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“If no one possessed any money, no one could get any money on loan.” --- Ryle’s Inquiry into the Bankruptcy of Intellectualism about Know How

This presentation has little to do with Political Philosophy. Those in need of advice on cutting their debt will be equally disappointed. The subject matter of my talk is Gilbert Ryle’s (1946/1949) attack on what he labels “the intellectualist legend”, i.e. the view that *knowing how to do* something is a species of *knowing that* something is the case.

Despite numerous recent attempts to critically evaluate Ryle’s anti-intellectualist arguments, there is no agreement as to what their target and force may be. It seems that both Ryle and his critics are to blame. On the one hand, Ryle does not deliver any clearly historical or systematic exposition of his opponents’ claims and some of his arguments may seem quite preliminary. On the other hand, his contemporary critics fail to acknowledge that --- despite the prose suggesting light-hearted local strikes --- Ryle’s arguments jointly contribute to a full-blown campaign against Intellectualism and should not be assessed in isolation from one another.

I attempt to briefly reconstruct the campaign, suggesting that one illuminating way to begin is to ask: What are the metaphysical grounds for knowing how to do something? The question enables us to acknowledge that Ryle gradually eliminates all strategic positions available to Intellectualists who seek such grounds in knowing that w , where w is a way to ϕ . For instance, Ryle demonstrates that although an Intellectualist may choose to deny that knowing how to ϕ involves considering ways to ϕ , he should expect to end up in a weaker and still hopeless position, whereby w has yet to become operational in ϕ -ing. Crucially, Ryle’s arguments --- while targeting no particular opponents --- provide a strong conceptual tool with which to expose Intellectualism as an array of “metaphysically bankrupt” views, i.e. ones incapable of accommodating the grounds for knowing how.