

Review of: "Provisional Definition of the Living State: Delineation of an Empirical Criterion that Defines a System as Alive"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

While this version is certainly better than the original, the problem I would say is that the author is trying to push a version of consciousness that isn't justified by factual evidence. I had to look up "pansychism", to find out what it was. While the concept has a rich history, as far as I can make out, it fell by the wayside some time ago as there was no evidence to support it. I have no real idea what "protopansychism" is in relation to "pansychism", but I may have missed that.

In this version of the manuscript, the author has now done a lot of reading - or at least added a lot of references. However, many seem to reference some core scientific principle, which the author has ascribed to his idea. One example, I am more than familiar with is "autocatalytic cycles" - Eigen, 1971. While I am not completely sold on the idea, Manfred Eigen at least provides a solid mathematical framework to justify their existence - and there is good evidence that the idea is at least partly true. However, the author then takes the idea of autocatalysis and links it to conscious interaction, which is a significant leap. Eigen's work, which I have referenced in work of my own, has stood the test of time, because it is mathematically - logically - robust.

At one stage I did think there was a bit of a push towards a completely believable idea: pragmatic information - i.e. (paraphrasing the idea) information is only important if it can be perceived and responded to. I thought that might be about to emerge from the idea of organisms responding to their environment. However, pragmatic information and pansychism are more than a tad different.

The main problem is that the author wishes us to believe that all life is conscious. While I think I would always struggle to accept that, I would suggest that what the author should do is provide the reader with a logically-consistent narrative that supports the conjecture. Instead, there are lots of bits of science jumbled together, most of which do not justify the points the author is trying to make. It's kind of like saying, "The sky is blue, therefore it's conscious," while providing a reference on Rayleigh Scattering and another on the nature of consciousness, then claiming the former supports the latter. That is not logical.

To conclude - and in a serious effort to be helpful - what I would do is really try and develop a logical train of thought on pansychism, which is what you are really trying to sell. What is the evidence for it - while reviewing counter claims. I would avoid the thermodynamic aspects (both well-trodden and would not be helpful) - and I wouldn't be touching the idea of wormholes (unproven) as a mechanism for transmitting consciousness. Remember, if you wish to publish in a scientific journal, the ideas have to logically link to one another, but those presented, here, do not. These ideas do not have to be

mainstream, but they do have to be logical and evidenced, if others are to be persuaded of the premise.