

# Shaping Our World: Knowing How Best to Act

Keagan Potts  
Philosophy Department  
Loyola University of Chicago  
1032 W Sheridan Rd.  
Chicago, Illinois 60625 USA

Faculty Advisor: Fr. James Murphy S.J.

## Abstract

Identifying skill knowledge as distinct from propositional knowledge affects the way agents interact with their world. This paper argues for a notion of skill knowledge independent from the consideration of propositions. Intentional actions depend upon a background of low level behavioral capabilities, and thus skill knowledge can operate without utilizing propositional understanding. As a result of this dependency relationship a skill is limited to the behaviors the agent has in their background and their ability to intentionally create a system of actions aimed at a goal. As a skill develops the tactical rules become pliable until the knower acts outside of the rules' jurisdiction. In this area of innovative and creative skill development the knower performs in a way that demands new rules be abstracted from their actions.

**Key Words:** Skill, Know-How, Propositional knowledge, Intentional Action

## 1. Introduction

A lot of debate currently surrounds whether or not know-how exists as distinct from propositional knowledge. I aim to contribute to the argument that knowledge-how is fundamentally different from propositional knowledge by explaining intention's dependence on know-how in the planning, implementation and innovation of skill sets. I argue using Searle's notion of background that low grade know-how provides the foundation that bounds and allows for intentions to be set into motion. Our knowing how best to act occurs by selecting appropriate low grade capabilities in the enactment of a skill, which become higher grade by virtue of their functioning in a system of intentions embodied by action in pursuit of an intended future state. The background sets satisfaction conditions for intentions as Anscombe conceptualizes them, which in turn decide the limits of skills. As a result, low grade know how limits our intentions which in turn guide and bound our skill knowledge, which functions as an extremely efficient multi-track disposition (Ryle 46).

I will begin the essay by endorsing Gilbert Ryle's argument for know how, highlighting the relevant concepts for this essay. In the following sections I use Anscombe's *Intention* and Searle's *Intentionality* to help understand how intention embodied in action depends on baseline know-how capabilities. After this I will draw upon Dreyfus to argue what qualifies action as skillful and distinguish it from low-grade know how by its unique implementations of intentions embodied in action to successfully actualize intentions as plans for the future. In the last section I will look at how innovative instances of knowing how best to perform a skill progress the entire discipline or practice.

## 1.2 Gilbert Ryle's know how

In the second chapter of his work *The Concept of Mind*, Gilbert Ryle constructs an argument that shows intelligent action is not confined to mental states of believing, judging or inferring (Ryle 26). Ryle attempts to set know-how apart from propositional knowledge by showing that "there are many activities themselves which directly display qualities of mind, yet are neither themselves intellectual operations nor yet effects of intellectual operations" (Ryle 26). He means here that skill-knowledge can be enacted without conscious reflection on rules preceding every instance of the skill. This allows the knower to quickly move past the question: "did I follow the rules?" to the more important: "how can I achieve loftier goals more efficiently?"

Skill knowledge is composed of trained dispositions that are always ready to be enacted when the situation calls for them, whether or not they ever are activated. However, Ryle wants to avoid thinking of know how as passive, mindless habituation and thus describes skill knowledge as a trained capacity which "involves the stimulation by criticism and example of the pupil's own judgments" (Ryle 38). Opportunities to develop skills arise from reflecting on which dispositions were activated, how they were applied to the situation, and whether or not there are more successful ways of achieving the desired result. By intending to do something in the future, I see the need to have acquired a specific skill set, and as a result begin training and acquiring dispositions. Because of this, intentions for the future lend importance to how the intention is embodied in actions, which is crucial to elevating skilled knowledge from lower level behavior.

Ryle's example of a chess player shows that at first one may consult the rules when developing a skill, but that the rules are eventually forgotten or even disregarded. Dreyfus later helps clarify Ryle's argument by making an important distinction between tactical rules: "heuristic rules [that] provide guidelines for how one can best respond to each type of situation," and rules that structure the game: "the particular moves each piece is allowed to make" (Dreyfus 53). The chess player never forgets that bishops can only move diagonally, though they may forget or fail to notice opportunities for strategies that a given situation presents. This distinction is important because it demonstrates rules are a teaching tool, but as the knower progresses in the development of their skill, less focus is put on merely following rules, and more on individual interpretation of how one can best embody the tactical rules and act intelligently upon them to create the most opportunities to win the game.

Ryle's notion of skill promotes an understanding of mind that is not limited to contemplation and application of truths and propositions, but rather a mind that is itself in the action. Prior to Ryle most philosophers argue that only knowledge of propositions and the ability to derive them from each other constitute a kind of measurable knowledge. However, skillful actions are described by Ryle as "Consist[ing], on the contrary, in the absence or presence of certain sorts of testable explanatory-cum-predictive assertions" (Ryle 25). Additionally, mindful actions are distinct from habits because they are done critically and intentionally to streamline the skill or broaden its applications via innovation at the stage of mature skill knowledge.

Ryle gives one model of how skill knowledge is built, though he is aware of many alternatives. A chess player is given the knowledge of the rules in propositional form, then practices their implementation by repeating them to himself over and over until eventually he can follow the rules without reciting them. After learning the rules Ryle makes clear that "It is not in what he does in his head or with his tongue, but what he does on the board that shows whether or not he knows the rules" (Ryle 41). Though taught as propositions, the tactical rules given to the pupil are not learned from deduction like other propositional knowledge. Rather, they are abstracted from what is identified as a skillful action, and then made into propositional rules.

Ryle's notion of a multi-track disposition is essential to understanding how skill knowledge juggles the many concerns involved in executing a skillful act. When someone acts skillfully there are any number of considerations going on within the knower of how to implement the skill set: "The higher-grade dispositions of people with which this inquiry is largely concerned, are, in general, not single-track dispositions, but dispositions the exercises of which are indefinitely heterogenous" (Ryle 44). Here, Ryle means that the exercise of higher grade dispositions requires a mixture of mental acts, both consideration and implementation. It might be helpful to consider the exercise of higher grade dispositions as considerate application, in that the application itself carries within it the consideration of rules structuring the skill.

For another example of a skill let us look at a jazz bassist. The improvisation involved in jazz music illustrates the importance of implementing rules without conscious reflection before each implementation, feeling their application, instead of referring to the rules. When watching a jazz bassist improvise in the early stages of skill development, one can see the artist is consciously trying to follow the rules of their performance, which sometimes results in the occasional hesitation in his or her playing. There is some skill in their ability to perform the piece in its entirety, but they are not yet considered skillful. The hesitations or hiccups prevent the skill from meeting satisfaction conditions set by the intentions of the skilled knower. In other words, the knower takes issue with *how* the skill was performed.

When watching the skilled artist performing intelligently with expert style, the audience would be unaware that the musician is following any rules. Only after the piece is performed creatively, without mistake or conscious reflection of each maxim guiding the activation of dispositions can it be considered skillful.

To follow our example further, the tactical rules that govern music are subject to manipulation, but one must be aware of the relevant scales, the key in which the piece they are performing is written, the time signature and various other guidelines. Consciously reflecting on all these considerations at the time of action is nearly impossible. According to Ryle, instead of acts of reflection, the skill's "exercises are observances of rules or canons or the applications of criteria, but they are not tandem operations of theoretically avowing maxims and then putting them into practice" (Ryle 46). The developed skilled knower is not performing two actions of reflection and application, but a unified mindful application without needing to afford conscious reflection on the rules governing behavior. The multi-track disposition discussed by Ryle allows that the skilled knower demonstrates their awareness of rules by not violating them. The skilled knower takes initiative to bend the tactical rules or apply them in interesting ways where they see fit. The less-skilled bassist above performs two separate actions: consideration and application. Additionally they cannot apply musical theory beyond the pre-determined rules abstracted from the practice of those that came before. Though in the developmental stages of a skill these two actions must be taken before the skilled performance, in the mature stages they are unified as dispositions that the skilled knower activates jointly. Such unification allows for creative actions. Only the streamlined unification in a multi-track disposition allows for creative and novel enactment, furthering the skill's relevance as it relates to the field of its application.

I will briefly mention Ryle's regress because it demonstrates the need for heterogenous or multi-track exercise of dispositions, but will minimize the time spent covering it to allow more time for the explanation of how intention develops know-how into skill knowledge. Following the rules of a skill must be demonstrated in the action, not in temporally prior and separate act of consideration. The skills are in the action, not referred to by the action. This is to say that the skill exists not in propositional rules as a reference which coordinates the action, but pervades the skill's implementation. The next section's account of intention taken from G.E.M Anscombe will argue this point at greater length and help elucidate how the mind is in the action. This conceptualization of skill *in* the action itself avoids the intellectualist's regress of having every mental act require prior mental thought, which itself will be an intelligent action and necessitate another prior intellectual consideration *ad infinitum*. Thus, because Ryle combines skills and consideration of the rules they follow into a multi-track disposition, he avoids the intellectualist regress; in a sense the consideration of rules is done by the manner in which the action is carried out.

In the next section I analyze how the multi-track dispositions, or skills, are implemented using Anscombe's notions of intending a future state and intentions embodied by actions. Examining the planning intention and acting intention will illuminate how and why skill knowers are critical in their comportment, and how the skilled knower determines how best to act in certain situations with multiple avenues for response.

## 2. Anscombe's Intentionality explored

In her work, *Intention*, Anscombe argues for three species of intentional action. Intention with which one acts (which I omit as unimportant to our current matter), intention in action and intentions for the future. She distinguishes unintentional actions from intentional actions by the latter being "actions to which a certain sense of the question 'Why?' is given application; the sense is of course that in which the answer, if positive, gives a reason for acting" (Anscombe 9). In other words the intelligibility of the action arises from its location in a process that is reasonably thought to achieve the desired future state of affairs: intention embodied by action is an indicator of what we are trying to do when we act.

For example, if I am making my mother dinner my intended future state would be serving dinner with all the right courses and garnishes. The intentions embodied in action would be my actions of cooking the steak, cutting the vegetables, or making a salad. All of these are parts of an interrelated intentional chain that contributes to the achievement of my future intended state. Making dinner would only become skillful if I repeated the actions until they became dispositions.

Skills depend on intentional action in that because it is a *trained* disposition the skill only develops with repeated instances of mindful intentional sequences. Constructing these intentional sequences multiple times in various instances demonstrates an agent's skill. The same type of intentional action grows into a skill as it is practiced multiple times, becoming increasingly efficient. The future goal determines the sequence of the intentions embodied by actions which put the mind into the action. While the skilled knower gets closer to their planned intention, they also get there in a good way. Here, good means actions which better embody the skill, and more seamlessly flows from one intention in action to the next. This is partially because the knower sets more reasonable expectations, as discussed in section

3. The means by which the execution of intentions gets the knower closer to their goal is covered by section 4. Knowledge of this will widen the application of the skilled action allowing for creative and innovative instances of skill implementation

To better explain intentions for the future, let us return to the musician example. The very first intention for the future would be to learn how to create sounds and string them together into a song. This means intentionally memorizing and applying appropriate scales, key signatures and playing styles as well as the learning of dynamic techniques and other considerations. As the skill knowledge is honed, the intended future state graduates from playing simple tunes, to longer more advanced songs and sometimes to original composition, from not just making sounds, but engaging the audience by the way in which the sounds are played.

The knower need not concentrate on each movement, because they know the skill well enough to understand their actions will bring about the desired effect: “One does not deliberate about an acquired skill; the description of what one is doing, which one completely understands, is at a distance from the details of one’s movements, which one does not consider at all” (Anscombe 54). Instead they focus more on the flow of their actions embodied by intention. Skill knowledge is demonstrated in knowing *how* intentions in action relate to future goals, though the agent need not be able to teach the skill. Skill is something that we enact, or do to low grade behaviors and as a result must relate to intentions.

As a result of being an action, know-how can be witnessed. The extremely advanced musician feels the music, and mistakes are virtually eliminated except under extenuating circumstances, like the breaking of a string or the slip of a finger resulting in the occasional out of tune note. However, these would both be classified as mishaps in performance as the intention was well formed in correct standing with the future intention; that is, it could reasonably be thought to bring about the desired effect, but failed to be properly enacted because of forces beyond the actor’s control. The most advanced skill knowers know how to anticipate and adapt to relevant conditions in the environment. Though the knower may still not be satisfied with the skill’s implementation, this occurrence is less threatening because failure to achieve the desired future intention is a result of the environment and not the knower.

Intentions in action lose their meaning without the future state toward which they orient themselves. Anscombe admits that “if the only occurrence of intention were as the intention of doing whatever one is doing, the notion of intentional action itself would be a very thin one” (Anscombe 32). Intentions gain weight as expressions of skill knowledge via the goal they seek to achieve. Intentions in action are described by Anscombe as actions which can be reasonably thought of as preceding steps to the desired future state: “In order to make sense of ‘I do P with a view to Q’, we must see how future state of affairs Q is supposed to be a possible later stage in proceedings of which action P is an earlier stage” (Anscombe 36). Some actions are seen as expressions of skill knowledge, and not just exercising of low-grade capabilities because the knower understands the intentional process necessary to activating a skill. Similarly both skills and intentions can remain unactivated, but are ready in the sense that if I desired a future state of affairs I would be ready to act immediately in a skillful way in order to attain it. I argue that specific intentions in action are reflected on less as a skill develops in lieu of focusing on their relations to other parts of the interrelated intentional set. As the skill knower views situations as open to their skill’s enactment, intention for the future is what is seen first, and then desired intentions in actions are constructed without conscious reflection on how each intention in action is to be executed. In other words, the skilled knower sees and acts, keeping in mind how best to act.

Although they eventually demand little reflection while the skill is being implemented, particular intentions in actions are returned to and examined by the skilled knower in cases of possible learning and further development of the skill. For example, our musician may listen to his own recording and identify flaws, or even speak to the conductor at the end of a performance about possible areas of improvement. Here one can see how the description of one’s own intentional actions, even when identifying which were performed poorly or incorrectly, are evidence of the skill’s development. This arises from the pupil’s awareness of intentions in action as a process toward the future intention. The advanced pupil understands the interrelatedness of an intentional system.

Now that I have discussed the importance of how the action is completed intentionally, I use Searle’s notion of ‘the background’ to show how the evaluation of intentions depends on directions of fit in the background components of which actions are intentional expressions. Baseline capabilities are the tools utilized by the skilled knower, and thus limit their conduct to the combination of capabilities they possess.

### **3. Searle, the Background and Intentions’ Directions of Fit**

This section demonstrates how know-how behaviors compose the pool of background capabilities that intention can draw upon for skill knowledge, and therefore set the satisfaction conditions for intentions embodied in action. Additionally an account of the directions of fit of our intentions will illuminate how constructing intentional systems

turns the behaviors of the background into high functioning skill knowledge. I give an account of such skill knowledge in the final section.

Searle's work *Intentionality* is helpful to understanding how we evaluate our intentional actions to learn how best to enact a skill. The notion of "Directions of fit" between mind and world help indicate how intentionality depends on the background capabilities in order to act in such a way that can be evaluated as a skill. I argue that understanding how intentions in action are given conditions of satisfaction by the know-how capabilities they combine is essential for growth of the skill and allows for more wide spread and immediate awareness of possible implementations. Intention for the future operates within the "mind-to-world" direction of fit, but can better detect opportunities to perform skill in the world by developing structures of intentions in action operating in the "world-to-mind" direction of fit. In other words, the better we enact our intentions in action (world-to-mind), the greater influence we see ourselves as having on the world (mind-to-world). In skill's most advanced stage of development, covered by section 4, I argue that the knower challenges rules and innovates, creating new unique applications or introduces new technology in skills that rely on tools. This demonstrates the ability to know how best to enact skill knowledge which in some cases calls for revolution or reform in the skill.

The background allows for the evaluation of intentional actions in the sense relevant to the refinement of skills in the knower who is attempting to know how best to act in certain situations. It is necessary that the knower can evaluate their skill knowledge beyond its obtaining of the desired future state. Examining particular intentions embodied in action, it becomes clear to Searle the need for two considerations to have taken place prior to acting: "I must know how things are and I must know how to do things" (Searle 143). This indicates the two directions of fit. As a skilled knower, I must too be skilled enough in observation to identify situations that are open to my skill's implementation. I want to argue that this consideration not only affects beliefs about how one can act to change the world, but that the actor who knows their ability to change the world affects the way they perceive the world to be.

Both intentions embodied by action and intentions for the future take into consideration directions of fit. Searle argues that the directions of fit arise from our background which conditions the evaluation of intentions in action. The background exists in two levels: the deep and the local. The deep background is composed of baseline behaviors. These are pieces of interactive knowledge that we have by virtue of our biological make up as humans. A couple examples Searle provides are "walking, eating, grasping, perceiving, [and] recognizing" (Searle 144). The shallower, or local background is composed of capabilities that allow us to interact with particular objects or technologies in the world, "such things as opening doors, [and] drinking beer from bottles" (Searle 144). It is important to understand that the two levels of the background have behavioral components standing in relation both to how we interact with the world and the way the world is. As a result of the background containing both directions of fit, our intentions too can operate according to both.

Before going farther it is necessary to discuss the nature of the background in depth. The background does not contain skill knowledge, but rather allows for it by presenting eligible stances or dispositions to be acted upon and made into knowledge. Our backgrounds are "set[s] of practices, skills, habits, and stances that enable intentional contents to work in various ways that they do" (Searle 158). It is important that the skills discussed by Searle are dispositions, just like in Ryle. However, they cannot be evaluated unless they are pulled from the background and put into action. Such a conception of skills is different from the notion I endorse. Because they are always being enacted critically and mindfully in attempts to hone or improve their application, skills can never fade into the background.

However, the notion of directions of fit is important and corresponds with the conception of skill outlined by Ryle. Aside from skills, I agree with Searle as to what makes up the background: primarily low level behaviors which are made skillful only by their positioning relative to each other in pursuit of the future intention. This relational evaluation is why we do not speak of intentions in the same way as propositions, because "Desires and intentions, on the other hand, cannot be true or false, but can be complied with, fulfilled, or carried out, and we might say they have the 'world-to-mind' direction of fit"—the notion of intention here is intention for the future (Searle 8). As a result of viewing intention for the future as having a "world-to-mind" direction of fit, the knower evaluates their intention's success relative to the effect it had on the world. Knowing how to bring about the desired effect in the best (most efficient) way possible arises from our ability to highlight not only relevant, but most pertinent components from the background and bring them into our action by constructing a chain of intentions embodied by action.

An example of how an intentional state may be achieved, but not fulfilled may aid in understanding the importance of skill evaluation. Take for example a high jumper on her third and final attempt. Her intention for the future is a successful clearance, and she intends to do this by running with good posture in her approach, jumping vertically, at the right moment, throwing herself over the bar back first and kicking her feet at the right moment—in other words with perfect form. However, adrenaline takes over and she sacrifices running form for power, bending at takeoff instead of taking off in the optimal position, which leads to other compromises in form, like nearly missing the pad

because she jumped too late. All of this being said, she still clears the height. The skilled knower would not consider her intentions in action fulfilled, even though her future intention was.

Knowing how best to make a successful attempt is not manifested in this example. This is because the jumper knows that she can affect the world in such away, and beyond that knows that she has the ability to do so from her training. Searle indicates that conditions of satisfaction are set by the limits of background behaviors: "Conditions of satisfaction are those conditions which, as determined by the intentional content, must obtain if the state is to be satisfied," as the intentional content is the intentional enactment of background behaviors (Searle 12-13). Knowing how best to act is reflected by adherence to the system of intentional actions known to most efficiently bring about a result. Skills then are the selection and construction of relevant behaviors and their efficient enactment towards a desired end intention.

Skillful action also impresses itself on the world, as each instance demonstrates new applications of the actions. Searle discusses how the world becomes a blank page for one's skillful manipulation: "the preintentional stance I take toward [A]... (how things are) allows for a completely different range of possibilities (how to do things)" (Searle 144). Projecting skill onto the world is a way in which more ambitious skill pursuits can be enacted, operating outside the realm governed by tactical rules by giving skills innovative exercise and pushing the limits of practice.

The next section uses excerpts from Dreyfus's "Overcoming the Myth of the Mental," to demonstrate how skills are enacted in their mature form. By investing at the personal level, skill knowers push the boundaries of skill knowledge past the rules. This indicates not only intentional action's dependence on a body of low grade knowledge from the background to draw upon in the production of a skillful performance, but also the importance of intentionally enacting these in such a way to question and affect the tactical rules which previously governed the learning of the skill in earlier stages.

#### **4. Dreyfus and the Highest Skill Development, an Endorsement of Subjectivity**

Dreyfus discusses how skills effect a knower's perception of the world. At the highest level of skill knowledge intentions embodied in action are enacted intuitively, knowing how best to act without weighing various options. This spur of the moment decision making allows for the progression of skills beyond the situations that have been accounted for by rules, and calls for reformation of the practice by extension or development of tools used in the skill.

The notion of intention and its dependence on a pool of background low grade knowledge to set standards of satisfaction that allow the advancement of skilled actions leads to the question: "how does the skilled knower select the appropriate behaviors to enact when intentionally pursuing a goal?" Dreyfus poses a similar question in the context of why computers struggled to exhibit skill knowledge: "it seemed to me that the real problem wasn't storing and organizing millions of facts; it was knowing which facts were relevant" (Dreyfus 48). Knowledge of propositions does not go far in the exercise of a skill. Skilled knowledge is distinguished by the importance of selecting appropriate behaviors.

As the skill is turned into a disposition, the knower's ability to act efficiently without consideration of rules is honed. The skilled knower meets challenges that arise with a sequence of intentions embodied by action that seems to fall into place, without careful and considerate construction. Rules in the sense of when a skill can be given application are not reflected upon before each action: "Rather, these rules are normally experienced in the background as a limit on what appears as worth doing. In this way the expert is sensitive to the rules of the game even if he is not following the rules consciously or unconsciously" (Dreyfus 53). The application of such rules which govern skills implementation are broadened by instances of knowing how best to act, which is developed by analyzing how intentions embodied in action failed to meet satisfaction conditions.

The aspect of skills that open them to evaluation not just based on successful implementation, but implementation in the right way result from the intentional aspect needing fulfillment. In short, the intention for the future needs to have been achieved because the actions manifested the given skill already held by the knower. Skill becomes mature only on reflecting on their instantiations: "As we cope, we experience ourselves to be getting a better or worse grip on the situation. Such coping has satisfaction conditions but it does not have success conditions" (Dreyfus 57). Success conditions ask nothing of how a goal was achieved, while satisfaction conditions get at the heart of skill development by targeting the knower's intentions: was the skill manifest by the action?

By ensuring each intention embodied in action met its satisfaction conditions based on its orientation toward a future intentional state, and the network of other contributing intentions in action, the skilled knower learns how best to act. This is truly remarkable because "such mastery requires a rich perceptual repertoire-the ability to respond to subtle differences in the appearance of perhaps hundreds of thousands of situations-but it requires no conceptual repertoire at all" (Dreyfus 58). That is to say that the skilled knower cannot possibly consider each possible way to deal with the

problem but learns the best, most efficient response from repeated attempts. This requires an investment from the skilled knower. The agent must care enough to ensure the skill was enacted properly: “Only those who became emotionally involved and took to heart their successes and failures developed into experts” (Dreyfus 52). These knowers have cultivated their skill knowledge enough to set a new standard for how to best enact a skill.

Practices stay relevant when their practitioners are always pushing the application of their skills. Acting in such a way prioritizes creativity over the rules that allowed for the skill’s development in the early stages: “The rules, however, seem to give way to more flexible responses as we become more skilled” (Dreyfus 52). Take for example Dave Fosbury’s creation of the Fosbury flop. It defied all rules that previously governed practice but has since shown itself to be the best way to achieve maximum height in high jump. Similar occurrences in skills mediated by technology can be exemplified by the advent of a bending pole in pole vault. Revolution or reformation in rules demonstrates the most advanced level of skill knowledge that fully understands the interactions between intentions embodied in action. Deeper insight into these rare cases will demonstrate intention’s dependence on a behavioral background to develop a skill. Repeated reflection on enactments of the skill after their execution, will then demonstrate how the optimum intentional actions are selected and attain disposition status ready to respond to skill perceptions.

Prior to the Fosbury flop, high jumpers had a completely different approach and as a result a different skill set. The sequence of intentions embodied in action were not acting in the best way. Fosbury was able to understand the chain of actions that led him toward the intended future goal well enough to identify areas of inefficiency in the process. Developments such as the Fosbury flop exhibit the highest kind of mature skill knowledge, knowing how best to act despite what the rules may instruct. Fosbury’s intention in actions draw upon the same body of behavioral know how, but enact different behaviors forming a new intentional action chain that demands abstraction of novel tactical rules.

Another instance of mature skill knowledge led to the invention of the bending pole in pole vaulting. Knowledge of what each intentional action was trying to achieve shed light on shortcomings of the straight pole technology of the time. This called for researching better materials that allowed a more smooth transition of horizontal energy into vertical energy. Those pioneering the new technology would have to be skilled enough to expand the rules of the straight pole practice to fit the new technology. This is the kind of situation that Dreyfus discusses when examining masterful innovation of skills. The skilled knower cannot step back and look at the rules objectively trying to apply them to the new technology, but rather must examine their own practice and make adaptations that they see fit regardless of the rules that taught them the practice. Knowledge of the rules will not necessarily help in such situations shaped by new technology because the tactical rules will not apply on the cutting edge of a skills development.

## 5. Conclusion

The definition of skill set forth by Gilbert Ryle indicates that skill knowledge is distinct from deliberative knowledge. The concepts of know how are skills that better engage us with our world, rather than propositions. Skills become dispositions so well engrained that they affect our worldview and the range of action that appears to be worth doing. Anscombe demonstrates how the direction of skills is guided by anticipations for how we can interact with our environment. This attuned application elevates movements from behaviors, to skills that express know how. This in turn leads to loftier goals and systemic knowledge of the behaviors we can implement in a skillful way. Searle’s notion of the background and directions of fit demonstrate the affects our know-how has on perception. The skills we have influence the control we perceive ourselves as having on our environment, and are importantly acts of perception, not deliberation. This informed perception, attentive to relevant details in the environment, gives way to mature skill knowledge. Dreyfus discusses the ability of such skill to revolutionize practice. Additionally, Dreyfus indicates that breaking or bending rules of application demonstrates a deeper understanding of one’s own relationship with the world. Skills become part of our world view because dispositions allow immediate, informed response when deliberating would interrupt flow.

As such, skill knowledge is dependent on what behavioral tools are accessible to the knower in their background. Critically constructing chains of these behaviors and enacting them intentionally in pursuit of a future state all must be done according to the rules that guide action in the beginning stages of skill development. Later such rules can be questioned and done away with in particularly advanced skilled knowers. The success of an action is evaluated by examining how behavioral components from the background were strung together in an action. The better a skilled knower gets, the more broadly and efficiently their skill can be given application. This means they perceive a wider set of intricate actions that appear worth doing. In this way, knowing how best to act in certain situations affects the way the skilled knower perceives the world. Skilled knowledge in its highest stages can be enacted beyond the guidance of prior practical rules. The more advanced the skill is, the more the knower can manipulate its traditional application to fit more instances in the world. However, even in this stage the knower is still limited and dependent

on the background of behaviors that are made skillful by their incorporation in a system of intentions in action directed toward a future intention.

## 6. Bibliography

1. Anscombe, G.E.M. *Intention*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.
2. Dreyfus, Hubert L. "Overcoming the Myth of the Mental." *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 79, no. 2 (2005): 47-65. Accessed November 23, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30046213> .
3. Ryle, Gilbert. "Knowing How and Knowing That." In *The Concept of Mind*. University Of Chicago Press, 2000.
4. Searle, John R. "The Nature of Intentional States" and "The Background." In *Intentionality*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.