

POETRY & PROSE

Dr. Capgras Before the Mirrors

by Richard May, DSPE

I've been replaced by an emulation, i.e., an exact copy of myself, down to the subatomic level, I think. I'm actually not sure how many times these replacements of myself have occurred: once, ten thousand times, one of Cantor's inconceivable transfinities or maybe an imaginary or surreal number.

Am "I" actually strobing, moment to moment, among the shadows of the shadows . . . of the shadows of uncountable Buddhas in a quantized stream of time or recurring endlessly in some fragmented eternity? Will these replacements of myself happen in the past, or have they already happened in the future?

I'm not certain if my replacements have occurred in seriatim or multiple times simultaneously or both; in each of Everett's

Many Worlds; in this universe alone. And are the replacement copies of myself really exact copies? Or am I being inexorably deleted bit by bit, inexactitude by inexactitude, memory by memory? What is there in me to be replicated, in any case?

But who or what is the observer, here before the mirrors, and who or what is the observed? What could replace the shimmering image of Narcissus in the stream of water or of time? Who or what is it that thinks I've been replaced by an exact copy of myself? Where or when am I? Can I, or maybe it, recognize or even see myself? Maybe an imposter now asks these questions. Perhaps some unknowable number of imposter copies has also been replaced, a potentially infinite regress of self-replacements in time. Even worse, what if I haven't been replaced?



A Belated Discovery

by Richard May, DSPE

I'm a highly perceptive person, so I was quite disconcerted a week ago to discover that I had actually been dead for more than two years. Apparently, I never really noticed that I had died, because I was somewhat distracted by sending myself text messages, getting "Likes" on Facebook, irradiating my brain with cell-phone EMF, having my Volvo tattooed, and putting on I-shadow.

It's a life-altering experience to suddenly learn that you have been dead for years. None of my closest friends noticed my passing, either. Perhaps they had also deceased and

were too busy making a living. I guess it's never very clear these days.

Naturally, I just continue to do everything as usual. Sometimes you don't get serious about life until you're dead; maybe not immediately even then. There's really no need to hurry. Now I take more time to smell dead flowers.

At least I'm not an ontological wanna-be. It's not that I wish that I had ever been, but occasionally for a moment, I may wish that I wished that I had been. Nothing has changed really, since I died. In fact, I haven't noticed any difference at all.