

**OF KNOWLEDGE AND OF  
KNOWING THAT  
SOMEONE IS IN PAIN** | *P.M.S.  
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**I. First person authority: the received explanation**

Over a wide range of psychological attributes, a mature speaker seems to enjoy a defeasible form of *authority* on how things are with him. The received explanation of this is epistemic, and rests upon a cognitive assumption. The speaker's word is authoritative because when things are thus-and-so with him, then normally he *knows* that they are. This is held to be because the speaker has direct and privileged access to the contents of his consciousness by means of introspection, conceived as a faculty of inner sense. Like perceptual knowledge, introspective knowledge is held to be direct and non-evidential. Accordingly, the first-person utterances 'I have a pain', 'I believe that *p*', 'I intend to *V*' are taken to be *descriptions* of what is evident to inner sense. Many classical thinkers held such subjective knowledge to be not only immediate, but also infallible and indubitable.

The challenge to the received conceptions came from Wittgenstein. He denied the cognitive assumption, arguing that it cannot be said of me at all (except perhaps as a joke) that I know that I am in pain. For what is that supposed to mean – except perhaps that I *am* in pain? (*PI* § 246) If it makes *no sense* to say that one knows that one is in pain, then the epistemic explanation is a non-starter, since it explains the special authoritative status of a person's avowal of pain by reference to the putative fact that the subject of pain knows, normally knows, or cannot but know, that he is in pain when he is. It is important to note that Wittgenstein did *not* mechanically generalize the case of pain across the whole domain of first-person utterances. The

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case of pain constitutes only one pole of a range of such utterances. Avowals and averrals of belief and intention approximate the other pole, and require independent analysis and grammatical description. Moreover, one must not allow the cases of the emotions and motives, which lie between these poles and where self-deception and lack of self-understanding is common, to overshadow the rest and blind one to the distinctive features to which Wittgenstein drew our attention.

Wittgenstein agreed with the philosophical tradition that being in pain is incompatible with doubting that one is, but pointed out that it is not merely that I *do not* doubt, I *cannot* doubt, i.e. doubt is *logically* excluded. *There is no such thing* as being in pain and doubting that one is – just as there is no such thing as castling in draughts. The form of words ‘A is in pain, but he doubts whether he is’ is not the expression of a false proposition, but is nonsense – i.e. no sense has been assigned to it. So it is excluded from the language. If someone were to say ‘Perhaps I am in pain, but I rather doubt it’ or ‘Maybe I have a pain, I’m not really sure’, we would not know what he meant. And since doubt is logically excluded, so too is certainty, for certainty presupposes the possibility of doubt.

In place of the received epistemic explanation, Wittgenstein proposed a *grammatical* elucidation. Rather than *explaining* why a person’s word carries the kind of weight it normally does when he avows that he is in pain, avers that he thinks this or that, declares his intention to do such-and-such, he sought to describe the grammar of such utterances, the distinctive features of their use, their compatibilities and incompatibilities with other assertions, and the epistemic operators (such as ‘I know’/‘He knows’, ‘I believe’/‘He believes’, ‘I doubt whether’/‘He doubts whether’) which they do or do not accept. Correctly locating such utterances in the web of our concepts, he thought, would obviate the apparent need for philosophical explanations by rendering perspicuous the conceptual structures involved.

Such first-person psychological utterances, Wittgenstein argued, are, *in the primitive language games out of which their use arises*, essentially *expressive*, not descriptive. It is, he held, a mistake to construe the characteristic avowal of pain, e.g. ‘It hurts’, ‘I have a pain’ or ‘I have toothache’, the typical utterance of belief, e.g. ‘I believe she is in the garden’, and of intention, e.g. ‘I’m going to V’ or ‘I intend to V’, as *descriptions* of myself or of my state of mind. On the contrary, they are characteristically *expressions* or *avowals*. They are authoritative (to the extent that they are) not because they are assertions of

something the agent *knows*, but because they are *manifestations* of the agent's feeling, thinking or intending whatever he feels, thinks or intends. So their truthfulness normally guarantees their truth. Hence, the 'authority' they have is, in certain cases, akin to the evidential authority of expressive non-linguistic behaviour. They are *logical criteria* for the 'inner'. The cry of pain, in circumstances of injury, is not a sign of pain, which has been discovered in experience to be inductively well-correlated with it. It is a manifestation of pain, and a logical criterion, not an inductive symptom, of pain. Utterances of pain, e.g. the exclamation 'It hurts' or the groan 'I am in pain', have the same criterial status, for they are acculturated extensions of natural pain-behaviour. (Avowals of occurrent passions, such as 'I am angry', 'I am afraid', 'I am so pleased' approximate this 'pole of description', being, *in the primitive language-game*, extensions of the snarl of anger, the cry of fear, and the exclamation of delight. But the primitive language-game extends to averrals of emotional disposition, and the story there gets more complex and nuanced.) To say that such utterances are acculturated *extensions* of natural expressive behaviour does not imply that they are just like the primitive behaviour on to which they are, as it were, grafted. *On the contrary* – unlike the natural behaviour such linguistic behaviour can be truthful or dishonest. What is said by such utterances may be true or false, no less than the third-person counterparts. It stands in logical relations of implication, compatibility or incompatibility with other propositions.

In other cases, for example of thought, belief, expectation, suspicion, etc., the first-person utterance 'I think (believe, expect, suspect, etc.) that *p*' is not grafted on to natural expressive behaviour, but on to forms of *linguistic* behaviour that have already been mastered, viz. the use of an assertoric sentence '*p*', which, uttered sincerely, may, in appropriate contexts, express one's beliefs, opinions, expectations, suspicions, guesses, etc. In such contexts, the utterance of the sentence '*p*' is a criterion for ascribing to the speaker the belief or opinion, etc. that *p*. So too is the utterance of the sentence 'I believe (think) that *p*', which is commonly an *explicit* expression of the belief that *p* and *not* an expression of the speaker's knowledge (or belief) that he believes that *p*. In avowing that he believes that *p*, a speaker is also endorsing what he believes. He is answerable, if not to others then to himself, for his beliefs. If he has beliefs for which he can find no reason and which he knows or thinks are contrary to reason, they are not so much

beliefs as obsessive thoughts, fantasies and imaginings of which he cannot rid himself. (While avowals of occurrent emotion approximate the case of pain in certain respects, avowals and averrals of emotional disposition approximate the case of belief in other respects.)

Of course, both utterances such as ‘I am in pain’ and utterances of the form ‘I think (expect, suspect, etc.) that *p*’ also have a use as statements or reports. ‘I think that *p*’ is typically an avowal or expression of belief or opinion, but it can also be used as an autobiographical admission, confession or statement. However, the first-person statement that things are thus-and-so with me shares many of the logico-grammatical expressive features of the more primitive utterance from which it grows. So, for example, my statement that I believe that *p* is nevertheless still an expression of my belief that *p*, in as much as in stating that I so believe, I am still endorsing the proposition that *p* (which is why I cannot say ‘I believe that *p*, but actually it is not the case that *p*’ or ‘I believe that *p*, but whether it is the case that *p* is an open question as far as I am concerned’). As always, generalization is perilous, and different cases must be examined in their own right. In particular, one must not extrapolate from avowals of pain to avowals of belief and related doxastic verbs or to avowals of intention and related volitional verbs, but investigate each case separately. So too, expressions of emotion and statements of motive are separate cases for treatment, which will not be ventured here.

It might well be said that, in view of Wittgenstein’s expressive elucidation of why a person’s avowal of how things are with him carries special weight, the term ‘authority’ is a misnomer. I am not an *authority* on how things are with me, as I might be an authority on renaissance painting. Rather, in the absence of defeating conditions, my word goes – it is a (defeasible) criterion for others to judge that things are thus with me. The ‘authority’ in question is not cognitive authority, but more akin to verdictive authority (in the case of belief) and executive authority (in the case of decision and intention). So the very term ‘first-person authority’ is misleading. This is, I think, correct. So although I shall use the received term occasionally, this qualification should be born in mind.

Wittgenstein’s arguments are often misunderstood and his conclusion has not won much support.<sup>1</sup> My purpose is to elaborate his account and to defend the rejection of the cognitive assumption as an explanation of so-called first-person authority. First, I shall try to elucidate the contour lines of

the concept of knowledge and to adumbrate some of its relations to adjacent concepts in its semantic field. This is necessary to evaluate the plausibility of the cognitive assumption and hence of the epistemic explanation. I shall then examine the rather special case of pain (and, by implication, of other sensations and arguably mental images). Belief (and related doxastic predicates) and intention (and related volitional predicates) will be discussed elsewhere.

## 2. Knowledge: the point of the concept

The concept of knowledge is bound up with the search for, grounds of or evidence for, and attainment of, truth, with the consequent possession and transmission of truths variously attained, and with reasons for thinking, feeling, acting and reacting. There have been numerous attempts to define knowledge. I shall not try to add to the list of disputable definitions. Rather, I shall endeavour to clarify some aspects of the use of the verb ‘to know’ and its cognates, and some paradigmatic circumstances that render the concept useful. The account is concerned with the standard or normal use of ‘A knows’, the use which is exemplified, *inter alia*, by ‘A knows (or: I know) that (or: A does not know/I don’t know whether) B is in pain (believes that *p*/intends to V)’. As we shall see, there are also non-standard uses.

‘A knows ...’ is a sentence-forming operator on declarative sentences (e.g. ‘A knows *p*’), on that-nominalizations (e.g. ‘A knows that *p*’), on WH-nominalizations (e.g. ‘A knows whether, what, who, when, which, why, how ...’) involving a WH-interrogative followed by a verb in the indicative (e.g. ‘whether B Vd’, ‘what happened’, ‘how it happened’) or by a verb in the infinitive (e.g. ‘whether to go’, ‘what to do’, ‘how to V’), on relative WH-clauses (e.g. ‘A knows what was said’), on noun-phrases that are vari-

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1. A recent examination of his views concludes that ‘the expressivist proposal ... is a dead duck ...’ (Crispin Wright, ‘Self-knowledge: the Wittgensteinian Legacy’, in Anthony O’Hear ed. *Current Issues in Philosophy of Mind*, Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement: 43 (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998), p. 115). If it seems so, I shall suggest, it is because it has been misunderstood. Part of the misunderstanding stems from an unwarranted extrapolation from the case of avowals of pain to other avowals, e.g. of belief or intention, an extrapolation which Wittgenstein was careful to avoid.

ants on an interrogative (e.g. ‘A knows the colour, weight, size, location, date of something or other’, these being knowledge of what it is), on nouns signifying something that has been learnt and can be used, spoken, recited or rehearsed (e.g. ‘A knows Latin, physics, the multiplication tables, “The Ballad of Reading Gaol”’), on infinitive clauses (e.g. ‘A knows the X to be Y’), or on nouns indicating an object of acquaintance or experience (e.g. ‘A knows B’). This latter use as an operator on such nouns, marked in other languages by distinct verbs, will not concern us here.<sup>2</sup>

If we reflect on how the use of this epistemic operator might be learnt, it is evident that it cannot be learnt as a partial substitute for natural expressive behaviour in the manner in which the use of ‘It hurts’ or ‘I want’ are grafted on to natural pain- or conative-behaviour respectively. ‘I know that *p*’ is not an acculturated extension of natural, prelinguistic behaviour that is an expression of knowing that *p*. The use of the cognitive verbs must be grafted onto the already mastered techniques of using declarative sentences, sentence questions and WH-questions – which is what we should expect, given that they are, in their paradigmatic uses, operators on declarative sentences and on transforms of interrogative sentences or their nominalizations. The question to be addressed is what needs do these terms satisfy, what is the point and purpose of them.<sup>3</sup>

We value truth, *inter alia*, because we are rational creatures,<sup>4</sup> and so use reason in thinking about the world around us, in our practical and theoretical reasonings. If we aim to discover how things are by inference, our reasoning should incorporate true premises. And if we are to plan our projects rationally and to find appropriate ways to execute them, our premises should

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2. See A.R. White, *Objects of Knowledge* (Rowman and Littlefield, Totowa, New Jersey, 1982) for more detailed elaboration.

3. The following discussion is indebted to O. Hanfling, ‘A Situational Account of Knowledge’, *The Monist* 68 (1985), pp. 40–56, and *Philosophy and Ordinary Language: the Bent and Genius of our Tongue* (Routledge, London, 2000), chap. 6, and to J.O. Urmson, ‘Prichard and Knowledge’ in J. Dancy, J.M.E. Moravcsik and C.C.W. Taylor eds. *Human Agency: Language, Value and Duty* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1988), pp. 11–24.

4. We have, and exercise, a *capacity* for rational (and hence too, have a *liability* for irrational) thought, volition, action and reaction.

be truths and not falsehoods. Being rational, we seek, and are called upon, to justify our reasonings, actions and reactions *ex ante actu*, by reference to the facts (including our purposes and valuations), and to explain, justify or excuse them *ex post actu* in the light of the facts. And being social creatures, in constant interaction with our fellow human beings, we seek to understand and sometimes to foresee their actions and reactions, to discern what reasons they have or had for thinking, feeling and acting.

We are eyes and ears to each other, and information which one person lacks, may be available to others. So we ask others whether such-and-such is the case, hoping that they will be able to tell us. Our questions take various forms. We may ask explicitly 'Is it the case that *p*?' – and our respondent may reply 'Yes' or 'No'. Or we may use a WH-question: 'Where is X?', 'Who is NN?', 'When is E?', etc., and our respondent may tell us. None of these exchanges call for cognitive verbs. It is *not* the role of the assertion 'I know that *p*' to supply the information that *p* – that is a role of an assertion of the declarative sentence *simpliciter*. But in many cases, the person we ask may not be able to answer the question – and, to make his position clear, he will naturally reply 'I don't know'. Of course, he could also say 'I can't tell you', but the reason for not being able to tell someone something may be that the information is to be kept secret. 'I don't know' is more specific than 'I can't tell you'. So one core use of 'know' together with negation is to indicate the inability to answer a question rather than the impermissibility of divulging the relevant information. It is used, typically in ellipsis, as an operator on a WH-nominalization.

The same interrogative context also explains one kind of requirement for other epistemic verbs. In many cases, the respondent may be able to give an answer which is less than fully reliable, in as much as the grounds or evidence for it are, in one way or another, shaky. Or it may intrinsically be a matter of opinion. So he will want to indicate that what he says, even given the presuppositions of normality that are the background of all communication of information, is not beyond doubt or dispute. Hence he may prefix to his reply 'I think', 'I believe', or '*As far as I know*', thus qualifying the sequel. In such contexts, 'I think that *p*', 'I believe that *p*' or '*As far as I know, p*' are *different* tentative or qualified assertions that *p*.<sup>5</sup> '*As far as I know*' indicates that the information I possess supports the supposition that *p*, but does not suffice to rule out the possibility that not-*p*. Here these three different

epistemic operators have a role in indicating the tentative or qualified character of the answer offered.

A person may assert that  $p$  (no matter whether in answer to a question or not). The assertion that  $p$  may be surprising and unexpected, or it may conflict or seem to conflict with what we ourselves have observed or been told. So we may doubt his word and question his credentials. Alternatively, we may not doubt his word (perhaps we are already aware that  $p$ ), but may wonder how he could be in the position to assert what he averred. For it may be that the speaker could not or should not have been in a position to assert that  $p$  (e.g. if it was supposed to be kept secret from him). In all these cases, epistemic operators have a role. For we should naturally ask ‘How do you know?’ or ‘Why do you believe that?’. ‘How do you know?’ may be a request for general credentials, i.e. enquiring how the agent is able to judge of such things. Or it may be asking more specifically how the agent was in a position to assert that  $p$  – which might be answered by, e.g. ‘I saw it’ or by explaining that he obtained the information by inference from the fact that  $q$ , or by hearsay, or on the authority of an expert. Alternatively, the question may be a request for evidence in support of the assertion that  $p$ , which may take different forms e.g. ‘How can you tell?’ or ‘What are the grounds for this claim?’. The kinds of answer to such questions merge with responses to the question ‘Why do you believe that?’, which can be a challenge to the addressee’s credulity and is a request for reasons. If the answer is in one way or another inadequate, then the questioner may be in a position to reply ‘So you don’t know’, thus denying the reliability of the informant or of the information offered, either because the informant was not in a position to make an unqualified claim or because his supporting grounds are inadequate to the case at hand.

Often, wondering how things are, we must find out whom to ask. Here too there is an obvious role for the word ‘know’. For we may ask ‘Do you know *whether*  $p$ ?’ or ‘Does he know what (when, who, etc.) ...?’ or just

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5. One difference, in *some* contexts, between thinking and believing, is that ‘I think’ is appropriate for my own judgements, whereas ‘I believe’ is apt for hearsay. Hence ‘I believe your rose garden is beautiful’ is in place prior to seeing it, whereas ‘I think it is beautiful’ is appropriate after I have seen it (see B. Rundle, *Mind in Action* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1997), pp. 73–80).



‘Who knows whether  $p$ ?’ Here the verb ‘know’ is used to enquire who can tell us. But sometimes we may already possess the information in question. Nevertheless, we may ask ‘Does he know that  $p$ ?’ (which, in this context, presupposes that we know that it is the case that  $p$ ), not in order to obtain the information, but in order to find out whether we need to tell him. So too, we may start telling someone something, and he may stop us by saying ‘I already know’, i.e. there is no need to tell him. Differently, someone who is seeking information may preface his question with an ‘I know that  $p$ , but ...’, in order to narrow down the range of information needed, as when one says ‘I know that the next London train is at 12.30, but could you tell me from which platform it leaves?’ Furthermore, there are other circumstances, e.g. of examinations, in which the question ‘Does he know?’ arises, even though we possess the requisite information. Here we want to find out whether a student, who ought to be similarly informed, can or cannot answer the relevant question. Interestingly, here (and in some other contexts too) there is an obvious use for the response ‘I think I know’ or ‘I believe I know’ to express uncertainty as to whether I have got things right, remembered correctly what I was taught, worked out the answer correctly, etc. ‘I think I know’ here is tantamount to ‘If I am right, then I know, although I may not be’.

There are other contexts which call for the use of this epistemic operator, for example to ward off an objection, as in ‘I know that  $p$ , but nevertheless I am going to  $V$ ’. The role of ‘I know’ is not to impart the information that  $p$ , but to make it clear that the speaker has already taken it into account or dismissed it. Differently, ‘I know that  $p$ ’ has a role not to supply the addressee with the information that  $p$ , but to impart to him the information that the speaker is in possession of it, information that functions as a background or condition of some further move in the language-game – as when one says ‘I know that you told A about the matter, but I wish you had asked me before you did so’. Yet a further kind of context in which ‘I know’ has a role is when there is need to forestall or repress doubt, as when one searches in vain for a book on the shelf and exclaims in exasperation, to oneself or to another, ‘I know I have a copy’.

Since rational creatures act on and reason from information available to them, there are, as noted above, two further complementary contexts in which the verb ‘know’ has a crucial role, namely for explaining (justifying

or excusing) and for predicting the behaviour and reactions of other people. We may enquire whether another knows (or knew) that  $p$  (presupposing that we do) or whether he knows or knew whether  $p$ , in order to be able to understand, justify or excuse or to predict his reasonings, responses, actions and omissions. For if the information that  $p$  is available to him, then, given the context of his projects, it is plausible to suppose that he has reasoned or will reason thus and so, has or had reason for reacting thus and so. That he knows will often render his responses and actions intelligible or relatively predictable – not on causal, but on rational, grounds. For if a person possesses the information that  $p$ , then it is possible for him to act or respond in certain ways for the reason that  $p$ . Similarly, ‘I didn’t know’ or ‘He didn’t know’ is often an excuse or explanation of an omission.

This schematic survey of the kinds of context in which there is a need for the verb ‘to know’ suggests that, in accounting for its use, primacy should be given not to states of mind, dispositions or dispositional states, but to the ability or inability to answer questions, to the reliability of the answers as justified by their sources or evidential support, to the need or redundancy of telling another that things are thus-and-so, to the understanding of others in terms of the facts that may constitute part of their reasons, explanations and excuses for their responses and actions, and to the prediction of the behaviour and reactions of others in the light of what may be their reason or part of their reason for responding thus or otherwise to their circumstances.

### 3. Knowledge: the semantic field

Knowledge is bound up with belief and its cognates. This is commonly explained by defining knowledge as true belief and a further, much disputed condition on the belief, e.g. that it be justified, or warranted, or appropriately caused, etc. But a nexus between knowledge and belief can be explained without any such commitment to *defining* knowledge in terms of belief. For typically (but not uniformly) belief is, as it were, a ‘fall-back position’ when knowledge is absent or a claim to knowledge fails, just as trying is, so to speak, a ‘fall-back position’ when an action misfires. If we ask a person whether  $p$ , and he replies that  $p$  and it turns out to be the case that  $p$ , we should typically (though not uniformly),<sup>6</sup> say that we asked him and he knew the answer. But if it turned out that not- $p$ , we should say that he thought he knew, but was wrong – that he believed that  $p$ , but was mistaken.

Knowledge is incompatible with falsehood, so a confident, unqualified, sincere assertion that *p* is an expression of belief if what is asserted is false, just as waving one's hand to attract A's attention is trying to attract his attention – if he does not see one. But it does not *follow* that action is to be defined in terms of trying, and no more does it *follow* that knowledge is to be defined in terms of belief. Hence, as noted above, 'as far as I know' has a use very similar to 'I believe' to qualify an assertion, indicating that the assertion can be questioned – that the possibility that not-*p* cannot be ruled out relative to what I know or think I know. What is known when someone knows that *p*, is generally something which *can be* believed, i.e. something of which it makes *sense* to say that someone believes it. It does not *follow* that what a person knows to be so he also believes to be so.<sup>7</sup>

Whether knowing *does* entail believing is an even more contentious issue than whether acting entails trying. Certainly the grammar of the verbs and their cognates is very different. We ask 'How do you know?' but not 'How do you believe?', and 'Why do you believe?' but not 'Why do you know?' – for there are ways, methods and means of achieving, attaining or receiving knowledge, but no ways, methods and means of achieving, attaining or receiving belief (as opposed to faith), since belief is not an achievement, attainment or mode of receptivity. Knowledge has a kinship with the category of ability, which belief lacks, hence knowledge at any rate cannot be construed as a *species* of belief. The affinity of knowledge with the ability to answer questions is manifest in the fact that 'know' can be followed by WH-interrogatives. But whereas we can speak of knowing who, what, which, when, whether, and how, it makes no sense to speak of believing who did it, what or which it is, when it happened, whether it is so or how to do it. The adverbs that fit belief do not suit knowledge, for while one can believe passionately, hesitantly, foolishly, thoughtlessly, whole-heartedly, fanatically, dogmatically, reasonably, one cannot know something thus. Whereas we may know something perfectly well, we cannot believe something thus; and

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6. Since, for example, guessing right is not knowing.

7. It is also something that may be opined, thought, conjectured, supposed, assumed, hypothesized to be so. But whereas I know that my name is PMSH, I surely do not *also* opine, think, conjecture, suppose, assume or hypothesize that it is.

while our knowledge may be thorough, exhaustive and detailed, our belief can be none of these. Admittedly, one might try to define knowledge in terms of belief without also claiming that knowledge is a species of belief. Nevertheless, these differences are striking. Perhaps they should give one pause and induce one to re-open the issue. However, this cannot be done here. The following arguments will not be committed to the received view that knowledge is definable in terms of belief; they will remain neutral and bypass the issue.

Empirical knowledge (which is our concern in this context) is connected with doubt and certainty. For what a person can know, he can in general be certain or doubtful about. That is, if it makes sense to say 'A knows that (or whether)  $p$ ', then it standardly makes sense to say 'A doubts that (or whether)  $p$ ' and 'A is certain that  $p$ ', although, to be sure, one can know that  $p$  without being certain that  $p$ , and conversely, be certain that  $p$  without knowing that  $p$ . One may know and be certain that  $p$ , as well as knowing for certain that  $p$ . That one is certain that  $p$  does not imply that one knows for certain that  $p$ . For if one knows for certain that  $p$ , then it follows that it *is* certain that  $p$ , i.e. that the possibility that not- $p$  is, *ceteris paribus*, ruled out. But the fact that one is certain that  $p$  does not imply that it is certain. Although knowledge is compatible with lack of certainty or even with doubt – as is evident in an examinee's hesitantly, uncertainly and even doubtfully offering the correctly worked out answer to a question, a sincere knowledge *claim* excludes subjective doubt. For one cannot say 'I know that  $p$ , but I am unsure whether  $p$ ', since to say that one is doubtful whether  $p$  implies that one has reasons for thinking (or an intimation) that it may not be the case that  $p$ , and hence that the possibility that not- $p$  cannot be ruled out.

Knowledge is linked to acquisition, reception and retention of information. What is known is what it generally makes sense for someone to learn, be taught, find out for oneself, discover or detect. The knowledge that  $p$  may be gained in many different ways, by many different means and methods. One may acquire knowledge by perception, or by observation, motivated scrutiny and investigation. It may be acquired by inference from information already available. Knowledge may be given one by others, who teach or inform one. Or it may be received by noticing, recognizing, becoming aware, becoming conscious, or realizing that things are so. Much

of what we came, in one way or another, to know, we retain in the form of memory, which is not a source of knowledge but, figuratively, a store of knowledge.

Since there are so many different ways of acquiring knowledge, the concept is linked to concepts of validation. What is known is what it *makes sense* to confirm, verify or otherwise validate. If one knows that *p*, then it makes sense for one to satisfy oneself that it is indeed the case that *p*, should doubts arise or a challenge need to be met. The concept of validation is in turn linked to that of sources of knowledge. The notion of a 'source' is connected to the manner of attaining or acquiring knowledge, i.e. to how a person knows. Hence the different forms of perception are sources of knowledge in as much as the senses are cognitive faculties. Other sources are evidence, testimony and the authority of experts, and, in the case of a priori knowledge, reason.

We often think that we know something to be the case, only to find out that we are mistaken. We may think that we can answer the question of whether it is the case that *p*, or of where *X* is, or of when event *E* will take place, and find out that we cannot or that our answer is false. The relation of knowledge to its negations is complex. Both 'A knows that *p*' and 'A does not know that *p*' (assuming the latter to be an ascription of ignorance)<sup>8</sup> normally conversationally presuppose that *p*.<sup>9</sup> Hence someone who asserts that A does not know that *p* typically conversationally implies that it is the case that *p* and that he himself knows it to be the case. If the truth of '*p*' is in question, the appropriate form of words is 'A does not know whether *p*'. But if we ask someone a question and he gives an answer which turns out to be mistaken, we would not report this by saying that he didn't know whether *p*, thereby implying that he could not answer. Rather, we would say that he thought he knew but was mistaken, or just that what he said was

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8. Of course, the stressed utterance 'A does not *know* that *p*, but he thinks it is the case that *p*', which does *not* impute ignorance to A, involves no such presupposition.

9. Both 'A knows that *p*' and 'A does not know that *p*' are typically used by a speaker who knows that it is the case that *p*. But the presupposition is unlike a Strawsonian presupposition. For the denial of 'A knows that *p*' may take a form which cancels the presupposition, viz. 'No he doesn't; it is not the case that *p*' (see Hanfling, *Philosophy and Ordinary Language*, p. 99).

wrong. Similarly, if someone has been informed that  $p$ , but does not believe what he was told, he could not say, *ex post facto*, that he did not know that  $p$ , but nor could he say that he did. All he could unmisleadingly say is that he was told but didn't believe it. For to say that he didn't know would imply that he had not considered the matter, whereas to say that he didn't believe that  $p$ , in this context, implies that he considered the matter and rejected the supposition.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4. Methodological constraints

These links in the web of epistemic concepts are crucial for the investigation of the cognitive assumption. We are concerned here with the use of the verb 'know' and related epistemic verbs as they are prefixed to psychological propositions. These are contingent empirical propositions, which can be true or false. The use of epistemic operators here is not comparable to their operation on necessarily true propositions of mathematics and logic. For the propositions are of categorially distinct kinds, and one may not assume that an operation which makes sense in one categorial domain makes the same sense, or indeed any sense, in another. We must compare like with like. So in conducting our investigation into the epistemic explanation of first-person authority with respect to psychological propositions, it would be illegitimate to extrapolate from the employment of epistemic verbs as operators on mathematical (or logical) propositions. This methodological constraint is important in order to forestall the suggestion that because the exclusion of doubt in the case of an a priori proposition such as ' $2 + 2 = 4$ ' is compatible with knowing it to be true, therefore the exclusion of doubt in the case of a first-person psychological proposition such as 'I am in pain' is compatible with my knowing that it is true. This requires further explanation.

To know a mathematical proposition, e.g. that  $13 \times 13 = 169$ , is not at all like knowing an empirical proposition, e.g. that it will rain this afternoon. To know the latter is to know that, as a matter of fact, things are thus-and-so. To know the former is to know a rule for the transformation of empirical propositions concerning quantities or magnitudes. It is to know, e.g., that if

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10. O. Hanfling, 'A Situational Account of Knowledge', p. 48.

one has 13 bags of 13 marbles each, then one has 169 marbles in all – it is to know that these are alternative descriptions of the very same state of affairs, to know that if one counts them up and finds only 168, then either one marble has vanished or there was a miscount, and so forth. Believing a mathematical proposition is not comparable to believing an empirical one, but to believing, for example, that castling in chess is done thus-and-so. In the latter case, one does not believe a rule of chess, rather, one believes that a rule of chess runs thus.<sup>11</sup> To believe that  $13 \times 13 = 169$  is to believe that this is a proposition of arithmetic, that this formula belongs to the system of arithmetical equations. Unlike believing that it will rain this afternoon, which is to believe that this is how things are, it is not to believe that ‘this is how things are in the realm of numbers’. And there is no such thing as *believing* that  $13 \times 13 = 196$ , for manifestations of such a ‘belief’ constitute criteria for not understanding the symbol ‘ $13 \times 13$ ’.<sup>12</sup> Similar difficulties attend the ideas of knowing or believing logical truths. Since ‘Either it will rain this afternoon or it will not rain this afternoon’ is a tautology, and hence has no sense, there is nothing to know or believe. But one might say that to believe such a logical truth just is to believe *that it is a tautology*. By contrast, to believe that it will rain this afternoon is not to believe that ‘It will rain this afternoon’ is an empirical proposition, but to believe that this is in fact what the weather will be like. In short, the application of epistemic operators in the domain of the a priori is fundamentally different from their application to empirical propositions – as is evident too when we reflect on the obvious fact that there is no such thing as wishing or hoping that  $13 \times 13$  were 196.<sup>13</sup>

It is true that it makes no sense to say ‘I doubt whether  $2 + 2 = 4$ ’, just as it makes no sense to say ‘I doubt whether I have a pain’, and we would not

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11. Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, rev. ed. (Blackwell, Oxford, 1978), pp. 78f.

12. A schoolchild may indeed think that the answer to the question ‘What is  $13 \times 13$ ?’ is ‘196’. He might say ‘I think (or perhaps even: I believe) that  $13 \times 13 = 196$ ’. But what does this ‘thinking’ or ‘believing’ amount to? Does he attempt to arrange 196 marbles in 13 rows of 13 each? How does he react to finding 27 left over? If he counts up marbles in a 13 by 13 array, does he say that 27 must have vanished? If the pupil also ‘believes’ that  $12 \times 13 = 156$ , does he then believe that  $156 + 13 = 196$ ? Does a person with such ‘beliefs’ understand what it is to add and multiply? If not, what is it to believe something one does not even understand?

know what to make of ‘I wonder whether  $2 + 2 = 4$ ’ or of ‘I believe that  $2 + 2 = 4$ , but I don’t know whether it is’. But one cannot argue that since I *do* know that  $2 + 2 = 4$  despite the fact that I cannot doubt it, so too, when I am in pain, I *know* that I am in pain, even though it is true that I cannot doubt it. For the kinds of proposition are altogether different, and what makes sense in the case of one type may not make sense in the case of the different type. Necessary propositions are not bipolar; unlike empirical propositions they are not capable of being true *and* capable of being false. To understand such propositions is not to know what is the case if they are true and also what is the case if they are false, since they could not be false. Arithmetical propositions are not descriptions of possible states of affairs, which are true descriptions if the states of affairs are actual and otherwise are false. Indeed, true arithmetical propositions are not descriptions at all, but norms of representation. By contrast, empirical propositions are bipolar. To understand them is to know what is the case if they are true and what is not the case if they are false. Psychological propositions are bipolar empirical propositions – their truth, if they are true, is contingent. It is possible for them to be true and it is possible for them to be false. What someone who utters such a proposition says is true if things are as he has asserted them to be, and is false if they are not. The truth of such propositions, unlike the truth of a mathematical proposition, excludes a genuine possibility. So we must not assimilate them to a priori propositions in respect of knowledge, belief, exclusion of doubt, etc.

Nor do psychological propositions belong to the class of propositions that are part of one’s world-picture, such as ‘The world has existed for many years’ or ‘I have never been to the stars’, let alone to the puzzling group of propositions such as ‘I exist’ or ‘I am alive’, the truth of which is apparently presupposed by a person’s possessing any knowledge whatsoever. These propositions are philosophically highly problematic; disagreement is rife over how they are to be understood, what their roles are, how they behave in respect of epistemic operators. So one can hardly be on firm ground if one takes these propositions as a proper comparison class. Nor *should* one

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13. For detailed defence of Wittgenstein’s insights into the epistemology of the a priori, see G.P. Baker and P.M.S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1985), pp. 263–348.



take them as the appropriate comparison class, since they are patently propositions which are *logically* very different from psychological propositions.

The proper comparison class for testing the cognitive assumption is obviously other psychological propositions, such that the name or pronoun that is part of the epistemic operator differs from the name or anaphoric pronoun in the psychological proposition operated on, or the tense of the operator differs from the tense of the proposition operated on. So we must investigate features of the grammar of such sentences as 'A knows that B is (or: was) in pain', 'I knew that A believed that *p*', 'He knows that B intends to V'. Having elaborated the relevant features, we may then compare such sentences with the problematic class which includes '*I* know that *I* am in pain', '*He* knows that *he* believes that *p*', '*I* knew that *I* intended to V', in order to test the cognitive assumption and find the rationale for Wittgenstein's non-cognitive account.

## **5. Some conditions of sense for the operators 'A knows' and 'I know'**

If '*p*' is a psychological proposition (or if 'that *p*' is a nominalization of a psychological proposition) which is the base for the epistemic operator 'I know' or 'A knows' and the subject of which differs from the subject of the epistemic operator (or if '*p*' is a philosophically unproblematic, non-psychological, empirical proposition), the following conditions appear to hold. (The conditions are specified for a subject A, but hold equally in the first-person.)

i. 'A knows that *p*' makes sense only in so far as it excludes a genuine possibility of A's being ignorant of the fact that *p*. The proposition that *p* is contingent, so it can be the case that *p* and it can be the case that not-*p*. The proposition that A knows that *p* is likewise contingent, i.e. A may not know that *p*. Both 'A knows that *p*' and 'A does not know that *p*' (where the latter is used to ascribe ignorance of the fact that *p*), unlike 'A knows whether *p*' and 'A does not know whether *p*', normally contextually presuppose that it is the case that *p*. So 'A knows that *p*' excludes (a) that *p*, but A does not know it to be the case, (b) that not-*p*, and (c) that A does not know whether *p*. So if 'A knows that *p*' makes sense, then 'A does not know that *p*' and 'A does not know whether *p*' make sense, i.e. they are possibilities which are excluded by A's knowing that *p*.

ii. If ‘A knows that  $p$ ’ makes sense, then ‘A believes (suspects, guesses, surmises) that  $p$ ’ all make sense.<sup>14</sup> For since A’s knowing that  $p$  excludes the genuine possibility of A’s being ignorant of the fact that  $p$ , then it must *make sense* for A to believe, suspect, guess or surmise that  $p$ , if he does *not know* that  $p$ . It is obvious that in the case of ‘A knows that B is in pain’, it makes sense for A not to know that B is in pain, and accordingly it makes sense for A to believe, suspect, guess or surmise that B is in pain.

iii. If ‘A knows that  $p$ ’ makes sense, then ‘A doubts whether  $p$ ’ and ‘A is certain that  $p$ ’ make sense. For in as much as ‘A knows that (or whether)  $p$ ’ excludes genuine possibilities, ‘A does *not* know whether  $p$ ’ obviously makes sense. So, if A does not know whether  $p$ , he may well doubt whether  $p$ . And if it makes sense for A to doubt whether  $p$ , then it makes sense for him to be certain that  $p$ , i.e. for his doubts to be put to rest. In general, what we can know is also what we can be certain of and what we might, in appropriate circumstances, be doubtful about.

iv. If ‘A knows that  $p$ ’ makes sense, then, unless his knowledge that  $p$  is infallible (if there is any such thing), ‘A thinks he knows that  $p$ ’ must make sense. So it must be possible for A to think he knows that  $p$  and be mistaken. Hence ‘It seems to A as if it were the case that  $p$ ’ makes sense too, as does ‘A mistakenly believes that  $p$ ’.

v. If ‘A knows that  $p$ ’ makes sense, so too does ‘A wonders whether  $p$ ’, i.e. what someone knows is something he may not know, but may want to know, may wonder about.

vi. If ‘A knows that  $p$ ’ makes sense, then ‘A satisfies himself that  $p$ ’<sup>15</sup> makes sense. And so, indeed, does ‘A verifies or confirms that  $p$ ’. (This does

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14. That is to say: if I *can* know that  $p$ , then I *can* believe, guess, suspect, or surmise that  $p$ . The ‘can’ here indicates what *makes sense*. I know that my name is PMSH, that I live in Oxford and that I teach philosophy – I do not guess, suspect or surmise this to be so. But I might do so if I were to suffer from amnesia.

15. ‘Wo man sich überzeugen kann’ is mistranslated as ‘where one can find out’ (*Philosophical Investigations*, p. 221). To be sure, amnesia apart, I do not *find out* that my name is PMSH, that I live in Oxford and teach philosophy. But if I know that  $p$ , even in such cases, I can *satisfy* myself, confirm or make sure that  $p$  if I were called upon to validate these facts.

not mean that if A knows that  $p$ , then he must have acquired his knowledge by satisfying himself, verifying or confirming that  $p$ .)

vii. If 'A knows that  $p$ ' makes sense, then there must be criteria for whether he knows it, which are distinct from the criteria or evidence for, or the manner in which one establishes, that  $p$ . Otherwise there would be no difference between its being the case that  $p$  and A's knowing that  $p$ .

viii. Truthfulness does not guarantee truth. A may sincerely assert that  $p$ , but his truthfulness or sincerity does not guarantee that what he asserts is true or that he knows things are as he asserts them to be.

These conditions hold for my knowledge that another person is in pain, is cheerful, feels surprised, believes, hopes, fears, expects or suspects that  $p$ , wants or intends to  $V$ . In all such cases, it is possible for me *not* to know that things are thus with A. I may guess, suspect, surmise or believe that things are thus with him, but not know that this is how things are, and I can often, given appropriate circumstances, satisfy myself, confirm or verify that they are. So too, I may doubt whether things are thus with A and I can be certain that they are. I may think that I know that A is or feels  $F$ , yet be wrong; and it may seem to me that A  $V$ s that  $p$  or  $V$ s to  $N$ , although, as it happens, I am mistaken. The criteria for whether things are thus-and-so with A are distinct from the criteria whereby another would establish that I know that they are. And my truthfulness in asserting that things are so with A does not guarantee that they are or that I know that they are.

## 6. The cognitive assumption: sensations

Although first-person 'authority' ranges over a wide spectrum of the psychological, the considerations which are pertinent to sensations (and arguably to mental images) are somewhat different from those appertaining to believing (as well as other doxastic predicates) and intending (and other volitional predicates). The use of the epistemic operators and their negations on sentences of the form 'I have a pain' and 'A has a pain' displays patterns which are in significant ways different from the patterns exhibited by their operation on 'I believe that  $p$ '/'He believes that  $p$ ' or 'I intend to  $V$ '/'He intends to  $V$ '. For the rest of this paper I shall be concerned only with the special case of pain – the case where the cognitive assumption seems to be most powerful. For we are very strongly inclined to say that when we are in pain, *of course* we know that we are! How could someone be in pain and *not*

know it? Is this ‘inclination to say’ an inclination to error, or an acknowledgement of an obvious truth?

We are concerned with propositions of the form ‘I have an X’ (pain, tickle, itch), to which an ‘I know’ is affixed. However, the first-person present tense is not the only concern. For the considerations that militate against the cognitive assumption in the first-person present tense also apply in the third-person case, as long as there is a double reference to the same subject, e.g. ‘He (or NN) knows that he (himself) is in pain’, and equally in other tenses, as long as the tense is held constant, e.g. ‘I knew that I was in pain’ or ‘He knew that he was in pain’. But if the cognitive assumption is refuted with regard to the first-person present tense, it will apply *mutatis mutandis* to the other forms. So I shall discuss primarily the first-person case.

It is clear, quite generally, that we have only marginal, rhetorical use for any sentence of the form ‘I don’t know *that p*’ to confess ignorance of the fact that *p*. This contrasts with ‘I didn’t know that *p*’ and ‘I don’t know whether *p*’. So the first question is whether it makes sense to say ‘I don’t know *whether* I have a pain’ (not ‘I don’t know *that* I have a pain’). But this constraint does not hold in the reiterated third-person case, so the question of whether it makes sense to say ‘He does not know *that* he is in pain’ is also on the carpet, as well as, of course, ‘He doesn’t know *whether* he is in pain’.

(i) It is surely evident that there is no use here for a first-person confession of ignorance. We may ask a person whether he is in pain, and he may reply truthfully ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. But if he were to answer ‘I don’t know whether I am’, we would not understand him. Of course, he might say that he was not sure whether the unpleasant sensation that he has merits the name of ‘pain’. But that would not be a case of his having a pain and not knowing that he has one, but of his having a borderline case of pain. Indeed, his hesitation is *a criterion* for his having a sensation which is a borderline case of pain. Someone who says ‘Surely *I* must know whether I am in pain’ does not mean that surely he must know whether what he has is *called* ‘pain’.

What then of the third-person variant, i.e. ‘He does not know that he has a pain’? Granted that there is no such thing as a *confession* of ignorance here, can there not be ignorance *simpliciter*? Does it make sense for *us* to know that A is in pain, but for him to be ignorant that he is? Could we be in a position to inform him of something that he does not know? Were we to say, ‘You are in pain’, could that be news to him? Surely not. There is no use for the

questions ‘Do you know that you are in pain?’ or ‘Do you know whether you are in pain?’, and the reason is not that anyone knows that sort of thing, like ‘Do you know the ABC?’ There is no such thing as someone being in command of his faculties, knowing what the word ‘pain’ means, and *not* being able to answer the question of whether he is in pain. But this does not mean that one always knows. Rather, since ignorance is grammatically excluded, so too is knowledge. Since *there is no such thing* here as ignorance, there is nothing for ‘know’ to exclude. Hence ‘I know that I am in pain’ either amounts to no more than an emphatic confirmation that I am indeed in pain, or it is philosophers’ nonsense.

But what if the person in question is delirious, tossing and turning in pain? Here there is neither any question of a confession of ignorance – the patient is not *compos mentis*, nor any question of informing him of something which he might not know – he cannot understand anything. Can one argue that being delirious while one is in pain is a case of being in pain and not knowing that one is? No; no one would say of the delirious patient ‘He is in dreadful pain, but he does not know he is.’ What on earth would this mean? It would make sense only if it also made sense to say of a non-delirious patient that he is in pain and he knows that he is, i.e. only if we had a grasp of what it means for someone to be in pain and know that he is. But as just argued it does not, we have no genuine (epistemic) use for the form of words ‘A knows that he is in pain’ or for ‘A is in pain and he knows that he is’. The criteria for whether a person does not know something consist, *inter alia*, in his saying ‘I don’t know’, in the manifestation in his behaviour of his ignorance of the relevant fact, in the lack of opportunity to come by the knowledge (‘He doesn’t know ... , since from where he is standing, it isn’t visible.’). But a delirious person cannot assert that he does not know, since he cannot assert anything. (Were he to groan ‘I am in pain’, we would not say ‘So he knows after all’, and were he to mutter deliriously ‘I am not in pain’, we would not say ‘He is lying’ or ‘He is mistaken’, since we would not hold him to have *said*, i.e. asserted, anything, anymore than if someone asleep were to mutter ‘I am dreaming’, we would say ‘He speaks the truth’.) Furthermore, there can be nothing in his behaviour which, on the one hand, satisfies the criteria for being in pain, and, on the other hand, fails to satisfy criteria for knowing that one is in pain – for there are none. There are criteria for A’s knowing that B is in pain, which are distinct from the cri-

teria for B's being in pain. But there are no criteria for A's knowing that he himself is in pain, which are distinct from the criteria for his being in pain. Finally, there is *in general* no such thing as an opportunity condition for finding out that one is in pain, since there is no such thing as *finding out* that one is in pain. So one could not be ignorant of being in pain through lack of any opportunity to find out.<sup>16</sup>

By contrast with 'How do you know that *he* is in pain?', there is no use for the question 'How do you know that *you* are in pain?' – for, on the one hand, one's avowal of pain is immediate, and, on the other hand, one's avowal of pain itself is a criterion for another to ascribe pain to one – he needs nothing further by way of a 'How do you know?'. Nor is there any use for the question 'Does he know *that* he is in pain?', which we, knowing him to be in pain, might ask to understand or predict his behaviour. For if we know that a person is in pain, then, without more ado, we can typically predict the kinds of thing he might do or avoid on the ground that he is in pain. For the fact that he is in pain is a reason for him to do all manner of things (ring up the doctor, lie down, take an analgesic, etc.). 'He knows ... , so he has a reason ...' is excluded here, since there is no such thing as his not knowing. In short, the kinds of needs which give rise to the use of 'I know', 'He knows', and their interrogative counterparts, and the kinds of circumstances in which it might have a legitimate use do not apply in the case of the subject's being in pain.

(ii) Similarly, there is no use for 'I believe (think) that I am in pain' or for 'I guess (suspect or surmise) that I am in pain'. One can say 'I think he is in pain, but I don't know for sure' (and here one can add 'I must find out'), but one cannot say 'I think that I am in pain, but I do not know for sure', let alone 'I must find out'. So too, there is no use for 'He does not know, he only believes, that he is in pain' or for 'As far as he knows, he is in pain'.

(iii) There is no such thing as being in pain and doubting whether one is. Were someone to say 'I doubt whether he is in pain – he is a notorious malingerer' we would understand him perfectly. But were he to say 'I doubt whether I am in pain – I am a notorious malingerer', we would not under-

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16. This does not entirely settle the case of the delirious sufferer, discussion of which will be resumed below.

stand him and would assume that he was cracking a poor joke. I may doubt whether the unpleasant sensation I have merits the name of 'pain', but that is not a case of being in pain and doubting whether one is.

Making a knowledge claim excludes subjective doubt, for one cannot intelligibly say 'I know that *p*, but I doubt whether *p*'. Hence Wittgenstein observed, ' "I know ..." may mean "I do not doubt ..." but does not mean that the words "I doubt ..." are *senseless*, that doubt is logically excluded.' (*PI* p. 221) But in the case of my being in pain, the sentence 'I doubt whether I am in pain' is not *false* but *senseless*. For here doubt is logically excluded.

Precisely because doubt is logically excluded, so too is certainty. For if it makes no sense to doubt whether I am in pain, then there is nothing for certainty to exclude. 'I am sure that I am in pain' could have a use only if 'I doubt whether I have a pain' had a genuine use.

(iv) It cannot *seem* to me as if I were in pain. For I cannot make a mistake or indeed think that perhaps I am making a mistake. The role of the operator 'It seems to me' is to qualify an assertion, typically where I think that things may not be as they appear to be. But this operator has no role in the case of 'I am in pain'. Of course, I may think that something is *going* to hurt, and cry out in anticipation – as when I hit my finger with a hammer and cry out, even though the blow was insufficient to cause pain. But this is not a case of being mistaken in thinking that I am in pain, but of being mistaken in thinking that it *will* hurt. If I exclaim 'It hurts, it hurts', you may chide me, saying 'Come, come, it's not that bad' – but you cannot intelligibly say 'You are wrong, it only seems to hurt'. The former is tantamount to 'Don't make a fuss', but the latter is either nonsense or a bad joke.

(v) It makes no sense to wonder whether one is in pain. I may wonder whether another is in pain, and try to find out, e.g. by asking him or observing his behaviour. But I cannot wonder whether I am in pain, nor can I try to find out, either by asking myself or observing my behaviour. And I cannot perceive or observe my sensation or 'introspect' to find out whether I am in pain.

(vi) It does not make sense to speak of my *satisfying* myself that I am in pain.<sup>17</sup> I can satisfy myself, verify or confirm the supposition that another is in pain, but not that I am.

(vii) There are criteria for whether a person is in pain, but there are no *additional* criteria for whether he knows that he is. There are, of course, criteria for whether he can say that he is, can answer the question ‘Are you in pain?’ or ‘Does it hurt?’ A person in a delirium cannot; and a baby, who has not yet learnt to speak, cannot either. But the former is bereft of his senses and cannot answer *any* question. It does not follow that he is *ignorant* of whether he is in pain – only that he is in pain and cannot say so. And the latter is lacking mastery of a language, not knowledge of his pains. No one would ask ‘Does the child know that he is in pain?’, and were anyone to ask such a strange question, one would not answer ‘No, he cannot yet speak’, let alone ‘No, he cannot yet act for the reason that he is in pain’. And when the child has learnt the use of ‘It hurts’ or ‘I have a pain’, one would not say ‘Now at last, whenever he has a pain, he knows that he does.’

One might object: surely, knowledge is bound up with the ability to answer a question, and the delirious person and the baby cannot answer the question ‘Are you in pain?’. So they do not know the answer; so they do not know that they are in pain. But this is mistaken. Knowledge whether *p* is indeed linked to the ability to answer the question ‘Is it the case that *p*?’ But neither the delirious person nor the baby understand the question that is put to them. And surely, the normal person, in normal circumstances, *can* answer the question ‘Are you in pain?’. So does he not *know* that he is (or is not) in pain? No – for he cannot intelligibly be *unable* to say whether he is, he cannot be mistaken, and he cannot have any doubts in the matter. There is no room for ignorance, and hence nothing for ‘I know’ to *exclude*.

But surely, animals, who cannot answer questions, do know a multitude of things. Indeed; so the link between knowledge and the ability to answer questions is broken when we extend the concept of knowledge to non-language users. And that is unsurprising, given that they cannot understand questions. So the concept of knowledge is remoulded for the case of mere animals. We do say that the dog knows where it buried the bone or that the

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17. There is *a* use of ‘pain’ in which it does make sense, viz. a conditional use, as in ‘I still have the pain in my leg, but if I don’t move at all, it doesn’t hurt’. Here I might satisfy myself that my leg still hurts by moving it to see whether it hurts when I do so. But this is not the categorical use that is our concern, for it is not the case of my currently feeling pain.



cat knows when it is feeding time. We say so because the animal exhibits behaviour that justifies the ascription of knowledge (in an attenuated sense). But we ascribe such knowledge to animals in cases where the animal might not exhibit such behaviour, where it also *makes sense* to say that it does not know that it is feeding time or that it has forgotten where it buried the bone. We do not say of an animal that it is in pain and that it knows that it is, or that it is in pain and that it does not know that it is. For, in the case of the animal, as in our case, there can be grounds justifying the assertion that it is or is not in pain but no additional grounds justifying the assertion that it does or does not know that it is.

(viii) If a person truthfully avows that he is in pain, then he *is* in pain. His truthfulness guarantees the truth of what he says.

These considerations are the grounds for the denial of the cognitive assumption in respect of pain and other sensations, and hence for the denial of the epistemic explanation of first-person authority with respect to sensations. It is important to note that Wittgenstein did not claim that ‘I know I am in pain’ has no use at all. His claim was that it has no use akin to its third-person counterpart ‘I know that he is in pain’ or to its past tense variant ‘I know that I was in pain’. Here the operator ‘I know’ has a standard epistemic role. In the case of ‘I am in pain’, there is no *such* role for it to play. That does not mean that it can have *no* role. It has various *non-epistemic* uses.<sup>18</sup> ‘I know that I am in pain’ might be used as an emphatic assertion that I really am in pain. (*PI* § 246) It might be used concessively: if someone were excessively solicitous, and kept on saying ‘You are in pain, so you mustn’t ...’, I might exclaim in exasperation ‘I know I am in pain – you needn’t keep on reminding me’. But that just means ‘Yes, I am indeed in pain – you needn’t keep on saying so’. It might be used as a joke, as in ‘He thinks that I am in pain, but I know I am’ or ‘You don’t know whether he is in pain? Ask him, he ought to know’. Why are these jokes? Because they

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18. It might be objected that to say that ‘know’ has a non-epistemic use is a solecism. But that is wrong. One can say ‘When he visited me, he was so amusing that I forgot all my troubles’. ‘Forget’ too is an epistemic verb, but here it has a non-epistemic use, since it does not mark a failure of memory, but a distraction of attention. Similarly, ‘Don’t worry, I know what I am doing’ is not an epistemic assertion, but an assertion that one is doing whatever one is doing intentionally, as part of a considered plan.

point to what Wittgenstein called a grammatical proposition, i.e. a rule for the use of words in the guise of an empirical proposition. The grammatical proposition in question is that it makes sense for a person to think that, doubt or wonder whether another is in pain, but it makes no sense for a person to think that he is in pain but be uncertain, or to wonder or doubt whether he himself is in pain. So the joke is a grammatical joke. Hence 'Only he knows whether he is in pain' might be used as a grammatical proposition to indicate that the expression of doubt *in his case* (i.e. in the first-person case) is senseless. (*PI* § 247) So too 'Surely I must know whether I am in pain' is a grammatical proposition which draws attention to first-person authority – if I sincerely say that I am in pain, then my word overrides anyone else's assertion to the contrary. Similarly, the remark cited at the beginning of this paper 'That is what he said (i.e. that he was in pain), and he ought to know' is a grammatical proposition indicating that in such cases truthfulness guarantees truth. So too, one might say 'When a person is in pain, he knows where the pain is'. What that means is that he *can say* where he has a pain – and that is not an empirical generalization. Indeed, were someone to say, 'I have a dreadful pain, but I don't know where it is', we would not understand him. But 'to know', in its standard use (and in the sentence 'I know that he is in pain') does not simply mean 'can say', and 'I know that *p*' does not mean '*p*, and I can say so'.

So what the objection to the cognitive assumption rules out is not *any* use for the form of words 'I know I am in pain', but rather that very use that lies at the heart of the philosophical tradition which informs our thought, i.e. its use to ascribe to oneself, or to claim, a form of knowledge of the subjective which is derived from introspection and is both indubitable and infallible. That conception, which was part of the picture of the mental as better known than the physical and of self-knowledge as based on privileged access to, and private ownership of, experience, is philosophers' nonsense.

## 7. Objections to the non-cognitive account

The non-cognitive account goes against the grain of centuries of philosophical thought. It conflicts with what one is inclined to say when confronted with the question of whether a person who is in pain knows that he is.<sup>19</sup> And further reflection produces considerations which seem to militate against the non-cognitive account. I shall survey some of these.

It might be argued that since I can patently lie about whether I am in pain, it must make sense for me to know or believe that I am in pain. For surely to lie is (roughly) to assert things to be so, with the intention of deceiving one's addressee, while knowing or believing that they are not so. But this is unconvincing. There is no reason to suppose that there is such uniformity in the analysis of lying. As Wittgenstein remarked, 'a lie about inner processes is of a different category from one about outer processes.'<sup>20</sup> To lie about being in pain is to assert that one is in pain when one is not in pain, with the intention of deceiving one's addressee. In the case of one's own current pain, neither knowledge nor ignorance can or need come into the story.

It might be argued that since I can be said to know that everyone in the room is in pain, then if I am in the room, surely it follows that I know that I, as well as the others, am in pain. But this is mistaken. For me to know that everyone in the room is in pain, I must know that the others are in pain and I must be in pain. What is ruled out is that I should be ignorant that I am in pain. But that is excluded by grammar – which also rules out that I know that I am in pain.

It might be argued that since I can know that you know that I am in pain, it follows that I must be able to know that I am in pain. For I cannot know that you know that *p* without knowing that *p* myself. But this too is mistaken. What is true is that it makes no sense to say that I know that you know that *p* but that I am ignorant, do not know, whether *p*. But in the case of 'I am in pain', both knowledge *and* ignorance are excluded. All that follows from my knowing that you know that I am in pain is that I am in pain, that you know that I am, and that I know that you know. It does not follow that I know that I am in pain.

It is tempting to conceive of remembering that *p* as a matter of having previously known that *p*, knowing now that *p*, and knowing now because one knew previously. But if so, does it not follow that it must make sense for one to know that one is in pain? For I can certainly remember that I was in

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19. For if one denies that he knows that he is in pain, it seems as if one is committed to the view that he is ignorant of the fact that he is in pain.

20. Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Vol. 2, p. 33.

pain yesterday. If so, it seems to follow that I now know that I was in pain yesterday, that I knew yesterday that I was in pain, and that I know now because I knew yesterday. However, it seems so only if one cleaves to a certain *form* of analysis in disregard of the use of the relevant sentences. It is, to be sure, very tempting for philosophers to seek for uniform and elegant analyses of concepts. But uniformity and elegance are worthless if distortion of our concepts ensues – given that what we are doing is clarifying our existing conceptual structures. All that follows from my remembering that I was in pain is that I was previously in pain, that I now know that I was in pain, and that I know now because I was previously in pain. So memory cannot be given this elegant, simple and all-encompassing analysis. There is, as it were, a *singularity* in the epistemology of the psychological, at the point of the first-person present tense of certain verbs and phrases – just as there is a singularity in arithmetic at the number 0.

There is an important connection between a person's knowing that *p* and it being possible for that person to act for the reason that *p*.<sup>21</sup> For it is not possible for a person to act for the reason that *p* if he is ignorant of the fact that *p*. And this in turn links up with important needs, emphasized above, which the verb 'know' satisfies, namely in understanding, explaining, justifying, excusing and predicting behaviour. For we may ask 'Does he know?' or 'Did he know?' for precisely this purpose. If someone knows that *p*, then *that p* may play a role in his reasoning, and so too in explaining or justifying his thoughts, actions and reactions. But the fact that I am in pain is certainly a very good reason for me to take an analgesic, go to the doctor, think I have a certain illness, be afraid, etc. So surely it follows that if the fact that I am in pain can be my reason for doing or thinking something, I must know that I am in pain.<sup>22</sup> – But this too is mistaken. All that follows is that a person cannot be said to V for the reason that *p* if he is *ignorant* that *p*. But when

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21. John Hyman has done much to elucidate this internal relation; see his 'How Knowledge Works', *Philosophical Quarterly* 49 (1999), pp. 433–51. However, where he construes the 'can' of 'If he knows that *p*, then he can act for the reason that *p*' as the 'can' of ability, I construe it as the 'can' of possibility. If I know that it is raining, then *that it is raining* can be a reason for me to do a variety of things. But that I can act for that reason is not an ability I possess – there is no such thing as *the ability to do something for the reason that it is raining*. Rather, given that I know that it is raining, then it is *possible* for me to do various things for the reason that it is raining.

I am in pain, I neither know nor am I ignorant of the fact that I am in pain. *Both* knowledge and ignorance are ruled out. That I am in pain is a reason for me to V in as much as it justifies my Ving. It is my reason for Ving in so far as I V because I am in pain, and would justify and/or explain my Ving by reference to my being in pain. That I am in pain can be a premise in my reasoning – as long as I am not *ignorant* of the fact that I am in pain, and there is no such thing as being in pain and not knowing that one is. Of course, that he is in pain cannot be someone's reason for doing something if he is in a delirium, but that is not because he is ignorant of the fact that he is, but because he cannot do *anything* for a reason.

These counter-arguments may seem indecisive. Perhaps they show that we *need not* accept the counter-examples, that we can sidestep them in the manner indicated, *if we wish to cleave to the non-cognitive account*. But they do not show that we *must* cleave to it. Some (but not all) of the eight arguments in support of the non-cognitive account rely on the fact that the verb 'to know' is embedded in a network of other epistemic verbs and related epistemic expressions, such that its use in a given sentential context makes sense only if it also *makes sense* to insert those other verbs, *mutatis mutandis*, in the same sentential context in conceivable circumstances. But could we not view the contexts in which the other epistemic expressions have no application as anomalies, without thereby denying that the verb 'to know' has application? After all, there are anomalies in respect of epistemic expressions which do not exclude the use of 'to know'. One can know, but one cannot doubt, suspect or surmise that  $2 + 2 = 4$ , and one can know, but one cannot forget, the difference between right and wrong.<sup>23</sup> So could it not be held that the eight arguments show only anomalies in the use of 'I know' in association with certain psychological verbs, i.e. anomalies in excluding doubt and certainty, belief, suspicion and surmise, satisfying oneself and confirming, etc., but do not actually show the exclusion of knowledge? For it does not *follow* from the presence of these anomalies, that I cannot be said to *know* that I am in pain, since it does not follow from comparable

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22. See J. Hyman, *ibid.*, p. 451.

23. G. Ryle, 'On Forgetting the Difference between Right and Wrong', repr. in *Collected Papers* (Hutchinson, London, 1971), volume 2.

anomalies in respect of elementary arithmetic and ethics that there is no such thing as arithmetical or ethical knowledge.<sup>24</sup>

As already noted in the previous methodological remarks, there are *many* anomalies in the use of epistemic verbs in the domain of mathematics.<sup>25</sup> They do not exclude mathematical knowledge or ignorance. But mathematical propositions are categorially different from empirical propositions. To know that  $2 + 2 = 4$  is as categorially different from knowing that A is in pain as the existence of the number 4 is from the existence of pain. What it makes sense to say within one domain does not necessarily make sense or make the same sense in another. For we are dealing with categorial differences. The fact that it makes sense to say ‘I know that  $2 + 2 = 4$ ’ even though it makes no sense to say ‘I doubt whether  $2 + 2 = 4$ ’ does not show that it makes sense to say ‘I know that I am in pain’ even though it makes no sense to say ‘I doubt whether I am in pain’. For we cannot extrapolate from one categorial domain to another. That is why a priori knowledge was excluded from consideration as a comparison class *ab initio* in this investigation.

Similarly, it is true that one can know the difference between right and wrong. But one cannot forget it; nor can one remember it. So there is here an anomaly in the web of epistemic verbs; but it does not exclude the use of ‘to know’. Here too we are dealing with a different categorial domain from empirical propositions. To learn the difference between right and wrong, to come to know the difference, is not merely to acquire information, it is to acquire a sense of obligation, to internalize moral standards and to care about what is right and what is wrong. These may be lost, abandoned or cease – if one becomes cynical, callous, and uncaring. But we do not call the loss of a sense of duty or cessation of care for morality ‘forgetting’. The reasons for the anomalies are perspicuous, and perspicuously do not lead us to deny the legitimacy of the use of the term ‘know’ in the domain of value, in particular in the phrase ‘knowing the difference between right and wrong’ and its negation ‘not knowing the difference between right and wrong’. On the contrary, the very meaning of the phrases is bound up with the unintel-

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24. I owe the objection to John Hyman.

25. For a detailed discussion of them, see G.P. Baker and P.M.S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, pp. 287–307.

ligibility of forgetting and remembering. But one cannot extrapolate from ethical to empirical knowledge. The use of the sentence 'I know I am in pain' is *not* bound up with the unintelligibility of 'I doubt whether I am in pain', since it *has* no genuine epistemic use. And *that* it has no such genuine use *is* bound up with the absence of any use for its negation 'I don't know whether I am in pain' (by contrast with 'He doesn't know the difference between right and wrong'), as well as for the other epistemic operators which have been examined.

It might be objected that the non-cognitive claim draws attention to a variety of anomalies, but does not show that they are more than mere anomalies. For it offers no general account of what knowledge is, no general conception of knowledge that draws the boundaries of what it makes sense to know in such a way as to exclude the problematic class. But this is at best misleading. What is true is that the non-cognitive claim is not committed to and does not offer any *definition* of knowledge. But is there any reason for supposing that there *is* a uniform definition that will capture all uses of 'to know'? Certainly there can be no presumption that such a fundamental epistemic term has an analytic definition. The efforts of many philosophers over many generations have met with nothing but failure. More importantly, failure to give an analytic definition of the word is not a criterion for not knowing what it means. The rules for the use of 'to know', rules which guide us in using the verb and which constitute standards for its correct application, are not given in the form of a single definition specifying necessary and sufficient conditions for its application. They are given in the contexts of the practice of using the terms, and learnt in those contexts. Finally, it is most plausible to suppose that there are as many *logical* varieties of knowledge as there are logical varieties in what is known<sup>26</sup> – and what makes sense for one variety, e.g. mathematical knowledge or moral knowledge or self-knowledge, may make none for another. What it is to know a mathematical proposition is altogether unlike what it is to know an empirical one, just as what it is for a mathematical proposition to be true is altogether unlike what it is for an empirical proposition to be true. Hence it

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26. I use the term 'variety' here in a manner akin to (but only akin to) von Wright's use of the term in *The Varieties of Goodness* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1963). That there are logical varieties of X does not mean that 'X' is ambiguous.

should not be expected that there is an *illuminating* general definition of knowledge. For the behaviour of the operators ‘A knows’ and ‘I know’ and their relations to other epistemic terms vary *logically* according to the logical character of their base. And since the base or operand is a sentence expressing a proposition, a nominalization thereof or a nominalization of a WH-question, there are as many logical varieties of operands as there are logical varieties of propositions – which is just another way of saying that the rules for the use of the epistemic operators in general, and of ‘know’ in particular, may vary according to the logical character of the sentence on which they operate. The difference in the logical role of the kind of sentence is reflected in differences in the use of the epistemic operators, and in their compatibilities and incompatibilities.

Nevertheless, the justification for the grammatical exclusion of knowledge that has been advocated reaches deeper than the mere enumeration of anomalies. The fundamental kinds of contexts in which the term ‘know’ is called for, the basic language-games in which it is at home, were specified in section 2 above. If we examine them, it will be evident that there is indeed a further rationale for the exclusion of knowledge from the problematic first-person present tense and its specified cousins.

(i) In the interrogative context in which someone asks another ‘Are you in pain?’, there is no possible use for ‘I don’t know’ as an expression of ignorance (as opposed to hesitation over borderline cases).

(ii) Similarly, in the interrogative context, there is no room for qualifications on the answer of the form ‘As far as I know I am, but I may be wrong’, ‘I think so, but I am not sure’, or ‘I believe I am, but I don’t know for sure’.

(iii) A person’s sincerely asserting that he is in pain cannot invite the question ‘How do you know?’, for there is no such thing as an intelligible challenge to a person’s ‘authority’ or ‘credentials’ in avowing or averring that he is in pain, given that he understands what he says. Nor is there any such thing as a person’s asserting that he is in pain on the grounds of evidence, hence there is no use for ‘Why do you believe that?’

(iv) In the context of needing to find out who has information we need, we can ask another person whether he knows whether NN is in pain, but we cannot ask NN ‘Do you know whether you are in pain?’. Nor, in cases where we know that NN is in pain, can we ask him whether he knows whether he is in pain in order to find out whether we need to tell him. Nor,



indeed, can we *tell* him that he is in pain; and if we say ‘You are in pain’, he may reply ‘Yes, I am’, but he can hardly reply ‘I already know’.

(v) There is no need for an ‘I know’ to impart to another the information that one is already in possession of the information that one is in pain, for the obvious reason that there is no question of one’s being ignorant of the fact that one is.

(vi) There is no possibility of using an ‘I know that’ in order to forestall or repress doubt for oneself or another (parallel to ‘I know I left the keys in the drawer’), since doubt is logically excluded.

(vii) In the context of understanding and predicting the actions and reactions of others we certainly need to know whether they are in pain. But we do not ask whether they *know* that they are in pain in order to understand or predict their conduct. For that would imply that they might be ignorant of the fact that they are – and, as argued, there is no such thing. That a person does not or did not know something may explain or excuse a variety of actions and omissions, etc. But there is no use for ‘He did not know that he was in pain’ or ‘He does not know that he is in pain’ in explaining or excusing his actions and omissions. In explaining the behaviour of babies or of delirious patients, their lack of rationality, i.e. their inability to act for reasons and to give reasons for their actions, may play a role, but not their ‘ignorance’ of the fact that they are in pain. Nor can I explain, justify or excuse my own behaviour by saying that I was in pain, but I didn’t know that I was – although I might excuse my behaviour by saying that I was in pain and delirious, so I didn’t know what I was doing.

The needs which give rise to the peculiar use of the epistemic operator ‘I know’ and the contexts in which it has a standard use exclude the base ‘I am in pain’.<sup>27</sup>

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