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Emergent Contingency

Everettian quantum mechanics - otherwise known as the Many Worlds Interpretation - has many remarkable consequences. Perhaps the most remarkable is that physical contingency is an emergent phenomenon: at the fundamental level, physical reality is non-contingent. I argue that Everettians who favour a naturalistic approach to metaphysics have overwhelming reason to extend this account from physical contingency to metaphysical contingency, adopting a novel form of naturalistic modal realism. Fundamentally speaking, there is only one way things could possibly have been; non-fundamentally speaking, things could have been different in various ways. I trace some anticipations of these ideas by philosophers including Parmenides, Spinoza and Lewis, and discuss some distinctive features of the Everettian implementation of the idea.