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Introduction to Philosophy

Philosophy of Mind 6

Recapitulation

- Methodological Behaviorism tries to describe and explain human behavior without appeal to mental states like beliefs and desires, but only in physical terms
 - MB's alternative conditioning model is too simplistic
 - Explanations in purely physical terms are often far more complicated than explanations with mental terms
- Mind-Body Identity Theory holds that each type of mental state is identical to a type of bodily state.

Mind-Body Identity Theory

- The Mind-Body Identity Theory says that:
 - There is a difference between two people in terms of mental states only if there is a difference between two people in bodily states
 - This is so because the mental states are identical to bodily states
- Every type of mental state M is identical to a type of bodily state B
- For example: desire for ice-cream is those cells being in a certain state (always **the same type of state** with **the same type** of desire).

Arguments for the Identity Theory

- All scientific progress until now has amounted to providing physical/materialist explanations for phenomena, e.g. in biology
 - This has already started in psychology as well, and it will continue to be so.
- Establishing that there is a correlation between a bodily state and a mental state by itself is not enough for the identity claim; but if there is no need to claim that the mental state is not identical with the bodily state, then it is better to assume their identity.
 - Principle of parsimony: simpler models are better than richer models, all things being equal: only if there is an explanatory need to do so, you may accept the richer model.

Knowability of Mental States

- Thus the Identity Theory holds that we can know mental states in two ways:
 1. **As** mental states, from our own inner experience, and from the behavior of other people
 2. **As** physical states, from investigating the brain etc.
- These are two ways of knowing the same thing > but that is a discovery, just as it is a discovery that the Morning Star = the Evening Star.
- But there is also a difference: the Identity Theory still holds that the physical states are more important for explanation than the mental states > in a way the mental states are a bonus

Evaluation of the Mind-Body Identity Theory

- The Identity Theory wants to recognize inner mental states without being committed to Dualism
- It does so by saying: every type of mental state is identical to a type of bodily state
 - But to avoid Dualism it is not necessary to have a type-type identity
 - It is enough that each mental state is identical to a bodily state, but not always of the same types



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