

Note: Portions of these notes have been taken from the wikipedia entries on their respective topics

BEHAVIORISM:

This is characterized by a strong [verificationism](#), which generally considers unverifiable statements about interior mental life senseless. For the behaviorist, mental states are not interior states on which one can make introspective reports. They are just descriptions of behavior or [dispositions](#) to behave in certain ways, made by third parties to explain and predict others' behavior.

Why would anyone be a behaviorist? There are three main reasons (see also Zuriff 1985).

The first is epistemic. Warrant or evidence for saying, at least in the third person case, that an animal or person is in a certain mental state, for example, possesses a certain belief, is grounded in behavior, understood as observable behavior.

Prob: behaviorism could be said to be [counter-intuitive](#) when it maintains that someone is talking about behavior in the event that a person is experiencing a painful headache.

MIND-BRAIN IDENTITY THEORY:

Ok, so maybe pain isn't explained as a *behavior* or a *tendency*. But we could explain it as identical with some *brain state*. To be in pain, on this view, is for my brain to be in some state. Pain on this view is equivalent to (let's say) c-fiber firings.

Possible trouble: Multiple realizability. We can imagine other sentient creatures with brains unlike ours, but which could still experience pain. It doesn't seem like pain is equivalent to any particular *type* of brain state.

(Revision: token identity theory. We reduce pain by saying that every particular pain is identical with some particular brain state (token identical).)

FUNCTIONALISM:

Here's another suggestion. Mental states aren't equivalent to physical brain states. Rather, they're best understood as *functions* of physical systems. A mental state like pain is just an input-output function

Consider a very simple machine that runs the following program:

An extremely simple example of a Turing machine which writes out the sequence '111' after scanning three blank squares and then stops is specified by the following machine table:

	State One	State Two	State Three
B	write 1; stay in state 1	write 1; stay in state 2	write 1; stay in state 3
1	go right; go to state 2	go right; go to state 3	[halt]

Maybe the brain is a much more complex version of this kind of machine

The essential point to consider here is the *nature of the states* of the Turing machine. Each state can be defined exclusively in terms of its relations to the other states as well as inputs and outputs. State one, for example, is simply the state in which the machine, if it reads a *B*, writes a *1* and stays in that state, and in which, if it reads a *1*, it moves one square to the right and goes into a different state. This is the functional definition of state one; it is its causal role in the overall system. The details of how it accomplishes what it accomplishes and of its material constitution are completely irrelevant.

According to machine-state functionalism, the nature of a mental state is just like the nature of the automaton states described above. Just as *state one* simply is the state in which, given an input *B*, such and such happens, so being in pain is the state which disposes one to cry "ouch", become distracted, wonder what the cause is, and so forth.

Why *Blade Runner* and Zombies matter

Philosophical zombies and replicants seem to raise serious problems for all three types of physicalism above. Suppose that we can really imagine such entities. And suppose that conscious experience is a mental phenomenon. The problem is that we can imagine replicants meeting all of the criteria in each of the above physical accounts, but lacking a mental phenomenon (consciousness).

Behaviorism: The replicants acts like they're in pain, in love, etc. (but they're not conscious!)

Identity theory: We can imagine Nexus 8 replicants (or zombies) with "fleshy" brains indistinguishable from ours—but they're not conscious

Functionalism: We can imagine that the replicants compute the same subfunctions that we do—but they're not conscious

Do thought experiments like this matter: yes. Here's why:

Materialists say that the mental is identical with something physical (the difference is in the details of what that physical thing is). This means that the mental is *necessarily* something physical. If you're imagining the physical correlate, you must also be imagining the mental one. But zombies give us cases where we're imagining a physical correlate *without* imagine the mental one. This ruins the hypothesis that the two are indeed the same.

Do zombies kill physicalism?

Maybe not. Deckard should not deny Rachel's cognitive abilities and . He should think that she loves him, that she remembers the things she remembers (even if they didn't happen *to her*, per se).

If Nexus 9 replicants figure out and teach us how to build time machines, it would be crazy to say that they don't *know* how to build time machines, but we do.

If zombies/replicants are *smart enough*, then maybe they can "eat qualia", or get rid of the kind of dualism underlying traditional philosophical zombie experiments.