

# Physicalism

## Chapter 00 Introduction

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## 1 About This Book

## 2 Physicalism and Materialism

# 1.About the Book

## Materialism or Idealism

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, almost all professional philosophers were idealists of one sort or another; that is, they held that the world was in some fundamental sense spiritual or mental, rather than being in some fundamental sense physical or material (see Stove 1991).

Far from being viewed with professional contempt, materialism became something like a consensus position within analytic philosophy in the 1960s and has remained so, or very nearly so, ever since. **Physicalism** is in many ways the Weltanschauung of modern analytic philosophy.

For present purposes, for ‘materialism’ read ‘physicalism’

# 1.About This Book

## Our Questions

### **(1) Interpretation**

What is this condition—being physical—that according to physicalism everything has or is? And what is it for everything to have this condition?

### **(2) Truth**

What is ‘the scientific world-view’ ? Is there one? And what is the connection between it and physicalism?

### **(3) Philosophical Significance**

In contemporary philosophy the idea of physicalism structures and informs many different questions and debates.

# 1.About This Book

## Other Questions

### (1)The relation of physicalism to broader social currents

Prevalence of physicalism in philosophy is part of larger currents in intellectual life in the twentieth century and after.

### (2)The relation of physicalism to technical questions in physics or philosophy of physics

The relation of physicalism to issues of a fairly technical kind within physics, or perhaps the philosophy thereof

### (3)The history of the subject

The relation between **physicalism** of the kind that we find in modern philosophy, and various versions of physicalism or **materialism** to be found throughout the history of thought.

# 1.About This Book

## Chapter 1

### **Philosophy Significance**

The standard picture of physicalism and its role in contemporary philosophy.

## Chapter 2 - 5

### **Interpretation**

The issue of what a physical property is.

## Chapter 6 - 11

### **Truth**

Concerns the truth or falsity of physicalism, and, of course, the arguments for or against its truth or falsity.

1 About This Book

2 Physicalism and Materialism



## 2. Physicalism and Materialism

### Point 1: Vienna Circle

#### Physicalism

introduced by

- Otto Neurath (1931)
- Rudolf Carnap (1932)

The linguistic thesis that every statement is synonymous with (i.e. is equivalent in meaning with) some physical statement.

'Materialism' is traditionally construed as denoting, not a linguistic thesis, but a metaphysical one, i.e. it tells us about the nature of the world as such.

## 2. Physicalism and Materialism

### Point 2: Root Notion

#### Materialism

The root notion of materialism is 'matter' and historically the notion of matter is quite constrained.

#### Physicalism

The root notion of physicalism is 'physics', and 'physics' includes more than simply 'matter.'

**It's right?**

## 2. Physicalism and Materialism

The distinction invoked by Carnap and Neurath, the background philosophy that held that in place has for the most part been rejected.

As regards the idea that the word ‘physicalism’ is somehow connected to ‘physics’, it remains the case that it is as closely related to ‘physical object’ as it is to ‘physics’ and, since ‘physical object’ is synonymous with ‘material object.’

**Stoljar assume that ‘physi- calism’ and ‘materialism’ are interchangeable but will generally use the first rather than the second.**

## 2. Physicalism and Materialism

### Naturalism

This work will use 'naturalism' to mean not a thesis about the nature of the world, and so not physicalism, but rather a methodological thesis.

Thank you for your time!