

A Wittgensteinian/Austinian Qualified Defense of Ryle on Know-How

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“Now I know how to go on!” is an exclamation; it corresponds to an instinctive sound, a glad start. Of course, it does not follow from my feeling that I won’t find I’m stuck when I do try to go on.—Here there are cases in which I’d say: “When I said I knew how to go on, I *did* know.” One will say that if, for example, an unforeseen interruption occurs. But what is unforeseen must not simply be that I get stuck.

—Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*¹

1. Introduction

This essay uses Wittgenstein and Austin to buttress Ryle against claims concerning the preeminence of knowledge-that over know-how. It thus seeks to exemplify *and update* ordinary language philosophy: in defending Ryle, I shall also in one important respect criticize and improve upon him.

Later in this paper, I will raise a concern about whether it is actually best to speak of know-how when there is *nothing* to say, or whether we are in fact already being sent down a certain garden path of which we should be wary when we are made to speak of know-how as a relatively wide category that more or less exhaustively subdivides a unified terrain with knowledge-that. In other words, I question the univocity of the alleged overarching category, typically taken for granted by both sides in the analytic philosophy debate: that of knowledge.

2. Why the Know-How versus Knowledge-That Debate Matters: Beyond the Confines of Philosophy

The intellectualist desire to convert know-how into knowledge-that—which currently holds sway in philosophy—is a desire to which it is

troublingly easy for philosophers to succumb. I say “troublingly,” because this tendency manifests—simultaneously, relatedly—an incoherent privileging of science over the very lifeworld that makes science *possible*, as discussed beautifully by Michel Henry:

It is not scientific knowledge that allows [a biology student] to acquire the scientific knowledge contained in the [biology] book [that she is reading]. It is not in virtue of this knowledge that she moves her hands or eyes or focuses her thoughts. . . . Scientific knowledge is objective. . . . But knowing how to move the hands, knowing how to turn the eyes—this knowledge of life is not objective in any way or in any sense; it does not have an object because it does not contain in itself the relation to the object and because this relation is not its essence.

If the knowledge contained in the movement of rubbing the hands and making it possible had an object, such as these hands and their potential movement, this movement would not happen at all. Knowledge would stand in front of it like it stands in front of something objective.²

This starts to bring out an important aspect of why the discussion in this paper *matters* beyond the dusty, abstract confines of philosophy. The so-called tacit and implicit, the phenomena of life that enable any activities at all and that are crucially responsible for our well-being, are easy to neglect when we are in the grip of a certain mode of philosophical reflection. We are influenced by a prejudice to want to understand in terms of neat pictures, according to the kind of concrete and easily transferrable expression characteristic of propositions. Know-how is less tangible and (at least when reflecting and not practicing) more multifaceted.

The philosophical dispute about know-how and knowledge-that is a kind of microcosm of a larger dispute that goes considerably beyond philosophy, and indeed beyond academia. The implicit is under massive threat in our society. This is a chief theme of Iain McGilchrist’s remarkable book, *The Master and His Emissary*. McGilchrist contends that the left hemisphere of the brain, which he argues is culturally dominant today, is persistently suspicious of whatever is not explicit or at least—explicitly!—open to being made explicit.³ Neil Gascoigne and Tim Thornton begin their book *Tacit Knowledge* by helpfully connecting the philosophical issue they are exploring directly to the troubling ideological dominance of “evidence-based medicine” (EBM) in medicine today,⁴ a model now being copied in other fields.⁵ EBM systematically negates clinical judgment and other aspects of medical practice that are not supported by explicit, quantifiable evidence.⁶ The dominance of the explicit in our civilization is perhaps most neatly symbolized by the avalanche of what is called explicit pornography, which is arguably transforming not just sexual expression but sexuality itself—and not,

on balance, for the better.⁷ The fetish for the explicit risks little less than the death of beauty and love.

However, I will claim that there is a risk of misfiring in the *defenses* of the tacit mounted by some of those whom I have so far mentioned positively, and certainly by others. There is a risk that in defending tacit knowledge one latently turns it into *a version of its opposite*. This risk is arguably an instance of (or at minimum an analog to) a central problem identified by us resolute readers of Wittgenstein: that the straight defense of the ineffable latently turns it into something effable or potentially effable.⁸ The ineffable is thus, ironically, rendered *not different enough* from the effable—by virtue, precisely, of being rendered.

The phenomenon of not being or making different enough is a central theme of the *Investigations*, albeit one that is insufficiently understood or appreciated by readers of Wittgenstein. This theme manifests in Wittgenstein's resistance to scientism, and (more generally) his rejection of the tendency to overgeneralization, which he finds endemic to philosophical temptation and delusion. This relates, of course, to the "motto" of the *Investigations*: "I'll teach you differences!"⁹ Here is my personal favorite instance of this motto in action:

One might say "Thinking is an incorporeal process" . . . if one were using this to distinguish the grammar of the word "think" from that of, say, the word "eat." Only that makes the difference between the meanings look *too slight*. (It is like saying: numerals are actual, and numbers non-actual, objects.) (PI 339)¹⁰

Remarks such as this help us to see, moreover, that there is (or should be) no dogmatism in this study of differences. It should thus help us to rediscover our freedom of thought, to *retrieve* it from the appeal of oversimplifications that ensnare us. One might even put it like this: There is no *fact* of the matter about these differences. Thus, these differences—and our attention to them—preserve (and indeed enhance) our freedom in philosophy. We do not force our interlocutor to acknowledge a factual difference; we seek to persuade her to see the *importance* of a difference for certain purposes. In this way I am following the late work of Gordon Baker, who follows Friedrich Waismann (and Wittgenstein) in emphasizing this way of taking and growing freedom.¹¹

I will suggest in this essay that the desire to explicitize the implicit or tacit is *not* a desire best countered simply by a defense of know-how as an independent category of knowledge. On the contrary, as I have already hinted, we ought rather to open the question of *whether* know-how is best understood as a *kind* of knowledge. Even insofar as it *is*, we ought (roughly speaking) seriously consider the possibility of *inverting* what has become, with the rise of intellectualism, a supposed preeminence of

knowledge-that over knowledge-how (and here I will draw on Austinian philosophy, broadly construed). Certainly, we ought to question the alleged preeminence of knowledge-that over knowing-how. In these regards, I am relatively close to Ryle, but with the significant proviso that my methodological aims are very different because I seek to avoid giving an *account* of know-how, to avoid enunciating any alleged general truth, and because I aim to be more hesitant and humble than is the norm on *either* side in this debate, including his.

3. A Note on Ordinary Language

What will be my methodology in the remainder of this essay? I aspire to learn from ordinary language, from *what we (would) say* on given occasions. But I aspire to do so in nothing like the way a scientifically minded sociologist or linguist might. What then *do* I aspire to do? Let me illustrate.

Consider PI 524 in this context—specifically, I ask you to think of it as including a self-reflexive comment on Wittgenstein’s own peculiar pictures and fictitious narratives:

Don’t take it as a matter of course, but as a remarkable fact, that pictures and fictitious narratives give us pleasure, occupy our minds.

(“Don’t take it as a matter of course” means: find it surprising, as you do some things which disturb you. *Then the puzzling aspect of the latter will disappear, by your accepting this fact as you do the other.*)

(The transition from patent nonsense to something which is disguised nonsense.) (PI 524; emphasis added)

Here, Wittgenstein offers a friendly, expository comment on something like the creative technique in sociology that Kenneth Burke and his followers call “perspective by incongruity.”¹² One can be made to see something so close that one normally misses it by means of inhabiting an “alien” perspective through which it *becomes* visible. In Wittgenstein’s case, as Cavell, Conant, Cerbone, and Crary have taught us with regard to Wittgenstein’s “woodsellers,” this is achieved (quite often) by the temporary inhabitation of imaginary scenarios.¹³ We need to find a perspective from which we can see our enjoyment and use of these imaginary scenarios as surprising—for then we can reinhabit, with something that was implicit now having become more visible to us, the perspective that was natural to us (possibly, too natural). And this may enable us to accept things that otherwise we might struggle to accept (e.g., that it is possible to obey an order without first imagining something). But still, these scenarios may be casting a spell on us, as they often disguise nonsense. We need to exercise ongoing vigilance.

Already then, I think we can say that Wittgenstein's use of peculiar imaginary scenarios makes manifest how Wittgensteinian thinking is not a limited and limiting quasi-sociolinguistics. This is one reason why we New Wittgensteinians/resolute readers have so strongly emphasized these scenarios. These scenarios enable us to resume our ordinary language via a breaching of the limits of sense, which enables us to decide for ourselves where those limits lie in (our) practice. In this way, these scenarios inherently stand at the base of a creative exercise that involves temporarily using or appearing to use words in peculiar or novel ways. We then re-reach ordinary language *by way of* exceeding it.

In what follows, I will not exploit any of Wittgenstein's imaginary scenarios directly, nor will I add any of my own. But I think we can learn a vital lesson from them for our purposes here—a lesson on *how we can come to see the limits of sense by breaching them*; a lesson on a certain tenable way of revealing something worth calling "implicit." This is a lesson we learn by entertaining a certain 'deviant' use of language rather than by tabulating ordinary usages or anything like that.

The main way I shall exploit that thought in what follows is by noting carefully—as best and as much as I am able, following the example of the likes of Wittgenstein, Frank Ebersole, and Austin—how easy it is, without one's even noticing, for one's uses of terms like "knowledge-that" or "tacit knowledge" to stretch further than they can stretch without deforming or breaking.

Austin wants to record and to have us reflect upon how people use language ordinarily—for a particular, philosophical, purpose. He does not proceed by claiming that philosophers utter nonsense if they do not use language as we ordinarily do. He wants to ask of philosophers, and *put* to philosophers, roughly this: Do you have any good *reason*—reason that on reflection you endorse—to use language in the way you (seek to) do?¹⁴ It is this kind of question that puts the power back in the hands of the speaker, and in the hands of the speaker's co-conversationalist. If we are seeking to understand what they are saying, then their consent to our interpretation is normally necessary. This ensures the existence of real dialogue in philosophy, rather than a tyranny or policing based on theory. For this move can potentially bring a would-be philosophical claim back into the realm of the ordinary; it gives the philosopher a chance to save what they want to say (as one might parse it: saving the linguistic appearances) by recontextualizing or clarifying it. This move makes paramount *mutual* understanding—actual communication about what it is that someone wants to say and why.

In what follows, I draw upon these Wittgensteinian and Austinian practices,¹⁵ to revisit affirmatively and yet critically Ryle's epochal vision of know-how.

4. Should We Reduce Knowledge-That to Know-How?: An Austinian Reason for Thinking Perhaps So

The “intellectualists” (Timothy Williamson and his followers) aim to reduce know-how to knowledge-that.¹⁶ They run the risk of seriously bloating the use of terms such as “know that.” We can see what I mean here if we examine this acute remark of Wittgenstein’s:

If I say: “I know there is someone in the room” and it turns out that I have made a mistake, then I didn’t *know* it—have I made a mistake in introspecting my state of mind then? I looked inside and took something to be a *knowing*, when it wasn’t?—Or can’t I *really* know something like that, but only such facts as: “I see something red,” “I am in pain,” and the like. That is, we are supposed to *use the word “know” only in situations where nobody does use it*; in other words, where “I know that p” means nothing, unless it perhaps means the same as “p,” and the expression “I don’t know that p” is nonsense.

Whatever you do, don’t look at the actual use of the words “I know. . .,” just look at the words and speculate what might be a fitting use for them.¹⁷

Given this observation of Wittgenstein’s, we can in a sense go further than I have so far threatened to: if we *are* to think about the kinship between knowledge-that and know-how, and *if* we are to risk thinking of know-how as in some way a kind of knowledge, then is there not a pretty strong case for thinking of knowledge-that as reducible to know-how (of knowledge-that as supervenient on know-how) rather than vice versa? Once we note the tendency of virtually all real uses of the term “know” (as opposed to philosophers’ idle speculations about uses) to be in situations of “repair” or the like¹⁸—situations where a problem or lack has emerged and needs verbally mending or filling out, situations where there is a need to vouchsafe some kind of *ability*—and once we recontextualize knowledge claims within their real place(s) in our lives, then we can start to see this strong case. This case is expressed already in the marvelous passage from Wittgenstein’s lectures on causation, knowledge, and intuition that I just quoted. This passage suggests that looking at the kinds of occasions when we actually use expressions such as “I know” will help avoid the mismove almost surely involved if one ends up using the word “know” with regard to situations where it is not normally used, using the word bloatedly, purely technically.

The case can be helped by thinking of the possible relevance of Austin here in his epochal challenge in *How to Do Things with Words* to the dogmatically assumed primacy of the proposition or statement, of the constative, of the “that.”¹⁹ Austin showed us that there is a neglected but key sense in which a statement is just one kind of speech act, one

kind of thing (action) that we *do* with words.²⁰ Similarly, and generally speaking, is it not getting things the wrong way around to cast knowledge-that as prior to know-how—especially if we insist that this is how it must be? Might the latter not be said if anything to be the *more* fundamental category? But then we should ask: fundamental in what sense and for what purpose?

Here, I think, is the core of an answer: Know-how is less linguistic and more directly tied to action. One key feature of this is that these aspects of know-how can help us avoid the problems that feed on seeing knowledge-that as dominant (e.g., the giving of a foothold to skeptical doubts about existence of the “external world” or other minds). Know-how is of special import to philosophy chiefly because we have an almost built-in tendency in philosophical thinking and theorizing to undervalue it, and in particular to miss the things it can do for us. This tendency is built in because philosophers are so good at analysis; we live off it. Philosophy is closer temperamentally to thinking and constating than to doing. Philosophy, especially in the mainstream of the Anglo-American tradition, tends to yield a “that” more than a “how.”

Knowledge-that claims are not some kind of magically prior set of paradigm examples of knowledge; on the contrary, they are better seen, as Austin would have us see them, as simply one kind of thing that we *do* with words, concepts, etc. Knowledge-that claims are not isolated atoms connected with facts; they are better seen as situated doings, performed for a reason, as part of a broader set of activities. Knowledge-that claims should then arguably be seen as, if anything, a subclass of the various forms of know-how that we exhibit. One advantage of this conception, which is open to us, is that it may help us to avoid becoming entrapped by certain culturally influential and problematic prejudices regarding the alleged predominance of knowledge-that.

We might schematize as follows:

Statements-that < A broader class of practices of speaking, of speech acts.

Knowledge-that < A broader class of practices of knowledge, of know-how.

It is worth adding here that one need not, of course, stick just to Austin and Wittgenstein in making the kind of move that I am making in this section. Further support for the vein of thought that has been the mainstay in the present section could be found in the work of Heideggerians, such as Hubert Dreyfus and Stuart Dreyfus—for instance, in the lovely exposition of their conception of expertise as irreducible to theory given in Bent Flyvbjerg’s book *Making Social Science Matter*²¹—and in Merleau-Ponty (who is also, of course, an invaluable source for thinking about

the vital bodily comportment aspect of know-how).²² In short: support for the conception of know-how I have been outlining here can be found in the best of phenomenology, to which Wittgenstein—and arguably Austin, too—are very much allies.

5. Two Cheers for Ryle

There is, of course, a much more obvious place to look for support for what I have argued in the previous section: Ryle. In “Knowing How and Knowing That,” Ryle develops an argument—his “regress” argument—that has *roughly* the consequence outlined in the previous section.²³ Why then have I not simply relied on Ryle? The reason is that Ryle’s presentation, for all its fame and brilliance, is in certain respects dogmatic, unliberatory. Ryle insists that knowing-how *is*, always and everywhere, logically prior to knowing-that. He insists that we *must* reduce knowing-that to knowing-how. By contrast, I suggested only a *case* for doing so in the context of the prejudices of intellectualists—a *sense* in which it is helpful and freeing (from the *déformation professionnelle* of philosophers) to do so.

Ryle’s tendency toward dogmatism is repeatedly apparent in his work, and especially in “Knowing How and Knowing That.” Here are a couple of examples from that essay that are perhaps not immediately obvious. First, he claims that “we cannot call an imperative a truth or falsehood. The Moral Law refuses to behave like a fact” (KHKT 231). But this can be questioned. We *can* call an imperative a truth or falsehood; we *do*, sometimes. The Wittgensteinian point would be the following: Doing so does not make it simply a fact and no longer an imperative.

Here’s a second example: “To know a truth, I must have discovered or established it” (KHKT 234). I know that Theresa May is Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.²⁴ But did I *discover* it? Did I *establish* it? I think it would be a gross exaggeration, a potentially tyrannical forcing, to insist that I *must* have done so. And it is by means of such an insistence that Ryle aims to establish the rule, the hegemony, of knowing-how, for he goes on thus:

But discovering and establishing are intelligent operations, requiring rules of method, checks, tests, criteria, etc. A scientist or an historian is primarily a man who knows how to decide certain sorts of questions. (Ibid.)

The slippage from knowing a—any—truth to the figure of the scientist or historian is perhaps revealing of, dare one say it, a kind of *intellectualism* in Ryle, too. It is perhaps revealing, that is, of an overemphasis on procedures, formal methods, or practices that are actually dependent upon

other, more basic ways of doing and knowing; it is a tendency, therefore, to overgeneralization (the very fault above all criticized by Wittgenstein), an all-too-easy sliding into the ambit of the academic (in the pejorative sense of that word), and thus a failure to see that it is perfectly reasonable in many circumstances to see instances of knowledge-that as *not* in need of any undergirding by or reduction to knowing-how. Ryle goes too far. While accepting the broad direction of his regress argument (as in effect I suggested in the previous section one ought to), we should nevertheless seek some kind of accommodation between knowing-how and knowledge-that, between the desire to speak like a Ryle and the desire to speak like a Williamson. But that accommodation is not to be found in a would-be theoretical synthesis. It is to be found in what I call the liberatory perspective that works through and demystifies the dogmas and theories that arise in this terrain.

A clue to what went wrong in these two examples from Ryle—not at all a knock-down argument, but a useful clue—is the presence of “cannot” in the wording of the first quotation and of “must” in the second. These are *prima facie* indicators of the *need* (unmet in Ryle’s own work) for Wittgensteinian *liberation*, the need for a check to prevent the reign of dogmatic assumptions.

Daring to think of knowing-how as the prior category is, I have suggested, anti-entrapping. Insisting on knowing-that as being the prior category is unattractive, unparadisiacal, once one is open to the alternatives. But the regress argument as Ryle gave it, insisting on the priority of knowing-how always and everywhere, would be re-entrapping—merely a mirror of the very dogma that it rightly threw into question.

That said, this paper remains very much a defense of Ryle overall. For, to be fair to Ryle, we should note that in most of his papers about thinking and doing a key stress falls on a point about conceptual mastery that is very close to Wittgenstein’s thinking concerning rule-following. Ryle returns again and again to the idea that in order to mobilize the kinds of concepts one uses, say, in a knowledge-claim, one needs to have cultivated a set of practical propensities.²⁵ Thus, to return to my example from above: It is an exaggeration, a dogmatic move, to insist that I must have *discovered* or *established* the item of knowledge that Theresa May is the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. However, it is reasonable to note that, in order to be capable of such knowledge, I need to be capable of things such as trusting in epistemic authority—specifically, of listening to the radio and making sense of what I hear, and so forth. And these capacities are the results of earlier trainings and acculturations issuing in cognitive possibilities. They are, roughly, ways of knowing *how*.

Thus understood, Ryle would see knowing-that as essentially tied to knowing-how, but in a slightly different sense than I interrogated above. His point would be that there is a dimension of practicality (of knowing-how) that is transcendently immanent to all knowing-that. This is rather harder to hear as a sort of residue of intellectualism in Ryle than the sense of that residue that I identified above.²⁶

6. A Wittgensteinian Way with Tacit Knowledge

It might be thought that the best way to sum all this up is through the influential notion of tacit knowledge. It might be thought, that is, that the concept of tacit knowledge will help us understand what is distinct, and in many contexts fundamental or prior, about know-how. Someone thinking this might take inspiration from the following remark of Wittgenstein's:

Compare *knowing* and *saying*:

how many meters high Mont Blanc is

how the word "game" is used

how a clarinet sounds.

Someone who is surprised that one can know something and not be able to say it is perhaps thinking of a case like the first. Certainly not of one like the third. (PI 78)

But I think that it would be a misreading of this remark to think that the second or third examples here must be theorized under the banner of tacit knowledge. Although I can certainly see the appeal of saying some such thing, and I have already mentioned the importance of defending the tacit against the hegemony of the explicit,²⁷ I do not think that a doctrine of tacit knowledge succeeds in capturing the phenomena here. Let me explain why, and why I think an ordinary language perspective along the lines indicated earlier is already enough.

The notion of tacit knowledge can be employed in three ways. The first way involves highlighting how often unacknowledged, context-specific, non-generalizable particulars (of the kind so often brilliantly stressed by Austin and Travis) along with background- and framing-factors are epistemologically significant. *This* way of thinking about what is called tacit knowledge ties it back, as above, into taking seriously human embodiment—not abstracting away from the body into culturalist fantasies or into an excessive intellectualist, or first-generation, cognitive science. I have no objection to using the term "tacit knowledge" in this way;²⁸ on the contrary, it can be useful. It is a way of directing our attention to a sometimes-neglected aspect of our ordinary, quotidian existence.

A second way is simply to speak of knowledge that is *temporarily* non-explicit, which is then made explicit. For example, this way hap-

pens when one identifies a premise that was previously tacitly assumed in an argument. This common or garden-variety way of using the concept is important though harmless since it yields nothing of substantive philosophical consequence. It can be handled basically as Williamson and other intellectualists would handle it: as knowledge-that in disguise.

A third way that the notion of tacit knowledge is used is as a kind of attempted radicalization of the second way. The way this is sometimes invoked is by gesturing at the putatively ineffable, which can then seem reminiscent of something tacitly present (in the second sense). Here, we might invoke Donald Rumsfeld's potentially helpful typology of "known knowns . . . known unknowns . . . and unknown unknowns."²⁹ On this model, tacit knowledge is the unmentioned fourth possibility implicit in Rumsfeld's typology: that of *unknown knowns*—things one (allegedly) knows without being aware that one knows them, or at least without being aware how one knows them, or of what exactly one knows. It is indeed useful to consider that there can be things one knows without knowing that one knows them; this can be the case with regard to the class that I just labeled the "second way." But, the central, problematic paradox of this version of tacit knowledge is ironically that it (tacitly) figures tacit knowledge as exactly the same as ordinary knowledge, except that it is tacit.³⁰ Tacit knowledge is in effect then said to be exactly the same in every way as standard cases of knowledge—except that it is ineffable, or inaccessible, tacit. The danger, then, is that *we lose what we wanted to be distinctive* about the concept of tacit knowledge. We then have inconsistent desires in relation to our words.

This last—unfortunately, very widespread, virtually standard—way of employing the notion of tacit knowledge is to be treated with suspicion. The reason is that it trades in a sort of mysticism, whereby we can gesture at something, claim to know *of* it, and demand that it be acknowledged by our interlocutors as just as good as all the other knowledge that they already acknowledge, while at the same time claiming it to be inarticulable and constitutively unable to take its place alongside the standardly cited evidential data.³¹ There is a danger, in other words, that the notion of tacit knowledge taken in this way demonstrates insufficient *confidence* on the part of its advocates, who want to try to achieve the same level of epistemological quality *already granted* to putatively standard knowledge claims, to knowledge-that. But this already concedes *too much*; it tacitly concedes that knowledge-that is the master category.

There is a decided risk with a term like "knowledge" of assimilating all cases of it together into one, and of effecting such an assimilation in the worst direction possible. For example, there is a risk of setting up a category of the tacit that tacitly figures it as just the same kind of thing

as the thing it was set up to be different from.³² There may well be circumstances in which we can and would say that we know ourselves to be (for example) ashamed, but it is to be led astray by the surface grammar—superficial similarities—to think that the use of the word “know” picks out the same class of knowledge-claim in each of the following examples: “I know that I am ashamed, because I can see the flushing hue of my skin in the mirror”; “I know who is going to win the prize; I’ve worked it out from the pattern of previous prize-givings”; “Yes, I know John has a melanoma; the doctor has already told me” (or, “. . . because I went to medical school”); and “I know my mother is sad today from the manner in which she’s moving around.” So far, this is, of course, only a provisional sketch of some examples.³³ A serious consideration of the knowledge-claims involved here would have, once more, to give more serious attention to *context*, and develop more detailed exemplifications.

Take the following literary example, which suggests just how different some uses of the word “know” or “knowledge” are from the standard epistemological paradigm that tends to structure the standard (i.e., what I called above the “third”) way of understanding “tacit knowledge” such that it has philosophical consequence. This is the climactic moment in Thomas Harris’ bestselling book (which was then made into the first, and so far only, horror film to have won the Best Picture Oscar), *The Silence of the Lambs*, when Special Agent Clarice Starling and the suspect Jame Gumb finally realize that each of them knows *who the other is*:

As he put the card on the table, the [Death’s Head] moth flew. It came from behind him, past his head and lit between them, on a cabinet above the sink.

He looked at it. When she didn’t look at it, when her eyes never left his face, he knew. Their eyes met and they knew each other.³⁴

They *knew each other*. They somehow saw deeply into each other’s soul. They knew each other in a way that is disturbing, with the slightest uncomfortable edge of something like carnality perhaps; they knew who the other was (to them) and also what would now surely start to happen (the final, deadly chase of the story). To say, “he suddenly knew that she knew that he was the serial killer,” barely begins to capture what at that moment they, together, knew. Starling knows that Jame Gumb is Buffalo Bill, the serial killer whom she is hunting, because she has gone so far beyond standard methods of investigating a killer and become intimate by proxy with him, which she now realizes. *The Silence of the Lambs* is all about the way in which real knowledge, real detective work, goes far beyond the crude stereotypes summed up in training manuals, or that which can be theorized and turned into “data,” “evidence,” and simple, publicly available facts. Harris is essentially

interested, that is to say, in how expertise cannot be reduced to knowledge-that. In that connection, and for the purposes of this essay, I take him to be an intellectual ally.

Now, the proponent of knowledge-that will probably object that this quotation from Harris' remarkable novel is not directly relevant, in that it is allegedly a case of (some version of) objectual knowledge or perhaps knowledge by acquaintance. But my point is that, while I have expressly allowed that different occurrences of the words "know" or "knowledge" are typically not *merely* occurrences of an ambiguous term (in the sense, for example, in which "bank" in "commercial bank" has virtually nothing in common with "bank" in "river bank"), and thus we should think carefully about the *connections* between different cases (and all should agree that, obviously, there *is some* such connection between Starling and Buffalo Bill coming to know each other and two people coming to know each other's identities), we should also (as Wittgenstein would have us do) pay proper attention to the differences. In particular, it is profoundly misleading to think that all these different cases might *reduce* to knowledge-that. My point, in other words, is that it is no more plausible to say that know-how reduces to knowledge-that than it is to say that knowledge by acquaintance (at least, in the fascinating kind of case depicted by Harris) reduces to knowledge-that. This is not, however, due to any kind of mysticism of know-how. It is rather because, in ways that as philosophers of ordinary language we can figure out, there are genuinely diverse uses of the word "know."

So, where do we find ourselves with respect to tacit knowledge after the discussion in this section so far? We might put it as follows: an epistemologically respectable conception of tacit knowledge is one according to which "tacit" does not denote an essential property of any "data," but rather denotes the nature of some relevant "data" *in a specific context*.³⁵ Such "data" might be tacit because it is particular to some of the participants, to the context, part of the backdrop for the scene or that which frames the scene and thus *frames* the non-tacit/explicit data. Such framing can be made explicit, but only at the price of creating a further frame that itself will then be tacit, as in the second way of taking tacit knowledge set out above. (Much as a scientific paradigm in Kuhn's sense of that word typically remains implicit unless and until it becomes controversial, contested, in a situation where it can no longer be taken for granted as a trusted frame for action.³⁶)

In short, any attempt to employ the notion of tacit knowledge to denote some intrinsically mysterious kind of knowledge (as in the third way outlined above) *ipso facto* fails to give adequate sense to one's claim. To engage in such attempts is to be a mystery-monger. There is nothing intrinsically mysterious or necessarily inaccessible about tacit

knowledge, though there *is* an important difference between the various cases of what generally gets called tacit knowledge, on the one hand, and ordinary cases of explicit knowledge, on the other. It is important to respect this difference. It is important to be alive, for instance, to what it actually is to know oneself, or one's mother, or to know a lover, or truly to know your enemy,³⁷ or to know string theory, to know that rape is wrong, as contrasted with what it is to know a set of straightforwardly stateable *facts*. It is important to know how very different these things are. Tacit knowledge claims that are consequential (i.e., that are not just of the second type in my typology above) typically involve something like one or more of the former. But what sometimes occurs in the hands of a mystery-mongering invoker of tacit knowledge is the figuring of such claims as if they involved only straightforwardly stateable facts, *but* with those facts being hidden away somewhere (most often, the mind, though sometimes the body) that makes those 'facts' inaccessible. This is what can give tacit knowledge its air of pseudo-mystery, and makes it—famously, in the hands of Michael Polanyi—more or less a self-contradictory concept, a gateway to confusion, and sometimes maybe even willful obfuscation. What Polanyi is *trying* to bring to one's attention is extremely important, and we should all be grateful to him for this. The way that he actually *does* it, I am saying, is problematic.

Take Polanyi's most famous, founding example: knowing how to ride a bike.³⁸ If I cannot explain how to ride a bike, then what precisely is the point of saying nevertheless that I have tacit knowledge of how to ride a bike?³⁹ Of course, it would be revisionist and unhelpful to say that it is wrong to talk about people knowing how to ride bikes if they cannot explain how to do so. In this regard, recall my discussion above of cases, of which there are many, in which there does not seem to be *any such thing* as making know-how explicit. But what we can now see and say more clearly is that, insofar as know-how *is* genuinely know-how, then it is (or at least, certainly can be) deeply other than knowledge-that. (As an aside: We should distinguish between "I am capable of riding a bike" and "I know how one rides a bike," for the latter in depth grammatical terms may be close to being a knowledge-that claim, since it need not imply that the speaker can actually ride a bike! It might well just be a way of saying that one has knowledge of what it is that one needs to do to ride a bike, but that one is incapable—for one of many possible reasons—of doing so oneself.)

This point concerning the importance and difference of know-how is beautifully developed by Wittgenstein, originally in his *Tractatus* and then in later work.⁴⁰ The "ineffable" truths allegedly communicated by the *Tractatus*, Michael Kremer suggests, are better condensed or dis-

solved into *ways of doing something with the text*, or perhaps as ways of coming to know oneself and one's tendencies to mire oneself in nonsense.⁴¹ The *Tractatus*, read resolutely, does not yield ineffable truths. The intellectual disaster that is the doctrine of ineffabilism is precisely a disaster of seeking to cast something as simultaneously truth-like or fact-like *and* unstateable. It is a disaster—from a resolute perspective, a nonsense—directly akin to the notion of tacit knowledge as standardly taken in philosophy (i.e., according to the “third way” set out above). The endless temptation—which is explicit and extreme in intellectualism (but often—tacitly—present, I am saying, elsewhere too)—is to turn everything into theories, into statements, or into propositions, everything into something that has a form with which we (philosophers) feel comfortable—and then hide it in the mind or in the body or in some third realm (my point is that *hiding it in one of these places is no better than hiding it in another*). Learning how to read the *Tractatus*—a painful process—is learning how to do something with its words; it is learning a new kind of skill, which one does not much *want* to learn. And this is true of all properly Wittgensteinian philosophy and of all of Wittgenstein's great writing throughout his career. Once again: *Expertise* is not anything like some tacit set of propositions.

Most philosophers have failed to understand that, insofar as know-how really *is* know-how, as I have argued, it can only be assimilated to knowledge-that at the cost of misleading conceptual deformation. Talk of tacit knowledge is typically *itself* (tacitly!) just such a deformation. The endless temptation is to turn our practical abilities into something that can be stated—even if, paradoxically, one then blocks the actual statement by claiming that that which can be stated is something unconscious or tacit—i.e., something that cannot be stated. And one talks then about what it would be to state it if one could state it. The endless temptation to fall away from the insight that human beings have practical abilities that are not exhausted through propositional stating alone, whether explicit or tacit, is overcome by Wittgenstein⁴² and by certain ethnomethodologists (about whom I will say more below). But it tends to be indulged in by Polanyi and by Polanyians. Once more, the theory of tacit knowledge does not do what Wittgenstein urges in his motto for the *Investigations*: it does not make so-called tacit knowledge *different* enough from our paradigm cases of knowledge. Such tacit knowledge is—tacitly—a form of knowledge-that. However, what Polanyi was (somewhat inchoately) grasping for, reaching toward, was, *rightly*, something else: our taken-for-granted practical abilities to *do* things.

The kind of non-scientistic orientation to our normal social mastery, which can be traced back to Wittgenstein and Harold Garfinkel, is of course foundational to what I am doing here. Moreover, as Wittgenstein

points out (e.g., PI 203–39), and as Garfinkel frequently observes,⁴³ what gets made explicit when rule-following abilities, for example, are verbalized is often “something” that had *no determinate content* prior to its elicitation (see also PI 71–88).⁴⁴ This makes the terms “explicitate” and “tacit knowledge” misleading, to say the least. A practical ability, when brought to focal attention and put into words, may require a kind of account or description that was never required before and whose content, therefore, cannot reasonably be claimed to have necessarily preexisted the verbalization.

The notion of tacit knowledge is typically very well-intentioned, and it *can* be used (in what I called at the start of this section the “first way” or the “second way”) harmlessly and indeed helpfully. The project of forcing all tacit knowledge to become explicit knowledge on pain of otherwise being delegitimated is a dogmatic, anti-liberatory one, one (more or less tacitly) modeled broadly on the (failed) model of logical positivism. But, there is also something unsatisfactory about most defenses and articulations of tacit knowledge, insofar as they incline to something mysterious, something with more consequences, something along the lines of what I called the “third way.” And this may well reveal a virtually inevitable lacuna concerning the concept, a trap that we as philosophers seemingly can hardly fail to fall into, which, in Wittgenstein’s sense, fails to make different enough, fails to teach differences.⁴⁵ The non-temporarily tacit had best stay (truly) tacit; it will not necessarily be at all well framed as *knowledge*. In the end, the question vis-à-vis alleged tacit knowledge is this: If it is really *knowledge* in the ordinary sense of that word, how could it be truly *tacit*? And if it is truly tacit, how could it really be *knowledge* (in the ordinary sense of that word)?⁴⁶

7. Conclusions

Knowingness (and its related forms of traceability and quantifiability, which are now entrenched scientific tendencies) is a disease of our civilization, preventing it from having any chance of becoming a culture.⁴⁷ The desire to create a new monoculture of knowledge-that, and the concomitant desire to make everything explicit, radically constrains us, narrowing our diet of examples by eliminating possibilities. These desires constrain our field of view, and we thereby underrecognize and undervalue that which does not fit our culturally desired (scientific) model of knowing. We badly need to be freed from these intellectual dis-eases.

But the real opponent of the fetish for the explicit is not, in the end, the tacit or the implicit. For these can too easily seem, as it were, to be merely waiting to be made explicit (at least, that is how they inevitably appear in rhetorical terms, and they thus fail to stem the tide of explicitation). The real alternative—one that is different enough—is the rich,

the self-subsistent, the *unparaphrasable*.⁴⁸

I have not asserted that know-how is not knowledge. But the automaticity of the assumption that it *is*—i.e., that it *must* be—has been a critical target for me here. Any such automatic leap runs against the fundamental desire in Wittgensteinian philosophy to *free*.

Does my talk of freedom and liberation summon up the specter of (say) Kripke on rule-following?⁴⁹ Does it result in a license where anything goes? No. Rather, we should bear in mind what Wittgenstein says when confronted with a similar challenge:

Should it be said that I am using a word whose meaning I don't know, and so am talking nonsense?—Say what you choose, so long as it does not prevent you from seeing the situation [*wie es sich verhält*]. (And when you see it [*du das siehst*], there is a good deal that you will not say). (PI 79; trans. mod.)

When we actually pay attention to the situation—including, of course, the context for any epistemological move, the context that gives it sense⁵⁰—the situation will (as it were) teach us what to say of it. When philosophy works, you are freed, but only from nonsense, *not* from anything you would genuinely on reflection like or need to do or say in some real situation.

The aim of philosophy in this sense is not the marshaling of facts for the sake of justifying a theory; the aim is simply to do sufficient justice to the nuances of the *various* things we call knowing, to the rich diet of uses of “know” that a healthy, civilized practice of language encourages, so as to be able to resolve problems connected with any tacitly biased perspective.

As suggested earlier, one reason that this matters within philosophy is that, while philosophers tend to give accounts of knowledge for multiple reasons, the challenge of skepticism is a central one. The overreliance on propositional knowledge is part of what drives a picture according to which an absence of explicit justification is thought to open a door to doubt. Giving primacy to knowledge-that feeds skepticism, for it encourages the (delusive and self-defeating) feeling that somehow there *must* always be a further propositional justification available. This essay (I hope) helps us to see—as I think Ryle saw when he sought to frame his regress argument—that the way that intellectualism wheels in a supposed solution therefore actually continues or worsens the problem. By contrast, the kind of attention to ordinary language that I hope to have essayed here helps us move past that putative solution by addressing the root bias that leads to its being offered in the first place—without, in a reactionary or revisionist way, over-balancing into a rival theoretical would-be solution, nor proposing a supposedly different solution that is actually just knowledge-that-ism in disguise.

I have suggested in this essay that we shouldn't always make the seemingly obvious or essential move from "know" to knowledge, *whether in an intellectualist or even a Rylean way*. The odd-soundingness of "knowledge-how" should serve as a helpful warning note for us here. (I think it repays attention to reflect on how the mainstream philosophical debate has been between *know-how* and *knowledge-that*. There is a telling mismatch between the terms, a mismatch telling us something about how our ordinary language *works* [and it normally does work].)

Thus, well-intentioned though it is, I feel that the notion of tacit knowledge is frequently, ultimately playing the role of nothing more than a distraction. One would usually be better served by talking about all the different ways in which we gain or manifest knowledge (and other things) and the different ways in which the word "knowledge" is employed to express radically *different kinds of knowing*. But this might, as I have said, equally or even better be expressed by not talking of kinds of knowing, let alone of knowledge *at all*. If we *are* to assimilate different kinds of knowing, then I have followed Ryle at least in suggesting that we would probably be considerably better off assimilating knowledge-that to know(ing)-how, rather than vice versa—if those are the only choices. But perhaps we would be better off still if we were just to learn differences.

NOTES:

Many thanks for comments on earlier drafts of this material to Ryan Dawson (especially), Lars Hertzberg, Phil Hutchinson, Tim Thornton, and the Editors of this special issue.

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and Rush Rhees (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), §323; henceforth PI, followed by section number.
2. Michel Henry, *Barbarism*, trans. Scott Davidson (London: Continuum, 2012), pp. 11–2. Merleau-Ponty also brilliantly resisted this privileging, arguing that science is an outgrowth of—or is parasitic on—life, and cannot intelligibly be regarded as superordinate to it. This is a central part of his critique of what he called "objective thought" (see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes [New York: Routledge, 2012], esp. pp. lxx–i, 59, 74, 97).
3. See Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), esp. pp. 51, 71–3, 155–7, 174–84, 399.

4. Neil Gascoigne and Tim Thornton, *Tacit Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 1–2. Here, Gascoigne and Thornton also helpfully note that Max Weber, anticipating Ryle, called this very process of would-be mastery through calculability “intellectualization” (see Max Weber, *Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. H.H. Girth and C. Wright Mills [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946], p. 139). On the closing page of their book, Gascoigne and Thornton question the way that “explicit codification is increasingly taken to be the norm” in our culture (Gascoigne and Thornton, *Tacit Knowledge*, p. 192).
5. I am thinking here for instance of evidence-based politics and evidence-based educational theory. An excellent critique of the pretensions of the latter can be found in Martyn Hammersley, *The Myth of Research-Based Policy and Practice* (London: Sage, 2013). I outline a critique of the former in Rupert Read, “The Tyranny of Evidence,” July 17, 2017, in *Philosophy for Our Times*, podcast, MP3 audio, 21:07, <https://player.fm/series/philosophy-for-our-times/e103-the-tyranny-of-evidence-rupert-read> (accessed August 26, 2018).
6. With Phil Hutchinson, I have written on how one might seek an alternative to EBM that is not hostile to “the tacit” (see Rupert Read and Phil Hutchinson, “De-Mystifying Tacit Knowing and Clues: A Comment on Henry et al.,” *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice* 17:5 [2011], pp. 944–7). See also our essay “Reframing Health Care: Philosophy for Medicine and Human Flourishing,” in *Debates in Values-Based Practice: Arguments For and Against*, ed. Michael Loughlin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 69–84. However, see §6 of this paper for qualification of how we can intelligibly use this notion.
7. See, for example, Carolyn Ross, “Overexposed and Under-Prepared: The Effects of Early Exposure to Sexual Content,” *Psychology Today*, August 13, 2012, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/real-healing/201208/overexposed-and-under-prepared-the-effects-early-exposure-sexual-content> (accessed August 26, 2018). See also National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, “Impact of Exposure to Sexually Explicit and Exploitative Materials,” December 2013, http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications_nsvrc_factsheet_impact-of-exposure-to-sexually-explicit-and-exploitative-materials.pdf (accessed August 26, 2018).
8. Among resolute readers I mean to include, of course, Cora Diamond (in particular, her essay “Throwing Away the Ladder: How to Read the *Tractatus*,” *Philosophy* 63:243 [1988], pp. 5–27), James Conant (in particular, “Throwing Away the Top of the Ladder,” *The Yale Review* 79:3 [1991], pp. 328–64), and myself (see “Throwing Away the Bedrock,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 105:1 [2004], pp. 81–98).
9. Drury reports a private conversation in which Wittgenstein told him that he thought of using this line from *King Lear* (William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, act I, scene 4, line 88) as the “motto” for the *Investigations* (see Maurice O’Connor Drury, “Contribution to a BBC Symposium,” in *The Selected Writings: On Wittgenstein, Philosophy, Religion, and Psychiatry*, ed. John Haynes [London: Bloomsbury, 2017], p. 90).

10. Additionally, PI 571 is also quite wonderful, and PI 194 explores a case in exquisite detail: the profound difference between possibility and actuality, which is endlessly underestimated in philosophy, and sometimes, in some-one like David Lewis, *professionally* so (thinking here of his architecture of possible worlds [see, in particular, *On the Plurality of Worlds* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986)]). There are in fact numerous cases of Wittgenstein seeking to persuade the reader of the importance of differences throughout the *Investigations*. A book could be written—called something like *I'll Teach You Differences!*—that essayed a reading of the *Investigations* on the basis of its “motto.”
11. For Baker's reading, see Gordon Baker, “Wittgenstein: Concepts or Conceptions?,” *The Harvard Philosophy Review* 9 (2001), pp. 7–23, and “Friedrich Waismann: A Vision of Philosophy,” *Philosophy* 78:304 (2003), pp. 163–79. For Waismann's account, see Friedrich Waismann, *How I See Philosophy*, ed. Rom Harré (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1968), esp. pp. 21, 217.
12. Kenneth Burke, *Perspective by Incongruity*, ed. Stanley Edgar Hyman and Barbara Karmiller (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964).
13. See Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 115–7, 124; James Conant, “The Search for Logically Alien Thought: Descartes, Kant, Frege, and the Tractatus,” *Philosophical Topics* 20:1 (1991), pp. 115–80; David R. Cerbone, “Don't Look But Think: Imaginary Scenarios in Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy,” *Inquiry* 37:2 (1994), pp. 159–83, and “How to Do Things with Wood: Wittgenstein, Frege and the Problem of Illogical Thought,” in *The New Wittgenstein*, ed. Alice Crary and Rupert Read (New York: Routledge Press, 2000), pp. 298–308; and Alice Crary, “Wittgenstein's Philosophy in Relation to Political Thought,” in *The New Wittgenstein*, pp. 118–45, esp. 134–8.
14. In this regard, Austin is very like another lesser-known but beautifully subtle exponent of this approach to philosophy, Frank Ebersole (see his *Things We Know: Fifteen Essays on Problems of Knowledge* [Eugene: University of Oregon Books, 1967]).
15. So that my rhetoric and design in the present essay is not misunderstood, it is perhaps worth clarifying that, following Baz and Crary, and to some extent following Travis and Fischer, I regard Austin and Wittgenstein as close intellectual bedfellows (see Avner Baz, *When Words Are Called For: A Defense of Ordinary Language Philosophy* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012], esp. pp. 38–45, and 135–7; Alice Crary, “Objectivity Revisited: A Lesson from the Work of J.L. Austin,” and “Ethics, Inheriting from Wittgenstein,” chaps. 2 and 3 respectively of *Beyond Moral Judgment* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007], pp. 49–126; Charles Travis, *The Uses of Sense: Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989], esp. pp. 362–5; and Eugen Fischer, “Therapeutic Philosophy,” pt. 3 of *Philosophical Delusion and Its Therapy: Outline of a Philosophical Revolution* [New York: Routledge, 2011], pp. 205–76). I interpret Austin at his best as compatible with (a resolute) Wittgenstein. It is profoundly intellectually unfortunate that most, including Austin himself, have

- failed to appreciate this closeness (see P.M.S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1996], p. 308n. 46).
16. See, for example, Jason Stanley and Timothy Williamson, "Knowing How," *The Journal of Philosophy* 98:8 (2001), pp. 411–44. Here they write that they "contest the thesis that there is a fundamental distinction between knowledge-how and knowledge that. Knowledge-how is simply a species of knowledge-that" (p. 441).
 17. Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Cause and Effect: Intuitive Awareness," trans. Peter Winch, ed. Rush Rhees, in *Philosophical Occasions: 1912–1951*, ed. James C. Klagge and Alfred Nordmann (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), p. 391; last emphasis added. As I hope is obvious here, the final sentence of this remark is articulated by Wittgenstein with especially savage irony.
 18. For an explication of this term, see Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp. 29–30. See also Emmanuel A. Schegloff, "Recycled Turn Beginnings: A Precise Repair Mechanism in Conversation's Turn-Taking Organization," in *Talk and Social Organization*, ed. Graham Button and John R.E. Lee (Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1987), pp. 70–85.
 19. See J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), esp. p. 3.
 20. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
 21. See Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, "Five Steps from Novice to Expert," chap. 1 of *Mind over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer* (New York: Free Press, 1986), pp. 16–51, esp. 16–7, 19, and 28; and Bent Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again*, trans. Steven Sampson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 38–43, esp. 42.
 22. See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 431.
 23. Gilbert Ryle, "Knowing How and Knowing That," in *Collected Essays 1929–1968*, vol. 2 of *Collected Papers* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 222–35; henceforth KHK, followed by page number.
 24. Only, to whom am I saying this? And on what occasion? To those who think my method and conclusions extreme, I counter that my method is actually very *concessive*. I am bending over backward to engage with the Ryles—and Williamsons—of this world. In a presentation that was more authentically *my own*, more *fully* Wittgensteinian and liberatory, perhaps less dialogical (only then, ironically, it would turn out, of course, to be *unliberatory*), I would join Ebersole in not even countenancing that one can make generalized remarks about knowing-how or about knowing *at all* (see Ebersole, *Things We Know*, pp. 122, 205–6, 349).
 25. See, for example, Gilbert Ryle, "A Puzzling Element in the Notion of Thinking," and "Teaching and Training," in *Collected Essays*, pp. 404–19 and pp. 464–78, respectively.

26. My thinking here is owed directly to comments by Alice Crary.
27. McGilchrist, for example, repeatedly lodges this defense to good effect, especially in “How the Brain Has Shaped Our World,” pt. 2 of *The Master and His Emissary*, pp. 239–427.
28. I think that this use of tacit knowledge is harmless provided it is used with care and without metaphysical emphasis. See my discussion of mystery-mongering below.
29. Donald H. Rumsfeld, “Department of Defense News Briefing” (The Pentagon, Arlington, Virginia, February 12, 2002). See again Hutchinson and Read, “De-Mystifying Tacit Knowing and Clues,” which supports my argument at this point.
30. In this way, it is reminiscent of problematic models of “the unconscious” that simply assume the unconscious to be a kind of *unconscious conscious* (see PI 149). Or, as we shall see below, it is reminiscent of problematic models of the unsayable that simply assume “the unsayable/ineffable” to be a kind of unsayable sayable—that which *would* be sayable if it could be said (which *ex hypothesi* it cannot be). This approach vis-à-vis knowledge can be traced to Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Toward a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). From a Wittgensteinian perspective, Polanyi’s *personal* knowledge risks becoming what looks like *private* knowledge, in its untellability, its individualism. For a more favorable evaluation of Polanyi’s ineffabilism, see Edward Goldsmith, *The Way: An Ecological World-View* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), pp. 110–3. I think what Polanyi is trying to say is actually something not unlike what I say: that it would be likely to be better to think of know-how, and especially of expertise (see my reference to the work of Dreyfus and Dreyfus), as a *flow* rather than a knowledge. When we are in flow, knowledge is simply not a concept that is to the point. Beyond knowledge, think of the setting-up of the infinite as an infinitely large *number* (Rupert Read, “Metaphysics Is Metaphorics: Philosophical and Ecological Reflections from Wittgenstein and Lakoff on the Pros and Cons of Linguistic Creativity,” in *Wittgenstein and the Creativity of Language*, ed. Sebastian Sunday Grève and Jakub Mácha [London: Palgrave, 2016], pp. 264–97). Or consider the example of pain as an “inner object”; or of the mind as a substance, exactly the same as the body except for being different in every way; or of the “inner realm” as a reflection of “the outer realm” or space, etc., etc. Wittgenstein’s philosophical project could helpfully be described as one of showing how philosophers, in the very act of indicating what they themselves proclaim to be profound differences, do not make what they are talking about different *enough*, do not “teach differences” (see endnote 9 of this essay).
31. My mention of the term “acknowledge” here may bring to mind the crucial paper of Stanley Cavell’s, “Knowing and Acknowledging” (in *Must We Mean What We Say?: A Book of Essays* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], pp. 238–66). Cavell’s argument there that knowing depends upon relationships of acknowledgement is one I would endorse. Acceding to it alters the frame through which one sees cases of tacit knowledge, since Cavell, somewhat like Kuhn, thus figures what is necessary for

knowing to take place and what can add to ordinary cases of knowing as a matter of a different kind to that which is standardly indexed by the term tacit knowledge. Once again: The problem with that term is that it immediately suggests that what is at issue here is clearly a case of knowledge, and thus it implies that that knowledge is of *the same kind* as our ordinary non-tacit knowledge (except that it is, in virtue of being tacit, completely different). But that is exactly what is at issue, exactly what is questionable.

32. My broader contention would be that the central theme of the *Investigations* of the teaching of differences between things we are inclined tacitly to figure as the same is itself preeminently a *liberatory* theme: it enables us to avoid getting stuck in the hall of mirrors of overgeneralization and scientism. In McGilchrist's terms: in such a left-hemisphere hall of mirrors, we are prevented (by ourselves, ultimately) from seeing or even imagining the possibility of the genuinely, radically different (McGilchrist, *The Master and Emissary*, p. 438). This is a tragic self-limitation.
33. For some amplification of my outline, see for example PI 246, which sets out, in stark terms, an ordinary-language-based limit to the (clear and sensical) application of the term "knowledge," a limit that philosophers typically decline to respect, with the consequence that they often overly assimilate supposed self-knowledge to other forms of what we call knowledge.
34. Thomas Harris, *The Silence of the Lambs* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), p. 342.
35. The word "data" may in fact incline to mislead us, as I index in this paper by often putting the word in scare quotes.
36. See Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 47–9. On this point, further analogues could be mentioned. For example, consider Paul de Man's brilliant analysis of blindness as a necessary condition for insight (*Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971]). This might in turn be connected to what I argued in a paper coauthored with James Guetti ("Acting from Rules: Internal Relations versus Logical Existentialism," *International Studies in Philosophy* 28:2 [1996], pp. 43–62). Here, we discuss how one's following the rule "blindly" is, of its essence, actually being able to *act* in a way that is not, as we might put it, *reducible* to the rule. We argue in that paper that rules need to be *presumed*—not fixated upon—in order for action to occur.
37. Again, the whole thrust of Thomas Harris' trilogy is to make clear the troubling consequences that can follow from knowing your enemy: the way in which the protagonists of *Red Dragon* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1981), *The Silence of the Lambs*, and *Hannibal* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1999) have to come to know "from the inside" those they are hunting in order to effectively hunt the rapists and murderers and monsters they seek out. This aspect of his work is perhaps most brilliantly undertaken in *Red Dragon* and in the Michael Mann film thereof, *Manhunter* (1986). The title of the film already expresses the key idea: the detective, too, is a manhunter, inevitably sharing something in common with the man he hunts.

38. Michael Polanyi, "The Logic of Tacit Inference," *Philosophy* 41:155 (1966), pp. 1–18, esp. 4–5.
39. Actually, of course, what Polanyians do not always like to acknowledge is those cases where its being explained to someone how to ride a bike—for example, its being pointed out that tiny (or not so tiny) movements to the right and left of the steering column help to stop the bike from tipping over, especially when the bike is going slowly—actually *do* then help that person to ride a bike better. It can be pretty *misleading* in many cases to say that people cannot explain at all how to ride a bike, cannot verbalize their skill. And this indicates once more a *relation* between knowing how to ride a bike and some knowledge-that.
40. See, for example, Michael Kremer, "Contextualism and Holism in Early Wittgenstein: From *Proto-Tractatus* to *Tractatus*," *Philosophical Topics* 25:2 (1997), pp. 87–120. See also Phil Hutchinson and Rupert Read, "An Elucidatory Interpretation of the *Tractatus*: A Critique of Daniel D. Hutto's and Marie McGinn's Reading of *Tractatus* 6.54," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 14:1 (2006), pp. 1–29.
41. See Kremer, "Contextualism and Holism in Early Wittgenstein," esp. pp. 106–7, for his reading of Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London: Routledge, 1961), §§4.121, 4.1212.
42. See, for instance, Wittgenstein's overcoming of the tendency to ineffabilism in the *Tractatus*, as documented in Cora Diamond, "Ethics, Imagination, and the Method of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*," in *The New Wittgenstein*, pp. 149–73; and James Conant, "Elucidation and Nonsense in Frege and Early Wittgenstein," in *The New Wittgenstein*, pp. 174–217.
43. See Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, pp. 26–31. See also Kuhn's discussion of the content of a paradigm (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, pp. 43, 49, 65, 80, 85, 175).
44. It is decidedly unattractive, on balance, to think that there must be a non-vague content to tacit knowledge states. Insofar as we, on reflection, want to carry on talking about such states at all, as we might with regard for example to the apparent phenomenon of implicit bias (e.g., implicit racism or sexism), by virtue of wanting to talk (say) about someone's supposed tacit "knowledge" of the different capacities of different races, one had better at the very least be clear that such content will be vague in much the same way that Wittgenstein lays out in these sections of the *Investigations*.
45. Consider once again the *Investigations*' "motto" from *King Lear*. Tacit knowledge leaves too much of a sense of a generalization, an assimilation, as if we first knew what *knowledge* was/is and everything thereabouts had to be subsumed in one way or another under the heading of *that*.
46. This point is brought out in some detail in Nigel Pleasants, "Nothing is Concealed: Decentering Tacit Knowledge and Rules from Social Theory," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 26:3 (1996), pp. 233–55, upon whose argument and general position I have somewhat leaned in my thinking here.

47. I am here alluding to Wittgenstein's remark that "perhaps one day this civilization will produce a culture" (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, trans. Peter Winch, ed. G.H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980], p. 64). Knowingness is an intellectual disease manifest in our institutions and how we manage them (where an overreliance on the explicit undermines trust, creativity, and freedom) and across our thinking more generally.
48. I have no space to follow up this thought here, but for a richly developed exploration of this real alternative, see James Guetti, "Language as Such," chap. 2 of *Wittgenstein and the Grammar of Literary Experience* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), pp. 62–89.
49. Saul A. Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).
50. Here, I am thinking of Austin but also, building on him and on Wittgenstein, of contextualism à la Charles Travis and Lars Hertzberg: see Charles Travis, *The Uses of Sense: Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), esp. pp. 151–6, and Lars Hertzberg, "The Sense is Where You Find It," in *Wittgenstein in America*, ed. Timothy McCarthy and Sean C. Stidd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 90–103.