

Phil 317: [handout #2]
Kim: *Philosophy of Mind*
Chapter 2: Behaviorism

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A joke for behaviorism: 'How am I now?' 'You're fine. How about me?'

§ 1. Two views concerning the relation between mental activities and behavior:

[William James]: Behavior exemplifying the pursuance of future ends and the choice of means for their attainment is *the mark and criterion* of mentality.

[Philosophical behaviorism]: Having a mind just *is* a matter of exhibiting, or having the propensity to exhibit, certain appropriate patterns of observable behavior.

Q: How are these two attitudes different?

§ 2. The definition of philosophical behaviorism (as distinguished from psychological behaviorism):

___ **The view that meanings of psychological terms derive from operational definitions based on observable behavior.** (e.g. the meanings of mental expressions such as 'pain' and 'thought' are to be explained by reference to facts about publicly observable behavior, not inner episodes in private minds.)

§ 3. Motivations behind the movement of philosophical behaviorism

- ___ **1. objectivity and experimentation in other sciences.**
- ___ **2. the problem of other minds -- Wittgenstein's "beetle in the box" analogy**

[Note]:

*** The Problem of Other Minds**

___ An epistemological problem, which means it concerns our knowledge (how do we justify), not whether others have minds or not.

___ Argument from analogy [my mind --> my behavior; therefore, others' behavior --> others' minds]

§ 4. Definition of 'Behavior'

___ **Whatever people or organisms or even mechanical systems do that is publicly observable.**

Two types of publicly observable behavior:

- ___ 1. physiological reactions and responses (e.g. increase in blood pressure)
- ___ 2. bodily motions (e.g. my arm's rising)

§ 5. [Three kinds of Philosophical Behaviorism]:

1. Logical behaviorism
2. Ontological behaviorism
3. Methodological behaviorism

[A] Logical Behaviorism: Carl Hempel

[Logical behaviorism I]: Any meaningful psychological statement (a statement describing a mental phenomenon) can be **translated**, without loss of content, into a statement solely about behavioral and physical phenomena.

[Logical behaviorism II]: Every meaningful psychological expression can be **defined** solely in terms of behavioral and physical expressions, that is, those referring to behavioral and physical phenomena.

Q: Does I entail II, or vice versa?

[definition]: If an expression E is defined as E*, then E and E* must be either synonymous or necessarily equivalent (i.e. there is no conceivable situation to which one of the expressions applies but the other does not.)

[Note: this definition is going to be useful later on.]

***[Hempel's argument for logical behaviorism]:**

- ___ 1. [The verification conditions] The content, or meaning, of any meaningful statement is exhausted by the conditions that must be verified to obtain if we are to consider that statement true.
- ___ 2. If a statement is to have a content that can be shared by different persons, its verification conditions must be publicly observable.
- ___ 3. Only behavioral and physical phenomena are publicly observable.
- ___ 4. Therefore, the content of any meaningful psychological statements must be specifiable by statements describing appropriate behavioral and physical conditions that must hold if and only if the psychological statement is to count as true.

* Examine the example on p. 31: Paul has a toothache.

*** Criticisms of logical behaviorism:**

1. There are no observable behavior associated with many belief states.



Definition of belief: S believe that P =_{def} If S is asked, "Is it the case that P?" S will answer "Yes."

2. It is not possible to eliminate all mental terms in defining a particular mental term. For example, we need to appeal to belief/desire in our definition of a belief state.

A challenge: Come up with an acceptable definition of 'having a pain' and 'having a belief that P' in defense of logical behaviorism.

Kim's suggestion: x has a pain if and only if x belongs to a pain-capable species, and there is a certain behavioral type B such that, for x's species, being in pain entails a disposition to emit behavior of type B, and x has the disposition to emit behavior of type B.

[B] Ontological Behaviorism

[Ontological behaviorism]: The nature of psychological states or phenomena is such that there are no psychological facts over and above behavioral facts, and there are no psychological states or events over and above actual and possible behavior.

→ **eliminative materialism**

Discuss: Do the body snatchers lack anything that we can call 'mental'?
Can computers have minds?

[C] Methodological Behaviorism

[Methodological behaviorism]:

- I. The only admissible data for the science of psychology are behavioral data.
- II. Psychological theories must not invoke internal states of psychological states; psychological explanations must not appeal to internal states of organisms, nor should references to such states in deriving predictions about behavior.
- III. Psychological theories must make no reference to inner mental states in formulating psychological explanations.

Discuss: Is psychology a respectable science?

§ Final question:

___ What are the differences among the three kinds of philosophical behaviorism? What are the advantages or disadvantages of each theory? Which theory is the most plausible of the three?