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Human Persons are Simple Beings: Reply to Bailey and Madden

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Abstract

David Barnett argues that human persons are not composed of other things. His argument appeals to the Datum in need of an explanation: "for any pair of conscious beings, it is impossible for the pair itself to be conscious." The argument concludes that pairs of people cannot be conscious because they are not simple. Objectors propose other alternatives to explain the Datum not considered by the argument: Elimination: pairs of people cannot be conscious because there could not be pairs of people; Maximality: pairs of people cannot be conscious because consciousness is a maximal property; Integrity: pairs of people cannot be conscious because pairs of people lack topological integrity. I argue that the alternatives are not enough to unseat Simplicity as the best explanation to the Datum yet concede the Simple Argument in its current form is not enough to argue for Simplicity

Keywords

Simple Argument, Simplicity, Consciousness

INTRODUCTION

David Barnett argues that human persons are simple, that is human persons are not composed of other things. His argument appeals to the Datum: "for any pair of conscious beings, it is impossible for the pair *itself* to be conscious." According to Barnett, there are six reasonable options why the Datum is true: (1) pairs of people lack a sufficient *Number* of immediate parts; (2) pairs of people lack immediate parts capable of standing in the right sorts of *Relations* to each other and their environment; (3) pairs of people lack immediate parts of the right *Nature*; (4) pairs of people are not *Structures* (they are unstructured collections of their two immediate parts); (5) some combination of (1)-(4); (6) pairs of people are not *simple*. Since (1)-(5) are not sufficient to explain the Datum, Barnett argues that (6) the best explanation: pairs of people

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cannot be conscious because pairs are not *simple*.[1] Let us call this argument as the "*Simple Argument*" and the conclusion that we are simple as "*Simplicity*."

The *Simple Argument* is not without controversy. Others are not convinced that *Simplicity* is the best explanation for the Datum. The options proposed are:

Elimination: pairs of people cannot be conscious because there could not be pairs of people.[2]

Maximality: pairs of people cannot be conscious because consciousness is a maximal property.[3]

Integrity: pairs of people cannot be conscious because pairs of people lack topological integrity.[4]

If these competing theses are better explanations for the Datum, then the *Simple Argument* is in trouble.

This paper goes as follows. First, I sketch how the *Simple Argument* works toward the conclusion that we are simple. Second, I outline *Elimination*, *Maximality*, and *Integrity* and offer possible ways proponents of *Simple Argument* may reply to them. Third, I close with summary and conclusion.

SIMPLE ARGUMENT TO SIMPLICITY

The *Simple Argument* rests on the following premises:

P1 The Datum (for any pair of people, it is impossible for the pair itself to be conscious).

P2 Something must explain the Datum (there is at least one non-trivial feature that no pair of people could itself have, but which every conscious being must have).

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[1] David Barnett, "You Are Simple," in *The Waning of Materialism*, ed. Robert C. Koons and George Bealer (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); David Barnett, "The Simplicity Intuition and Its Hidden Influence on Philosophy of Mind," *Nous* 42, no. 2 (June 2008): 308–35, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0068.2008.00682.x; David Barnett, "Chitchat on Personal Identity," in *Personal Identity: Complex or Simple?*, First paperback edition, ed. Georg Gasser and Matthias Stefan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 21–43.

[2] Andrew M. Bailey, "You Needn't Be Simple," *Philosophical Papers* 43, no. 2 (May 2014): 145–60, https://doi.org/10.1080/05568641.2014.932955.

[3] Bailey, "You Needn't Be Simple."

[4] Rory Madden, "The Naive Topology of the Conscious Subject," *Noûs* 49, no. 1 (March 2015): 55–70, https://doi.org/10.1111/nous.12002. There is also another objection of a different kind that cannot be addressed here because of the lack of space. See Eric Yang, "Persons, Simplicity, and Substance," *Philosophical Papers* 47, no. 2 (May 2018): 299–311, https://doi.org/10.1080/05568641.2018.1445551.

P3 If no combination of *Number, Relation, Nature,* and *Structure* explains The Datum, then *Simplicity* explains the Datum

P4 No combination of *Number, Nature, Relation,* and *Structure* explains The Datum.

P5 *Simplicity* explains the Datum.[5]

The most controversial premise of the argument is P3, so the discussion on the premise occupies most of Barnett's discussion. For *Number*, Barnett contends that the *primary* bearer of an experience cannot be a pair or a collection of conscious beings. Experience must be experienced by *a* conscious being. If the pair Richard and Maurice both enjoy a burger, there is no additional being (the "McDonald Brothers") that enjoys the burger. No matter how many conscious beings you add to the collection, there will be no additional conscious being that bears the experience which is not already included in the collection. Therefore, *Number* cannot explain the Datum.

As for *Relation*, suppose that two persons, *X* and *Y* act as the left and right brain hemispheres. Both *X* and *Y* have been trained to act as if they are one unity of a brain such that from the outside, they seem to be a single unified conscious being. However, it seems absurd to think that even when *X* and *Y* are in a relation so intimate as the left and right brain hemispheres, there is another subject, the pair of *X and Y*, that is also individually conscious in virtue of the right relation between *X* and *Y*. If *X* experiences something, he experiences it himself, as is *Y*. It is incredible, however, to think that the *pair* of *X and Y* itself experiences something.

What about *Nature*? It seems that whatever the nature of the object is, no pair of objects can be conscious on their own. Whether we have a pair of carrots or a pair of bunnies or even a pair of brain hemispheres, it does not seem less absurd to think that the pair itself is conscious.

For *Structure*, it seems that however a collection of objects be structured, it cannot explain the intuition behind the Datum. The left and right brain hemispheres thought experiment has shown that even if there are two conscious beings put together into a certain structure called the brain, it is hard to believe that the structured pair itself is conscious. It seems clear that *Number*, *Relation*, *Nature*, and *Structure* individually cannot explain the Datum.

[5] Barnett, "You Are Simple," 172.

What about the combination of *Number*, *Relation*, *Nature*, and *Structure*? This seems to be what people have in mind when they ascribe consciousness to human bodies. No doubt, human beings are conscious. Therefore, it might be the combination of these four options above that accounts for the thinking human beings. But it seems that we ascribe consciousness to the body because it is presented as simple, but not to pairs of people because they do not appear to be simple. If the composite aspect of a human body is made more salient, that is, if it is shown to be a composite object consisting of zillions of sub-atomic particles, then it is as absurd to attribute consciousness to the human body as it is to attribute consciousness to pairs of people. As Barnett says,

> The structure is not some simple object that pops into existence once the particles are so related; at any moment, it *consists* in the particles' being so related. To be sure, a simple object may pop into existence whenever particles are so related, and such an object may itself be a subject of experience. But the idea that this system of particles—considered *as* a system of widely separated objects—might *itself* experience something, say, the taste of McDonald's French fries, seems no less absurd than the idea that a galaxy of stars might itself experience something.[6]

There seems to be no way that the combination can explain the Datum. From here, Barnett concludes that what best explains the Datum is *Simplicity*.

Adding to that, *Simplicity* seems to be the ground of many influential intuitions typically elicited in philosophical arguments.[7] If *Simplicity* turns out to be false, then all the influential intuitions go down as well. In Barnett's words, "Thus, if my arguments are sound, then a strong argument that conscious beings need not be simple is a strong argument for dismissing a range of influential intuitions in philosophy of mind."[8]

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[6] Barnett, "You Are Simple.", 171. Emphasis his.

[7] Ned Block, "Troubles with Functionalism," *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science* 9 (1978): 261–325; Hilary Putnam, "The Nature of Mental States," in *Readings in Philosophy of Psychology*, ed. Ned Block (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1980), 223–31; John R. Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 3, no. 03 (September 1980): 417, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X00005756; Peter Unger, "Identity, Consciousness and Value.," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 42, no. 167 (April 1992): 247, https://doi.org/10.2307/2220223; Arnold Zuboff, "The Story of a Brain," in *The Mind's I: Fantasies and Reflections on Self and Soul*, Nachdr., ed. Douglas R. Hofstadter and D. C. Dennett (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 202–11.

[8] Barnett, "The Simplicity Intuition and Its Hidden Influence on Philosophy of Mind," 309.

This then, is a précis of the Simple Argument for *Simplicity*. It is time to turn to alternatives in explaining the Datum. Let us begin with *Elimination* that is advocated by Andrew Bailey.

ELIMINATION

Elimination contends that there are not, and could not be, any person-pairs. The Datum is true because there *could not* be person-pairs to be conscious to begin with. The way of Elimination is not really to explain the Datum, but to eliminate the supposed object that raises the problem. Explanation by elimination is a reasonable philosophical tool. Sometimes a philosophical problem can be removed if the underlying assumption can be denied. If there could not be any person-pairs, then the Datum is not even a problem from the start. Bailey shows that even if it is far from obvious that *Elimination* is true, *Elimination* still stands as an undercutting defeater to Barnett's claim that only *Simplicity* can explain the Datum hence the unsoundness of the Simple Argument. His modest aim is to show that *Elimination* is a possible explanation to the Datum and ignoring it would not do well for the *Simple Argument*.

That said, there is a good reason to hold that *Simplicity* is still a superior alternative than *Elimination*. First, the Simple Argument is an argument that is primarily supported by intuition. In contrast, Bailey concedes that *Elimination* is "far from obvious." It has to be stressed that the *Simple Argument's* real aim, "is merely to make credible a position that is rarely taken seriously by contemporary philosophers, namely that conscious beings must be simple." Moreover, Barnett admits, "The argument itself has escape routes." Then, what is Barnett doing? His argument "involves a long, slow, development of an intuition pump that is designed to give the reader a certain perspective on key examples. By the end of the argument, the materialists just might find themselves having the intuition that they are wrong."[9] The *Simple Argument*, therefore, is primarily an argument from intuition. This poses a problem for *Elimination* for it seems that the intuition of *Simplicity* is more obvious than the intuition of *Elimination*, a point that Bailey has granted. Of course, there might be a concept that seems unintuitive at first glance yet turns out to be true after some considerable explanation. In other words, simply stating that one intuition is more obvious than another does not seem to help one to decide which one is better, especially in the case of a tie. Nevertheless, I contend that *Elimination* does not need

[9] Barnett, "You Are Simple," 161.

to be a threat for proponents of *Simplicity*. Indeed, I suggest that even proponents of *Simplicity* might adopt *Elimination* to argue that we are simple.

In order to see why those who hold *Elimination* should accept *Simplicity*, there needs to be some clarification. *Elimination* seems to be an answer to what Peter van Inwagen calls the Special Composition Question (SCQ, hereafter):

> **The Special Composition Question SCQ:** What necessary and jointly sufficient conditions must any *xs* satisfy in order for it to be the case that there is a *y* composed of those *xs*?[10]

Accordingly, there is either an *Extreme* or *Moderate* version of answering this question, the former further divided between *Nihilism* and *Universalism*.[11] *Nihilism* is basically saying that composition never happens and therefore nothing has proper parts.[12] *Universalism*, on the other hand, claims that composition happens all the time. The *Moderate* answers that under certain conditions, two or more non-overlapping things compose something and yet sometimes two or more non-overlapping things do not compose anything. Proponents of the *Moderate* version differ on what are the conditions when composition happens, but generally speaking, if the conditions are not met then composition does not occur and what is left are metaphysical simples. Recall that for *Elimination* the pair cannot be conscious because the pair lacks existence. It seems the *Elimination* view in mind is either *Nihilism* or *Moderate* answer to SCQ.[13] I argue that both are still unsuccessful in unseating *Simplicity* as the true explanation of the Datum. Let us see why.

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[10] Peter Van Inwagen, *Material Beings*, First printing, Cornell paperbacks (Ithaca London: Cornell University Press, 1990).

[11] Another answer would be *Brutal* which says that there is no true, non-trivial, and finitely long answer to SCQ. This answer would be another challenge to the *Simple Argument* but for lack of space would not be discussed here. Ned Markosian, "Brutal Composition," *Philosophical Studies* 92, no. 3 (1998): 211–49, https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1004267523392.

[12] For a thorough argument for *Nihilism* see Theodore Sider, "Against Parthood," in *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics, Volume 8*, ed. Karen Bennett and Dean W. Zimmerman (Oxford University Press, 2013), 236–93, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199682904.003.0006.

[13] Bailey's own view is apparent in his other articles. He answers the SCQ with what is usually called "Animalism" which is the view that only animals are composite objects. Andrew M. Bailey, "You Are an Animal," *Res Philosophica* 93, no. 1 (2016): 205–18, https://doi.org/10.11612/resphil.2016.93.1.9; Andrew M. Bailey, "Our Animal Interests," *Philosophical Studies* 174, no. 9 (September 2017): 2315–28, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-016-0800-6.

Suppose we adopt *Nihilism*, it seems that there is at least one conscious being (other than God or angels). But what is this conscious being? Does it have proper parts or is it simple? If it has proper parts, then it is a complex being composed of other things. If it does not have proper parts, then it is simple. Given *Nihilism*, this conscious being cannot have proper parts. But is not that the same as saying that conscious being must be simple, that it is not composed of any proper-parts? After every composite being is eliminated, then what is left are only simple beings. And if any of these simple beings are conscious, then *Simplicity* seems to be vindicated once more. A pair of conscious objects cannot be conscious in itself because the pair is not *simple*. If proponents of *Nihilism* still want to accept that there are conscious beings in this picture, then the conscious beings must be simple. It is curious why detractors of *Simplicity* would want to endorse this view.

Therefore, it seems proponents of *Elimination* is thinking about the *Moderate* answer to SCQ; that is, they may argue that there are some composite objects in virtue of, at least according to one version of it, being involved in a kind of participation and cooperation in the same life.[14] Human organism is the paradigm example of such beings, while pairs of persons are not. That is why the Datum is true since a pair of persons does not compose anything. The pair does not exist. Call this *Moderate Elimination.*

I do not think that *Moderate Elimination* works. In order to see this, we do not need to go into bizarre thought experiments; we only need to look at the case of conjoined twins. Call the first twin Fred and the second, George. Fred and George are conjoined to each other since birth. This seems to be a clear case where there is a pair of persons conjoined together, participating and cooperating in the same life. *Moderate Elimination* has to grant that aside from Fred and George there is another entity: the pair of Fred and George. But this is a problem. If *Moderate Elimination* grants the existence of the pair of Fred and George, then it seems that *Elimination* violates its own maxim, that person-pairs could not exist. Even more, now it is hard to see how *Moderate Elimination* can stand as an explanation to the Datum.

Alternatively, the proponents of *Moderate Elimination* might want to eliminate the individual Fred and the individual George but insist that the pair of Fred and

[14] For a thorough defense of this view, see Van Inwagen, *Material Beings*; Eric T. Olson, *What Are We? A Study in Personal Ontology*, Philosophy of mind (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), chapter 2 & 9.

George exists. In doing that, *Moderate Elimination* does not violate its own maxim, because there is no pair at all. But this seems absurd. It goes against what we see in real conjoined twins where each individual is conscious by itself. Whenever we talk to a conjoined twin, we do not refer them as a single person, but to two, as it should be. The individual Fred and the individual George are right to be puzzled when we address them as one but not to any of them in particular.[15]

In reply, proponents of *Moderate Elimination* might modify the conditions upon which composition occurs. They could make the condition to be "some *xs* make a *y* whenever the *xs* are participating and cooperating in the same *mental* life." Call this *Modified Moderate Elimination* (*MME*). In this way, even though Fred and George are united biologically, they do not compose a pair of persons.

Proponents of *Simplicity* might object by considering plants. According to MME, plants, although they are among the clearest examples of living organisms, do not exist, insofar as they do not appear to possess a mental life. Here an argument may be made that plants are conscious. It does not matter. Take a living non-conscious being, *z* and that being, according to the modified condition, does not exist. The alternative is to regard all living things, including *mycoplasma genitalium* to be conscious, but that seems to be a stretch of imagination.

Here, proponents of *MME* could bite the bullet and say that there are no plants either. To me it appears to be a big price—one that I rather not pay. Also, it is worth pointing that this move could be utilized only if one has already granted that composition does occur in the way *MME* says it does. But this begs the question, to my mind. As Barnett anticipates,

The relevant question is not: supposing that we are identical to composite objects, might such-and-such composite object be conscious? But rather: suppositions and philosophical theories aside, might the collection of elementary-

[15] Surprisingly, some animalists readily accept that there are not two persons within some cases of conjoined twins such that even if we were to amputate one of the heads, we may experience what we typically call death, but no one is killed. Not surprisingly, there is a lively discussion among animalists about the phenomena of conjoined twins. See Alexandria Boyle, "Conjoined Twinning & Biological Individuation," *Philosophical Studies* 177, no. 8 (August 2020): 2395–415, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-019-01316-x; Tim Campbell and Jeff McMahan, "Animalism and the Varieties of Conjoined Twinning," *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 31, no. 4 (August 2010): 285–301, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11017-010-9150-0; Eric T. Olson, "The Metaphysical Implications of Conjoined Twinning: Metaphysical Implications of Conjoined Twinning," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 52 (September 2014): 24–40, https://doi.org/10.1111/sjp.12073.

particle-people, or the system that comprises it, itself be a subject of experience? To which the intuitive answer is: *no*.[16]

In other words, we need an independent argument for *MME* to make this objection works. Without it, left with our naïve conception, it seems that the intuition works better with *Simplicity*.

To summarize, *Nihilism* leads to simple conscious beings; accepting *Moderate Elimination* leads to granting the existence of person-pairs; while *MME* leads toward eliminating living non-conscious beings. The results seem to be bad news for *Elimination* or to whoever wanting to deny *Simplicity* using this strategy. No doubt it is not conclusive, but more works need to be done to unseat *Simplicity*. To *Maximality* now we turn.

MAXIMALITY

Bailey attempts to explain the Datum by arguing for *Maximality*. He defines *Maximality* as follows: a property *F* is maximal, just in case for any *x* that is *F*, there is no *y* such that *x* is a proper part of *y* and *y* is *F*.[17] The property of being conscious is maximal. In this sense, *Maximality* explains the Datum because person-pairs have persons as proper parts. Therefore, by the definition of maximal property, person-pairs cannot be conscious.

Proponents of *Simplicity* might attempt to deny *Maximality*, but they cannot do so since *Simplicity* entails *Maximality*. As Bailey puts it, "if no conscious beings have proper parts (as *Simplicity* maintains), then no conscious beings have conscious beings as proper parts (as per *Maximality*)."[18] Bailey realizes some people might suggest that *Simplicity* explains *Maximality* and hence the superiority of the former. He argues that *Maximality* is a necessary truth just as *Simplicity*. If *Simplicity* needs no further explanation, why must *Maximality* need an explanation? It is the case, then, that *Maximality* is as good an explanation to the Datum as *Simplicity*.

This seems to be a wrong move. According to *Maximality* person-pairs do not exist because conscious beings cannot have another conscious being as proper part. However, consider a pair of mereologically simple objects, *X* and *Y*. Suppose that together they compose a pair, *C*. Now, *C* is conscious. What is it that makes *C*

[16] Barnett, "You Are Simple," 169.
[17] Bailey, "You Needn't Be Simple," 151.
[18] Bailey, "You Needn't Be Simple," 154.

conscious? There are two possible options to my mind. First, one of the parts of *C*. That is, either *X* or *Y* is conscious such that *C* is really *X* having *Y* as part or *Y* having *X* as part. But if this is the case, then *Simplicity* is right. Proponents of *Simplicity* have nothing to worry about. We can run the thought experiment again with three parts, four parts, to *n* parts and the result should be the same: there is one simple conscious being of which the other simples are its parts. The problem would be more apparent if neither *X* nor *Y* is conscious, but somehow *C* is conscious since *X* and *Y* together compose a certain kind of being that is conscious. Here *Simplicity* is wrong and *Maximality* is right.

However, *Maximality* seems wrong for independent reasons. C. S. Sutton argues that *Maximality* is accurate for most cases, but there are exceptions that would invalidate *Maximality* as a necessary truth.[19] She gives some examples. Consider a larger tile that has a smaller tile as a part. Per *Maximality*, the smaller tile should not count as tile, which is striking. Another example is a file which has files as its parts. According to *Maximality* the sub-file should not count as a file since it is a part of a larger stack of file. It could be replied that *being a file* is not a maximal property. But if *being a file* is not a maximal property, what makes *being conscious* or *being a house* a maximal property? These examples serve to show that *Maximality* seems not to be a necessary truth, at least not one that is on par with *Simplicity*. But if it is not on par with *Simplicity* then we seem to have a reason to think that *Simplicity* is a more fundamental explanation of the Datum.

Let us now turn to the last option: *Integrity*.

INTEGRITY

Rory Madden argues that the Datum is best explained by *Integrity*. Responding to Barnett, Madden thinks that what is required from our naïve conception is not a purely mereological requirement but a topological requirement. His answer is:

> Integrity: Our naïve conception of a conscious subject demands that conscious beings be topologically integrated (i.e. that they not be topologically scattered).[20]

[19] C. S. Sutton, "Against the Maximality Principle," *Metaphysica* 15, no. 2 (January 2014), https://doi.org/10.1515/mp-2014-0023.

[20] Madden, "The Naive Topology of the Conscious Subject," 57.

There are two primitives that he assumes. First, a *proper part* of another thing is *Pxy* where it is, "an anti-symmetric, irreflexive, transitive relation, intended to capture the intuitive idea of one thing's being 'a bit' of another thing." Second, relation of *interior continuity Cxy* where it is, "a reflexive, symmetric, transitive relation." With these, he defines integrated, scattered, integral whole, limb, collection, and mottle in this way:

x is free $=_{df} \forall y \forall z ([Pyx \,\&\, Cyz] \rightarrow Pzx)$

x is attached $=_{df}$ x is not free

x is integrated $=_{df} \forall y \forall z ([Pyx \,\&\, Pzx] \rightarrow Cyz)$

x is scattered $=_{df}$ x is not integrated

x is an integral whole $=_{df}$ x is integrated and free

x is a limb $=_{df}$ x is integrated and attached

x is a collection $=_{df}$ x is scattered and free

x is a mottle $=_{df}$ x is scattered and attached[21]

X is integrated when any pair of its proper parts is interior-continuous. If not, it is scattered. The list is just an elaboration of these two relations. By this account, person pairs are composed of free objects, therefore the pairs are topologically scattered and not integrated whole. It is obvious that a scattered thing, whether free or attached, is not conscious. Our naïve conception requires a topologically integrated whole in order for the thing to be conscious. Therefore, contra Barnett, it seems that the *Nature* of the things being paired do play some role for the pair to be conscious.

With these topological distinctions Madden also criticizes Barnett's move in considering *Relation* where it is imagined that there are two persons shrunk and put into McCartney's left and right hemisphere, functioning together as if they are one brain. Barnett claims that even if the relation is right, it is absurd that the pair itself (McCartney) is conscious. Not so fast. Madden sees that McCartney's brain is not topologically integrated, and that explains why the pair itself is not conscious. If this is right, *Relation* and *Structure* do play some role for the pair to be conscious.

What about the combination of *Number*, *Nature*, *Relation*, and *Structure*? Here Barnett's use of extraordinary magnifying goggles is also problematic. Barnett sees that if our body is magnified extraordinarily then it is seen that we are composed of zillions of sub-atomic particles like a galaxy of stars that is arranged body-wise.

[21] Madden, "The Naive Topology of the Conscious Subject," 58.

Barnett concludes that it is no less absurd to think that this collection is conscious than to think that person pairs are conscious. However, Madden sees that the way Barnett pictures the system as a galaxy of stars is misleading. Of course, a galaxy of stars cannot be conscious since they are topologically scattered. If they are topologically integrated, on the other hand, the story might well be different. Madden concludes that, "Our naïve conception of a conscious subject demands that its proper parts are attached in *nature* and that they stand to one another in the *relation* of interior continuity—for only then can the *structure* they compose be an integrated whole."[22] *Simplicity* seems to be in trouble again.

Or so it seems. *Integrity* seems to fail because it cannot account why human persons are topologically integrated and yet person-pairs are not topologically integrated. Recall that Madden criticizes Barnett in likening human body to a galaxy of stars rather than a topologically integrated whole. However, he is aware that our way of seeing the microphysical world does look like what Barnett has pictured. Even more, he argues that:

> Still, one might think that we need not penetrate down to the strange quantum world in order to find conflict between Integrity and materialism. It takes only quite low-powered optical microscopy to reveal that red blood corpuscles, or ovum cells, for example, appear to be topologically free wholes, not unlike smooth pebbles. Now, a materialist determined to preserve the naïve conception of conscious subjects as integrated might point out here that we can regard our blood system as actually a complex topological hole in our integrated body, the interior walls of the various blood vessels forming a single elaborate continuous exterior surface of the organism. The free corpuscles moving around this hole are thus not really proper parts of the organism at all. Similarly the 'cell nests' of the ovary, which contains the ova, can be regarded as just further holes in an integrated organism. An ovum is really no more part of an organism than is a hen's egg held in one's closed hand.[23]

He explains this conflict of *Integrity* with materialism by the possibility of reworking the primitive notions (proper part and interior continuity):

> For example 'interior continuity' between the parts an organism may be acceptably interpreted as a matter of participation and cooperation in the same

[22] Madden, "The Naive Topology of the Conscious Subject," 63–64.
[23] Madden, "The Naive Topology of the Conscious Subject," 67.

> life. On the other hand 'interior continuity' in the case of a billiard ball might be interpreted as a matter of ancestral chains of 'rigid bonding'. These more precise ways of giving flesh to the primitive notions both fit the logical properties of the relation, and they respect the distinction between mere contact and connection. Importantly they do not obviously exclude the possibility of microscopic spatial discontinuities. Nor do they exclude integrated wholes from having walled cells as parts: the exchange of nutrients and energy between their interior parts and those of other interior parts of the organism means that those parts participate in the same life.[24]

If human bodies are like a galaxy of stars, then human bodies are not topologically integrated. If we are not topologically integrated, how is it that *Integrity* offers any help against the *Simple Argument*? There must be something that integrates all the human particles, even though Madden has not come about what it is specifically that makes human bodies integrated wholes. Let us grant for the sake of the argument that there is actually a kind of 'interior continuity' of human bodies that make them integrated wholes. I believe even if there is a kind of rigid bonding between particles of human bodies it is still unclear how *Integrity* is supposed to explain the Datum, much less explaining it better than *Simplicity*.

Let us use some already familiar thought experiments to see this. Consider the case of Fred and George again. If proponents of *Integrity* are willing to grant that human bodies are integrated wholes in virtue of a sort of 'interior continuity' then it seems that they have to grant that Fred and George *is* an integrated whole. But if they grant that Fred and George is an integrated whole, it is not clear to me how *Integrity* could explain the Datum, much less, in a way that is better than *Simplicity*. It seems that proponents of *Integrity* want to say that pairs of people are not conscious because they lack topological integrity while at the same time, they grant that there is an integrated whole that is not conscious in itself. But if this is true, why is this integrated whole of Fred and George is not itself conscious, while the integrated whole of the individual Fred is conscious?

Naturally, proponents of *Integrity* would want to resist the implication that Fred and George are rigidly bonded. They could say that Fred and George, even though they are attached to each other, are not an integral whole because they lack the rigid bonding required to be considered an integrated whole. The individual Fred is an

[24] Madden, "The Naive Topology of the Conscious Subject," 67.

integrated whole, while Fred and George, as a pair, is not, or at least not the same kind of integrated whole as the individual Fred. In other words, the first strategy is to say that the individual Fred is an integrated whole of kind *A*, while the pair of Fred and George is an individual whole of kind *B*. The second strategy is to say that the individual Fred is an integrated whole and the pair of Fred and George is not an integrated whole. Both strategies assume that there are varieties of topological integrity. I am not sure how this can be done and how this is helpful in explaining the Datum.

To make the point clearer, let us imagine the citizens of Indonesia are rigidly bonded with each other, making them one unified integrated whole. Assume that all the citizens are individually conscious. Would we say that the whole will have consciousness of its own? It seems absurd to think that the unified whole of the citizens of Indonesia can be conscious in itself, even when they are rigidly bonded with each other into a unified whole. Proponents of *Integrity* would surely agree, but then it becomes unclear why topological integrity would grant that the integrated whole of an individual citizen of Indonesia is conscious, while an integrated whole of the nation of Indonesia is not. It seems that whether we are integrated wholes or not is not relevant to why the Datum: "for any pair of conscious beings, it is impossible for the pair *itself* to be conscious" is true.

CONCLUSION

Simplicity, according to the *Simple Argument*, is the best explanation of the Datum. There are novel attempts to explain the Datum such as *Elimination*, *Maximality*, and *Integrity*. This paper has shown that there are problems with each of these that make them partial explanations to the Datum at best. It does not mean that the *Simple Argument* is enough to argue for *Simplicity*. As is apparent in the discussion of *Maximality*, there are possible options yet to be considered and some of them might successfully resist the *Simple Argument's* intuitive push. All this is to say that P3 does not include all the possible options needed to make the argument sound. Nevertheless, the *Simple Argument* is an argument that warrants further discussion by both sides be that a proponent or a detractor of *Simplicity*.

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