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PANPSYCHISM AND MIND-DUST

by

John Heath Hamilton

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of Mississippi
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Philosophy and Religion

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ABSTRACT

It is only recently that panpsychism has emerged as a viable position in philosophy of mind and metaphysics. As such, the exploration and defense of it is not yet on par with some competing views. The current project is a step towards a remedy to this unfortunate state of affairs. It concerns one of the most important objections to the view, which I label the ‘mind-dust’ objection in homage to William James. It is essentially the conceptual difficulty of how proto-experiential being at the micro-level is supposed to ‘sum’ in a way that forms the consciousness with which we are intimately aware. I argue that the objection is more forceful than some suppose, and attempt to explicate a way around it. A possible route to circumvent the problem, I explain, is to develop a suggestion made by Grover Maxwell almost forty years ago. The insight is to conceive of proto-experiences not as particles or bits but as fields of influence. The end result is a position that looks in many ways similar to the epistemic neutral monism of Bertrand Russell, but is also a novel version of panpsychism. The suggestion is simply this: it might be the case that we should think of the world as inherently and ontologically qualitative in nature. I call this resultant position panqualiaism and hope that it represents a step forward.

For
My Parents,
Grandparents,
And
Rachael

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A special kind of thanks is owed to the people to whom this thesis is dedicated. All have shown me unconditional love and support throughout the project. I am grateful for my parents' ready acceptance of a son whose goals will take him far from home. Along similar lines, I am thankful for my grandparents' forgiveness of a grandson who sometimes forgets to call. Although I owe many things to Rachael, the thing I am most grateful of is sticking by me through both the lows and highs. I often feel undeserving of them all.

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INTRODUCTION

“I place no extreme obligation of attentiveness on my readers; I hope instead for those who read as I do, seeking what they can learn from, make use of, transform for their own purposes. Much as they wanted to be understood accurately, the philosophers of the past would have preferred this response, I think, to having their views meticulously and sympathetically stated in all parts and relations. The respect they paid their predecessors was philosophy, not scholarship.” — Robert Nozick, *Philosophical Explanations*¹

The protagonist of this tale is panpsychism. She is not only a proposed answer to the mind-body problem, but a structural metaphysic that guides our inquiry into the nature of reality. The belief that lies at the heart of panpsychism, that experience is in some way ubiquitous, has been around for a long time. An argument can be made for Aristotle holding a similar intuition, but it at least traces back to Spinoza.² The contemporary literature, however, is not so respecting of such a view. Opinions usually range from mere indifference to accusations of lunacy. Current unpopularity, though, is no exclusionary criterion, and especially not with regards to a position that has a rich historical grounding.

Every good story needs an antagonist. Like the protagonist, it is not the usual person but an idea. The antagonist at the heart of my inquiries has several different labels, such as the ‘grain problem’³ or ‘combination problem’⁴. I refer to it as the ‘mind-dust objection’ to pay

¹ Nozick (1981), p. 8.

² I know of no way to comprehend Aristotle’s conception of active mind as the intelligibility of the world itself (or as “a positive state like light” that endures eternally) other than by relating it to this intuition. To explain briefly, mind has the potential to become all things because experiential being or ‘understanding’ pervades all of reality. I’ll return to this point later. See the *De Anima*, 430a15-25.

³ Maxwell, (1978), 351.

⁴ Chalmers, (2010), 136.

homage to William James, perhaps its most forceful champion.⁵ It is a conceptual problem that arises when one holds two basic premises: (1) our experience is or at least appears to be unified, smooth, and not fragmented; (2) there are simpler entities that compose our experience. The issue, then, is the conceptual difficulty of how something so apparently unified could actually be a non-unified compound. It has at least two formulations, being a problem for both identity theories and panpsychisms. The question for identity theorists is: how can the combined electro-chemical firing of neuronal and glial cells in the brain produce conscious experience that appears unified to the experiencer? The corollary question for panpsychists is: how could micro or proto-experiential phenomena sum to form the macro-level unified experiences with which we are normally acquainted?

Grover Maxwell provided the beginnings of a solution more than thirty years ago. In “Rigid Designators and Mind-Brain Identity” he takes a stab at his identity theory’s supposed ‘grain problem’.⁶ His answer to the problem is twofold, containing both a negative and positive proposal. The negative proposal begins with a simple observation, made by Bertrand Russell⁷ before him and Daniel Stoljar⁸ since: our knowledge of the ‘physical’ is only rudimentary, as we are mostly (or completely) ignorant of its intrinsic nature and instead only have knowledge of its structural or dispositional properties.

Maxwell suggests that the ‘grain’ or ‘mind-dust’ problem results from our ignorance of the physical. We simply do not know enough about it to assert that it is impossible for mental states to just be physical states. The positive proposal pushes the observation further:

Even within the bounds of present physical theory, we might consider a fanciful but logically coherent possibility. Fields-electrical, magnetic, or gravitational-and

⁵ James, (1890), 145-182.

⁶ Maxwell, (1978), 351.

⁷ Russell, (1927), 390.

⁸ Stoljar, (2006b), 170.

fluctuations in fields are, *as far as their structures are concerned*, viable candidates for identification with (some kinds of) mental states or mental events.⁹

Identity theory is thus quite adaptable, since the kind of physical event need not be specified in order for the identity relation to hold.

Maxwell does not linger upon his suggestion of considering ‘fields’ for long. It seems he merely wanted to show that there are alternatives to the standard brain-event model of identification. I, however, see more merit in the idea. Though Maxwell offers up the idea in the hopes of finding a solution for the identity theorist’s problem, I submit that it can be manipulated to work for the panpsychist as well. My suggestion, derived from Maxwell’s, is simple: if the assumption that micro or proto experiential entities behave in the same way that physical entities do (or that physical entities essentially or always behave as particles) is abandoned, then the mind-dust objection loses much of its force. This is because the objection’s power is rooted in the common conception of how physical compounds operate: as ‘bits’ or ‘atoms’. If experiential being both (a) exists as something more akin to fields than particles and (b) a form of panpsychism can be outlined that is able to accept such a thing, then panpsychism may yet escape the mind-dust objection.¹⁰

My overall project is an attempt to further explain and defend both (a) and (b). It begins with an explanation of how I understand panpsychism in Chapter I. Chapter II provides a quick overview of some positions that influence my own, and acknowledges what I borrow from them. Chapter III lays out the mind-dust objection as explained by both James and some contemporary authors. Chapter IV is an historical reconstruction of Bertrand Russell’s neutral monism, which

⁹ Maxwell, (1978), 351.

¹⁰ I do not yet want to comment on whether or not experiential properties are the intrinsic properties of physical things, for the panpsychist does not necessarily need to hold this. If they are, then one would need to show that physical entities really behave as fields instead of atoms. If they are not, then an argument not dependent upon physical theory would be needed.

provides the framework for the version of panpsychism I develop. In Chapter V I develop a novel version of panpsychism based upon Maxwell's suggestion. In Chapter VI, I explain why my view circumvents the mind-dust objection. Chapter VI, and the whole project, concludes with some remarks about the pros and cons of my position.

CHAPTER I

The immediate obstacle to the goal of defending (a) and (b) is the subject of this first chapter. The minimal commitments for holding panpsychism must first be elucidated before any adventurous claims are undertaken. The existence of many different versions of panpsychism suggests that I cannot simply rely on one author's take.¹¹ My task is instead to find the most basic commonalities between the views and eliminate all but the necessary and sufficient conditions for something to carry the label 'panpsychism'. In the next section, I state and explain three commitments that I argue are the minimal commitments of any panpsychism.

Without further ado, my list of minimal commitments and what I mean by them are as follows:

1. Monism is true.
2. There is a symmetrical relationship between the experiential and non-experiential.
3. Experiential being is ubiquitous.

§ 1 Monism

The minimal panpsychist is a monist. I understand monism to mean the following: there is some level of reality x such that all things existing at x are the same kind of thing. If one is committed to a metaphysically fundamental level of reality, x may obtain at the fundamental level or one higher up the ladder of complexity. Even if one does not accept the notion of a fundamental

¹¹ For instance, Galen Strawson (2006b) delineates at least four different kinds of panpsychism that one might hold.

level or ‘ultimates’ (understood as entities which ultimately compose everything in existence), one may still be a monist as long as x obtains at some level.

The following question immediately arises: Does the kind of monism matter? I think that it does, and so will provide an example to show why. Though there are other kinds of monism, I am concerned with the two types most easily able to support panpsychism: neutral and ‘both’ monism. I am using ‘both monism’ to refer to the position that Strawson calls “Equal-Status Fundamental-Duality Monism” for brevity’s sake.

A neutral monism similar to the type described by Bertrand Russell is what I have in mind.¹² Although in Chapter IV I provide an alternative reading of Russell’s neutral monism, I will here present the usual take. The basic picture is simply that whatever ultimately composes reality has a neutral nature in and of itself, and can therefore be *either physical or mental*. Something more than a one-sentence sketch is needed for clarity’s sake, however. There is strong evidence that Russell did not understand his view as a neutral monism in his later work, but historical scholarship is not my primary concern here.¹³ I thus restrict my discussion to the admirably lucid account of neutral monism given in *The Analysis of Matter*.

Chapter XXXVII, entitled “Physics and Neutral Monism”, is the culmination of Russell’s analysis of physics and what it means for our understanding of the world. He acknowledges there that some aspects of his view give off the air of idealism whereas others have a hint of materialism, but makes the case that it differs from both in important respects:

Both materialism and idealism have been guilty, unconsciously and in spite of explicit disavowals, of a confusion in their imaginative picture of matter. They have thought of the matter in the external world as being represented by their

¹² I focus upon Bertrand Russell because he is probably the most often cited in the literature on panpsychism. Most authors with whom I am familiar indicate Russell as the source for their understanding of neutral monism. See Chalmers (2010), Strawson (2006a), and Stoljar (2006a).

¹³ For those interested in this historical debate, I recommend Landini (2011), pp. 289-305.

percepts when they see and touch, whereas these percepts are really part of the matter of the percipient's brain.¹⁴

Russell is here accusing both idealists and materialists of a philosophical error rooted in a misunderstanding about perception. The point is that those inclined towards both materialism and idealism mistakenly assume that the representations we have of matter accurately portray its nature in and of itself. There is at least one important implication if Russell is correct. If the assumption that Russell pinpoints is done away with, we are left with the conclusion that we are deeply ignorant with regards to the actual nature of the material world.

The specific mistake of both the materialist and idealist is to think of matter as billiard-ball type little bits.¹⁵ The advent of both quantum and relativistic physics suggests to Russell that we must give up this antiquated view of matter. He instead proposes that we consider *events* to be the fundamental constituents of the world. Since there is no prima facie reason to suppose that events cannot sometimes be mental in nature, then our world that seems to be mainly composed of physical events may also contain mental events. The picture then, to simplify, is just that: reality is composed of events, with some being mental in nature and some being physical.¹⁶

I wish to contrast neutral monism with what I term 'both' monism, but there are many similarities between them.¹⁷ The 'both' monist takes seriously Russell's charge that our portrait of reality is often unimaginative. It arguably takes it more seriously than neutral monism, as it revises not only our conception of what physics is but also pushes the boundaries of metaphysics.

¹⁴ Russell, (1927), 382.

¹⁵ For a good discussion of what recognizing this point means, see Strawson (1999).

¹⁶ I mean the term 'physical' in the same way as Stoljar (2001) describes: as having two conceptions. I discuss the details and implications of this in Chapter II.

¹⁷ Strawson (2006b) draws inspiration from Spinoza when writing about 'both' monism. For a magnificent historical discussion on the matter see Jonathan Bennett (2001), pp. 112-121. Essentially, he interprets Spinoza as a property/concept dualist where both properties/concepts (thought and extension) obtain in a single substance ('Nature' or 'God').

The difference between them is straightforward: while neutral monism posits ultimates that can be *either* experiential *or* non-experiential, both monism holds that ultimates are *both experiential and non-experiential*. It is vital to note that the difference is specifically concerned with intrinsic natures. A neutral monist could conceivably hold, for example, that the ultimates that compose our world are events and that all of them are both experiential and non-experiential. This would probably work out in many ways the same as a both monism. The deciding factor between them then is a question about fundamental metaphysics, namely: can ultimates be said to have a dual nature, or must they be in some sense neutral?

An answer to the question over what kind of monist to be, then, is essential for a fully worked out panpsychism. It is not necessary to pick between the two I have discussed here, even though most versions do. My point here is merely to show that specifying what exactly one means by ‘monism’ cannot be left undone. It is also to note that competing versions of panpsychism may appear different but build upon the same kinds of assumptions.

§ 2 Symmetry

The second commitment to symmetry requires a bit more explanation, as many will find it the most contentious. I must first give a satisfactory account of what I mean by the terms “experiential” and “non-experiential”. One way to accomplish this involves explaining what is meant by non-experiential and then showing that the experiential is what the non-experiential is not. This move is no doubt motivated by the current trend of taking physicalism as a default position. It is counterintuitive, however, because it begins by assuming things foreign to us, as we seemingly have no direct apprehension of non-experiential things. Many have denied this

claim, but many have also supported it. I cannot here argue for it, but instead merely use it as a starting point.¹⁸

Before beginning the discussion of experiential and non-experiential, I cannot help but give a reason for not using the more common terms “mental/conscious” and “physical/material”. Essentially, the vagueness associated with these terms worries me. There is always the concern that they pick out things that I do not want them to. For instance, the vagueness of the term “physical” makes it possible that experiences are physical given an object-based conception of the physical (see footnote 15). While this might be true, it does not help my purpose. I take seriously the idea that unclear terms might be at the root of many problems and so feel deeply uneasy about such cases. There is of course a good chance that my preferred distinction fares no better or worse, but I’ll accept the risk.

While I cannot provide a list of the qualities that exhaustively describes the character of experience, I do mean the term to capture an extensive range. Galen Strawson states the sentiment well in *Mental Reality*:

When people talk of experience, they often have sensations and perceptions primarily in mind. But thinking a thought or suddenly remembering something or realizing that the interval between the perfect squares increases by 2 is as much of an experience as feeling pain when one has burnt one’s finger or seeing a raven flying low over bracken. So I will not speak of thoughts *or* experiences, opposing them in the way that some do. Episodes of conscious thought are experiential episodes. Experience is as much cognitive as sensory. It includes everything a bat or a newborn baby can feel, and everything a great mathematician can experience in thinking.¹⁹

I find this description to be essentially correct, as abstract thought about logic is just as much an experience as finding furniture in the dark with one’s tibia. This, however, has so far been only a discussion of what kinds of experiences one may have. There is also the matter of what

¹⁸ Strawson, in the introduction to *Real Materialism and Other Essays* (2008), gives a short discussion of this point.

¹⁹ Strawson, (1994), 3.

experience itself is like. This question, I think, is one of the most important for the panpsychist to answer: What is the core nature of all experience and not just our own? What one holds to be the essential character of all experience will determine the structure of one's panpsychism.²⁰

Although it doesn't even come close to exhausting the list of the characteristics of experience, I'll stick with just one: experiences at the human level are subjective. It is a *necessary* but possibly not *sufficient* condition for something to be experiential to humans.²¹ Subjectivity is at least one of the characteristics that make experience unique. It also seems to be fairly accepted (at least among non-reductivists) that it is indeed a characteristic of experience. It additionally has the virtue of being basic enough to apply to all types of experiences that one can have.

What I mean by subjective is captured by Thomas Nagel when he says that, "A feature of experience is subjective if it can in principle be fully understood from one *type* of point of view: that of a being like the one having the experience, or at least like it in the relative modality."²² This is the so-called 'what-it's-like' characteristic of experience; meaning that for any given experiential state *n*, there is something it is like to be in *n*. This subjectivity cannot in principle be captured by a third-person description.

Non-experiential, then, may tentatively refer to all things that do not have a subjective component. This could just pick out what is normally meant by 'physical', or could include more. What it actually does end up referencing is not as important as the following point though.

²⁰ For instance, one might hold that qualia are the most fundamental experiential phenomena from which the other aspects (such as intentionality, subjectivity, etc.) derive. This position might be more accurately labeled as a *panqualiaism*, which would differentiate it from other possibilities such as *pansubjectivism*. The traditional label of *panpsychism* might therefore best be reserved for the view that these separate aspects of experience come as a package deal, meaning that they are separable in thought but not ontologically.

²¹ As noted in footnote 17, one might hold that what truly makes experience unique are qualia and that subjectivity emerges from them at higher levels of reality. This is highly speculative and far beyond the scope of the current paper, though I plan to give it some thought in the future. For my purposes here, I limit myself to talking about the character of the type of experience we are most intimately aware of: our own.

²² Nagel, (1979), 188.

The scope of things that ‘non-experiential’ refers to will shrink if more conditions are added, but it cannot shrink to emptiness. If it does, then idealism is true and the panpsychist’s position is defeated. This is of course possible, but outside of my concern. Once again, the goal in this section is to show what the panpsychist *needs* to say instead of arguing for the view. She (the panpsychist) needs to hold that neither the experiential nor the non-experiential category is empty.

Claiming that the two categories are not empty is, however, not enough. The minimal panpsychist must hold that the relationship between the two categories be symmetrical, which is my way of saying that one cannot be explained in terms of the other. This is not merely an epistemic claim about the limits of our ability to understand the two. The epistemic limit is in place because it is *in principle* impossible to explain one in terms of the other, due to them being metaphysically distinct. Their natures are such that there is no level of reality where they can be said to be metaphysically identical.

Both idealism and physicalism²³ are ruled out by this commitment, as they hold that at some level one category is explained in terms of or composed of the things in the other. And traditional dualisms are excluded by commitment (1). How, then, should one understand such a view that defies obvious classification? There seems to be a sense in which panpsychism (at least the minimal variety) has to be some kind of dualistic monism that carves a middle path in between the other options. Deciding what kind of monism fits this requirement is key.

²³ Galen Strawson would not agree that physicalism is ruled out. He points out in several places that we have no reason to believe that physical things are necessarily non-experiential, mainly due to our profound ignorance of their intrinsic nature. I have no problem with this. I simply do not see why he insists upon calling his position a physicalism. I find that almost everyone else who claims to be a physicalist wants to deny the possibility of fundamental mentality. This is, I think, one of the foundational claims of physicalism that is often not made explicit. In any case, the decision is the physicalist’s on whether or not to accept a principle of ‘no fundamental mentality’. If they accept such a principle, most versions of panpsychism would be ruled out. If they do not accept it, then panpsychism may be compatible with their view. My position on this is opposed to Jonathan Dorsey’s (2011), and it is also discussed in Stoljar (2006a).

Something else is ruled out by this commitment that deserves to be mentioned. A fundamental symmetry directly implies non-emergence. If the symmetrical relationship holds down to the most fundamental level of reality, then there is no chance of the experiential emerging from the non-experiential or vice versa. This will of course need to be justified by the minimal panpsychist by arguing against both brute and epistemic emergence.

I understand brute or metaphysical emergence to be the process of a novel entity emerging from a complex system that is metaphysically distinct from the system that gives rise to it. I agree with Strawson that this would amount to allowing magic into our philosophical picture of the world, mainly because it rules out nothing.²⁴ If new properties or things could emerge metaphysically out of any sufficiently complex system, then we would have no way of understanding these emergences and allow miracles into our worldview. Our understanding of the world at present, both philosophically and scientifically, gives us little reason to propose that such miracles obtain. Even if it turns out that brute emergence does occur, it does us no good to begin under the assumption that it does. We should only accept such a thing in the face of a genuinely impassible epistemic barrier; otherwise, it is tantamount to admitting defeat.

It is important to note that I am here not attempting to refute through argument brute emergence. I am merely giving what I think are reasons to set it aside as an unthreatening possibility, which could be used by anyone and not just a panpsychist. What the minimal panpsychist will have to reject more convincingly is the idea of epistemic emergence. While it seems unlikely that the miraculous metaphysical emergence of the experiential from the non-experiential or vice-versa is a threatening explanation for the panpsychist, the idea that the experiential emerges from the non-experiential and we are just ignorant of how seems to put the position in jeopardy.

²⁴ Strawson, (2006a), 18.

Once again, the symmetry between the experiential and non-experiential needs to hold at all levels in which they both obtain. The possibility that our limited faculties fool us into thinking that one cannot come from the other is perhaps the panpsychist's most serious threat. She needs to demonstrate that we know enough about the experiential and non-experiential to reasonably eliminate such a possibility, and thereby fortify commitment (2).

§ 3 Ubiquity

The term panpsychism itself implies a principle of ubiquity. Such a principle is the manifestation of the intuition that experience in some way pervades the world, and has been around for a long time. It is the simplest of my minimal commitments and also what opponents find most unpalatable. I will state my ubiquity principle as the following: there is at least one level of reality n such that all things existing at n are in some way experiential. This leaves open the possibility that there are levels of reality where experiential being does not obtain, which the symmetry principle does not rule out. The non-existence of experience at one level does not directly imply that it can be explained in non-experiential terms, as there could always be a more fundamental level where experiential being does obtain.

Some may consider my version of the ubiquity principle to be too weak. It certainly might be that a stronger one is necessary for the view to work. Once again, though, the goal here is only to unearth minimal commitments. Even in its weakest form, the ubiquity principle separates panpsychism from other options and is perhaps its most distinctive characteristic.

CHAPTER II

The position outlined in Chapter I is what I am referring to when the terms ‘panpsychism’ or ‘minimal panpsychism’ crop up in the remainder of the project. It is important, however, to discuss how my take on the view compares with its competitors. I also think it respectful to acknowledge borrowed ideas. In this Section I briefly consider panpsychism and other relevant insights as different authors have written about them. The analysis is not extensive, but only covers the essential points of relevance. The exposition is restricted to five influential philosophers relative to my thoughts: Galen Strawson, Thomas Nagel, Grover Maxwell, Daniel Stoljar, and Aristotle. Though he certainly deserves a place in this list, I purposefully leave out Bertrand Russell. This is because the discussion of his work is important enough to warrant an entire chapter devoted to it.

The ordering of my list is purposive in that it indicates the philosophers’ strength of allegiance with panpsychism. Strawson not only heartily adopts it, but blasphemously argues that any realistic physicalist must as well. Nagel argues for something like it in several places, but usually remains neutral.²⁵ Maxwell ultimately vies for a physicalist identity theory, but his specific version has interesting parallels with Strawson’s position. Stoljar rejects panpsychism, though I include him because his work on physicalism greatly helps the overall debate. The curveball is Aristotle, and I save it for my last pitch. I do not intend to make an interpretative

²⁵ Nagel has the rare ability to provide masterful discussion of views without actually labeling himself. He comes closest to positively arguing for panpsychism, as far as I know, in his (1979) and (1986). Most of my discussion pulls from these two texts.

claim about how best to view Aristotle's conception of mind. Instead, I point out that some of the insights and arguments that lead one toward panpsychism date to him. The chapter ends with some summarizing comments on which aspects of the discussed views I borrow.

§ 1 Strawson

Galen Strawson has traveled further down the road that leads to a fully worked-out panpsychism than most. In the reply to commentators of "Realistic Monism: Why Physicalism Entails Panpsychism", he lists and briefly explains 41 metaphysical and epistemic theses that constitute the framework of his view.²⁶ I take this as being the closest to a definitive statement of his view that he has given. I seek only to describe the basic picture and theses I directly use, and so will not come close to covering them all.

The first paragraph of "Realistic Monism" states the position in a nutshell:

I take physicalism to be the view that every real, concrete phenomenon in the universe is... physical. It is a view about the actual universe, and I am going to assume that it is true. For the purposes of this paper I will equate 'concrete' with 'spatio-temporally (or at least temporally) located', and I will use 'phenomenon' as a completely general word for any sort of existent. Plainly all mental goings on are concrete phenomena.²⁷

To quickly summarize, physicalism (and thus monism) is assumed true and therefore mental events are physical. Strawson, however, does not mean what most other physicalists do by this claim.

To illustrate Strawson's attempt at building a new kind of physicalism, I offer some of his theses construed as an argument:

[1] There is a fundamental sense in which there is only one kind of stuff in reality

[3] There is experiential reality or being

²⁶ Strawson (2006b), 222-223.

²⁷ Strawson (2008), 3.

- [6] There is physical reality or being
- [7] All reality is either experiential or physical
- [8] There is only one kind of stuff. It has experiential reality and physical reality and no other kind of reality
- [17] There is only physical reality²⁸

These theses are aided by others, but they are a good representative sample of where Strawson intends to go. He lists a number of conclusions that can be drawn from them:

- [18] All experiential being is physical being (*Experiential Physicalism*)
- [19] All physical being involves experiential being (*Weak Panpsychism*)
- [20] All physical being is experiential being (*Pure Panpsychism*)
- [21] At least some ultimates are experience-involving (*Micropsychism*)
- [36] Reality is substantially single. All reality is experiential and all reality is non-experiential. Experiential and non-experiential being exist in such a way that neither can be said to be based in or realized by or in any way asymmetrically dependent on the other. (*Equal-Status Fundamental-Duality Monism*)²⁹

It is not clear to me that Strawson aligns definitively with any one of these positions. He expresses a fondness for [36], but only comments that it “may very well be a truth beyond our understanding” instead of arguing for it directly.

For my part, I do not think that Strawson’s goal was ever to reveal the truth of one option and *ipso facto* deny the others. Instead, he seems only to urge that *some* form of panpsychism must be correct while leaving it up to future generations to decide which one. His purpose for listing all the possibilities he can conceive of is twofold, and the same as mine: to clarify what sort of implications the term ‘panpsychism’ might have and to find a way to differentiate

²⁸ Strawson (2006b), 222.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 222. I have kept Strawson’s enumeration intact for referential purposes.

between authors who all label themselves panpsychists. I often find his labels helpful and make use of them on occasion.

If I must ascribe a specific view to Strawson, however, I'd put my money on a combination of [17] and [36]. In other words, he holds onto an equal-status fundamental-duality monism where all things in reality are physical and all physical things are both experiential and non-experiential. This implies that he is not a neutral monist and denies the possibility of emergence. Conveniently enough for my reading, he directly dismisses both.

On most days of the week, I think that Strawson is probably correct. However, I do not think that one needs to agree with him in order to be a panpsychist. It should be fairly obvious that my 'minimal panpsychism' is essentially trying to capture [36] in more detailed form. It is the closest anyone has come to pinning down the thesis that most panpsychists are striving towards. The main difference between my view and his, then, is the commitment to physicalism. I have no specific hostility towards physicalism, but simply think it an unnecessary addition to panpsychism. As covertly noted in a footnote already, I understand physicalism to include a 'no fundamental mentality' constraint. This means that at the fundamental level of reality, there is nothing that resembles consciousness or mentality. I do not claim that the position of physicalism necessarily holds this constraint, but instead think that most philosophers who argue for physicalism at least implicitly accept it. It is simply a convenient and clear way of drawing the taxonomy.

§ 2 Nagel

Thomas Nagel does not often label himself with a position in any given area within philosophy. This is not some sign of weakness but the mark of a brilliant mind. He, more so than most, fully appreciates just how difficult philosophical problems are and understands that certainty of

opinion is more often a sign of ineptitude than expertise. The strategy he favors is to argue for modest claims and only afterward attempt to understand where the arguments have led him.

Nagel's approach toward panpsychism follows this general schema: he reaches it in a negative way by showing that it is the only thing left after one accepts a few basic positions. By his rendering, panpsychism "appears to follow from a few simple premises, each of which is more plausible than its denial, though not perhaps more plausible than the denial of panpsychism."³⁰ They are the following:

1. *Material composition*: no constituents besides matter are needed to compose a living organism.
2. *Nonreductionism*: mental states are neither physical properties of an organism nor are they entailed by any physical properties.
3. *Realism*: mental states are actual and real properties of an organism.
4. *Nonemergence*: complex systems, such as an organism, do not have any truly emergent properties as emergence is only an epistemic principle of ignorance.

Panpsychism, for Nagel, is the position that one arrives at when one accepts all four of these.

This approach, I think, gives significant insight into how he understands it.

Nagel's explanation of what opposition to reductionism entails is quite different from both Strawson's and mine. He asserts that non-reductionism means mental states must be non-physical, which is in obvious conflict with Strawson's adherence to physicalism. The disagreement may only be superficial or terminological, however, depending upon what Nagel means by 'physical'. For my part, I do not think that one needs to put a dog in the 'physicalism' race in order to be a panpsychist. The key, instead, is to preserve non-reductionism in its purest form by holding both that mental or experiential phenomena cannot be reduced to non-experiential phenomena and vice versa.

³⁰ Nagel (1979), 181.

Assuming that Nagel's term 'matter' can refer to things that have both experiential and non-experiential qualities, then I have no problems with the rest of his theses. Premise one can be derived directly from my view through the commitment to monism: nothing else but 'matter' is needed to compose living beings because there is nothing else that exists. Premises three and four are captured by my symmetry thesis, as it both assumes experiential states to be real and directly implies a non-emergence thesis.

My only problem with Nagel's position is that it doesn't quite get him panpsychism. As I've already argued, any real form of panpsychism needs something like my ubiquity thesis. To be fair, though, Nagel's paper doesn't seem to be arguing specifically that holding onto all four premises automatically forces one into panpsychism. His point is much more subtle than that. I understand his purpose as trying to show two things: first, that even though the premises appear to be incompatible with one another, there is a position available that can take account of them all; second that having the intuition that all four premises are true may lead one to eventually accept that panpsychism is true. Commitment to a full-blown panpsychism probably requires an additional psychological step.

§ 3 Stoljar

Daniel Stoljar has contributed a good deal to the understanding of what the position of 'physicalism' entails and how it relates to similar views. There is much of his work that is relevant to the project at hand, but I will limit the discussion to just one idea. It is important because it explains precisely how I understand a key concept throughout the duration of the project. As already briefly alluded to in footnote six of the first chapter, I mean the term 'physical' to pick out several possibilities. Because of the importance and frequent usage of the term, I will now explain Stoljar's analysis in greater detail.

The essential claim is that there are two distinct ways of conceiving of the ‘physical’. The first is the theory-based conception. It defines a physical property as:

A property which *either* is the sort of property that physical theory tells us about *or* else is a property which metaphysically (or logically) supervenes on the sort of property that physical theory tells us about.³¹

The second way of viewing physical properties is with the object-based conception. It defines them as:

A property which *either* is the sort of property required by a complete account of the intrinsic nature of paradigmatic physical objects and their constituents *or* else is a property which metaphysically (or logically) supervenes on the sort of property required by a complete account of the intrinsic nature of paradigmatic physical objects and their constituents.³²

The definitions are fairly straightforward, but their implications are not.

The distinction matters because whether or not a position is labeled as a physicalism could depend entirely upon which conception is assumed. The prime example is the version of panpsychism that Galen Strawson endorses. He labels it a physicalism presumably because he accepts the object-based conception as the correct way to understand which sorts of entities the position picks out. Because he is a realist about experience, it is doubtful that his position would qualify as a physicalism given only the theory-based conception.

I do not bring up the distinction here to argue for one conception or the other. My purpose is to present it as a tool of clarification. I appeal to it in Chapter VI while attempting to understand the nature of the position that I develop.

§ 4 Maxwell

Grover Maxwell develops in the span of only a long essay an innovative position that he calls nonmaterialist physicalism. It is a physicalism in the sense of the object-based conception of the

³¹ Stoljar (2002), p. 313.

³² *Ibid*, p. 313.

physical, evidenced by Maxwell's statement that, "The physical is, very roughly, the subject matter of physics. By subject matter I mean not the theories, laws, principles, etc., of physics, but rather what the theories and laws are about."³³ It is also a mind-brain identity theory designed specifically with the purpose of avoiding Kripke's criticisms. As will become apparent through the course of this project, there are certain key parallels between Maxwell's position and Russell's, Strawson's, and mine.

The first thing to note about Maxwell's thesis is that he labels it a *genuine* mind-brain identity theory:

A genuine mind-brain identity thesis must hold that there are both mental events and brain events, that all mental events are brain events, and that therefore *some brain events are mental events* — in the most full-blown "mentalistic" sense of 'mental'.³⁴

This is why Maxwell calls his view 'nonmaterialist'. He does not seek to reduce mental events to brain events and seems to think an attempt at doing so is not a true mind-brain identity thesis. The question remains, however, of how to conceptualize the implications of this view.

Maxwell begins with an observation that echoes Russell before him and Stoljar (among others) after him. In Chapter IV, the discussion of Russell, I call it the ignorance principle. It is the thesis that what the sciences, such as physics or neurophysiology, tell us about is merely the structural or dispositional properties of the things that compose the world. If true, this means that neuroscience only explains the dispositional characteristics of brain events. Maxwell then concludes that:

The possibility is entirely open that some of these brain events *just are* our twinges of pain, our feelings of joy and sorrow, our thoughts that two plus two equals four, etc. Such a brain event would of course, "share" all of its properties

³³ Maxwell (1978), p. 341.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 349.

with the mental event which it *is* — all “essential” properties and all “accidental” properties, all intrinsic properties and all causal properties, etc., etc.³⁵

Since he also holds that we do know the intrinsic characteristic of our mental events, through acquaintance with them, then he sees the above conclusion as likely.

The remainder of Maxwell’s paper is an attempt to defend this thesis against a number of objections, one of course being the grain problem. It is for this reason that he makes the field suggestion, which I develop in Chapter V. Before moving on, however, I wish to bring up a comment that Galen Strawson makes about Maxwell’s position. Buried in a footnote near the end of his essay ‘Real Materialism’ is an offhand remark about the difficulty in naming his position. He says, “It is hard to find satisfactory names, and Grover Maxwell, who holds essentially the same position as I do, calls himself a ‘nonmaterialist physicalist’.”³⁶ I do not know exactly what to make of this comment, but have something to say about it in Chapter VI. For now, I will simply say that the connection between panpsychism and mind-brain identity theories may be more intricate than some might suppose.

§ 5 Aristotle

Aristotle was not a panpsychist. Nor did he hold any of the other positions we talk about today when we discuss ‘philosophy of mind’. The way he parsed up the world is too radically different from the post-Cartesian tradition we work in. To say his view matches perfectly or neatly with any current option is to be historically insensitive. But this is not to say that Aristotle cannot be helpful. On the contrary:

The interpreter of Aristotle who wants to present his view as philosophically relevant today is obliged to take for granted the scientific advances of the last few centuries. But we are not obliged to take for granted the terms that have been imposed upon this new scientific knowledge by the post-Cartesian tradition of

³⁵ Ibid, p. 349.

³⁶ Strawson (2008), p. 51.

philosophical dualism and anti-dualism. On the contrary, to do so seems to me to kill the philosophical relevance of Aristotle by eliminating his chief advantage, namely that he stands outside this post-Cartesian tradition, and hence that a sympathetic understanding of his position may allow us also to step outside this tradition long enough to subject it to critical scrutiny.³⁷

My inclusion of Aristotle in this project is directly related to the above quotation. Part of the point in going the route of panpsychism is to find an alternative to the traditional views. I also wish to point out certain similarities between Aristotle and the position that Bertrand Russell develops, which is the topic of Chapter IV. I will not go into detail here about Russell's position, but instead beg the reader to recall the exposition here when dissecting the chapter devoted to it.

One aspect I wish to bring out concerning Aristotle, which is echoed in the later chapter on Russell, is the notion that 'mind' and 'matter' may not be as different as traditionally supposed. Alternatively, it might also be the case that 'mind' and 'matter' are conceived of in the wrong way. The panpsychist will probably hold that both are true.

The first thing I wish to discuss under this heading is the passive/active mind distinction. To understand this one must make note of how Aristotle conceives of 'soul', as the two subjects are intricately bound. In fact, the analysis of the mind is merely a sub-section in the overall analysis of the soul. In particular, the first/second actuality distinction is most relevant as it bears a striking resemblance to the passive/active mind distinction. First actuality is defined as when one has knowledge of how to carry out a particular activity, whereas second actuality is when one actually performs said activity. This distinction is used to define soul as, "an actuality or formulable essence of something that possesses a potentiality of being besouled."³⁸ Soul, then, is not a metaphysical *thing* or *object* but instead the form of natural bodies that have achieved the first actuality of the potential to live. It is fairly clear that he thinks of mind in a similar way with

³⁷ Kahn (1992), 359.

³⁸ 414a25-27.

the active/passive mind distinction. Passive mind is when things are apprehended and thus the mind has the objects necessary for activity. Active mind is the carrying out of said activity, meaning that it is also not a thing or object.

The obvious corollary here is with Russell's notion of mental and physical 'events', which act as his replacement for mental and physical substances. These are not objects or things in the ordinary sense, but are instead minute entities that have no structure in space-time.³⁹ The point is to show that, as Russell argues, part of the problem may simply be that the categories of mind and matter are ill conceived.

One other point under this topic is the close relationship between mind and matter. Russell expresses doubt that mental and physical events are all that different, suggesting that many suffer from a failure of the imagination when they do not see how this could be the case.⁴⁰

Aristotle has this to say:

If thinking is like perceiving, it must be either a process in which the soul is acted upon by what is capable of being thought, or a process different but analogous to that. The thinking part of the soul must therefore be, while impassible, capable of receiving the form of an object; that is, *must be potentially identical in character with its object without being the object*. Mind must be related to what is thinkable, as sense is to what is sensible.⁴¹

The italicized section reveals exactly how similar physical and mental events are supposed to be. Though it may at first appear that the mind and objects in the world are clearly distinct, this may not be the case. As Aristotle has just pointed out, the two need to be related in some fundamental way in order for them to interact.

The other aspect of Aristotelian philosophy I wish to bring out concerns the ubiquity principle. It is this topic even more so than the last which can illustrate Aristotle's relevance.

³⁹ Russell (1927), p. 286.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 384.

⁴¹ 429a15, emphasis mine.

The principle can at times be hard to grasp, so it is useful to delineate multiple formulations.

How Aristotle discusses the idea can, I think, clarify exactly what is meant by it.

It is interesting to note that he arrives at something like the ubiquity principle as a consequence of the previous point. The argument is roughly the following:

1. Mind must be related in some deep way to what is thinkable.
2. Everything is a possible object of thought.
3. If (2) is the case, then reality as a whole is the object of the mind. In other words, all of reality is understandable by the mind.
4. From (1) and (3), we see that active mind (the actual carrying out of mental activity) really amounts to the actual understandability of the world.

This argument only works if one accepts Aristotle's system, but it brings out an important idea.

It provides an alternative way of conceiving of the idea that mental or experiential phenomena are ubiquitous at a low level of reality. Taken in weak form, this could simply mean that all of reality has a nature such that it is understandable to our minds. This fundamental understandability is a possible way to further explain the ubiquity principle, or to make it more palatable to some.

CHAPTER III

Now that panpsychism and related positions have been discussed, it is time to explicate one of its major obstacles. The subject of this chapter is the mind-dust objection as explained by both a contemporary and a philosopher at the turn of the century. The problem does not end, however, with the issue as traditionally conceived. I wish to make things even more difficult for the panpsychist by drawing out a corollary problem. It is really just an aspect of the overall difficulty, but it should be made explicit.

The problem is essentially a conceptual one. It poses as an obstacle to both panpsychism and mind-brain identity theories, though I ignore the latter for present purposes. One starts by noticing an implication of panpsychism, which is that our experiences are composed of smaller or micro-level experiences. I will use the term ‘proto-experience’ to refer to these micro-experiences which are supposed to somehow form into macro-experiences. The difficulty that emerges was formulated by William James in the first volume of his *The Principles of Psychology*.

He states the problem eloquently in the following passage:
If feelings can mix into a *tertium quid*, why do we not take a feeling of greenness and a feeling of redness, and make a feeling of yellowness out of them? Why has optics neglected the open road to truth, and wasted centuries disputing about theories of color-composition which two minutes of introspection would have settled forever? We cannot mix feelings as such, though we may mix the objects we feel, and from their mixture get new feelings. We cannot even have two feelings in our mind at once. At most we can compare together objects previously presented to us in distinct feelings; but then we find each object stubbornly

maintaining its separate identity before consciousness, whatever the verdict of the comparison may be.⁴²

The problem, then, is that experiences do not seem to sum in the way that panpsychism would seem to require. As James argues, it is only objects and not experiences that can blend together. Moreover, he also holds that the mind can only be presented with one experience at a time and not a conglomeration of many. He also seems to conceive of experiences as individuated in a strong sense, meaning that they come one by one and are completely divided entities.⁴³

Philip Goff, in a response article to Galen Strawson, calls upon the same objection to halt panpsychism. He puts the same idea the following way:

The experiential being of BIG PAIN is supposed to be wholly constituted by the experiential being of all the LITTLE PAINS. But to suppose that what it feels like to be BIG PAIN is wholly constituted by what it feels like to be all the LITTLE PAINS (if this comes to anything at all) must be to suppose that BIG PAIN feels how all the LITTLE PAINS feel and feels nothing else. But, by stipulation, this is not right. BIG PAIN feels a certain way that all the LITTLE PAINS do not: that is, severely pained.⁴⁴

Goff's example brings out the same point as the passage from James, namely that each experience is unique. Many small pains are just experienced as many small pains, not one big pain. There is, though, another problem intricately bound with the first lurking behind the scenes. I now turn to it.

The idea is just this: experiences do not float alone out in the ether. Talk of experiences seems to necessitate talk of *subjects* of experience. The problem is that panpsychism seems to also hold that the human subject is composed of many smaller subjects of experience, or perhaps 'proto-subjects'. The same process as the one Goff describes with pains, little subjects combining to form big subjects, would need to take place in order for macro-level subjects to

⁴² James (1890), pp. 157-158.

⁴³ At least this is what I assume he means by saying that experiences are "windowless" and "shut in their own skin". See James (1890), p. 160.

⁴⁴ Goff (2006), p. 58.

form. There are several issues at work here. The first is that this seems to radically overpopulate one's ontology with subjects. The second is that the notion of a 'subject' of experience becomes almost vacuous, mainly because it is difficult to see how electrons understood as 'subjects' could be anything like what we usually think of as a subject of experience, i.e. humans or animals. The third is that it seems inconceivable how many little subjects could somehow lend themselves or their information to a larger subject which they compose. As an example, think of an extremely large crowd of people. Though the crowd is composed of many little subjects, it seems counterintuitive to suppose that a new and larger subject is formed *in the same way* subjectivity happens in humans, even if one subscribes to a strong notion of group agency. At the very least, it would seem as though we need to discern special laws for how this happens.

Before parting to the next section, I am compelled to address a possible attitude towards the objections just presented. There is the chance that some will not be impressed with the objections and think they are not worthy of much attention. This might lead one to dismiss them as simply a 'failure of the imagination' in the mind of an objector. A dismissive attitude is perhaps due to the tendency on the part of adversaries to present them as a problem of the summation of simplistic experiences. There is, however, more to them than may at first meet the eye.

It might be that the examples provided by Goff and James can be dismissed by a response of the following form: "Just because you cannot conceive of how experiences can sum doesn't mean that they cannot." If the panpsychist only had to show that the summation of billions or trillions of proto-experiences or proto-subjects produced human consciousness, then the problem wouldn't be as powerful. But human consciousness is not that simple. It is usually taken to include many more things than brute sensations. Intentionality, cognition, and the phenomenal

characteristics of both are all taken to be aspects of consciousness which the panpsychist, as a nonreductivist about such things, must take account of. This is especially difficult if one takes these different aspects of consciousness to be a package deal, meaning consciousness only occurs when all are present. The panpsychist must be able to tell a story about how the experiential or proto-experiential being at a micro level forms the type of consciousness that we are most intricately aware of: our own. If it is not possible to weave a narrative about how this happens, then one has no good reason to suspect that panpsychism is any closer to explaining consciousness than physicalism.

A substantial answer to the mind-dust objection, then, is needed. It is indeed a conceptual problem(s), but this is no reason to think that it is trivial. I do not have anything close to a definitive answer to either aspect of the issue, but instead try in the next two chapters to outline a possible way forward. To begin building my case against them, I now turn to Bertrand Russell.

CHAPTER IV

The content of this chapter is largely historical in nature, though it serves a contemporary purpose. It concerns a reinterpretation of the ‘neutral monism’ described by Bertrand Russell in a late chapter of *The Analysis of Matter*. I contend that it can be understood as an epistemic thesis; a framework one may use to construct a reasonable metaphysic. In addition to the overall understanding of Russell’s position, I also outline several specific facets of his philosophy. They form the bones of the framework, and will mainly come into play during the next chapter. It is there that I will make first steps toward a metaphysical project, as I use Russell’s position to support and help explain my version of panpsychism.

It is not a goal of this paper to argue that my reading of *The Analysis of Matter* best represents Russell’s actual position. Nor is it to argue for the superiority of my interpretation over others. It is instead an almost purely positive project. I wish only to detail my interpretation and present it as a contemporary option. The scholarly tasks of arguing against its competitors and for its accuracy are relegated to the future.

Before beginning, I must make note of the methodological technique that is most likely the reason why my reading of Russell is different than some others. The thrust of my argument relies on Russell’s later understanding and discussion of his own work. His later books *Human Knowledge* and *My Philosophical Development* provide clarification. Russell’s own opinion was that much of his earlier work was misunderstood, and so sought to restate his views. When two interpretative options are presented, I will tend to side with the one that best fits the later

restatements. I have no elaborate defense of this method. It is simply my (hopefully) reasonable belief that Russell better understood his own views than any interpreter could.

Russell began to shift away from dualism and towards a neutral monism several years before *The Analysis of Matter* was written.⁴⁵ However, recent ‘Russellian monists’ draw their inspiration almost solely from it. This is no accident. The work contains the most detailed analysis of it that Russell provided, along with how it helps one to understand the connection between physics and perception. Most of my analysis will therefore focus on it, and especially the later chapter entitled ‘Physics and Neutral Monism’. As already noted, I will sometimes seek advice from the later Russell when the fog of vagueness settles.

There are a couple of key features to point out that should, taken together, provide ample evidence for my reading. These include: the event ontology, the notion of ‘compresence’, what I call the ‘ignorance’ principle, and the lack of an act/object distinction. They are discussed in turn.

§ 1 Events

Throughout *The Analysis of Matter*, Russell dispenses with talk of ‘substance’ and ‘matter’. He finds that current scientific understanding suggests that these concepts, which were once thought to be fundamental, are now analyzable into more basic terms. The analysis shows, at least Russell thinks, that these more basic constituents are ‘events’.

Some unpacking of this view must now be done, though its relevance will only appear at the conclusion. First, it must be noted that ‘events’ take on the role of ‘particulars’ in Russell’s analysis. Particulars are defined as:

⁴⁵ Russell notes in *My Philosophical Development* that this major change in thinking happened around the time he gave the lectures on logical atomism, or about 1918. See Russell (1959), p. 134.

the ultimate terms of the physical structure – ultimate, I mean, in relation to the whole of our present knowledge. A “particular”, that is to say, will be something which is concerned in the physical world merely through its qualities or its relations to other things, never through its own structure, if any.⁴⁶

One important aspect of this definition should be made explicit. Particulars, the “ultimate terms”, are given a relativistic definition. Though Russell may consider events to be the most basic terms by which current physics can be analyzed in, he is here admitting that they may not actually be the ultimate terms. Given further scientific progression, we may learn that talk of events may be analyzable into simpler terms.

What, though, are these ‘events’ which are supposed to be particulars? In the chapter ‘Particulars and Events’, Russell tells us that:

I shall therefore assume henceforth that the physical world is to be constructed out of “events”, by which I mean practically entities or structures occupying a region of space-time which is small in all four dimensions. “Events” may have a structure, but it is convenient to use the word “event”, in the strict sense, to mean something which, if it has a structure, has no space-time structure, i.e. it does not have parts which are external to each other in space-time.⁴⁷

‘Events’, then, are meant to be the most minute bits into which space-time can be broken into. For reasons to come later, it is important to reiterate a key feature of the definition. Russell leaves open the possibility that these minute ‘events’ have a complex structure, so long as the parts are not distinct in space-time.

The picture, so far, is that physical reality may be analyzed down to particulars that are admittedly relative to current scientific understanding. The particulars of modern physics, it seems, are discrete events in space-time instead of ‘substances’ or ‘things’. How, though, does this help us resolve the mind/body problem? Russell speaks in many places of both ‘mental’ and ‘physical’ events, not hinting that the mental events could be reduced to physical ones. We turn

⁴⁶ Russell (1928), 277.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 286.

now to the notion of compresence to see how mental events can find a place in the physical world.

§ 2 Compresence

Compresence is initially defined as a relation that two or more events may have with one another. Two or more events are compresent if they overlap in space-time.⁴⁸ Russell sees this notion as a way to give mental events presence in space-time, and therefore causal efficacy. If mental events can be compresent with physical events, then they have a place in the order of space-time. If they have this, then they may also factor into the causal lines that run through reality.

The first important note made is that the compresence of mental and physical events is not meant to apply to percepts and *pieces of matter*. If one understands ‘physical event’ to roughly equate to ‘matter’, then Russell’s assertion will seem inconceivable. But the age-old conception of matter as impenetrable and indestructible is absent in his take. This is because, for Russell, pieces of matter are merely logical constructions composed of physical events.⁴⁹ The relation of compresence, then, is meant only to apply to percepts and physical events.

There still might seem to be something odd in the idea of mental and physical overlapping in space-time even when cast in terms of events instead of substances. We may see upon evaluation, however, that this intuition is unwarranted. It might turn out that the line between mind and body is not so clear. I now turn to what I call Russell’s ‘ignorance principle’ to show how this might be.

§ 3 The Ignorance Principle

⁴⁸ Ibid, 294.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 384.

The topic of this section has been discussed in contemporary literature much more so than the previous two. Most who label their position ‘inspired’ by Russell focus upon it. I call it the ignorance principle, and will offer a cursory definition followed by specifics from Russell. It is essentially the claim that we are either completely or almost completely ignorant of the intrinsic nature of the physical world. Physics, in this line of reasoning, only describes structural or dispositional properties. The ‘categorical basis’ or intrinsic nature of the entities that have the dispositional properties physics describes is hidden from us.⁵⁰

How exactly, though, does Russell arrive at this position? I find the clearest statement to be the following:

A piece of matter is a logical structure composed of events; the causal laws of the events concerned, and the abstract logical properties of their spatio-temporal relations, are more or less known, but their intrinsic character is not known. Percepts fit into the same causal scheme as physical events, and are not known to have any intrinsic character which physical events cannot have, since we do not know of any intrinsic character which could be incompatible with the logical properties that physics assigns to physical events. There is therefore no ground for the view that percepts cannot be physical events, or for supposing that they are never compresent with other physical events.⁵¹

It is important to keep in mind the topics of the last two sections when trying to understand this position. Since Russell casts it in terms of compresent events, one must be careful not to slip into talk of ‘objects’ or ‘substance’ in order to give an accurate portrayal. One may, of course, utilize the main idea in one’s own metaphysic, but it is not abundantly clear that it can hold ground outside of Russell’s system. In any case, I will attempt to understand the position using Russell’s terms.

I take the crucial aspects of the ignorance principle to be:

1. Matter is not a concrete entity, but is instead a logical construction that is really compresent events in some given region of space-time.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Stoljar (2002, 2006, 2010), Strawson (2006), and Chalmers (2010).

⁵¹ Russell (1927), 384.

2. We are so far unaware of the intrinsic nature of the events which compose the physical world.
3. Mental events are part of the world's causal schema.
4. We have no good reason to suppose that it is impossible for some mental events, namely perceptions, to be physical.
5. We also have no good reason to suppose that mental events cannot be compresent with physical events.

Let me be clear about what I think this is *not* saying. It is not claiming that the nature of physical events is not discoverable in principle. There is at least the possibility, within Russell's system, that we could come to know the nature of physical events by description.⁵²

The important thing to point out about this principle is that it does not force us into one specific kind of position. It is instead pointing out places where our knowledge is lacking. In doing so, it also hints at possible avenues to pursue that diverge from the traditional categories of materialism and dualism.⁵³ The subject of the next chapter will serve as an example of one such possibility.

§ 4 The Act/Object Distinction

There is an assumption working in the background of *The Analysis of Matter* that deserves to be acknowledged. It will not factor much into the discussion of the current chapter but will be important later on. As I have already noted, Russell was a dualist until sometime around 1918. What began the shift towards monism is that he gave up the act/object distinction. In other

⁵² Here I am referring to the technical notion, knowledge by description, which Russell develops as part of his epistemology.

⁵³ For an alternative and much more thorough discussion of the ignorance principle, see Stoljar (2006a), pp. 112-116.

words, he ended up agreeing with William James that there is no deep or metaphysical distinction between the subject and object.⁵⁴

Instead, the subject becomes something like a logical construction or fiction in the same way that matter does. Russell's take is that:

It [the subject] is introduced, not because observation reveals it, but because it is linguistically convenient and apparently demanded by grammar. Nominal entities of this sort may or may not exist, but there is no good ground for assuming that they do.⁵⁵

This passage shows that Russell's attitude towards the existence of the subject is similar to the one expressed concerning the relation of mental and physical events. He is not definitively denying the existence of the subject, for he clearly leaves open the possibility that it really does exist. And it may be possible that it can be proven to exist in the future. The point is yet another one of epistemic humility: we shouldn't assume either way without good reason. In the absence of good reasons, he parsimoniously sides with the non-existence of a separate subject.

Russell realized fairly quickly that giving up the distinction required him to re-work much of his philosophy. For example, it required him to abandon the notions of 'sense-data' and 'knowledge by acquaintance'. He also realized that the relationship between perception and physics described in *The Problems of Philosophy* and *Our Knowledge of the External World* needed to be reconceived. This realization is, I think, at least partly responsible for his writing of *The Analysis of Matter*.⁵⁶ There is decent reason to think, then, that the position outlined in said book can be read as including a rejection of the independent existence of subjects.

⁵⁴ See Russell (1956), pp. 134-144 for his own account of this progression. In addition, the preface to the 1929 edition of *Our Knowledge of the External World* acknowledges the same thing: Russell is here informing the reader of the major changes between the 1914 and 1929 versions. He states that, "The only philosophical change in the present edition is the abandonment of the distinction between sensations and sense-data, which I now agree with the American realists in regarding as illusory." See Russell (1914/1929), p. vii.

⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 135-136.

⁵⁶ I should note that the dates of the referenced works are able to support this conclusion. *The Problems of Philosophy* was published in 1912 and *Our Knowledge of the External World* was originally a series of lectures

§ 5 The Epistemic Reading

How are we to understand the position Russell is laying out? Why does he refer to it as a ‘neutral monism’? Is it a metaphysical or epistemic thesis? I will attempt to answer these questions in the present section. First, however, it must be noted that what I have provided is far from a comprehensive study. I have only picked out the aspects of Russell’s view that I take to be the essential pieces for my purpose. Once again, though, the goal is not a precise historical analysis. I simply wish to provide an alternative way of understanding Russell’s position while of course remaining as accurate as possible.

I propose to understand Russell’s ‘neutral monism’ as an epistemic thesis concerning what we know about mind and matter.⁵⁷ ‘Neutral’, in this reading, does not refer to any metaphysical property of neutrality possessed by the events that compose the world. The focus is not upon how events are in and of themselves. It is instead upon how we come to know of them. For Russell, it seems to be the case that the division between physical and mental as ordinarily conceived *just is* determined by how we come to know of them. How he defines them in *Human Knowledge* is telling:

Let us first define more exactly what we mean by a “physical” event. I should define it as an event which, if known to occur, is inferred, and which is not known to be mental. And I define a “mental” event as one with which some one is acquainted otherwise than by inference.⁵⁸

The difference between mental and physical, then, is merely an epistemic one based upon the different ways we come to learn of events.

given in 1914. As already stated, Russell gave up the act/object distinction around 1918. *The Analysis of Matter* was not published until 1927, leaving plenty of time for any residual sympathies towards the distinction to disappear from his mind.

⁵⁷ Stoljar (2006a) arrives at a similar position, though he makes quite different use of it.

⁵⁸ Russell (1948), p. 202.

The notion of ‘neutrality’, then, is not making a claim as to the intrinsic nature of the events that compose the world. It is simply that the notion of an ‘event’ can be understood independently of ‘mental’ and ‘physical’. The actual metaphysical structure of the world is another question entirely. Remembering the ignorance principle, we see that experience does not make the true natures of events easily known to us. This information, however, might be discoverable through careful analysis. Many different positions are compatible with an epistemic neutral monism. For instance, one could be a metaphysical idealist while maintaining epistemic neutral monism. This would basically claim that experience only shows us that some events are mental and some are physical, so we can treat them as two different types of the same thing. The idealist would then make the further claim that we can also learn through doing philosophy that all the events composing the world are ultimately mental in nature.

As for Russell himself, there is decent textual evidence to suggest that he thought a physicalist mind-brain identity theory was most likely the default stance.⁵⁹ Although I will not weigh in on the historical debate concerning Russell’s position, I bring up this point for a reason. Recalling the section on the ignorance principle, Russell clearly acknowledges the possibility that mental events *just are* physical events. If this were the case, then the view would qualify as a kind of identity theory. As I have already hinted at in the section covering Grover Maxwell, the difference between identity theory and panpsychism is not clear. Part of Chapter V will deal with this question, as I try to understand the nature of the position that I develop.

⁵⁹ Thanks go to Donovan Wishon for bringing this to my attention. See, for instance, Russell’s discussion of William James in his *History of Western Philosophy*.

CHAPTER V

The present chapter applies glue to the so far disparate pieces. The resultant position is only a sketch, an outlining of a possible avenue. It combines the insights from the second chapter with the Russellian account developed in the last, all in an effort to suggest a way around the mind-dust objection. The development has been admittedly tedious. My hope is that the work here will render it worthwhile.

The first section outlines in more detail Maxwell's proposal, combined with a short discussion of how I understand 'fields'. The second section applies the suggestion to panpsychism. The third then uses it to build upon the Russellian framework described in the last chapter. The fourth section gives reasons for thinking that the approach circumvents the mind-dust objection. A new version of panpsychism is briefly outlined in the fifth section as an attempt to tie everything together. The chapter, and entire project, concludes with a brief recap of the main aspects of the outlined position.

§ 1 Fields?

Grover Maxwell's purpose in writing 'Rigid Designators and Mind-Brain Identity' was to defend a version of identity theory, which was immune to Kripke's criticisms. Along the way he defends it against various other possible objections. One of these is the 'grain' problem, which is just the identity theorist's equivalent of the mind-dust objection: how is it that the billions of neurons in the brain can produce conscious experience that is smooth and not fragmented in the

way the brain itself is? Maxwell's suggestion is to say that the problem may be with assuming that conscious experience must be identified with neuronal activity. It may instead be the case that some other physical phenomenon in the brain is a more apt mechanism for identification with individual conscious experiences.

The notion Maxwell entertains as a possibility is admittedly fanciful, but he is justified in making it. He has at this point in the paper already made clear his alignment with Russell's ignorance principle, or at least the thought that leads to it. Essentially, our imaginative picture of matter and the physical world is profoundly elementary. His remedy is the following:

In sum, as our knowledge grows about the various manifolds of events that constitute the physical realm, perhaps we shall discover that some of the structures that are exemplified by them are entirely isomorphic and quite possibly identical with instances of the structures with which we are acquainted in our "private" experience. Even within the bounds of present physical theory, we might consider a fanciful but logically coherent possibility. *Fields — electrical, magnetic, or gravitational — and fluctuations in fields are, as far as their structures are concerned, viable candidates for identification with (some kinds of) mental states or mental events.*⁶⁰

Maxwell's purpose is obviously to entertain the idea that the structure of mental events is such that physical fields could be what they are identical with in the material world. The understated idea is what I wish to emphasize: *it is possible to think of mental events as behaving in a manner similar to physical fields.*

My proposal to the panpsychist is therefore simple. Why not think of experiential or proto-experiential being at the micro level as a type of field? More specifically, why not think of experiential being behaving in the same way as a *gravitational field* (at least as far as relativistic physics is concerned)? There are of course other ways of understanding how this might work, but I merely want to offer a specific suggestion.

⁶⁰ Maxwell (1978), p. 351. Emphasis added.

One thing I wish to be clear about is that my project differs from Maxwell's in at least one crucial respect. While he is seeking a way to identify mental events with a certain type of physical phenomena, the panpsychist has no need for this identification. Panpsychism, as a monism, certainly needs to be *compatible* with physics, but this is far from saying that experiential being must be tied to one specific physical phenomenon.

Before detailing how my suggestion works with respect to panpsychism, I will give a quick discussion of how I wish the notion of 'fields' to be understood. As already stated, the specific method will be to consider proto-experiential being at the micro level to behave in a similar fashion to gravitational fields as elementary relativistic physics describes them. One is likely to encounter the following thought experiment in many non-technical popular physics books.

Imagine space-time as a thin sheet of some elastic material. When a heavy object is placed on the sheet, an indentation is formed around it. If smaller and lighter objects are then rolled near the heavy object, they will fall toward it due to the indentation. Gravity acts on the large scale in a similar way as the indentation in the fabric caused by a heavy object. Large and heavy objects, such as the Sun, create an indentation in the fabric of space-time. This indentation, or curvature, of space-time is the gravitational force which causes smaller objects like planets to orbit or fall towards larger ones.

It is difficult to pin down exactly what a 'field' is supposed to be. I shy away from technical definitions because they are usually presented in terms of physical theory. It also may distract from the main point, which is not to present a technical theory of exactly how experiential being exists at the micro level.

§ 2 Experiential Fields

How exactly can the gravitational field suggestion be applied to panpsychism? The essential picture is to think of experiential being at the micro-level as something akin to the sheet of elastic material representing space-time. This is experiential being at its most minimal level.⁶¹ It is then that elementary physical particles are taken into account. Physical entities create indentions in this experiential fabric, which warps experiential being into a field surrounding the entities. This is perhaps what could give the physical entities their intrinsic nature. The emphasis, however, is on the idea that experiential being at this level (whatever its nature) is more like gravity than particles.

Something more must be said of exactly how to combine this fanciful notion with panpsychism. To do so, I will in turn treat each of the three theses I described as the minimal commitments for panpsychism. The first question to entertain, then, is: is this position a monism?

My proposition is to treat this view as a version of ‘both’ monism, which Strawson labels ‘equal status fundamental duality monism’.⁶² This is essentially the idea that reality is composed of only one fundamental type of stuff. The ‘stuff’ is then said to have a dual nature, in this case both experiential and non-experiential. The reason is that this position kills two metaphysical birds with one stone.

The ‘both’ monism may strike some as a dualism masquerading as monism. It is true that the duality between the experiential and the non-experiential will be fundamental, but there is no reason to think that they represent separate substances. If parsimony is to prevail, it seems more likely that the fundamental stuff or substance underlying all reality simply has two distinct aspects. At the same time, the commitment to a ‘both’ monism can also ensure that the principle

⁶¹ It might be the case that the version of the ubiquity principle I drew from Aristotle could be used to explain this most minimal level.

⁶² Strawson (2006b), p. 223.

of symmetry is maintained. The both monism is able to hold that at the most fundamental level where either experiential or non-experiential being obtains, there is a symmetrical relationship between the two.

The field version of panpsychism also conceives of the ubiquity principle in a novel way. Instead of thinking of experiential being as particles or some other ‘object’, it is instead viewed in a way similar to how physical science views space itself. Though some might think of ‘space’ as an abstract concept, modern physics details how the fabric of space has a real influence upon physical entities. Conceiving of it in this way therefore in no way diminishes the causal efficacy of the experiential or diminishes its place in the metaphysical schema.

§ 3 Russell Round Two

The portrait of reality just explicated is admittedly speculative. Speculation, however, might be exactly what is needed for solving a deep conceptual problem. There is still more to add to the picture to bring it slightly back down to Earth. Several of the concepts discussed in the previous chapter on Bertrand Russell now come into play.

It should be obvious that the project is inspired by Russell’s ignorance principle and makes thorough use of it. Specifically it takes to heart the suggestion that part of the problem is thinking of the things that compose the world as ‘matter’ or billiard ball style little bits. It is difficult to see how a field of experiential being could interact with matter as traditionally conceived even if they are composed of the same stuff. It might be best, then, to hold that matter is not a solid, indestructible, and impenetrable substance.

Instead, the matter, which makes up concrete reality is composed of events. Russell’s definition of ‘event’ is purposefully vague, as he does not wish to posit which entities count as events. The motivation is to keep the analysis of physics adaptable. In proposing a metaphysical

structure for how to understand experiential being, however, the need to stay adaptable to current physical theories is not as important. I propose, then, that a way of understanding the experiential fields is to think of them as events in Russell's sense of the term. It could be that this is the ultimate differentiation between mental and physical events: when the 'stuff' of the world behaves as a field it exhibits its experiential quality, whereas when it behaves as a particle it exhibits its non-experiential quality. The description of a field also blends well with the definition of events, as fields do not suffer from the fatal flaw that the antiquated conception of matter does. Fields are not immutable, impenetrable, solid entities. There is a certain intangible aspect to them, though they nonetheless influence the physical world.

It might be objected that Russell's definition of events as non-structural particulars does not match well with the dual nature inherent in 'both' monism. But this is to forget that while events do not have a structure in space-time, Russell leaves room for them having a structure of the nature posited here. That is because the structure of events for the field panpsychist is one of metaphysical intrinsic natures, not extrinsic spatio-temporal ones.

Once something like Russell's events are added to the picture, the door is opened for another aspect of his system. There is always the question of how the individual experiential fields interact. Physical theory has its own version of what happens when two curvatures in space-time meet, so there should be a corollary for the field panpsychist. The notion of compresence might fill the gap.

Since fields are posited as events, then following Russell, it is possible for them to be compresent. In other words, they may overlap in space-time. What this would amount to is up for debate, but it is conceivable that the result of two fields being compresent is an *intensification* of the fields. Take, for example, a corollary situation in physical theory. A star roughly the size

of our sun causes a fairly large indentation in space-time, resulting in a decently strong gravitational field. If another star is added in the near vicinity, creating a binary star system, the resultant gravitational field becomes much stronger. In the next section, I propose that this is the key point in understanding how the field approach might solve the mind-dust objection.

§ 4 Mind-Dust Again

As a quick refresher, the first problem associated with the mind-dust objection concerns the summation of experiences. It is difficult to conceptualize how, as Goff noted, many ‘little’ pains could sum to form one ‘big’ pain. There is an alternative way of conceiving of this summation that must be made explicit, however.

Yesterday morning, I woke up with a sore neck from sleeping in an awkward position. Shortly afterwards I banged my foot climbing into the shower. It was indeed possible for me to view these two separate pains as individual experiences in the way that Goff and James describe. After concentrating more, however, I realized that I was not able to individuate the pains as clearly as originally supposed. It certainly was not the case that the two ‘little’ pains summed to form some bigger ‘pain’ in the way Goff describes. But the separation of the two was also not clear. What seemed more accurate was that the presence of two separate pains merely intensified the sensation of pain itself.⁶³

The proposal, then, is that experiences cannot and do not ‘sum’ because they are not as clearly individuated as ordinary objects. Instead, two similar experiences can blend with one another and intensify (or possibly cancel out). This is exactly how the compresence of two or more experiential field events would work. They are able to sum in a way that panpsychism

⁶³ Recent work in experimental philosophy suggests that how people individuate intentional actions depends upon extraneous factors, such as moral valence. It might be the case that the individuation of experiences suffers from a similar phenomenon. If this is indeed the case, then the borders between experiences may not be as clear as many suppose. See, for an example of experiments done on act individuation, Ulatowski (2012), pp. 249-262.

requires, but not in a way that seems inconceivable. This conceptual framework hopefully alleviates some of the worries with how experiences are supposed to sum.

There is still, however, the problem concerning the subjects of experiences. There are perhaps multiple ways to go on this issue. Galen Strawson, for one, appeals to the notion of ‘thin subjects’:

This is not to commit oneself to any view about the ontological status of the necessarily existing subject. It is certainly not to commit oneself to the idea that it must be a substance in any conventional sense of the word, i.e. any sense in which a substance is understood to be something that stands in fundamental ontological contrast with a property. One can be certain that an experience is impossible without an experiencer while knowing nothing more than Descartes knows in his *Second Meditation* when he says ‘I know I exist; the question is, what is this “I” that I know?’.⁶⁴

The appeal to ignorance (in the Russellian sense) is apparent. The claim is that it seems ridiculous for us to assume the problem of subjects is actually a problem since we have no idea what a subject of experience is. This is certainly an appeal that one can make, but there is another possible avenue to pursue.

The main issue with Strawson’s method is that it gets us nowhere closer to actually solving the problem, assuming it really is one. My proposal is even more Russellian in nature. Why should we not simply give up the act/object distinction to do away with the problem? In other words, if we deny that there is a real difference between the experience and the experiencer, then the issue loses much of its force.

The suggestion is admittedly radical, but it does away with an important objection. One does not need to worry about the nature of micro-subjects when there is no actual distinction between them and micro-experiences. In this way, the problem of subject summation collapses back into the original problem of experiential summation. I do not pretend to have fully thought

⁶⁴ Strawson (2006b), p. 190.

through the consequences of this radical move, but merely offer it as a possible solution. It is possible that giving up the act/object distinction would allow one to meld the metaphysical field pansychist thesis with Russell's epistemic system presented in *Human Knowledge*. If this is so, then there is indeed a way of maintaining many of Russell's positions while at the same time offering a re-conception of the structure of reality. This may be only wishful thinking, but I see no obvious reason for why it could not work.

§ 5 Panqualiaism

The end of chapter III lamented that many probably do not see the mind-dust objection as a serious issue, and gave reasons for doubting this blasé attitude. The question is how simplistic proto-experiences, assuming they can combine in some way, can end up proliferating into the vastly complex consciousness that humans are familiar with. The suggestion for how to approach this issue is perhaps even more fanciful than the field approach, though it might follow from it.

The solution may be to accept that some aspects of human consciousness are not fundamental. In fact, one may need to posit only one facet of consciousness or mentality that exists at all levels. From this one fundamental aspect of experiential states, all the others will somehow arise either from it or in response to it. Why would one possibly go in this direction? Because it is intuitively plausible that experiential being at a micro-level is simple in the same way that microphysical entities are. Consider quarks as an example. These tiny particles are even smaller than the protons and neutrons which make up the nuclei of atoms. They are only distinguished by a single property, their spin. Some spin upwards and some spin downwards. It is conceivable that the properties held by micro-experiential fields (or however one conceives of the micro-experiential) need to be as simplistic.

Human consciousness, however, is not simplistic. It seems deeply suspicious to suggest that tiny experiential fields also have many facets, such as intentionality and subjectivity. Many writing in the panpsychism literature have recognized this point. The appeal usually made is to ‘panprotopsychism’, with ‘proto-experiences’ usually defined as being experiential in character without actually being full-blown experiences. It is difficult to hold this position and not have it collapse into strict physicalism without positing the nature of the proto-experiences. My purpose in this section is to offer a suggestion as to their nature, as it is probably the case that the field approach qualifies as a type of panprotopsychism (though I am not sure that the distinction is an important one).

The proposition is simply that the experiential character inherent within the ‘stuff’ of the universe is essentially qualitative. To put it another way, the stuff that composes all of reality is taken to have a qualitative nature in and of itself. The qualities of physical entities, then, are not qualities relative to other physical entities. They are absolute, ontologically foundational qualities. Qualia, or something near enough, are therefore taken to be the intrinsic experiential or mental characteristics of concrete reality. I will call this position, for complete lack of anything better, panqualiaism.

If one accepts this view, then there is a possibility of explaining why it is that conscious experiences are qualitative. Maxwell’s identity theory, for one, holds that some brain events are essentially mental in character. Brain events specifically associated with conscious activity would most likely be the prime candidate. There is always the question for the true identity theorist, however, of *why* it is the case that some brain events have a qualitative nature. The foundation provided by panqualiaism might be able to suggest that what makes consciousness unique is that it taps into the qualitative nature of reality itself. With enough complexity, such as

that provided by our brains, organisms are able to access the qualitative nature of the world. The brain might be viewed as an interpreter or approximation engine of the qualities found in ordinary objects. The suggestion sounds strange, like something out of a fairy-tale, but is at least a coherent possibility.

It is my hope that panqualiaism might be looked upon as a possible metaphysical structure with which to unite all of the various pieces presented here. It is a monism of the ‘both’ variety and preserves both the symmetry and ubiquity principles. Therefore, it minimally qualifies as a version of panpsychism. It additionally adds to the field approach by supplying a way of understanding what exactly the micro-level fields of experience are like. The fields would be something like the expression of reality’s true intrinsic qualitative-ness. In less confusing terms, the experiential being that pervades reality at the micro-level is nothing more than the actual intrinsic quality of reality itself.

§ 6 In Summary

At the end of a long tale, it is beneficial to take stock of what has happened since specifics are bound to be forgotten along the way. The story began with an analysis of what the position known as panpsychism is actually committed to. It is first committed to monism, the idea that if one ventures far enough down the chain of levels in reality, one will eventually reach a level where every concretely existing thing is of only one type. It is secondly committed to a symmetry principle, meaning that neither the experiential nor the non-experiential can be explained in terms of the other. The third commitment is to a principle of ubiquity, such that experiential being pervades the world at some level.

The antagonist to the story was the mind-dust objection in all of its various forms. To aid in the defeat of this foe, the work of Bertrand Russell was called into action. The notions of

events and compresence were taken from the work and explicated. The ignorance principle, which is a founding feature of many (if not all) versions of panpsychism, was also briefly sketched.

The plot twist was a re-conceptualization of how experiential being exists at the micro-level. It might be that, instead of discrete entities like atoms, proto-experience exists in field form. The argument was that fields nicely fit into Russell's definition of 'event', meaning that they could also be compresent. The compresence of field-like events was then presented as how experiences could 'sum', as it is not so much summation as intensification. It was also suggested that another of Russell's ideas be borrowed for solving the problem of micro-subjects. If one simply gives up the act/object distinction, the conceptual difficulty appears less insurmountable.

The story's final plot turn was the proposal of a novel view to tie everything together. This 'panqualiaism' establishes a new way to view panpsychism, while at the same time allowing for the field approach to work. It also offers up a new way of looking at the ontological structure of reality. Whether or not it is ultimately a viable option is an open question. It was never a goal of this project to decide which view was most likely. The end result of the tale, if there is one, is the establishment of an alternative conceptual scheme that sits outside the mainstream. I consider it successful if it does nothing more than show which approach not to take. I cannot at this point, however, pronounce the end to the story. As is always the case in philosophy, future investigation is needed.

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