draw a distinction between:

(a) *a* becomes *b* and remains *a*

and

(b) *a* becomes *b* and thereby ceases to be *a*

I could become you if I ceased to exist and you could become me if you ceased to exist. This becoming would consist in one of us being physically and psychologically continuous with the other. For example, my body gains the physical characteristics of yours while yours disintegrates. Your thoughts cease as I begin to have them. We do not have to suppose that we are spatio-temporally juxtaposed during this psycho-physical change, though your human being becoming mine is consistent with that heuristic.

It is logically and metaphysically impossible that

(1) we exchange minds at the level of that which thinks.

The obstacle to this is that you are the relatively enduring subject of change which becomes anything it does become.

Could there be anonymous human beings?

An anonymous human being is a human being who is not anyone. This has nothing to do with personality. (We could exchange personalities). Each of us knows that not all human beings are anonymous because each of us “is” one of them. Does the mind go with the soul or not? The soul is not the mind but can go with it.

Is the difference between you and anyone else mental or physical?

Argument that the difference between you and anyone else is not mental or physical:

- (1) It is possible that there should be no mental difference between you and anyone else.
- (2) It is possible that there should be no physical difference between you and anyone else.
- (3) There would still be a difference between you and anyone else.
- (4) Therefore, there is some difference between you and anyone else that is not a mental or a physical difference.

You have some feature, or you are something, that marks you out uniquely as you. If anything empirical is either mental or physical then whatever marks you out as you is not empirical.

[5]. Understanding the Problem of Being Someone

Why is the problem of being someone difficult to understand?

There is a huge gulf between philosophers who can see the problem of being someone and those who cannot. Inability to see the problem of being someone is symptomatic of physicalism, naturalism, and the ruling critical secularism. Within anonymous, third-person, or generalized thinking it is barely registered that someone is oneself, even though your own existence is far more real than any scientific or pseudo-scientific fact which might be used to try to explain it away.⁶ That you are this particular human being, or pervade it, or are centered on it, or view the world from it, is existentially shocking and empirically inexplicable.

Why is thinking in generalities an obstacle to understanding your own existence?

Thinking in generalities is an obstacle to being brought up sharply by the existential reality of your own being. General thinking has the form “all *as* are *bs*,” “most *as* are *bs*” or, even, “this *a* is a *b*.” Thinking of types, or even only thinking of yourself as belonging to a type, does not do justice to the one-off-ness, there here-and-now reality of being you.

Why is thinking in an abstract way an obstacle to understanding your own existence?

If you think in an abstract way you are taken away from your existence here and now, not just in the here and now but as the here and now. The use of the terms “persons,” “the mind,” “the brain,” takes thought into an anonymous sphere useless for fundamental philosophical problem solving. Anonymous language blocks progress in the philosophy of mind.

Why is thinking in a third-person way an obstacle to understanding your own existence?

Thinking in the third person way revered by both old science and pseudo-science leaves you out of the picture. It is not enough to think of yourself as just one person amongst many even though, in a sense, you are one person amongst many. Does the problem of

6) If naturalism entails physicalism, Benedikt Göcke has refuted naturalism. See: Göcke, “Priest and Nagel.” I use “refute” with this entailment: If *p* is refuted then *p* is false. (So denying is not enough for refuting.)

being someone not arise about everyone? We could raise the question of being someone about anyone but it might then not be understood. We would still be trapped at the level of anonymity. Ideally, you ask: “Why am I me?” You have to raise the question about yourself. Thinking only about other people or just “people” hides the question.

We have been conditioned to understand the question “Why are you you?” as admitting of only a scientific or social scientific answer. This misses the question’s disturbing profundity entirely. Layer after layer of conditioning was necessary, for you think of yourself as an other, to be blind to the stark reality of your own existence.⁷ In authentic philosophy, existentialism and metaphysics coincide. We are, in more than one sense, lost in thought. Anonymous truth is not the whole truth. Reality is not anonymous.

Are we conditioned?

We are very conditioned. We are conditioned by our genes. We are made what we are by at least: formative childhood influences, schooling, peer-group pressure, the unconscious, neurobiology, economic pressures, or opportunities, metaphysical policies, life chances, or the lack of them. Re-iterating these causal factors, which we have learned about (or at least heard about), is not thinking in new ways.

The kinds of influence constituting a human being are far richer and more varied than those recognized by twenty-first century science and social science. We have yet to develop a history of perception, a history of envisaged futures, a neuro-phenomenology, a theory of human self-constitution, a theory of human self-destruction, a theory of the person that will stand the strain of translation between grammatically first and third person accounts of the person, a unified physics, a unified science, and social science.

Anyone who says we know what consciousness is, what matter is, what gravity is, or what energy is, is lying or mistaken. We have no idea. Science, far from having everything sewn up, has hardly begun.

7) In medieval mysticism there is an awareness of the mystery of being you, which has been largely lost to modernity. For example, the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* is struck by what they are, and by that they are, both their essence and their existence: “All men have reason for sorrow; but he who knows and feels that he exists has a very special experience of sorrow. In comparison to this, all other sorrows seem to be a sort of pretence. Certainly, he who is aware and experiences not only what he is but that he is can sorrow in earnest.” *Cloud*, 203. See also Masciandaro, *Sorrow*.

[6]. Science

Could science change and solve the problem of being you?

The scientific revolution necessary to explain your own existence would not only be greater than those associated with Galileo, Newton, or Einstein: Science would have to include the opposite of itself. Of course, I do not mean that science would have to give up careful observation, concern for definition, and mathematical modelling. There need not be the slightest sacrifice of rigor. Science would still deal in facts which are objective in the sense of being facts. Science would have to change doctrinally. Science would have to concede the existence of subjective subject matter. Without including its opposite science is powerless to explain why someone is you.

(I) Argument that you cannot be explained scientifically:

- (1) Science is objective.
- (2) You are subjective.
- (3) There is no objective explanation of subjectivity.
- (4) You cannot be explained objectively.
- (5) Therefore, you cannot be explained scientifically.

(II) Argument that you cannot be explained scientifically:

- (1) Science is deterministic.
- (2) You are free.
- (3) There is no deterministic explanation of freedom.
- (4) You cannot be explained deterministically.
- (5) Therefore, you cannot be explained scientifically

(III) Argument that you cannot be explained scientifically:

- (1) Science is general.
- (2) You are most specific.
- (3) There is no explanation of the most specific in general terms.
- (4) You cannot be explained in general terms.
- (5) Therefore, you cannot be explained scientifically

(IV) Argument that you cannot be explained scientifically:

- (1) Any scientific explanation of past, present, and future is in terms of before, after, and simultaneity.
- (2) You have a past, present, and future.
- (3) Past, present, and future cannot be explained in terms of before, after, and simultaneity.
- (4) You cannot be explained in terms of before, after, and simultaneity.
- (5) Therefore, you cannot be explained scientifically.

(V) Argument that you cannot be explained scientifically

- (1) Science is materialistic.
- (2) You are a consciousness.
- (3) There is no materialist explanation of consciousness.
- (4) There is no materialist explanation of you.
- (5) Therefore, you cannot be explained scientifically.

(VI) Argument that you cannot be explained scientifically

- (1) Science is quantitative.
- (2) You are qualitative.
- (3) There is no quantitative explanation of quality.
- (4) There is no quantitative explanation of you.
- (5) Therefore, you cannot be explained scientifically.

(VII) Argument that you cannot be explained scientifically

- (1) Science is anonymous.
- (2) You are you.
- (3) There is no anonymous explanation of being you.
- (4) There is no anonymous explanation of you.
- (5) Therefore, you cannot be explained scientifically.

You are essentially the opposite of what science says there is. Science performs a kind of phenomenological *epoché* in reverse.⁸ Perhaps the revolution has begun: some science is indeterministic if those interpretations of quantum mechanics as ontologically indeterminist, rather than merely undecidable, are true. Science, far from entailing materialism, entails no distinctive ontology. Indeed, the conjunction of all the findings of science with idealism or mind-body dualism or theism entails no contradiction. Secular and scientific philosophy is a kind of madness because it denies its own presuppositions. To begin to explain you, science would have to include the opposite of what science now is: science needs theology to explain its own presuppositions. Science needs theology, to be science. Science needs theology to be complete.

It is false that your viewing the world from this particular human being has been explained by studies of the brain. The brain is billions of atoms moving in empty space. It is false that neuroscience tells us the relationship between consciousness and billions of atoms moving in empty space.

The anonymous “the” in “the brain” or “the person” stops us being brought up sharp by the existential reality of being this being. Anonymous language keeps us in a dream: the dream of the abstract, the general, the only third-person: the dream of the machine.⁹

[7]. Phenomenology

Is the problem of being you phenomenological?

Phenomenology clarifies the problem of being someone, and usefully causes people to understand it, but doing phenomenology alone does not solve the problem.

8) Schrödinger says: “For the purpose of constructing the picture of the external world, we have used the greatly simplifying device of cutting our own personality out, removing it; hence it is gone, it has evaporated, it is ostensibly not needed. In particular, and most importantly, this is the reason why the scientific worldview contains of itself no ethical values, no aesthetical values, not a word about our own ultimate scope or destination, and no God, if you please. Whence came I, whither go I?” Schrödinger in Wilber, *Quantum*, 82.

9) Penrose says: “It seems to me that there is a fundamental problem with the idea that mentality arises out of physicality – this is something which philosophers worry about for very good reasons.” Penrose, Shimothy, Cartwright, and Hawking, *Large*, 94. See also Schrödinger, *Mind*.

Phenomenology begins the disclosure of that existence which is not “objective,” but phenomenology remains essentially within the anti-metaphysical paradigm (except *malgré elle*), because it offers only descriptions, not explanations.

Phenomenology usefully describes the psycho-physical symptoms of being someone, for example the peculiar visual perspectives on the body and the fact that you know only one consciousness from the inside. Nevertheless, these are phenomenological consequences of being someone, not what being someone consists in. This particular human being is like no other and is no other. This peculiarity is a peculiar one, which in a way we are very used to but, in another way, is a shocking revelation.

For any true phenomenological description, one may ask “Why is this true?” The answer is not straightforwardly empirical because the phenomenological is primordial with regard to the empirical. The phenomenological is more empirical than the empirical (by which I mean phenomenology is more strictly empiricist than the empiricism advocated by the empiricists). A metaphysical phenomenology is needed to exhibit the non-empirical ground of true phenomenological descriptions. Metaphysics is overtly or covertly bracketed by phenomenology. But this is a mistake. Metaphysics is not a set of extravagant postulates but a set of ineliminable presuppositions. Philosophy without metaphysics is shallow.

Are you this particular human being?

Given that this living, breathing, psycho-physical totality exists: Is it you? It might seem completely obvious that you are this particular human being. If you are identical with this particular human being, is this identity necessary or contingent? You are not this particular human being in the way in which a brick is a brick.

The truth of these phenomenological descriptions is inconsistent with you being strictly or necessarily numerically identical with this particular human being; you are inside this particular human being looking out of it. You are not only inside this particular human being looking out of it. You pervade this particular human being.

You are, at least partly, where this particular human being is without your being it. You exceed this particular human being. You are present at this particular human being. You are present through this particular human being. We should

not expect prepositions honed in understanding physical objects to readily carry over to descriptions of the relation between you and this particular human being. That the truth of the phenomenological descriptions precludes your being necessarily numerically identical with this particular human being will be challenged, so I present objections and then reasons for accepting that the inconsistencies nevertheless obtain:

[1] You are inside this particular human being looking out of it therefore you are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.

But a set can be a member of itself! The set of sets, for example, is a member of itself. Analogously, might not a be inside b and nevertheless be b? The relation of set membership is not the relation you bear to this particular human being if you are inside it. Admittedly, this is not the physical relation of being inside (which holds if toy soldiers are in a drawer). You are inside this particular human being in the sense of viewing the world from it. Your interiority is an absolute interiority: an inside without an outside. Being this precludes strict numerical identity with this particular human being.

Argument from being inside:

- (1) You are inside this particular human being looking out of it.
- (2) If a is inside b then a is not necessarily b .
- (3) Therefore, you are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.

[2] You are (not only) inside this particular human being looking out of it, therefore you are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.

A set might be a member of itself and belong to some other set. Might not a be inside b, be outside b and yet be b? If there is a distinction between b and that which is not b then that is marked by “outside” in this way: If anything is outside b it is not necessarily b . Being outside b is therefore a sufficient condition for not being necessarily b so, if a is outside b , a is not necessarily b .

Argument from not only being inside:

- (1) You are not only inside this particular human being looking out of it.
- (2) If *a* is not only inside *b* then *a* is not necessarily *b*.
- (3) Therefore, you are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.

[3] You pervade this particular human being therefore you are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.

Cannot a pervade a? Cannot a both exude and be the exuding itself? Cannot the exuding exude? Even if exuding can exude itself, pervading is not exuding. Pervading is being where something is without being it.

‘pervades (def.) “*a* pervades *b*” iff “*a* is where *b* is but *a* is not *b*”

We are to understand the place as exactly where the pervaded is (so if two objects are in the same room one does not thereby pervade the other). This is what pervading is, so if there is any pervading, and *a* pervades *b*, then *a* is not *b*. If you pervade this particular human being, with whom you are so closely associated every day, then you are not necessarily this particular human being. (Is contingent identity identity? We do not have to find two things.)

Argument from pervading:

- (1) You pervade this particular human being.
- (2) If something pervades something then it is not it.
- (3) Therefore, you are not identical with this particular human being.
- (4) You are, at least partly, where this particular human being is without being it therefore you are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.

Because physicalism is true, if anything is exactly where something is, it is that thing. If anything is anywhere, anything identical with it is where it is. However, the reverse inference is invalid. You can be where this particular human being is without being it. (Even in the case of physical objects, exact fusion and fission is not logically or theo-

retically impossible. How many physical objects are exactly here? Two? A million? An infinite number?)

Argument from being where something is:

- (1) You are where this particular human being is without necessarily being it.
- (2) If “*a* is where *b* is” has more than logical or tautological force then *a* is not necessarily *b*.
- (3) “*a* is where *b* is” has more than logical or tautological force in “you are where this particular human being is.”
- (4) Therefore, you are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.
- (5) You exceed this particular human being; therefore you are not necessarily identical with this particular human being. (“Where this particular human being is” does not entail “only where this particular human being is”).

Things are constantly changing. The present is eroding the future. In this way, everything exceeds itself. Therefore, *a* can exceed *b* but be *b*. Look at it this way: perhaps *a* exceeds *b* precisely because *a* is *b* and *a* exceeds itself.

The present, in the sense of that which is present, or the content of the present, or what happens in the present, entails the becoming-past of the future. Ceasing to be and beginning to be cannot be readily captured by an only atomistic logic: there is the Heraclitean.

However, even in the case where *a* exceeds itself there is a distinction, within *a*, between the aspect of *a* which exceeds and the aspect of *a* which is exceeded. If we reject the thesis that if *a* exceeds *b* then *a* is not *b* then we obliterate the distinction between exceeding and coinciding with. If there is exceeding, then if *a* exceeds *b* then *a* is not, or at least not only, *b*.

Argument from exceeding this particular human being:

- (1) You exceed this particular human being.
- (2) If *a* exceeds *b* then *a* is not necessarily *b*, or at least not only *b*.
- (3) Therefore, you are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.
- (6) You exceed this particular human being.
- (5) Therefore, you are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.

Argument from being present at:

- (1) You are present at this particular human being.
- (2) If a is present at b then a is not necessarily b .
- (3) Therefore, you are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.
- (4) You are present through this particular human being therefore you are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.

If the Welsh Guards are present at the Trooping of the Colour then the Welsh Guards, marching in an appropriate way (carrying the standard in the Queen's presence etc.), are the trooping of the color, at least on that occasion.

A military ceremony is something a regiment carries out or conducts, not something it is; even if the actions of the troops on a particular occasion are necessary and sufficient for the ceremony taking place. " a is necessary and sufficient for b " does not entail " a is b " (even though the converse entailment holds). The actions of the troops in the presence of Her Majesty constitute the ceremony but they are not it.

The relation "present at" is not typically as close as in the ceremony example. We could be present at a battle without being it or being any part of it.

You are present at this particular human being. You are present where it is present, but you could exist without it and it could exist without you. This particular human being could have been someone else. You could have been present at a different time and place. You could have pervaded a different human being.

Anything present is present through itself. If anything is present, that is necessary and sufficient for its presence so anything is only present through itself. This actually rules out a being present through b without being b .

"Through" does not mean "because of" in "you are present through this particular human being." Indeed, the existence of this particular human being is neither necessary nor sufficient for your presence.

"You are present through this particular human being" means that you are centered on this particular human being with the rest of existence arranged panoramically around you. That you are centered on this particular human being is a contingent fact about you. If a is present through b in this sense, then a is not b . If you are centered on this particular human being then you are not it.

Argument from being present through:

- (1) You are present through this particular human being.
- (2) If a is present through b then a is not necessarily b .
- (3) Therefore, you are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.

You are not necessarily identical with this particular human being, this constellation of psycho-physical processes. The everyday human being is not the “I” you feel yourself to be.

Here the logical presuppositions of phenomenological descriptions have been unpacked to show their metaphysical consequences. Metaphysics makes phenomenology possible.

Argument from being present as:

- (1) The truth of the description “you are present as this particular human being” is inconsistent with your being strictly or necessarily identical with this particular human being.
- (2) You are present as this particular human being
- (3) Therefore, you are not strictly or necessarily identical with this human being.

Are you essentially this particular human being?

Argument that you are not essentially this particular human being:

- (1) There are possible worlds in which you exist but this particular human being does not exist.
- (2) There are possible worlds in which this particular human being exists but you do not.
- (3) Therefore, you are not essentially this particular human being.

Argument that you are not necessarily this particular human being:

- (1) There are possible worlds in which you exist but this particular human being does not exist.
- (2) There are possible worlds in which this particular human being exists but you do not.
- (3) Therefore, you are not necessarily this particular human being.

Are you the center of the universe?

Scientific progress has not shown that your own existence is not the center of the universe. It is right that as a system of physical objects or events standing in Einsteinian spatio-temporal relations, the universe has no center. However, this does not refute the fact that the world is present to you as around this particular human being. The *Welt* is an *Umwelt*. The universe radiates from your body in every direction. If we drop our conditioning for a moment, and look and see, it is completely obvious that you are the center of the universe. It is a measure of the success of secular conditioning that this fact is normally hidden from you and we tend to dismiss it. It is a pity that the expression “center of the universe” has come to mean “egotistical” or “arrogant.” We do not see how directly and literally true it is. The world is all around you. You are the center of space.

You are the center of time. You are the center of space-time.

If you can notice this, it naturally invites the question: “Why?” What is this center or centering? Other things are over there but you are centered. Objects present surfaces to you but you are inside out or outside in. The soul is an absolute interiority, an inside without an outside, so if you are a soul we should expect you to be the inside of space-time. If you are not a soul, the phenomenology is inexplicable. The phenomenology is explicable, so you are a soul.

Are you co-extensive with this particular human being?

In the case of just one human being, this one, you feel yourself to be wholly or largely coextensive with it. In the normal course of things, you go where it goes. If you raise your arm, this particular human being raises its arm. Nevertheless, you do not end where your body ends. You exceed your flesh. For example, your visual field is not within your body but your visual field is part of you, so you exceed your body. Your visual field is a zone of a wider phenomenological field which includes your olfactory, tactile, auditory, and thought fields. These fields are not separate because there are no boundaries between them. There exist sensory and intellectual uses of one and the same phenomenological field or space.

Argument that you exceed your body:

- (1) Your phenomenological field is either wholly or partly not within your body.

- (2) Your phenomenological field is either you or a part of you.
- (3) Therefore, you exceed your body.

Far harder to accept is the fact that you even exceed this particular human being.

Argument that you exceed this particular human being:

- (1) Your phenomenological field is either wholly or partly not within this particular human being.
- (2) Your phenomenological field is either you or a part of you.
- (3) Therefore, you exceed this particular human being.

But, you object: “This phenomenological field is part of me, part of this particular human being!”

The first part of this is right, the second wrong. The phenomenological field is not part of the human being because it survives the *epoché*. To justify premises (1) and (2) we insert the findings of transcendental phenomenology (i.e., Husserl). The human being is a constellation of psycho-physical events. The phenomenological field is the infinite zone in which that they take place. The phenomenological field recedes infinitely in every direction.

Are you this particular human being?

Awareness of the phenomenological field requires *epoché* or a switch of attention from perceptual contents to the field or space in which they are presented; a suspension of the natural attitude.

epoché (def.) suspension of ontological commitment.

epoché (def.) reduction of what is to what is given.

natural attitude (*def.*) ontological commitment to the empirical world and anything that depends upon it.

Argument that the phenomenological field is part of your essence:

- (1) Any part of you that does not fall by the *epoché* is part of your essence.
- (2) The phenomenological field does not fall by the *epoché*
- (3) Therefore, the phenomenological field is part of your essence.

The phenomenological field has properties of the soul. (Husserl, in describing transcendental subjectivity, was unwittingly describing the inside of the soul). It is the unchanging condition of the mind and the body in so far as they are someone's. "Being someone's" does not mean "pertaining to this body." It means "pertaining to someone."

Argument that your existence is part of your essence:

- (1) Any part of you that does not fall by the *epoché* is part of your essence.
- (2) Your existence does not fall by the *epoché*
- (3) Therefore, your existence is part of your essence.

Argument that your presence is part of your essence:

- (1) Any part of you that does not fall by the *epoché* is part of your essence.
- (2) Your presence does not fall by the *epoché*
- (3) Therefore, the presence of you is part of your essence.

Argument that the you-ness of you is part of your essence:

- (1) Any part of you that does not fall by the *epoché* is part of your essence.
- (2) The you-ness of you does not fall by the *epoché*
- (3) Therefore, the you-ness of you is part of your essence.

Argument that any prerequisites of your own existence are not empirical:

- (1) Everything empirical falls by the *epoché*.
- (2) You do not fall by the *epoché*.
- (3) Therefore, you do not depend upon anything empirical.

Argument that you are not this particular human being:

- (1) This particular human being falls by the *epoché*.
- (2) You do not fall by the *epoché*.
- (3) Therefore, you are not this particular human being.

Phenomenology, which usefully begins the disclosure of existence that is not objective, remains essentially within the anti-metaphysical paradigm (except *malgré elle*) because it offers only descriptions, no explanations. A metaphysical phenomenology would exhibit the non-empirical ground of true descriptions. A phenomenological theology would disclose the immanence of God. We can always ask: “Why is this phenomenological description true?” Metaphysics begins where phenomenology ends.

Is something's being you its self-identity?

You are self-identical. Being self-identical is an essential property of you because it is necessary for your being and for your being anything (for your existence and for your essence). Nevertheless, the self-identity of this particular human being is not sufficient for its being you. There is no valid inference from:

“This particular human being is self-identical.

to

You are this particular human being

That this particular human being is the thing it is, and no other, does not entail that it is you. Something's being you is an extra fact over and above this particular human being's being self-identical. Being you is necessary and sufficient for being you but this particular human being's being this particular human being is not sufficient for this particular human being's being you. Even though the self-identity of whatever it is that you are is necessary and sufficient for its being you, its being necessary and sufficient for being you is not its being you. “Is necessary and sufficient for” does not imply “is” even though “is” implies “is necessary and sufficient for.”

Are you someone else?

If you were someone else you would view the world from a different human being. You do not, so you are not someone else.

Are all persons ultimately the same person?

On some quasi-pantheistic views, you are not a substance but a point of view, or perspective, of God. At death, we return to the cosmic spirit like drops of water to the

ocean. (e.g., Hegel, Brahman; Hegel is a Hindu). Our individuality is the most difficult fact about us to explain. Construing all human beings as one person obliterates individuality rather than explains it.

Can the problem of other minds be solved?

The problem of other minds can be solved by a sensitive, so extreme, empiricism. The holistic presence of the other, in face, voice, and gesture, precludes the psychological possibility of sincere skepticism. The presence of the other is not reducible to physical “behavior,” even if described with subtlety. It is not observable movement, no matter how small or subliminal.

The presence of the other is a presence.

The problem of other minds presupposes that someone is oneself. You are present as (or at, or through, or in), this particular human being you take yourself to be. You are a presence. The kind of presence you are is the kind of presence crudely hidden but subtly observable in the other. We are left with the problem of what being you consists in even after solving the problem of other minds.

We raise the problem of other minds about other human beings rather than, say, stones. Why? Because human beings have minds and stones do not. (G. E. Moore asked the good question: What is the external world external to?)

Nevertheless, scientific reductionism is animism *malgre lui*; an unwitting and ironic inflation: genes are selfish. Cells carry information. The brain processes messages. Understandably, strict scientists do not accept such theses as scientific (not Dawkins, but Gould). Scientific explanation is essentially metaphorical description. Once we drop the metaphors, the materialist’s world of atoms remains but the scientific explanations have disappeared. Science is essentially metaphor.

[8]. Can the problem of being someone be solved?

Is something’s being you its being unique?

Uniqueness is not unique. Uniqueness is not unique because everything is unique. To define “uniqueness” I distinguish between numerical and qualitative uniqueness:

numerical uniqueness (*def.*) Something's being the one it is, and not any other thing.

qualitative uniqueness (*def.*) Something's being what it is, and not what any other thing is.

"*x* is numerically unique" means: "nothing is it" and "*x* is qualitatively unique" means "nothing is exactly like it." (Could anything exhibit one kind of uniqueness but not the other?)

'uniqueness (*def.*) Something's either being the one it is, and not any other thing, or its being what it is, and not what any other thing is.

You are unique not just in the sense of not being anything else but in the sense of not being exactly like anything else.

Argument that something's being you is not just its being unique:

- (1) Everything is unique.
- (2) You are unique. (From (1)).
- (2) Uniqueness is not unique. (From (1)).
- (3) Something marks you out as you.
- (4) Therefore, something's being you is not just its being unique.

You are not only unique. You are uniquely unique, not in the sense that you are unique in being unique but in your manner of being unique. Not only is nothing else you: nothing else is like you.

Are you essentially unique?

It is a necessary condition for something's being you that it be whatever distinguishes you from whatever you are not. Because nothing empirical or logical distinguishes you from anything else, whatever being you consists in must be qualitatively distinct from whatever being anyone else consists in.

You are not contingently unique. You are essentially unique. (I use “contingently” here to mean accidentally as well as contingently.) You are essentially unique. There is a sense in which anything is unique but not anything is essentially unique. The you-ness of your being is not like anything else, including anyone else’s you-ness. You are in some respect unlike anything else in any possible world in which you exist.

“Someone,” “anyone” captures the unity of the self, a unity that is not emergent from any synthesis. Your unity is an un-it-y. (“Somebody” and “anybody” express a limited materialist prejudice useful only for picking people out on an empirical level.)

Is something’s being you its haeccity?

haeccity (def.) something’s *haeccity* is its being the thing it is.

haeccity (def.) *haeccity* is thisness.

There is, in a way, no limit to the extent to which a thing is the thing it is. A thing exudes being the thing it is. For those with eyes to see it, there is the infinite in the finite. Nevertheless, something’s being you is an extra fact over and above its *haeccity*.

Argument that something’s being you is not its *haeccity*:

- (1) Every being has *haeccity*.
- (2) Only one being is you.
- (3) That some being has *haeccity* is not a sufficient condition for that being’s being you. (from (1) and (2))
- (4) Something is sufficient for a being’s being you.
- (5) Therefore, that which is sufficient for some being’s being you is not its *haeccity*.

Is being you the holding of any logical property?

Argument that being you does not consist in any logical property holding:

- (1) If being you consisted in some logical property holding then it would consist in either: numerical identity, self-identity, or *haeccity*.
- (2) Being you does not consist in any of numerical identity, self-identity, or *haeccity*.
- (3) Therefore, being you does not consist in any logical property holding.

What depends on your being you?

Your entire conception of the world is based, or grounded, in the fact that you exist here now. You have the view from now-here. Your own existence is indispensable to your view of the world: not just in the obvious sense that unless you existed you could have no view, but in the further sense that your being here now makes a difference to what is presented to you and how. Even this is not an obvious empirical claim. The world is presented as past, present and future, as here and elsewhere, as radiating on every side from the center that you are.

What is the world?

the world (*def.*) w is the world *iff* w = the totality of what is, whatever is.

The world is present, pre-sent, present(ed) to you as all around you, all a-round. (The *Welt* is an *Umwelt*.)

What is the past?

the past (*def.*) P is the past *iff* P = what has happened before now.

What is the future?

the future (*def.*) F is the future *iff* F is what will happen after now.

Why is this not apparent?

The I that sees does not see the I that sees.

What sort of fact is it that someone is you?

That something is you is not an empirical fact. Being you is not just the fact that a particular being exists. Being you is not a logical fact, for example, that a particular being is numerically distinct from all other beings, or that some being is self-identical. Even if some of these facts are necessary for something's being you, none is sufficient, nor are they jointly sufficient. There is always more to something's being you than something's being mental or physical or logical.

Argument that being you is a metaphysical fact:

- (1) All facts are empirical facts or logical facts or metaphysical facts.
- (2) Being you is not an empirical fact.
- (3) Being you is not a logical fact.
- (4) Being you is a fact.
- (5) Therefore, being you is a metaphysical fact.

It follows in a fairly precise sense that you are out of this world.

Argument that that something is you only admits of theological explanation:

- (1) Any metaphysical fact admits of a theological explanation or no explanation.
- (2) Nothing admits of no explanation.
- (3) Metaphysical facts only admit of theological explanation.
- (4) Being you is a metaphysical fact.
- (5) Being you admits of a theological explanation.

(1) is true because no metaphysical fact admits of empirical explanation. Only God has the attributes necessary to be the cause of non-empirical facts.

(2) is true because if something has no explanation it has no reason to be. If it had no reason to be it would not be. It is, so there is a reason for it to be.

Argument that that something is you only admits of theological explanation:

- (1) Being you is a metaphysical fact.
- (2) Metaphysical facts only admit of theological explanation
- (3) Therefore, being you only admits of theological explanation.

Are you a miracle?

- (1) miracle (def.) a significant and qualitatively unique or unusual event, inexplicable by natural law, and caused by God.
- (2) Your own existence is a significant and qualitatively unique or unusual event, inexplicable by natural law, and caused by God.
- (3) Therefore, your own existence is a miracle.

Why should this be so? How Come?

Argument that there is a theological explanation of your own existence:

- (1) There is no naturalistic explanation of your own existence.
- (2) There is not no explanation of your own existence.
- (3) There is an ultimate explanation of your own existence.
- (4) Any explanation that is not naturalistic but ultimate is theological.
- (5) Therefore, there is a theological explanation of your own existence.

Argument that your existence is a miracle:

- (1) Your existence is significant.
- (2) Your existing is a qualitatively unique or unusual event.
- (3) Your existence is inexplicable by natural law.
- (4) Your existence was caused by God.
- (5) Therefore, your existence is a miracle.

One's own existence is, in a fairly precise sense, a "miracle." It does not violate any laws of nature, but nor is it to be explained in terms of them. The term "miracle" is reserved for an unusual event, not just one that is naturally inexplicable. That a human being is you, is unusual. It is not to be confused with the generalized thought that there are people, or even the more insightful thought that anyone is someone or other. Only you are you. This essential uniqueness qualifies as a miracle, and should be recognized as such. We need God and the soul to explain why each of us exists and what it is for us to be who we are. The problem of being someone compels us to adopt a theological framework for its solution.

Why are you, you?

This question is meaningful and profound, even though meaningless to the secular, materialist, or conditioned mind. "Why are you, you?" means: "Why is whatever is you, you?" or: "Why is whatever it is you are, you?" What have you said about this human being, this constellation of atoms, if you have said that it is you?

Argument that some human being's being the one you view the world from is not that human being's self-identity:

- (1) Every human being is self-identical.

- (2) You view the world from only one human being.
- (3) That some human being is self-identical is not sufficient for that human being's being the one you view the world from (from (1) and (2)).
- (4) There is something sufficient for a human being's being the one you view the world from.
- (5) That which is sufficient for some human being's being the one you view the world from is not self-identity.

Even the self-identity of this particular human being is not what its being the one you view the world from consists in. That there is a view from this particular human being does not entail that it is your view, even if you have that view at present. That this particular human being is the one you view the world from is a further fact over and above its being the one that it is. This particular human being's being the one you view the world from is not just its being self-identical.

The problem of other minds rests on the unnoticed distinction between being oneself and not being anyone else. Epistemology presupposes metaphysics.

Is something's being the one you view the world from its being numerically distinct from anything else?

Something's being the one you view the world from is an extra fact over and above something's numerical difference from anything else. There is no valid inference from: “

“This particular human being is numerically distinct from anything it is not,”

to

““This particular human being is the one you view the world from.”

That this particular human being is numerically distinct from any human being it is not, is not sufficient for its being the one you view the world from. Something's being the one you view the world from is an extra fact over and above that thing's not being anything it is not.

Argument that some human being's being the one you view the world from is not its being numerically distinct from anything else:

- (1) Every human being is numerically distinct from any other human being.
- (2) You only view the world from one human being.
- (3) That some human being is numerically distinct from any other is not a sufficient condition for that human being's being the one you view the world from. (from (1) and (2))
- (4) There is some difference between one human being and any other sufficient for this particular human being's being the one you view the world from.
- (5) Therefore, the difference between one human being and any other sufficient for this particular human being's being the one you view the world from is not a numerical difference.

Is the numerical difference between two things an essential difference? x can become y .

That suggests that x and y if distinct are contingently distinct.

From the fact that a particular human being exists, and is distinct from every other being, it does not follow that that human being is the one you view the world from. That a human being is the one you view the world from is a metaphysical fact for which no physical, mental, or logical fact is sufficient.

What is a mind?

There is a distinction between that which thinks, what is thought, and the thinking of what is thought.

mind (*def.*) whatever has a capacity to think

mind (*def.*) a totality of thoughts (propositions)

mind (*def.*) a totality of thoughts (attitudes)

Are you this mind?

Suppose this mind is the only mind you are directly acquainted with.

Argument that you are not necessarily this mind:

- (1) This mind is a totality of thoughts.
- (2) For any thought, you might not have had that thought.
- (3) You only contingently have this mind.
- (4) Therefore, you are not necessarily this mind.

About any thought had by you we may ask: "What have you said about this thought when you have claimed it is your thought?" It is correct but inadequate to say "It is one of a set of logically, semantically, and phenomenologically related thoughts in a single mind called 'mine.'" This only shifts the problem onto your whole mind, and does not explain what it is for this entire consciousness or set of interrelated thoughts to be yours. I am not any mental act or content nor set of mental acts or contents. I am that which engages in mental activity with content. I am that which thinks, not any thought nor the thinking of any thought.

Am I mental?

Argument that I am something that is not mental:

- (1) I am not mental.
- (2) I am something rather than nothing.
- (3) Therefore I am something that is not mental.

Are you out of your mind?

You are out of your mind.

Are you your body?

Argument that you are not necessarily your body:

- (1) There are possible worlds in which this body exists but you do not.
- (2) There are possible worlds in which you exist but this body does not.
- (3) You are only contingently related to your body.
- (4) Therefore, your body is not necessarily you.

Are you a Physical Object?

Argument that you are not necessarily a physical object:

- (1) There are possible worlds in which physical objects exist but you do not.
- (2) There are possible worlds in which you exist but physical objects do not.
- (3) You are something rather than nothing.
- (4) Therefore, you are not necessarily a physical object.

Are you your brain?

The brain is only billions of atoms moving in empty space. For all its anatomical complexity, the brain is only pieces of matter in motion. No matter how sophisticated our neuroscience, the gap between billions of atoms in empty space and consciousness is completely unbridged.

One atom cannot see. Two atoms cannot see. Billions of atoms whirling in the void cannot see. This is what I mean when I say that science does not have the answers. Nor is science the best method we have. The standards of logical rigor, argument, and proof in academic philosophy are far higher than those required in the natural sciences, including physics.

The brain does not see. You see. We do not know what sees because we do not know what we are. We do know that whatever sees is invisible. The seer is not seen (Nagel, brain). Answering automatically “the brain” is already to abdicate what is given and to import a supposedly objective but in fact highly conditioned idea.

You might ask: Why cannot the true explanation be in terms of the conditioned? On one level, an empirical level, it is obviously right that I cannot see without a brain and cannot see without eyes. This does nothing to answer “What sees?”

Are you contingently identical with this particular human being?

Argument that you are contingently identical with this particular human being:

- (1) You are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.
- (2) If you are identical with this particular human being either you are necessarily identical with this particular human being or you are contingently identical with this particular human being.
- (3) You are identical with this particular human being.
- (4) Therefore, you are contingently identical with this particular human being.

You are directly acquainted with the psychological interiority of only one human being, the one you pervade, but you could in principle have been any human being or none.

A distinction obtains between:

(1) This particular human being exists.

and

(2) You are this particular human being that exists.

(2) provides new information not already contained in (1). Understanding this new information helps us understand and answer “Why are you, you?” There is a difference between there being some human being or other and your being that human being, even when that human being is this particular human being.

Argument that the relation between you and this particular human being is contingent identity (I):

- (1) There are possible worlds in which you exist but this particular human being does not exist.
- (2) You are identical with this particular human being.
- (3) If you are identical with this particular human being then you are contingently or necessarily identical with this particular human being.
- (4) You are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.
- (5) You are contingently identical with this particular human being.

Argument that the relation between you and this particular human being is contingent identity (II):

- (1) There are possible worlds in which this particular human being exists but you do not exist.
- (2) Therefore, you are not necessarily identical with this particular human being.
- (3) Therefore, if you are identical with this particular human being then you are contingently identical with this particular human being.

Premise (1) in the first argument means: in some of the worlds in which you exist but this particular human being does not, you exist but you are a different human being. In others, you exist but are not a human being. You are disembodied or closely associated with a physical or psycho-physical being other than a human being. There are possible worlds in which you exist but no human beings exist. This is counter intuitive only because of the weight of naturalist and secular preconceptions. There is no contradiction in the idea of disembodied existence.

Premise (1) in the second argument means: in worlds in which this particular human being exists but you do not, the very human being you in fact view the world from exists but you do not view the world from it. Someone else does. “Your” human being is simply another member of the public. “Your” human being is not you. This particular human being is not quite *Dasein*. This particular human being includes psychological interiority, but *Dasein* is the being of human being. This particular human being exceeds *Dasein*.

Suppose FK is the Master of the Hall. Between:

(1) FK exists.

and

(2) FK is the Master of the Hall.

there is a failure of inference, but FK is still the Master of the Hall. The failure of the inference does not prove a lack of identity. However, the identity is contingent. Perhaps “identity” is the wrong concept here. Of course, that human being, FK, is numerically identical with that human being who is the Master of the Hall. In that sense, it is right to say “FK is the Master of the Hall” is an identity statement. Nevertheless, FK and the Master of the Hall can come apart. Can *a* ever really be *b* if *a* is sometimes not *b*? Can anything not be what it is? Of course, there are changes but this is not what I mean. Can anything not be the thing it is? “FK is the Master of the Hall” expresses identity in the loose and popular sense only: as though a disguise had been uncovered, or a job taken and left.

Stephen Priest, The Problem of Being Someone

If the relation between you and yourself is identity, which might be doubted, it is contingent identity.¹⁰ In these claims:

(1) You are present as this particular human being.

(2) You are present at this particular human being.

you are the presence, not the human being.

Could this particular human being have existed without you existing?

This seems utterly impossible but it is possible. This particular human being who you in fact are might have existed without you existing. That living breathing human being with a psychological interiority who is reading this book now might have existed but you might have had nothing to do with it. This particular human being would then have been just another member of the public. You would not have occupied the standpoint of this particular human being. You would then not have viewed the world from this particular human being. Perhaps someone else would. The existence of this particular human being would have been much like the existence of all those human beings who, now, are not you. Your human being would be another, or someone else, or no-one.

It is logically and metaphysically possible that this particular human being should have existed if you did not exist. This is sufficient for any putative identity between you and this particular human being to be contingent.

10) Heidegger insightfully suggests that what we ordinarily take ourselves to be in our day to day actions is not what we fundamentally are: "It could be that the 'who' of everyday *Dasein* just is not the 'I myself'." Heidegger, *Being and Time*, I.4. 25, 150. Heidegger is describing what it is to be someone at the level of being, at the level of *Fundamentalontologie*, not psychology or psychologistic philosophy: "Is it ... obvious a priori that access to *Dasein* must be gained only by mere reflective awareness of the 'I' of actions? What if this kind of 'giving itself' on the part of *Dasein* should lead our existential analytic astray and do so, indeed, in a manner grounded in the being of *Dasein* itself? Perhaps when *Dasein* addresses itself in the way which is closest to itself, it always says 'I am this entity,' and in the long run says this loudest when it is 'not' this entity. *Dasein* is in each case mine, and this is its constitution; but what if this should be the very reason why, proximally and for the most part, *Dasein* is not itself?" Heidegger, *Being and Time*, I.4. 25, 151.

Are you this particular human being?

In order to see that this particular human being, the one you in fact are, might have existed, just as it is, except for not being you, suppose the following:

You do not exist.

But,

A human being otherwise just like you does exist.

The world in which this holds, is the closest world to the actual world that does not contain you. The only difference between this possible world and the actual world is that a certain human being is not you. This very human being exists in both worlds.

As a heuristic, imagine someone exactly like you next to you now. Now subtract the one who you are. Suppose the other person moves to where you were. The one left over is not you but otherwise exactly like you. The only difference between you and the one in your place is you are you and the other one is not you. We need to find out what this difference entails. (It misses the point to state the obvious truth that the one who is not you came from the place next to you. The movements here are only a heuristic.)

How is the view from now-here possible?

Consider all the human beings of the past, present, and future, arranged in a line. You are then thinking of the line of people from the outside. Where are you in the line? Which one is you? Which is yourself?

What is it to be in the line, not just in the objective sense but from the inside of the line, viewing the world from the standpoint of one of the people in the line? It is as though history has been turned inside out. History in its exteriority is seamless (which is not to deny its empirical interruptions and discontinuities). This uniformity of otherness is broken where you burst into or out of history. Here you are now with the world on every side. The line of history, from this new point of view, is an idea in your mind.

Spatial metaphor is usually needed to begin metaphysical and theological thinking, because our minds are conditioned to the manipulation of the world of physical objects. Spatial metaphor needs to be discarded or treated with suspicion for the acquisition of spiritual knowledge.

What is missing from the view sub specie aeternitatis?

The view *sub specie aeternitatis* is not complete because it omits (*inter alia*) your being inside history, or your emergence into history. Your living history from the inside is a further fact over and above your objective location in history's chronology. Existentialism replaces, or supplements, the view *sub specie aeternitatis* with the view from now-here.

Why are you in history?

It is a puzzling and striking fact that out of all the human beings there have been, are, and will be, you yourself are one of them. You are, inserted into history from the inside as yourself. Were you inserted? Where did you come from? Why are you here? Being in history needs an explanation: an explanation adequate to own-ness. There is no grafting of subjectivity onto objectivity as some epi-phenomenon. This is the mistake of modernity.

From:

(1) There exists the set of all human beings, past present, and future.

and

(2) The set of all human beings, past present, and future includes this particular human being

we cannot validly derive the conclusion:

(3) You are a member of the set of all human beings, past, present, and future.

Notice that there is not just a failure of inference from (1) to (2) but, crucially, from (1) and (2) to (3). There is not just the obvious invalidity of the inference from a set to a putative member of that set. There is also the far less obvious invalidity of the inference from a set of things like you, including the being you normally take yourself to be, to your own existence.

Any possible world either contains or does not contain a particular being. Any temporal possible world contains its own history.

Any possible world either contains you or does not contain you. *A fortiori*, any temporal possible world contains or does not contain you in its history. We need to know:

What is the difference between a possible world in which you exist and one in which you do not exist? Actuality.

Why should it be that out of all these human beings, you are one of them?

It is not enough to talk about birth here. The philosophical question “How come that particular birth gave rise to you?” has still not been touched. Why did it bring you into the world? Why did it not just bring a person or someone else into the world? The answer to this question lies outside the world.

Is the problem of being someone about origins?

Argument that the problem of being someone is not about origins (I):

- (1) There is an infinite number of possible worlds in which you exist but did not begin to be.
- (2) The problem of being someone arises in every world in which you exist.
- (3) The problem of being someone arises if you exist but did not begin to be.
- (4) Therefore, the problem of being someone does not concern origins.

The problem is not about origins because it would still exist even if this being had always existed. We may still ask about this being without an origin: What is it for it to be you? You could have had no origin but you would still have been you. You could have had a different origin from the origin you had but you would still have been you. (Premise (1) is consistent with the occurrence of a first event because you are not essentially composed of events).¹¹

11) Kripke is right to argue that: “Perhaps in some possible world Mr. and Mrs. Truman had a child who actually became the Queen of England and was even passed off as the child of other parents. This still would not be a situation in which this very woman whom we call ‘Elizabeth II’ was the child of Mr. and Mrs. Truman, or so it seems to me.” Kripke, *Naming*, 112–13. But that is because being the Queen of England is not a sufficient condition for being that very woman who is in fact Elizabeth II, rather than because anything

Argument that the problem of being someone is not about origins (II):

- (1) There is an infinite number of possible worlds in which you exist as this particular human being but this particular human being has a different origin.
- (2) The problem of being someone arises in every world in which you exist.
- (3) The problem of being someone arises if this particular human being exists but had a different origin.
- (4) Therefore, the problem of being someone does not concern origins.

There is no contradiction in the supposition that, for any being, this very being had a different origin. Your origin is not essentially yours but you are essentially you.

Could everything have had a different origin?

Nothing has its (particular or kind of) origin essentially. There is no contradiction in the supposition that this very being had a different origin from the origin it had, only falsity.

The problem about being you is not about origins because it would still exist even if this particular human being had always existed. We may still ask about this particular human being without an origin: What is it for it to be you? Not only is there a failure of inference from:

(1) This being exists

to

(2) This being is you.

has its (kind of) origin essentially. Here Kripke expresses only a biological impossibility, not a logical or a metaphysical impossibility: "How could a person originating from different parents, from a totally different sperm and egg, be this very woman? ... It seems to me that anything coming from a different origin would not be this object." Kripke, *Naming*, 113. In these cases, Kripke (and for that matter, Sartre earlier on), are talking about the origin of a human being. I am talking about what it is for you to be a human being, this one. If the relation between you and one particular human being is identity, which might be doubted, it is at best contingent identity.

There is a failure of inference from:

(1) This being has always existed

to

(3) This being is you.

And from:

(1) This being began to be at such and such a place and time

and

(2) This being exists,

to

(3) This being is you.

Are you your body?

You are not your body. You are not just in your body. Your body has never been alive. You animate your body. Your body does not animate itself.

If you say about your hand (perhaps looking at your hand and holding it up) “this is my hand” what exactly have you claimed about this hand? It is true, but not enough, to say “It is attached to my body.” This only shifts the problem onto your whole body. What have you said about this body when you have said it is yours? It is at least true of your hand that you pervade your hand, but what pervades your hand if you pervade your hand?

What is it for this body to be yours?

No set of empirical or psycho-physical facts is sufficient for any human body being your body, not even facts about the body of this particular human being. This body is yours because you pervade it, because you are where it is without being it.

Are you your ego?

The ego is the emotion-saturated constellation of images, thoughts, and impressions that is your inner self-depiction. It includes more of what you would like this particular human being to be than of what this particular human being is. Nevertheless, if your ego is part of this particular human being, part of its psychology, then thinking of yourself in this way is partly being this way.

You are not your ego because a thought presupposes a thinker of that thought otherwise it is not right to speak of “thought” here. A thought is a thought because it is thought, in the sense of subjected to thinking and only a subject can subject anything to thinking.

Is “Why is someone you?” an ontological problem?

By “an ontological problem” I mean a problem about what exists or what does not exist, including any problem that could be solved by showing what exists or does not exist.¹²

Argument that “Why is someone you?” is an ontological problem:

- (1) That someone is you is an ontological fact.
- (2) Why someone is you is a problem.
- (3) Any problem essentially about an ontological fact is an ontological problem.
- (4) Therefore, why someone is you is an ontological problem.

12) Sartre is one of that minority of philosophers who understands some version of the problem of being someone: “There is a metaphysical problem concerning birth in that I can be anxious to know how I happen to have been born from that particular embryo.” Unfortunately, he quickly shies away from it: “This problem is perhaps insoluble. But it is not an ontological problem,” Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 139. In fairness to Sartre, he says the problem is “perhaps” insoluble, but he does not try to solve it. When Sartre says the problem is not ontological, he is in the company of those philosophers who reject the thesis that a “new entity” would solve the problem. See Sartre, *L’Etre*, 139; Nagel, *Nowhere*; Peacocke, “Nagel”; and Blackburn, *Think*, chpt. 4. Peacocke and Blackburn think all the same problems arise for any such new entity. The “new entity” that is the often unnamable is the soul.

Is there an ontological explanation for something's being you?

Argument that there is an ontological explanation of someone's being you (I):

- (1) That someone is you is an ontological fact.
- (2) There is an explanation of someone's being you.
- (3) Only ontological facts can explain ontological facts.
- (4) Therefore, there is an ontological explanation of someone's being you.

“Why is someone you?” is an ontological problem because there is something it consists in to be you and you exist. Therefore, whatever it consists in for you to be you exists.

Argument that there is an ontological explanation for someone's being you (II):

- (1) Only something that exists can explain something that exists.
- (2) You exist.
- (3) There is an explanation of your existence.
- (4) Your existence is explained by something that exists.
- (5) Therefore, there is an ontological explanation for someone's being you.

Whatever it is to be you exists. The ontological problem is saying what that is. The problem is ontological because it can only be solved by the existence of something non-physical, non-mental, and non-modal. We have to think outside these accepted categories to solve it. In your particular case, your being you consists in something you are essentially and that is essentially you.

How can you be this human being?

The question rests on a false assumption. You are not this human being if “are” means here “are strictly (or necessarily, or essentially) numerically identical with.” The answer is theological if “are” means “to pervade.”

How can you be only this human being?

You are not only this human being. Your being *exceeds* the being of this particular human being. There is a possible world in which you are not that psycho-physical human born in a certain place at a certain time who is reading this book. That very

psycho-physical human being exists in that world, but it is someone else. In the actual world, it is an extra fact about that individual that you are that individual.¹³

Am I this particular human being in other possible worlds?

There is a possible world in which I am not that psycho-physical human being born in a certain place at a certain time in England who authored this book. That very psycho-physical human being exists in that world, but it is someone else. In the actual world, it is an extra fact about that individual that I am that individual.

Is the problem of being you the mind-body problem?

Argument that the problem of being you is not the mind-body problem:

- (1) The mind-body problem is the problem of stating correctly the relation between the mind and the body.
- (2) The problem of being someone is the problem of stating correctly the relation between you and this particular human being.
- (3) The problem of stating the relation between the mind and the body is not the problem of stating the relation between you and this particular human being.
- (4) Therefore, the problem of being someone is not the mind-body problem.

13) In answer to two of Nagel's questions: How can you be this specific human being? The answer is you are not, if by "are" means "are numerically identical with." How can you be only this specific human being? You are not. Your being exceeds the being of one particular human being. Nagel is right to say: "The fact that it is possible to give impersonal truth conditions for first-person statements does not enable one to make those statements without using the first person. The crucial question is whether the elimination of this particular first-person thought in favor of its impersonal truth conditions leaves a significant gap in our conception of the world. I think it does." Nagel, *Nowhere*, 59. I should go further than Nagel. Your entire conception of the world is based or grounded in the fact that you exist here now. The world is presented to you as all around you. The past is what has happened before you now. The future is what will happen after you now. Although few philosophers have been able to grasp the problem Nagel is pointing to, the problem is even more acute than Nagel mentions. Your own existence is indispensable to your view of the world: not just in the obvious sense that unless you existed you could have no view, but in the further sense that your being here now makes a difference to what is presented to you and how. For example, it is presented as past, present, and future, as here and elsewhere and from the center that you are. Why is this not apparent? The I that sees does not see the I that sees.

A human being is a psycho-physical totality. The problem of being someone remains a problem on these solutions to the mind body problem.

Is there a materialist solution to the problem of being someone?

If materialism were true, the problem of why someone is you would remain. If a person is only a highly complicated physical object, or set of physical processes, we still need to answer: “What have you said about this physical object when you have claimed that you are it? What have you said about this constellation of atoms moving in empty space when you have said it is you?”

Is there a dualist solution to the problem of being someone?

If mind-body dualism is true, no mental event is identical with any physical event but a human being comprises both mental and physical events. We may still ask: “What is it for some mental events and some physical events to be you?”

Is there an idealist solution to the problem of being someone?

If idealism is true then, fundamentally, only consciousness exists. We may still ask: “What is true of consciousness if it is your consciousness?”

Is there a neutral monist solution to the problem of being someone?

If neutral monism is true, a human being comprises some reality that is intrinsically neither mental nor physical but which makes that distinction possible. We may still ask: “What is it for some intrinsically neither mental nor physical reality to be you?”

Is there a functionalist solution to the problem of being someone?

If functionalism is true, then mental states are effects of sensory inputs and causes of behavioral outputs. We may still ask: “What is it for a cause or an effect to be you?”

How is your knowledge of this particular human being possible?

It is clear *a priori* that your access to this particular human being is by reflective awareness of your body and psychological interiority. The epistemological asymmetry between your knowledge of you and your knowledge of everyone else is grounded ontologically. How this particular human being is given to you is a clue to your not being necessarily numerically identical with it.

What does “am” mean?

“I am this particular human being” said by you is wrong, if “am” expresses necessary numerical identity here. “Am” is a word of immense profundity. It is the word of God. It is the word rightly used to express the existential way in which we are made in God’s image. In Japanese, we do not say “I am Stephen” but “I Stephen,” which is suggestive of numerical identity, as in “I Claudius” (Hitoshi Nagai). Some concepts are more readily expressed in some languages. Nevertheless, the reality of being subjectivity without objectivity captured by “am” obtains irrespective of linguistic contingencies.

What is it for this particular human being to be yours?

You do not ground this particular human being but you do ground this particular human being’s *being yours*. (I use “ground” in this way: *a* grounds *b* if and only if *a* is necessary for *b*). You are close to this particular human being. For you, it is infinitely proximal. You are centered on it. You know intuitively that you are not straightforwardly identical with this particular human being. You are a shadow or a ghost which spreads beyond this particular human being. You do not end where your human being ends. If you were only this particular human being you would be inert, lifeless.

This particular human being is alienable. (To resist this thought is to have been persuaded by inductive logic).

Do you coincide with this particular human being?

You do not end where your flesh ends. In both space and time, you exceed this particular human being.

Are you another?

You are another, another to another. That you think of this particular human being as another, that is, as one human being amongst others, is not wrong but inadequate to the facts. It is a metaphysically misleading and comparatively superficial habit of thought, conditioned by generalized and third-person thinking. To think of a person as only another is a mistake of science. You are the refutation of scientific materialism.

Why is self-knowledge difficult?

We think of ourselves as embedded in history. This picture substitutes for being brought up sharp by the stark reality of being all-here-now. History hides our existence from us.

Practical economy, capitalism, and bourgeois individualism, emphasize the individual but, ironically, conceal the perspectival asymmetries between you and others that begin to disclose your profound and true individuality. There is irony in individualism: individualism is not very individualistic. In individualism, the individuals are all the same.

Is the problem of being you only about the logic of indexicals?

The question “Why are you, you?” has next to nothing to do with language. You would still be you even if there was no such thing as language. Although language was hugely overrated by twentieth century philosophy, I say something about indexicals because many readers are bound to think the problem of being you as linguistic (in both senses of “bound”).

Logically, from no non-indexical description of the world, no matter how complete, may we validly derive the conclusion that you are part of it.

- (1) The world exists.
- (2) The world is *F*.....*G*.
- (3) Therefore, I am part of the world.

is an invalid inference.

Even if we specified every atom of that body that is *in fact* yours, the fact of its being yours would not thereby have been mentioned:

- (1) This particular human being exists.
- (2) This particular human being is made up of the set of atoms {.....}.
- (3) Therefore, I am this particular human being.

is an invalid inference.

Even if we specified every thought and emotion that *in fact* runs through your mind, the fact of their being yours would not thereby have been mentioned.

- (1) This particular human being exists.
- (2) This particular human being includes the sequence of mental states {...}.
- (3) Therefore, I am this particular human being.

The above is an invalid inference. Being you is not any physical, mental or logical fact about you. When all the physical and mental and modal facts are in, not all the facts are in.

Clearly, the logical independence of descriptions is not sufficient for the ontological independence of facts. "I am in pain" (uttered by you), does not entail and is not entailed by "That person is in pain," but this does not prove that the fact that you "am [are] in pain" and the fact that that person "is in pain" are not identical. If the first-person singular pronoun and the demonstrative expression "that person" are correctly used to refer to the same human being in these contexts then the truth conditions for "you are in pain" are the truth conditions for "that person is in pain."

However, the observation that any inference from the logical independence of descriptions to the ontological independence of entities is fallacious does nothing to dispel the metaphysical mystery of what it consists in for something to be you.

Why have you not previously noticed that this person "is" you?

You are so used to thinking in general, abstract, or third-person ways that you fail to notice that something is yourself.

How can "I exist" be understood?

"I exist" cannot be understood only intellectually. You have to understand it as here and now. Although you can experience yourself and you do exist, you cannot experience your own existence, because existence is not empirical. Your own existence is present to you in a way which exceeds rationalism and empiricism but is presupposed by both philosophies. You intuit your own existence. Your own existence is not an inference you draw from your thought or experience of yourself, even though any such inference is sound. You are present to yourself. This means, your presence is present to yourself.

What is true of anything if you are it?

Certain asymmetries obtain between what is disclosed by being a person, the person who you are, and observing a person, any person who you are not. These asymmetries shake the assumption that you are strictly numerically identical with the human being you normally take yourself to be.

[9]. The existence of the soul

Are you a spiritual being?

‘a being (*def.*) x is a being iff x exists and x is numerically distinct from anything else.

‘spiritual (*def.*) x is spiritual iff x is immaterial, subjective, pervasive of anything it is not, unbounded, a person.

Argument that you are spiritual:

- (1) Anything that is a presence is spiritual in the precise sense of being immaterial, subjective, pervasive, unbounded, a person.
- (2) You are a presence.
- (3) Therefore, you are spiritual.

You take your self to be this particular human being: this particular human being, this psycho-physical constellation of projects and projections, but that which is present though this particular human being is not this particular human being. You are not this psycho-physical human being but that which pervades it. You are your self or you. A spiritual being is a self, so: You are not this particular human being. You are your self.

What is a soul?

soul (*def.*) finite spiritual substance

So, by the definition of “spiritual” above:

‘soul (*def.*) x is a soul *iff* x is a finite substance which is immaterial, subjective, pervasive of anything it is not, unbounded, and a person.

By a person I mean:

person (*def.*) someone in the sense of “someone” in “being someone.”

“Soul” is used in various senses. Arguably, each of these is a contribution to a definition, or expresses a necessary condition for being a soul:

‘soul (*def.*) your soul is essentially you, so logically necessary and sufficient for your existence

soul (*def.*) the soul is not intrinsically mental or physical

‘soul (*def.*) the soul is not of this world so it is not a natural entity

‘soul (*def.*) the soul is *a kind of presence* and so accounts for your own presence in, or as, this particular human being

soul (*def.*) the soul is immaterial

soul (*def.*) the soul is simple

‘soul (*def.*) the soul is invisible

If these features are necessary, then a tentative definition of “soul” is:

soul (*def.*) simple, immaterial, finite, presence with absolute interiority

Are you a soul?

Argument that you are a soul (I):

- (1) Something is essentially you, so logically necessary and sufficient for your existence.
- (2) That which is essentially you is neither mental nor physical nor abstract.
- (3) Anything which exists is either mental, physical, abstract or spiritual.
- (4) You are spiritual.
- (5) You are finite.
- (6) Anything finite and spiritual is a soul.
- (7) Therefore, you are a soul.

Argument that you are a soul (II):

- (1) You are simple.
- (2) You are immaterial.
- (3) You are a kind of presence.
- (4) You have absolute interiority.
- (5) Therefore, you are a soul.

You are out of this world so not a natural entity.

Has anyone ever seen anyone else?

Perhaps surprisingly, no-one has ever seen anyone else. We are invisible. We only ever see each other's bodies.

The soul of traditional theism has the properties that being you consists in. You have those properties. Therefore, you are a soul.

The idea that you are a soul is anathema to the materialist and scientific thinking that dominates modernity. However, there is no materialist or scientific explanation of a being's being you. Once we understand the metaphysical question we should expect a theological answer.

What exists if and only if you exist?

Your soul is what you consist in. The soul is identified with innermost being. "Inmost" can be read in two ways which are mutually consistent. "Innermost" means essen-

tial or necessary, so to say the soul is my innermost being is to say it is what being me consists in. The soul is logically or metaphysically necessary and sufficient for my existence. “Innermost” also means “pertaining to my spiritual interiority.”

Your own being is an absolute interiority, an inside without an outside. This interiority is identical with the interiority of the soul. By creating a soul, God has bestowed upon a human being the property of being someone.

What can a man give in exchange for his soul?

Nothing. The claim is not just that there is nothing more important to the welfare of a human being than the salvation of their soul. You cannot exchange souls with anyone else. You and I could, logically, (say, given enough advanced technology), exchange bodies or minds. We could not exchange souls because we are our souls. We could exchange human beings because we pervade these human beings. Philosophical questions: theological answers.

[10]. The Autological Argument for the Existence of God

Is there a Sound Autological Argument for the Existence of God?

I offer an argument for the existence of God from your own existence. I call this the autological argument. By “an autological argument” I mean any deductive argument from some premise which is a first person singular existential claim. By “God,” a unique, eternal, infinite, immaterial, omniscient, omnipotent, and benevolent creator of the universe.

The Autological Argument for the existence of God:

- (1) I exist.
- (2) I was caused to be.
- (3) There can be no natural cause of my existence.
- (4) There is a non-natural cause of my existence.
- (5) The non-natural cause of my existence is God.
- (6) Therefore, God exists.

The argument is valid because it would be contradictory to affirm the premises but deny the conclusion. It is sound because it is valid and all its premises are true. To

show that the premises are true it is necessary to show that there is nothing true that is inconsistent with any of them. I consider each premise in turn.

(1) I exist.

If propositions are individuated by their truth conditions, then “I exist” produced by you expresses a different proposition from “I exist” produced by me. The auto-logical argument is sound irrespective of which particular first person singular existential claim is expressed by “I exist.” A sufficient condition for the truth of the proposition expressed by “I exist” is that the sentence “I exist” be affirmed or denied. So if, for example, you affirm or deny “I exist” then it follows that “I exist” is true. It does not follow that “I exist” is a necessary truth. “I exist” would have been false if the person affirming or denying “I exist” had not existed, but then that token utterance of “I exist” would not have existed. The proof of “I exist” has the status of a transcendental argument: Its truth is a necessary condition for my experience. My experience is sufficient for its truth. Therefore, nothing within my experience can refute it, yet in principle, it could have been false. For example, its negation does not entail a contradiction and there is an infinite number of possible worlds in which I do not exist.

(2) I was caused to be.

This premise is true only if I began to be. If I exist then either I began to be or I have always existed. By (1) I do exist.

The overwhelming empirical evidence is that I have not always existed but began to be. On third person authority it seems that the human being who I “am” was conceived by two parents and was born at a specific time and a specific place. From the first-person singular point of view of my own memories I cannot remember anything earlier than my early childhood. It does not follow that I existed no earlier than I can remember, but it does follow that I have no memory of having existed earlier than my conception. It would require special evidence to show that I existed before my conception or birth. In the absence of such evidence, it is right to conclude that I have not always existed. I have not always existed so I began to be.

Stephen Priest, The Problem of Being Someone

There are two ways of denying (2): 1. I did not begin. 2. I was not caused to be, either because I did not begin or because I began without cause.

If I have not always existed, I began to be. If I began to be then either I was caused to be or began to be *ex nihilo* and for no reason. It is simpler, and so more likely to be true, that I was caused to be.

It is difficult to disprove the thesis that the soul has always existed. Arguably, all and only those items incapable of ceasing to be are incapable of beginning to be. This is right if ceasing to be is impossible because transitions between being and nothingness are impossible. Then there could be no transition from not being to being, not only no transition from being to not being. Although there is no logical proof that I have not always been, that I began to be is empirically compelling.

If I have always existed, there is even more need for some non-naturalistic explanation of my existing.

(3) There can be no natural cause of my existence.

By “a cause” is meant “a sufficient condition” so this premise entails that there can be no natural sufficient condition of my existence. (Of course, I do not deny that there are natural necessary conditions for my existence if we understand me to “be” a certain human being.) There is no natural cause of my existence because some existence being my own existence is not a natural fact and a fact that is not a natural fact cannot be caused naturally.

To see that something that exists is me is not a natural feature of that thing consider the following. From no description of a person does it logically follow that that person is me.

This is not just the familiar point that from no non-indexical description of someone does it logically follow that that description is a description of a particular person. It is the further point that from the existence of a particular person we cannot logically derive the conclusion that that person is me. This conclusion does not go through even if that person is me. Heuristically, I might not have existed even if Stephen Priest had existed. Once Stephen Priest exists not all the facts about Stephen Priest are in. There remains the extra fact that I am Stephen Priest. You object:

“Can something non-natural have a natural cause?”

No. Having a natural cause is sufficient for being natural. You object: “Artificial objects (artifacts) have natural necessary conditions and perhaps natural sufficient conditions but are not natural.” These count as natural. By “non-natural” I do not mean artificial. I mean supernatural or divine.

(4) There is a non-natural cause of my existence.

Follows from conjunction of (2) and (3).

(5) The non-natural cause of my existence is God.

Only God is powerful enough to create oneself. God is the soul-maker. The cause of your existence is omniscient because he knows how to create oneself. The cause is benevolent because it is good that you exist.

The cause is infinite because only an infinite cause can cause the infinitude of the soul. The cause is immaterial. Something physical is natural so if the cause is not natural it is immaterial. God is not natural so God is not physical. The cause is spiritual because you are spiritual and only something spiritual can cause something spiritual. Does the cause have to be like the effect? If so, some properties of God (the cause) may be inferred from properties of the effect (oneself). This is part of the truth that I am made in God’s image: God is the macrocosm; you are the microcosm. In you, God has created a finite and limited version of himself. Your being is of the same kind as God’s being: me-ness and subjectivity, are captured by “am” but inadequately by “is.”¹⁴

14) Whether we are souls, and whether God exists, clearly bear urgently on how we answer: “Should I fear death?” “Should we mourn the dead?” “If so, why and how?” and related questions. On the philosophy of attitudes to death, see Slawkowski-Rode, *Mourning*. For related questions about the meaning of life, see Waghorn *Nothingness*.

The regress of explanation generated in answering ‘What is it for anything to be me?’ is halted in your being *this* soul, *this* absolute interiority. You are essentially this soul. For this reason, I do not endorse Aquinas’ claim ‘Anima mea non est ego’ (Aquinas “My Soul”, Priest “Anima”). Only a Platonic or Cartesian soul is adequate to this role, so Aristotelianism is not enough. Ralph Stephan Weir has usefully argued that property dualism collapses into substance dualism. (Weir “Substances” and *Mind-Body*).

That the soul is a substance is not sufficient for mind-body dualism, because it is consistent with idealism. See the essays collected in Göcke and Farris, *Idealism* and in Göcke and Weir, *Existentialism*. For the variety of putative solutions to the mind-body problem see Priest, *Theories*.

(6) God exists.

An Autological Argument may be presented briefly:

- (1) Someone is you.
- (2) There is an explanation of someone's being you.
- (3) Any explanation is empirical, logical, or theological.
- (4) There is no empirical or logical explanation of someone's being you.
- (5) There is a theological explanation of someone's being you.
- (6) If there is a theological explanation of someone's being you then God exists.
- (7) Therefore, God exists.

Why are you, you?

You are you because God made someone you. A philosophical question has a theological answer.

Why are you, you?

God made this particular human being you by creating an immaterial soul. God has bestowed upon this particular human being the property of being you. The philosophical question "Why are you, you?" has a theological answer.

Argument from the soul to the Existence of God (I):

- (1) Your existence as a soul has no natural cause.
- (2) Anything with the power to cause your own existence as a soul is rightly called God.
- (3) There is a cause of your existence as a soul.
- (4) Therefore, you were created by God.

In so far as there is something that it consists in for something to be you, to be me, and so on, we are God's creation. God is the soul-maker.¹⁵

15) I am grateful to my colleague Stephen Mulhall for the expression: God as "soul-maker."

Argument from the soul to the Existence of God (II):

- (1) By inference to the ultimate explanation, something is only you if it is ultimately you.
- (2) Your soul is ultimately you.
- (3) By inference to the ultimate explanation, your soul exists only if whatever is capable of creating souls exists.
- (4) Only God can create souls.
- (5) Therefore, the explanation of your own existence is theological.
- (6) God exists.

By “inference to the ultimate explanation,” I mean the halting of a chain of necessary conditions by a necessary condition with no necessary condition except itself.¹⁶

Argument from the Soul to the Existence of God (III):

- (1) Now is the time it is (inside the soul).
- (2) There is no empirical or logical explanation of its being now (inside the soul).
- (3) Any explanation is either empirical or logical or theological.
- (4) There is an explanation of its being now (inside the soul).
- (5) There is a theological explanation of its being now (inside the soul).
- (6) Therefore, God exists.

We are no nearer understanding what it consists in for anything to be you. We do not know what property something has if and only if it is you. We do not know what value to allocate to “F” in: $F(a) \leftrightarrow (a = \text{you})$. But we are now in a position to answer a closely related question: Why is anything you? God made something you. Philosophical questions: theological answers.¹⁷

16) We break the hold Kant has over philosophy by identifying the transcendental with the transcendent. We reseal the circle that Kant has broken. We push Kant’s Kantianism far beyond Kant’s conclusions so that, in the end, critical philosophy and metaphysics coincide. This ending, which would have horrified Kant, is *reasoning to ultimate presuppositions*: presuppositions which are neither only logical, nor only psychological, but theological. See Kant, *Critique*.

17) Ironically, it was the influential materialist J. J. C. Smart who said that if the mind was more than the brain it would be “something new under the sun,” something which would be inexplicable in terms the scientific laws we have discovered. He of course offered this as grounds for skepticism and naturalism. I draw the opposite inference: We have to re-describe your own existence theologically: You are a portal to God.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the following for useful conversations about the problem of being someone, or related issues: Joshua Farris, Benedikt Paul Göcke, Fergus Kerr, Saul Kripke, Nicola Masciandaro, Thomas Nagel, Robert Nozick, Derek Parfit, Terence Penelham, Roger Penrose, Mikołaj Sławkowski-Rode, Richard Swinburne, Nicholas Waghorn, Ralph Stefan Weir, Timothy Williamson.

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