


ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The regeneration of the cosmic mind: cosmopsychism, mental chaos, and the new creation

Harvey Cawdron 

St Mary's College, The School of Divinity, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, Fife, UK
Email: hc212@st-andrews.ac.uk

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Abstract

In several works, Joanna Leidenhag has discussed the theological merits of panpsychism, the idea that consciousness is ubiquitous in the universe. I shall pursue a related project here in which I consider how a variant of panpsychism called cosmopsychism, in which the universe itself is seen to be conscious, can answer key questions regarding the cosmic scope of sin and redemption in the new creation view of eschatology. After outlining the new creation view and considering key problems in the contemporary debate about cosmopsychism in philosophy of mind, I shall propose a cosmopsychist account of the new creation view that can address these queries regarding cosmic scope.

Keywords: cosmopsychism; new creation; Holy Spirit; mental chaos; N. T. Wright

Introduction

In a number of works, the most notable of which being her recent monograph *Minding Creation: Theological Panpsychism and the Doctrine of Creation*, Joanna Leidenhag has argued for the theological merits of panpsychism,¹ the idea that consciousness is ubiquitous in the universe.² In the contemporary literature, panpsychism is typically developed as a view that claims that the fundamental building blocks of the universe, such as quarks and atoms, are conscious,³ and this is the understanding that Leidenhag follows in her work.

Leidenhag's exploration of the theological merits of panpsychism has proved to be extremely fruitful, and has inspired me to undertake a related project that explores the theological implications of a different variant of panpsychism. Here, I shall draw on cosmopsychism, the idea that the universe is conscious,⁴ and shall see how it can be used to understand the new creation view of eschatology. Cosmopsychism is a form of panpsychism, but instead of following atomistic panpsychism in deeming the fundamental building blocks of the universe, such as quarks and atoms, conscious, it construes the universe itself as a conscious mind of some sort.

To be clear, as a metaphysical thesis about the universe cosmopsychism can be used in numerous religious contexts. Indeed, previous exploration into cosmopsychism from a religious standpoint has typically not been undertaken from a Christian perspective.⁵ Here, I only intend to show that cosmopsychism can be of use in a Christian context by using it to understand particular theological claims related to the new creation view

of eschatology. Thus, my use of cosmopsychism here is not intended to undermine its use in other religious contexts.

I shall start by explaining the new creation view of eschatology, and shall draw particularly from the work of N. T. Wright on this topic. I shall highlight some important questions that stem from this view, specifically regarding how sin and redemption can be cosmic in scope. I shall then provide an overview of the debate on cosmopsychism in contemporary philosophy of mind, and shall develop an understanding of cosmopsychism suitable for use in the theological discussion. After this, I shall use this model to construct a theological narrative of the creation, distortion, and subsequent renewal of the cosmos, providing a cosmopsychist understanding of the new creation view that can explain the cosmic impact of sin and redemption.

The new creation view of eschatology

Let us begin by outlining Wright's new creation view. The new creation view differs crucially from other prominent eschatological views, such as the heaven and hell view, as the world that one enters in the eschaton is not distinct from the world one currently occupies. Instead, the cosmos is renewed from top to bottom by God.⁶

Let us unpack these ideas more thoroughly. Wright claims that God created a world that is good but other than Godself,⁷ and in the new creation this world is not destroyed, but is healed.⁸ Here, we have an integrated cosmology of heaven and earth, and the new creation is a redemptive transformation of the original creation rather than the abolition and replacement of it. Heaven and earth, instead of being separate realms of existence, were made for each other, and are able to come together in certain circumstances.⁹

What condition is the universe being healed from in the new creation? Wright claims that because of evil, the cosmos is 'out of joint'.¹⁰ For Wright, evil is a result of idolatry, which occurs when people turn away from worshipping God and instead venerate that which God has created, namely elements of the natural world.¹¹ Evil, therefore, is rebellion, and humans become slaves to sin as a result of it.¹²

Although it is this world that is renewed, this does not mean that the world is getting better and better.¹³ Presently, creation is in a state of death and decay, and God rescues it from this condition.¹⁴ God must do something fresh to put it to rights.¹⁵ For Wright, this process is started at the resurrection. The resurrection begins the process of reconciling the world and bringing it back into harmony with God.¹⁶ For Wright, God does for the entire cosmos what was done to Christ during the resurrection.¹⁷ The resurrection acts as the microcosmos through which the new creation is launched. It reaffirms the goodness and God-giveness of the original creation.¹⁸ After the evil distorting the universe has been dealt with, the universe is remade. The work of Christ in his death and resurrection is not confined to humans that have heard the gospel. Wright states that: 'It resonates out, in ways that we can't fully see or understand, into the vast recesses of the universe.'¹⁹ However, this work of renewal is not completed until the second coming. It is here that the world will be fully put to rights.²⁰

Wright's proposal leaves us with some crucial questions. The ones I shall focus on here relate to the cosmic scope of sin and redemption, although I recognize that there will be other important elements of the model that require exploration. Regarding cosmic scope, one can query how exactly the idolatrous rebellion of humanity can cause the cosmos to become out of joint, and how Christ can in turn heal and renew the entirety of creation through liberating humanity from sin. Indeed, as indicated earlier, Wright himself suggests that we cannot fully understand how the effects of Christ's death and resurrection resonate out into the rest of the cosmos.²¹

Here, I shall propose a cosmopsychist model of the new creation that can help us to understand these claims. I shall not argue that it is the superior account of the new creation view, nor that it is one that Wright himself would endorse. I shall merely argue that it is one way through which we can make sense of these claims regarding the cosmic impact of sin and redemption.

Cosmopsychism and the transparency problem

Before developing the cosmopsychist account of the new creation, I shall provide an overview of cosmopsychism and the key problems discussed with the view in contemporary philosophy of mind. I shall then develop the model of cosmopsychism that will be used in our model of the new creation.

Cosmopsychism, to reiterate, is the idea that the universe is conscious. It is attracting increasing attention in philosophy of mind as a potential solution to the 'hard problem' of consciousness.²² This problem is concerned with difficulties explaining subjective experience: the fact that for human beings and other organisms capable of experience, there is something that it is like to be them.²³

When addressing this problem, it is the job of the cosmopsychist to explain the consciousness of subjects like human beings, not explain it away. In doing this, however, they face a difficult challenge: the individuation problem. This is the issue of explaining how the cosmic subject individuates into the various distinct perspectives of other subjects.²⁴

The individuation problem has been thought by some to mirror the combination problem raised against panpsychism – explaining how micro-experiences (the experiences of quarks and atoms, for example) can combine to yield macro-experience (the experience of more complex subjects, like human beings)²⁵ – and is thus labelled the de-combination problem by such scholars.²⁶

However, this assumption has come under question and dissimilarities between the two problems have been pointed out. One of the key differences is with where the incoherence is located in each problem. In the combination problem, one gets incoherence when explaining the existence of macro-subjects (subjects with macro-consciousness, like humans), as micro-experiences do not seem able to combine to generate macro-experience. However, Itay Shani has noted that with cosmopsychism, the incoherence in explanations of individuation is typically found at the level of the cosmic subject, and not that of macro-subjects.²⁷ As one shall see in the forthcoming discussion of cosmopsychism, explanations of individuation often have difficulties with explaining how we can plausibly deem the cosmic subject a mind, or psyche, with a coherent perspective after its individuation into other subjects.

The model that we shall use in the theological discussion will be a form of constitutive cosmopsychism. In constitutive cosmopsychism, macro-subjects are metaphysically grounded in the cosmic subject, and they are parts of it.²⁸ Grounding is the explanatory relation between more fundamental and less fundamental entities.²⁹ It is an asymmetrical relation of metaphysical dependence. If *x* grounds *y*, then facts about *y* obtain in virtue of facts about *x*.³⁰ Thus, to say that macro-subjects are grounded in the cosmic subject is to say that facts about macro-subjects obtain in virtue of facts about the cosmic subject.

Some understandings of grounding employed in models of cosmopsychism generate problems. For instance, Philip Goff has advanced a theory of grounding by subsumption which suggests that the experiences of lesser subjects are subsumed as aspects within the experience of the cosmic mind.³¹ On this understanding, the cosmic subject would have transparent access to the experiences of the subjects grounded in it and would experience them as they do. Miri Albahari has objected to this, claiming that this

would result in mental chaos. Many of the experiences of other subjects would contradict one another, as one subject may have an overwhelming fear of spiders, while another might love spiders. The mind of the cosmic subject would lack coherence, as it would contain all these conflicting identities and perspectives within itself.³² I shall label this the transparency problem.

Goff expresses willingness to bite the bullet here. In response, he claims that the universe is not an intelligent agent, but its consciousness is simply a mess, meaning that there is no issue with it containing conflicting, or contradictory, contents.³³ However, this response has come under scrutiny. Shani suggests that the workings of the mind involve an intelligent effort at integration, or an attempt to reduce the tensions or discord within it. Therefore, in acting like a mess and not seeking integration Goff's cosmic subject is not acting like a psyche.³⁴

There are several alternative understandings of cosmopsychism one might explore in response to this problem. One could deny that the perspectives of macro-subjects are grounded, or fully grounded, in the cosmic subject. For this, one can adopt a form of non-constitutive cosmopsychism in which the mental states of macro-subjects are not grounded in those of the cosmic subject,³⁵ or one can claim that macro-subjects are partially grounded in the cosmic subject in that the cosmic subject provides them with the ingredients required for them to be subjects of experience, such as sentience and a perspectival structure, while their private perspectives are shaped by factors irreducible to the cosmic subject.³⁶ In denying that the perspectives of other subjects are grounded, or fully grounded, in the cosmic mind, these options allow one to avoid the transparency problem. Alternatively, one can follow Albahari and deny that macro-subjects form parts of a cosmic subject by arguing for an aperspectival variant of cosmopsychism in which fundamental consciousness is free from localized subjectivity, and thus does not belong to a subject.³⁷

These options for responding to the transparency problem are all worthy of consideration. However, for the purposes of this article, I shall instead attempt to revive the constitutive option, drawing on Goff's theory of grounding by subsumption. My motivation for this relates to the theological claims I am trying to explain. Because the perspectives of other subjects are parts of the cosmic mind's own perspective, when the perspectives of these subjects are sinful, or redeemed and renewed through sanctification, they will have a direct impact on the perspective of the cosmic mind. The constitutive view thus allows us to make sense of how sin and redemption impact the cosmos.

Nevertheless, the transparency problem does raise serious concerns with the constitutive view, and thus before turning to the theological discussion I shall consider how the severity of this problem can be lessened. When addressing these concerns, I shall not resolve the transparency problem itself, but shall instead show how we can grant the cosmic mind certain features of intelligent subjects – such as agency and decision-making – despite its fragmentation into different perspectives. This will allow the cosmic mind to select, and act on, the different perspectives constituting it, addressing Shani's concern that it would be acting like a mess.

To explain this, we need an understanding of how a psyche operates when it is integrated, and for this I shall draw on the work of Luke Roelofs. Roelofs proposes a theory of agency – of when actions may be attributed to subjects – that is useful for our purposes.³⁸ I shall now outline this account.

Roelofs suggests that a subject is responsible for an action if the action was brought about through a mechanism that granted an opportunity for all of its parts, or mental states, that are relevant to the action to influence the action. For example, when making a decision in which there are various considerations or motivations to choose from, the

mental states attached to these all had their say, as well as the one that directly motivated the outcome selected. All those that are relevant can make a difference to the action.³⁹

On this account, the subject is only responsible for an action when it is performed through a mechanism that enabled all of its parts that are relevant to the action to have a say in whether the action should be performed. As Roelofs claims, when a decision is made in this way, the resulting action reflects all of the mental states that had their say as well as those that ultimately caused it.⁴⁰ If the action, however, is caused by one mental state (when being startled causes one to drop and smash a plate, for instance), only this mental state is reflected in the action performed.⁴¹

Roelofs uses Donald Davidson's mountain climber case to explain this. The mountain climber is holding their friend by a rope which they drop, causing their friend to fall to their death. On Roelofs's account, if the climber were to have let go inadvertently because they were scared or startled, the dropping of the friend is caused by the responsible mental state. However, the climber is responsible for dropping the friend in cases where all their relevant mental states had a say. For instance, the climber could consider their care for their friend against their desire to lighten their load and decide on the latter option, making them responsible for dropping their friend.⁴²

On this account, the agency of a subject would require mental states to be connected in a particular way. They would need to be coherent, interdependent, and mutually accessible so that they are able to feed into a mechanism or decision-making process that results in a single united action. In cases where there are conflicting motivations, for example, the subject needs to be capable of choosing between them. The different motivations in these cases are made coherent and interdependent through their submission to the decision-making process, in which one course of action is selected.⁴³

For Roelofs, this is how agency can be established within individual subjects. However, he also claims that agency can be established between subjects. Here, similar to the case of individual subjects, a mechanism or decision-making procedure is needed that takes into consideration the wills of different subjects and, in making a decision on how to act, brings the wills involved into alignment. Here, we again have a unified decision, and it is one for which the group of subjects is responsible.⁴⁴ This also holds when these subjects constitute, or form parts of, another subject, as in constitutive cosmopsychism. Here, the wills of the parts are grounded in that of the whole, and thus when the wills of the parts are aligned through the decision-making process the choice can be attributed to the will of the whole.⁴⁵

Roelofs also discusses how mental conflict is resolved on his account. He claims that mental conflict is a result of incompatible desires and a failure of reconciliation. When desires are reconciled successfully, the link between the desire that is not chosen and action is severed. When I decide to go to the gym despite having the desire to stay at home, I reconcile these desires successfully when I do indeed go to the gym instead of refraining. The reconciliation process is unsuccessful when the desire that is not selected defies the decision by controlling or constraining the resulting action through causing actions that satisfy the desire or preventing actions that frustrate it. Thus, the reconciliation process is unsuccessful if my desire to stay at home prevents me from going to the gym despite my decision to go.⁴⁶ This completes our outline of the essential components of Roelofs's account for our purposes.

In constitutive cosmopsychism, we can apply this account to the entire cosmic subject. We can claim that the cosmic subject possesses agency, the ability to act and make decisions, and the ability to resolve mental conflict when it has established some form of decision-making process that takes all of its relevant parts, which will be the perspectives of the subjects constituting it, into consideration when acting.⁴⁷ Here, all parts of the cosmic subject need to be capable of feeding into the decision-making process as this keeps

the cosmic mind unified in allowing all parts of it to remain connected through this mechanism.⁴⁸ However, it is only the parts relevant to particular decisions that will have an input in those decisions.⁴⁹

To be clear, this does not resolve the transparency problem, as the cosmic mind is still fragmented into distinct, incompatible perspectives. However, it does enable the constitutive cosmopsychist to bestow things like agency and decision-making, which are crucial features of intelligent subjects, on the cosmic mind. The relevant mechanism can also enable the cosmic mind to resolve instances of mental conflict between these differing perspectives and generate a unified action, preventing it from simply acting like a mess in the way that concerns Shani. This lessens the severity of the implications of the transparency problem.⁵⁰

One might immediately respond that while such a mechanism may be capable of achieving this, no such mechanism exists. There does not seem to be any such decision-making process in operation within humanity itself, let alone one that can connect all subjects in the way required to produce actions at the level of the cosmic mind. This may bring the viability of this solution into question. However, I shall address this concern within the theological narrative used to make sense of Wright's claims. I shall now turn to outlining this theological account.

A cosmopsychist account of the new creation

Now, I shall present the cosmopsychist account of the new creation, drawing on the resources outlined in the previous section. I shall start by outlining how the cosmic mind is generated. I shall then clarify how sin impacts the cosmic mind, and after that I shall explain the impact of the removal of this condition in the new creation.

Genesis and the formation of the cosmic mind

In the initial act of creation, the cosmos emerges after God defeats the waters of chaos.⁵¹ In Genesis 1:1–2, it is said that: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.'⁵² The world was formed from these formless waters of chaos.

We can provide a cosmopsychist interpretation of this. We can claim that in the beginning, cosmic consciousness was formless in the sense that it was aperspectival in the way suggested by Albahari, and it was out of this that God created the cosmic mind. God gave form to the formless ocean of consciousness, and transformed it into a subject. The cosmic mind itself is not divine, but is separate from God as God's creation. As suggested earlier, here I am going to use a constitutive form of cosmopsychism, drawing on Goff's theory of grounding by subsumption, as the basis of this model.⁵³ I shall also use Roelofs's account of agency to show how this cosmic mind can be considered an agent capable of making, and acting on, decisions. This model can provide us with an understanding of the cosmic scope of sin and redemption, as shall be shown later.

It is worth taking time to consider the implications of this proposal. In many accounts of cosmopsychism that grapple with the religious implications of the position, the cosmic mind itself is considered to be divine.⁵⁴ Thus, in making God and the cosmic mind distinct this article takes a very different approach. Although it is not the purpose of this article to provide a full defence of this, I shall briefly discuss some of the key issues here.

It is important to note that while God is often associated with the cosmic mind in the cosmopsychist literature, cosmopsychism is not incompatible with forms of theism that posit a separation between God and the world.⁵⁵ In fact, cosmopsychism shares

similarities with the idea of the world-soul,⁵⁶ which has been developed by certain scholars in the Christian tradition into a view of creation in which the universe embodies a soul that is ontologically distinct from God.⁵⁷ Thus, while the cosmopsychist literature has often associated the divine with the cosmic mind, there is precedent in the theological literature for the construction of models in which God and the cosmic mind are distinct entities.

One might respond that the addition of the cosmic mind into this picture is unnecessary, as God can make do without it. God is capable of things like ordering the universe, so it is not obvious that God would have any need for a cosmic mind.⁵⁸ However, there are certain theological benefits that the bestowal of consciousness and agency on the universe would have. This can be seen when interpreting some claims made by proponents of the new creation view. For instance, John Polkinghorne, when discussing the differences between the original creation and the new creation, states:

The understanding that this creates in my mind is that the old creation has the character which is appropriate to an evolutionary universe, endowed with the ability through the shuffling explorations of its happenstance to 'make itself'. It is a universe, certainly not lying outside the sustaining and providential care of God, but nevertheless it is given its due independence to follow its own history. That historical process cannot avoid the cost of suffering which is the price of independence. The new creation represents the transformation of that universe when it enters freely into a new and closer relationship with its Creator, so that it becomes a totally sacramental world, suffused with the divine presence.⁵⁹

In this model, we can interpret the independence of the universe literally. In accounts of cosmopsychism in which the universe is an intelligent agent, we can claim that the cosmic mind has been granted autonomy and independence to act, as well as the potential for inner development.⁶⁰ This explains how the universe has the ability to make itself and the independence to follow its own history.⁶¹

This has advantages. A very serious problem for Christian philosophers is the problem of evil. The problem of natural evil, which is evil caused by natural processes,⁶² is an important component of this. One of the key questions prompted by natural evil is that of why evolution, the process that generated intelligent life, took so long and caused so much suffering. It is unclear why this would be the case if God, who would presumably be capable of generating intelligent life without so much suffering, exists. However, if God has granted the cosmic mind autonomy and independence to act, we can explain the inefficiency of such processes with reference to the cosmic mind's autonomy in developing the processes that gave rise to intelligent life. The cosmic mind, rather than God, can be deemed responsible for the problems or errors that result in natural evil.⁶³

To be clear, this should not be understood in a deistic way in which God leaves the cosmic mind to work on its own once it has been created. Although the cosmic mind has been granted autonomy in the generation of certain creative processes, God may be seen to guide or direct the cosmic mind. God's guidance can perhaps help prompt the cosmic mind to do things like develop the processes that give rise to intelligent life, or to keep itself ordered and in right relationship with God. This still leaves room for error, such that we can still construe natural evil as being a result of the cosmic mind. God's guidance may allow for the cosmic mind to exercise its autonomy when implementing the guidance such that error is possible in this process. Thus, we can construe God as having involvement in directing and guiding the cosmic mind while retaining our explanation of natural evil.⁶⁴

Of course, God would be capable of carrying out these processes without the cosmic mind.⁶⁵ However, as previously noted, if we deem God responsible in this way, we would have difficulty explaining natural evil. Moreover, we can justify God's use of the cosmic mind here with reasoning employed in the free will defence in the literature on the problem of evil. There, one can find claims that the existence of free creatures is a good because they would resemble God in being centres of creative activity.⁶⁶ We can make similar claims about the cosmic mind here, and say that it too resembles God in being a centre of creative activity. Thus, while God would be capable of creating intelligent life without the cosmic mind, there is justification for the idea that God would create a cosmic mind that has autonomy here.

There are further theological advantages. In the passage outlined earlier, Polkinghorne also refers to the ability of the universe to freely enter into a relationship with God. Again, this is something that can be facilitated by cosmopsychism. In bestowing agency and decision-making on the universe, it is able to choose to have a relationship with God. This enables God to have a reciprocal, loving relationship with the entire universe, instead of restricting this to particular groups like human beings.⁶⁷

One might query whether such benefits apply to our constitutive model due to the transparency problem. However, these concerns can be addressed. As noted in the previous section, it is the conflicting perspectives of other subjects that cause the cosmic subject in constitutive cosmopsychism to enter into a state of mental chaos. When the cosmic mind is developing and implementing the processes that give rise to other subjects, including intelligent life, it has not yet generated any other subjects. At this stage, we need not construe the cosmic mind as a complete mess, but can see it as an intelligent entity with its own coherent perspective. Thus, it would be capable of setting up these processes through its own autonomy.⁶⁸

One might have concerns that the individuation of the cosmic mind into other subjects jeopardizes both its autonomy and its ability to freely have a relationship with God. In this model of cosmopsychism, other subjects are brought about through the individuation of the cosmic mind, and their perspectives are subsumed within its own, giving rise to the transparency problem. Its perspective would incorporate all the subjects within creation, including humankind.

In response, we can claim that the cosmic mind was meant to generate other conscious subjects without compromising its agency and autonomy.⁶⁹ How can this occur in this model? In the constitutive account proposed earlier, we did not address the transparency problem, or the fragmentation of the cosmic mind into different perspectives. However, if the cosmic mind were to have a mechanism that enabled it to choose between the differing perspectives that constituted it in the way suggested by Roelofs, one can grant it agency and the ability to make decisions, addressing concerns that this cosmic mind would simply act like a mess.

We can claim that the cosmic mind was created with a decision-making process such as this that enabled it to retain its agency after individuation. The decision-making procedure is dedicated to keeping creation in right relationship to God, and all decisions made through it contribute to this in some way. Although all subjects must be capable of feeding into the mechanism, given Roelofs's reference to relevance in his account some decisions may require the input of particular sets of subjects within creation. This would require the relevant subjects to commune on the relevant decisions through the decision-making procedure.

Since the will of the cosmic mind is constituted by the wills of other subjects, this decision-making process allows us to attribute these decisions, and the resulting actions, to the cosmic mind itself.⁷⁰ This ability to make and act on decisions enables the cosmic mind to retain autonomy after individuation and means that it can still freely choose to

have a relationship with God through this decision-making process. I acknowledge that this is an enormously speculative suggestion, and a decision-making procedure on a scale such as this is difficult to imagine. However, it is certainly within God's power to facilitate this, so it is not beyond the realms of possibility.

One might object that there are certain subjects, such as babies and some species of animals, that seem incapable of contributing to a decision-making process in this way. However, there are ways around this problem. We might claim that the Holy Spirit can take on an intermediary role in such cases. The Spirit might take in the inputs of these subjects, such as particular feelings and desires, and feed them into the decision-making process itself. Cases such as this will require the Spirit to take on a rather prominent role in decision-making, but it ensures that the perspectives of these subjects are adequately considered.

It is also worth noting that this model can accommodate the differences in perspective and identity between creatures. Despite the cosmic mind's fragmentation into these subjects with different perspectives and identities, the decision-making process enables it to decide between them. As suggested by Roelofs, mental conflict only remains unresolved if subjects attempt to frustrate the outcomes of decisions made by the cosmic mind or fulfil desires the cosmic mind rejected. Thus, so long as creatures do not rebel against the decisions made the cosmic mind will be able to resolve instances of mental conflict. Thus, this model is compatible with the differences in identity and perspective that can be found in creation.

This completes our outline of the creation and initial state of the cosmic mind, and before proceeding, it is worth summarizing the account. God formed the cosmic mind out of formless, aperspectival consciousness. Prior to individuation, the cosmic mind established the processes that gave rise to other subjects, including intelligent life, through its own autonomy. It was also granted a decision-making procedure that enabled it to make decisions and act on them after its individuation into other subjects, allowing it to retain its autonomy and ability to freely choose to have a relationship with God. Now that we have outlined this, we can provide an explanation of the impact sin has on the cosmos.

The effects of sin

Now, we must explain how sin can have a cosmic impact in this model of cosmopsychism.⁷¹ In this theological story, we can claim that sin impacts the cosmic mind in two ways. First, as mentioned earlier, the cosmic mind is constituted of the perspectives of other subjects. Therefore, if these perspectives are sinful, the cosmic mind will be at least partly constituted by sinful perspectives.

Second, we can claim that sin causes the eradication of the decision-making process that granted the cosmic mind agency and the ability to make decisions. Subjects, in turning away from God and worshipping other things within creation, compromise the unity of the cosmic mind. Idolatry is multifaceted, and there are numerous things within creation that people can choose to venerate, many of which will conflict with the choices made by others. We can claim that the differences in commitment caused by idolatry result in subjects focusing on their own individual projects, preventing them from retaining the communal focus devoted to keeping creation in right relationship to God.

As a result of this turn inward, the decision-making process breaks down. The decision-making process requires all subjects to be capable of feeding into it and sin prevents sinful subjects from doing so, meaning that this decision-making process is no longer in place. This means that the cosmic mind has no way of navigating its state of mental chaos, as it

is unable to decide between, and act on, the numerous perspectives that constitute it. As a result of sin, the cosmic mind is robbed of agency.

This gives us an idea of how sin makes it such that the cosmos is out of joint. Because sinful subjects are turned away from God and pursuing their own individual projects, there is no mechanism through which the cosmic subject can turn the inputs of these subjects into a unified action. This also deprives God of a relationship with the cosmic mind, as its lack of agency means that it can no longer freely choose to enter into, or remain in, a relationship with God.⁷²

The agency of the cosmic mind has been impeded by sin and idolatry because subjects have turned away from God and towards their own individual projects, and we can claim that this turn towards individuality means that they no longer commune to form unified actions at the level of the cosmic subject. If this can be addressed through the re-establishment of the relevant mechanism, the cosmic mind's agency can be restored, enabling it to navigate its state of mental chaos to make, and act on, decisions. I shall now outline how God does this in this model.

The renewal of the cosmic mind

Now, we can present our account of how the cosmic mind is renewed in the new creation. As suggested previously, I shall argue that the turning away of other subjects from idolatry and towards God facilitates the reintegration of the cosmic mind, re-establishing its agency and allowing it to navigate its state of mental chaos.⁷³ I shall now outline how this occurs.

As Wright claims, the renewal process is started at the resurrection but will not be completed until the second coming. When discussing the presence of Christ in creation in between his ascension and the second coming, Wright claims that Christ remains an embodied human following his ascension into God's new world, and so there is a crucial sense in which Christ is absent. However, Christ is also present to humanity through the Holy Spirit and the sacraments.⁷⁴ The work of the Holy Spirit shall prove crucial in explaining how the cosmic mind is renewed.

How, through the work of the Holy Spirit, is the state of the cosmic mind addressed? Several scholars have discussed the way the work of the Holy Spirit within a person leads to their integration around the good. Eleonore Stump, for instance, has claimed that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the mind of a believer is the means through which God and the believer work towards integration around the good in a cooperative manner. The virtues infused by the Spirit at the indwelling counteract the believer's sinful dispositions and, so long as the believer continues to will the strengthening of their willing the good, the sanctification process will eventually culminate in their complete integration around the good.⁷⁵

Just as the work of the Spirit can help to facilitate integration at the individual level, it can also do so at the communal level. Joshua Cockayne has recently proposed a model of the work of the Spirit within the Church that will be of use here. Cockayne notes that 'the Church is a body instituted and directed by the one Spirit, through whom all its members are united'.⁷⁶ On the other hand, Cockayne acknowledges that the Church does not appear to be united, but is instead fractured into different denominations, some of which have vastly differing beliefs.⁷⁷

To produce a model of the oneness of the Church which acknowledges its apparent division, Cockayne draws on the social ontology literature.⁷⁸ Cockayne claims that the Church is a group agent, one in which the members are linked by its organizational structure and decision-making procedure.⁷⁹ Members contribute to this decision-making procedure with varying levels of awareness of how their actions contribute to the Church as a

whole.⁸⁰ However, the Holy Spirit unites the contributions of members into a coherent group action.⁸¹ In guiding and shaping the actions of members of the Church in this way, the Holy Spirit brings them into line with the will of Christ.⁸²

The understandings of integration at the individual and communal level shall both prove useful in clarifying how the freeing of subjects from the grip of sin and idolatry helps to address the impact sin has on the cosmic mind. The work of the Spirit towards the integration of individual subjects around the good will lessen the number of sinful perspectives constituting the cosmic mind, as more and more subjects turn away from idolatry and towards God. In the new creation, none of the perspectives constituting the cosmic mind will be sinful.

Moreover, Cockayne's model of the oneness of the Church can help us to outline how the decision-making procedure that generates unified actions at the level of the cosmic mind can be re-established in the new creation. If the Holy Spirit were to help to cohere the inputs of subjects into a unified action at the level of the cosmic mind, instead of confining its work to the Church, this would enable the cosmic mind to be considered an agent in Roelofs's understanding. At the second coming, the decision-making procedure that is coordinated by the Spirit in the Church is extended to the entirety of creation and, just as in the initial creation, it is focused on keeping creation in right relationship to God.

The more people that join the Church and feed into this decision-making procedure, the closer the cosmic mind gets to unity and integration. However, as long as there are subjects residing outside of the Church that are not feeding into this decision-making procedure, the cosmic mind remains unable to navigate its state of mental chaos, as we need all subjects within creation to be able to feed into this decision-making procedure to generate unified actions at the level of the cosmic mind.⁸³ The extension of the decision-making procedure within the Church to the entirety of creation at the second coming addresses this, as we can say that the Spirit, which is distinct from the cosmic mind, helps to cohere the inputs of subjects within creation into actions at the level of the cosmic mind.⁸⁴ Through this, the Spirit brings the entirety of the created order into line with the will of Christ.⁸⁵

How exactly would the Spirit do this in this model? We do not want to say that the Spirit simply collates, and acts on, the inputs itself in the new creation, as here it does not seem to be the case that the cosmic mind has any input at all. In fact, one might argue that the cosmic mind here still lacks agency, as it is the Spirit that is deciding and acting on the inputs, rather than the cosmic mind. Thus, the role of the Spirit in the new creation needs to be more qualified.

Instead of construing this process in a way that makes the Spirit look solely responsible, we can make this more of a collaborative endeavour. Instead of collating the perspectives itself, we can modify the role of the Spirit and claim that in the new creation it instead facilitates the re-establishment of the decision-making process within the cosmic mind that enables the cosmic mind itself to collate the inputs and reach decisions. This will mean establishing a decision-making process that all subjects are capable of feeding into in which the subjects relevant to particular decisions collaborate together to reach decisions that can be attributed to the cosmic mind. Although the Spirit helps to facilitate this process, the decisions and resulting actions can be attributed to the cosmic mind itself.

As mentioned earlier, the Spirit will have a more direct role when inputting the perspectives of subjects that are incapable of contributing to the decision-making process in this way, as it will collate and input these into the decision-making process itself. The re-establishment of the decision-making procedure restores the agency and autonomy of the cosmic mind, and allows it to freely choose to enter into a relationship with God.

Note that such a model can accommodate both the individuality of subjects and their unanimity in response to God in the new creation. With the death of idolatry and integration of individual subjects around the good, all of their wills are now ordered towards worshipping God. However, this model can also accommodate differences in identity and perspective between individual subjects in the new creation. Unified actions at the level of the cosmic subject can be formed from the perspectives of individual subjects even when their perspectives and identities diverge in significant ways, as the decision-making procedure allows it to choose between conflicting motivations. Thus, this model can account for the differences in identity and individual particularities that one may find in the afterlife.

This cosmopsychist understanding of the new creation presents us with answers to the earlier raised questions of how sin and redemption can be cosmic in scope. Both impact the perspectives of subjects constituting the cosmic mind. Moreover sin, in turning subjects away from God and towards idolatry, jeopardizes the decision-making procedure that enables the cosmic mind to navigate its state of mental chaos. The work of the Holy Spirit, however, alleviates this in the new creation, as it enables individual subjects to be integrated around the good, and helps to establish a decision-making procedure that takes their inputs and turns them into unified actions at the level of the cosmic subject. Thus, in this cosmopsychist model, we can provide an account of how sin and redemption impact the cosmos.

Cosmopsychism is essential when it comes to explaining this. One might claim that the Spirit is capable of collating the inputs of all creatures regardless of whether these creatures are parts of a cosmic mind, potentially leading one to think that the cosmic mind is superfluous. However, the cosmic mind is integral in this model of the new creation when it comes to explaining how the cosmos comes to be out of joint and is then renewed, as the fact that these subjects form parts of its perspective enables us to explain how sin and redemption can impact it. This means that the cosmic mind is not superfluous in our case.

This completes our outline of the cosmopsychist account of the new creation. To reiterate, God forms a constitutive cosmic mind out of aperspectival cosmic consciousness. It is created with a decision-making procedure that allows it to retain agency after its individuation into other subjects. As a result of sin and idolatry, this decision-making procedure is jeopardized. This, however, is addressed at the new creation, as the Holy Spirit facilitates the integration of individual subjects around the good and re-establishes the decision-making procedure that takes their inputs and generates unified actions at the level of the cosmic subject.

Conclusion

This cosmopsychist account of the new creation seems able to address the key questions regarding cosmic scope in Wright's new creation view of eschatology. After outlining Wright's view, queries were raised regarding how sin and redemption could have an impact at the cosmic level. Following an outline of cosmopsychism, we were able to explain this using a constitutive model of cosmopsychism in which sin and idolatry both impact the perspectives of the subjects constituting the cosmic subject and deprive the cosmic subject of its ability to navigate its state of mental chaos, something that is alleviated at the new creation. How the effects of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection reverberate out into the cosmos is not a mystery in this model.

It is important to pay heed to the scope of this discussion. I have not argued that this account of the new creation is the superior account, nor that proponents of the new creation view are likely to endorse it. Indeed, some may prefer a solution to these questions that draws primarily from biblical exegesis rather than from the use of concepts in

contemporary analytic philosophy. Nevertheless, this cosmopsychist understanding does seem to present us with a plausible understanding of how the cosmos is renewed in the new creation, and thus is certainly worthy of consideration.

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Notes

1. See Leidenhag (2021), Leidenhag (2020b), and Leidenhag (2019).
2. Goff et al. (2022).
3. See Chalmers (2016) for further discussion of panpsychism.
4. Goff et al. (2022). See also Ganeri and Shani (2022), for a useful outline of the position.
5. See, for instance, Gasparri (2019) and Fasching (2022) who explore cosmopsychism from the perspective of Advaita Vedānta in Hinduism. I thank an anonymous reviewer for pushing me to clarify this.
6. Wright (2007), 80. To be clear, Wright is not the only scholar to have proposed such a view. The new creation is also discussed in Polkinghorne (1994, ch. 9).
7. Wright (2007, 94).
8. Wright (2007, 122).
9. For this, and the ancient Jewish cosmology undergirding it, see Wright (2019, ch. 5). Ian McFarland similarly notes that renewal and God's care extend to the entirety of the created order. See McFarland (2014, x).
10. Wright (2007, 95).
11. Wright (2007, 95).
12. Wright (2007, 96).
13. Wright (2007, 93).
14. Wright (2007, 104–105). See also Polkinghorne (1994, 164).
15. Wright (2007, 93). The idea that creation naturally progresses towards better states is also critiqued in McFarland (2014, 152–158).
16. Wright (2007, 96–97).
17. Wright (2007, 93).
18. This and the importance of the resurrection is explained in detail in Wright (2019, ch. 6).
19. Wright (2007, 97).
20. Wright (2007, 121–123).
21. While this article focuses on these specific theological claims made by Wright, this may be a more general problem. Since at the heart of the new creation view is the idea that the cosmos is renewed, scholars will probably need an explanation of how sin and redemption impact the entire cosmos. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.
22. One of the most influential forms of cosmopsychism is priority cosmopsychism, in which the consciousness of the cosmos is ontologically prior to the consciousnesses of individual organisms. For an outline of this, see Miller (2018), and Nagasawa and Wager (2016). Priority cosmopsychism is a position attributable to Nagasawa and Wager. It is based on the priority monism of Schaffer (2010).
23. For more on this and the difficulties that different theories have with it, see Chalmers (2003). A theory of cosmopsychism that does not seem to help here is existence cosmopsychism, as here the cosmic subject would be the only subject that truly exists. See Benovsky (2018, 48), for this outline of existence cosmopsychism, and Leidenhag (2021, 74), for this critique.
24. Swami Medhananda (2022, 93).
25. Chalmers (2016, 36).
26. See Miller (2018) and Miller (2021).
27. This and the other differences are pointed out in Shani (2022, 13–15).
28. Chalmers (2020, 364).
29. Bernstein (2016, 21).
30. For more on grounding and its implications for panpsychism and cosmopsychism, see Goff (2020, 144–156).
31. See Goff (2017, 220–233).
32. Albahari (2020, 122). This issue is also faced by the model of constitutive cosmopsychism developed in Mathews (2003, chs 2, 3, and 5).

33. See Goff (2017, 243). It is worth noting that Goff has proposed an agentive model of cosmopsychism elsewhere. See Goff (2019).
34. Shani (2022, 16–17).
35. Chalmers (2020, 363–364).
36. See Shani (2022). This outline was also assisted by Albahari (2022, 30).
37. See Albahari (2019), and Albahari (2022). An aperspectival form of cosmopsychism is also proposed in Shani and Keppler (2018). Swami Medhananda has commented that this option has problems with explaining how perspectival subjects can emerge from aperspectival fundamental consciousness. See Swami Medhananda (2022, 105).
38. Roelofs's overarching project is a view called combinationism, which argues that the experiential properties of subjects can be constituted by the experiential properties of the subjects composing them. See Roelofs (2019) and Roelofs (2016) for more on this.
39. Roelofs (2019, 253–257). Roelofs does not provide a precise account of relevance. See Roelofs (2019, 256).
40. Roelofs (2019, 255). Roelofs is clear that it is not just actions resulting from conscious decisions that one can credit to subjects. However, just as with conscious decision-making, these actions would still be performed through a process that enables all their relevant mental states to have an input. See Roelofs (2019, 255).
41. Roelofs (2019, 255).
42. Roelofs (2019, 254–255). For Davidson's own outline, and the accompanying discussion of the impact of beliefs and desires on actions, see Davidson (2001, 79–80).
43. Roelofs (2019, 255–256).
44. Roelofs (2019, 256–259).
45. Roelofs (2019, 258–259).
46. Roelofs (2019, 259–261).
47. In refraining from precisely specifying how such a decision-making procedure would work, I am following Roelofs (2019, 258–259).
48. This draws on Roelofs (2019, 258).
49. This point is key in establishing the difference between actions that can be attributed to the cosmic mind from those that can be attributed to particular groups. In the case of the cosmic mind, all its parts are capable of contributing to the decision-making process but only the relevant parts have an input. However, the process through which decisions are made by particular groups is typically only open to members of the group in question.
50. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for helping me to further clarify this point.
51. This and other elements are pointed to in the discussion of cosmic narrative in Wright (2019, ch. 5). The reference to the waters of chaos need not rule out the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, as it is possible that God created these too. For discussion, see McFarland (2014, 3–4).
52. This, and all subsequent biblical references, are taken from the New International Version. My use of the biblical passages here is not exegetical. I am not claiming that this is what they say, but am referring to them to illustrate how my model works.
53. Despite drawing on his theory of grounding by subsumption, this model differs from Goff's in crucial respects. On Goff's view, other subjects are necessary constituents of the cosmic mind, and it has no existence apart from their existence. Given that the cosmic mind in my account exists prior to other subjects, this is not the case here. Furthermore, the cosmic mind has more active agency in my model, and this again means that it differs from Goff's. I thank an anonymous reviewer for pushing me to clarify this.
54. See, for instance, Albahari (2019), Albahari (2022), Shani and Keppler (2018), and Swami Medhananda (2022).
55. Leidenhag (2022, 7), makes a similar point. To be clear, cosmopsychism can be used in alternative forms of theism, such as pantheism and panentheism. See Leidenhag (2020a) and Nagasawa (2020) for discussion. Cosmopsychism has even been used as a rival to theism in philosophy of religion. See, for instance, Goff (2019) and Cawdron (2023). It is thus a versatile position that can be developed in numerous different ways depending on the concerns of the relevant scholar.
56. This concept is outlined in Plato's *Timaeus* (see Plato 2008). Wright himself is critical of the presence of Platonism in theology and thus, at a glance, one might conclude that cosmopsychism goes against this element of his thought. However, the specific element of Platonism that Wright critiques is its devaluing of bodies and the created order, which has caused some Christians to believe that we will escape this world and enter a new one after death. See, for instance, Wright (2007, 18). We are not doing this here, so our use of cosmopsychism is not problematic in this sense. Wright's emphasis on the material is compatible with cosmopsychism. One can claim that the material world is grounded in cosmic consciousness. For example, see Shani (2015, 410). I am grateful to Joanna Leidenhag for raising this concern.
57. See, for instance, Bulgakov (2002, 79–103), Williams (1927, lecture 8), and Dumsday (2019).

58. I thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this objection.
59. Polkinghorne (1994, 167).
60. See Dumsday (2019), for this and some other potential advantages. Dumsday is arguing for the world-soul here, but the advantages outlined seem applicable to a cosmopsychist universe as well. I do not intend to imply that Polkinghorne would endorse such an interpretation, however.
61. When speaking of independence here, I am only referring to the cosmic mind's agential nature. Essential to the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* is the idea that God not only freely created the world out of nothing but also sustains it in existence, making it dependent on God for its existence. See Leidenhag (2021, 91–96). Here, we can still claim that the cosmic mind is dependent on God for its existence much like autonomous human agents are, meaning that the autonomy of the cosmic mind here does not significantly conflict with this doctrine.
62. Swinburne (1978, 295).
63. See Dumsday (2019, 317–320). This is not the only explanation of natural evil available, but it is certainly worthy of consideration.
64. I thank an anonymous reviewer for pushing me to clarify this.
65. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.
66. See Plantinga (1973, 542).
67. It should be acknowledged that this discussion of the theological merits of cosmopsychism is not intended to be exhaustive and requires far more exploration than can be given here.
68. One may query whether the cosmic mind here would jeopardize God's infinity and unlimited nature, as it takes on a considerable amount of responsibility for creative processes. However, I do not think this follows. We can still deem God the primary cause of all created effects, and the cosmic mind, which is a created effect itself, can be a secondary cause of some of the created effects that occur within it. Here, I am drawing on McFarland (2014, 144–145). I thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this objection.
69. Here, I am drawing on Williams (1927, 526–527).
70. This draws on Roelofs (2019, 259).
71. Williams proposes that the fall of the world-soul is the cause of the existence of evil in the world. See lecture 8 of Williams (1927), for more on this. I shall not commit myself to such an idea here.
72. Due to the presence of natural evil, one may query whether the cosmos was already 'out of joint' prior to the sin and idolatry of subjects within creation. However, as previously suggested, we need not construe natural evil as being a result of some moral fault of the cosmic mind, but can instead deem it a result of mistakes or errors in the establishment of creative processes.
73. This is drawn from Williams (1927, 530).
74. Wright (2007, 112–114).
75. Stump (2018, 342–344).
76. Cockayne (2022, 20). This builds on Cockayne's earlier work. See Cockayne (2019).
77. Cockayne (2022, 20–21).
78. Cockayne (2022, 21).
79. Cockayne (2022, 30–31).
80. Cockayne (2022, 32–34).
81. Cockayne (2022, 34).
82. Cockayne (2022, 35). A similar model is proposed in Crisp (2022, ch. 9).
83. To be clear, while all subjects must be capable of feeding into the decision-making procedure for there to be unified actions at the level of the cosmic mind, Roelofs's reference to relevance means that not all subjects will contribute to every decision made, but only those relevant to the particular decision.
84. This reference to the Church here may make this position look exclusivist. However, this position is still consistent with inclusivism. To make this model inclusivist, we can claim that those who have not heard or do not believe in the Gospel may still be saved and contribute to this decision-making process in the new creation. I thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this objection.
85. One might wonder whether it is possible for this decision-making process to be re-established without the Holy Spirit. However, it is difficult to fathom how this might work. We would need a decision-making process that all subjects within creation are capable of feeding into. It seems implausible to suggest that subjects would be capable of re-establishing this without the help of the Spirit, especially given the impact of sin and idolatry and the fact that there are some subjects that seem incapable of contributing to it on their own in the way required. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pushing me to consider this.

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