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PANPSYCHISM AND PANTHEISM. AN UNEASY ALLIANCE?*

In this paper, I am going to argue that panpsychism may naturally lead to pantheism. Such an idea is by no means new: it was popular in the past (see e.g. JAMES 1909, 318) and is also sometimes developed today, for example on the ground of cosmopsychism (NAGASAWA 2020, 262–63). On the other hand, the vast majority of contemporary panpsychists believe that panpsychism and pantheism are as different as they can be, so if they are allies at all, they are very accidental ones. In this paper, I defend two claims: that the most popular versions of panpsychism may pave the way to pantheism and that—contrary to common consensus—additional assumptions are needed not to attach but to detach them. My aim is to turn attention to the usually overlooked consequences of panpsychism that need to be exposed, before we agree that it provides the best explanation of the problem of consciousness.

1. FROM MICRO-MINDS TO THE COSMIC MIND

Panpsychism's rebirth in recent years is mainly due to the fact that the commonly accepted opposition of materialism and substance dualism turned

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out to be too crude and leaves no place for more moderate options.¹ The appearance of the so-called hard problem of consciousness made philosophers aware that standard materialism is probably not able to explain conscious phenomena. On the other hand, substance dualism is clearly contradictory to many widely shared philosophical views, such as the causal closure of the physical. It thus seems that the idea that mental properties are hard-wired into the ultimate constituents of the physical domain is the best of both worlds. Just like materialism, panpsychism seems to respect naturalism but at the same time it takes consciousness seriously. Since the 1990s, panpsychism has been on the rise. It turns out that this forgotten—and for most of the past century mocked—view can still play the role of an inspiring metaphysical framework and is now thought to be one of the most promising programs in philosophy of mind.

But what is panpsychism in the first place? In its long history, there have been many versions of the view and even more have appeared during its recent resurgence, so it is very difficult to find a single answer to this question. For the sake of this paper, I propose to cut the Gordian knot and define panpsychism in the broadest possible sense—as a view that at least some of the ultimate stuff our universe is made out of is at least potentially mental.

Also pantheism has been gaining popularity lately.² Although the view was often attacked by standard (transcendent) theism as concealed atheism, contemporary philosophers of religion are developing it as an interesting alternative to traditional approaches. However, just as in the case of panpsychism, we can ask: What is pantheism? And, as before, the answer is complicated mainly due to the fact that it is a family of different views, not a single view.³ Usually pantheism is defined as a claim that everything is God. But to have a clear grasp of what one means by saying that, one needs to define what “everything”, “God” and “is” mean. And because there is no agreement on that matter, one ends up with different interpretations of pantheism. Do they have anything in common? I think they do. The vast majority of philosophers claim that pantheism necessarily holds (1) that “everything that exists constitutes a unity” and (2) that “this all-inclusive unity is

¹ Of course, one may rightly note that there were efforts to find the middle path between those two extremes, such as property dualism. However, it is at least unclear whether one can hold the latter view without slipping into the verge of substance dualism (FRANCESCOTTI 2001; SCHNEIDER 2012).

² For a recent version of pantheism, see e.g. SPRIGGE (1983). For a good analysis of pantheism, see LEVINE (1994) and FORREST (2016).

³ Various answers to this question are given in BUCKAREFF and NAGASAWA (2016).

divine” (MACINTYRE 1967, 34).⁴ Let us call the first the Requirement of Unity and the second—the Requirement of Divinity. I find both to be necessary and sufficient to qualify a given view as pantheism.

It is widely acknowledged that “panpsychism and pantheism have often appeared as complimentary positions within the history of philosophy” (LEIDENHAG 2019, 543). However, in recent literature the alliance is usually seen as only superficial and therefore purely contingent (LEVINE 1994, 114; SKRBINA 2009, 21). After all, panpsychism is a view in the philosophy of mind, not the philosophy of religion and as such is limited to the claim that there are fundamental mental properties. It thus does not imply any of the requirements necessary for pantheism. When it comes to the Requirement of Unity, panpsychism claims that the universe is made out of a great number of fundamentally mental substances but says nothing about the all-encompassing Mind. This does not mean that the Requirement of Unity cannot be squared with panpsychism—it can, but an additional assumption is needed. This assumption is related to the question of the meaning of “the fundamental level”. Most panpsychists accept the view of what Sam Coleman (2006) calls *smallism*, according to which “all facts are determined by the facts about the smallest things, those existing at the lowest ‘level’ of ontology” (40). In other words: the fundamental level is the level of bosons, leptons and other sub-atomic particles. A combination of this view and panpsychism can be called micropsychism. Its counterpart is cosmopsychism, based on the idea that smallism wrongly identifies what “the fundamental” means: it is not the level of sub-atomic particles but the level of the whole universe. In light of this approach, our consciousness is not like a wall made of smaller bricks but like a drop in an ocean, a part or an aspect of a bigger whole that turns out to be prior to its parts. By accepting this view, the Requirement of Unity is secured. The assumption is, however, an extra addition and is not hard-wired into panpsychism as such. Bare panpsychism—as we can call it—is focused solely “on individual things in the cosmos” and pantheism is focused “on the cosmos as an entity in its own right” (NAGASAWA 2020, 260). They obviously belong to different worlds.

What about the Requirement of Divinity? Well, it is even more difficult to achieve. Without further assumptions, panpsychism does not say anything

⁴ What about others? Paul Harrison (1999) claims that “pantheism believes that all things are linked in a profound unity” and that there is “the object of deepest personal reverence” (1–2). Also Michael Levine (1994) mentions unity and divinity as two crucial features of pantheism (25–143). See also STEINHART (2004). A good review of literature regarding MacIntyre’s definition can be found in LEIDENHAG (2019, 545).

about any kind of divinity. Even cosmopsychism does not guarantee that the requirement is met: one can be a cosmopsychist and still “might reject the existence of a higher self and postulate the phenomenality of the cosmos as a whole without assuming the self as its bearer” (NAGASAWA 2020, 262). All in all, even if it is possible to argue that there is the Cosmic Mind and that it is divine, both claims must be introduced via independent arguments, as they are not a part of bare panpsychism.

Some will gladly welcome this conclusion: they argue that this alliance is not only purely contingent but also harmful to both parties. It is obvious that panpsychism is often treated as naturalistic and that naturalism gives panpsychism an advantage over non-naturalistic solutions, such as Cartesian dualism. On the other hand, while the definition of naturalism is not clear, it is certainly true that pantheism is much more difficult to swallow for naturalists and if it can be done, the status of pantheism as a religious view will be unclear. Be that as it may, this sharp separation of panpsychism and pantheism is an orthodoxy in current debates.

What I am going to argue is that panpsychists have good reasons to *accept* the Requirement of Unity and the Requirement of Divinity without embracing cosmopsychism—that is, on the ground of micropsychism—and that they can do it without introducing any additional assumptions. More: I claim that an independent argument needs to be offered not to *attach* panpsychism and pantheism but to *detach* them. I thus want to prove that the most popular versions of micropsychism meet the necessary requirements for pantheism, so the former leads to the latter. My paper focuses mainly on justifying the Requirement of Unity, because—as it will turn out—when this is met, the Requirement of Divinity will be much easier to obtain.

My argument for the Requirement of Unity takes the form of a plain argument from analogy. As we know, arguments from analogy run as follows:

1. A and B are similar with regard to many of their properties.
2. A has a property X.
3. Therefore, B also has the property X.

My argument is based on numerous similarities between the properties of micro-consciousness (Micro-C, for short) and properties of macro-consciousness (Macro-C, for short). By Micro-C, I understand consciousness that characterizes the phenomenal life of, say, an atom. By Macro-C, I understand a rich phenomenology that we enjoy every second of our life when

we are awake—a what-is-it-likeness of such states as being in sharp pain or tasting a lemon.⁵ Some philosophers observe that this description is vague because there are at least two aspects of phenomenal states that need to be clearly distinguished: the first is simply experience, but the second is subjectivity, the first-personhood that is necessary, if we believe that experience requires a subject. In other words, Micro-C involves not only microphenomenal states (say, an extremely simple redness or sweetness—whatever that means), but also microsubjective states, while Macro-C involves macrophenomenal as well as macrosubjective states we know from everyday life. For the purposes of this paper, I will be mainly interested in the first-person subjectivity that will turn out to be important for my considerations.

So, how does the argument for the Requirement of Unity for panpsychism run? We know that, on the ground of panpsychism, Micro-C and Macro-C share many properties, such as spatial location, being non-reducible, being phenomenal and involving first-personhood. In fact, the vast majority of the properties of Macro-C are already possessed by Micro-C and the only difference between them is not of kind but of degree. With this in mind, I would like to focus on the ability of Micro-C to bind together and become a part of greater structures, up to the point where it turns into Macro-C. Almost every proponent of panpsychism agrees that Micro-C becomes Macro-C at some level of organization. We can thus say that Micro-C has the ability to combine or that some mental chemistry, to use the expression of J. S. Mill, happens. Having this premise, my argument runs as follows.

4. Micro-C and Macro-C are similar with regard to many properties.
5. Micro-C has a property of being able to combine.
6. Therefore, Macro-C has a property of being able to combine.

In other words, Micro-C undoubtedly can give rise to Macro-C (and to any intermediary level between Micro-C and Macro-C). It thus seems likely that Macro-C also inherits the abilities of composing and giving rise to more complex forms of consciousness. If this is the case, then it opens the possibility that there may be extra-brain consciousnesses, most probably up to the level of the highest, all-encompassing Mind, composed of all the lower-level

⁵ Perhaps this catalogue is much wider and contains also so-called cognitive phenomenal states, such as finding something funny or making mathematical calculations. However, I confine myself to sensory phenomenal states that are intuitively easier to grasp.

conscious minds.⁶ Thus we can reach the Requirement of Unity for panpsychism.⁷

Many panpsychists will protest vehemently, although only a few of them have devoted any space to discussing the possibility I have sketched above. Apart from the works of Luke Roelofs and Philip Goff, who boldly ask: “Under what assumptions do subjects combine to produce a further subject?” (GOFF 2016, 296), the problem is not often discussed.⁸ Nevertheless, I can imagine at least three lines of criticism rejecting the argument from analogy as too weak to be worried about its conclusion, rejecting one (or both) of the premises, and accepting the conclusion but claiming that it is not enough to meet the Requirement of Unity. I would like to analyze all three lines of defense and check whether they are strong enough to successfully undermine the reasoning I have proposed.

2. DO EXPERIENCES COMBINE INFINITELY?

The least sophisticated way to reject the argument above is to point out that reasonings from analogy are weak, so their conclusions should not worry us. However, I think that this answer does not take into account the kind of problem that we have to deal with here. Undoubtedly, arguments from analogy often fail, but in this case the argument I offer is an instantiation of a more serious (and certainly real) problem, namely the combination problem, which is the question: “How do the experiences of fundamental physical entities such as quarks and photons combine to yield the familiar sort of human conscious experience that we know and love?” (CHALMERS 2016, 179). Despite the great effort that has been put into answering this, we are still ignorant of the mental chemistry—the way the most primitive mental

⁶ I assume that the argument from analogy works for all over-Macro-C consciousnesses, up to the level of the all-encompassing Cosmic Mind. Of course, this assumption may be false but it is as plausible as the whole argument I propose above. From now on, I assume that the view that there are over-Macro-C consciousnesses is equal to the view that there is the all-encompassing Cosmic Mind.

⁷ Objection: You assume that aggregates inherit features of their parts and this is an obvious mistake known as the fallacy of composition. Reply: No, I do not simply claim that our conscious brains have to have the same features as, say, atoms, but that they do not possess features that *every* being on *any* lower level has. In short: the ability of combining is much more similar to spatial location than having a spin. I believe a panpsychist is obliged to explain this.

⁸ Also Gregg Rosenberg (2016) analyzes the problem he calls “the boundary problem” (155) but he believes it can be solved.

subjects having the most primitive experiences bind together and turn into “big” subjects with rich phenomenal life. My argument is based on our ignorance about the limits of phenomenal bonding and the philosophical consequences it brings.

It may then look promising to reject the premises. However, both are vital to panpsychism, so the only way to prove them false is to adapt one of the views that David Chalmers (2016, 191–97) calls noncombinatorial versions of panpsychism. One of them holds that Macro-C is strongly emergent on Micro-C, so the former exhibits new properties the latter does not possess. If this is so, then premise (4) is false. Alternatively, one can claim that Macro-C is fundamental, so the assumption that Micro-C has the ability to combine is invalid. If this is so, then premise (5) is false. However, both possibilities have their own problems: emergent panpsychism requires strong emergence, which, as we shall see, may be the kiss of death for panpsychism, and autonomous panpsychism is very similar to substance dualism. Apart from that, both views cannot account for mental causation. While it does not make them logically incoherent, they are certainly implausible and for that reason they are rarely adopted.

What about the last way of criticism, that is, the claim that the conclusion of the argument characterizes only a necessary but not sufficient condition for the Requirement of Unity? At first glance, this is what a standard panpsychist should say: while he admits that small chunks of Micro-C can be bound together and give rise to Macro-C, he definitely wants to avoid the conclusion that literally *any* aggregation of Micro-C—like the one we can find in tables and chairs—has Macro-C. In short, many panpsychists will agree that, in principle, Macro-C inherits properties of Micro-C, so it is legitimate to ascribe to the former a property of being able to combine. However, this is an ability that can become actual only if further requirements are met. What are these requirements? Most panpsychists will say that, in order for the process of combination to happen, Micro-C has to be *properly organized* or *properly structured*. But here another question appears: What makes the fundamental stuff properly organized? Well, the answer is most probably given by sciences such as neuroscience. In fact, we have already found an instantiation of a proper structure, namely a network of tightly packed neurons forming very complicated patterns and constantly exchanging information in the brains of conscious creatures. We also know that if brain structures are disrupted, the subject will suffer from various mental disabilities, up to the point where the subject and her rich experience cease to exist. This

gives us then a strong case for the claim that the structural features of brains are crucial for mental chemistry to work. Now, the critic goes on, because these structural features are absent between individual brains, we can infer that the latter do not give rise to next-level consciousnesses. In short, discrete brains are very different from neurons, so while both Micro-C and Macro-C (as well as consciousness at any level in between) may have the ability to combine, Macro-C does not meet the additional requirements to give rise to any higher forms of consciousness.⁹ If this is the case, then the Requirement of Unity does not follow from the argument from analogy—and of course from panpsychism.¹⁰

Although this reply has an initial force, I believe that it illegitimately assumes that we know way more than we actually do. First of all, instead of offering us the laws of mental chemistry, it simply states that conscious beings are conscious. However, the fact that some (arbitrarily picked out) features of neuronal structures can be found in conscious brains certainly does not imply that those features are necessary for all instantiations of mental chemistry. Such a claim can, at best, be backed up by the argument from the best explanation. Still, it is very weak, because it is founded on *one kind* of case only and is assisted by ignorance about the processes responsible for mental chemistry. It is thus very probable that it leads us to false conclusions, as in the case where someone who has never seen any mammal, apart from other people, comes to the view that mammals are necessarily bipeds, because people are both mammals and bipeds.¹¹

A critic may reply that it is true that we do not know many things about mental chemistry, but we do know that it is impossible for it to happen without certain features of neural networks, such as the spatiotemporal proximity of their constituents and observable causal activity. However, I think we have strong arguments to consider these features irrelevant for the mental chemistry. When it comes to spatiotemporal proximity, it is true that brains are made out of tightly packed neurons. On the other hand, a single atom turns out to be quite different from the interior of our skulls: it is mainly

⁹ An argument along these lines can already be found in JAMES (1909, 194).

¹⁰ Strictly speaking, such implication is invalid, but for the sake of the paper I assume that there are no other arguments for the Requirement of Unity than the argument from analogy. In that case, if the argument fails, the Requirement of Unity does not follow from panpsychism.

¹¹ Here is a comment for the sake of clarity. The argument I criticize could work if we were extremely lucky and our pre-scientific intuitions let us discover the true law of nature—namely that the level of conscious brains is the last where mental chemistry takes place. I find it very implausible, but of course not impossible.

filled with empty space and the distance between the nucleus and electrons is enormous. Still, a panpsychist believes that the experience of a nucleus and the experience of electrons somehow combine. A similar argument can be offered against the feature of observable causal activity. No one can deny that while neurons are organized into a dense network characterized by electrical and chemical activity, no such network is observed between conscious brains. However, this claim does not do any harm to the Requirement of Unity, as it is not only irrelevant but also most probably false. First of all, it is far from obvious that there is no network of causal interactions between conscious brains. As Luke Roelofs (2019, 98) notes, our brains communicate all the time. If I tell you I have a headache, your brain is able to understand what I say and even provide you with a representation of a given mental state. Not only our language but also the ability to read the states of others' minds prove that brains do communicate. Additionally, a possibility that literally everything—not only sub-atomic particles and their aggregates, but also the space between them—is conscious should at least be considered by any consistent panpsychist. By accepting that “experience exists at every point in the spatial universe” (STRAWSON 2006, 271), it is possible to argue that any portion of the fundamental stuff is causally related to (all?) other portions. Even if one does not want to accept this extravagant idea, it is difficult to deny that “the causal integration of the universe as a whole is widely noted” (COLEMAN 2019, 94). These arguments make a strong claim against the view that our brains do not establish a causal network. Of course, such a network differs significantly from the network of neurons in our skulls, but we do not have any argument to think that only causal networks similar to the latter can be responsible for mental chemistry.

One can still point out that we have no empirical evidence that any higher-level Minds (not to mention the Cosmic Mind) exist. This is true, but is nevertheless not a good argument against the Requirement of Unity. This is due to the fact that panpsychists usually accept that the relation between Micro-C and Macro-C cannot be deduced *a priori*. (Alternatively: it can be done, but not in purely physical terms; therefore, as long as we do not solve the combination problem and we do not discover laws linking Micro-C and Macro-C, we will not be able to conduct a proper *a priori* inference.) This means that we can know that a certain pattern is responsible for developed mental life only *ex post*, when we find out that a certain cognitive system is in fact conscious. As a consequence, the fact that we do not understand how the Cosmic Mind is grounded in conscious brains is exactly what we should

expect! This observation has already been made by Gottfried Leibniz in his mill analogy:

[I]f we suppose that there were a machine whose structure makes it think, feel, and have perception, we could imagine it increased in size while keeping the same proportions, so that one could enter it as one does with a mill. If we were then to go around inside it, we would see only parts pushing one another, and never anything which would explain a perception. (LEIBNIZ 2014, 17 [§17])¹²

We know next to nothing about mental chemistry and we discovered that our consciousness is grounded in neuronal phenomena only because we were lucky enough to find correlations between them. But it would definitely be too hasty to say that the model of the network that we can find in our skulls is necessary for *every* instantiation of mental chemistry. (Here we can ask again: What about subatomic particles?) If I am right, then literally *no* feature of the neuronal processes in our heads gives us insight into the necessary conditions for the combination of mental properties. On that matter, we are still like “dogs and cats are in our libraries, seeing the books and hearing the conversation, but having no inkling of the meaning of it all” (JAMES 1909, 309).

I believe that the conclusion is clear. We know that Micro-C gives rise to Macro-C, but we are ignorant of the laws responsible for it. In effect, we also do not know whether there are further—over-Macro-C—levels of organization. Because we do not have any reason to believe that what we know about mental chemistry in our brains is true about mental chemistry in general, it seems equally probable that there are and that there are no further levels of consciousness. However, because I think that we have no good reasons to believe that there are any further constraints for mental chemistry to happen, the most plausible solution is that any instantiation of the mental stuff is able to form further subjects.¹³ It is of course not a conclusive argument, but at the same time it is enough to tilt the balance to the side of those who argue

¹² It is worth noting that Leibniz’s argument was primarily directed against the view that consciousness can be composed of parts. Here, however, I treat it as one of the first versions of the argument from the explanatory gap.

¹³ A critic may ask: Do you really think that there are *no* good reasons to believe in any constraints of mental chemistry? My answer is: I would love to find such reasons, but for now I do not have any. My critic can reply: How can you believe that your brain and the brain of someone living in Australia are combined? I answer: The same way as I believe that a neuron in my prefrontal cortex and the neuron in my visual cortex belong to the same brain, although the distance between them is—in their scale—enormous and there may be no direct causation between them.

that there are extra-brain levels of mental combination, up to the level of the Cosmic Mind. In this way, one can justify the Requirement of Unity.

It is surprising how little attention has been devoted to the problem of the mereology of phenomenal consciousness. One can get the impression that most panpsychists simply assume that there are two levels of consciousness: the world of fundamental physics and the world of highly developed brains. Only a few authors ask what happens along the way. One of them is Gregg Rosenberg (2004), who argues that it is at least possible that the model of conscious beings recalls “Russian dolls”, where “there would be individuals within individuals within individuals, all of them subjects of phenomenal experience. The hierarchy of nature might then contain a hierarchy of experiencing subjects, each more or less complex” (82). The same claim is defended by Strawson. However, none of them take the final step: they do not seriously take into account that there may be further levels of consciousness grounded in individual conscious brains.¹⁴ Quite the contrary: they seem to believe that experiences combine through all the levels, up to the level of brains and then they magically lose this ability. I have argued that it is more natural to believe that, in fact, they still have it and, if one thinks otherwise, one needs a good argument to justify it. If this is the case, then a panpsychist needs to argue *against* the Requirement of Unity, not *for* it.

3. IS THE COSMIC MIND DIVINE?

If the argument above works, we reach the conclusion that there may be further subjects of consciousness up to the highest possible level that can be characterized as the all-encompassing Cosmic Mind. But can this Mind be legitimately called divine? In other words, does panpsychism meet the Requirement of Divinity?

To answer this question one needs to deal with another problem: what does divinity mean in pantheism? It is important to distinguish two different

¹⁴ As far as I know, amongst contemporary non-cosmopsychistic panpsychists, only Luke Roelofs is ready to straightforwardly acknowledge that it is possible that “all the experiences in the universe are phenomenally unified, subsumed by the vast phenomenal field of the whole cosmos” (2019, 95). In his recent papers, also Strawson (2016) argues that “we have strikingly good grounds for thinking that many of our intuitions of irreducible ontological separateness and distinctness are profoundly mistaken” (103). Chalmers (2016) is close to accepting this conclusion, but he stops at the observation that “it is not at all easy to see how phenomenal bonding will avoid the Scylla of a universal subject and the Charybdis of fragmentary subjects” (201).

possible answers to this question. One is rooted in the understanding of a religion as a personal set of ontological and moral claims that are important for practice. While I believe that the all-encompassing Cosmic Mind may meet this demand no worse than the God of Abrahamic theism, I am not interested in this approach.¹⁵ Instead, I adopt the approach that is tempting mainly to philosophers looking for metaphysical conditions of divinity. In his paper on pantheism, T. L. S. Sprigge discusses fourteen features of divinity, suggesting that “something is appropriately called ‘God’ if and only if ... it satisfies at least one of these conditions” and if “it satisfies more of them than does anything else” (SPRIGGE 1997, 192). I do not have enough space to discuss all the conditions. Suffice it to say that the Cosmic Mind satisfies the requirements of being uniquely all-experiencing, omni-present, uniquely perfect (in a non-moral sense) and—perhaps the most remarkably—being a proper object of worship. Let us examine these points.

It is necessarily implied by what I have already said that the Cosmic Mind is all-experiencing. However, this does not mean that the Mind knows every experience that exists in the world. Quite the contrary: just as we do not know what it is like to be an atom, the Cosmic Mind may not know what it is like to be us.¹⁶ What being all-experiencing means is that there are no chunks of Micro-C that are not parts of the Cosmic Mind. In that sense, the Cosmic Mind is the ultimate Subject that has the ultimate Experience, which makes it perfect. (Of course, the Cosmic Mind may be far from *moral* perfection.) Moreover, because every single token of experience is a part of the Cosmic Mind, it follows—if we agree that the whole and its parts occupy the same space—that the Cosmic Mind is literally everywhere. In that sense, it is omni-present.

I think that these reasons are enough to say that the Cosmic Mind is divine. However, one can still claim that it is insufficient, because divinity is not personal and, if this is the case, it remains unclear whether the Cosmic Mind can be an object of worship, which is an important aspect of any religion with *theism* in its name. I agree that this charge is definitely a problem for pantheism based on materialistic monism, where God is “merely a collective term for all the (purely) physical objects in the universe” (LEIDENHAG

¹⁵ I agree with Michael Levine (1994) that “theistic and pantheistic concepts of divinity are functionally equivalent” (69). As Philip Goff (2019, 213–17) argues, panpsychism—even not combined with pantheism—may play the role of a moral compass as well as fulfilling one’s need to be a part of a cosmic order.

¹⁶ I do not rule out that the Cosmic Mind is powerful enough to answer this question, but this definitely does not follow from the argument I propose.

2019, 546).¹⁷ However, the conception I present here is able to avoid this: the Cosmic Mind is the highest Subject or the highest Self. It seems obvious to me that if something can be called a person at all, such a being is the best candidate. I also agree with Daniel Hill (2005, 232) that “personhood is a great-making property”. If this is the case, then the Greatest Person is the greatest being and it is natural to think that it deserves the greatest worship. Having this inference, the argument for the divinity of the Cosmic Mind is complete.¹⁸

However, I can imagine that at least some philosophers will be dissatisfied with this argument. They may claim that it necessarily follows from the concept of worshipping that the object of worship can establish a personal relation with us (see e.g. LEFTOW 2016). On the other hand, even if the Cosmic Mind exists, it is by no means clear whether it knows about our existence. If this is so, then worshipping the Cosmic Mind may be impossible. Nevertheless, I think this argument fails and that worshipping is not limited to personal contact. This fact is revealed by some religions where there is worship but where an object of worship does not know about it. The best example is Buddhism: Buddha is not a god and cannot establish a personal relation with his worshippers. However, as a respectful ideal he may be an object of a cult. It is clear to me that the Cosmic Mind may also be such an object, even if it does not know about our existence. While it may seem strange for Western people, similar examples of worshipping someone who cannot establish a relation with a worshipper can be found in numerous beliefs around the world.¹⁹

I do admit that the Cosmic Mind I describe is very different from the standard God of theism. In comparison to the God of Abrahamic religions, the Cosmic Mind—apart from being unaware of our existence—did not create the world, is a contingent being (although it may be eternal, if the stuff the universe is made out of is eternal as well) and is probably not morally perfect. Of course, there are many open questions such as: What is it like to be the Cosmic Mind? Are its experiences similar to ours? Does it change through time? We do not know this, although our ignorance is perhaps the same as in the case of the phenomenal life of atoms and sub-atomic parti-

¹⁷ For a different opinion, see HARRISON (1999, 6).

¹⁸ Incidentally, it is usually assumed that the claims that God is everything and that God is a person cannot both be true (HEWITT 2019, 282). I think that panpsychistically-founded pantheism proves them to be fully compatible.

¹⁹ Even if one denies any premise of this reasoning, it is difficult to deny that the Cosmic Mind is at least awe-inspiring (BYERLY 2019), which may be entirely enough to call it divine.

cles.²⁰ The kind of pantheism I present here is also different from most of the philosophical pantheisms of, say, Baruch Spinoza and Francis Bradley. For example, I do not suggest that God is an independent substance. Quite the contrary: the Cosmic Mind is just grounded in individual consciousnesses that are, in turn, grounded in the smallest chunks of experience. I do not also assume that substance monism is true. While this approach can be adopted by cosmopsychism, I prefer to stick to micropsychism implying substance pluralism.²¹ Finally, if we agree that there are some further levels between individual brains and the Cosmic Mind, the model I describe departs from monotheism and leans towards polytheism, with many super-human minds and the all-encompassing Highest Mind. However, the view I present here is not novel in philosophy, as one can find similar ideas in the works of Friedrich Paulsen and Josiah Royce (SPRIGGE 1997, 196). While this post-Hegelian idea is definitely not in vogue today, as I was trying to argue, it is simply a consequence of unconstrained mental chemistry—unconstrained because our ignorance tells us nothing about the limits of combining experiences and their subjects.

4. POSSIBLE WAYS OUT

I can imagine that many people find this view strange. I agree: it is strange and I personally would be reluctant to accept it. But—apart from strangeness—some philosophers will certainly be ready to argue that this unacceptable outcome is yet another example of the absurd consequences brought by panpsychism. Even some of the proponents of the latter may be reluctant to accept it. Fortunately, because panpsychism is a family of views, I believe it involves such varieties that allow one to avoid the menace of pantheism. On the other hand, everything comes at a price.

²⁰ One of the most interesting questions is: can the Cosmic Mind be a free agent? Contrary to a materialistic pantheist, who usually finds it to be determined, I can answer that, well, it depends. If the Cosmic Mind is to be an agent, downward causation has to be possible. If the Cosmic Mind is to be free, then one has to prove that libertarianism is true. To achieve the latter aim, it is especially tempting to utilize Philip Goff's pan-agentialism (see GOFF 2020), where fundamental particles are primitively free and—due to mental chemistry—higher-level beings become more and more advanced in their freedom. This matches perfectly the idea that the Cosmic Mind's freedom is the greatest possible.

²¹ Using mereological terminology introduced by Graham Oppy (1997, 321), one can say that cosmopsychism may at best imply collective pantheism, while the pantheism I defend is distributive.

One of these ways out is a weaker version of panpsychism that Galen Strawson (2017) names psychism, according to which there is fundamental mental stuff as well as fundamental non-mental stuff. Those who defend this view claim that our universe is deeply heteronomous. Thus constitutive unity is ruled out. What is constitutive unity? According to a definition offered by Leidenhag (2019), “if x is in constitutive unity with y , then all the true statements about y are true because they are true about x ” (546). It is reasonable to assume that pantheism demands that all statements about the world are at the same time statements about the Cosmic Mind. Otherwise, it would be impossible to explain how the universe and the Cosmic Mind are identical. However, if psychism—and not panpsychism—is true, then constitutive unity between them is impossible. Why? Because if the stuff the universe is made out of is bifurcated, there will be true statements—that is, statements about the non-mental stuff—that will not be true about the all-encompassing Cosmic Mind. This does not mean that if psychism is true, then pantheism is false—one can still hold that divinity embraces both mental and non-mental domains of the universe—but it does disprove my initial claim that panpsychism leads to pantheism without further assumptions. It turns out, then, that pantheism follows from panpsychism if and only if the latter is interpreted as monistic idealism. Such a consequence is perhaps a great relief to many panpsychists, who usually agree that only “some fundamental physical entities have mental states” (CHALMERS 2015, 246), so there are non-mental facts, and this contradicts the Requirement of (Constitutive) Unity.

However, I am afraid that, in this case, the cure is worse than the disease. This is because the most efficient arguments *for* panpsychism are at the same time arguments *against* the existence of the non-experiential. If we introduce, as Bertrand Russell and his followers do, a distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description, and then limit our certain knowledge to the former, it will become clear that there is no way to know anything certain about the non-experiential. As a consequence, the non-experiential becomes a philosophical construct with no empirical content. David Chalmers notes this in one of his recent papers by saying that “one starts as a materialist, then one becomes a dualist, then a panpsychist, and one ends up as an idealist” (CHALMERS 2020, 353). This does not mean that psychism is false but, to defend it, one needs to depart from the original view of Russell and propose an alternative argument for the fundamentality of the mental.

I also think that psychism brings about conceptual problems. If we define it as a view that there is fundamentally mental stuff and fundamentally non-mental stuff and that both are logically independent, then it is difficult to distinguish it from substance dualism.²² The only difference is that in Cartesian dualism there are fundamental simple beings, namely highly developed subjects of consciousness, while in psychism there are fundamental simple beings and highly developed beings consisting of fundamental simple beings. If one believes that panpsychism involves bifurcation of the fundamental stuff, then one needs to define the view in such a way as not to end up with substance dualism (and its well-known problems). I am not sure how this can be done.

Another solution is to accept the view that Herbert Feigl (1975, 18) calls panqualityism. According to this, there can be unconscious mental qualities that turn into phenomenal properties when one becomes aware of them. Such a view leads to a conclusion that the ubiquity of the mental does not require the ubiquity of fundamental subjects. Therefore, subjects can be metaphysically non-primitive. Alternatively, one can deny that they exist at all (CHALMERS 2016, 197). By deflating subjects, we can get rid of the problem. Once again, this does not mean, of course, that there is no all-encompassing Subjectless Experience. It does mean, however, that both the Requirement of (Constitutive) Unity and (probably) the Requirement of Divinity are false. If this is the case, then panpsychism does not lead to pantheism.

However, the view that experience does not need a subject is controversial. Many philosophers, such as Galen Strawson (2010, 139), think that “there cannot be experience without a subject of experience, because experience is necessarily for someone or something.”²³ While some deny this (see e.g. COLEMAN 2016), most panpsychists agree that subjects of experience are as fundamental as experience itself. It is also worth noting that panqualityism has its own problems. One of them is the fact that if subjects of experience are not fundamental, then they seem to be strongly emergent on the non-subjective. However, if we agree that there are cases of strong emergence in nature, the next step is to say that—for the sake of simplicity—not

²² On the other hand, if the mental and the non-mental are not logically independent, then the Requirement of (Constitutive) Unity is true: by knowing only one of these two, one can *a priori* infer all the truths about the second.

²³ This does not mean that a subject of experience has to be a durable substance. Quite the contrary: Strawson argues that it is transient but nonetheless is necessary for experience to happen.

only subjects of experience but also experience are strongly emergent on the non-experiential. Thus we go back to standard materialism.²⁴

Some will say that these options are still better than pantheism. Others disagree. Be that as it may, those panpsychists who accept type-monism and the fundamental character of subjectivity—and I find both assumptions to be more plausible than their alternatives—will have to agree that their view brings them closer to the Requirement of Unity and the Requirement of Divinity, which are two necessary and sufficient requirements for pantheism. If this is the case, then the most plausible version of panpsychism paves the way to pantheism.

5. (NOT SO GRIM) CONCLUSION

My argument is, of course, not a decisive one. Most importantly, if one day we discover laws responsible for mental chemistry, we will be much closer to verifying at what point the process ceases.²⁵ Therefore, it may turn out that my worries are greatly exaggerated. Maybe. Nevertheless, I believe that *today* we have no good reasons to claim that individual human consciousness is the final link in the chain of conscious beings. Moreover, we have reasons to seriously consider the idea that we are only a part of a much longer chain of Minds, with the all-encompassing Cosmic Mind as the final link.

Is such a conclusion disastrous? I can imagine that many panpsychists will reply: “Of course!” However, I think this would be an overreaction. Granted, it is difficult to combine pantheism with naturalism and the latter seems non-negotiable to many philosophers, but prejudices against pantheism are mainly cultural, not philosophical. In fact, they are parallel to those against panpsychism, which was mocked for a vast part of the past century. We were able to overcome a hostile intellectual atmosphere around panpsychism and I believe we can do the same with respect to pantheism. After all, panpsychism has made us aware that the fundamental nature of the universe can be strange. I would argue that, in light of pantheism, it is only *a little* more weird.

²⁴ For this reason, views accepting strong emergence, such as panprotopsychism, can be counted as “broad physicalism”. See CHALMERS (2015, 261).

²⁵ An example of this view is the Integrated Information Theory or any other conception where “low-level subjects ‘merge’ or ‘blend’ or ‘fuse’ to yield higher-level subjects” (CHALMERS 2016, 198).

To sum up: I have tried to justify the claim that panpsychism leads to pantheism and, if anyone is unhappy with this conclusion, arguments must be proposed to avoid it. I acknowledge that my claim might, at first blush, be controversial. This is hardly surprising: most panpsychists seem to be unaware of the challenge they need to face. As a result, almost no one links panpsychism and pantheism today.²⁶ However, such a possibility should be taken into account and thoroughly discussed. I am sure it will turn out to be beneficial both for panpsychists and for pantheists.

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²⁶ The only remarkable exception I found is T. L. S. Sprigge, who develops an argument similar to mine in his book *The Vindication of Absolute Idealism* (SPRIGGE 1983, 250–63). Karl Pfeifer (2016) also defends the view, but because he is mainly preoccupied with intentionality, not subjectivity, he reaches the view he calls pan-intentionalism. On the other hand, in *Panpsychism: Contemporary Perspectives* (2016) edited by Godehard Brüntrup and Ludwig Jaskolla, the name "pantheism" appears only three times and always in the context of cosmopsychism. In *The Routledge Handbook of Panpsychism* (2020), edited by William Seager, there is only one paper, written by Yujin Nagasawa, that investigates (albeit very concisely) the relations between panpsychism and pantheism.

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PANPSYCHISM AND PANTHEISM. AN UNEASY ALLIANCE?

Summary

Although panpsychism and pantheism were seen as natural allies in the past, in contemporary philosophy it is widely common to stress differences rather than similarities between them. As a result, only few panpsychists (e.g. so-called cosmopsychists) acknowledge that their view may imply pantheism. In my paper, I argue that at least some popular versions of panpsychism do lead to pantheism. My main argument is that panpsychism meets the minimal requirements for pantheism, defined as a view that the world is identical to all-encompassing Unity and that this Unity is divine. Although there are kinds of panpsychism that allow one to avoid these consequences, the most popular versions of this view pave the way to pantheism.

Many philosophers will find this a serious challenge for panpsychism. On the other hand, it can be argued that this conclusion is not as grim as it seems. An all-encompassing Cosmic Mind has little to do with the God of Abrahamic religions, so it does not necessarily deprive panpsychism of its naturalistic flavor that many find non-negotiable. Be that as it may, the aim of this paper is to turn the attention of proponents of panpsychism to yet another problem they need to solve.

Keywords: panpsychism; pantheism; cosmopsychism; the combination problem.

PANPSYCHIZM A PANTEIZM: KŁOPOTLIWE PRZYMIERZE?

Streszczenie

Mimo że panpsychizm i panteizm postrzegano w przeszłości jako naturalnych sojuszników, we współczesnej filozofii najczęściej podkreśla się raczej różnice, nie zaś podobieństwa między nimi. W efekcie tylko niewielka część panpsychistów (np. tak zwani kosmopsychiści) przyznaje, że ich pogląd może implikować panteizm. W swoim artykule wskazuję, iż co najmniej niektóre popularne wersje panpsychizmu w istocie prowadzą do panteizmu. Mój główny argument głosi, że panpsychizm spełnia minimalne warunki dla panteizmu, definiowanego jako pogląd, w myśl którego świat jest identyczny ze wszechogarniającą Jednością i że Jedność ta ma boski charakter. Mimo że niektóre rodzaje panpsychizmu pozwalają uniknąć tej konkluzji, najbardziej popularne jego wersje wytyczają drogę wprost do panteizmu.

Wielu filozofów uzna, iż jest to poważne wyzwanie dla panpsychizmu. Można jednak także argumentować, iż wniosek ten nie jest tak destrukcyjny, jak mogłoby się zdawać. Wszegarniający kosmiczny Umysł nie ma wiele wspólnego z Bogiem wielkich religii basenu Morza Śródziemnego, przyjęcie jego istnienia nie musi zatem prowadzić do odrzucenia naturalizmu, który wielu filozofom wyda się warunkiem *sine qua non*. Bez względu na to, celem tego artykułu jest zwrócenie uwagi zwolenników panpsychizmu na jeszcze jeden problem, z którym muszą się zmierzyć.

Słowa kluczowe: panpsychizm; panteizm; kosmopsychizm; problem połączenia.