Hypermodal Realism

Phenomenal Information and Excluded Possibilities

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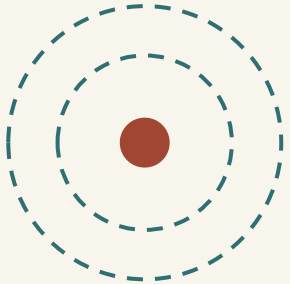
THE ENTRY PRESSURE

The Hypothesis of Phenomenal Information

Lewis formulated it in 1988 in order to reject it.

Phenomenal Information Externalism (PIE)
Same local activity, different phenomenal information:
a difference in what they exclude.



same activity — different exclusions

But excluded by what?

TWO PROBLEMS

Two Modes of Context

1 THE ACTUAL CONTEXT

Does the history, the environment, the extended body determine what the local state leaves open?

- Swampman
- Phenomenal externalism
- Naive Realism
- Extended-mind

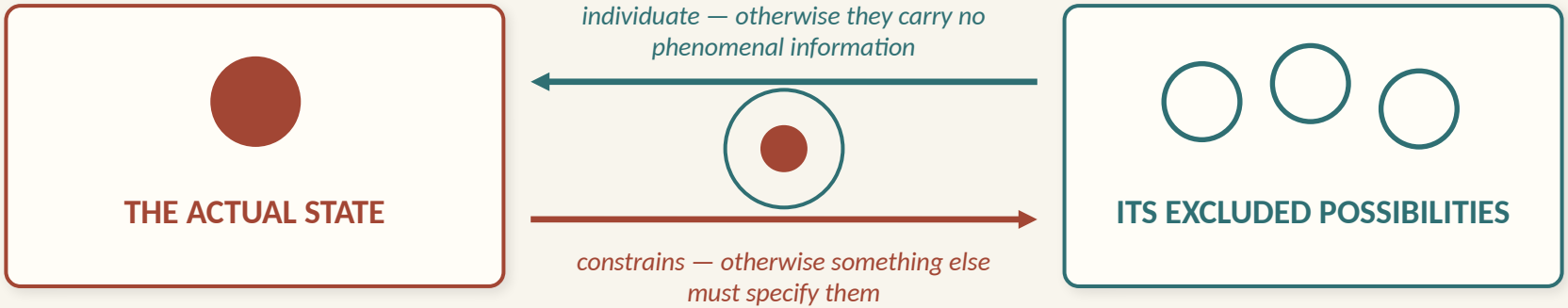
2 THE CONTEXT OF POSSIBILITY

What makes an actual state phenomenally informative? What specifies the right alternatives?

- teleo-functions
- wide counterfactuals
- quantum potentiae
- intrinsic cause–effect structure (IIT)

THE THESIS

Hypermodal Realism



The excluded possibilities help individuate the actual experience; **the actual constrains its exclusions.** ***Hence hypermodal.***

TWO DEFLATIONS

Two ways of “missing the point”

REJECT THE ONTOLOGY

The determination is carried by epistemically loaded descriptions or functions.
→ But wait, exclusions located there inform the interpreter, not the experience!

modally thin individuation

REJECT THE RECIPROCITY

The excluded possibilities reduce to intrinsic dispositions of the actual state.
→ But wait, how can potentials derived only from the actual turn back to individuate it?

modally thin constraint

CONSEQUENCES

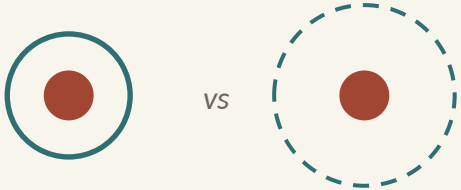
Empirical Claims

THE TEST

Hold the actual state constant and vary the real potentials, then see if the phenomenal information changes.

THE CASE

Dretske bit the bullet: Swampman would be a zombie. Inversely: just by being conscious, one could know one has a history.

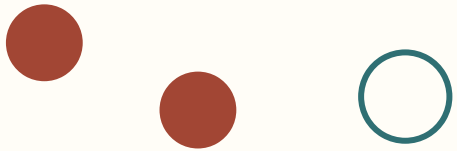


same actual — different field

THE OPERATIONAL CASE

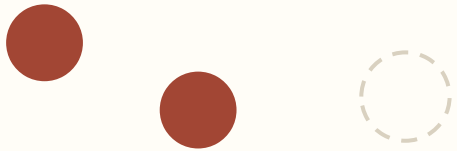
IIT's Prediction: Silent vs Clamped Unit

SILENT



able to activate — not activating

CLAMPED



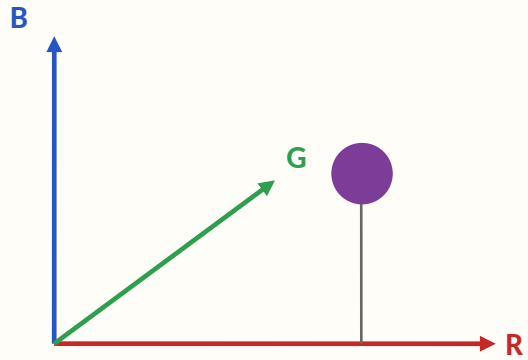
clamped — unable to activate

The actual activity is the same, only the possibility-structure is not. IIT predicts the experience will differ: **A silent unit contributes ontologically to what the experience is.**

THE OPERATIONAL CASE, SCALED

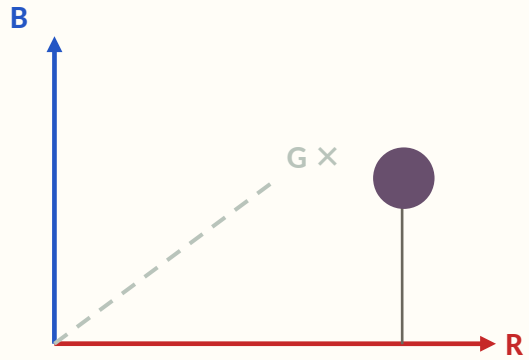
A colour is what it excludes

FULL SPACE



R+B active, G silent — a vibrant purple

G INCAPACITATED



same activation — the purple "greys"

The activation stays the same; the space of exclusions shrinks from "3D" to "2D." **If that alone "dampens" the colour, the possibilities must be real.**

A STRONGER READING

Hypermodal Power Realism

If phenomenal information is not epiphenomenal (if it has *"phenomenal powers"*, as Hedda Mørch puts it), the excluded possibilities do not merely individuate the actual but ***influence*** it.

ACCEPT the influence

Then what is the ontology? Forced into something like quantum potentiae, strongly emergent potentials, or more exotic routes out to interactive dualism.

REJECT the influence

Real, irreducible, yet inert: epiphenomenalism threatens, and the difference between views risks becoming untestable.

No exclusions, no information.
No real exclusions, no phenomenal information.

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