

**Functionalism:**  
**Introduction**

**1.**  
**The Bridge**

Armstrong's argument for the identity theory provides a bridge between the identity theory and functionalism.

Armstrong's strategy: analyze the concept of a mental state and show, in turn, that we can identify that type of mental state with a type of physical state.

According to Armstrong, mental concepts are causal role concepts. A causal role concept is the concept of something that is "apt to be the cause of certain effects or apt to be the effect of certain causes" (183).

e.g., poison

The Causal Argument:

1. Our concept of pain = the concept of an internal state that is normally caused by tissue damage, and tissue damage typically causes such behaviors as wincing, groans and avoidance behavior.
2. There is a type of internal state (such as c-fibers firing) that is normally caused by tissue damage and in turn typically causes wincing, groans and avoidance behavior.
3. Therefore pain = that type of mental state (such as c-fibers firing).

Problem: Multiple realizability. What's that again?

**2.**  
**Next on the menu:**

**Functionalism:** mental kinds are functional kinds, or causal-functional kinds.

What does this *mean*?

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

Example: 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  $F$ ) =<sub>def</sub> 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 (again!)

For a subject,  $S$ , to have a pain (or be in pain) =<sub>def</sub> for  $S$  to have some property  $P$  such that  $P$  is typically caused by tissue damage and that, in turn, typically causes wincing, 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 wincing, 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.