CHAPTER - VI
CHAPTER - VI

THE NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The nature of consciousness occupies a very significant place in the philosophy of mind. Usually it is believed that the essence of mind is consciousness. It is said to be a constant element of all mental processes. Both consciousness and introspection enable us to know and ascertain the facts of the internal world. They are taken as the unfailing facts of mental life.

In Psychology, consciousness is regarded as a mental state or process. The word "Consciousness" is derived from the Latin word "Conscire" which means "to know things together." We are aware of our mental and motor activities. This definition was made popular by Vives, the Spanish psychologist. Thus consciousness is the distinctive character of mental life. But it is very difficult to define consciousness. According to Baldwin, "Consciousness is the point of division between mind and not-mind." Wherever there is not total unconsciousness, in the sense in which we attribute unconsciousness to a table or a log of wood, the existence of some form of mind we denote by the word consciousness. Another psychologist Mc Dougall says that the word consciousness should be used to mean the act of knowing or thinking of thing. But consciousness has a more wider sense than this. The nineteenth century psychologist G.T. Ladd gives this meaning of consciousness: "Whatever we are when we are awake, as contrasted with what we are when we sink into a profound and dreamless sleep, that it is to be
conscious. What we are less and less, as we sink gradually down into dreamless sleep, or as we swoon slowly away and what we are more and more, as the noise of the crowd outside tardily arouses us from our after-dinner nap, or as we come out of the midnight of the typhoid fever crisis,' that is consciousness 

The International Dictionary of Psychology gives the following interpretations on consciousness:

"Consciousness - The having of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings; awareness. The term is impossible to define except in terms that are unintelligible without a grasp of what consciousness means. Many fall into the trap of confusing consciousness with self-consciousness - to be conscious it is only necessary to be aware of the external world. Consciousness is a fascinating but elusive phenomenon. It is impossible to specify what it is, what it does, or why it evolved. Nothing worth reading has been written about it" (Sutherland 1989)

Thus consciousness is the most vivid phenomenon. It is very difficult to pin down the subject-matter of consciousness. It cannot be directly defined. But it is clear that from the psychological point of view consciousness is a mental phenomenon i.e. awareness, feeling etc. The conscious experience is the central element of consciousness.

In philosophy, Rene Descartes was the first philosopher to discover consciousness as the essence of mind. All mental states and processes are conscious states and processes. Descartes held that every event in the mind is a

cogitatio, or a content of experience. To this class he assimilated volitions, intentions and every type of thought. To Descartes, the notion of an unconscious mental state was a contradiction. In search of certainty in philosophical knowledge, Descartes found that "Cogito -ergo-sum" is the single certain truth. After having made it clear that he exists (Cogito-ergo-sum), Descartes tried to find out what he is. He found that he is nothing but a thinking thing. Thinking or consciousness is his essence. The essence of a thing contains only what is necessary for the existence of the thing. Here we can mention the example given by Norman Malcolm:

"...if there is an existing thing O, and if there is something E, such that if one perceives E necessarily one perceives O, and if one perceives O, necessarily one perceives E, then E is the essence of O."94

Descartes found that his essence is thinking or consciousness. He held that the subject of consciousness is the mind and that the mind is a thing or entity separate and distinct from the body. The body is thing or entity whose essence is occupying space, i.e. having shape, size and location in space; and it is not conscious. The mind, on the other hand, is completely different in its nature. It is utterly nonspatial, having neither shape, size, nor location. Its essence is having consciousness, that is, thoughts, feelings, memories, perceptions, desires, emotions etc. Thus Descartes is aware of himself when and only when he is aware of thinking. Descartes says, thinking is nothing other than "Consciousness". In his Meditation II, Descartes maintained that a thinking thing is that which is having

94. "Descartes proof that His Essence is Thinking • Modern Studies in Philosophy", edited by Willis Doney, P. 315
conscious activities like doubting, understanding, willing sensing etc. that is consciousness. Descartes writes,

"What then is it that I am? A thinking thing, what is a thinking thing? It is a thing that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, wills, sustains from willing, that also can be aware of images and sensations."

By the principle 'Cogito-ergo-sum,' Descartes wants to rebuild the edifice of knowledge about self-consciousness. The 'I' (or self-consciousness) that has been proved to exist and it has been inferred from the fact that "I think, therefore I exist." If 'I' ceased to think, there would be no evidence of my existence. I am a thing that thinks, a substance of which the whole nature or essence consists in thinking and which needs no place for its existence. The soul is therefore distinct and separate from the body. Descartes says that the mind is essentially active and its activity is to 'think'. Descartes holds that there is no thinking apart from something which thinks. He admits that there is a permanent self or ego, since there is its unchangeable attributes of thinking. Descartes concludes that the soul or mind is a permanent substance, since we have found its essence called thinking or consciousness which even the worst of doubt cannot demolish. He recognises two kinds of substances - finite and infinite. God is the only perfect and infinite substance. Mind and body are finite substances. Thus according to Descartes the essential nature of soul or self is thinking, since to be aware of thinking is to be aware of myself and to be aware of oneself is to be thinking or consciousness.

Some philosophers argue that Freudian concept of mind goes against 95. Philosophical Writings, translated by N.K. Smith, P. 186.
Descartes' claim that consciousness is the essence of mind. Freud's concept of mind shows that mind has three mental states, such as conscious, subconscious and unconscious. If so how consciousness can be regarded as the essence of mind? But it should be mentioned here that Freudian unconscious state has two grades, namely preconscious and unconscious proper. According to Freud, unconscious has no access to consciousness except through the pre-conscious.

Pre-conscious is the unconscious states which are easily accessible to memory. The unconscious must be accepted as the general basis of the psychic life. Here Freud analyses what Descartes has pointed out. Everyone would agree that an unconscious state cannot prove its existence. Mind can be proved to be having existence only through consciousness. Moreover, if unconscious is accessible to consciousness through preconscious states then unconscious does not remain opposite to consciousness.

David Hume assumed that we know nothing of an immaterial, indivisible, imperishable soul-substance. The idea of substance is meaningless whether applied to matter or to mind. The doctrine of simplicity and indivisibility of thinking substance can neither be affirmed nor refuted by empirical evidence. Hume's denial of soul-substance as well as consciousness can be understood by his following writings:

"The mind is a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed one another with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement. The mind is a kind of theater where several perceptions successively make
their appearance, pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of
postures and situations. There is no simplicity in it at one time, nor identity in
different (times)96

Hume again admitted that he did not find self by his introspection. But Hume's
claim seems to be untenable because as a subject of consciousness something
must exist whether it is mind or physical body. In this regard Mc. Taggart says that
our knowledge of our own identity implies that self is not a mere bundle of impresions
as Hume contended. It implies that there is in fact an unanalysable ego of which
we have direct knowledge of introspection.

There are some philosophers and psychologists who more recently have
denied the very existence of consciousness. Some psychologists raised the fol­
lowing objections regarding the statement consciousness is the essence of mind.

(i) There are a number of activities of which we are conscious in the begin­
ning and which on being performed for a number of times become automatic. As
they become automatic, they do not need attention. This is the nature of our ha­
bital actions. Thus in habitual actions, there is no need of consciousness.

(ii) Recently the unconscious is regarded as an important part of the mind
and its study is very much within the province of psychology. The 'unconscious' as
established by Freud, has an important impact on our conscious behaviour.

(iii) Consciousness can be studied only with the help of 'introspection'. Ev­
ery individual's consciousness being his own, introspection is a private affair, its
study can only be subjective or speculative. We have immediate knowledge of our

96. Hume, David • A Treatise of Human Nature, B.K. 1 Sec 6
own consciousness only. Consciousness of others can only be inferred. But this is the method of analogy and it is unscientific.

(iv) Again, the use of introspection can obtain a complete description of the consciousness of an individual. But it does not explain why any particular consciousness takes the form it does, and how it can be controlled or utilised to the best advantage of human beings.

For all these difficulties the definition of psychology as the science of consciousness was discarded.

William James in his famous paper ‘Does “Consciousness” exist?’ denies the existence of consciousness. But we should notice the first point that William James puts the word consciousness in inverted commas. This should warn us that he is not referring to consciousness as ordinarily understood, but to a specific philosophical doctrine of “Consciousness.” The following passage makes clear about William James’ denial of consciousness: “To deny plumply that “Consciousness” exists seems so absurd on the face of it - for undeniably “thoughts” do exist - that I fear some readers will follow me no farther. Let me then immediately explain that I mean only to deny that the word stands for an entity, but to insist most emphatically that it does stand for a function. There is, I mean, no aboriginal stuff or quality of being, contrasted with that of which material objects are made, out of which our thoughts of them are made; but there is a function in experience which thoughts perform, and for the performance of which this quality of being is invoked. That function is knowing.”

97. James, William: Essays in Radical Empiricism (London, 1912), Chap. 1, P.3
Thus what James is denying is not in fact the existence of consciousness but the correctness of certain types of description of consciousness: viz. those that entail its being an 'entity' or 'aboriginal stuff.' That is to say that James is disputing the truth of certain philosophers' descriptions of consciousness. This is a far less radical challenge than the unqualified statement consciousness does not exist. Thus James believed that consciousness is the name of a non-entity, and has no right to place among first principles. He denies that the word "Consciousness" stands for an entity, but insists that it stands for a function. For him it is the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life. While regarding consciousness as the stream of thought James seems to be very close to Descartes' interpretation of consciousness.

But Hamilton gives a sort of objection to James' claim that consciousness is not an 'entity' or 'aboriginal stuff.' According to Hamilton, "Consciousness may be compared to an internal light, by means of which, and which alone, what passes in the mind is rendered visible. Consciousness is simple - is not composed of parts, either similar or dissimilar. It always resembles itself, differing only in the degree of its intensity; Thus, there are not various kinds of consciousness, although there are various kinds of mental modes or states of which we are conscious."98

Ludwig Wittgenstein tried to dissolve the problem of mind and body and attempted to show that this problem arises out of conceptual confusions, and that proper attention to the way in which we use mental and physical terms in ordinary

---

language will relieve us of the vexatious problem. For him, there is nothing inside who has mental processes and beetle in the box has nothing to do with the language game because the box may be empty. Wittgenstein liberates the concept of mind from the Cartesian conception of the inner world and puts it back in the outer world of the linguistic and other activities. So, according to Wittgenstein, mind is a part of the world where language games take place. The world is not a set of dead material objects and the objects are various sorts, such as plants, animals, humans etc. But we see that the question of consciousness arises only in the case of human beings who speak language. It is because of this, that mind, thought and other mental states are ascribe to the human beings. It is the human beings who have the capacity to relate themselves to the world by virtue of their cognitive and other interests in the world. But human mind cannot rest idly without speculation by simply dissolving the philosophical problems as suggested by Wittgenstein. A philosopher has to enquire the mental concepts until the mystery of the mind is disclosed. Wittgenstein maintains that language serves as the best medium of relating our mind to the world and mind does not stand apart as a transcendent entity but directly enters the world as a function of the linguistic activities that are about the world. Thinking and representing the world are the same and the activity of representing the world means we have already thought about the world. Thus Wittgenstein’s mind represents the universe with language which represents rational mental activity and consciousness.

Bertrand Russell in his book "Analysis of Mind" denies consciousness as
the essence of mind. According to him, consciousness is a complex and far from universal characteristic of mental phenomena. As he says, "Consciousness is too narrow to characterize mental phenomena. Many things which seem essentially mental are really neural. Perhaps it is the nerves that acquire experience rather than the mind." Russell maintains that mind and matter are logical constructions, the particulars out of which they are constructed have various relations, some of which are studied by physics, others by psychology. But who makes this logical construction of mind and matter? who thinks, or infers them from particulars? There must be a thinker whose essence is thinking or consciousness which is proved by Descartes.

C O. Evans defines consciousness as follows, "To conscious is, inter alia, to perceive, to feel emotions and sensations, to have images and recollections, and to have desires, intentions and thoughts." By this definition he does not want to limit consciousness to persons such that only persons can be conscious and since he is staying within the self-approach no question arises of having to correlate consciousness with behaviour. The mental concepts in terms of which Evan has defined consciousness must be understood in a non dispositional, or episodic sense.

Gilbert Ryle declares that the general theory of consciousness and introspection is a logical muddle. It is a product of misconceived notions and confused convictions. Ryle remarks that the myth of consciousness is a piece of para-

100. Evans, C O. : The Subject of Consciousness, P. 48
Both Ryle and William James attack G.E. Moore's "Refutation of Idealism" in which he offers his analysis of sensation which provides the most notable instance of the doctrine of 'consciousness'. According to Moore, "We have then in every sensation two distinct elements, one which I call consciousness and another which I call the object of consciousness. This must be so if the sensation of blue and the sensation of green, though different in one respect, are alike in another; blue is one object of sensation and green is another and consciousness, which both sensations have in common, is different from either".\(^{101}\) Moore again writes, "For the element 'Consciousness' being common to all sensations may be and certainly is regarded as in some sense their "Substance" and by the "Content" of each is only meant that in respect of which one differs from another."\(^{102}\)

Thus when philosophers such as James and Ryle deny the existence of 'Consciousness', they are not denying that we are conscious in the ordinary sense of the word. They are denying rather the views of Hamilton and Moore. Who admit that all our experiences contain an element in common which they confusedly name 'consciousness.' They deny consciousness as an entity.

Ryle discusses consciousness in the sixth chapter of "The Concept of Mind" which is entitled as "Self - Knowledge." Here Ryle's primary concern is two fold. The first is to dismiss the traditional notion of consciousness and introspection and the second is to establish the identical nature of knowledge of one's own self and the knowledge of others. Ryle maintains that our knowledge of our own

\(^{102}\) Ibid P. 23
selves cannot be based on the doubtful means. He believes that the traditionalist' theory of 'privileged access' to our own mental states and processes rests on an imaginary assumption that there is an internal faculty of reflection or intuition or introspection or consciousness which supplies the data about our internal life. Ryle has sought a number of arguments to dismiss the age-long notions of consciousness and introspection.

Actually 'consciousness' is not to be conceived of as something over and above the occurrence of thoughts and feelings. We are therefore, free to determine the meaning of consciousness without fear. Any attempt to discover the meaning of consciousness as it is ordinarily used would meet with the immediate objection of Ryle. Ryle argues that the word is ordinarily used in a number of different contexts for a variety of purposes. First of all, he draws our attention to a number of senses in which the words 'conscious' and 'conscioussness' are used in our daily life. But Ryle holds that in none of these, the philosophers' sense of the word 'conscious' find a place. Ordinarily, the word 'conscious' or 'self-conscious' is used in the following senses-

(a) First, it is used when we want to convey our vague or indistinct apprehension of some object or situation, e.g. when we say, 'I am conscious that some wrongly had occurred some where', or 'I am conscious that the furniture had been rearranged' or 'I am conscious that he was less friendly than usual'. In such contexts the word 'conscious' is used instead of words like 'found out' 'realized' and 'discovered' to indicate certain noteworthy nebulousness and consequent inar-
ticulateness of the apprehension. The furniture looked different somehow, but the observer could not say what the differences were; or the man's attitude was unaccommodating in a number of ways, but the speaker could not enumerate or specify them.

(b) Secondly, it is used when we want to speak of the embarrassment shown by other people, especially by youthful persons. We often say, he is conscious of the sorry figure that he cut on the occasion. The youthful persons anxious about the opinions held by others by their qualities of character or intellect. Shyness and affection are ways in which self consciousness, is commonly exhibited.

(c) Thirdly we also use the word 'conscious' or 'self-conscious' when we want to talk of the heed that we pay to our own qualities of character or intellect e.g. When we say 'I am conscious of my homesickness'. Self-consciousness in this sense is of primary importance for the conduct of life and of Ethics. The Freudian concepts of the 'unconscious' and the 'subconscious' are closely connected with this use of 'conscious'.

(d) Fourthly, 'conscious' is also used for 'sensitiveness' e.g. when we say, 'consciousness in returning to my numbed or anaesthetized leg. In this use 'conscious' means 'sensitive' or sentient' and 'unconscious' means anaesthetized or insensitive. We say that a person has lost consciousness when he has ceased to be sensitive to any slaps, noises, pricks or smells.

(e) Fifthly, it is used for the heed that we pay to our bodily sensations. It is in this sense that we say, 'I was not conscious of the pinching of the shoe because
I was deeply engrossed in talk. It makes sense to say that a sensation is hardly noticed even when the sensation is moderately acute, namely when the victim's attention is fixed very strongly on something else. Conversely, a person may pay sharp heed to very faint sensations. For example, when he is scared of appendicitis, he will be acutely conscious of stomachic twinges which are not at all acute. In this sense, also a person may be keenly conscious, hardly conscious, or quite unconscious of feelings like twinges of anxiety or qualms of doubt. Thus 'heeding' does not denote a peculiar conduct of cognitive certainties.

Ryle says that philosophers' concept of consciousness is not covered by any one of them. The philosophers' notion of consciousness, he says, invariably use consciousness in the sense of an essence of the mental as opposed to the physical. Mental, for the philosophers, is by nature conscious or self-intimating. Anything appearing on the mental state makes itself felt or known by the person concerned. 'Conscious' in the sense of 'sensitive' of a particular part of the body means awareness of that part of the body. Of course, Ryle's description of this sense of consciousness is not sufficiently drawn. A person is 'sensitive' or 'sentient' while he is fast asleep and yet no one can be conscious in any of the other senses while in a dreamless sleep.

John Wisdom\textsuperscript{103} tried to determine the fundamental sense of consciousness by the following points -

(i) Conscious implies either feels or awareness.

\textsuperscript{103} Wisdom, J : Problems of Mind and Matter, PP-12-15
(ii) Consider the change which comes over a man as he comes round from chloroform or from dreamless sleep. That kind of change he calls 'becoming conscious'.

(iii) Conscious does not mean alive. A tree is alive but not conscious. An amoeba is certainly alive yet quite likely not conscious.

(iv) Conscious does not mean living and sensitive. A man in a dreamless sleep is a living and sensitive being. But he is not at that time conscious in the sense of course such a man is conscious compared with a tree or a dead man.

(v) S is conscious implies neither (a) that S is conscious of his environment nor (b) that S is conscious of himself.

(vi) Conscious is the fundamental sense of 'conscious' - that is the sense in terms of which all other senses are defined.

Wisdom's analysis of consciousness brings into open all the ambiguities latent in Ryle's description of consciousness in the sense of 'sensitiveness'. There are two major points of disagreement between Ryle and Wisdom. Firstly, Wisdom believes that a fundamental sense of conscious may be distinguished. But Ryle fails to determine the relations of dependency which hold between the various senses of consciousness. He distinguishes and he denies by omission that there is a basic sense of consciousness. Secondly, Wisdom asserts that the other senses of consciousness can be defined in terms of the fundamental sense.

Ryle's list of different senses of 'conscious' is a different type of list from that of Wisdom. Ryle's list is a list of possible usages of the word 'conscious' in
ordinary language, whereas Wisdom's list reveals a number of possible philosophical distinctions that may be made by taking conscious in various senses. Thus while it is true that Wisdom's basic sense of 'conscious' is a defining sense for his list, it is doubtful whether it could be a defining sense for Ryle's list. As C.O. Evans writes, "Since my entailment relation between the basic sense of conscious' and its other senses applies to Ryle's list as well as to Wisdom's it is more flexible than Wisdom's defining relation." 104

Ryle argues that if consciousness is the constant and unfailing source of obtaining facts about mental life will speak of 'knowing through consciousness' or getting some truth as 'a direct deliverance of consciousness'. Had it really been so important a source of acquainting oneself with the private life, such idioms, would have surely entered into the common parlance of people. But nobody speaks in such idioms. Secondly, if consciousness is the constant and unfailing source of obtaining information about mental life it will remain hidden or obscure from the agent.

Ryle does not believe that awareness or consciousness exists. He substitutes awareness by disposition, which is no more than behaviour, actual or possible. But consciousness or awareness cannot be identified with behaviour. For example, a paralysed man may be completely incapable of any behaviour, but he is still conscious. Conversely a robot may behave as perfectly as a human being, but it is not conscious. The mistake of identifying consciousness with behaviour lies in one's failure to see that there is only a correlation between consciousness.

104. Evans, C.O.: The Subject of Consciousness P. 45.
and behaviour. But a correlation or a bond does not mean identity. By denying consciousness, Ryle has only strengthened the belief that dispute about the traditional philosophical problems. Therefore, the phenomenon of consciousness is so fundamental that it cannot be either defined or properly described. Arguments and reasonings, therefore, cannot prove to be effective either for its affirmation or denial. According to Ryle, the philosopher's popular notion of consciousness is an extended version of the protestants' belief that there is a God-given light of conscience within us. As the protestants thought that there is an internal light of conscience to discern moral qualities, so the traditional philosophers think that there is a general light of consciousness to reveal the mental episodes.

Ryle gives one important argument against the idea of consciousness. That is the argument of infinite regress or reductio ad absurdum. There would be an infinite number of consciousness. The theorists had maintained that consciousness is self-luminous. It reveals itself as well as its objects. When I am conscious of something, I am also conscious of that thing. Consciousness of an object and the consciousness are simultaneous. However, Ryle argues that the theorist's notion of consciousness cannot escape the conclusion that there is an infinite series of consciousness in us. Ryle believes that if this absurd notion of a series of consciousness is to be avoided, the theorists' notion of consciousness must be discarded. So, the general theory of consciousness is unacceptable to Ryle. By analysing the meaning of the words 'conscious', 'consciousness' and 'self-consciousness' as used in day-to-day life, Ryle shows that none of them has any
affinity with the philosopher's use of the term. Ryle writes, "Philosophers chiefly since Descartes, have in their theories of knowledge and conduct operated with a concept of consciousness which has relatively little affinity with any of the concepts described above." 105

Ryle's radical objection to the philosophers' theory of consciousness is that there are no ghostly objects to be illumined by consciousness. As he writes, "The radical objection to the theory that minds must know what they are about, because mental happenings are by definite conscious, or metaphysically self-luminous, is that there are no such happenings, there are no occurrences taking place in a second status world, since there is no such status and no such world and consequently no need for special modes of acquainting ourselves with the denizens of such world." 106

Ryle has one more objection against consciousness on linguistic ground. He argues that if consciousness is to be conceived on the analogy of light, the theorists ought not to say that consciousness enables us to know the mental states and processes. His objection is to the use of the word 'know'. Ryle argues that we speak of only seeing things, say a table, in light. We don't speak of knowing it. Light enables us to talk of seeing not of knowing for "knowing is not the same sort of thing as looking at, and what is known is not the same sort of thing as what is illuminated." 107 Ryle argues that as if seeing and knowing are opposite concepts.

105 Ryle, G: The Concept of Mind, P. 152.
107 Ibid, P. 162.
knowing in the same context.

Ryle's basic objection to the theorists', notion of consciousness is that there is no mental happening to be consciousness which can be known or felt. Ryle uses the word 'ghostly' for whatever is said to occur in the 'private theatre'. Ryle thinks that the philosophers have committed a category mistake by conceiving of mind in the idioms which are suitable only for the body. But here question may be arised-Does he not himself commit a category mistake by likening the mind to a ghost? A ghost is a nebulous body. It appears. But consciousness or mind is not a body. It does not appear as an object. For his own purpose Ryle has sought to replace consciousness by disposition. Because of such replacement we find an altogether new picture of man. In this sense man is a typically behaving body. Though unconscious, he is considered to do everything that is called intelligent. One may wonder whether Ryle himself believes that he is unconscious. Therefore, man's conscious nature is very dear to him and he may feel completely shocked and disappointed to hear that he is in fact unconscious being As D.S. Miller writes:

"If you learned today that your own life from tomorrow morning on would be of this sort, the life of perfectly behaving body but a perfectly unconscious one, you would suddenly cease to be concerned about it, you would not in the least cling to life on these terms. Why? Because you cannot for a moment identify yourself with a body without consciousness".  

A conscious mind is the creator of all human values. It is the source of art, literature and religion. The task of creating and maintaining such human values cannot be ignored by our body. Thus, as a perfect organism, we should conceive the concept of consciousness.

'Introspection' is a term of art. It is ordinarily used to signify about one's own character, abilities, deficiencies and oddities. The technical term 'introspection' is supposed as the species of perception. Ryle finds fault with the philosophers' theory of introspection. He denies introspection almost on the same lines on which he has denied consciousness. Ryle admits that the traditionalists theory of introspection is as little intelligible as their theory of general consciousness. The theories of consciousness and introspection suffer from severe defects and as such they cannot be made infallible and unfailing sources of letting us into the secrets of mind. The word 'introspection' is hardly used by the common people. It is a technical term used in the language of art. The common man is little familiar with this concept and it is only a highflying utterance of theoretical philosophers. Ryle also rejects the idea of introspection on some other grounds. According to him, if introspection be the mental act of scrutinizing the private experience of one's own, it would mean that we can attend to two things at once. But how can one attend to the act and the object of scrutiny simultaneously? Because of this usual difficulty, we can say that in introspection the act and the object remain distinguishable. It is certainly difficult to attend to two disconnected things at once. In introspection, however, the act and the object may fuse together to become one whole. There-
fore the charge of double attention in introspection prove it to be inappropriate.

Ryle puts another familiar charge against introspection which is known as the
infinite regress. The charge is like this - if the mental is known by introspection, if
being mental must be known by another introspection and so on indefinitely. The
act of introspection and the mental state scrutinized may form one whole and we
may be conscious of the whole without being distinctly conscious of parts.

In this regard A. C. Ewing holds, “So if I introspect or am in some way
conscious of myself as resolving, both introspection and resolving will be part of
my total felt state, but they need not both be objects of distinct consciousness.”

But if we analyse the charge of infinite regress against introspection then
we have to admit that the question of infinite regress cannot arise with introspec­
tion because it makes no sense to say that one knowledge requires another knowl­
edge to be known. It is an obvious matter. Consciousness has been conceived on
the analogy of light. One light does not require another light to manifest itself.

Ryle’s another attack for introspection is that it is not what it is said to be.
The theorists believe that introspection is the deliberate act of internally perceiv­
ing mental episodes. It is said to be the media in informing us about our internal
life. Ryle argues that if it is so why do several disputes exist relating to the nature
of our internal life? Of course this criticism of Ryle against introspection has some
ground. It is true that the claim of infallibility is an extravagant claim on the part of
the introspectionists. Introspection means scrutiny and scrutiny involves judge­

ments. One may error in his judgement. But error in judgement does not establish that there is no judgement. The introspectionists may be wrong in their concept of infallibility.

By following Hume, Ryle points out the worthlessness of the introspection on the ground that they do not enable us to have a true picture of our emotional states or experiences. The language of introspection clearly points out to retrospection. Ryle says, "There is nothing intrinsically ghostly about the objects of retrospection".110 When I catch myself getting into panic, I do such and such or He caught himself wondering how to do so and so' is usually the language of introspection. The word 'catch' here clearly suggests that by introspection we actually mean retrospection for we can catch only that which is running away from us and which is being pursued and overtaken. Thus what we name as introspection is in truth retrospection and there is nothing mysterious about it. In this regard Ryle asserts, "In the same way that I can catch myself daydreaming. I can catch myself scratching; in the same way that I can catch myself engaged in a piece of silent soliloquy, I can catch myself saying something aloud".111

Therefore, primarily there is no difference between 'catching oneself scratching' which is a public act, and 'catching oneself daydreaming' which is a private act. Here Ryle tried to establish that in principle there is no difference between the physical or public and the mental or private aspects of a man. What is ordinarily private in a man is the subject matter of retrospection. Retrospection supplies

110 Ryle, G: The Concept of Mind, P. 160
111. Ibid, P. - 160
data about the qualities of the agent. It is just like a diary. Thus as the diary and its contents are not ghostly, retrospection and its date are not likewise ghostly. Ryle says, "The fact that retrospection is autobiographical does not imply that it gives us a privileged Access to facts of a special status. But of course, it does not give us a mass of data contributory to our appreciations of our own conduct and qualities of mind. A diary is not a chronicle of ghostly episodes, but it is valuable source of information about the diarists' character, wits and career." Introspection, therefore is nothing but the authentic process of retrospection. By substituting retrospection for introspection, Ryle thinks that he can eliminate the ghost. But it is not at all clear how this substitution can help one to escape the ghost—for if we do not introspect, how can we retrospect? Retrospection generally means scrutiny of the recent past. We know that retrospection involves memory and memory involves our consciousness or awareness of some situation. Thus though retrospection is the scrutiny of something not present at the moment, still what is scrutinised is the experience of one's own. Thus Price writes -

"Introspection may always be retrospection; it may always be form of short range memory. But even if it is always 'retro'-, the point that it is always 'intro'."

Thus it is difficult to do away with introspection. The reason is that if we do not introspect, how do we know that an attempt to introspect cools down the emotional experience? Moreover, if I am asked to introspect the feeling of pain

112. Ibid, P. - 160
113 Price: Some Objections to Behaviourism, Dimensions of Mind, P. - 81
that I will have when the injection needle goes deep into my skin, shall I ever fail to introspect? All these facts go to support the case for introspection and consciousness. Therefore, Ryle's attempt to deny both consciousness and introspection is debatable.

Now, we discuss Ryle's account of self-knowledge. In this connection he makes a bold statement which dominates his thoughts and ideas throughout "The Concept of Mind." Ryle writes,

"The sorts of things that I can find out about myself are the same as the sorts of things that I can find out about other people, and the methods of finding them out are much the same." Of course, it is not difficult to see that Ryle's identification of the method of knowing others is due to his oversimplified notion of mind and the mental. He admits that mind is just a name for a certain class of behaviour, typical to human beings. Thus Ryle believes that by marking the behaviour of others we can know other minds and by noticing our own behaviour, we can know our own. It is true that behaviour is the only source of our information about the mind of others. One has certainly to see how the other talks, acts, and moves. He can know what the other wants to do. Other person's minds can be known only through behaviour because it is none of our privilege to have direct access to other minds. Behaviour in general is a pointer to the workings of other minds. It is so because it is more or less like a 'proprium' of mental phenomena. A proprium follows from an essential property without being itself an essential prop-

Ryle's real difficulty is that if we donot identify mind with behaviour, we can never know in that case known that there are other minds because we can never observe the thoughts and feelings of others.

But a question may be raised here - How do we know that there is a mind? In this regard Ryle writes,

"The ascertainment of a person's mental capacities and propensities is an inductive process, an induction to law-like propositions from observed actions and reactions." 115

Ryle substitutes mind by person and believes that a person is not the combination of mind and body. According to Ryle, the conjunctive phrase, 'mind and body' is as ridiculous as the conjunction 'in tears and sedan chair'. To say that 'a man is mind and body' is as absurd to say, 'she came home in tears and sedan chair.' Throughout "The Concept of Mind", Ryle argues to establish that the theorists' notion of mind and body have a series of breaches of logical rules. Ryle admits,

"Where logical candour is required from us, we ought to follow the example set by novelists, bidgraphers and diarists." 116

But Ryle has frequently identified the Cartesian mind with behaviour of certain sorts. Thus it is difficult to decide what he actually wants to say whether mind is the behaviour of certain sorts or person is the behaviour of certain sorts.

115. Ibid. P. - 164.
116 Ibid. P. - 168
Ryle agrees with Freud that in believing that a man may be a stranger to himself in certain respects. Ryle concludes that though there is no primary difference between self knowledge and knowledge about others, there are some circumstances which provide reasons making self-knowledge more open than the knowledge of others. So, whereas the dualists had based self-knowledge on consciousness and introspection, Ryle bases it on induction. Secondly whereas the dualists had based the knowledge of others mind on feeble inference (feeble, because no body has perceived the connection between somebody’s behaviour and his so-called accompanying mental experience), Ryle bases it again on induction. Thus Ryle makes it clear that there is nothing secret or ghostly about man. but a question may arise, what about the notion of 'I' stand for? Generally it has been said that 'I' is the name of soul or spirit which is the basis of identity in us and which survives death. It is the subject or known as apposed to the body or material substance. But according to Ryle, this is not the true meaning of the word 'I'. This way of interpreting the word 'I' is to rob it of its true meaning. Ryle asserts that 'I' does not mean a soul substance. It only means an index word. Just as 'now' refers to the time when the word is uttered, just as 'that' refers to the person or thing which is pointed out by the speaker's figure, So 'I' refers to the person by whom the word 'I' is uttered or written. Similarly, the word 'you' refers to the person who hears one say 'you' or who reads the word 'you'. Therefore, 'I' and 'you' cannot be the names of ghostly substances in me or in you. Thus Ryle writes,"

"'I' is not an extra name for an extra being; it indicates, when I say or write
it, the same individual who can also be addressed by the proper name Gilbert Ryle. 'I' is not an alias for 'Gilbert Ryle', it indicates the person whom 'Gilbert Ryle' names when Gilbert Ryle uses 'I'.

To determine the meaning of 'I' clearly Ryle again asks the question 'Is the self known or unknown? According to him, if it is known it is an object like other objects; if it is unknown, it is a mystery, leading to nothing. So, there is no question of the self and no question of 'I' as naming the self. 'I' and myself is used in different senses in different contexts. For example, 'I am warning myself before the fire'. Here the word 'myself' refers to the body. 'I caught myself just beginning to dream', here 'myself' does not refer to the body. 'I was not scorched, only my hair was', here 'I' is not used even for a part of the body. 'I collided with police car', here 'I' is used for the mechanical auxiliary, viz. the car, which is far more inferior than the human body.

But we may object that these different usages do not deny the self. On the other hand, they suggest the various types of selves within the human body. For example, when one says the statement, 'I should not have done that', one's good self appears to be passing a remark on one's bad self. Ryle answers that 'I' or 'myself' always refers to the same person, though uses in different contexts. Thus there is no mysterious ghost in the statement 'I found myself guilty' in Ryle's sense.

Thus in the context of above explanations, Ryle explains the notions of 'self-consciousness' and 'self-control' which is related with the concept of consciousness. Self-consciousness is the act of reporting on our own selves. Just as

117 Ibid, P - 180
we report about others so we report about ourselves. The same is true of self-
control. As we control others, so we control ourselves. Therefore self-
consciousness and self-control have no reference to soul in the body. Many philosophers
describe the soul as the pure knower, the pure ego or the ultimate consciousness.
But Ryle denies the fact. He argues that the systematic elusiveness does not
presuppose the fact of soul, mysteriously existing in human body According to
Ryle, this elusiveness has no reference to an extra ordinary being in man. Of
course, this may be true of many observable facts in the world. But for that matter
this elusiveness does not become extra ordinary or mysterious. Ryle argues that
all the acts of a diarist cannot be recorded in the diary for the last act of making
entry still remains to be recorded Thus Ryle mainatins that there is no question
of pure ego or pure consciousness as opposed to body. In this way, Ryle attempts
to demolish the whole structure of Cartesian psychology. For him, Descartes' con-
cept of consciousness has little similarity with any of the concepts used in ordi-
nary life. The concept of consciousness as described by Descartes and his follow-
ers is a myth and mental processes are, in some cases unconscious. But there
are no occurrances taking place in a second status world, since there is no such
world. Thus according to Ryle, consciousness is not the part of the mental or it is
not the essence of the mind. Ryle says that mental process donot refer to mind or
consciousness but they refer to the disposition of human behaviour. Ryle by at-
tracting the science of behaviourism criticises Descartes' metaphysical theory of
consciousness. But it is not the way to attack him on this ground.
One of the basic confusions that Ryle has made in his book "The Concept of Mind" is between mental qualities and their tests. Ryle fails to distinguish between the essence and the evidence of mental qualities, between the meaning of a statement and the method of its verification. This has led Ryle to say that mind is just a summary of the different behaviours peculiar to a human being. Ryle's writings prove that he has not decided whether mental concepts stand for some behaviour or they are only tested by some behaviour. Critics have invariably found this fault with his theory of mind. Stuart Hampshire in his review of "The Concept of Mind" remarks:

"Professor Ryle is not really arguing that all or most statements, involving mental concepts are (or are expressible as) hypothetical statements about overt behaviour, but (and it is very different) that to give reasons for accepting or rejecting such statements must always involve making some hypothetical statement about overt behaviour." 118

Hampshire points out that Ryle tries to prove too much as a general logical thesis for the concept of mind when he says that the sorts of things I can find out about myself are the same as the sorts of things that I can find out others, and the methods are the same. This Hampshire observes as an open paradox, for the reason that people can notoriously occult in at least one very important sense, namely that in comparison with animals and inanimate things, it is difficult to establish truth about human beings. Again Hampshire maintains that the Privileged Access view of the traditional philosophers may not be wholly true, it is equally the

118 Hampshire, S.: 'Review The Concept of Mind', Mind, April 1950. 245
case for precisely the same reasons that the Open Access view of Gilbert Ryle is equally unacceptable. Of course, Ryle says that it is not his purpose to distinguish between the meaning of a mental concept and the method of its verification. On the other hand it is his theory to identify the two.

Thus Ryle's attempt to confine a man's mentality in his behaviour is primarily motivated by his belief that there is one world which is open to everybody. Ryle believes that self-consciousness or self-awareness is just our higher order action which are directed on our own previous actions. A higher order action is one which is somehow concerned with other action or actions. Ryle thinks that just as one directs his higher order action on the actions of others, so he directs his higher order action on his own. In his extreme behaviouristic and realistic view Ryle has sought to merge the subject with the object. According to Ryle himself, the self of the moment does not allow itself to be objectified. J.N. Findlay thinks that man is necessarily a "two-sided person having an outward and an inward history."

To escape from rigorous criticism Ryle might be trying the law of persimony in abandoning dualism or he might be only playing a linguistic game. But we cannot consistently think of a man as a mere lump of flesh and bone exhibiting certain typical behaviours. A man is more than these and there lies than these and there lies the ghost. As C. A. Mace says,

"The ghost in the machine is, we may say, the machine itself as it appears

---

119 Findlay, J.N. "Linguistic Approach to Psycho-Physics", Reprinted in Language, Mind and Value, P. 142
to itself, and it can appear to itself as an extremely spiritual sort of thing - even as a 'disembodied mind'. Every thing is what it is, and not another thing.

From the above explanation it is clear that the concept of consciousness is an undeniable fact. No one can deny the fact that the discovery of consciousness is the most valuable incident in the history of philosophy which is successfully done by Descartes. Consciousness is the essence of the philosophy of mind. It occupies a very important place in neurology as a neuro physiological phenomena and trying to identify it with high level brain activity. But neuro physiology is yet to develop itself to prove mental phenomena to be neuronal phenomena. In this regard David J. Chalmers, in his essay "On the Search for the Neural Correlate of Consciousness" rightly concludes -

"And I hope to have made a case that philosophy and neuroscience can come together to help clarify some of the deep problems involved in the study of consciousness."121

Thus the concept of consciousness occupies a very important place in science. Hence Descartes seems to be fruitful in the light of the recent development of neurophysiology. The attempt to study the concept of consciousness in this area will surely reveal new facts about the concept of consciousness.

John R. Searle122 in his essay on "Free Will as a Problem in Neurobiology" writes about the importance of consciousness which can move our bodies.

According to him, because the problem of free will is a problem about the causal facts concerning certain sorts of consciousness, we need to explain how consciousness in general can function causally to move our bodies. How can a state of human consciousness cause a bodily movement? One of the most common experiences in our lives is that of moving our bodies by our conscious efforts. For example, I now intentionally raise my arm, a conscious effort on my part. Searle admits that consciousness is a higher-level biological feature of the brain. The consciousness of the brain can have effects at the neuronal level even though there is nothing in the brain except neurons (with glial cells, neuro-transmitters, blood flow, and all the rest). Just as the behaviour of the molecules is causally constitutive of solidity, so the behaviour of the neurons is causally constitutive of consciousness. When we say that consciousness can move my body then we mean that the neuronal structures move our body. But they move our body because of the conscious state of the mind. Consciousness is a feature of the brain in a way that solidity is a feature of the wheel. Thus the nature of consciousness cannot be denied. Searle asserts the following conditions regarding the relation of the consciousness and the body.

(i) Consciousness, as caused by neuronal processes and realised in neuronal systems functions causally in moving the body.

(ii) The brain causes and sustains the existence of a conscious self that is able to make rational decisions and carry them out in actions.

(iii) The brain is such that the conscious self is able to make and carry out
decisions.

Thus consciousness is a generic concept that may be defined in terms of its several instances. The concept of consciousness, though Ryle denies it, occupies a very important place in philosophy and in the recent past in neurobiology. Ryle's view on consciousness and introspection is very hard to accept.