

Functionalism

1. The evolution thus far:

Substance Dualism to Behaviorism to Identity Theory

2. Next on the menu:

Functionalism: mental properties are functional properties (or mental kinds are functional kinds).

What does this *mean*?

We must distinguish between the **function** of a thing and the **material** from which it is made.

Example: **engine, mousetrap**

F is a functional property (or kind) just in case F can be characterized by a definition of the following form:

For something x to have F (or be an F) =_w for x to have some property P such that $C(P)$, where $C(P)$ is a specification of the causal work that P is supposed to do in x .

Q is a 'realizer' of a functional property F for x if and only if $C(Q)$, that is, Q fits the specification C in x .

Now think about the mind:

Example: pain

For a subject, S , to have a pain (or be in pain) =_w for S to have some property P such that P is typically caused by tissue damage and that, in turn, typically causes winces, groans and avoidance behavior.

A property Q is a 'realizer' of pain (remember pain is a functional property) for S if and only if Q typically caused by tissue damage and that, in turn, typically causes winces, groans and avoidance behavior.

So, according to the functionalist, the condition for having a certain mental property (or being in a mental state of a given kind) should be given by the functional role of that property (state)—that is, by its **causal relationship** to stimuli, behavior and other mental states.