

Dualists needn't be anti-criterialists (nor should they be)

By Matt Duncan¹

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Abstract Sometimes in philosophy one view engenders another. If you hold the first, chances are you hold the second. But it's not always because the first *entails* the second. Sometimes the tie is less clear, less clean. One such tie is between substance dualism and anti-criterialism. Substance dualism is the view that people are, at least in part, immaterial mental substances. Anti-criterialism is the view that there is no criterion of personal identity through time. Most philosophers who hold the first view also hold the second. In fact, many philosophers just assume that substance dualists ought to, or perhaps even *have* to, accept anti-criterialism. But I aim to show that this assumption is baseless. Substance dualism doesn't entail, suggest, support, or in any way motivate anti-criterialism, and anti-criterialism confers no benefit on dualism. Substance dualists have no special reason—and, indeed, no good reason at all—to accept anti-criterialism. Or so I shall argue. My aim isn't to defend substance dualism, nor is it to attack anti-criterialism. My aim is to show that, contrary to a long-standing trend, dualists needn't be anti-criterialists. Nor, as it will turn out, should they be.

Keywords Personal identity · Personal persistence · Dualism · Anti-criterialism · Persons

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But I aim to show that this assumption is baseless. Substance dualism doesn't entail, suggest, support, or in any way motivate anti-criterialism, and anti-criterialism confers no benefit on dualism. Substance dualists have no special reason—and, indeed, no good reason at all—to accept anti-criterialism. Or so I shall argue. My aim isn't to defend substance dualism, nor is it to attack anti-criterialism. My aim is to show that, contrary to a long-standing trend, dualists needn't be anti-criterialists. Nor, as it will turn out, should they be.

1 Anti-criterialism and dualism

A criterion of personal identity through time—or, as I will put it, a criterion of personal *persistence*—is a set of informative necessary and sufficient conditions for personal identity through time.¹ To count as a criterion of personal persistence, the obtaining of these conditions must be metaphysically necessary and sufficient for any person's persistence through time. And these conditions must also be *informative*; that is, they mustn't presuppose the identity of the person in question. If I assert that person P at time t is identical to person P* at time t* if and only if P is *the same person* as P*, then although I have given a necessary and sufficient condition for personal persistence, I haven't given a criterion of personal persistence, since my condition isn't informative. If instead I assert that P at t is identical to P* at t* if and only if *it is raining in Paris from t to t**, then I have given an informative condition for personal persistence—it doesn't presuppose anyone's identity across time—but I haven't given a criterion of personal persistence, since my condition isn't necessary and sufficient for personal persistence. Hence, to count as a criterion of personal persistence, the conditions on offer must be both informative and also necessary and sufficient for personal persistence.²

Many philosophers contend that there is a criterion of personal persistence. Some claim that a certain form of psychological or phenomenal continuity is necessary and sufficient for personal persistence. On such a view, a person P persists from t to t*—that is, P at t is identical to P* at t*—if and only if P at t

¹ In talking about *persons* and *personal* persistence, I, as well as all of my interlocutors, use 'person' to mean *you* (or *me*, or whoever's identity we are talking about); that is, I use 'person' to just mean whatever we are essentially or fundamentally. So an inquiry into *your* personal persistence, for example, is nothing more or less than an inquiry into your persistence *tout court*. This is worth mentioning, because some philosophers use 'person' differently, and do not wish to assume that you or I are essentially persons in their sense. These philosophers may simply plug in 'you' wherever I refer to persons. My arguments will be unaffected. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

² It's worth emphasizing that I am not using 'criteria' in an *epistemic* sense. That is, I am not talking about conditions under which we could *know* that a person has persisted through time. Rather, I am talking about conditions under which a person persists through time, regardless of whether we can know it or not.

has the relevant psychological or phenomenal connections with P^* at t^* . Others claim that it is physical or biological continuity that is necessary and sufficient for personal persistence. They say that P at t is identical to P^* at t^* if and only if P is physically or biologically continuous in the relevant way with P^* .³ But what unites all of these philosophers is the belief that there is a criterion of personal persistence.

Anti-criterialists, on the other hand, deny that there is a criterion of personal persistence. They do not deny that people persist through time. They just deny that there are any informative necessary and sufficient conditions for personal persistence. Butler (1736/2008) is a case in point. Butler says that people persist through time, but he rejects any view according to which personal persistence consists in some further fact or conditions. He says:

Now, when it is asked wherein personal identity consists, the answer should be the same as if it is asked, wherein consists similitude or equality; that all attempts to define, would but perplex it (p. 99).

Reid (1785/2008) takes a similar line. He agrees that people persist through time; but, like Butler, Reid thinks that personal persistence is unanalyzable (p. 115–116). Butler and Reid are two of the first defenders of this view. But many have followed their lead. For example, here's how Madell (1981) describes his view:

I argue that the correct view of the nature of personal identity is the one associated with the names of Reid and Butler above all: that personal identity is strict and unanalysable (preface to *The Identity of the Self*).

Notice that Butler, Reid, and Madell's claim is that there is no *definition* or *analysis* of personal identity. This is a common way for those in Butler and Reid's tradition to express the claim that there is no criterion of personal persistence (see, e.g., Swinburne 1985, p. 20; Gasser and Stefan 2012; Kanzian 2012; Langsam 2001, p. 251). And yet, this talk of analysis is not entirely without controversy.⁴ So in what follows I will stick with the claim that there is no criterion of personal persistence.

Contemporary philosophers who endorse this claim include Merricks (1998), Chisholm (1976), Swinburne (1985), Lowe (2009), and Langsam (2001). These philosophers agree that although people persist through time, there are no informative necessary and sufficient conditions for personal persistence. That is, there is no *criterion* of personal persistence. Hence, they are *anti-criterialists*.

According to anti-criterialists, many alleged criteria of personal persistence are *uninformative*. Again, an alleged criterion of personal persistence is uninformative if it presupposes the identity of the person in question. To use an earlier example, if a criterialist claims that P at t is identical to P^* at t^* if and only if P^* is *the same*

³ Shoemaker (1985) and Noonan (2003) hold versions of the psychological view. Dainton (2008) and Strawson (1999) hold the phenomenological view. Van Inwagen (1990) and Olson (2007) hold the biological view.

⁴ Merricks (1998), for example, argues that questions about criteria of personal persistence do not have the tight connection with questions about analyses of personal persistence that many have assumed exists.

person as P, then her alleged criterion of personal persistence is uninformative. Or, perhaps less obviously, the claim that P at t is identical to P* at t* if and only if P* has *genuine* memories of P's experiences at t might also be uninformative, and thus, not a criterion of personal persistence. For if by 'genuine memories' one means to assert that the memories which P* believes are of her experiences at t really are of *her* experiences at t, then of course P* at t* is identical to P at t if P* has the genuine memories of P. But that's only because 'genuine memories' is defined in terms of the identity of the person whose memories they are (cf., Merricks 1998). So this alleged criterion assumes the identity of the person in question. Thus, it is uninformative. We might expound on these examples by saying that an alleged criterion of personal persistence is uninformative/presupposes personal identity if it either explicitly references the persistence of the person in question as a condition for her persistence (e.g., 'is the same person as'), or contains a component that is analyzed in terms of her identity such that her persistence is implied by the alleged criterion simply in virtue of the analysis or definition of that component (e.g., 'genuine memory'). Uninformativeness is thus akin to circularity in a definition or argument (see, e.g., Lowe 2009, p. 137; Noonan 2003, §1.5, 3.5; Shoemaker 1985, p. 80–81, 98; Gasser and Stefan 2012, p. 3, 14; Foster 2001, p. 243).⁵ And proposing an uninformative criterion of personal persistence is a mistake that anti-criterialists accuse many criterialists of making (e.g., Merricks 1998; Swinburne 1985).

But anti-criterialists do not claim that this is the only mistake that criterialists can or do make. Anti-criterialists typically grant that some criterialists provide informative persistence conditions. But they claim that all such conditions are either unnecessary or insufficient (or both) for personal persistence. For example, one might claim that spatial continuity is necessary and sufficient for personal persistence. This alleged criterion is informative; it doesn't presuppose personal identity. But an anti-criterialist might claim that spatial continuity is *insufficient* for personal persistence, since it seems that a person could die and therefore be spatially continuous with a corpse, and yet, not persist as a corpse.

And anti-criterialists claim that a similar story can be told for *any* alleged criterion of personal persistence. That is, anti-criterialists claim that any potential criterion—regardless of whether it has been proposed, defended, or even mentioned by anyone—will be uninformative, unnecessary, or insufficient for personal persistence.

Not all anti-criterialists are substance dualists, but most substance dualists who have a view on personal persistence accept anti-criterialism.⁶ This includes Butler

⁵ It is natural to think of informativeness as *epistemic* in nature. However, given that criteria of personal persistence are themselves *metaphysical*, not epistemic—that is, they are conditions under which people persist through time, *whether or not we know it* (see fn. 2)—I think it's more plausible to say that whether an alleged criterion is informative isn't really a matter of whether it gives us any knowledge about a person's persistence; rather, it is a *metaphysical* (or perhaps logical) matter having to do with whether personal persistence is given as a condition for its own obtaining. That said, none of my arguments turn on this point (just keep in mind that the criteria for personal persistence themselves are metaphysical, not epistemic).

⁶ In fact, aside from Locke (1689/1979), it may be that *all* dualists with a view on personal identity are anti-criterialists. I, at least, know of no other exceptions.

(1736/2008), Reid (1785/2008), Madell (1981), Chisholm (1976), Swinburne (1985), Lowe (2009), and Langsam (2011). Substance dualism (henceforth 'dualism') is the view that people are, at least in part, immaterial mental substances. We might call these immaterial substances 'minds' or 'souls'. I will use 'soul'. This term has religious connotations that I would prefer to avoid, but it is perhaps less confusing than 'mind', since materialists can agree that we have minds. At any rate, on dualism, souls do not bear physical properties—they are, after all, immaterial—but they do bear mental properties (for our purposes we needn't settle whether it's all of our mental properties, or just some of them). And, on dualism, there is one soul per person. Some dualists maintain that people *are*—that is, are identical to—their souls (e.g., Butler 1736/2008; Reid 1785/2008; Lowe 2009). Others maintain that people are soul-body composites (e.g., Swinburne 1985). I will address this disagreement when relevant. But, for the most part, we can ignore it. For what I am concerned with here is the view, which all of the above dualists accept, that a person persists if and only if her soul persists. That is, I am concerned with the view that personal persistence necessarily depends on—perhaps just *is*—soul persistence.

It is striking that most (if not all) defenders of this view also accept anti-criterialism. This is striking because it's not obvious *why* it is the case. Swinburne (1985) says that anti-criterialism "amounts to the same as Cartesian dualism," but he doesn't give any clear reasons to support this claim (p. 20–21).⁷ Parfit (1984) says that dualism is a *kind* of anti-criterialism, and thus says that dualists are paradigmatic anti-criterialists (p. 210, 251). But his reasons are elusive. Merricks (1998) says, "I think most dualists, although they rarely explicitly affirm this, hold positions which entail that there are no criteria of identity over time for persons" (p. 121, fn. 1). But he doesn't say what those positions are that supposedly entail anti-criterialism.⁸ Sydney Shoemaker (2012) says that anti-criterialism "often—but not always—goes with acceptance of some form of mind–body dualism," but he leaves it at that (p. 123). This is standard. That is, it is standard for philosophers to assume, without argument or explanation, that dualism and anti-criterialism go hand-in-hand.⁹ Very few philosophers dispute or even discuss this assumption.¹⁰ And no detailed examination of its potential bases has been offered.

So in what follows I will consider various reasons why a dualist might be motivated to accept anti-criterialism. I will argue that they are all *bad* reasons, or perhaps not reasons at all. So I will conclude that dualists needn't be anti-criterialists.

⁷ What Swinburne (1985) does is argue that people can possibly switch bodies. This may support dualism, but there is no obvious connection here to anti-criterialism.

⁸ Merricks (1998) does add that, "None of the prominent dualists (for instance, Swinburne or Chisholm) offers anything like a criterion of identity over time for simple, unextended, indivisible souls; since persons are, according to these philosophers, simply souls, if there is no criterion of identity over time for souls, there is none for persons" (p. 121, fn. 1). But Merricks doesn't say why there can't be a criterion of soul persistence.

⁹ In addition to Swinburne (1985), Parfit (1984), Merricks (1998), and Shoemaker (2012), see, for example, Gasser and Stefan (2012) "Introduction", and Baker (2012).

¹⁰ Olson (2012) and Zimmerman (2012) do briefly discuss the connection between dualism and anti-criterialism.

2 Dualists needn't be anti-criterialists

My contention is that dualists have no special reason to accept anti-criterialism, because dualism doesn't entail, suggest, support, or in any way motivate anti-criterialism, and anti-criterialism offers no benefit to dualists. This is not to suggest that there is no reason *whatsoever* for dualists to accept anti-criterialism. For there may be reasons that are reasons for *anyone*, whether or not they are dualists, to accept anti-criterialism (though, for what it's worth, I doubt it; see Duncan 2014). But what I am concerned with here is whether dualists *in particular* ought to accept anti-criterialism. And, again, my contention is that dualists in particular have no special reason to accept anti-criterialism.

But then why are so many dualists anti-criterialists? Let's start with this potential reason why dualists might be anti-criterialists: The standard dualist claim about personal persistence is *not* a criterion of personal persistence. The claim to which I refer is that a person persists from t to t^* if and only if her soul persists from t to t^* . This claim is not a criterion of personal persistence. For it is not informative. It specifies P 's persistence in terms of the persistence of *her* soul—that is, P 's soul—and so it specifies P 's persistence partly in terms of her own identity. Hence, it is uninformative.

But is the fact that the standard dualist claim about personal persistence isn't a criterion of personal persistence a reason for dualists to accept anti-criterialism? Hardly. That dualists tend not to offer a criterion of personal persistence does not imply that there is no such criterion. Consider an analogous case. Suppose someone claims that a person persists from t to t^* if and only if her *body* persists from t to t^* . This claim is not informative, and thus, is not a criterion of personal persistence. But that in itself does not imply that there is no bodily criterion of personal persistence. Bodily continuity theorists will accept the above claim. But they will just add that there's more to the story—they will say that bodily persistence can, at least in principle, be specified in a way that does not presuppose the identity of the person in question. The same is open to dualists. The claim that a person persists if and only if her soul persists is perfectly consistent with there being more to the story. Soul persistence just needs to be specified in a way that does not presuppose the identity of the person in question.

One might deny that this can be done. That is, one might deny that there is any way to specify soul persistence without presupposing the identity of the person in question. But why? It may be that dualists simply don't *know* how to specify soul persistence without presupposing personal persistence. But that's beside the point. Ignorance of a criterion doesn't imply its absence. Again with the analogy: Bodily continuity theorists may have no idea how to fully characterize bodily continuity. But that doesn't imply that there is no criterion of bodily persistence. Likewise, dualists may not know how to fully characterize soul persistence. But, again, this epistemic limitation is irrelevant.

Perhaps the issue isn't just that dualists don't know how to fully characterize soul persistence. Perhaps it's that dualists have *no clue*—not even a rough idea—about how that would go (cf., Quinton 2008, p. 54–55). We at least have a rough sense,

even if it's not a complete picture, of what bodily or neural continuity is. But with souls our ignorance is deeper, and perhaps unresolvable.

It's not obvious why the *degree* of ignorance should matter here. But, regardless, at this point I want to emphasize that dualists *do*, in fact, have the resources to say something about soul persistence. Dualists say that souls are immaterial mental substances that persist through time despite changes in their mental properties (what people think, feel, sense, etc., does change, after all). Furthermore, dualists say that souls are essentially mental—essentially capable of instantiating mental properties (see, e.g., Swinburne 1985, p. 33). So it would be natural to construe soul persistence in terms of mental continuity of some sort, or in terms of continuity in the *capacity* for mentality of some sort. Dualists may not know how the soul operates—how it does what it does—but that, in itself, needn't keep them from accepting that there is a criterion of soul persistence, and thus, of personal persistence. In fact, as I will show later on, this needn't even keep them from *offering* a criterion of soul/personal persistence. But my main point here is, again, that ignorance of a criterion doesn't imply its absence.

Some philosophers suggest that there couldn't be informative conditions for personal persistence in terms of soul persistence because a person *just is*—that is, is identical to—her soul (e.g., Merricks 1998, p. 121, fn. 1; Swinburne 1985; Reid 1785/2008). But that people are identical to their souls does not imply that there are no informative conditions to be had here. Again, there are analogous cases. A bodily continuity theorist may say that people are identical to their bodies. A psychological continuity theorist may say that people are identical to their minds. This does not bar them from proposing criteria of personal persistence in terms of bodily or mental continuity—that is, in terms of the purely qualitative causal relations that make for bodily or mental continuity. As long as these conditions can in principle be specified without presupposing personal persistence, there's no problem. And the same goes for dualists. The issue isn't whether people are identical to souls; it's whether soul persistence can, at least in principle, be specified without presupposing personal persistence.

So if there is no way to specify soul persistence without presupposing personal persistence, it can't be just because dualists don't know how to do it or because people are supposed to be identical to their souls. It has to be because there is something about souls *in particular* that makes it the case that there couldn't be a criterion of personal persistence in terms of soul persistence. What could that be?

It can't be that souls, unlike bodies or brains, are entirely devoid of qualitative—that is, non-identity-assuming—features. For souls *do* (supposedly) have qualitative features. They have *mental* features, which are qualitative features *par excellence*. It also can't be that souls, unlike bodies or brains, are *changeless*. For, as I've said, souls *do* (supposedly) change all the time. What I am thinking and feeling is in constant flux. So if these are states of my soul—which dualists affirm—then souls change. And it can't be that souls are eternal. For souls are (supposedly) *not* eternal. *Pace* Plato, they at very least come into existence. And presumably it's at least possible for souls to be annihilated.

Could it be because souls are *non-physical*? Some philosophers do seem to assume that criteria of persistence are only appropriate for physical things, and that

giving a criterion of personal persistence requires giving persistence conditions in terms of the cross-temporal causal relations among our physical parts.¹¹ So perhaps some philosophers just assume that non-physical souls aren't fit to feature in a criterion of personal persistence.

But this assumption is baseless. Remember, a criterion of *x*'s persistence is just a set of informative metaphysically necessary and sufficient conditions for the identity of *x* through time. This is a fully general metaphysical notion that does not discriminate on the basis of ontological type. All that matters is that there are informative metaphysically necessary and sufficient conditions for *x*'s identity through time. And the fact that souls are non-physical in no way precludes there being such conditions.¹²

Some say that souls being *completely separable* from physical bodies (which most dualists affirm) raises the possibility that souls cannot be *individuated* (Kim 2005, ch. 3)—a potential problem for a theory of soul persistence. But, crucially, this is a general objection to dualism. If souls cannot be individuated—if there is nothing that makes my soul mine and not yours—then dualism is in trouble. And, specifically, the claim that personal persistence is soul persistence is in trouble. For if souls are not individuals, then soul persistence doesn't ensure *my* persistence. So the individuation worry is equally problematic for anti-criterialist dualists as it is for criterialist dualists. So it doesn't provide dualists with any reason to accept anti-criterialism. Now, what the dualist should do is resist the claim that souls cannot be individuated. And, for what it's worth, I think they can. On Aristotle's view, what individuates substances is their *matter*.¹³ So, for example, what makes one table different from another table is that they are made up of different physical stuff. Souls aren't made up of physical stuff. But plausibly they do have matter in the relevant sense: the simple, non-physical stuff of which they are composed. Dualists

¹¹ See, for example, Parfit (1984, p. 227), Madell (1981, p. 78–106) and Gasser and Stefan (2012, p. 15–16). Some philosophers suggest that a proper criterion of personal persistence must be put in terms of “observable” features of people (e.g., Noonan, 2003, p. 16; Baker 2012, p. 179–180). This might at first *seem* to suggest that only physical features are fit to feature in a criterion of personal persistence. But we need to be careful. For souls *are* observable. Their (mental) properties are observable via *introspection*. And, at any rate, whether or not a feature is observable is an *epistemic* consideration that is irrelevant as to whether it can figure among the *metaphysically* necessary and sufficient conditions for personal persistence.

¹² Some dualists appeal to non-reductionism about the mental—i.e., the view that the mental cannot be reduced to the physical—to support non-reductionism about *people*—i.e., the view that people are not reducible to physical stuff—which, in turn, they associate (or at least seem to associate) with anti-criterialism (e.g., Swinburne 1985; Reid 1785/2008; Butler 1736/2008; Langsam 2011; see also Zimmerman 2012). But this latter association is unjustified. Of course dualists think that people are not reducible to physical stuff—that's just part of the view. But that only gives them reason to believe anti-criterialism if the fact that people are not (wholly) physical gives them reason to believe that there are no informative necessary and sufficient conditions for personal persistence. And, as I've argued, it doesn't. Nothing precludes non-reductionists about the mental (whether they are substance dualists or just property dualists) from endorsing a criterion of personal persistence, including one specified in terms of continuity in that irreducible mentality.

¹³ At least, this is Aristotle's view in *Metaphysics* Z.8. Aristotle is not a dualist in the sense that I am discussing here. And he suggests that our physical bodies are what individuate us (*ibid.*). But I see no reason why dualists cannot appropriate Aristotle's general ontological picture.

can say that this is what individuates souls.¹⁴ Now, one is free to reject this Aristotelian picture. But it serves to illustrate that dualists can resist the claim that souls cannot be individuated. So it shows that the complete separability of souls from physical bodies doesn't raise insurmountable difficulties for dualism. But, more importantly for my purposes, even if it does, it doesn't give dualists any reason to accept anti-criterialism.

So the non-physicality of souls isn't an issue. Some philosophers evidently think that souls are just too "spooky" to feature in a criterion of personal persistence (Parfit 1984; see also Zimmerman 2012, p. 211). But, whatever spookiness is, it is clearly irrelevant as far as criteria of persistence go. There is no *in-principle* barrier to there being criteria of persistence for spooky things. Ghosts, ghouls, goblins, and creatures that go bump in the night might all have criteria of persistence if they existed. Maybe they *do* have criteria of persistence that apply in possible worlds in which they exist. So believers in souls shouldn't rule out a criterion of soul persistence on the basis of souls' spookiness.¹⁵ In fact, even the most ardent naturalist physicalist should agree on this point. For some of the spookiest things ever conceived are those posited by physicists—things such as vibrating strings, point particles, and zerobranes (cf., Gertler 2007, p. 295; Montero 2009). As Bertrand Russell (1927) once observed, "matter has become as ghostly as anything in a spiritualist's séance" (p. 78). So the "spookiness" of souls is not a good reason to deny that they can feature in a criterion of personal persistence.

Perhaps it's that souls are *simple*. That is, they lack proper parts. Consider what Reid (1785/2008) says:

The identity of a person is a perfect identity: wherever it is real, it admits of no degrees; and it is impossible that a person should be in part the same, and in part different; because a person is a monad, and is not divisible into parts (p. 111; see also, Gasser and Stefan 2012, p. 17).

I take it the thought is this: It makes sense to talk about a criterion of bodily persistence because bodies regularly change (i.e., gain and lose) parts; but souls don't change parts; so it doesn't make sense to talk about a criterion of soul persistence. This thought makes sense if the only way for souls to change, and indeed if the only way for souls to change such that they could potentially cease to exist, is to change parts. For if this is the case, then souls are changeless and could only cease to exist if their (improper) part is destroyed. Then it wouldn't make sense to talk about the conditions—the possible circumstances involving qualitative changes—under which souls persist.

But changing parts is *not* the only way for souls to change. And plausibly it is not the only way for souls to change such that they could cease to exist. Souls change

¹⁴ Lycan (2009) recommends that dualists say that souls are located in space and are thus individuated by their spatial location (p. 562). This is a fine solution for dualists who believe (a) that souls are located in space, and (b) that souls cannot share spatial locations.

¹⁵ In fact, giving a criterion of soul persistence might be a good way for a dualist to minimize the spookiness of souls, since anti-criterialists are plausibly seen as, to use Zimmerman's (1998) term, "identity mystics".

when their mental properties change. And plausibly their mental properties could change so much—e.g., by being completely and irreparably eliminated—so that the non-physical part that makes up a soul could cease to be a soul.¹⁶ So it makes sense to talk about the possible changes that souls can survive; it makes sense to talk about the conditions of soul persistence.¹⁷

Perhaps there's another path from the simplicity of souls to anti-criterialism. Consider the following two cases, versions of which sometimes show up in this debate¹⁸: (1) A simple particle persists from t to t^* ; (2) The same simple particle persists *partway* from t to t^* , but then is instantaneously replaced by a qualitative duplicate. One might think that these two cases differ in one respect only: the identity/persistence of the simple. And one might also think that cases like these aren't possible for complex objects (if they are, then simplicity doesn't make a relevant difference here, so these cases don't give believers in simple souls a special reason to be anti-criterialists). For one might think that "duplicate" complex objects necessarily harbor differences other than the identity of the complex. For example, if a tree is replaced with a duplicate tree, then plausibly the duplicate will have different *parts*. So one might think that simples are unique in that their persistence is at least sometimes a *further fact* that cannot be reduced to continuity in any non-identity-assuming features suited for criteria of persistence. Thus, one might think that the simplicity of souls gives dualists a reason to be anti-criterialists.

The problem is that, upon closer inspection, there is no difference between the simple and complex cases. Assuming one buys the line about differences in duplicate complex objects, one should adopt a parallel stance with respect to simples—one should say that the identity of the simple is *not* the only difference between (1) and (2). Here's how that should go. First, just as the duplicate tree plausibly has different parts from the original, so too the duplicate simple plausibly has different matter—different underlying stuff—from the original. Second, in both duplicate cases, the normal causal or metaphysical link—the "immanent causation" (Zimmerman 2012)—is missing between the duplicate and original; the duplicate does not *depend* on the original as it does in normal cases.¹⁹ Third—and especially

¹⁶ Some dualists suggest that we could survive complete amnesia or other disruptions in our mental lives (e.g., Swinburne 1985, p. 24). But they do not say that we could survive the complete loss of all of our mental properties, including our mental capacities. In fact, just the opposite (see, e.g., Swinburne 1985, p. 33).

¹⁷ An example may help. Suppose that there is an extended simple that can change in various ways—e.g., color, location.—but is essentially spherical. Indeed, suppose that the simple sphere has this criterion of persistence: Simple Sphere S at time t is identical to Simple Sphere S^* at time t^* if and only if S and S^* are composed of the same matter, and that matter remains spherical from t to t^* . There is nothing incoherent here. Which shows that something's being simple is no barrier to its having a criterion of persistence.

¹⁸ See, for example, Merricks (1998), Parfit (1984), and Shoemaker (2012). These authors' aims in discussing cases like these are different from the point under consideration here. Nonetheless, I think cases like these often lurk in the background of discussions about the connection between dualism and anti-criterialism. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

¹⁹ Dependence of this sort is standardly held to be a condition on persistence. See, for example, Lewis (1976, p. 17), Shoemaker (1985), and Rey (1976, p. 48). If the above cases were reimagined such that this dependence *is* present in the duplicate cases, then it may be that the two cases, whether concerning

relevant here—if (1) and (2) are adapted to that of simple *souls*, then the two souls will have different *mental states*. If my soul were swapped out for a duplicate, then even if the two souls' mental states were of the exact same *type*, they still wouldn't be the same *token* mental states. *These* experiences that I am undergoing right now—*these* feelings, thoughts, memories, etc.—they could be duplicated, but those duplicates would not be the same token mental states any more than a duplicate tree's parts would be the same token parts.²⁰ So, again, cases like (1) and (2)—especially when about souls—do contain differences other than the identity/persistence of the simple. At very least, they are parallel in all relevant respects to cases of complex objects. So these cases do not give dualists who believe in simple souls a special reason to accept anti-criterialism.

Notice that there is a more general metaphysical point here. Simples—whether they are souls, elementary physical particles, or whatever—may very well have criteria of persistence. As long they can undergo change, and possibly undergo so much change that they cease to exist, it makes sense to talk about the conditions of their persistence. So, although here I am focusing on simple souls in particular, there is a broader metaphysical lesson to be drawn from the foregoing discussion: Simples can have criteria of persistence.

But now back to souls. An issue that may be related to that of simplicity has to do with the claim that souls are *fundamental*. Consider what Lowe (2012) says:

My tentative suggestion ... is that personal identity is just *so basic* in our ontological scheme that we should not really expect to be able to formulate [a criterion of personal persistence]. A crucial point here is that, as we have seen, one-level criteria of identity for objects of a kind *K* always appeal to entities of *other* kinds in specifying a criterial relation for *K*-identity. They must do so in order to avoid circularity ... But if persons really are *fundamental* in our

Footnote 19 continued

simples or complexes, really aren't different with respect to the identity facts. In other words, it may be that the simple (or complex) persists.

²⁰ Notice that this difference between mental states is (arguably) a difference in the *identity* of the mental states. So it is an identity difference. But the same is true of the tree's parts—the only difference is in the parts' identities. The important point in each case is that it's not a mere difference in the identity *of the soul* (or tree).

Now, one might think that mental states are individuated by their subject—i.e., by the person who has them. So one might think that the mental differences I've mentioned smuggle in soul-identity differences. For what it's worth, I think mental states can be individuated without reference to their subjects. But regardless, notice that the worry here is a potential problem for *any* psychological criterion of personal persistence (see Shoemaker 1985, 2012, for potential solutions), not just a dualist one. So it doesn't give dualists *in particular* a reason to favor anti-criterialism. Also, if one takes this line with respect to mental states, then perhaps one should also take it with respect to the individuation of tree parts, in which case, again, the story with simples is the same as the story with complexes. Or even if one wants to individuate tree parts differently, in a way that mental states cannot be individuated—e.g., in terms of spatial location—that still won't help. For, in the case of the duplicate tree, the spatial location (and other qualitative features) of the parts is the same throughout the replacement. So one would have to say that the trees have the same parts, and that the only difference between the two cases is with the identity of the tree. And then, again, the cases of simples and complexes are parallel. So the simplicity of souls does not yield a special reason to accept anti-criterialism. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising these issues.

ontological scheme, as I very much suspect they are, then we simply should not expect to be able to appeal to other entities of suitable kinds in their case ... That being so, we should probably conclude that personal identity is primitive and “simple,” in the sense that nothing more informative can be said about the identity of persons than that in some cases it just *obtains* and in others *not* (p. 152; see also Chisholm 1976, p. 104–108; Zimmerman 2012, p. 209).

According to Lowe, there are no criteria of personal persistence because people are fundamental—fundamental in the sense that their identity cannot be specified in terms of any other, more basic kind of entity (e.g., physical parts). To put this point in our current context, a dualist might think that there are no criteria of personal persistence because people are souls and souls are fundamental. This seems promising. But we need to be careful. We need to ask: What exactly does it mean to say that souls are fundamental? Of course, it can't *just* mean that there is no criterion of soul persistence (and thus personal persistence). For this is precisely what's at issue—it is precisely the claim that we are trying to see whether dualists have any special reason to believe.²¹ So there must be something else about souls in particular that makes them fundamental. However, this seems to return us to the question we have been pursuing: What is it about souls in particular that might make them ill suited to feature in a criterion of personal persistence? And thus far we have come up empty.

But perhaps Lowe's (2012) claim about the unspecifiability of personal persistence (or, for our purposes, soul persistence) in terms of any other, more basic kind of entity can provide some guidance here. I say “perhaps” because I don't mean to positively assert that Lowe's claim *can* provide such guidance. For I think it is reasonable to reject Lowe's claim that a criterion of something's persistence must be specified in terms of another, more basic kind of entity. For example, on Aristotle's view (which, incidentally, Lowe and other dualist anti-criterialists such as Swinburne are generally very sympathetic to) the most basic, most fundamental entities—i.e., primary substances—have definitions, but certainly not in terms of other, more *basic* kinds of entities, since there are no such entities. This is an attractive metaphysics that wouldn't require (or even recommend) that personal persistence be specified in terms of another, more basic kind of entity. So it's not obvious—to me, at least—that something has to be non-fundamental in order to have a criterion of persistence. As I suggested above, as long as something can undergo qualitative change, and can possibly cease to exist with enough qualitative change, it seems that we can meaningfully inquire as to its persistence conditions.

But suppose that Lowe (2012) is right. Suppose that something's having a criterion of persistence does require that it be non-fundamental in the sense that its persistence is specifiable in terms of another, more basic kind of entity. Now the

²¹ Think of the dialectic this way. Dualist: I accept anti-criterialism. Me: Why? Dualist: Because souls are fundamental. Me: What does that mean? Dualist: It means that there is no criterion of soul persistence. Me: Um....

question is: Why think this can't be done for souls? Here I might point out that so far in our inquiry there doesn't seem to be anything special about souls that makes them unfit for a criterion of persistence. And thus I might suggest that so far we have no reason to think that souls are fundamental in Lowe's sense. But, to be fair, I think it is reasonable for dualist anti-criterialists to shift the burden here. I think it is reasonable for them to ask: What makes you think that soul persistence *can* be specified in terms of some other, more basic kind of entity? What could that even be?

But to this I answer: The intrinsic qualitative mental features of souls, or else the intrinsic qualitative features of souls in virtue of which they have their mental capacities, that are (supposedly) essentially instantiated in souls.²² These features may be further specifiable in terms of the nature of the underlying immaterial stuff of which souls are composed (whether or not anyone knows how to do this). But dualists needn't take a stand one way or another on that issue. I don't know whether this answer implies that souls are non-fundamental. I suspect not.²³ But, at any rate, it seems a perfectly good answer—one that dualists have no obvious reason to reject. In fact, if a dualist does wish to reject this answer, then I believe the burden *is* on her to explain *why*—that is, to explain what it is about souls that makes my answer inapt. Which, again, would return us to our pursuit of a feature of souls that makes them unsuited for a criterion of persistence. Which, again, has left us wanting.

And I don't believe that there is any other distinctive feature of souls that I have yet to consider that might do the trick. I have considered whether souls being non-qualitative, unchanging, eternal, non-physical, unindividuable, spooky, simple, or fundamental might do the trick and give dualists a reason to accept anti-criterialism. But none of these features of souls (insofar as they are features of souls) have helped. And I know of no other distinctive feature of souls that will. Indeed, I know of no other distinctive features of souls *at all*. Souls are (supposedly) non-physical mental things that are (perhaps) simple and fundamental. That's it. So if none of these features give dualists a reason to accept anti-criterialism—and I've argued that they *don't*—then there is nothing special about souls in particular that gives dualists a reason to accept anti-criterialism. Thus, I conclude that there is nothing special about souls in particular that gives dualists a reason to accept anti-criterialism.

But this doesn't yet settle the matter. For it could be that while there is nothing about dualism *per se* that entails, suggests, supports, or motivates anti-criterialism, there is nonetheless some more *indirect* connection between these two theses. It could be that there is some other, third thesis that dualists are likely to accept—either because it is their motivation for accepting dualism or, conversely, because it is motivated by dualism—that in turn motivates anti-criterialism. One potential

²² One might deny that any of these features are *more basic* than people or souls. But if this line is taken then I don't see any good reason to accept that a criterion of something's persistence has to be specified in terms of a more basic kind of entity.

²³ After all, fundamental entities can have essential qualitative features. Thus, it does seem that their persistence conditions could, at least in principle, be specified in terms of another kind of entity—namely, those essential qualitative features.

example is *theism*. As it happens, many dualists who accept anti-criterialism are theists (e.g., Butler, Reid, Swinburne). Theists' chief, and as far as I can tell *only* benefit in adopting anti-criterialism is that doing so allows them to say that people survive bodily death without having to cite any of the continuities that seem to break down at death (e.g., biological or bodily continuity) as the explanation for our survival.²⁴ So when asked how people survive bodily death, theists can say, "They just do," perhaps adding, "It's a miracle!" (cf. Merricks 2001). Thus, dualists who are theists may also have some reason to be anti-criterialists.

The problem here is that dualists have absolutely no use for the benefits conferred on theists by anti-criterialism. For dualists already have their own explanation for how people survive bodily death—namely, *souls* survive bodily death! Almost all dualists, and certainly all theist dualists, hold that souls can be disembodied—that they can, and at least sometimes do, survive the death, decay, and complete disintegration of the body. And this makes sense, since souls are (supposedly) independent substances, which do not depend for their existence on other substances, such as bodies. So dualists have no need to avail themselves of the anti-criterialist solution to the problem of survival. Thus, theists' chief and perhaps only benefit in adopting anti-criterialism is *not* a benefit for dualists.

In fact, it's the opposite. All else being equal, having an explanation is better than not having one. So the fact that dualists can explain how we survive bodily death (supposing that we do) gives them an advantage over anti-criterialists, whose strategy is precisely to *refuse* to give an explanation (see Merricks 2001). Thus, theistic considerations having to do with surviving bodily death do not give dualists a reason to accept anti-criterialism.

Now consider a related point: Some philosophers, including dualists, are inclined to accept anti-criterialism because the latter thesis helps solve certain other puzzles about personal persistence (e.g., Swinburne 1985; Lowe 2012; Merricks 1998, 2001). Chief among them is the puzzle of *fission*. Fission occurs if a person is split amoeba-like into two distinct people. The possibility of fission generates a puzzle for various theories of personal persistence because these theories seem to imply the impossible—namely, that one person could be identical to two distinct people. Here's how Swinburne (1985) describes the puzzle as applied to a *brain* theory of personal persistence:

The human brain has two very similar hemispheres—a left and a right hemisphere ... It might be possible one day to remove a whole hemisphere, without killing the person. There are no logical difficulties in supposing that we could transplant one of P_1 's hemispheres into one skull from which a brain had been removed, and the other hemisphere into another such skull, and that both transplants should take ... We have seen earlier good reason for supposing that the person goes where his brain goes, and if his brain consists only of one hemisphere, that should make no difference. So if the one

²⁴ Merricks (2001), for example, explicitly appeals to this benefit. For general surveys of these issues having to do with the relationship between criteria of personal persistence, dualism, and theistic views about the survival of bodily death, see Corcoran (2001) and van Inwagen and Zimmerman (2007).

remaining hemisphere is then transplanted, we ought to say that the person whose body it now controls is P_1 . Whether that person is P_1 can hardly be affected by the fact that instead of being destroyed, the other hemisphere is also transplanted so as to constitute the brain of a person. But if it is, that other person will be just as good a candidate for being P_1 . So ... both resulting persons are P_1 . But ... that cannot be—since the two latter persons are not identical with each other (p. 14–15).

According to Swinburne (1985), the possibility of cases like the one described above shows that the brain theory of personal persistence implies a contradiction—namely, that a person could be identical to two non-identical people. And Swinburne thinks that similar cases can be constructed to threaten the other major proposed criteria of personal persistence. Thus, Swinburne concludes that we should reject those proposed criteria and accept anti-criterialism. According to Swinburne, we should say that fission is impossible; though ultimately there is no explanation for it, people cannot divide (p. 21).

Perhaps the first thing to point out about Swinburne's argument, which other anti-criterialists give in other forms (e.g., Merricks 1998; Chisholm 1976; see also Noonan 2003, ch. 5; Gasser and Stefan 2012, p. 10–11), is that it is a potential reason for *anyone*, even if they are not dualists, to accept anti-criterialism. And, as I've said, this is not my main concern in this paper. For my purpose is to consider whether dualists *in particular* have a reason to accept anti-criterialism. So, technically, Swinburne's argument is no threat to my main thesis. Nonetheless, I think there's an important point to be gleaned from this case. So just consider this: Dualists, like anyone else, might be worried about the puzzle of fission. So dualists, like anyone else, might be inclined to turn to anti-criterialism.

The problem is, again, that they have no reason to. For dualists already have a solution to the puzzle of fission. Souls are simple, and so, arguably, cannot divide. Thus, on dualism, fission is impossible. Puzzle solved! Hence, dualists have no need for the anti-criterialist solution; anti-criterialism offers no benefit to dualists here. In fact, it's the opposite. For, again, all else being equal, having an explanation is better than not having one. Dualists have an explanation for why people can't fission ("Souls are simple!"). Anti-criterialism offers no explanation (see Swinburne 1985; Chisholm 1976, p. 111–112).²⁵ So dualists should not turn to anti-criterialism to solve the puzzle of fission.

As I've said, worries about fission represent a potential reason for *anyone* to accept anti-criterialism. But, again, what I am concerned with here is whether dualists *in particular* ought to accept anti-criterialism. So the puzzle of fission may

²⁵ Nothing *precludes* anti-criterialists from saying that the impossibility of fission has an explanation. After all, they could *borrow* the dualist explanation for why fission is impossible; that is, they could say that fission is impossible because souls are simple. But the point here is that anti-criterialism *itself* offers no explanation for why fission is impossible (nor does it *help* with such an explanation). And insofar as anti-criterialism is offered as a *solution* to the puzzle of fission—that is, insofar as survival of apparent-fission is said to be brute or mysterious, as per Swinburne (1985)—anti-criterialism gets in the way of an explanation for why fission is impossible. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pressing me on this point.

seem a bit tangential. However, the reason I mention this puzzle, as well as the problem of survival above, is to illustrate an important point: Some of the standard reasons for accepting anti-criterialism turn out to be reasons for dualists to *not* accept anti-criterialism. This is a surprising result. For it turns out that dualists' historical preference for anti-criterialism may in fact be the *opposite* of what their preference should be. For, not only do dualists in particular have no special reason to accept anti-criterialism; in fact, they have special reason to *reject* some of its primary motivations.

This is where I leave off my search for potential bridges from dualism to anti-criterialism. I've exhausted all of the potential reasons for dualists to accept anti-criterialism that can be found in the extant literature, gleaned from the doctrine of dualism itself, or drummed up in my own imagination. I conclude that dualism doesn't entail, suggest, support, or in any way motivate anti-criterialism, and that anti-criterialism offers no benefit to dualists. So I conclude that dualists have no special reason to accept anti-criterialism. Dualists needn't be anti-criterialists.

3 Nor should they be

Most dualists who have a view on personal persistence accept anti-criterialism, the view that there is no criterion of personal persistence. In this paper I have considered various reasons why this might be so. Specifically, I have considered the following answers to the question, "Why should dualists accept anti-criterialism?": (i) because dualists tend not to give a criterion of personal persistence, (ii) because dualists don't know what soul persistence consists in, (iii) because dualists have *no idea* what soul persistence consists in, (iv) because people are identical to their souls, (v) because souls have no qualitative features, (vi) because souls are changeless, (vii) because souls are eternal, (viii) because souls are non-physical, (ix) because souls cannot be individuated, (x) because souls are spooky, (xi) because souls are simple, (xii) because souls are fundamental, (xiii) because doing so allows theists to say that people can survive bodily death, and (xiv) because doing so helps solve the puzzle of fission. I have argued that these are all bad reasons, or perhaps not reasons at all, for dualists to accept anti-criterialism. And since these are the only potential reasons for dualists in particular to accept anti-criterialism, I have argued that dualists in particular have no reason to accept anti-criterialism. In other words, dualists needn't be anti-criterialists.

Nor should they be. Elsewhere I have argued that anti-criterialism is false (Duncan 2014). That is, I have argued that no one should accept anti-criterialism. But in the course of this paper I have argued that dualists *in particular* have reasons to reject anti-criterialism. For the standard anti-criterialist "no explanation" line on fission and the afterlife robs dualism of its ready-made explanations for these phenomena.

But now I want to conclude by pointing to another thing dualists can explain, but only if they reject anti-criterialism. Namely: How people persist through time! If they accept that there is a criterion of personal persistence, dualists can allow that there is a fully general explanation for personal persistence. And if dualists offer a

criterion of personal persistence, they can say what that explanation is.²⁶ This is a considerable benefit. Dualists, who are already much maligned for obscurantism, mysticism, or “spookiness”, should take all the explanations they can get. So they should jump at the chance to develop a criterion of personal persistence.

How might that go? Thus far I have not suggested any dualist criterion of personal persistence. I have not done so because I want it to be clear that my thesis in this paper—i.e., dualists needn't be anti-criterialists—in no way depends on my proposing a plausible dualist criterion of personal persistence. For dualists can accept that there is a criterion of personal persistence even if they don't know what it is or even if no plausible dualist criterion has been proposed. But now, with that said, let me propose one.

Here is a potential dualist criterion of personal persistence: Person P with soul S at time t is identical to person P* with soul S* at time t* if and only if P/S's capacity for consciousness is continuous with P*/S*'s capacity for consciousness.²⁷ In fleshing out this candidate criterion—in particular, in fleshing out what a “capacity for consciousness” is and what continuity in such a capacity consists in—dualists can assert that continuity in the underlying, immaterial features of souls is what makes for continuity in the capacity for consciousness. Since dualists won't know a lot about these features, they will have to give a general, abstract account of capacities—perhaps in terms of dispositions or powers. But there is nothing inherently problematic in this. After all, scientists and philosophers often posit abstract properties or mechanisms, which play important roles in their theories, to capture functional features instantiated in physical systems. So, once again, I say: The same is open to dualists!

Now, as I said in my introduction, my aim isn't to defend dualism. So I do not offer a potential dualist criterion of personal persistence in order to convince anyone of its truth. I only wish to show that such a thing is possible—it is something open to dualists and it is something that they needn't dismiss. For, as I have argued throughout this paper, dualists needn't be anti-criterialists. Nor, I hasten to add, should they be.

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²⁶ Here I do not mean to suggest that giving necessary and sufficient conditions for x *always* yields an explanation for x. There are plenty of counterexamples to that general claim. For example, $2 + 2$ equaling 4 is necessary and sufficient for all bachelors being unmarried, but the former does not explain the latter. Nonetheless, *in this case*—as with survival and fission—it seems clear that a criterion of personal persistence *does* provide an explanation for how we persist through time (see, e.g., Shoemaker 1985, p. 127; Perry 1976, p. 69–73; Noonan 2003; Olson 2012, p. 61). Merricks (1998, 2001) argues that anti-criterialists can still explain *some* aspects or instances of personal persistence, but he also acknowledges that they cannot *fully* explain personal persistence. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

²⁷ This potential criterion is similar in many respects to criteria of personal persistence proposed by Dainton and Bayne (2009) and Dainton (2008). These authors do not offer their criteria specifically as *dualist* criteria of personal persistence, but it would be easy enough for a dualist to adapt one of them for her purposes. So a dualist might consider these proposals in further fleshing out her criterion.

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