

For a start I started thinking. What was I? I always thought that thinking is what happens in the brain, and the brain is made of cells which are made of molecules. Now it seems I wasn't made of molecules anymore, but I was still thinking. How could this be? Maybe my mind was somehow imbedded directly in the fabric of space-time, or in the fluctuations of virtual particles popping in and out of existence? What utter bullshit! Furthermore, even if it was true, how did my mind get there? If it was in my brain first, how did it suddenly go elsewhere? I mean, if you transfer things from one computer to another, you need all kinds of compatible hardware and software. There are "hand-shaking" protocols and such. In my case, my brain got shattered, but in that very instant all the information from it suddenly appeared elsewhere (where exactly?) in perfect working order. How can that be?

Or maybe thinking doesn't even happen in the brain to start with, just like good old Descartes thought. But then how could neurotransmitter-like molecules in pill-form affect our moods, our feelings and our thoughts?

Or maybe it's a special feature of the brain to be able to transmit its information content elsewhere, wirelessly. You know, telepathy!

Maybe, in the instant of death, my whole mind just got sent out of my brain, and now it's elsewhere, imbedded in the fabric of the universe, still working, still thinking...

Does this always happen when someone dies? If it does, where are all the other ghosts like me? Maybe they eventually all went insane from not being able to deal with the new situation, so they all degenerated and finally dissolved into nothing?

And what about my ability to travel through time? Since I could read other people's thoughts, maybe I could influence them as well. What if I went back to myself, to the instant before I fell through the gap between the highways, and flashed some images of the gap to myself? Maybe that other me, the living me before I died, would look over the plank, see the gap and abstain from jumping into it? Then I wouldn't die, which means I wouldn't become a ghost capable of time-travel, which means I wouldn't be able to warn myself about the gap, which means I would still fall through it and die. Which in turn would mean that I would become a ghost capable of time-travel and warning myself!

It's the time-traveler's paradox!

I guess this paradox simply gets resolved by parallel universes. In one of them I die and become a ghost. By traveling back in time and saving myself, I create a new universe in which I don't die. And so then there are two me's, the me who didn't die and goes on living normally, and the ghost from the parallel universe where I did die. Yeah, that's how it must be...

You don't like this idea of parallel universes? Well, let me tell you something! In Quantum Mechanics there is this interesting property called superposition. A particle can be in a certain state and its opposite at the SAME TIME, until you measure it, and then it suddenly clearly becomes one or the other. Well, you might say, who cares about particles?

A guy called Schrödinger put it this way: you have a device that measures the state of a particle, and depending on the outcome it triggers a gun that shoots an imprisoned cat or not. You put the whole thing (cat included) in a box that isolates it from the rest of the universe. As long as you don't measure the state of the particle, it may be in a superposition of two states. Does this also mean that as long as you don't look into the box, the cat is both alive and dead at the same time, in some kind of superposition of both these states?

Of course, as soon as you look into the box, the cat is either dead or alive, but what is it before you open the box?

Anyway, what is it that decides whether the cat should live or die?

For me, the answer is simple. Each time there is such a dilemma (each time you open that box) the universe separates into two parallel universes – in one of them the cat is alive, in the other dead.

You don't like this idea? You don't think you have any alter egos in parallel universes?

Well, even if you forget all about Schrödinger's cat, you still must have many alter egos. If the universe is infinite, then at some point it will have used up all possible arrangements of matter, and things will necessarily start repeating themselves. If it is truly infinite, which means that it goes on for ever, ever and ever, then all the possible arrangements of matter won't just be repeated once or twice, but an infinite number of times, which means you have an infinite number of alter egos...

Or what if the universe isn't infinite after all? What if it's just a tiny bubble within a MULTI-verse?

Well, once all possible bubble-structures have been used up, they are bound to repeat themselves. You will find the same universes over and over and over again, infinitely. This makes you sick?

Wait, it gets even better: as I just said, there are infinitely many universes exactly like this one, with an alter ego of yourself in it doing and thinking exactly what you are doing and thinking right now. But there is also any number of universes where things are almost the same as here, but not quite. For every decision you make, there is an alter ego somewhere who had the same life as you up till now, except that now he makes exactly the opposite decision...

You are proud because today, out of a sudden impetus of friendliness, you helped the old neighbour lady carry home her heavy shopping bags?

Well, don't be so proud, because in some parallel universe you brushed past her impatiently!

You just miraculously escaped from a major accident? Don't worry, in a parallel universe you happily died of it!

Whatever is happening, there are infinitely many universes in which the very same thing is happening too, and there are also infinitely many universes in which something different is happening. In some the cat is dead when you open the box, in others it's alive. Whatever you decide, there are infinitely many universes in which you decided exactly the opposite.

So whatever you do, it doesn't really matter, because - whatever it is - it must obviously happen somewhere. All the other options must happen too, so they just happen elsewhere.

You say you don't care about what happens elsewhere, you only care about what happens here? Well, that's fine for you, because you have a body, so you always know what you mean by HERE (namely where your body happens to be). Me, I'm a ghost. I can travel through time. I can play with all the parallel universes. I can arrange for everybody to be killed, then I can go back in time and undo what I just did, knowing of course that the first option still goes on happening in the parallel universe I just left, and that it would still have happened even if I hadn't intervened, because some parallel ghost would have done it in my place, somewhere in this multiverse of infinite possibilities...

Yes, really, maybe everybody becomes a ghost like me when they die, and they all see what I'm seeing now, and it drives them insane. They go so completely insane

that they just disintegrate, and that's why I haven't met any fellow-ghosts yet, even though all human minds that ever existed should be around somewhere around here... On the other hand, what if I can't influence other people's thoughts after all? What if I can just read them? What if I'm just a spectator?