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Evolution of our understanding on Behaviorism

Behaviorism, as a theory, has long stood as a pivotal theory in philosophy, aimed at understanding observable behaviors. However, despite its rise in popularity, it has faced several shortcomings whenever we are accounting for the internal mental processes of different humans and animals. In this essay, I plan to argue in favor of the inability of behaviorists to fully account for the internal mental processes of different beings along with their inability to account for similar emotions or behaviorism of other animals. Alongside these we will also be exploring the evolution of our understanding of behaviorism and examining concepts related to understanding and answering questions raised by thought experiments such as Bettle in the box, “What is it like to be a bat”, Cartesian Theater and Philosophical Zombieism to understand the evolution in our progression of understanding Behaviorism. By examining these ideologies and experiments, I plan to argue for a more clear and simplified understanding of behavior that incorporates both observable and unobservable mental states.

We start off by first understanding the history and rise of behaviorism and what it means to have a generic understanding of it. This concept rose at the start of the 20th century but its idea conception according to Kim starts off in 1913 by J.B. Watson whose declaration we will compare with William James in his classic “Principles of Psychology”. According to Watson, Psychology is a purely objective experimental branch whose theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behavior. What this view means is we consider psychology to be more or less an experimental study of publicly observable human and animal behavior which brings into question the lack of understanding of internal mental states. This field of science dominated scientific psychology until the 60’s and according to Kim made behavioral science a preferred name for it across multiple universities [textbook reference pg 61]. The author also rightly states that the rise in behaviorism popularity is no fluke. Kim states that behavior is intimately related to mentality. What the author summarizes is that we do is inseparably connected with what we think and want. Our behavior is considered a natural expression in conveying these ideas

Resources:

1. [Animal Cognition - Google Books](#)
2. [What Happened to Behaviorism – Association for Psychological Science – APS](#)
3. [The New Behaviorism | Second Edition | John Staddon | Taylor & Francis \(taylorfrancis.com\)](#)
4. [Philosophy of behaviorism \(nih.gov\)](#)
5. [Behaviorism | John B. Watson | Taylor & Francis eBooks, Reference Work \(taylorfrancis.com\)](#)
6. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/lib/oculcarleton-ebooks/detail.action?pq-origsite=primo&docID=665820> (edited)

7. Bit more on the psychology side but [Behaviorism Evolves on JSTOR \(carleton.ca\)](#)
8. [Understanding Behaviorism: Behavior, Culture, and Evolution - William M. Baum - Google Books](#)