Ryle's Conceptual Cartography
A Brief Introduction

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Abstract   Conceptual Cartography is a style of philosophical investigation, named and championed by Gilbert Ryle and somewhat akin to, but independent from, Wittgenstein's examination of 'language games' in *Philosophical Investigations*. This study examines the impetus for this method which includes difficulties with the traditional approaches to conceptual analysis initiated by Plato's Socrates and encouraged by later work in formal logic.

Keywords   Ryle. Conceptual analysis. Conceptual cartography. Systematic ambiguity. Category-mistake. Logic. Philosophy.

Summary   1 Conceptual Cartography. – 2 The Problem With Traditional Conceptual Analysis. – 3 Systematic Ambiguity. – 4 Category Mistakes. – 5 Conceptual Analysis vs Conceptual Cartography. – 6 Some Examples. – 7 Conclusion.

1 Conceptual Cartography

Gilbert Ryle promoted a style of philosophical enquiry he called "Conceptual Cartography" in contrast with the traditional styles of decompositional and logical analysis. In comparing conceptual clarification with geographical cartography, he compares what a competent speaker of language is to a philosopher with what an ordinary villager is to a mapmaker.

A local villager knows his way by wont and without reflection to the village church, to the town hall, to the shops and back home again. He knows every house, stream, road, and alleyway from the personal point of view of one who lives there. Asking him to draw or to consult a map of his village, however, may give him pause. For this way of thinking of his village may be new and strange since it employs compass bearings and units of measurement. What was first understood in the personal terms of local snapshots now has to be considered in the completely general terms the cartographer. Whereas the villager knows from the point of view of someone who lives in it the whereabouts of the places in the village, in the sense that he could lead a stranger from one place to another, this is a different skill from one requiring the villager to tell the stranger, in perfectly general terms, how to get to any of the places, or indeed, how to understand these places in relation to those of other villages.

St Augustine, in the morning, could operate with ideas of temporal duration when he wondered how long the battle lasted; "he could follow remarks containing tensed verbs and specifications of dates, hours and epochs, and yet, so to speak, in the afternoon he could not answer questions about the concept of Time" (Ryle 2009c, 451-2). Why? The answer Ryle suggests is that the morning and afternoon tasks belong to different levels of discourse; just as the know-how of the villager is of a lower order from the knowledge of the mapmaker. "The afternoon task requires reconsidering, in a special way, features of what had been done, perfectly efficiently perhaps, but still naïvely, in the morning" (438).

2 The Problem With Traditional Conceptual Analysis

Ryle (2009c, VII) tells us that by the time he became a don in the 1920s, philosophers had begun to give up the view that their subject-matter was ideas in the mind and instead, hankering for a subject matter that was not in competition with the sciences, they succumbed to the "regrettable temptation to look for Objects that were neither mental nor material":

> Platonic Forms, Propositions, Intentional Objects, Logical Objects… [and even] Sense Data were recruited to appease our professional hankerings to have a subject matter of our own. (Ryle 2009c, VII)

Propositions, or the content of judgments, are expressed in sentences. On the view Ryle rejects, these propositions are what the sentences name: the entities to which they refer. And the proposition-factors – including particulars, qualities, relations, and concepts – are also considered to refer to or name objects that subsist in a Platonic heaven or, as Frege (1956, 302) suggests, "a third realm must be recognized".

The traditional method of conceptual analysis, illustrated by Plato in the *Socratic Dialogues* and later by G.E. Moore, and still alive today, is to search for the conditions that are both necessary and sufficient for the application of the concept-term. The problem with this style of decompositional analysis is that it rarely, if ever, works, since there always seem to be exceptions. This problem, as we shall see, will also affect logical analyses.

3 Systematic Ambiguity

Why is it so difficult to provide such an analysis? It is because of Ryle calls the 'systematic ambiguity', of, in particular, common general terms that we categorize as 'concepts'. Unlike obvious 'pun' words, such as 'bank', which can be used in completely different senses (a financial institution or the side of a river), systematically ambiguous ones may take on more subtle 'inflections of meanings' or 'elasticities of significance' as they occur in various discourses. Ryle pointed out that most, if not all expressions of natural language have these elasticities. Wittgenstein (1953, § 108) acknowledges in his later work that "[w]e see that what we call 'sentence' and 'language' has not the formal unity that I imagined but is the family of structures more or less related to one another". This network can be revealed when we consider the different implication or logical threads of a sentence as it is employed on various occasions. These logical threads, as Ryle explains, include what would count as evidence, justification or warrant; as implied or permitted; as contrary, contradictory or otherwise inconsistent or incompatible; as incurred commitments and liabilities; as acceptable uptakes or reactions; and so on. Mentioning any one of these is among the ways we spell out what we mean or what we are trying to say. It is for this reason that an answer to the questions "What is your evidence?", "What are your grounds?", "What is your point?", or even "Give me an example!" may help us understand what is said. In short, given the elasticities of significance in any

given expression, to understand the force of the utterance and its logical ties will often enable us to glean the way its constituent expressions are applied. To better appreciate this, let us consider the following example.

> If you show me a photograph of a woman you call your mother but at the same time claim that she is not a member of your family I may not know what to think until I learn what you mean by 'mother' and 'family': how you are using or applying these expressions in the circumstances.

As we come to understand English, we learn that (in what I shall call) the metaphorical 'folder' labelled 'mother' we tend to include, for example, females who have given birth. We may also include females who have raised their offspring. Often the different considerations that would elaborate, explain, or justify our use of the label 'mother' coincide, but sometimes they do not. On occasion it is important to mark the differences, so if the context does not make it clear, we might use special labels to specify that the subfolder we have in mind is 'birth mother' or 'adoptive mother'. Several decades ago, a separate folder, 'nurse mother' was employed more frequently than it is today. Of course, there are other items collected under the folder 'mother' besides females who have given birth; extending, as a form of address, to very old women, to the head of a female religious community, to institutions or organizations which have 'begotten' other ones; to an extreme example or large specimen of something. The French equivalent, *la mère*, is sometimes used as a synonym for the 'starter' (or 'the mother yeast') used in the production of vinegar and bread. And so on and so forth.[1]

The folder family overlaps in certain places with that of mother – but given the different inflections and thus subfolders of mother and family we may need some time to reflect in order to spell out how. My four cats and one dog are members of my family though many animal owners do not consider their (e.g., working) horses, dogs, sheep, etc. as pets and thus in an intimate way. This is not just a sentimental claim: it is illuminative to those who might otherwise be bewildered by my lifestyle choices. However, though I used to take my sourdough starter on holiday with me (because it needed regular feeding)

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[1] Grammatical variants – adverbs, adjectives, or verbs – such as 'motherly', 'mother-like', or 'to mother' will have overlapping occupations with (that is some affinities with and some differences from) those items collected under 'mother'. Indeed, in many philosophically interesting cases, it will be the applications of verbal, adjectival, or adverbial forms of an expression that will determine how best to understand what is subsumed by the abstract noun. This is exemplified by the present study of the notion of meaning.

even if there were any sense in regarding it as part of my family this
would have nothing to do with its being *la mère*.[2]

On one central, established use of the expressions 'mother' and
'family', to be a mother is to be a member of a family. Your decision
to use 'family' so as to exclude your mother when you showed me
her photo, though perhaps not immediately clear, is upon reflection
understandable: within the metaphorical folder labelled 'family' are
included people who are related to one another and who, because of
this, are to be treated with a special loyalty or intimacy. You could
well argue that your relation to your mother does not warrant this in-
timacy but your relation to your adoptive parents or your pets does,
and it is this particular inflection which you are bringing out in your
choice not to use the term for your mother.

It was suggested that in the docket labelled 'mother' we may in-
clude females who raise their offspring as well as those who have
given birth. Because the expression 'raise their offspring' also has
elasticities of significance, especially as modern, reconstituted fam-
ilies become prevalent, we find the folder labelled 'mother' may al-
so contain 'stepmother', though this expression itself admits of in-
flections arising from its use, for example, in fairy tales. It would be
understandable if a child were to stick with 'mother' to describe a
stepmother to whom she feels close, especially if the birth mother is
not around. By contrast, because of the suggestion of age difference
and the idea of an extended family unit, I would not dream of calling
myself a stepmother to my husband's three adult, middle-aged, male
children (and nor would they). 'Given birth' can also be stretched:
those who are aptly described as having done so may include, for ex-
ample, a genetic or non-genetic surrogate – also called the gesta-
tional mother. Although presently the egg donor is deemed to be the
biological mother, it would not be difficult to envisage how this cat-
egory may undergo further subdivisions as different kinds of proce-
dures for facilitating births or avoiding congenital disorders are in-
vented (for example, when there are two egg donors). In 2023 it was
announced that human trials of artificial wombs are about to start
for babies born critically premature.[3] Might this one day be extended
for the full period of gestation, giving sense to the notion of an arti-
ficial mother? Will this category itself divide as robots begin to play

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[2] Extended uses, we may agree, can be set aside while we concentrate on those that
form the central core. In the discussion that follows, we shall quickly set aside several,
more peripheral applications of 'mother' in order to concentrate on core, more literal
uses as opposed to metaphorical or figurative ones. But the contrast between what is
literal and what is figurative itself tends to blur as the context changes; and, as we shall
see, the number of applications even within an arguably literal use will be innumerable.

[3] Cf. https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-02901-1.

a nurturing role? This will depend, of course, on the need we have to make use of such notions.

Often what we mean, if we are to be understood, is settled by factors that override any scope or latitude we might have for drawing boundaries on our part. If you, who do not consider your mother to be family, were asked by your doctor if anyone in your family has a history of heart disease, you would be expected to consider the question in relation to the same woman you showed me in the photo, whether or not you choose to use the term 'family' in such a way as to exclude her. If the doctor asks of a child born to a surrogate parent whether she has such a history, presumably the answer here – how 'mother' is to be understood – would be the egg donor or the biological mother. If the doctor were interested instead in, say, diseases that can be transmitted from the womb to the baby this would arguably require that 'mother' be applied to the surrogate. These occasions, in other words, would call for different uses or applications. When the context is not clear and the relevant applications point in different directions the question, 'Is this woman your mother?', might invite the response, "Well, she is and she isn't" until it is clear what is to count as your mother in the circumstances.

This example illustrates the considerations that govern, have governed, and may in the future govern what might be considered core or literal, as opposed to peripheral or figurative, applications of the expression 'mother' and various subdivisions of this general category. There is no reason, however, to think that I have picked a special case. For the illustration of 'mother' illustrates a feature of most, if not all, expressions of any given natural language.

For example, consider what mathematicians count as random number sequences. One criterion – let us call it an 'epistemic' one – focuses on the unpredictability of successive numbers in relation to the preceding ones. Or, exploring how to achieve unpredictability, they might turn to a functional criterion through methods such as rolling a fair die. Or, when deciding whether to judge a sequence as random they might divert to intrinsic criteria, focussing on the types of patterns or types of numbers within any particular sequence. When these criteria clash and priority is given to the epistemic criterion – compromising the functional and intrinsic methods – the result is known as a 'pseudorandom' sequence. When conflicts persist, it is not uncommon to hear mathematicians bemoan that the concept of randomness is too elusive to grasp fully. This suggests that there is a definition of 'random number' to be found: it just has not yet been discovered. A more reasonable approach, following Ryle, would require recognizing the intricate and evolving considerations involved in deeming a number or sequence random, and perhaps even making

choices as what is to count in the circumstances as a random sequence based on specific needs.[4]

Or, as another example, consider the definition of 'planet' agreed upon by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) in 2006,[5]

> A planet is a celestial body that (a) is in orbit around the Sun, (b) has sufficient mass for its self-gravity to overcome rigid body forces so that it assumes a hydrostatic equilibrium (nearly round) shape, and (c) has cleared the neighbourhood around its orbit.

This definition, to the chagrin of many, downgraded Pluto and upgraded Ceres. Just as it is common to identify tomatoes as vegetables (instead of fruits) in everyday contexts, so do many insist on identifying the original nine bodies circling the Earth as what will count as a planet.

This is also the case for the proprietary concepts of analytic philosophy: Consider 'knowledge', 'justice' or 'beauty', like those of 'time', 'space', 'probable', 'about', 'the same as', 'understanding', 'meaning', 'thought', 'belief', 'right', and 'good', for example, each of which have applications in which their inference-ties will differ. This is especially true for expressions that feature in multiple and overlapping areas of discourse. Reading through discussions in philosophy, we are likely to discover that this is also true of the semi-technical expressions adapted for philosophical purposes, such as 'real', 'idea', 'representation', 'analytic', 'necessary', 'possible', 'entail', 'valid', 'argument', 'property', 'proposition', 'concept', and so on, as these have been and continue to be used and debated in philosophical discussion. Unless the context makes it clear, what a philosopher is *counting* as satisfying any one of these expressions on the occasion of its employment is often necessary for understanding what she means.[6]

4 Category Mistakes

It is this feature of language – the systematic ambiguity of most, if not all of our expressions – that Ryle focuses upon when considering philosophical puzzles in *The Concept of Mind* and in *Dilemmas*.

His method for dissolving this typical philosophical puzzle is to identify 'category-mistakes' or 'type-errors' that have been committed. He shows that there has been this particular type of philosophical

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4 Cf. the radio broadcast by Melvyn Bragg "In our Time: Random and Pseudorandom". https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00x9xjb.

5 Cf. https://science.nasa.gov/solar-system/planets/what-is-a-planet/.

6 For an extended discussion of the concept of knowledge, see Tanney 2018, in particular Chapter 3 (51-68).

equivocation by untying the logical threads of the key expressions – or, generalised to include what may be expressed in different languages, the key concepts – to show how the error should or could have been avoided. Such category or type-errors tend to occur when, in the same argument, a concept-expression having certain implications, presuppositions, and other logical ties is employed at one moment, and then the same concept-expression is employed with different logical ties at another. On this understanding, the diagnosis of a category mistake is tantamount to a warning of a potentially logically fallacious equivocation.

I have argued (Tanney forthcoming) against others (Strawson 1970; Palmer 2009; Dancy 2014; Kremer forthcoming) that Ryle, in his early work, did not have a 'doctrine of categories' or think that some theoretical account could be given of the notions of category, of category-difference, or category mistake. Indeed, I suggest that he clarifies, rather than changes, his position in *Dilemmas* when he complains that Aristotle's followers 'ossified' their master's teaching by treating his list of categories

> as providing the pigeon-holes in one or other of which there could and should be lodged every term used or usable in technical or untechnical discourse. Every concept must be either of Category I or of Category II or... of Category X. Even in our own day there exist thinkers who, so far from finding this supply of pigeonholes intolerably exiguous, find it gratuitously lavish; and are prepared to say of any concept presented to them' Is it a Quality? If not, then it must be a Relation. (1953, 10)

In opposition to philosophers who claim that there are a finite number of categories (in Aristotle's case there are ten, including substance, quantity, quality, and relations), Ryle launches the challenge: "In which of your two or ten pigeon-holes will you lodge the following six terms, drawn pretty randomly from the glossary of Contract Bridge alone, namely 'singleton', 'trump', 'vulnerable", 'slam', 'finesse' and 'revoke'?" (10).

He reminds us (rather ironically) that the languages of law, physics, theology, and musical criticism are not any poorer than that of Bridge. *Contra* Aristotle, there is not a finite number, let alone a mere six or ten distinct logical domains or *métiers* available for the terms or concepts we use in either everyday or specialized discussions. There are countless ones, as well as indefinitely many dimensions of these distinctions. The characterization of categories or types will depend – to use a metaphor of Wittgenstein's and a more literal example of Ryle's – the game being played.

Not only, for example, will the six Bridge terms, 'singleton', 'trump', 'vulnerable', 'slam', 'finesse' and 'revoke', fail to go into any

of Aristotle's ten pigeon-holes since, "though all alike belong to the specialist lingo of a single card-game, not one of them is, in an enlarged sense of 'category', of the same category with any of the other five…" (10). Furthermore,

> [w]e can ask whether a card is a diamond or a spade or a club or a heart; but not whether a card is a singleton or a trump; not whether a game ended in a slam or in a revoke; not whether a pair of players is vulnerable or a finesse. None of the terms is a co-member of an either-or set with any of the others. The same thing is true of most though naturally not of all of the terms that one might pick at random out of the glossaries of financiers, ecologists, surgeons, garage-mechanics and legislators. (10-11)

It follows from this, Ryle continues, that both the propositions that encapsulate such concepts and the inquiries they aim to address cannot automatically be categorized into a predefined set of logical types or classifications.

> A logician, however acute, who does not know the game of Bridge, cannot by simple inspection find out what is and what is not implied by the statement 'North has revoked'. (11)

The point of searching for category-mistakes in philosophical arguments that champion one position or 'ism' over another is, I suggest, to give a first indication that there is not a genuine puzzle:

> Sometimes thinkers are at loggerheads with one another, not because their propositions do conflict, but because their authors fancy that they conflict. They suppose themselves to be giving, at least by indirect implication, rival answers to the same questions, when this is not really the case. They are then talking at cross-purposes with one another. It can be convenient to characterize these cross-purposes by saying that the two sides are, at certain points, hinging their arguments upon concepts of different categories, though they suppose themselves to be hinging them upon different concepts of the same category, or vice versa. But it is not more than convenient. It still remains to be shown that the discrepancies are discrepancies of this general kind, and this can be done only by showing in detail how the *métiers* in ratiocination of the concepts under pressure are more dissimilar from one another or less dissimilar from one another than the contestants had unwittingly supposed. (11)

It is the job of conceptual cartography to set the matter straight.

5   Conceptual Analysis vs Conceptual Cartography

The existence of the pervasive logical flexibility of our expressions shatters a number of presuppositions that are key to the methods of analytic philosophy. Not only, as we have seen, does it frustrate conceptual analysis in the Socratic-Moorean style because there can be no necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of a concept if it is subject to indefinitely many circumstance-dependent variations. It also puts into question what Wittgenstein called the 'preconceived idea of crystalline purity' of language: a requirement of formal logic. Instead, Wittgenstein (1953, §108) suggests that

> what we call 'sentence' and 'language' has not the formal unity that I imagined, but is the family of structures more or less related to one another. – But what becomes of logic now? Its rigor seems to be giving way here. – But in that case doesn't logic altogether disappear? – For how can it lose its rigor? Of course not by our bargaining any of its rigor out of it. – The preconceived idea of crystalline purity can only be removed by turning our whole examination around. (One might say: the axis of reference of our examination must be rotated, but about the fixed point of our real need).

The philosophy of logic speaks of sentences and words in exactly the sense in which we speak of them in ordinary life when we say e.g. "Here is a Chinese sentence", or "No, that only looks like writing; it is actually just an ornament" and so on.

We are talking about the spatial and temporal phenomenon of language, not about some non-spatial, non-temporal phantasm. (Note in margin: only it is possible to be interested in a phenomenon in a variety of ways). But we talk about it as we do about the pieces in chess when we are stating the rules of the game, not describing their physical properties.

The question "What is a word really?" is analogous to "What is a piece in chess?"

The systematic tendency of our expressions to take on different inflections of significance requires us to reject the Plato-inspired idea that concepts or proposition-factors are logical objects that exist 'in isolated splendour'. It is one thing – and, indeed, a great improvement – to deny that concepts are ideas in the mind. Their autonomy from psychology, however, arises not from their self-sufficiency as third-realm, independent, subsistent and never-changing Objects: on the contrary; our linguistic practices, and the forms of life in which they figure, are their genesis.

The analogy of philosophy with cartography is useful to remind us that philosophers are not, in thinking about Pleasure for example, 'staring hard' at an entity or Essence designated by these abstract

nouns: instead, they are considering "what we are asserting or denying *in concreto* when we say that someone did or did not enjoy the concert; or that someone enjoys this piece of music more than that piece" (2009a, 192). Unlike the abstract noun 'Pleasure', the corresponding live verb 'enjoy' is making specific contributions to the sense of the sentence. Thus, to say anything enlightening about Pleasure we must first examine expressions – in their various employments – operating with this concept by embodying the relevant verbs, adjectives, and so on. Without the morning task there could be no afternoon task. Pace the impression Moore and Russell tended to give, analysing concepts "cannot consist just in acts of contemplating a rarefied object, withdrawn, like a coin in a museum, from its native commercial transactions" (192).

As Ryle explains, we, in the midst of our morning task, are like the villager with respect to our employment of words and phrases. Knowledge by wont of the use of expressions and of concrete ideas is something everybody learns in the course of growing up speaking and understanding a language: "Ideas like spaniel, dog, ache, thunder in their original use are instances of concrete concepts [...] their 'logical geography' is taught by one's daily walks" (207). But just as people often know their way about a village, say, without necessarily being able to describe the distances or directions between places within it or its relation to other villages, so too do people often know how to operate with ordinary, non-technical, and even semi-technical and technical expressions as well as with 'concrete' ideas without being able to codify the rules, permissions, or sanctions that govern their operations. "This workaday knowledge is knowledge but it is knowledge without system and without checks. It is knowledge by wont and not knowledge by rules" (201). The philosopher's task, by contrast, is analogous to that of the mapmaker. It is a higher-order task, for it charts – or operates upon – the concepts, especially the more abstract ones, which are operated with by expressions embodying the live verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc. doing their particular, circumstance-dependent, morning-task work.

The analogy with cartography is useful insofar as it reminds us of the importance of a synoptic view that surveys more than, say, just one building. For philosophical problems do not arise from difficulties with single concepts. They arise, instead "as the traffic-policeman's problems arise, when crowds of conceptual vehicles, of different sorts and moving indifferent directions meet at some conceptual cross-roads" (325) (Hence the role of the category-mistake cum traffic-cop). Thus, the goal in philosophy, as in cartography, is not to chart the appearance of single ideas, but rather "to determine the cross-bearings of all of a galaxy of ideas belonging to the same or contiguous fields" (201-2).

6   Some Examples

In *The Concept of Mind* (2009b) Ryle examines both the ontological and epistemological consequences of Descartes's view that the mind and body are distinct substances that interact. In contemporary philosophy, Descartes's mind-body dualism is often the starting point for discussions in the philosophy of mind. This expands into debates between competing philosophical theories, such as type- and token-physicalism, mentalism, eliminativism, fictionalism and more complex forms of dualism.

Consider, as a brief example of Ryle's, the question: "How can one seem to see a dragon or hear a tune if there is not a dragon to be seen or a tune to be heard?". Before beginning the search for a psychological representative of that which is seen or heard, we should examine carefully how the expression, say, "she fancied or she imagined she saw a dragon" is employed. We have no trouble understanding it: we know the kind of circumstances in which it is appropriate or not; in which it would be accepted or challenged, and none of this requires theoretical knowledge or as Ryle says, knowledge of the "wires and pulleys" kind. Understanding the nature of imagination involves – as Wittgenstein (1953, § 370) reminds us – understanding how the word 'imagination' is used. This in turn, as I see it, requires understanding the grounds and backing we give and accept for making claims such as "she fancied she saw a dragon". In reminding ourselves how we defend these claims, we should come to see that our initial question is not one that a theory of mental mechanisms is required to answer. (Nor, we should add, one that requires a theory of mental mechanisms augmented by a theory about the mechanisms' alleged physical realisers). The way out of the puzzle is to construe descriptions of people as imagining that they see or hear or do things "without falling back on the idioms in which we talk of seeing horse-races, hearing concerts, or committing murders" (Ryle 2009b, 228). To say someone has committed a stage-murder or a mock-murder "is to say, not that a certain mild or faint murder has been committed, but that no sort of murder has been committed" (228), and similarly, to say that someone imagines seeing a dragon is not to say that she sees a dragon-image or, we might add, that she has a mental representation of a dragon (which counts as non-veridical because it is not the causal effect of a real dragon). It is rather to say that she "does not see a dragon or anything dragon-like at all" (228). When we speculate that when one fancies she hears a tune she really hears a mental tune we are failing to recognize that 'seemings' concepts are at least partly designed to act as factual disclaimers and not to suggest the existence of things. It is worth emphasizing again for today's readers that not only do such concepts *not* suggest the existence of

shadowing things: nor do they suggest the existence of more palatable 'natural' proxies for the ghostly ones.

Ryle's work in *The Concept of Mind* also involves, to give another example, what he considers a mistake that is committed by philosophers of mind who attempt to distinguish certain moves or performances that deserve credit (e.g., 'achievements') from other performances that, though perceptually similar, do not. The mistake involves appending on to the credit-deserving performance an extra, non-perceptual feature. Ryle diagnoses that error as a result of mis-assimilating expressions that employ mental concepts as active verbs, such as 'to think', 'to reason', or 'to deliberate' – which signal occurrences – with other expressions that employ the adjectival or adverbial forms to qualify actions, such as 'thoughtful', 'deliberate', and 'reasonable' – which do not. In the latter cases, where there are no recognizable happenings for the words to symbolize, it is supposed, mistakenly, that there are hidden ones, such as for example a mental mechanism that is thought to constitute the act of thinking, deliberation, or reasonableness.

Later, in *Dilemmas* (1953, 1), Ryle considers quarrels between

lines of thought, which are not rival solutions of the same problem, but rather solutions or would-be solutions of different problems, and which, none the less, seem to be irreconcilable with one another. A thinker who adopts one of them seems to be logically committed to rejecting the other, despite the fact that the inquiries from which the theories issued had, from the beginning, widely divergent goals. In disputes of this kind, we often find one and the same thinker-very likely oneself-strongly inclined to champion both sides and yet, at the very same time, strongly inclined entirely to repudiate one of them just because he is strongly inclined to support the other. He is both well satisfied with the logical credentials of each of the two points of view, and sure that one of them must be totally wrong if the other is even largely right. The internal administration of each seems to be impeccable but their diplomatic relations with one another seem to be internecine.

The concrete arguments he examines here include disputes between scientific theories and everyday platitudes that seem to defy the scientific findings. One example is the difference between a conclusion that seems to follow from any physiological account of perception versus what everyone learns to say, about what we see, smell, taste, or feel. Another involves Zeno's puzzle about Achilles and the Tortoise that seems to prove that their race cannot ever end, on the mathematical grounds that there are infinitely many intermediate (eventually fractional) steps to the finish-line. He also considers the suggestion – found in rationality-based theories of action – that all purposive or

intentional actions are motivated by desires which, at bottom, consist in the promotion of pleasure and the decrease in pain.

The problem of free will vs. determinism is another case:

> On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays [the same person] is sure that the will is free; on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays he is sure that causal explanations of actions can be found or are actually already known.... In his heart he would prefer saying that he knows that both views are true to saying that he knows that actions have no causal explanations or that he knows that people are never to blame for what they do. (4)

7 Conclusion

I have described Ryle's cartographical-philosophical approach, which has commonalities with, but was developed independently of, the later Wittgenstein's focus on language-games. Both philosophers look at our linguistic practices – what we say and do, including how we defend and correct ourselves – in the light of various situations and circumstances. Finding within these practices a plurality of employments of any given expression – everyday, semi-technical, and even technical – Ryle unties the philosophical knots he finds in various philosophical conundrums that typically require prompting for one or other position or 'ism'. In so doing, he challenges many of the traditional assumptions, still very much alive, in Western analytic philosophy.

This, of course, is just a taste of Ryle's work. I highly recommend it to my readers.

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