CHAPTER - V
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THE NATURE OF SENSATION AND OBSERVATION:

The concept of sensation is an important concept of philosophy as well as psychology. The Oxford English Dictionary describes ‘Sensation’ as an operation of any of the senses, a psychical affection or state of consciousness consequent on and related to a particular impression received by one of the bodily organs or a particular impression required by one of the organs of sense. Based on this description we can draw a distinction between two types of sensations.

I. Those which are connected with special organs of sense, namely eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin.

II. Those which are connected with other sensitive but non-sensory parts of the body.

Seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and feeling come under the first category. They are the sensations connected with special organs of sense. The later are generally called organic sensations. Pains, aches, tickles, pricking, fatigue and giddiness, fall under this later category. But both are used interchangeably. For example, when our eyes are dazzled or we have a fish-bone in the throat, or we are pricked in the skin, we readily say that we have pain. Conversely, whenever we have an organic sensation, for example, pain in the throat or stomach or we are fatigued, we are apt to say that we feel the fish bone in the throat or suet pudding in the stomach, or the resistance of a log. However, the main point of
distinction is that while it is proper to ask for the cause of organic sensations, there is no sense in asking for the cause of the sensations connected with our special organs of sense. Generally, the cause of an organic sensation can be a sensation connected with our special sense organs.

The Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Philosophy describes the two meanings of the term sensation.

I. Ordinarily, sensation means having such feeling as cold, pressure, thirst, itches, or pains.

II. Technically, it means mental entities of a kind private to their owner.

Thus in ordinary language one may speak of having sensations of thirst, cold or pleasure and may refer to itches or pains as sensations. Here sensation is used synonymously with feeling. But the technical use of the word sensations involves a meaning. One may speak of visual or auditory sensations (i.e. - colours or sounds) while such form of speaking have no place in ordinary speech. Sounds and smells seem public and external. For example, two or more people may hear the same sound or smell the same smell and agree on its source. But the feelings of pressure or warmth are partly sensations and partly seem to be awareness of heavy or warm objects. In the technical sense, sensation is used in a semi-physiological and semi-psychological sense. Here sensation includes colour patches, hearing sounds, getting smells, tasting, touching and so on.

Sensation is primarily said to be a mental phenomena. Psychologists define sensation as a primary consciousness originating from sense object contact.
According to them, due to the stimulation of the senses, an initial consciousness emerges in the private realm of mind, which goes by the name sensation.

Some supporters of the theory of sensations are influenced by discoveries concerning the atomic structure of matter. The basic sensations are atomic. They are sensory point-elements each corresponding to a different nerve cells. Thus a patch of red colour would be made up of many sensations of red. The awareness of sensations or percepts is a circular explanation and can lead to an infinite regress; seeing sensations must require further sensations and so on. Thus it is necessary to maintain that the awareness of sensations or percepts is a special kind of direct awareness different from perceiving, an amendment explicitly adopted by the sense-datum theory. Sensationalists like James Mill, J.S. Mill, Hume and others claimed that perceiving is the association of various sensations. 'Association' is a vague term and was explained as the customary linking of ideas or sensations that are similar, contiguous in space and time and so on.

Sensationalism or sensationism holds that all knowledge has its origin in sensation. It is a doctrine of epistemology which considers sensations as the sole source of knowledge. As a psychological theory sensationalism stresses the origins of knowledge and the processes by which it is acquired. It reduces all mental contents to unitary sensations and has close relationships with associationism. It is sometimes regarded as a form of empiricism and adopted with antimetaphysical intentions. There is always a tendency to associate sensationalism with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries empiricism. The development of sensationalism
leads us to the distinction between sensation and perception. The distinction between them is important because perception involves interpretation and thus there is the possibility of error. But sensation does not involve it. Thus sensationalism is an empiricists quest for certainty and a sure foundation for knowledge.

During the last fifty years philosophers use the word sense-data or sense contents instead of sensations. Perception whether direct or indirect is a process of acquiring knowledge in which we know what is given to our senses. This given entity is the sense datum. The datum present in sensation is the sense-datum. It is different from memory data or introspection. Thus the problem of illustration or error in perception leads the philosophers to introduce sense data in philosophy specially with regard to epistemology. The concept of sense-data is not a new one. Some ancient philosophers called them sensible species.

In Locke and Berkeley we find them as the ideas of sensation. The same concept was found in Hume as impression. In the nineteenth century philosophy they were known as sensations. C.D. Broad and some other called them sensa. Ayer called them sensibilia and at the same time the term 'sense-data' has been introduced by the contemporary philosophers. The introduction of sense data has occupied a new dimension in the problem of knowledge and perception. Through the justification of sense-data perception has been made free from error or illusion.

G.E. Moore introduced the term 'sense-data' to denote those objects of sense-experience that are immediately given. According to the analytical philosophers also what is immediately given in sense experience is called 'sense
datum'. We can have sensory experience of things which do not exist. But what is immediately given to our sense organs must exist i.e. sense data. And what is lying behind the sensation is a physical object. Moore, regarding the nature and status of sense-data, takes a peculiar position which starts with the objectivity of sense data and marches towards subjectivity. Maintaining a difference between sense-data and the act of sensing he upholds that sense data can exist independently, without being perceived.

Some general nature of sense data are as follows -

I. Sense data are private. Each sensed only one percipient.

II. Sense data are transitory existents. They are lasting only while they are usually claimed to be events rather than things or properties.

III. Sense-data are distinct from the percipient and seem to be external.

IV. Sense-data are causal properties, for sounds cannot act on other things nor can colours or tastes, though the sensing of them may affect a person.

V. Sense-data cannot be other than they appear to be.

Thus the introduction of sense-data in philosophy are very important for understanding the nature of sensation. What we directly get in sensation is nothing but the sense-data and what is lying behind the sensation is a physical object.

Another important concept that is related with sensation, is observation. The relation between sensation and observation can be maintained as a relation of elements to a complete whole. Observation consists of noticing or having of
sensations, images, relations and other elements of experience. Observation is a 
purposive perception of the objective reality that provides us with the primary data 
for various claims to knowledge. Observation may be simple or complex, or direct 
or indirect. It is regarded as one of the postulates of scientific investigation. It 
provides the primary data for scientific research. Observing some thing entails not 
only housing a sensation but also paying heed to it. In the form of a formula we 
can say:

Observation = Having a sensation + paying heed to it.

Thus sensation and observation are closely related to each other.

The traditional philosophers more or less deal with the nature of sensation 
and observation. The Greeks had no linguistic means of distinction between 
sensation and perception. The word 'aesthesis' is used by Plato and Aristotle to 
mean 'sensation' or 'perception'. Plato says that the senses make judgements 
and indicate the results to the soul. Plato speaks of the senses anthropomorphically. 
The important point that emerges is the connection of perception with judgement. 
In some cases that judgement is straight forward; in other cases it has to be made 
relative to other standards. Plato made the distinction between absolute and relative 
properties. According to him, absolute properties are those which the senses are 
competent to judge for themselves. Plato accepted the view of Heraclitus that the 
whole of the sensible world is in a flux. Thus Plato thinks that the senses never 
judge adequately about any sensible properties that the whole sensible world is 
imperfect, a mere imitation of the world of Forms. This view is put forward in the
Timaeus. Plato's view of perception are also found in the first part of the Theatetus. This part of the Theatetus is concerned with the question whether aesthesis is knowledge. This is clearly not perception in the ordinary sense of the world. Thus ordinary empirical judgments are vindicated, and being not merely becoming, is attributed to objects of perception. This constitutes a revolution in Platonic thought and it is connected with other developments which may be discovered in the later dialogues.

In the Theatetus, Plato has used the term aesthesis. To have aesthesis is to have an acquaintance with sensible object; and the last is an impression or what modern philosophers have called a sense-datum. Therefore, Plato has not been concerned with perception in the ordinary sense of the word. In the notion of an impression the notions of sensation and perception are blended and there is no conception on Plato's part to separate them. Impressions are like sensations in so far as they are caused by things outside us. They are perceptual in so far as they afford us knowledge of things outside us.

Aristotle's conception of sense perception is found in De Anima. Aristotle is not concerned with the question where perception brings with it knowledge or can act as the basis of knowledge. He makes statements about the infallibility of the senses. But he was not concerned with the reliability of the senses as a source of knowledge. In the De Anima he says that before perceiving the senses are nothing actual at all, and that the same is true of the relation between the intellect and thought. Moreover, he says that the soul never thinks without an image, while
images depend for their existence upon previous sense-perception.

In the Metaphysics, Aristotle says that each sense is more reliable concerning its own proper object than it is about the objects of another sense. Aristotle wishes to distinguish between the physical object and the affections which it produces. But this passage of the metaphysics contains the germs of two notions which present difficulties for Aristotle in his discussion of perception in De Anima. Firstly, perception is said to involve a pathos. Since this word is etymologically connected with the verb to suffer or be affected, perception may in this respect be viewed as passive. Secondly, it is said that the senses make declarations about their objects. Hence, there are two grounds for subsuming perception under two of the Aristotelian categories—those of passivity and activity. To assert that something falls under some category when it really falls under another is to make a category mistake. In the 'Posterior Analytics', Aristotle says that all animals possess a 'congenital discrimination capacity which is called sense perception. He says the persistence of sense-impressions leads to memory and this is in turn to what he calls experience—the basis of empirical knowledge but as yet unsystematized.

Aristotle uses two formula in order to explain sense perception. The first formula is that in sense perception the sense organ receives the sensible form without matter. In this formula Aristotle uses technical vocabulary which he evolved to deal with philosophical problems. The second formula is that in perception the sense, the faculty or the sense organ is potentiality what the sense-object is actuality. In this case Aristotle again employs the technical distinction between actuality and...
potentiality.

In stressing the role of passitivity in perception, Aristotle emphasized the fact that, if perception is to occur, our senses require to be stimulated. The affection of our sense-organs is a necessary condition of perception. Thus Aristotle was really concerned with the conditions under which we have sensations.

The philosophy of the 17th century were much concerned with problems of perception. The rationalists attempted to show that knowledge could be based on indubitable truths of reason, independent of sense experience. The empiricists believe in sense experience upon which all knowledge could be based.Descartes believed in the method of Geometry. He makes no distinction between sensation and he thinks of sensation as caused in the mind by the stimulation of our sense organs. The words perception and perceptio are used to cover any form of cognition, whether intellectual or sensory.

Another word that is related with sensation is 'idea'. In Meditation III, Descartes defines ideas as thoughts which are as it were images of things, and he opposes them to volitions, affections and judgments. He says that ideas, when considered only in themselves and not as representative of another thing cannot strictly speaking be false. Falsity arises from the will, i.e. from the use of judgement. God guarantees our ideas, but not the use to which we put them. We have ideas both in perceiving and understanding our soul is confronted with an idea. In perception we have a spontaneous impulse to believe that our ideas are veridical, but that they are so can be demonstrated only by reference to God. Descartes
thinks of sense perception as something akin to sensation in the strict sense, although he adds to this our use of judgment. But we see that in so imposing judgment upon an initial passive sensation, Descartes follows the mediaeval tradition. But Descartes' concept of sensation is ambiguous between sensation and perception.

Like Descartes, Malebranche thinks that we can have clear and distinct ideas of extension, figure and movement, because these qualities are intelligible. His reasons for this view are the same as those of Descartes, namely that they are rationally conceivable in mathematical terms. God puts into our minds sensations corresponding to the effects in the sense organs which are caused by objects. The sensation which we have in any given case corresponds to the 'image' on the sense organ; and the sense organs themselves are designed for the conservation of life. The relativity plays a large part in Malebrachche's account of sense perception. He tries to show that our estimates of size, figure, movement and distance are all partially relative. Malebranche thinks that the essence of perception consists in the having of sensations. He thus follows the Cartesian tradition in thinking of sensations as representative. In referring to complex sensations, Malebranche points out that the impressions on the retina must be considered as a whole and not in isolation. Malebranche admits that since sensations are representative we are given information in each perception.

Spinoza's views of sensations can be understood by the following definition-

"By idea I understand a conception of the mind, which the mind forms
because it is thinking thing. I say conception rather than perception, since the
word 'perception' seems to indicate that the mind is affected by an object; whereas
conception seems to express an activity of mind. Because God is both a thinking
the order and connexion of ideas is the same as the order and connection of
things. 76

Thus in spinoza's philosophy the relation between ideas and bodies and
their objects and so the order of events in the human mind and in the body must
necessarily be parallel. But an idea has been defined as a conception not a
perception. Spinoza maintains that the human mind has therefore no adequate
knowledge of the body or of the things which are perceived by its means. Sense
experience is the lowest of the three grades of knowledge distinguished in the
Ethics. It covers not only the direct receipt of sensations but also any knowledge
derived ultimately from the senses and hence dependent on the body. Spinoza
calls it also 'opinion' and imagination. Knowledge derived from reason or intuitive
is necessarily true, while experience is the only cause of falsity. Spinoza recognizes
the existence of images or 'imaginations' of mind and he says that they in
themselves contain no error.

Leibniz makes a distinction between perception and apperception. To have
a perception is to have an idea which corresponds in some way to an object.
'Perception' is merely a general term for the representation of other things in a
monad. To have a perception of an object is to have an idea of it, an idea is not a
certain act of thinking but a power or faculty. When we are so aware we have

76 Spinoza - Ethics II, P.- 7
apperception, and this entails that our perceptions must be distinct. That is to say that in order to have apperception we must be conscious of what is involved in our perceptions and this necessarily requires that those perceptions should be distinct.

In Leibniz's philosophy the highest monad of all is God and under him there is a hierarchy of monads ad infinitum. The dominance of one monad which constitutes its body is determined by its power of activity and hence by the clarity of its perceptions. In human beings the monad which constitutes the soul has clearer perceptions than those which constitute the body. Monads not only have perceptions, they also have appetitions. Appetition is the tendency to pass from one perception to another and is due to the intrinsic activity of the monad. Appetition is an intrinsic property of a monad, not something that determines its relations to other monads. According to Leibniz, it is appetition which ensures the passage of a monad from one perception to another but the correspondence of those perceptions with their objects is due to the pre-established harmony. Leibniz and Spinoza are supreme rationalists in the sense that they make everything that has to do with the mind a function of the mind alone. They give no account of our ordinary conception of perception. Thus we see that the rationalists equate sensations with the ideas of our mind.

The empiricists occupy an important position regarding the nature of sensation. Locke held that ideas are produced in our minds by things outside us; Berkeley held that they are caused by spirits, while Hume denied the existence of things which could be the causes of our ideas, he suggests impressions. Locke
claims that there are three degrees of knowledge - (i) intuitive (ii) demonstrative and (iii) sensitive. He claims that we have intuitive knowledge of our own existence, demonstrative knowledge of God's existence and sensitive knowledge of the existence of particular finite things. Ideas may be either of sensation or reflection and they may be simple or complex. Locke uses the term sensation in many ways-

(i) Of the process by which we come to have ideas of sense.

(ii) As an equivalent of sense perception.

(iii) Of the physiological effect which objects have on the sense-organs and brain.

(iv) Of the consequent ideas.

Locke also uses the term 'impression' in an ambiguous way. He uses it to account for the effects on our sense organs and also to account for the effects on the mind. Locke follows the Cartesian line of making perception as a mode of thought. He classifies different kinds of perception -

(i) The perception of ideas in our minds

(ii) The perception of the significance of signs.

(iii) The perception of the agreement or disagreement between any of our ideas and he calls perception as an act of the understanding.

Locke supports the view that the mind must attend to the bodily impressions if there is to be perception. To feel a pain is to have a sensation. Locke distinguished between primary and secondary qualities. The primary qualities are solidity, extension, figure, motion or rest and number. As opposed to these there are such
qualities which in truth are nothing in the objects themselves but powers to produce various sensations in us by their primary qualities - as colours, sounds, tastes, etc. 'These are secondary qualities. Our perception of secondary qualities varies with the circumstances. Locke calls the ideas of secondary qualities as sensations

Berkeley gives us a new picture of the conception of sensation. He might be called as 'Purified Locke'. Berkeley substitutes for the Lockean view that matter can cause the ideas which are to be found in our minds. But our perceptions are caused by God. Berkeley assimilates all qualities to sensations. Berkeley follows Locke, but he goes further than him in that he extends the arguments to primary qualities, indicating that size, shape etc. are also perceived differently under different conditions. He draws the conclusion that all perceived qualities are really sensible things i.e. sensations in the mind.

Berkeley's view of sensation is that each sense is responsible for separate and distinct sensations and these are connected only by experience. To perceive an object is merely to have a bundle of ideas or sensations. Berkeley's view provides an almost perfect example of an attempt to assimilate perception to sensation. The notion of a sensation is such that it could rightly be said to be proper to a sense, and Berkeley relies on that fact. When the assimilation of perception to sensation is rejected, Berkeley's conclusions, including his somewhat paradoxical metaphysical views, no longer seem surviving.

Hume uses the term perception for any content of the mind, and all the actions of seeing, hearing, judging, loving, hating and thinking, fall under this
denomination. (Treatise, III, P. 456). Hume seems to make the distinction between impressions and ideas both one of kind and one of degree. In some places, he uses the term 'perception' instead of 'impression' speaking of it as passive in contrast with the active exercise of thought and he occasionally uses the term 'sensation' as another equivalent of impression. Hume maintains that there are three different kinds of impression conveyed by the senses, i.e., those of primary qualities, those of secondary qualities and pains and pleasures.

After Hume, Reid offers an important conception on the nature of sensation. In the "Essays On The Intellectual Powers of Man", Reid says, "Sensation is a name given by philosophers to act of mind which may be distinguished from all others by this, that is hath no object, distinct from the act itself". Again, he says that there is no difference between the sensation and the feeling of it. A pain and the feeling of pain are one and the same thing. Reid takes pains and similar feelings as the paradigm cases of sensations, and he shows some acuteness in his remarks about the status of these senses. He thinks that we have sensations whenever we use any of our senses. Reid thinks that perception is an act of mind which involves a conception of the object. Reid maintains that sensations are natural signs of perceptible qualities, not only the effects of those qualities.

Kant took over the representative theory of perception and maintained that all knowledge is founded on subjective experiences produced by entities outside the mind. The essential part of Kant's philosophy is that experience in the proper sense cannot arise without both intuitions and concepts. Thus he says 'thoughts
without content (intuition) are empty, intutions without concepts are blind". In Kant's theory sensations are like perceptions to the extent that they have an object and thus have an epistemological function.

In the nineteenth century Hartley defined sensations as 'those internal feelings of the mind which arise from the impressions made by external objects upon the several parts of our bodies.' He thus equated sensations with feelings, a move which was typical of the sensationalists. All our other internal feelings may be called ideas. Hartley makes it clear that sensations may be distinguished from ideas only by their intensity. So, he agrees with Hume.

Thus we see that most of the traditional philosophers admit sensation as a mental phenomenon and observation as object of sensation. The traditional philosophers equate sensations with perception and say that sensations are the ideas of our mind.

Gilbert Ryle tries to give a dispositional analysis of sensation and observation. He believes in the phenomena of sensations without believing in a mind to house them and as such he thinks that there is nothing other worldly or mysterious about sensations. The word 'Sensation' is used ordinarily for a special family of perceptions, that is, tactual and kinaesthetic perceptions, perceptions of temperatures, pains, discomforts etc. Seeing, hearing, tasting and smelling do not involve sensations any more than seeing involves hearing or than feeling a cold draught involves tasting anything. In the sophisticated sense sensation is semi-physiological, semi psychological term, the employment of which is related with
certain pseudo, scientific, cartesian theories. When we feel things as hot or cold, soft or hard, sweet or sour with hands we are said to have the sensations of the thing concerned. So, sensation is a species of perception. It is not an ingredient in perception. It is wrong to believe that seeing, hearing and smelling are comprised of sensations. Nobody says that he has first visual sensations and then seeing or he has first auditory sensations and then hearing. The case of seeing, hearing or smelling are comprised of sensations. So, according to Ryle, sensation means bodily feeling.

Ryle holds, "To say that something tastes peppery is to say that it tastes to me now as any peppered viands would taste to anybody with a normal palate". In this sense we cannot describe haystacks in terms of this or that set of sensations. We describe our sensations by certain sorts of references to observer and things like haystacks. For describing the organic sensations Ryle follows the same practice. When a sufferer describes a pain as stabbing, a grinding, or a burning pain, though he does not necessarily think that his pain is given to him by a stiletto, a drill, or an ember, still he says what sort of a pain it was by likening it to the sort of pain that would he given to anyone by such instruments. Thus Ryle says that sensations cannot be internal. It is something like the external bodily feeling which may be obtained by other instruments. We donot employ a 'neat' sensation vocabulary. We describe particular sensations by referring to how common objects regularly look, sound and feel to any normal person. Epistemologists use words like 'pains',

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77 Ryle, Gilbert : The Concept of Mind, - P. 193
itches', 'stabs' 'glows', 'dazzles' as neat sensations. But Ryle says that this is misleading.

Ryle says that to be observing something the observer must be trying to find something out. Thus his scrutiny is described as careful or careless, cursory or sustained, methodical or haphazard, accurate or inaccurate, expert or amateurish. Observing is a task. But one's powers of observation is different from having of visual, auditory or gustatory sensations. One can listen carefully, but not have a singing in one's ears carefully; one can look systematically, but one cannot have dazzle-sensation systematically; one can try to discriminate flavours, but one cannot try to have sensations of taste. Again we observe on purpose, but we do not have sensations on purpose, though we can induce them on purpose. We can make mistakes of observation. But in case of sensation, it is nonsense to speak of either making or avoiding mistakes. Sensations can be neither correct or incorrect, veridical nor non-veridial. They are neither apprehensions nor misapprehensions. Thus Ryle holds,

"Observing is finding out or trying to find out, something but having a sensation is neither finding out, nor trying to find out, nor failing to find out, anything". 78

Ryle advances a number of arguments to show that the theorists or traditionalists conception of sensation is false and fabricated. First, the theorists cannot explain what their sensations actually are. Sensations cannot described in

78. Ibid: P. - 195
unambiguous language. The theorists always describe sensation with the help of some object e.g. it looks as such and such or it sounds like such and such. So, whenever a sensation is described, it is described with the aid of the vocabulary of common objects. This falsifies the theory of the traditionalist, who explain things with the help of sensation. Ryle denies sensations as private events or processes because we have no neat sensation vocabulary i.e. there is no pure sense-datum language. This argument of Ryle consists of the following -

(a) The concept of sensation as understood by the theorists does not occur in the accounts of the novelists, the biographers, the diarists etc.

(b) Common people talk of seeing, hearing or smelling object are quite unconscious for occurring anything they need sensation.

(c) We speak of objects and not of sensations. If we want to talk of a glimpse (which is a sensation word according to the theorists), we talk of the glimpse of some such object as a robin. So, instead of the robin being described in terms of its glimpses or sensations, as the theorists had supposed, we describe the glimpses or the sensations in terms of the robin.

(d) There are some words e.g. 'pains', 'itches', 'stabs', 'glows', 'dazzles' etc which are taken to be pure sensation by the Cartesians. But Ryle says that it is not true.

Thus theorists account of sensation is not covered by the ordinary language and Ryle admits it as meaningless.

The second argument of Ryle is the argument from the impossibility of observing sensations. The points of this argument can be summarized as follows:
(a) Mental predicates are not applicable to sensations. We cannot speak of having sensations carefully, systematically, purposefully etc. Each predicates are only applicable to perceptions. We can listen carefully, look systematically or observe purposefully. As there is nothing mental about sensations, so we speak of reptiles having sensations.

(b) Objects of observation have size, shape, temperature, position, colour etc, but sensations cannot be the objects of observation.

(c) We require aids for observing objects e.g. telescope, stethoscope, torch light etc. But we donot require them for observing sensations. So, sensations cannot be affirmed as the objects of observation.

(d) If sensations would ex-hypothesse require the sensations of a sensation. But this is ridiculous.

Thus Ryle's arguments suggest that in order that a concept may be called mental, it has to be qualified by some such mental predicate as 'carefully,' 'systematically' etc. If it is proper to say that the concept of awarness is mental, even when 'carefully', 'purposefully' 'systematically' are inapplicable to it. Similarly, it is no less proper to say that the concept of sensation is mental even when such terms arenot applicable to it. After all a mental doesnot require a mental to prove as a mental. Sensations are mental. They donot need anything else to be established as mental. Ryle's contention is that sensations are non mental, because reptiles do oberve. These creatures observe and therefore act. Ryle, therefore as he does that whereas sensations arenot mental, observaitons or perceptions are so.
Ryle's second objection that the objects of observation have size, shape, colour etc. which are not at all to be found in sensation, strengthens dualism instead of weakening it. This only proves that the objects of observation are different in nature when compared to sensations. So, this argument though seeming to support Ryle may also go against him.

Ryle's third argument to use observational aids like telescope, stethoscope etc. in the case of sensations is also not very helpful because it may mean that the methods of knowing sensations and the external world are different. This again supports dualism for sensations and external objects being different in nature.

Ryle's last argument that the observation of sensation would require the sensation of sensation is unsatisfactory for the same reasons. Ryle maintains that as the observation of a robin would require the sensation of a robin, the observation of sensation would require the sensation of a sensation. But this argument presumes that the method of knowing sensations must be the same as the method of knowing robins. Generally sensation is the medium of knowing physical objects. A sensation therefore, which is very much unlike the physical object does not need a prior sensation in order to be known. The argument that a sensation must be known by another sensation is similar to the argument that a light must be known by another light. But Ryle maintains that sensation cannot be observed by pointing out the absurdity of such expressions as 'sensation of a sensation', 'the glimpse of a glimpse' or the 'whiff of a pain' etc. Here Ryle takes the words 'glimpse' and 'whiff' as sensation words. But Ryle himself says that these words are not sensation.
words. They are observation words. So, taking them as observation words but arguing as if they are sensation words will itself lead to nothing but absurdity and confusion. Thus Ryle's conception of sensation is ambiguous.

Ryle's argument is against the traditionalists' conception that a sensation is a private phenomenon which can only be internally observed. His objection is against the use of the verb 'observe' with regard to sensation. Ryle says that planets, microbes, nerves and eardrums are publicly observable things in the outside worlds. On the other hand, sensations, feelings and images are privately observable constituents of our several mental worlds. We need observational aids like telescopes, stethoscopes and torches for the observation of planets, hearts and moths, but we cannot think to apply such instruments to our sensations. Similarly, though we know well what sorts of handicaps prevent our observation of common objects, namely handicaps like fogs, tingling fingers, and singing in the ears, we cannot think of analogous impediments getting between us and such sensations as tingles and singings in the ears. Regarding the nature of sensation, Ryle holds.

"In saying that sensations are not the sorts of things that can be observed, I do not mean that they are unobservable in the way in which infra-microscopic bacteria, flying bullets, or the mountains on the other side of the moon, are unobservable in the way in which the planets are unobservable to the blind. I mean something like this. Every word that can be written down, except words of one letter, has a spelling; some words are more difficult to spell than others and some words has several different spellings. Yet if we asked how the letters of the
alphabet are spelled, we have to answer that they cannot be spelled at all. But this 'cannot' does not mean that the task is one of insuperable difficulty, but only that the question, 'of what letters arranged in what order does a given letter consist?' is an improper question. As letters are neither easy to spell, nor insuperably hard to spell, so I argue, sensations are neither observable nor unobservable. 79

The theorists again believe that perception requires to be preceded by having at least one sensation. We do not observe it. Ryle says strongly that sensations are never the objects of observation. We do not observe sensations as such. What is observed is an object, not its sensations. Sensations can only be noticed but not observed just as alphabets may only be written but not spelled. If sensation would have been observed, we would require the sensation of a sensation and the series would go on forever. It is said that observing entails having sensations. In this sense a man could not be described as watching a robin who had not got a single glimpse of it or as smelling a cheese who had not caught a whiff. Thus an object of observation like a robin, or a cheese must be the sort of thing by which the observers are able to catch glimpses or whiffs. If sensation are proper objects of observation then observing them must carry with it the having of sensations of those sensations analogous to the glimpses of the robin without which I could not be watching the robin. But this kind of sensation is absurd. There is no answer to the phrases like 'a glimpse of a glimpse' or a 'whiff of a pain' or 'the sound of a tweak' or 'the tingle of a tingle' and if there was anything to correspond, the series would go on forever.

Thus Ryle holds that sensations cannot be the object of observation. Ryle has, 79. Ibid : P. -196
however, no objection to the use of the verb ‘notice’ in connection with sensations since according to him, it is quite proper to speak of ‘noticed headache’ or ‘felt tweaks’.

Ryle, of course, makes a distinction between observing and noticing. He says that whereas observing involves noticing, noticing does not involve observing. But this simply means that observing is a complex process consisting of the noticing of various sensations. On the other hand, observations are characterised as good or bad, careful or careless etc. But the sensations cannot be characterised like this. Observations have the qualities of size, shape, position, temperature, colour, or smell etc. but these qualities are not found in the sensations. Thus sensations cannot be the objects of observation. There are objects and there are sensations to be noticed but there is no mind to house them or observe them. All those who believe that sensations are the objects of private or internal perception are wrong because the question of their perception cannot be meaningful. Thus sensations need not refer to a ghostly habitat called mind to exist in. Ryle holds that the word ‘observe’ is generally used to cover the processes like watching, listening, savouring, descrying, detecting etc. It is also sometimes used that ‘pay heed to’ is synonym of ‘notice’. Ryle says, “Watching and descrying do involve paying heed, but paying heed does not involve watching”.

But Ryle himself does not appear to be confident about the nature of sensation and observation. In his chapter on ‘Sensation and Observation’ he categorically asserts that observation is a complex process.

80 Ibid: P-198
comprising of the noticing of sensations. His two statements that is, 'observing entails having sensations' and 'watching and descrying do involve paying heed, but paying heed does not involve watching', establish that observation is a complex process and is more than having sensations. But in another article 'On Sensation' Ryle does not admit this point. There he observes: "The concept of perception is on a more elementary or less technical level than that of sense-impression" 81. Thus the whole idea of Ryle seems to be confused.

If we critically analyse Ryle's conception of sensation we see that Ryle himself takes sensations to be private. He observes, "It is, of course true and important that I am the only person who can give a first hand account of the tweaks given me by my ill-filling shoe, and an oculist who cannot speak my language is without his best source of information about my visual sensation: But the fact that I alone can give first hand accounts of my sensations does not entail that I have what others lack, the opportunity of observing those sensations." 82 The main burden of Ryle's argument is to disapprove that sensations are private on the ground that they are unobservable. His objection is to use of the verb "observe". But though he rejects the privacy of sensations on the ground of the impropriety of the use of 'observing sensation', he does not fail to secure its privacy on other grounds. What is thrown out from the front door is received back through the back door. This time Ryle secures its privacy on logical grounds. He observes, "Just as you cannot, in logic, hold my catches, win my races, eat my meals, frown my

81 Article Published in Contemporary British Philosophy, 3rd series, George Allen and Unwin, P. - 428
82 Ryle, Gilbert : The Concept of Mind, P- 199
frowns, or dream my dreams, so you cannot have my twinges, or my after images. So, my having of sensations is, according to Ryle analogous to my eating the meal. But there is one great difference between my having of sensations and my eating the meal. Whereas others can see eating the meal, others cannot see experiencing the twinges. The experience of what the twinge is, can only be known by me. A.C. Ewing has made a similar objection. He remarks ‘I cannot help somebody elses’ catches, but I can be aware of his catches in a way in which I cannot be aware of his pain.’ Ryle refutes the traditionalists, view of sensations as something private realm of mind.

In his conception of sensation and observation Ryle attacks the traditionalists’ theory of sense-data. But we know that the theory of sense-data serves a good hypothesis for explaining errors in perception. That which is given to the sense is a sense datum. Different sense impressions are sense data e.g. Looks, appearances, sounds, whiffs, flavours and tastes are sense data. The sense-datum theory is an attempt to elucidate the concepts of sense perception or the notions of sensations of sight, touch, hearing, smelling and tasting. Those who believe in the theory of sense-data believe in the three factor theory of knowledge. Any knowledge situation involves three things viz. The act of knowing, the sense impression or datum and the object. We donot know the objects directly. What we know directly is the datum and through such datum, we infer the object. Thus when we know a horse, we actually see or sense some colour patches and through

83 Ibid : P. - 199
84 A.C. Ewing.- Prof. Ryle’s Attack on Dualism P - 314
the impressions. We know a horse by inference. Similarly, we do not taste a lemon, what we taste is the flavour and know lemon by inference.

The upholders of the theory of sense-data would say that the elliptical appearance of a round plate is sense-datum. Ryle strongly objects to this way of explaining the knowledge of objects. According to him the whole theory of sense-data is a 'logical howler'. Ryle says, "The whole theory of sense data rests upon a logical howler, the howler, namely of assimilation the concept of sensation to the concept of observation." 85

Ryle tries to show that this assimilation makes nonsense simultaneously of the concept of sensation and of the concept of observation. The sense-datum theory says that when a person has a visual sensation of getting a glimpse of horse-race, his having this sensation consists in his finding a sensum, that is a patchwork of colours. This means that having a glimpse of a horse-race is explained in terms of his having a glimpse of something else, the patchwork of colours. But if having glimpse of a horse-race entails having at least one sensation, then having a glimpse of colour patches must again involve having at least one appropriate sensation, which in its turn must be analysed into the sensing of an earlier sensum and so on forever. Regarding sensations Ryle holds,

"Sensations then, are not perceivings, observings or findings; they are not detectings, scannings or inspectings; they are not apprehendings, cognizings, intuitings, or knowing. To have a sensation is not to be in a cognitive relation to a sensible object. There are no such objects. Nor is there any such relation. Not

85. Ryle, Gilbert: The Concept of Mind, P-203
only is it false, as was argued earlier, that sensations can be objects of observation; it is also false that they are themselves observings of objects." 86 Thus we see that Ryle negatively asserts the nature of sensations.

The theory of sense datum asserts absurd facts. Further, the so-called sense-datum is nothing else than the object. Ryle says "Now a person without a theory feels no qualms in saying that the round plate might look elliptical. Nor would he feel any qualms in saying that the round plate looks as if it were elliptical. But he would feel qualms in following the recommendation to say that he is seeing an elliptical look of a round plate." 87

This assertion would mean that it is meaningful to say that a round thing might look elliptical though it is not meaningful to say that its elliptical appearance is seen. If Ryle, by maintaining this assertion means something deep and extraordinary, then it is difficult to see what he actually means. It is a difficulty of this kind which makes Russell comment. "I cannot understand what exactly he is maintaining." 88 With the collapse of the sense datum theory, Ryle claims to prove that sensations or sense-impressions are not the Rules of the observation of objects. Sensations are neither the objects of observation, nor the observing of objects. For perception we do not require the via media of sense-datum. We can directly perceive an object. Thus the datum which refutes mind, is also refuted. Thus the sense datum theory had unnecessarily established two worlds - the public world

86 Ibid : P.- 204
87 Ibid : P.-206
to house objects and the public world to house sense data. According to Ryle, an error in perception is due to our own failure in the application of the proper technique of perception. It is our own misuse of the perception recipe. Ryle also does not distinguish between illusion and hallucination. He observes, “Only a person who can balance can lose his balance; only a person who can reason can commit fallacies; only a person who can discriminate huntsmen from pillar boxes can mistake a pillar box for a huntsman; and only a person who knows what snakes look like can fancy he sees a snake without realising that he is only fancying.”

Ryle’s basic criticism against the sense-datum theory is that sensations are not a species of observation. Hence observation cannot be equated with having or noticing of a series of sensations. Observation implies having sensations. But it is certainly more than of having sensations. It involves an active element of finding out something. Ryle objects to perceiving anything that is not real, or that which cannot be witnessed by more than one individual at the same time. He has pointed out repeatedly that to have an elliptical look of a plate is not to see anything. Ryle draws an important distinction between sensation and observation with the remark that sensations while noticed are not equivalent to observation. Sensations are ingredients of observation but observation is obviously more than sensations.

Ryle denies the theory of phenomenalism with the denial of sense data. First, phenomenalism asserts that a thing is nothing more than the family of different sense impressions. It denies the ‘thing in itself’ and reduces a thing to the experience of different sense data. According to this theory a thing is what it looks, sounds...
feels etc. Phenomenalism asserts that talking of a thing is talking about sense-data. Ryle finds this theory is unacceptable. Secondly, according to Phenomenalism, observing an object means observing sensations, which again cannot be true. We have already seen that Ryle proves that sensation cannot be observed. Thirdly, language does not permit the propositions about objects to be translated into propositions about sensible objects. Fourthly, sense-impressions or data are temporary but things or objects are more or less permanent. Ryle says that phenomenalism is therefore wrong. What is observed is not the family of sense impressions or sense data or sensations. It is the object itself. We observe the common or public objects.

Ryle also objects the traditionalists' account of perception. Traditionalists maintain that perception or observation is sensation plus meaning. When we experience of sensible quality (or sensation), we on the basis of past experience, impose all other qualities on the sensible quality which were found associated with it and thereby perceive an object. So, according to this theory, perception is more than sensation. This theory maintains that there is private world of mind from where the meaning is applied to sensation. It suggests that what we directly observe are the sensations and what we indirectly know are the objects. We do not observe robin; we observe its sensations and know the robin thereafter. Ryle finds no truth in this account. He asserts that, "It is robins and games that we observe and it is sensation that we never could observe". Here Ryle's position is that of naive realism. Knowledge, according to him, involves only two factors; the knower and the object.
Thus there is no need of sensation to explain perception. Ryle holds that we learn perception recipes as we learn bicycling i.e. we learn by practice. To illustrate Ryle's standpoint: We perceive a tune when on noticing the auditory sensation we recognise it, i.e. when we utilise our past knowledge of the tune, we are said to perceive it. Recognition consists in the utilization of the previous knowledge of the tune. Thus perceiving or recognising a tune means hearing a tune in a special frame of mind. When we learn a tune, we acquire certain auditory expectation propensities. Similar is the case with visual and other perceptions. When we catch the glimpse of a thimble, we at once recognise it to be a thimble. When we know a thimble, we acquire certain expectation propensities, i.e. we expect to see it in a particular shape, size, colour etc. and also expect to do with it in a certain way. When at the occurrence of the visual sensation, these expectation propensities are fulfilled, we are said to recognise or perceive the thimble. Ryle again holds, "A sensation is not something which its owner observes or witnesses. It is not a clue. Listening to a conversation entails having auditory sensations, for listening is heedful hearing, and hearing entails getting auditory sensations. But having sensations is not discovering clues. We discover clues by listening to conversations and looking at fingerprints. If we could not observe some things, we should not have clues for other things and conversations are just the sorts of things to which we do listen, as fingerprints and gate-posts are just the sorts of things at which we do look."

Thus listening and looking are not merely having sensations nor they are joint.

90. Ibid : P-220
processes of observing sensations and inferring to common objects. Observing is using one's ears and eyes. But using one's ears and eyes does not entail using one's visual and auditory sensations as clues. It makes no sense of 'using sensations.' Thus Ryle admits that observing entails having at least one sensation, though having sensations does not entail sensation. And perceiving, according to Ryle, is nothing ghostly. It is only recognition which recognised the object.

There is another example for the description of sensations. As flour, sugar, milk, eggs etc. are among the raw materials out of which cakes are made or as bricks and timber are among the raw materials of the builder, so sensations are often spoken of as the raw materials out of which we construct the world we know. But Ryle holds that the notions of collecting, storing, sorting, unpacking, treating, assembling and arranging which apply to the ingredients of cakes and the materials of houses, cannot apply to sensation. We can ask what a cake is made of, but not what knowledge is made of; similarly we cannot ask about the ingredients of visual and auditory sensations. Thus Ryle says that sensation cannot be the raw materials of observation.

Thus Ryle concludes that there is nothing mysterious or ghostly or other worldly about sensation. He denies sensations as private processes for two main reasons (i) we have no neat sensation vocabulary i.e. there is no pure sense-datum language and (ii) It makes no sense to speak of observing sensations. So, because sensations cannot be said to be observed and there are no pure sensation word in our every day language. In his "After Thoughts" he categorically maintains
that there is no sensation but perception. What we call sensations are tactual or kinaesthetic feelings. With the view that perception entails sensations, he expresses his deep dissatisfaction. In his forward to the chapter on 'Sensation and Observation' he maintains "For reasons developed in its last section, I am not satisfied with this chapter. I have fallen in with the official story that perceiving involves having sensations. But this is a sophisticated use of sensation." Ryle again and again finds helpless with the concept of sensations. In his separate article 'On Sensation' he confesses his helplessness when he says: "One of the things that worry me most is the notion of sensations or sense impressions." 92

91. *Ibid.* P. - 191
92. Published in *Contemporary British Philosophy, 3rd Series.* P. 427.