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Evolution of our understanding on Behaviorism

Behaviorism has long stood as a pivotal theory in philosophy, aimed at understanding observable and unobservable behaviors (Kim, 2010, p. 61). Despite its rise in popularity, it has faced severe shortcomings whenever we are accounting for the internal mental processes of different humans and animals. This essay argues 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 behaviorism of other animals. Alongside, we will also explore 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 and Cartesian Theater to understand the evolution in our progression of understanding Behaviorism. By examining these ideologies and experiments, I plan to argue for a more comprehensive understanding of behavior that incorporates both observable and unobservable mental states.

We will start by first understanding the history and the rise and fall of behaviorism; and understanding the intimate relationship between mentality and behaviorism. Behaviorism rose at the start of the 20th century and was intended to make psychology a natural science (Roediger & III, 2004) but its conception according to Kim starts of in 1913 by J.B. Watson whose declaration we will compare with William James in his classic “Principles of Psychology.” Watson stated that, Psychology is a purely objective experimental branch whose theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behavior (Kim, 2010, p. 61). 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 importance of understanding of internal mental states for these organisms.

Behaviorism dominated scientific psychology until the 1960's and according to Kim became known as behavioral science across multiple universities (Kim, 2010, p. 61). The author also rightly states that the rise in behaviorism popularity is not coincidental and rightly states that behavior is intimately related to mentality. What the author summarizes is that what we do is inseparably connected with what we think and want as in our behavior is considered a natural expression in conveying these ~~belief~~beliefs and desires. This raises a few questions in our mind such as how intimate is this relationship? In simple words, having a mind is just a matter of exhibiting appropriate patterns of behavior (Kim, 2010, p. 62). The idea however has lost its special privilege and position from 50s onwards, according to M. Braat et al. 2020, the theoretical and social factors that contributed to the shift in conceptual understandings it is generally seen that psychologist, linguists and computer scientists joined forces and developed empirical approaches to study of mind and cognition and according to Roediger in his article states that due to its dominance in growth and psychology he states that its decline was due to the search and hunger for newer concepts to replace it, the other few reasons resonate with the lack of interest in these concepts due to its position and popularity (Roediger & III, 2004). Such was ~~in~~ the case similar to Zuriff, ~~who~~ in his journal to understand and further the research where he states his frustrations that his interest and passion was not shared by his seniors and mentors (Zuriff, 2002). These thought ~~experiements~~experiments will provide us a better understanding of how interconnected these concepts are and help provide a more comprehensive view of behavior that includes both observable actions and internal mental states.

To understand the intimate relationship between mentality and behaviorism among organisms we come across the first of many thought experiments the Cartesian theater. According to ideas derived from Descartes, mind is a private inner stage on which mental actions take place. This stage needs actors who are represented by our thoughts, sensations, perceptual sensings, emotions, and so on where these 'actors' play their role and fade away- (Kim, 2010, p.63). This "fade away" in this concept doesn't necessarily mean disappear forever rather it means till the end of the act, and it prepares itself for the next scenario. This concept brings into mind a few set of interconnected questions how many people and how do they

view the acts? The answer is simple only the owner. We can consider this person to have a full authoritative control of it. From this we can infer that nothing goes on in the theater without their knowledge. But here we come across the concept of how would others be able to view the internal states of our mind since it is only limited to the owner of the theater (Kim, 2010, p.63). ~~(Kim, 2010, p.63)~~ We can formulate an attempt to answer this question with the help of an example similar to one by ~~Kim's~~; pain of stubbing a toe, when we stub a toe we know we are in pain due to the feelings we experience also termed as direct knowledge but the person looking at us can only infer the state we are in. ~~Which-~~This further raises a question wisely stated by Kim, How do you know? The answer is difficult to explain unless we are an expert in biological connections which I am not so my answer follows exactly similar to Kim's "I just do" (Kim, 2010, p.63) approach since it is a knowledge--associated directly to me or the person experiencing the play or act at hand. This brings to rise another question; how do we know if the person has understood our feelings based on our outer signs? Outer signs might demonstrate the wrong behavior to the other person. Kim approaches this question to explore the inductive procedures, suggesting that these states is self correcting and depends upon the development of the context to actually help the viewer be able to understand the emotions demonstrated by the owner.

The idea of cartesian theater can be explored quite similarly to the thought experiment "Beetle in the box" by Wittgenstein. The concept essentially follows the idea that each person let us say for example standing in a circle and has their own box. They are given conditions that limit them to being able to view all the contents available to them in their own box. The people will say they have a beetle in their box. But this brings about a important question, what do they mean by the term 'beetle'? It is possible to think that we all have a beetle but what if the experiment takes a twist and we are told that only one of us has a beetle and the rest have different things or items. Wittgenstein states that it is difficult to know since the word beetle can be shared by many items and may have different terms in languages which we will explore later on in this essay (Kim, 2010, p.64). ~~(Kim, 2010, p.64)~~ This thought experiment like the cartesian theater brings out the ever mysterious cartesian concept of mind where we can only infer the mental state

the specific person could possibly be in. Kim elaborates on this cartesian picture by diving into the concepts of “pain when we fall down” where we cannot see what goes on in the ~~persons~~person's mind, but we can only infer it. But this begs a question: if we are groaning or feeling a different sensation to pain how would we be able to explain it to other? A simple answer is communicating the information for example stating I am in pain or visiting a doctor to get a diagnosis on your issue and explaining to the practitioner our systems. We could also say that this communication acts ~~as~~ a transport to convey our sensations, likes and ~~dislikes~~dislikes, emotions, regrets etc (Kim, 2010, p. 65). Without language we can only imagine how much more difficult it will be to convey our mental states which will inevitably lead to difficulty in holding social interactions. This brings about the idea of ‘Free Will’ which is one of many ~~inter-related~~interrelated concepts that are often given the term of Folk Psychology. By this means we know that the patient can even choose to say or can come under the terms of “I thought about it” which implies that the inner self has an inner self of thoughts and feelings. (Baum, 2017, p.15)

From the ~~above~~analysis of the thought experiments, we ~~are now in~~an ~~agreement~~agree with ~~what~~with Hempel's ~~statement~~ in Kim's book that is we see ~~see~~these psychological languages are mainly used ~~for~~ to ~~abbreviating~~abbreviate the description of certain modes of physical response (Kim, 2010, p. 68). In order to get a proper understanding of it we will be looking into a bit of an evolution of our understanding of behaviorism with the introduction of Logical Behaviorism. But why accept it? Like any concept in philosophy or psychology a concept is valid if its preconditions that it aims to suffice is validated such as in the case for logical behaviorism we are brought to the 4 premises outlined by Kim with the prominent one being the first premise that is the verifiability criterion of meaning (Kim, 2010, p. 69). ~~The~~ ~~next~~Another challenge ~~offer~~ for our languages is for it to have shareable meaning which essentially means common grounds of understanding what the person implies. We can explore these concepts with a help of an example related to “Paul has a toothache” (Kim, 2010, p. 70) from Kim's book where we see how ~~this~~ ~~these~~ examples help us understand the importance of meaning in our behaviors such as Paul's erratic gestures to pain will symbolize nothing much more than distress until we ask him “What Happened?” and

he explains in a language using terms that we are familiar and can easily associate his discomfort with. Throughout this scenario, we come across various other ~~denomination~~denominations of behaviorism such as verbal behavior which overly simplifies the idea of communicating behavior demonstrated by expressions.

From the above few thought experiments, we see how the privacy nature of cartesian minds affects psychological language. But throughout those ideas, we were looking for common grounds to try to understand the internal mental states of the beings, but what if there exists a situation where a being we are trying to communicate with ~~has no internal mental states or no qualia~~cannot speak like us. ~~In order to~~To explore more about other beings we will look into the research conducted with animals since they do not share the same language as us. We are first introduced to the Matching Law by Nevin and Richard Herrnstein ~~where~~ these animals were acting under concurrent schedules of reinforcement (Cook, 1993). The Law states that the relative investment given over to each response matches the proportion of total reinforcement available from all schedules combined. This law as stated by Cook has ~~become in~~essentially become the law of Gravity for the science of Behavior mainly because it has been verified in hundreds of ~~experiment~~experiments. These concepts also helped further the research beyond the initial conception of reflex (Cook, 1993). Since it helped provide stimulus as a consequence of reflex. These concepts can also be ~~helped explain~~illustrated with the help of the example from Kim 'What is it like to be a bat?' which is published by Thomas Nagel ~~which that~~ brings into light the importance of consciousness which helps us understand and explore wider areas and understand states like pain-, red circle and so on (Kim, 2010, p. 267). ~~(Kim, 2010, p. 267)~~ In response to ~~the~~Nagel's question, we have no idea since we cannot understand bat experience beyond our conceptual reach, we can only understand their behavior and physiology based on their actions but we will never be able to completely grasp their internal states.

Throughout our exploration starting with the introduction of behaviorism, its rise and fall, and exploring various thought experiments and what they entail to help us understand the thought processes that lead to

the evolution of the understanding of behaviorism to the basic version we understand and use today. From these experiments we come across the various issues and difficulties that current and old philosophers come across that is the lack of being able to understand the internal mental state of their subjects. Especially with the scenario from animals since we can only infer what they are trying to demonstrate without ever knowing their mental states due to lack of our ~~own~~-conceptual reach. As we were focused on the recurring evolution of the ideas behind behaviorism we see as to why with the current means and technology available to us it will not be possible to bridge the gap between the observable and unobservable behavior unless it is explained to the person conducting checks with the person to establish a straight flow of information. ~~Which—This~~ ultimately helps us understand behaviorism across different beings and helps us understand various views that acknowledges the complex relationship between mind and behavior.

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