

# **Knowledge, Perception, and Memory**

Carl Ginet

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## PREFACE

In this book I present what seem to me (at the moment) to be right answers to some of the main philosophical questions about the topics mentioned in the title, and I argue for them where I can. I hope that what I say may be of interest both to those who have already studied these questions a lot and to those who haven't. There are several important topics in epistemology to which I give little or no attention here — such as the nature of a proposition, the major classifications of propositions (necessary and contingent, *a priori* and *a posteriori*, analytic and synthetic, general and particular), the nature of understanding a proposition, the nature of truth, the nature and justification of the various kinds of inference (deductive, inductive, and probably others) — but enough is covered, to one degree or another, that the book might be of use in a course in epistemology.

Earlier versions of some of the material in Chapters II, III, and IV were some of the material in Ginet (1970). An earlier version of the part of Chapter VII on memory-connection was a paper that I profited from reading and discussing in philosophy discussion groups at Cornell University, SUNY at Albany, and Syracuse University in 1972—73.

I do not like to admit how long I have been working on this book. I don't remember all the sources from which I have derived ideas, and I am fairly sure that I have forgotten with respect to some of the ideas used here that they did come to me from others. I have, of course, acknowledged the sources I do remember. I have also tried to mention treatments by others that are significantly similar to my own, arrived at independently, where I am aware of them. My apologies to those whom I should have remembered or known about but didn't.

I am grateful to many teachers, colleagues, students, and friends from whom I have received valuable stimulus relevant to this book. My thinking on matters I treat here has had especially great help, through their discussions with me and their writings, from Keith Lehrer, Norman Malcolm, Sydney Shoemaker, and the students in several epistemology courses I have given, at the University of Michigan, the University of Rochester, the University of Washington, and Cornell University. I appreciate the special encouragement that the editors of the Philosophical Studies Series in Philosophy have given me in getting the book to

publication. I am grateful to Vanda McMurtry for the bulk of the work in preparing the Index.

I thank my children, Lisa, Alan, and Greg, for the encouragement I've derived from their interest in the fact of this project and for their never-failing tolerance of my fits of abstraction.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to Sally McConnell-Ginet. I've gained much from the many times I've discussed points in the work with her. She has read the entire manuscript, made a large number of suggestions for stylistic improvements, and saved me from more than one error in the content. In this as in all my endeavors I have been supported and inspired by her love and her example.

CARL GINET

Ithaca, New York  
March 1975

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

1. What is it to *know* that something is the case? What am I saying when I say, 'I *know* that the temperature outside is below freezing' or 'I *know* that the money was in my pocket when I left the house' or 'Now we *know* that the moon has a great deal of dust on its surface' or (to my son while helping him with his arithmetic) 'Now, you *know* that six tens are sixty'? What sort of thing would make one of these propositions, or any other of the form 'S *knows* that p'<sup>1</sup>, true? What will constitute a case of knowing that a certain proposition is true, that is, a case of *propositional knowledge*?

I intend this as a philosophical question. Thus the sort of answer I want will be an *a priori*, conceptual truth. How do we understand knowledge claims like those mentioned above? What do we mean by 'know' in such constructions? The answer to the question of what constitutes a case of propositional knowledge is, at least in part, an elucidation of the *concept* of knowing.

One way of going about answering the question would be to say 'This sort of case, that sort of case, and this other sort of case are all cases of propositional knowledge', specifying for each case the factors in it that seem to make it a case of knowledge. Case by case, one could try to delineate minimally sufficient conditions for particular varieties of propositional knowledge. (A condition sufficient for the truth of some set of instances of 'S knows that p' is minimally sufficient if nothing weaker — entailed by the given condition but not entailing it — is sufficient.) Although such detailed analyses of particular cases or kinds of propositional knowledge could be extremely interesting, they would not adequately answer the *general* question of what it is to know that something is the case. When we have finished the inventory of special cases, we are still unsatisfied. We want to construct a unified account of what it is to know that something is the case that will embrace all the

special instances, an abstract definition of propositional knowledge that will be satisfied by any adequate account of particular cases.

Belief that such a general account can be given is wide-spread and deeply rooted, but I am well aware that it is not shared by all philosophers. Many have doubted that the construction 'S knows that  $p$ ' has a sense for which there is an interesting general analysis (even given the restriction that ' $p$ ' must express a true or false proposition). Some suggest that although our uses of that construction in various cases interconnect and overlap in such ways as to prevent our saying that the construction is simply ambiguous, those uses are so diverse that it is futile to try to specify a set of conditions that will in general be necessary and sufficient for a person's knowing that a proposition is true.<sup>2</sup> One can make a case that a general definition is possible, and make clear what it is supposed to define, only by offering one and defending it against objections. This is what I propose to do.

There are two major dichotomies within the whole of propositional knowledge that I will distinguish: that between inferential and non-inferential knowledge and that between fallible and infallible knowledge. I will discuss at some length each of two more specific categories of propositional knowledge: perceptual knowledge, which is one's knowledge that one perceives a certain sort of thing, and memory knowledge, knowledge that  $p$  that one can justifiably claim to have because one remembers that  $p$ . These are important because one's knowledge in these two categories contains virtually the whole basis of one's knowledge of contingent truths about the world beyond the present content of one's consciousness. (I am confident that this is true of every actual person; whether it is *necessarily* so is another question, to which I think that the answer is no.) Trying to say what perceptual and memory knowledge are will naturally involve me in trying to say what perception and memory are, what it is to perceive something and what it is to remember something.

All these categories of knowledge have been distinguished and much discussed, in one guise or another, by other philosophers; but my definitions of them (like my general definition of propositional knowledge) will not necessarily be the same as anyone else's. On my account, the division between inferential and non-inferential knowledge does not coincide with that between fallible and infallible knowledge, contrary to the way in which some philosophers have viewed those divisions.

Perceptual and memory knowledge are both species of fallible knowledge; and, while all memory knowledge is non-inferential, perceptual knowledge does not fall entirely on either side of that divide.

(Perceptual knowledge is peculiar in that it is distinguished by the kind of proposition known, rather than, as with the other categories I've mentioned, the kind of justification one has for claiming that one knows.)

2. 'Know' is the main verb in many forms of proposition other than 'S knows that p'. For instance:

- (1) 'S knows whether or not p'  
'S knows what/who/when/where ... is' 'S knows which... is---'  
'S knows why *p*'
- (2) 'S knows *R*' where '*R*' is a name or definite description of someone or something.  
'S knows what it is like to...'  
'S knows what it would be like to...' (3) 'S knows how to...'

In confining my investigation to conditions for the truth of propositions of the form 'S knows that p' am I ignoring all these other forms of proposition? No, not most of them, not entirely.

Propositions of the forms indicated in (1) all ascribe to S knowledge of the truth of some proposition of a certain sort or range without specifying which particular proposition it is. To assert a proposition of the form 'S knows whether or not p' is to assert that either S knows that p or S knows that it is not the case that *p*. A proposition of the form 'S knows what/who/when/where... is' is true if and only if S knows to be true some proposition that is a satisfactory answer to the question 'What/who/when/where is . . . ?'. Similarly a proposition of the form 'S knows which... is- --' is true if and only if S knows to be true some proposition that is a satisfactory answer to the question 'Which... is---?', and a proposition of the form 'S knows why *p*' will be true if and only if S knows to be true some proposition that answers the question 'Why is it that p?'.

Which classes of propositions will serve as acceptable answers to questions like these can not be determined without reference to the interests involved in raising them. For the questioner's concerns really determine



what question is being asked, which of the formally possible answers are actually relevant. For example, one who asks 'Where is Jones?' may want to find out 'In which room is Jones?' or 'In which country is Jones' or any of an indefinite number of other things; and one who asks 'Who is Jones?' may mean 'Which incident of my meeting someone was my meeting Jones?' or 'What unique and important position in the community does Jones hold?' or 'What role is Jones playing in the play?' or any of an indefinite number of other things. Likewise, which propositions are such that S's knowing one of them to be true will establish the truth of a proposition expressed by an utterance of any of the forms in (1) that contain blanks or 'why' will depend on the interest of the person entertaining that proposition, the corresponding question he has in mind; this really determines what proposition he would intend to express with such an utterance.

The forms indicated in (2) all have to do with the 'acquaintance' sense of 'know'. The first, 'S knows *R*', is found in such examples as 'Cindy knows chemistry', 'Brenda knows San Francisco', 'It is a rare father that knows his own child', 'Lucille does not really know her own husband', 'Sam used to know Nixon when they were students at Whittier', 'Do you know that French restaurant in McGraw?' The attributions of knowledge involved in these examples (whether asserted, denied, queried, or something else) imply that S is acquainted with *R*. But sometimes such a proposition implies more than mere acquaintance; sometimes, as in the first four of the examples just given, it implies that S knows a significant number of the significant truths about *R*. What 'significant' means here is, of course, rather vague and will depend on what *R* is and on the context of the utterance, especially the intent of the utterer.

What suffices for being acquainted with *R* will vary a good deal, depending on what *R* is. Being acquainted with a person is different from being acquainted with a restaurant. In general, S's being acquainted with *R* seems to require some sort of interaction with *R* (usually involving S's having perceived *R*, if *R* is a perceivable thing, but not necessarily: one can become acquainted with a person by corresponding with her). No matter how much I may know *about* George Washington, it is impossible for me to know him (or to have known him): the dates of his death and my birth preclude the required sort of interaction. Being acquainted with a person seems to require more than having merely perceived that person; one must also have had some sort of social interaction with the person, but how

much and what sort is required would be hard to say. That not just any sort or amount will be enough is suggested by remarks like 'I have *met* him but I don't actually *know* him'. And perhaps being acquainted with a restaurant requires more than having perceived it once: perhaps one needs to have observed it closely enough to know some of the distinctive salient facts about it.

In order to know *R* in the acquaintance sense one must, besides having had a certain amount and sort of interaction with *R*, now recall a certain amount of this interaction from the time of its occurrence: a person suffering from amnesia for his experience prior to a certain time no longer knows the people with whom he was acquainted only prior to that time, no matter how much information he may have been given in the meantime about his experiences with those people. And this interaction cannot have been so long ago that *R* is likely to have changed significantly in the interval: I do not now know my childhood friends whom I have not seen since childhood, no matter how much I may recall of my childhood experiences with them. In these sorts of cases we can say that one used to know *R* but no longer does. All this suggests that knowing *R* in the acquaintance sense may always consist in a certain sort of propositional knowledge, knowing in a certain way certain sorts of truths about one's experience of *R*: one knows *R* (in the acquaintance sense) if and only if one has had experience of *R* that is of the right sort and knows that one has had this experience by remembering it from the experience itself. (There is a special use of 'S knows *R*' — as in, for example, 'Even with my new beard he knew me at once' — that implies, not only acquaintance of the sort we have been discussing, but also an occurrent recognition of *R*.)

A proposition of the form 'S knows what it is like to *VP*' where '*VP*' refers to some action or experience — for example, 'S knows what it is like to feel the most intense kind of pain', 'S knows what it is like to shoot down white-water rapids in a canoe', 'S knows what it is like to snap the wrist in the proper fashion in the forehand squash stroke' — seems to imply that S has *VP-ed*, or else has done something else that is like *VP-ing* in the respect intended by 'what it is like to *VP*', and remembers what it is like to do it; that is, it implies that S is *acquainted* with the particular kind or property of experience intended by 'what it is like to *VP*'. Knowing a *property* (of experience, or a perceivable property of external things) in the acquaintance sense is, however, *propositional* knowledge, even if the property known cannot be put into words but must be expressed with

the aid of demonstration or oblique reference: '*That* is what it is like to *VP*' or 'What it was like to... is what it is like to *VP*'.

A proposition of the form 'S knows what it would be like to *VP*', seems to imply that S does not have acquaintance with the property in question but that he would be able to recognize the property should it occur in his experience. Though he's never had the experience itself, he has a well-founded accurate idea of it and, should he have it, he would be able to say honestly, 'Yes, that is what I thought it would be like'. Knowing how to recognize what it is like to *VP* is also propositional knowledge, though if one is asked to say what it is that S knows when he knows what it would be like to *VP*, the best one may be able to do is to say, 'S knows that it would be like *this*: if *this* were to happen to him he would be able to recognize it as what it is like to *VP*'. How could one be justified in thinking that one can recognize a certain property of experience if one has never been acquainted with it? Well, one may have been acquainted with an essentially similar property: I may know what it would be like to have one's left leg in a cast if I have had my right leg in a cast. Or one may have a particularly vivid or informative description to which one's imagination is able to respond; I have never felt as if the upper half of my body were floating away from the lower half but I think I know what it would be like to have such a feeling.

3. With respect to propositions of form (3), 'S knows how to...', I am inclined to think (although I am not perfectly confident) that they do nothing more than ascribe certain sorts of propositional knowledge to S. It does seem clear that such a proposition always *implies* that S has propositional knowledge of a certain sort. It implies that he knows the truth of some proposition that gives a satisfactory answer to the question 'How can one...?' or 'How should one . . . ?', a proposition that will take the form 'A (the) way to... is to ---'~ But it may also seem that at least some such propositions attribute to S certain *abilities* that are beyond any that are involved in knowing the truth of any propositions.

Ryle appears to suggest that this is the case.<sup>4</sup> But all that he actually brings out, as far as I can see, is that the exercise (or manifestation) of one's knowledge of how to do a certain sort of thing need not, and often does not, involve any separate mental operation of considering propositions and inferring from them instructions to oneself. But the same thing is as clearly true of one's manifestations of *knowledge that* certain propositions are true,

especially one's knowledge of truths that answer questions of the form 'How can one...?' or 'How should one...?' I exercise (or manifest) my knowledge *that* one can get the door open by turning the knob and pushing it (as well as my knowledge *that* there is a door there) by performing that operation quite automatically as I leave the room; and I may do this, of course, without formulating (in my mind or out loud) that proposition or any other relevant proposition.

Moreover, one may have and exercise knowledge of truths as to how various sorts of things can be done or should be done without ever formulating those truths in any way or even being able to formulate them. It may be that no one can — even that no symbols exist with which it would be possible to — formulate a fully detailed description of the sorts of things one must know to do in order to ride a bicycle (smoothly) or play a certain piece on the piano (well) — all the complex and subtle responses that one must know to make in the various subtly changing circumstances and at the various points in the operation that one must be able to discriminate. Indeed, the nature of the moves, responses, features to be discriminated, etc. required in the successful performance of many operations is very likely to be such that it is quite impossible to know what they are without having done or experienced them; one must know what they are like. In this case knowledge of such truths about how the operation is performed, even if they could be expressed in symbols, could not be learned by means of them alone but only by training and practice aimed at becoming acquainted with the sort of thing one must do or recognize, that is, training aimed at acquiring the ability to perform the operation. For example, in order to know that a particular sounding of a certain note on a violin is flat one's hearing must have been trained to discriminate the difference; in order to know that pressing the string in *this* way, but not in this other, slightly different way, will yield the sound one wants one must learn to feel and demonstrate the difference.

When there is, at least in practice, no other way for a person to acquire or show that he has knowledge of important truths as to how to do a thing except by acquiring and showing the ability to do it (properly) then of course we are not likely to think that he knows these truths — knows how it is done, knows how to do it — unless he is *able* to do it. Thus, though we are very often entitled to infer from 'He knows how to...' to 'He is able to...', and to think that he *cannot* know how unless he is able, it does not follow

that 'He knows how to...' ascribes abilities beyond what are involved in knowing sufficient truths about how to...

Two further considerations support my inclination to deny that any such further abilities are ever required for knowing how to.... One is that in the case of every ability that I can think of with respect to which it is clear that there can be a case of a person who lacks that ability but knows all the same truths about how to do the thing as one who has the ability knows, it would sound very odd to characterize the difference between such a person and one who has the ability by saying that the latter *knows how* to do the thing but the former does not. For example, it would not be right to report the fact that I am able to lift a hundred pounds off the floor but my eight-year-old son is not by saying that I know how to do this but he does not know how. Insofar as there is any knowing how involved he knows how as well as I; he just doesn't have the strength to do it.

The other consideration is very similar. When someone knows how to... and has the ability to... (for example, ski expertly, play the violin well, read English, parallel park a car) but then suddenly loses the ability to... through a cause that clearly cannot change (at least not immediately) the truths he knows about how to do... (for example, he suffers a sudden paralysis or takes a drug that disturbs his muscular control or becomes blind) it would certainly not be right to report this sudden loss of ability to... by saying that this person suddenly no longer knows how to.... An expert skier who in the course of a downhill run gets a bad case of stomach cramps and is able to complete the run only very clumsily still knows how to ski very well even while temporarily unable to do so. The only sort of case where 'S no longer knows how to...' is clearly appropriate is one where it is also appropriate to say 'S no longer remembers what to do in order to...'. If a violinist cannot be said to have *forgotten* (or otherwise lost his memory of) what all the subtle right moves are for fingering a certain piece, but he is no longer able to make them all simply because of damaged fingers, then he still knows how to finger that piece. Indeed, it may be because he knows how to finger it that he can tell from a few tentative movements of his fingers that he won't be able to finger it. Loss of knowing how to... requires loss of memory of what must be done in order to... and is not entailed by mere loss of physical ability to.... We should not be led to overlook this by the fact that very often one may not be able to show that one still knows how to do a thing except by doing it and may discover that one no longer remembers how to do it by trying and failing.

If, however, despite these considerations that suggest the contrary, there are some correct and strict applications of 'S knows how to...' that ascribe abilities to S beyond any entailed by his knowing sufficient truths about how to..., then there is a use of 'know' that will be neglected hereafter in this study.

4. I have set myself the (somewhat formidable) task of proposing and defending a general definition of the concept of propositional knowledge. Indeed, my claims in Sections 2 and 3 suggest that the restriction to propositional knowledge may be no real restriction at all. So to understand knowledge in general, it may be enough to consider a set of conditions necessary and sufficient for the truth of propositions expressed by sentences of the general form 'S knows that *p*'.

Before turning to that job in the next chapter, I need to introduce a stipulation as to how I will interpret such knowledge claims. I will take 'S knows that *p*' as equivalent to the claim that S knows to be true all of the *obvious content* of the proposition that *p*. The obvious content of *p* includes every proposition *q* such that *p* entails *q* and no one could understand *p* without understanding *q* and knowing that *p* entails *q*.<sup>5</sup> The most important consequence of this stipulation is that if the sentence replacing '*p*' contains a name or definite description '*A*' of a particular individual —so that '*p*' could be represented as '*F(A)*' — then 'S knows that *p*' is to be taken to imply that S knows *that it is A* of which '*F(...)*' is true.

Usually it is taken for granted that if 'S knows that *p*' expresses a true proposition then 'I know that *p*', if uttered by S, expresses a true proposition, but this need not always hold. Given the right sort of context, one may say 'S knows that *p*' without misleading, even though, as one knows, S does *not* know all of the obvious content of the proposition that *p* in the sense spelled out above. For instance, if someone describing her sister's adventures in a foreign land says, 'This shopkeeper knew that my sister was an American', she will not be taken to be implying that the shopkeeper knew that it was her sister who was an American.<sup>6</sup> If she had said, 'The shopkeeper knew that this woman he was dealing with was an

American', we probably would take her to be claiming that the shopkeeper knew the obvious content of the proposition that this woman he was dealing with was an American. Her second report is from the point of view of the knower (that is, the shopkeeper), whereas the first was from her own viewpoint (that is, the speaker's). In its context the first utterance, 'This shopkeeper knew that my sister was an American' must be interpreted as a loose, convenient way of expressing what might more strictly be put in terms like 'Of this person, who was in fact my sister, this shopkeeper knew that she was an American', that is, as saying that the shopkeeper knew to be true some proposition in which being an American is ascribed to that person, without saying which proposition it is.<sup>7</sup>

Anyway, I will be considering only those uses of 'S knows that  $p$ ' that are intended to imply that S knows the obvious content of the proposition that  $p$  to be true. And it will be useful to extend this stipulation to cover all sentences of the form 'S *ATTs* that  $p$ ' where '*ATT*' covers any verb or verb-phrase of positive propositional attitude or positive propositional act. Thus 'S believes that  $p$ ', 'S claims that  $p$ ', 'S wishes that  $p$ ' will be taken to imply that S's belief, claim, or wish is with respect to all the obvious content of the proposition that  $p$ .

#### NOTES

1. I shall use the phrase 'a proposition of the form "S knows that  $p$ "' as short for 'a proposition that could standardly be expressed by utterance of a sentence of the form "S knows *that p*"; and a sentence of that form is one that is obtainable from the schema 'S knows that  $p$ ' by replacing 'S' with some expression that designates a person (name, definite description, pronoun, demonstrative phrase) and ' $p$ ' with a sentence that would in the standard utterance of 'S knows that  $p$ ' express a true or false proposition.

A *proposition* is what is true or false, also what one believes, desires, asserts denies, wagers, etc., to be true or false, and what one intends, offers, promises, requests someone, etc., to make true or false. A proposition is the bearer of truth-value and the object of propositional attitudes and illocutionary acts. A proposition is distinct from any particular sentence, clause, or phrase used to express it and from any particular utterance in which it is expressed, since the same proposition may be expressed by different utterances of different sentences (where there may be no more reason to identify the proposition with any given sentence or utterance than with any other). (A detailed argument for distinguishing propositions, the bearers of truth-value, from sentences, utterances of sentences, and speech acts is to be found in Cartwright (1966).) What a proposition is would be explicated, I take it, by giving criteria for when an utterance of a sentence or sentence-part expresses a proposition and for when two different utterances of sentences or sentence-parts express the same proposition. I will not attempt such an explication here but will just rely on the understanding of the term 'proposition' that my readers already possess, hoping that what I have to say does not depend on any mistaken assumptions about what exactly propositions are.

2. On this view 'know' is, in Wittgenstein's phrase (1958, p. 44), one of the 'odd-job' words in our language. See also Saunders and Champawat (1964).

3. The two forms of 'how' question are importantly different, as D. G. Brown (1970) brings out. 'How *can* one... [for example, prove this theorem, get this trunk open]?' inquires after some *means* to..., whereas

'How should one...?' inquires after the *correct* or proper or required *manner* to... where this is to be distinguished from other manners in which one might... Corresponding to each of these two sorts of question is a different interpretation of 'S knows how to...' and 'S knows that a (the) way to... is to—', that is, these constructions are ambiguous. If S does not know how to... in the sense of not knowing any correct answer to 'How can one...?' then it follows that S is unable to...; but if S does not know how to... in the sense of not knowing any correct answer to 'How should one...?' then it does not follow that S is unable to...: he may still be able to... in some improper way. For the thesis that knowing how to... is always just knowing some correct answer or answers to a question of one of those forms, Brown offers arguments based largely on considerations of English syntax. While these arguments are welcome reinforcement, they do not seem conclusive. In the text I offer some inconclusive arguments of a different kind.

4. Ryle (1949), Ch. 2.

5. For the sake of brevity I shall permit myself to use the letters 'p', 'q', etc. not only as sentential variables (as in 'S knows that p'), but also as variables for names of propositions (as in 'p entails q') and, combined with quotation marks, as variable names of sentences (as in 'the singular terms in "p"'). I shall also use quoted sentences or sentence-forms sometimes as sentence names or variable sentence names and sometimes as proposition names or variable proposition names. Which of these varied uses is being made will always be clear from the context. In contexts where different uses are made of the same variable letter or quoted sentence (or sentence form), the context will make clear whether or not they are dummy names or expressions of the *same* proposition or sentence throughout.

6. This example bears significant resemblance to one given by Dretske (1970), which he uses to support the claim that a person's knowing the truth of a proposition does *not* necessarily require him to know the truth of every obvious consequence of that proposition.

7. This is not to say that the speaker's use in this context of 'This shopkeeper knew that my sister was an American' was such that the position occupied by 'my sister' was *referentially transparent* in the sense of Quine (1953). If the speaker's sister was the long-lost daughter of the shopkeeper but the shopkeeper did not know this, then the speaker could not but have misled if she had uttered instead, in the same context, 'This shopkeeper knew that his daughter was an American'. It is hard to imagine any context in which this sentence could be uttered without seeming to imply that the shopkeeper knew that it was his daughter who was an American.





## CHAPTER II

### THE GENERAL CONDITIONS OF KNOWLEDGE: TRUTH AND CONFIDENCE

1. The general definition of propositional knowledge that I propose to defend is along traditional lines and can be expressed as follows:

S knows that  $p$  if and only if

- (1)  $p$ ,
- (2) S is confident that  $p$ , and
- (3) S's being so is supported by a disinterested justification for being so
- (4) that is externally conclusive.

The traditional lines here are conditions (1), (2), and (3). They or some conditions very like them have long been thought necessary for knowing that something is the case (though the necessity of (2) and (3) has recently been disputed). Some philosophers have also thought that (1), (2), and (3) are jointly sufficient. Only since Gettier (1963) provided clear counter-examples to this claim has it been widely recognized that some fourth condition is needed; but there has been no general agreement as to what it should be.

I will explain each of the four conditions and argue that each is necessary to the definition. My reason for thinking that these conditions are jointly sufficient is, in the end, simply that I cannot see what else could be required. I am unable to think of any counter-example in which a proposition of the form 'S knows that  $p$ ' would be disproved by something other than the absence of one or more of these four conditions. This is not a very interesting argument but it is, I think, the only sort of reason one can have for thinking that a proposed definition is adequate to an already established concept (where sufficiency cannot be just stipulated).

2. Condition (1) needs little comment. If anything is obvious about the literal use of 'know' it is that one cannot *know* to be the case what is *not* the case. This does not mean that it is always unacceptable and pointless for a speaker to say (of some person S and some proposition  $p$ ) that S knows that  $p$  when the speaker knows that his hearers know that it is false that  $p$ . But such uses of 'know' must be interpreted as ironic. In a magazine article about Christopher Columbus I encountered the sentence "In 1492 most people *knew* that the earth was flat".

Here there is an attempt at wit that there would not be had the author written 'were sure' or 'confidently believed' instead of 'knew'. One would not have been surprised had 'knew' here been put in quotation marks. If one reads the sentence aloud it is quite natural to deliver 'knew' with a slightly mocking intonation. A similarly ironic use of 'know' might be made in another sort of case — for example, someone's ruefully declaring 'I *knew* he would come' after he has not come — not so much for amusing effect but to point up the fact that though the speaker's case resembled knowing in all the ways recognizable to him at the time it still fell short in one crucial respect: the suggestion conveyed by the irony would be: 'How silly/vain/poignant my thinking that I *knew* looks now'. In all such cases the point of the ironic ascription of knowledge depends on the hearers' being aware that, speaking literally and straightforwardly, one cannot *know* that something is the case unless it *is* the case.

3. One can see that condition (2), that S is confident that *p*, is necessary for S's knowing that *p* by considering the case of S's having an uncertain memory of what he once knew. Suppose *A* and *B* are doing a crossword puzzle and *A* goes to S with the question 'Do you know who was President between Cleveland's two terms?' It would be perfectly intelligible and natural for S to respond: 'I used to know that — used to know all the Presidents in sequence in fact — but I'm not sure I do anymore. Let's see now, was it Garfield? or was it Harrison? I'm just not sure anymore, but I'm inclined to think it was Harrison. Well, I'm sorry that I don't *know* who it was, but I *think* it was probably Harrison.' Suppose *A* returns to *B* and tells him that S thinks it was Harrison. *B* might well ask 'Does he *know* that it was Harrison?' to which it would be only honest and straightforward for *A* to reply 'No, he's not at all sure'. This demonstrates that a person's not being confident that *p* is conclusive ground for saying that he does not *know* that *p* (at least when one is called upon to be scrupulous in one's use of 'know'). For in this case the only reason that *A* has for denying of S, and that S has for denying of himself, that he *knows* that Harrison was the one is that his memory on the point falls short of being confident.

Curiously, the case of uncertain memory has been thought to show that being confident that *p* (or even believing that *p*) is *not* necessary to knowing that *p*. Cohn Radford (1966), for instance, has pointed out that even in a case where a person's memory of what he once knew is a good deal more uncertain than in the case sketched in the previous paragraph (even where, for example, he doesn't know that he ever knew the answer to the question and thinks he is just guessing) it might be acceptable, in the right sort of context, to say that he knows, or still knows, the thing in question.<sup>1</sup> But to infer from this to the unqualified conclusion that being confident is not necessary to knowing is to overlook the difference between *strict* and *loose* uses of 'know'. This distinction explains why it is that

S's not being sure gives us (and him) a conclusive reason in one sort of context to say that he does not know that  $p$  but that in another sort of context, without any change in him, it seems unobjectionable to say that he still knows that  $p$ . One can see how it is that the fact that S's present uncertain belief that  $p$  represents his *retaining to a degree his former knowledge* that  $p$  and the fact that his present state is *as good as knowledge* for some purposes — for example, for being able to give the right answer to certain questions — make it natural to speak loosely of his 'still knowing' that  $p$ . (And it will be still more natural, and perhaps speaking somewhat less loosely, if' — as in one of Radford's examples — S's uncertainty represents a more or less *unreasonable* distrust of his memory: it seems to him that he clearly remembers that  $p$  but he is, for no good reason, unsure that this memory impression is correct.) But that it is a loose use of 'know' is shown by the fact that it will not bear emphasis. Though it would not be misleading in some contexts to say of the S of our previous example 'It's remarkable: although he hasn't thought of it for years, S still knows who was President between Cleveland's terms', one could not but mislead if one stressed 'know' and said of S 'He still knows — really *knows* — that the President between Cleveland's terms was Harrison'. (Where 'know' is used thus loosely and will not bear emphasis one can insert 'in effect' without really weakening the intended assertion. Compare: 'She did not really *say* that  $p$  but she in effect said that  $p$ ' and 'She does not really *know* that  $p$  but she in effect knows that  $p$ '.)

It is plainly absurd to say 'I know that  $p$  but I am not sure that  $p$ ' and this might be thought to be evidence that knowing entails being confident. But Radford thinks that this absurdity can be explained in another way, and indeed it can: since 'I know that  $p$ ' obviously entails that  $p$ , if I am not sure that  $p$  I cannot be sure that I know that  $p$  and so cannot assert without reservation that I do while at the same time confessing uncertainty about  $p$ . But this does not explain why it is also absurd to offer, along with the confession that one is not sure that  $p$ , the uncertain conjecture that one knows that  $p$ . If our use of 'know' were such that the proposition that one knows that  $p$ , strictly understood, does not imply that one is confident that  $p$ , but would be made true merely by one's having known that  $p$  in the past and having a present uncertain memory that  $p$ , then it should be perfectly acceptable with nothing odd about it at all to respond to the question 'Do you *know* that  $p$ ?' with 'Well, yes, I *think* that I know that  $p$ , but since I'm not sure that  $p$  I can't be *sure* that I know it.' But this is clearly not an acceptable response to that question, in which, as its emphasis indicates, 'know' is intended quite strictly and to which the only honest answer is 'Well, no, I don't *know* that  $p$ '. (This is different from the momentarily uncertain response to 'Do you know who was President between Cleveland's terms?' that I allowed in my example. Being unsure whether or not one knows something must, as in that example, be a matter of being temporarily unsure whether one can after reflection and effort come up with an answer that one can be sure of and claim to know.) So, in the