Against intellectualism

ALVA NOË

Is all know-how a species of propositional knowledge, as Stanley and Williamson have argued (2001)? In this short essay, I show that they give us no reason to take that proposal seriously. Their paper is a defence of Intellectualism, which is a well-entrenched framework for the study of mind, especially in linguistics and developmental psychology. In the last few years Intellectualism has come under fire from more biological approaches to the mind. Intellectualism was and is a response to Behaviourism. It is becoming increasingly clear that it fares no better than Behaviourism in accounting for our mental nature.

1. Is all knowing how knowing that, as Stanley and Williamson claim? Their argument for this is set against the context of a re-evaluation of Ryle's (1949) attack on what he called 'the intellectualist legend'. They summarize Ryle's argument this way (413):[1]

> If knowledge-how were a species of knowledge-that, then, to engage in any action, one would have to contemplate a proposition. But, the contemplation of a proposition is itself an action, which presumably would have to be accompanied by a distinct contemplation of a proposition. If the thesis that knowledge-how is a species of knowledge-that required each manifestation of knowledge-how to be accompanied by a distinct action of contemplating a proposition, which was itself a manifestation of knowledge-how, then no knowledge-how could ever be manifested.

[1] Page numbers refer to Stanley and Williamson 2001.

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I don't wish to defend Ryle's regress argument (although I suggest, in what follows, that there is a successful regress argument in the vicinity). But there is good reason to be dissatisfied with the way Stanley and Williamson try to resist it. They insist it is not the case that the thesis at issue – that knowledge-how is a species of knowledge-that (hereafter, the Thesis) – implies that 'to engage in any action' one must contemplate a proposition. This might follow, they suggest, if, for any action, engaging in that action required that one know how to do that action. But this entailment – from 'A does thus and such' to 'A knows how to do thus and such' – does not hold. Stanley and Williamson do not question that if you do something, then you can do it; what they deny is that if you do something, you know how to do it. They're happy to grant that people and other animals have abilities that are not intellectual. It's just that they think the scope of such non-intellectual abilities is much more limited than has been thought.

To support their claim about the relation between the possession of abilities and know-how, they practice good old-fashioned Oxford philosophy (GOOP). They tell us quite a lot about what they think it is correct to say about some plain examples.

Consider their first exhibit (414):

(1) If Hannah digests food, she knows how to digest food.

About this they say: 'But (1) is clearly false. Digesting food is not the sort of action that one knows how to do.'

I would agree that digesting food is not the sort of action that one knows how to do. But that is because digesting is not the sort of thing one does (intentionally or otherwise). Hannah doesn't digest food; her digestive system does (in her or for her). Hannah may have excellent digestion, but she is not, in that case, excellent at digesting. Digestion is not an action that a person or animal can perform; it is a process that takes place inside a person or animal. The upshot is that (1) is either true (as the antecedent is false), or, I think more reasonably, it is misleading (in so far as it suggests that digesting food is something Hannah does). Whatever we say about this, the case of digestion does nothing to establish that there are things we do without knowing how to do them.[2]

[2] The point is not one about what it is appropriate to *say* about what Hannah does. Consider a different example: 'If Hannah breathes while she sleeps, then Hannah knows how to breathe while she sleeps.' (Thanks to David Chalmers for the example.) The consequent here is false even though it seems perfectly okay to say that it is Hannah doing the breathing. In this sort of case, language and the nature of mind come apart. I judge that although it's true here that she Fs without knowing how to F, this is because there is a way in which she only marginally Fs. Breathing is something Hannah does only impersonally, as it were.

On to their second example: They continue (directly after the above quoted sentences): 'Similarly, if Hannah wins a fair lottery, she still does not know how to win the lottery, since it was by sheer chance that she did so.'

This seems plausible enough. One reason to think that Hannah does not know how to win the lottery, even though, as we are supposing, she has just won it, is that winning the lottery isn't something that she did. It's something that, in effect, happened to her. What she did was (say) buy a lottery ticket; and it was thanks to that action that she was entered into the lottery and so placed in a position to be made the winner. But then this example does no more than the first to persuade us that it is possible to perform an action without knowing how to do it. Let us note: she bought a lottery ticket only if she knew how to buy a lottery ticket.

However plausible, I don't think we are compelled to admit that Hannah does not know how to win the lottery. All there is to knowing how to win the lottery, one might say, is knowing how fairly to enter into the competition. Why should we suppose that it is a condition on the relevant know-how that one be able to win the lottery whenever one wants? (Likewise, I'd say that I know how to surf, even though I sometimes fail to catch a wave; I know how to drive even though I've had an accident.)

Not that there aren't hard cases. Take an example of beginner's luck. Never having bowled, I pick up the ball and bowl a strike. Having bowled a strike, we might with justification say that I can bowl a strike. But it would be strange to say, in this case, that I know how to bowl strikes (or even to bowl). Is this an example of 'can do' in the absence of 'knows how to do'? No. First, as a general rule, skills aren't acquired all at once, in a fell swoop. They're built up or acquired gradually and there may not be sharp lines here. In so far as it would be wrong to say that I know how to bowl strikes, that's just because I've yet to acquire the ability or skill. Second, although I bowled the strike on the first go, that doesn't mean that I can bowl strikes *in the relevant sense*, i.e. that I have that skill. What I *can* do is pick up a ball and toss it down the lane; I do know how to do that.[3]

In fact, Stanley and Williamson are willing to accept the truth of the problematic entailment – that F-ing implies knowing how to F – so long as substitution instances of 'F' are restricted to intentional actions (that is, actions of the sort that can be performed intentionally) (415). But they seem to think that this restriction is so much the worse for Ryle's regress argument. They believe this because, as they try to show, it ties Ryle's hands when it comes to defending the second premiss on which the regress

[3] Thanks to John MacFarlane for calling cases of this sort to my attention.

argument depends, namely, that manifestations of knowledge-*that* must be accompanied by distinct actions of contemplating propositions.

The argument for this proceeds in two steps. First, they assert that 'it is simply false that manifestations of knowledge-that must be accompanied by distinct actions of contemplation of propositions' (415). In lieu of support for this claim (which is, after all, the claim they are trying to demonstrate), they cite the fact that Ginet (1975) has made the same claim. They quote his assertion: 'I may [engage in actions that manifest my knowledge *that* there is a door there, say], of course, without formulating (in my mind or out loud) that proposition or any other relevant proposition.'

This talk of 'manifesting propositional knowledge in actions' is misleading, since it can be understood in two different ways. On a constitutive reading, what is at stake when we ask *What actions must accompany the manifestation of knowledge-that?* is, *What is it to exercise knowledge-that?* (or *In what does knowledge-that consist?*) On a second, quasi-epistemological reading, what is at stake is different: *On the basis of what actions are we justified in attributing, to oneself, or someone else, knowledge-that?* Crucially, Ryle's concern (and ours) is with the constitution of knowing-that, not with criteria for attributions of knowledge.

Now, if we interpret Ginet's assertion to pertain to the second reading, then it may well be true. But it is irrelevant to Ryle's (and our) concerns. That is, it is irrelevant to the question of what knowledge-that (or its exercise) consists whether we can reasonably ascribe it without checking whether the one to whom we are ascribing it is formulating propositions in his mind. So we had better take Ginet to be speaking to the *nature* of propositional knowledge. But if we do interpret him this way, we confront the fact that neither he nor Stanley and Williamson give us any inkling why we should think it is true that one can 'of course' engage in actions that manifest knowledge-that *without* entertaining the corresponding proposition. How does Ginet know this? What is the evidence? Crucially, this is a substantive claim and it is probably not the sort of thing that mere first-person reflection or gut feeling or even (I would venture) logico-linguistic analysis can settle. At best what Ginet's remarks remind us of is that, as a matter of fact, we do not have conscious experiences of formulating propositions every time we act in ways that give expression to our propositional knowledge. But so what? Ryle's argument is not committed to the claim that we must be conscious of acts of contemplation.

Stanley and Williamson next observe (this is the second step of the argument) that one way to 'save' Ryle's argument from Ginet's objection would be to hold that 'contemplating a proposition' is a 'sort of action that is no more intentional than is the action of digesting one's food' (416).

Of course, if Ryle were to succumb to this way out, all would be lost. For in order for the regress argument to go through, it would have to be the case that the contemplation of a proposition must itself count as the sort of action that is an appropriate value for 'F' in 'if one Fs, one knows how to F.' But Stanley and Williamson have already established, at least to their own satisfaction, that this thesis is only true if 'F' takes intentional actions as its values. Given this, and given the concession that contemplating a proposition need be no more capable of being performed intentionally than the action of digesting, it would follow immediately that contemplating a proposition is not itself a legitimate substitution instance for 'F', and the regress argument grinds to a standstill. As they write: 'Ryle's argument fails to get off the ground ... It fails to establish any difficulty for the thesis that knowledge-how is a species of knowledge-that' (416).

The problem with all this is that Ryle would never be tempted by the proposal Stanley and Williamson offer him as a response to Ginet's objection. Ryle would not accept that the action of contemplating a proposition could be like that of digesting food, for the latter is not an action at all. When Ryle asserts that if one Fs, then one knows how to F, he has only actions in mind. In any case, there is no *need* for Ryle to consider this way out. Ryle can accommodate Ginet's observation by countenancing the possibility that not every act of contemplating a proposition is performed consciously. To say that it is or could be performed unconsciously is not to say that it is not the sort of thing that could be performed intentionally. Unconscious actions of contemplation are things we do nonetheless, unlike processes of digestion, which are not. So there is no need for him to appeal, problematically, to actions of contemplation that could not be performed intentionally. And so, Stanley and Williamson's claim that Ryle's argument does not get off the ground is left unsupported. Which is where they leave it when they turn their attention to Ryle's positive views about knowing how and the ascription of abilities.

2. This is their real target: Ryle's identification of 'knowledge-how' with the possession of abilities. They think it is just not the case that to know how to do something is to have an ability; to know how to do something is, they say, to have a certain kind of intellectual, propositional knowledge. As they indicate at the beginning of their article, their aim is to criticize the idea that there is a 'fundamental distinction' between knowing how and knowing that.

In support of this claim, they tell us more about what they think we should say about some examples. (They give us more GOOP.)

The first example is that of a master pianist who knows how to play piano even though she has lost her arms in a tragic accident. The fact that she cannot play piano, but that she knows how to play piano, shows

that Ryle's thesis – that to know how to perform an action is to have the ability to do it – is 'demonstrably false'.

Hardly! I agree that there would be no contradiction in supposing that Maestra knows how to play piano, even though she cannot now play. But this doesn't show that knowing how to play the piano is not the same as having the ability to play. For there are (uncontroversially) at least two different ways one can be unable to play the piano (or exercise a skill). One might be unable to play because one doesn't know how; because, that is, one *lacks* the ability. Or one might be unable to play because, even though one does know how, conditions whose satisfaction is necessary for one to exercise one's ability are not satisfied. For example, no matter how good a piano player I am, I won't be able to play piano if there is no piano ready to hand. Lacking access to a piano would mean I would be unable to play, even though I would not, for that reason, lack the relevant know-how. This explains, I think, our shared judgement about Maestra. We judge she knows how to play even though she is now unable to play, because we think of the loss of her arms as comparable (in the relevant sense) to the loss of her piano; as we tell the story, it is reasonable to think that the accident brings about the failure of a necessary enabling condition to be satisfied. The example does not illustrate what they say it does: a case of someone with the relevant know-how but lacking the relevant ability.

The judgement that Maestra knows how to play in this way relies on implicit assumptions about the character of the enabling conditions for the ability in question, judgements which are sensitive to temporal considerations. As the date of the accident recedes in Maestra's personal history, it becomes less and less plausible to think of her as retaining knowledge of how to play; what at first seemed like the failure of an enabling condition on her exercise comes to seem like a failure of ability itself. The fact that she remains an expert judge of play, or an expert teacher, or that she retains her knowledge of music, is irrelevant to this assessment of her practical knowledge. And this assessment gains support from what we know about the effects of amputation. Deafferance of hand-related cortical areas leads to cortical reorganization, a reorganization which may destroy the brain-basis of the relevant practical knowledge.

The second example Stanley and Williamson offer is no more persuasive: the ski jump instructor who knows how to perform the jumps, but can't do them herself.

Is it Stanley and Williamson's view that, if polled, most English speakers would share their intuition that the instructor is unable to do the jumps even though she knows how to do the jumps? I would predict that this is not true, or rather, that the outcome of such a poll would depend on how we tell the back-story. Consider: what could justify the judgement that the

instructor knows how to do the jumps, if not her ability to perform them here and now? Not the fact that she is able to teach someone else to do the jumps, or the fact that she knows a lot about jumping. She can know how one jumps, or how jumping is done, after all, without knowing how to do it.[4] Remember the old adage: if you can't do, teach, and if you can't teach, teach gym. Teachers and critics, although very knowledgeable, do not, by that very fact, have the relevant *practical* knowledge.

One good reason to think the ski jump instructor knows how to do the jumps, even though she can't do them, is that *she used to do them all the time*, with a high level of proficiency. Imagine she's an experienced jumper who is now too old, or too injured, to keep doing them. The case is now like that of the pianist. The instructor knows how to do the jumps and this knowledge consists in her actual ability to do them. Sadly, she is now *prevented* from being able to do them, however. She is unable to use *this rickety old body* to exercise her jumping skill. Once again, the linkage between knowing-how and the possession of abilities is left intact.

3. The case of the pianist and the ski jumper bring out some important features of practical abilities.

First, abilities are *embodied*. They depend on our bodily natures. Only a creature with a body like ours could be a piano player. Dogs couldn't manage the feat, and chimps, who might have the hands for the task, lack the brains. Learning a new task, moreover, changes our bodies. It does so in superficial ways, as when the guitarist acquires calluses and the athlete acquires muscles. It does so in deeper ways too; tool users undergo cortical reorganization as they acquire new tool-using skills. Monkey rake users, for example, exhibit enlarged cortical representations of the hand and arm (Iriki, Tanaka and Iwamura 1996). Likewise, changes to the body disrupt our capacities, and not only in the obvious way that even Lance Armstrong could not ride a bike with a broken leg. Amputation of the arms leads to deafference of cortical areas and to plastic rewiring. This is what explains phantom limb phenomena, and it is also why loss of the arms would, probably, lead to loss of the knowledge of (say) how to play piano.

Second, abilities are *situated* in the sense they have conditions for their exercise that are external to the agent. You can't play piano if you don't have access to a piano, and you can't surf if you live in a land-locked country with no access to waves. The exercise of practical abilities depends not only on our embodiment, but also on our successful

[4] This distinction is key. To know how to do something is to have the relevant ability; but one can know how something is done, or how one does it, without knowing how to do it, that is, without having the ability. The second kind of 'know how' is indeed propositional. Thanks to Kent Bach for stressing this.

and reliable coupling with the world that affords us opportunities to play.

Third, the possession of abilities affects our attitude and enables us to have experiences that we could not have otherwise. A piano tickles the fancy of a pianist, soliciting him or her to play. And the piano player can see in the piano, in the arrangement of its keys, possibilities that are not available to the non-player. Likewise, for the surfer, a calm horizon can signal, through what to non-surfers would be imperceptible signs, that it is necessary to reposition him or herself to be in a prime spot for the next wave. Possession of abilities enables us to detect significance where there would otherwise be none. In this way, the body, the world and our practical knowledge open up a meaningful realm of experience to us.

It is this last fact that explains, in part, why it is reasonable to think of practical abilities as a kind of knowledge. Practical abilities amount to a type of understanding, one that we apply in our practices as we might apply conceptual understanding. And it is considerations such as these that create at least prima facie difficulties for the view that the knowledge in question is *propositional*. First, if knowing how to do something consists in one's knowledge that certain propositions are true, then it becomes something of a mystery why embodiment and situation should or could be as important as they are. Some philosophers have argued (persuasively I think) that context, situation, and even embodiment provide conditions on the availability of certain kinds of propositional contents. Evans (1982) and McDowell (1986), for example, hold that some contents are object-dependent in the sense that one couldn't grasp the proposition but in the face of the object itself. And Putnam (1973) and others have suggested that causal relations between perceivers (actual embodied beings) and their environment place constraints on what their thoughts are or could be about. The question for Stanley and Williamson is, what is it about the distinctive kind of propositional knowledge in which knowing how to do something consists that should make it the case that situation and embodiment play such an essential role?

Second, grasping propositions itself depends on know-how; but if know-how consists in the grasp of further propositions, then one might wonder whether one could ever grasp a proposition. One way this argument might be fleshed out is in terms of concepts: to grasp a proposition, you need to understand the concepts deployed in it; to understand some concepts may be to grasp propositions; but this can't be true for all concepts, on pain of infinite regress. At some point, therefore, it must be possible to give possession-conditions for concepts in non-conceptual, and so non-propositional terms. For example, my grasp on the concept *red* probably does not consist in my knowledge of propositions about redness.

Indeed, one can reasonably wonder whether there could be such propositions. My grasp of *red* consists, it is more likely, in my disposition to apply *red* to an object when it exhibits a certain quality (Peacocke 1992). This regress argument remains unanswered.

Stanley and Williamson can perhaps evade these difficulties if they can show that having the ability to do something does not consist in knowing how to do it (for then they could admit that grasping propositions depends on basic practical abilities without admitting that it thereby depends on *knowledge-that*). As we have seen, they do not give us reason to follow them in making this separation. If, as I remain convinced, the possession of abilities is a matter of knowledge-how, then we are led to consider the possibility that the truth is exactly the opposite of what Stanley and Williamson maintain: All knowledge-that depends on and must be analysed in terms of a more basic knowledge-how. Intellectualism over-intellectualizes the mind.

4. Stanley and Williamson offer a positive argument for the Thesis, on the basis of current linguistic theory. Their argument goes like this: if linguistic theory is by and large true, then sentences attributing knowledge-how are of the same kind as sentences attributing knowledge-that. In particular, the best, most up-to-date, semantic and syntactic analysis shows that 'knows how' is not a constituent of sentences in which it occurs in matrix position, and that 'knows how' sentences are just a special class of 'knows that' sentences. Crucially, all the sentences in this class take propositional complements. Following the grammar blindly, then, one would be led to an analysis such as the one Stanley and Williamson themselves offer. On their analysis, when we say that 'Hannah knows how to ride a bicycle' what we are saying is something like 'there is a way to ride a bicycle and Hannah knows that this is that way and she knows it in the practical mode of presentation.' The challenge Stanley and Williamson pose to Ryle is to provide some evidence that the standard linguistic analyses are wrong.

This raises interesting and important questions about which Stanley and Williamson say very little. Why should linguistic analysis be regarded as dispositive in matters like this? Is it not a home truth of analytic philosophy that grammar can mislead? What does the grammar have to do with what we are talking about or thinking about or studying when we study practical knowledge? And more specifically, is it even the case that the Rylean philosophical analysis (according to which knowledge-how is the possession of a practical ability rather than a relation to a proposition) is incompatible with the linguistics?

In fact, it is difficult to see how the positive analysis offered by Stanley and Williamson entails the falsehood of Ryle's distinction between

knowing how and knowing that. Ryle's distinction is not a thesis about the sentences used to attribute propositional and practical knowledge respectively. It is a thesis about the nature of practical and propositional knowledge. Moreover, Stanley and Williamson's preferred account doesn't eliminate the distinction, or give anyone committed to it a reason to give it up; it merely relocates it. According to Stanley and Williamson, knowing how to do something is a kind of propositional knowledge. The point, for our purposes, is that it is a special kind of propositional knowledge; in particular, it is of a different kind from what Ryle had in mind when he emphasized the contrast of knowing how with knowing that. Knowing how to ride a bike is a special way of grasping a proposition about the way to ride a bike; it is grasping that proposition in *the practical mode* of presentation. Crucially, knowing how to ride a bike is not a species of propositional knowledge about ways to ride bikes in non-practical modes of presentation. The two phenomena belong to different kinds, on Stanley and Williamson's view as much as on Ryle's.

I don't mean to suggest that the fact that Stanley and Williamson analyse knowledge-how as a *special kind* of knowledge-that derogates from their claim that it is, for all that, a bona fide species of knowledge-that. They are right to defend themselves against that charge (433ff.). What I would suggest is: (1) Stanley and Williamson's analysis is merely technical – it presents a new notational or conceptual framework within which it is possible to make the same old distinction. (2) Whereas the distinction between knowing how and knowing that is pretty straightforward and is easily illustrated with examples, the account of the distinction that Stanley and Williamson offer is somewhat obscure. For their analysis turns on the idea of *modes of presentation*, entities whose existence and function in language is a matter of controversy. They seem to grant this when they write: 'Giving a nontrivial characterization of the first-person mode of presentation is quite a substantial philosophical task. Unfortunately, the same is true of giving a nontrivial characterization of a practical mode of presentation of a way' (429).

But they immediately go on to say: 'In both cases, however, one can provide an existence proof for such modes of presentation.'

They don't actually give us any such proof, but what they say indicates that what they have in mind comes down to this: If there were no practical modes of presentation of propositions, then it couldn't be true that knowledge-how is a species of knowledge-that. But it is. Therefore, there must be such modes of presentation. Their idea is that if you assume a propositional analysis of knowing-how sentences, then there must be a way of grasping the relevant propositions that guarantees that one's knowledge is genuinely practical.

What lends apparent legitimacy to this 'existence proof' is the analogy between practical modes of presentation and first-personal modes of presentation. Consider (26) and (27) (I use their numbers):

(26) John believes that that man has burning pants.
(27) John believes that he himself has burning pants.

The embedded propositions in (26) and (27) express (by hypothesis) the same Russellian proposition. Something must explain the difference in their cognitive significance. A standard proposal is that the complement clause in (27), but not (26), is typically entertained in the *first-personal mode of presentation*.

What makes this argument compelling, and it is compelling, is that we have independent reasons for thinking (I assume this for the sake of argument) that the complement clauses in (26) and (27) express the same Russellian proposition. The analogous line of argument for the existence of *practical* modes of presentation would need to be made in respect of (28) and (29):

(28) Hannah knows that that way is a way for her to ride a bicycle.
(29) Hannah_i knows [how PRO_i to ride a bicycle].

But the analogy breaks down. We have no independent reason to believe that the complement clauses in (28) and (29) express the same proposition. Indeed, Stanley and Williamson are forced to appeal to modes of presentation just in order make plausible the idea that they do. It is plainly circular for them to claim that considerations about the identity of the embedded propositions in (28) and (29) give one reason to believe in the existence of the relevant type of mode of presentation.

5. I have referred to Stanley and Williamson as practicing GOOP. But really, what they practice is something like good old-fashioned Oxford philosophy all souped-up with contemporary linguistics. But new-fangled GOOP has many of the same old problems as old-school GOOP. The biggest problem with GOOP is that it directs our attention to considerations about language (how people talk), when theorists of mind (in philosophy or cognitive science) are interested in human nature and the nature of mind.

To see how this charge sticks, consider the way Stanley and Williamson respond to an objection from animals. According to this line of objection, knowledge-how can't be a species of knowledge-that, for if it were, then the attribution to non-human animals of knowledge-how would entail the attribution to them of knowledge-that. But we have independent reason (so the objection runs) to believe, first, that non-human animals are not sufficiently sophisticated to possess propositional knowledge (439), and

second, that it is frequently the case that they have knowledge-how. For example, we say such things as (Stanley and Williamson's)

(46) Pip knows how to catch a Frisbee,

where Pip is a dog. (As a matter of fact, Pip is my dog.)

Their response to this objection from animals is as follows:

> But this objection is a non-starter. For in similar scenarios, we just as smoothly ascribe propositional knowledge to non-human animals, as in:
>
> (47) (a) Pip knows that when visitors come, he has to go into the kitchen.
> (b) Pip knows that Alva will give him a treat after dinner.
>
> So smooth ascriptions of knowledge-how to non-human animals are simply no objection to our account. Everyone requires some account of uses of sentences such as (47a–b). Whatever account is provided will work equally well for uses of sentences such as (46).

This reply misses the force of the objection. That for which we seek an account is not our *use of sentences*. (Ryle was not a linguist and he was not an ordinary language philosopher!) We want to understand how (46) could be true of a non-human animal, such as Pip, if in fact Stanley and Williamson are right about knowledge-how being a species of knowledge-that. And the reason why we want to understand this is that we believe propositions expressed by sentences like (46); in particular, I believe that (46) is true. Catching Frisbees is something Pip does know how to do. In contrast, it is a genuinely open question whether sentences like (47a–b) are ever true (even if we say things like that). As a matter of fact, I believe (47a–b) to be false. I love Pip. He's an excellent dog. What makes (47a–b) false is precisely the fact that Pip isn't smart enough to understand the propositions embedded in them.

The point is not that dogs can't grasp propositions. The point is that whether or not they can grasp propositions is an open question, one that is debated in cognitive science. The problem for Stanley and Williamson is that their analysis commits them to the strong consequence that dogs *can* grasp propositions, at least if it is to have any hope of being true. For if one thing is clear, it is that Pip does know how to catch a Frisbee (even though he is getting old).

6. It is one thing to admit that there is a distinction between knowing how and knowing that, and another to insist that the distinction can be drawn sharply. There's good reason to doubt that this can be done. Snowdon (2004) has recently called to our attention the fact that a great deal of know-how consists in the possession of propositional knowledge. For example, knowing how to get to the bank may consist, among other things, in know-

ing that you need to go right at the corner. More importantly, from the fact that there is a distinction between knowledge-how and knowledge-that, it doesn't follow that the distinction cuts any philosophical ice.

I have suggested that Stanley and Williamson may be exactly wrong about knowing how and knowing that in that propositional knowledge may be grounded on practical knowledge, although I haven't tried to make the case for that here. What I have tried to do is show that Stanley and Williamson give us no reason to reject Ryle's distinction. My broader point is that Stanley and Williamson's investigation is in some ways methodologically backward. It is a mark of philosophical progress that we can now see that neither linguistic analysis nor cultivated intuitions are the key to understanding the nature of mind.[5]

University of California, Berkeley
California 94720-2390, USA
noe@berkeley.edu

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