# Re: Defining "physical"

***Source:*** http://sci.tech−archive.net/Archive/sci.physics/2007−11/msg00267.html

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- *Date*: Sun, 04 Nov 2007 08:59:07 −0800

> On 4 Nov., 17:48, Paul Holbach <paulholbachDELETETHEN...@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:
>
> "X is a physical property iff X is measurable in terms of one of the
> SI base units or one of the SI units derived from them."
>
> That's better.
> This definition seems to harmonize with the following one:
>
> "The theory−based conception:
> A property is physical iff 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.
>
> According to the theory−based conception, for example, if physical
> theory tells us about the property of having mass, then having mass is
> a physical property. Similarly, if physical theory tells us about the
> property of being a rock −− or, what is perhaps more likely, if the
> property of being a rock supervenes on properties which physical
> theory tell us about −− then it too is a physical property."
> (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/physicalism/#9)

The latter definition is more inclusive, because according to it
properties such as being an electron, being a crystal, or being a
comet are physical properties, even though these properties cannot be
measured in terms of the SI units.
So not only those properties which are measurable in terms of the SI
units may count as physical properties but also those ones which (see
above) supervene on properties measurable in terms of the SI units.

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