

# Gilbert Ryle as a Fidgetty Cook Wilsonian

Guy Longworth<sup>1</sup>

University of Warwick

9.9.25

## 1. Introduction

Is factual knowledge a capacity? Or is it rather something categorical, perhaps a qualitative state, event, or activity? If factual knowledge is a capacity, then there must be an answer to a second question: what, most fundamentally, does possession of that capacity enable? What are its characteristic exercises or actualizations? This chapter starts to address those questions by explaining the emergence, in Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* (1949), of an apparent disagreement between Ryle and one of his Oxford predecessors, John Cook Wilson, concerning their respective views about the characteristic exercises of factual knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Understanding this development in Ryle's thinking will involve exploring some perhaps less familiar points of convergence with Cook Wilson in Ryle's work before 1949.<sup>3</sup>

According to Cook Wilson, factual knowing, or what he calls "apprehending," is most fundamentally an occurrent shaping of consciousness. To a first approximation, cases of occurrent knowing or apprehending would include cases of recognizing, cognizing, or acknowledging. Indeed, Cook Wilson sometimes characterizes these acts or states using a continuous form of the verb 'knows'. For example, he writes that "the process of reasoning is precisely the activity of knowing" (Cook Wilson 1926: 35). Now what we more ordinarily talk about when we talk about factual knowing is something non-occurrent which we take to be preservable through periods of unconsciousness. We can think of this as *standing* knowing. Standing knowing, according to Cook Wilson, is a capacity. Specifically, it is a capacity to enjoy occurrent knowing or apprehending. So, Cook Wilson answers our first question

---

<sup>1</sup> I'm grateful for comments or discussion to Lesley Brown, Lucy Campbell, Thomas Crowther, Naomi Eilan, Michael Kremer, Hemdat Lerman, Roberta Locatelli, Matthieu Marion, Giulia Martina, Cheryl Misak, Kurt Sylvan, Jasmin Trächtler, Simon Wimmer, and audiences at Dortmund, Montreal, and Warwick.

<sup>2</sup> Cook Wilson (1849–1915) was Wykeham Professor of Logic 1889–1915. Ryle (1900–1976) was Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy 1945–1967.

<sup>3</sup> My discussion of these aspects of Ryle's development parallels, though with narrower focus, Michael Kremer's 2025, which I highly recommend in itself and as a complement.

affirmatively, holding that *one* form taken by factual knowledge is that of a capacity. And Cook Wilson offers a seemingly clear and straightforward answer to the second question: standing knowing is a capacity for occurrent knowing or apprehending.

In 1949, Ryle agrees with Cook Wilson that factual knowledge is a capacity (see, e.g., Ryle 1949: 117). However, Ryle seems to dissent from Cook Wilson's answer to the second question, going so far as to deny that there is such a thing as occurrent knowing:

Theorists who recognise that 'know' and 'believe' are commonly used as dispositional verbs are apt not to notice this point, but to assume that there must be corresponding acts of knowing or apprehending and states of believing; and the fact that one person can never find another person executing such wrongly postulated acts, or being in such states is apt to be accounted for by locating these acts and states inside the agent's secret grotto (Ryle 1949: 102–3).

And Ryle also sketches a seemingly quite different view about the characteristic exercises of factual knowledge:

Dispositional words like 'know'...are determinable dispositional words. They signify abilities, tendencies or pronenesses to do, not things of one unique kind, but things of lots of different kinds. (Ryle 1949: 102)

As we shall see, Ryle's position before 1949 is vanishingly close to Cook Wilson's. Ryle's 1949 position therefore seems to represent a significant change in view. I shall be suggesting that the reasons discernible in Ryle 1949 for this apparent change in view are not compelling. If I am right, then further questions arise. Are there reasons supporting this shift which Ryle failed to make explicit? Alternatively, is there less to Ryle's apparent disagreement with Cook Wilson than meets the eye? I shall not attempt to address those questions here. My more modest aim is to make them seem pressing.

§2 outlines three relevant themes in Cook Wilson's thinking about factual knowledge. §3 explores significant reflections of those views in the development of Ryle's views up to around 1945. Although Ryle's thinking during this period exhibits a significant measure of agreement with Cook Wilson's, it also manifests some emerging tensions, as I explain in §4. §5 considers Ryle's apparent departure from Cook Wilson in 1949.

## 2. *Ryle as a fidgety Cook-Wilsonian*

In a paper Ryle read to the Oxford Philosophical Society in 1968, he makes the following comments about his early philosophical development:

I did not want Price or Moore to have their immediate acquaintance with sense data, but nor did I want Russell or Meinong or Plato or, I fancied, the author of the *Tractatus*, to enjoy their trout-like<sup>4</sup> apprehendings of universals, objectives, propositions or the constituents of propositions.

---

<sup>4</sup> "Trout-like" is puzzling. Plausibly, it is related to Ryle's discussion of the idea that non-inferential knowledge is acquired in "some sort of non-inferential confrontation," and his characterisation of such confrontations as "blank acquiescent gazings" (1949: 217) Michael Kremer informs me that in Ryle's manuscript, held at Linacre College, "trout-like apprehendings of" replaced an initial "face-to-face encounters with," which supports this first way of reading the simile. A second, related reading draws on the trout's fabled inactivity, based on its energy-

What was wanted was (a) Realism without additional entities to apprehend or<sup>5</sup> (b) Realism without fabricated apprehendings....

So far my motivation was that of a would-be antibiotic epistemologist. ‘Fidgetty [*sic*] Cook-Wilsonian’ would, so far, have been a fair title for me.... I was fairly clear that what was wanted was...a Nichomacheanised [*sic*]<sup>6</sup> *De Anima* that was also syntactically circumspect. (Ryle 1993b: 106–7)

The central point of interest here is Ryle’s qualified description of his earlier self as a Cook Wilsonian. Given that self-description, we can see that what Ryle wanted to reject was not apprehension *per se*. He was opposed to the apprehension of “additional entities”—additional, that is, to the facts—and to “fabricated apprehendings,”—plausibly, the apprehension of sub-components of facts. Of secondary interest is Ryle’s qualification. His mention of fidgetiness suggest that he was not a *settled* Cook-Wilsonian and perhaps also that his unsettledness reflected a partly suppressed yen for bodily activity. As we shall see, Ryle was, until 1949, a good Cook Wilsonian. In doing so, we shall uncover some potential sources of restlessness. Before returning to Ryle, it will be helpful to have in view three relevant themes in Cook Wilson’s work.<sup>7</sup>

The first theme is Cook Wilson’s appeal to apprehension as the active or occurrent form of knowing. Cook Wilson’s single-minded focus on apprehension means that he is not very explicit about its relations to standing knowing. It is therefore helpful to consider a summary by one of his younger contemporaries, Richard Robinson, from a book length defence of Cook Wilson’s philosophy:

In connexion with knowledge Cook Wilson has the term ‘apprehension’ and its relatives. By this term he refers precisely to the fact of knowledge. But yet it is not quite a synonym for ‘knowledge’. For by the verb ‘to know’ we usually refer to the possession of knowledge in general, and not to a particular realization of our knowledge. We say of a man that he knows geometry, not meaning that he is thinking of it at this moment, but that he has learnt the facts of geometry and can think of them when he wishes. By the verb ‘to apprehend’, on the other hand,

---

efficient tendency to rely on the water currents to deliver nutriment while remaining in situ. See, e.g., the following from Izaak Walton: “the *Trout*...there lies at the watch for any flie or Minnow, that comes near to him” (Bevan ed. 1983: 229). A third reading focuses on the trout’s extraordinary variability and adaptability, also noted by Walton (Bevan ed. 1983: 224–230), on which see, e.g., Lobón-Cerviá 2018. A fourth can be drawn from William Sayers’ reconstruction of the historical development of the phrase ‘old trout,’ used as a derogatory term for elderly women:

To summarize, English *trot/tratte* would have originated in French *trote*, with subsequent reshaping, both semantic and phonological, under the influence of Latin *trattus* and its English derivative, and would have been used as an agent noun for a [*sic*] intermediary, whether in the provision of services (as procuress) or of information (as amorous counsel, gossip). In the reformation as ‘old trout’, a euphemistic melioration, the word is only lightly dismissive but not condemnatory in moral terms, as the exchange of personal information on other members of the community is prejudicially seen as the quintessential activity of older women. (Sayers 2009: 198)

On this last reading, Ryle’s suggestion would be that apprehendings of propositions and their ilk are sorts of intermediaries or go-betweens.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Kremer informs me that this ‘or’ replaces ‘and’ in Ryle’s manuscript.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Kremer informs me that Ryle’s manuscript has “Nicomacheanized”.

<sup>7</sup> For detailed discussion of Cook Wilson’s account of knowledge, see Longworth and Wimmer 2022a, 2022b, Marion 2000a, 2000b, Robinson 1931, Travis and Kalderon 2013.

Cook Wilson usually refers not to the possession of knowledge in general but to the particular act of attending to and knowing something. Lt.-Col. Farquharson says that Cook Wilson appears to use ‘apprehension’ as equivalent to Aristotle’s [*noesis*].<sup>8</sup> [*Noesis*] is the realization of the faculty [*noûs*]. [*Noûs*] is knowledge, and thus [*noesis*] is exactly ‘apprehension’. (Robinson 1931: 8–9. See also 245–248.)

According to Robinson (and Farquharson), Cook Wilson followed Aristotle in treating standing knowledge as a capacity for apprehension. Central here is the structural proposal that standing knowledge is a capacity for a special form of conscious occurrence, “a particular act of knowing something” (Robinson 1931: 8).<sup>9</sup> (As we shall see, this use of the continuous form of “know,” suggesting a characteristic activity, figures also in some of Ryle’s earlier work. For relevant discussion, see Robinson 1931: 245–248.)

Aristotle varies his characterisations of the operative form of conscious occurrence to include *theoria* or contemplation as well as *noesis* or apprehension, but the following passage from *De Anima* is illustrative:

In the first case, something is a knower in the way in which we might say that a human knows because humans belong to the class of knowers and to those things which have knowledge; but in the second case, we say directly that the one who has grammatical knowledge knows. These are not in the same way potential knowers; instead, the first one because his genus and matter are of a certain sort, and the other because he has the potential to contemplate whensoever he wishes, so long as nothing external hinders him. Yet another sort of knower is the one already contemplating. (Aristotle, *De Anima*: II.5 417a 22–30)

Someone with standing knowledge thereby has a capacity to apprehend or contemplate, whensoever they wish. An active knower is one who is already apprehending or contemplating. As revealed by Cook Wilson’s focus on apprehension, he also agrees with Aristotle in affording explanatory priority to the exercises, or active form, of standing knowledge. Capacities, and potentialities more generally, are to be characterised by appeal to their most fundamental activities or realizations:

...if one ought to say what each of these is, for example what the intellectual or perceptual or nutritive faculty is, then one should first say what reasoning is and what perceiving is, since actualities and actions are prior in account to potentialities. (Aristotle, *De Anima*: II.4 415a 15–20)

Standing knowledge is therefore to be characterised by appeal to apprehending.<sup>10</sup>

The second theme is Cook Wilson’s conception of apprehension. Although standing knowledge is to be characterised by appeal to apprehension, Cook Wilson treats apprehension itself as fundamental:

...the judgement of knowledge, or other such act of knowing, is such apprehension. Apprehension itself is obviously ultimate. Everything we can say about it, or indeed about

---

<sup>8</sup> The omitted footnote is a reference to Farquharson’s editorial footnote, Cook Wilson 1926: 78.

<sup>9</sup> Cook Wilson 1879: 19–20 characterises standing knowledge as “potential,” “dormant,” and “implicit.”

<sup>10</sup> On the priority of activity or actuality over potentiality, see Aristotle *Metaphysics* Θ.

anything else, presupposes it; it is futile therefore and a mere fallacy to profess to explain the act of apprehension. (Cook Wilson 1926: 279)

Similarly, Cook Wilson writes:

Perhaps most fallacies in the theory of knowledge are reduced to the primary one of trying to *explain* the nature of knowing or apprehending. We cannot *construct knowing*—the act of apprehending—out of any elements. (Cook Wilson 1926: 803)

Despite viewing apprehension as fundamental, Cook Wilson provides further insight in the following passage:

I may remark that I think I have made an improvement in terminology. I used to employ the words *recognize*, *recognized*, *recognition*, but for a year or two (perhaps more) I have steadily used the words *apprehend*, *apprehended*, *apprehension*, as being the simplest and truest expression of what is meant. It is partly the feeling of <the> necessity of some general word which introduced the barbarous *cognize* and *cognition*, which nothing would induce me to use. (Cook Wilson 1926: 816)

Recognizing has an occurrent form and seems very closely connected with standing knowing. Cook Wilson's helpful suggestion is that recognition is a form of apprehension. His thought seems to be that it is not the only form, since it implicates prior apprehension. That implication might have been removed by the deletion of 're-' but Cook Wilson refuses to take that route. Despite his refusal, however, those who are competent with "recognition" or "cognition" can exploit their competence to gain some additional purchase on the idea of apprehension.<sup>11</sup>

The third theme is a corollary of Cook Wilson's commitment to the ultimacy of apprehension. Cook Wilson holds that knowledge (or its occurrent form) is not explicable by appeal to belief (or its occurrent form):

Belief is not knowledge and the man who knows does not believe at all what he knows; he knows it. (Cook Wilson 1926: 100)

Since knowing is not constructed out of *any* elements, believing is not an element of knowing. So, someone who knows does not (thereby) also believe what they know. Further, insofar as there are explanatory relations between knowledge and other mental states or activities, those explanatory relations run *from* knowledge *to* those other states or activities rather than *vice versa*. Thus, Cook Wilson suggests that opining, believing, thinking, and wondering are to be explained through their focal connections with knowing (Cook Wilson, 1926: 34–47). There is also a hint here of a further important theme in Cook Wilson's work, that one aspect of the distinction between knowing and believing concerns their having different formal objects: "the man who knows does not believe at all *what he knows*" (Cook Wilson 1926: 100, my emphasis).

### 3. Ryle as a Cook Wilsonian

---

<sup>11</sup> The earliest relevant uses of "cognycyou" and "recogycon" recorded by the OED are roughly contemporaneous, occurring at 1447 and 1450, respectively.

What is Ryle's attitude towards our three Cook-Wilsonian themes? The third theme, that there is a fundamental distinction between knowledge and belief, represents one of Ryle's most abiding commitments, visible in his earliest and latest work. Thus, from early in Ryle's career, we have the following:

Now in my opinion Cook Wilson has shown in a strictly phenomenological manner that this whole assumption is vicious. Knowing is not one definable species of 'consciousness of...' among others, it is something anyhow partly in terms of which believing, fancying, guessing, wanting and the rest have to be defined. Belief, e.g., is a state of mind involving *ignorance* of such and such a *knowledge* of so and so: it involves more than that, but at least it involves this double reference to knowledge. (Ryle 1932b: 183)

If I *know* that X is Y I am not to be described as *thinking* that X is Y or vice versa. We say: 'I don't *think*, I *know*', and 'I don't *know* but I *think* so and so'. (Ryle 1930: 30)

And from very late in his career, Ryle's review of Zeno Vendler's (1972) *Res Cogitans* includes the following:

With great success Vendler attacks, root and branch, any theory that defines *knowledge* in terms of *belief*. So far is knowledge from being belief qualified as (1) true, (2) held with full conviction, (3) well-founded, (*plus* any other leak-stoppers), that knowledge and belief do not even have the same 'objects'. (Ryle 1974: 98)

We saw, however, that Cook Wilson's commitment to this distinction derives from commitments embodied in the other two themes: to the priority of apprehension over standing knowledge and the ultimacy of apprehension. Are these also amongst Ryle's settled commitments?

Ryle appeals regularly to apprehension. Our task is therefore to consider the extent to which Ryle's early understanding of apprehension is like Cook Wilson's. To that end, I shall begin by examining Ryle 1930.

One apparent difference between Ryle's 1930 understanding of apprehension and Cook Wilson's concerns the range of the objects of apprehension. Ryle sometimes seems willing to allow that apprehension might extend more widely than Cook Wilson allows, subsuming varieties that correspond not only with factual knowing but also with, for example, believing, opining, wondering, doubting, entertaining, and understanding. Since the latter are attitudes which might naturally be thought to have propositions rather than facts as their objects, their manifestations might similarly be expected to include apprehensions of propositions rather than facts (1930: 30). This difference, however, is only apparent. The aim of Ryle's essay is to defend the claim that all apprehension is of facts rather than propositions. He argues that although believing does involve a form of apprehension, namely, understanding, understanding is in turn the apprehension of a special range of facts, facts about the conditions in which sentences (or other vehicles of stating) could be used to state further facts. The essay should therefore be seen not as seeking to expand apprehension's range, but rather as part of Ryle's early campaign against views that posit "additional entities to apprehend" (Ryle 1993b: 106).<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> There is a closely related discussion in Ryle 1933.

A second possible difference between Ryle and Cook Wilson concerns the temporal profiles of apprehension. ‘Apprehend’, like ‘know’, clearly has stative forms, forms which do not wear on their sleeves any reference to occurrence. Insofar then as Ryle makes use only of stative forms of ‘apprehend’, it will not be clear whether he agrees with Cook Wilson that apprehension is occurrent. However, although Ryle often uses stative forms of ‘apprehend’, he on occasion also uses continuous forms, as in “What am I apprehending when I *understand* someone else’s statement without knowing whether or not it states a fact?” (1930: 34). Such uses suggest a commitment to the possibility of an occurrent form of apprehending, in line with Cook Wilson’s position.<sup>13</sup>

Notably, Ryle’s willingness to use continuous forms extends beyond ‘apprehend’ to ‘know’, in further agreement with aspects of Cook Wilson’s practice. As late as 1945, Ryle is prepared to write:

“Well but surely the intelligent reasoner is knowing rules of inference whenever he reasons intelligently.” Yes, of course he is, but knowing such a rule is not a case of knowing an extra fact or truth; it is knowing how to move from acknowledging some fact to acknowledging others. (Ryle 1945: 227)

The pseudo-quotation in this passage corresponds closely with the sentence of Cook Wilson’s that was quoted in the introduction (1926: 35). What is striking is Ryle’s willingness to endorse it. And earlier in Ryle’s career, he was quite often prepared to use such continuous forms of ‘know’.<sup>14</sup> Whether or not one finds acceptable such continuous uses of ‘apprehend’ or ‘know’, one can see how someone seeking to capture occurrent forms of apprehending or knowing might be tempted in their direction.<sup>15</sup>

Given this background, consider the following passage, which is worth quoting at length:

In the writings of epistemologists, psychologists and logicians we commonly find that all such things as knowing, believing, wondering, remembering, etc., are classed together as *acts* of consciousness....

...But...as ordinarily used, the verbs to know, believe, be of the opinion that, etc., denote not momentary occurrences but more or less enduring conditions....

---

<sup>13</sup> For reasons discussed in section 5, use of a continuous form of a verb is at most a sufficient condition, and not a necessary condition, for accepting an occurrent form of the verb’s denotation. Furthermore, it is not clearly a sufficient condition, since those who are willing to use an occurrent form will often view it as a borderline-acceptable equivalent of the stative form, so that e.g. “I was loving her for many years” is viewed as equivalent to “I loved her for many years.”

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. Ryle 1929: 10; 1930: 15, 21, 26, 31, 35, 37; 1932a: 43; 1939: 12. As far as I can tell, the 1945 occurrence of the continuous form of ‘know’ is the last, although there is a stray occurrence of the continuous form ‘recognise’ in 1949: “Certainly a person who spies the thimble is recognising what he sees” (Ryle 1949: 208). See also “realising” (Ryle 1949: 242).

<sup>15</sup> Jennifer Hornsby notices Ryle’s 1945 use of the continuous form of ‘know’ and finds it strange, especially in the light of Ryle’s 1949 animadversions (Hornsby 2011: 86). What I am suggesting is that Ryle’s rejection of an occurrent form of ‘know’ in 1949 (e.g., Ryle 1949: 100) represents a recent adjustment in his thinking.

...As opposed to these more or less abiding ‘dispositions’, there certainly are also *acts (actus)*.<sup>16</sup> Thus, ‘I have just remembered so and so’, ‘I found out so and so all of a sudden’, ‘At 12 o’clock I was thinking of Egypt’....

...[T]here does seem to be some sense in which one may have *known* or *believed* something for years, and only to have *thought of* it a few times, just as one may have possessed some property for years and only used it a few times....

It is only a pedantic way of putting the same point to say that what I know or believe is only *per accidens* ‘present to my consciousness’ at any given moment during my having that knowledge or belief, while it is essentially ‘present to my consciousness’ at the moment when I am thinking of it—for they are almost equivalent expressions. (1930: 32–33)

With hindsight, it is tempting to read back into this passage themes from Ryle 1949, including his apparent denials there that knowing is a capacity for acts (or *actus*) of consciousness. However, in context, the passage includes nothing to give Cook Wilson pause. As we have seen, Ryle is at this stage committed to there being occurrent forms of apprehension. The suggestion here is that those forms are various, including remembering, finding out, *one* form of thinking of, and *one* form of having present to consciousness (where other forms of thinking of and having present to consciousness manifest believing rather than knowing). Ryle’s central thought is that ordinary uses of the verb ‘know’ denote a standing condition that is distinct from these occurrent forms. However, he is prepared to leave it open that standing knowledge is related to occurrent apprehension in the way a potentiality is related to its actualizations.<sup>17</sup> Thus, Ryle’s target is not Cook Wilson’s view, that apprehending is the actualizing of knowing, but rather a different view, that knowing is *identical* with occurrent apprehending.

As late as 1945, there is evidence that Ryle still endorsed a view of factual knowledge like Cook Wilson’s. Consider the following initially puzzling passage:

Philosophers have not done justice to the distinction which is quite familiar to all of us between knowing that something is the case and knowing how to do things.... They assume that intelligence equates with the contemplation of propositions and is exhausted in this contemplation....

...I hope to show that a number of notorious cruces and paradoxes remain insoluble if knowing—that is taken as the ideal model of all operations of intelligence. They are resolved if we see that a man’s intelligence or stupidity is as directly exhibited in some of his doings as it is in some of his thinking. (1945: 225)

Ryle attributes to philosophers a version of what he elsewhere in the essay calls “the prevailing doctrine”, according to which “intelligence is a special faculty, the exercises of which are those

---

<sup>16</sup> By ‘actus’, Ryle means actualizations of potentialities, which can be stative rather than active (Ryle 1930: 32).

<sup>17</sup> Ryle expresses some scepticism about the idea that standing knowing or believing are dispositions and expresses a preference for thinking of them as “deposits”. However, his scepticism concerns the idea that if either knowing or believing were a disposition, then it would be a “liability or propensity to act or react” rather than the broader idea that knowing and believing are forms of potentiality (Ryle 1930: 32). By 1949, Ryle is willing to allow that belief is a form of tendency although he continues to deny this of knowledge, since he holds that knowledge is a different form of potentiality, namely, a capacity (Ryle 1949: 100–135, especially 117). For a different way of developing Ryle’s 1930 suggestion that knowing or believing are deposits rather than dispositions, see Rees 1957–8.

specific internal acts which are called acts of thinking, namely, the operations of considering propositions” (1945: 222). What is initially puzzling about the passage is that Ryle sees the assumption of that doctrine as bound up with taking factual knowledge to be “the ideal model of all operations of intelligence”. Why should there seem to Ryle to be any such connection between the prevailing doctrine’s view that intelligence is a faculty of considering or contemplating and views about the relationship of intelligence to factual knowledge?<sup>18</sup> The answer must be that he arrived at the connection via two premises. The first premise is explicit: the attribution to philosophers of the assumption that the faculty of intelligence comprises only factual knowledge. The second, implicit premise is then that factual knowledge is itself a faculty or capacity for contemplating or considering propositions, a capacity directly exhibited or actualized in thinking rather than in doing. Given those two premises, the faculty of intelligence is a faculty for thinking rather than doing. Ryle can then take it that showing that the faculty of intelligence is *not* such a faculty, that it is actualized not only in thinking but also in doing, would serve also to demonstrate that the faculty of intelligence does not comprise only factual knowledge. Crucially, that line of argument depends for its force on Ryle himself endorsing the second premise, a version of Cook Wilson’s treatment of factual knowledge as a capacity for apprehension.

#### 4. *Ryle as fidgety*

The introduction to Ryle 1949 includes this comment:

Some readers may think that my tone of voice in the book is excessively polemical. It may comfort them to know that the assumptions against which I exhibit most heat are assumptions of which I myself have been victim. (1949: lxi)<sup>19</sup>

My suggestion so far has been that one such set of assumptions reflects Ryle’s earlier adherence to Cook Wilsonian views about knowledge. Throughout his career, Ryle agrees with Cook Wilson that knowledge and belief are fundamentally distinct. As late as 1945, Ryle actively appeals to apprehension, viewed as a kind of conscious occurrence, and agrees with Cook Wilson that it is the occurrent form, or manifestation, of standing knowing. Ryle also agrees with Cook Wilson that occurrent knowing cannot be explained by appeal to any analogue of apprehension that manifests, is an occurrent form of, or is an occurrent factor in, believing.

Despite this significant measure of agreement with Cook Wilson, we can discern some emerging tensions in Ryle’s thinking:

1. Ryle’s commitment to there being a fundamental difference between knowing and believing imposes a demand to explain this difference. Initially, Ryle followed Cook Wilson in seeking to explain the difference by appeal to apprehension. However, there are some pressures in his early thinking towards allowing for forms of apprehension that could be common factors of knowing and believing. Ryle 1930 views occurrent

---

<sup>18</sup> Paul Snowdon also notices this puzzle (Snowdon 2011: 65).

<sup>19</sup> In line with his own strictures concerning the aims of the book, which is to restore logical discipline rather than to correct factual errors, Ryle might better have written “habits” or “category-habits” rather than “assumptions”.

believing as dependent on occurrent understanding, and he views understanding as dependent on the apprehension of facts about conditions of factuality. Given those views, it would be natural to raise two questions. First, could understanding and, consequently, its special forms of apprehension, figure also in exercises of knowledge? Second, could occurrent forms of understanding *exhaust* the occurrent reflexes of knowing? As presented, offering an affirmative answer to both questions would be regressive. For understanding is manifested in the apprehension of facts, albeit facts about conditions of factuality, and so by an occurrent form of knowledge that cannot be merely the apprehension of conditions for the obtaining of facts. However, that obstacle might be removed by a different approach to understanding.

2. The most straightforward view about the occurrent form of knowledge is that it is simply an act of knowing. However, although Cook Wilson and Ryle are occasionally willing to essay an active or continuous form of the verb ‘to know’, reflection suggests that this is unnatural. We have seen that Ryle becomes increasingly sensitive to the fact that the natural form of the verb is stative, and so that its natural denotation is static. Initially, he allows that this is consistent with knowledge having an occurrent form—an actus or actualization of knowledge, rather than an act of knowing. However, loss of the active form removes a key support for the view that there is an occurrent form of knowing.
3. Relatedly, Ryle 1930 sees that there are various ordinary ways of characterising what might be thought of as occurrent exercises of factual knowledge, e.g., remembering, finding out, or thinking of. At this stage, he allows that despite their superficial variety, these occurrent forms are generically similar, all being determinate forms of determinable apprehension.<sup>20</sup> However, that position is potentially unstable in the face of increasing recognition of, or increasing sensitivity to, the sheer variety of manifestations of knowledge. There would be pressure on someone seeking a common factor of remembering, finding out, and thinking of to hold that this common factor is distinct from, and insufficient for, any of remembering, finding out, or thinking of. And one way of responding to that pressure would be to view such a common factor not

---

<sup>20</sup> Richard Robinson’s defence of Cook Wilson’s views about knowledge includes a similar but more varied list, together with a version of Ryle’s response:

What are the absolutely ordinary ways of referring to the act [the faculty of performing which is called knowledge]? The following sentences will reveal some of them.

- ‘I saw him coming.’
- ‘I heard it strike six.’
- ‘He felt the bridge shake.’
- ‘I learnt that the case was hopeless.’
- ‘I perceived that it was going to rain.’
- ‘I realized that I was wrong.’
- ‘I grasped what he was driving at.’
- ‘I inferred that he meant to kill me.’
- ‘I saw what he meant.’
- ‘I perceived that God is love.’

Every one of these sentences refers to a single act of apprehension. (Robinson 1931: 247)

only as insufficient for remembering, finding out, or thinking of, but thence as insufficient for knowing. Thus, the tension here connects with that noted under point 1.

4. Ryle's attention to knowing how suggests to him that amongst the characteristic exercises of this form of knowledge are cases of doing—in particular, cases of bodily activity. Although Ryle initially sees this feature of knowing how as marking it off from factual knowledge, it is plausible that his noticing it would have opened his eyes to the possibility that factual knowing might also be manifested in activity. That in turn would naturally have had two reflections in Ryle's thinking. First, it would raise the question whether any of the occurrent thinking that is associated with factual knowing might be purposeful, intelligent *mental* activity, to be explained not only by appeal to factual knowledge, but also by appeal to, for example, intention and know how. (This would align with point 2.) Second, it would raise the question whether factual knowledge might be, like know how, characteristically manifested in *bodily* as well as mental activity. Affirmative answers to either of these questions would dramatically increase the seeming variety of characteristic manifestations of factual knowledge (aligning with point 3). And such answers would again point to similarities between the manifestations of factual knowledge and the manifestations of belief (aligning with point 1).

These points expose a variety of pressures towards denying that factual knowledge has a proprietary range of characteristic manifestations. The overarching tension is between two conditions that must be met if a view like Cook Wilson's is to be maintained. First, the characteristic exercises of factual knowledge must be of a piece, all being forms of apprehension. Second, the characteristic exercises of factual knowledge must be distinct from the characteristic exercises of belief. Were Ryle to allow that knowledge shares characteristic manifestations with other conditions, including belief, then he would need other means of distinguishing factual knowledge from those conditions.

#### 5. *A change in view?*

Amongst the targets of Ryle's 1949 is this:

When someone is described as knowing, believing...these verbs are supposed to denote the occurrence of specific modifications in his (to us) occult stream of consciousness. (Ryle 1949: 5)

We have seen that Ryle agrees with Cook Wilson that ordinary talk about knowing and believing treats them as dispositions rather than occurrences. The locus of their apparent disagreement concerns the exercises or manifestations of those dispositions and is focused on Ryle's answers to three questions:

Q1. Is there only one form of exercise or manifestation of knowing or are there rather a variety of forms?

Q2. Is the form, or are the forms, of the exercise of knowing different from the form, or forms, of the exercise of believing?

Q3. Is the form, or are the forms, of the exercise of knowing conscious occupants of a subject's stream of consciousness?

Let us conclude by considering some of Ryle's arguments directed towards answers to these questions, which we will treat, perhaps counterfactually, as designed to support answers different to Cook Wilson's. I'll suggest that so construed, these arguments are unsuccessful, making pressing the questions whether it was Ryle's intention to undermine Cook Wilson's position and, if it was, whether stronger arguments can be mustered.

### 5.1. *Is there only one form of exercise of knowing?*

Ryle's argument that exercises of knowing take a variety of forms draws on a more general claim about dispositions:

There are many dispositions the actualisations of which can take a wide and perhaps unlimited variety of shapes; many disposition concepts are determinable concepts. When an object is described as hard, we do not mean only that it would resist deformation; we mean also that it would, for example, give out a sharp sound if struck, that it would cause us pain if we came into sharp contact with it, that resilient objects would bounce off it, and so on indefinitely. (Ryle 1949: 32)

This discussion of hardness here conflates the various counterfactuals that can be explained by appeal to a disposition, or that can be conveyed by, or reasonably expected from, the attribution of a disposition, with the more or most fundamental actualizations of the disposition. Thus, although Ryle is right that a hard object will not only resist deformation but will (and will be expected to) manifest its hardness in a variety of ways, its resistance to deformation is fundamental to its hardness. We can see this by considering the order of explanation amongst the various elements in Ryle's list of actualizations. It is the object's resistance to deformation that explains (in conjunction with other situational factors, including other dispositional factors) the object's giving out a sharp sound when struck, and so on. We would not seek to explain the object's resistance to deformation by appeal to its sounding, causing pain, and so on. So, the fact that a given disposition can be manifested in various ways does not show that it has no single, *primary* form of manifestation.

Assuming his general claim about dispositions, Ryle applies it to knowing and believing:

Dispositional words like 'know' [and] 'believe'...are determinable dispositional words. They signify abilities, tendencies or pronenesses to do, not things of one unique kind, but things of lots of different kinds. Theorists who recognise that 'know' and 'believe' are commonly used as dispositional verbs are apt not to notice this point, but to assume that there must be corresponding acts of knowing or apprehending and states of believing... (Ryle 1949: 102–3)

We have already seen one sort of ground for resisting Ryle's claim that knowing and believing are not dispositions to do one unique kind of thing. Even if standing knowing and believing each has a wide variety of manifestations, it does not follow that they are not each, more fundamentally, dispositions to manifestations of one unique kind. For a disposition might have

one primary manifestation despite having various secondary manifestations that are explained by appeal to its primary manifestation.

There is also a second impediment to Ryle's conclusion. For one reason we might think of a disposition with lots of different kinds of manifestation as a determinable disposition is because we view each of those kinds of manifestation as a determinate of one unique determinable kind of manifestation. Thus, even if we were forced to allow that the primary manifestations of knowing take various forms, those forms might nonetheless all be determinates of a single determinable kind, the act of knowing or apprehending.

We can discern a third sort of argument in the following passage:

Epistemologists, among others, often fall into the trap of expecting dispositions to have uniform exercises. For instance, when they recognise that the verbs 'know' and 'believe' are ordinarily used dispositionally, they assume that there must therefore exist one-pattern intellectual processes in which these cognitive dispositions are actualised. Flouting the testimony of experience, they postulate that, for example, a man who believes that the earth is round must from time to time be going through some unique proceeding of cognising, 'judging', or internally re-asserting, with a feeling of confidence, 'The earth is round'. (Ryle 1949: 32)

Initially, this seems unfair. There is no more reason to assume that someone who has the *disposition* to enjoy an occurrent form of believing must from time-to-time enjoy that occurrent form than there is to assume that a brittle vase must from time-to-time shatter. However, Ryle has a deeper point in mind. Our response to Ryle in the case of hardness was that we can see hardness as primarily a disposition to resist deformation because its disposition to that manifestation explains its disposition to other, secondary manifestations. Given that response, it might be thought that that form of explanation depends on a correlative explanatory ordering amongst manifestations, so that a hard object's resisting deformation explains its causing pain, and so on. If that were right, then we should expect that standing believing could explain any of its secondary manifestations only by first explaining its primary manifestation. In that case, we should expect that wherever an occurrence is explained by standing believing, the explanation goes via an occurrent form of believing. And now since no occurrent form of believing seems to be present in many cases where we explain other occurrences by appeal to believing, there is reason to doubt that occurrent believing is the primary manifestation of standing believing.

There are two possible forms of response to this line of argument. The first accepts the claim about dispositional explanation, that a disposition explains its secondary manifestations only via explaining its primary manifestations, but asserts the presence of occurrent believing whenever standing believing explains. The second, and perhaps more plausible, line of response rejects the claim about dispositional explanations. One sort of counterexample is my capacity to lift 50kg weights. That very capacity can explain my lifting a 25kg weight, and not via first explaining my lifting a 50kg weight. (Aristotle *De Caelo* 11 281a7–18 deploys this sort of example.)

That sort of counterexample can be generalized. There can be dispositions with manifestations that, at some level of categorisation, are of various kinds, including, say, both cases of *F*-ing

and of *G*-ing. That is consistent with the disposition's having a primary manifestation, say *H*-ing, cases of which must also be cases of either *F*-ing or *G*-ing. Given that structure, we would expect the disposition to *H* to incorporate sub-dispositions to *F* and to *G*. Full manifestations of the disposition would be either cases of *H*-ing that were also cases of *F*-ing or cases of *H*-ing that were also cases of *G*-ing. For example, a disposition the full manifestation of which is opening a type of door might sometimes be manifested in turning the doorknob clockwise and sometimes in turning it anticlockwise. It would incorporate sub-dispositions to clockwise and anticlockwise knob-turning. However, that is consistent with neither *F*-ing nor *G*-ing *per se* being *sufficient* for *H*-ing. In our example, the door might be locked. So, given that the disposition to *H* incorporates sub-dispositions to *F* and to *G*, it could manifest in cases of *F*-ing that were *not* also cases of *H*-ing or in cases of *G*-ing that were *not* also cases of *H*-ing. Such manifestations would be explained by the disposition to *H* without the explanation going via any manifestation of *H*-ing.<sup>21</sup>

## 5.2. *Are the exercises of knowing different from the exercises of believing?*

We have just seen that the secondary manifestations of knowing and believing could be quite various consistently with their primary exercises being unique. The same considerations indicate that knowing and believing could have secondary manifestations in common consistently with each having proprietary primary manifestations. Ryle makes a slightly different case for commonality of manifestations in the following passage:

Epistemologists are apt to perplex themselves and their readers over the distinction between knowledge and belief. Some of them suggest that these differ only in degree of something or other, and some that they differ in the presence of some introspectable ingredient in knowing which is absent from believing, or vice versa. Part of this embarrassment is due to their supposing that 'know' and 'believe' signify occurrences, but even when it is seen that both are dispositional verbs, it has still to be seen that they are dispositional verbs of quite disparate types. 'Know' is a capacity verb, and a capacity verb of that special sort that is used for signifying that the person described can bring things off, or get things right. 'Believe', on the other hand, is a tendency verb and one that does not connote that anything is brought off or got right. (Ryle 1949: 128)

What Ryle proposes here is not immediately transparent but the following presents one way of understanding his proposal.

There are some dispositions the *primary* exercises of which are sometimes successes or achievements and sometimes are not. These manifestations are sometimes cases of bringing something off or getting something right and sometimes not. One sort of example would be one form of disposition to tell people something. The relevant achievement or success in this case would be telling someone something *true* and so telling them *correctly*. Where one tells a person something correctly, one gets something right, namely, telling them something correctly.

---

<sup>21</sup> Cook Wilson 1879: 21, 49–56 rejects the idea that merely potential knowledge could explain in this way but he fails to consider whether knowledge might play such an explanatory role if it were neither merely potential nor fully actualised but rather *partially* actualised. Also relevant here is Ryle's discussion of "polymorphous concepts," 1951: 271–274.

However, since the operative disposition is to tell someone something, rather than to tell someone something correctly, one's success is not explained just by appeal to one's disposition. At best, the operative disposition is to tell people something correct *if* what one says is true. Thus, someone with only this disposition has at most a *tendency* to get telling right: they will *tend* to get telling right insofar as there happens to be a match between how they say things are and how things in fact are. According to Ryle, believing is a disposition of this sort: one with this tendency will exercise it in doing things that will meet operative conditions for success or achievement only insofar as circumstantial factors without the control of the disposition play their required role in securing success. In short, success is only a *secondary* manifestation of this sort of disposition.<sup>22</sup>

By contrast, there are some dispositions the primary exercises of which are successes or achievements. Where someone possesses a disposition of this sort, it is no accident, given their disposition, that they succeed as they do. Since the primary manifestation of their disposition is success, their success is explained by their possession of that disposition. One sort of example would be another form of disposition to tell people something, a disposition to tell someone something because it is true. This would be a disposition to tell someone something correctly. Thus, someone with this disposition is disposed to get telling right: they do not merely *tend* to get telling right if suitable circumstances obtain; rather, they get telling right as a matter of *capacity*. According to Ryle, knowing is a disposition of this sort: someone with this capacity will exercise it in doing things that meet operative conditions for success. In short, success is the *primary* manifestation of this sort of disposition. We can see this conception at work in the following passage:

When we use, as we often do use, the phrase 'can tell' as a paraphrase of 'know', we mean by 'tell', 'tell correctly'. We do not say that a child can tell the time, when all that he does is deliver random time-of-day statements, but only when he regularly reports the time of day in conformity with the position of the hands of the clock, or with the position of the sun, whatever these positions may be. (Ryle 1949: 130)<sup>23</sup>

Suppose Ryle's proposal accepted. Why might it be thought to follow that the manifestations of knowledge and belief are of the same kind? The thought would have to be that the tendency that is believing and the capacity that is knowing in fact have the same manifestation, either successful performance or performance that is neutral between success and failure. However, the proposal to this point seems to mark a significant difference between the *primary*

---

<sup>22</sup> Compare:

Tendencies are different from capacities and liabilities. 'Would if . . .' differs from 'could'; and 'regularly does . . . when . . .' differs from 'can'. Roughly, to say 'can' is to say that it is not a certainty that something will not be the case, while, to say 'tends', 'keeps on' or 'is prone', is to say that it is a good bet that it will be, or was, the case. So 'tends to' implies 'can', but is not implied by it. (Ryle 1949: 131)

The suggested understanding focuses on 'Would if . . .' as a marker of tendency, with the protasis specifying necessary conditions for successful exercise—in the case of telling, the truth of what is said. Just as something cannot dissolve unless in contact with an appropriate solvent, one cannot tell correctly unless things are as one thereby says them to be. Having a tendency in this sense entails that one *can* succeed, but not in the sense that one has a capacity the *primary* exercise of which is success.

<sup>23</sup> For helpful discussion of Ryle's proposal, see Kremer 2016, 2025, Scheffler 1968.

manifestations of knowledge and belief: the former, but not the latter, are successes. So, this line of argument to the conclusion that knowledge and belief have the same kinds of manifestations rests again on conflating a disposition's primary manifestations with its secondary manifestations. That is, it rests on conflating the manifestations, which figure in the most fundamental characterisation of that disposition and are explained just by appeal to the possession of that disposition with manifestations which are explained by the disposition only in combination with features of the surrounding circumstances.

A puzzle remains about the idea that the primary manifestation of a capacity to succeed might be the same as the secondary manifestations of a tendency to succeed. As we have seen, the secondary manifestations of a tendency to succeed involve a match between the primary manifestations of a disposition and circumstances extrinsic to the disposition. The trouble is that it is difficult to understand how there could be a disposition the primary manifestation of which ensured that sort of match without ensuring more than that match. Such a disposition would have to be appropriately keyed to the obtaining of relevant circumstances, either partly constituted by the obtaining of those circumstances or partly constituting their obtaining. But it is plausible that a disposition could be so keyed only if its primary manifestations were so keyed. The suggestion, then, is that a capacity, in Ryle's sense, would need to be a disposition the primary manifestations of which were partly constituted by an appropriate relation between the possessor and circumstantial conditions of success or achievement. They couldn't therefore be the same as manifestations of mere tendency. However, pursuing that line of thought would take us too far afield, into Ryle's challenging discussions of the constitution of achievements (on which see Ryle 1949: 131–135, 179–221), and so I set it aside for discussion elsewhere.

### 5.3. *Are the exercises of knowing conscious occupants of a subject's stream of consciousness?*

A full discussion of this question would again require engaging with Ryle's views about achievements as well as his views about paying heed to, being alive to, or thinking what one is doing and his closely related appeal to "semi-hypotheticals" or "mongrel categoricals" (on which see Ryle 1949: 118–131 and 136–166). For present purposes, we will restrict attention to the following argument. For exercises of knowing to be conscious occupants of a subject's stream of consciousness, such occupants would have to be *occurrent*. That would require, in turn, that the exercises of knowing be *events* or *activities*. However, manifestations of knowing that were not, like bodily or mental activities, merely *secondary* manifestations, would be ongoing *states*, *conditions*, or *dispositions* rather than events or activities.

We should accept the third premises of this argument.<sup>24</sup> Unlike verbs for activities, like 'walk,' or accomplishments, like 'walk to the shop,' there is, as we have noticed, no (semantically

---

<sup>24</sup> The marks of stative verbs employed here derive from various sources, including especially Aristotle, *Metaphysics*  $\Theta$ , 1048b: 18–36. Seminal discussion may be found in Kenny 1963, Mourelatos 1979, Penner 1970, Ryle 1954: 87–93, and Vendler 1957. Some theorists follow Mourelatos, amongst others, in taking the locus of classification to be whole predications rather than verbs but that nuance will not matter here.

distinct<sup>25</sup>) continuous or progressive form of ‘know.’ That marker would be consistent with ‘know’ denoting either an achievement, like ‘reach the shop’, or an ongoing state, condition, or disposition. However, ‘know’ differs from verbs for achievements in not accepting temporal modification of the form ‘in [some period]’ without change of meaning. Thus, ‘Kim knew that Ryle was born in 1900 *for several years*’ is fine, while ‘Kim knew that Ryle was born in 1900 *in a few minutes*’ forces a reading equivalent to ‘Kim *came to* know that Ryle was born in 1900 in a few minutes,’ thus denoting an achievement. Finally, ‘know’ differs from verbs for achievements, accomplishments, or activities in occurring in the non-reportative simple present without change of meaning. Thus, in ‘Kim smokes,’ ‘Kim smokes a cigarette,’ and ‘Kim finishes smoking a cigarette,’ the non-reportative simple present forces a more-or-less natural habitual reading. By contrast, ‘Kim knows that Ryle was born in 1900,’ is a perfectly natural non-habitual. In short, knowing something is a static and continuous way someone is, rather than something they do or an event or process in which they participate. ‘Apprehend’ is harder to classify but appears to exhibit some of the same pattern of behaviour as ‘know’.<sup>26</sup> It may be that ‘apprehend,’ like ‘recognize,’ or ‘recollect,’ occurs in achievement as well as stative forms, in something like the way that ‘know’ occurs when used to mean ‘come to know’.<sup>27</sup>

Although these considerations support the argument’s third premise, they also position us to see that the argument must fail. For if anything is an occupant of the stream of consciousness, then seeing is such an occupant. But ‘(can) see’ is as clearly a stative verb (or verbal complex) as is ‘know’. ‘Kim is seeing Ryle cross the road’ has no semantically distinct use.<sup>28</sup> ‘For several minutes, Kim could see Ryle crossing the road,’ is fine while ‘In several minutes, Kim could see Ryle crossing the road,’ has only a ‘came to see’ reading. ‘Kim can see Ryle crossing the road,’ occurs naturally in the non-reportative simple present without change of meaning. So, insofar as we have evidence that knowing is a state, condition, or disposition, we have equivalent evidence with respect to seeing. It follows that an analogous argument can be constructed to the unacceptable conclusion that seeing is not an occupant of the stream of consciousness.

A puzzle remains, however. For knowing, unlike seeing, is preservable through periods of unconsciousness. It follows that knowing, unlike seeing, is not invariably an occupant of the stream of consciousness. We therefore need to understand where the argument fails in a way that can help us to understand this difference between seeing and knowing. The first premise of the argument, that occupants of the stream of consciousness must be occurrent, seems irresistible. What about the second premise, that what is occurrent must itself be an event or process? Since we know that the argument fails, this premise must be rejected. But if we simply

---

<sup>25</sup> See footnote 7.

<sup>26</sup> The pattern can be summarised thus:

- (1) \* Kim is apprehending that Ryle was born in 1900.
- (2) Kim apprehended that Ryle was born in 1900 for a few minutes.
- (3) ? Kim apprehended that Ryle was born in 1900 in a few minutes.
- (4) Kim apprehends that Ryle was born in 1900.

<sup>27</sup> This apparently mongrel-like behaviour of ‘apprehend’ and ‘recognize’ might be used by a sceptic as part of a diagnosis of Cook Wilson’s insistence that they are occurrent forms of the state of knowing.

<sup>28</sup> There is an irrelevant use, on which Ryle’s crossing the road is viewed as an event like an opera and seeing it is viewed as an activity.

reject it without replacement, then we will be unable to understand the difference we noticed between seeing and knowing.

I suggest that an adequate replacement for the second premise would be this: something can be occurrent only if *either* it is an event or an activity *or* it *depends constitutively* on events or activities. Given the replacement, one way of understanding how seeing can be occurrent despite being state-like is that it depends constitutively on its objects, which essentially include activities. And a way of understanding how knowing can withstand unconsciousness would be that it does not depend constitutively on anything occurrent, since it depends only on its objects, facts, which are intrinsically unchanging. At the same time, the proposed replacement would allow that knowing *can* on occasion take occurrent form insofar as it has occasional *forms* that *are* constitutively dependent on events or activities.<sup>29</sup>

The suggestion just sketched would require significant development before it could be evaluated. A crucial part of that development would be concerned with investigating the types of activities or events on which occurrent knowing might depend, which might potentially include occurrent perceiving and imagining, as well as bodily activities, such as speaking. It is therefore likely to converge with various related lines of discussion in the works of Cook Wilson<sup>30</sup> and Ryle.<sup>31</sup> Establishing whether such development and evaluation would result either in correcting Ryle or, instead, in reconciling him with Cook Wilson, must be postponed to other occasions.

## References

[Where Ryle's works have been reprinted, references are to reprints.]

Aristotle. *De Anima*. C. Shields (trans., intro., and commentary). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2016.

———. *De Caelo* [*On the Heavens*]. D. J. Allan (ed.) and J. L. Stocks (trans.) in J. Barnes (ed.) *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 1. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press: 447–511.

———. *Metaphysics*  $\Theta$ . S. Makin (trans., intro., and commentary). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006.

Bevan, J. 1983. *Izaak Walton: The Compleat Angler 1653–1676*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

---

<sup>29</sup> The suggestion sketched here is based on a proposal in Soteriou 2013, which develops and defends it in much greater depth. See also Crowther 2009.

<sup>30</sup> See e.g. Cook Wilson 1926: 292, 415, 462–3. For discussion, see Robinson 1931: 18–19.

<sup>31</sup> See e.g. Ryle 1930, 1933, 1949 (especially 21–24, 240–254), 1951, 1968, 1979.

- Cook Wilson, J. 1879. *Aristotelian Studies I. On the Structure of the Seventh Book of the Nicomachean Ethics, Chapters I–X*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- . 1926. *Statement and Inference with other Philosophical Papers*, 2 vols., A. S. L. Farquharson (ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Crowther, T. 2009. “Watching, Sight, and the Temporal Shape of Perceptual Activity.” *The Philosophical Review* 118, 1: 1–27.
- Kenny, A. 1963. *Action, Emotion, and the Will*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Kremer, M. 2016. “A Capacity to Get Things Right: Gilbert Ryle on Knowledge.” *European Journal of Philosophy* 25, 1: 25–46.
- . 2025. “The Development of Gilbert Ryle’s Conception of Knowledge.” In L. Campbell (ed.) *Forms of Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 56–76.
- Lobón-Cervía, J. 2018. “Introduction: Princess of the Streams: The Brown Trout *Salmo trutta* L. as Aquatic Royalty.” In N. Sanz and J. Lobón-Cervía eds. *Brown Trout: Biology, Ecology and Management*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Longworth, G., and Wimmer, S. 2022a. “John Cook Wilson on the indefinability of knowledge.” *European Journal of Philosophy* 30, 4: 1–18.
- . 2022b. “Cook Wilson on knowledge and forms of thinking.” *Synthese* 200, 276.
- Marion, M. 2000a. “Oxford Realism: Knowledge and Perception I.” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 8, 2: 299–338.
- . 2000b. “Oxford Realism: Knowledge and Perception II.” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 8, 3: 485–519.
- Mourelatos, A. 1979. “Events, Processes, and States.” *Linguistics and Philosophy* 2: 415–34.
- Penner, T. 1970. “Verbs and the Identity of Actions—A Philosophical Exercise in the Interpretation of Aristotle.” In O. P. Wood and G. Pitcher (eds.) *Ryle: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday: 393–460.
- Rees, W. J. 1957–8. “Continuous States.” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 58: 223–244.
- Robinson, R. 1931. *The Province of Logic: An Interpretation of Certain Parts of Cook Wilson’s “Statement and Inference”*. London: George Routledge & Sons.
- . 1971. “The Concept of Knowledge.” *Mind* 80, 317: 17–28.
- Ryle, G. 1929. “Negation.” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supp. Vol.* 9: 80–96. Reprinted in Ryle 1971b: 24–35.
- . 1930. “Are There Propositions?” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 30: 91–126. Reprinted in Ryle 1971b: 13–40.

- . 1932a. ‘Systematically Misleading Expressions’, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 32, 1: 139–170. Reprinted in Ryle 1971b: 41–65.
- . 1932b. “Phenomenology.” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supp. Vol. 11*: 68–83. Reprinted in 1971a: 174–185.
- . 1933. “Imaginary Objects.” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supp. Vol. 12*: 18–43. Reprinted in Ryle 1971b: 6–85.
- . 1939. “Plato's ‘Parmenides’.” *Mind* 48, 190: 129–151. Reprinted in Ryle 1971a: 1–46.
- . 1945. “Knowing How and Knowing That.” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 46: 1–16. Reprinted in Ryle 1971b: 222–235.
- . 1946. “Why are the Calculuses of Logic and Arithmetic Applicable to Reality?” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supp. Vol. 20*, 1: 20–29. Reprinted in Ryle 1971b: 236–243.
- . 1949. *The Concept of Mind*. London: Routledge.
- . 1951a. “Thinking and Language.” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supp. Vol. 25*: 65–82. Reprinted in Ryle 1971b: 269–283.
- . 1954a. *Dilemmas: The Tarner Lectures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- . 1968. “The Thinking of Thoughts: What is ‘le Penseur’ doing?” In Ryle 1971b: 494–510.
- . 1971a. *Collected Papers, Volume 1: Critical Essays*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- . 1971b. *Collected Papers, Volume 2: Collected Essays 1929–1968*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- . 1974. “Mowgli in Babel.” *Philosophy* 49, 187: 5–11. Reprinted in Ryle 1979: 95–104.
- . 1979. *On Thinking*. K. Kolenda (ed.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- . 1993a. *Aspects of Mind*. R. Meyer (ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.
- . 1993b. “Paper Read to the Oxford Philosophical Society 500<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 1968.” In Ryle 1993a: 101–108.
- Sayers, W. 2009. “Trusty Trout, Humble Trout, Old Trout: A Curious Kettle.” *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 8, 3: 191–201.
- Scheffler, I. 1968. “On Ryle’s Theory of Propositional Knowledge.” *Journal of Philosophy* 65, 22: 725–732.
- Soteriou, M. 2013. *The Mind’s Construction: The Ontology of Mind and Mental Action*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Travis, C. and Kalderon, M. E. 2013. "Oxford Realism." In M. Beaney (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Analytic Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 489–517.
- Vendler, Z. 1957. "Verbs and Times." *The Philosophical Review* 66, 2: 143–160.
- . 1972. *Res Cogitans: An Essay in Rational Psychology*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.