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1 Behaviorism

According to behaviorism, sentences like “Suzie is happy” or “Joe is feeling low” can be analyzed as long conjunctions of claims about how people are disposed to behave.

Two sorts of objection:

- For any given mental state (like feeling happy), there’s no single set of behavioral dispositions that can be associated with that state—how you’ll act if you’re happy/sad/in pain/etc. depends on what *other* mental states you’re in.
- What mental states somebody is in doesn’t just depend on his or her behavioral dispositions—it also depends on what’s going on inside the head.
 - The case of the congenitally paralyzed poet.

2 Physicalism

Physicalism is sensitive to both of these objections—according to the physicalist, mental states are brain states. Because it doesn’t take there to be any necessary connections between mental states and behavior, it’s not vulnerable to the above objections. But it does face other objections.

- Multiple Realizability

3 Functionalism

Like physicalists, functionalists think that mental states are internal states of an organism. But unlike physicalists, they think that mental states are importantly related to behavior.

Removed due to copyright restrictions. Definition of functionalism from [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#).

Questions:

- How does functionalism handle the earlier objections to behaviorism?

- How does functionalism handle the multiple realizability problem that threatened physicalism?

4 Objections to Functionalism

The Chinese Room (Searle):

Suppose that I'm locked in a room and given a large batch of Chinese writing...together with some [English] instructions...[that] instruct me how to give back certain Chinese symbols with certain sorts of shapes in response to certain sorts of shapes given me...I get so good at following the instructions for manipulating the Chinese symbols that...my answers to the questions are absolutely indistinguishable from those of native Chinese speakers...it seems to me quite obvious that...I do not understand a word of the Chinese stories. (331-2)

1. According to functionalism, the man in the Chinese Room understands Chinese. (A)
2. The man in the Chinese Room doesn't understand Chinese. (A)
3. Functionalism is false (1,2)

Reply: The functionalist can deny premise 1. Why?

- The man doesn't understand Chinese—at best, the system of which he is a part could understand Chinese.
- Such a system couldn't really be functionally identical to a Chinese speaker.

Questions:

- Can we set up a version of this example so that the Chinese room system really will be functionally identical to a Chinese speaker?
- Suppose we can. Would the system in such an example thereby have mental states? Would it understand Chinese?
- Suppose we agree with Searle. What views about the mind are available to us? What's Searle's view? Here's how he puts it:

My own view is that only a machine could think, and indeed only very special kinds of machines, namely brains and machines that had the same causal powers as brains...Whatever else intentionality is, it is a biological phenomenon, and it is as likely to be causally dependent on the specific biochemistry of its origins as lactation, photosynthesis, or any other biological phenomena. [“Intentionality is the power of minds to be about, to represent, or to stand for, things, properties and states of affairs”—Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy]

How should we understand Searle's view?

- Is it a version of Dualism?
- Physicalism?

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