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**Article:**

Olson, E.T. (2003) *Was Jekyll Hyde?* *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 66 (2). pp. 328-348. ISSN 0031-8205

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# Was Jekyll Hyde?

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Many philosophers say that two or more people or thinking beings could share a single human being in a split-personality case, if only the personalities were sufficiently independent and individually well integrated. I argue that this view is incompatible with our being material things, and conclude that there could never be two or more people in a split-personality case. This refutes the view, almost universally held, that facts about mental unity and disunity determine how many people there are. I suggest that the number of human people is simply the number of appropriately endowed human animals.

## 1.

We all know stories about split personality, or “dissociative-identity disorder” as the psychiatrists say. Someone suddenly changes so radically in his behavior, personality, beliefs, mental abilities, moral qualities, and even physical features that we scarcely recognize him, and later reverts just as suddenly to his original condition. The good-hearted physician Jekyll becomes a ruthless criminal, Hyde, and after a night’s rampage changes back again, horrified at what he has done, all the more so for fear that he may do it again. One person somehow has two personalities.

Others tell the story differently: a single human being is somehow the home of two different thinking agents—two people or persons—who alternate in controlling its movements. Jekyll may be horrified at what *Hyde* has done, but he himself has done nothing wrong, apart from performing the ill-fated pharmacological experiment that brought Hyde into being.

Which way of telling the story is the right one depends on whether Jekyll *is* Hyde—whether Jekyll and Hyde are two or one. Split personality raises questions about our identity because both descriptions seem right. We want to say that there is just one person in the story, who simply thinks and acts in very different ways at different times, because there is just one human being or human animal there. We also want to say that there are two people—that Jekyll isn’t Hyde—because that one human being thinks and acts, so to speak, as if it were two. Yet the two descriptions are incompatible: Jekyll and Hyde cannot be both identical and not identical.

The second description has a good deal of support. Some experts think that two or more people—two intelligent, rational, self-conscious beings—share a single human being in some real cases of split personality. Many more think that it might happen, if only the split were deep enough. If the personalities in such a case *were* ever individually full and well-rounded and independent of one another in the right way, whether or not this ever happens in real life, the people would outnumber the human beings. For want of a better name, I will call this the *Cohabitation Claim*. Doubts about whether there are more people than human beings in actual cases of split personality are almost always about whether the personalities in those cases are ever sufficiently full or independent of one another. Though many doubt whether the antecedent of the Cohabitation Claim is ever satisfied, few question the Claim itself.<sup>1</sup> This is not surprising. The Claim follows from the idea, almost universally held since Locke, that the number of people in a situation is determined by psychological facts, in particular by facts about psychological unity and disunity. Nearly everyone assumes that if you have two centers of consciousness, or points of view, or unified and independent systems of mental functioning or the like, you necessarily have two different thinking beings. I will say more about this general principle later.

I am going to argue that the Cohabitation Claim is false. There could never be two or more people in a case of split personality, no matter how deep the split. I reject the Claim because it appears to rule out any plausible view about what sort of things you and I are. In particular, it rules out our being material things—things made of flesh and blood. If we think carefully about what we are, and especially about what non-mental properties we have, we will see that there is simply no room for two of us within one human being. Or at least not in a split-personality case. If this is right, it has important consequences for the neglected but important question of what determines how many of us there are at any one time, the so-called problem of synchronic identity. It implies that the number of thinking beings does not follow from facts about mental unity and disunity.

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<sup>1</sup> Gillett (1986) and Lizza (1993) doubt the antecedent but not the Claim. Anderson (1976), Wilkes (1988: 127f.), and Radden (1996) say that there is more than one thinking being in actual cases of split personality; see also Broad (1923: 16). The Cohabitation Claim dates back at least as far as Locke (1975: 344); its contemporary advocates include MacIntosh (1974: 455f.), Shoemaker (1984: 97), Carruthers (1986: 226), Glover (1988: 25), Lowe (1996: 31), and Rovane (1998: 169ff.). Hofstadter and Dennett *define* split personality as “two or more persons ‘inhabiting’ one body for alternating periods of time” (1981: 479). Note that the Claim is that there could be two numerically different people within one human being. The idea that someone suffering from split personality might “be” two different people in a sense not involving numerical identity, in something like the way that an actress might alternate between “being” Ophelia and “being” Rosalind, is of no meta-physical interest.

Let us have a concrete example. We want a representative test case, one where two different people would share one human being if this could ever be so due to split personality. The story of Jekyll and Hyde is not, alas, ideal for this purpose. Nor are the fascinating real cases of Christine Beauchamp, Eve, or Sybil. So with some reluctance I will set aside these colorful characters of fiction and clinical history and turn instead to a comparatively dull philosopher's story—one designed to avoid the sorts of anomalies and unexpected twists that may make for a good tale, but are likely to lead us astray.

Imagine, then, a human being with two personalities, one of which is "out" or active on even days, and the other of which is active on odd days. Each day at midnight, like clockwork, one personality goes dormant and the other takes over. Call the being who thinks and acts on even days *Even* and the one who thinks and acts on odd days *Odd*. (By 'thinking' or 'thought' I mean any sort of mental activity or state.) Suppose that *Even* cannot recall, on even days, anything that *Odd* thinks or does on odd days, and that *Odd* likewise cannot recall on odd days anything that *Even* does or thinks on even days. On even days, *Even* can learn what *Odd* did or experienced on past odd days only by doing detective work: by interrogating witnesses and examining traces of *Odd*'s behavior, such as the mess he left in the bedroom. *Even* sincerely denies, on even days, any responsibility for what *Odd* does on odd days. *Even*'s thoughts and actions on even days affect those of *Odd* on odd days in something like the way that your thoughts and actions might affect those of someone who shared your living quarters and slept in your bed, but who was always out when you were at home so that you never met. Likewise for *Odd*, on odd days, with respect to even-day thoughts and actions. Let the two personalities be as full and well-rounded as the circumstances permit, so that no one familiar with *Even* on even days or with *Odd* on odd days would have any reason to suspect anything unusual, apart from their curious inability to report firsthand on events or experiences from alternate days. (They might claim to spend every second day asleep.)

If this is not enough to get us to think that *Even* and *Odd* are two people if there could ever be two people in a split-personality case, let the two personalities be very different. *Even* (on even days) is cheerful and gregarious, while *Odd* (on odd days) is sullen and withdrawn. *Even* enjoys smoking on even days; *Odd* detests it on odd days. We may want to add that the even-day and the odd-day thoughts could no more *become* integrated, through psychotherapy or the like, than your thoughts could become integrated with mine. Fill out the story as you like, resolving any further details in whatever way would most favor the view that there are two people.

If the case histories we find in textbooks of abnormal psychology are accurate, something not all too different from this ought to be possible, even

if it would be unlikely ever to arise except perhaps as the result of an elaborate and highly immoral medical experiment. Those who distrust fanciful thought experiments may want to replace my story with whatever *they* think is the possible case of split personality most likely to involve more than one thinking being, and imagine my comments modified so as to apply to it.

My question, then, is whether Even—the one who thinks and acts on even days—is Odd, the one who thinks and acts on odd days. Are Even and Odd two or one? Is the being who is cheerful and gregarious on even days the one who is sullen and withdrawn on odd days, or a numerically different being? This question is not answered simply by the way we introduced the names ‘Even’ and ‘Odd’. Even was said to be the one who thinks and acts on even days; that doesn’t by itself rule out his also thinking and acting on odd days, or Odd’s thinking and acting on even days. I will assume that the Cohabitation Claim is true if and only if Even and Odd would be two different beings.

### 3.

I fear that some may doubt whether there is any objective fact here to be discovered. “Whether Even is Odd depends on how we choose to describe the case. It depends on our concept of a person. According to one concept, Even and Odd are two. According to another, they are one. We cannot say which is right until we settle on a concept. More likely our ordinary concept of a person is simply not up to the task. Being designed to deal with ordinary life, it isn’t precise enough to tell us in all possible cases whether we have one person or two. So we cannot discover whether Even is Odd. At most we can *decide* the matter by sharpening our concept of a person.”

This is rather puzzling. The question was whether the being who thinks and acts on even days also thinks and acts on odd days—whether there is one thinking, acting being in the story or more than one. What has that got to do with our concept of a person? If there really is something that thinks and acts on even days, and something that thinks and acts on odd days, and if there really is such a relation as numerical identity—and without these assumptions there are no questions about personal identity in cases like this—then those beings must be either identical or distinct. (Or it may be indeterminate: “they” might be neither definitely one nor definitely two. But that too would be an answer to our question.) How could there be “no fact of the matter”? How could it be up to us to decide?

Presumably the idea is something like this. There are really many thinking, acting beings in the story. Some think and act only on even days, some only on odd days, some on both even and odd days. Strictly speaking, there is no *one* being that thinks and acts on even days, or any one being that thinks and acts on odd days. There are many such beings. So until we are told more, the names ‘Even’ and ‘Odd’ will be ambiguous in their reference. ‘Even’ will

refer to at least one being that thinks and acts only on even days, but also to at least one being that thinks and acts on both even and odd days, and likewise, *mutatis mutandis*, for ‘Odd’. We can say whether Even is or isn’t Odd only once we have disambiguated the names, as we might do by sharpening our concept of a person and stipulating that ‘Even’ and ‘Odd’ are to name people in that sharpened sense. If we adopt a person-concept that applies to only one of the beings in the story—one that thinks and acts on both even and odd days—we will say that Even is Odd. If we adopt a concept that applies to more than one being—in particular to at least one that acts only on even days and to one that acts only on odd days—we will say that Even is not Odd (though of course we won’t strictly be speaking of the same “Even” and “Odd” in both cases).

But in that case the objective fact, and the answer to our question, is that there aren’t just one or two thinking beings in the story, but three at least, and probably many more. Our question was not how many such things would count as “people” on one or another sharpening of that concept, but how many thinking beings there are. So those who say that our question has no answer to be discovered appear to be assuming the Cohabitation Claim at the outset. Or if this is not what they have in mind, it will be hard to understand them.

Someone might deny that there is any fact about how many thinking beings there are until we sharpen *that* concept. But again, it will be hard to understand this unless it implies that the story contains a largish number of beings that are candidates, so to speak, for being thinkers (that qualify as thinkers on at least one admissible sharpening of that concept). That too is an answer, though a messy one, to our question, and one that entails at least a close variant of the Cohabitation Claim. I can see no way round the question.

#### 4 .

Before arguing against the Cohabitation Claim I will briefly discuss two arguments in support of it.

The first I will call the *argument from personhood*, since it is based on the general idea that we work out how many people there are in a given situation by analyzing the concept of a person (Anderson 1976, Wilkes 1988: 120-123, Rovane 1998: 172). We start by arguing that anything with such-and-such features is a person. The number of beings in the situation that have those features will then give us the number of people there. The premise about how many beings have the relevant features is supposed to be an empirical matter that can be read off, in principle if not in practice, from an adequate clinical description of the case. The philosophical work lies in deciding what makes something a person, as opposed to a non-person.

Let us apply this idea to the case at hand. Wilkes says that a person is anything that is rational, is the subject of intentional states, is appropriately treated as a moral agent, can reciprocate when so treated, uses language, and has some sort of self-consciousness. Suppose that is right. Presumably we can agree that both Even and Odd have those six features. Does it follow that there are at least two people there?

Hardly. I think I can say without boasting that *I* satisfy Wilkes's criteria for being a person. So does the author of this essay. Yet that is obviously compatible with the fact that I am the author of this essay. What the argument needs is the premise that Even and Odd are numerically different. But that was just the point at issue. The trouble is that the argument works only once we have identified and counted all the beings in the story that are candidates for being people. Only then can we count the people by noting how many of those candidates satisfy our criteria of personhood. Until we know whether Even *is* Odd, it is no help to be told whether Even and Odd are people. Our question is precisely how many serious candidates there are—how many rational, thinking beings. And here the argument from personhood offers no guidance.

Wilkes and Rovane say that the candidates for personhood in cases like ours are *personalities*. The case history will tell us how many personalities there are, and their mental properties; we philosophers need only apply our criteria of personhood to those personalities to see how many qualify. In our story there are clearly two personalities, each of which is rational, has beliefs and desires, and so on. Thus, each of them is a person, and so there are two people.

But again, this is not an argument for the Cohabitation Claim. It simply *asserts* that there are two rational, thinking beings in the story. To support the Cohabitation Claim Wilkes and Rovane would have to argue, first, that there are two things called 'personalities' in the story, and, second, that those things are rational, thinking beings. They provide no such argument.

In any case, their position is incredible. What sort of thing is a personality? We don't ordinarily use the term to refer to countable objects at all, but merely as a way of talking about people's mental and behavioral features. (We wouldn't say that someone had two different smiles. Or if we did, we wouldn't take it to imply that anyone literally had two of something.) If there really are two concrete objects called personalities in our story—and if this is a point that we can take as a premise in an argument for the Cohabitation Claim without assuming the point at issue—then a personality would seem to be some sort of complex psychological attribute, or perhaps a collection of mental and behavioral events or dispositions. The question then is whether a psychological attribute or a collection of mental events can literally be rational or self-conscious, or think or act or be responsible for its actions.

Are you and I attributes or collections of mental items—rather than, say, men and women? (Whatever else men and women are, they are made at least partly of flesh and blood, and not entirely of mental items.) Wilkes apparently thinks that we are. Rovane says explicitly that we are “sets of intentional episodes” (1998: 212).

This strikes me as absurd. Collections of thoughts and experiences don’t fret about the future or drink coffee or feel tired. The thing you see or point to when you see or point to me is not a set of intentional episodes. Certainly the argument from personhood supports no such claim. On the other hand, if ‘personality’ just means a certain sort of *person*—as when we say that Woody Allen is a famous cinema personality—then the number of “personalities” there are in the story is just the point at issue, and once again needs to be argued for and not simply assumed.

## 5 .

The second argument for the Cohabitation Claim attempts to derive the number of thinking beings from facts about how particular mental states relate to one another. It is based not on the concept of a person, but on that of a mental state or property. The idea derives from Kant, who suggested that part of what makes something a mental state of a particular being, and hence a mental state at all, is that being’s ability to combine or synthesize it with its other mental states (*Critique of Pure Reason* B134).

Rather than discuss Kant directly, I will take on someone nearer my own size. Shoemaker’s recent argument that the Cohabitation Claim follows from the functionalist theory of mind is Kantian enough, I hope, but easier to understand (1979: 335, 1984: 94-97). The functionalist theory characterizes mental states partly in terms of the way they are disposed to combine with other mental states to produce further mental states and behavior. If I prefer chocolate to vanilla, it is part of the nature of that preference that it dispose me to choose chocolate over vanilla unless I want something else that I think I could get by acting otherwise. Mental states and actions come by nature in packages: no state of mine could be a desire, belief, or experience without being combined with other mental states with which it is disposed to interact in this sort of characteristic way, and without such combinations at least potentially producing characteristic behavior. We might call the packages of mental particulars and actions interrelated in this way *mental systems*. (I hesitate to call them *minds*, as that word is often used as a synonym for ‘person’ or ‘thinking being’. We don’t want to assume that mental systems are thinking beings.)

Shoemaker then argues like this: (1) The even-day thoughts and actions make up one mental system, and the odd-day thoughts and actions form another. That was part of our story. If Even wants chocolate on an even day,

that desire will in no way be disposed to interact with Odd's belief, manifest only on odd days, that there is chocolate in the bottom drawer, to produce appropriate action, any more than my desires are disposed to interact with your beliefs to produce action. (2) The even-day thoughts belong to someone, and the odd-day thoughts belong to someone. This could fail to be the case only if there were no thinking beings in the story at all, and hence no thinking beings anywhere and no problems about personal identity. (3) Nothing could be the subject of two mental systems. Hence, (4) the subject of the even-day thoughts is not the subject of the odd-day thoughts. Even and Odd are two.

The *synthesis argument*, as we might call this, is more promising than the argument from personhood. It makes no contentious assumptions about how many person-candidates there are, or about whether Even is Odd, or about our being literally bundles of thoughts. It starts with facts that might reasonably be thought to fall out of any neutral description of the case, applies a plausible principle to them, and deduces the number of thinking beings.

Is it persuasive? I want to know why there couldn't be two mental systems unless there are two thinking beings. Isn't that just the point at issue? It doesn't follow from the functionalist theory of mind. As it is ordinarily understood, anyway, the theory says only that every mental state must belong to a mental system. Shoemaker argues like this: Functionalism implies that a mental state of mine must be disposed to interact in characteristic ways with other mental states and actions that make up a mental system. But which other mental states, and what actions? Mine, of course. My preference must dispose *me* to choose chocolate when *I* believe it is available, unless *I* have a preference that *I* take to be incompatible with it. Those mental states not disposed to interact in this way with states of mine must belong to someone else. This is plausible enough. But it seems to get its plausibility from the idea that thinking beings derive their identity from facts about mental unity and disunity. And that is just what I want to question. What if there are simply not enough thinking beings around to match up one to one with the mental systems?

Someone might solve this problem by saying that thinking beings *are* mental systems. The existence of two systems of mental states that interact in the way the functionalist theory specifies guarantees the existence of two thinking beings to be the subjects of those states because that is what thinking beings are. This is more or less the view of Wilkes and Rovane. But it isn't Shoemaker's view, and certainly doesn't follow from functionalism.

There is more to be said about the synthesis argument. But as it stands it is inconclusive at best.

I will now state my case against the Cohabitation Claim. I will discuss more arguments in support of the Claim afterwards, in the form of objections to my own view.

I object to the Claim because it is inconsistent with our being material things of flesh and blood. (By ‘material thing’ I mean roughly something made of matter that has mass and shape and a location in space and that can persist through time.) My argument has three premises.

First, if Even and Odd are two, they differ psychologically and behaviorally. There must be times, for instance, when Even is conscious and acting and Odd is unconscious, or at any rate unable to perceive or act. There is no point in saying that there are two people in the story unless we can attribute the even-day thoughts and actions to just one of them and attribute the odd-day thoughts and actions entirely to the other, so that each gets exactly one personality. If one person with two personalities is bad, surely two people with two personalities each is worse.

Second, any two material people who differ mentally and behaviorally in the way that Even and Odd would have to differ, if they were two, will differ in some non-mental respect that accounts for their mental difference. At any rate they will be very likely to differ non-mentally. Two immaterial souls might perhaps differ systematically in their intrinsic mental attributes without differing in any non-mental way, but two material people couldn’t.

Third, if Even and Odd are material things, they have the same qualitative, non-mental properties. (Such “non-qualitative” properties as being identical with Even are of course excluded.) They are made of the same matter and have the same surroundings, evolutionary history, and so on.

Here, then, is the argument. Suppose Even and Odd are material things. If they are two, they will differ mentally in a way that implies some non-mental difference. But since they “share” a single human being, they cannot differ in any such non-mental way. So they cannot be two. Again: if they are material things of flesh and blood, sharing a single human being, they will be non-mentally exactly alike, and therefore mentally exactly alike, and therefore one and not two. So Even and Odd must be one—unless, perhaps, they are not material things.

What might they be instead? Bundles of mental particulars, most likely, since that is what the main arguments for the Cohabitation Claim seem to imply—though as far as the present argument goes they could also be simple immaterial substances, mental events, or even wholly abstract things akin to computer programs. We agreed that the Cohabitation Claim was true just in the case that Even and Odd, in our story, were two. Hence, the Claim implies that the people in split-personality cases are not material things. There are simply no two material things that could *be* Even and Odd. There isn’t room

for them. And if they are not material things, neither are the rest of us. The Cohabitation Claim leads to dualism. (If we're not material things, doesn't it follow that we are immaterial things? And isn't that dualism?) Since I take dualism to be false, I conclude that there could not be two of us in any case of split personality.

I wish I had a good argument for the claim that we are material things. But this is such a fundamental point that it is hard to say anything that will not be seen, perhaps rightly, to assume the point at issue. Still, it seems true. When we look in a mirror we seem to see ourselves, and not merely the material shell that houses the invisible things that we really are. I presume that most readers think that they are material. If you like, you can see my argument as supporting the conditional claim that if we are material, then the Cohabitation Claim is false.

Let us now examine the argument's main premises. The first, that Even and Odd would differ mentally if they were two, needs no defense. What about the second? Could two people—two material beings—that were alike in every non-mental respect still differ mentally in the way that Even and Odd are supposed to differ? Could there be that sort of mental difference without any non-mental difference?

If so, two beings made of the same atoms arranged in the same way, with the same surroundings and evolutionary history, might be mentally as different from one another as you are from me. Intrinsic mental properties would not even “weakly” supervene on physical ones. (Mental properties weakly supervene on physical properties if, necessarily, two beings with the same physical properties would have the same mental properties. Most of those who call themselves physicalists believe that the mental supervenes on the physical in a stronger sense than this.)

Now some of those who believe that we are material things deny weak psychophysical supervenience. They say that there is a material object numerically different from me called “my body” which, despite being physically identical with me (with the same surroundings and evolutionary history), does not and cannot think. Could this—if it were true—help us to understand how Even and Odd might differ mentally?

Well, if we ask why the activities of my body's nervous system should be insufficient for it to think or experience (despite being identical to the activities of my own nervous system), we shall probably be told that it is because people and their bodies belong to different ontological kinds. My body cannot think, despite being physically just like me, because it is a body, with identity conditions different from those of people. (Part of what makes something an ontological kind is presumably that it determines the identity conditions of its members.) Mental properties, then, are grounded in part in such non-physical properties as ontological kinds, which are not determined entirely by

a thing's microphysical structure and surroundings. To explain why something is conscious we must mention not only its physical properties, but also the fact that it is a person and not, say, a person's body. (For an account of this sort see Shoemaker 1999.) But even if we grant this, it can hardly explain how two physically identical *people*, with the same surroundings and history, could be radically different mentally. Even and Odd belong to the same ontological kind. So rejecting weak psycho-physical supervenience is little help in explaining how Even and Odd could be qualitatively different.

In fact the argument against the Cohabitation Claim need not rely on supervenience claims of any sort. We needn't insist that any two material people indistinguishable in their non-mental qualities must be mentally alike. It would be enough if they were *likely* to be mentally alike. It would even be enough if they were likely to be mentally very similar. This would be so if, for instance, a thing's non-mental properties reliably but fallibly caused its mental properties. For in that case Even and Odd's being non-mentally alike would make significant mental differences between them improbable. We should expect their mental properties to converge in the future. And we should expect the people in most other cases of split personality to be mentally alike.

But advocates of the Cohabitation Claim believe that the psychological differences between "cohabiting" people in cases of the sort we have described are not improbable or temporary, but systematic and lawlike. It is not supposed to be a freakish accident that Even and Odd have different mental properties. It may be a freakish accident that there are two people there in the first place; but given that they are there, it is supposed to be unsurprising that they differ mentally. If such people are nonetheless exactly alike non-mentally, it is hard to see how there could be any interesting connection at all between mental and non-mental properties. If nothing else, that makes it unlikely that people are material things.

We could put the point like this: Why do Even and Odd differ mentally and behaviourally, if indeed they do? What could explain the supposed fact that Even is conscious and acting while Odd, at the same time, is unconscious and unable to act? If there is any connection between mental and non-mental properties, we should expect this mental difference to be grounded at least in part in some non-mental difference.

So much for the second premise. Any materialist who thinks that Even and Odd are two will deny the third premise, and argue that they differ in some non-mental way. This poses a challenge for materialist friends of the Cohabitation Claim. They will have to find two material things in the story that Even and Odd could be—objects that differ in some physical or at any rate non-mental way that can account for their supposed mental and behavioral difference. Since Even and Odd belong to the same ontological kind, it

is hard to see how their mental difference could be grounded in the sort of non-physical difference that is supposed to explain why people and their bodies differ mentally. So Even and Odd must apparently differ in some physical way. They could not, after all, be made of the same atoms at the same time.

I doubt whether any such materially different things can be found, at least without making some gratuitous and highly implausible assumptions. But let us have a look. There would seem to be two possibilities. Even and Odd might exist at different times, rather than both at once. Or they might exist at the same time but be composed of different spatial parts.

## 7.

Suppose Even exists only when Odd doesn't. At the end of an even day Even perishes and Odd comes into being. That would give Even and Odd a non-mental difference that could explain how they differ mentally and behaviorally: if Even's C-fibers fire at noon on Tuesday, this will not be true of Odd, since he won't exist then.

This assumes that a concrete material object can exist intermittently: it can pass away at the end of one day, not exist at all during the next, and come back into being on the third day. Even might come into being for the first time in 1950 and pass away for the last time in 2030, yet exist for only 40 years in all. Someone who perishes now may be resurrected in the next age.

This is a contentious assumption. Even if we grant it, though, we don't get a plausible description of the story of Even and Odd. People don't just come to be and pass away at random. When we begin and end is disputed, but nearly everyone agrees that if a person ever comes into existence, it is at some point between conception and the onset of rationality, and that if a person ever perishes, it is at biological death, or when her mental capacities decay beyond a certain point or her remains dissolve into dust. But no such thing happens to Even at the beginning or at the end of any even day. So why should he come into being and pass away then? Apparently just because he gains consciousness at the beginning of an even day and loses it at the end of the day. But if Even must perish when he goes unconscious, then so must the rest of us. (It was part of the argument that Even and Odd are beings of the same sort as you and I.) No one could continue to exist without remaining conscious. The phrase 'unconscious person' would be an oxymoron. We could never sleep. My bed at night would contain no person, or anything that ever was or could ever come to be a person. No one thinks that.

Perhaps Even perishes at the end of each even day not because he loses consciousness, but because Odd appears. We can survive falling asleep, so long as no new personality takes over. But this is no help. Odd mustn't appear until Even has gone—that was the point of saying that one exists

only while the other doesn't. Odd appears on the stage too late to push Even off it.

Couldn't Even and Odd be different temporal parts of one human being? Suppose a person consists of those temporal parts or "stages" of a human being (or in science fiction of several human beings) that relate to one another in a certain way. And suppose that the even-day stages relate to each other in that way, and the odd-day stages do as well, but the even-day stages don't relate in that way to the odd-day stages. Then the aggregate of even-day stages would be one person, Even, and the aggregate of odd-day stages would be another, Odd. In that case Odd's presence on odd days wouldn't *cause* Even to exist only on even days. The two would exist on alternate days simply because that is where their temporal parts are.

Of course, we can say this only if Even and Odd, and you and I and other familiar things, have temporal parts—we ourselves, and not just our histories. This is a substantive metaphysical claim, and one that many advocates of the Cohabitation Claim reject.

But there is trouble even for those who accept the ontology of temporal parts. What relation would bind together all and only the even-day stages of the human being, and all and only the odd-day stages, into people? The usual "four-dimensionalist" view is that a person is a maximal aggregate of psychologically interrelated person-stages (e.g. Lewis 1976). There is dispute about just what this psychological relation is, but all agree that it is sufficient for two stages to be psychologically related if, for instance, one can remember an experience of the other. But the even- and odd-day stages in our story are psychologically related in just this way. When the even-day personality goes dormant at the end of an even day, the memories of that day's experiences are not extinguished, but continue to be realized in the human being's brain. They are simply not accessible then. Otherwise how could they be available again 24 hours later? So the odd-day stages have the same memories of past even-day experiences as the even-day stages have, and likewise for the even-day stages with respect to past odd-day experiences. The even-day stages in our story could not be psychologically unconnected with the odd-day stages in the way in which your even-day stages are unconnected with my odd-day stages (supposing we have temporal parts). For Even and Odd to be different temporal parts of one human being, the identity of a person over time would have to consist in something entirely different from the sort of psychological continuity or connectedness that most philosophers think it does.

In fact Even and Odd, on this proposal, would relate in much the same way as you would relate to the person who would result if you were to suffer from amnesia—not philosopher's amnesia, where all mental content is permanently erased, but the so-called transient global amnesia that occurs in real life, where those contents are not erased but are only inaccessible, like a book

locked in a drawer whose key is lost. If Even and Odd exist alternately, then anyone who forgets his name, address, and recent history must literally cease to exist and be replaced by someone new, even if the condition is only temporary—though one may come back into existence (thereby destroying the person who existed in the interim) when the condition is reversed. I take it that no one would accept this. For that matter, we ought to wonder whether the current proposal could allow for anyone to have temporal parts that were unconscious.

In any case, we can rule out Even's existing only when Odd doesn't by changing the story a bit. We imagined that the even-day personality shut down entirely on odd days. We might say instead that it remains active but is simply disconnected from perception and movement. Then there would sometimes be two isolated "streams of consciousness" going on within the human being at once, but only one at a time would have anything to do with perception or action. (If Even and Odd were two, we could say that Even sometimes remains conscious at the end of an even day but loses the ability to perceive or act.) In that case the memories of past even-day experiences would be accessible on odd days, and could be recalled and reflected on then, but no one would be able to verbalize or otherwise act on them. We said that 'Even' was to name the being who thinks and acts on even days. We could say instead that Even is the being who *perceives* and acts on even days, and likewise, *mutatis mutandis*, for 'Odd'. I take it that this would make no real difference to the argument. 'Even' and 'Odd' name two different people in the modified story if they do in the original story. (Wilkes says this would actually strengthen the case for there being two people [1988: 125].) And the modified story is surely possible if the original is: as we have seen, the memory-traces of even-day events must persist on odd days, even in the original story.

In the revised story we can no longer say that Even ceases to exist at the end of each even day, for otherwise we should have two isolated streams of consciousness going on in one person at the same time. Presumably that person would be the subject of both streams. This is clearly the sort of thing the Cohabitation Claim was meant to rule out. We can rule it out only by saying that two people share the human being at once.

We can see now that the split-personality puzzle has to do both with what it takes for a person to persist through time and with what determines how many people there are at any one time—with both "diachronic" and "synchronic" identity, as the jargon has it. We argued that any plausible account of what sort of thing a person could survive requires Even and Odd to exist at the same time. The challenge facing those who think that they are two is therefore to square this with some reasonable account of what determines how many people there are at any one time.

Let us turn now to the second possibility, that Even and Odd differ non-mentally despite existing at the same time. I take this to imply that at any given time Even must have parts that are not parts of Odd, and vice versa, the possession of which helps to explain how they differ. (Two people made of the very same parts at the same time will be alike in their qualitative, non-mental properties.) This would seem to make Even and Odd parts of a human being, most likely parts of its brain.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps one part of the brain supports the even-day personality and another, physically separate part of the brain realizes the odd-day personality, and those things are Even and Odd. That would provide the sort of non-mental difference that could account for their mental and behavioral differences, much as physiological differences between your brain and mine help to explain our mental differences.

Now if Even and Odd are literally parts of a brain, then you and I are also parts of brains, or at most whole brains. (Again, Even and Odd are the same sort of beings as the rest of us. Whatever determines the parts and boundaries of some human people does so for all of us.) You are literally a soft, creamy-colored, two- or three-pound organ lodged between your ears: not a brain in a vat, but a brain in a head. You are not a human being, but only a small part of one. Human beings are not themselves intelligent or sentient, but are merely inhabited by intelligent brains. (If human beings were also sentient, how could anyone know that one was the brain and not the human being?) Presumably the same would go for sentient animals of other species. I take this to be absurd.

Well, suppose Even includes not just that part of the animal's brain that realizes his mental life, but all of the animal except that part that supports Odd's mental life, and likewise, *mutatis mutandis*, for Odd. If the human being weighs 150 pounds, Even and Odd each weigh slightly less, perhaps 149 pounds. That way you and I could be whole human beings, as there is no one else whose mental life is realized in parts of our brains.

Now both this proposal and the previous one assume that the two personalities in a case like that of Even and Odd would have to be realized in physically separate parts of the brain. That might be a reasonable assumption if the brain worked like a digital computer. When my old Macintosh runs two independent programs at once, a word processor and a web browser, say, those programs are "realized" at any particular time in discrete sets of on-off switches. But no one knows whether the brain works like that. And no one takes the Cohabitation Claim to rest on any empirical assumption about how

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<sup>2</sup> This might be Carruthers' view (1986: 227). He says that a person is "a particular functional organisation of cells within the brain", specifically that "particular network of cellular connections" that explains one's behavior. In split-personality cases there may simply be two such networks. But I don't know whether a "network of cellular connections" is supposed to be a material thing.

the brain works. Moreover, split personality is supposed to show that two people could share a *whole* human being (Lowe 1996: 31, Rovane 1998: 8n.).

In any case, the proposal is problematic. If Even's heart and liver are parts of him, why not his brain—the whole of it? It's *his* brain, isn't it? (Imagine someone insisting that your left kidney was a part of you but not your right kidney.) We cannot take this claim seriously without some sort of theoretical justification. It would have to follow from some general principle about what makes something a part of one. I can think of no credible principle of this sort. Here is the sort of thing that would be needed: The parts of a person are all and only those parts of the animal associated with him, save those that are involved in someone else's mental life. (If the two mental systems are realized in overlapping parts of the brain, we shall need something more complicated.) No such principle seems to me to have any independent plausibility. Suppose a devious neurosurgeon somehow arranged things so that some memories accessible only to you were stored somewhere within my brain. Would a bit of my brain thereby cease to be a part of me? Would the surgeon have made me a bit smaller and lighter? Surely not.<sup>3</sup>

## 9.

To sum up. Friends of the Cohabitation Claim face hard questions: What things are Even and Odd, or more generally the people who share a single human being in possible or actual cases of split personality? In particular, what non-mental properties do they have? What are they made of? What are their spatial boundaries? Or are they located in space at all? What non-mental difference between them accounts for their striking psychological differences? These questions must have answers, and their answers will have implications for the rest of us as well. I don't say that they are unanswerable. But those possible answers that are compatible with the Cohabitation Claim appear *ad hoc* and implausible at best. The Cohabitation Claim may be intuitively attractive. But few of its advocates have thought carefully about its metaphysical implications. I believe that once we see those implications, the Claim will lose its appeal—except perhaps to those who believe on other

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<sup>3</sup> The principle also rules out our being human animals—that is, our being identical with human animals. Not only are we not essentially animals, but we are not animals at all. Part of my brain could become involved in someone else's mental life, in which case the principle implies that it would cease to be a part of me. But it would not thereby cease to be a part of the animal associated with me. Where an animal's boundaries lie is not determined by matters of psychology. (I discuss this in Olson 1997: ch. 6.) Thus, the animal could come to have parts that were not parts of me, and so could come to be numerically different from me. And two things that *could* be numerically different are numerically different. If we are not human animals, we ought to wonder why those animals can't think, or, if they can, how we know they aren't us. But that is another topic (see e.g. Olson 1997, ch. 5).

grounds that we are immaterial substances or bundles of impressions, rather than things of flesh and blood.

That concludes my argument against the Cohabitation Claim. I turn now, briefly, to some objections to my view that there could never be more than one thinking being in a case of split personality.

Can we coherently describe the split-personality case without supposing that there are at least two mental subjects there (Puccetti 1973: 351, Anderson 1976)? Suppose Even insults his boss on an even day. Even will remember that event; but Odd, it seems, will not. That is a contradiction unless Even and Odd are numerically different.

I claim that Odd does remember insulting his boss, but owing to his unusual condition he is unable, on odd days, to say that he does. Being unable to report or otherwise act on an experience one has had and not forgotten may be strange, especially if one is conscious at the time; but it is not impossible. It is just what we should expect in a strange case like this one. It could even happen to you: if we inject sodium amytal into your left carotid artery, temporarily “anaesthetizing” your speech hemisphere, you will remain conscious but be unable to report on your past experiences.

Here is a harder case. Suppose Even painfully stubs his toe on an even day. Odd (the objection goes) will feel nothing, since his experience is unaffected, on even days, by alterations to Even’s sense organs. So if Even were Odd he would be both in pain and not in pain at once. The problem is especially acute on the second variant of the story, in which there are two isolated streams of consciousness going on at once.

It is not immediately clear what I ought to say about this. But here is a description that seems as good as any, and which appears to be free from contradiction. Despite appearances, the subject of those even-day experiences not affected by the sense organs is in pain (since he is also the subject of those experiences that *are* affected by them). He even knows that he *is* in pain. At the same time, he may believe that he is not in pain. The reason why he can hold such blatantly contradictory beliefs at once is that his mental life is split into subsystems that don’t interact in the usual way.

If you don’t like this, and doubt whether any coherent description of this case can avoid postulating two different thinkers, consider that similar things can happen to any of us under special conditions. Psychologists report that if we tell someone who is hypnotized but otherwise normal that she will feel no pain, then immerse her hand in ice-water for several minutes (ordinarily painful enough), she will sit patiently and claim to be comfortable—but may write with her other hand, if she cannot see it, that she is in pain.<sup>4</sup> If we must say that there are two people in *this* case, all bets are off. Otherwise,

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<sup>4</sup> Wilkes (1988: 107f.); see also Glover (1988: 30). Zemach argues that there must be two people in cases like this (1986: 142).

the correct description of it, whatever it is, would seem a good candidate for being the correct description of the toe-stubbing case.

A related objection is that my view rules out any acceptable account of what makes someone responsible for an action. Even is not responsible for Odd's actions (the ones done on odd days). But someone is responsible for them. So if there were just one person in the story, he would be both responsible and not responsible for those actions.

Well, why isn't Even—the one who acts on even days—responsible for the things done on odd days? To say that it is because he didn't do them, or doesn't remember doing them, would be to assume the point at issue. Perhaps it is because he cannot verbally recall doing or planning those things, or indeed any of the events surrounding them, and because he is not disposed to act in a similar way again. It is doubtful whether that is enough to excuse someone entirely from responsibility; but even if it is, it is true of Even only on even days. So at most the objection shows that Even is not responsible on even days for the things done on odd days. It in no way suggests that anyone is both responsible and not responsible for something at the same time. It may well be unclear in the story just who is responsible, and when, for what actions. But I don't think that is the fault of my claim that there is just one person there. We aren't very good at making moral judgments even in ordinary situations. So it is no surprise that this *outré* case should baffle us.

“Consider the human being in the story. Because his mental life is so disunified, he does not count as a person, or a moral agent, or a subject of experience. Otherwise we might as well say that something made up of you and me would be a person. (Try imagining what it would be like to have a mental life that was no more unified than yours is unified with mine.) On the other hand, Even and Odd are clearly people, moral agents, and subjects of experience. So your view cannot be right.”

But there is no point insisting that there must be two people in the story unless there could be, and our arguments suggest that there couldn't (unless, perhaps, we are immaterial). The mere fact that the human being in the story doesn't satisfy your favorite definition of 'person' hardly implies that there must be *two* such “people” there. In fact I see no reason to deny that our human being is a person in Wilkes's sense, or in the familiar Lockean sense: a thinking intelligent being that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places. He is of course rational, intelligent, and self-aware in a peculiar way—twice over, as it were. But that doesn't make him any less rational or intelligent or self-aware.

I don't expect these brief remarks to set readers' minds entirely at ease. My proposal is certainly surprising. But those who have trouble believing it should consider the alternatives.

I will end with a few speculative remarks. What would it mean if there could never be two or more people in a case of split personality? It would do away with a widely held thesis about personal identity, namely that the number of people is determined by facts about mental unity and disunity. The idea is that the number of people—or agents or thinking beings—is necessarily equal to something like the number of systems of thought and action that are individually well-integrated, yet appropriately separate and independent of one another. We might call this the *Psychological Identity Principle*. The Principle implies that there must be two people in the story of Even and Odd. I believe that it is false because there may not always be a different being available to be the subject of each such mental system. That in turn is because people are not purely mental beings. They have non-mental properties as well.

This is not quite such a radical departure from tradition as it may appear. The Principle is still *almost* true, in that most possible situations, and probably all actual ones, conform to it. In this respect it is at least as well off as Newtonian Mechanics. This fact helps to explain the Principle's long and distinguished history and the fact that most philosophers find it self-evident. Psychiatrists and others concerned with real-life situations can rely on it. Only philosophers need be wary.

What, then, stands to the Psychological Identity Principle as General Relativity stands to Newtonian Mechanics? What *does* determine the number of people or thinking beings in a situation, if not facts about mental unity and disunity? What makes it the case that you and I are two, rather than one person with a split personality? What makes it the case that there are six billion rational beings living on our planet, rather than some other number? Here is a modest conjecture: there are six billion people because there are six billion human beings—human animals, members of the species *Homo sapiens*—who, for whatever reason (presumably on account of their mental features), qualify as people, and no other beings that qualify. So we might replace the Psychological Identity Principle with something like this:

Necessarily, there are  $n$  people if and only if there are  $n$  human beings of the right sort,

where the qualification 'of the right sort' is meant to embody our definition of 'person' (it might be short for 'who are rational, self-conscious moral agents', or for something like Wilkes' proposal). I assume that what determines the number of human beings in a situation has nothing to do with psychology, but is a matter of ordinary biology. What determines the number of human beings is much the same as what determines the number of animals of other species. We might therefore call this the *Biological Identity Princi-*

ple. It probably agrees with the Psychological Identity Principle in all actual cases, though not in the case of Even and Odd.

There might, of course, be non-human people: intelligent Martians, gods, or what have you. If so, we must restrict the Principle to human people. (I don't know how to generalize it to account for non-human people. There may not be any unified identity conditions for people in general, any more than there are unified identity conditions for material objects in general.)

I don't claim that the Biological Identity Principle is the only alternative to the Psychological Identity Principle. Nor is this the place to argue that it is superior to its rivals—though I might mention that it has the advantage of following from the plausible assumption that we are human animals. But we must abandon tradition if we are to reach the truth about personal identity.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For helpful comments on ancestors of this paper I thank Edward Craig, André Gallois, Jane Heal, Peter Kail, Andrew Melnyk, Trenton Merricks, Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra, Carol Rovane, several anonymous referees, and numerous patient audiences in Britain and America.

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