



Compositional Subjects

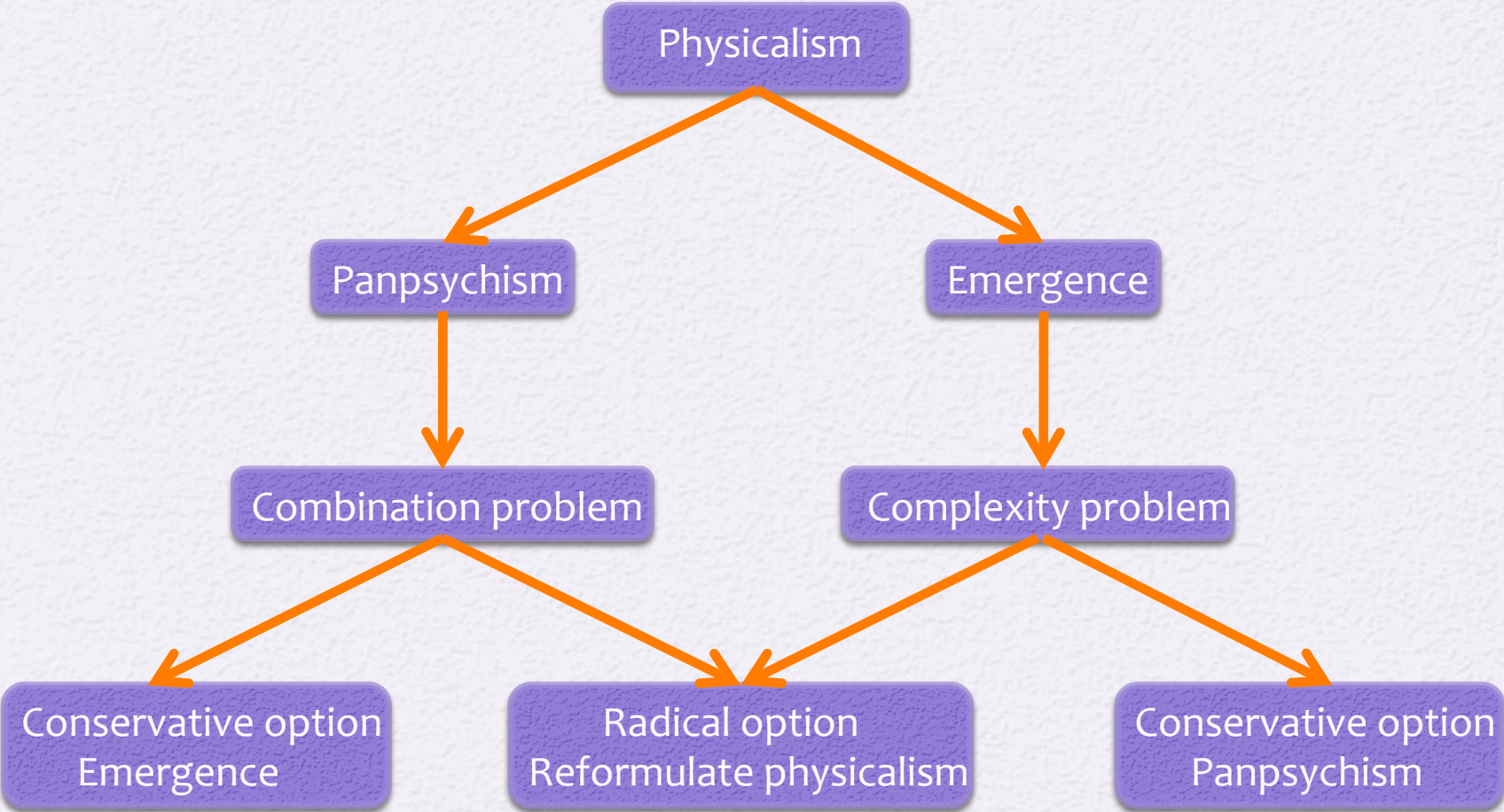
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Realistic physicalism & experience

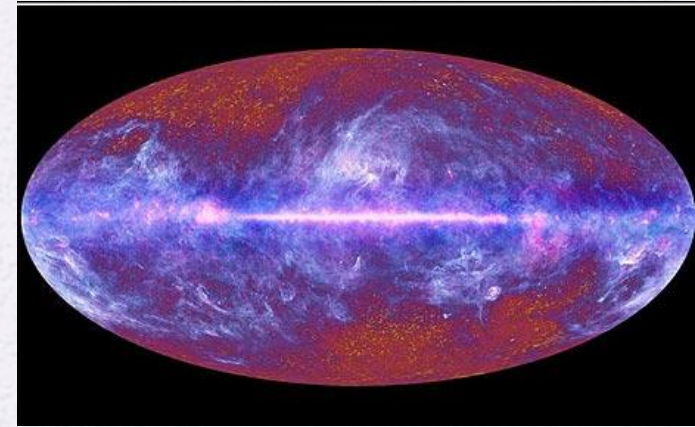
- *How do we accommodate experience (Hard Problem)?*
- When more radical alternatives like idealism or mysticism are ruled out, only **physicalism** remains.
- **Emergence** - most popular physicalist approach.
 - Complexity problem: When does experience emerge?
- Does realistic physicalism entail **panpsychism**?
 - Combination problem: How do qualia combine?
- Are these the only alternatives at present?

Panpsychism, Emergence & Physicalism



Physicalism

- “Everything is physical”:
explanatory gap.
- Can physicalism be expanded to
accommodate consciousness?
- Why is it accompanied by experience?
(*Chalmers*)
- Forced into speculative ontology
because of hard problem.



Source: esa.int

Physicalism = Physicalism + X

- Add ingredient X to physicalism.
- Physicalism should remain physicalism despite X.
- Re-examine panpsychism and emergence in light of new physicalism.



- It is accompanied by experience because X is always accompanied by experience.

A fundamental compositionality

- *A counter-intuitive proposal.*
- *Assertion: Physicalism + fundamental compositionality accompanied by experience.*
- *Letter but not the spirit of panpsychism: fundamental but not pan.*
- *Spirit but not the letter of emergence: non-reductive but fundamental.*



Compositions versus Combinations

- Fundamental composition of basic elements contrasted with combinations of basic elements.

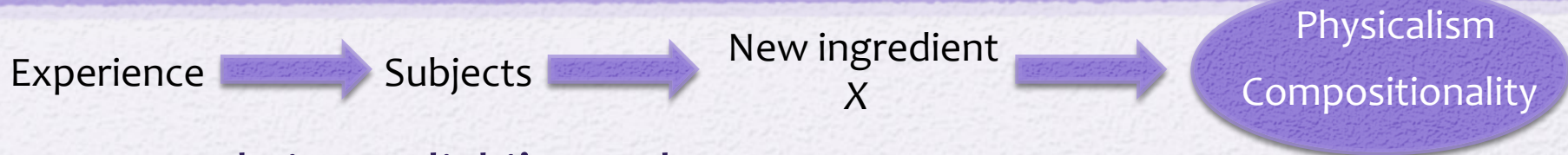


Fundamental composition accompanied by experience

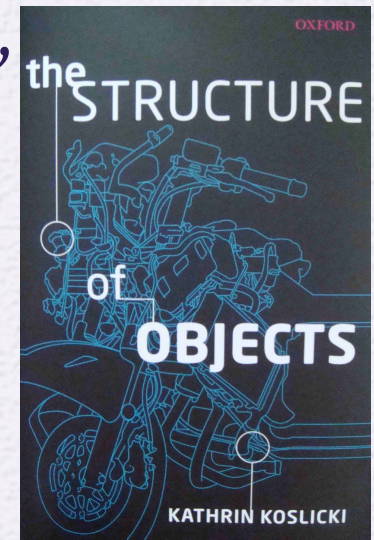
Phenomenology: Thin Subjects

- Persons and selves as subjects of experience (SoE) (*Lowe*).
- “A subject of experience is something that exists only if experience exists of which it is a subject” (*Strawson*).
- “The thinking or the existence of the thought and the existence of my own self are one and the same” (*Kant*).
- Thin subjects (SESMET): subjects that persist for brief periods of time, a “gappy process” (*Strawson*).
- mere self in Mahayana Buddhism (*Tsongkhapa*).
- Notion goes back at least to Frege in the west.

Restricted Compositionality Principle (RCP)



- Kathrin Koslicki's work.
- RCP: Some objects m_1, \dots, m_n compose an object O , of kind K , just in case m_1, \dots, m_n satisfy the constraints f_1, \dots, f_n dictated by some formal components, associated with objects of kind, K .
- Weak Supplementation Principle.
- Avoid proliferation of *sui generis* relations.
- Relies on ontology of *natural kinds*.
- Material and formal parts of object (composition).



SoE as Natural Kinds

- Restricted compositionality principle requires commitment to ontology of natural kinds.
- SoE as a natural kind term:
 - Appeal to *same-kind relation* between SoE objects.
 - Non-descriptive and does not require rigidity (*Koslicki*).
 - Requires mechanism for picking out same kind object.
- Intersubjectivity as *mechanism*? Clearly controversial.
 - I see You, Y'All, namaste.
 - Second person as foundation for SoE?
 - Could be wrong but more importantly could also be right.
- SoE in psychology:
 - analogous to species in biology.
 - Different SoE: prehension, sensation, emotion, cognition, visualization.

Subject of Experience (SoE): Sensation

- “An irreducible gap between physics and sensation which physiology cannot bridge”, Richard Gregory, *Mind in Science*, 1982.
- SoE of sensation: SoE_s – a sensation natural kind object.
- Intersubjective mechanism: I feel your touch, I see you touch something.
- Formal parts: Relation between physiology (old physical) and new object.
- SoE_s :
 - composed of low-level material entities.
 - same kind sensation relation between different SoE_s .
 - When SoE_s *thin subject* arises, accompanied by sensation.
- Fundamental Question: Sensation separated from perception, emotion, cognition, visualization - hence SoE_s ?

Oppositions

Substance

Tropes

| Experience implies subjects of experience (SoE) | Experience implies incompleteness of physical |
|---|---|
| Everything is physical or entailed by the physical (<i>Stoljar</i>) | Physicalism does not imply that microphysicalism is true (<i>Hüttemann</i>) |
| SoE are physical (compositions) | Mid-level compositionality principle? |
| Compositions have material and formal parts | Relations between “old” physical properties and experiential properties? |
| Formal parts require commitment to ontology of natural kinds | Tropes-based natural kinds to help avoid <i>sui generis</i> relations? |
| SoE are natural kind objects | Mid-level properties “corresponding” to bundles of experience? |

Objections

- ① There is experience (*Chalmers*).
 - Denied by eliminativists.
- ② Experience implies (thin) subjects of experience (*Strawson*).
 - Denied by materialists and some panpsychists.
- ③ Everything is physical or entailed by the physical (*Stoljar*).
 - Denied by interactionist dualists.
- ④ Physicalism does not imply microphysicalism (*Hüttemann*).
 - Very controversial and denied by many physicalists.
- ⑤ SoE are physical compositions of a certain natural kind (foll. *Koslicki*).
 - Denied by idealists and property dualists.

Discussion

- ① “Why is it accompanied by experience?” (*Chalmers*).
- ② “Everything is physical or entailed by the physical” (*Stoljar*).
- ③ “Until more is said it amounts to simply dismissing of... the intuition that the experiential cannot emerge from the non-experiential” (*Strawson*).
- ④ Expand physicalism: Physicalism = Physicalism + *y* (*Montero*).
- ⑤ Compositionality: “There exists a *y* the *x*’s compose if and only if the activity of the *x*’s compose a life” (*van Inwagen*).
- ⑥ Experience implies a subject of experience (*Lowe*).
- ⑦ Subjects of experience (SoE) are physical compositions of a certain natural kind (following *Koslicki*).

References

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Thank You

We are indebted to Leopold Stubenberg for pointing out Koslicki's work
All mistakes are of course ours

Objections

- New ingredient merely motivated by subjects of experience.
- Freedom for adding compositions to physicalism not fleshed out.
- Experience epiphenomenal due to causal closure?
- What actually distinguishes compositions from combinations?

Compositions acting on possibilities

- Current quantum field theories: evolution of scalar and vector fields in time.
- Instead we envisage a basic physicalism with a restriction operator on set of possibilities.
- Compositionality: further restriction on possibilities accompanied by experience.
- Physicalism in terms of operators restricting sets of possibilities is almost surely wrong (and goes beyond philosophy).

Substances versus properties

- Approach raises intriguing picture of substance (SoE) linked to properties via compositionality relation.
- Not property or substance dualism but weird hybrid.
- No worry over natural kinds if there is only one kind of substance, namely, SoE.
- Substance introduced only to accommodate experience seems jury rigged.
- May be democratizing Spinoza (matter and mind as properties of single substance/God).