

Analytical Table of Contents

Introduction 15

No theory of knowledge is attempted. The work explores some paradoxes connected with knowledge and belief. The role of paradox in philosophical inquiry is discussed. G. E. Moore's prominence in the work is explained. The distinction between sentence and proposition is questioned.

I. *Knowing and What It Implies* 23

A certain form of skeptical argument has many guises: Descartes, Hume, Broad. (1) One particular expression of it is analyzed; it raises the problem of the absence of a set of implications. (2) The argument is restated so as to avoid this problem. The argument's force is seen to derive from asking an ordinary question in an unaccustomed setting. (3) The skeptical use of the question depends on the assumption that 'know' has a constant meaning; in fact its meaning shifts with the circumstances. 'Know' is an 'odd job' word.

II. *Do I Know or Only Believe?* 39

(1) Knowing and believing are distinguishable, so why shouldn't we ask whether we know or only believe a given thing? Plato, Descartes, Prichard considered this question. (2) A number of cases are examined to discover the difference between knowing and believing. We find that the distinction shifts with the circumstances. What Prichard says about it is exemplified in only one

case. Yet the distinction of that case does not allow asking his original question. (3) Malcolm's and Hintikka's interpretations of Prichard are criticized. Underlying these interpretations and Prichard's question is the assumption that knowing has a certain kind of object, and that saying one knows a thing refers to one's relation to that object. However, this assumption does not allow for the shifts of meaning in saying one knows. (4) There is no general distinction between knowing and believing. We may deny that we know in one situation what we claim to know in another, without inconsistency or change in attitude.

III. *Examples of What One Knows* 64

(1) Moore frequently gave examples of things he knew, but his use of 'know' in giving them was odd. Does this mean we cannot give natural examples of what we know? (2) Various uses of 'I know' are studied; the force changes with changes in context. None of its uses is appropriate for giving examples. (3) The catalog hypothesis: is there a list of all the things we know? It is a mistake to treat knowledge as a class concept. (4) Many philosophers have supposed there is such a class as 'all the things one knows,' and thought it was one task of philosophy to describe it: Plato, Descartes, Locke, Moore. This assumption is connected with the assumption that knowledge has a certain sort of object. It also derives from taking phrases in ordinary use as describing how a concept works. The procedure of looking at what we say we know as a means of studying the concept of knowledge is defended.

IV. *Expressing Beliefs* 89

'Moore's paradox': we cannot assert a particular proposition although it is meaningful and may be true. Moore's solution: we imply that we believe what we say. (1) The paradox involves a certain view of meaning; Moore was interested in related questions and paradoxes. (2) The 'package view' of meaning underlies the paradox. The conception of belief-expression and the use of sentences to tell something to someone is presented. (3) What is the connection between truth and belief-expression? Sentences that normally express beliefs are contrasted with mathematical ones. (4) Moore's paradox is evaluated: does it involve a contradiction? It has a crucial feature in common with contradictions. (5) The argument is summarized and its implications considered.

V. *The Belief that I Exist* 122

(1) Descartes's purpose was to prove his existence as a first move in establishing knowledge. Various forms of his argument are compared. What is meant by an 'argument for one's existence'? (2) The 'inference' from thinking to existence: a formal argument is distinguished from a proof against doubt. (3) We think we must have a belief in our existence, and therefore a proof of it. Is there such a belief? One argument for thinking there is involves the assumption that, if one proposition entails another, the belief that the former is true entails a belief that the latter is. This assumption is shown to be wrong. (4) The argument of this chapter is summarized. The Appendix offers an explanation of Descartes's curious inconsistencies regarding his proof.

VI. *Common-Sense Beliefs* 149

Moore defends Common Sense by asserting that certain propositions are true and known by him. (1) Some of these entail that time is real. The status of Moore's truisms and of 'Time is real' is considered. (2) These propositions are seen not to be expressive of beliefs; therefore their truth or falsity should not concern us. (3) McTaggart's and Bradley's arguments against the reality of time are presented. Their views, like Moore's, are justified by ordinary things we say. What then should be made of their conflict? What is the significance of 'contradiction' in philosophical dispute? (4) Moore's 'defense' of Common Sense is evaluated. Is there a 'Common Sense view'? The nature of inferences leading to propositions like 'Time is real' is discussed.

VII. *Dead Certainty* 189

The first question for the theory of knowledge is sometimes thought to be: What (if anything) is certain? This question leads to skepticism. (1) Why is absolute certainty required? How is such certainty determined? Malcolm's 'strong' and 'weak' senses of 'know' are considered. (2) Saying one knows in the strong sense of 'know' does not close debate; neither do expressions of 'absolute certainty.' Such assertions acknowledge, rather, that debate and challenge are reasonable. We see why Moore's most obvious assertions aroused expressions of doubt. (3) There is no defense against the possibility of doubting what is known, but neither is any defense needed. (4) Defining knowledge implies

that what is known, like what is a zebra, is a matter on which there should be agreement among speakers of the language. Our argument shows this is wrong. What is said to be 'known' is always open to challenge. That belongs to the concept of 'knowing.'

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