

Chapter 1 : Physicalism - Wikipedia

Physicalism is a programme for building a unified system of knowledge based on the view that everything is a manifestation of the physical aspects of existence. This book presents an exploration of the philosophical foundations of this programme.

As such, it obviously raises issues about the place of phenomenal consciousness, intentionality, and morality—among other things—in a purely physical world. But it also raises issues that are independent of these familiar special cases, and it is to them that this bibliography is devoted. One cluster of issues concerns how to formulate a thesis of physicalism that is neither obviously true nor obviously false, and significant if true. A second cluster of issues concerns the implications of physicalism. Is physicalism a posteriori? Is it if true at all necessarily true? Can physicalism avoid commitment to physical reductionism? If so, how, and if not, then is that a problem for physicalism? Is physicalism consistent with the countless claims of causation and causal explanation made in the special sciences and in everyday life? This last issue overlaps so much with the problems of mental causation, which have a vast literature of their own, that it is not addressed in the present bibliography; the reader is directed to the separate bibliography on mental causation. A third cluster of issues concerns how in principle we could have, and whether in fact we do have, empirical evidence that physicalism is true—or of course that it is false. For example, is it true that for every narrow sense physical effect there is a sufficient physical cause, that is, that the causal closure of the physical holds? Can observed correlations between reported mental states say and brain states provide reason to think that mental states just are brain states? A fourth cluster of issues concerns alternatives to physicalism. Aside from traditional forms of mind-body dualism, what possible alternatives are there? For example, some views hold that phenomenal properties are the intrinsic aspects of the properties known in physics through their causal or structural aspects. Are these views physicalist or not? What scope is there for theses of pluralism, or of neutral monism? General Overviews There are no satisfactory general overviews of all the issues mentioned in the Introduction. Kim, however, provides an excellent introduction to most of the main ones, and should be accessible to intermediate and advanced undergraduate philosophy students. Stoljar is a critical survey of—for the most part—the issues surrounding the formulation of physicalism; but it is aimed at a more sophisticated readership. Neither of these works brings any empirical material into their discussions. Oppenheim and Putnam, though dated philosophically, usefully assembles empirical evidence as available in for thinking that the world boils down to physics. *Mind in a Physical World: Oppenheim, Paul, and Hilary Putnam. University of Minnesota Press, Perhaps best viewed as implying eliminative physicalism. Edited by Edward N.*

Chapter 2 : Tim Crane, "Physicalism: the Philosophical Foundations" by Jeffrey Poland - PhilPapers

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Definition of physicalism[edit] The word "physicalism" was introduced into philosophy in the s by Otto Neurath and Rudolf Carnap. Karl Popper defined a physical proposition to be one which can at least in theory be denied by observation [6]. A "physical property", in this context, may be a metaphysical or logical combination of properties which are physical in the ordinary sense. It is common to express the notion of "metaphysical or logical combination of properties" using the notion of supervenience: A property A is said to supervene on a property B if any change in A necessarily implies a change in B. The point of this extension is that physicalists usually suppose the existence of various abstract concepts which are non-physical in the ordinary sense of the word; so physicalism cannot be defined in a way that denies the existence of these abstractions. Also, physicalism defined in terms of supervenience does not entail that all properties in the actual world are type identical to physical properties. It is, therefore, compatible with multiple realizability. The theory-based conception of physicalism proposes that "a property is physical if and only if it either is the sort of property that physical theory tells us about or else is a property which metaphysically or logically supervenes on the sort of property that physical theory tells us about". Physicalists have traditionally opted for a "theory-based" characterization of the physical either in terms of current physics, [9] or a future ideal physics. But if we instead define the physical in terms of a future ideal or completed physics, then physicalism is hopelessly vague or indeterminate. Frank Jackson for example, has argued in favour of the aforementioned "object-based" conception of the physical. David Papineau [16] and Barbara Montero [17] have advanced and subsequently defended [18] a "via negativa" characterization of the physical. The gist of the via negativa strategy is to understand the physical in terms of what it is not: In other words, the via negativa strategy understands the physical as "the non-mental". Unfortunately, statement 1 fails to capture even a necessary condition for physicalism to be true at a world w . To see this, imagine a world in which there are only physical properties— if physicalism is true at any world it is true at this one. But one can conceive physical duplicates of such a world that are not also duplicates simpliciter of it: A world might contain "epiphenomenal ectoplasm", some additional pure experience that does not interact with the physical components of the world and is not necessitated by them does not supervene on them. This allows a world in which there are only physical properties to be counted as one at which physicalism is true, since worlds in which there is some extra stuff are not "minimal" physical duplicates of such a world, nor are they minimal physical duplicates of worlds that contain some non-physical properties that are metaphysically necessitated by the physical. One response to this problem is to abandon statement 2 in favour of the alternative possibility mentioned earlier in which supervenience-based formulations of physicalism are restricted to what David Chalmers calls "positive properties". A positive property is one that "With regard to the former, statement 3 gives the correct result that a purely physical world is one at which physicalism is true, since worlds in which there is some extra stuff are positive duplicates of a purely physical world. With regard to the latter, statement 3 appears to have the consequence that worlds in which there are blockers are worlds where positive non-physical properties of w_1 will be absent, hence w_1 will not be counted as a world at which physicalism is true. A necessary being is compatible with all the definitions provided, because it is supervenient on everything; yet it is usually taken to contradict the notion that everything is physical. So any supervenience-based formulation of physicalism will at best state a necessary but not sufficient condition for the truth of physicalism. It is intended to capture the idea of "physical mechanisms". Token physicalism is not however equivalent to supervenience physicalism. Firstly, token physicalism does not imply supervenience physicalism because the former does not rule out the possibility of non-supervenient properties provided that they are associated only with physical particulars. Secondly, supervenience physicalism does not imply token physicalism, for the former allows supervenient objects such as a "nation", or "soul" that are not equal to any physical object. Reductionism and emergentism[

edit] Reductionism[edit] There are multiple versions of reductionism. In one formulation, every concept is analysed in terms of a physical concept. One counter-argument to this supposes there may be an additional class of expressions which is non-physical but which increases the expressive power of a theory. The opposite view is non-reductive physicalism. Reductive physicalism is the view that mental states are both nothing over and above physical states and reducible to physical states. One version of reductive physicalism is type physicalism or mind-body identity theory. A common argument against reductive physicalism is multiple realizability , the possibility that a psychological process say could be instantiated by many different neurological processes even non-neurological processes, in the case of machine or alien intelligence.

Emergentism There are two versions of emergentism, the strong version and the weak version. The strong version of emergentism is incompatible with physicalism. Since there are novel mental states, mental states are not nothing over and above physical states. However, the weak version of emergentism is compatible with physicalism. We can see that emergentism is actually a very broad view. Some forms of emergentism appear either incompatible with physicalism or equivalent to it e. Emergentism compatible with dualism claims that mental states and physical states are metaphysically distinct while maintaining the supervenience of mental states on physical states. This proposition however contradicts supervenience physicalism, which asserts a denial of dualism. A priori versus a posteriori physicalism[edit] Physicalists hold that physicalism is true. A natural question for physicalists, then, is whether the truth of physicalism is deducible a priori from the nature of the physical world i. The suggestion, then, is that possession of the concepts in the consequent , plus the empirical information in the antecedent is sufficient for the consequent to be knowable a priori. Rather, they would hold that the inference from PTI to N is justified by metaphysical considerations that in turn can be derived from experience. So the claim then is that "PTI and not N" is metaphysically impossible. One commonly issued challenge to a priori physicalism and to physicalism in general is the "conceivability argument", or zombie argument. P1 PTI and not Q where "Q" stands for the conjunction of all truths about consciousness, or some "generic" truth about someone being "phenomenally" conscious [i. C Physicalism is false. If PTI and not Q is possible, there is some possible world where it is true. This world differs from [the relevant indexing on] our world, where PTIQ is true. But the other world is a minimal physical duplicate of our world, because PT is true there. So there is a possible world which is a minimal physical duplicate of our world, but not a full duplicate; this contradicts the definition of physicalism that we saw above. The a priori physicalist, then, must argue that PTI and not Q, on ideal rational reflection, is incoherent or contradictory. Some a posteriori physicalists think that unlike the possession of most, if not all other empirical concepts, the possession of consciousness has the special property that the presence of PTI and the absence of consciousness will be conceivableâ€”even though, according to them, it is knowable a posteriori that PTI and not Q is not metaphysically possible. These a posteriori physicalists endorse some version of what Daniel Stoljar has called "the phenomenal concept strategy ". If this is correct, then we should arguably conclude that conceivability does not entail metaphysical possibility, and P2 of the conceivability argument against physicalism is false. They must at least embrace micropsychism. Micropsychism is not yet panpsychism, for as things stand realistic physicalists can conjecture that only some types of ultimates are intrinsically experiential. But they must allow that panpsychism may be true, and the big step has already been taken with micropsychism, the admission that at least some ultimates must be experiential. I would bet a lot against there being such radical heterogeneity at the very bottom of things. In fact to disagree with my earlier self it is hard to see why this view would not count as a form of dualism So now I can say that physicalism, i. All physical stuff is energy, in one form or another, and all energy, I trow, is an experience-involving phenomenon. Real physicalism, realistic physicalism, entails panpsychism, and whatever problems are raised by this fact are problems a real physicalist must face.

Chapter 3 : Mind Body Dualism

Physicalism is a program for building a unified system of knowledge about the world on the basis of the view that everything is a manifestation of the physical aspects of existence.

But the two terms have very different histories. It is not clear that Neurath and Carnap understood physicalism in the same way, but one thesis often attributed to them is. But materialism as traditionally construed is not a linguistic thesis at all; rather it is a metaphysical thesis in the sense that it tells us about the nature of the world. At least for the positivists, therefore, there was a clear reason for distinguishing physicalism a linguistic thesis from materialism a metaphysical thesis. Moreover, this reason was compounded by the fact that, according to official positivist doctrine, metaphysics is nonsense. But physics itself has shown that not everything is matter in this sense; for example, forces such as gravity are physical but it is not clear that they are material in the traditional sense Lange , Dijksterhuis , Yolton It is important to note, though, that physicalism is. We will return to some of these when we discuss Physicalism and the Physicalist World-picture. In approaching the topic of physicalism, one may distinguish what I will call the interpretation question from the truth question. The interpretation question asks: What does it mean to say that everything is physical? The truth question asks: Is it true to say that everything is physical? Nevertheless, the issues here turn out to be somewhat technical, and those new to the topic might like to read only the first section of our discussion of the interpretation question, which is: Introductory , and then turn directly to the truth question which begins at The Case Against Physicalism I: The interpretation question itself divides into two sub-questions, which I will call the completeness question and the condition question. The completeness question asks: In other words, the completeness question holds fixed the issue of what it means for something to satisfy the condition of being physical, and asks instead what it means for everything to satisfy that condition. Notice that a parallel question could be asked of Thales: The condition question asks: In other words, the condition question holds fixed the issue of what it means for everything to satisfy some condition or other, and asks instead what is the condition, being physical, that everything satisfies. Notice again that a parallel question could be asked of Thales: In discussing the interpretation question, I will turn first to the completeness question, and then consider the condition question. Introductory One answer to the completeness question is an answer suggested initially in Davidson looks to the notion of supervenience. This notion is historically associated with meta-ethics, but it has received extensive discussion in the general metaphysics and logic literature. For a survey, see supervenience. As we shall see as we proceed, supervenience is not quite as popular an answer to the completeness question as it once was, but it is nevertheless remains an attractive answer, and we may go a considerable distance by concentrating on it. The idea of supervenience might be introduced via an example due to David Lewis of a dot-matrix picture: A dot-matrix picture has global properties it is symmetrical, it is cluttered, and whatnot and yet all there is to the picture is dots and non-dots at each point of the matrix. The global properties are nothing but patterns in the dots. The basic idea is that the physical features of the world are like the dots in the picture, and the psychological or biological or social features of the world are like the global properties of the picture. Just as the global features of the picture are nothing but a pattern in the dots, so too the psychological, the biological and the social features of the world are nothing but a pattern in the physical features of the world. To use the language of supervenience, just as the global features of the picture supervene on the dots, so too everything supervenes on the physical, if physicalism is true. Similarly, one might say that, in the case of physicalism, no two possible worlds can be identical in their physical properties but differ, somewhere, in their mental, social or biological properties. To put this slightly differently, we might say that if physicalism is true at our world, then no other world can be physically identical to it without being identical to it in all respects. If physicalism is construed along the lines suggested in 1 , then we have an answer to the completeness question. According to 1 , what this means is that if physicalism is true, there is no possible world which is identical to the actual world in every physical respect but which is not identical to it in a biological or social or psychological respect. It will be useful to have a name for physicalism so defined, so let us call it supervenience physicalism. Further Issues Supervenience

physicalism is relatively simple and clear, but when construed as a formulation of physicalism, it faces four problems. There is also a fifth problem to be discussed later, viz. As we will see, while some of these are relatively easily answered, others are much more challenging. On the other hand, for all 1 says, such a world might be radically different in terms of the distribution of mental properties. But that seems absurd: There are a number of different responses to this problem in the literature cf. Perhaps the simplest response is that the problem conflates two issues that are better kept apart: But why should one assume that this last piece of knowledge should be a consequence of physicalism? To put the point slightly differently, imagine that we discover that who has mental properties on Earth is in part a function of the behavior of molecules on Saturn. That would of course tell us that we are deeply wrong in our assumptions about how the world works. But it would not tell us that we are deeply wrong about physicalism. For further discussion of this point, see Paull and Sider, and Stalnaker Davidson have thought of physicalism as a conceptual or necessary truth, if it is true at all. But most have thought of it as contingent, a truth about our world which might have been otherwise. The statement of physicalism encoded in 1 allows a way in which this might be so. But it leaves it open whether or not the actual world conforms to those conditions as a matter of fact. Perhaps it is not true of our world that a physical duplicate of it would be a psychological duplicate. If so, physicalism would not be true at our world. But for some it is puzzling that physicalism is stated using modal notions i. To see the problem, notice first that, supervenience physicalism tells us that the physical truths of the world entail all the truths; hence 2 The physical truths entail all the truths. If supervenience physicalism is true, it will then be true that: However, if 3 is a necessary truth, how can physicalism be contingent? After all, 3 seems equivalent to physicalism. But if the two are equivalent, how can one be necessary and the other contingent? But the response to this problem is straightforward. On other hand, 2 is equivalent to physicalism but it is not necessary. It is important to bear in mind here that not all entailment claims are necessary. Horgan, Lewis Imagine a possible world W that is exactly like our world in respect of the distribution of physical and mental properties, but for one difference: The problem this possibility presents for 1 is that, if 1 provides the correct definition of physicalism, and if physicalism is true at the actual world, then there is no possible world of the kind we just described, i. The reason is that W is by assumption a physical duplicate of our world; but then, if physicalism is true at our world, W should be a duplicate simpliciter of our world. But W is patently not a duplicate of our world: On the other hand, it seems quite wrong to say that W is an impossibility "at any rate, physicalism should not entail that it is impossible. In order to solve the epiphenomenal ectoplasm problem, we need to adjust 1 so that it does not have the truth of physicalism ruling out W as a possible world. While there are a number of different proposals about how to do this, one influential proposal is due to Frank Jackson cf. For earlier proposals and further discussion, see Horgan and Lewis He proposes replacing 1 with: Unlike 1, 4 does not have physicalism ruling out W, and so 4 is on the face of it preferable to 1 as a statement of physicalism. A different proposal is due to David Chalmers Unlike 1, and like 4, 5 does not have physicalism ruling out W, and so 5 is on the face of it preferable to 1 as a statement of physicalism. Hawthorne, Leuenberger Imagine a possible world similar to ours with respect to the distribution of mental and physical properties, except for this difference: For example, being in an overall physical condition P will necessitate being in pain so long as you do not also instantiate some further property B. If you are in both P and B you are not in pain; but if you are in P and not in B, you will be in pain. The problem that this possibility raises for supervenience definitions of physicalism is as follows. Let us suppose that the relation obtaining at a world W between the mental and the physical is one of weak necessity as just defined; that is, suppose that, at W, the mental is necessitated by the physical but only if certain blockers are absent. Intuitively it would seem that physicalism is false at W. On the other hand, if physicalism is defined in the way suggested by Jackson it would be true. But that seems to be true of W as we have imagined it. There are a number of possible responses to the blockers problem. A different response is to adopt a formulation of physicalism that is weaker than supervenience physicalism; this strategy is pursued in Leuenberger For if the relation of the mental to the physical that obtains at W is one of weak necessity, then not only is physicalism false but it is also false that any world which is a physical duplicate of W is a positive duplicate of W "at some physical duplicate worlds, for example, there will be no psychological properties at all. None of these responses are

clearly correct however, and the proper treatment of the blockers problem and indeed of the epiphenomenal ectoplasm problem, of which the blockers problem is a development is an open question in the literature For simplicity, I will continue with 1 , rather than with either 4 or 5 ; nothing in what follows will turn on this choice. Supervenience Physicalism as Minimal Physicalism Physicalism is intended as a very general claim about the nature of the world, but by far the most discussion of physicalism in the literature has been in the philosophy of mind. The reason for this is that it is in philosophy of mind that we find the most plausible and compelling arguments that physicalism is false. Indeed, as we will see later on, arguments about qualia and consciousness are usually formulated as arguments for the conclusion that physicalism is false. While the issue of physicalism is central to philosophy of mind, however, it is important also to be aware that supervenience physicalism is neutral on a good many of the questions that are pursued in philosophy of mind, and pursued elsewhere for that matter. If you read over the philosophy of mind literature, you will often find people debating a number of different issues: Given the multifariousness of mental states, it is quite likely that the correct position will be some kind of combination of these positions. But this is a question of further inquiry that is irrelevant to physicalism itself. So physicalism itself leaves many debates in the philosophy of mind unanswered. This point is sometimes expressed by saying that supervenience physicalism is minimal physicalism Lewis

Physicalism is a program for building a unified system of knowledge about the world on the basis of the view that everything is a manifestation of the physical aspects of existence. Jeffrey Poland presents a systematic and comprehensive exploration of the philosophical foundations of this program.

This motivation has drawn many philosophers to endorse doctrines variously described as physicalism, materialism, or naturalism. Epistemological naturalism is the view that knowledge is best gained perhaps: It is often suspected on the part of non-naturalists that a self-declared naturalist is really just a physicalist under a different label. Both doctrines are thought to have significant consequences for our understanding of the world, especially human aspects of the world and the nature of mentality. They may also have implications for our understanding of moral properties, abstract objects, the possibility of knowledge, and other familiar items of philosophical investigation. Debates about these metaphysical doctrines often focus on the prospects for solving such placement problems, where a failure may justify an elimination of the thing in question or a rejection of the global doctrine. Other debates focus on the proper formulation and understanding of the doctrines e. General Overviews While physicalism and naturalism influence an enormous amount of philosophical work, general overviews are mostly confined either to portions of larger works where the main focus lies elsewhere or entries in philosophical companions or guides. There are many of the latter to be found in the recent proliferation of handbooks, companions and similar volumes, especially those focusing on mind, metaphysics, or philosophy of science. By way of books, Stoljar is a less ecumenical monograph that provides an excellent introduction and overview, and Ritchie serves as a textbook addressing both epistemic and metaphysical varieties of naturalism. It is also advisable to get a partial overview of the issues surrounding physicalism by surveying the development of the mind-body problem since the middle of the 20th century, as that discussion has done much to influence the more general metaphysical discussions. Edited by Edward N. A review of several positions associated with naturalism without an attempt to provide a definition of naturalism itself. Metaphysical issues reviewed include the status of normative, mathematical, and modal facts and whether they can be located in a natural world. The fourth and fifth chapters focus primarily on metaphysics, including discussion of a non-physicalist metaphysical naturalism. A usefully ecumenical, wide-ranging work. Stanford University Press, Suitable as an introduction while also making a signal contribution to the literature, arguing that no formulation both makes sense of philosophical debates about physicalism while being adequate to the intuitive understanding of the doctrine. Edited by Neil A. Manson and Robert W.

Chapter 5 : Physicalism | Analysis | Oxford Academic

Physicalism, the philosophical foundations. [Jeffrey Stephen Poland] -- Physicalism is a programme for building a unified system of knowledge based upon the view that everything is a manifestation of the physical aspects of existence.

Advanced Search As a first pass, physicalism is the doctrine that there is nothing over and above the physical. Much recent philosophical work has been devoted to spelling out what this means in more rigorous terms and to assessing the case for the view. What follows is a survey of such work. Along the way, I will suggest avenues for further exploration. Nothing over and above The primary motivation for including the nothing over and above clause in the statement of physicalism is the thought that physicalism should be consistent with the existence of entities that are not on their face physical, even entities that are irreducible to physical entities in some important sense, provided such entities depend on and are determined by physical entities in the right way. Indeed, nonreductive physicalism is plausibly the leading version of physicalism today, with contemporary authors still frequently referring back to classic defences like Putnam, Davidson and Fodor. To be sure, nonreductive physicalism has its critics, like Kim and Polger and Shapiro. Here is one example of how to develop a supervenience-based formulation of physicalism, due to Jackson. Physicalism is true just in case any logically possible world that is a minimal physical duplicate of the actual world is a duplicate simpliciter of the actual world. A minimal physical duplicate of a world, *w*, is a world that is physically indiscernible from *w* and that contains nothing more than what it needs to by virtue of being physically indiscernible – so, for instance, no Cartesian souls or ghosts or ectoplasm if *w* lacks them. To see why such an approach seemed promising, consider two different views about phenomenal consciousness. First, a standard role-functionalist holds that conscious properties are not identical with physical properties but instead are second-order functional properties that supervene on physical properties with logical necessity. Such a role-functionalist qualifies as a physicalist according to [Supervenience]: In contrast, property dualists like Jackson and Chalmers, Ch. It is generally agreed that the supervenience of everything on the physical is a necessary condition for physicalism – although see Montero for an argument to the contrary. The debate has focused instead on whether it is also sufficient. One especially influential argument that it is not maintains that what physicalism requires is not just such supervenience but in addition that the obtaining supervenience relations be explainable in a physicalistically acceptable way rather than brute. Horgan; Kim. Two examples are often used to illustrate the idea. Second, classic emergentist views of the mind. McLaughlin, perhaps especially if combined with a necessitarian view of laws. Wilson, are paradigmatically anti-physicalist and yet take or at least can take mental properties to supervene on physical properties with logical necessity. But see Howell, who defends the supervenience approach from this putative counterexample. In response to this line of criticism, several philosophers in recent years have sought some stronger and more explanatory relation than supervenience in order to analyse nothing over and above. In the relevant sense of entailment, one class of truths entails another just in case in any logically possible world in which the first class obtain, the second class obtain. An entailment is said to be a priori if it is knowable a priori. Then here is a proposal: Physicalism is true just in case the class of all actual physical truths together with a totality truth a priori entail all truths. In particular, there are so-called a posteriori physicalists who grant that the physical truths entail all truths but maintain that such entailments are knowable only a posteriori. See, for instance, Block and Stalnaker; McLaughlin; Diaz-Leon; Elpidorou. The view is often motivated by reflecting on certain epistemic arguments against physicalism. Some philosophers deny the tenability of a posteriori physicalism. For discussion of the issues involved see, for instance, Jackson, Stoljar; Chalmers and Jackson; Witmer; Montero; Dowell; Goff; Howell; Tiehen. Without trying to settle the debate here, the following seems prima facie plausible. Even if you think a posteriori physicalism is ultimately untenable, this is something to be established through substantive argument, not built into the definition of physicalism. Indeed, since physicalism is a metaphysical rather than epistemological thesis, any attempt to analyse it in epistemic terms like a priori knowability is on the wrong path. Perhaps, the correct metaphysical analysis of nothing over and above will have epistemic implications, including implications for a priori entailment. But even if this is so,

the analysis itself should be purely metaphysical. Several philosophers have responded to the perceived failures of supervenience-based analyses of nothing over and above by turning to the notion of realization familiar from discussions of functionalism and multiple realization. Competing accounts of realization have been developed. Melnyk understands realization in terms of functional types. A type F is functional when it is associated with some condition C such that, necessarily, F is tokened just in case there is some token of a type G that meets C. When this occurs, the G token is said to realize the F token. With this account of realization in place, Melnyk proposes something close to the following: Physicalism is true just in case every entity is either physical or realized by a physical entity. Here, the core idea is that one property or perhaps property instance realizes another just in case the causal powers of the realizee are a proper subset of those of the realizer. Yet, other views of realization have been developed by other authors see, for instance, Gillett ; Endicott ; Polger and Shapiro Not all recent work on realization explicitly engages the question of how to formulate physicalism, however, and so I want to allow that some views may fall outside the scope of our discussion here. The realizationist analysis of nothing over and above has several things going for it. Realization relations seem to entail that and explain why supervenience relations obtain. In connection, the approach seems to handle properly the non-naturalism and emergentism cases that pose a problem for [Supervenience]. And all of the leading accounts treat realization as a purely metaphysical relation, thus avoiding the sort of epistemic intrusion we saw with [A Priori Entailment]. Before we get too pleased with ourselves for having settled a philosophical question, however, let us consider a fourth and final view. Grounding is often taken to be metaphysically primitive, in which case no analysis of it is available. But authors advance claims about its formal features – for example, perhaps it should be understood as an irreflexive, asymmetric, transitive, hyperintensional relation that can obtain between entities of any sort. Several authors have regarded the formulation of physicalism as an obvious place where grounding might be put to work. Physicalism is true just in case every entity is either physical or grounded in physical entities. Now, grounding champions are often explicit about their reasons for preferring their approach to [Supervenience] or [A Priori Entailment]. But what about [Realization]? Here such philosophers have not yet said enough – indeed, they often say nothing at all about the realizationist view. Is realization simply grounding by another name, or perhaps a determinate form of grounding? One reason to think not is that while grounding is primitive, leading accounts take realization to be analysable – for instance, on the subset account it can be analysed in terms of causal powers and sets thereof. If [Grounding] and [Realization] are competitors, this point presumably counts as an advantage of the realizationist approach: In addition, as both Wilson , , and Melnyk observe, it is not clear that [Grounding] properly handles the cases that motivated the initial rejection of [Supervenience]. For example, Rosen But if the Moorean can accept such grounding claims, [Grounding] fails as an analysis of physicalism. Cutting in the opposite direction, you might suspect that realizationist approaches come with metaphysical commitments that grounding theorists are able to avoid. For example, some have thought the subset account requires an objectionable view of properties and powers see McLaughlin b ; Baltimore ; Morris ; Pineda and Vicente For now perhaps the thing to say is philosophers have made progress on analysing nothing over and above without yet settling on a universally accepted approach. The physical Now to the other portion of the physicalist slogan that there is nothing over and above the physical – just what is meant by the physical? Here is one way to develop this thought. An entity is physical just in case it is denoted by a theoretical term of physics. So, for instance, mass, charge, angular momentum and so on, all count as physical entities according to [Theory]. The Theory View is perhaps the most common approach to defining the physical see Lewis ; Chalmers , ; Melnyk , ; Ney a ; Stoljar , Ch. If it is taken to mean current physics, the resulting physicalist doctrine is likely false since current physics is presumably incomplete. But if it is taken to mean some future or ideal physics, the resulting physicalist doctrine is empty since nobody knows what a future or ideal physics might contain. Some authors have taken the dilemma or broadly similar considerations to pose an insuperable challenge for physicalism, showing there is no interesting and plausibly true physicalist thesis to be had Crane and Mellor ; Chomsky and the discussion in Montero Some embrace the second, arguing that the appeal to a future or idealized physics need not be empty Poland ; Dowell ; Witmer And some say physicalism needs to be reconceived as a stance or attitude rather than a hypothesis Van Fraassen ; Ney b. Instead of examining any of

these options at length or assessing their merits, I want to focus on another potential response to the dilemma: Here is an initial attempt to formulate such a Via Negativa View. An entity is physical just in case it is not mental. This pleasingly straightforward proposal does not work, however. For one thing, it mishandles the threat to physicalism posed by non-mental entities. For another, as Stoljar Such theories say that certain entities properties, events, etc. But on [Via Negativa], this amounts to saying those entities are both mental and not mental – a contradiction. Perhaps, such identity theories are objectionable, but surely their incoherence cannot be established this easily. The rough idea is that physicalism should allow non-fundamental physical properties to be mental but rule out the instantiation of fundamental mental properties. Before engaging in further comparison of the views, it will be helpful to have our last remaining account of the physical on the table. Some philosophers have tried to draw on this concept to define the physical Jackson ; Stoljar , ; Strawson An entity is physical just in case it is the sort of entity that figures in a complete account of the intrinsic nature of objects like tables and chairs, rocks and mountains i. The Object View comes with its own set of problems however. Among them, it seems to classify as nonphysical various entities that are not ordinary physical objects, but nevertheless are such that no self-described physicalist objects to them, like gravitational forces or quantum mechanical wave functions see Stoljar Whether these views are consistent with physicalism partly depends on what is meant by the physical. To illustrate, consider a view on which everything that exists is made up of the same sorts of fundamental entities, and these entities all have phenomenal intrinsic natures that are inscrutable to physics. Human consciousness is realized by or grounded in, etc. Is this a physicalist position? YES, according to [Object]. For the same entities that make up humans also make up tables and chairs, rocks and mountains. Suppose the theoretical terms of physics have functional definitions.

Chapter 6 : Physicalism and Mental Causation: The Metaphysics of Mind and Action - Google Books

Physicalism: The Philosophical Foundations Physicalism is a program for building a unified system of knowledge about the world on the basis of the view that everything is a manifestation of the physical aspects of existence.

Background[edit] According to U. Place , [1] one of the popularizers of the idea of type-identity in the s and s, the idea of type-identity physicalism originated in the s with the psychologist E. Boring and took nearly a quarter of a century to gain acceptance from the philosophical community. Boring, in a book entitled *The Physical Dimensions of Consciousness* wrote that: To the author a perfect correlation is identity. Two events that always occur together at the same time in the same place, without any temporal or spatial differentiation at all, are not two events but the same event. The mind-body correlations as formulated at present, do not admit of spatial correlation, so they reduce to matters of simple correlation in time. The need for identification is no less urgent in this case p. The barrier to the acceptance of any such vision of the mind, according to Place, was that philosophers and logicians had not yet taken a substantial interest in questions of identity and referential identification in general. The dominant epistemology of the logical positivists at that time was phenomenalism , in the guise of the theory of sense-data. Indeed, Boring himself subscribed to the phenomenalist creed, attempting to reconcile it with an identity theory and this resulted in a *reductio ad absurdum* of the identity theory, since brain states would have turned out, on this analysis, to be identical to colors, shapes, tones and other sensory experiences. The revival of interest in the work of Gottlob Frege and his ideas of sense and reference on the part of Herbert Feigl and J. Smart , along with the discrediting of phenomenalism through the influence of the later Wittgenstein and J. Austin , led to a more tolerant climate toward physicalistic and realist ideas. Versions of type identity theory[edit] There were actually subtle but interesting differences between the three most widely credited formulations of the type-identity thesis, those of Place, Feigl and Smart which were published in several articles in the late s. However, all of the versions share the central idea that the mind is identical to something physical. Place[edit] Main article: For Place, higher-level mental events are composed out of lower-level physical events and will eventually be analytically reduced to these. So, to the objection that "sensations" do not mean the same thing as "mental processes", Place could simply reply with the example that "lightning" does not mean the same thing as "electrical discharge" since we determine that something is lightning by looking and seeing it, whereas we determine that something is an electrical discharge through experimentation and testing. Nevertheless, "lightning is an electrical discharge" is true since the one is composed of the other. Feigl and Smart[edit] For Feigl and Smart , on the other hand, the identity was to be interpreted as the identity between the referents of two descriptions senses which referred to the same thing, as in "the morning star" and "the evening star" both referring to Venus, a necessary identity. So to the objection about the lack of equality of meaning between "sensation" and "brain process", their response was to invoke this Fregean distinction: Moreover, "sensations are brain processes" is a contingent, not a necessary, identity. Criticism and replies[edit] Main article: Multiple realizability One of the most influential and common objections to the type identity theory is the argument from multiple realizability. The multiple realizability thesis asserts that mental states can be realized in multiple kinds of systems, not just brains, for example. Since the identity theory identifies mental events with certain brain states, it does not allow for mental states to be realized in organisms or computational systems that do not have a brain. This is in effect an argument that the identity theory is too narrow because it does not allow for organisms without brains to have mental states. However, token identity where only particular tokens of mental states are identical with particular tokens of physical events and functionalism both account for multiple realizability. The response of type identity theorists, such as Smart, to this objection is that, while it may be true that mental events are multiply realizable, this does not demonstrate the falsity of type identity. In this way we have a second order type theory. In such gardens, the tops of hedges are cut into various shapes, for example the shape of an elf. We can make generalizations over the type elf-shaped hedge only if we abstract away from the concrete details of the individual twigs and branches of each hedge. So, whether we say that two things are of the same type or are tokens of the same type because of subtle differences is just a matter of descriptive abstraction. The

type-token distinction is not all or nothing. Putnam, and many others who have followed him, now tend to identify themselves as generically non-reductive physicalists. Qualia Another frequent objection is that type identity theories fail to account for phenomenal mental states or qualia , such as having a pain, feeling sad, experiencing nausea. Qualia are merely the subjective qualities of conscious experience. An example is the way the pain of jarring ones elbow feels to the individual. Arguments can be found in Saul Kripke and David Chalmers , for example, according to which the identity theorist cannot identify phenomenal mental states with brain states or any other physical state for that matter because one has a sort of direct awareness of the nature of such qualitative mental states, and their nature is qualitative in a way that brain states are not. Let us suppose, Jackson suggests, that a particularly brilliant super-scientist named Mary has been locked away in a completely black-and-white room her entire life. Over the years in her colour-deprived world she has studied via black-and-white books and television the sciences of neurophysiology, vision and electromagnetics to their fullest extent; eventually Mary comes to know all the physical facts there are to know about experiencing colour. When Mary is released from her room and experiences colour for the first time, does she learn something new? If we answer "yes" as Jackson suggests we do to this question, then we have supposedly denied the truth of type physicalism, for if Mary has exhausted all the physical facts about experiencing colour prior to her release, then her subsequently acquiring some new piece of information about colour upon experiencing its quale reveals that there must be something about the experience of colour which is not captured by the physicalist picture. The type identity theorist, such as Smart, attempts to explain away such phenomena by insisting that the experiential properties of mental events are topic-neutral. The concept of topic-neutral terms and expressions goes back to Gilbert Ryle , who identified such topic-neutral terms as "if", "or", "not", "because" and "and. For the identity theorist, sense-data and qualia are not real things in the brain or the physical world in general but are more like "the average electrician.

Chapter 7 : notes on - "The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap"

physicalism the philosophical foundations pdf In philosophy, physicalism is the metaphysical thesis that "everything is physical", that there is "nothing over and above" the physical, or that everything supervenes on.

Chapter 8 : Physicalism and Metaphysical Naturalism - Philosophy - Oxford Bibliographies

The Reverend Anthony Freeman gained a brief moment of fame last year when he lost his parish because his bishop took him to be an unbeliever. The British national newspapers enjoyed the spectacle of an 'atheist vicar' for a while; however, Mr Freeman himself always denied that he was an atheist.

Chapter 9 : Physicalism (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Part 6 Assessment of the physicalist programme: adequate expression of the core ideas and values challenges to the acceptability of physicalism prospects for success of the physicalist programme.