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Panpsychism, the thesis that consciousness is a fundamental and ubiquitous property of the universe, is considered as one of the most convenient answers to the main problem for philosophy of mind – the hard problem, thanks to it seems to have advantages of both and disadvantages of neither [2. P.1]. Nevertheless, panpsychism has its own problems; in this research we consider the main one – the combination problem.

Panpsychism, roughly, states that consciousness like ours (macrophenomenal entities) made of the microconscious entities (microphenomenal entities). The problem is to explain how these microphenomenal entities combine to produce macrophenomenal minds. Originally, the combination problem relies to W. James’ infamous work «The Principles of Psychology» – James argues that it is not possible to multiple subjects combine with each other and create a brand new subject; in fact, the conscious subjects do not share the feelings and experiences, they are isolated from each other [5. P.160; 4. P.4]. He continues and says that these subjects might sum only aggregatively, not intrinsically. Thus, we see that two main essential assumptions of the enemies of panpsychism are (1) the isolation of subjects and (2) the aggregative summing [4. P.4].

Panpsychists have attempted to solve this difficulty in different ways. One of the most promising approaches, in Chalmers’ opinion [2. P.23], is the phenomenal bonding solution (or «mental chemistry» [3]). The solution is to eliminate those two problematic assumptions and to explain how these micro-level conscious entities came up creating a new macro-level one. Firstly, Goff and Coleman argue the statement that micro-level entities are subjects to be false: they’re to be properties of objects, like mass or charge. Thus, the microphenomenal entities are not supposed to be under the aggregative summing rule, i.e. they can sum intrinsically.

The microphenomenal entities are able to connect with each other and form or constitute a macrophenomenal entity thanks to so-called phenomenal bonding (or mental chemistry). But the nature of this bonding is not clear: though Goff supposes that it is kind of as fundamental as the spatiotemporal relations. Coleman compares a mental chemistry occasion with cooking [3. P.23]: when we cook a dish with wine and vegetables, they do not just aggregate and remain untouched, but instead of it they integrate with each other and form a new taste. Although it does not really tell us what such phenomenal bonding or mental chemistry is, but we might intuitively consider it as very strong connection on metaphysical level.

However, we might consider another question: is really the combination problem a problem? B.G. Montero argues that the problem might not be one [6. P.6]; almost everything in the universe (including not only dishes and consciousness, but also our bodies and macrophysical objects) is made of something less – the fundamental particles. And we do not usually ask about how they combine to create larger objects, because we already are aware of physical laws explaining it. Further, Montero proposes that instead of dealing with such problems we better should think about panpsychism itself in the first place and consider the better and more adequate theory to describe consciousness with it. She states that the very problem might be ill-conceived [6, p. 1].
Now we have two points of view on the combination problem: the first, phenomenal bonding approach, states that there is a problem that could be solved by rejection of two anti-combination premises and the notion of bonding, and the second, which declares that not the problem needs to be fixed, but panpsychism itself. We might argue for both of views. On the one hand, the bonding-chemistry theory is not actually transparent, on the other – the combination problem and its solution are serious ontological problems. Whether or not, this conflict is worth of further philosophical research.

BIBLIOGRAPHY