

# The Moral Parody Argument Against Panpsychism\*

Zach Blaesì

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**Abstract** I exploit parallel considerations in the philosophy of mind and metaethics to argue that the reasoning employed in an important argument for panpsychism overgeneralizes to support an analogous position in metaethics: *panmoralism*. Next, I raise a number of problems for panmoralism and thereby build a case for taking the metaethical parallel to be a *reductio ad absurdum* of the argument for panpsychism. Finally, I contrast panmoralism with a position recently defended by Einar Duenger Bohn and argue that the two suffer from similar problems. I conclude by drawing some general lessons for panpsychism.

**Keywords** Panpsychism · Panmoralism · Pannormism · Moral realism · Emergence · Grounding · Essence

## 1 Introduction

Human beings and other complex systems undergo a variety of experiences, from unpleasant feelings of pain to vibrant experiences of color. While that is the starting point to any realist theory of consciousness, panpsychism takes that starting point a step further by holding that the entities characterized by fundamental physics that compose those systems are themselves conscious. As a result, if there is a fundamental level of reality, then panpsychism implies that consciousness is a rock-bottom phenomenon.<sup>1</sup>

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✉ Zach Blaesì  
zblaesì@utexas.edu  
Department of Philosophy, The University of Texas at Austin, 2210 Speedway, Stop  
C3500, Austin, TX 78712, USA

<sup>1</sup> I assume that there is a fundamental level of reality, but my arguments can be restated so that they are consistent with the falsity of this assumption. Cosmopsychists maintain that a cosmic subject is fundamental (e.g., Goff, 2017). I won't consider cosmopsychism here;

In this paper, I exploit parallel considerations in the philosophy of mind and metaethics to argue that the reasoning employed in an important argument for panpsychism overgeneralizes to support an analogous position in metaethics: *panmoralism*. To the extent that panmoralism should be rejected, so also should the argument for panpsychism; so unless there is something else to recommend the view, panpsychism should be rejected as well. This is the *moral parody argument against panpsychism*. While this argument does not refute panpsychism, it does pose an indirect challenge to the view. When confronted with the moral parody argument, panpsychists are left with four options: (i) adopt panmoralism; (ii) reject moral realism; (iii) explain how the relevant parallels can be broken; or (iv) replace the argument for panpsychism with some other argument. While options (i) and (ii) add to the costs of panpsychism, options (iii) and (iv) suggest that there is more work to be done in establishing panpsychism as a respectable theory of mind.

The paper proceeds as follows. In Section 2, I provide an introduction to the positions in the philosophy of mind and metaethics that will figure into my arguments. In Section 3, I lay out the argument for panpsychism. In Section 4, I argue that the same sorts of considerations that apparently motivate panpsychism (as a version of phenomenal realism) also apparently motivate panmoralism (as a version of moral realism). In Section 5, I build a case for taking the metaethical parallel to be a *reductio ad absurdum* of the argument for panpsychism. In Section 6, I contrast panmoralism with a position recently defended by Bohn (2018) and argue that the two suffer from similar problems. Finally, in Section 7, I conclude by drawing some general lessons for panpsychism.

## 2 Background

In this section, I provide an overview of moral realism, panpsychism, and some related positions that will figure into my arguments. Following the lead of Goff (2017) and Rosen (2018), I deploy an ideology of (*metaphysical*) *ground* and *essence* in order to make these positions precise. I start by providing a brief introduction to these notions.

Suppose that there is a party in the conference room. We might then ask *why* there is a party in the conference room. In asking this question, we needn't be requesting a *causal* explanation of the party's occurrence; perhaps we already know that the party was caused by the department chair's sending an email. Rather, in our more philosophical moods, we think of reality as stratified into levels, some more fundamental than others. We want to know what *underlies* the existence of the party at a given time, and we expect an answer to cite the facts *in virtue of which* there is a party in the conference room.

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I use "panpsychism" as shorthand for what Goff (2017) would call "constitutive smallest panpsychism."

Ground is this notion of determination and constitutive explanation that links the less fundamental to the more fundamental.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to asking *why* a given entity exists, we might ask *what it is* to be that entity. An answer to this question should state what is *essential* to the entity in question.<sup>3</sup> This is not the same as stating what *must* be true if the entity is to exist (Fine, 1994). It is necessary that if Socrates exists, then Socrates is a member of {Socrates}. But being a member of {Socrates} is no part of *what it is* to be Socrates. The dependency runs in the other direction: it lies in the essence of {Socrates} to contain Socrates as its sole member. The notions of ground and essence are closely related. For whenever some facts ground another, it is highly plausible that the ground-theoretic connection is explainable with reference to the essence of one or more constituents of the grounded fact. As Fine (2012) puts it, “It is the fact to be grounded that ‘points’ to its grounds and not the grounds that point to what they may ground” (p. 76). Why does the existence of Socrates ground the existence of {Socrates}? Because it lies in the essence of a set that if its members exist, then the existence of those members grounds the existence of the set of those members. Why does the fact that snow is white ground the fact that either snow is white or the moon is made of cheese? Because it lies in the essence of disjunction that disjunctions are grounded in their true disjuncts. It is easy to multiply examples (Greenberg, 2014, p. 173).

With the notions of ground and essence in our toolkit, I now turn to the aforementioned positions. Let’s call the moral and normative properties that we pre-theoretically countenance “o-moral” and “o-normative” properties, respectively (“o” for “ordinary”).<sup>4</sup> We can then understand an *o-moral* or *o-normative fact* to be a fact about the instantiation of an o-moral or o-normative property. *Moral realism*, as I understand it, is the minimal thesis that there are obtaining o-moral facts. Understood in this minimal way, moral realism is *prima facie* compatible with various views concerning the metaphysics-

<sup>2</sup> Following Rosen (2010), I take grounding to be a multigrade relation between facts, understood to be “structured entities built up from worldly items—objects, relations, connectives, quantifiers, etc.—in roughly the sense in which sentences are built up from words” (p. 114). I use “[*P*]” as a function term for the fact that *P*, which *obtains* just in case *P*. When [*P*<sub>1</sub>], [*P*<sub>2</sub>], . . . ∈ Δ, I write “Δ < [*Q*]” for “[*P*<sub>1</sub>], [*P*<sub>2</sub>], . . . ground [*Q*]” The primary notion of ground is *full*: if Δ < [*Q*], then nothing needs to be added to Δ in order to explain the obtaining of [*Q*]; and it is metaphysically necessary that if every fact in Δ obtains, then [*Q*] obtains. But we can define a notion of *partial ground* (<) in terms of full ground: [*P*] < [*Q*] just in case [*P*] fully grounds [*Q*] on its own or in combination with other facts. The partial grounding relation is a strict partial order.

<sup>3</sup> I take the notion of essence to be canonically expressed by the operator “it lies in the essence of *x* that.” As Fine (1995, p. 69, n. 2) points out, we needn’t take a subexpression of the form “the essence of *x*” to be a singular term that refers to a special sort of entity, just as we needn’t take the subexpression “not” to be a significant grammatical component of the operator “it is not the case that.” See Lowe (2008, pp. 38–40) and Lowe (2012, pp. 941, 946–47) for reasons to deny that the essence of a thing is some further entity. The notion of essence is closely related to a notion of *real definition* (Rosen, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> This terminology is inspired by Goff (2017), who distinguishes “o-phenomenal” properties from the hypothetical phenomenal properties posited by panpsychists (“u-phenomenal” properties in my terminology).

ical grounds for o-moral and o-normative facts. In particular, it is prima facie compatible with both *naturalism* and *robust realism*.

In order to distinguish these positions, let's understand a *natural property* to be a property that is either non-normative or definable in wholly non-normative terms. Following Rosen (2018), I understand *naturalism* to be the view that every obtaining o-moral and o-normative fact is fully metaphysically grounded in natural facts. Since in the paradigm cases, ground-theoretic connections are explainable with reference to the essences of the grounded items, it is highly plausible that if naturalism is true, then it lies in the *essences* of o-moral and o-normative properties that their instantiations be fully metaphysically grounded in natural facts (if those facts obtain).

*Robust realism*, by contrast, is the view that some facts about o-moral or o-normative properties are metaphysically ungrounded. In particular, if the instantiation of every o-moral property is fully metaphysically grounded in more fundamental facts, then some of those facts are metaphysically ungrounded facts about o-moral or o-normative properties. Perhaps the instantiation of every o-moral property is fully metaphysically grounded in fundamental facts about *normative reasons* (as a "reasons-first" might hold) (Berker, 2019, p. 931). Or perhaps the instantiation of every o-moral property is fully metaphysically grounded in natural facts together with some fundamental normative or moral laws (Rosen, 2017a,b, 2018). Or perhaps the instantiation of every o-moral property is fully normatively (but not metaphysically) grounded in natural facts, where *normative* and *metaphysical grounding* are distinct relations.<sup>5</sup> Regardless, if robust realism is true, at least some facts about o-moral or o-normative properties have no full metaphysical explanation.

In the philosophy of mind, *phenomenal realism* is the view that there are experiences such that *there is something that it is like* to undergo them. Let's call the experiences that we pre-theoretically countenance "o-experiences." O-experiences instantiate *o-phenomenal properties*, which type them in terms of what it is like for individuals to undergo them. An *o-phenomenal fact* is a fact about the instantiation of an o-phenomenal property by an o-experience. As I understand it, phenomenal realism is prima facie compatible with both *physicalism* and *property dualism about o-experience* ("physicalism" and "dualism" for short).

In order to distinguish these positions, let's understand a *microphysical property* to be a fundamental property expressed by a predicate of a completed physics and a *microphysical object* to be a fundamental (and fundamentally *non-mental, non-experiential, non-normative*) object denoted by a

<sup>5</sup> Fine (2012) argues that in addition to a *metaphysical* grounding relation, we should also recognize a *normative* grounding relation that is of special interest to ethics and a *natural* grounding relation that is of special interest to science (see also Bader, 2017). Fine maintains that these relations differ in modal strength: if the facts in  $\Delta$  normatively ground  $[Q]$ , then it is *normatively* necessary that if the facts in  $\Delta$  obtain, then  $[Q]$  obtains; whereas if the facts in  $\Delta$  naturally ground  $[Q]$ , then it is *naturally* necessary that if the facts in  $\Delta$  obtain, then  $[Q]$  obtains. Fine (2002/2005) argues that neither of these two forms of necessity is reducible to the other or to metaphysical necessity. On this basis, he maintains that obtaining moral facts are normatively necessary but metaphysically contingent (see also Rosen, 2020).

term of that physics.<sup>6</sup> We can then understand a *microphysical fact* to be a fact about the instantiation of a microphysical property by one or more microphysical objects. *Physicalism* is the view that every obtaining o-phenomenal fact is fully metaphysically grounded in microphysical facts.<sup>7</sup> Again, since in the paradigm cases, ground-theoretic connections are explainable with reference to the essences of the grounded items, it is highly plausible that if physicalism is true, then it lies in the *essences* of o-phenomenal properties that their instantiations be fully metaphysically grounded in microphysical facts (if those facts obtain).

*Dualism*, by contrast, is the view that some facts about o-phenomenal properties are metaphysically ungrounded. In particular, if the instantiation of every o-phenomenal property is fully metaphysically grounded in more fundamental facts, then some of those facts are metaphysically ungrounded facts about o-phenomenal properties. Perhaps the instantiation of every o-phenomenal property is fully metaphysically grounded in microphysical facts together with some fundamental psychophysical laws. Or perhaps the instantiation of every o-phenomenal property is fully naturally (but not metaphysically) grounded in microphysical facts (see n. 5 above). Either way, if dualism is true, at least some facts about o-experience have no full metaphysical explanation.

*Panpsychists* maintain that there is more to fundamental reality than what physics can describe. Like dualists, they deny that every obtaining o-phenomenal fact is fully metaphysically grounded in microphysical facts. But contrary to dualists, they maintain that every obtaining fact about o-experience is (partially) metaphysically grounded in facts about phenomenal properties that we do not pre-theoretically countenance and of whose natures we are at present largely ignorant (Chalmers, 2015/2017, pp. 252–53).<sup>8</sup> These theoretical phenomenal properties are hypothesized to be fundamental properties of the fundamental objects (or “ultimates”) designated by the terms of a completed physics.<sup>9</sup> Thus, if electrons are fundamental objects countenanced by a completed physics, then panpsychists maintain that electrons are phenomenally conscious. Let’s call the experiences that the ultimates supposedly undergo “u-experiences” (“u” for “ultimate”). U-experiences instantiate *u-phenomenal properties*, which type those experiences in terms of what it is like for the ultimates to undergo them. We can then understand a *u-phenomenal fact* to be a fact about the instantiation of a u-phenomenal property by a u-experience.

<sup>6</sup> This definition of a microphysical object expands upon Wilson’s (2006) “no fundamental mentality” constraint (see also Goff, 2017, ch. 2.1.6). I use the phrase “completed physics” as a placeholder for whichever account of physical theory is best suited to formulating physicalism.

<sup>7</sup> For ease of discussion, I am setting aside the question of whether physicalism is best formulated to allow for o-phenomenal facts that have a fundamental totality fact as a partial ground (Blaesi, 2021). None of my arguments turn on how we answer this question.

<sup>8</sup> On one interpretation, emergentist panpsychists deny the grounding claim (Goff, 2017, p. 19). Recall that I am using “panpsychism” as shorthand for “constitutive smallest panpsychism” (see n. 1 above).

<sup>9</sup> I have adapted the term “ultimate” from Strawson (2006/2008).

Since panpsychists maintain that the ultimates are fundamentally *experiential*, they must deny that they are “microphysical objects” in the previously defined sense. In order to distinguish panpsychism from physicalism, then, let’s understand a *u-physical fact* to be a fact about the instantiation of a microphysical property by one or more ultimates (regardless of whether those ultimates are fundamentally mental, experiential, or normative). According to panpsychists, every obtaining fact about o-experience is fully metaphysically grounded in u-phenomenal facts (on their own or together with u-physical facts). Mother Nature starts out with a handful of basic phenomenal colors, so to speak. She brushes one color here, another color there, using ultimates colored by experience to paint a complex scene, until *voilà*—the experience of pain emerges! If only we knew more about the paint—the “intrinsic nature” of fundamental reality—there would be no “explanatory gap” between the u-level facts and the facts about pain. That’s how I’ll understand panpsychism throughout. It’s certainly an interesting view of the world. But why would anyone *be* a panpsychist?

### 3 The master argument for panpsychism

Let’s say that an o-phenomenal fact  $[P]$  *arises from* some microphysical facts  $\Delta$  just in case the facts in  $\Delta$  either naturally ground  $[P]$  or metaphysically ground  $[P]$  (on their own or together with the holding of a psychophysical law). Understood in this way, the claim that o-phenomenal facts *arise from* microphysical facts is neutral between physicalism and dualism but incompatible with panpsychism.<sup>10</sup> Panpsychism derives much of its appeal from the following argument:

- (1) Either o-phenomenal facts arise from microphysical facts, or o-phenomenal facts are fully metaphysically grounded in u-phenomenal facts (on their own or together with u-physical facts).
- (2) If o-phenomenal facts arise from microphysical facts, then either physicalism or dualism is true.

<sup>10</sup> More carefully, while the claim is compatible with the versions of dualism I considered in Section 2 above, it is incompatible with versions of dualism according to which o-phenomenal facts are neither partially metaphysically nor naturally grounded in any microphysical facts. One of these holds that the instantiation of every o-phenomenal property is merely naturally necessitated by microphysical facts. If there are fundamental psychophysical laws, we might say that the obtaining of an o-phenomenal fact  $[P]$  is *naturally necessitated* by the conjunction of the microphysical facts in  $\Delta$  just in case it is metaphysically necessary that if the facts in  $\Delta$  obtain and the psychophysical laws hold, then  $[P]$  obtains. If, contrary to Chalmers (1996), the psychophysical laws hold of metaphysical necessity, then the obtaining of  $[P]$  is naturally necessitated by the conjunction of the facts in  $\Delta$  just in case the obtaining of  $[P]$  is metaphysically necessitated by the conjunction of the facts in  $\Delta$ . Another version of dualism holds that the o-phenomenal facts stand in neither an explanatory nor a nomic relation to the microphysical facts but merely happen to be correlated with them in the actual world. These versions of dualism strike me as implausible, so I have set them aside throughout. However, my stipulative definition of “arises from” can be easily modified to accommodate these versions of dualism. Similar remarks apply to robust realism in Section 4 below. Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing me to clarify my terminology.

- (3) Physicalism is false: it completely leaves out experience.
- (4) Dualism is also false: it requires brute emergence.
- (5) So, o-phenomenal facts are fully metaphysically grounded in u-phenomenal facts (on their own or together with u-physical facts).

Call this the “master argument for panpsychism.” In one form or another, it is to be found in Nagel (1979/2012) and Strawson (2006/2008). It is also connected to Goff’s (2017) case for panpsychism. Since it is valid, the crucial question is why each of its premises should be accepted. Once we set aside the competitors to physicalism, dualism, and panpsychism, premises (1) and (2) should be relatively uncontroversial. The argument turns largely on premises (3) and (4).

Let’s start with (3). Nagel (1979/2012) and Strawson (2006/2008) seem to think that it is obvious.<sup>11</sup> In their defense, there are a number of arguments that have been offered against physicalism. Drawing from Yetter-Chappell and Chappell (2013), who also explore the relationship between arguments in the philosophy of mind and metaethics, I’ll focus on two. The first is inspired by Moore’s (1903/1993) *open question argument*.<sup>12</sup> Let “phenomenal redness” denote the o-phenomenal property that types experiences of red in terms of what it is like to undergo them, let “*e*” denote a particular experience of red, and let “r-fiber firing” denote the neural correlate of phenomenal redness with respect to *e*. The first step of the argument establishes a semantic conclusion:

- (6) The statement “*e* instantiates r-fiber firing, but it doesn’t instantiate phenomenal redness” isn’t self-contradictory.
- (7) If (6), then “phenomenal redness” doesn’t mean the same thing as “r-fiber firing.”
- (8) Therefore, “phenomenal redness” doesn’t mean the same thing as “r-fiber firing.”

The second step of the argument uses (8) to support the ontological conclusion that phenomenal redness is distinct from r-fiber firing. For given (8), the statement “phenomenal redness = r-fiber firing” is not analytically true. But true identity statements are either analytic or synthetic. Therefore, the statement “phenomenal redness = r-fiber firing” must be synthetically true (if true at all).

Some physicalists have embraced this conclusion and suggested that psychophysical identity statements can be modeled after synthetic identity statements familiar from the sciences, such as “water = H<sub>2</sub>O.” However, it seems that “phenomenal redness = r-fiber firing” is unlike these familiar synthetic identity statements. In such cases, one term flanking the identity predicate

<sup>11</sup> More precisely, Strawson (2006/2008) seems to think that *reductive* physicalism is obviously false; he independently argues that a version of non-reductive physicalism is committed to “brute emergence” (see n. 17 below).

<sup>12</sup> See also Broad’s (1925) objection to a view he calls “behaviourism”: “However completely the behaviour of an external body answers to the behaviouristic tests for intelligence, it always remains a perfectly sensible question to ask: ‘Has it really got a mind, or is it merely an automaton?’” (p. 614).

rigidly designates whatever plays a certain role and the other rigidly designates something that happens to play that role. For example, “water” rigidly designates the stuff around here that plays the watery role (i.e., has the property of being a colorless, odorless liquid that falls from the sky, fills the lakes, etc.), while “H<sub>2</sub>O” rigidly designates H<sub>2</sub>O, which, as it happens, plays the watery role. This seems to make it possible to a priori deduce that water = H<sub>2</sub>O from the microphysical facts. By contrast, “phenomenal redness” (or the concept that it expresses) picks out its referent in terms of *how it feels*, which isn’t simply a role that its referent happens to play; *how it feels* to instantiate phenomenal redness is *essential* to phenomenal redness.<sup>13</sup> This makes it hard to see how the putative identity between phenomenal redness and r-fiber firing could be a priori deduced from the microphysical facts. After all, we can’t simply check to see whether the causal role contingently associated with phenomenal redness is played by some physicalistically acceptable property, because that will always leave open whether the property in question *feels like* and thus *is* phenomenal redness.

This asymmetry suggests that psychophysical identity statements cannot be modeled after synthetic identity statements familiar from the sciences. Moreover, some philosophers have argued that *all* of the synthetic identities with which we are independently familiar are like those from the sciences in that they can be a priori deduced from the microphysical facts (e.g., Chalmers and Jackson, 2001). This is what supposedly enables us to provide “reductive explanations” of the phenomena in question. If physicalists grant the asymmetry while insisting that “phenomenal redness = r-fiber firing” is synthetically true, then they are forced to abandon the prospect of giving a “reductive explanation” that we would otherwise expect to be able to give. As a result, unless they can provide some other independently motivated model for how “phenomenal redness = r-fiber firing” could be synthetically true, their “suggestion will seem at best ad hoc and mysterious and at worst incoherent” (Chalmers, 2002/2010, p. 117). The most natural conclusion is that “phenomenal redness = r-fiber firing” is simply false. Or so the argument goes.<sup>14</sup>

This argumentative strategy can be generalized. No matter what we substitute for “ $\phi$ ,” so long as it contains no irreducibly experiential terms, the result

<sup>13</sup> See Kripke (1980, Lecture III) and Trogon (2017, p. 2347). This claim is not uncontroversial; realizer functionalists such as Lewis (1980/2013) would reject it and instead maintain that “phenomenal redness” is a non-rigid expression that picks out its referent in terms of a role that it happens to play for the “appropriate population” (p. 219).

<sup>14</sup> In response, some philosophers deny that there is an asymmetry between “water = H<sub>2</sub>O” and “phenomenal redness = r-fiber firing” by arguing that it is not a priori that water is the stuff around here that plays the watery role (e.g., Block and Stalnaker, 1999; Tye, 2009). Others accept the asymmetry but attempt to provide a physicalistically acceptable explanation of it by appealing to the special nature of phenomenal concepts (e.g., Levin, 2019; Papineau, 1998). Still others argue that the connections from the less fundamental to the more fundamental are generally not a priori knowable and thereby challenge the assumption that synthetic identity statements such as “water = H<sub>2</sub>O” can be a priori deduced from the microphysical facts (e.g., Schaffer, 2017). I am grateful to an anonymous referee for urging me to clarify the open question argument against physicalism and acknowledge some responses to it.



of replacing each occurrence of “r-fiber firing” with an occurrence of “ $\Lambda x.\phi$ ” (“the property of being an  $x$  such that  $\phi$ ”) is a new two-step argument—just as strong as the original—for the conclusion that phenomenal redness is distinct from  $\Lambda x.\phi$ .<sup>15</sup>

This puts pressure on versions of physicalism, such as the mind–brain identity theory and functionalism, which hold that phenomenal redness is identical to a property that is definable in wholly non-experiential terms. Moreover, as Rosen (2015, p. 206, n. 22) points out, it also puts pressure on the view that it lies in the essence of phenomenal redness to be fully grounded in non-experiential facts, for it is hard (if not impossible) to distinguish that view from the reductive view that phenomenal redness is identical to a disjunctive property constructed from each of its possible non-experiential grounds.

Jackson’s (1982) *knowledge argument* provides additional support for the anti-physicalist premise (3). Mary is a brilliant color scientist who, having spent her entire life inside a black-and-white room, has never experienced color. She is also fully conceptually and logically competent, and by studying the physics and neurophysiology of color experience, she has learned all the general microphysical facts relevant to color experience and thereby deduced every fact that is fully grounded in those microphysical facts—for short, she knows *all the physical facts about color experience*. Yet, when Mary is released from her room and sees a red rose for the first time, she makes a surprising discovery: she learns *what it is like* to see red. Since Mary knew all the physical facts about color—the argument continues—she must have learned a non-physical fact. Therefore, there is at least one non-physical fact, and physicalism is false.<sup>16</sup>

We can amplify this argument by clearly distinguishing two steps of epistemic progress that Mary takes all at once. Consider Nida-Rümelin’s (1995) example of Marianna. Like Mary, Marianna has spent her entire life inside a black-and-white room studying the physics and neurophysiology of color experience. Prior to her release, however, Marianna’s captors show her a series of colored chips without telling her the names of those colors or anything about the materials from which the chips are made. Upon seeing a blue chip, Marianna learns what it is like to see blue. Yet, she still doesn’t know that what it is like for normally sighted people to see the sky is similar (with respect to color) to what it is like for her to see *this*. Marianna doesn’t gain

<sup>15</sup> I use the uppercase “ $\Lambda$ ” to distinguish “ $\Lambda x$ ” from “ $\lambda x$ ,” which some use as a device for forming complex predicates as opposed to names for properties (Fine, 2012, pp. 67–68).

<sup>16</sup> Some philosophers respond by arguing that Mary doesn’t know all the physical facts about color experience inside her black-and-white room (e.g., Alter, 1998; Moran, n.d.). Others attempt to make sense of Mary’s apparent discovery while avoiding the anti-physicalist conclusion by arguing that she only gains new know-how (e.g., Lewis, 1988/2004); that she gains new knowledge-that by coming to know a previously known physical fact under a new concept (e.g., Horgan, 1984); that she comes to bear a new (distinctive) relation of truth-apt knowledge to a physical fact of which she already had (ordinary) knowledge-that (Pelczar, 2005); that she gains new knowledge by acquaintance of a physical property (e.g., Conee, 1994; Tye, 2009); or that she comes to base her knowledge-that of a previously known physical fact on her knowledge by acquaintance of a physical property (Grzankowski and Tye, 2019).

this further item of knowledge until she is released from her room and sees the sky for herself. Again, since Marianna knew all the physical facts about color experience, it seems that she must have learned a non-physical fact. This example threatens to undermine the *old fact/new guise* response to the knowledge argument, since prior to her release, it is plausible that Marianna already possessed whatever concepts we use to think about color experiences.

To be clear, I am not endorsing either of these two arguments against physicalism here. There are a number of responses to these arguments that merit careful consideration (see nn. 14 and 16), and I do not have the space to do that in this paper. As I will argue in Section 4 below, my main point is simply that *if* one of these arguments succeeds, then a parallel argument in metaethics also succeeds.

While some philosophers use these arguments to support dualism, panpsychists go on to argue against dualism. This brings us to premise (4). Nagel (1979/2012) and Strawson (2006/2008) object to theories of mind that are committed to “brute emergence.”<sup>17</sup> While they sometimes characterize emergence in epistemic terms, it is clear upon closer inspection that they are raising a metaphysical objection. Thus, Nagel takes properties to be “truly” emergent when they “appear at certain complex levels of organization but are not explainable in terms of any more fundamental properties, known or unknown, of the constituents” of the systems that have those properties (p. 186). And Strawson explicitly states that he uses the notion of “explicability” to express “the idea that there must be something about the *nature* of the emerged-from (*and nothing else*) *in virtue of which* the emerger emerges as it does and is what it is” (p. 63; emphasis added). To put it in terms of metaphysical ground and essence, a property  $Ax.\phi$  is brutally emergent when it is instantiated by a non-fundamental entity  $e$  and either (i) the fact that  $e$  instantiates  $Ax.\phi$  is not fully metaphysically grounded in the instantiations of more fundamental properties by ultimates or (ii) the fact that  $e$  instantiates  $Ax.\phi$  is not explainable in terms of the essences of things.

Strawson (2006/2008) argues that there is no analogy “of the right size or momentousness” to give us “any imaginative grip on the supposed move from the non-experiential to the experiential” (p. 63), while Nagel (1979/2012) maintains that brute emergence is nowhere else to be found in nature. Thus, if dualism is committed to brute emergence, it is thereby committed to a momentous leap that is unlike anything else in nature. But since dualism entails that at least some facts about o-experience are metaphysically ungrounded, it is hard to see how dualists can avoid a commitment to brute emergence. After all, o-phenomenal properties appear to be instantiated by non-fundamental

<sup>17</sup> Strawson’s (2006/2008) objection appears to be directed at a version of non-reductive physicalism rather than property dualism, which he claims “is strictly incoherent (or just a way of saying that there are two very different kinds of properties) in so far as it purports to be genuinely distinct from substance dualism” (p. 73). However, since Strawson’s objection has as much force against dualism as it does against certain versions of non-reductive physicalism (see, e.g., p. 62, n. 24), I have applied his discussion to premise (4).

entities, such as the o-experiences of human organisms and other complex systems.

The best case scenario for dualism is that o-phenomenal properties are governed by “irreducible contingent laws connecting [o-phenomenal properties to] complex organic states” (Nagel, 1979/2012, p. 194). Smart (1959) famously complained that such “nomological danglers” would be unlike anything “so far known in science” and “have a queer ‘smell’ to them” (p. 143). Even the best case scenario for dualism runs into an analogue of Goff’s (2017) *simplicity argument* for panpsychism.<sup>18</sup> The supposition that there are irreducible psychophysical laws “leads us to complexity, discontinuity, and mystery” (p. 170). Dualism runs afoul of the “theoretical imperative to form as simple and unified a view as is consistent with the data” (p. 170).<sup>19</sup>

Again, as with the arguments against physicalism, I am not endorsing the simplicity argument against dualism here. As will become clear in Section 4 below, my main point is simply that *if* the simplicity argument gives us a compelling reason to reject dualism, then a parallel argument in metaethics gives us a compelling reason to reject robust realism.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> I am indebted to an anonymous referee for inspiring me to make this connection.

<sup>19</sup> That said, it is unclear why the psychophysical laws of dualism should make for a theory that is any less simple or unified than versions of non-reductive physicalism (Pautz, forthcoming). Moreover, as an anonymous referee pointed out to me, the dualist might respond to the simplicity argument by insisting that the holding of a fundamental psychophysical law does not cry out for explanation in its own right. By analogy, if the occurrence of an event is causally explained by the occurrence of its cause in accordance with a causal law, we aren’t inclined to think that the holding of the causal law itself requires a causal explanation. Similarly, the dualist might maintain, if the o-phenomenal facts are naturally grounded in microphysical facts in accordance with fundamental psychophysical laws, we shouldn’t expect the holding of each fundamental psychophysical law to have an explanation. Proponents of the simplicity argument can push back against the dualist’s response in several ways. First, the explanandum of a causal explanation is the occurrence of an event. If causal laws are not events, then it is a category error to suggest that the holding of a causal law has a causal explanation. That is arguably why the holding of a causal law is not apt to be causally explained. By contrast, it is not obvious that the natural grounding relation imposes any constraints on the (distinct) facts that it can relate. This calls into question whether the analogy with causal explanation actually supports the conclusion that the holding of a fundamental psychophysical law is not apt to be naturally grounded. Second, even if the the holding of a fundamental psychophysical law is not apt to be *naturally* grounded, it doesn’t follow that it is not apt to be *metaphysically* grounded. Consider causal explanation again. While we aren’t inclined to think that the holding of a causal law requires a causal explanation, we might nonetheless assess a theory for whether the causal laws that it posits are such that their holding is metaphysically explained by more fundamental facts. The analogy with causal explanation does not alleviate the worry that the holding of each fundamental psychophysical law has no metaphysical explanation, because even in the case of causal explanation, we expect the holding of a causal law to have a metaphysical explanation (say, in terms of more fundamental laws of nature). Third, even if the holding of a fundamental psychophysical law is not apt to be explained, this only alleviates the worry that dualism leads us to *mystery*. It does not alleviate the worry that dualism leads us to *discontinuity* or *complexity* (Pautz 2015, forthcoming). Similar remarks apply to my discussion of robust realism in Section 4 below.

<sup>20</sup> Thanks to an anonymous referee for pressing me to emphasize that my main points do not require the arguments against physicalism or dualism to succeed.

In short, the arguments against physicalism and dualism push us in different directions. The master argument for panpsychism gives us a reason to find a new way forward. Perhaps panpsychism is that way.

#### 4 The moral parody argument for panmoralism

Or perhaps not. With the master argument for panpsychism clearly laid out, the parallels in metaethics are striking. Let's say that an o-moral fact  $[P]$  arises from some natural facts  $\Delta$  just in case the facts in  $\Delta$  either normatively ground  $[P]$  or metaphysically ground  $[P]$  (on their own or together with a fact about o-moral or o-normative properties, such as the holding of a moral law). We can now construct a parallel argument concerning o-moral facts:

- (1') Either o-moral facts arise from natural facts, or o-moral facts are fully metaphysically grounded in u-normative facts (on their own or together with u-physical facts).
- (2') If o-moral facts arise from natural facts, then either naturalism or robust realism is true.
- (3') Naturalism is false: it completely leaves out normativity.
- (4') Robust realism is also false: it requires brute emergence.
- (5') So, o-moral facts are fully metaphysically grounded in u-normative facts (on their own or together with u-physical facts).

Call this the "moral parody argument." The conclusion of this argument is *panmoralism*, a view according to which every obtaining o-moral fact is (partially) metaphysically grounded in facts about normative properties that we do not pre-theoretically countenance and of whose natures we are at present largely ignorant ("u-normative" properties). These theoretical normative properties are the metaethical analogues of the u-phenomenal properties posited by panpsychists, and they are hypothesized to be fundamental properties of the ultimates. Thus, if electrons are fundamental objects countenanced by a completed physics, then panmoralists hold that electrons are fundamentally normative in the sense that they instantiate normative properties and their instantiating those properties has no full metaphysical explanation.

I include "parody" in the label for the above argument to highlight the apparent absurdity of its conclusion and to draw attention to how it reaches that conclusion by parity of reasoning with the master argument for panpsychism. Like the master argument for panpsychism, the moral parody argument is valid. And once we set aside the competitors to naturalism, robust realism, and panmoralism, premises (1') and (2') should be relatively uncontroversial. The crucial premises are (3') and (4'), and the same sorts of considerations that apparently support premises (3) and (4) of the master argument for panpsychism also apparently support these crucial premises.

Let's start with (3'). Like its counterpart in the philosophy of mind, many philosophers take (3') to be obvious. Moreover, some influential arguments against physicalism in the philosophy of mind can be adapted to argue against

naturalism in metaethics (and vice versa). We already saw that there is an open question argument against physicalism. Now consider the metaethical statement “goodness = the property of being something we desire to desire” (“goodness = desirability” for short). The first step of the metaethical parallel to the open question argument against physicalism establishes that this metaethical statement is synthetically true (if true at all).

However, as Horgan and Timmons (1991) argue, “goodness = desirability” seems to differ from synthetic identity statements familiar from the sciences.<sup>21</sup> Recall the statement “water = H<sub>2</sub>O.” The standard line on this statement is that “water” rigidly designates H<sub>2</sub>O. Someone who is tempted to reject this view has to deal with Putnam’s (1975) famous “Twin Earth” argument. Putnam invites us to imagine a distant planet, Twin Earth, that is exactly like Earth in every respect with one exception: the stuff that plays the watery role on Twin Earth isn’t H<sub>2</sub>O but rather some distinct chemical kind with similar observable properties. Putnam predicts that competent English speakers have a strong semantic intuition that Twin Earthlings don’t designate with their twin-word “water” what we designate with our word “water.” This intuition is often taken to be strong defeasible evidence for the semantic hypothesis that our word “water” rigidly designates H<sub>2</sub>O.

But now consider Moral Twin Earth, a distant planet that is similar to Earth in every respect except that twin-uses of the twin-word “goodness” are causally regulated by a natural property that is distinct from desirability. Horgan and Timmons (1991) predict that, unlike with Putnam’s Twin Earth scenario, competent English speakers have a strong semantic intuition that Moral Twin Earthlings *do* designate with their twin-word “goodness” what we designate with our word “goodness.” Thus, if we were to travel to Moral Twin Earth and discover that there is an act that we take to *have* what *we* call “goodness” but that Moral Twin Earthlings take to *lack* what *they* call “goodness,” it is plausible that we would regard this as a substantive moral dispute, not a merely verbal disagreement. Horgan and Timmons argue that this semantic intuition provides strong defeasible evidence for the conclusion that the statement “goodness = desirability” is not synthetically true. And as we saw with the parallel argument in the philosophy of mind, this argumentative strategy can be generalized to put pressure on a variety of naturalistic theories in metaethics.

What about the knowledge argument? As Pelczar (2009) and Yetter-Chappell and Chappell (2013) independently point out, we can construct a metaethical parallel. Moral Mary is a brilliant scientist who is fully conceptually and logically competent. Despite what her name might suggest, however,

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<sup>21</sup> Another respect in which the putative identity between goodness and desirability seems to differ from standard synthetic identities is that it is hard to see how it could be a priori deduced from the microphysical facts (even if all other o-moral facts can be). This makes the naturalist vulnerable to the objection (summarized in Section 3 above) that their identity statements are ad hoc and mysterious.

she has spent much of her life without moral concepts.<sup>22</sup> By consulting the physical and social sciences, she has learned every general natural fact relevant to morality and thereby deduced every fact that is fully grounded in those natural facts—for short, she knows *all the natural facts about morality*. Later in life, she agrees to have a brain operation devised to equip her with moral concepts. When the operation is over, she finds that she is suddenly able to conceptualize acts *as wrong*. She may even learn that it lies in the essence of wrongness that wrong actions have wrong-makers (Fine, 2012, pp. 77–78). Yet, much like Marianna, there is still much that Moral Mary doesn't know. In particular, for a wide range of acts, she doesn't know *which of them* (if any) are wrong. For despite her full conceptual and logical competence, she doesn't know which natural properties are wrong-makers.

According to Yetter-Chappell and Chappell (2013), Moral Mary's situation is possible because there are “many different internally-coherent moral viewpoints that conceptually competent and empirically-informed agents might hold” (p. 872). Because Moral Mary is initially unable to decide between, say, consequentialism and deontology, she doesn't *believe* that certain acts are wrong and thus doesn't *know* that they are wrong (Pelczar, 2009, p. 27). Similar to Marianna when she sees the sky for the first time, Moral Mary seems to learn something new when she acquires certain *substantive* “rational insights of a kind that go beyond the mere application of a new conceptual apparatus to an old domain of facts” (Yetter-Chappell and Chappell, 2013, p. 871). She needs these rational insights in order to engage in a process of wide reflective equilibrium and thereby acquire knowledge about the moral status of certain actions. (If her captors were to wire her in such a way that she starts with the wrong moral intuitions, then she arguably wouldn't acquire this knowledge.) But prior to acquiring these substantive rational insights, Moral Mary possessed all the relevant moral concepts, and she knew all the natural facts about morality. Thus, in acquiring these substantive rational insights—the argument continues—she must have learned a non-natural fact. Therefore, there is at least one non-natural fact, and naturalism is false.

The example of Marianna purports to show that even a fully conceptually and logically competent subject who possesses all the relevant phenomenal concepts and has complete knowledge of the physical facts can still be ignorant of some phenomenal facts, and the anti-physicalist infers from this that there are non-physical facts. Similarly, the example of Moral Mary purports to show that even a fully conceptually and logically competent subject who possesses all the relevant moral concepts and has complete knowledge of the natural

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<sup>22</sup> There is an interesting question of what exactly is required for one to possess moral concepts, but this question is largely irrelevant to the argument. The point of the example is that just as Mary should be able to learn everything there is to know about color without undergoing color experiences (if physicalism is true), so too Moral Mary should be able to learn everything there is to know about morality without sharing whatever it is that we have (and some other conscious subjects lack) that explains why we possess moral concepts (if naturalism is true). Thanks to A. B. Jimenez-Cordero for helpful discussion on this issue.

facts can still be ignorant of some moral facts, and the anti-naturalist infers from this that there are non-natural facts.

Of course, naturalists needn't take these arguments lying down. Pelczar (2009) defends naturalism by developing an *old relatum/new relation strategy*. Yetter-Chappell and Chappell (2013) defend naturalism by developing a *moral concept strategy*. Perhaps naturalism even wins the day. My point here isn't that naturalism is *false*. Rather, it is that we have just about as much reason to think that naturalism is false as we have to think that physicalism is false.

So what about premise (4')? Suppose that, with the possible exception of o-experience, brute emergence is nowhere else to be found in nature. It follows that if robust realism is committed to brute emergence, it is thereby committed to a momentous leap that is unlike (almost) anything else in nature. But since robust realism entails that at least some facts about o-moral or o-normative properties are metaphysically ungrounded, it is very hard to see how robust realists can avoid a commitment to brute emergence. After all, o-moral and o-normative properties appear to be instantiated by non-fundamental entities, such as particular actions and events.

As with dualism, then, the best case scenario for robust realism is that o-moral properties are governed by irreducible moral or normative laws connecting o-moral properties to natural properties. These "normative danglers" are analogous to psychophysical laws, and in their absence, there can be no full metaphysical explanation of other o-moral facts. This is a way of constructing the complaint (similar to Smart's complaint vis-à-vis psychophysical laws) that "moral facts would be 'queer', in that unlike other facts they cannot be explained in terms of arrangements of matter, or logical constructions out of sense-data, or whatever the particular theorist takes to be the general form of real things" (Mackie, 1946, p. 78). Hence, even the best case scenario for moral realism runs into a metaethical parallel of the simplicity argument against dualism. The supposition that there are irreducible moral or normative laws leads us to complexity, discontinuity, and mystery. Along with other theoretical imperatives, Occam's razor cuts against robust realism and gives us a reason to find another way.

## 5 In defense of the incredulous stare

But should we *really* think that *panmoralism* is that way? It is tempting to simply end the paper with an *incredulous stare*—and perhaps throw in a raised eyebrow for good measure. Surely panmoralism is complete and utter woo-woo! I am inclined to believe that this is the right reaction to have, and it has implications for panpsychism. So far, I have argued that the same sorts of considerations that apparently support the premises of the master argument for panpsychism also apparently support the premises of the moral parody argument for panmoralism. This suggests that if moral realism is true—an assumption to which I return in Section 7—then the two arguments stand or fall together. Therefore, on the assumption that moral realism is true, if the

incredulous stare is a reason to think that the moral parody argument for panmoralism fails, then it is also a reason to think that the master argument for panpsychism fails.

Why does panmoralism invite an incredulous stare? It isn't simply that the view attributes normative properties to objects characterized by physics. Perhaps each electron has the normative property of being such that it shouldn't be used to bring about the mass destruction of a densely populated city. There needn't be anything especially strange about that. For if a particular electron has such a normative property, it is plausible that there are more fundamental facts pertaining to the rights, interests, or preferences of persons that partially explain the fact that the electron has that property. Part of what makes panmoralism seem so strange by comparison is its claim that the ultimates are *fundamentally* normative—that they instantiate normative properties and their instantiating those properties has no full metaphysical explanation.

Panpsychists might object that if consciousness is normatively significant, then this is a straightforward consequence of plain old panpsychism; thus, panmoralism is no stranger than panpsychism, and panpsychists have nothing more to worry about. However, even if we grant that it follows from panpsychism that the ultimates are fundamentally normative, it doesn't follow (as panmoralism holds) that they instantiate *u-normative* properties: hypothetical normative properties that we do not pre-theoretically countenance and of whose natures we are at present largely ignorant. To the extent that these distinctive posits contribute to the strangeness of panmoralism, panmoralism is still stranger than whatever follows from panpsychism under plausible assumptions about the normative significance of consciousness.<sup>23</sup>

But as the saying goes, one philosopher's modus tollens is another's modus ponens. If any moral realists find themselves completely unmoved by the incredulous stare, then they can consider this paper a friendly invitation to critically explore a largely unrecognized metaethical view.<sup>24</sup> They should proceed with caution, however. Panmoralism faces several problems, and these problems compound with those that panpsychism already faces. Taken together,

<sup>23</sup> All that said, it is far from obvious that it *does* follow from panpsychism under plausible assumptions about the normative significance of consciousness that the ultimates instantiate normative properties and their instantiating those properties has no full metaphysical explanation. First, while it is plausible that *certain* phenomenal properties have normative significance, it is debatable that *all* of them do. Second, it is controversial that when a conscious experience instantiates a normative property, the instantiation of that normative property by that experience has no full metaphysical explanation. Finally, even if the ultimates undergo conscious experiences that have normative properties, it doesn't follow that the ultimates *themselves* have those normative properties. I am grateful to Josh Dever, Hedda Hassel Mørch, Bradford Saad, Joseph C. Schmid, and an anonymous referee for helpful comments that led to the inclusion of the preceding discussion of the incredulous stare.

<sup>24</sup> An anonymous referee suggested that Philip Goff has defended a view along the lines of panmoralism. In personal communication, Goff clarified that while he has presented material arguing that panqualityism helps solve an epistemological problem for robust realism (as opposed to panmoralism), his thoughts on moral epistemology have subsequently shifted and he may not pursue the original material in future work.



they build a strong cumulative case for taking the moral parody argument for panmoralism to be a *reductio ad absurdum* of the master argument for panpsychism. In the remainder of this section, I motivate the incredulous stare by laying out some of these problems. But first I anticipate a maneuver that may well have occurred to the reader.

Suppose that panmoralism is much more problematic than panpsychism. It might then be objected that this alone provides the panpsychist with a basis for consistently endorsing the master argument for panpsychism while disavowing the moral parody argument for panmoralism. The following analogy should dramatize the mistake in this objection. One way of implementing the *companions in guilt strategy* for defending moral realism is to argue that the arguments for moral error theory overgeneralize to support an implausible error theory about all of normativity. Now clearly it would be silly for moral error theorists to respond to this objection by simply insisting that since normative error theory is much more problematic than moral error theory, one can consistently endorse the arguments for the latter while disavowing the arguments for the former. The *whole point* of the companions in guilt strategy is to establish that the arguments for moral error theory overgeneralize to support other problematic positions. The more problematic those positions turn out to be, so much the worse for moral error theory (Cowie, 2018, sec. 2.2). The companions in guilt strategy challenges moral error theorists to explain how the relevant parallels can be broken or else show why the apparently absurd consequences of their arguments are not as implausible as they might first seem. Similar remarks apply to the moral parody argument against panpsychism.

I now turn to some problems for panmoralism. I begin by discussing an objection that—upon closer examination—fails to raise a serious problem for panmoralism. However, it is instructive to begin with this objection. First, it suggests how the moral parody argument can be adapted to parody another influential argument for panpsychism. Second, it points in the direction of an objection that *does* raise very serious problems for panmoralism. Finally, it shows why panmoralism has an advantage over a position recently defended by Bohn (2018), which I discuss in the next section.

In order to lay out this objection, let's return to premise (1) of the master argument for panpsychism. This premise ignores non-panpsychist versions of *Russellian monism*, a worldview inspired by the writings of Bertrand Russell. It consists of three central theses. The first is that physics only reveals the abstract and structural features of the ultimates but not their “intrinsic” or “categorical nature” (the “quiddities”). As Chalmers (2015/2017) puts it, “Physics tells us a lot about what mass does—it resists acceleration, attracts other masses, and so on—but it tells us nothing about what mass intrinsically is. We might say that physics tells us what the mass role is, but it does not tell us what property plays this role” (pp. 253–54). The second is that the ultimates must have some fundamental quiddities that play the pertinent microphysical roles and underlie microphysical structure. The third is that the fundamental quiddities on which physics is silent play an important role in generating o-experience.

*Russellian panpsychists* maintain that u-phenomenal properties play the pertinent microphysical roles and underlie microphysical structure. However, not all Russellian monists are panpsychists. Some hold that the quiddities are non-subjective qualities of the same type as those presented to us in subjective experience (such as the *redness* involved in experiences of red). Others hold that the quiddities are neither subjective nor qualitative but somehow intrinsically suited to generating o-experience. Like dualism, non-panpsychist versions of Russellian monism confront Goff's (2017) simplicity argument:

We now have a theoretical choice. We can either suppose that the categorical nature of [the ultimates] . . . is constituted of properties of the kind we are acquainted with, or we can suppose that they have some entirely unknown categorical nature. On the former supposition, the nature of macroscopic things is continuous with the nature of microscopic things. The latter supposition leads us to complexity, discontinuity, and mystery. The theoretical imperative to form as simple and unified a view as is consistent with the data leads us quite straightforwardly in the direction of panpsychism. (pp. 169–70)

This argument lends indirect support to premise (1) of the master argument for panpsychism by providing a reason to set aside non-panpsychist versions of Russellian monism. It also suggests that anyone in the market for a “pan-ism” should purchase that pan-ism together with Russellian monism as a package deal.

Now for the objection to panmoralism. The simplicity argument puts pressure on panmoralists to maintain that u-normative properties play the pertinent microphysical roles and underlie microphysical structure. Yet, it may seem difficult to understand how that could be. (The retort “Oh, it *be!*” is not very reassuring.) One way of bringing this out is to recall Hume's (1739–40/2007) famous claim that an “ought” cannot be derived from an “is.” The Russellian panmoralist is committed to saying something that seems *far stranger* than the denial of Hume's claim: the *natural* can be derived from the *normative*! In short, unlike panpsychism, panmoralism seems to be incompatible with Russellian monism.

However, insofar as the pertinent microphysical roles are *causal*, panmoralists will surely respond that all it takes for the natural to be derivable from the normative is for u-normative properties to figure into complete causal explanations of u-physical events. The previous objection amounts to no more than an inference from the controversial premise that normative properties are causally inert to the conclusion that panmoralism is incompatible with Russellian monism. But why should panmoralists accept that premise? Many naturalists reject it.<sup>25</sup> And while some robust realists accept it, once panmoralism

<sup>25</sup> According to Sturgeon (1986), for instance, “We often clearly attribute causal efficacy to them [moral properties]. We point to injustice, along with poverty, as a cause of revolution, or of pressure for reform; we think that Hitler's depravity *led* him to do a variety of terrible things; and we suppose that moral decency *keeps* other people from doing things like that, and would have kept him from doing them if he had been decent” (p. 75).

is on the table, it is unclear why moral realists who reject naturalism should be committed to it.

This response suggests how the moral parody argument can be adapted to parody arguments for the conclusion that panpsychism avoids a causal exclusion problem for dualism (Chalmers, 2015/2017; Goff, 2017). While I do not have the space to develop it in detail here, these arguments also have a metaethical parallel. In brief, since robust realists must deny that o-moral facts are fully metaphysically grounded in microphysical facts, it seems that they cannot hold that o-moral facts are causally efficacious without either incurring a commitment to systematic causal overdetermination or abandoning the causal closure of the u-physical. But since it is open to panmoralists to maintain that u-normative properties play the most fundamental microphysical roles, they can hold that o-moral facts inherit causal relevance from the u-normative facts (and/or u-physical facts) in which they are fully grounded, thereby avoiding objectionable overdetermination and preserving the causal closure of the u-physical. Thus, if panpsychism can avoid a causal exclusion problem for dualism, then panmoralism can avoid a parallel problem for robust realism.<sup>26</sup>

While the previous objection is dialectically unpersuasive, it points in the direction of an objection to panmoralism that cannot be so easily dismissed. It is widely held that the moral globally supervenes on the natural: no two metaphysically possible worlds can differ in moral respects without also differing in natural respects.<sup>27</sup> Panmoralism seems to be incompatible with this thesis (Bohn, 2018, pp. 4120–21). Unless there are metaphysically necessary connections between u-normative properties and the microphysical roles that they putatively play, then on the face of it, there is a metaphysically possible *natural/amoral world* that is exactly like the actual world in all natural respects but in which no ultimates have u-normative properties and there are no obtaining moral facts.

This raises two very serious worries for panmoralism. The first is epistemological (Bader, 2017, pp. 110–11). If natural/amoral worlds are metaphysically possible, then we have to take seriously the epistemic possibility that the actual world is one of them. Since these worlds are empirically indistinguishable from worlds at which moral facts obtain, we can't rule out this epistemic possibility a posteriori. But if it is metaphysically contingent that u-normative properties play microphysical roles, then it is also very hard to see how we could rule out this epistemic possibility a priori. The failure of the global supervenience thesis also raises an explanatory worry. Given the failure of that thesis, the putative fact that we find ourselves in a world that happens to align with moral realism seems to be a matter of sheer luck that cries out for

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<sup>26</sup> I am inclined to take this to be a *reductio ad absurdum* of the causal argument for panpsychism, but that is a topic for another paper.

<sup>27</sup> For two rare detractors, see Fine (2002/2005) and Rosen (2020).

explanation, and it seems that the panmoralist is forced to admit that it is just a brute fact that we won the moral lottery.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, panmoralism faces a dilemma (Pautz, 2015). Either o-moral properties are reducible to complex u-normative-involving properties, or they aren't.<sup>29</sup> Suppose that they are. In that case, unlike on naturalism, o-moral properties turn out to have "hidden essences" linking them to fundamental *u-normative* properties. But if we're forced to concede that, then it is unclear why we should accept the anti-naturalist premise (3') of the moral parody argument for panmoralism as opposed to adopting a naturalist view according to which o-moral properties have hidden essences linking them to properties that are either non-normative or definable in wholly non-normative terms. Like naturalism, reductive panmoralism is open to the Moral Twin Earth objection (just imagine a Moral Twin Earth on which uses of moral terms are causally regulated by slightly different complex u-normative-involving properties or by natural properties that are not u-normative-involving at all). And if the natural/moral global supervenience thesis is false, reductive panmoralism amplifies the challenge of providing a physicalistically acceptable account of how it is that moral terms determinately refer to complex u-normative-involving properties rather than to whatever properties they denote in natural/amoral worlds, given that these worlds are empirically indistinguishable.<sup>30</sup>

The panmoralist might respond that reductions of o-moral properties to complex u-normative-involving properties are less problematic than standard naturalistic reductions, because o-moral and u-normative properties have "homogeneous" natures. The history of metaethics shows why this response is unpersuasive. Robust realists of various stripes all agree that o-moral properties have homogeneous natures insofar as they are all essentially *moral*. That doesn't stop them from debating whether *deontic* facts, for example, can be reduced to *evaluative* facts (or vice versa).

By contrast, suppose that o-moral properties are irreducible. The instantiations of complex u-normative-involving properties might nonetheless fully ground the instantiations of o-moral properties. However, in the paradigm cases, ground-theoretic connections are explainable with reference to the essences of the grounded items. If o-moral properties don't have hidden essences, then panmoralism appears to be committed to something very similar to the brute emergence it is meant to avoid: while the robust realist posits

<sup>28</sup> Pautz (2015, sec. 4) argues that Russellian monism confronts a similar problem of "psychophysical luck," while Dreier (2019, sec. 2.5) independently argues that the view that the most fundamental moral facts are metaphysically contingent implausibly leads to widespread "moral luck."

<sup>29</sup> I use the phrase "reducible to" as a placeholder for either identity or real definition; the two are (arguably) related (Rosen, 2015, p. 190, n. 2; see also Correia, 2017). See Pautz (2015, pp. 5–6) for a helpful distinction between "quiddity-involving" and "quiddity-neutral" properties; in this terminology, reductive panmoralists hold that (i) o-moral or o-normative properties are quiddity-involving and (ii) u-normative properties are among the fundamental quiddities on which physics is silent.

<sup>30</sup> Drawing from Papineau (2003) and Sider (2001), Pautz (2015) develops a similar problem of reference for Russellian monism.

brute normative or moral laws connecting o-moral properties to natural properties, panmoralists posit brute grounding connections between the instantiations of o-moral properties and u-normative properties. These brute grounding connections lead us to complexity, discontinuity, and mystery.

At this point, the panmoralist might object that grounding connections do not cry out for explanation in their own right, and even if they do, they do not require *essence-based* explanations. This is a large issue of ongoing controversy, and a detailed examination of it will have to wait for another paper.<sup>31</sup> However, I am willing to concede that the panmoralist can blunt the second horn of the dilemma by holding that grounding connections do not need essence-based explanations. Having made this concession, I have three points in service of showing that this horn remains sharp enough to put pressure on the panmoralist.

First, some philosophers will view the panmoralist's proposal as an unfortunate way out of the dilemma. Brute grounding seems uncomfortably close to brute emergence. As with supervenience relations, it just seems arbitrary and unsatisfying to posit grounding connections without saying anything more. Successful essence-based explanations, by contrast, are arguably distinctively non-arbitrary and maximally satisfying (e.g., Dasgupta, 2014, p. 580).

Second, even if the panmoralist's proposal circumvents the charge that the non-reductive panmoralist's grounding connections lead us to mystery, there is still a case to be made that these grounding connections add to the *discontinuity* and *complexity* of the non-reductive panmoralist's theory in the way that fundamental moral or normative laws add to the discontinuity and complexity of robust realism and fundamental psychophysical laws add to the discontinuity and complexity of dualism (Pautz, 2015, forthcoming).

Third, the panmoralist's proposal may come at a dialectical cost. Recall that one way of motivating the open question argument against physicalism in the philosophy of mind and naturalism in metaethics is to inductively infer from the premise that paradigmatic synthetic identities have certain features to the conclusion that all synthetic identities have those features. There is a

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<sup>31</sup> For now, I briefly sketch three related responses that can be given to this objection. First, the growing literature on what Litland (2017) calls the "Problem of Iterated Ground"—the question of what (if anything) grounds the facts about what grounds what—suggests that grounding connections are apt to be *metaphysically* explained. After all, the problem arises in part because there are reasons to believe that the facts about what grounds what *can* and *should* be grounded (e.g., Litland, 2017, sec. 3). Second, Dasgupta (2014) and Rosen (2017a,b) have argued that the best solution to the Problem of Iterated Ground is to take the facts about what grounds what to be partially grounded in and thus partially metaphysically explained by essentialist facts. Third, there is an important question of what distinguishes *metaphysical* explanation from *scientific* explanation. Rosen (2017a) has provided (in my view, compelling) reasons to think that the most plausible answer to this question is that a fact is metaphysically grounded in some facts only if that grounding connection is mediated by the essence of the grounded. But if that is right, it is very natural to go a step further and conclude that all metaphysical explanations admit of a further explanation that some scientific explanations do not—namely, an essence-based explanation. Contrary to Dasgupta (2014) and Rosen (2017a,b), however, we needn't take essence-based explanation to be a type of *grounding* explanation. According to Lowe (2012), "We should regard *essence-based* explanation just as one more distinctive *species* of explanation" (p. 938).

similar inductive inference to be drawn from the premise that paradigmatic grounding connections are explainable with reference to the essences of the grounded items to the conclusion that all grounding connections are explainable with reference to the essences of the grounded items. If the panmoralist's maneuver out of the dilemma is legitimate, then it is hard to see why it isn't similarly legitimate for physicalists and naturalists to hold that their synthetic identities needn't involve "Twin-Earthable" terms or be a priori deducible from the microphysical facts. In short, the panmoralist's proposed way out of the dilemma may weaken the case for panmoralism in metaethics (and, by parity of reasoning, the case for panpsychism in the philosophy of mind).

The preceding discussion may invite another general concern. Suppose that the panmoralist simply concedes that there are brute grounding connections between the instantiations of o-moral and u-normative properties. If the alternative is to hold that nothing fully metaphysically grounds the instantiations of o-moral properties by non-fundamental entities, then the panmoralist might still declare victory. Perhaps a theory that posits brute grounding connections between facts at different levels is *ceteris paribus* superior to a theory that doesn't posit any grounding connections between those facts at all.

In response to this concern, I grant for the sake of argument that non-reductive panmoralism has an advantage over certain metaethical theories. However, the dialectical situation in metaethics is more complex than the previous concern makes it seem. As I explained in Section 2, it is open to robust realists to hold that the instantiation of every o-moral property is fully metaphysically grounded in natural facts together with fundamental normative or moral laws. Panmoralists and normative bridge law robust realists, as we might call them, can *agree* that the instantiation of every o-moral property by a non-fundamental entity is partially metaphysically grounded in fundamental normative facts. The main difference between them is that for the panmoralist, these fundamental facts include the instantiations of *hypothetical* normative properties by ultimates, whereas for the normative bridge law robust realist, these fundamental facts include (lawful) generalizations linking *ordinary* moral properties to *ordinary* normative properties. It is hard to see why this should make a difference to whether the one theory is any less complex, discontinuous, or mysterious than the other.<sup>32</sup>

## 6 Collective pluralized pannormism

Bohn (2018) constructs an argument that is similar to the moral parody argument for panmoralism, but rather than taking it to be a *reductio ad absurdum* of a parallel argument for panpsychism, he goes on to defend two related positions that he calls "collective pluralized pannormism" and "collective pluralized panpsychism," respectively. It might be objected that *these* are the positions

<sup>32</sup> I am indebted to an anonymous referee for challenging me to address these general worries about the dilemma for panmoralism. These same worries will arise when I present a similar dilemma for pannormism in Section 6.

that we ought to adopt. In this section, after raising some questions about a general principle that is meant to motivate these positions, I argue that collective pluralized pannormism (“pannormism” for short) faces all three of the problems that I raised for panmoralism and amplifies the first of them. Again, this suggests that we should take the moral parody argument to be a *reductio ad absurdum* of the master argument for panpsychism.

According to Bohn (2018), pannormism can be motivated by a general research program based on the following *trickle-down principle*:

$$TDP: (Fx \wedge ([Byy] < [Bx])) \rightarrow Fyy,$$

where each occurrence of “ $x$ ” is to be replaced with an occurrence of a singular term; each occurrence of “ $yy$ ” is to be replaced with an occurrence of a plural term; each occurrence of “ $F$ ” is to be replaced with an occurrence of a predicate expressing a “metaphysically basic” property (“basic” for short); and “ $B$ ” means “[has] *being*” (Bohn, 2018, p. 4112).<sup>33</sup> In English, TDP is meant to express the idea that if an object has a basic property, and the being of that object is grounded in the being of a plurality of other objects, then those other objects together have that property.

Bohn (2018) uses the phrase “metaphysically basic” for “sub-factual objects and properties (and relations) whose being has no full metaphysical explanation in other terms” (p. 4107, n. 1). Since Bohn appears to use the terms “being” and “instantiation” interchangeably when talking about properties, I take him to mean that a property  $Ax.\phi$  is basic with respect to a particular object  $o$  when  $o$  instantiates  $Ax.\phi$  and there are no facts that do not contain  $Ax.\phi$  as a constituent such that they fully ground the fact that  $o$  instantiates  $Ax.\phi$ . It’s not clear what Bohn means by the “being” of an *object* (see my n. 38 below). However, it is worth noting that Bohn (2018) and I both assume that grounding is a multigrade relation between facts (see, e.g., p. 4109, n. 9). As a result, since an expression of the form “the being of  $x$ ” is apt to be mistook for a definite description or function term for something other than a fact, a sentence of the form “the being of  $x$  is grounded in the being of  $yy$ ” is to be treated as shorthand for a sentence along the lines of “the fact that  $x$  has being is grounded in the fact that  $yy$  have being.”

To illustrate TDP, suppose that *badness* is a basic property expressed by the predicate “bad” instantiated by a particular epileptic seizure. According to Bohn (2018), it follows from TDP that:

If the epileptic seizure is bad, and the being of the epileptic seizure is grounded in the being of some uncontrolled, overactive neuron firings in the brain, then those uncontrolled, overactive neuron firings are bad, and if the being of those uncontrolled, overactive neuron firings are grounded in the being of some atomic behavior, then that atomic behavior is bad, and if the being of that atomic behavior is grounded in the being of some sub-atomic behavior, then that sub-atomic behavior

<sup>33</sup> I have modified the original notation slightly to bring it in line with my own.

is bad, and if the being of that sub-atomic behavior is grounded in . . . ,  
and so on possibly *ad infinitum*, without end. (p. 4112)

On this view, the predicate “bad” is “‘multigrade’ in the sense that it can take both singular and plural subjects” (p. 4112, n. 14). As Bohn points out, the claim that some neuron firings are bad is ambiguous between three different readings. Bohn intends the *collective* reading: “Fyy iff all of yy together has F, but no one of them individually has F” (p. 4113). Correspondingly, let’s say that a plurality *collectively* has a property when the members of that plurality together have that property, but no one of them individually has that property; and that a property is a *plural collective property* when a plurality of objects collectively has it. Importantly, a *plurality* isn’t supposed to be a further object: “By standard plural logic, a plurality of objects is nothing but those objects” (p. 4119).

Bohn (2018) maintains that if badness doesn’t trickle down in such circumstances, then it is *emergent*: “a metaphysically basic property whose instantiator has a ground . . . but [whose] instantiation has no full explanation in terms of that ground” (p. 4109). That is, even though the being of the seizure is fully grounded in the being of the neuron firings, the fact that the seizure has badness is not fully grounded in facts about those neuron firings.

With these preliminaries in place, we can now understand pannormism to be the following view:

*Pannormism*: Some o-moral or o-normative properties are basic and governed by TDP.<sup>34</sup> Thus, if one of those properties is instantiated by a non-fundamental entity whose being is fully grounded in the being of some ultimates, then those ultimates collectively have that property.

Suppose that there is a fundamental level of reality. Here’s the crucial difference between pannormism and panmoralism: the former, but not the latter, takes at least some *o-moral* or *o-normative* properties to be instantiated by some ultimates; the latter, but not the former, countenances an ontology of *u-normative* properties.

As previously indicated, one of the central motivations for pannormism is that it belongs to a more general research program based on TDP. This research program is meant to solve a general problem of emergence by taking basic properties instantiated by non-basic objects to “trickle down” independently motivated grounding chains to more fundamental pluralities of objects (Bohn, 2018, pp. 4111–12). Consequently, if TDP admits of counterexamples,

<sup>34</sup> Quantifying into predicate position:  $\exists F((\text{Basic}(F) \wedge (\text{Moral}(F) \vee \text{Normative}(F))) \wedge \forall x \forall yy((Fx \wedge ([Byy] < [Bx])) \rightarrow Fyy))$ . In order to capture the intended idea that basic o-moral or o-normative properties are not “emergent” in Bohn’s (2018) sense, the view needs to be complicated to specify that when a non-basic object has a basic o-moral or o-normative property, the fact that it has that property is grounded in the fact that a more fundamental plurality of objects (whose being grounds the being of that non-basic object) collectively has that property: e.g., conjoin the previous existential generalization with  $\forall G \forall z \forall vv(((\text{Basic}(G) \wedge (\text{Moral}(G) \vee \text{Normative}(G))) \wedge ((Gz \wedge ([Bvv] < [Bz]))) \rightarrow ([Gvv] < [Gz]))$  (Bohn, 2019, p. 390).



then that research program collapses and one of the central motivations for pannormism falls with it. For this reason, it is worth pausing to consider whether TDP holds in general.<sup>35</sup>

I will mention three cases that (depending on one's broader philosophical views) seem to call TDP into question. The first of them, which Bohn (2018) considers, is the case of consciousness. In a later (2019) paper, Bohn provides a detailed defense of collective pluralized panpsychism, which holds that some o-phenomenal properties are both basic and collectively instantiated by certain pluralities. Collective pluralized panpsychism turns largely on the assumption that it is possible for a plurality of things to collectively have an o-phenomenal property. This assumption is controversial. Van Inwagen (1990) famously rejects it: "Now, surely, planning for tomorrow or feeling pain cannot be activities that a lot of simples can perform collectively, as simples can collectively shine or collectively support a weight" (p. 118) (but see Rosen and Dorr, 2002, p. 160). Moreover, O'Conaill (2021) provides reasons to think that o-phenomenal properties are essentially *subjective*: their instantiations "are always like something *for someone*, a subject of experience" (p. 4). As a result, collective pluralized panpsychism confronts what O'Conaill calls "the problem of the plural subject": the task of clarifying how a plurality of things can collectively have an o-phenomenal property when we seem to have no prior grasp of how that could be. To the extent that this is a compelling problem, the usual arguments against physicalism about o-experience suggest that certain o-phenomenal properties generate counterexamples to TDP.<sup>36</sup>

The second case involves what Moran (2018) calls "fundamental kinds." Moran proposes that certain objects fall under kinds by reference to which we can specify *what they are* (as opposed to merely specifying *how they are*). These fundamental kinds can in some sense determine the properties that their instances may have (e.g., a proposition is the kind of thing that can have a truth value, but not the kind of thing that can be colored). On this basis, Moran proposes that, in some cases, the fact that an object has a property grounds the fact that it has a further property only on the condition that it falls under a certain fundamental kind. Moran argues that this notion of *kind-dependent grounding* can help us make sense of certain puzzling cases, such as those in which distinct coincident objects seem to share a physical property and yet only one of them has a further property in virtue of having that physical property. While this framework can be implemented in more than one way

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<sup>35</sup> Thanks to an anonymous referee for inspiring me to consider potential counterexamples to TDP.

<sup>36</sup> If the problem of the plural subject can be solved, thereby removing what some take to be an important obstacle to mereological nihilism, the solution would bring into renewed focus the question of why we should prefer collective pluralized panpsychism over a version of eliminativism according to which there are no mereologically complex subjects of experience. For there is a case to be made that considerations of parsimony favor eliminativism (e.g., Van Inwagen, 1994). However, Bohn (2014) defends the thesis of composition as identity and would deny that considerations of parsimony favor eliminativism over collective pluralized panpsychism. Not surprisingly, the question of whether mereology is "ontologically innocent" is a matter of ongoing controversy.

(e.g., Moran, 2021), Moran’s (2018) preferred solution requires the view that (some) “fundamental kinds are ground-theoretically fundamental since their instantiation is ungrounded” (p. 371). This may spell trouble for TDP. For consider Moran’s case of the statue and the lump of clay that constitutes it. If the lump of clay doesn’t fall under the fundamental kind of the statue, as Moran suggests, then surely the plurality of which the statue is composed doesn’t fall under that kind either. But if the being of the statue is grounded in the being of the plurality of which it is composed, then a basic kind instantiated by a non-basic object fails to trickle down the grounding chain to the more fundamental plurality of which that non-basic object is composed, and TDP fails.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, consider the property of being a set. Suppose that  $\{\text{Socrates, Plato}\}$  has this property. On the face of it, the property of being a set is essentially singular. Nonetheless, there is a case to be made that the being of  $\{\text{Socrates, Plato}\}$  is grounded in the being of Socrates and Plato. But if the property of being a set is basic, then it follows from these assumptions that TDP fails.

All that said, these purported counterexamples are only as compelling as the assumptions on which they’re based.<sup>38</sup> Some philosophers will insist that, for each of these cases, TDP is more plausible than the set of assumptions required for the purported counterexample to succeed. I have presented each case here for the consideration of those who are independently attracted to those assumptions. However, in the remainder of this section, I will simply assume that TDP does not admit of successful counterexamples. Instead, I will focus on pannormism and argue that it suffers from the same problems that I raised for pannormism.

Here’s the first problem for pannormism that I will discuss. As I pointed out in Section 5 above, the simplicity argument suggests that anyone in the

<sup>37</sup> Needless to say, Moran’s (2018) metaphysical framework is not uncontroversial, and proponents of other metaphysical frameworks (including the essence-based framework introduced in Section 2 above) may prefer to pursue different solutions to the problem cases that Moran considers (assuming they take them to be genuinely problematic in the first place).

<sup>38</sup> They also turn in part on how TDP is to be interpreted. Recall that since grounding is a multigrade relation between facts, a sentence of the form “the being of  $x$  is grounded in the being of  $yy$ ” is to be treated as shorthand for something along the lines of “the fact that  $x$  has being is grounded in the fact that  $yy$  have being.” Moreover, it is natural to use the term “has being” interchangeably with “exists.” Yet, Bohn (2018, p. 4108, n. 4) implies that he doesn’t intend “being” to mean the same thing as “existence.” What then is a sentence of the form “the being of  $x$  is grounded in the being of  $yy$ ” (translated into English from “[ $B_{yy}$ ] < [ $B_x$ ]”) supposed to mean? It’s not obvious. Here’s a suggestion: replace sentences of the form “the being of  $x$  is grounded in the being of  $yy$ ” with a sentence along the lines of “for any way that  $x$  is,  $x$ ’s being that way is grounded in  $yy$ ’s being some way.” Quantifying into predicate position:  $\forall F(Fx \rightarrow \exists G([G_{yy}] < [Fx]))$ . For example, a philosopher might claim that the being of a particular seizure ( $a$ ) is grounded in the being of some neuron firings ( $bb$ ) *in the sense that* for every property that  $a$  has, there is some property that  $bb$  collectively has such that the fact that  $a$  has the one property is grounded in the fact that  $bb$  collectively has the other property. But on this interpretation, anyone who holds that badness is a basic property of  $a$  that isn’t collectively had by  $bb$  will simply deny (on pain of contradicting themselves) that the being of  $a$  is grounded in the being of  $bb$ . They will insist that the grounding claim simply begs the question against their view. Unfortunately, considering all the various ways that TDP might be interpreted is a task for another paper.

market for a pan-ism should purchase that pan-ism together with Russellian monism as a package deal. While panmoralists can accept Russellian monism by maintaining that u-normative properties play microphysical roles, it is *very* hard to see how pannormism can be successfully combined with Russellian monism—even if normative properties are causally efficacious. For according to the pannormist, the basic o-moral or o-normative properties are collectively had by *pluralities* of ultimates but not by any *individual* ultimates. So, it is hard to see how those properties could account for the microphysical properties of those individual ultimates. Take an individual electron, for example. That electron might belong to bad pluralities at some times but not at others. Yet, there will never be a time at which it isn't negatively charged. Therefore, if the charge role is realized by some quiddity, that quiddity can't be the badness of any ordinary plurality of ultimates. The same reasoning should apply to most (if not all) other microphysical roles.

If the basic plural collective o-moral or o-normative properties do not play any microphysical roles, then at best they help account for certain o-moral and o-normative facts but pretty much nothing else—they are one step removed from being metaphysical “idlers.” The pannormist might respond that the basic plural collective o-moral or o-normative properties still do important metaphysical work and that is enough to earn their theoretical keep. Of course, there is something similar to be said in defense of the fundamental laws of certain versions of robust realism and dualism. Even so, because the objection that I am raising is comparative in nature, this response is beside the point. Part of what makes Russellian monism so attractive is that it appears to offer a relatively economical picture of the world. According to Russellian monists, Mother Nature works her wonders from a small inventory of stock ingredients. These include the basic kinds under which the ultimates fall as well as the properties that their instances instantiate and the fundamental physical laws that govern the behavior of those instances. In principle, everything else can be explained in terms of the instances of these fundamental kinds and properties in accordance with the fundamental laws of physics. By contrast, pannormism is committed to saying that the basic properties of a plurality cannot “be derived from basic properties of, and relations among, each members of the plurality” (Bohn, 2018, p. 4120). As a result, the pannormist is forced to *bloat* Mother Nature's inventory by positing *additional* basic properties (e.g., badness).<sup>39</sup> This isn't a decisive reason to reject the view, but it does suggest that, as with robust realism in metaethics and dualism in the philosophy of mind, pannormism has theoretical costs that we should be reluctant to pay.

<sup>39</sup> O'Conaill (2021) argues that this makes collective pluralized panpsychism vulnerable to the charge of objectionable bruteness: “Both the emergentist and the pluralized panpsychist hold that consciousness is a basic property that can only be instantiated when basic objects are arranged in specific ways. The main difference between them, by Bohn's lights, is that he regards consciousness as a PCP [plural collective property] of pluralities of basic objects, not (only) as a property of non-basic objects. But it is not clear why this should make the difference between objectionable and non-objectionable bruteness” (p. 3). The same can be said of pannormism.

Next, as Bohn (2018) himself points out, pannormism seems to imply that it is “metaphysically possible that all pluralities of basic objects simply fail to instantiate the metaphysically basic plural collective normative properties, on pain of inexplicable metaphysically necessary connections between some pluralities of basic objects and some basic normative properties” (p. 4121). In order to preserve the natural/moral global supervenience thesis, then, the pannormist has to hold that there are necessary connections between the basic o-moral or o-normative properties and the pluralities of ultimates that instantiate them. As Bohn (2018, p. 4121) observes, robust realism faces a similar problem. However, the robust realist may take the modal connections between moral and natural properties to be explained by fundamental moral or normative laws. Since the alternative is to countenance a vast disarray of inexplicable modal coincidences, there is pressure on the pannormist to posit fundamental moral or normative laws as well. This introduces several new worries.

First, these moral or normative laws will add to an already bloated inventory of basic kinds, properties, and laws, raising the theoretical costs of the view. Second, there are reasons to doubt that the antecedents of these laws can be specified in wholly microphysical terms. Perhaps it is a normative law that if a plurality is *arranged badness-wise*, then it collectively has badness. Unlike the plural collective property of being arranged molecule-wise, say, it is very hard to see how the property of being arranged badness-wise is to be defined or explained in terms of the microphysical properties of individual ultimates or the spatial relations holding between them. This suggests that, in order to posit fundamental moral or normative laws, the pannormist may be forced to posit additional basic kinds as well (e.g., the plural collective property of being arranged badness-wise). Consequently, even if the pannormist avoids brute emergence, it may come at an increased cost of mystery and complexity at the fundamental level. Finally, if these fundamental moral or normative laws are taken to be *normatively* necessary but *metaphysically* contingent, as Bohn (2018, p. 4121) favors, then pannormism still raises the epistemological and explanatory worries that I raised for panmoralism in Section 5 above.

Finally, pannormism faces a dilemma similar to the one that I posed for panmoralism. Consider the bad epileptic seizure from before, and suppose that its being is fully grounded in the being of some ultimates. Assuming that badness is a basic property, pannormism entails that both the seizure and those ultimates instantiate badness. In order to avoid the conclusion that badness is emergent, therefore, the pannormist has to hold that the instantiation of badness by the *seizure* is fully grounded in the instantiation of badness by the *ultimates* from which that seizure is composed (Bohn, 2019, p. 390). Now, either that ground-theoretic connection is explainable with reference to the essences of things, or it isn't. If it is, then it is hard to see how that connection could be explained by the essence of anything other than badness (Rosen, 2010, p. 133). But as Fine (2012) might put it, even if the essence of badness knows something of other normative properties and relations, it certainly doesn't know anything of the ultimates and the composition relations into which they enter. It is no part of *what it is* to be bad that badness at one level of reality

gives rise to badness at some other level of reality (whether higher up or lower down reality's compositional chains). If that ground-theoretic connection isn't explainable with reference to the essences of things, then as with non-reductive panmoralism, pannormism appears to be committed to something very close to the brute emergence it is meant to avoid: while the robust realist posits brute normative or moral laws connecting o-moral properties to natural properties, the pannormist posits brute grounding connections between o-moral or o-normative properties at different levels of reality. Again, this leads us to complexity, discontinuity, and mystery.<sup>40</sup>

## 7 Lessons

So what does all this matter for *panpsychism*? Again, we arrive at these metaethical views as a result of more or less the same considerations by which we arrive at panpsychism. Moreover, it is unclear how we can break the relevant parallels in metaethics and the philosophy of mind. What to do? Since panmoralism and pannormism are counterintuitive, problematic, and problematic for reasons similar to those for which naturalism and robust realism are problematic, I believe that the answer is to reject the master argument for panpsychism. And without some other argument to support the view, that means giving up panpsychism as well.

As I mentioned at the outset, the moral parody argument confronts panpsychists with four options: (i) adopt panmoralism; (ii) reject moral realism; (iii) explain how the relevant parallels can be broken; or (iv) replace the argument for panpsychism with some other argument that doesn't overgeneralize to support panmoralism. I have already provided reasons to be skeptical of option (i), and it remains to be seen whether option (iii) can be successfully defended in future work. Option (iv) is a promising direction for panpsychists—although, as I explained in Section 5, there is a case to be made that the causal argument for panpsychism also overgeneralizes to support panmoralism. Of course, the panpsychist might simply adopt option (ii). But without an independent and compelling argument against moral realism, option (ii) adds to the costs that panpsychism already incurs. More importantly, it suggests that the master argument for panpsychism is not a very good one after all. For even if some panpsychists are inclined to reject moral realism, it is hard to take seriously an

<sup>40</sup> The second horn of this dilemma raises the same general worries that I considered in Section 5 after laying out a similar dilemma for panmoralism. My replies are the same, but I leave it to the reader to fill in the details. In the present context, I have one more point to make. Suppose that the pannormist attempts to evade the dilemma by holding that grounding connections do not need essence-based explanations. This may come at an additional dialectical cost. Bohn (2018) motivates a ban on emergence by arguing that “it is a good methodological rule to not postulate emergence beyond necessity” (p. 4111). He then suggests that this methodological rule is a good one because it is “intended to rule out unnecessary and unexplained things” (p. 4111). As a result, there is some pressure on the pannormist to explain why it is a *good* methodological rule not to postulate emergence beyond necessity but a *bad* methodological rule not to postulate brute grounding connections beyond necessity, given that both rules are intended to minimize unexplained facts.

argument for panpsychism that compels moral realists to accept panmoralism on pain of rejecting moral realism altogether.

Supposing that's right, then what exactly goes wrong with the master argument for panpsychism? Some of the aforementioned problems for panmoralism suggest a potential diagnosis. What typically gets panpsychism going against physicalism is an intuition of distinctness with respect to the experiential and the microphysical (Papineau, 2002, ch. 6). In order to avoid (something close to) brute emergence, there is pressure on panpsychists to posit *essential* connections between o-phenomenal and u-phenomenal properties. This makes panpsychism once again susceptible to the very anti-reductionist intuitions that play an important role in the usual arguments against physicalism.<sup>41</sup>

Now, while I have focused on parallels in metaethics and the philosophy of mind, there is a more general lesson to be learned here. The moral parody argument for panmoralism is just one instance of an argument schema concerning any two phenomena that together seem to give rise to a distinctive explanatory gap.<sup>42</sup> We can produce additional instances of this schema in support of pan*representationism*, pan*meaningism*,<sup>43</sup> pan*beautyism*, pan*gastronomicism*,<sup>44</sup> and so on. If the panpsychist can't break the relevant parallels, then the incredulous stares will just keep multiplying. And while an incredulous stare is not an argument, there are only so many incredulous stares that a philosopher can take before wondering whether something has gone wrong.

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<sup>41</sup> Goff (2009) offers a similar diagnosis in terms of a priori entailment. One of his main points is that the conceivability/possibility link some panpsychists use to argue against physicalism is a double-edged sword that—by parity of reasoning—can be used to undermine panpsychism as well.

<sup>42</sup> Thanks to Daniel Muñoz for helpful discussion.

<sup>43</sup> As Pelczar (2009, p. 28, n. 4) notes, it is possible to extract a knowledge argument against (a version of) physicalism about meaning from Quine's (1960/2013) argument for the indeterminacy of translation.

<sup>44</sup> See Loeb (2003) for discussion of a position he calls "gastronomic realism."

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