



Hypermodal Realism

Phenomenal Information and Excluded Possibilities

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The Hypothesis of Phenomenal Information

In 1988 Lewis formulated it as his own adversary — and rejected it.

A limited version has gained ground:

Phenomenal Information Externalism (PIE)

Two systems identical in local occurrent activity can differ in phenomenal information — *they differ in what they exclude.*

But excluded by what?



Settling the context — twice

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

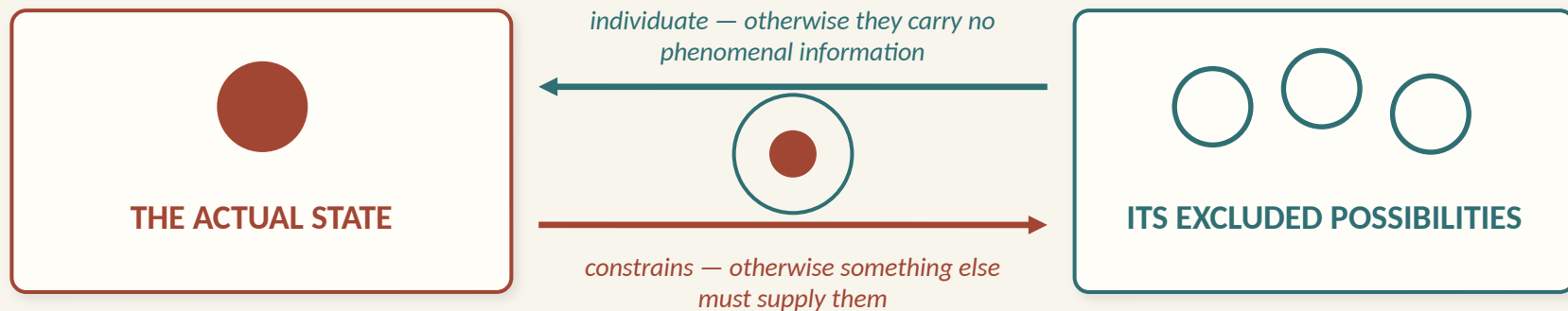
What makes an actual state phenomenally informative — what specifies the right alternatives?

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

The second problem is the hard one — and the neglected one.



PIE implies Hypermodal Realism



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

IIT arguably shares this commitment — its own postulates already run both directions.



Two ways of “missing the point”

REJECT THE ONTOLOGY

The determination is carried by epistemically loaded descriptions or functions.

→ **exclusions located there inform the interpreter, not the experience.**

REJECT THE RECIPROCITY

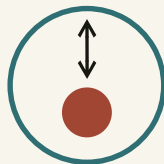
The excluded possibilities reduce to intrinsic dispositions of the actual state.

→ **wholly derivative potentials merely redescribe the actual — and redescription cannot individuate.**

Both deflations fail to capture:



modally thin individuation



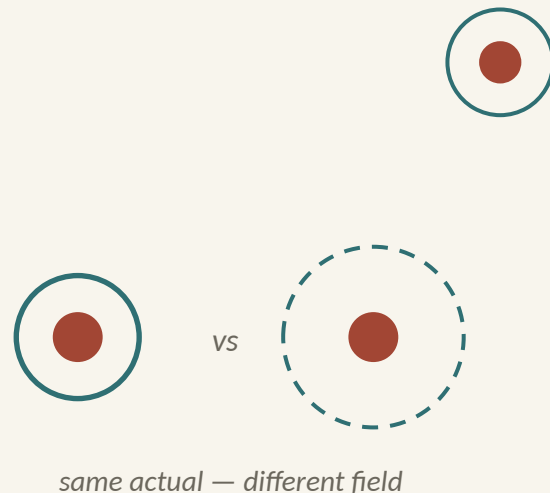
modally thick



modally thin constraint

Falsifiability as covariance

The protocol: *hold the actual constant, vary the admissible — and watch whether experience notices.*



Some phenomenal externalists famously bit the bullet: Swampman — a molecule-for-molecule duplicate without the history — would be a zombie.

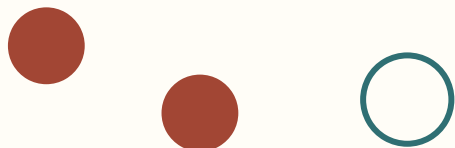
The inversion: *then just by being conscious, one could know one did not arise this second.*

Change the possibility-space associated with an actual state, and the phenomenal information changes with it.



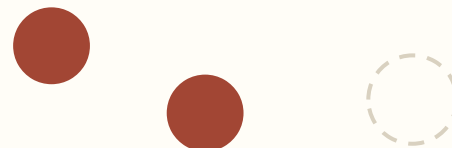
The silent unit vs the clamped unit

SILENT



able to activate — not activating

CLAMPED



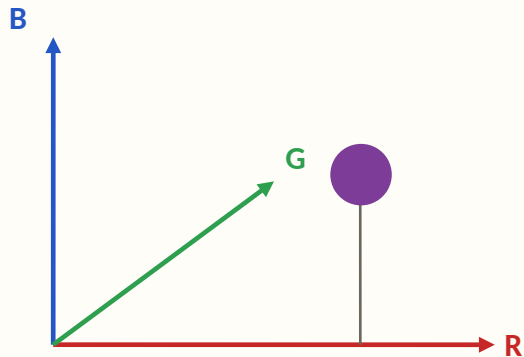
clamped — unable to activate

The actual activity is the same; the possibility-structure is not — and strong IIT predicts the experience differs. **A silent unit contributes ontologically to what the experience is — the ‘silent neuron’ of the IIT literature.**



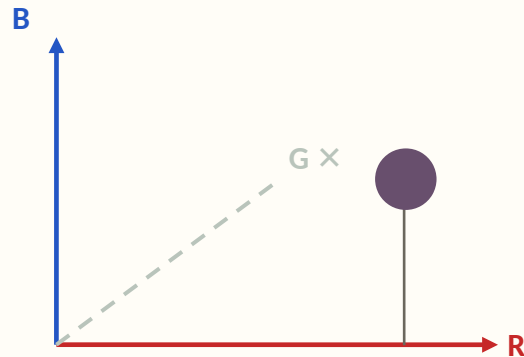
A colour is what it excludes

FULL SPACE



R+B active, G silent — a vibrant purple

G INCAPACITATED



same activation — the purple greys

One actuality informs by excluding millions. Incapacitate an unused dimension: actualism predicts no change; **if the colour greys, the possibility of variation was doing phenomenal work.**



Hypermodal Power Realism

If phenomenal information is not epiphenomenal — if it has “*phenomenal powers*” — the excluded possibilities do not merely individuate the actual but *influence* it.

ACCEPT the influence

Owe a carrier: real potentials, quantum potentiae — 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.

We end on a dilemma, not a doctrine.



Excluded by what? — by the actual they individuate in turn.

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

If phenomenal information is genuine information, its excluded possibilities
must be real — in brains or in machines.