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## Letters

### A philosophical response

I am responding to the question posed by one of your readers (Letters, SN: 12/12/87, p.371): "Where are the philosophers when you need them?"

I would like to assure everyone that the professors of philosophy, at least at Cal-State University, had us very busy discussing the very question of the paradoxical double aspects of creativity versus rationality ("The Spark," SN: 12/12/87, p.298). It is unfortunate that most readers of hard science rarely delve into the subtleties of philosophical journals, which might clarify the understandable ambiguities raised in scientific literature, but here are some thoughts on the question.

It is ironic that theologians and metaphysical philosophers have been castigated for promoting the double aspect of the body/mind problem, when we all really believe it is one and the same thing. However, the scientific side of the human house seems to be

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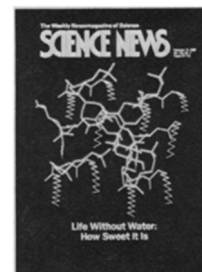
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### 107 Death-Defying Dehydration

Cover: Intrigued by creatures that survive long periods of extreme dehydration, scientists are finding that when water abandons the body, trehalose and other sugars can be lifesavers. Computer models like the one shown here are revealing how trehalose (yellow) may fit together with membrane phospholipids (blue) to form hydrogen bonds (green) that help dried membranes maintain their structure and avoid dehydration damage. These models and other biochemical studies are laying the groundwork for scientists to design molecules that might someday preserve everything from pest-attacking worms to artificial blood. (Image: B. Rudolph/NRL)



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doing the same thing when considering the differentiation between rationality and creativity and thus creating a body/mind dichotomy of their own. This, on the face of it, seems to be a serious inconsistency. My concern is not the common factors which embrace the essence of creativity, but that in separating and segregating and categorizing the characteristics of creativity we may fall into the logical abyss that the body/mind problem has been in for centuries.

Whatever the characteristics of creativity may be, we must reconcile and satisfactorily answer the following questions: If it is true that there are left/right brain differences and thus rational/creative (emotional) differences, how do we account for the lack of data demonstrating that the right eye in males is stronger than the right eye of females, since many believe that males have a stronger left brain and are left-brain-oriented in general? Further, since artists and musicians are believed to be so right-brain-ori-

ented (subjective, creative and emotional), how do we explain the fact that almost all musical arrangements contain the (seemingly) purest of mathematical relationships — which belong to left-brain-oriented types? Finally, consider the artist capturing the proper perspective and the quintessence of spatial symmetry coupled with shadows and colors to convey universals of the human condition; if this is not rational and left-brain-oriented, then we must be stuck in a definitional argument.

It seems to be a basic simplistic characteristic of humans to label, categorize and fix everything into comprehensible pair entities, such as good-evil, night-day, male-female, body-mind, objective-subjective, rational-emotional or rational-creative, and we persistently refuse to see the grand synthesis which gives meaning, order and significance to our human experience.

William G. Novahom  
Apple Valley, Calif.

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