



Concept of Mind in Gilbert Ryle: A Philosophical Examination

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ABSTRACT

Ryle's thesis on the mind arises polemically from the mind-body dualism of Rene Descartes. Ryle refers to Descartes dualism as the official doctrine because it was so prevalent amongst theorist and even laymen. Ryle introduces the term the dogma of the ghost in a machine to describe the philosophical concept of the mind as an entity separate from the body, Ryle posited that it is false not in detail but in principle, and that Descartes made a mistake of a special kind by postulating an interaction between the mind and the body in his philosophy of the mind, hence Ryle called it a category mistake. The work presents a historical, evaluative and logical behaviourist account of the human person, that is to say; you can know people based on their public behaviour and it raises critical problems concerning the deceptive nature of the displayed human behaviour. the work presents a beautifully written account of the will, emotion, self-knowledge, imagination and disposition and occurrences. The project unveils the achievement and lapses of Gilbert Ryle's conception of the mind. It gives a philosophical insight to anyone interested in the nature of human behaviour.

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INTRODUCTION

From time immemorial, the concept of the mind has been a contentious and contestable issue under the deliberation and diagnosis of different philosophers. Man by nature is a complex, curious and insatiable being, these qualities of man has lead him to explore yet another dimension of his composite, which is the mind. What motivated me to engage in this research work is my passion for understanding human behavior and its mysterious nature therein.

Polemically, some philosophers have reflected and objected Rene Descartes theory of the mind and its tenability. Many counter theories have been formulated each contesting on the claim to the dualist nature of the human person and of the interaction therein. Gilbert Ryle (1900-1976) who is a logical behaviorist criticized Descartes mind-body dualism and based on the abstraction of the theory he called it "the myth of ghost in a machine"¹.

The critical problems this research work has set out to solve include:

- Can the mind and body interact?
- Does man's behavior always reflect the state of his mind?

This project is designed to give a succinct philosophical investigation into the nature of mind as postulated by Gilbert Ryle. It answers the fundamental questions bordering on Descartes "interactionism" and Ryle logical behaviourism with the aim of helping readers grasp the conception of mind as obtainable in the philosophy of Gilbert Ryle.

Ryle's logical behaviourism will possibly trigger individuals to accept responsibility for their actions and not ascribing it to the working and relationship of something known or unknown. Many questions that were left unanswered and the vacuum They create, warrant a clarion call for more exploration and philosophical investigation on the mind. This work will be of immense assistance to students and general public that wish to research more on the topic.

This project will also help in understanding human psychology

The confines and restriction of this project work is on Gilbert Ryle's conception of the mind. The work also, where necessary, posits the idea of other philosophers in different schools of thought on the mind.

This project adopted mainly a qualitative research design. It included evaluative, historical, and critical examination approach to the issues involved in the study. Data for the study were gathered from primary and secondary sources such as books, journals, magazines.

Generally, Man is not complete without the mind or soul referred to as an immaterial substance. To be conscious is to have a mind; and the mind is made up of such contents like; Sensations, emotions, intentions, thoughts, desires and believes. This shapely distinguishes man from animals.

The mind, since antiquity till this contemporary period, has been an issue of deliberation among different philosophers as a result of the continuous mystery posed by the mind. This has led to the emergence of various theories of mind. This chapter focuses on a systematic presentation of the views of some philosophers that had the mind or soul as the focus of their philosophizing. For the purpose of clarity, it should be noted that the "soul" and "mind" would be used interchangeable here, without prejudice to either of them as in the case of Plato and Aristotle.

Plato(427-347 B.C)was the first Western Philosopher who reflected keenly on the relationship between the soul and the body. Plato posited a definitive insistence on the existence of the soul apart from the body. The soul, for Plato, belongs to the realm of the divine; hence should always lead the mortal part; Plato, as a dualist, qualified the soul as the life wire of the body, hence the nature of the body as dependent on the power of the soul, and that the soul is an immaterial substance which escapes from the body at death.

Plato maintains in *the Phaedo* “that the soul is in the very likeness divine, immortal, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble and unchangeable, and the body in the very likeness is human, mortal, unintelligible, multiform, dissoluble and changeable.”² It is from this position that Plato maintains that the body does not operate on its own accord since it is lifeless because it is animated by the soul.

Aristotle (384-322B.C) objected and presented an alternative to Plato’s conception of the soul. He thinks that the soul is not separate from the body, but is rather the structure and functioning of the body. Aristotle made a distinction between two sorts of actualities. He considered body, that is, natural body, as substance, and goes on to affirm that the soul is a form or the actuality of the body. The implication of this therefore is that the soul is a necessary part in the body which engineers movement. If you like, the soul is the essence of the whole ‘living’ in an individual. Aristotle argues that matter always has the potential to change. His argument is that the mind and the body are two inseparable substances; hence he posited “individual organism is a single, unified and independent substance whose matter is its body and whose form are its soul and body are inseparable like the matter of a physical object is separable from its shape.”³ This means that, in Aristotle’s view as an empiricist, the body and soul are inseparable hence matter and form constitute a single human person.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 AD) was a Christian philosopher who worked in the Aristotelian tradition. According to him, “it is meaningless to ask whether a human being is two things (soul and body) or one, just as it is meaningless to ask whether the wax and the shape given to it by the stamp are one.”⁴ Aquinas did not view the body as an unfortunate prison in which the soul resides, instead, as the body is important so is the soul. He submits that the soul which is the first principle of life is not a body, but the act of a body. Understandably, Thomas Aquinas’s conception of man as not only the soul but something composed of soul and body makes him cultivate in the same philosophical farm with Aristotle. His standpoint could be summarized in the following way:

A human being is an animated body in which the psychic principle is distinctive of the species and determined that the material is human. In other words, man’s soul is his substantial form, the soul is a real part of man and being both immaterial and real, it is spiritual.⁵

Aquinas submits that man is not a soul only, but something composed of soul and body.

Rene Descartes (1596-1650 A.D), often known in the Latin language as *Renatus Cartesius*, was a great philosopher who developed the first systematic and comprehensive theory of the mind, which has greatly enriched our understanding of the mind. Descartes opined that there is a vast difference between the mind and the body, that the body from its nature is always divisible and that the mind is entirely indivisible. Descartes submits in the *sixth meditation* that “I am not residing in my body as a pilot in his ship, but I am intimately connected with it, and so blended, as it were, that a single whole is produced.”⁶ All things exist either as spatial and material, or as conscious and mental. Mind and body are distinct substances, in the sense that the properties which are essential to being corporeal and the properties which are essential to being mental can, without distortion, be conceived in separation from one another, and the two substances are united in human beings.

In philosophy of mind, the philosophy of Descartes has been termed “interactionism” which implies that our bodily changes register themselves in our mental outlook and mental experiences affect bodily processes.

Arnold Geulinx (1625-1689) who was a disciple of Descartes, accepted Descartes’ dualism but rejected his explanation of mind-body interaction. He agreed with Descartes that the soul and body were two separate substances, (spirit and matter) but denied any contact or causal relation between them. What looks like causal relation between them is, according to Geulinx, the intervention of God. For example when mental acts take place (desiring, willing, deciding) God moves my body to act. “When for example, I want to move my arm, that is the occasion for God to make my arm to move, and when an object is in my field of vision, that is the occasion for God to produce a visual appearance in my mind”.⁷ As a result, when a mental act takes place, God moves the body to act. When my body is hurt, God moves my mind to feel pain. Geulinx illustrates this with the analogy of two clocks made by the same clock-maker and arranged in such a way that when one points to any hour, the other strikes. This theory is properly known as “occasionalism” in philosophy of mind.

Baruch Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677) was a Dutch philosopher of Jewish origin, whose view on the mind can be grasped based on his conception of substance. According to him, “by substance I understand that which is in itself and is conceived through itself in other words, the conception of which does not need the conception of another thing from which it must be formed”⁸ Spinoza posits that there is only one substance in reality, this he referred to as God or nature. Spinoza strongly upheld that there is only one substance, which can be conceived of as either nature or God. Seen this way, the mind and body are not two separate entities but attributes of the one and only substance, Spinoza could be seen as a major proponent of the Double aspect theory which states that neither the mind nor the body is a completely separate and independent entity, rather, one is an underlying reality that appears as mind when we experience it from the inside or subjectively, and as body or matter when we view it from the outside or objective.

George Berkeley (1685-1753) was an Irish philosopher and Bishop of Cloyne. He opined strongly that minds and the perceptions of such minds are the only things that exist. In his work *principles of human knowledge*, he submitted that “all that exist are finite mind or spirits (such as ourselves) our ideas or perceptions and sensations of an infinite spirit (God) for him there is no purely material or mind-independent reality”.⁹ God is the cause of idea in the mind of finite spirits. Berkeley’s famous dictum is *esse et percipi*-to be is to be perceived. In essence, to be is to be either a perceiver, a subject, a mind (spirit) or an object of perception (an idea). Berkeley concludes that since we never perceive anything called matter but only ideas, it is an untenable conjecture to presume there is material substance lying behind and supporting our perception. John Locke and others had resisted this suggestion by making the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, such as colour, taste, smell, and claiming that only secondary qualities are mind-dependent. But Berkeley’s argument appear to show that there is no valid distinction between primary and secondary qualities in perception, as a result, everything turns out to be mind-dependent. If something fails to be an idea in someone’s mind, it fails to exist.

Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) a German Idealist philosopher who presented the concept of the Absolute mind or spirits, that is the whole reality is a dynamic process which manifest itself in nature as well as in the working of the human mind, the human mind, he affirms plays a gigantic and enormous role in the working process of the Absolute, in nature and in history. The mind is also involve in the triadic structure of dialectic process described as the movement from thesis to Antithesis and finally to synthesis. Hegel conception of the mind does not come with question of its interaction with the body, Hegel mainly focused on his absolute idealist projection .that “the human mind, though finite, is at the same time more than finite and can attain the standpoint at which it is the vehicle as it were of the Absolute’s knowledge of itself”¹⁰.The human spirit (mind) becomes the means through which reality comes to know itself.

AN EXPOSITION OF GILBERT RYLE’S CONCEPTION OF THE MIND

His notion of the will:

According to the oxford dictionary of philosophy the “will means to be able to desire an outcome and the purpose to brings about.”¹¹ Ryle commented that it have been held in antiquity that the will is an immaterial organ where in occur processes or operations properly referred to as ‘volitions’ which have been as an operation in the mind by means of which a mind gets its ideas translated into fact. According to the theory, “the working and acts of the body can be preceded by mental thrusts and it is only when a bodily movement has issued from such a volition can one merit praise or blame for what one’s hand or tongue has done.”¹² Contrarily, Ryle posited that no one unless to endorse the theory, ever describes his own conduct, or that of his acquaintances, in the acclaimed idiom illustrating this idea, he writes “No one ever say such things as that at 10am he was occupied in willing this or that he performed five quick and easy volitions and two slow and difficult volitions between midday and lunch time”¹³

Ryle further established that, it is the concession of the theory that an individual cannot witness the volitions of another but can only infer from an observed overt action. There exist, in the assessment of Ryle a difficulty in connection since mind and bodies are taught of as being of different sorts of existence and existing in distinct worlds where no bridge status is allowed

Ryle avers that the whole web of the conception stems from the misapplication of mental-conduct concepts in relation to bodily events.

So if ordinary men and women fail to mention their volitions in their descriptions of their own behavior, this must be due to their being untrained in the dictions appropriate to the description of their inner as distinct from their overt behavior, however, when a champion of the doctrine is himself asked how long ago he executed his last volition or how many acts of will he executes in reciting little miss muffed backwards, he is apt to confess to finding difficulties in giving the answer.¹⁴

Ryle posited that one person can never witness the volitions of another, he can only infer from an observed overt action to the volition from which it resulted, and then only if he has any good reason to believe that the overt action was a voluntary action and not a reflex or habitual action or one resulting from some external cause.

Ryle in presenting the distinction between voluntary and involuntary commented thus; it should be noticed that while ordinary folk, magistrates, parents and teachers, generally apply the words voluntary and involuntary to actions, in one way philosophers often apply them in quite another way. In their most ordinary employment voluntary and involuntary are used with a few minor elasticities, as adjectives applying to actions which ought not to be done. We discuss whether someone’s action was voluntary or not only when the action seems to have been his fault. “He is accused of making a noise and the guilt is his, if the action was voluntary like laughing, he has successfully excused himself, if he satisfies us that it was involuntary like a sneeze”¹⁵ But when philosophers expand the scope of voluntary and involuntary to embrace or entail both meritorious and reprehensible actions they imply, perhaps naively, that a student who get a sum right or correctly could have got it wrong in the sense namely that he was sufficiently intelligent and well-trained and concentrating hard enough to make such a miscalculation. Against such a position Ryle maintains that when a person has done the right thing, we cannot then say that he knew how to do the wrong thing, or that he was competent to make mistakes. Ryle maintains that the unconsciously stretched use of ‘voluntary’ is partly the springboard of the spurious problem of the will wherein actions are not spoken of in terms of reference to ability not put in use but to latent acts of will. We do not decipher the voluntariness of an action with reference to occurrence or non occurrence of any occult episode but whether or not one had the capacity or the required higher-level competence of doing such a thing. As a result “strength of will, is not a disposition to execute occult operations of one special kind, but a propensity the exercise of which consist in sticking to tasks, that is in not being deterred or diverted weakness of the will is having too little of this propensity.

Ryle writes dissuasively about the bogy of mechanism, he notes that the laws of mechanics may govern things but they do not decide things in advance. They are not fated. Men are not machines he says, not even ghost ridden machines. Certain questions which may be posed regarding the actions of man can also be answered in the similar manner, it is done with inanimate things. The question what makes the bullet fly out of the barrel? Is properly answered by the expansion of gases in the cartridge, similarly the question how does my mind get my finger to squeeze the trigger? Involves a further chain process embodying still earlier tensions releases and discharges, though this time ‘mental’ ones but whatever is the act or operation, we describe it as in ordinary life. We say simply he did it and not he did or underwent something else which caused it, the discoveries or the physical sciences no more rule out like, sentences purpose or intelligence from presence in the world.

Conclusively, Ryle views the fear of mechanism as irrelevant and uncalled for, since they do not entail the supposed implications alleged by advocates of the standard theories.

Gilbert Ryle and Emotion

According to the oxford dictionary of philosophy “emotion is a word that is typically use in human species to denote love, grief, anger, joy, each indicates a state of some kind of arousal, a state that can prompt some activities and interfere with others. These states are associated with characteristic feelings, and they have characteristic bodily expressions”¹⁶ The concept of emotion has not been left void, their are some scholars who have written extensively on it

because of its complex comprehension, they have tried to clarify the concept of emotion to an extent.

A classic paradigm of some philosopher that wrote on emotion inescapably include, David Hume (1711-1776) in his treatise on Human Nature, propounded that emotion occurs and manifests in an individual, these persons are not themselves the cause. He further proclaimed that though the emotion of pride and humility for instance may have an object in themselves, their causes are traceable to other phenomena which spur their expression. Hume posited thus

Every valuable quality of the mind, whether of the imagination, judgment, memory, or disposition; with good sense, courage, justice, integrity, all these are the causes of prides, and their opposites humility... A man may be proud of his beauty, strength, agility, good mien.¹⁷

Philosophers like Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) use the words *Appetiti* or desire and aversion to designate what is meant by emotion, the former implies to tend towards something that is love or liking; when the object is in the future, this takes the form of desire; when present with joy or delight. To avoid something is to hate it; when the object is future this takes the form of fear; when present with sorrow.

Gilbert Ryle, grasped how philosophers and psychologist views emotion as internal or private experience and as turbulences in the stream of consciousness, the owners of which cannot help directly registering them; to external witness they are, in consequence necessarily occult. They are occurrences which takes place not in the public physical world but in you or my secret, mental world.

Against this view, Ryle wrote:

I shall argue that the word 'emotion' is used to designate at least three or four different kinds of things which I shall call, 'inclinations' (or motives) 'moods' 'agitations' (or 'commotions') and feelings. Inclination and moods, including agitations, are not occurrences and do not therefore take place either publicly or privately. They are propensities not acts or states. They are, however, propensities of different kinds, and their differences are important. Feeling, on the other hand, are occurrences but the place that mention of the should take in descriptions of human behavior is very different from that which the standard theories accord to its moods or frames of mind are unlike motives, but like maladies states of the weather, temporary conditions which in a certain way collect occurrences but they are not themselves extra occurrences.¹⁸

Ryle also understood emotions as acts or events themselves and not associated with any extrasensory world. Explicating on motive Ryle gave an example, a man is described as vain, consideration, avaricious, an explanation is being given of why he conducts his actions daydreams and thoughts in the way he does. Vanity, kindness and avarice rank as species of emotion and spur the eventual action of the fellow. Ryle opines that elements like vanity and kindness are dispositional properties. Concerning the way of discernment of another motive, Ryle posited that the way in which a person discovers his own long term motive is the same as the way in which he discovers those of others.

Moods, as another designation of emotions are short-term tendency words. They differ from motive words not only in the short term of their application but in their use in characterizing the total 'set' of a person during that short-

term. To be in a certain mood is to be in the frame of mind to say, do and feel a wide variety of loosely affiliated things on how you can know the moods of other Ryle asserts that the declaration of the actor is sufficient, and enough.

For Ryle there are two quite different senses of 'emotion' in which we can explain people's behavior by reference to emotions. In the first sense we are referring to the motives or inclinations from which more or less intelligent actions are done. The second sense we are referring to moods, including the agitations or perturbations or which some aimless movements are signs. In neither of these senses are we asserting or implying that the overt behavior is the effect of a felt turbulence in the agent's stream of consciousness. In the third sense of 'emotion', pangs and twinges are feelings or emotions, but they are not save per accident, things by reference to when we explain behavior. They are things for which diagnoses are required, not things required for the diagnoses of behavior. For even intersections, tones of voice, gestures and grimaces are moods of communication. We learn to produce them, not indeed from schooling, but from imitation. Ryle ended his treatise on emotion by commenting thus; my discovery of my own motives and moods is not different in kind, though I am ill placed to see my own grimaces and gestures, or to hear my own tones of voice. Motives and moods are not the sorts of things which could be among the direct intimations of consciousness, or among the objects of introspections as these factitious forms of privileged access are ordinarily described. They are not 'experiences' any more than habits or maladies are experiences.

Ryle on Imagination

Introducing his treatise on imagination, Ryle posited that "operation of imagining are, of course, exercises of mental power"¹⁹. Ryle attempted a clarification, that tries to answer the question where do the things and happenings exist which people imagine existing? To try to answer a spurious question, they do not exist anywhere, though they are imagined as existing, say, in this room, mind is taken as the theatre of things assumed to be existing, Ryle established the fact that the familiar truth that people are constantly seeing things in their minds eyes and hearing things in their heads is not proof that there exist things which they see and hear, or that the people are seeing or hearing. Much as stage-murders do not have victims and are not murders, so seeing things in one's mind eye does not involve either the existence of things seen or the occurrence of acts of seeing them.

Ryle proffered scholarly the distinction between picturing and seeing when he said:

To see is one thing; to picture or visualize is another. A person can see things only when his eyes are open, and when his surroundings are illuminated; but he can have pictures in his mind's eye, when his eyes are shut and when the world is dark similarly, he can hear music only in situations in which other people could also hear it, but a tune can run in his head, when his neighbor can hear no music at all.²⁰

Considering Hume's attempt to distinguish between ideas and impressions by saying that the latter tend to be more lively than the former, Ryle considers this a mistake, to validate this, he posited that suppose, first, that lively means vivid "A person may picture vividly but he cannot see vividly, one idea may be more vivid than another idea, but impressions cannot be described as vivid at all, just as one doll can be more lifelike than another but a baby cannot be

lifelike or unlikelike”²¹. Ryle posited that what people commonly describe as having a mental picture of Helvellyn or having Helvellyn before the mind’s eye is actually a special case of imagining.

Ryle writing on pretending, opined that to describe someone as pretending is to say that he is playing a part, and to play a part is to play the part, normally of someone who is not playing a part. For example a corpse is motionless, and so is a person pretending to be a corpse, so a person pretending to be a corpse is, unlike the corpse motionless. Distinguishing, pretending from fancying, Ryle use the difference between a child playing at being a pirate and one fancying that he is a pirate.

Ryle closed his treatise on imagination with memory for him memory is made valid with its instrument of remembering, he opined that the verb “to remember” has two widely different ways in which it is used. The most important and the least discussed used of the verb is that it is use in which remembering something means having learned something and not forgotten it. Secondly,

A person is said to have remembered or been recollecting, something at a particular moment, or is said to be now recalling, receiving or dwelling on some episode of his own past. In this use remembering is an occurrence; it is something which a person may try successfully, or in vain to do; it occupies his attention for a time and he may do it with pleasure or distress and with ease or effort.²²

Recalling has certain features in common with imagining. I recall only what I imagine myself seeing, leaning, doing and noticing; and I recall as I imagine. So things can be recalled deliberately and sometimes involuntarily.

Disposition and occurrences

Ryle emphasized “that a number of the words which we commonly use to describe and explain people’s behavior signify dispositions and not episodes. To say that a person knows something or aspires to be something, is not to say that he is in a particular moment in process of doing or undergoing anything, but that he is able to do certain things when the need arises, or that he is prone to do and feel certain things in situations of certain sorts”²³. For Ryle the numerous words we commonly use in describing and explaining people’s behavior signify dispositions and not episodes he attributed this mistakes by people to the Para-mechanical legend.

Some dispositional words are highly generic or determinable, while others are highly specific or determinate; the verbs with which we report the different exercises of genetic tendencies. Capacities and liabilities are apt to differ from the verbs with which we name the dispositional verbs, are apt to be the same. To buttress this he posited that, “A baker can be baking now, but a grocer is not described as ‘grocing’ now, but only as selling sugar now, or weighing tea now, or wrapping up butter now.”²⁴

Dispositional words like ‘know’, ‘believe’ ‘aspire’ ‘clever’ and , humorous are determinable dispositional words. They signify abilities tendencies or proneness to do, not things of one unique kind, but things of lots of different kinds. Theorist who recognize that know and believe are commonly used as dispositional verbs are apt not to notice this points but to assume that there must be corresponding acts of knowing or apprehending and states of believing; and the fact that one person can never find another person

executing such wrongly postulated act, or being in such states is apt to be accounted for by locating these acts and state inside the agent’s secret grotto. For Ryle the temptation to construe dispositional words as episode words and the temptation to postulate that any verb that has dispositional use must also have a corresponding episodic use are two sources of one and the same myth.

Dispositional statements resemble laws in being partly valuable or open to say that this lump of sugar is soluble is to say that it would dissolve, if submerged anywhere, at any time and in any parcel of water, dispositional statements apply to, or are satisfied by the actions, reactions and states of the object; they are inference-tickets, which license us to predict, explain and modify these actions and states. Hence this wire is conducting electricity’ satisfied what is asserted by this wire conducts electricity.

Interestingly, Ryle opined that we describe people in terms of dispositions to behave in certain ways meaning that they will do certain things if certain situation arises. So when we say that someone is a cigarette smoker, we do not mean anything about his consciousness, but merely that they have a disposition to buy cigarettes, or accept them when offered. Ryle strongly posited that dispositional statements narrate no events but only tendencies and propensities; they are neither true nor false in themselves. Ryle tried to campaign that distinctions and dichotomies in the use of some of our dispositional terms. He explains “that while some show tendencies, others denote capacity. Tendencies show that a thing is likely to take place or occur. An example is ‘Believe’ Believe is a tendency verb which does not connote certainty towards a thing but rather proneness and vacillation. Thus a person can be urged or entreated not to believe things, and he may try, with or without success, to cease to do so.

For capacity verbs ‘know’ is a capacity verb, and one of a special sort that is used for signifying that the person described can bring things off, or get things right.”²⁵ To know is to be equipped to get something right and not to tend to act or react in certain manners. Roughly believe is of the same family as motive words, where know is of the same family as skill words; so we ask how a person knows this, but only why a person believes that, as we ask how a person tries a clove-hitch, but why he wants to ties as clove-hitch or why he always ties a clove-hitch granny-knots. Skills have methods while habits and inclination have sources similarly, we ask what makes people believe or dread things but not what makes them know or achieve things.

Ryle and Self Knowledge

Self-knowledge understood as the apprehension of the total constituting elements of the being of an individual especially with reference to certain ‘inner’ workings or happenings, is a conception which flows from the dualist stance on the nature of the human person. The mind has two fold privileged assess to its own doings. These are consciousness and introspection. While the former denotes a constant awareness of the occupants of its private stage, the latter is the vehicle for a non-sensuous inner perception. This makes its self-knowledge superior in quality and immune from error.

Consciousness and Introspection

This doctrine of the twofold privileged access, Ryle observes has won so strong a hold on the thought of philosophers and psychologists, one of such figures is John Locke (1632-1704). In *an essay concerning human understanding*, posits that consciousness is necessarily glued

to or linked with the individual thinking process. Expressing this notions Locke writes:

Can the soul think and not the man? Or a man think and not be conscious of it?... if they say the man thinks always but is not always conscious of it, they may as well say his body is extended without having parts for it is altogether as intelligible to say that a body is extended without parts, as that anything thinks without being conscious of it or perceiving that it does so.²⁶

With Locke, consciousness is to be construed as the perception of what passes in a man's own mind, which knowledge he possesses a sole privilege. For Thomas Reid (1710-1796) "we can know nothing of anything outside the mind except by means of some representative substitute for it within the privacy of the mind."²⁷ Hence it is by means of consciousness that a person acquires the ideas of the various operations of mental states, such as the ideas of perceiving, thinking, doubting, reasoning, knowing and learns of his own mental states at any given time.

Ryle argues that such erroneous conception was the direct consequence of Descartes' exoneration of the mind from the mechanical world of Galileo (1564-1642) 'consciousness' was employed to play in the mental world the role played by right in the physical world. Thus the contents of the mental world were thought of as being self-luminous or refulgent. It was supposed then, that mental processes are phosphorescent, like tropical sea-watch, which makes itself visible by the light which itself emits, in other worlds, the mind can "see" or look at its own operation in the light give off by itself.

Contrarily Ryle contends that consciousness cannot be what they are officially described as being, since their supposed objects are myths. Ryle makes this rebuttal public by the projection of certain counter propositions. Firstly, he affirms, no one ratifies one's argument or a statement of truth by maintaining that he found it or came to it by a direct deliverance of consciousness, rather than that he himself hears, feels, or smells something. Also, consciousness is not identical with knowledge. This is where, according to him, the metaphor of light is insufficient 'knowing' is not the same sort of thing as 'looking at' and what is known is not the same sort of thing as what is illuminated. In essence, light can make you recognize a thing but not necessarily to know what it is. Besides, there are possible and even tangible instances where someone fails to recognize correctly his actual frame of mind if consciousness is what it is described as being, it would be logically impossible for such failures and mistakes in recognition to occur. Finally, he contends that in the cognitive operation, what I am conscious of in a process of inferring is difference from what the inferring is an apprehension of, there is the happening itself and the supposed consciousness of this event the question that might be raised is whether there is no consciousness of the latter consciousness. This leaves us with an infinite number of onion-skins of consciousness embedding any mental state or process whatsoever the rejection of this conclusion would imply that some elements in the mental process are not themselves things we can be conscious of and then conscious could no longer be retained as part of the definition of mental.

At the other side of the coin is the concession of introspection like consciousness, its hold on philosophers and psychologist as well as its reference to latent episodes is no less the natural off shoot of the standard theory. Locke alludes to it as internal sense since the understanding things

inwards upon itself, reflects on its own operations, and makes them the object of its own contemplation, exposing his viewpoint, G.F stout maintains that "to introspect is to attend to the workings of one's own mind"²⁸.

Expressively, it is to be noted that Ryle's conception of consciousness and introspection as logical muddles is not tantamount and correlative to a denial of attainment of what there is to known about ourselves, the route or medium to these findings does not lie in any 'peep' through a windowless chamber but in observable behaviors, exhibitions and expressions of the individual in relation to a particular element or trait. Illustrating his point, Ryle writes:

For example, after listening to an argument, you aver that you understood it perfectly; but you may be deceiving yourself or trying to deceive me. If we then part for a day or two, I am no longer in a position to test whether or not you did understand it perfectly. But still I know what tests would have settled the point. If you had put the arguments into your own words or translates it into French. If you had stood up to cross-questioning...then 'I should have required no further evidence that you understand it perfectly. An exactly sort of tests would satisfy me that I had understood it perfectly.²⁹

It is clear that Ryle's approach, as he himself alluded to, is inductive, an induction to law-like propositions from observed actions and reactions. In a similar vein, Ryle discloses another means by which we come to knowledge of ourselves and especially of others. This is the medium of unstudied talk. By this is meant remarks, comments, and utterances which are spontaneous, frank and unprepared for, consolidating on this, Ryle explains:

In unstudied that we talk about whatever we are at the moment chiefly interested in. it is not a rival interest... A person who is annoyed with a knotted shoe-lace is, if he has learned to talk, also in the mood to use a verbal expression of annoyance with it...what he says, together with his way of saying it, discloses or lets us know his frame of mind, just because his unstudied using of that expression is one of the things that he is in the frame of mind to do.³⁰

The Self and the systematic elusiveness of the "I"

Ryle further focuses his analytic lenses on yet another dimension of the self which appears to be dogmatic to unsophisticated people and misconstrued by theorists. It bothers on the notion of "I" Ryle observes that when some people speak about it, they do so with a certain feeling of a reference to a thing when all their ordinary personalia have been listed. A child who asks the question "who or what am I? Does not do so from the desire to know his own surname, age or nationality. He knows all these. Rather, he feels that there is something else in the background for which his 'I' stands, something which has still to be described after all his ordinary personalia have been listed. Those who think along this line feel vaguely that since 'I' and 'you' are not public surnames, they must be the names of another and queer sort of some extra individuals hidden away behind or inside persons who are known by their surnames and Christian names.

Contrarily, Ryle posits that they belong to a class of words which he refers to as 'index' words they indicate to the hearer or reader, the particular thing, episode, person, place or moment deferred to, expressing this viewpoint, Ryle notes;

In all cases, the physical occurrence of an index word is bodily annexed to what the word indicates. Hence 'you' is not a queer name that I and others sometimes give you; it is an index word which, in its particular conversational setting, indicates for you just who it is to whom I am addressing my remarks. 'I' is not an extra name for an extra being; it indicates, when I say or write it, the same individual who can also be addressed by the proper name; Gilbert Ryle.³¹

Finally, Ryle reiterates the elusiveness of the notion of 'I' stressing that to concern oneself about oneself in any way, is to perform a higher-order act, just as it is to concern oneself about anybody else. A higher-order action cannot be the action upon which it is performed. In a similar tone of voice, there is nothing mysterious or occult about the range of higher-order acts and attitudes, which are prone to be inadequately covered by the umbrella title of 'self-consciousness'

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION ON GILBERT RYLE'S CONCEPTION OF THE MIND.

It is essential to grasp, that Ryle didn't start philosophizing in the air, and his thesis was motivated polemically from Descartes' concept of interactionism or dualism. Ryle refers to it as a myth and as the official doctrine because it was so widespread amongst theorists and even laymen, that is to say that many people had subscribed to Descartes' conception of the mind, this also made Gilbert Ryle to coin his famous dictum of a Ghost in a machine, in the bid to counter the rationalist Descartes.

Descartes' Myth

Descartes' was a continental rationalist of the 17th century who was preoccupied by his quest for certainty of knowledge, Descartes describes reality as a dualism consisting of two substances namely thought (mind) and extension (body) which are of basically different natures. Body is extended and unthinking; mind is thinking and unextended. Descartes affirmed and espoused the interaction between two entities; he considers each substance as thoroughly independent of the other. "To know something about the mind, therefore, we need make no reference to the body and similarly, the body can be thoroughly understood without any reference to the mind"³²

Ryle concedes that, this theory "official doctrine which hails chiefly from Descartes, is something like this with the doubtful exceptions of idiots and infants in arms every human being is both body and a mind."³³ As a necessary corollary of this general scheme there is implicitly prescribed a special way of construing our ordinary concepts of mental powers and operation. The verbs, nouns and adjectives, with which in ordinary we describe the units, characters and higher-grade performances of the people, with whom we have to do with. Are required to be construed as signifying special episodes to occur. When someone is described as knowing, believing or guessing something, as hoping, dreading, intending or shirking something, as designing this or being amused at that, this verb are supposed to denote the occurrence of specific modification in his occult stream of consciousness. Ryle posited that "only his own privileged access to this stream in direct awareness and introspection could provide authentic testimony that these mental conduct verbs were correctly or incorrectly applied"³⁴. The onlooker, be the teacher, critic, biographer or friend, can never assume himself that his comments have any vestige of truth yet it was just because we do in fact know how to make such comments, make them

with general correctness and correct them when they turn out to be confused or mistaken, that philosophers found it necessary to construct their theories or the nature and place of minds, finding mental conduct concepts being regularly and effectively used, they properly sought to fix their logical geography. But the logical geography officially recommended world entails that there could be no regular or effective use of these mental-conduct in our descriptions of and prescriptions for other people's minds.

Objections to Cartesian theory

It is crucial to note that the objections that follow the Cartesian theory did not begin with Gilbert Ryle. There have been counter-positions of other philosophers like Nicholas Malebranche (1638-1715) and Arnold Geulinx (1727-1669) they rejected Descartes' interactionism and presented God as being the sole controller of all bodily movement on the agreement of the mind, there theory is called occasionalism. Ryle "objected the Cartesian theory with deliberate abusiveness as the dogma of the Ghost in the machine and he tried to prove that it is entirely false and false not in detail but in principle. It is not merely an assemblage of particular mistakes but one big mistake and a mistake of a special kind"³⁵. Ryle posits that it represents facts of mental life as if they belonged to one logical type or category when they actually belong to another category mistake. The disparity and dichotomy created between the mind and body results from an incompetent and improper use and application of concepts. There exist in that 'dogma' a separation of terms which belong to the same category and a unification of others which do not belong together, to buttress his point Ryle projects and used the following for illustrations:

A foreigner visiting Oxford or Cambridge for the first time is shown a number of colleges, libraries, playing fields, Museums, scientific departments and administrative offices. He then asks but where is the university? I have seen where the members of the colleges live, where the registrar works, where the scientists experiment and the rest. But I have not yet seen the university in which reside and work the members of the university³⁶.

A child witnessing the march-past of a division, who having had pointed out to him such and such battalions, batteries, squadrons, etc, asked when the division was going to appear. He would be shown his mistake by being told that in watching the battalions, batteries and squadrons marching past he had been watching the division marching past³⁷.

A foreigner watching his first game of cricket learns what are the functions of the bowlers, the batsmen, the fielders, the umpires and the scorers. He then says, 'but there is no one left on the field to contribute the famous element of team-spirit. I see who does the bowling the batting and the wicket keeping; but I do not see whose role it is to exercise spirit d corps'³⁸

It is to be explained to him that the university is not another collateral institution distinct from these departments neither is team-spirit another cricketing-operation supplementary to all of the other special tasks nor the division another separate group from the battalions, batteries and squadrons.

"These illustrations show that the mistakes were made by people who did not know how to wield

the concepts 'university' team-spirit and 'division' respectively the theoretically interesting category-mistakes, according to Ryle are those made by people who are perfectly competent to apply concept, at least in the situations with which they are familiar, but are still liable in their abstract thinking to allocate those concepts to logical types to which they do not belong"³⁹

Meaning and origin of category mistake

The concise oxford dictionary of English, explained "category to mean a class, division, one of the possibly exhaustive set of classes among which all things might be distributed"⁴⁰.

Philosophically categories can mean classes, genera, or types supposed to mark necessary divisions within our conceptual scheme, it is essential to note that the word "category" was first used as a technical term in philosophy by Aristotle, and according to the oxford dictionary of philosophy "there are ten categories according to Aristotle and they include: substance, quality, quantity, relation, place time, posture, state, action and passion"⁴¹. Category mistake is a concept coined by Ryle and a category mistake arises when things or facts of one kind are presented as if they belong to another. Someone would make a category mistake if after being shown all the battalion and regiment she wished to be shown the army. Ryle believed that a Cartesian "theory of mind depended on the category mistake of rectifying mental events instead of seeing mental descriptions as just one kind of description of person and their disposition. Thinking of beliefs as in the head, or number as large spatial objects, or God as a person, or time as flowing, may each be making category mistake"⁴².

Considering the origin of Cartesian category mistake, Ryle traced it to when Galileo showed that his methods of scientific discovery were competent to provide a mechanical theory which should cover every occupant of space, Descartes found in himself two conflicting motive. As a man of scientific genius he could not but endorse the claims of mechanics, yet as a religious and moral man he could not accept, as Hobbes accepted, the discouraging rider to those claims, namely that human nature differs only in degree of complexity from clockwork. The mental could not be just a variety of the mechanical. "He and subsequent philosophers naturally but erroneously availed themselves of the following escape route. Since mental-conduct words are not to be construed as signifying the occurrence of non-mechanical processes; since mechanical laws explain movements in space as the effects of other movements in space, other laws must explain some of the non-spatial workings of minds as the effects of other non-spatial workings of minds"⁴³

Gilbert Ryle's Analysis of mental terms

Typical of Ryle's method is his analysis of the notion of intelligence, acting intelligently consists of two activities the first is doing something and the second is thinking what one is doing while doing it. It is true we often deliberate before we do something, as in playing chess, but deliberation is not a necessary feature of intelligent performances. When we drive a car make a humorous response in a conversation, or address a letter, we usually do not mentally rehearse our intended action furthermore, if intelligence is defined in terms of a hidden, private process that occurs behind the senses, then we could never know if someone was intelligent, for we would not have access to the private theater of the mind. Similarly, we could not know a host of other things we do know about people, such that they are vain, creative, conscientious, or

observant, the connect analysis, Ryle believes, is to view an attribute such as intelligence as a kind of competence or skill similar to knowing how to tie a knot or play a musical instrument. Hence, overt intelligent performance are not clues to the workings of minds; they are those working. Ryle points out that dispositional properties are a different sort of property from properties such as colour or shape, for example being brittle is a dispositional property. When we say a glass is brittle we are saying that under certain circumstances. Similarly, when we say smith is intelligent (or devious or cautious and so on) we mean that in certain sorts of circumstances he will tend to respond in certain sort of ways.

One problem with the view that bodily activities are directed by mental acts is that it leads to an infinite regress. If acting intelligently requires the bodily action to be preceded by some sort of intellectual operation, then for these mental activities themselves to be intelligent. This execution must be preceded by another prior act of theorizing and so on. Similarly, if we say a bodily action is voluntary if it originated in an act of the will, then if that mental action of willing to be voluntary, it must have itself been preceded by yet another volition, and so endlessly. Ryle argues that "voluntary" does not refer to a mental act that precedes or accompanies an action but indicates the manner in which it was done"⁴⁴.

One argument that Descartes and other dualists use to defend their position is based on the phenomenon of self-knowledge we have privileged access to the private theater of our minds, they claim in ways other people do not. In critiquing this thesis, Ryle points out that we do not have a totally unique, privileged access to our own mental life because, we are often wrong in interpreting our own motives and emotional states and people sometimes understand us better than we do ourselves. For most part, however, the sorts of things that I can find out about myself are the same as the sorts of things that I can find out about other people, to illustrate this he asks us to consider the answer to the following sorts to questions.

How do I discover that I am more unselfish than you? that I can do long division well, but differential equations only badly? that you suffer from certain phobias and tend to shirk facing certain sorts of facts, that I am more easily irritated than most people but use subject to panic, vertigo or morbid conscientiousness.

To answer such questions, I do not peep into a windowless chamber, illuminated by a very peculiar sort of light in knowing how to answer such questions about myself as well as others. I observe the activities of the person in question his or her tendencies, dispositions, and patterns of behavior in certain circumstances. Finally, if the mind is not a private area of mental states, the dualist asks, how can the hypocrite be outwardly contrite, someone is contrite from his or her gestures, accents, words, and deeds if we were not usually correct in making inference from such behavior, the hypocrite could not deceive us by simulating this behavior. To conclude Ryle would, perhaps, say "that whether or not you consider his own philosophical intellect to be brilliant or mediocre – you did not find this out by peering into the hidden recesses of his mind any judgments you make about a philosopher's intellectual powers are necessarily made on the basis of the publicly available data of his or her scholarly achievement"⁴⁵.

Behaviorist Conceptions of the Mind

Behaviourism is a materialist theory, in that it reduces mental concepts, such as having a pain or being happy to physical activity for, a behaviourist crying out and rubbing the damaged part of the body is exactly what being in pain is all about, there is no separate or private activity going on over and above the physical and publicly observable behaviour. In psychology behaviourism developed out of the frustration of trying to find something that could be observed and monitored as opposed to sensation which were known only through introspection and evidence for which could not be assessed objectively and became an important feature of 20th century psychological investigation.

Notably, Pavlov (1849-1936) in Russia, J.B Watson (1875-1958) and Fred Skinner (1904-1990) in U.S.A “were hugely influential in their day. Their work was based on measuring physical responses to stimuli”⁴⁶ considerably, the aim of behaviourism was to produce a science of mind, with results that could be measured and evaluated, in general, there are two types or classification of behaviourism, “the first is methodological behaviourism, in that it simply relates input stimuli to the resulting behavior and logical behaviourism which takes this a step further, suggesting that mental terms can be defined in terms of observable behavior, for example to have pain means to grimace, clutch the affected spot”⁴⁷.

Philosophical behaviourism accounts for consciousness from the third person perspective, since it defines all expressions involving consciousness in terms of bodily behavior which can be observed, in other as easily as in oneself. But some can be in pain without groaning or complaining “some behaviourists try to meet this objection by distinguishing between overt and covert behaviours. Overt behaviours are expressed on the body. The covert behaviours occurs inside the body, for example a slight movement of the lips might be an indication that one is thinking”⁴⁸.

A classical proponent of the behaviourist account is found in Gilbert Ryle, “who translates mental concepts into sets of dispositions. Dispositions become skills made manifest in observable behavior, such that we can judge whether someone has applied well the appropriate skills given their external manifestation”⁴⁹.

In a sharp sense behaviourism has a merit of showcasing that the application of mental terms to oneself and others lies in behavior and behavioural dispositions. To say that one knows English is to be able to understand and translate English phrases. In the negative sense, they are not necessary because a person might be in pain but not groan; “they are not sufficient because he could as well take groaning although he is not in pain, in other words, feeling pain is one thing and being disposed to behave in certain ways is another”⁵⁰. Finally philosophical behaviorism claims that any sentence about a mental state can be paraphrased, without loss of meaning, into a long complex sentence about what observable behaviour would result if the person in question were in this, that, or other observable circumstance.

A helpful analogy here is a dispositional property, being soluble. To say that a sugar cube is soluble is to say that the sugar cube enjoys some ghostly inner state. It is just to say that if the sugar cube were put in water, then it would dissolve.

Evaluation

Gilbert Ryle should be applauded for his philosophical ingenuity and insightful investigation into philosophy of mind. Ryle agrees with Wittgenstein that philosophers in their role as cartographers, do not discover or look for new matters

of fact. What philosophers do rather, is to throw new light on the terrain which is resident in the rigour of their arguments. Thus Ryle posited that his theory does not give new information about the mind but attempts to rectify the logical geography of the knowledge which we already have. Ryle criticizes Descartes’ theory of mind which he called Cartesian myth the official doctrine that the mind and matter are two distinct and wholly different kinds of substances which belong to the same category in the sense that together they make up what we call a human being. He termed the doctrine under attack “the ghost in a machine”⁵¹ to substantiate his argument, he noted that we speak of courage as though it has a substantial existence of their own.

How could we do that? We answer, because he has courage. These words are simply the term we use to describe a person’s way of acting. For Ryle, the mind does not belong to the same logical category with the body and to think otherwise is source of error. More generally, Ryle argued that the human mind should be viewed as a complex set of episodes, dispositions and activities.

Some of the lapses evident in Ryle’s theory of the mind, include:(a) it does not account for certain conscious features which lack behaviour.(b) there are objects of thought which may not exist concretely. For example: I wish for a new book. Such object comes to us when we think of them and cease when we stop thinking of them. We are conscious of them but no corresponding behavioural action is noted. Another crucial question arises from Ryles philosophy.(c)where does it place the plan I have for tomorrow and the unexpressed love or hate I have for my friends? Examining Ryle’s theory of mind, it is noticeable plans and emotions have no place in his philosophy. Can a man’s behaviour always reflect the state of his mind? To attempt this question, it is not in doubt human beings can be deceptive. The deception can be beyond immediate human comprehension, from experience and personal observation, it is impossible to know other minds unless a psychologist who after some procedural tests, can attempt unleashing what is in the other persons mind, for Ryle peoples behaviour have something to say about them. Although the mind is the cause of behaviour, yet it is not identical with behaviour, what goes on in it does not always find expression in behaviour.

Considering the possibility of mind and body relating, Rene Descartes posited that it is possible that mental state can cause bodily action and bodily condition can influence mental state, Ryle opposed this view when he called it a ghost in a machine and for him “to talk of a person’s mind is not to talk of a repository, it is to talk of the persons abilities, liabilities and inclinations to do and undergo certain sorts of things a way of the doing and undergoing of these things in the ordinary world”⁵². So there is nothing like a mind conceive as a repository where thinking and other mental acts take place. There is no ghost in a machine, mental acts do not take place inside anything, they take place in our world. There is no mind/body dualism. Ryle argued that to say a person was not describing a quality in some unknown mind but simply describing a feature of the attitude and behaviour of that person. Ryle’s work thus has an important thrust which reaffirms the value of philosophical activity as a way of coming to understand the world. Ryle also extended his philosophy to encompass some human attribute like: the will, emotion, imagination, self-knowledge and disposition and occurrences all for the sake of clarity in what he believes to be the best way of understanding the composition of the

human person. Ryle tried to deliver us from an abstract world to a so what realistic world

Conclusion

Philosophy which is a rational and reflective understanding of things both visible and invisible focuses on the verification of why things are the way they are. Gilbert Ryle devoted himself to analyzing what he perceived as philosophical errors based on conceptual use of language. Ryle didn't just start philosophizing in the air; he started by disputing Rene Descartes's theory of mind "interactionism". Hence, in his influential book *The concept of mind*, Ryle posited that to speak of the mind and the body as though they were equivalent, is to make a category mistake. A key feature of Ryle's view is that it is a mistake to say that one's mind did something; rather, one should say that one did it. In other words, Ryle argued that to say a person was kind was not describing a quality of unknown mind, but describing a feature of the attitude of that person. One of the problems with Ryle's approach is that it equates a mental state with a physical disposition. It was unable to take into account the influence of one's mental state on another, and yet we are all the time open to many different and sometimes conflicting desires and beliefs which influence how we behave. For instance, someone who is hungry can refuse food, considering this, it is difficult to see how such internal debates, overriding expected activities can be accounted for if all mental states are ultimately reduced to action and disposition to act.

Going by Ryle's philosophy, being in pain means that a person cries when he is in pain, it is possible that a wounded soldier in the enemy's zone, no matter how much pain he is experiencing may not cry in order not to endanger his life. Someone can be in pain but not groan and someone can as well fake groaning. Finally, Gilbert Ryle should be commended for his bold and courageous step in disputing Rene Descartes and bringing his own logical behaviourism into the philosophical limelight.

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