Philosophy Study Guide Test 1

**Unit 1: Physicalism and “the Mind-Body Problem**

* Most fundamental questions:
  1. How does the mind relate to the body?
  2. Is the mind, like the body, a **physical** thing?
  3. If so, what explains the **distinctly mental** features of mind?
  4. If not, how could a non-physical mind relate to a physical body?
* These questions comprise the **mind body problem—**problem of specifying relation between mind and the physical world
* Two approaches to mind-body problem
  1. Physicalism- some or all mental phenomena belong in domain of physical phenomena
  2. Anti-physicalism- some or all mental phenomena **do not** ultimately belong in domain of physical phenomena, they are and do not depend on physical phenomena
* **Marks of the Mental**
  1. Only mental states have **intentionality**
     + Psychological attitudes, examples include believing (epistemic/doxastic states), desiring (orectic states), intending (volitional states), fearing (emotional states)
     + They all express a subject’s attitude toward a proposition, i.e. Donald Trump will be the next President
     + These attitudes represent the world as being a certain way, even if the world actually isn’t that way. This is the definition of intentionality
  2. Only mental states are **conscious**
     + **Phenomenal character** of an experience is how it seems from the point of view of the subject experiencing it.
       - Essentially, the perspective of these conscious experiences are private; only the person experiencing the sensation has access to the sensation
         * Defined, this is **subjectivity—**the property of belonging to a subject, has private and direct access to some phenomenon
* **Anti-Physicalism**
  1. We share physical properties with almost every other physical thing, i.e. both have location in time and space, affected by gravity, etc. **BUT,** properties we have as mental things are properties we share with few, if any, other physical things. Can be traced to fact we are all made up of quarks, leptons, and bosons
     + We have conscious experiences, adopt intentional psychological attitudes, capable of acting on world.
  2. However, neural events and brain processes are physical phenomena.
  3. **Vitalism—**view that life cannot be explained by reference to physical laws that apply to even lifeless things.
     + Eventually proven false (DNA, Krebs cycle, etc.)
     + Won’t anti-physicalist point of view have same fate as vitalism?
* **Path to Physicalism**
  1. **Two categories of physicalist responses**
     + **Reduction:** view that mental phenomena are just physical phenomena, mental phenomena *reduce* to physical phenomena
     + **Realization:** view that mental phenomena are not physical, but ultimately depend on physical phenomena; mental phenomena are *realized* in physical phenomena
* **Nagel’s Argument**
  1. Centers around the premise that consciousness can never be shown to arise from public physical phenomena like brain states
     + “An account which showed how consciousness arises from physical processes would involve accounting for the distinctively subjective and qualitative aspects of conscious experience in increasingly more objective terms”
     + “The subjective and qualitative aspects of conscious experience cannot be given a more objective description
  2. Nagel states that our minds do not have the resources to subjectively see others experiences.
  3. “You can never know what it is like for a bat to be a bat”
* **Qualia**
  1. “the directly accessible, qualitative properties of an experience or a conscious mental state”
     + Essentially, they make up what’s like, from the point of view of the subject, to have that experience”
* **Jackson’s Mary argument**
  1. If physicalism about conscious experience is true, then Mary already knows all there is to know about experiences of redness.
  2. Mary does not know all there is to know about experiences of redness
  3. So, it is not the case physicalism about conscious experience is true.

**UNIT 2**

* **Mind, Body, and the Cartesian Ego**
  1. We usually talk about human beings as a compound or union of things: body and mind
     + We implicitly accept that mind and body can function independently of each other
     + Two separate entities—substances.
     + Descartes was big in this area
       - Gave us modern conception of mind as a faculty of thought; or a thinking thing
       - First to treat and body as wholly **independent** entities; thus he is the first unambiguous mind-body **dualist** in Western tradition.
* **Cartesian Ego**
  1. Descartes- human beings are compounds of a mind and a body
     + The mind is a thinking thing
     + The body is an extended thing, a thing whose essence is to have extension in space and in time
     + Only creatures like us who can think in addition to having a body are compounds in this way.
       - One consequence- non-human animals are nothing but corporeal machines.
  2. **Mind and the Body as Separates Entities**
     + Descartes says mind and the body are not essentially dependent of each other
       - Mind requires a body for space but not to simply think
       - Body is an extended thing
       - We are thinking things conjoined to a body with witch we interact, but on which we as minds do not in any way depend.
* **Interactionist Substance Dualism**
  1. **Dualism:** the thesis that there exists two fundamentally different types of things in a certain domain
     + Descartes is a dualist of substance
  2. **What is a Substance?**
     + Think of it as a correlative of a philosophical notion of a property
       - A **property** is an attribute or modification of a **substance**
       - A **substance** is a bearer of **properties**
  3. **So what is Substance Dualism?**
     + View that there exist two fundamentally different types of substance, or bearers of properties
     + So mental properties (pain, seeing) are properties of mental substance and physical properties are properties of physical substances
* **Alternatives to the Cartesian Position**
  1. **Substance monism** is the view that there exists inly one type of substance, or bearer of property
     + **Idealism** is the view that there is only one mental substance
     + **Substance Physicalism** is the view that there is only one physical substance
  2. To Descartes, it would be false to say the human body is a substance
* **Interactionism**
  1. **Interactionist substance dualism** is the view that mental substance and physical substance casually interact in both directions
* **Argument for the Mediations**
  1. Descartes thinks he can argue that the mind is a substance is he can prove these two claims
     + I can understand myself solely as thinking thing
     + If I can understand myself solely as a thinking thing, then I can be without a body. So, I, the thinking thing I am, can exist independently of the body
* **Cogito Argument**
  1. I can doubt the existence of my body
  2. I cannot doubt the existence of myself
  3. If I am doubting anything, I am thinking
  4. So, if I am anything, I am a thinking thing
     + Descartes concludes that all he can be certain of is that he is a thinking thing
* **Conceivability and Possibility**
  1. Descartes argues that if he can conceive of himself as separate from his body, then he must be able to exist with out his body
     + This is the principle that “Conceivability entails Possibility.
  2. “If it is possible that P, then it is possible that P”
* **Why we shouldn’t all be Cartesian dualist**
  1. Tw serious difficulties in Descartes position
     + Contains a fallacy and that interactionism is incoherent
* **Elizabeth of Bohemia**
  1. In writings to Descartes, she argues that “Anything can interact with the body-bring out the “determination of movement”- has either extension or materiality.
     + Anything that has extension is a body
     + Anything that is material is a body
     + Mind is not a body
     + So, mind cannot interact with the body
  2. Descartes reply is two things
     + We have a primitive notion of ourselves ad a union of mind and body, from this we are led to accept mutual interaction
     + It would be a confusion to suppose that mind moves the body same way bodies move one another
       - He says he argument is misplaced
* **Problem of Mental Causation—** is the problem of explaining how mind and body casually interact.

**UNIT 3**

* **Behaviorism—**is the view that mental states are identical to behavioral states, or to dispositions to exhibit certain types of behavior
* **Behaviorist against Cartesians**
  1. The Cartesian “Theater of the Mind”
  2. “The Ghost in the Machine”
* **The Cartesian Theater**
  1. Your pain and sensory experience is private to you because it is literally yours
* **Is Behavior an indication of One’s Mental State?**
  1. You could say we can’t directly observe the subjects experience; we can infer that she is experiencing a tickle on the basis of her behavior.
  2. This is where a behaviorist objects
     + You can’t reasonable infer that she’s experiencing a tickle on the basis of her “tickle” behavior, for its compatible with her behaving that way for her to be
       - Experiencing a tickle, or
       - Experiencing something else, or
       - Experiencing nothing at all
* **Ghost in the Machine**
  1. Behavioral properties are public, physical properties, and so modifications of a physical substance
  2. According to Descartes, no mental state is a property of a physical substance.
* **The Behaviorist Solution**
  1. **Privacy—** their tickle is private it to them, cannot directly observed by us.
  2. **But,** we can say she is experiencing tickle behavior, since behavior is public.
* **What is behavior then?**
  1. **Behaviorism is the view that a person’s mental states are identical to her behavioral states.**
  2. Ontology- is the branch of metaphysics devoted to the study of being and what exists
  3. Analysis- is a philosophical discipline devoted to the study of the meaning of concepts in certain domains of discourse.
  4. **Physiological behaviorism**—is the view that human behavior can be explained solely in terms of observable environmental inputs and behavioral outputs, without the need to appeal to unobservable “internal” mental states
     + **Pain law**—bodily damage (input) to the system produces the behavioral disposition to wince or groan (output)
     + **Logical Behaviorism**—view that all statements about mental states are identical in meaning to statements about behavioral dispositions
     + **Ontological behaviorism**—view that mental states are identical to (dispositions to be in) behavioral states
* **Dispositions to behave**
  1. Mary could be in pain, but not wincing or groaning. She could “be playing through the pain”.
     + So she may not be exhibiting pain behavior, but she is disposed to
* **Hilary Putnam’s Objection**
  1. If behaviorist account of pain is true, pain sufferers must posses at least the disposition for pain behavior
  2. There can be pain sufferers who do not possess the disposition for pain behavior.
  3. So, the behaviorist account of pain is false.
* **Mary the Super-Spartan**
  1. Community that successfully suppresses all involuntary pain behavior. May occasionally admit they feel pain, but do not wince, scream, flinch, etc.
     + She can still feel pain
  2. Super-Super Spartans
     + Suppress the talk of pain, do not admit to having pain at all
     + In this case, pain cannot be identical to pain behavior
* Behaviorism fell out of favor in the 1950’s and 60’s