On What We Know

1

In spite of the repeated efforts of so many philosophers, since Plato's Theaetetus, to clarify the concept of knowledge, I am still dissatisfied with the result. There are a number of fairly obvious features of this concept which cannot be squared with the prevailing theories, and which are still being ignored by philosophers, who, as is their wont, are more interested in proving their theories by an arbitrary selection of facts than in the facts themselves which the theories are supposed to explain.

The most persistent, and still dominant, line of analysis tries to understand knowledge in terms of belief, true belief, true belief with adequate evidence, grounds, accessibility, or some other, often very elaborately and ingeniously stated condition. Whether such a claim is advanced as a reduction or just as a list of necessary conditions, I think it is still misleading and prejudices the issue. For it is taken for granted by the proponents of this view that knowledge (at least in the sense of knowing that) can have the same object as belief, that is, that it is possible to believe and to know exactly the same thing.

This, to me, is a highly questionable assumption. Granted, it is nonsense to say that one knows that p but does not believe it. It need not follow, however, that in this case one must believe that p. What is known may be something that cannot be believed or disbelieved at all. In other words, the incongruity of the sentence I know that p but I do not believe it may be due not to an implied inconsistency but to a category confusion similar to the one embedded in the sentence I have a house but I do not covet it. As one cannot be said to covet or fail to covet one's own property, it may be the case that one cannot believe or disbelieve what one knows. Again, from the fact that what one knows cannot be false, it does not follow that it must be true and hence that knowledge must entail true belief, if what is known is not a thing to which truth and falsity apply. A picture may be faithful or not faithful, not its object; yet it is the conformity with the object that makes a picture faithful. In a similar way conformity with things known may render beliefs true, without these things being true themselves. At this point I offer these considerations as mere possibilities; the task remains to justify the analogies I have suggested.

In recent years some other points have been added to our comprehension of the concept of knowledge, such as Ryle's distinction between knowing that and knowing how, and Austin's recognition of the performatory aspect of the verb to know. These are valuable insights, but the features they single out do not account for the essence of the concept. Knowing that is distinct from knowing how, as it is distinct from knowing who, what, when, where, why, or whether, from knowing a story, a house, or one's friend. What is it, beyond the use of the same word, that is common to all these cases, or, at least, what are the interlocking similarities that would constitute a family resemblance? As to the performatory aspect, its presence is not sufficient to make know a bona fide illocutionary verb; the intuition, moreover, that tells us that this verb, unlike, say, declare or promise, denotes a state and not a speech act is too strong to be ignored. In any case this aspect hardly applies beyond the domain of knowing that; consequently it too fails to account for the unity, no matter how loose, of this concept.

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What do you know? Things of surprisingly many kinds. There are only a few verbs (among them another philosophers' darling, see) that display a similar versatility. In the previous section I mentioned in passing the main categories of the possible verb objects of know. The verb believe, which is supposed to help us in our task, is much more restricted. A comparison between these two verbs is indeed helpful to start with. In doing this, at the beginning, I shall operate on a rather unsophisticated level, restricting my observations to what some grammarians would call the surface structure of the noun phrases involved. As

Author's note: This paper was also read at a conference held at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, in 1968, with Bruce Aune as the commentator. A modified version of it is included in my book Res Cogitans (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972).
we go on, the very nature of the investigation will force us to break through the crust and reveal more and more of the underlying structure.

There is a domain which appears to be shared by both verbs. This comprises the familiar that-clauses, i.e., nominals formed simply by prefixing that to an unaltered sentence. I know that and I believe that can be followed by any declarative sentence regardless of tense, modality, or structural variation. There is, on the other hand, a domain which is wholly owned by know to the exclusion of believe. One can be said to know, but not believe, birds and flowers, houses and cars, wines and detergents, cities and deserts. Practically any original noun will do with or without adjuncts such as the relative clause and its derivatives. Names and other phrases denoting people also qualify, of course, but at this point believe reenters the picture. After all, you can say that you believe Jane as well as that you know Jane. Needless to say, these two assertions have very little to do with one another. Believing a person may require knowing him (to some extent), but knowing him certainly does not entail believing him: the chief reason for not believing Jane may be the fact that you know her too well. At this point the reader will protest: “But, of course, know and believe operate in totally different ways in these cases!” In other words, the reader wants to peek below the surface. For the time being I shall thwart his desire.

There is another group of nouns which is appropriate to either know or believe, and which creates a similar situation. I think of story, tale, explanation, theory, and, perhaps, opinion, suspicion, assumption, and the like. All these things can be known or believed, but even if known, the question of belief remains open: it is perfectly normal to say, for instance: I know the story but I do not believe it. The reader might want to protest again and voice his intuition. I still resist, for we do not yet know enough to see the reasons for the intuition.

In connection with Ryle’s knowing how, I have mentioned the other wh-forms, such as what, when, why, etc., that can introduce the verb object of know. This move, in general, fails with believe; whereas one can know where the treasure is hidden, one cannot believe where the treasure is hidden. There is one exception to this incompatibility, and that concerns what. I may believe what you said as I may know what you said. Clearly the relation of these two claims is similar to the one just encountered between knowing and believing stories or people. The knowledge of what one said does not imply belief, but the belief of what

one said presupposes the knowledge of what one said. Since the word what, unlike the ones figuring in the previous examples, is a purely grammatical word, we can nourish the hope that in this case we shall be able to disambiguate the offending phrase on syntactical grounds alone, and then apply the result to the previous contexts relieving thereby the reader’s pent-up frustration.

There are what and what. Consider the following three sentences:

1. Joe lost his watch.
2. I found what he lost.
3. I know what he lost.

Sentences (1) and (2) jointly entail that I found his watch. (1) and (3), however, do not entail that I know his watch. What, in (2), amounts to that which (or the thing which), i.e., a demonstrative pronoun (or a dummy noun) followed by the relative pronoun beginning a relative clause. As always, such a clause depends upon a noun-sharing between two ingredient sentences. The derivation of (2) can be sketched as follows:

4. I found (a watch) (4a) He lost (a watch)
5. I found (the watch) (5a) which he lost
6. I found that (6a) which he lost
7. I found what he lost

Example (5a) is a relative clause obtained by replacing a watch by which. Since the clause is taken to be identifying, watch in (5) obtains the which is contracted into what.

What, in (3), cannot be analysed into that which. It is not the watch he lost that I claim to know, but rather that it is a watch that he lost, although I put my claim in an indefinite form. What he lost, in this case, has nothing to do with a relative clause; it is a sentence nominalization on par with, say, who lost the watch, when he lost it, how he lost it, and the like. This nominalization operates by replacing a noun phrase or an adverbial phrase in the original sentence by which plus the appro-

1 Concerning relative clauses and the definite article, see my Adjectives and Nominalisations (The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1968), chap. 1.
characteristic of container sentences, which is to be filled by an appropriate nominal.\(^2\)

It is interesting to note that wh-clauses after the negation of know do not come through that but whether. The correct analysis of, say,

I do not know what he ate

and of

I do not know where he went

will show

I do not know whether he ate . . . or . . . or . . .

and

I do not know whether he went to . . . or to . . . or to . . .

rather than

I do not know that he ate (fish)

and

I do not know that he went to (Paris).

This is interesting linguistically: it shows that the negation precedes the nominalization in the generative process.

Wh-nominals are not confined to the object position; they can occur as subjects too, e.g.:

Who killed her is uncertain.

Why she went there is a mystery.

This possibility permits us to draw another interesting comparison between the two structures underlying what he lost.

(12) What he lost is a watch.

(13) What he lost is a mystery.

Sentence (12) is contracted from

That which he lost is a watch

which is an extraction transform of

He lost a watch.

Sentence (13), on the other hand, is certainly no transform of

He lost a mystery.

\(^2\) Ibid., chap. 2.
These facts enable us to explain the ambiguity of what he said in the sentences:

(14) I believe what he said
(15) I know what he said.

Believe cannot take wh-nominals, consequently, the analysis of (14) cannot follow the pattern of (3). (2) provides the correct analogy: the object of believe is a pronoun (or dummy noun) followed by a relative clause. In full:

(a) I believe (that p) He said (that p)
   I believe that which he said
   I believe what he said.

Roughly, the object of your saying and my believing is the same thing. Not so in (15). The object of my knowledge is not the object of his saying (that p), but, obviously, an indefinite version of that he said that p. Thus the derivation matches (8) to (11) above, i.e.:

(b) I know . . . He said (that p)
    I know . . . that he said (that p)
    I know . . . what he said
    I know what he said.

The possibility of believing what (= that which or the thing which) is restricted to "things" that can be objects of belief. For this reason, such sentences as

* I believe what he lost

are ruled out: the relevant co-occurrence sets of believe and lose, unlike those of believe and say, do not overlap. Roughly speaking, believe demands that-clauses, but lose requires object nouns. If so, the intelligent reader will ask, what saves (15) from being given the relative clause interpretation in addition to the other one, and from consequent ambiguity, since the object range of say and know widely overlaps in the domain of that-clauses? Twist as we might, (15) is not ambiguous. It seems, therefore, that the that-clauses following say are different from the that-clauses following know. And since the former are of the kind which is compatible with believe, it seems to follow that the that-clauses after know are different from the that-clauses after believe; i.e., that know and believe cannot have identical objects at all. As we go on, this suspicion will grow to certainty.

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Just to rub in the point, consider another verb, tell. In this case the phrase knowing what he told (somebody) is indeed ambiguous. Although the sentence

I know what he told you

most likely will be interpreted in the sense of the wh-nominal (I know that he told you that p), I can elicit the other interpretation by saying, for instance,

I already knew what he just told you.

Here I claim to know that p (which he just told you). One cannot play the same trick with say. The sentence,

I already knew what he just said (to you)

is substandard, and the improved version,

I already knew what he would say . . .

once more selects the path of the wh-nominal. Know therefore is capable of absorbing the dummy for a that-clause, provided this latter is of the right kind. Now tell, but not say, seems to provide such. What, then, is the difference between say and tell in this respect? I shall take up this problem later on. For the time being, let us remember that as there are whats and whats, there are thats and thats.

4

It is time to return to the problem of knowing and believing people and stories. First I shall consider belief. It is clear that a sentence such as

(16) I believe Jane

must be elliptical. For one thing, the breakdown of two common transformations (passive and extraction) shows that the sentence is "abnormal" for some reason or other:

* Jane is believed by me
  ? It is Jane that I believe.

Intuition tells us that what (16) means is this:

I believe what Jane said (would or will say).

What, of course, is that which. This intuition mirrors a general deletion
pattern that tends to substitute the subject of saying or doing something for the saying or doing itself. E.g.:
I refuted him (what he claimed)
I understood him (what he said)
I imitated him (what he did)
I heard him (his voice)
and so on. In a similar way, the sentence
I believe his story (explanation, etc.)
is but an ellipsis of
I believe what his story (contains, says, etc.)
The verbs in the parentheses are not to be taken too seriously. They are but idiomatic crutches to facilitate the move to the deep structure. What is essential is that this latter contains the elements,
I believe that p
His story (explanation, etc.) is that p
and that the two are fused into a relative clause construction by virtue of the identical noun phrase (that p).

It appears, therefore, that all occurrences of believe (I am not considering believing in somebody or something) can be reduced to believing that.

Nevertheless, this verb retains some latitude, inasmuch as it can take substitutes for the that-clauses (it, thing, what). This, interestingly enough, is not true of a cognate verb, think. This one takes that-clauses without discrimination, but refuses substitutes. One can answer, for instance, I believe it but not I think it, and owing to the exclusion of dummies, it is impossible to think a person, a story, or what one said. Later on I shall return to this difference between think and believe.

What, then, about knowing a story, an explanation, or other things of this sort? Knowing these things differs from believing them in exactly the same way as knowing what one said differs from believing what one said. Accordingly, say, knowing a story is but shorthand for knowing what the story is or how the story goes. And, as the parallel with how clearly indicates, this what is not that which. The same about tales, reasons, explanations, excuses, and theories offered by somebody or other. Incidentally, whereas these things, as we recall, can also be believed (but what a difference!), poems, jokes, names, foreign words, tongue twisters, and the like can be known but not believed. The reason is obvious. The possibility of believing, say, a story is founded upon the sentence in the deep structure:

The story is that p

which makes the relative clause inclusion possible. Poems, tongue twisters, etc., on the other hand, cannot be reproduced in that-clauses; consequently there is no way of connecting them with believe. Nothing prevents their being known, however. Knowing a poem, for instance, is knowing how it goes, or, if one is more ambitious, knowing how it is to be understood, interpreted, and what not.

The availability of the inexhaustible variety of wh-nominals the verb know can take makes it a relatively easy matter to explicate one element of the concept of knowing such things as a person, a house, a car, or a city. What, for instance, can you possibly mean when you say that you know Jane? There is a “minimal” sense of this claim, which is satisfied if you have ever met her in the flesh and, perhaps, talked to her. Yet in spite of such an encounter you may still insist that you do not know her (“I have met her, but I do not know her at all”). What is it that you disclaim in this case? What would be knowing her in this fuller sense? Well, it is an open-ended affair. It might be merely knowing what her full name is, where she comes from, what she does for a living, and other particulars of this sort. If you know her better, if you “really” know her, then you know what she thinks, how she feels about various matters, what she would do if . . . ; consequently you know how to treat her, and the like.

Knowing all these things about Jane will not, however, normally entitle one to claim that one knows her without the personal acquaintance previously mentioned. I do not know Mao Tse-tung, although I know many things about him. Yet some latitude remains in this respect. Churchill could have said truthfully, during World War II, “I know Hitler, he would destroy his country rather than surrender,” even if he never met Hitler in the flesh. But, one might argue, they at least had some dealings with one another, which is not true of Mao and me. Again, the phrase I used to know him many years ago suggests an interruption of contact rather than of the flow of relevant information.³

³I am indebted to Paul Ziff for a clearer perception of these two aspects of knowing a person.
Mutatis mutandis, the same analysis works for knowing houses, cars, cities, and the like. Does the armchair geographer who knows a great deal about Lhasa know Lhasa? Does the little old lady from Dubuque who spent two days in Paris with a guided tour know Paris?

I suspect that the requirement of contact (acquaintance) is a hang-over from the ancient sense of know, according to which knowing, say, pain and misery meant having these things, and which sense is also reflected in the phrase carnal knowledge. We are going to see, toward the end of this essay, that this element of contact with something actually "there" still pertains to the concept of knowledge throughout the entire domain of its application.4

The phrase I used above, knowing how to treat her, represents a new construction which I did not mention before among the possible objects of know. It is by no means restricted to knowing how. I know whom to blame, what to do, where to look, and when to stop in many situations. The transformational origin of these phrases is quite clear. The infinitive, to V+, is generally used in sentence nominalizations to code a noun-sharing between the subject of the nominalized sentence and either the subject or the direct object of the container sentence, provided there is a modal verb in the latter sentence. These features can be brought out with greater or lesser grammaticality in appropriate paraphrases; e.g.:

I decided to go — I decided that I should go
I persuaded him to go — I persuaded him that he should go
I know where to go — I know where I should go
I know how to solve the problem — I know how I can solve the problem,

and so forth. As we see, there is nothing special about knowing how to.

Reviewing our results, we find that the acquaintance sense aside, all verb objects of know, other than the that-clause, can be reduced to wh-nominals. Now these, themselves, are nothing but indefinite versions of that-clauses, formed, as we recall, by replacing a noun phrase or an adverbial phrase in the sentence following that by wh plus the appropriate pro-morpheme. Consequently whenever I claim that I know wh . . . , I guarantee that I could make another claim in which the wh-nominal is replaced by a corresponding that-clause. It makes perfect

4 In many languages there are two separate words corresponding to know; one for noun-clause objects and the other for simple noun objects (kennen—wissen, connaître—savoir, etc.).

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sense to say that I know what he did, but I would not tell you; to say, on the other hand, that I know what he did, but I could not possibly tell you, is absurd.

It will be objected here that in some cases of knowing how it is impossible to tell, in words, what one knows. I know how to tie a necktie, but I could not tell you in words alone. I grant this, but point out that this situation is possible with nearly all the knowing wh forms. I know what coffee tastes like, what the color magenta looks like, where it itches on my back, when I should stop drinking, how the coast line of Angola runs, but I could not tell you in words alone. I must have, however, some other means to supplement words: pointing, offering a sample, a sketch, a demonstration, or saying "now." By these means I can tell you, or show you, what I know: I know that magenta looks like this (offering a sample), that it itches here (pointing), that I should stop drinking now. The need of supplementing words with nonlinguistic media affects knowing how, and knowing what in general, exactly because it affects the corresponding knowing that.

I leave it to the imagination of the reader to account, along similar lines, for the meaning of phrases such as knowing geography, knowing Aristotle, or knowing Russian.

5

In the previous section we have concluded that the basic form of the verb object for both believe and know is the that-clause. Yet at the beginning I suggested that these verbs cannot have the same verb object. These two claims need not conflict, of course, if that-clauses can be ambiguous. And, indeed, we have already encountered one reason for thinking that they are. Roughly, the object of saying, a that-clause, can be the object of belief, but not the object of knowledge. In this section I shall gather the remainder of the evidence that points in the same direction.

The main argument I am going to advance involves a group of nouns that are normally joined to that-clauses by means of the copula, e.g.:

His suggestion is that p
That p is his prediction
That p is a fact
The cause of the phenomenon is that p.

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Clearly there is a need to subdivide this class. Words like *suggestion*, *prediction*, *statement*, *confession*, *testimony*, *excuse* on the one hand, and *belief*, *opinion*, *assumption*, *view*, *theory*, and *suspicion* on the other, are derivatives either of illocutionary verbs or of verbs of propositional states. This is shown in the typical transformation exemplified by

He suggested that p — That p is his suggestion
He suspects that p — That p is his suspicion.

The *that*-clause, accordingly, is tied to a person and this tie is specified by the words I listed, and which I shall call “subjective” P-nouns. This class is to be distinguished from the class of “objective” P-nouns, which will comprise *fact*, *cause*, *result*, *outcome*, *upshot*, and a few others. Facts, causes, and the like do not belong to anybody, and the transformation just given has no parallel. Some P-nouns cross the line, e.g., *reason* and *explanation*: one can speak of Joe’s reason or Joe’s explanation versus the reason or the explanation.

These two groups behave quite differently with respect to know and believe. Subjective P-nouns can follow either verb, but the analyses of the resulting sentences follow quite different lines. If, for instance, someone’s suggestion is that p, then believing his suggestion is believing that p; knowing that suggestion, however, never means knowing that p, but rather knowing what that suggestion is, i.e., knowing that the suggestion is that p. It appears, therefore, that *that*-clauses marked by subjective P-nouns are per se compatible with believe, but not with know. This latter verb cannot take on these *that*-clauses except in a roundabout way, via the wh-nominal.

In view of what we found before, it is easy to give the analyses of the two sentences involved:

(c) I believe (that p)  
His suggestion is (that p)  
I believe that  
which is his suggestion  
I believe his suggestion

(d) I know . . .  
His suggestion is (that p)  
I know . . .  
that his suggestion is (that p)  
I know . . .  
what his suggestion is  
I know his suggestion.

The sentence with believe cannot follow the second pattern, since, as we recall, this verb cannot take wh-nominals. What is more interesting, and indeed decisive, is that the sentence with know does not conform to the first pattern. The clause that p, insofar as it is marked as a suggestion, that is, as something subjective, something produced by an illocutionary act, is not an appropriate object of know.

The situation is quite different with objective P-nouns. They naturally follow know, but only with great strain believe. You may know the facts about the crime, the cause of the explosion, the result of too much publicity, and the outcome of the trial. But what, possibly, could be meant by a sentence such as I believe the cause of the explosion or I believe the outcome of the trial? It might be objected that results are said to be believed or disbelieved: it makes sense to say I do not believe the results of the autopsy. We quickly realize, however, that in this case one speaks of the results submitted by some experts; they are “their” results. If no human authorship is involved, then believing or disbelieving results is impossible; it is nonsense to say, for instance, I do not believe the results of the inflation. In a similar way one may believe or not believe the “facts” submitted by the police, but not the facts about the crime.

The analysis of a sentence like I know the cause of the explosion is interesting. It goes via the wh-nominal: I know what is the cause of the explosion, i.e., I know that the cause of the explosion is that p. This, of course, entails that I know that p. If I know that the cause of the explosion was the overheating of the wire (that the wire got overheated), then I know that the wire got overheated. The words cause, result, outcome, and so forth are relative, inasmuch as they are followed by a genitive structure in nonelliptical sentences: causes, results, outcomes, and the like are causes, results, and outcomes of something or other. Hence knowing the cause of the explosion is not merely knowing that p, which is the cause, but knowing that that p is the cause, i.e., knowing what is the cause.

Facts are not relative in this respect. Consequently these two paths merge into one. Indeed, I know that that p is a fact or I know, for a fact, that p are but emphatic forms of I know that p. Of course one can relate facts to something or other and say, for example, I know the facts about the crime, which means I know what are the facts about the crime, i.e., I know that the facts about the crime are that p and that q, etc. This, naturally, entails that I know that p, that q, etc.
At this point we should recall what we said about the relevant difference between say and tell. If you said that p, and I believe what you said, then I believe that p; knowing what you said, however, does not mean knowing that p, but knowing that you said that p. Tell works differently: if you told me that p, then knowing what you told me may mean, in a suitable context, that I know that p. This seems to suggest that tell, but not say, is an objective P-verb. It is not surprising to find, therefore, that one can tell, but not say, the facts about the crime, the cause of the explosion, the outcome of the trial, and so forth. Tell belongs to the family of know, say to that of believe.

The urge to find symmetries makes us ask the question, why is it that one cannot say suggestions, predictions, opinions, and the like. The answer is simple. Say like think can take that-clauses, but not their substitutes: you may believe that p, think that p, or say that p; but if I suggested that p, then you may believe my suggestions, but not think or say my suggestion.

But, you object, I can surely tell you my suggestion or opinion, and this move seems to cross the line between the subjective and the objective. No more, I reply, than knowing opinions or suggestions. The wh-nominal bridges over the gap. Telling your suggestion, or knowing your suggestion, is telling, or knowing, what that suggestion is (and what, here, is not that which). Telling your suggestion is not the same thing as suggesting or making a suggestion. A suggestion is a subjective entity. That one has made a suggestion, however, is something objective, it may be a fact.

Wh-nominals in general belong to the objective domain. We have seen that they are compatible with know but not with believe. Similarly they can follow tell but hardly say. I can tell you where I went yesterday and what I did there and why. Putting say for tell in such context, however, will yield ungrammatical or at least substandard speech:

?He said where he went ( . . . what he did, . . . why he did it).

But notice that negation changes the picture. The sentence

He did not say where he went ( . . . what he did, . . . why he did it)

sounds distinctly better. We know, of course, that the presence of negation means that the subsequent wh-clause is to be derived not from that p but rather from whether p or q or . . . . This may suggest that the objectivity of such clauses is somewhat problematic. A comparison with P-nouns will round out the picture. Sentences such as

*His suspicion is why she did it
*Who killed her is my opinion

are ungrammatical. On the other hand, it is easy to pair wh-clauses with objective P-nouns:

What he did was the result of despair
How he said it was the cause of the scandal.

It will be helpful to consider a very common verb, state, at this point. From our present point of view it is like tell, rather than say, since obviously one can state a fact, or the cause, the result or the explanation of something or other. What one states, therefore, is something objective. One’s statement, on the other hand, is not. For whereas what one states may be a fact, one’s statement, even if true, is never a fact. Accordingly, knowing your statement cannot be anything but knowing what that statement is; knowing what you stated, however, may amount to knowing that p, which you stated. Believing your statement, on the other hand, necessarily means believing that p, which you stated.

A little exercise for amusement’s sake. What do the following sentences mean?

(17)  I believe what you believe.
(18)  I know what you believe.
(19)  *I believe what you know.
(20)  I know what you know.

Sentence (17) means that you and I share a belief. (18) means that I know what your belief is. (19) is deviant. (20) is ambiguous: it either means that I know what it is that you know, or (with a stress on you) that you and I share a piece of knowledge.

All these facts can readily be accounted for by the following simple hypothesis. There are two kinds of that-clauses, the subjective and the objective. They are distinct because, first, they have entirely different co-occurrence restrictions: one kind fits subjective P-nouns and subjective verbs such as say and believe, the other kind fits objective P-nouns and such objective verbs as tell and know; second, their transformational potential is different: objective that-clauses are open to the wh-nominali-
zation, but subjective ones are not. Thus we see that the seemingly trivial and unexplainable “accident” of grammar that, for instance, it is possible for me to know what you ate, but not to believe what you ate, is, in fact, an important clue to the discovery of a fundamental distinction in linguistic structure and in our conceptual framework.

We have seen that that-clauses (or their pronoun substitutes) are incompatible with certain contexts as a result of their being embedded in a more immediate context. Since the incompatibility works both ways, we have to assume that the immediate context imprints a mark on the clause and this marker, subjective or objective, then decides its further co-occurrence restrictions and its transformational behavior with respect to the wh-nominalization. Take the phrase believing what one knows. Since believe rejects wh-nominals, what has to be that which. That is a pronoun substituting for a that-clause governed by the objective verb know, which clause, accordingly, bears an objective marker. This, however, precludes the context believe. The phrase, therefore, is ungrammatical; one cannot possibly believe what one knows.

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Thus far, surprisingly enough for an essay on knowledge and belief, we have said very little about truth and falsity. The considerations just given concerning subjective and objective P-nouns and other propositional containers make it possible to fill this gap at this point. If one asks the question, what are the things that are paradigmatically true or false, the answer will contain the set of subjective P-nouns, i.e., statement, assertion, testimony, etc., on the one hand and belief, assumption, suspicion, etc., on the other. Turning to objective P-nouns, we find that although the adjective true can be ascribed to them, the resulting compounds require a rather special interpretation. Compare, for instance, true statement and true result. The analysis of the former phrase is simple and straightforward: a true statement is a statement which is true. The phrase true result, however, suggests a different interpretation: a true result is not a result which is true, but something which is true (“really”) the result of something or other. In this sense true (like real) contrasts not with false but with alleged. In the same way the true facts of the case will be contrasted with the alleged facts, true causes with alleged causes, and so forth. In all these contexts true can be replaced by real without any loss of meaning. False, moreover, hardly applies at all; what would be a false fact, false cause, or false result? Of course, we know from elsewhere that true in this adverbial sense is not the opposite of false: such phrases as true fish or true North do not have false fish or false North as opposites; nor do, for that matter, false teeth and false hair have true teeth and true hair for opposites. To argue, therefore, that since there are no false facts, false causes, or false results, all facts, causes, and results must be true, is to commit the same blunder as to conclude that since there are no false fish all fish must be true, or to insist that all hair must be false, since true hair does not exist. Insofar as true is opposed to false (i.e., used in an adjectival sense), facts and causes, results and outcomes, are neither true nor false.

We have found, however, that it is exactly these things that are the immediate objects of knowledge. It follows, then, that what is known is not something that can be true or false. What I say or what I believe is true or false, not what I know.

“But, surely — you object — what I know must be so, must be the case, or even must be the truth. Now do these phrases not mean the same thing as must be true?” No, they do not. Consider, once more, the verb state. We have shown that the two derivatives, his statement and what he stated are very different. The former belongs to the subjective domain: his statement may be true, but his statement cannot be a fact. What he stated, however, can be; people often state facts. And, I add now, what he stated may be so, may be the case, or may be the truth. His statement, on the other hand, is never the case or the truth. For the same reason, whereas it is possible to tell the truth or tell what is the case, it is not possible to say the truth or say what is the case. Tell, as we recall, is an objective verb, say a subjective one.

The phrases is so, is the case, is the truth are near synonyms with is a fact. The phrase is true, on the other hand, does not belong to this set. The thing which is true is not a fact, it only fits the facts, corresponds to what is the case, and, perhaps, agrees with the truth. Consequently, what I believe, or what I say, may fit the facts, in which case it is true; or may fail to fit the facts, in which case it is false. What I know, however, is the fact itself, not something that merely corresponds, or fails to correspond, to the facts.

“We make to ourselves pictures of facts.”

*L. Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, 2.1.
adopt beliefs, opinions, and the like. And we issue such pictures for the benefit of others in making statements and suggestions, in giving testimonies, descriptions, and so forth. These are subjective things, human creations; they belong to people: we speak of Joe's beliefs or Jane's statements. Facts, results, causes, etc., are objective: they do not belong to anybody. They are "there" to be found, located, or discovered.

A picture is affected by the imperfections of the painter. Accordingly, beliefs, statements, and other subjective things, even when true, bear the marks of human ignorance: they represent the facts from a certain point of view, in a given perspective. What I am driving at is the referential opaqueness of such contexts. Even if it is true that Joe believes that A. S. Onassis married Jacqueline Kennedy, it may be false that he believes that Onassis married the widow of the thirty-fifth president of the United States. Yet these two possible beliefs are true together, because they correspond to the same fact. Given this, we are faced with a serious difficulty. If the object of knowledge is not a subjective replica, but the objective fact itself, as we have claimed, then why is it that not only belief-contexts, but also knowledge-contexts are referentially opaque? For even if Joe knows that A. S. Onassis has married Jacqueline Kennedy, it is possible that he does not know that Onassis married the widow of the thirty-fifth president of the United States.

This is a very difficult problem, which requires the utmost care. Let us return to the picture analogy. Given two pictures of the same thing, say, of a rose, my claim that I see this or that picture of the rose does not entail that I see the rose itself. I do, of course, see the rose "in the picture," but seeing something "in the picture" is not the same thing as seeing something simpliciter. Therefore, seeing two pictures of the same thing does not entail seeing the same thing. Now consider seeing the rose itself from two points of view. Do I see the same thing? Yes and no. Yes, if I focus my attention on the object seen; no, if I focus my attention on the aspect (appearance) presented to me in the two glances.

I claim that the situation is similar with respect to belief versus knowledge. Two persons may hold different beliefs mirroring the same fact; they have, as it were, different pictures of it. If, however, two persons know the same fact, what they know, in one sense, will be the same thing, although what they know may appear to them in different perspectives. The person who knows that Onassis married Jacqueline Kennedy, and the person who knows that Onassis married the widow of the late president, without either of them knowing that Jacqueline is that widow, know the same fact, namely, both know whom Onassis married. A parallel move, as we recall, is impossible with believe. I cannot claim that two persons having beliefs that mirror the same fact, but differ in the referential apparatus, have the same belief, for example in our case, that they both believe whom Onassis married. The wh-nominal transcends referential opaqueness. It is not surprising, therefore, that its application is restricted to objective contexts. The possibility of wh-nominalization marks the objective domain of the language.

Now the intuitive pieces fall into a consistent pattern. The widely different ways in which we think of knowledge and belief, the difference in their conceptual environment, bears out the conclusion we established by more formal means. I shall select a few salient points for discussion, but the list could be continued and the details amplified to the extent of one's patience and curiosity.

I begin with the well-known difference in the form of the relevant questions: Why do you believe . . . ? and How do you know . . . ? Why demands reasons, but how asks for the manner of a successful achievement. Forming a belief, like painting a picture, or imagining something, is a human act, which can be recommended (You ought to believe it), praised ( . . . a reasonable belief), or condemned ( . . . a foolish belief), and for which one might and should have reasons. One does not say, on the other hand, that one has reasons for one's knowledge. Knowing something does not involve something like forming a picture; it is rather like seeing what is there. And you do not have reasons for seeing something either. The relevant question here is concerned with the source of the information: how did you find it out, "whence" do you know?*

Still, we can say you ought to know as much as you ought to believe. But what a difference! You ought to believe something if you have good reasons for doing so. You ought to know is ambiguous. One sense is this: you ought to learn it, or have learnt it (say, from a textbook). The other is more interesting: you had the opportunity (you were in a posi-

*"Unde scis . . . ?" asked the Romans and "Woher wissen Sie . . . ?" ask the Germans.