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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?

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- 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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