

Deploying Panpsychism for the Demarcation of Panentheism

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1. Introduction

The recent literature on panentheism often starts with two claims. First, one is reminded of the recent popularity of the term ›panentheism‹ across philosophy of religion, systematic theology, the comparative study of world religions, science and religion, and naturalistic spirituality.¹ Through numbers, if not through arguments, »the panentheistic turn« is presented as »a doctrinal revolution«, which cannot be ignored by either critics or sympathisers.² Second, one is presented with a problem; namely, that no one knows exactly what panentheism means or how it can be demarcated from similar views—even demarcated from the very view panentheism is commonly pitted against, namely classical theism.

The central claims of panentheism, which are often used to define the position, are that ›the world is the body of God‹ and ›the world is in God‹. In order to avoid predetermining whether these phrases should be taken literally or metaphorically, I refer to these claims throughout this paper as ›the panentheistic slogans‹. These slogans are evocative but cannot illuminate panentheism's distinctive claims regarding God's relationship to the world without further analysis. As a result, there is a growing collection of secondary literature seeking to interpret these slogans in a way that clearly demarcates panentheism from neighbouring theological positions.³ This paper contributes to this secondary literature.

However, there are also scholars who criticise the search for a clear demarcation for missing the point of panentheism entirely.⁴ As Thomas C. Owen notes, some panentheists seem to view the fluidity or vagueness of their position as part of its attraction.⁵ The implication is that the gathering together of

1 See, Clayton and Peacocke 2004; Biernacki and Clayton 2014.

2 Clayton 1999; Brierley 2004: 4.

3 Mullins 2016; Göcke 2013; Gasser 2019 Brierly 2008: 636-41; Peterson 2001; Stenmark 2019; Gregerson 2004; Towne 2005; Hutchings 2010.

4 Lataster 2014; Lataster & Bilimoria 2018.

5 Thomas C. Owen justly critiques Philip Clayton for glossing such ambiguity as ›richness‹. Owen 2008: 653-53; cf. Clayton 2004: 254, 256.

various warring parties in religious discourse under the panentheist's banner of relationality, naturalness, scientific credibility, and embodied spirituality, is a good to which clear definitions should be willingly sacrificed.⁶ For such a purpose, emphasising »family resemblances« between even the most disparate positions is enough.⁷ However, this paper rejects this all-inclusive framing of either the content or purpose of panentheism. In the marketplace of academia, a clear demarcation between one's own theory or the family in which a theory is found and one's competitors is an essential part of any sales pitch, else the various members of the family might be adopted into other dynasties.

For all its celebration of unity, panentheism remains a polemical position and is presented as either »the *other* God of the philosophers«, the reasonable »middle path between two extremes« (dualistic classical theism and atheistic pantheism), or the »higher synthesis« between supernaturalism and atheistic naturalism.⁸ If we cannot demarcate panentheism from these neighbouring positions, then not only does panentheism lose its competitive edge and much of its explanatory power, but the gathering of ambiguously related theories under the umbrella of panentheism becomes superfluous; panentheism would amount to »a somewhat suspect ›fudge‹ word.«⁹ Process panentheist David Ray Griffin warns that »increased popularity brings a danger that ›panentheism‹ will be appropriated for doctrines devoid of [its] promise.«¹⁰ If panentheism amounts to the popularity of an ambiguous slogan, rather than a genuinely shared understanding of the relationship between God and the world, then the panentheist umbrella seems unlikely to weather any future storms.

Yet there might be a way to avoid this dreary forecast. As Thomas writes, one »major exception to this vagueness in the concept of panentheism« is found in the work of Process philosophy.¹¹ Whilst few can deny the historical importance of Process theology within the panentheist family (particularly in the West where the name, but perhaps not the original idea, was coined), Process panentheism is often treated as the grandparent whose leadership of the family has been surpassed by younger generations. Thankfully, this paper has no

6 One might point to the value-based and political arguments for panentheism in Jantzen 1984 and McFague 1993.

7 Clayton 2004: 249. Indeed, Philip Clayton describes both the classical theism of John Cooper and the atheistic pantheism of Robert Corrington as versions of panentheism, such that one is forced to ask what the term ›panentheism‹ excludes? See, Clayton 2017.

8 Cooper 2007; Brierley 2004: 3; Hartshorne & Reese 1953: 5.

9 Roe 198: 94. Patrick Hutching simply states that, to commit myself to panentheism is disingenuous since »I am—as I see it—committing myself to nothing.« Hutching 2010: 299.

10 Griffin 2005: 35.

11 Brierley 2004: 3.

interest in defending Process theology, nor holding Process panentheism up as the exemplary for panentheists more widely. Instead, this paper investigates if a particular theory of mind, one that Process philosophy shares with many other historical figures, can provide the resources to demarcate panentheism from neighbouring theological positions. The theory of mind in question is panpsychism.

This raises an immediate methodological question; quite simply, what's mind got to do with it? Although often taken for granted, it is not immediately transparent what a position in philosophy of mind has to do with the God-world relationship, nor how strong the relationship between mentality and divinity should be. On the one hand, it has been asserted that »on any possible reading of the panpsychic system« the world must be »internal parts of God and not external creations«. ¹² On the other hand, the historical preference for panpsychism by panentheists may be little more than coincidence, since there seems no good reason why the God of classical theism could not have chosen to create a panpsychist universe quite apart from Godself. ¹³ It seems safest to conclude that adopting a panpsychist theory of mind cannot determine one's theology. Moreover, if God is the source of all being, then perhaps philosophy of mind should play second fiddle to philosophy of religion. If this is correct then panpsychism cannot *and* should not, determine one's theology. ¹⁴

This brief methodological excursus allows me to be clear about the scope and ambition of this paper's analysis. It is precisely because panentheists have certain primary theological commitments regarding the God-world relationship that this paper explores whether panpsychism can facilitate and clarify those commitments. Within this paper, philosophy of mind is serving

12 James, 1947: 318; cf. Cooper 2007: 141.

13 Taliaferro 2017. This preference is noted in Cooper 2007: 193. However, classical theist Gottfried von Leibniz and pantheist Bauarch Spinoza, provide clear counter examples of how panpsychism can support various theological positions. Skrbina 2005: 87-91, 95-99.

14 R.T. Mullins raises something like this objection against demarcations where, »[a]ll the demarcating work is being done on the side of creation«, since »panentheism is supposed to be making a unique claim about the nature of God.« Mullins 2016: 342. But this seems to mischaracterize panentheism. Panentheism is primarily a statement about God's relationship with the world, not about God's nature in abstraction or considered apart from the world. Indeed, to many panentheists the idea of making a unique claim about the nature of God apart from the world would be to miss the point entirely (see, Henrikson, 2017: 1083; Gregersen 2004: 20; Meister 2017: 8; Peters 2007: 285). A God-world relationship may, of course, have strong implications for the attributes of God etc., such as seen in the panentheists tendency to accept divine passibility, mutability and deny *creatio ex nihilo*, but as Mullins shows these ideas alone fail to demarcate panentheism. On the insufficiency of these demarcations see, Stenmark 2019; Mullins 2016: 344-336; Göcke, 2013: 71-72; Lataster & Bilimoria 2018: 59-60.

as handmaiden to philosophy of religion. Panpsychism neither gives rise to, nor determines the beliefs of panentheism, and there is no argument here that panentheists are panpsychists by default (nor *vice versa*). Indeed, I do not think panpsychists should adopt panentheism as the theological expansion of their commitments.¹⁵ Instead, the central question of this paper is only whether panpsychism provides a useful framework for interpreting the two panentheistic slogans, such that panentheists may use panpsychism to demarcate themselves from their neighbours and rivals.

To achieve this, the section below will define panpsychism by providing four core theses that demarcate panpsychism from neighbouring theories of mind and provide the boundaries for identifying one's theory as panpsychist. I then provide seven auxiliary theses that specify versions of panpsychism currently offered within this boundary. Not only is this necessary, since two ambiguities do not equal a clarity, but may serve as something of a model for the kind of demarcation we are hoping for with regard to panentheism. Whilst there may be a general correspondence between the aims of panentheism and panpsychism, vague gestures towards a correspondence between these theories is a relatively unhelpful exercise, particularly if the goal is to clarify panentheism's distinct claims. As such, the specific variants (seven auxiliary theses) within the panpsychist theory of consciousness are essential for the second task of this paper; to test whether particular versions of panpsychism can illuminate the two panentheistic slogans. The demarcation is in the details.

2. Panpsychism

The word ›panpsychism‹ can be translated to the general claim that all (pan) is mental (psyche), yet this should not be confused with animism, vitalism, or idealism. Popular definitions amongst contemporary panpsychists are that ›mentality is fundamental and ubiquitous in the natural world‹, ›the view that the basic physical constituents of the universe have mental properties‹, ›physical nature is composed of individuals, each of which is to some degree sentient ... [has] experience, or in a broad sense, consciousness‹, or more colloquially that ›everything has a soul ... or a rudiment of a soul.‹¹⁶ While these definitions provide a general idea of what panpsychism is about, a more

15 I should acknowledge that I do not subscribe to panentheism or Process theology, but do consider panpsychism the most plausible position in philosophy of mind.

16 Goff, Seager & Allen-Hermanson 2017; Nagel 1979: 181; Sprigge 1998; Popper & Eccles 1977: 15.

precise list of Panpsychism's Core Theses (PCT) are required to show that panpsychism is a coherent and demarcated position within philosophy of mind.

Panpsychism's Core Theses

The first core thesis is:

PCT1: At least some physical organisms are phenomenally conscious. (Mental Realism)

Phenomenal consciousness refers to the qualitative, subjective, experience or feeling of ›what it is to be like‹ an organism.¹⁷ The felt quality of an experience is said to be the *phenomenal character* of that experience; for example, the reddish quality of seeing the colour red. According to panpsychists, phenomenality is a real and irreducible feature of this world. The first core thesis demarcates panpsychism from reductive physicalism in its various forms (e.g. eliminativism, behaviourism, functionalism).

The second core thesis is:

PCT2: Phenomenal consciousness is fundamental, and thus can neither arise out of, nor be reduced to anything wholly lacking in phenomenal consciousness. (Non-Emergence and Irreducibility)

A panpsychist does not merely believe that phenomenal consciousness exists but argues that phenomenality is a really hard fact to account for in a fundamentally physical world.¹⁸ If organic consciousness (phenomenal consciousness of material organisms) is real and neither reducible nor strongly emergent, then ›there must be some secret properties of matter with a direct connection to consciousness‹.¹⁹ Weak and Strong Emergentists, however, will disagree with these claims and so PCT2 demarcates panpsychism from emergence theory.

Since a traditional substance dualist or hylomorphist can hold to PCT1 and PCT2, a further core thesis is required to demarcate panpsychism from these two alternative positions. I propose that a third core thesis of panpsychism should be,

PCT3: Whatever is fundamental for materiality is also fundamental for mentality, since there is only one fundamental level of reality. (Fundamental Monism)

17 Sprigge 1971: 166-68; Nagel 1974; Chalmers 1995.

18 Galen Strawson 2008: 60-67; Brogaard, 2017: 131-137.

19 Coleman 2018a: 185.

For panpsychists then, unlike traditional substance dualists or hylomorphists, the individual phenomenal consciousness experienced by human beings is not itself fundamental, but it can be accounted for by positing a single, fundamental, psychophysical ground to reality.

This fundamental monism underpins a large portion of the general correspondences between panpsychism and panentheism. First, just as panentheism seeks the path between monistic pantheism and theological dualism, panpsychism proposes a route between reductive physicalism and substance dualism. Second, just as panentheism wishes to talk of God and the world as a ›qualified non-dualism‹ (*Vishishtadvaita*) where two realities form a single unity, so do many panpsychists speak of mind and matter as the two properties of a shared neutral substance or as the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of any one entity.²⁰ Third, for panentheists, infinity is a monistic category that includes all finite realities, and for the panpsychist fundamentality is a monistic category that grounds all beings and includes both material and mental properties. Fourth, just as a panpsychist seeks to naturalise the mind, so too do many panentheists seek a naturalistic version of theism.

Finally, one should state a fourth core thesis for panpsychism:

PCT4: Fundamental consciousness is necessary for explaining organic consciousness.

Panpsychism posits consciousness at the fundamental level of reality because it provides an explanation for organic consciousness. If fundamental consciousness does not and will never aid (in any way) in explaining organic consciousness, then panpsychists should abandon their position.²¹ As such, how best to specify PCT4 is a major conundrum for panpsychists, better known as ›the combination problem‹.²² Phrased as a question, the combination problem asks: what is the relationship between fundamental consciousness and human subjects, just that the former aids in explaining the existence of the latter? The hard-nut of this question is, more specifically, how does the adding together of many single perspectives result in a composite but unified conscious whole?

20 Meister 2017: 3. See, Stubenberg 2017; Chalmers 2015.

21 There are versions of panpsychism that are not so reliant on providing an explanation of organic consciousness, and instead seek to provide explanations to one of the other perennial mysteries of philosophy; such as causation. However, within philosophy of mind, I take it that all theories *raison d'être* is to provide an explanation of organic consciousness.

22 This is a very old problem discussed by Lucretius, Leibniz, and William James, but the conundrum was given its modern name in Seager 1995. For a thorough discussion see, Chalmers 2017b: 179-214.

Whilst the combination problem has yet to be expressed as a defeater against panpsychism, it remains an open question that requires (and is currently receiving) further research.²³ As panpsychists debate between themselves how to specify PCT₄, this conundrum holds the competing mind-body ontologies in a stalemate; the combination problem is comparable to the interaction problem for substance dualists, or the question of how mind emerges from mindless matter for the emergentist. It may simply be a matter of which mystery one is happy to live with.

With these core theses we have successfully defined panpsychism and demarcated it from the other major positions in philosophy of mind. A specific version of panpsychism will require auxiliary theses, upon which panpsychists may disagree whilst still identifying their position with the panpsychist camp. As mentioned above, these auxiliary theses will be important for interpreting the pantheistic slogans of divine embodiment and interiority.

Panpsychism's Auxiliary Theses

The seven auxiliary theses stated below are organised into three semi-independent categories. First, whilst panpsychists all agree that mentality is found at the fundamental level they differ on how to specify the nature of this primitive mentality (Aux₁-3). No living panpsychists I know of posit rational, volitional, self-conscious, emotional, imaginative, etc. minds as fundamental—but prefer to use phrases such as »thin subjects« or »raw feels«. ²⁴ The kind of mental life enjoyed by human beings is taken to be the result of the complexity and evolutionary development of these basic subjects. On panpsychism, you can't get something from nothing (*pace* strong emergence) and there really is something there (*pace* reductive physicalism), but we may be able to get more mental life from less—the question is ›how much less?‹. Currently a panpsychist has a choice between three auxiliary theses on this matter:

Aux₁: Basic subjects, which have simple momentary experiences, exist at the fundamental level. (Subject Panpsychism)

The panpsychists who reject Aux₁ do so either because it is too counterintuitive or because it bares the full force of the combination problem; it demands

23 Sam Coleman describes the combination problem »represents a major theoretical ›I owe you‹ of the panexperientialist/panpsychist. But that there is work to be done does not imply the falsity of a view, and there are avenues to be explored.« Coleman 2006: 51.

24 ›Thin subjects« or »SESMETs« are what Galen Strawson uses to refer to subjects that persist only for the briefest period of time, Strawson 2009. ›Raw feels« is a phrase taken from Toleman 1932 to refer to features of our mental life that science cannot capture.

an account of how subjects combine to form larger subjects. To avoid these issues some panpsychists prefer:

Aux2: Proto-phenomenal properties, but not phenomenal experience or subjects, are found at the fundamental level. (Panprotopsychism)

Whilst panprotopsychism does not demand an account of subject combination, it does still require an account of how phenomenal experiences arise from proto-phenomenal properties without violating PTC₂. Moreover, whilst some panprotopsychists name specific properties, such as qualities or intentions, we cannot really know what proto-phenomenal properties are. Panprotopsychism, therefore, seems threaten by noumenalism.²⁵ If Aux₁ is too counterintuitive, and Aux₂ appears too mysterious, then the third option is:

Aux3: There are experiences, but no subjects to experience them, at the fundamental level. (Panexperientialism)

This is the option preferred, almost exclusively, by Process theologians since it requires an event-based, and not substance-based, ontology to make sense of experiences floating free of subjects.

The second disagreement between panpsychists is in how to specify what is fundamental, or perhaps more clearly, *where* the fundamental level of reality is (Aux₄₋₅). As argued above, the panpsychist needs to hold to fundamental monism (PTC₃) and this leaves panpsychists with only two choices. The first option is,

Aux4: The cosmos is made up from a plurality of fundamental psychophysical micro-entities. (Micropsychism).

Simply put, the fundamental level of reality is where the building-blocks for all that exists are found (e.g. quarks and photons, or whatever is described by a completed physics). It is largely due to the success of reductionistic explanations in the natural sciences that the majority of Western panpsychists retain the spirit of reductionism by holding to micropsychism alongside microphysicalism (that physical things are explained in virtue of their physical parts). In order to satisfy PTC₄, micropsychists typically seek models of mental combination. However, Eastern forms of panpsychism, Absolute idealism, and the rise of environmental holism has also meant that some panpsychists, instead, favour:

²⁵ See, panqualityism in Coleman 2018b and panintentionalism in Pfeifer 2016.

Aux5: The cosmos as a single psychophysical whole is fundamental. (Cosmopsychism).

More recently, some analytic philosophers of mind have come to prefer Aux5 over Aux4, due to the perception that PCT4 will be easier to maintain.²⁶ That is, it is hoped that a theory of subject individuation will be easier than a theory of subject combination. This view is influenced by Jonathan Schaffer's account of *priority monism*, where the one and only fundamental entity is the cosmos.²⁷

The third set of auxiliary theses outline two types of relation between fundamental subjects and human or organic subjects; namely, constitutive and non-constitutive relations. The literature on the combination problem is too large to survey fully here but I will give four example solutions from: constitutive combination, non-constitutive combination, constitutive individuation, and non-constitutive individuation. It is these examples that are most relevant for the present discussion since they specify how different panpsychists understand the mind-body relation and what it means for a mind to be >in< another mind.

The first type of relation is a constitutive relation, where all the true statements about human consciousness are (wholly or partially) grounded in true statements about fundamental consciousness.²⁸ To use a (controversial) metaphor from ecclesiology, if individual members of a church are seen to be prior to the church itself, then the existence of the church might be said to be grounded in the existence of its members. In this case, the church just is the sum of its members. However, if the church (perhaps as a spiritual reality) is logically prior to it having any members, then being a member of the church is a state of affairs about an individual that is grounded in the existence of church (itself, probably grounded in something else, like the will of God). In both cases, the grounding entities are prior to and more fundamental than the grounded entities. That is, truths about human consciousness are true in virtue of the fact that they are also, perhaps primarily, true about fundamental consciousness.

Aux6: All true facts about organic consciousness are true in virtue of facts about fundamental mentality. (Constitutive Panpsychism)

26 Goff 2017b; Nagasawa & Weger 2017; Jaskolla & Buck 2012.

27 Schaffer 2010. Schaffer's account is different to cosmopsychism primarily because Schaffer identifies as a materialist.

28 Chalmers, 2017b, 181; Cf. Fine 2012; Scheaffer 2009.

On this view, the organic subject is the sum of its fundamental parts (if combined with Aux4) or a part of a larger subject (with Aux5). All the organic subject's properties and causal powers are metaphysically necessitated by the properties and powers found at the fundamental level. This is sometimes phrased as an ›ontological free lunch‹, since the organic subject is nothing ›over-and-above‹ fundamental mentality.²⁹

For many panpsychists, the advantage of Aux6 is that it retains a bottom-up, scientific (even quasi-reductionist) account of consciousness, parallel to material sciences. The materialist will hold to a constitutive relation like this between fundamental physical facts and organic material/mental facts, whereas a constitutive panpsychist will hold to a constitutive relation between fundamental mental facts and organic mental facts (facts about the mental life of organisms). The main advantage is that constitutive relations seem best suited for accounting for mental causation in a bottom-up fashion alongside physical causation.³⁰

A proposed constitutive combinatorial solution (Aux4 + Aux6) to the combination problem is Philip Goff's idea of Phenomenal Bonding. Goff has proposed that, just as fundamental entities have intrinsic phenomenal properties (subjectivity, experience) and extrinsic material properties (mass, spin, location), so too might relations between such entities have intrinsic phenomenal relational properties which facilitate subject combination.³¹ Similarly, Gregg Rosenberg's ›carrier hypothesis‹ has proposed that causation is a fundamental relation that has a phenomenal interiority to it, as part of his argument for panpsychism from causation.³² The biggest challenge for Phenomenal Bonding is to give a more positive account of what these ›bonds‹ are, where they are, and how they structure the mental aspect of the world such that some things, like organisms, are conscious as single collective wholes, and other things (like tables and slippers) are not.

Philip Goff has more recently argued that constitutive panpsychists should, instead, adopt Cosmopsychism (Aux5). Whilst this provides some relief from providing a positive account of combinatorial relations, it still requires an

29 Goff 2017b: 226-27.

30 Chalmers 2017b: 193.

31 Philip Goff abandons his own idea in favour of a constitutive cosmopsychism. Others are more hopeful that ›phenomenal bonds‹ might yet provide the best way forward; Miller 2017; Chalmers 2017b.

32 Goff 2009, Goff 2017a. As such, Rosenberg argues that panpsychism not only offers a solution to the mind-body problem, but also to what intrinsic or categorical natures carry the structures of causality in our world. Rosenberg 2004. See also, Mørch 2014; Mørch forthcoming.

account of constitutive individuation. Goff refers to this as Grounding by Subsumption; all true facts about organic subjects are true in virtue of being true of the cosmic subject. In this way, Goff argues, organic subjects are subsumed within the cosmic subject as a partial aspect of a given unity.³³ On this view, the fundamental entity (the cosmos) is not a »homogenous blob« but is »structured« by its different aspects.³⁴ These aspects may be considered (epistemologically) in isolation, but (ontologically) depend upon the existence of the whole.

If one has never been enamoured by materialism and reductive explanations, then constitutive solutions to the combination problem may seem unnecessarily strange or sterile. Instead, a panpsychist, perhaps who has previously been associated with dualism or emergence theory, may prefer to search for a non-constitutive solution to the combination problem.

Aux7: There are true facts about organic consciousness that are not true in virtue of facts about fundamental mentality. (Non-Constitutive Panpsychism)

A non-constitutive relation allows for new properties to arise within the combined organic subject that are not present in the fundamental subject. The organic subject can be said to be caused by the fundamental subject(s), but to exist over-and-above the fundamental subject(s).

The most important micropsychist version of the non-constitutive relation (Aux4 + Aux7) is Emergent Panpsychism.³⁵ As with emergence theory more widely, an emergent panpsychist can say that the body is the emergent base of the mind, and that the body gives rise to the mind due to some contingent laws of nature. But, importantly, as a panpsychist body this emergent base is a society of micropsychist subjects who merge or infuse to create a single collective mind. The main advantage of this position is that no further theory of combination is required, instead the emergent mind is fundamental in the same way that a substance dualist affirms.³⁶

33 Goff 2017b: 221-233. The terms ›aspect‹ and ›unity‹ are treated as primitive concepts that do not admit fundamental analysis. Goff uses examples to clarify these terms: one's *unified* experience is often made up of different auditory, visual, and emotional *aspects*; a specific colour is a unity of different aspects of hue, saturation and lightness; states of affairs (electrons-having-negative-charge) are fundamental unities of which the object (electron) and the property (negative charge) are aspects.

34 Goff 2017b: 225-26.

35 Seager 2012; Seager 2010; Brüntrup 2017; Mørch 2014.

36 And thus, David J. Chalmers argues that emergent panpsychism suffers from the same difficulty as substances dualists in accounting for mental causation; Chalmers, 2017b, 193-94.

As long as Aux7 is not combined with Aux2 (panprotopsychism), then emergent panpsychism is not in danger of retreating into a (super)strong emergence theory, as is ruled out by PCT2. As a realist position regarding mentality (PCT1) and often realist concerning downward causation, emergent panpsychism cannot be confused with Weak Emergence either.³⁷ That said, given that the rejection of emergence is a core thesis for panpsychism, many panpsychists are not willing to sail so close to the wind of emergence theory.

Finally, one might propose a non-constitutive model of individuation (Aux5 + Aux7). Such solutions are popular amongst cosmopsychists, but highly speculative and often phrased metaphorically. For example, Itay Shani employs aquatic metaphors where the universe is a »vast ocean of consciousness« or »oceanic plenum« and human subjects are »local disturbances coursing the ocean as currents, waves, streams, eddies, bubbles, ripples, and the like«. ³⁸ Freya Mathews and Joseph Bracken, who both endorse panentheism, employ the language of systems theory; a self is a »system with a very special kind of goal, namely its own maintenance and self-perpetuation.« ³⁹ For Bracken, Ultimate Reality is a comprehensive system, in this technical sense, and is identified as the divine-life system, which includes the world and all creatures »as a sub-system within the higher-order system of the divine life«. ⁴⁰

This brings us to the theological implications of these variants of panpsychism and so to the main investigative question of this paper: can panpsychism aid panentheists in interpreting their two core metaphors in a way that demarcates their position from neighbouring theories of the God-world relationship? Although the two panentheistic slogans should ideally be held together they are treated somewhat separately in the two remaining sections of this paper. First, I focus on how micropsychist theories of combination (Aux4 + Aux6/Aux7) illuminate how the world might be God's body, and second I examine how cosmopsychist theories of individuation (Aux5 + Aux6/Aux7) may elucidate how one subject may be said to be ›in‹ another subject, perhaps as the world is ›in‹ God.

37 Brüntrup 2017.

38 Shani 2015: 389-437, 411-412.

39 Mathews 2003:48. Mathews 2010.

40 Bracken 2015: 219. Bracken is clear that the aim of its systems-orientated approach is to »eliminate any kind of dualism, even dualism between God and the world of creation« p. 224.

3. The World as God's Panpsychist Body

The first panentheistic slogan draws explicitly on philosophy of mind in claiming that ›the world is the body of God‹. There are as many ways to interpret this metaphor as there are positions in philosophy of mind. If God is an immaterial mind, and the world is a ›mindless‹ mechanical body over which God has direct and total control, then a classical theist could easily employ this metaphor to depict the ontological separation between God and the world, as well as God's total determination of all events.⁴¹ Yet, panentheists typically critique exactly this depiction of the mind-body, God-world relationships.⁴² The success for this metaphor hinges almost entirely upon whether the panentheist can specify a mind-body relationship capable of performing the interpretative heavy-lifting necessary to demarcate panentheism from neighbouring theological positions.⁴³

Western versions of panentheism have more recently turned to emergence theory to elucidate the metaphor of divine embodiment.⁴⁴ Emergence theory states that consciousness emerges from the complex arrangements of the physical body, such that consciousness supervenes upon (is determined by, or is at least ontologically dependent upon) the body. Probably the most well-known statement of »emergentist panentheism« is Philip Clayton's »*panentheistic analogy*«, which suggests that God acts in the world in a way analogous to how the emergent mind (whole) acts through the body (parts) as its physical substrate.⁴⁵

There have been, however, a number of critiques against employing emergence theory to interpret the panentheist's use of this metaphor. Niels Henrik Gregersen argues that, whilst the world as God's body may have been an attractive metaphor in antiquity, the rise of emergence theory in philosophy of mind makes this metaphor unsuitable since, »God would appear as an emergent reality arising out of natural processes rather than the other way around.«⁴⁶ Emily Thomas compares the emergentist panentheism of Clayton, Peacocke and Morowitz, unfavourably, with Samuel Alexander's emergentist theology by arguing that emergence theory is quite simply incompatible with the claim that the universe is ›in‹ God. If God is the emergent whole or resultant then it

41 T.J. Mawson even argues that »Classical Theism is committed to seeing the universe as God's body.« Mawson 2006: 171.

42 McFague 1993: 144-145, 154-155.

43 Ward 2004, 62-68; Barua 2010.

44 Leidenhag 2013, 978.

45 Clayton 1997: 258-59.

46 Gregersen 2004: 20.

can only be true to say that »deity is strictly contained ›in‹ the universe« and not the other way around.⁴⁷ In summary, as I have argued elsewhere, the use of emergence theory entails the prioritization of the material and the subordination of the immaterial, which is in tension with much philosophy of religion and forms of theism, including pantheism.⁴⁸ The unsuitability of emergence theory, in addition to a longstanding historical precedent, gives us good reason to turn to panpsychism instead.

Subject Panpsychism and Micropsychism (Aux1 + Aux4) give an account of the body as a society of subjects. If the world is a body in this sense, then the universe is a cosmic community, united by a shared relation to the whole/God. This seems congruent with pantheistic motivations towards a sacramental, ecological, and value-laden picture of the physical universe, and the rejection of inert, mechanistic views of materiality. An example of this approach is Hartshorne's statement that »The world consists of individuals, but the totality of individuals as a physical or spatial whole is God's body, the Soul of which is God.«⁴⁹ Yet, what relation the bodily community of subjects will bear to God on this panpsychist interpretation of pantheism will depend upon the type of combinatorial relation that is adopted, Aux6 or Aux7.

3.1 *Constitutive Micropsychism and God's Body*

If the micropsychist, subject panpsychist also adopts a constitutive relation (Aux1+ Aux4 + Aux6), then God will be the sum of the universe; all facts about God will be true in virtue of being true of some feature of the world. As such, God is constantly affected by the experiences and events in the world between creatures as a metaphysical necessity. Indeed, whilst ›God‹ would properly refer to the joint experience of the whole cosmic community, it would not be incorrect to refer to each subject as God in a derivative sense of participating in, even constituting, the divine body. This resonates with Lataster's celebration of pantheism for lacking »an authoritarian deity dictating commands from on high. Only the divine can tell us what to do, but we are the divine!«⁵⁰

47 Thomas 2016.

48 Leidenhag 2016.

49 Hartshorne 1984: 94.

50 Lataster & Bilimoria 2018: 52. Similarly, Gregersen ties Christian pantheism to degree Christology, where Christological revelation is not unique to the person Jesus of Nazareth. Freya Mathews goes so far as to suggest that on pantheism/panpsychism, »God with angels and burning bushes, the gods and goddess of Olympus and small hearth gods of Asia to Daoist immortals, fox fairies, vision lakes, tertons, dragons, and rainbow serpents« are all »different emanations of the same material substratum«, that is »imbued with possibilities of inspiration.« Mathews 2010: 234-35.

The problem for panentheism here is that a constitutive relation may be too strong, and so fail to demarcate panentheism from pantheism.⁵¹ Not only do God and the world share a single substance, but there are no facts about God that are not also true of the world as a whole.⁵²

3.2 *Non-constitutive Micropsychism and God's Body*

If the panentheist adopts Micropsychism, Subject Panpsychism, and Non-constitutive Panpsychism (Aux1 + Aux4 + Aux7), then the picture changes substantially. The world is still the body of God as a combined plurality of subjects or cosmic community, but God is not reducible to the sum of this plurality of subjects. As such, God may have properties, intentionality, experiences, or actions that are not true of individual organic subjects, nor true of the cosmic community as a whole. As such, the panentheists could now demarcate their position from pantheism and classical theism by claiming that, whilst God depends upon the world (*contra* classical theism), God also transcends the world (*contra* pantheism); there are true facts about God that are not true of the world, but all true facts about the world affect, and perhaps even effect, the very essence of God.

However, if the non-constitutive relation employed is the causal relation of emergence then on this model God again appears secondary and dependent upon the universe, but the universe does not appear dependent upon God. Panentheism would then become a version of emergent theism. This conclusion may not be exclusive to emergent panpsychism but may be a tendency within all varieties of micropsychism and (as argued above) traditional emergence, where the parts are taken as more fundamental than the whole. Therefore, a panentheist committed to divine creation/creativity of the world, to God's logical priority over the world, or even God's logically equality with the world, is more likely to find aid from cosmopsychism (Aux5) than micropsychism (Aux4).

51 Lataster stresses that many versions of panentheism hold that God and the world are the same substance, and in doing so classifies panentheism as a version of pantheism. Lataster 2014: 390-91, 392.

52 For more on pantheism and constitutive panpsychism, see Leidenhag 2018.

4. Panpsychism ›in‹ God

The second panentheist slogan, »that *the world exists within the Divine, although God is also more than the world*«, is captured in the very name ›pan-en-theism‹.⁵³ Whilst a panentheist could abandon all notion of divine embodiment, she cannot abandon the claim that ›all is in God‹ and still claim to be a pan-en-theist. Yet, as Gregersen writes, »the concept of panentheism is not stable in itself. The little word ›in‹ is the hinge of it all.«⁵⁴ It is widely recognised that this small word ›in‹, »must bear the brunt of the interpretative burden« since it alone »holds the position together and distinguishes it from its rivals.«⁵⁵ To achieve this, what is meant by ›the world being in God‹ must exclude, first, whatever it means for the world to be ›outside of God‹ (Classical Theism) and, second, ›identical to God‹ (pantheism).⁵⁶ Third, to say that ›the world is in God‹ should not be identical to the claim that ›God is in the world‹; the traditional doctrine of divine omnipresence or indwelling.⁵⁷ Whilst more controversial, this third constraint is nothing more than the logical consequence of the first two. For if what it means for the world to be in God is identical to traditional notions of omnipresence then the defining statement of panentheism is no different from a statement adhered to by most classical theists. Similarly, if ›God‹ and ›world‹ can dance around the word ›in‹ interchangeably then there is a risk of implying that these are synonymous concepts, as in many versions of pantheism.

In his constructive proposal to demarcate panentheism from neighbouring positions, R.T. Mullins suggests that panentheists should interpret the ›in‹ literally and not metaphorically. To do this, Mullins recommends that panentheists make metaphysical space and metaphysical time attributes of God—in Gregersen's words, God has »roominess«.⁵⁸ When this roomy God creates the universe, physical space and time are created within the divine metaphysical space and time. In this way, the universe and all its objects are literally ›in‹ God. This proposal, as Mullins intends, says something unique about God and so might be the beginnings of a successfully demarcated panentheism.⁵⁹

53 Clayton 2017: 1045

54 Gregersen 2004: 19.

55 Clayton 2004: 252; Peterson 2001: 396.

56 Göcke 2013: 63.

57 For example, Krishna's teaching in the *Bhagavad Gita* is often labelled as pantheistic and not panentheistic because he teaches that whilst »everyone abides in him, he does not abide in them.« Lataster & Bilimoria 2018: 52. This is contrary to Clayton 2010: 184.

58 Mullins 2016: 342-344; Gregersen 2004: 20.

59 Mullins 2016: 243.

However, it says nothing about God's relationship to the world and very little about the ontology of the world. As a result, Mullins' proposal abandons most of panentheism's motivators to be a more credibly scientific, relational, dynamic, view of God that can account for both the problem of evil and the reality of religious experience.⁶⁰ A clear demarcation that fails to motivate the position is only marginally helpful to the panentheist. The question is, can panpsychism provide an equally clear demarcation of panentheism as Mullins' proposal without sacrificing the motivating reasons to adopt panentheism in the first place?

Since, cosmopsychism (Aux5) starts with a single whole, which all finite organic subjects are contained within, it seems that the second panentheistic metaphor is a theological parallel to cosmopsychism. This retains both the literal reading of ›in‹ that Mullins argues for, but in both a mentalistic and spatial sense, since on panpsychism subjectivity and extension are fundamentally united (PCT3). As Uwe Meixner comments,

It seems natural to identify the transcendental subject with God. The immediate consequence of this idea is that *everything is in God* (*qua* being in His total experience, which, at the same time, is the totality of all experiences), whether as an experience, as a subject of experience, or as an object of experience.⁶¹

Meixner identifies this version of cosmopsychism (Husserlian idealism) with a panentheism that provides »a real sense of the inner, the utterly intimate omnipresence of God.«⁶² As such, this cosmopsychist notion of how the world is ›in‹ God, such that the minds of the world exist by virtue of being part of God's experience, also retains at least some of the main motivators of panentheism. It seems a promising start for the panentheist, therefore, to adopt PTC₁₋₄ with Aux5. However, the panentheist will still need to adopt a theory of individuation and apply either a constitutive or non-constitutive relation to her understanding of the God-world relationship.

4.1 *Constitutive Cosmopsychism*

If applied to panentheism, Philip Goff's grounding by subsumption would mean that organic subjects are constitutive aspects of the divine. This already

60 Panentheists need not be concerned with all these motivators, nor does their proposal need to be successful in achieving all these claims. But, I take it that a panentheist should be concerned with at least one of these in order to motivate her metaphysical claims in competition to competing models of God.

61 Meixner 2017: 399.

62 Ibid.

invokes the mereological language that literal interpretations of pantheism prefer. It also captures the idea that discrete, individual subjects and objects are both dependent upon God and manifestations of the divine being, not as symbolic representations as a classical theism may hold, but in a more direct and ontological fashion.⁶³ In a way similar to how Goff says that aspects of the cosmic consciousness can be distinguished epistemologically without ontological separation, Göcke describes pantheism as holding to a distinction between reality and ultimate reality »that is epistemologically needed for ultimate explanation, [but] cannot be a *substantial* ontological distinction between them for a variety of reasons.«⁶⁴

Goff argues that his grounding by subsumption model only applies to subject cosmopsychism (Aux1+Aux5), since aspects of unities (unlike parts of composites) cannot have any properties, which are not had by the whole within which they are subsumed; if aspects of the cosmos are subjects, then the cosmos must also be a subject. This may suit the personal view of God adopted by many (but not all) pantheists, demarcating it from, at least, impersonal versions of pantheism. He also suggests, however, that fundamental reality will not be a pure subject, but an impure subject with both experiential and non-experiential aspects (consciousness+).⁶⁵ Although Goff cannot tell us what exactly consciousness+ consists in, grounding by subsumption may yet tell us some things about the cosmic-subject/God. For example, the cosmic subject must be aware of all the experiences and first-person perspectives that are contained within it as partial aspects, otherwise these partial aspects would have properties not had by the cosmic subject. To be clear, the cosmic subject does not know *about* the experiences of finite subjects in a third- or second-person kind of knowledge, as is the case in some definitions of omniscience and omnipresence in classical theism, but the cosmic subject experiences them as its own, in an unmediated first-person way. Indeed, my experiences just are the experiences of God in the partial aspect of God that is ›me‹. Since my experiences are grounded in God's experiences, there can be no separation between how I feel and how God feels.

We might compare this constitutive cosmopsychism to Linda Zagzebski's proposal to add ›omnisubjectivity‹ as a divine attribute within classical theism. She argues that perfect knowledge of subjects and their first-person experiences, such that God is present with creatures in their experiences, is a direct implication of the classical theists' commitment to omnipresence, omniscience

63 Clayton 2010: 187-190.

64 Göcke 2017: 6.

65 Goff 2017b: 230.

and omnipotence.⁶⁶ Zagzebski proposes that an omnisubjective God maximally empathizes with all the conscious first-person states of creaturely subjects. She contrasts her proposal with a constitutive relation between the divine consciousness and human subjects for three reasons. Her first reason is that if the »One conscious self (God) has another conscious self (you) as a part.« Then, »[t]he self you thought you were is not a distinct self.«⁶⁷ This alone may not concern panentheists or panpsychists, who could argue that we must deflate our notions of selfhood away from autonomous or fundamental unities. Second, Zagzebski points out the repercussions for relationality, since »if I am simply a part of God, I lose much of the point of *addressing* God as a distinct person.«⁶⁸ There can be no second-personal I-Thou relationship in a whole-part constitutive relation; this seems to me a serious problem for panentheists who claim to have a highly relational view of God. Third, Zagzebski defends her own view from The Moral Objection, which worries that if God empathizes with humanity then immoral dispositions and intentions are included into the life of God. Although Zagzebski applauds Charles Hartshorne sensitivity to the importance of divine empathy, she cites his understanding of the world as the body of God as incurring the full force of The Moral Objection, and thus departing from the tradition on the issue of absolute divine goodness and holiness.⁶⁹ This is a clear example of how the type of relation between God and the world has concrete implications for religious practice and ideas of who God is.

As an asymmetrical relation, grounding by subsumption may appear to demarcate this version of cosmopsychist panentheism from pantheism; since the world would be grounded in God (by subsumption), but God would not be grounded in the world and thus it seems that God and the world cannot be strictly identical. However, this demarcation fails. For whilst it is true that God bears an asymmetrical relation to organic or finite subjects (such as human beings), God does not bear such an asymmetrical relation to the world (universe or multiverse) as a whole. Indeed, a constitutive relation means that the cosmic subject is *not* more than the world, but is just the sum of its parts; the total consciousness+ in the world when it is not individuated.⁷⁰ The world as a whole is not a partial aspect of God, but simply is God. Goff considers this a problem for theological appropriations of his theory of mind. He comments,

66 Zagzebski 2013: 10-25.

67 Zagzebski 2013: 24.

68 Ibid.

69 Ward 2004: 70.

70 Leidenhag 2018.

Cosmopsychism does not entail pantheism. We need not think of the universe as a supremely intelligent rational agent.... It is more plausible to think that the consciousness of the universe is simply a mess.⁷¹

Many pantheists will, justly, complain that Goff's depiction of their deity as »a supremely intelligent rational agent« is a mischaracterisation. However, Goff's assumption that his position is closest to some form of pantheism and his warning that any cosmic deity resulting from his philosophy of mind will lack mental (rational, emotional, experiential, violation) coherence or clarity should be of concern to pantheists.

4.2 *Pantheism and Non-constitutive Cosmopsychism*

The problem of a ›messy‹ God is avoided by a cosmopsychist pantheism that adopts the non-constitutive model of individuation (Aux7). The most common example of a non-constitutive relation is the contingent and causal relation described in emergence theory. When combined with cosmopsychism this becomes something like a reverse emergence theory, where the whole system (›the ocean‹) logically precedes and causes the parts (sub-systems or ›eddies‹) to endure semi-independently for a time. Unlike emergent pantheism or emergent panpsychism, the adoption of cosmopsychism buttresses this version of panpsychism from the previous criticisms. If the pantheist were to adopt a non-constitutive cosmopsychism (Aux5 + Aux7) they would still be able to claim that God is logically prior to and the causal ground of all other subjects, whilst also being of one substance with all finite beings. The world is a contingent, rather than a necessary, aspect of God.

The non-constitutive relation means that the cosmic consciousness is more than the sum of its partial aspects. Therefore, the cosmic substrate, the divine ocean of consciousness, need not experience all (morally problematic) finite intentions, thoughts, emotions as its own. Indeed, the fundamental level of mentality need not be personal or a subject at all. That is, a non-constitutive relation (Aux7) is compatible with subject panpsychism (Aux1), panexperientialism (Aux2) or panprotopsychism (Aux 3), in a way grounding by subsumption was not. Therefore, a non-constitutive cosmopsychism allows the pantheist to adopt either a personal, impersonal or more-than-personal view of God. The demarcation between pantheism and pantheism is upheld by the contingent causal relation between God and the subjects/objects we call ›the world‹. In terms of holding together agency at both the cosmic-divine level and the organic level, this position gives no immediate relief to the problems

71 Goff 2017b: 246.

of epiphenomenalism and overdetermination that challenge ontologies with fundamental agents existing on multiple levels, but this is not a unique or defeating problem for non-constitutive cosmopsychism/panentheism.⁷²

This non-constitutive relation between God and the world means that there is a logically possible state of affairs where God, as the cosmic consciousness, was the only consciousness in existence and none of the finite objects and subjects of the world were yet to individuate themselves from the divine substance or consciousness. What we may have in a non-constitutive cosmopsychist interpretation of panentheism is an origin of finite subjects/objects through emanation from the divine substance; creation *ex deo*, not creation *ex nihilo*. Contrary to classical theism, this emanation not only takes place within the substance of God, rather than from absolute nothingness, but individuation results from a kind of contingent law or principle of the divine being itself, rather than an act of the divine will. This corresponds with a number of statements from panentheists that emanation implies that God is »bodying [the world] forth, generating all life from her being« and that creation is »a self-transformation of the divine being«.⁷³

5. Conclusion

This paper has explored whether panpsychism can illuminate the two panentheistic slogans in such a way that panentheism can be clearly demarcated from neighbouring positions. Whilst panpsychism may be combined with any model of God, panpsychism's account of the mind-body relation and fundamental-organic consciousness relation do seem to provide a framework for interpreting the panentheists metaphors in a distinctive manner. This is a promising start, but further work will be needed to develop this into a more thorough demarcation and version of panentheism. Since evocatively powerful ambiguities have plagued panentheism in the past, I have employed panpsychism's auxiliary theses in addition to the core panpsychist theses to try and make this discussion as specific and concrete as possible. It is clear from the resulting analysis that these auxiliaries make a great deal of difference to the interpretation of panentheism's core metaphors. Future scholars should keep these particularities in mind when exploring or asserting any correspondence between panpsychism and panentheism. In the end, a cosmopsychism that posits a non-constitutive relation between the cosmic consciousness and

72 Chalmers 2017b: 194.

73 McFague 1993: 152; Göcke 2017: 7.

organic subjects seems to mirror the kind of relationship between God and the world posited by panentheists most faithfully. However, there is much more to be done on this and panpsychists themselves are at no agreement concerning the possibility of such individuation; panentheists will need to pay attention to this ongoing debate. For now, it seems that there may be a way of employing panpsychism for the demarcation of panentheism, but as to whether panentheism is a plausible or desirable theology is a separate question and one I will leave panentheists to argue for.

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