

An Evaluation of Ryle's Criticism of Substance Dualism

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ON

MIND BODY PROBLEM

Observations on the Criticisms of Ryle

- Albert Hofstadter, “Ryle’s Category Mistake” *Journal of Philosophy*, vol.48, No. 9, 1951.
- 1. ***The Concept of mind*** is a brilliant attack on **Metnalism** in general and dualism in particular
- 2. Dualism is not a **factual mistake but a logical mistake**. This shown undertaking the study of ***the logic of language***
- Ryle’s analysis implies ‘only a certain sort of ***sophisticated naïve behaviourism***

Hofstadter's Disagreement 1

- “How are the mental conduct concepts applicable to human behaviour? Is a question about the causation of behaviour.”
 - (Ryle 1950: 67)
- What makes the bodily movement voluntary? Is a causal question.
 - (Hofstadter 1951)

Disagreement 2

- Descartes need not be blamed for advocating dualism. Historically dualism has been advocated by Stoics, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, et. al.

How do we explain action?

- Philosophical explanation is descriptive rather than explanatory.
- How can teleological behaviour be explained with the assumption that the nervous system function like a cybernatic mechanism? And to explain this mechanism we need anatomical and physiological evidences.
 - This would of course weaken the position of dualism.

Ryle's philosophical Analysis

- Defining the mental substance as observable facts
- All observable facts are explained with the help of a theory
- But mind is not an observable facts
- Hence, it is not part of the explanatory theory, rather it is descriptive.

What is man? And, Why dualism?

- “Man exhibits certain characteristics in behaviour; a complex persistence in variation, teleological unity, multiple tracked dispositions and so on, whereas stones do not.”
- “Men are something more than the bodily, having something competent, as body is not, to make body behave intelligently. This is soul. (It is like pilot in the ship; without the pilot he ship wonders aimlessly)” (Hofstadter 1951: 264)

Searle on **Mind and Body Problem**

- Why Dualism still remains?
- The **commonsensical pictures** of man as **conscious, free , mindful, rational agents** does not go with the **scientific conception** of the reality. i.e.
 - the world contains nothing but the unconscious physical particles.
 - **How does one balance these problems?**

Searle's basic questions

- How human beings represent the world?
- How essentially meaningless world contains meanings?

Spill over of this issue

- “How should we interpret recent work in computer science and artificial intelligence - work aimed at making intelligent machines?”
- Does digital computer give us right picture of the human mind?”
 - (Searle 1984: 13)

Mind - Brain Problem

- Mind body problem seems to be difficult
- **Stomach – digestion** problem
- **Seventeenth Century Vocabulary** still prevails
 - Monism vs Dualism
 - **Monism – idealism or materialism**
 - **Materialism – behaviourism or physicalism**

Temptation to downgrade the mental

- **Materialism**
- Subjective, conscious mental states are **not real** and **reducible** to any thing else in the universe.
 - Imagining non existence of consciousness is meaningless.
- “Consciousness is the central fact of specifically human aspects of our existence – language, love, humour, and so on – would be impossible.” (Searle 1984: 16)

Problem with Intentionality

- How can this stuff inside my head is *about* anything?
- How can it *refer* to anything?
- How does the mind *represent* the world?

Problem of subjectivity

- ‘I have pain’ – *from my point of view.*
- I am aware of myself and ***my internal mental states*** which are quite different from the mental states of the other people.