

# THE SELF: A HUMEAN BUNDLE AND/OR A CARTESIAN SUBSTANCE?

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## ABSTRACT

Is the self a substance, as Descartes thought, or is it 'only' a bundle of perceptions, as Hume thought? In this paper I will examine these two views, especially with respect to two central features that have played a central role in the discussion, both of which can be quickly and usefully explained if one puts them as an objection to the bundle view. First, friends of the substance view have insisted that only if one conceives of the self as a substance is it possible to account for genuine particularity of selves and genuine persistence through time of them. I will discuss in detail this claim as well as a special case of persistence - the case of a fission of a self - and I will ask, as Shoemaker (1997) did, how such a case can be handled by the two competing theories. The second central point of traditional disagreement concerns independence: it is often said that only a substance, but not a mere bundle, is independent enough of its properties to play properly the role of a self, and I will have something to say about this.

Concerning all these points, my thesis will be a meta-theoretical one: contrary to appearances, *both* views can accommodate all of them (particularity at a time, persistence, fission, independence) *in the same way*, and I will examine two possible conclusions to be drawn from this: either that the differences between the two views are no more than terminological and that they turn out to be equivalent views, or that the differences are metaphysical but that it is epistemically under-determined which one of the views we should choose.

**Key words:** self, bundle theory, substance, substratum, metaontology

*"It is certain that a thought cannot exist without a thing that is thinking, and in general no act or accident can exist without a substance for it to belong to."*

Descartes 1965, 175-6

*"For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I can never catch myself at any time without a perception, and can never observe anything but the perception. When my perceptions are remov'd for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of myself, and may truly be said not to exist."*

Hume 1978, 252

## 1.

Is the self a substance, as Descartes thought, or is it 'only' a bundle of perceptions, as Hume thought? Although I shall talk about "the Cartesian view" and "the Humean view", I will not really be here concerned with Cartesian or Humean

exegesis. I think that what I will say about these views is (at least) very close to views Descartes and Hume actually held, but exact interpretation of their writings is a tricky endeavour that I shall not attempt. Rather, I will be content if I can contribute to the discussion about the nature of the self that arose from the opposition between their views on this issue. Thus, I shall leave aside any specialities of Descartes' or Hume's view – in particular, I will be examining the two theories in a more general way comparing the view that the self is a bundle of *properties* and the view that it is a substance that has *properties*, which is neutral with respect to what sort of things one takes to be bundled or had: perceptions, ideas, mental events, thoughts, experiences, or other. What I am interested in is to compare these two views by examining their central features that are most commonly shared by usual variants of them. Furthermore, I shall limit myself to examining versions of these views where properties are said to be tropes, rather than universals, for the case of the bundle theory combined with the claim that properties are universals requires a special additional treatment because of worries that arise with Identity of Indiscernibles, and this is a discussion for which there was no space in this paper (note however, that the arguments I *do* discuss here *do* apply to the bundle theory with universals as well).

There are two central and commonly shared features of these two views that have played a central role in the discussion, both of which can be quickly and usefully explained if one puts them as an objection to the bundle view. First, friends of the substance view have insisted that only if one conceives of the self as a substance is it possible to account for genuine persistence of selves through time. In his recent book, Barry Dainton (2008, 341) says that “[...] we think of ourselves as being particular things, enduring objects – in traditional parlance, *substances*<sup>1</sup>” where it even seems to be part of the meaning of “substance” that it is something that endures through time, which a mere bundle is traditionally said to be unable to do. Furthermore, this substance is something that is *simple* which guarantees the particularity of the self: it is the ultimate bearer of properties that it *has* but that it does not *contain*, unlike a bundle. Thus, a substance, it is argued, is needed for two things: accommodate the idea that the self is a *particular* thing that has properties at a time, and that it genuinely persists through time. In what follows, I will discuss in detail these features of the two theories, and I will also discuss a special case of persistence of selves through time – the case of a fission of a self, and I will ask, as Shoemaker (1997) did, how such a case can be handled by the two competing theories.

The second central point of traditional disagreement concerns *independence*: it is often said that only a substance, but not a mere bundle, is independent enough of its properties to play properly the role of a self, and I will have something to say about this.

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<sup>1</sup> Dainton actually rejects this view.

Concerning all these points, that I take to be central to the debate and that are indeed such that they are often taken to *define* the views at hand, my thesis will be a meta-theoretical one: contrary to appearances, *both* views can accommodate all the above-mentioned points (particularity at a time, persistence, fission, independence) *in the same way*, and I will examine two possible conclusions to be drawn from this – that is, either that the differences between the two views are no more than terminological and that the two views turn out to be equivalent, or that the differences are metaphysical but that it is epistemically under-determined which one of the views we should choose.

Such a conclusion(s), especially the former one, may seem strange at first sight, since as metaphysical theories go, these two rival views could hardly seem be more dissimilar and opposite to each other. My aim in this paper is then twofold. First, I want to make some progress with respect to the substance theory and the bundle theory of the self, and I want to do this mainly by examining the central points of alleged disagreement between them mentioned above. Second, I want to defend the meta-metaphysical claim that the two allegedly very different rival views are much less different than what we thought: their structure is extremely similar, their strategies are extremely similar, they can both face their theoretical challenges (particularity, persistence, fission, independence) *in the same way*, so that, as we will see, some central objections to one side always have a sneaky tendency to reappear for the other side as well.

## 2.

The substance theory of the self claims that a self is not just a collection of thoughts, ideas, perceptions, and so on; rather it is the thing which possesses them. The self is an ultimate subject of these attributes, an “ultimate particular” as Gallie (1936, 29) put it. Thus this view can be put as a claim about what the relationship between the self and its properties is: there is the self and there are its properties that are had by the self that is conceived of as being the bearer of those properties. This view of course parallels a general theory of substances where such a bearer of properties, which has its identity independently of the properties which it bears, is often called “an underlying subject”, a “substratum”, a “substance”, or a “bare particular”. Thus, analogously to what the general substance theory says about objects like tables, the substance theory of the self sees it this way: there are properties (thoughts, perceptions, experiences, ...) and a substance (a ‘bare self’) that supports them and glues them together in order to make up a person (i.e. something that has particular thoughts, experiences, ...).

The Humean bundle theory claims that there are only properties and denies the existence and the need for any such substance: a self is then taken to be a bundle (a cluster, a bunch, ...) of its properties. The bundle theory thus claims that there is only one kind of component needed to make up selves, instead of two as the substance theory has it, and that selves are just bundles of properties which are held together (glued together

in order to make up a person) by a special property (an  $n$ -adic relation, where  $n$  is the number of properties) often called “co-personality”.

As already announced, I shall discuss and compare the substance theory and the bundle theory under the assumption that properties are tropes rather than universals, for reasons mentioned above. The bundle theory appeals to a bundling relation that is labelled in different ways like “co-personality”, “co-consciousness”, “consubjectivity”, “compresence”, “consubstantiality”, “co-instantiation”, “togetherness”, “collocation”, etc. The fact that there are so many different labels for this relation does not mean, however, that there are many different analysis of the nature of this relation. Indeed, typically, the co-personality relation is taken to be unanalyzable and primitive. Thus, it is important for what follows to note that this relation is defined and individuated *not* by its nature or intrinsic features of which we are not told much by the bundle theory, but rather by its *theoretical role*: it is a *unifying device*, a device that takes properties to make up selves. While many friends of the bundle view only implicitly assume the primitiveness of their bundling relation, Barry Dainton, for one, claims it to be the central notion of his theory explicitly: “The key relationship is co-consciousness, a primitive but real relationship between experiences” (Dainton 2008, 347).

In a parallel way, the substance theory uses properties and a bearer of properties that is labelled in different ways like “substance” (a tricky word in philosophy, but that I shall continue to use nonetheless in order to stick to tradition), “substratum”, “naked particular”, “bare particular”, “thin particular”, etc. As for the bundle theory, the fact that there are so many different labels for this bearer does not mean, however, that there are many different analysis of its nature. Indeed, typically, it is thus defined and individuated not by its nature or intrinsic features of which we are not told much by the substance theory, but rather by its theoretical role: it is a unifying device, a device that takes properties to make selves.

It is then I think very important to note that *both* the bundle theory and the substance theory contain a unifying device that is primitive and under-defined, and whose purpose is to tie together properties of a single self. Paraphrasing Locke, who was interested in the general case of the bundle theory and the substance theory of material objects, in both cases this unifying device is a “we-know-not-what” ... but it is a “we-know-what-it-does”, that is, we know its theoretical role.

The parallel between the two unifying devices also shows in the way the substance view is often objected to. Indeed, an objection to the substance view goes: “In virtue of what is one self, one ‘bare’ substance, distinct from another self? No attributes or properties can distinguish between them, since they are bare!”. But I think that the very same question can be asked about co-personality: “*Tu quoque*: In virtue of what is one co-personality relation (involved in the bundling of a self A) distinct from another (involved in the bundling of another self B)? No attributes or properties can distinguish between them.” Both views, I submit, answer these questions by a primitivist claim.

Let us now turn our attention to the case of persistence of selves through time. As announced in the introduction, there is allegedly an importantly different way in which selves conceived of as substances can persist through time while selves conceived of as 'mere' bundles cannot. Here is Peter Van Inwagen on this: "[...] One who took the general Humean line might of course say that the word 'I' referred to some collection of these qualities, but collections of ideas aren't really suitable candidates for the referent of 'I' (or so it might be argued) because it is part of the meaning of the word 'I' that its referent is something that persists through changes of qualities, and that is just what collections of qualities don't do." (Van Inwagen 2002, 176). This objection parallels a general traditional complaint against the bundle theory of material objects, that can be found, for instance, in Van Cleve (1985, 122): "If a thing were a set of properties, it would be incapable of change. For a thing could change its properties only if the set identical with it could change its members, but that is impossible; no set can change its members." Taking an example of an individual that is supposed to change one of its properties over time, he adds: "[...] what we have is replacement of one individual by another, not change in the properties of one and the same individual." (Van Cleve 1985, 124).

The objection certainly has some clear initial force: if a self is a bundle of properties then even if only one of the properties making up the bundle changes, the bundle itself changes and consequently the self that is the bundle changes as well – it is simply not the same entity, and we have a case of an entity that ceased to exist and another entity that took its place, which has the unwelcome consequence that selves cannot genuinely change and cannot persist through time because they cannot persist through intrinsic change.

The substance view is supposed to be able to avoid such objections, but actually it does not. What could amount to genuine change under the substance view? The substance itself (the 'bare' entity) does not change since it does not have in itself any properties it cannot undergo qualitative change at all, and the 'thick' self composed of the substance and the properties it has cannot genuinely change for a reason that relevantly parallels what we have seen above concerning why the self conceived as a bundle cannot change: there is no change, rather there is replacement of one 'thick' particular by another.

True enough, the substance view can claim that the *substance* remains the same over different times, and that this guarantees that the self, while changing its properties, is the same self, but if this were an acceptable reply, then the bundle view can give exactly the same: the co-personality relation remains the same over different times, and this guarantees that the self, while changing its properties, is the same self. Both views thus have a primitive unifying device that allows them to do the job: both views can answer the objection in the same way by appealing to their unifying device, and calling the device different names ("co-personality" or "substance") does not change anything relevant since both unifying devices just play the same role in the same way – that is, in a primitive way. Again, this is something that is often only passed along in silence, but Jonathan Lowe, for one, puts it as clearly as one can wish: "The simplicity of the self is seen

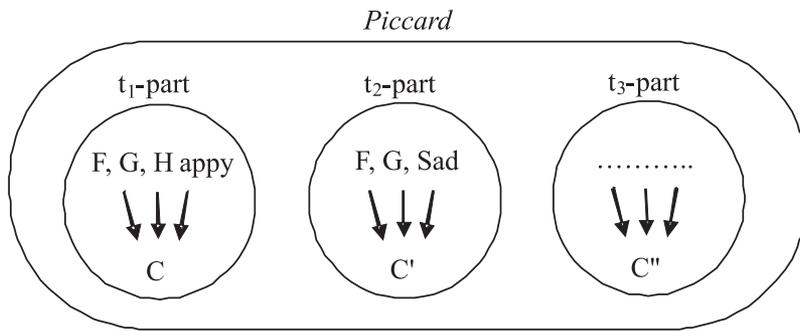
to imply that its diachronic identity – its persistence through time – is irreducible and ungrounded, and hence criterionless” (Lowe (1996, 10)); “[...] the diachronic identity of simple substances, including the self, is primitive or ungrounded” (Lowe 1996, 41).

In order to get a better and more precise grip on this claim, I shall in the next section examine the two main strategies there are to face the problem of persistence through time, namely a version of perdurantism and a version of endurantism, and see whether there is any difference between the use of a substance or a co-personality relation. (As we shall see, there isn't.) The general idea behind my claim here is that, as we have already seen and as we shall see in more detail below, both views appeal to their unifying device which is what I will call a “problem-solver”. Simply put, a problem-solver is something that is a primitive in a theory and that solves a problem (in our case, the problem of how a self can persist through time and undergo change in intrinsic properties). Perhaps, every primitive in every theory is a problem-solver – for why do we introduce primitives in the first place, if not for them to do an explanatory-power job? And how do they do this explanatory-power job? By having a primitive capacity to do so. The idea is simple: how can the theory account for a self to be one and the same at different times while having different qualities? By having a primitive unifying device that is primitively the same over time (in a sense we will see in more detail below). The premise that there are such primitive unifying devices is thus a “problem-solver” in the sense that without it the theory would not be able to face the theoretical challenge of accounting for change over time for selves and that it succeeds to do so only in virtue of the postulation that it can do so. The latter claim may sound a bit pejorative, but it is not : every theory has its primitives and every primitive is, at least to some extent, a problem-solver. As I see it, the use of problem-solvers is commonplace in all philosophy, and without it we would not get very far – it just is one among the components of the philosopher's toolbox. The conception of primitives I have in mind here is a view about their nature that takes very seriously the *functional role* they play in the theory. By its very nature, a primitive being primitive, it is non-analysable and we are not really given any information concerning its nature; we are told *what it does* rather than *what it is*. So it is what it does that counts – after all, that's what any primitive is introduced for in a theory in the first place (otherwise there would be little justification for having it). Thus, primitives are individuated by what they do, what their functional role in a theory is, and as a consequence two primitives that do the same job just turn out to be equivalent for all theoretical purposes. In what follows I intend to show in more detail that this is indeed the case for the unifying devices ‘co-personality’ and ‘substance’ with respect to the problem of change of selves over time, and see what consequences follow from that for the two theories at hand<sup>2</sup>.

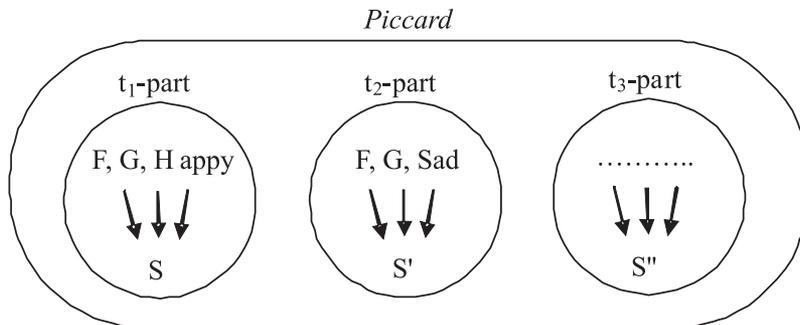
<sup>2</sup> One may think that co-personality is not primitive since it can be analyzed in a Humean fashion in terms of resemblance and causality. But this will not do since *distinct* selves can also enter in close relations of similarity and causality, while being distinct. To make them apart and count them as distinct bundles they must therefore be unified by something else than just resemblance and/or causality, so primitive bundling is required.

3.

If one combines perdurantism and the bundle theory, one gets a *bundle-bundle* theory. Let us take the example of Jean-Luc Piccard, captain of the starship Enterprise, who is first happy, because the Enterprise is getting a new warp engine, and later he is sad because the engine does not work as it should. Under perdurantism, Piccard (where “Piccard” is taken to refer to Piccard’s self) is a collection of his temporal parts, each numerically and qualitatively distinct from the others. It is then by having different temporal parts at different times that Piccard is said to be able to undergo qualitative intrinsic change. Schematically, the picture looks as follows, where “C” stands for “co-personality”:



Now, what happens if we combine perdurantism with the substance view? Interestingly, the picture we get is not really different, except that I had to change “C” into “S” (for “substance”):



Consequently, we now have a case for the claim that the only difference between the two views is terminological : both views contain a unifying device included in the momentary temporal parts of Piccard, and saying that in one case it’s co-personality and that in the other case it’s a substance does not make any difference in the way this unifying device achieves to play its theoretical role (more on this at the end of §3 below). Let us now have a look at the endurantist alternative.

According to endurantism, Piccard persists through time and through intrinsic change by existing wholly at different times, rather than by having temporal parts. Under this

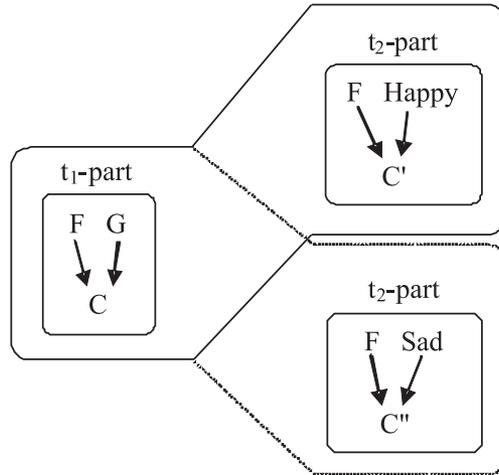
view, the self is thus said to be genuinely one and the same at different times: one and the same (numerically identical) substance exists wholly at  $t_1$  and  $t_2$  and has the two incompatible properties of being happy and being sad. In order to avoid a contradiction, endurantists will typically embrace some kind of temporal indexation strategy, as for instance Peter Van Inwagen (1985) does. According to this indexicalist version of endurantism, Piccard does not have incompatible properties, for instead of having properties like “being happy” he has time-indexed properties like “being-happy-at- $t_1$ ” and “being-sad-at- $t_2$ ,” and these are non-contradictory. Thus, since the indexicalist will claim that all properties are always indexed, no contradiction can ever arise from intrinsic change of an object that is numerically one and the same at different times, as the endurantist claims.

Combined with the bundle view, the endurantist claim thus yields a picture of Piccard as being a bundle of time-indexed properties. (Such a picture parallels closely the endurantist picture Peter Van Inwagen draws (see Van Inwagen 1985, 195)). If combined with the substance view, as before, the picture will not look very different: instead of having as a unifying device the relation of compresence, we will have as a unifying device a substance that has all of the time-indexed properties that are, under the bundle view, tied by co-personality.

Until now, I have examined a ‘normal’ case of persistence of a self through time involving simple change in intrinsic properties. Interestingly, Shoemaker (1997) discusses a fictional case of fission (and also of teletransportation) of persons and suggests that friends of the substance view have the natural tendency to regard these cases as *not* person-preserving, while friends of the bundle view typically find it natural to say that they *are*. If so, it could mean that there is some difference with respect to persistence through time of selves as substances and as bundles that only becomes apparent in these extravagant cases.

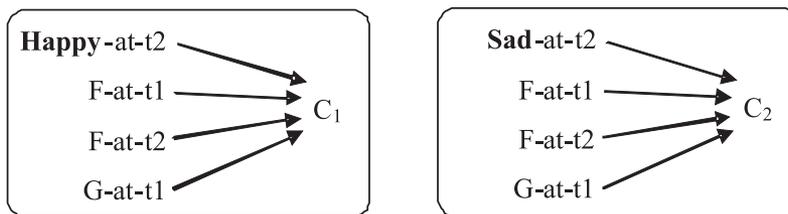
But I think that there is no reason why one party should find it more natural than the other to claim that such procedures are person-preserving or not – rather, such a claim is independent of the choice between a substance or a bundle tied by co-personality; it is for independent reasons that one might think (or not) that the procedure is not person-preserving and then model the situation either in terms of substances or bundles, with no significant difference. To illustrate this, let us examine just one case of what might happen in a fictional case of fission of Piccard. When Piccard uses the transporter aboard the Enterprise, say just before his ship gets the new engine installed, let us suppose that the transporter malfunctions and as a result Piccard undergoes a fission where two individuals are standing there after the ‘transport’. Suppose then that one of them is sad because of the new engine not working, but the other is happy because for some reason he just was not told about the new engine’s failure. There are then four possibilities: both of the resulting post-fission selves are Piccard(s), none of the two resulting selves is Piccard, or one of the two is Piccard and the other is not. All four possibilities can be equally well modelled and accounted for by the substance view and the

bundle view; let us quickly see how this looks for the first option, the other three cases being easily done in a similar way. If both post-fission selves are said to be Piccard(s), this is how it looks under perdurantism and the bundle view:



According to perdurantism, the case of fission is here no more than a case of sharing an overlapping temporal part. The bundle view can easily provide such an account as pictured above, and the substance view can do the same – just replace the Cs with Ss, in the same manner I have done it in the normal case of persistence through time before. There is no reason why one could not do this as simply as that.

Under endurantism and the bundle view, the two Piccard(s) are simply two different bundles:



Here again, it takes no more than replacing the Cs with Ss to get the substance view picture. It is thus easy to model under both views the idea that a fission case is person-preserving and that both post-fission resulting persons are Piccard(s), and it would be equally easy, using the same strategy, to model the other options. So, the question whether fission or teleportation procedures are person-preserving must be decided on other grounds (most likely, the answer will depend on the nature of the relation that 'glues together' temporal parts of worms like Piccard under perdurantism, and on the nature of criteria for diachronic identity under endurantism), and then modelled in one or the other way, using with equal efficiency substances or bundles.

The point that arises from all these cases is, as we have already seen, that the substance and the co-personality relation play the same theoretical role. Both the bundle view and the substance view use their unifying device in the same way, and so they have the same means to face the case of intrinsic change over time and the case of fission. It seems then that the difference between them is merely terminological – one has a unifying device called “C” and the other has a device called “S” but since both devices are theoretical entities (they are there to do some theoretical work) and are thus individuated by their theoretical role, and since they play their theoretical role in the same way, they just seem to be one and the same thing under different disguises. And if that’s the case, there just does not seem to be any real difference between the bundle view and the substance view.

But let us not be too quick. Granted, the substance and the co-personality relation do the same theoretical work, but perhaps it is not so obvious that they are ‘just’ theoretical entities: even though they play the same theoretical role, they *are* metaphysically *different* things.

If one thinks that theoretical equivalence entails metaphysical equivalence, one will embrace the strong metaphysical equivalence thesis. (I myself feel strongly inclined to embrace this strong claim, for if there is a theoretical equivalence, that is equivalence with respect to what substance and co-personality can *do*, what would justify the claim that there is no equivalence with respect to what they *are*? The very reason to postulate their existence was to get a theoretical job done!) But if one thinks that theoretical role does not exhaust the nature of substances and relations like co-personality, one may only wish to embrace the weaker conclusion that, given that both substance and co-personality do the same theoretical work, it is *epistemically under-determined* which one of the bundle view or the substance view we should choose. The idea behind this weaker claim is that, granted, C and S are metaphysically different entities, but they play the same theoretical role in the same way, and consequently the bundle view and the substance view have the same explanatory power (as far as we metaphysicians are concerned, they both do the job we want them to do).

#### 4.

When asking myself why anyone would want to insist that, despite their playing the same theoretical roles, the substance and the co-personality unifying devices are metaphysically different entities (see the Weak Conclusion above), I come to think that it might be because one sees an important difference between substance and co-personality in terms of their *independence*. This is often put as an objection to the bundle view: the self has to be a substance since only a substance is ontologically independent enough to play such a role – ideas and experiences have to be *had* by something, they cannot “float free” without any supporting subject, and the relation of co-personality

is not of any help since it is itself also no more than a property. A different way to express this worry is to say that properties, and bundles of properties, are not ‘*substantial*’ enough to play the role of a self or even to exist without being had by any substance. So, this can be used either to say that the bundle view does not provide enough independence or ‘substantiality’ to serve as a theory of selves, or worse to say that the bundle view in general fails altogether.

But what exactly does “being independent” or “being substantial enough” mean here? Most often, in the mouths of the critics, it means something like “is ‘ontologically stronger’ than the other elements (properties) that are themselves not substantial enough to sustain a self’s existence, and is itself such that it can confer the ‘substantiality’ we need” – which is something that co-personality is said not be able to do, since it is itself no more than a property.

To my mind this is no more than an unfortunately very familiar prejudice against properties, relations, and bundles. What I call prejudice, Hawthorne and Cover call ‘incredulous stare’ (while speaking about the bundle theory combined with universals):

Perhaps some philosophers will claim to find it just self-evident that universals are had by something. We don’t have much to say to such philosophers. We do note, however, that the polemic against the bundle theory has rarely taken the form ‘It is simply self-evident that anything quality-like is directly or indirectly predicated of something that isn’t like a quality [...]’. If opponents of [...] the Bundle Theory wish to retreat to this form of an incredulous stare, so be it. (Hawthorne and Cover, 1998, §2)

Barry Dainton in his “The phenomenal Self” also makes it clear that he does not see why bundles of properties that are suitably unified by a co-personality relation would not be ‘substantial enough’ to serve as selves (his bundles are “C-systems” the details of which I unfortunately do not have the space to discuss here):

Entities such as pigs and planets may well satisfy the unity criterion and the independence criterion, so they might reasonably be thought to be substantial in a way subjects (construed as extended C-systems) are not. But by virtue of satisfying the unity criterion in so resounding a manner, subjects are undeniably entities, indeed substances, of an eminently respectable sort. (Dainton 2008, 347-8)

Yet a different and interesting way to address this issue can be found in Galen Strawson’s “The Self”:

But if there is a process, there must be something – an object or substance – in which it goes on. If something happens, there must be something to which it

happens, something which is not just the happening itself. This expresses our ordinary understanding of things, but physicists are increasingly content with the view that physical reality is itself a kind of pure process – even if it remains hard to know exactly what this idea amounts to. The view that there is some ultimate stuff to which things happen has increasingly ceded to the idea that the existence of anything worthy of the name ‘ultimate stuff’ consists in the existence of fields of energy – consists, in other words, in the existence of a kind of pure process which is not usefully thought of as something which is happening to a thing distinct from it. (Strawson 1997, 427)

I have now used arguments from authority and my gut feeling to claim that a bundle of properties unified by co-personality can equally well satisfy requirements for independence and ‘substantiality’ to play the role of a self as well as a substance that has properties does it. Perhaps my main reason behind this unrigorous way of arguing for it is simply that to my knowledge there is no argument that exists that would *show* that a bundle is indeed guilty of the accusations that are made against it, apart from ontologically prejudiced and un-argued for complaints.

This being said, let me say something more about the Strong Conclusion, that is, the claim that the bundle view and the substance view are no more than terminological variants. To illustrate it again with the case of fission, here is how I think that it works: first, for intuitive reasons or for independent philosophical reasons, a theorist more-or-less explicitly decides *whether* it is a desirable feature of her theory or not to allow for person-preservation in such a case (and for persistence through time in general); second, she has to decide *how* to accommodate it and model it and does this by incorporating into her primitive problem-solver the power to do so; and third, she has to make her problem-solver graspable by others and express it in a way that conveys well the concept she has in mind – here terminology plays an important role, since by calling her problem-solver a “substance” the theorist conveys perhaps better the idea of substantiality and independence or sameness across time, or other relevant features of an existing and persisting self that she wants to insist on (and by calling it a “bundle” she may insist on other features, like the idea cherished by Hume that one is never aware by introspection of the unifying device). Thus, as we have seen, although both the bundle view and the substance view are no more than different ways of expressing oneself and both can equally well fulfil their role, there is a choice between the bundle view and the substance view that is a choice between alternative ways of formulating the same thing, where nothing really depends on the formulation, except that of course one formulation can be better than another in order to express in a more understandable way what one wants to say<sup>3</sup>.

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