

**Philosophy and Critical Thinking**  
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**Week-03**  
**Lecture 12: Rene Descartes**

Welcome in lecture 12. Today we are going to talk about Rene Descartes. In last class, we have discussed Rene Descartes and his idea of body and mind. Since this course is of philosophy and critical thinking, so we also, it is very important to talk about the Rene Descartes argument and then its critical analysis. So, in this class, what we will try to do is, we will be discussing how Rene Descartes' idea of body and mind has some problem. And we will try to critically analyze or understand the Rene Descartes from different philosophy point of view. So first, just for your revision, in last class what we have discussed or in the Rene Descartes idea of body and mind, he argued that mind is diametrically opposed to the body. So, what he did, he used the mathematical method in philosophy and he concluded that how the body is different from mind. So, there is a method of doubt or method of doubt is in a radical doubt where he was doubting each and everything, the existence of body and existence of this world. And now finally, he concluded that there is something I or I which is in a beyond of this doubt. I mean, we cannot doubt the I. So we can't doubt the mind. So mind is beyond that. It means that what he concluded that I think, therefore I am. So, he has a very certain knowledge about the mind. And he concluded this idea that there is mind and body, the two substrates. So, it is called substance dualism. So substance dualism is which is something which is an independent, independent existence. So, mind and body. So, body is again is a different from mind and its attributes is extension. Now if you see this I or mind, mind is a thinking thing. Now Descartes argued that he is concluding this because he believed that he had a very clear and distinct idea of myself. So, remember in last class we were discussing about that how if you are going for it, I mean, clear and distinct idea, there will be no possibility of making an error because he believed that whatever we read, there are a lot of error in their philosophy. Now he wanted a philosophical conclusion like mathematical conclusion. In mathematics, if two plus two is equal to four, everyone is going to accept that without any discussion. In philosophy, we were discussing on one concept, for example, existence of mind, existence of body and so on. But still, we do not have this conclusion as a mathematical conclusion. Still there is a scope for the discussion. However, he concluded that there is a existence of mind and body and mind and body is two different thing. Now, if you are saying that the body is, there is a substance dualism because of this, because body exists independent our thinking and they do not need our existence in order to exist and that is what he called substance and that is reason that we said the substance dualism is two different things. Ultimately, however, he accepted that God is a substance. But this body and mind is relative to substance, it is dependent on God. However, our point is here

is in Rene Descartes, there is a body and mind. Mind is different from body. Let us understand again this body and mind. Suppose this is a space, and in this space, there is a body. So, we can locate the body when we are saying that this is body. So, it means that there is an extension and we can say, yeah, this is body. And mind is something which is we cannot locate in the space. It is immaterial. So, body is material, which we can locate in a space, and mind, we cannot locate in a space. So, mind is immaterial. Body is material. Now if you see these two things, body and mind is a two different logical type. So mind is different and body is different. Now this theory, this doctrine has become an official doctrine because it was so famous. I mean the way Rene Descartes used the method, method was strong. So therefore, his claim was very strong. So, if what Rene Descartes used to say that mathematics problems or mathematical conclusion is certain because of their method, not because their subject matter. So, method is solid or it is in a proper or we are using that method, then we will have a proper argument, proper conclusion. Now Rene Descartes idea of this body and mind or substantial dualism, it was a very famous kind of there are philosopher, they argued that it become an official doctrine saying that there is a body and there is a mind dualism. Now there are many ways to, many philosophers after Descartes who rejected this substantial dualism. However, we are not going to cover all of them in this lecture. We will be taking only one philosopher name, Gilbert Ryle, who published in a book, The Concept of Mind and who rejected this substantial dualism. Now what Gilbert Ryle argued that there is no mind and body dualism. So, we will try to understand his argument.

So now what Gilbert Ryle is basically is arguing that in Cartesian method and conclusion, there is a logical error of mixing up one category with another. So, we are saying that there is a two category as Rene Descartes argued, there is a body and there is a mind. So, Gilbert Ryle is arguing that look, both of this category is an, this is an error. You are mixing up, mixing up the sense that you are taking one mind in a different, putting in a different category, different logical type and that is the problem. Now he gave an example. Let us take the same example in my words. For example, I am like staying in IIT ISM, and the first time we came to this place and you asked me to, can you show me the, where is IIT ISM, Dhanbad. So, what I did, I took you around. So, we saw library, we saw administrative building, we saw hostels, departments. But you are still confused that where is IIT ISM. Now the idea is you wanted to see this IIT ISM the way you are seeing these buildings. So, the idea is this is a category. So you are, for you there is a library, there is department, administrative buildings, or offices, but you are like confused that where is this IIT ISM. You are basically what you are doing, you wanted to see this IIT ISM, Dhanbad in the way for you there is an elaborating for you there are department and administrative offices. At the moment you are like when I said that this is IIT ISM, then you thought of okay, it means IIT, ISM is not belonged to this category, belongs to another category. And therefore, you said okay, it means IIT ISM is something which is immaterial. Now like for example, you are watching a cricket match. So, there is a team, so you can

see that a captain, a person who is a baller and then you also can see the wicket keeper, they also can see who is there in field and different players, but you are still not able to see the team spirit. So you are confused where the team spirit is. Now the problem is you wanted to see these things in this category and if you are not kidding for example, when I am saying look, this is me, Gyan Prakash. So when I am saying where is Gyan Prakash? So, I am talking about this body, his hand, head and so on, but still there are there is an object, but still you are not able to see where is Gyan Prakash and then you thought okay fine, it means this Gyan Prakash is not a material, again look at something which is immaterial and then this is how we talked about the body and mind, but that is an error. That is not right way to define the mind. So, if you are going to do that, I mean even you are going to take your argument that there is no mind and there is no body, mind is immaterial. It is like the Ghost in a machine, I ghost in a machine that there is something which is immaterial who is controlling this body. So, who is the boss of this body? This machine is a mind. A mind is completely immaterial. So, it is like again if it is not clear, again let me explain you again that basically Gilbert Ryle is arguing that the mind is just a word to represent this all activity. So, when I am saying I am Gyan, it only means that it is a word who represents this activity. So, when I am saying this IIT ISM Dhanbad, so this is how everything is working, the word is now representing this entire activity. Just a word to represent this activity. So, it does not mean that IIT ISM Dhanbad is a different form this world, different from the department and administrative offices, persons, playing fields, grounds. I mean you came to this university and you are like looking for where is this university, University X. So, you went where inside and then you started looking where is X university, like as he gave an example of Oxford University. Now you saw everything, library, playing, fields, museums, departments, administrative offices, but still you are like confused, I mean confused it means that you are not able to see the Oxford, where is the Oxford University. And what Descartes said if you take in this way, Descartes thought that okay it means if you are not able to see it means something is belongs to a different category. Basically, this Oxford University is in a word who represents this all this activity. So, when I am saying this is an IIT ISM or I am arguing this is Gyan Prakash, so this name and is our IIT ISM Dhanbad is in a word who is representing this activity. It is not a different from, this buildings, administrative buildings, departments, library, hostels. So, Ryle argued that this about the mind, mind is not different from the body. So he basically rejected the idea of dualism. He said there is no dualism, there is no immaterial mind which is controlling your body. Now let us understand his, the Cartesian idea. This is what he Descartes argued that body and then mind. So, mind is a different logical type and body is a different logical type. Now if you see this in an argument, his argument says that in last class we have discussed that how the mind and body interact, the problem of interaction. Even we are going to accept this okay there is in a mind which is a different from body and mind is worth doing everything. It is a boss of the body. I mean who is controlling the body. Now the question arises that how this body interacts with the mind. So, there is to be

in a system where you are getting some information and passing to the mind and mind finally taking the final decision that okay do this, do that and so on. So, for that we need that some mechanism where we can say that oh look how this mind and body is interacting. This is what it was asked by the Princess Elizabeth when Rene Descartes presented this argument. So she said that how they interact. Now Rene Descartes what he did he argued that the place of mind is the pineal gland. Now where does mind and body is interacting? So, everything is going to the pineal gland and now there is a communication between body and mind, in both way. Now but there is an argument that this interaction between mind and body will not be possible. If you can recall when we were discussing about the Plato idea of idea and then Aristotle idea of idea where they talked about the third man argument. Now there they were like participating I mean the particular in the universal idea. Here we have the idea of body and idea of mind and Rene Descartes has basically used this causal where there is a cause and then effect. In the sense that when you are perceiving any object for example you are walking in forest. So, you saw a wild animal for example a Lion. Now if you the moment you saw a lion immediately after that you start running away from that place or you are going to face some firearms or you are making some alarm or making you calling someone else or calling someone for help. You may depend I mean you are like performing certain action. So, you saw a wild animal and then there is an action. Or maybe you are in jungle safari so you start like watching from distance and taking photographs so you are like doing something. So, you saw something and then you started performing some sort of action. Now if you will accept the Descartes idea of body and mind so this theory will argue that so there is a light to hit a retina and then reality in the making certain changes in the sense that passing this information about the object is called lion is passing this information where in mind and then mind is basically deciding okay do this do that and finally you are performing an action. This is how we can explain in terms of substantial dualism where the mind is deciding that okay this is how and this is how body is passing this information to mind and mind again is giving an okay run away from this place. Take a photograph. Now Gilbert Ryle is arguing that this interaction will not be possible because mind is belongs to a different logical type a different category and again body is a different logical type. So, this relationship between this mind and body it is not possible. We cannot establish the relationship body and mind. I mean interaction will not be possible. Even you want to establish a relation or you want to establish that interact then we need something which can establish which can help in this relation right because since mind in from belongs to a different category body belongs to a different category and therefore, they cannot interact. So, we need something for example M2 who can help in this interaction right. Now the third one. Now again you have to ask what is this M2 is? I mean M2 belongs to which category? In the mind, material side or immaterial side. Now if it is going to suppose it falls in this category immaterial side then again between M2 and B not be possible. The interaction between M2 and B will not be possible. Therefore, we need another S1. The same problem same question it belongs to where? In this category or this category material

category or immaterial category if you're going to belong in this again we need another one and this is how infinite difference and therefore they believe and they argued that the interaction between the body and mind will not be possible. So even you are accepting that so there is a body and there is a mind we cannot establish a relation between this body and mind. I hope this theory is clear. This is one way to rejecting this body and mind. Now even Rene Descartes argued that the mind is different from the body. Rejecting this idea Gilbert Ryle is arguing basically this is in a category mistake. So, for example you are at the university you are looking at this building the university building, departments, library and so on. So, what happened that you are still you are looking for a university in the same way in same category. When it was difficult for you, I could not find that then you imagine oh there is something which is immaterial which controls this university and that is in the category mistake. That is a right argument and this is how he rejected the Descartes idea of body and mind and he argued that mind is not different from the body. So, when we are saying this is in a mind just representing this activity. Oxford University or IIT ISM it is not different from this administrative building, playing ground, departments, hostels and library and so on. So, this is how the Gilbert Ryle rejected the Descartes idea of mind and body. Now if even, you are going to accept this idea this argument against Rene Descartes idea of body and mind still we need to argue many things. For example, it is fine I got this idea that mind and body is not two different things. Now the question is then what is the thinking? What is thought. Because if you see I am a thinking thing because I can think it also means that I is something which is different. If you are like accepting the Rene Descartes idea of body and mind. Gilbert Ryle arguing that need to understand what is thinking, what is this I think, thought and then process of thinking. So, you have some idea, you have learned, now you are recalling those things, reflecting. Suppose for example, so today is the very first day and physically we have this class. You came to this campus, IIT ISM, Dhanbad campus and we are like discussing this Gilbert Ryle philosophy in the classroom, one of the classrooms. So directly you are coming to the station and then to or airport directly to the classroom. Now I am saying that I am announce my class that after this class we will go for a cup of tea and I ask you that you decide where we can go. Now for you it will be difficult to think because you have no idea about the place where it can have this cup of tea, the taste and the time. So even if you are going for a something and suppose we have a large number of students in my class then you also have to think of the space. So now if I am asking that please think and decide you may not be able to think because you really have no idea about this campus. You really have not seen this campus and heard about the anything about this campus. So, you have no idea what is the timing, the space and when the place it is in terms of taste or maybe we going for some more than tea for example snacks. So, you basically cannot think. You say no I have no idea how I will think I can think. How can decide that where to go and what is the time and what time you can go or is it possible to go immediately out of the class. Ryle is arguing that you have seen something. You have learned something and now what you are doing? You are

reflecting, you are thinking, recalling those things and this is what we are saying I am a thing. So, when I am saying I am thinking for example there is a game right chess. We are playing so after you move, I am thinking. Suppose I have no idea about these rules. I am not aware of that. I have not practiced. I have not heard of these rules. Even I am acting that I am thinking. Do you think that it is possible for me to think about my next move? No. So when I am saying I am thinking it means I know the rules and I am applying. I am thinking. Okay I can go for this move and that move and so on. So thinking is when you know something and you are recalling those ideas recalling those process rules things. For example we have like a car and we are planning to go out but no fuel. Now when I said that let us go and we will go for it and then fill the fuel and then we will go for our next program. Now you are thinking oh today is X Day and in X Day that petrol pump or that area is like closed right because today is Sunday today is Monday and so on. So since today is Sunday so you may not be able to get in this area or this place. Let us go for another place. Thinking you know the idea you have idea of the city you know that okay and Sunday it is closed right. So, you are thinking you can think you can decide where to go or when to go but when you have no idea you cannot think. It means you have no knowledge previous knowledge you cannot think. So, when I am saying that I am thinking it means that I have learned something and still I remember those things. Like for example I know the rules and now but I cannot recall it because it is I have not I have forgotten everything. In that case if you ask me to think and decide I may not be able to do that. So, when I am saying is I am thinking it only means that I have an idea and I am recalling. reflecting. So, what Gilbert Ryles basically is arguing that what you believe that there is something mind which is different from body whose thinking is in the wrong argument. He is rejecting this in a Descartes idea of mind. Descartes believes that mind is a different from body right and mind is a thinking thing which is immaterial which we cannot locate in a space and this is how through this arguments Gilbert Ryle is saying that no, mind is not different from the body. It is not what he was saying that thinking thing, which is different from the body. So, Gilbert Ryle is arguing so when you are saying I am thinking you basically you have learned something and then you have not forgot it right. So, if you are going to like suppose I have forgotten everything then obviously I cannot recall those things. So, I have learned I have seen I have experienced but still it is with me. It is with me in the sense that I can recall. Still remember right. Then I am reflecting. So what Gilbert Ryle is arguing so when you are saying I am thinking thing is not different. This is how he explained the idea of the notion of thought thinking thing right. Now again the question arises what about is the memory. There is an argument there is a mind and has experience in past and then still remember. Gilbert Ryle is arguing that remembering means if you are saying is to remember means if you have learned something and still not forgotten it. You have not forgotten it and that is the reason that when we are talking about the memory when we are talking about that we are thinking those things still there. We are recalling we are reviewing whatever we have we have seen our own past. So, the Gilbert Ryle's idea that dualism is

there is no dualism and there is a problem in the argument for such as dualism and he argued that there is no mind I mean my no mind means it is not different from the body. So, what Cartesian idea of mind it was rejected by Gilbert Ryle. Gilbert Ryle argued that there is no dualism and when I am saying that I am thinking I am thinking only means that I have learnt I have experienced something in past and still it is with me means I have not forgotten that. So, when I am saying I am thinking I am recalling those things right. So, this is how a Gilbert Ryle rejected the idea of mind from Cartesian idea of mind and body. Thank you.

So, this talk was based on these two books I mean one book and one online material. So by Gilbert Ryle the concept of mind is published and the Stanford Encyclopedia. Thank you so much for your kind attention. Thank you.