CHAPTER - II
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THE NATURE OF DISPOSITIONS AND GILBERT RYLE'S ACCOUNT OF MIND

The term 'disposition' is applied to the mind which refers to capacity, ability, tendency and liability to do certain sorts of things. Most of the psychological terms we use stand for dispositions and not actual states of mind. When we speak of a person knowing, desiring, fearing, valuing something, we donot ordinarily mean that he is at the moment we speak in a state of actual desire, fear etc. but that he has a disposition or tendency to be so.

According to Oxford English Dictionary the word, 'disposition' means the person's natural qualities of mind and character. It signifies inclination or tendency.

Gilbert Ryle, in his introduction to "The Concept of Mind" declares that his central aim in the book is not to 'give new information about minds'. It is not to increase what we know about mind, but simply 'to rectify the logical geography of the knowledge which we already possess'. His main aim is to explode Descartes' dualism and to create the dispositional account of the mind. Ryle says that the mind is not a ghost, it is only a disposition to behave in certain ways. He explains psychological terms as behaviours or dispositions to behaviour. It is not a fact that bodily behaviours are caused by mind. They are occasioned by dispositions or tendencies. Human being have many dispositions or inclinations in him. He acts
according to those dispositions. But Ryle makes it clear that these dispositions are not stored in an inner private chamber called mind. There is nothing mysterious about dispositions. They are only the ways in which the public behaviour of men are managed. Thus Ryle says that the mental qualities are primarily dispositions in nature.

By his theory of dispositions Ryle gives a new picture of the philosophy of mind. His method is primarily linguistic and not factual. He replaces the Cartesian mind by dispositions and believes that all psychological terms are more or less depositional in character. Speaking of dispositional properties Ryle writes,

“To possess a dispositional property is not to be in a particular state or to undergo a particular change; it is to be bound or liable to be in a particular state, or to undergo a particular change, when a particular condition is realized.”

Ryle denies the traditionalists’ account of mind to be a substance over and above the body. Mind is thought to be a disposition, a set, a style or an organic state of readiness ‘to do and undergo certain sorts of things’ in their appropriate situations. A disposition, however, is not an occult or mysterious inner quality or potentiality present in the person or the object about whom the disposition is said to be true. It is nothing actual. It simply signifies a tendency for certain events to occur if some conditions are realised. For example, when glass is said to be brittle it does not mean that brittleness is a property secretly present in glass. It only means that when a certain situation obtains, e.g. when it is hit with a stone, a

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26 Ryle Gilbert: The Concept of Mind, P - 43
certain event takes place then the glass breaks into parts. The similar case is true to human vanity or any other disposition. When a man is said to be vain, it does not mean that there is an inner element of vanity in him which he feels or experiences. It simply means that one is prone to behave in certain ways under some specific circumstances. Ryle believes that disposition words are not the names of existing qualities. Dispositional statements are not the categorical reports of some secret phenomena. They have only a hypothetical import. Ryle says that this lump of sugar is soluble is to say that it would dissolve, if submerged anywhere at any time and in any parcel of water. To say that this sleeper knows French, is to say that if, for example, he is ever addressed in French, or shown any French newspaper, he responds pertinently in French, acts appropriately or translates it correctly into his own tongue. This is of course, too precise.

Thus according to Ryle, a dispositional statement may be categorical in form like 'This sleeper knows French, but it is actually hypothetical in meaning because it is always unpacked in hypothetical statements. For example the above sentence has the following hypothetical statements -

If he is addressed in French, he responds pertinently in French, if he is shown any French newspaper, he acts appropriately or translates it correctly etc. Ryle admits that a dispositional statement cannot be a reporter of existing states and processes. By arguing that mental conduct concepts are dispositional or hypothetical, he seems to think that he can remove the misconception that they refer to a certain existing entity called mind.
Ryle thinks that the meaning of the dispositional statements involves an infinite number of hypothetical statements. He observes, "When an object is described as hard, we donot mean only that it would resist deformation; we mean also that it would, for example, give out a sharp sound if struck, that it would cause us pain if we cause into sharp contact with it, that resilient objects would bounce off it and so on indefinitely."27 Similarly when a man is said to be vain we donot mean only that he tends to talk a lot about himself if in the company of others.

Ryle distinguishes between dispositions and occurrences. The distinction lies in his explanation of some of the significant mental conduct concepts like the concept of knowing, believing, thinking, imagining etc. Dispositions are neither actions nor occult or unobservable causes of action. Dispositions behave like open hypothetical statements. The dispositional characteristics whether belonging to inanimate things, animals or human beings behave in the same way. They indicate the ability or propensity of things and persons to act in certain specific ways. Ryle is primarily concerned with the exposition of mental concepts displaying human character and intellect. According to Ryle, human minds are the most complex. Man displays his abilities to think, imagine, know, or believe. Mental epithets are present in us mostly as dispositions which we can know through our various functions of intelligence, cleverness, shrewdness, understanding, imagining etc. Dispositions are inference tickets or the general rules for particular mental activities.

27. Ibid, P-43
Ryle distinguishes between single-track dispositions, the actualisations of which are 'nearly uniform' and 'many-track' dispositions, the actualisations of which are 'indefinitely heterogenous'. The word 'Cigarette-Smoker' is a single track disposition word because it always means a tendency for only one type of activity viz. the activity of smoking. But the word 'vain' or 'greedy' is a 'many-track' disposition-word because it signifies not one but diverse activities in different situations. Ryle illustrates it with the concept of 'grocing.' As the term 'grocing' stands for different activities like selling sugar, weighing tea, wrapping up butter, and so on, so the term 'vanity' or 'greedy' stands for a wide range of different activities under various circumstances. According to Ryle, the many-track dispositional words are highly generic or determinable, while the single-track words are highly specific or determinate. The determinable dispositions are indefinitely heterogeneous. So, the description of human beings are given with the help of many track dispositional words. Ryle says - "Some dispositional words are highly generic or determinable, while others are highly specific or determinate, the verbs with which we report the different exercies of generic tendencies, capacities and liabilities are apt to differ from the verbs with which we name the dispositions, while the episodic verbs corresponding to the highly specific dispositional verbs are apt to be the same." 28

Thus any act which is to be characterised by a mental predicate must be the actualisation of some disposition. There are many dispositions whose track of

28 Ibid, P - 114
actualization is not one. They may actualise in different ways. Intelligence is an example of many track disposition. Intelligent activity is not one unique activity. It may take various forms. Almost all psychological concepts can be explained on the lines of intelligence. They mainly refer to disposition. Dispositions, for Gilbert Ryle, are possibilities of action, whose only evidence are actions themselves. Ryle seems to explain the disposition of man which is highly complex phenomenon. Some indicate the individual's capacities, abilities or efficiencies to act in certain ways, while others indicate his inclinations, propensities or tendencies to act in certain ways. Actually tendencies are different from capacities and liabilities. But Ryle while emphasized the difference between capacities and tendencies, he never mentioned the cardinal point of their difference. On the other hand he makes an effort to point out their essential sameness which lies in the fact that all are dispositional concepts requiring analysis in terms of hypothetical statements regarding overt behaviour.

Ryle distinguishes between 'knowing how' and 'knowing that'—knowing how to type write and knowing that the Indian type writer is cheaper than others. Ryle says that knowing in the sense of 'knowing how' is a disposition. The dualist philosophers maintain that knowing is an occurrence in the secret chamber of mind. But Ryle does not find any episodic use of the term 'knowing'. Knowing is the ability to do certain acts or things. Such an ability is called a disposition. There is nothing categorical about dispositions. Dispositional statements are always hypothetical statements. They always involve 'if-then'. That is why they resemble
how statements. Ryle also tried to prove that psychological concepts of 'know', 'believe', 'aspire', 'clever', 'humourous' etc. do not refer to secret activities conducted on secret place called mind. All of them are disposition words. Thus Ryle says that 'knowing' in the sense of knowing how is necessarily a disposition to act outwardly. Ryle does not explicitly discuss the logical status of 'knowing that' though he is particular about discussing the logical status of 'knowing how'. Thus in Ryle's philosophy of mind 'knowing how' is more basic. One does not have to plan his actions first and then act.

Ryle's distinction between 'knowing how' and 'knowing that' is based on the criticism of the traditional doctrine. According to him the mental characteristics like intelligence, learning, thinking, imagining, understanding etc. are dispositional in character, in the sense that the disposition to do certain things or to act in certain ways means the individual's doing them rather than meaning his inner capacity to recite rules for them. It is one and the same individual disposed to act and to actually act in a certain way. The mental characteristics like intelligent, clever, shrewd, witty etc. are attributed to human behaviour.

Ryle observes, "Theorists have been so pre-occupied with the task of investigating the nature, the source and the credentials of the theories that we adopt that they have for the most part ignored the question what it is for someone to know how to perform tasks. In ordinary life, on the contrary, as well as in the special business of teaching, we are much more concerned with people's competences than with their cognitive repertories, with the operations than with
the truths that they learn.” 29

In this passage, Ryle has illustrated the value of knowing how much more than that of knowing that. But Ryle's view breaks down when we consider the fact that knowing how requires, the necessary presence of knowing something, which is associated with 'how to do'. Knowing how to drive a car means both to know that there are rules of driving and to be able to drive the car. In this sense knowing how presupposes knowing that. According to Ryle, "There are certain parallelisms between knowing how and knowing that, as well as certain divergences. We speak of learning how to play an instrument as well as of learning something is the case; of finding out how to prune trees as well as of finding out that the Romans had a camp in a certain place; of forgetting how to tie a reef-knot as well as of forgetting that the German for 'Knife' is 'Messer': we can wonder how as well as wonder whether." 30

'Knowing how' is not a physical counterpart of the inner or theorizing behaviour of 'knowing that. One is neither the consequence nor the concurrent effect of another. We can see the intelligibility or competence of 'knowing how' activities without referring to their antecedent 'knowing that' causes. Ryle thinks that philosophers supposed wrongly that all actions requiring mental capacities, tendencies, proficiencies or skills can be explained by a double life doctrine i.e. the purely physical being guided and governed by the purely mental. What is physical cannot, at the time be mental, and what is mental cannot at the time, be.

29 Ibid. P - 28
30 Ibid. P - 29
physical. Ryle opposes the distinction between the physical and the mental.

According to Ryle 'know' is a dispositional or a capacity verb. It is noted that some dispositional words are highly generic determinable while others are highly specific or determinate. 'Know' is thus, a determinable dispositional word. It is not used for reporting episodes. It does not stand for a mental act. Perception verbs like 'see', 'hear', 'taste' 'smell' etc. are not dispositional but episodic. They stand for the fact that certain acts have certain results.

Ryle explains clearly the logical powers of 'knowing how' when we say that someone knows how to play chess or swim or cook. We more often refer to the individual's ability or skill to perform these activities than indicate his competence to recite rules or formulas for these activities. He emphasises the difference between 'knowing how' and 'knowing that'. When we say that the individual knows how to play chess or how to cook, we are claiming no more than that the individual on demand will display his ability to play chess competently or cook well. The individual knowing how to play chess is not performing two synchronous activities, one private, and another public rather he is performing one activity and performing it well. In the words of Ryle,

"Part of what is meant is that, when they perform these operations they tend to perform them well, i.e. correctly or efficiently or successfully. Their performance come up to certain standards or satisfy certain criteria. But this is not enough. The well regulated clock keeps good time and the well - drilled circus seal
performs its tricks flowlessly, yet we do not call them intelligent."31 It is not sufficient
to observe an individual's various behaviour in ascertaining his cleverness. Standards
or criteria are not either acts nor possible acts, they are the rules which make
actions intelligent and clever.

Some champions of intellectualist legend are apt to try to reassimilate
'knowing how' to 'knowing that' by arguing that, intelligent performance involves
the observance of rules or the application of criteria. But Ryle argues that the
intellectualist legend is false and that when we describe a performance as intelligent,
this does not entail the double operation of considering and executing. We do not
only reflect before we act but reflect in order to act properly. Some intelligent
performances are not controlled by any interior acknowledgments of the principles
applied in them. 'Knowing how' to apply maxims cannot be reduced to, or derived
from, the acceptance of those or any other maxims. Thus 'knowing how' cannot be
the internal criteria of human being.

There is the difference between knowing how to cycle and knowing
mathematics. One is concerned mainly with competence, another with competence
as well as knowledge of rules of mathematics. But both would require competent
delivery for others to witness that A knows how to cycle and B knows mathematics.
'Knowing how' may not be accompanied by any theoretical instruction in one's
mind. According to Ryle, our capacity to understand is equally dispositional in
nature. The logical function of understanding is the same as the logical function of

31 Ibid P. 29
intelligent; it is a 'know-how' activity indicating the individual's disposition to understand certain problems or implications of certain actions. Understanding, according to Ryle, is a part of 'knowing how'. Understanding is dispositional in the sense of being observable in nature.

In the section on "Intellect", 'knowing how' is indicated primarily as a dispositional capacity required in all intellectual operations of the human mind. It seems that whereas 'knowing how' is primarily concerned with the skilled abilities of intelligent beings, 'knowing that' comprising the theoretical or the intellectual performance which is regarded as essentially inner and private. Ryle emphasizes the point of difference to indicate mainly the observable character of most of the mental conduct concepts. Ryle does not deny the mind. He denies that mind is a different sort of entities, governed by some inscrutable para mechanical laws. He says that there are not two worlds, but only one world which can understand the mental epithets or certain species of human behaviour without involving the dogma of the ghost in the machine.

There are some significant differences between reciting rules of an intelligent action, and acting intelligently. But one cannot give a sufficient account of another nor can it be substituted for another. Ryle says, "Intelligent' cannot be defined in terms of the 'intellectual' or 'knowing how' in terms of 'knowing that'; thinking what I am doing does not connote 'both thinking what to do and doing it. When I do some thing intelligently, i.e. thinking what I am doing, I am doing one thing and not
two. My performance has a special procedure or manner, not special antecedents.” 32 Knowing how is a disposition, but not a single track disposition like a reflex or a habit. Its exercises are observances of rules or corons or the applications of criteria.

But we are struck by the intimate and invariable relationship between ‘knowing how’ and ‘knowing that.’ One is a disposition to certain types of action, such as cycling, playing chess, swimming, cooking etc. Another is also a disposition to certain other types of action such as knowing the rules of grammar, knowing French, knowing that the earth is round and so on. If ‘know that’ is inner and private, know how is equally so. For in both a unique recognition is needed by the individual himself for knowing how to cycle and knowing the rules of grammar. It is unique because, no one knows exactly how he knows them. Ryle had drawn a non-parallelism between the two kinds of knowing with the observation that knowing that is more an intellietual activity concerned with knowing subjects like mathematics and logic. In the same way ‘knowing how’ activities cannot be explained adequately without reference to rules or formulae of these actions.

A similar analysis of ‘knowing that’ is given by John Hartland Swann in his "An Analysis of Knowing" where he shows that all cases of ‘knowing that’ are ultimately reducible to cases of ‘knowing how’. So, ‘knowing that’ is as much a disposition to recite rules and ‘knowing how’ is a disposition to perform certain other kinds of activities. Swann points out that there is no significant non-parallelism between the two uses of knowing, although people may find it difficult to accept

32 Ibid, P - 32
that 'knowing that' the earth is round is ultimately on a par with 'knowing how' to swim. He further observes, "Of course, it is not on a par but only because a different kind of capacity is involved, namely the capacity to state correctly what is the case." But 'Knowing how' is not on a par with 'Knowing that' because a different kind of capacity involved in them. But both of them involve capacities. They are essentially identical in the sense that sentences relating to 'Knowing that' statements can be relevantly stated into sentences relating to 'Knowing how' statements. There is no basic difference which indicate their non-parallelism. Taking Ryle's example of knowing French, which is cited as a case of 'knowing how', Hartland Swann points out that it is equally an instance of knowing the correct rules of translating the French words into their equivalent English words. He shows how 'knowing that' statements are ultimately reducible to 'knowing how' statements.

But there is no basic non-parallelism between the two and that 'knowing that' is as much a disposition to recite rules of grammar or give correct mathematical answers as 'knowing how' is a disposition to swim, to cook or to cycle.

Ryle makes an attempt to reduce the dispositional concepts to their corresponding hypothetical statements, so that no metaphysical statements can explain the mental characteristics of human behaviour.

Ryle's theory of disposition raises a number of questions. First of all we can ask questions why should Ryle think that a disposition is primarily a tendency to behave overtly? why should knowing French mean only such overt acts as replaying

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33 Swann, H.: Analysis of Knowing. P. 60
in France, translating in mother tongue and so on? why should 'Vanity' almost mean the overt acts of boasting alone. Ryle's account of disposition lays an over emphasis on overt acts for disposition may be a disposition to act outwardly as well as to feel inwardly Thus in this regard A.C. Ewing remarks that a disposition may not be primarily "a disposition to behave in a certain way, but a disposition to have private experience of a certain kind." 

D.M. Armstrong says Ryle's theory of disposition as the phenomenalist or operationalist account of disposition He advocates the Realist account of dispositions. According to him, "To speak of an object's having a dispositional property entails that the object is in some non-dispositional state or that it has some property (there exists a categorical basis) which is responsible for the object manifesting certain behaviour in certain circumstances, manifestations whose nature makes the dispositional property the particular dispositional property it is. It is true that we may not know anything of the nature of the non-dispositional state." 

The Realist view gains some support from ordinary language, where we often seem to identify a disposition and its 'categorical basis'. Armstrong presents an a priori argument which purports to prove the truth of the Realist account of dispositions. On a number of occasions, a certain rubber band has the same force, \( F \), applied to it, and that on each occasion it stretches one inch. We can then attribute a disposition to the band. It is disposed to stretch one inch under force \( F \).

34 Ewing, A C: "Prof. Ryle's Attack on Dualism", P - 318
35 Armstrong, D M: A Materialist Theory of Mind, P - 86
Thus one essential thing about dispositions is that we can attribute to objects even at times when the circumstances in which the object manifests its dispositions do not obtain.

For the phenomanalist, like Ryle, a disposition does not entail the existence of a categorical state. The only reason he can give for saying that the band would have stretched one inch under force \( F \) at \( T_1 \), is that numerically the same band behaved in this way on other occasions. Armstrong raises questions against the phenomanalist 'what is the magic in numerical identity?' A thing can change its properties over a period of time. Why should it not change its dispositional properties? How does the phenomanalist know what the band's dispositional properties are at \( T_1 \)?

Thus Armstrong remarks that the phenomanalist about dispositions will be reduced to utter scepticism about dispositions, except on occasions that they are actually manifested. He relates disposition to categorical basis. Thus, if belief is a disposition in Realist account of mind, then it is entailed that while I believe \( P \) my mind is in a certain non-dispositional state, a state which is suitable circumstances gives rise to manifestations of belief that \( p \).

The Realist view of dispositions are causes or causal factors. On the phenomanalist view, dispositions cannot be causes. To say the glass breaks because it is brittle is only to say that it breaks because it is the sort of thing that does break easily in the circumstances which is in it. But if brittleness can be identified with an actual state of the glass, then we can think of it as a cause, in the
process that brings about breaking. Dispositions are seen to be states that actually stand behind their manifestations. It is simply that the states are identified in terms of their manifestations in suitable conditions, rather than in terms of their intrinsic nature.

But Realist account of dispositions can equally be applied to capacities and powers. Armstrong says, "To admit dispositions as states lying behind, and in suitable circumstances giving rise to, behaviour is to contradict the whole programme."36

Ryle's account of intelligence again is somewhat inappropriate in its usage. Ryle thinks that intelligence is a disposition of doing things in certain ways. He equates intelligence with a certain manner or procedure, so that if somebody is intelligent, he will do in that manner and if he does in that manner, he is intelligent. But there are cases in which this equation breaks down. For example, somebody's inner communings might, be intelligent but public performances dull because of his shyness. An intelligent student might do worse at the examination. Conversely somebody might do well at times but he maynot be intelligent. His so-called intelligent action may be only a chance performance. This shows that intelligence cannot be identified with the manner of doing things, though, it is intimately connected with such a manner or procedure. In his book "The Concept of Mind" Ryle makes a basic confusion between the essence and the evidence of mental concepts. Many of the logical problems that Ryle's analysis of mental concepts has raised are due to his failure to distinguish the essence with evidence. Thus

36 Ibid, P - 88
Ryle's attempt to unfold the meaning or significance of a mental concept in terms of behaviour has its own limitation.

Ryle's phenomenalism with regard to mind (Phenomenalism because he holds that mind is not over and above certain sorts of behaviour just as the phenomenalists has said that an object is not over and above certain sorts of sensations) will suffer from the usual charge that no phenomenalist analysis can ever be completed. The original statement, in Ryle's account of disposition will always mean more than the hypothetical observation statements and a complete analysis will remain logically impossible. Again Ryle's assertion that a mentalistic sentence instead of reporting some actual episodes of mind, reports an infinite series of possible behavioural episodes, has the effort of making simple things look rather complicated. To this complexity Peter Geach comments, "It is really a scandal that people should count it a philosophical advance to adopt a programme of the phenomenalists with regard to physical object statements and of new-behaviourists with regard to psychological statements." 37

Thus Ryle's attempt to describe a dispositional concept in terms of behaviour and to reduce a dispositional sentence into a series of hypothetical statements is faced with many difficulties. His notion of many or multi track dispositions is also faced with fresh difficulty. Ryle conceives of a 'many track' dispositional word such a word according to him, is 'highly generic' i.e. It serves as a genus having heterogeneous episodes as its species. In this connection R J. Spilsbury remarks.

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37 Geach, Peter. Mental Acts. P - 7
"I donot understand Ryle's use of the term 'generic' in this context. In any ordinary use it would be absurd to say that hardness was a genus, of which the properties of causing pain, resisting deformation, and giving out a sharp sound were species.

We may also say that Ryle's example of grocing doesnot establish his point satisfactory. Whereas any overt performance of selling, weighing, or wrapping is grocing, any overt performance isnot the working of mind or in Ryle's terminology the actualisation of a disposition.

Spilsbury points out that in Ryle's analysis of dispositional concepts, acts and possible acts fill a similar place to that filled by sensa and sensibilia in the phenomenalist theories of perception. The phenomenalist analysis of perception carried out in the 20th century is a paradigm case of the empiricist tradition initiated by Hume in the 18th century. The empiricist philosophers in general, and the logical empiricist in particular, thought of reducing philosophical knowledge to a species of scientific knowledge. Physical objects must be capable of being translated into a series of sensible experience, actual and possible taken together. The same phenomenalist method is applied to our knowledge of the human mind. The mind and the mental must be capable of being known through behaviour. Thus Spilsbury criticises the notion of generic dispositions. Ryle denies that there is any episodic use for many words as Spilsbury maintains. Spilsbury's observation is that the logical problems raised by Ryle's analysis are mainly due to the failure to understand the difference between the meaning of a statement and the evidence for its truth or falsity.

38 Spilsbury R J. "Dispositions and Phenomenalism", Mind, July 1953, PP. 342-43
There is another difficulty of the phenomenalist analysis of dispositions, i.e. the difficulty arising out of offering a hypothetical analysis of statements which do not appear to have anything hypothetical about them. Another important question is whether dispositions are only hypothetical and not actual. Ryle's thesis is that to expect of a disposition word to denote some specifically existing property is to expect of the term 'average rainfall' to denote some particular pod of water. Average rainfall does not mean something over and above the particular instances of rain. Disposition words similarly do not mean anything over and above the particular episodes of one's life and work. To say that dispositions are not actual is to say that there is no actual difference between person and person. Ryle believes that if we want to distinguish a soluble thing from an insoluble one, we can do so not by virtue of a property or character, present in the one and absent in the other. We can do so only with the help of certain hypotheticals. A hypothetical which will be true of the one will be untrue of the other. If the hypothetical 'it will dissolve, if submerged in water' will be true of a soluble thing, it will not be true of an insoluble thing.

Further, the rejection of dispositions as something actual leads to queer consequences. It has led Ryle to believe that vain behaviour is not due to an element of vanity present in the agent. It is due to some such thing as meeting the stranger. Ryle's account of dispositions thus in a way relieves us of our responsibility for our own actions.

Ryle thinks that a disposition only means a regular sequence of behaviour
under appropriate conditions. Dispositional words according to him, do not stand for drives, forces or powers, existing within the agent. The conception of an occult force has been given up by physical sciences. Habit is our disposition.

Aaron, while explaining the nature of dispositions observes that a disposition does not signify only a regular behaviour-sequence. On the other hand, "When ordinary men and some scientists and philosophers speak of dispositions they clearly mean more; rightly or wrongly they mean drives, forces or powers."^39

Ryle's theory is concerned with common people and common usage. He has tried to understand a dispositional statement only in terms of hypothetical statement. He has argued that both categorical and hypothetical statements are not true of dispositional concepts. Dispositional concepts are not suggestive of inner or hidden qualities. Even when mental concepts stand for dispositions, our inner life is not to be denied.

Ryle's theory of dispositions is helpful chiefly in deciding about the 'character of mind', not about the 'working of mind.' Let us explain it with the help one or two of Ryle's own illustrations. While giving us a criterion of intelligent activity, he holds that an intelligent activity is one which is the outcome of a skill or disposition. The shooting of a bull's eye by a marks man is an example of an intelligent activity because the marks man has the ability or the skill or the disposition to do it under various circumstances 'even if the wind strengthens, the range alters and the target moves.'^40 The corollary of this view is that the same act of successful shooting
by a novice is not an intelligent activity because he is not able or disposed to do it again and again. But here what the ability or the disposition help us to decide is that the mind of the marks man is superior to the mind of the novice. The fact that the marks man was disposed to shoot again and again while the novice was not. Both of them might have consciously tried to shoot the target. The mind of both of them might have moved into action. The only difference being that the mind of the marks man was superior in being able or disposed to achieve the success under diverse circumstances, which the novice’s mind was unable to do. It is an account of the superiority of mind of the marks man that his action is called intelligent.

It is necessary for Ryle to distinguish between human and non-human disposition. Merely to say that mind is a disposition to behave in certain ways will not do. Inanimate objects also have their dispositions to behave in their own ways. What is it, then which makes us classify some dispositions as physical and others as mental? Ryle does not provide a suitable answer to this question. He also does not think it necessary to explain the criteria that will distinguish the two sorts of dispositions. In this regard Russell remarks "A plain man should say that ‘brittle’ denotes a disposition of bodies and intelligent denotes a disposition of minds - in fact, that the two objectives apply to different kinds of ‘Stuff’. But it is not open to Professor Ryle to say this and I don't quite know what he would say." 41

He does not distinguish human dispositions from the dispositions of other beings and objects, but he makes certain distinctions amongst mental dispositions. Of the dispositions ‘know’ and ‘belief’ one renders to capacity and the other to

41 Russell, Bertrand • My Philosophical Development, P - 247
tendency. 'To know' means to be able to get things right; to believe means to tend
to act or react in certain ways. So, according to Ryle, neither the capacity verb
'know', nor the tendency verb 'believe' refers to any act or process conducted on
the private stage of mind. These verbs, Ryle believes, cannot report secret acts or
processes, because there are no such acts or processes. His main objection against
cognitive acts is that certain questions which ought to be answered about them,
because they are acts, cannot be answered.

Ryle has himself seen that a concept of heed, e.g. noticing, concentrating,
carrying, attending etc. is not fully explicable on dispositional lines. In the case of
these concepts, grouped under the common heading of 'minding', Ryle has to
take recourse to the language of 'mongrel categorical' or 'semi dispositional'. Such
concepts, he believes are half-dispositional and half-episodic. The proposition 'X
is reading carefully' containing the heed concept 'carefully' is therefore neither
fully dispositional nor fully episodic. It is in the language of Ryle, mongrel categorical
or semi dispositional.

By introducing the concept of 'mongrel-categorical' for elucidating the
meaning of heed concepts, Ryle is gradually modifying his original position to an
extent that it hardly appears to survive. He holds that the traditionalists had
misunderstood the logic of mental concepts. Mental concepts, according to him,
donot report any happening or episode for there are no such happenings; there
are no occurrences taking place in a second states world. "To talk of a person's
mind is to talk of his abilities, liabilities, and inclinations to do and undergo certain
sorts of things, and of the doing and undergoing of these things in the ordinary
Ryle appears to maintain firmly that mental concepts are dispositional and not episodic. The logic of disposition words is different from the logic of episode words.

Minding, attending, noticing or caring is known directly through the deliverances of consciousness. Ryle will argue that if minding is known from consciousness, the consciousness of minding must be known by another consciousness and so on forever. Ryle uses the argument of infinite regress against the traditionalists concept of heed. Further, Ryle seems to identify heed with intention or purpose. His discussion of the heed concepts and the inclusion of the word 'trying' in the list of such concepts give the reader an impression that according to Ryle, doing with heed means doing with purpose and vice-versa. Somebody's action may be intentional but unheedful or unintentional but heedful. Lighting a Cigar for the purpose of smoking is intentional but it might be unheedful because the man concerned might be absorbed in some other activity. Similarly, we may begin to pay attention to somebody's conversation accidentally, without any plan or purpose or intention to do so.

Ryle while explaining an attentive or heedful activity thinks that it is an activity done in a certain frame of mind. To do with heed is, according to Ryle, to do something in the present and to be disposed to do a lot of associated things in future if required. The question of heed is not, therefore, to be decided with reference to the outward activity. It is to be decided with reference to the frame of mind, the readiness or the preparedness or the disposition of the agent to do some other possible but connected things. In short, minding, according to Ryle, is the frame...
of mind' in which one is found to work at the moment. It is a disposition which may actualise in several ways and one of whose actualisations is the activity in which the agent may be engaged at the moment.

Thus heed according to Ryle, is a frame of mind or disposition. But a pertinent question arise whether 'the frame of mind' is not something actual. Ryle will say that a frame of mind is a disposition and it cannot as such be actual.

Mind or consciousness cannot as such be so easily replaced by dispositions or semidispositions. Hugh R. King referring Ryle's concept of disposition says, "We cannot, reduce 'my mind' to simply 'my ability' or proneness to do certain sorts of things. Indeed, ability and proneness may be just those dispositions which allow me to do a thing unconsciously and without heed, to dismiss my mind." 43

Thus Ryle offers the dispositional theory of mind, according to which the mind is a disposition of the body. According to him, mental acts are mythical. But for all of them, the word knowledge is not descriptive of any inner occurrence. This view is quite consistent with the statement that 'know' is a capacity verb or that it has a performative rather than descriptive use. But the dispositional account of knowledge is misleading. Here the word 'disposition' is used in an extra-ordinary sense. Dispositions as patterns of tendencies are only a few. By calling knowledge a disposition, we obscure the limitless variety in knowledge. Relation to particular facts is necessary for manifestation of knowledge, but not for manifestation of disposition. Thus the dispositional account of knowledge is not free from controversies.

43 Huge R. King, "Prof. Ryle and The Concept of Mind", Journal of Philosophy Vol XLVIII P - 99 -0--0-