

Peer Review

Review of: "The Mind as a Particular: Why Cartesian Dualism Is True"

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The Hard Problem of The Self: Review of "*The Mind as a Particular: Why Cartesian Dualism Is True*" by Alexandros Syrakos

Introduction

Alexandros Syrakos' paper tackles the question of what fundamentally distinguishes one conscious mind from another, arguing that the mind's "particularity" – a unique first-person perspective – is an irreducible feature of reality. On this basis, Syrakos defends Cartesian dualism, claiming the mind/self is a simple (non-composite) substance.

This review focuses on four key aspects: (1) engagement with prior work on consciousness (phenomenality, privacy, the explanatory gap), (2) the notion of *particularity* versus existing ideas of the privacy of experience, (3) the formulation of the question "Why was it *I* that came into existence?", and (4) whether the rejection of materialism is justified by the arguments presented.

Engagement with Prior Philosophical Work

Syrakos clearly recognizes the classic "hard problem of consciousness" (Chalmers 1995) and related debates on qualia and intentionality. Early in the paper, he notes that modern philosophy of mind has grappled with *universal* features of consciousness (like qualia) and "runs into 'hard' problems". He summarizes the gist of these problems as the explanatory difficulty of linking first-person experiential processes to physical properties. In doing so, he cites key literature (e.g., David Chalmers' works) and acknowledges that contemporary philosophy of mind is well aware of the *phenomenal* character of experience. However, he explicitly frames his thesis as addressing a "much deeper mystery" that he believes has been overlooked by those debates.

While Syrakos mentions qualia and first-person experience in general, one notable omission is a direct reference to Thomas Nagel's famous notion of the *subjective character* of experience – the idea that for any conscious being, there is “*something that it is like*” to be that being (Nagel 1974). This concept encapsulates the privacy and first-person perspective of mental states, which Syrakos calls “particularity.” The paper would benefit from explicitly situating its core idea in relation to Nagel's insight. For instance, Nagel's criterion holds that an organism is conscious “just if there is ‘something that it is like’ to be that organism”, meaning some subjective way the world appears from that creature's point of view. Syrakos' notion of each mind's incommunicable perspective is strongly aligned with this; acknowledging Nagel's work (and related discussions by philosophers of mind on the privacy of experience) would show that the author is building on, rather than simply restating, established ideas.

Currently, the paper risks giving the impression that *particularity* is entirely neglected – whereas in truth, debates on the subjective, private aspect of consciousness have a rich history. A more thorough literature engagement (e.g., Nagel on phenomenality, Joseph Levine on the “explanatory gap,” Frank Jackson's knowledge argument, etc.) would strengthen the academic grounding. Syrakos' references do include major works in the philosophy of mind and personal identity, but a clearer acknowledgment of how *his* problem overlaps with and diverges from the explanatory gap problem would be helpful. For example, Levine's concept of an explanatory gap (the idea that we currently lack a conceptual bridge from physical processes to subjective experience) is highly relevant. Syrakos does indirectly allude to it by noting that science can find correlations but not explanations for consciousness, yet using the term “explanatory gap” or citing Levine could make the connection explicit. Moreover, some physicalists *grant* that such a gap exists yet argue it does not refute materialism. Engaging with this viewpoint (that an explanatory gap might reflect our epistemic limits rather than a metaphysical truth) would show the author has properly considered prior arguments instead of overlooking potential counter-positions.

In sum, Syrakos does recognize prior work on consciousness to a degree – for instance, he cites Chalmers and others on consciousness and even references Jaegwon Kim's critiques of dualism. The paper's ambition is to pivot to a “deeper” issue (the particular *who* of consciousness) which he argues has been neglected. This pivot is clearly stated and is a valid contribution. However, to maintain scholarly balance, the author should ensure he is not *overly* dismissive of existing debates. Phrases like modern philosophy being “oblivious” to particularity might be tempered by acknowledging philosophers who *have* touched on the uniqueness of the first-person perspective (even if briefly or inadequately). By placing *particularity* in dialogue with concepts of phenomenal consciousness and first-person privacy already in the literature,

the argument would appear less isolated and more robust. This would involve citing or discussing, for example, Nagel's work or the idea of indexical/self-reference issues (as in Perry or Lewis's work on the first-person), which are highly relevant to the *I-perspective*. Addressing these would not only properly credit prior thought but also clarify how Syrakos' argument either extends or differs from them.

Particularity of the Mind vs. Privacy of Mental States

The central concept in the paper is that each mind is a particular in a "quintessential" sense – "*I experience life through my own, private, unique, and non-duplicable perspective*". The question arises whether *particularity* is truly a new insight or just a re-labeling of known ideas like the privacy of mental states or Nagel's "*what-it-is-like*" notion. Syrakos implies it has been *overlooked* in the philosophy of mind, which suggests he views his treatment as novel. However, as noted, philosophers have long pointed out that each conscious subject has a private viewpoint inaccessible to others. What Syrakos adds is a strong ontological claim: that this irreducible first-person particularity is the *fundamental defining characteristic* of a mind, and that it cannot be derived from or explained by anything else. In other words, physics and composition contain no pointer to *whose* consciousness arises, underscoring that particularity is an explanatorily basic fact. This argument is coherently laid out through intuitive thought experiments (a strength of the paper's exposition). For instance, the body duplication experiment asks us to imagine two identical human bodies/brains – if all physical properties are the same, physics would predict identical behavior and qualia, but we still have *two distinct perspectives*, one per body. What physically distinguishes *which* mind goes to which body? Syrakos argues nothing does – hence physical description is incomplete. Similarly, a body-swapping scenario (trading bodies between two minds) is invoked to show that our identity isn't tied to particular matter; if gradual exchange of matter or even structural replication could occur, it wouldn't transfer the *self* because particularity is singular and not a property of matter at all.

These examples are effective and vivid, aiding clarity. However, to better distinguish *particularity* from existing concepts, Syrakos could explicitly address how this idea relates to the notion of qualia's privacy. As it stands, he describes particularity largely in isolation. By saying, for example, "*This particularity is not merely the qualitative character of experience (the what-it's-like), but the fact that there is a unique who having the experience*", he could sharpen the distinction. Indeed, one might argue Nagel focused on the *qualitative* privacy (each species or person has experiences only accessible to itself), whereas Syrakos is focusing on the *indexical* or *personal* privacy – the fact that *I* am a particular subject. This is a subtle but meaningful

shift. Making this differentiation explicit would improve coherence: readers would see that *particularity* isn't just reheating the hard problem of qualia, but introducing the "hard problem of the self," so to speak.

Can particularity be derived from other concepts? Syrakos' stance is that particularity "cannot be explained or deduced" from anything more fundamental– it is a primitive fact. He provides a reasonable intuitive case for this: any candidate explanation (genes, brain pattern, etc.) fails because such factors could be replicated without replicating the unique self. However, some might find this argument a bit quick. The paper asserts irreducibility rather than deeply analyzing alternatives. For instance, a materialist could counter that particularity *does* supervene on physical facts, just not in an obvious way – perhaps it is an emergent *relational* property of a brain that we don't yet understand. Syrakos preemptively rejects this, but mostly by assertion and thought experiment. To strengthen the case, he might engage with philosophers who have attempted *naturalistic* accounts of the sense of self or personal identity, even if to explain why they fall short. As a comparison, consider Derek Parfit's reductionist view: Parfit would deny that there is a further irreducible "I" at all – personal identity is a construct based on psychological continuity. Syrakos implicitly disagrees, since his entire argument presupposes a robust *I* (the particular self) that either exists or not. Bringing such contrasts into the discussion would help clarify why Syrakos insists *particularity* cannot be derived from physical or psychological continuity alone. In summary, the concept of particularity is presented clearly and passionately as the core property of minds. Distinguishing it more explicitly from the well-known privacy of mental states (e.g., citing Nagel's criterion or similar discussions) would situate the idea in context, and a more detailed justification of its irreducibility (perhaps considering possible physicalist rejoinders) would make the argument even more compelling.

The "Why I?" Question: Clarity of Terms and Assumptions

A recurrent theme in the paper is the haunting question: "Out of billions of human bodies, why was it *I* that was brought into existence?". Syrakos puts this question front and center as a way of dramatizing the mystery of particularity. It's an intriguing and genuinely puzzling query – one that many readers will find familiar from their own reflections. However, its meaningfulness depends a lot on how we interpret "I" and "brought into existence," and here the paper could be clearer. Throughout the essay, "*I*", "*mind*", "*self*", and "*person*" are used nearly interchangeably to denote the entity possessing particularity. Syrakos essentially defines the *I* as the simple mental substance – the Cartesian ego – that has no parts but bears this unique identity. In adopting this stance, he is aligning with a traditional dualist notion of the soul or self. However, this definition is more assumed than argued. The question "Why was it *I* that came into

existence?” already presupposes there is a well-defined *I* (a particular self) that could counterfactually have been someone else, or not existed at all, even if “my” body existed. Critics might label this a form of *question-begging* if not clarified: one must be careful not to assume what one is trying to prove. To Syrakos’ credit, he addresses why the question is meaningful and not nonsensical. He notes, for instance, that asking why a particular inanimate object came into existence (why this chair and not another) is meaningless, but for a conscious being, it “is of the utmost relevance,” because a conscious being uniquely perceives its existence. This explanation is helpful: it underlines that *I* refers to the *subjective first-person existence* which is indeed something special that demands explanation. Still, the paper might improve its clarity by explicitly stating: *“In this context, ‘I’ means the conscious self or subject – the thinker of thoughts and feeler of sensations. The question assumes this self is a real entity (not an illusory construct) whose existence began at some point.”* Adding such a statement would fend off confusion about the usage of “I.” It would also acknowledge that not all philosophers agree such an *I* is metaphysically fundamental (some, like Parfit or Buddhists, might say the question “Why *I*?” has no answer because the self is not a discrete thing in the first place).

The paper assumes that *I* (the self) came into existence when “my” body/brain reached a certain state (presumably during development). Syrakos doesn’t pinpoint when or how – that’s part of the mystery – but he clearly believes there was a time *I* did not exist, and then *I* began to exist (with the formation of my brain). One potential issue here is ambiguity: does “existence” refer to conscious awareness (e.g., the onset of consciousness in the fetus/infant), or the existence of the soul/self even if not continuously conscious? Syrakos seems to treat *existence of the self* as binary – you either exist or you don’t at all. This leads to the stark problem he identifies: If *I* didn’t exist before my body, how did *I* pop into being, given that nothing in the prior state of the world could “point to” me in particular? He later phrases it as the creation problem: *“Before I existed... there was nothing in the universe that could point to me specifically... This renders the creation of a self impossible. And yet I now exist... How can these both be true?”*

This is a clear formulation of the paradox. The assumption underlying this question is that selves are *numerically distinct* entities that are not predetermined by physical parameters. Syrakos fully embraces this assumption (as a dualist would). But some philosophies would challenge it. A materialist might respond: *“The question is ill-posed; ‘I’ is just the person constituted by this body/brain. There is no further fact to explain – I am me because this organism’s brain produces this mind. If an exactly identical brain existed, that would be another person, not me, by definition.”* In other words, one could argue there is no mystery of “why *I*?” because identity is trivial: it refers to the one instantiating the consciousness. Syrakos finds this

unsatisfying, calling out that *just saying “two brains, two minds” misses the real question of which mind attaches to which brain*. His rebuttal is insightful: if one thinks no further explanation is needed, one is implicitly treating the mind as particular (not just an emergent property) – essentially one is assuming each brain somehow *gets* an individual self by default. Syrakos points out this is either circular or inadvertently dualist: it attributes a non-physical individuality to the mind while claiming to be physicalist. This is a strong counter-argument, and the paper does a good job articulating it.

Nonetheless, to make the discussion more robust, the author could explicitly acknowledge the alternative view: that perhaps the question “Why me?” is, as some would say, a *pseudo-question*. Philosophers like Parfit would say there is no additional “me” apart from the continuity of mental life in this body, so asking why this continuity is *mine* is just tautological. While Syrakos clearly rejects this view (and has reasons to), mentioning it would show the author has considered the full landscape of the debate. It would also give him a chance to explain why he finds that view inadequate. For instance, he might argue that introspective certainty of one’s own existence as a subject (*Cogito ergo sum*-style) provides evidence that the *I* is not an illusion or mere construct – something the paper hints at but doesn’t state outright.

On a stylistic note, the way Syrakos poses the question in various forms is generally clear and evocative. He gives concrete examples: “*Why am I experiencing life through this body and not, say, through a particular female body in China... or the body of my brother...?*”. These examples successfully convey the puzzling contingency that *I could imagine being someone else, yet I am here*. The clarity is high – readers immediately grasp the kind of scenario being imagined. One small suggestion is that the paper might differentiate between logical possibility and physical possibility in these imaginings. Of course, *I cannot literally wake up as another existing person* given the laws of nature, but Syrakos is asking us to conceive it as a way to isolate the role of the self. Perhaps a sentence affirming that *this is a thought experiment to illustrate that nothing in the body’s makeup tells us why its consciousness is mine* would preempt any misunderstanding that the author is suggesting minds actually float freely (he’s not; he’s making a metaphysical point).

In summary, the “Why was it I?” question is a powerful organizing motif in the paper. It is coherently used to introduce and personalize the abstract problem of particularity. The main area for improvement is explicating the terms and assumptions behind it. By clearly defining what he means by “*I*” (a real unitary self, as opposed to an aggregate or fiction) and acknowledging that this presumes a non-materialist concept of person, Syrakos would strengthen his position against charges of presupposition. Additionally, engaging with those who claim the question has no answer (because they deny the self as

an entity) would further demonstrate the depth of his analysis. As it stands, the question is thought-provoking and central, and making its foundation explicit would only enhance its impact.

Does the Argument Defeat Materialism? – Particularity and the Explanatory Gap

One of the boldest claims of the paper is that the existence of mind-particularity “is incompatible with physicalism and materialism”. Syrakos argues that recognizing this unique form of particularity “rules out” any view that the mind is composed of or generated by more fundamental parts. In other words, if his arguments hold, materialism is false and Cartesian dualism is true. This section evaluates how well that conclusion is supported and how it relates to the known *explanatory gap* in the philosophy of mind.

The structure of Syrakos’ argument against materialism is as follows: if materialism were true, then every fact about the mind (including whose mind it is) should in principle be determined by physical facts (the arrangement of matter, etc.). But we see no possible physical basis for assigning *this* consciousness to *this* body – all physical parameters are either universal (shared by many bodies) or, if unique, could be swapped or duplicated without affecting which person we get. Therefore, the identity of the self is an extra fact beyond the physical, implying materialism is incomplete or false.

This is a clever inversion of the usual *pairing problem* (which was originally a challenge for dualism posed by Kim). Syrakos reframes it as a problem for physicalism: physics might dictate that one brain yields one mind, but not which mind. The paper clearly states this challenge: “*Out of the billions of bodies... why is it that mine, and mine alone, gives rise to me? ... If physicalism is true then this answer must come down to physics... [yet] obviously there cannot be any physical explanation for this, since the physical arrangements of the two bodies [in a duplication scenario] are identical.*”. The clarity of this reasoning is commendable – the author lays out the logical steps and even anticipates the simplistic rebuttal (“there are two brains, hence two minds”) and explains why it fails. By illustrating with hypothetical experiments, the paper makes an abstract argument quite tangible.

However, Syrakos’ argument essentially assumes that if a concept cannot even in principle be explained by physical parameters, then materialism cannot accommodate it. This is akin to an *a priori* reasoning: by conceptual analysis of what physical explanations involve (symmetry, interchangeability of identical parts, etc.), he concludes *particularity* is beyond their scope. This is very much in line with arguments about the explanatory gap or the hard problem, where one argues no amount of physical description yields the *subjective* insight of what experience is like. The paper might strengthen its position by acknowledging that this style of argument has precedents and is controversial. For example, some philosophers (so-called *anti-materialist dualists*) indeed argue that phenomenal concepts or the grasp of

one's own consciousness provide a priori evidence of something non-physical (this is often how the knowledge argument or conceivability argument for dualism proceed). Syrakos is making a related move for *personal identity*: our conceptual reflection indicates a gap that physics can't bridge. However, many physicalists counter-argue that an explanatory gap need not imply an ontological gap – it might be that our human conceptual framework is limited; some physicalists even accept that explanatory gaps are to be expected and even predicted by physicalism. In the current draft, Syrakos does not deeply engage with this counterpoint. He takes the inability of physics to determine “who is who” as decisive. A constructive suggestion would be to address whether this inability is absolute or just reflective of our current ignorance. If one assumes (as Syrakos does) that no future science could ever derive particularity from physical laws, one should defend that assumption. Perhaps Syrakos could argue that particularity is not a quantitative property or functional property at all, so it falls outside what physical science can even describe – thus it's not a matter of someday finding a pattern, but in principle impossible. Hints of this appear in the text: he notes that science deals only in universals (mass, charge, structure), never reference to *particular* entities. This is a strong point: physical explanations abstract away from individuality (one electron is as good as another). Minds, by contrast, are individuated at the basic level. Making this contrast even more explicit and philosophical (perhaps referencing arguments about the indiscernibility of identicals or the role of haecceities) could bolster the case.

It's worth comparing Syrakos' *particularity gap* to the classic *qualia gap*. The paper does imply that the mystery of “which mind?” is deeper than the mystery of “why any conscious feel at all?” Syrakos writes that philosophy of mind has limited itself to asking why physical universals correlate with mental universals, neglecting the question of individual mind identity. This is a fair differentiation: even if we solved why brain state X produces *pain* experience in general (the hard problem), we would still wonder why pain in *this* brain is felt by *me*. By positioning his argument this way, Syrakos extends the explanatory gap discourse into the realm of personal ontology. The coherence here is good – the reader sees that this is *not* just Chalmers' hard problem rephrased, but an adjacent problem. However, the paper could benefit from explicitly referencing the term “explanatory gap” or philosophers like Joseph Levine, to acknowledge this intellectual backdrop. It would also be useful to note whether *particularity* might be seen as an instance of what philosophers call a “primitive thisness” (haecceity) – a concept sometimes invoked in metaphysics for individuality. By connecting to such terms, Syrakos could show he is aware of similar debates in metaphysics (for example, the idea that each individual has a non-qualitative thisness that isn't captured by properties). Such a connection might actually strengthen his dualism argument by

showing that if ordinary objects don't have an answer to "why this one?" (and they don't require one), but conscious minds *do* force the question, then minds are ontologically unique.

Given his premises, Syrakos concludes that the mind/self is simple and fundamental, essentially a soul, as Descartes said. Does this follow logically? If physics can't explain particularity, one might conclude that we need to add something to our ontology to account for it – Syrakos chooses to add a *simple mental substance*. This is a reasonable inference, but alternatives exist (which he does acknowledge briefly). For instance, he notes panpsychism's idea of immaterial constituents, only to reject that those would fare any better in explaining particularity. He also considers (in Section 5) the possibility that selves exist eternally or are uncreated, which would avoid the "coming into being" problem by denying that selves ever *come* into being. Ultimately, he favors a theistic dualism: that a divine Mind (God) creates individual minds, using a power beyond physical law. This theological turn is presented toward the end as a personal conclusion rather than a strict logical deduction (he even labels the section "Epilogue" and shares his journey to this view). In an academic philosophy of mind context, invoking God is unconventional but not illegitimate.

For the argument to *reject materialism* to be persuasive to a neutral reader, it might need a bit more balance. A suggestion here is to briefly mention the cost of dualism as well: dualism solves the "Why I?" by positing a soul, but it traditionally has its own pairing problem (why does this soul interact with this body?) and interaction issues. Syrakos does mention Kim's pairing objection and counters it by analogy to unexplained physical action-at-a-distance, which is a fair defense. Still, acknowledging "Materialism struggles with explaining *who* experiences, whereas dualism must simply accept it as a fundamental fact (or appeal to a creator)" would show the author recognizes that neither framework gives a *full* explanatory mechanism – each takes something as primitive (matter for physicalists, self for dualists). In fact, Syrakos essentially admits that the creation of a self is "something inexplicable and miraculous" no matter what worldview one holds. This candid admission is welcome and could be highlighted earlier: it sets a tone that we might simply need to accept some brute facts. The choice then is which brute fact we accept – *a brute fact that each brain yields a unique self without further reason (materialism)*, or *a brute fact (or divine act) that a new soul comes into being for each new person (dualism)*. Syrakos opts for the latter as more coherent with the evidence of particularity. This comparative framing would make the argumentative move more transparent.

Finally, the paper could strengthen its academic merit by explicitly engaging with philosophers who have discussed related issues. For example, *Eric Olson* and *Lynne Rudder Baker* are cited in the references – they

debate whether we are bodies or not. Olson's view (animalism) would likely reject Syrakos' stance, whereas Baker's constitution view might have room for a first-person perspective as a separate aspect. It's not clearly discussed how Syrakos' dualism responds to these views. Additionally, *Kevin Corcoran* or *Dean Zimmerman* have written on the puzzle "Why this soul with this body?" – and *K.E. Himma (2010)*, whom Syrakos cites, directly tackled the "why my body produces me and not someone else" question. A more thorough engagement with Himma's argument, comparing and contrasting it with Syrakos' formulation, would be illuminating (to see if Syrakos adds anything or improves upon it). Since the question explicitly asks if the author engages with existing discourse: at present, the engagement is mostly by reference (citing sources in footnotes) rather than by discussion in the text. Converting some of those references into a dialogue within the paper (even if briefly in a literature review style section) could improve scholarly depth.

In conclusion, Syrakos' argument for dualism on the basis of mind's particularity is coherent and powerfully presented, but its force depends on accepting that an explanatory gap in principle equals an ontological gap. The paper makes a strong case that materialism has an explanatory void regarding personal identity – analogous to, yet distinct from, the usual qualia gap. Whether this *necessitates* the rejection of materialism is debated in philosophy; the author comes down firmly that it does, aligning with the view that *mental concepts (like the concept of the first-person self) reveal fundamental truths* that materialism cannot capture. This position is certainly arguable, and Syrakos argues it with conviction. To fully satisfy a critical academic audience, he might need to shore up this stance with explicit reasoning about why no materialist solution can ever work (as opposed to hasn't worked yet) and by addressing head-on the standard physicalist rejoinders about epistemic limits. By doing so – and by connecting his *particularity* gap with the well-known explanatory gap literature – the author would not only reinforce his case for dualism but also demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the surrounding intellectual territory.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Alexandros Syrakos' paper is a thought-provoking defense of Cartesian dualism that centers on a genuine and often under-discussed question: *what accounts for the individual self in a world of physical universals?* The arguments are presented in a generally clear and structured manner, using memorable examples (body duplication, swapping) to illustrate abstract points. The focus on the unique first-person perspective successfully highlights an aspect of consciousness that mechanistic accounts gloss over. The

paper's clarity could be further improved by more explicitly defining key terms like "I" (self) and "particularity" in relation to existing concepts, and by acknowledging potential objections and prior discussions. In terms of coherence, the logical flow from the premise of irreducible particularity to the conclusion of dualism is mostly convincing, though it would benefit from engaging alternative viewpoints to avoid the appearance of a one-sided analysis.

Suggestions for improvement:

- Situate the concept of particularity within existing literature: Draw connections to Nagel's "what it is like to be..." and other discussions of subjectivity, to show awareness of how *your* concept overlaps or diverges. This will prevent readers from thinking prior work was overlooked and clarify the novelty of your approach.
- Clarify terminology and assumptions: Provide a brief, explicit definition of what "I" denotes in the paper (a conscious self, not reducible to brain or psychology) and justify treating it as a real entity. Acknowledge that this assumes a non-eliminative view of the self, and perhaps briefly explain why that assumption is warranted by introspection or otherwise.
- Address the "no further fact" objection more directly: You compellingly argue that saying "two brains, two minds" hides the real question. Consider referencing philosophers (like Parfit or others) who think personal identity has no deep further fact, and explain why that stance is unsatisfactory. This will strengthen your rebuttal by showing you've considered it philosophically, not just anecdotally.
- Engage more with the explanatory gap debate: Since your argument is analogous to the hard problem of consciousness, explicitly mention the explanatory gap and why particularity represents an even harder problem. Also, acknowledge the physicalist view that an explanatory gap doesn't automatically refute physicalism— then counter it by arguing why *in this case* it indicates an insurmountable divide (e.g., the issue of particularity is not just ignorance but in principle outside the scope of physical theory).
- Cite and discuss relevant philosophers of personal identity: You have good references (Olson, Baker, Shoemaker, Swinburne, etc.). Incorporating a few sentences about, say, Olson's view (that we are biological organisms) and why it fails to account for particularity, or how your argument relates to Himma's 2010 dualism argument, would enrich the paper. It shows readers how your contribution fits into the broader conversation on what we are.
- Tone and balance: While making a case for dualism, maintain a neutral scholarly tone regarding opposing views. Phrases suggesting others are "oblivious" could be softened – perhaps they *recognize*

the issue but haven't solved it. Acknowledge that dualism, too, has mysteries (as you do with the creation-by-God discussion), but argue that it is still a better position given the evidence of particularity. This balanced approach will make your conclusion more persuasive to skeptics.

In reviewing "*The Mind as a Particular: Why Cartesian Dualism Is True*," we find a lucid and passionate argument that puts the spotlight on a fundamental question of personhood. The paper succeeds in articulating why the uniqueness of the first-person perspective is profoundly mysterious under physicalism. With the above clarifications and integrations, the work would enhance its credibility and impact, making a compelling case that Cartesian dualism – often dismissed in contemporary philosophy – deserves reconsideration in light of the insoluble particularity of the thinking mind.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.