# A postmodern physicalism that can accommodate experience

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#### The Problem of Experience

- Inadequacy of present day science to deal with consciousness.
- Recent challenge from analytic philosophy
   Consciousness not logically supervenient on the physical (David Chalmers).
- Varieties of idealism, panpsychism, dualism now back on the table.

### Approaches - a survey

- Materialism (functionalism, epiphenomenalism)
- Emergence (radical, embodied, etc.)
- Dualism
- Idealism
- Dual-aspect theories
- Panpsychism
- Mysticism
- ?????

### Logical Supervenience

- "Consciousness not logically supervenient on the physical," Chalmers 1996.
- "Consciousness logically supervenient on the physical," Stoljar 2006.
- Contradictory on the surface.
- Both point to a new physicalism.

### A new physicalism

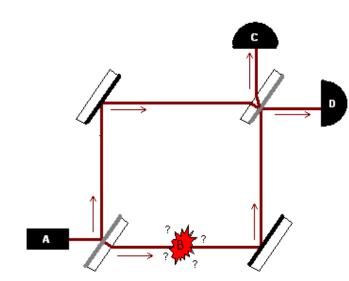
- Almost everything is logically supervenient on the physical.
- Exception: Experience.
- A Move: Construct a new physicalism that can accommodate experience.
- Explanatory gap: Why should the new physicalism entail experience?

### A multiverse of possibilities

- Quantum physics specifies a measure on a set of possibilities.
- Relativity forces us to abandon privileged frame of (spatiotemporal) reference.
- Slogan: Multiverse as a quantum computer (Lloyd 2006).
- Abandon trajectories for possibilities.
- Without an additional mechanism, multiverse
- has only possibilities no actualities.
- Additional ingredient to flesh out physical?

#### Do possibilities exist?

Elitzur-Vaidman bomb testing experiment



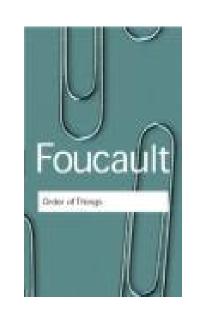
If bomb is a dud, only D detects photon
If only C detects the photon, bomb is not a dud

Destructive interference at C only because both possibilities exist

### Phenomenology

- Pure experience prior to cognitive elaboration (Husserl 1910).
- Severely criticized by post-structuralism (Foucault '70).
- Myth of the given (Sellars '56).
- Can phenomenology be separated from point of view or perspective?
- For us, no.

### Foucault and Phenomenology



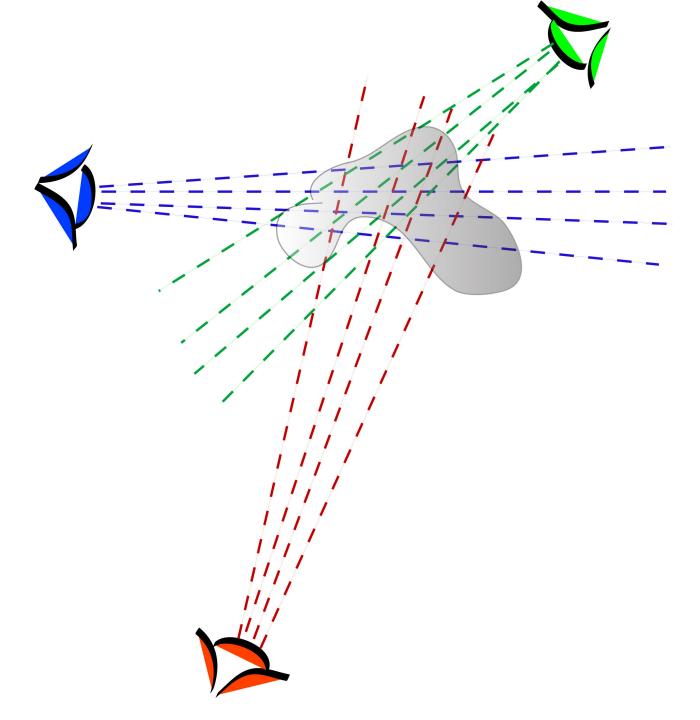
- Scientific picture as construct
- "If there is one approach that I do reject, however, it is that (one might call it, broadly speaking, the phenomenological approach)..." (Order of Things, Foreword to English Edition)
- Emergence of postmodern science?

### Perspectives

- Nietzschean and otherwise (Wilber, 2006).
- Point of view.
- Biased?
- Conceptual frame of reference
- Orients phenomenology controversial.
- Modal logic systems: S5 + perspectives (Hales).
- Physical perspectives?
- Constrains a set of possibilities?

### Perspectives and Content

- Given a set of possibilities and a measure on them, conceive of perspective as an operator.
- Perspectives operate on possibilities or possible worlds.
- Interaction: Content of a perspective. Physical events.
- Interaction generates experience (among other things).

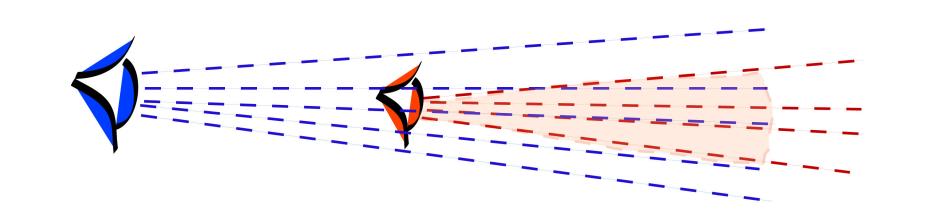


### A Conceptual Contrast

Perspectives	Multiverse
Biased: Restricts set of possibili- ties	Unbiased: Allows all possibilities to exist
Local: Centered on here and now	Global: Possible spacetimes in- cluded
Top down: Operates on the mul- tiverse	Bottom up: Informs all perspectives?
Probability: Perspectives generate measure on possibilities?	Possibilities: Multiverse generates possibilities

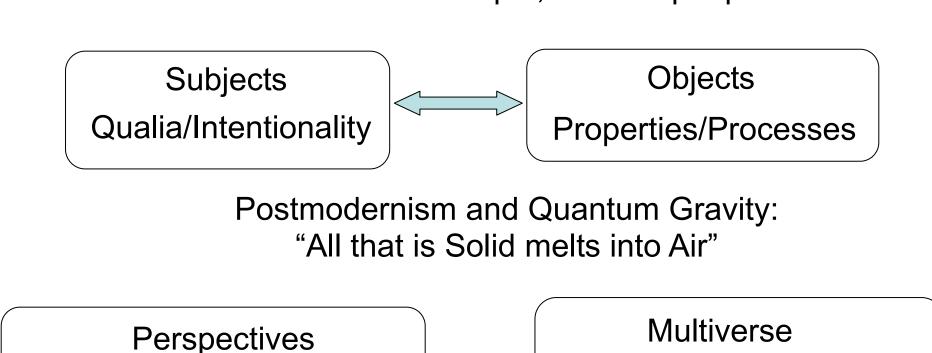
### Perspectives and the Multiverse

- Need a "bottom up" physics to specify a set of possibilities or possible worlds: Check
   Need a "top down" physics to specify a set of
- Need a "top down" physics to specify a set of perspectives to operate on the possible worlds: Check
- Each perspective has a point of view
  Private content --> Experience



#### **A Story**

We were once a simple, modern people



Is this PerVerse?

Possibilities/Computations

### Relationship to panpsychism

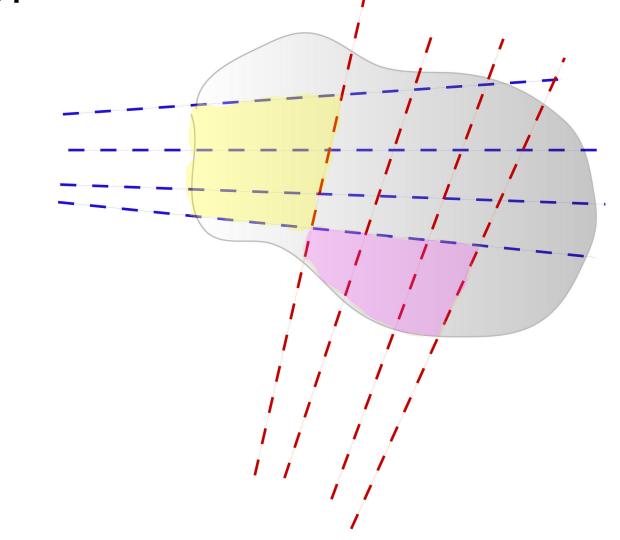
- Interaction between perspective and set of possibilities generates a physical event
- If every interaction is accompanied by experience, then postmodern physicalism is panpsychist.

### Perspectives and Accessibility

- Modal logic systems (S4, S5 etc.)
- Accessibility relation.

Phenomenology/Operations

- Relativism (Hales) uses "accessibility" to study truth in different perspectives.
- For us, accessibility is a relation that specifies access to physical events.
- Possibly accessible versus actually accessible?



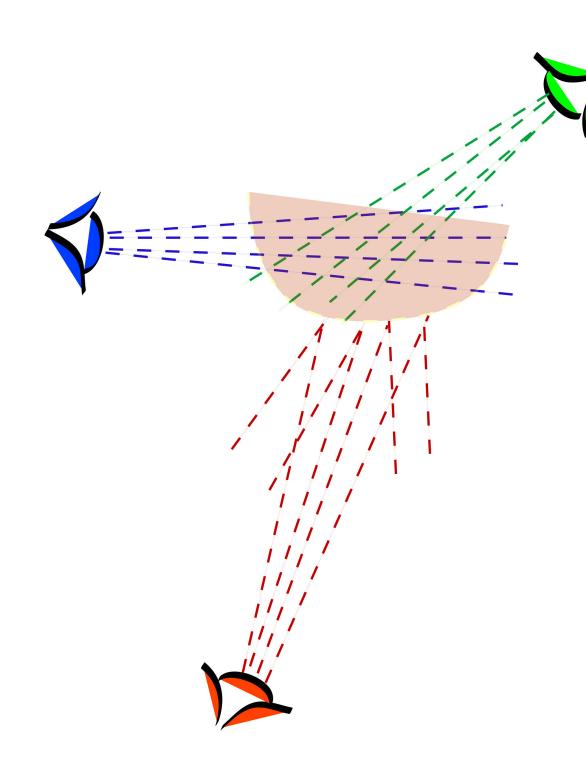
## What is an experience?

- A private event.
- Qualitative and phenomenal.
- Definition: An experience is a physical event which is accessible from only the perspective that generates the event.

### Relationship to naturalistic dualism

- Dualism of (old) physical with experiential added on.
- No theory of interaction between experiential and (old) physical.
- Accepts phenomenology at face value: No perspectives.
- Can slide to a dual-aspect theory.
- Our approach → Naturalized perspectivism similar but allows perspectives and possibilities to interact.

#### Relationship to dual-aspect theory



- Reality divided into interior/exterior.
- Interior correlated with experiential.
- Perspectives and accessibility could lead to a new geometry.
- Interior/exterior qualified w.r.t. accessibility.

#### Discussion

- Perspectives operate on multiverse of possibilities.
- The multiverse informs perspectives.
- Interaction of a perspective with possibilities generates a physical event.
- Accessibility relation can flesh out relationship between perspectives and experience.
- One path: If physical event is accessible from only one perspective → experience.
- Offer perspectives, multiverse and accessibility to build postmodern physicalism.

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#### Acknowledgements: Manisha Ranade for graphics and typesetting