Elizabeth Schechter

Indiana University, Department of Philosophy and Cognitive Science Program

November 4, 2021

Title: Plurals and plural identity

Abstract: Plurals are human beings who say things like, "I am one of multiple people in this brain", while a human being who identifies as and feels like the sole person in their brain is a singlet. Many plurals have dissociative identity disorder, but thanks to the growth of online communities for plurals, many also do not. In this talk, I introduce the population of interest and present a puzzle for understanding the plural identity claim. The puzzle, basically, is that of identifying the basis of the distinctness qua person that plurals claim for their "headmates". Indeed, there is no existing psychological (much less somatic) account of personal identity which would yield the conclusion that a plural somehow constitutes multiple people. I discuss the prospects for developing such an account and separately articulate the strongest kind of respect for plural identities that I think singlets owe to plurals.