

“I KNOW THAT I HAVE TWO HANDS” — WITTGENSTEIN AND MOORE

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It is the aim of this essay to show how Wittgenstein discussed Moore's definition of knowledge based on Moore's use of the term in his treatise *A defense of Common Sense*. In order to do this I shall first give an outline of G. E. Moore's train of thought and then explain Wittgenstein's views on language and knowledge as applied in his *Philosophical Investigations* and in *On Certainty*. In my conclusion I shall specify the mistakes Moore had made according to Wittgenstein.

Moore's conception of knowledge

Moore begins his essay *A defense of Common Sense* (1925) with a list of statements he considers to be “obvious truisms” and which Moore “knows” with certainty to be absolutely true (Moore 1959, 32). These statements include the propositions “My body exists”, “I have never been far from the earth's surface”, “The earth existed for a long time before my birth”, “I am a human being, having had various experiences” and so on.¹ Moore calls all of these propositions “wholly true” (Moore 1959, 36). But it isn't just Moore who knows these things, we all know them:

[E]ach of us [...] has frequently *known*, with regard to *himself* or *his* body and the time at which he knew it, everything which, in writing down my list of propositions [...], I was claiming to know about *myself* or *my* body and the time at which I wrote that proposition down [...]. (Moore 1959, 34f.)

It is the sceptic's view that only statements about oneself can be verified and known, that no direct knowledge about other human beings or the exist-

¹ In this context, Moore points out that he uses these propositions in their “ordinary or popular meaning” (Moore 1959, 36) and, furthermore, that he distinguishes between the understanding of the meaning of a statement and the analysis of the meaning of a statement. Understanding seems to Moore a given fact: “Such an expression as >The earth has existed for many years past< is the very type of an unambiguous expression, the meaning of which we all understand” (Moore 1959, 37). The question of the correct analysis proves to be extremely difficult, however: “The question what is the correct analysis of the proposition meant on any occasion [...] by >The earth has existed for many years past< is, it seems to me, a profoundly difficult question, and one to which, as I shall presently urge, no one knows the answer.” (Moore 1959, 37)

ence of material things can be had with certainty. Moore objects that any proposition of common sense — like the ones he mentions — is a true proposition (and not, as some philosophers would have it, widely held views, which may be believed but not known). Moore says that the sceptic's error is twofold: For one, the sceptic pretends to know that it is not only himself who cannot know if other human beings exist, but extends the claim so that no other human being can know whether other humans exist. From this follows that he "is making a proposition about human knowledge in general, and therefore is actually asserting the existence of many human beings" (Moore 1959, 43) — exactly the kind of knowledge the sceptic denies himself.

If one accepts statements of common sense, but denies their truth value, it means, according to Moore, as follows:

'There have been many other human beings, beside myself, who shared these beliefs, but neither I nor any of the rest has ever known them to be true.' In other words, he asserts with confidence that these beliefs *are* beliefs of Common Sense, and seems often to fail to notice that, *if* they are, they must be true; since the proposition that they are beliefs of Common Sense is one which logically entails propositions both of type (a) and (b); it logically entails the proposition that many human beings, beside the philosopher himself, have had human bodies, which lived upon the earth, and have had various experiences, including beliefs of this kind. (Moore 1959, 43)

In view of the question whether Moore's expressions of common sense are based on knowledge rather than belief, Moore states "that I have nothing better to say than that it seems to me that I *do* know them, with certainty" (Moore 1959, 44). This kind of knowledge is as a rule not a direct one, but rests on the fact that "in the past, I have known to be true *other* propositions which were evidence for them." (Moore 1959, 44)

More often than not these grounds for proof cannot be stated. This is no reason, however, to doubt the knowledge thus acquired:

We are all, I think, in this strange position that we do *know* many things, with regard to which we *know* further that we must have had evidence, and yet we do not know *how* we know them, i. e. we do not know what the evidence was. If there is any 'we', and if we know that there is, this must be so: for that there is a 'we' is one of the things in question. And that I do know that there is a 'we', that is to say, that many other human beings, with human bodies, have lived upon earth, it seems to me that I do know, for certain. (Moore 1959, 44)

Knowledge, certainty and action in Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein, in his *Philosophical Investigations* (PI), draws one's attention to the close connexion between language and action. Language is even termed a "form of life" (*Lebensform*). (PI 23) There exists a great variety of language

games, more or less interwoven by their relationships (PI 65), their family resemblances (PI 67). These language games nevertheless share no common feature or inherent function that would allow for a systematized view. In his *Philosophical Grammar* (PG) Wittgenstein calls the term *language game* — or, the at the time still often used term *calculus* "collective name[s]", use of which "should not keep us from investigating each particular case we would like to judge." (PG 26)

The designation of language as a thread of language games does not result in one common criterion. Each theory of language and especially each form of essentialism denies the multitude of language games, the plurality of their functions and uses, and thus simplifies matters unduly. Questions like "What is a sentence?" or even "What is language?" become redundant, as well as the reflexion upon philosophical terms such as "language", "world", "experience", — they are specialized abstractions, used in the search for the essence of language or the correspondence of language and reality (comp. PI 97). The construct of the crystal-like clarity of the logic of language is described as a walk on the ice, picturesque maybe, but certainly cold and very slippery (comp. PI 107). Without friction we easily slip away — but friction can only be found on the, rough ground" of an everyday usage of words, not in icy metaphysical structures. Since this theory of clarity as an ideal rests on our nose like a pair of glasses, as Wittgenstein writes elsewhere, we have at least some hope: once one has become aware of that pair of glasses it can be taken off at any time. Unaware of these glasses, however, it seems that there is only our one ideal and we are bound by it:

The ideal, as we think of it, is unshakable. You can never get outside it; you must always turn back. There is no outside; outside you cannot breathe.— Where does this idea come from? It is like a pair of glasses on our nose through which we see whatever we look at. It never occurs to us to take them off. (PI 103)

Once one has gotten rid of the glasses, thus Wittgenstein, one would abandon the search for a theory and instead concentrate on things as they are, focus on the actual language games. Most of the time, the meaning of words will become transparent through their usage: "It is possible to explain the word >meaning< — if not for all cases of its use — for a wide set of uses of the word by saying: the meaning of a word is its usage in the language." (PI 43). Unlike in his earlier *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein argues here that the meaning of words is neither firmly attached to objects nor mysteriously linked to reality. This also holds true for philosophically designated terms, such as "Knowledge", "Sentence", "I", "Object", "Being" — the terminology philosophers use to aim at the essence of things is met by Wittgenstein's question: "is the word ever actually used in this way in the language which is its original home?" (PI 116) Instead of a search for obscure matters (expressed in questions like "What

is knowledge?", "What is language?") (comp. PI 92) Wittgenstein proposes an investigation into the everyday usage of such words as "to know", "language" and others.

Such an investigation regarding the word "to know" is undertaken by Wittgenstein in *On Certainty* (OC). Central to this study is the world-picture human beings share, Wittgenstein also calls it the, frame of reference" (comp. OC 83). This world-picture provides the basis for our knowledge, its foundations are set in the earliest stages of language acquisition. In this context Wittgenstein explores in detail how children learn their language. An important aspect of learning is the delayed occurrence of doubt: In the beginning of any learning process stands the unquestioned belief in the things one is being taught (comp. OC 160). If, for example, we learn about the height of a mountain, or whoever climbed that mountain first, the gained facts prevent certain questions from arising: "A child learns there are reliable and unreliable informants much later than it learns facts which are told it. It doesn't learn *at all* that that mountain has existed for a long time: that is, the question whether it is so doesn't arise at all. It swallows this consequence down, so to speak, together with *what* it learns." (OC 143) Apart from things we might question later, we learn a great amount of things in that manner, things we (normally) never doubt at all. Moore's statements that these are our hands, that the earth exists, that we are human, etc. appear too obvious to question. Often these sentences aren't even uttered due to their self-evidence. Just as we usually don't wonder whether we can trust a teacher who tells us the height of a mountain, or doubt whether that particular mountain existed a hundred years ago. In fact, if a child would, against all expectations, doubt everything from the start, we wouldn't consider it a very bright child. On the contrary, we would consider it at best a nuisance, at worst disabled: "For how can a child immediately doubt what it is taught? That could mean only that he was incapable of learning certain language games." (OC 283) How should a teacher deal with a situation in which his pupil doubts that a table is still there when no person is in the room? Will he lose his patience or — in spite of a heightened irritation — calm himself by thinking his pupil will soon give up nonsensical questions (comp. OC 314)?

That is to say, the teacher will feel that this is not really a legitimate question at all.

And it would be just the same if the pupil cast doubt on the uniformity of nature, that is to say on the justification of inductive arguments. — The teacher would feel that this was only holding them up, that this way the pupil would only get stuck and make no progress. — And he would be right. It would be as if someone were looking for some object in a room; he opens a drawer and doesn't see it there; then he closes it again, waits, and opens it once more to see if perhaps it isn't there now, and keeps on like that. He has not learned to look for things. And in the same way this pupil has not learned

how to ask questions. He has not learned *the* game that we are trying to teach him. (OC 315)

Furthermore, it has to be said that the child does not explicitly learn about the existence of objects (something Moore wanted to prove, among other things) — the question of objects does not arise as such — the child "learns to react in such-and-such a way" (OC 538), it learns to act: "Children do not learn that books exist, that armchairs exist, etc. etc., — they learn to fetch books, sit in armchairs, etc. etc." (OC 476) Questions on the existence of things arise much later (questions like the one, whether there are unicorns), and when they are posed, this happens only against the background that ordinarily the question of an object's existence is *not* posed. One might, for example, tell a child that this is its hand, but not that this *may very likely* be its hand. "That is how a child learns the innumerable language-games that are concerned with his hand. An investigation or question 'whether this is really a hand' never occurs to him. Nor, on the other hand, does he learn that he *knows* that this is a hand." (OC 374) Thus the most striking feature in the examination of language acquisition is not which questions arise, but rather which questions are not posed at all: One doesn't question whether this hand is truly one's hand and why the hand is named "a hand". One doesn't question whether the table exists or whether it is still there once no-one looks at it. The external world is always presupposed — we are therefore not dealing with knowledge, but with the absence of doubt (comp. OC 477).

What is learned are skills, forms of action, we are trained (per "*Ab-richtung*") in the use of speaking and acting. This reflection is of more importance than it may seem at first sight: At the earliest stages of language acquisition those things we take for granted are fixed, things we'll never doubt (things we can not claim to know, precisely because knowledge is *not* the absence of doubt). This has remarkable bearings on our investigations, for the undoubted acceptance of a set of propositions "is part of our *method* of doubt and inquiry" (OC 151). Exactly because one didn't arrive at those undoubted propositions through reflexion, those propositions are the least open to doubt. Such a conviction "is anchored in all my *questions and answers*, so anchored that I cannot touch it." (OC 103)

Concerning those unquestioned certainties there are two further aspects to mention: For one, the propositions we don't doubt are not learned explicitly (as mentioned above), it is even conceivable that they are never uttered at all. We are never expressly taught to not doubt certain things, nor is there a rule that tells us which doubt may be reasonable or not (comp. OC 452). On the other hand those propositions aren't isolated cases waiting to be discovered only to be included in a catalogue of listed basic assumptions. In fact, we gain a whole system of judging and acting: "When we first begin to *believe* anything, what we believe is not a single proposition, it is a whole system of pro-

positions. (Light dawns gradually over the whole.) It is not single axioms that strike me as obvious, it is a system in which consequences and premises give one another *mutual* support." (OC 141f.)

In this system there is no clear distinction between propositions that can be questioned and those where doubt would be nonsensical, — all kinds of propositions are closely knit together constituting the whole:

The child learns to believe a host of things. I. e. it learns to act according to these beliefs. Bit by bit there forms a system of what is believed, and in that system some things stand unshakeably fast and some are more or less liable to shift. What stands fast does so, not because it is intrinsically obvious or convincing; it is rather held by what lies around it. (OC 144)

Thus the foundations of our world-picture are the unquestioned foundations of what we call our knowledge — not in the sense of unfounded premises, but in the sense of unjustified actions: "Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end; — but the end is not certain propositions' striking us immediately as true, i. e. it is not a kind of *seeing* on our part; it is our *acting*, which lies at the bottom of the language-game." (OC 204)

If we wanted to doubt these foundations we would encounter the question whether we'd be able to do so. What consequences would follow our fundamental scepticism? Assuming I would cease to be convinced of my being human, of the fact that this is my hand, of the existence of the earth etc. — would I still be able to act? Could I venture through life and world the way I do today with all the self-evidence that accompanies my everyday-actions? Is it even conceivable not to have this assurance?

The possibility of questioning rests on the exclusion of some propositions from this investigation, doubt becomes possible only if it is based on convictions: "That is to say, the *questions* that we raise and our *doubts* depend on the fact that some propositions are exempt from doubt, are as it were like hinges on which those turn." (OC 341)

From this follows for the term of knowledge that the validity of our knowledge cannot possibly exceed a world-picture, attain to an objective status. Instead, its relevance is restricted to the frame of reference of a particular world-picture, and any knowledge, irrespective of a particular world-picture, rests in the end on certainty, exactly because all grounds, all reasonings for what I call my knowledge, rest on the *acknowledgment* of certain undoubted propositions. An acknowledgment that is not singular, but collective:

Knowledge is in the end based on acknowledgement. (OC 378)

'We are quite sure of it' does not mean just that every single person is certain of it, but that we belong to a community which is bound together by science and education. (OC 298)

What designates the undoubted foundations of our world-picture? How are they defined?—

Wittgenstein calls them propositions of logic, respectively propositions of grammar (in order to describe language games) (comp. OC 51, 56, 98, 319). Compared to empirical propositions, which we can test and which are regularly tested in practice, grammatical propositions are of a kind we "affirm without special testing" (OC 136). Naturally, there is an enormous difference between a statement which can be verified, argued about and fought for and a statement which contains propositions which have never been questioned, which might not be open to questioning, or, which once questioned might transport us to the very limits of being able to act.

It is of interest in this context that the same sentence — based on the situation — may take on the part of an empirical or a grammatical proposition. Wittgenstein shows this especially clearly in the example of the proposition "I know that I have two hands". At the moment of uncertainty concerning the existence of my hands I will usually also be unable to trust the method of trial — e. g. looking at my hands to verify their existence. More than that: I would not even consider to ascertain the existence of my hands:

If a blind man were to ask me "Have you got two hands?" I should not make sure by looking. If I were to have any doubt of it, then I don't know why I should trust my eyes. For why shouldn't I test my eyes by looking to find out whether I see my two hands? (OC 125)

In other words: If I woke up tomorrow for any reason unable to see my hands, I would not doubt their existence but my ability to see.

On the other side we can imagine situations in which the statement "I know that I have two hands" not only makes sense, but can actually turn out to be an empirical proposition, easily tested. At this point Wittgenstein makes use of the example of a patient who had recently been operated on. I am not sure whether his hands have survived the operation, or whether they were amputated in the process:

And if he says he *knows* it, that can only signify to me that he has been able to make sure, and hence that his arms are e. g. not still concealed by coverings and bandages etc. etc. My believing the trustworthy man stems from my admitting that it is possible for him to make sure. (OC 23)

Even within one and the same world-picture propositions may be empirical or grammatical dependent on their use in language games, the specific circumstances in which they occur.

The difference between the two forms of propositions lies in the fact that empirical propositions are open to error and grounds for knowledge can be stated (in the sense that the proof for a specific knowledge gives it certainty), whereas for grammatical propositions error is inconceivable and no grounds can be provided for: The proposition itself "is as sure [...] for me as any grounds I could give for it" (OC 111)

It is important to state here that the difference between empirical and grammatical propositions cannot be located in the proposition alone — the specific language game is the decisive factor. This answers to a certain degree what makes a proposition grammatical. No specific feature of the proposition itself, but solely the use in a certain language game makes it a grammatical proposition. If the proposition is *used* as a grammatical one in a specific language game then it *is* a grammatical proposition within the restricted sphere of that language game.

The status of a proposition as either empirical or grammatical is not fixed, neither are there only two poles — "empirical propositions" and "grammatical propositions": their transitions are fluid: "It might be imagined that some propositions, of the form of empirical propositions, were hardened and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid propositions hardened and hard ones became fluid." (OC 96) The image of a river-bed used by Wittgenstein in this context renders the dynamics especially clear: After initially comparing the grounds of the world-picture with a sort of mythology, Wittgenstein continues:

The mythology may change back into a state of flux, the river-bed of thoughts may shift. But I distinguish between the movement of the waters on the river-bed and the shift of the bed itself; though there is not a sharp division of the one from the other. (OC 97)

And the bank of that river consists partly of hard rock, subject to no alteration or only to an imperceptible one, partly of sand, which now in one place now in another gets washed away, or deposited. (OC 99)

The Criticism on Moore

Wittgenstein thought Moore's *Defence of Common Sense* to be his best essay. This didn't prevent him from massively criticizing Moore in *On Certainty*. But where exactly lie Moore's mistakes? His main fault is the confusion of knowledge and doubtlessness. Moore constructs his use of the word "to know" parallel to the sense used by words such as "to believe", "to assume" or "to doubt" (comp. OC 21). While a statement like "I believe..." excludes any error, a statement of the form "I know..." implies the possibility of error. "One says 'I know' when one is ready to give compelling grounds. 'I know' relates to a possibility of demonstrating the truth. Whether someone knows something can come to light [...]." (OC 243)² It is exactly this possibility of error in regard to his knowl-

2 These "compelling grounds" are naturally not universally conclusive reasons, but those within the sphere of a given language game.

edge that Moore wants to exclude. At the same time, Moore cannot offer any reasons for his (assumed) knowledge (comp. OC 367). His assurance that he *knows* cannot help us any further — if anyone makes a claim to knowledge he must be able to provide evidence to assure us of this knowledge:

What is the proof that I *know* something? Most certainly not my saying I know it. (OC 487).

And so, when writers enumerate all the things they *know*, that proves nothing whatever.

So the possibility of knowledge about physical objects cannot be proved by the protestations of those who believe that they have such knowledge. (OC 488)

The phrase "I know..." is subordinate to any claim of knowledge (it only personalizes that claim, comp. OC 588). Of importance is the way a person's knowledge can be proven and the named grounds for that knowledge must be understood and accepted by the other members of the language game (thus being not an arbitrary decision by a single person but a consensus provided for by the language game). The (possible) grounding of knowledge is the important factor, not the private affirmation of any knowledge (comp. OC 13f.).

In our everyday language "to know" is also used in a very different manner. Sometimes it is even used to indicate the impossibility of error, e. g. if my psychiatrist asks me whether I recognize a specific object and I claim to *know* that it is a chair. In this situation I exclude error in order to convey the notion that I am "normal" (comp. OC 355). Or, as another example, if I answer "I know" to the statement "you smoke too much", the *knowing* amounts to my assertion (or a faked assertion) in order to end the conversation. The various possibilities of use in various situations don't justify Moore's claim to knowledge, however, as he resides in none of these language games but sets himself to prove the external world. He writes, for example, that some of the propositions he mentions "cannot be true, unless some *material things* have existed and have stood *in spacial relations* to one another: that is to say, they are propositions which, *in a certain sense*, imply *the reality of material things* and *the reality of Space*." (Moore 1959, 38)

Nevertheless it is very unlikely anyone would call in question Moore's propositions. On the contrary — if a person doubted whether he was human or whether the earth had existed for quite some time, we would question that person's state of mind (the only exception being the chance that we know this person to be a philosopher who regularly voices curious ideas but on the whole acts pretty much as we do). Another reaction — slightly delayed by our initial shock — might be a curt "Nonsense!" (— or, if we ourselves are philosophers, a learned debate on the topic at hand). Seen this way, Moore was at most able to prove himself "normal": "If Moore were to pronounce the op-

posite of those propositions which he declares certain, we would not just not share his opinion: we should regard him as demented." (OC 155)

Let us assume someone would voice doubt and we tried to convince that person that he is mistaken. We would realize quite quickly that we have no clue how to do so. Which grounds could we offer? How to convey the assurance we call our own? Could we even explain on what our own conviction rests? "If someone said to me that he doubted whether he had a body I should take him to be a half-wit. But I shouldn't know what it would mean to try to convince him that he had one. And if I had said something, and that removed his doubt, I should not know how or why." (OC 257)

We will come to realize that we are not certain about Moore's propositions because we spent long hours thinking them through. I assume no-one amongst us (except the reading of sceptic philosophers had induced such an idea) has in the past on a lovely day decided to withdraw into a quiet corner to contemplate the true existence of his right hand, that of the earth, or asked himself whether he is human and rightly calls this body his own. Here we are clearly not dealing with knowledge but with doubtlessness. What Moore does by expressing his convictions is he "gives the degree of certainty that something has for him. And it is important that this degree has a maximum value." (OC 386) We need certainty to be able to act, to be able even to doubt other things (beyond these certainties): "If you tried to doubt everything you would not get as far as doubting anything. The game of doubting itself presupposes certainty." (OC 115)

Certainty is, as a rule, not expressed by someone's statement concerning the knowledge of certain things. (We fairly seldom face situations in which someone passionately declares to *know* about the existence of his foot and its five toes.) Life shows the assurance certainty provides. (comp. OC 7): "Why do I not satisfy myself that I have two feet when I want to get up from a chair? There is no why. I simply don't. This is how I act." (OC 148)

The main difference between knowledge and doubtlessness consists in the first requiring a justification, while for the latter no justification can be thought of which would possibly heighten the assurance in regard to certainties. In everyday life these certainties are only linked to the expression "I know..." if the other lacks information from which he would otherwise deduce my assurance in the matter. (Examples range from the other being unaware that I am describing a house I've lived in for many years, to the rather outlandish example of the other being a Martian who is not acquainted with the certainty with which humans are assured of their ten toes.) Moore is in no such situation. To consider his claim for knowledge justified, he is not telling us anything we didn't know ourselves, nor is he telling us things in regard to which we'd require background information. On the contrary — he talks about matters we are equally certain about. To call these certainties *knowledge*

is — to put it simply — in everyday situations (except a few) nonsensical, in philosophy, however, plain wrong.

Concerning the usage of "I know" in the framework of philosophy, Wittgenstein points out that someone's assertion "that he knows such-and-such, and this is part of his philosophy" means that that person's philosophy is to be judged according to the proposition uttered (OC 408). Once that person goes astray in his proposition, his philosophy is faulty. And Moore has gone astray, according to Wittgenstein, because he claimed to *know* while at the same time excluding the possibility of error, further, because he could not give any grounds for his "knowledge" and left it at the plain assertion that he personally knew his propositions to be true. Moore's assertion that he *knows* the things he mentioned is wrong, since knowledge requires a giving of grounds (to render it open to examination) and knowledge is not a personal but a, general" (therefore testable) concept.

Moreover, Moore's proof of an external world has missed its mark as well, as he couldn't give ground for his alleged knowledge. According to Wittgenstein, Moore aimed past the sceptic's doubt — more than that, he even made the sceptic's doubting understandable: When one hears Moore say 'I know that that's a tree', one suddenly understands those who think that that has by no means being settled. The matter strikes one all at once as being unclear and blurred. It is as if Moore had put it in the wrong light." (OC 481)

This *wrong light* consists here — analogous to the claim for knowledge — in accusing the sceptic of a fallacious argument. It would have been sufficient to point out that acting itself presupposes an external world: Even the sceptic acts within the world with as much ease as each of us.

"But I can still imagine someone making all these connexions, and none of them corresponding with reality. Why shouldn't I be in a similar case?"

If I imagine such a person I also imagine a reality, a world that surrounds him; and I imagine him as thinking (and speaking) in contradiction to this world. (OC 595)

This inconsistency in the sceptic's argument had been hinted at by Moore in pointing at the use of the "we", the talk about humans in general. The reference to knowing about the existence of an external world is no antidote for scepticism however: The sceptic's argument isn't wrong, it is nonsensical (his proposition cannot be tested) (comp. OC 56). Nonsensical, because the sceptic completely misunderstands the function of doubt. A sceptic's doubting has no place in our language games — if there were room for it, the language games would evaporate (for any *universal doubt* would make me doubt the meaning of words altogether) (comp. OC 369–372). Doubts can only be uttered within the realm of a specific language game, a language game which presupposes certainty because it is part of our world-picture. Anyone doubting various things has to be able to give grounds for his doubting, in the same way he

would have to give grounds for any claim of knowledge (comp. OC 458) — but as we are dealing here with certainty (not with knowledge) any doubt imaginable is not merely wrong but simply nonsensical.

Criticism regarding the way Moore uses the word >to know< within his philosophy is summed up in Wittgenstein's remark: "For when Moore says 'I know... such and such', I want to reply 'you don't *know* anything!' — and yet I would not say that to anyone who was speaking without philosophical intention. I feel (rightly?) that these two mean to say something different." (OC 407)

Let us now investigate the difference between the everyday usage of >to know< and >knowing something< within the framework of philosophy: The primary difference in usage is, as mentioned above, that their self-evidence keeps Moore's propositions from being uttered in an everyday context. We can imagine situations where they occur (As in the example of the bandaged man who had recently been operated on. A man who has reason to check whether his hands are still there.) — but these singular events generate the necessity and acceptability of such statements. That is to say, the situation, the context of our utterance, is defined. We understand what is said against that particular background and this context functions as frame of reference for our claim to knowledge. We accept or challenge what is said against that background. Moore's propositions lack their frame of reference, we can hardly accept them as messages:

Just as the words, "I am here" have a meaning only in certain contexts, and not when I say them to someone who is sitting in front of me and sees me clearly, — and not because they are superfluous, but because their meaning is not *determined* by the situation, yet stands in need of such determination. (OC 348)

We would not know how to interpret Moore, lacking further explanations to aid us classify his proposition. And if we got those, we would have the necessary background information to understand his proposition (e. g. "he isn't mad at all, he's just a philosopher", comp. OC 467), but Moore wouldn't have achieved what he set out to do, he would not even have made the same proposition he had wanted to make: A proposition with the aim "to demonstrate to himself or to someone else that he *knows* something that is not a mathematical or logical truth." (OC 350)

To summarize we can say that Moore's advance in the direction of common sense has obvious parallels in Wittgenstein's thinking. In particular, the focus on the ordinary meaning of an utterance and the demonstration of inconsistency in the sceptic philosopher's argument. Wittgenstein criticizes Moore's persistence in a claim for knowledge Moore cannot hold, if he talks about the inability of giving grounds of proof while at the same time insisting that these grounds are given. Moore doesn't see "how very specialized the use

of 'I know' is" (OC 11) because he believes that, the words 'I know that ...' are always in place where there is no doubt, and hence even where the expression of doubt would be unintelligible."(OC 10) Against that Wittgenstein tries to make transparent how our certainty regarding Moore's propositions rests on doubtlessness, not on a large series of successful examinations and the giving of grounds. Our sense of assurance is as it is because we *never* examined it at all and because we would under normal circumstances not get inspired to do so.