The CaML model of pantheism

NIKK EFFINGHAM ⓘ

*Department of Philosophy, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom,
B30 1AD, UK*
e-mail: nikk.effingham@gmail.com

Abstract: This article argues for a new understanding of pantheism whereby God
is a multi-located mereological simple which constitutes the cosmos. I argue that
the traditional theist can more readily accept this version of pantheism than a
version identifying God with the cosmos.[1]

'Pantheism' is defined in many different ways (Pfeifer (2016), 41–43, discusses
a representative sample). For the purpose of this article, pantheism (broadly con-
strued) will be the claim that God is the cosmos. We can interpret that broad claim
in different ways depending upon what we mean by 'God', 'is', and 'the cosmos'.

In this article 'the cosmos' refers to the maximal fusion of everything physical
(thus other universes, if there be any, are parts of the cosmos).[2] The conceit of
this article is that we can readily combine classical theism with pantheism, thus
'God' will be taken to be a personal agent who has the standard batch of omniquali-
ties (e.g. omnipotence, omniscience, omnibenevolence, etc.).

The meat of this article is how we understand 'is'. The standard treatment takes
'is' to be the 'is of numerical identity', getting us:

> IDENTITY PANTHEISM: God is numerically identical to the cosmos. (cf. Hewitt,
> 2019)

But problems arise given IDENTITY PANTHEISM. Given that He's identical to a 93 billion
light year wide hypersphere teeming with matter, how can God be mereologically
simple? Or immutable? Or a person? One option is to be revisionary, discarding
those elements of classical theism which clash with IDENTITY PANTHEISM – God
would end up being a mereologically complex, mutable, impersonal agent (etc.).
But this article's conceit is to keep a more-or-less classical understanding of
'God' so I'll instead adopt an alternative understanding of 'is', treating it as the
'is of constitution'. Recasting pantheism in this way avoids IDENTITY PANTHEISM
and allows pantheists to capture a more classical theism than would otherwise

have been thought. Believing that God constitutes the cosmos is one component of the pantheistic model I advance in this article (the 'C- component').

The second component is included likewise to help reconcile pantheism with as much of classical theism as possible. It is the '-aML component': God is multi-located at every point within the cosmos. A full explanation of what this amounts to must wait for now. Together, though, these components comprise the 'CaML Model of Pantheism' which better gels pantheism together with classical theism.

This is how this article proceeds. After a preamble about the nature of location, I introduce the two components of the model before explaining how they resolve some problems with combining pantheism with the tenets of classical theism: God's independence (and, to a lesser extent, God's simplicity); God's immutability; God's being a person; and how God can be the cosmos when the cosmos is flawed. I end with a brief discussion of why a traditional theist may be attracted to such a version of pantheism.

Multi-location

Chorology

Start with understanding some basics in the philosophy of location ('chorology').[3] Use ostension to define the three-place relation '__ is exactly located at __ (at time __)' (equivalently: '__ exactly occupies __ (at time ___)'): cubes are exactly located at just one cube-shaped region at any given time; the Kuiper Belt exactly occupies a scattered region composed of lots of non-overlapping asteroid shaped regions; at all times, a sphere of radius r is exactly located at some region with a volume equal to $\frac{4}{3}\pi r^3$.

That relation is temporally relativized. There's an analogous relation which is atemporal: '__ is (atemporally) exactly located at __'. That relation holds between an object and a spatiotemporal region. For instance, I am atemporally exactly located at an extended region of spacetime stretching from 1979 to, hopefully, far in the future. This temporally relativized/atemporal division is ubiquitous. Consider geometrical relations. A circular flatlander who persists through time will be a circle *at a time* but would *atemporally* be a cone. Consider mereological relations. If my car has a flat tyre then when we put a new wheel on it, the wheel is a part of the car *at that point in time* but (because their spacetime worms merely overlap) the tyre is not an *atemporal* part of the car. Consider emotions. I am happy at a certain point in time, but it makes little sense to say I'm atemporally happy, although it (arguably) makes sense to say that my instantaneous temporal part at that certain time is atemporally happy. So there being two analogous location relations is not idiosyncratic to chorology.

Next, introduce 'multi-location':

> x is multi-located at the Rs (at t) (in the temporally relativized sense) $=_{df}$ there are at least two spatial regions, the Rs, and x is exactly located (at t) at each R.

> x is atemporally multi-located at the Rs (at t) $=_{df}$ there are at least two spatiotemporal regions, the Rs, and x is exactly located at each R.

If you believe in the possibility of time travel, you believe in the possibility of temporally relativized multi-location. Imagine Marty, a 6′ tall time traveller from the future, returns back in time and stands next to his shorter, 4′ tall, self. Marty is in two places at once (MacBride (1998), 222; Effingham (2015a); *Idem* (2020)) and is exactly located, in the temporally relativized sense, at two spatial regions at the same time.[4] Since time travel is possible, it follows that temporally relativized multi-location is possible.

However, the CaML model will require things to be *atemporally* multi-located. I am ambivalent about that possibility. Time travel may demonstrate the possibility of temporally relativized multi-location, but no example similarly demonstrates the possibility of atemporal multi-location. The closest we get would be those endurantists who believe that persisting entities are atemporally multi-located at different regions of spacetime (Effingham, 2012) – that form of endurantism would be an example of atemporal multi-location. But a particular understanding of endurantism, which is just a speculative thesis in analytic metaphysics, is a step more dubitable than the time travel example that the everyday person can get their head around. So that's a reason to doubt that atemporal multi-location is possible. But before we give up on its possibility too quickly, consider a conflicting motivation. We might think atemporal exact location is a fundamental relation. Given a standard understanding of recombination, that fundamental relation would be recombinable, thus allowing for atemporal multi-location. So I am in two minds about the possibility of atemporal multi-location. I think there's enough to be said in its defence to mean that it's worthwhile assuming it to be possible – even if solely for the purpose of philosophical exploration – in order to see what work it could do. Thus, this article sets asides worries about the impossibility of atemporal multi-location and assumes that it's possible.

Gainsaying

Consider the geometric properties of objects (e.g. size and shape). They supervene on the geometric properties of the region which such an object exactly occupies (e.g. a cube must be exactly located at a cube-shaped region, a sphere at a sphere-shaped region, etc.) (McDaniel (2003), 310; *Idem* (2007), 135; Skow (2007); Calosi (2014), 124; Gilmore (2018)). A time-travelling object multi-located in the temporally relativized sense thus inherits multiple sets of geometric properties; time travellers that visit themselves will have two (or more) sizes and shapes. For instance, Marty is both 4′ tall and 6′ tall. The same thinking applies to other properties; for instance, a painted cube which travels back in time may be both black all over and red all over. Such claims appear contradictory, but they're not because they're not of the form $\phi \wedge \neg\phi$. Given certain conditionals (e.g. 'If an object is 4′ tall at time t then it is not 6′ tall at time t') they would

entail a contradiction, but it seems natural – given the examples of time travellers just cited – to think that such conditionals are false of multi-located things. So the claims aren't contradictions. Call them 'gainsayers' instead. Gainsayers are *prima facie* contradictory but *secunda facie* consistent. (I defend this understanding of gainsayers more extensively in Effingham (2020).)

If gainsayers can be true in the case of temporally relativized multi-location, gainsayers can presumably be true in the case of atemporal multi-location. Imagine two flatlanders. Harry the flatlander grows from a point to a circular shape over time; Harry is thus atemporally conical. Laura the flatlander grows in a similar fashion, but atemporally multi-locates. The first half of her existence atemporally exactly occupies one spacetime region; she is thus atemporally conical. The second half of her existence atemporally exactly occupies a distinct region; she is thus atemporally a frustum. See figure 1. Being both a cone and a frustum would normally be contradictory, but it isn't in a case where, like Laura, something is multi-located – claims about her shape are mere gainsayers, not contradictions.

The multi-located God

Having pinned down the basics of chorology (and multi-location), consider one component of the CaML model:

> -AML COMPONENT: God (atemporally) exactly occupies every point of spacetime.

Two things straightaway follow from -AML COMPONENT.
First: It entails, and explains, God's omnipresence. While God is not exactly located at every region (for -AML COMPONENT entails only that He's exactly located at the point-sized parts of every region) He'd nonetheless be *present* at every region were we to follow Pruss (2013, 62) in taking 'present at' to be the relation of weak location:

> x is weakly located at a region R =$_{df}$ (i) there exists a region r at which x is exactly located and (ii) R overlaps r.

And it certainly seems reasonable to say of an object weakly located at a region that it's 'present' at that region. For example, I'm weakly located at Birmingham and it seems true enough to say that I'm therefore present in Birmingham. Were that what presentness consisted in, -AML COMPONENT would entail that God is present at every region.[5] Thus, -AML COMPONENT can recommend itself on the grounds that it entails a classical theistic claim, namely that God is present everywhere.[6]

Second: -AML COMPONENT allows for God to be in Heaven. If there is a non-physical realm – a place for God the Father (and/or the angels, Cartesian souls etc.) to reside – then God is present there too, just as long as that non-physical realm is composed of points. That a non-physical realm such as Heaven can be composed of points is an idea I've discussed more fully in Effingham (2015b), but I'll briefly
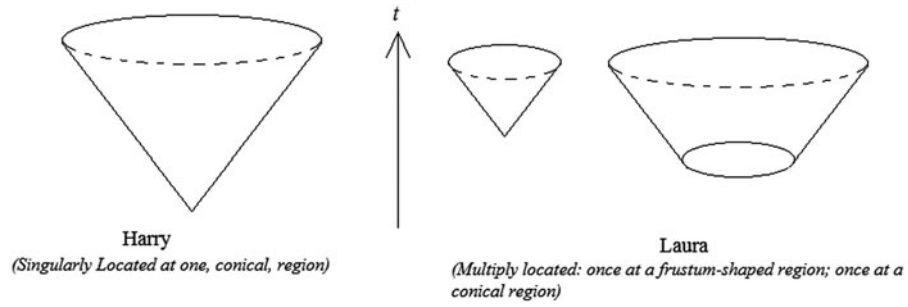
Fig. 1. Laura and Harry in Flatland.

sketch what it involves. Spacetime is made of points; the points are spatiotemporal in virtue of standing in certain spatiotemporal relations to one another. My claim is that non-physical realms are also made of points – or, as I'll assume for example purposes, a single point. That point doesn't stand in any spatiotemporal relation to any other points (nor any spatial or temporal relations to any other points). Because it doesn't stand in such relations, the point isn't spatiotemporal (nor spatial, nor temporal) (Effingham & Melia (2007)); it's 'outside space and time'. Such a point can nonetheless still be a relatum of a chorological relation. Thus entities, like God, can still be (atemporally) exactly located at it.

Were God multi-located in both Heaven and (as -AML COMPONENT requires) at every point which is a part of spacetime, then this would reconcile certain tensions between pantheism and classical theism.

First tension to be resolved: Classically, God is outside space and time, but pantheism seems to entail that God is spatiotemporal. -AML COMPONENT allows us to say that God is *both* outside space and time *and* inside it – God is both timeless *and* temporal. Just as Laura the flatlander is both a cone and a frustum, God is atemporal, eternal, and outside spatiotemporality (in virtue of exactly occupying the point that is Heaven) while also getting to be temporal (in virtue of exactly occupying points which are a part of regular spacetime). God being both atemporal and temporal is no contradiction, rather it is a non-contradictory gainsayer. Tension resolved.[7]

Indeed, independently of pantheism we might have similar worries. Historically, there have been issues reconciling God's omnipresence (and thus his location within spacetime) with his being immaterial (Inman (2017) has an excellent discussion of the various views on this matter). -AML COMPONENT affords a new avenue of response: God *is* – in some sense – material in virtue of being present in spacetime, but is *also* immaterial in virtue of exactly occupying Heaven.

Second tension to be resolved: Some worry that, given pantheism, God ends up with the wrong modal properties (and wrong persistence conditions, etc.). For example, were the cosmos created, then if God is identical to it then God is also created – a serious challenge to His aseity (cf. Forrest, 1997). Another example: Since God cannot fail to exist, we might think pantheism wrongly entails both that spacetime necessarily exists and that God's existence is necessarily connected to spacetime's (Oakes (2006), 175–176). -AML COMPONENT, coupled with this understanding of Heaven, resolves both issues. This is because, were the cosmos to not exist, God would still exist for (in both cases) God would still exist at the Heavenly, non-spatial/non-temporal, realm.

The constitutive God

The second component of the model is:

C- COMPONENT: God constitutes the cosmos (and everything within it).[8]

By 'constitute' I mean the same relation that constitution theorists say holds between lumps of clay and statues. Imagine a lump of clay, *L*, is moulded into a statue, *S*. So, says the constitution theorist, *L* pre-exists *S* and thus (given the Indiscernibility of Identicals) *S* and *L* are distinct. Indeed, they differ regarding other properties: *L*, but not *S*, can survive being squashed (thus they have differing persistence conditions); *S*, not *L*, is essentially statue-shaped (thus their modal properties differ); *S*, not *L*, is Romanesque (thus their aesthetic properties differ) (Fine, 2003). Constitution theorists say that while *S* and *L* are distinct, *S con-stitutes L* (and, similarly, lumps of wood constitute tables, lumps of flesh constitute human bodies, etc.).

C- COMPONENT is what makes the CaML model a pantheistic model (and allows for an alternative to IDENTITY PANTHEISM, whereby there's a difference between God and the cosmos, *contra* Francks (1979)). Everyone agrees that there are at least two types of 'is': the 'is' of identity (as in 'Superman is Clark Kent') and the 'is' of predication (as in 'The ball is red'). Constitution theorists add a third: The 'is' of constitution, whereby one entity 'is' another in the sense that it constitutes the other. In sentences like 'Michelangelo's *David* is a lump of clay' the 'is' is functioning as the 'is' of con-stitution. Given C- COMPONENT, when we say that 'God is the cosmos' – the traditional pantheistic claim – we would be correct because God *constitutes* the cosmos. God is distinct from the universe, even though it's true that God *is* the universe.[9]

I am not the first to suggest that something like C- COMPONENT might be true. Framing it in a hylomorphic context, the twelfth-century philosopher David of Dinant argued that God is the underlying matter of all things (Moran (1989), 86). There are also contemporary claims which are very similar: Oakes (2006) argues that God's omnipresence constitutes the cosmos (although he doesn't believe that this commits one to pantheism, presumably because he has in mind IDENTITY PANTHEISM); Oakes also reads Garrigou-Lagrange's Thomist exegesis as saying that '(a pantheistic God) is the 'ground' or 'foundation' of the universe' (Oakes (1977), 170); Forrest (2016a, 71–72) believes C- COMPONENT entails panentheism (albeit not pantheism); Pfeifer (2016) argues that God stands to the universe as a mass substrate (e.g. a mass of gold) stands to an object (e.g. a golden wedding ring); Johnston (2009, 97) says that the universe constitutes God (which is similar in so far as its converse is C- COMPONENT); Nolan (2018, 94–95) introduces a (presumably multi-located) God that is a proper part of every spacetime point (adding, unlike me, that this God com-poses Herself). So C- COMPONENT is a claim already similar to claims already extant.

The bulk of this article explains how both components solve various problems with reconciling pantheism with classical theism. Before moving to that discus-sion, first consider two objections to C- COMPONENT.

First objection: multi-located entities can't constitute further entities

This objection needs its motivation fleshing out. I'm not sure what things will qualify as being mereological simples – perhaps superstrings, or quarks, or

some such. Label whatever they are 'Leucippions'. For sake of argument, I'll assume that Leucippions are point-sized. Usually, composite objects are composed of distinct Leucippions. But we could imagine that a time-travelling Leucippion, looped back in time many, many times, could compose a composite object. I've previously argued that in such cases, such composites would be distinct from the multi-located Leucippion (Effingham & Robson (2007); Effingham (2010); see also Gilmore (2007)). So a time-travelling Leucippion could, by itself, compose both a lump of clay and the statue constituted by that lump. But we may resist saying that the Leucippion also *constitutes* the statue. 'Constitution' and 'composition' are different relations. Composition is the following (well-understood) mereological relation:

> The ys compose $x =_{df}$ (i) every y is a part of x; (ii) no part of x fails to overlap a y; (iii) no two ys overlap. (van Inwagen 1990: 29)

'Constitution' is a different relation – one which is far less well understood (Wasserman, 2004) (and which I have no analysis of to offer in this article). Once we assume that the multi-located Leucippion composes the statue, it becomes awkward to say that it likewise constitutes it – the thing which constitutes the statue is the lump, which is composed of – not identical to – the Leucippion. In general, if x (or the xs) compose y, and y constitutes z, we tend *not* to think that x(/the xs) constitute z. So we shouldn't think that the Leucippion constitutes the statue any more than we should think that a plurality of Leucippions constitute a statue in regular (non-time travelling) cases where such pluralities compose both a lump and the statue which it constitutes. And what we say of the Leucippion would be said of God: a multi-located God may *compose* the cosmos, but why – goes this objection – would we suggest that God *constitutes* the cosmos?

It boils down to what we should say about the regular, non-time travelling case in which lots of Leucippions compose a statue and a distinct lump of clay. I believe we should say that the plurality *does* constitute the statue. The only reason to deny this would be a staunch commitment to constitution being a one–one relation relating only singular entities, which would exclude pluralities from being a relatum. If pluralities couldn't constitute anything then, in the regular non-time travelling case, a plurality of Leucippions can't constitute anything; by extension, the single time-travelling, multi-located Leucippion (which is otherwise playing the same role as that plurality) can't constitute anything either. Such constitution theorists would believe:

> SINGULAR CONSTITUTION: The two relata of the constitution relation are always (i) singular entities, not pluralities, where (ii) those entities exactly occupy the same region.

If we extend this thinking to a multi-located God, then while He might compose the cosmos SINGULAR CONSTITUTION rules out God constituting the cosmos (for,

while He's a singular entity, He's playing the same 'role' as a plurality of spacetime points; since the latter can't constitute the cosmos, nor can God).

Given I believe that the plurality of Leucippions can constitute the statue, I deny SINGULAR CONSTITUTION. And it's an eminently plausible denial. Put aside worries about time travel and multi-location and consider just two normal tables: an old, aged, oak table ('Oaky') and a modern Noguchi table consisting of curved, ash wooden legs, with a heavy plate glass top ('Noguchi'). A lump of oak constitutes Oaky. Noguchi is *partially* constituted by a lump of ash and *partially* constituted by a lump of glass. Thus, a plurality of entities constitute Noguchi and SINGULAR CONSTITUTION is false. Similarly, we should say that lots of Leucippions could constitute a statue; similarly, there's no reason to deny that a single, time-travelling, Leucippion could do likewise; similarly, there's no reason to deny that a multi-located God can constitute the cosmos.

But this is too quick. The response will be that Noguchi *isn't* constituted by two things. Instead, Noguchi is constituted solely by the singular, heterogeneous fusion of the lump of ash and the lump of glass. But what if there was no heterogeneous fusion? What if mereological universalism were false and the lumps had no such fusion? In that case, Noguchi would have to be (collectively) constituted by the plurality of the two lumps.

The constitution theorist should not respond by saying that there *must* be a fusion of the lumps, for building a commitment to mereological universalism (or any reasonably liberal principle of composition) into constitution theory seems too strong a move. A better suggestion is to say that *nothing* constitutes Noguchi in such a case. The idea would be that only when two entities are superposed does constitution come into play: Oaky, in being superposed with the singular lump of oak, must be a constituted thing; Noguchi, in being superposed neither with the lump of glass nor with the lump of ash, need not be constituted by anything. But there are good reasons to deny precisely this move.

First reason: I suspect that some constitution theorists might think along these lines, and endorse SINGULAR CONSTITUTION, because they think that the constitution relation *just is* the relation which holds between two distinct, singular entities when they're superposed. But constitution theorists also want to *explain* the differing properties of the statue and lump by saying that the lump constitutes the statue. Since the constitution relation has explanatory power, and the relation of two distinct, singular, entities being superposed has *no* explanatory power (cf. Baker (2000), 46; Wasserman (2004)), those relations cannot be the same. So this would be a bad reason to believe SINGULAR CONSTITUTION. Indeed, I can't think of any other positive reason to believe it in the first place, so take myself to have undermined the positive case for SINGULAR CONSTITUTION.

Second reason: Not only do I think there's no positive case to be made, I think there is reason to believe that SINGULAR CONSTITUTION is false. There are common, everyday cases where lots of things are *collectively* superposed with a singular thing e.g. a chair composed of lots of (non-time travelling) Leucippions being

superposed with those Leucippions. But the chair and the plurality of Leucippions have different properties – for instance, the chair is one and the plurality is many, and the chair is a composite and the plurality is not, etc. But how can they have different properties? Isn't this just the same problem as that of the statue and the lump, but with the slight tweak that we're worried about the collective properties of a plurality rather than properties of a singular whole (cf. Lowe (1995), 177)? It seems natural for a constitution theorist to explain how the chair and the plurality have different properties, even though they're superposed, in the same way in which they explain similar issues in statue/lump cases: the plurality constitutes the chair, thus ameliorating worries about them being superposed and having different properties. And if we take that natural route, SINGULAR CONSTITUTION must be false. And if it's false, then we no longer have an objection to God constituting the cosmos.

Second objection: constitution cases are always 'two tier'

A lump of clay constitutes a statue. But perhaps there can be no more constitution; at most, there are two 'tiers' of objects and the statue can't constitute anything further. C- COMPONENT, however, demands three (or more) tier constitution: God constitutes lumps of matter and those lumps of matter constitute other things within the cosmos (e.g. statues, tables, people, etc.).

In response, the constitution theorist should say (as some already do (Wasserman (2004), 694–695)) that constitution can be more than two tier. Examples are not hard to come by. Imagine an ice artist carves a (transient, short-lived) diorama of people. The diorama is constituted by a lump of ice (or lots of such lumps). But a similar diorama could be made of living people who stand stock still to create a (transient, short-lived) piece of art. In that case, organic matter would constitute people, who in turn constitute a piece of art. Or imagine an actor, himself constituted by a lump of flesh, who constitutes Hamlet. Or consider Donald Trump, who (at the time of writing) constitutes the President of the United States. In short, 3+ tier constitution is acceptable.

The simple objection

C- COMPONENT and -AML COMPONENT comprise the CaML model. The next three sections explain how the CaML model resolves tensions between pantheism and traditional beliefs about theism. This section considers a mereological worry.

Start by sketching the worry. It's standard to believe that God depends upon nothing. But if God had parts then He would depend upon those parts. Because the cosmos has parts, were pantheism true we would get a contradiction (Steinhart (2004), 64–65; Oakes (2006), 177; see also (Gordon 2018), 535). In more detail:

> FUNDAMENTAL: God is a fundamental being.
> NO PARTS: Anything with proper parts isn't fundamental.
> COMPOSITE COSMOS: The cosmos is a composite, i.e. has proper parts.

Given IDENTITY PANTHEISM, we get a contradiction. A similar issue crops up concerning the traditional position on divine simplicity (Vallicella, 2019). Given the doctrine of divine simplicity, God must be a mereological simple; given that claim – plus COMPOSITE COSMOS and IDENTITY PANTHEISM – we get a contradiction.

Pantheists could abandon traditional theism by denying FUNDAMENTAL (for instance, Oakes (2006: 177) argues that we should merely think that God is indestructible, rather than fundamental). Alternatively, they could deny COMPOSITE COSMOS (endorsing, say, Schaffer's (2007) 'existence monism' whereby only one thing exists) or NO PARTS (by, say, endorsing Schaffer's (2010) priority monism). But a less revisionary route is the CaML model's denial of IDENTITY PANTHEISM. Given C- COMPONENT, God constitutes the cosmos like a lump constitutes a statue. Just as the lump needn't thereby have the statue as a part, God need not have parts either. (This means the pantheist must endorse a version of constitution theory denying that constitution involves mutual parthood (Thomson (1998); Hawthorne (2006); Cotnoir (2010); Hovda (2013)); I am not a fan of such theories and so don't have a problem with this – see also Walters (2019).)

Not all of the work is being done by C- COMPONENT; some is also being done by -aML COMPONENT. Were God singularly located across the cosmos, rather than multi-located at every point of it, then God would be stretched out across space-time. That's problematic for two reasons.

First, God could only be such a simple were we to believe that extended simples were possible. I'm comfortable with that possibility, but since others are less comfortable (see Gilmore (2018), §5.4–5.5) it would be ideal to avoid God being extended. -aML COMPONENT allows exactly that to be the case for God ends up being an unextended point (indeed, in being multiply located, He ends up being point-sized many, many times over).

Second, even were you comfortable with extended simples, we would require extended mereological simples to constitute mereologically complex objects (Wasserman (2004); Hudson (2006b); Johansson (2009)). Imagine a statue-shaped extended simple which (i) exactly occupies region r_s, and (ii) constitutes a statue. Were the statue mereologically complex, it would have (e.g.) a head, which exactly occupies the head-shaped sub-region of r_s – call it 'r_h'. But what would constitute the head? It can't be the simple; in exactly occupying r_s rather than r_h, it's too big Presumably, *nothing* constitutes the head. But then the head would exactly occupy a region filled by the simple. According to the constitution theorist, this happens only when one thing is a proper part of the other (which the head isn't) or one thing constitutes the other (which the head can't). Thus, if extended simples constituted objects, they must constitute mereologically simple objects. Therefore, were God a singularly located extended simple, the

cosmos must be mereologically simple and have no parts. But that's just a denial of
COMPOSITE COSMOS, which the CaML model is meant to help avoid. Better, then, to
think that God is multiply located and acknowledge that C- COMPONENT alone
cannot do all the work in guaranteeing God's mereological simplicity.

(Note that if the aim is to guarantee the doctrine of divine simplicity, what I've
said here only goes some way to that meet that aim. It's a step in the right direction,
but cannot be the whole story because the doctrine of divine simplicity further
requires God to lack other, non-mereological, types of constituents.)

Immutability

A crude argument against pantheism runs as follows:

MUTABLE COSMOS: The cosmos changes and is mutable.
IMMUTABLE GOD: God cannot change and is immutable.
Given IDENTITY PANTHEISM, we get a contradiction (Oakes, 1977).

Given I deny IDENTITY PANTHEISM, I can avoid that problem. But we can go on to advance
a similar, more sophisticated, concern which is problematic even for the CaML
model. One thing can constitute another only when the intrinsic properties of the con-
stitutum are a certain way. For instance, a squished lump of clay cannot constitute a
statue because it's got the wrong intrinsic properties; when the clay is properly
moulded, its intrinsic properties are different and it can then constitute a statue.
Similarly, if God constitutes every Leucippion then, unless all Leucippions are quali-
tatively identical (a hard claim to make stick for perhaps some are charged and some
are not, or some spin one way while others spin another), then God must have certain
intrinsic properties at one time and place and different intrinsic properties at another.
Since His intrinsic properties vary over time, God changes and we get the problematic
conclusion that a pantheistic, constitutive God is a mutable God.

-AML COMPONENT does the work in avoiding this problem, allowing some thing to
be F at one time and G at another without changing. I believe that the motivation
for thinking that God must change comes from:

> STANDARD CHANGE AND PERSISTENCE: Things persist from one time to another
> solely in virtue of existing at both of those times (Lewis (1986), 202). Moreover
> (where F and G are incompatible predicates) something changes from
> being F at an earlier time to being G at a later time iff it's F at the earlier time
> and G at the later time.

But STANDARD CHANGE AND PERSISTENCE is false. Consider four scenarios.

Scenario one

At t_{25}, Emmett is born. He is 4′ tall at t_{50}, at which point he clambers into a
time machine. Emmett then travels back through the previous instants to t_1. It
takes a while to arrive; when Emmett gets there he's grown and is 6′ tall.

Given STANDARD CHANGE AND PERSISTENCE Emmett has persisted from t_1 to t_{50}, which seems wrong – it seems more correct to say that he's persisted from t_{50} to t_1. Further, it entails that Emmett changes from being 6′ tall to being 4′ tall. But surely it's the other way around?

Scenario two

Marty is born at t_1. At t_{10}, Marty is 4′ tall and uses a time machine which discontinuously teleports him to t_{21} (i.e. he does not 'travel through' $t_{11}-t_{20}$). He stays there for some time, growing taller and becoming 6′ tall. At t_{50} he time travels to t_{11}, staying there until t_{20}, at which point he returns to the future by time travelling to t_{51}.

STANDARD CHANGE AND PERSISTENCE wrongly entails both that Marty persists *from t_{20} to t_{21}* and that he changes from being 6′ tall to being 4′ tall.

Scenario three

Imagine a world at which there is (intuitively) no change. There are just two particles: both come into existence at t_1 and exist for evermore; one is always negatively charged; the other is always positively charged.

Given an appropriately liberal principle of composition, there'll be a third object that is composed of the temporal parts of the negatively charged particle from t_1-t_{50} plus the temporal parts of the positively charged particle from t_{51} onwards. Given STANDARD CHANGE AND PERSISTENCE that object changes from being negatively charged to being positively charged, which is *ex hypothesi* false because the world was meant to be changeless. I submit that the world of scenario three is intuitively changeless, no matter what composition principle holds, and that it is STANDARD CHANGE AND PERSISTENCE which is at fault.

Scenario four

An interval, *T*, has a duration of D_T units of time. It is composed of instants and is 'closed', i.e. has a first instant (t_1) and last instant (t_{last}). There are infinitely many persisting things ($x_1, x_2...x_{last}$) each of which is qualitatively identical in every way except whether or not they time travel: x_1 persists through interval *T*, changing many times during its existence (e.g. from being *F* to being *G*); x_2 persists through the first half of *T* before time travelling back to t_1 and persisting $\frac{1}{2}D_T$ longer; x_3 persists through the first quarter of *T* before time travelling back to t_1 and persisting $\frac{1}{4}D_T$ longer and, again, time travelling back to t_1, before doing that twice more; and so on. At the end of this infinite series there will be an *x*, x_{last}, which time travels back to the instant it was just at, never existing at any other external time.

Given STANDARD CHANGE AND PERSISTENCE x_{last} doesn't change and doesn't persist. But given that the other *x*s change over the course of their existence, and x_{last} is intrinsically identical to them, it seems odd to say that x_{last} does not. Similarly, if it's not persisting then it must at least be doing something *a lot like* persisting.

So we should deny STANDARD CHANGE AND PERSISTENCE. There is more to persistence than mere existence and more to change than mere difference. Introduce 'immanent causation' (to be distinguished from the 'transeunt' causation we normally think about) (Zimmerman (1997), 433ff.). Immanent causation connects the different temporal parts of an object; the fact that one's earlier temporal part is a certain way is a fact which immanently affects facts about how one's later temporal parts are – immanent causal relations explain why an object inherits the properties of its earlier self. For instance, if I am toothless now, that's because earlier someone knocked out one of my teeth. That causal explanation would be a transeunt causal explanation. There is also an immanent causal explanation for me being toothless: My earlier, toothless, stage immanently causes my current stage to be toothless as well.

I propose that we say (i) that to change, one must persist and (ii) that for an x to persist from one point to another requires the two stages of x to be connected by immanent causation. This would resolve all of the problematic scenarios. In scenario one, no fact about the 6′ stage of Emmett immanently causes his 4′ stage to be the way that it is; Emmett, then, does not persist from the earlier time to the later. Similarly, his 4′ stage *does* immanently cause his 6′ stage to be the way that it is, thus he 'persists backwards'. (Note that his 6′ stage might instead *non-immanently* cause his 4′ stage to be the way that it is. For instance, at t_4 Emmett may contrive for his earlier self to get a tattoo at t_{28} – in that case, his 6′ stage would causally interact with his 4′ stage. But this is 'transeunt' causation, not the intimate, immanent causation required for persistence.)

The same things can be said of the other scenarios. In scenario two, the pattern of immanent causal interconnections between Marty's stages won't bear out his changing from being 6′ tall to 4′. In scenario three the gerrymandered object's earlier, negatively charged, temporal parts don't immanently cause its later, positively charged, temporal parts to be charged. Thus it doesn't change over time. In scenario four, there *are* immanent causal connections between x_{last}'s stages, just as there are between the stages of the other xs. Thus x_{last} *can* change and *does* persist, albeit persisting across many regions of space at the same time.

The same goes for God. He is F in one place and G in another, but that needn't imply that He changes. He doesn't change because He doesn't persist, at least if we believe that there are no immanent causal connections between the various multi-located versions of God spread across spacetime. And we should build just such a denial into the CaML model, accepting:

> IMMANENTLY ACAUSAL: God immanently causes nothing and is immanently caused by nothing.

Accepting IMMANENTLY ACAUSAL is very plausible for two reasons.
First, assuming – as I have thus far – that perdurantism is true, immanent causation is clearly a relation between (facts about) temporal parts of a whole. But

God is mereologically simple, has no atemporal proper parts, and thus has no temporal parts either. So God can't have immanent causal relations within Himself.

Second, distinguish 'external time' – that is, time as measured by the universe – from 'personal time' – that is, time as might be measured by a time traveller's watch (Lewis (1976), 146). Pruss (2013) persuasively argues that God should be 'internally timeless' and have no personal times. And I've argued in Effingham (2020) that for one thing to be later in personal time than some other thing is simply for the latter to immanently cause the former. Thus, if God is internally timeless, then we must accept IMMANENTLY ACAUSAL.

In conclusion, we should think that how God is varies from place to place – it must do, in order for God to constitute varying things. But this doesn't imply that God changes, or persists, or is mutable.

The personality objection

Given materialism, we know that, in at least some cases, consciousness/personhood supervenes on complex systems (e.g. a human brain). We may believe that this bears out the following principle:

> CONSCIOUS COMPLEXITY: Complex systems suitably similar to human brains are conscious(/a person); complex systems suitably dissimilar to a human brain are not conscious(/a person).

Given:

> DISSIMILAR: The cosmos, in being a complex system of superclusters, galaxies, immense tracts of (basically empty) space and so on, is suitably dissimilar to the human brain.

It follows from IDENTITY PANTHEISM that God would be a suitably dissimilar complex system and, given CONSCIOUS COMPLEXITY, could not be a person. Thus pantheists should accept:

> IMPERSONAL: God is in no sense a person/conscious.

Not every pantheist thinks a commitment to IMPERSONAL is problematic (Levine (1994), 3–5; Forrest (1997); Harrison (2004); Mander (2016)), either begrudgingly accepting it or more enthusiastically seeing it as a bonus feature of pantheism. But given I'm trying to keep God's personhood, I'm putting myself alongside such pantheists as Forrest (2016b), Pfeifer (2016), the Stoics (Baltzly, 2003), and Sinclair (Thomas, 2019), who all attempt to allow for a pantheistic personal God (see also Hewitt (2019)).

So the task is to make pantheism consistent with:

> PERSONAL: God is conscious/a person (in either a literal or attenuated, analogous sense).

The CaML model has it that God constitutes a mereologically complex system suitably dissimilar to the human brain, not that He is identical to it. Indeed, as I made clear earlier, God is a mereological simple. Drawing upon a key insight from Plantinga (2007) about the nature of consciousness, mereological simples – in not being complex systems at all – can have the appropriate properties to ground consciousness/personhood. Conscious Complexity is a principle solely about *complex* systems; it's mute about what to say about mereological simples, and rightly so. Conscious Complexity is compelling because, clearly, the properties of *composites* supervene upon the nature and arrangement of their parts: a steel bar has a certain arrangement of parts which obliges it to be solid and unyielding; tissue paper has a certain arrangement of parts which obliges it to be delicate and prone to tear; the arrangement and nature of the Statue of Liberty's parts necessitate that it's 93 metres tall; etc. The arrangement of parts a composite has delimits what properties the composite itself can have. But the same cannot be true of mereological simples because their properties can vary even though the arrangement of, and properties of, their proper parts do not vary (for they have no proper parts *to* so vary).

Of course, simples can't have any old property – a mereological simple cannot, for instance, be disposed to tear into two pieces/parts. And one might suspect that a simple cannot be conscious and that we could construct a new argument, not mentioning Conscious Complexity at all, which shows that a mereologically simple God could not be conscious. But, again shadowing a point made by Plantinga, this lacks dialectical bite. While an *atheist* may be justified in believing that simples aren't conscious, that's by-the-by. This article is trying to sell pantheism to the already committed traditional theist. And traditional theists will *already* believe that God is a mereological simple that *can* be a person and *can* be conscious. And if simples can be conscious people under traditional theism, the CaML model equally makes room for Personal.

The problem of evil

Pantheists are faced by a specific version of the problem of evil (see, for example, Nagasawa (2016), 100–101)). Given standard theism, the evils and imperfections of the world are had by things distinct from the perfect God. If I am imperfect, that's *my* problem; God is not thereby imperfect as well. But if pantheism is true, God is the cosmos; since the cosmos is imperfect, God is imperfect. But God is perfect and, thus, pantheism cannot be true. Break that down as follows:

> Imperfect Parts: Some parts of the cosmos are flawed, evil, or otherwise imperfect.
> Genetic Perfection: A whole is not perfect if it has imperfect parts.
> Divine Perfection: God is perfect.
> Given Identity Pantheism we get a contradiction.

Whatever the merits of denying IMPERFECT PARTS or GENETIC PERFECTION (or failing to toe the traditional theistic line, by denying DIVINE PERFECTION), the CaML model allows for an interesting escape route. The CaML model obviously denies IDENTITY PANTHEISM, but also has an excellent explanation for why God needn't be imperfect. In general, in constitution cases the properties which a constitutee has needn't be the same as its constitutum – for instance, sortal properties, persistence conditions (etc.) differ between the statue and the lump. And, since flaws are properties, we needn't think that the flaws of the constitutee are flaws of the constitutum or vice versa. For instance, many statues are aesthetically flawed in some fashion; for example, a statue might have an imperfectly carved nose. But this needn't imply that the lump which constitutes it is also flawed. The lump of clay constituting the statue could be flawless – it could be 100 per cent pure clay, easy to mould, not too permeable, not too coarse, and so on. The lump can be perfect even though the statue is imperfect.

Now it's easy to see what to say about pantheism's problem of evil: God can be flawless and perfect while simultaneously constituting a distinct thing – namely the cosmos – which is flawed and imperfect. The flawed property attaches, not to the deity, but to the constituted substance.

Conclusion

This article has argued that even though traditional theists eschew pantheism, they needn't. However, I've said little about *why* the traditional theist should be attracted by pantheism. That's intentional – the main aim of the article is an attack on the reasons *not* to be a pantheist. Nevertheless, risking the possibility of mission creep, I'll end with a few comments about why traditional theists might find such a model of pantheism attractive.

First, there are independent arguments for pantheism. Some won't appeal because pantheists are sometimes explicitly motivated to argue for a deity *sans* traditional theistic features. But not every pantheist argument is along those lines – see, for instance, Baltzly (2003, 20–28). Traditional theists might be swayed by such arguments.

Second, I have already explained how -AML COMPONENT means that God is both timeless (in virtue of being exactly located in Heaven) and temporal (in virtue of being located within spacetime). This affords the pantheist a chance to have their cake and eat it too when it comes to the competing motivations for God being timeless versus temporal. For instance, Mullins (2016; see also Deng (2019), 47) criticizes theologians for treating God as being both timeless and temporal. He has in mind, for example, Ware, who says: 'Amazingly, then, at creation God becomes both omnipresent and omnitemporal while remaining, in himself apart from creation, fully nonspatial and timelessly eternal' (Ware (2008), 89).

Mullins castigates theologians for asserting such contradictions. But now we can see that they're not necessarily contradictions for they could be mere gainsayers;

the theologians can keep their *prima facie* contradictory, *secunda facie* consistent, beliefs about God's temporality – He is (given the CaML model) both timeless and temporal. Thus, we have a reason for the traditional theist to accept the CaML model: in order to charitably allow contemporary theologians to be saying true things rather than false things.

Third, various metaphysical virtues favour CaML Pantheism. Pantheism is more parsimonious than standard theism. Rather than deity and cosmos, there is just deity. Given IDENTITY PANTHEISM this argument works smoothly, but it also works given C- COMPONENT, even though God ends up being distinct from the cosmos. Imagine two rooms: in one there are two distinct things; in the other there are three distinct things. The former's contents are obviously more parsimonious than the latter's. Now imagine two more rooms: in one there are two distinct things, a lump of clay and the statue which it constitutes; in the other there are two distinct things, namely two misshapen lumps of clay, neither of which constitutes anything. Again, the former's contents are intuitively more parsimonious than the latter's, even though both rooms contain the same 'number of things'. It seems intuitive that, when considering parsimony, we should say that when one entity constitutes another, that is (to some degree) less ontologically weighty than merely having two distinct entities. So an ontology of a deity and a distinct, unconstituted cosmos will be less parsimonious than that of a deity which constitutes the cosmos. Parsimony favours CaML Pantheism.

There are other metaphysical virtues we might be able to capture. Hudson (2006a; *Idem* (2009), 204) argues in favour of the existence of a 'null individual', which is a part of everything. He goes on to argue that God is a good candidate for the null individual. If x is a part of y if x constitutes y then God would be a part of every concrete thing (because God constitutes every simple, and so would be a part of everything). So CaML Pantheism makes room for the null individual (and the concurrent theoretical benefits of including the null individual in one's ontology). (It doesn't quite go all the way to achieving this end because, for instance, the CaML model doesn't entail that God is a part of abstracta, should there be any. To get the full power of Hudson's theory, we'd either have to be nominalists or separately commit to God being a part of all abstracta.)

Fourth, the CaML model allows us to makes sense of the Christian doctrine of *perichoresis*, the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son whereby each is in the other (see John 10: 38). Given the Trinity, -AML COMPONENT would be best interpreted as being a thesis about the location of the Father, rather than every Divine Person. We could say that the Son exactly occupies a single four-dimensional spatiotemporal region, just as any regular, perduring human would. The Son would be 'in' the Father insofar as He exactly occupies a sub-region of the region that the Father fills. The Father is 'in' the Son in so far as He exactly occupies (numerous) sub-regions of the region which the Son exactly

occupies. We would have a chorological understanding of *perichoresis* (which has previously been resisted (Cotnoir (2017), 128), although mainly on the grounds that Divine Persons aren't located, which obviously isn't an issue given the CaML model).

Fifth, *ex nihilo nihil fit* is the principle that nothing comes from nothing. Historical debates about *ex nihilo nihil fit* have considered whether or not traditional biblical understandings of God are committed to its denial. On one side of the fence there are those who believe the biblical account can only be true were *ex nihilo nihil fit* false, and that God summoned the universe into existence from nothing. On the other side of the fence there are those who believe *ex nihilo nihil fit* must be true, and that nothing can genuinely be brought into being; this presumably undermines the biblical account of creation for it would then look as if we're committed to saying that prime matter has eternally existed and that God merely *shaped*, rather than *created*, the cosmos.

CaML Pantheism carves an intermediate path. We can accept *ex nihilo nihil fit* but still accept that the cosmos came into existence a finite amount of time ago, with no prime matter pre-existing it. Instead, God's divine fiat was to multi-locate Himself so as to make spacetime; constituting spacetime (and its contents) was God's 'creative' act. But it wasn't creative in a way offending *ex nihilo nihil fit*. Those who believe *ex nihilo nihil fit* – unless they are the most extreme Parmenideans – won't deny that a sculptor can shape a lump of clay and manage to create a statue. On the standard *ex nihilo nihil fit* view, the matter which constitutes the clay has existed eternally; thus while the statue may come into being, its underlying constitutum – that is, the eternally existing matter – existed all along. The ban is on underlying, fundamental substances coming into existence, not constituted things. Thus God can bring the cosmos into existence 'from nothing' because the cosmos is a constituted thing. And the underlying constitutum of the cosmos, and of everything within the cosmos, is uncontroversially an *uncreated* thing which exists eternally and necessarily, for it is God. God's creation of the universe is no longer a summoning into existence of matter from nowhere, but a divine action to make His chorological properties a certain way. Once God has fixed His location, and made Himself into a multi-located thing, He has created no underlying substance but has brought a lot of constituted things into existence (namely the cosmos and its contents). Thus the CaML Pantheist can endorse a traditional, biblical line while avoiding a denial of *ex nihilo nihil fit*. Depending upon your metaphysical mores and feelings about *ex nihilo nihil fit*, this may be a persuasive benefit. Indeed, this view on pantheism and creation is not wholly original (Mander, 2000). For instance, it's a view similar to Eriguena's emanation pantheism; as Mander (2016) says, '[t]o Eriugena, God is precisely the nothing from which all things were made'. Similarly, May Sinclair believed that pantheism was intimately connected with issues of creation (Thomas, 2019).[10]

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Notes

1. Thanks to the stipend provided by the Pantheism and Panentheism Project, funded by the John Templeton Foundation. I would also like to thank the anonymous referees of this journal for their helpful advice and comments.

2. This would define theories like Nagasawa's (2016) 'modal panentheism' as a variety of pantheism proper (as already noted by Nagasawa (*ibid.*, 93–94)).

3. For more on location, see Parsons (2007).

4. One might object that Marty instead merely exactly occupies the *union* of the two regions. I deal with this objection in Effingham (2020), so I do not discuss it here.

5. If we placed stronger demands on what 'present at' requires, God could well still be omnipresent. For instance, we might think that to be present at a region is to 'fill' it:

> x fills $R =_{df} R$ is a (possibly improper) sub-region of the fusion of every region which x exactly occupies.

Here's an example to help understand 'filling'. Return to Marty meeting his younger self. Were they to re-enact E.T. and touch fingertips then Marty would fill the region exactly occupied by both hands. Atemporal filling would be an analogue of that. Given -AML Component, God atemporally fills every region, so if 'presence' was instead 'filling', God would again be present at every region.

6. This leads to a theory of omnipresence very similar to that of Pruss (2013). It differs in so far as Pruss treats God's multi-location as temporally relativized, rather than atemporal. (My view is also similar to that of Hudson (2009), although Hudson thinks God is a gigantic extended simple, rather than a multiply located point-sized thing.)

7. While God 'is temporal', that needn't mean He has all temporal features. For instance, I don't believe He persists. This isn't a problem. It's quite standard for God's temporality to not require that He has every temporal feature; see Deng (2019), 38ff.) for discussion.

8. Given both components – and because spatiotemporal regions are parts of the cosmos – God exactly occupies that which He constitutes. This would be problematic if we believed both:

> CONSTITUENT PRIORITY: If x constitutes y then x is more fundamental than y.
> REGION PRIORITY: If x exactly occupies r then r cannot ontologically depend upon x.

God would then be both *more* and *less* fundamental than the regions He occupies, which is contradictory. The solution is to deny REGION PRIORITY. And that's a defensible denial. If it's a fact that a exactly occupies b, that can either be a fundamental fact or a derivative fact (cf. Inman, 2017). For instance, an immanent universal exactly occupying a region is a derivative fact, holding in virtue of the (possibly fundamental) fact that an instance of the universal exactly occupies that region. Another example: given supersubstantivalism, objects exactly occupy their locations in virtue of being identical to them; again, their being located somewhere is a derivative fact. Similar to supersubstantivalism, it's natural to think that if some x constitutes a region, x exactly occupies that region – in which case, REGION PRIORITY would be false. And this is what I say God does: He constitutes the regions He exactly occupies.

9. One referee pointed out that if we eschewed the 'is' of constitution (see, for example, Pickel (2010)) then the CaML model would nevertheless seem to be a pantheistic theory even given that 'God is the cosmos' is false. For those who believe in constitution, but also eschew the 'is' of constitution, this is an open position.

10. It also carries with it a commitment to views about the relationship between conversation and creation (Vander Laan, 2017). Creation and conservation are one and the same given CaML Pantheism. To create something, God must will Himself to be its constitutum, and must be such at all times that the constituted entity exists. Further, at every time at which an object exists, God is present as its underlying substance and thus conserves it. The same act of atemporal multi-location both creates and conserves; they are one and the same thing.