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Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy of Mind 4

Recapitulation

- Logical Behaviorism is the view that mental states causing behavior are not 'inner' > inner mental states causing behavior do not exist
- The argument is that inner mental states would not be knowable, but we do know mental states
 - > This did not seem a particularly good argument – cf. the first argument for dualism, with the morning star/evening star objection.
- However, why couldn't we get access to inner mental states indirectly?
 - > Argument from analogy

Can we know **inner** mental states of others?

- Argument by analogy:
 - (1) From my own perspective, I notice that inner mental states S cause behavior B.
 - (2) I see behavior B in others.
 - (3) Therefore, inner mental states S cause behavior B in others.
- Is this convincing?

Can we know **inner** mental states of others?

- Argument by analogy:
 - (1) From my own perspective, I notice that inner mental states S cause behavior B.
 - (2) I see behavior B in others.
 - (3) Therefore, inner mental states S cause behavior B in others.
- Is this convincing?
- Is it so clear that what happens in my case is also what happens in the case of another person?
- This cannot be how we get to know mental states of others as a child, and how we develop the concepts of 'having a desire' and 'having a belief' in the first place.

Can we know **inner** mental states?

- A better argument is an abductive argument:
- I cannot know inner mental states of others immediately, from my own experience.
- But I can posit inner mental states as a kind of theoretical entities to explain behavior > by way of abduction.
- I can test my theory on the basis of the behavior of myself and other people.

The Alternative of Logical Behaviorism

- Mental states are not inner states; they are our **constructs** to describe and explain our behavior.
- Dispositional analysis of mental states:
 - X wants to do D = X has the disposition to do D
 - X has the position to do D = if the circumstances are appropriate, X will do D.

For example:

- X desires to drink = X has the disposition to drink
- X has the disposition to drink = if there is drink available, X will drink

Objection against Dispositional Analysis

- It is possible to want to drink, with the circumstances being appropriate, and still not to drink > e.g. if you believe the water is sea water
- So the full dispositional analysis:
 - X wants to drink = X has the disposition to drink y, and X believes that y is drinkable.
 - But then another mental state appears: belief > this must be described in a similar way
 - For example: X believes that y is drinkable = X has the disposition to drink y if the circumstances are appropriate??
 - But then a belief would be a desire!

Methodological Behaviorism

- Methodological behaviorism differs from logical behaviorism:
 - LB denies that beliefs and desires are inner states
 - MB claims that **in science/in explanations we should do without beliefs and desires because they are inner states.**

Arguments for Methodological Behaviorism

1. Beliefs and desires are **in principle** not observable; but science should be about things which are at least in principle observable.
2. The thesis that beliefs and desires explain behavior cannot be tested; but everything in science should be testable.

➤ Every time a specific explanation with specific beliefs and desires does not work, we can just add another belief or desire to do the job.

- These two arguments seem to be **too strict** > not everything in science is in principle observable, and not everything in science is testable.



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