Fodor on Functionalism

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Deficiencies in Other Theories

- Dualism
  - Failure to account for mental causation
  - Immaterial substance cannot cause physical events
  - If mental processes were a different substance than physical processes, then we wouldn't have a reason to believe it exist

Deficiencies (cont.)

- Behaviorism
  - Solves problem of interaction between mental and physical (eliminates immaterial factor), but fails to account for mental processes
  - Ignores causation
    - Embedded in our language and understanding of ourselves and the world around us
    - We act based on how we believe the world works
    - May not act on feelings or beliefs, yet those still exist
  - More elaborate technology developed to explain internal neurological processes

Deficiencies (cont.)

- Logical Behaviorism
  - Mental is the same thing as saying an organism is disposed to behave a certain way
    - Fragility of glass
    - Manifestation of a disposition
  - Allows for mental processes to be explained in physical terms
  - However, "treats manifestation of a disposition as the sole form of mental causation" → problem of interaction
    - Event- event causation
    - Disposition for taking aspirin for a headache only if there is a belief that you're in pain AND you have a desire to get rid of that pain

Deficiencies (cont.)

- Central-Identity Theory
  - Mental events, states and processes are identical with neurophysiological events in the brain
    - Chain of mental causes possible in this theory
    - Mental processes have causal properties of neurophysiological processes
  - Type and Token Physicalism
  - Problem of Multiple Realization

Deficiencies (cont.)

- ## Multiple Realization
  - The same mental states/processes can exist in different types of minds
    - Three types of lefty brains
    - Two people seeing two different colors, but both calling it "red" and having certain feelings that accompany the perception
      - Subjective – we can't know objective truth of objects
  - This is not possible under identity theory

Functionalism

- Identifies mental states with relevant properties of that state, rather than identical neurological processes
    - Someone is in pain if they have been affected by certain inputs that would make you feel pain, and may produce a certain range of causally related behavior
    - More towards abstract explanation of the mind (programs, processes) as opposed to physical one
- Tries to solve causal problem of logistical behaviorism and relational problem of identity theory

Software Analogy

- ## Mind is the software of the brain
  - Same software can be run on different types of hardware
  - Likewise, same mental functions can be performed in different types of 'minds'
  - Similar psychological constitutions in different physical organizations

- ## Compares computers to minds
  - Computations: causal chain of computer states interpreted from machine code
  - Turing Machine: Input → Algorithm → Output
    - Mind = Algorithm, rather than the internal workings of a computer

Artificial Intelligence

- Fodor believes functionalism would allow for the possibility for machines, computers and robots to 'have minds'.

- Thoughts?

Mind and Machine

- Vending Machine vs. Probabilistic Automaton
  - Deterministic function of vending machines
    - Certain input produces predictable and certain output
    - We know this because we know how a vending machine will work
  - But we aren't vending machines – idea of free will
    - Probabilistic Automaton
    - Variety of possible stimuli/inputs that affect the internal processes of the automaton, so that in each individual situation it is possible that there is a different result, yet overall there is a greater probability of one behavior over another

Problems for Functionalism

- ## Qualitative Content
  - Supposedly same perception may not be the same for everyone
    - One person's red might be slightly or drastically different from another person's red
    - We don't have reason to believe that we're all the same/have the same software
    - Same functional state, but different mental states
- ## Intentional Content
  - Chinese Room
    - May know algorithm or rules of language, but not understand it's meaning
    - More to minds than algorithms
    - Difference between us and machines – certain insights

Problems for Functionalism

- ## Mental Representation
  - Problem with functional role determining semantic properties of mental state
  - Resemblance: Difference between thought that John is tall and the fact that John is tall?
  - Mental states not equivalent to physical counterpart
  - Semantic properties of mental representations caused by some aspect of its functional role