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## The Concept of Mind

### Introduction

#### *The Man behind the Philosopher*

Gilbert Ryle was born in Brighton, England, in 1900. He came up to The Queens College, Oxford to read first Classics and Philosophy, and then Philosophy, Politics and Economics. He was appointed to a lectureship at Christchurch, Oxford, in 1924. After war service in Intelligence, he was elected to the Waynefleet Professorship in Metaphysical Philosophy in 1945. He died in 1976, still active in philosophy. Apart from his service during the Second World War, and occasional though extensive travels, he spent the whole of his life in Oxford.

In later life he was an impressive, somewhat 'military' figure. Through the editorship of *Mind* and his dominant role in developing the philosophy graduate school in Oxford, he exercised an almost world wide influence on how philosophy developed in the nineteen fifties and sixties, and who occupied teaching positions over a large part of the globe. He was an indefatigable traveler, willing to go to the ends of the earth to present his ideas. His lectures were animated versions of his writings, with the same charm and the same method of presentation. Surprisingly, he had little talent for informal discussion. If challenged he would fall back on the points he had made in a lecture.

Ryle had very high standards of the conduct proper to members of the academic profession. Strong argument was not to be confused with personal abuse. As editor of *Mind*, he caused a stir by refusing to review Ernest Gellner's attack on Oxford philosophy, on the grounds that it was *ad hominem* rather than argumentative.

Ryle had already revealed the existence of a new voice in philosophy with his 'Systematically misleading expressions' published in the early thirties (Ryle, 1931). Nevertheless, the appearance of *The Concept of Mind* in 1949 was a landmark. It was the first widely read work in the style that was soon to become 'Oxford Philosophy'. In this book the marriage of linguistic analysis and philosophical argument was set out in a major study of one of the most difficult topics in philosophy: What is the nature of the human mind? All our troubles

with understanding the mind, he argued, came from the tendency to bring together illegitimately, diverse and conflicting conceptual schemes in trying to set up one comprehensive account of what it is to be a human being.

However, the problem of the nature of the human mind was not the only philosophical conundrum to which he applied the idea of resolving seemingly intractable problems by what one might almost describe as the Rylean technique. All sorts of diverse puzzles could be shown to be artifacts of the tendency to falsely unify distinctive conceptual frames. The puzzles disappeared once this tendency was unmasked. In *Dilemmas* (Ryle, 1954) exploited the technique to great advantage.

### *The Concept of Mind*

The plot of the book is straightforward. Philosophy of mind has been mired in a persistent pattern of gross philosophical errors. With some historical licence, Ryle claimed that these errors lead from different directions to Descartes and his two-substance account of personhood. According to this account, the body is made of one substance, matter, and the mind of another immaterial stuff. This is an ontological error which has had all sorts of unwelcome consequences. However, as we shall see, it is remediable by attention to the way the words we use to describe thinking, feeling and acting are actually used.

Attention to language shows that there is no ground for the presupposition of a hidden realm of mental states and activities 'behind' those we actively produce and experience in thinking, feeling and acting as we do. It shows this by tracking the erroneous path along which philosophers have led us towards the mentalistic illusion through misunderstandings of the way key words are used. What exactly is the illusion? It is that there is an unobservable immaterial 'machine' the workings of which are responsible for all the phenomena, be they the public behaviour or the private thoughts and feelings which make up the domain of common experience. Material substance comprises the body as a physical machine and a second, immaterial substance, comprises the mind as a mental machine

It is not quite clear in which direction the finger of blame points. Is the root of our linguistic muddles an uncritical acceptance of the myth of 'the ghost in the machine'? Or, is it

these very misunderstandings that lead inexorably to the two-substance picture of what it is to be a human being?

There are key words in our psychological vocabulary that are thought to refer to hidden states of mind. Attention to how they are actually used shows instead that they are used to ascribe to a person certain dispositions to behave in various and particular ways. For example, intelligence is a real attribute of some people, but is mis-assigned as a mental property to the immaterial 'ghost' inhabiting the human bodily machine. If we are convinced that there is no such machine, the temptation to misinterpret words like 'intelligent' is more easily resisted.

Oftentimes the discussion in *The Concept of Mind* seems to move in the opposite direction. The prime mover to error is presented as our tendency to slip into mistakes about the meanings and uses of words. If 'intelligence' is a mental state to what is it to be ascribed? The obvious subject for an immaterial property is an immaterial mental substance invented or just this purpose. For example, Ryle insisted that it was a mistake to suppose that there was any such thing as an 'act of will' that brings about a deliberate human action. This gratuitous invention is the result of a misunderstanding of the everyday distinction between voluntary and involuntary acts. There is no hidden realm of acts of will behind the deliberate voluntary acts we all carry out. However, if we were to mistakenly think that there are acts of volition their only possible site is in an immaterial mental machine.

. Ryle's book can be read as a kind of philosophical medicine that will free us from an ancient and long-standing metaphysical mistake. At the same time, it presents a quasi-historical diagnosis of the route by which philosophers, for example Descartes, have been led to make that mistake. The intersection of these lines of argument in disposing of any vestige of Cartesianism is the source of the strength of the whole enterprise.

*The Concept of Mind* was widely read. At the time of its publication, only an inner circle of devotees knew the later writings of Wittgenstein, though Ryle may have had some acquaintance with them. The close link between the Rylean method of analysis and Wittgenstein's technique of undertaking a survey of the relevant language games was visible to most people only in hindsight.

It must also be said that the fact that Ryle's studies were devoted to the uses of everyday English words was responsible for a widespread misunderstanding of the Oxford philosophical style. It came to be called 'ordinary language philosophy', as if the rules for the use of everyday

expressions in the vernacular were to be the touchstone of all wisdom, the repository of philosophical truth. On the contrary, the temptations to misunderstand the uses of words were not thought to be confined to the language of everyday life. The use of linguistic analysis to reveal philosophical confusions had an equal place in studies of even the most recondite vocabularies. The 'ordinary language of quantum mechanics' tempted one to misunderstand the import of the 'Uncertainty' Principle, just as the 'ordinary language of the law' tempted one to misunderstand the legal concept of causation (Hart and Honoré, 1985).

### **The 'Cartesian' category mistake**

Ryle's target in accusing philosophers of a profound mistake in the interpretation of our mentalistic vocabulary was the misassignment of all mental phenomena to an immaterial substance. Mental activities were treated as properties of that substance. The mistake lay in treating the mind as a being of the same category as the body, namely a substance. Ryle calls the two-substance account of persons the 'official doctrine'. The person is thought of as a conjunction of a mental substance with a material substance. This doctrine is the result of a category mistake.

The argument proper of *The Concept of Mind* begins with an explanation of this fallacy. Ryle examines several examples of common category-mistakes (pp 16 – 17) to illustrate the structure and force of the fallacy. A visitor's quest for the University among the buildings of the city of Oxford is an illusory project because it is based on a category mistake, taking the University to be of the same category as the colleges. Colleges are spatio-temporally locatable institutions. The University is not another such institution. It is, in a certain sense, the aggregate of the colleges. It has no spatio-temporal location. Having visited the colleges one has visited the University.

Then there is the child who having seen the battalions of a military division march by asks when the division is to appear. Moreover, more to the point of the book, there is a third example. A foreign visitor having watched a cricket match and seen the various players batting, bowling, fielding and so on, asks which person is responsible for the *esprit de corps*. However, displaying team spirit is not another cricketing activity of the same category as batting, bowling and fielding. Importantly for the later argument Ryle remarks that we cannot say that the bowler

bowls *and* displays team spirit, even though displaying team spirit is not the same thing as bowling or batting or fielding.

A category mistake arises, declares Ryle, because the person who makes it does not have a clear and explicit grasp of how the *words* 'University', 'division' and 'team spirit' are used. In general, people manage their vocabularies very well, until they begin to reflect on them in some abstract way, in short until they start to philosophise. Then they tend to misinterpret the pertinent words, removing them from the everyday contexts of use. Why should that lead to error? Because the fact that a word is a noun, for example, and so likely to be name of some thing or substance becomes the dominant feature of its meaning, when it has been abstracted from context. Thus, to take another of Ryle's illustrations, a political philosopher might come to believe that in addition to the organs and activities of government there was another entity, the British Constitution, as if it were of the same ontological type, the same sort of existent, as the readily observed governmental institutions, scattered up and down Whitehall.

### **Substantial Mind as a Category Mistake**

Adopting the mentalistic myth of mind-as-substance either because of mis-assignments of word-kinds, or as a long-standing error seemingly supported by Cartesian arguments, leads to several consequential errors. First of all, there is the idea that people live in two worlds. There is the physical world of bodily states and happenings, the world of material substance. There is also the mental world of cognitive and emotional events. The mistake is to construe the mental world as consisting of a mental substance, paralleling the material substance of the body. The one is said to be 'outer' and publicly visible to all. The other is said to be 'inner' and its properties are known, wholly or in part, only the person to whom such events as forming a thought, recollecting a past experience, suffering a pang of hunger and so on, are occurring. Physical being is in space and time, while mental being is only in time. Thus, there are two realms or 'insulated fields', the physical realm and the mental realm.

An important and seemingly intractable problem stems from this way of thinking, that is treating the difference between the material and the mental aspects of a person's life as grounded in a radical difference between substances. The way that events as pairs of states, one from each of the two incommensurable substances, can influence one another then becomes a seemingly

irresolvable mystery. How is it possible for a state or process occurring in a mental substance to affect the state or condition of a material or physical substance, if the substances of which they are properties have nothing in common? How could a thought influence the making of a sound? How could a sound influence what someone thinks or feels? Yet, it must be admitted that people can influence one another's thoughts and feelings only via the mediation of some process in the physical realm. This is an important aspect of the traditional *mind-body problem*.

Ryle's diagnosis is that this traditional philosophical problem is not a problem at all. It appears so only because of the root category mistake which segregates the mental and physical as attributes of distinct and diverse substances.

What exactly is Ryle denying in rejecting the myth of the 'ghost in the machine'? He is not denying that there is a domain of personal and private experience. He is denying that there is a realm of cognitive *entities* and *processes* beyond the realm of experience, be it private or public, the behaviour of which explains the psychological phenomena of which we are witnesses. He argues, mostly by the piling up of examples on examples, that the concepts appropriate to the private and personal domain of experience are continuous with and subject to the same logical grammar, that is the same general rules of use, as those which are displayed publicly and socially.

In a curious way, Ryle's target was an approach to psychology that had not yet been born. Many of the theses the fatal flaws of which he diagnoses, are the very principles on which a certain strand of so-called 'cognitive science' has been built. (See particularly the writings of J. A. Fodor, (1975) for the idea of a cognitive realm unknown to those who think, feel and act intentionally, and yet determining what those thoughts, feelings and actions will be.) Ryle's argument would seem to show that there is no 'language of thought', no mind behind the mind. Though Ryle never says so, it surely follows that the only domain 'behind the mind' is the domain of neural activity. Psychology terminates in the public and person activities in which people engage.

Consistently with his general line, Ryle also denies that our private experiences are processes in and properties of that same immaterial mental substance. In this vein, he seems to be saying that the content of our mental lives are *acts* we perform, things we *do*, rather than static properties of something mysterious. Imagining something privately, that is 'in the mind's eye', is just as much a matter of something someone does as drawing something publicly on a sheet of

paper. According to this line of argument, the concept of a mental substance is intelligible, but as it happens there is no such thing. We do not need to invoke that hypothesis to explain all that needs to be accounted for in our thoughts, feelings and actions.

Ryle sometimes seems to suggest that the hypothesis of the mind behind the mind is arrived at by faulty reasoning. On this reading, it would be a matter of fact that the hypothesis of a hidden mental realm, a mind behind the mind, is false. It is false in the same way that the hypothesis of a luminiferous aether is false. That hypothesis, central to nineteenth century physics, was arrived at by faulty reasoning, based on the mistaken principle that light waves required a medium. It turned out that the hypothesis, though meaningful, was false as a matter of fact. There is no such thing.

Sometimes Ryle seems to be suggesting that the very concept of a substantial but hidden mental realm is incoherent, and so meaningless. The conclusion from this reading would be that there *could be* no such thing. There are no round squares because the concept is incoherent. Ryle's primary intention was surely to promote the latter view in order to show that there could be no place for the former view.

### **Historical Origins of the 'Myth of the Ghost in the Machine'**

How did the dual substance account of personhood come to be dominant in Western thought, a dominance that ran for at least three hundred years? Ryle locates the substantialisation of the mind firmly in the seventeenth century (pp. 18 – 24). The physicists, exemplified by Galileo, had made a splendid start on creating a mechanistic picture of the physical world. According to this way of looking at material reality, the hypothesis of unobservable material corpuscles as the constituents of material things, and the laws of mechanics describing how everything material behaves, were adequate to account for every material phenomenon. By parity of reasoning, if the mental was not to be reduced to the material, nor 'mental-conduct words construed as signifying the occurrence of mechanical processes, they must be construed as signifying the occurrence of non-mechanical processes ...' (p. 19). Some human behaviours will have mechanical causes, and others non-mechanical causes. This is a different but contributing source of the myth of the immaterial mind behind the mental lives of human beings.

Now comes Ryle's most innovative step, a move that links these historical considerations to the diagnosis that the hypothesis of the ghost in the machine is a category mistake. The Cartesian way of preserving the mind from a mechanistic reduction is grounded in the treatment of the differences between the physical and the mental 'as differences within a common framework of the categories of "thing", "stuff" [and so on]' (p. 19). What is mental is treated as a subcategory of the category of substance, the other subcategory being matter. This is just like the error of the visitor who treats the concept of 'The University' as a subcategory of the category to which the colleges belong, spatio-temporally locatable institutions housed in appropriate buildings.

Having disposed of one alleged seventeenth century legacy, the Cartesian 'ghost in the machine' we are not yet home free. There is another bogey, the threat of mechanism. The Galilean project was to find the laws of mechanics, which reflected the motions and structures of material things. These laws were to be naturally necessary and the processes they described deterministic. From time to time Ryle makes small scale and not very well informed forays into history and philosophy of science, mainly to identify the alleged sources of the bogey of mechanism. In his review, Hampshire (1950) drew attention to Ryle's often cursory and sometimes shallow historical asides.

According to Ryle 'Mechanism' is yet another facet of the Cartesian point of view that has proven both influential and mischievous. What sort of entities are these mental substances of which each person possesses a unique exemplar? Belonging to the same category as bodies, the scientific project will show, it was hoped, that minds too will be found to obey a parallel set of laws to the laws of mechanics that describe material phenomena. Not only is there a ghost in the machine, but the mind is itself a ghostly machine. This links back to the supposed parallel between the ambitions for an actual science of material phenomena, and those for a possible science of mental phenomena.

This brings us to the final step in Ryle's analysis, a step that has been one of the driving forces behind the social constructionist psychologies of the late twentieth century. The treatment of mental processes on the model of the physics of matter entails a deeply disturbing consequence. There is no place in such a scheme for moral concepts in the assessment of the mental life. The intuition that this was an unacceptable consequence of Cartesianism led to heroic efforts to solve another pseudo-problem that the Cartesian mental mechanism account of

mind throws up. If the body and the mind are both deterministic machines, obeying strict causal laws, how could there be human agency? This is the traditional problem of the freedom of the will. It looked as if in a universe in which there was both material and mental causation, there could be no room for the application of the idea of human freedom. Without freedom, there is no place for the concept of personal responsibility and so no place at all for moral concepts.

Ryle argues that abandoning the Cartesian project, now seen to be rooted in a category mistake, removes the most persisting problems of philosophy of mind in the modern era at a stroke. How could mind and body interact if each was a substance with no properties in common with its counterpart? How could there be free action when causal laws dominated both the material and the mental worlds? These questions do not present problems to be solved. They are consequences of a misunderstanding of the grammar of our language. Psychological words are not used in such a way as to imply the existence of a hidden mental realm, the domain of an immaterial substance.

Having diagnosed the roots of the 'disease' of mentalism, and explained how a right understanding of the words of our mental vocabulary relieves us of paradoxes and problems, Ryle then sets about a detailed demonstration of the logical grammar, that is of the rules of correct, that is the current received use, of a wide range of the relevant words.

### **The Mentalistic Vocabulary and Its Uses**

The notion of a disposition, along with other linked concepts such as skill and ability make their appearance piece meal in Chapters Two, Three and Four. These chapters follow the traditional division of psychology into three main topics, Cognition, Conation and Affection, knowing, willing and feeling. The detailed analysis of the difference between dispositions and occurrences, expressed in dispositional and episodic words respectively, is tackled only in Chapter Five. I believe the clarity of the argument will benefit from the explicit introduction of the distinction between dispositions and occurrences before the three traditional topics are given the Rylean treatment!

Let me introduce this distinction with a simple non-psychological example. To say solubility is a *dispositional property* of sugar is to so say that if it is placed in any warm watery

liquid it will dissolve. To say that a teacup is full is to ascribe an *occurrent property* to the cup. 'Being soluble' is a disposition, while 'being full' is an occurrence.

In several places, Ryle lists some of the professions members of which use mentalistic words. Among them are judges, teachers, novelists, psychologists, sportsmen and 'the man in the street'. They use words from two main groups. There are dispositional words such as 'knowing', 'believing', 'aspiring', 'clever' and 'greedy', and episodic words such as 'seeing', 'hearing', 'running', 'paying attention to' and the like. Already it is easy to see that these lists are not homogeneous. Each group of words falls into diverse kinds.

At the root of the category mistakes that disfigure the philosophy of mind, Ryle finds a tendency to treat mental disposition words as if they referred to mental states. Expressed in linguistic terms the mistake is to treat dispositional words as if they were a special group of episodic words. Since dispositions are not observable occurrent states of persons or things the temptation into which 'many epistemologists'<sup>1</sup> fall is to treat disposition words as referring to unobservable or occult occurrences and states. Hence, we come to believe that there is a hidden mental realm.

The vocabulary that is used to describe human activities includes dispositional terms like 'know', 'aspire' and 'habit'. In contrast are episodic words, such as 'run' and 'tingle'. What distinguishes dispositions? The answer will come from a close look at the logic of dispositional attributions. It is a mistake to construe dispositional words as episodic words. Dispositions are described in conditional statements, but descriptions of episodes are categorical.

Listing adverbs that are appropriate to qualify the members of one group, but not the other brings out the distinction between these classes of words.

The overall argument is very simple. Realising that dispositional words do not refer to anything observable other than the behaviour they describe, and slipping into treating them as if they were episodic words, it seems natural to suppose that they refer to unobservable states of affairs. To what then do they refer? Since there are no other observable phenomena to competences, tendencies, capabilities and skills than the conditions under which they are displayed in the appropriate kind of performance, people are tempted to suppose that there must be occult or unobservable states, conditions and processes as their referents. However, Ryle argues, these words do not have a descriptive function at all. They are used to licence the drawing of inferences. Conditionals are rules for predicting and explaining happenings by

reference to certain antecedent happenings. Dispositions, as condensed expressions of rules which licence certain inferences, are no exception. To say that someone is clever is to say, amongst other things, that if this person is presented with a problem, he or she will readily solve it. With this conditional in hand, one can infer that this person, when presented with a problem will quickly solve it. Cleverness is not a hidden mental attribute which makes the problem solving behaviour possible.

Tendencies, for example, are attributed to material and organic beings, including people, in statements of the conditional or 'if ... then ...' form. Their role is to serve as licenses for drawing inferences as to a person's likely behaviour in specific circumstances referred to in the antecedent clause of the conditional statements with which we unpack the meaning of dispositional terms. We might say that Joe has a tendency to get annoyed when frustrated by bureaucratic red tape. Analysed as the conditional 'if Joe is frustrated by red tape then he is likely to get annoyed' the statement serves to support predictions as to what Joe will do when he is asked to fill in yet another form!

'Sentences embodying these dispositional words have been interpreted as being categorical reports of particular but unwitnessable matters of fact [occult causes and effects] instead of being testable, open hypothetical ... statements' (p. 117).

To bear out this important thesis the first step will be show that the logic of dispositional attributions requires that dispositional statements take the form of conditionals, that is that dispositions are indeed ascribed by the use of open hypotheticals, which take the 'if ... then ...' form. However there is an episodic aspect to dispositions. Someone who is properly said to be touchy may not be displaying irritation at this moment. The person so described has a tendency to take offence too readily. However, if that individual never took offence it would surely be improper to describe him or her as touchy. In general, a disposition must have been or will be displayed. Could there be personal dispositions that are never displayed? A person may feel a strong urge to jump off a high place, but has always managed to resist it. What is it about the person that persists even when the disposition is not being displayed?

There is an obvious objection to admitting the conditional analysis to be exhaustive of the meaning of words of this kind. How is one to explain the grammatical fact that dispositions are ascribed to someone (or something) when the relevant behaviour is not being displayed there and then? In short, in contemporary terminology, how are dispositions grounded? What persists,

according to Ryle, is that the relevant inference licence continues to be able to be used to make valid inferences about the person or thing to which the disposition is ascribed. Its occurrent truth amounts to no more than the presumption that we are licensed now to infer what Joe might do later, or probably did do before. No continuing *mental* state need be implied. Of course, this is compatible with there being a persisting *material* state of the person's brain and nervous system.

Ryle has been often accused of being a closet behaviourist. Except in so far as there are certain general similarities between his views and those of B. F. Skinner the accusation is wide of the mark if Watsonian behaviourism is what we have in mind. He never denied the reality of private conscious experience. However, his account of dispositional hypotheticals as law-like and so as expressing inference licenses take him very close to repeating Hume's notorious dismissal of real causal efficacy. A law-like statement in its overt 'if ... then ...' format licenses one to infer from one matter of fact to another. According to Ryle, knowing a law is not the same as knowing any particular matters of fact. It does not require belief in the efficacy of any particular state of affairs to engender another.

On p. 124, the cloven hoof of Hume is at last revealed. To the suggestion that dispositional statements not only license inferences but describe usually 'hidden goings on' Ryle responds with three highly tendentious comments:

1. We know that a being has a certain disposition without knowing of any 'hidden goings on'.
2. The utility of this occult knowledge would consist in supporting what we already know we can do, namely draw matter of fact inferences.
3. We can know of such 'goings on' only by inferring them from the fact that we can use the dispositional statement as an inference licence.

Ryle uses 'conducts electricity' as a non-psychological example to illustrate the irrelevance of 'hidden goings on' to the inference licensing power of the disposition. He is surely quite mistaken in using this example to reject 'occult goings on'. In the case of electrical conductivity, these 'goings on' would be the well established but unobservable passage of electrons through the conductor. However, in the case of mental dispositions the 'no occult goings on' principle looks a good deal more defensible, if the alleged grounding is presented as mental.

Of course, statements asserting capacities, tendencies, propensities and liabilities are not laws. Nevertheless they are used in a 'partly similar way', namely to support our expectations of

what someone is likely to do in this or that circumstances. Is there a necessity about these expectations? Not necessarily. 'If' does seem to suggest 'can', though this word is itself used in rather diverse ways. Ability to do something does not guarantee that it will be done.

The last general point in this famous analysis is the emphasis on standards of correctness. 'Abilities', 'capacities', 'capabilities' and 'skills' suggest mastery of the performances in which they are realized. The use of words like 'spell', 'solve' and 'persuade' involve performances to be gone through and something which is brought off or not brought off. Along with competences go liabilities, to get things wrong – to perform inadequately. In contemporary terminology, Ryle's dispositions are normative.

### *Kinds of Mental Dispositions*

Ryle's first major distinction among kinds of dispositions is between those that can be displayed in many different ways (determinable) and those can be displayed in only one way (determinate). This distinction is of major importance for Ryle's argument since he insists that such central words as 'know', 'clever' and so on are determinable dispositional words. 'They signify abilities, tendencies or pronesses to do ... things of lots of different kinds' (p. 118), without any assumption that there are also corresponding mental acts.

Tendencies carry the implication of 'likely to perform or display' the relevant behaviour. 'Habits', 'interests', 'jobs' and occupations' are all higher-level tendencies. They are self-imposed and in many cases require adherence to codes and customs.

In contrast to tendencies are capacities. 'Knowing' is a capacity word, and requires correct performances, be they cognitive or practical. The distinction between knowing and believing is not between two sorts of mental states or conditions. 'Believe' is a tendency verb. Knowing and believing differ as capacities and tendencies differ. Knowing is not, therefore, a superior degree of believing.

### *Kinds of Mental Episodes and Occurrences*

The mark that distinguishes mental occurrences from mental dispositions implicit in much that Ryle has to say is grammatical. The former are described with episodic verbs the use of which is

categorical in the indicative mood. The latter are ascribed with dispositional verbs, the use of which is conditional, often in the subjunctive mood. 'Something' is occurrent if it is fully realized in the here and now. Digging a ditch is a here and now activity. 'Something' is dispositional if it is manifested only occasionally in appropriate contexts, and perhaps in special cases never manifested at all. Being a gymnast is manifested only occasionally in gymnasias and on horses, rings, mats and the like. Having a tendency to make a violent physical response to a minor personal slight might be lifelong but never displayed.

Both occurrences and dispositions are dateable, many taking time, having beginnings and endings. 'Paying heed to what one is doing' is one of Ryle's most telling examples of an episodic verb, while 'performing a task' is another. Though to be disposed to or to tend to do something is not, in general, an occurrence, it makes sense to date the acquisition and loss of an ability. The temporal dimension simply covers the time during which it would be correct to use that inference licence to make predictions about what the person or thing might do. So there is no clear temporal criterion for distinguishing dispositional words from those for episodes and occurrences. Yet, for Ryle, the temporal dimension of dispositional words does not reflect anything that is both permanent *and psychological* about the being to which the disposition is ascribed.

### *Semi-hypotheticals and Mongrel Categoricals*

Ryle's analysis has the immediate effect of forcing dispositions and occurrences apart. Yet, there is a very important class of statements that seem in some respects like statements of fact, and in other respects like inference licenses. 'Heed' words are often used to qualify how one is performing an activity. One can drive a car carefully, paying attention to what one is doing. Notoriously, one can drive a car, inattentively, thinking of something else. What is the difference between the two occasions? One negotiates the curves and stop signs correctly and arrives at one's destination safely. The analyst faces a dilemma. Either the distinction refers to a hidden concomitant of the operation, or it serves to make an open hypothetical statement about the actor. If the second horn is grasped, on the plausible grounds that being attentive and being inattentive are private and personal states of mind that one might come to attend to, it is also clear that certain predictions can be made on the basis of the distinction. If we believe the driver to have

been attending to what he or she was doing, we would expect ready answers to such questions as to how long it took for a traffic light to change. So 'attentive' is the heart of an inference license.

On p. 141, Ryle remarks that 'the description of [someone] ... as minding what he is doing is just as much an explanatory report of an actual occurrence [how he was able to avoid the maverick cyclist] as a conditional prediction of further occurrences'. These examples bring to light an important category of words and the statements they can be used to make that fits neatly under neither the dispositional nor the episodic. Because of their ubiquity and importance, they deserve a special name. Ryle called them 'semi-hypotheticals' or 'mongrel categoricals'. These statements are in some respects like descriptions and in some respects like inference-licenses. Critics have been bothered by the way the ubiquity of mongrel categoricals seems to undermine the sharp contrast between dispositional verbs and episodic verbs on which the diagnosis of the root category mistake seems to depend.

### *Tasks and Achievements*

Ryle's task/achievement distinction has become so embedded in the way we reflect about people's ways of thinking and acting that it now seems entirely obvious. Making use of everyone's grasp of the activities of everyday, by listing all sorts of examples, Ryle points out that there are two broad kinds of occurrences. Running a race is a task and takes time. Winning a race is an achievement which, though dateable, does not take time. This common sense distinction appears in the grammatical distinction between task verbs and achievement verbs. At the same time, it lays bare yet another source of grammatical confusion, another kind of category mistake to which theoreticians of perception are particularly prone.

Our intuitions are mobilized with the help of a list of commonplace, everyday instances of the distinction between performing a task and achieving an appropriate outcome. The list (p. 149) includes 'kicking and scoring', 'treating and healing', 'hunting and finding', 'clutching and holding fast', 'listening and hearing', 'looking and seeing', 'traveling and arriving'. Ryle's argumentative technique is quite evident. The psychological words are sandwiched between instances from football, medicine, searching, playing cricket or some other ball game, and journeys. So bracketed how can we fail to agree that perception displays the same kind of

distinction between task and achievement as do the commonplace and unproblematic activities of gardening, playing games, taking tours, and the like?

Refinements come quickly in the text (pp. 150 – 151). The use of an achievement verb asserts that some state of affairs obtains over and above the task performance. There can be achievements without task activities preceding them. We can see something without first having looked for it. All this underlines the point that an achievement is not an occurrence of the same type as a task. It is not separately perceptible, for example. Winning is the result of racing, not a separable activity engaged in by the champion alone.

The application of the distinction between tasks and achievements to the problems of perception is continued by offering another list. This is an extensive list of adverbs that can be applied to search verbs but not to perception verbs. For example, these include 'successfully', 'in vain', 'methodically', 'inefficiently', 'laboriously', 'lazily', 'rapidly', 'carefully', 'reluctantly', 'zealously', 'obediently', 'deliberately' or 'confidently'. Grasping the point of the list helps us to see that perception words are not 'process words'. 'They do not stand for perplexingly undetectable actions or reactions' (p. 152). So I cannot answer the question 'What are you doing?' by saying that I am seeing. Looking for something is a task, while seeing it is an achievement. The same holds for 'knowing', 'proving' and so on. Such verbs cannot be qualified by such adverbs as 'erroneously'. This does not show that some people are infallible or that some cognitive states are incorrigible. It is just a grammatical remark about how we use the verbs 'to know' and so on.

## **Cognition**

There are two main themes in Ryle's treatment of cognition. He sets out to demonstrate by the piling up of examples that our cognitive vocabulary has as good a use for discussing bodily actions as it does for discussing mental operations. The second theme is the exorcism of the pervasive illusion that behind our overt cognitive doings there is another hidden realm invoked to explain these doings. This is just another case of the malign influence of the myth of the ghost in the machine.

*Knowing how and knowing that*

To know how to do something, say to make the tea, is a practical skill which usually does not call for the consultation of a recipe or a set of rules. The test of whether someone knows how to do something is consistent and successful performance. To know that something is the case or that something happened is to be able to produce the relevant proposition on demand. Ryle uses this general distinction to point up a disparity between being intelligent and possessing knowledge. The former is dispositional, the latter episodic. Intelligence is not defined as the apprehension of truths. How do we know? Let us look at how the intelligence ascribing words are used. Ryle gives several lists of such words, including 'shrewd', 'silly', 'prudent' and 'imprudent'. Plainly, these words do not impute knowledge to someone. They qualify what that person does, and at the same time ascribe dispositions, abilities and liabilities to act in certain ways.

Furthermore, the dispositions of the people whose performances merit such epithets are tendencies or capacities to do things correctly, properly and successfully. Failures attract the corresponding epithets of demerit. Just being successful is not enough to justify calling someone's actions intelligent. The person must be paying attention to what he or she is doing, monitoring and correcting the action. Misconstrued, this commonplace observation gives rise to the intellectualist legend on another dimension. We are tempted to explain successful performances as the result of inwardly consulting and then following rules and maxims of correct practice. Knowing how would depend, if we took the intellectualist account seriously, on knowing that. Cooks would need to recite recipes, heroes to consult moral imperatives and chess players to run over strategic maxims, before they could act skillfully, competently, bravely or successfully. But they don't! Or not often.

Ryle deploys two lines of argument, as well as the above assertion. The first involves not only Aristotle inventing logic but Isaac Walton reflecting on fishing. Efficient practice preceded the theory. It follows that people were able to reason correctly and to fish successfully before the principles of correct reasoning and skillful fishing were enunciated. The second argument points to the regress of rule consultations that easily opens up. Selecting the right or best maxim to apply is itself an intelligent action. However, if intelligence is adverting to maxims, knowledge of what it is right to infer, is the result of another cognitive performance which must itself be

conducted according to a maxim. If the intellectualist legend is right, yet another maxim will be required in selecting that maxim and so on. At each point, the choice can be made stupidly or intelligently. Abandon the intellectualist legend and the regress cannot begin.

### *The Cleverness of Clowns*

How does the intellectualist legend arise? Since parrots can make sounds that match human remarks as far as muscular movements go, and a lout might be tactful by accident, wit and tact are not just behaviour. There is a temptation to suppose that there must be a counterpart mental act that is the real exercise of wit, tact, skill and so on. When people admire the cleverness of a clown, it is the skill exhibited in the visible performance they admire. The skill cannot be recorded separately from the performance. However, this is not because it is a hidden counterpart performance. It is not something that happens to accompany the performance. This is because it is not of the logical type to be a happening, since it is a disposition. 'The clown's trippings and tumblings are the workings of his mind, for they are his jokes' (p. 33). 'The mistake is to suppose that there must be 'unwitnessable mental causes and their witnessable physical effects' (p. 33).

Ryle concedes that some propositional competence is necessary to acquire practical skills. However, it does not follow that the mature exercise of practical skills requires a parallel process of the exercising of propositional competences. One can be bad at practicing what one preaches.

### **Conation**

The second member of the traditional triad of thinking, willing and feeling, is Conation, or the 'executive faculty'. By this is meant the power an individual has (or lacks) to put into practice his or her intentions and decisions as to what to do. In this context, according to Ryle, the malign influence of the mentalistic myth leads to a misunderstanding of the distinction between voluntary and involuntary actions. Philosophers have been tempted to insert an *act of will*, a volition, between a person's intention to do something and the execution of that intention. I decide to weed the cabbage patch, but to get the weeding started there seems to be something

else needed to propel me into action. The existence of this executive act, so it is supposed, is what distinguishes acting voluntarily from acting out of habit, or merely responding automatically to some influence or stimulus.

What is wrong with this account? Not surprisingly, Ryle begins his attack by an argument based on a list of attributes these alleged acts would need to possess were they to be real. People do not report being occupied in willing, performing a certain number of acts of volitions in a certain episode. Juries do not enquire whether a volition preceded a criminal act. In true Rylean style there then comes a long list of adjectives which are used to qualify both real conscious processes and overt actions, but which, Ryle presumes, we would agree, do not characterize volitions. Here is a selection: 'weak', 'difficult', 'enjoyable', 'accelerated', 'interrupted', 'inefficient', 'learned', 'habitual', 'forgotten', 'be mistaken about', 'moment of performance', and so on. The belief in the existence of these acts is an empty hypothesis, based on a mistake.

What is the mistake? The diagnosis begins with the observation that we use the concept pair voluntary/involuntary in situations in which the action under scrutiny ought not to have been done. 'In this ordinary use' says Ryle (p. 69) 'it is absurd to discuss whether satisfactory, correct or admirable performances are voluntary or involuntary'. 'Philosophers', Ryle's vaguely specified villains, misuse the distinction by applying it to meritorious and correct performances as well. To blame someone for doing something implies that that the actor knew what was right or correct but did not do it. To decide whether someone who failed in some task should be blamed, we do not need to enquire into whether a certain 'occult episode' had occurred, but into whether the individual knew what to do, though he or she failed to do it correctly or at all.

Strength of will is not a feature of a mental organ, the will. It is used, along with lots of other expressions, to refer to the resolution that someone displays in doing things. 'It is a propensity, the exercise of which consists of sticking to tasks ...' (p. 73).

How did it come about that 'philosophers' had slipped into the error of expanding the voluntary/involuntary distinction to cover both meritorious and incorrect actions? If the mechanistic account of human action had been correct, then there would have been no room for moral appraisals of what someone did. We need to be able to distinguish between those actions which can be praised or blamed from those to which neither comment is appropriate. The 'inner world' could serve as the location of volitions, while mechanistic causes resided in the material world. This is a live issue to this day. In its current form, the take-over bid comes from the

science of genetics. If everything one is and does is the result of one's genetic endowment, where is there a place for moral and political appraisal?

However, Ryle has another line of argument against the threat of scientific determinism. The pattern is familiar. People dread the possibility of it turning out that everything people do is explicable ultimately by the inexorable laws of physics. However, this is not a contingency that might or might not happen. This is because it makes no sense to suppose that it might. In short, there is a philosophical or conceptual argument against this kind of super-determinism. Since the issue is still very much on the agenda for the third millennium Ryle's argument deserves to be spelled out in some detail.

The analogy of playing a game to living one's life in general is the key move in the argument. Games involve rules to which the players are committed. A game is bounded by and managed in accordance with rules of various kinds. However, games also involve people, who, in Ryle's analogy, choose from varieties of moves, placements of kicks, sweeps or off drives and so on. However, once the move is under way then it *must* accord with the rules of the game. A bishop necessarily moves on a diagonal, but not necessarily two, three, or four squares. An off drive of sufficient power and direction penetrates the covers necessarily going for four according to the laws of mechanics and the rules of cricket. The people in the analogy have radical freedom to initiate moves the development of which is necessitated by the rules.

This is really a very bad argument to issue from the pen of the Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy. It presupposes what is to be proved. That someone chooses a certain move is, the determinist alleges, fixed from some prior conditions that obtained before the game started. Moreover, those conditions could be argued to have been the result of lawful evolution of the world from states that existed from before the appearance of *Homo sapiens*, and even before the invention of cricket. For the strict Laplacian determinist the initial conditions of the world were set at the Creation!

There is a little subsidiary argument that is not much better. To ask for the cause of a happening in the material domain a 'chain-argument' is proper. The initiating cause is linked to the relevant effect by a chain of intermediate causes and effects. However, if we ask 'How does my decision lead to my squeezing the trigger?' we can be puzzled by how difficult it seems to be to offer a chain-argument. The right answer, according to Ryle, is to assign radical causal powers to persons, in such phrases as 'Lee Harvey Oswald did it', perhaps in response to yet another

conspiracy theory about the death of President Kennedy. In effect Ryle wants to distinguish 'Who was responsible?' questions from 'What caused it?' questions. However, it seems to me obvious that we cannot even begin to answer the former without having to hand a tentative answer to the latter.

### **Affection**

The third province of psychology has traditionally been the emotions and the feelings with which they are intimately involved. Ryle highlights the alleged role of emotions in the explanation of what someone did. Motives like ambition and moods like depression stand over against emotion like anger. All three stand over against bodily feelings. Here is a list of some of them (p. 83) 'thrills', 'twinges', 'pangs', 'throbs', 'wrenches', 'itches', 'prickings', 'chills', 'glows', 'loads', 'qualms', 'hankerings', 'curdlings', 'sinkings', 'tensions', 'gnawings' and 'shocks'. We could add 'aches', 'thrills' and many more.

There are, so Ryle acknowledges, 'throbs of compassion'. However, the compassion is 'not to be equated with the throbs'. There are throbs of pain and pleasure too. The difference between these various uses of such words as 'twinges' is to be put down to how we believe they are caused. A twinge of guilt is a feeling induced by a belief that we have behaved badly. A twinge of indigestion is a feeling induced by over indulgence at the table. Unlike his social constructionist descendents Ryle does not pursue this line of analysis very far. A discussion of the moral surroundings of emotions is the next step.

Motives come on the scene through one of Ryle's enigmatic attributions to an unspecified group of muddle headed folk, the 'theorists'. They have fallen into the category mistake of thinking that when we explain what someone has done by the use of motive words like 'vain', 'considerate', 'avaricious', 'patriotic' or 'indolent' these words refer to motives, and thence to feelings. 'Vanity' and 'indolence' are dispositional properties having the usual 'whenever X is in situation Y he/she is likely to do or not do Z'. Of course, there must be occasions on which a person displays vanity in order for the attribution 'vain' to be apposite. These words not only denote motives, but also traits of character and personality. The point is that feelings of patriotism are occurrences, and it is absurd to suggest that a person's life-long patriotism consists

in a sequence of such incidents. Rather his/her tendency to have such feelings is yet another consequence of the inclination as is tying the national flag to the car radio aerial.

Moods such as 'depression' or 'joyfulness' compare with feelings of despair and ecstasy as inclinations and dispositions do to occurrences. Moods are lasting and dateable, though, like the weather, they are changeable. They affect everything a person does. One of the most powerful and important of Wittgenstein's distinctions is that between 'avowals' and 'descriptions' (Wittgenstein, 1953: §§ 244 - 246). Ryle presents it explicitly. 'If a person says "I feel bored" or "I feel depressed," we do not ask him for his evidence' (p. 102). Part of what it is to be bored is to be inclined to say such things as 'I feel bored', to yawn, fidget and so on. It follows that such a remark does not call for such judgments as 'true or false' but rather 'sincere or shammed'.

One of the most widely discussed parts of this analysis of the emotional life is the section devoted to 'pleasure' and 'pain' (pp. 107 – 110). Ryle's concern is to bring out some of the differences between the supposed logic of the use of these words and their actual use. There are feelings *of pleasure*. So, it denotes of a certain kind of mood, such as elation. Thus, a flutter, glow or thrill is a pleasurable one. 'Pleasure' and 'enjoyment' are also used for describing activities in which someone is wholly absorbed, thinking of nothing else, doing it effortlessly and so on. It might be the pleasure someone gets from playing his/her clarinet in a Mozart Divertimento. However, there are not two things going on, the performance and the pleasure. Once again, the members of anonymous opposition, 'theorists', are so misguided as to treat delight and enjoyment as feelings. Does one enjoy the joke or the ripple of laughter? Pains, on the other hand, are or can be stand-alone aversive bodily feelings. It follows that the words 'pain' and 'pleasure' do not denote the poles of a fundamental affective dimension.

### **Personal Identity**

Personal identity is expressed for the most part by the use of the word 'I'. Is it the name of the ghost in my machine? The nature of selfhood comes up in several places, but is highlighted by Ryle's robust rejection of the thesis that knowing myself is observing a spate of mental happenings. It is thus that it is supposed that I know non-dispositionally what I am experiencing. This cannot be right because there are no such happenings to get to know. This for the somewhat

recondite reason that what follows the verb 'to know' is that something is the case. That Ryle should have failed to notice the difference between 'conocer' ['Connaitre', 'to be acquainted with'] and 'saber' ['savoir', 'to know intellectually'] is a surprise.

The question of the uses of 'I' first comes up in Ryle's emphasis on unstudied talk, on avowals. A lorry driver who asks 'Which is the way to London?' avows or discloses his anxiety about the route rather than reporting or describing his state of mind. If someone says 'I wonder if the shop has got any aubergines in today', he/she is not offering a snippet of autobiography. Reflection on the first person soon engenders the intellectual vertigo of a cluster of philosophical problems. Here are some: 'Could I be you?', 'What is it that for a religious person is saved or damned?', 'Who am I really?' and so on. 'Philosophers [who?] have speculated whether "I" denotes a peculiar or separate substance and in what consists my indivisible and continuing identity' (p. 186).

Anticipating the concept of indexicality, a formulation of the nineteen seventies, Ryle points out that 'I' is not a name of anything, but a word like 'today' or 'here'. It is, he says, 'systematically elusive'. 'I' indicates from which person the vocable 'I' issues. 'You' indicates to you which person I am addressing, namely you.

However, in some contexts some first person expressions, for example, 'myself' could be replaced by 'my body'. Ever good for a startling example Ryle asks us to reflect on the first person pronouns in 'Cremate me after I am gone'. However, there are plenty of uses where such a substitution makes no sense. In 'I caught myself daydreaming', 'my body' could not replace the reflexive first person pronoun. For example, when 'I' is used to commit the speaker to a course of action, and sometimes to avow or express how I feel or what I am thinking the substitution of 'my body' makes no sense.

In a final point, reminiscent of G. H. Mead's 'I' and 'me' distinction, Ryle remarks that 'self-commentary, self-ridicule and self-admonition are logically condemned to perpetual penultimacy' (p. 195). Once I have picked up from the surrounding conversation the practice of commenting on or ridiculing the performance of others, I can apply the skill thus acquired to my own thoughts and acts, but only after I have done them.

### **The Possibility of Psychology**

The *Concept of Mind* ends with a short but deeply incisive reflection on the possibility of a science of psychology. Again, one is struck by the way that the Ryle of the nineteen forties anticipates so much of the new paradigm psychology of the last twenty years. Between nineteen forty-nine and two thousand and two lie more than fifty years of much misplaced endeavour, if Ryle is right.

Ryle's first point is terminological, but of paramount importance. Psychologists and lay people alike use 'the concepts of learning, practice, trying, heeding, pretending, wanting, pondering, arguing, shirking, watching, seeing and being perturbed' in the same way. Ryle omits to add the really telling point, that when psychologists seem to be using a technical vocabulary, specific to their supposed science, it consist largely of synonyms for words from the above list and others of the same provenance. 'Visual perception' appears for 'seeing', 'CFS' for 'shirking' and so on.

The alleged parallel between a Newtonian science of material stuff and a Cartesian science of mental stuff has been a leit-motif throughout the book. Ryle presents it as a legacy of the 'two-worlds legend', a rather dubious historical judgement. Even when this programme was riding high, psychological researchers studied what people said and did, thought and felt, not the non-existent happenings behind these actions.

He distinguishes between what psychologists declare to be their project and what they do in their actual studies. In experimenting on visual perception, they 'analyse the reactions and verbal responses of the subjects of their experiments' (p. 321). Memory is studied 'by recording their successes and failures in recitations [of stimulus material] after the lapse of different periods of time'. Just a minute! Surely, the mind behind the mind is not the realm of private thought and feeling that lies behind the public world of actions. We thought the dual world was a generally unobservable but hypothetical world of mental states and processes.

One is led to surmise that Ryle has slipped badly here by reflecting on his account of the way chemists turned to the phenomena of combustion after abandoning the search for the hidden substance phlogiston. A little history of science would have helped here. What Lavoisier actually did was establish the existence of a different occult substance, oxygen, as an alternative to the non-existent phlogiston.

Nevertheless, Ryle's positive suggestion has merit. There are many domains and methods of enquiry into 'men's [sic] minds'. Here is a Rylean list: practicing psychologists, economists,

criminologists, anthropologists, political scientists and sociologists, teachers, strategists, statesmen, employers, confessors, parents, lovers and novelists. There seems to be no difference between what these people do and what psychologists purport to do. Ryle's advice is that we give up 'the notion that "psychology" is the name of a unitary enquiry or tree of enquiries' (p. 323). 'Medicine' could serve as an analogous for a similarly loosely connected cluster of enquiries and techniques.

However, some might retort, psychology offers to provide *causal* explanations of human conduct. Ryle has already shown the folly of that proposal in the bulk of the book. We know very well what caused this or that human performance, say the farmer bringing back the pigs from the market. The price was too low. Furthermore, though there are phenomena for which one does not have an explanation, for the most part the idea that a psychologist could arrive at an ulterior and disparate kind of explanation from the one we already have is absurd. To the objection that there is a question as to why the price being too low led to farmer abandoning the sale. Ryle's response is to argue that, in the end, there are simple correlations and that is it.

There is one strand of behaviourism which resembles the Rylean account of mind. It is the 'radical behaviorism' of B. F. Skinner. Despite the crudeness of the Skinnerian terminology and his simplistic account of the developmental process, both authors hold to the continuity of the private and public domains, while denying that there is any good ground for the hypothesis of a hidden realm of cognition with which the mental dispositions and occurrences of human life is to be explained. According to Ryle, behaviourists (and that must mean J. B. Watson) neglected the meaning of public performances, asserting that thinking consisted in making complex movements and noises. Others held that the 'inner mental life processes' were inaccessible to scientific, that is public study, and should be excluded from science. The merit of the behaviourist programme, according to Ryle, was to show how shadowy were the inner life processes. Mechanists and para-Mechanists have both mislocated the phenomena of the mental life.

Private and public activities are alike in almost every respect. Neither is in need of an extra explanatory dimension, of mental mechanisms that parallel the hidden explanatory dimensions of the physical sciences. That does not seem to be quite the right exegesis of the line in *The Concept of Mind* either. If it were, why did Ryle so conspicuously neglect to mention oxygen in his discussion of combustion? Sometimes Ryle writes as if he were a positivist,

rejecting the reality of a theoretically supported domain in the physical sciences as in psychology.

### **Ryle's Method**

There are three striking features of the method Ryle uses in the *Concept of Mind*. The reader is immediately struck by the way Ryle uses comparisons between the meanings of problematic psychological words, and the meanings of everyday expressions about which no one is likely to be mistaken or misled. For example to *show* that 'seeing' does not refer to a special cognitive activity in the way that 'looking' does so refer, Ryle offers the distinction between 'fishing and catching' and 'walking and humming'. Catching is the upshot of fishing, whereas humming is a different activity from the walking with which it is accompanied. The comparisons serve to throw the problematic uses into a clear light. Our grammatical intuitions are readied for the philosophical task of coming to see something recondite about perception and cognition by attending to something mundane about fishing. The relation between 'looking' and 'seeing' is like that between 'fishing and catching', but unlike that between 'walking and humming'. In case we have not caught the point Ryle makes his other characteristic methodological move, the presentation of a list of similar words. Thus, 'searching and finding', 'fighting and winning', 'journeying and arriving' are offered as well (pp. 150 – 151).

Lists have another role. For instance, in the discussion of emotion (p. 108) Ryle offers a list of words doing duty for one of the generic uses of the word 'pleasure'. His list includes 'delight', 'transport', 'rapture', 'exultation' and 'joy'. The point of the list is to highlight the cases in which there are feelings associated with such moods. While there are thrills of pleasure, Ryle declares that it is not pleasure which courses through our bodies. Neither delight nor enjoyment are themselves feelings. They are moods, 'signifying agitations'. Why should we accept Ryle's assertion? Well, we know how to use the words in the list. All we need are reminders. What then is pleasure? It is neither a feeling nor a mood. In this it is unlike its presumed complement, pain.

The third innovation could be called 'argument by adverbs'. In several places Ryle sets about establishing a distinction between two kinds of expressions, for example task-verbs and achievement-verbs, by presenting a list of adverbs which can be used to qualify one sort of verb

but not the other. While we can say he ran quickly, we cannot say he won quickly. We can say he looked assiduously, but not that he noticed assiduously.

These moves are indeed innovatory as the texture of philosophical argument. They rest in the end on *reductiones ad absurdum*, but the full text of the arguments is rarely spelled out. There is no need to spell out formal contradictions stemming from the views Ryle attributes to that mysterious company 'some epistemologists'. Anyone can see from running through the relevant list that delight is a mood *expressed* in various feelings, but is not itself a feeling.

Part of the pleasure in reading *The Concept of Mind* comes from the extraordinary wealth of observations and comparisons which the Rylean method requires. Quite unlike the often boring abstractions of academic philosophy, Ryle's world is rich in people fishing, gardening, soldiering, playing golf, planning to redecorate the sitting room, and so on. Every page opens a window on to the activities of everyday life. There are no abstract persons denoted by letters of the alphabet, nor are their doings expressed algebraically. The concreteness of the illustrations is an essential part of the argument. How can we fail to assent to suggestions that draw on comparisons with that which we know intimately in our own homes, gardens, jobs and pastimes?

### **Ryle's Legacy**

In the relatively recent development of discursive psychology one finds many Rylean themes and concepts. Yet, I think it is true to say that *The Concept of Mind* was not the vehicle by which these ideas came into psychology. The direct influence of Ryle's great book has been overshadowed by the flood tide of Wittgenstein's writings and commentaries thereon, through which this approach to psychology has been fostered. However, there are some Rylean phrases that are now part of the common currency of philosophy of mind. For example, the distinctions between 'dispositions and occurrences', 'knowing how and knowing that' and 'tasks and achievements' are ubiquitous.

In philosophy, at least for a while, it was a different story. The analysis of the family of dispositional concepts has become a long-standing field of philosophical study. The technique of argument by lists has been used to good effect by many writers of the second half of the twentieth century, for example by A. R. White, in a study of 'attention'. (White, 1964). The

publication of a new edition of *The Concept of Mind* in 2002 with an important introduction by Daniel Dennett will, no doubt, bring the book back to the influential position it deserves.

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<sup>i</sup> Throughout *The Concept of Mind*, Ryle identifies his philosophical adversaries in the vaguest terms. The use of the phrase 'some [most] epistemologists' is typical.