

Theories of the Mind-Body Relationship

Lecture 4

Part One

Dualism and Behaviorism

The Cognitive Phenomenon

Thinking, reasoning, inferring, choosing,
deciding, willing, intending, loving,
fearing, hoping, wishing, imagining,
seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting,
feeling, experiencing, dreaming...

Preview

- Dualism
- Behaviorism
- Identity Theory
- Eliminativism
- Functionalism

Dualism

(mind is distinct from matter)

Why is Dualism Thought to be Plausible?

- INTROSPECTION
 - It just seems that mind (the soul) is distinct from matter
- HOW COULD ...?
 - How could certain phenomenon (the way my pain feels or inferential reasoning) arise from 'matter nicely orchestrated'?

Dualism

- Two main kinds:
- Substance dualism
- Property dualism

Substance Dualism

- The mind (soul, spirit) is a substance (kind of stuff, object, or thing) that is radically different from matter

Property Dualism

- Mental states are non-physical (immaterial) properties (states) of the physical brain / body

Objects vs Properties

- Water is a substance
- Liquidity is a property of the substance
- Liquidity is a physical property of water (and other substances too)
- The difference is that mental states are thought to be non-physical or immaterial properties

Dualism and Causal Interaction

- INTERACTIONISM
 - Two way causal interaction between body and mind (e.g., Descartes)
- EPIPHENOMENALISM
 - Matter causes changes to matter but mind is causally impotent (shadow analogy)
- PARALLELISM
 - No causal interaction between body and mind (e.g, Leibniz)

Problems for Dualism

- Providing an account of this non-material stuff / properties
- Understanding how causal interaction is possible (on the interactionist views)
- A simpler explanation posits one kind of stuff (or kind of properties) rather than two (Morgans Cannon, Ockhams Razor)
- Analogy with mind and vital spirit

Currently...

- Not many defend substance dualism
- A few defend property dualism for consciousness (e.g., Block, Chalmers)
- Most think that dualism has been abandoned as the result of scientific advances (really taking the vitalism analogy seriously)
- But we shall return when we look at consciousness

Behaviorism

Mental states are behavioral
dispositions

Behaviorism

- Two main kinds
- Analytical Behaviorism
- Methodological Behaviorism

Analytical Behaviorism

- Primarily a thesis about how we should analyze mental discourse
- E.g., to say 'x is in pain' just is to say that 'if x were placed in these circumstances then x would be disposed to....'
- Since mental language refers to dispositions to behave, mental states just are behaviors or dispositions to behave

Methodological Behaviorism

- Different psychoanalytic / psychodynamic theories of the mind seemed 'unscientific'
- In order to become a 'real science' 'just like physics' the best bet for psychology is to become the science of behavior (e.g., Skinner, Watson)
- Strictly speaking methodological behaviorists don't need to be analytical behaviorists
- In practice most justify their view by appealing to analytical behaviorism, however

Why is Behaviorism Thought to be Plausible?

- LEARNING

- We don't observe (others) mental states directly so how do we learn to label our own?
- The importance of behavior as a source of evidence for figuring out what mental state a person is in

Problems for Analytical Behaviorism

- Providing a fuller account of the dispositional profiles
 - Problems cashing out the dispositional profile (concern it might be infinite or circular)
 - The thought that the disposition might best be thought of as an inner state of the brain
- Doesn't seem so plausible as an account of the felt quality of experience (qualia, p-consciousness)

Problems for Methodological Behaviorism

- The birth of cognitive psychology and the cognitive revolution showed that psychology didn't have to be about behaviors / behavioral dispositions in order to be scientific!

Currently...

- Within psychology it is often thought that cognitive psychology *replaced* behaviorism as a methodological paradigm
- Functionalism may be viewed as an *extension* or *development* of analytical behaviorism, however (as we shall see)
- In practice methodological behaviorism is alive and well in certain areas (e.g., animal behavior in ethology, behavioral change especially in children and the intellectually handicapped in clinical psychology)