Certainty as Regards the Existence of Physical Objects in the Later Philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein

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CERTAINTY AS REGARDS THE EXISTENCE OF PHYSICAL OBJECTS IN THE LATER PHILOSOPHY OF LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

by

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate School of Loyola University of Chicago in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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PREFACE

Ludwig Wittgenstein's *On Certainty*, recently edited by G. H. Von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe, presents philosophical difficulties which occupied its author in the last year and a half of his life. The theme which has been abstracted for explication and interpretation in this essay is his analysis of certainty as regards the existence of physical objects, i.e. the external world.

Wittgenstein's analysis will consist in the description of such concepts as: "to know", "to believe", "to be certain", "proposition", "to doubt", "to justify", "to mistake" and physical object". Thus Wittgenstein's analysis will take the form of a semantic analysis of a classical epistemological problem.

The first chapter will offer Wittgenstein's positive characterization of the cluster of epistemic concepts mentioned above. What will be delineated are his reflections on prominent aspects of the structure of factual discourse. The second chapter is a further clarification of his analysis of the epistemic concepts described in the first chapter. But here his analysis of the limits of factual discourse will be given through his criticism of G. E. Moore and the sceptical doubts as to the existence of the external world. The final chapter will take up the question of the status of propositions about the existence of the external world in light of the above.
I would now like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Edward Maziarz and Dr. Gregory Ross of the philosophy faculty: the former for giving the author the time needed to research and write this thesis and for his helpful hints on how to put things like thesis together; the latter for his aid in situating Wittgenstein in that rather amorphous group of philosophers who do language philosophy.

A special note of thanks to Mary Susan O'Hehir who saw her way through my peculiar, and at times perverse, rendition of the English Language to type the first draft of this thesis.
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CHAPTER ONE

WITTGENSTEIN'S ANALYSIS OF A CLUSTER OF PROMINENT EPISTEMIC CONCEPTS

The philosopher's task, for Wittgenstein, is to understand the structure and limits of thought. The method he used was to study the structure and limits of language. His philosophy is a critical one. He believed that philosophers often unwittingly go beyond the bounds of language into a kind of nonsense that seems to express genuine thought but in fact does not do so. Wittgenstein wanted to discover the location of the line dividing sense from nonsense so that philosophers might realize when they reach it and stop. This negative side of the philosopher's task reveals a positive side. His purpose is not merely to formulate instructions which would save philosophers from trying to say what cannot be said in language, but also to succeed in understanding the structure of what can be said.¹

This chapter offers a characterization of Wittgenstein's conception of the positive side of the philosopher's task. In the first section, his analysis of "grammar" and "criteria" is given. The second section centers on his clarification of certain prominent epistemic concepts used in factual discourse, Wittgenstein's criticisms of G. E. Moore's rejection of the sceptic's arguments against certainty in regard to

the existence of physical objects is left to Chapter Two. This division serves a triple purpose in the explication of Wittgenstein's analysis of the status of propositions about the existence of the external world.

First, Wittgenstein himself makes no clear textual indications as to where his criticism of others ends and where his own positive characterizations began. As an aid in understanding his reflections such a division is necessary. Second, resultant upon the absence of any such clear indicational devices, some interpreters have taken Wittgenstein as a kind of "meta-philosopher" who is content to refute theses without replacing them with less objectionable ones. This interpretation needs to be corrected. To be sure, in his later work he does not offer any explicit theory of language, but he does offer numerous descriptions of ordinary discourse through which the grammar of language is revealed. In this sense, he does offer a partial analysis of the structure of language. It is important to realize this point. Third, and most important, it is only by understanding his description of the structure of factual discourse that it is possible to fully comprehend his criticism of scepticism and Moore's objection to the sceptic's arguments. It is only by understanding the structure of factual discourse that one can recognize the transcending of its limits in the production of a subtle variety of nonsense.
SECTION I

We will now present the grammar of a cluster of inter-related concepts which are used in factual discourse. For Wittgenstein, the grammar of these concepts is something like the rules by which they are used; the game in which they are played; the logic of their functioning. These metaphors should be clarified before our analysis proceeds.

In On Certainty, everything that is descriptive of language-game is part of logic. (C-56)\(^2\) Wittgenstein writes:

...What sort of proposition is: "What could a mistake here be like!" It would have to be a logical proposition. But it is not a logic which is used, because what it tells us is not learned through propositions - it is a logical proposition; for it does describe the conceptual (linguistic) situation. (C-51)

or again:

...If "I know, etc." is conceived as a grammatical proposition, of course the "I" cannot be important. And it properly means "there is no such thing as doubt in this case" or "the expression 'I do not know' makes no sense in this case". And of course it follows from this that 'I know' makes no sense either. (C-58)

Logical explanations, in this sense, will be descriptions of the game, i.e. rules of the game, called language. Extending the game analogy, one can say that logical or grammatical descriptions are a collection of the rules by which we play the game.

Here Wittgenstein finds a correspondence between "rules" and "meaning". (C-62) "A meaning of a word is the kind of employment of it. For it is what we learn when the word is incorporated into our language". (C-61) Here is strong textual support for the relatedness of "grammar", "meaning", "rule", "logic", and "language-game".

Furthermore the relatedness of these concepts can be shown in that the concept "grammar", supported by these related concepts, is of prime importance in Wittgenstein's attitude towards the claim of formal logic to be sole arbiter of significance in discourse. The thesis that logic must operate according to strict rules, with no vagueness or imprecision, is attacked in On Certainty (sections 26-65). In place of the mathematical exactitude of formal logic Wittgenstein emphasizes "grammar", which rests upon agreement in the way people act, upon a form of life. These remarks will be presupposed in the following discussion. Thus about a proposition of which its opposite is self-contradictory Wittgenstein does not, in On Certainty, say that they are "analytic" or "tautological", these terms being reminiscent of his earlier Tractatus and formal logic — but that they are "grammatical".

In this essay we shall utilize a logical tool which is not mentioned in On Certainty. This is the concept "criterion". This concept, first formulated in the Blue and Brown Books, is used extensively in the Philosophical Investigations.
Within these works "grammar" and "criterion" are referred to in order to decide about the propriety of an utterance. The expression "criterion" is connected to the question of the propriety of some of these utterances or about the circumstances in which some utterance is appropriate. In the *Investigations*, when he discusses the grammar of "to fit", "to be able", and "to understand", he writes:

...The criteria which we accept for "fitting", "being able to", "understanding", are much more complicated than might appear at first. That is, the game with these words, their employment in the linguistic intercourse that is carried on by their means, is more involved - the role of these words in our language other than we are tempted to think.3

As we will show, the grammar of "to believe", "to know", are essentially related to the criteria for the normal utterance of "I believe that..." and "I know that..." So though Wittgenstein does not use the expression "criterion" there is overwhelming textual evidence to show that it in no way distorts the explication of his analysis. Indeed, it will be shown that Wittgenstein's understanding of the concept "proposition" is partially an extension and development of the concepts "criterion" and "symptoms".

Before offering the distinctive features of "criterion", a brief description should be given. Wittgenstein opposes the concept "criterion" to the concept "symptom". To the question "How do you know that so-and-so is the case?", Wittgenstein writes that we sometimes answer by giving "criteria" and sometimes by giving "symptoms". In the Blue and Brown Books he uses as an example an inflammation caused by a particular bacillus called angina. To the question "Why do you say this man has got angina?" The answer "He has the bacillus so-and-so in his blood" gives the criterion for angina. If the answer was "His throat was inflamed", this might be a symptom of angina.

Wittgenstein regards "symptom" as a phenomenon which past experience has shown that it coincided, in some way or other, with the phenomenon which is the criterion. To say "A man has angina if this bacillus is found in him" is a loose way of giving the meaning of the concept angina. But to say, "A man has angina whenever he has an inflamed throat" is to make a hypothesis. 4

Now we turn to the description of the distinctive features of "criterion". We will draw upon the work done by N. Garver in his clarification of the concept "criterion". But we shall use texts cited from On Certainty, in support of Garver's understanding of this concept as was developed by Wittgenstein in the Philosophical Investigations and the Blue and Brown Books.

If one asks someone what kind of thing a criteria is, for the other to say that it is an instrument of a certain sort would be a good introductory answer. Wittgenstein follows the basic dictionary definition of a criterion as a test or standard or canon of correctness.

One can now ask, What these instruments are for? In On Certainty, Wittgenstein offers criteria for a variety of different things: for a person knowing something, for being in a state of conviction, for a person believing something, for calling a particular tree a cedar tree, etc. Wittgenstein's criteria have their application in connection with linguistic expressions. When he describes the criteria

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for a person's believing something, it must be recalled that it is short hand for the criteria for the use of such expressions as "I believe that...." That is, criteria do not determine the empirical fact that A believes, but the "meaning" of "A believes", and this forms part of the grammar of "to believe".(C-61)

The utterances for which there are criteria are those statements which the speaker has some way of knowing to be true or false or which he might justify by reference to something other than what is stated in his utterances.(C-14) All utterances of this sort have criteria governing their use. Once it is agreed that criteria govern the use of certain linguistic expressions, it is reasonable to expect that they govern the use of all those utterances that make statements which the speaker can know, justify or verify.(C-105)

In that criteria are human instruments, criteria are always the criteria of some person or group of persons. This is an important point to emphasize in that one will not confuse criteria with necessary and sufficient conditions. It is absurd to suppose that for one person the necessary and sufficient conditions for a cedar tree growing would be different than for another person. The necessary and sufficient conditions are something in the world,
they are not a matter of linguistic convention. With criteria the case is different, there may be a divergence among people, social groups or cultures.

Criteria are arbitrary, in the sense that there need be no justification for criteria being what they are. The whole point of criteria is that they determine what we say. (C-105) To use the rule analogy for a moment, a rule indicates what we are to say. One needs no reason for following such a rule as we do; rather one is trained to follow it when we learn the language. (C-205)

Criteria are internalized in linguistic practice, and the people who use them may be quite unable to say what they are. Using Ryle's distinction between "knowing how" and "knowing that", one can say that after children have been trained in the use of linguistic expressions, they are still unable to explicate the grammar of their language in Wittgenstein's sense. (C-95)

These criteria are generally rough and imprecise; it is their regular use and acknowledgment, rather than precision which makes them useful. To say they are imprecise is only in light of a purity which had been demanded by the Wittgenstein of the Tractatus. They are as precise as they need be for human communication.
The roughness of criteria can be delineated in two ways. First, the criteria for "I know that..." determine the sorts of things that would show "I know that..." is true or false; and to say whether some set of circumstances are of this sort or not requires discrimination that is not determined by the criteria and is only given in practice. (C-29) The second way in which the roughness of criteria shows itself is in one's inability to say exactly what the criteria are even for simple utterances. Wittgenstein writes: "Am I not getting closer and closer to saying that in the end logic cannot be described? You must look at the practice of language, then you will see it." (C-501)

Criteria presuppose circumstances of application. This characteristic is apparent in cases where there are many different criteria for a linguistic expression. The vast majority of concepts have several complementary criteria.

Furthermore there may be a fluctuation between the criteria for a linguistic expression and symptoms or evidence for it. "The same proposition may get treated at one time as something to be tested by experience at another as a rule of testing". (C-109) But it would be incorrect to say that there were only symptoms or evidence.
Wittgenstein's understanding of the concepts "grammar" and "criteria" have now been explicated. We are now in a position to offer a detailed account of his analysis of certain prominent epistemic concepts. His analysis will present a partial description of the grammar, i.e. use of these concepts through a presentation of the criteria.

SECTION II

We will start our examination of Wittgenstein's analysis with the concept "to know", then go on to "to believe", "to doubt", "to be certain", and "proposition". This is not to say that we will not have cause to note his analysis of other concepts in the clarification of the above.

The explication will be somewhat reconstructive, because many of the linguistic situations are of the author's invention. These situations have been developed out of those given by Wittgenstein in his somewhat abbreviated style. They have no distorting effect on the doctrine presented; the doctrines are Wittgenstein's.

Wittgenstein offers numerous commonplace situations in which the concept "to know" is used. He is concerned with revealing the linguistic presupposition of these situations. In presenting the linguistic presupposition, he will delineate the criteria for its use. Thus he will offer a partial description of the grammar or the meaning of this concept.
One of the first moves in his analysis to show that when one utters the expression "I know that...", one is not referring to one's mental state. One is doing something, not describing what one is doing. He writes: "I know seems to describe a state of affairs which guarantees what is known, guarantees it as a fact. One always forgets the expression 'I thought I knew'".(C-12)

How does he go about showing this? Imagine the following situation: call it Situation 1. A. "That is a new police armoured personnel carrier." B. "No, it isn't." A. "I know that it is. Look at the emblem of the Chicago Police Department." B. "Oh, now I see it!" One of the ways someone would say that another person knows something is that that person is ready to give grounds for what he knows. To use the expression "I know that...", one has to be able, if requested, to tell how one knows.(C-484)

On the other hand, if speaker A could not tell "how he knows", one would rebuke him for saying that he knew, "You didn't know at all." Here the expression "I know that..." was mis-used.

One of the criterion for the use of the expression "I know that..." is that one is ready and can, if so requested, state his grounds, or "how I know." Put more formally, "'I know that...' in context 1, is being ready, if requested, to state ones grounds".(C-18)
A final interesting, and important point about this illustration. Speaker A's original utterance asserted something being the case, i.e. that the vehicle is a police personnel carrier. This statement was reasserted in his reply to speaker B. In both utterances the correctness of the statement depends on the evidence which is offered.

When questioned, speaker A uttered "I know that...". This expression is used at times when there is some question as regards the correctness of the statement. Notice that this has little to do with the correctness of the statement. "I know that..." does not guarantee that the statement is correct. It just doesn't function that way.

Imagine the following situation: call it Situation 2. A. "Is that a cedar tree over there (pointing to a tree)?" B. "I know that it is. When I was a boy we had two of them in our front yard. Now look at the shape of the leaves." A. "Yes, its true, the leaves are...".(C-176)

Speaker A posed the question whether the tree could or couldn't be called a cedar tree. Speaker B, in answering the question, did at least two things.

First, he offered something from his past experience which would allow him to be in a position to know such things. He was brought up with cedar trees. Second, he offered evidence for calling this tree, here and now, a cedar tree.
However, if speaker B was not in a position to know what he says he knows, A would not accept this statement that "he knows that...". Consider the situation where two friends are playing the stock market. Speaker A has played it for years, but speaker B is having his first go at it. The stock B buys advances significantly, and he says, "I knew it would." Speaker A then responds, "The hell you did; it's only a lucky guess."

Returning to Situation 2. The evidence is accepted by speaker A as showing that the statement is true. This evidence is all that is needed in this situation. If speaker A still was not convinced that this was all that was needed to show that that was a cedar tree, he would ask for further evidence. Speaker B would have offered it. Note that there must be the possibility of deciding the truth or falsity of the statement. If speaker B could not have shown that it was true, speaker A would not have accepted B's statement that he knew.

More formally, it can be put as follows: "I know, in context 2, means that there is a possibility of showing that p is true". (C-243)

Now consider the following situation: call it Situation 3. It takes place at a cocktail party. A. "Haven't I met you before?" B. "No, I don't think so". A. "Yes, I have, in Bulgaria". B. "No, you couldn't have. I have
never been there". A. "Why yes I have met you". B. "No, I know that you haven't; I have never been out of North America!" In this situation, it is important to observe that when speaker B stated "I know that..." it was not an expression of his readiness for his statement to be confirmed. He was not expressing his willingness to have his grounds or evidence checked for their truthfulness. If he had, he might have said "I believe that I have never been out..." Rather, "I know that..." implies "bewilderment" if what he said was not confirmed.(C-333) Wittgenstein writes of the use of "I know that..." in situations like 3, "I know = I am familiar with it as a certainty."(C-272)

In completing our reconstruction of Wittgenstein's analysis of the concept "I know", consider the following situation: call it Situation 4. A. "I know that that's a cedar tree over there." B. "You really believe that?" A. "Yes, look at the way the leaves are shaped." Our first point is that when speaker A states "I know", he also is willing to state "I believe".(C-171)

It might be objected that though "I believe" and "I know" assert the same statement, they exclude one another. If "I know p" it would be wrong for me to say "I believe p", because this would suggest that I do not know it. If, in knowing p, I am asked whether I believe p, I would retort,
"No, I know p". But this is not a serious objection. In a parallel case, I would mislead someone if I described my parents as people I live with. Asked whether they are people I live with I would say, "No, they are my parents". Nevertheless I live with my parents. What is true is that I do not merely live with them. Similarly, if "I know p", I do not merely believe p, but still "I believe p". (C-425)

A more powerful argument against a criterion for the use of the concept "I know" in terms of "I believe" is that people can, it seems, know something to be the case and yet refuse, or seem unable, to bring themselves to believe it. A mother who is told by a reliable witness with a great deal of circumstantial detail that her child has been murdered by being pushed into a river by another child might be in such a situation. Wittgenstein's approach to this difficulty is to say that although she has conclusive grounds for believing that her child is dead, she does not, in fact, believe it or know it. To have compelling grounds is one thing, but to recognize them as compelling is another thing. (C-239)

Wittgenstein has partially described the speaker's use of the concept "to know" in common linguistic situations. From his analysis we have formulated the following points about the grammar of this expression. "'I know',
in common linguistic contexts, means being able, if requested, to state one's grounds for p, to show the possibility of p being true, to offer one's position for knowing p, and to believe p". It has also been shown, that "I know that..., in situation 3, means "an unwillingness to have one's grounds for p, ones position for p, the truth of p, and the belief in p, tested", though in the other situations there is an implied willingness to entertain the possibility of the statement being mistaken.

Furthermore, it is interesting that one uses the expression in situations where there is a possibility of a contradiction or questioning on the part of another.(C-424) When there is no question, or no wish to emphasize linguistically what one is about, the expression "I know" is not used.

This observation should not be considered a criticism. That one doesn't utter the expression in speaking about what is the case is not a shortcoming or lack of exactitude on our part. Rather, people communicate facts about the world and themselves to one another. It is accepted that when one communicates facts one knows these facts to be true. This is what factual discourse is for.
We have already mentioned the expression "to believe". It was shown that the criteria for the use of the expression "I know that..." is related to that of the expression "I believe that..." The latter is similar to the former in that neither is a description of one's mental state. (C-42) It is not an expression referring to an inner process.

Observe the following situation: call it Situation A. 
A. "I believe that John is coming". B. "No, he said he was going out of town". A. "I know he is. There is his car coming up the street". B. "No, it is not. That is a newer model". (C-42) It is important to note that in this illustration the truth of speaker A's statement was in question, but that he believed it wasn't. When a person objects to another believing a statement, he says "You shouldn't believe that...", and not "You don't believe that...".

One can ask, if one is curious or genuinely interested in the truth of a statement made, "How do you know?" It is never asked, "How do you believe?" One must state how he is in a position for making the statement and one must state his grounds for the truth of the statement. If these two conditions are not satisfied one will say, "You don't know at all".

One does ask, "Why do you believe?"; but never, "Why do you know?" Here it is not necessary that one gives his
grounds, or if one does, they can be scattered references. (C-550) The use of the expression "I believe that..." does not have, as one of its linguistic presuppositions "the possibility of offering one's grounds or evidence". It is important to realize this. What one believes about the world are the sorts of things which are "groundless". (C-166) They are the sorts of things that have no special way of being tested.

Furthermore, one doesn't say, "He is in a position to believe that." Rather one says, "It is reasonable to assume that in this situation..." It is not part of criteria for the use of "I believe that..." that one can give one's position for believing a statement. However, it is possible that one can decide whether it is reasonable in such-and-such a situation to assume this or that with confidence. This is the case even though what is believed is false. (C-556)

In summation, one believes that some statement or other is true, or that some state of affairs is or is not the case. "I believe that..." is followed by an assertion, i.e. a statement. It was shown that "I believe that..." means "that one can state why one holds the statement, though it is not necessary to offer grounds for the truth of the statement". Though part of the criteria of "I believe that..." is not "being in a position",


one can and does speak of it "being reasonable in such-and-such a situation to assume the statement."

It is important to recognize that people act according to a system of propositions which are believed, but they very rarely verbally formulate these. One believes what people transmit in a certain manner. In this way geographical, historical, religious, and psychological facts are communicated. (C-170) As a child, by instruction and observation, one is taught to accept these things and act upon them. One is initiated into a culture unified by science and education.

To see that this is an initiation, a form of ritualized training, imagine a child in the following classroom situation (Situation 6), questioning a particular geographical proposition which is held as true. A. "How do we know that corn is grown in Indiana?" B. "Well, this book was written by a man who knows these things." A. "But do we have to believe that just because he writes..." B. "You will never learn geography if you don't stop asking such silly questions!" (C-283) One is taught "to believe in" a vast number of things and, only after one accepts and acts upon this system, is one allowed to question some propositions within it. In "knowing that..." and "believing that" $p$ is the case, and conversely to "doubt that" $p$ is the case, one is first taught "to believe in" an entire system of propositions. (C-114)
One final comment before proceeding to Wittgenstein's analysis of the concept "to doubt". First "I believe that..." and "I believe in..." are used in situations where there are needs for verbal stage-setting. When people communicate facts to one another, as we have seen, they are expected to communicate what they know. This is what factual discourse is all about. Usually there is no need to position utterances with the expression "I know that...". Similarly, people are expected to believe the facts they know. They act like persons act when they believe and at times can be said to know what they believe. Sometimes this activity takes the form of verbal utterances, that one believes certain facts.

Wittgenstein's analysis of the expression "to doubt" has already been introduced in illustration 6. The questioning of the child was countered by the teacher's offering grounds for the truth of her original statement. Yet when the child continued in his doubt about the truth of these grounds, the teacher rebuked him for his nonsensical question.(C-310) The teacher didn't answer the child's question because within the context his doubt was a groundless one. The child was doubting what had to be accepted in learning geography. Obviously when one uses the expression "I doubt that..." one must "offer his particular grounds for questioning".(C-122) It should also
be noted that "I doubt that..." functions in a similar way to "I know that" or "I believe that", in that it does not offer a description of a mental state of affairs. Rather, it is part of an activity which we call "doubting a particular proposition which purports to be a statement about the world". (C-359)

In the following explication, we will want to separate doubts of three different sorts: those which are reasonable, those which are unreasonable, i.e. superfluous, and finally those doubts which are logically impossible, i.e. doubts which are no doubts at all. (C-453) This last sort of doubt will be given only a preliminary description. The full import of it can only be understood in relation to Wittgenstein's criticism of Moore's article on the "Proof for the existence of the external world".

Imagine the following situation: call it Situation 7.

A. "We can explain the rise in food prices by increased expenditures for the war effort." B. "No, we cannot. If you look at the statistics from 1950-2 you will see that our involvement in Korea..." A. "This is true, but...". (C-335)

Here is the normal give and take of a statement asserted and doubts raised as to its truthfulness. Speaker B expresses doubts about the statement, speaker A makes and offers his grounds or evidence for the falsity of the
statement. In this case one would say that speaker B offered his doubts and showed the reasonableness of this doubt by stating his evidence. More formally, "'I doubt that...", in context 3, is being able, if requested, to offer one's grounds against the truth of the statement." It is also interesting to note that the reasonableness of the grounds is contingent upon speaker A accepting the evidence. But this is not contingent upon any decision on speaker A's part. (C-271) Statistical evidence is what is called "good grounds" in economics. As a student speaker A was taught to accept this type of evidence as good evidence. (C-603)

Using the same illustration, a third party joins the conversation. C. "Gentlemen, Gentlemen, it seems to me that your discussion is a fruitless one." A. and B. "Why?" C. "Your use of statistics invalidates your so-called explanations". A. "We realize that the statistical method has many shortcomings such as..., but we take these into account when using them". C. "Yes, but you can never get to the truth with a mere correlation of a certain limited set of phenomenon". B. "Your doubts are unacceptable. To be sure we don't get all the facts for some ideal explanation. But this is the truth as far as we can know it". In this discussion a further step has been taken. Our third questioner has offered doubts not only of the evidence or grounds for the truth of a statement, but has also rejected
the method for obtaining the truth of statement and others similar to it.

In response to speaker C's objections, speaker A and B accept the difficulties involved in the use of the statistical method, but have no better one to offer. They will call speaker C's doubts unreasonable and unacceptable for he offers grounds which have been considered before by the two researchers. Speaker C only offers the possibility of doubting as the ground for overthrowing a methodological principle in search of ideal explanations. This possibility has not been found acceptable for there are no grounds for it. It is "merely" possible. (C-392)

A fourth party joins our group. D. "It seems to me that the whole of the previous discussion is futile. The explanation you seek, the principles you use, the evidence you offer are all quite meaningless to the real question." C. "Well, well, it's difficult to respond to your attack. I don't know really where to begin. I'm not exactly sure what you mean. In what way is it meaningless?". (C-24)

What is of interest in this conclusion to the illustration is that speakers A, B, and C are confronted with one who objects to the totality of principles, propositions, evidence, etc., which is called the "science of economics."
They find it difficult to engage in a discussion with their objector in that they are not clear in what way they should "argue" for the truth of their science. Indeed, what would count as "true" for them does not seem to hold for their objector.

To "argue" one uses certain principles, propositions, evidence, etc., in supporting or denying a proposition or set of them. But here there is no method or argumentation. One is not sure what "argument" means here. What is asked for is an explanation of the meaning of D's utterances. If one cannot be assured of an accepted base for speaking for or against certain propositions, can one be assured of the meaning of the objector's utterances? (C-456) To be more precise, can what the objector is doing be called "doubting"? We had offered the aspects of the criteria for saying that "He is doubting" in our first two parts of this illustration. What speaker D is doing seems to be something similar to this: yet we would not want to call this "a doubt". Perhaps speakers A, B, and C would conclude that speaker D was "mentally upset". They would suppose that normal people do not doubt like that. (C-255)

We now turn to Wittgenstein's analysis of the concept "to be certain". No better introduction could be given
concerning the question, "What is meant by the truth of the proposition 'is certain'?" than when Wittgenstein writes:

...With the word "certain" we express complete conviction, the total absence of doubt, and thereby we seek to convince other people. But when is something objectively certain? When a mistake is not possible. But what kind of possibility is that? Mustn't a mistake be logically excluded?(C-194)

This distinction that Wittgenstein draws is reminiscent of one given in historical introductions to the problem of certitude. That is, "certainty" has been taken to be either a state of mind or a relational property of propositions or statements. The task now is to separate and delineate these two sorts of certainty.

To see this observe the following situation: call it Situation 8. A. "Is that a cedar tree over there?" B. "Yes, it is. I am certain that it is. Look at..." Here "I am certain that..." functions in a way similar to "I am sure...", "I am familiar...", and "I am comfortable with...", in that speaker B was offering how he was holding "that is a cedar tree".(C-194)

It should be noted that in this illustration speaker B's holding the statement as certain was not a condition from which he inferred the truth of the statement. Rather, he offered his grounds to A for the truth of the statement.
These grounds are ones which could be subject to dispute, and B could be mistaken. So the use of "I am certain that" is not a condition for the truth of the statement, though it is a description of how B holds the statement. (C-30)

Following Wittgenstein, it was stated that "I am certain that..." is a psychological concept used in a description of one's relation to an assertion. Now it can be asked what are the criteria for the identification and ascription of this expression to a person? One will say that "he is certain that..." when the speaker acts as one "who does not have the slightest doubt that that is a cedar tree; that he is convinced that that is a cedar tree and will attempt to convince others in his particular situation that that is a cedar tree."

If one didn't behave in a way similar to the above when he uttered the expression "I am certain that...", one would say that this person was lying or didn't understand the meaning of his words. Imagine a ticket agent who stated that he was certain that the train would arrive at 10:05, yet, while saying this, he was hurriedly looking up time schedules, rubbing his head, sitting in an uneasy position, etc. One would say that perhaps he uttered the expression as a joke in revealing that he wasn't really certain at all when the train would arrive.
In this regard, if one uttered a statement without the linguistic cue "I am certain that..." and if one's behavior was similar to the criterion offered above, one could say "he is certain that..." In other words, the utterance of the expression "I am certain that..." is only one of the criteria for people engaged in "certainty behavior".

Wittgenstein offers another way of understanding the concept "to be certain". This is "Objective Certainty", where a mistake about the truthfulness of propositions is "logically" excluded. The linguistic game in which speakers participate excludes certain sorts of propositions within it from being mistaken. If one doesn't hold these sorts of propositions as being certain then he would not be playing the game according to the rules.\(^\text{(C-446)}\)

What is here described is not the use of "to be certain" as in "I am certain that..." which is a description of a "psychological state", but rather that the grounds for the truthfulness of propositions are certain, i.e., "It is certain that...". That the grounds for the statement are certain is not something any particular person can decide upon. Rather it is determined by the game they are involved in.\(^\text{(C-56)}\) On the relationship between propositions which are certain and the use of "I am certain that..." Wittgenstein writes that they just hang together.\(^\text{(C-313)}\)
For a clearer understanding of this, observe the following: (1) "I am certain that is a cedar tree", and (2) "I am certain that I am R.M." It has already been shown that in uttering (1), the speaker was describing how he holds to this proposition, yet the proposition's truthfulness is verified by ascertaining whether the grounds that the latter offers are sufficient. If speaker A questioned the truth of the statement, speaker A wasn't questioning whether speaker B in fact held the proposition as a certainty, i.e. whether he believed it was certain. It could turn out that they may look closer at the tree and discover that it wasn't a cedar tree at all. Here and in many other like situations mistakes are possible and do occur.

Now imagine the following situation: call it Situation 9. A man receives a caller at his home. The caller questions him in regard to his identity. A. "I am R.M." B. "Are you really?" A. "I am certain of it. I lived here for the last five years, here comes my wife. This must be a friend's practical joke". B. "No it isn't. I would offer evidence that you really are not who you say you are." A. "I refuse to allow any such thing. This whole thing is absurd".(C-577) In this situation speaker A refuses to accept any evidence to the effect that he is
not R.M.(C-381) To give up or entertain as doubtful his identity, speaker A would have to question a set of related propositions which he also holds as certain, i.e. where he lives, how old he is, what he does for a living, etc., and speaker A will not allow this. For speaker A everything, i.e. all his past experiences, speak in favor of his being R.M. and nothing speaks against it. These would conclusively prove that he is in fact R.M.(C-594)

That these grounds are conclusive is premised on the fact that people are brought up to accept many propositions as certain, and the grounds which one has for them are considered conclusive. In normal circumstances people know with a maximum degree of certainty what their names are, where they live, what they do for a living, and one doesn't doubt in normal circumstances that they could be "mistaken" about these things.(C-529) If one was mistaken about where he put his keys this is nothing unusual, but what would one say of a person who was mistaken about his identity? Would one say that he made a "mistake" in the same sense as being mistaken about his keys?(C-300) No one just doesn't make mistakes about ones identity.

To clarify this last point, Wittgenstein observes that mistakes not only have a "cause", but they also have a "ground".(C-74) When someone makes a mistake it can in
most circumstances be fitted into what he knows. If one is "mistaken" about where he left his keys, he still knows he is in the right house, he knows that he has just come home from work, etc. Here there is a mistake about one particular point within a field of points. However, the case of someone who made a "mistake" about his identity is different. Jim Smith said he was Jesus Christ and lived in Galilee. (C-67) He would be "mistaken" about his whole field and not just one or a couple of points within it. But this kind of "mistake" is usually called "insanity". One would say perhaps that he was "temporarily confused and disoriented" and this is not a "mistake". (C-71)

Completing our explication of Wittgenstein's analysis of structure of certain epistemic concepts, his grammatical description of the concept "proposition" will now be given. Wittgenstein writes that "our 'empirical propositions' do not form a homogeneous mass". (C-213) He says "Here one must, I believe, remember that the concept 'proposition' itself is not a sharp one". (C-320) Finally Wittgenstein says "It is clear that our empirical propositions do not all have the same status...". (C-167)

Before entering into a detailed analysis of the concept "proposition" we will offer the root metaphors that
Wittgenstein uses as the point of departure for his logical analysis. By root metaphor, what is meant is a somewhat systematic repository of ideas by means of which Wittgenstein describes, by analogical extension, the concept "proposition" where these ideas do not immediately and literally apply.

First, Wittgenstein's use of the River Metaphor. He writes:

...It might be imagined that some propositions of the form of empirical propositions, were hard and functioned as channels for such empirical propositions as were not hardened but fluid; and that this relation altered with time, in that fluid propositions hardened and hard ones become fluid. (C-96)

Further:

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

Then there is the picture metaphor. Wittgenstein writes that "The truth of certain empirical propositions belongs to our frame of reference". (C-83) And again:

...But I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No; it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true and false. (C-99)
Finally:

In general I take as true what is found in text-books of geography for example. Why? I say: all these facts have been confirmed a hundred times over. But how do I know that? What is my evidence for it? I have a world-picture. Is it true or false? Above all it is the substratum of all my inquiring and asserting. The propositions describing it are not all equally subject to testing. (C-162)

Here Wittgenstein is not so much arguing a position for the correct description of the concept "proposition", as attempting to change a philosopher's associations which surround the mention of this concept. What generally are these associations?

It is that propositions are: (1) Analytic, or the truth of the proposition is determined by the meaning of the terms which constitute the proposition. Thus "Bachelors are unmarried males" is true because "unmarried male" defines or is a logically essential characteristic of "bachelor." The relationship which obtains between the propositions "John is a bachelor" and "John is an unmarried male" is one of logical entailment; and (2) Synthetic, or the truth of the proposition is determined by its method of verification. Synthetic propositions give one information about the world, and the relationship between any two of them is a contingent rather than logical one.

Wittgenstein suggests, in the above, that there are propositions which at the surface appear to be empirical
or synthetic. However, when he offers an analysis of their functioning, i.e. meaning, he discovers that they are rather the frame through which, or the bedrock upon which empirical propositions have their meaning. Furthermore, they cannot be considered analytic.

That "framework propositions" are not analytic observe the following. What is the relationship between someone's engaging in doubting behavior and his being in doubt? Obviously the tie between the two is not a strictly logical one. It is not a matter of entailment. It is perfectly conceivable, in almost any given case, that the statement of a framework proposition be true while its related empirical proposition is false.

The characterization of the sort of propositions which Wittgenstein metaphorically calls fluid or those within the framework of a picture will be given first. In analyzing one of the functions of this concept a partial description of its grammar will be presented.

One final point before proceding to our explication. In developing - as an introduction to Wittgenstein's grammatical descriptions - his concepts of "grammar," "rule," "game," and "criteria" - it was mentioned that though he does not use the concept "criterion" there is overwhelming textual support that something like the tool "criteria" is used in On Certainty. It will now be
shown that Wittgenstein's analysis of the concept "proposition" is an extension of his understanding of "criterion".

Take an expression which has been used on numerous previous occasions in this essay: "that is a cedar tree" (pointing to a tree). What was happening in the linguistic situation where the speaker uttered these words? As we have seen that utterance was one that could be tested, if the situation required it. If speaker B was not satisfied that the tree pointed to was a cedar tree, speaker A would have to show why the tree could be called a cedar tree. There was, then, the possibility that this utterance could be tested. Therefore if one were to ask what sort of thing an "empirical proposition" is, the answer would follow that it is an utterance which is testable. More formally "empirical proposition", in this context, is "an utterance which is testable". (C-109)

It was stated that "empirical propositions are testable". In order to extend our explication, it now should be asked what do tests do? Wittgenstein mentions a variety of descriptions which characterize utterances which are testable. Most importantly they can be: (1) "correct or mistaken", (2) "true or false", (3) "evidence can be offered for or against them", (4) "supported or denied by grounds", and (5) "justified in some way".
If from the number of remarks made about what we shall call "bedrock propositions" or "framework propositions" one could determine their interest for Wittgenstein, then it could be stated that it far outweighs his concern for empirical propositions. Indeed empirical propositions are mentioned only in relation to his more extensive discussion of "framework propositions". But this would be misleading, for as we shall see empirical propositions can only be understood in light of his clarification of other types of propositions used in our talk about the world.

"Framework" or "bedrock propositions" are, to say the least, norms, methodical principles, or rules for determining the correctness of something. What is this something which they determine? They are rules for a variety of different things. As we have seen they are used to decide whether a person knows something, whether he believes something, whether a person is making a mistake, whether "x" is a cedar tree, whether "y" is a police armoured personnel carrier, etc. Here we are not determining the way the world is, but rather that one calls that particular object a cedar tree.

The utterances for which there are framework propositions or statements, are ones which the speaker has a way of showing to be true, justified, correct or grounded. All utterances of this sort have bedrock propositions governing their use.
In that "propositions" are human norms, i.e. methodological principles, framework propositions are always propositions of some person or group of persons. As with Wittgenstein's earlier notion of criterion, this is an important point, because one must not confuse bedrock propositions with necessary and sufficient conditions. It is absurd to hold that the necessary and sufficient conditions for a cedar tree growing are different from one person to another. Necessary and sufficient conditions are something in the world; they are not a matter which is subject to linguistic determination. With the case of bedrock propositions the case is different. There may be a divergence from person to person.

Bedrock propositions are arbitrary, in the sense that there need be no justification for bedrock propositions being what they are. To use the picture metaphor for a moment, Wittgenstein writes "I did not get my picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No: it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between true or false". (C-94) There is no need to justify the truth of bedrock propositions for they are what we use in determining what is true and what is false, i.e. empirical propositions. To ask whether they are true or false is a question which soon loses its force.
"Bedrock propositions" are internalized in linguistic practice. People who are engaged in this activity may be quite unable to say what they are. Wittgenstein writes: "the propositions describing this world-picture might be part of a kind of mythology, and their role is like that of rules of a game; and the game can be learned purely practically, without learning any explicit rules". (C-95)

These bedrock propositions are generally rough and imprecise. Their acknowledged use in normal circumstances, rather than their precision is what makes them useful. (C-373) Then again their lack of exactitude is only a lack from the perspective of a formalized system such as formal logic. From the standpoint of human communication they are as precise as they need to be. The roughness of bedrock propositions can be exemplified in two ways. First, the framework for "'x' is a cedar tree" determines the evidence that shows "'x' is a cedar tree" is a true or false proposition; and to say whether some set of circumstances are of this sort or not requires discrimination that is not determined by the bedrock propositions and is only given in practice. (C-139) Second, the roughness of bedrock propositions shows itself in one's inability to say exactly what bedrock propositions are for simple utterances like "making a mistake". (C-23)
Bedrock propositions presuppose circumstances of application. This feature is apparent in cases where there are many different bedrock propositions for a linguistic utterance. The vast majority of empirical propositions have several complementary bedrock propositions. (C-27) Moreover, there may be fluctuations between bedrock propositions for linguistic expressions and empirical propositions which serve as "evidence" for the utterance. The same propositions may get treated at one time as something to test by experience and as a rule for testing. Wittgenstein writes, "It is clear that our empirical propositions do not all have the same status, since one can lay down such a proposition and turn it from an empirical proposition into a norm of description". (C-167) This is not to say that all we have are empirical propositions. (C-423) There is not sharp boundary between the two, but the lack of sharpness is that of boundary between rule and empirical propositions. (C-309, 318 and 319)

This fluctuation between bedrock and empirical propositions is premised on the fact of the contextual character of bedrock propositions. A linguistic situation has a certain purpose and certain presuppositions and bedrock propositions are among these presuppositions. But not all linguistic situations have the same purpose or presuppositions. So what may be taken as grammatical, i.e.
bedrock proposition in one situation could in another be an empirical proposition.

Finally, we can pose the difficult question whether there can be a conflict between different bedrock propositions. In one sense, no, there could not be a conflict. If our bedrock propositions ceased to coincide, the proposition to which they are related would dissolve in that the expression would have no clear use. In light of this fact it is very difficult to see what sense there would be in continuing to give the designation "bedrock proposition" to those phenomena which have been counted as bedrock propositions. If there were no bedrock propositions, there could be no conflict between them. That this is the case can be better realized when it is recalled that bedrock propositions are human products with regular uses, and their application presupposes circumstances which frequently obtain, and where these circumstances do not obtain our propositions do not apply and thus lose their sense.

It has been shown that within the language game it is impossible to have a conflict over bedrock propositions. The question now can be asked whether something from outside a particular language game can cause a conflict in bedrock propositions. What will now be shown is that there is a possible conflict between two linguistic systems.
Wittgenstein poses the question whether it is "wrong" to guide one's actions according to propositions of physics. Is one to say that one has no "good grounds" for the propositions of physics? Wittgenstein remarks, "Isn't precisely this what we call a 'good ground'". (C-608)

His point is that in our culture having "good grounds" for something being the case is having propositions which are articulated by the science of physics. To ask whether the grounds offered by physics are "good grounds" would be pointless. "Good grounds" are grounds which are formulated by physics. We first accept and acknowledge this for we have been initiated in a culture which is unified by science and education.

What would happen if one were to meet a people who did not accept this as a telling reason? Instead of physics they would consult an oracle. This is what they accept as having "good grounds". The question whether these grounds are "good grounds" would be as pointless for them as the question whether the grounds of physics are good grounds for us.

Now if one were to confront a person from this other culture with the assertion "the sun is a large gaseous mass", he might retort that "the sun is a hole in the sky". What one has here is a conflict over what it means "to be the sun". If our disputants were to offer their.
grounds for their concepts of the sun—"A large gaseous mass" or "a hole in the sky"—neither would accept the other's grounds as being "good grounds". If one called the other "wrong" Wittgenstein writes, "Aren't we using our language-game as a base from which to combat theirs". (C-609) He also writes, "I said I would 'combat' the other man, but wouldn't I give him reasons? Certainly; but how far do they go? At the end of reasons comes persuasion (think what happens when missionaries converted natives)." (C-612)

We have now brought to a conclusion our explication of On Certainty with its view towards the positive characterization which Wittgenstein offers of the structure of factual discourse. First presented was Wittgenstein's formulation of the "grammar" and "criteria" for talk about the world. With these philosophical tools at hand, we followed Wittgenstein in offering the criteria for a set of epistemic concepts. The linguistic presuppositions of these concepts were disclosed in bringing their meaning to the fore. We now turn to Wittgenstein's description of the limits of this structure, in relationship to the status of propositions about the existence of the physical world.
CHAPTER TWO

WITTGENSTEIN'S CRITIQUE OF MOORE'S REJECTION
OF THE SCEPTICAL DOUBTS AS TO THE
EXISTENCE OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD

Though this chapter will offer a further explication of Wittgenstein's analysis of the epistemic concepts given grammatical descriptions in the previous chapter, our focus will no longer be on the normal circumstances of their use. We will not proceed in a further delineation of the grammar of these concepts by way of an analysis of their criteria which is the linguistic presupposition of these normal circumstances. Rather, our analysis will explicate his grammatical descriptions through his observations of the abnormal occasions of their use. The value of these observations are that through them the limits of the meaning of these concepts will be given. This will also be a description of the grammar of these epistemic concepts but now by observing situations where there are no criteria for their use.

What sort of abnormal circumstances does Wittgenstein primarily concern himself with? The examples given, in On Certainty, are those in which G. E. Moore rejects the sceptic's arguments against certainty as regards the existence of the physical world. In offering instances of abnormal situations, Wittgenstein will offer a description of the "philosophical use" of epistemic concept.
Wittgenstein offers no clear indication, in his scattered remarks on Moore, to which article in particular he is at any given time referring. The author has taken the liberty, in making this explication as clear and as true as possible to Wittgenstein's analysis, of dividing Wittgenstein's remarks into two broad categories. First to be taken up is his criticism of "A Defense of Common Sense" which seems to revolve around Moore's use of the expression "I know that...". Following this will be an explication of his criticism of "Proof of the External World", which seems to deal with the sort of "proposition" Moore attempts to prove, the sort of "proof" he offers when he states "I know that...", and the "doubt" which this proof is to overcome.

What Wittgenstein shows is that Moore takes the concepts "to know", "proof", "proposition", and "to doubt" out of their normal application in common discourse, and puts them to a specifically philosophical use. This use of these concepts transcends the limits of factual discourse in attempting to say what cannot be said.

This production of factual nonsense is a consequence of Moore's attempting to offer a proof for the existence of the external world which he takes to be an epistemological difficulty. Wittgenstein takes this epistemological
difficulty as a problem to be dealt with by an analysis of epistemic concepts. For Wittgenstein this epistemological difficulty can only be resolved by a semantic analysis. (C-3)

We leave to chapter three our final clarification of Wittgenstein's reflections on certainty as regards the existence of the physical world. In explicating his remarks on the structure of factual discourse, in light of the limits of its meaningfulness, we will offer his views on the status of propositions about the existence of the physical world.

SECTION ONE

The most pervasive criticism made by Wittgenstein on Moore's article "A Defense of Common Sense" is contained in the following aphorism. 6 He writes:

...Now, can one enumerate what one knows (like Moore)? Straight off like that, I believe not. -For otherwise the expression "I Know" gets misused. And through the misuse a queer and extremely important mental state seems to be revealed. (C-6)

In chapter one we had shown the specific use that is made with the expression "I know that...". We had shown that this expression is commonly used in circumstances where there is some possibility of a dispute about the proposition asserted.

We had also offered Wittgenstein's positive characterization of the concept "to know". With the clarification of the criteria of "I know that...", we gained a partial description of the grammar of "to know". In summarizing the results of that analysis, it was stated that "I know that...", in common linguistic contexts, is being able, if requested, to state one's grounds for the statement, to be in a position to make the statement, to state the truth of the statement, and to believe the statement. Furthermore, it was shown that "I know that...", in context 3, means an unwillingness to have one's grounds for the statement, one's position for the statement, the truth of the statement, and the belief in the statement, tested. Though in the other situation there was an implied willingness to entertain the possibility of the statement being mistaken.

Moore, to the contrary, does not use the expression in either of the above manners. He states: "I know with certainty that there exists at present a human body, which is my body, this body was born at a certain time in the past, and has existed continuously ever since", etc. He utters this in circumstances where there is no one questioning him as to the truth of these assertions. Now we must ask, How does this expression get misused?
Imagine the situation where Moore was questioned on how long he has known such things as he has asserted. He would no doubt suggest that he has known them since the time he could think about them. Here it is easy to be misled into conceiving of "knowing" as similar to "thinking" in that they are both taken as mental states.

So even when he hadn't uttered these assertions, say, a month before he wrote his essay, there was a "place" where these assertions could be found. This "place" would be the "knowing process". His utterances would be the external manifestation of the known thing which is somehow in his mind. When he does utter these assertions, their truth is assured by the fact that they refer, are the manifestation of, this mental state. This mental state is the ground for his utterances because they merely report a mental occurrence. Here the picture is complete. Moore has been deceived into conceiving "I know that..." as similar to "I am thinking" is similar to "I am certain", "I am sure", in that it is a description of how one holds an assertion. But "I know that...", as we have seen, does not function that way.

We have presented, in the above imaginary situation, the picture, i.e. theory, of what knowing is taken to be by G. E. Moore. This picture is a result of his misuse of
of the concept "to know". But we do not have Moore here to question. So we will, following Wittgenstein, approach and criticize Moore's picture of knowing in an indirect manner.

Even if we had Moore here to criticize, it is doubtful whether Wittgenstein, and this analysis in following him, could confront and criticize Moore's concept of knowing in a direct way. To the question "What is knowing?", we have imaginatively elicited an answer from Moore. If Wittgenstein rejected this and stated "No, knowing is...", then he would fall under the same illusion which captivates Moore. Wittgenstein would be offering just another conception of what knowing is. He would be replacing one picture with another, one theory with another.

However, the uniqueness of Wittgenstein's method lies in the fact that he does not offer any philosophical theories. Yet his method is not merely an empirical observation of linguistic facts which would be utilized in anthropological linguistics. Rather, these ordinary linguistic facts are used to dissolve philosophical pictures and the paradoxes which arise from them. There are at least two approaches that Wittgenstein takes in his criticism of Moore's conception of knowing.

No better introduction can be given to Wittgenstein's first criticism than when he writes:
Moore's view really comes down to this: the concept 'know' is analogous to the concepts 'believe', 'surmise', 'doubt', 'be convinced' in that the statement 'I know...' can't be a mistake and if that is so, then there can be an inference form such an utterance to the truth of an assertion. And here the form 'I thought I knew' is being overlooked. (C-21)

For Moore the expression "I know that..." is conceived as guaranteeing the truth of the assertion. It functions for him as a ground upon which the truth of the proposition depends. This ground is something which Moore personally has. It is something that he has an inner sense about. The expression "I know that..." is then merely a report on this inner sense.

This would be a misunderstanding of the use of the concept "to know". Moore regards this expression as little subject to doubt as "I am convinced". (C-178) One doesn't normally doubt that a person is convinced of what he knows. It may be suggested that he ought not be so sure, but his "state of conviction" is not doubted. But, "I know that..." is under normal linguistic situations subject to doubt. One of the linguistic presuppositions of the concept "to know" is that one can be "in doubt" about the proposition asserted. In attempting to use the concept "to know" as analogous to "to be convinced", Moore wants this concept to be used in a way that it means "a referral to a mental state that can not be doubted". But he has not established this new criterion.
In that Moore considers the utterance "I know that..." as little subject to doubt as "I am convinced", he has overlooked the expression "I thought I knew". (G-12) That this expression is used in normal discourse reveals the fact that the language-game of knowing is one wherein there is the possibility of doubting a proposition, and mistakenly holding a proposition to be a statement of what is the case. This has been shown in Wittgenstein's characterization of the concept "to know".

Within the language-game of knowing, the expression "I know that..." is used just in those circumstances where the speaker recognizes that there is opposition to his statement. Furthermore, it was shown that part of the criteria for the use of this expression is that there is the possibility of offering grounds, or evidence for the truth of the assertion. If it is possible to show that the statement is correct by offering grounds, then there is the possibility of showing the doubtful character of the statement by offering grounds which show that it is false. This is what Moore failed to see.

Moore wants the concept "to know" to function in a way similar to "to be convinced", in that one could not be mistaken about what one knows. He holds, in effect, that "I know that..." means "can not be false". However, Moore has not established this new criteria.
The most that can be drawn from the use of the expression "I know that..." is that "he believes what he knows". (C-106) As Wittgenstein has shown, part of the linguistic presupposition of the expression "I know that..." is "I believe that...". Therefore, from the fact that Moore "believes what he knows" to the truth of the proposition he asserts is the gap of having to offer his grounds, his evidence, and his position for the truth of the assertion.

The second criticism which Wittgenstein levels against Moore's use of the expression "I know that..." will now be explicated. We have seen that part of the meaning of the concept "to know" is that "one is in a position" to offer grounds or evidence for the truth of a proposition. But a remarkable feature of Moore's use of the expression is that he relates propositions which everyone would be in a position to know. (C-100)

One offers "one's position" for knowing in those circumstances where there is some doubt raised as to whether one could be in a position to know the assertion uttered. But what sense does this make, if everyone is in a position to know that assertion? To avoid this contradiction, Moore must conceive of the concept "to know" as lacking, as one of its linguistic presuppositions, the possibility of being or not being "in a position" to know. But this new criteria has not been justified by Moore.
In summation, Moore takes "I know that..." as a revelation of an important mental state which guarantees the truth of the assertion made. This assertion is taken as being beyond doubt. That it is beyond doubt is also grounded in the mental state of knowing. These truths are such that they are known by everyone. Finally, in that knowing is a mental process and in that these truths are known to everyone, then anyone can readily recite these truths which are shared by all. This is the philosophical use of the concept "to know".

However, the common meaning of "I know that..." is such that it is not a reference to an inner state which guarantees the truthfulness of the assertion. It does not offer a guarantee that the assertion is beyond doubt, and if it did, it would not do so by a referral to an inner state. "I know that..." is used to indicate that one is in a position to know, and this would be superfluous if everyone was in a position to offer grounds for the assertion. Finally, this expression is not used in circumstances where one recites a set of propositions held to be true.

Before turning to Wittgenstein's criticism of Moore's "Proof for the Existence of the External World", we should note what positive significance, if any, Wittgenstein found in Moore's "A Defense of Common Sense". It should be noted
that what follows will only take on its full significance when we turn in chapter three to Wittgenstein's positive clarification of certainty as regards the existence of physical objects, though we will have cause to note again in this chapter.

Wittgenstein writes that when Moore states such things about the world, he is really enumerating a lot of empirical propositions which we affirm without any special testing. In other words these propositions have a peculiarly logical role in the system of our empirical propositions. (C-136)

As we have seen, Moore's telling us that he knows such and such propositions can't satisfy the criteria for calling these propositions true, and that he knows them to be true. Rather, it can only be said that "he believes that he knows". For Wittgenstein, Moore's assurances that he knows them is not of philosophical interest. However, the propositions are very interesting. Not because anyone knows their truth, or believes he knows them, but because these propositions all have a similar role in the system of our empirical judgments. (C-137)

For example, we do not arrive at them as a result of investigation. There are biological investigations into the structure and relationship of various parts of the animal bodies, but not into whether animal bodies do exist
or have existed a hundred years ago. Of course many of us have information about this matter. But couldn't information be wrong? "Nonsense", one would say, "how could all these people be wrong!" But is that an argument? Rather, isn't this simply a rejection of an idea? Would not this also be a determination of a concept? For if one speaks of a possible mistake here, does not this change the role of "mistake" and "correctness" in language? (C-138)

So though Wittgenstein takes objection to Moore's use of the concept "to know" in relation to the proposition he enumerates in "A Defense of Common Sense" — and one can extend this to the ones he enumerates in the "Proof of the External World" — he does see value in Moore's analysis. Moore has brought to light a group of role-related propositions. These are empirical propositions, yet they are not tested by any special investigation. They are propositions which people do not go about being mistaken about. That one is not "mistaken" about them is a result of their place in our language.

SECTION TWO

It is now time to give Moore's famous proof for the existence of the External world. "I can prove now, for instance, that two hands exist. How? By holding up my
two hands, and saying, as I make a certain gesture with the right hand, "Here is one hand," and adding, as I make a certain gesture with the left, "and here is another." And if, by doing this, I have proved ipso facto the existence of external things, you will all see that I can also do it..."

In taking up Wittgenstein's objections to Moore's proof for the existence of the external world we will concentrate on the following points: (1) the use of the concept "proof" in Moore's essay, (2) the "doubt" which is the occasion for offering the proof, and (3) the sort of "proposition" which is proved.

Turning to the first, Wittgenstein seems to accept that a valid proof should have the characteristics which are mentioned by Moore in his article. These are (1) the premises differ from the conclusion, (2) one knows the premises to be true, and (3) the conclusion logically follows from the premises. But Wittgenstein will argue that Moore's proof is no proof at all, because it fails to meet the above criteria for calling an utterance a "proof".

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We have already given Wittgenstein's analysis of the concept "to know" and have shown where Moore transcended its limits. Moore misuses this concept in uttering the expressions he utters. So no further comments on this point will be made here. Furthermore, Wittgenstein offers no discussion of the third characteristic by way of criticism of Moore.

We will take up the first criterion for calling something a proof, i.e. the premises differ from the conclusion. Here we want to focus on how the premises "differ" from the conclusion.

Wittgenstein shows that in point of linguistic fact they do not "differ" in this essential aspect; they do not differ in the sense needed in the statement of the first criterion of a "proof". The "Here is one hand" and "Here is another" do not differ, in an essential way, from the conclusion "There is an external world" is seen in the fact that premises are not more certain than the conclusion.

That there is an external world, i.e., physical objects, is in normal circumstances, as certain as anything that could be produced as evidence for it. This is why one is not in a position to take the sight of one's hands as evidence for it. But, if one cannot offer any evidence for or against the conclusion, the evidence or premises which are offered do not differ from the conclusion,
in the sense that the premises are said to "support" or "justify" the conclusion. If they do not differ in this sense, then they do not "differ" in the way needed in the characterization of the first criterion.

In conclusion, if one cannot say "he knows the premises to be true", and the premises do not "differ" from the conclusion, then one has not offered what is normally called a "proof". Moore has offered a proof where neither of the above points obtain. In effect, Moore has offered a proof which is no "proof" at all. He has attempted to transcend the common criteria of "proof" in attempting to offer a uniquely philosophical proof.

Now for the analysis of Wittgenstein's second objection. In taking up the doubt as to the existence of the external world, there will be a final clarification of our analysis of the concept "to doubt" which was begun in the first chapter of this essay. It will be shown that Moore's "philosophical proof" was an attempt to answer a "philosophical doubt".

Wittgenstein will argue that such a doubt is an expression of what cannot be expressed in this manner. The expression of this sort of doubt will be the utterance of factual nonsense. "I doubt the existence of the external world" will be a non-significant utterance within this context.
In the second section of chapter one we had distinguished three different sorts of doubt. They are: (1) doubts that are reasonable, (2) doubts that are superfluous, and (3) doubts that are absurd. The nonsensicalness of the third sort of doubt was shown by the fact that speakers A, B, and C would not say that this was the doubt of a reasonable man. But rather they are "irrational ramblings". This type of doubt was really not a doubt at all, but evidence for the insanity of speaker D.

Now for an extension of Wittgenstein's analysis of this sort of doubt, which is really no doubt at all. Here we will want to distinguish this from a "philosophical doubt", and also to distinguish both of these from what we could call "ordinary or scientific doubt" or doubting behavior. (C-259)

Take Moore's statement "Here is one hand", and "here is another". Moore states that he knows these two statements are true. We had observed that the criterion for such a statement is that there is a doubt to be removed, a method by which it could be removed. This method is carried out by giving grounds, offering one's position for holding, etc.

Now the doubts which are raised and the proof which Moore offers against them, do not have the criteria of
"doubting" described above. Consider the circumstances in which Moore would have spoken correctly if he had said, "I know that here is a hand." He and his audience, at the British Academy, had his hand in full view. If his hand had been concealed in a box it is unlikely that he would have pointed at the box and said to his audience "I know that there is a hand." If rumor had it that Moore recently lost his arm and acquired an artificial one, he would have probably used his head as an example. The point is that Moore would have wanted the circumstances to be such that there was no question or doubt about his hand.(C-483)

So it is interesting that Moore offers his proof where there is no question or doubt as to the existence of his hand, and we could also assume that there was no doubt as to the existence of the external world. By way of retort, it could be stated that there was a "philosophical doubt" as to whether his hand existed. This is quite true. But Wittgenstein's point now would be that one has a "philosophical doubt" in circumstances where there is not any doubt as to the truth of the statement "I know that is my hand".

If his hand was in a box or there was the chance that Moore had an artificial hand, then this example would not be used. Moore and his opponent would want to use an example for his "philosophical doubt" where there was no "doubt" as to whether it was his hand or not. The use of
an object as an example for expressing philosophical arguments in support of the questioning or doubt as to the existence of that object only works when there is no ordinary doubts like the ones we have cited in our illustration of the use of the concept "to doubt." It must be the case that there is no doubt before there is a "philosophical doubt" as to whether one is certain that that's Moore's hand.

But it could not be argued that one could be doubting the existence of Moore's hand in the sense that the doubter may merely be dreaming about Moore and his hand. Indeed this is a powerful argument against certainty in regard to objects perceptually given. This argument is used by Descartes in showing that all perceptual judgments are never certain for one may be dreaming. Imagine that we were watching Descartes when he wrote down this argument. Suppose that he was facing his fireplace, as he developed his argument against certainty as regards the existence of physical objects. Now we see him get up from his desk, move over to the fireplace and set on new logs. Then he sets a tea pot to boil. It would seem a mis-description to say that Descartes was in "doubt" as to whether there was a fire, or that he was only dreaming. He doesn't behave as one would, if he was doubting the existence of
the physical world. It would be a misuse of the concept "to doubt" to call the above doubting. For Descartes displays none of the phenomena by which we could say that he was doubting.

Now consider the situation where a man is seated in a room with his back to the fireplace with a closed screen. On different occasions during the day the fire has gone out, and so now he stops writing to peer over the screen. Here would be normal circumstances for saying that he was in "doubt" about whether there was a fire or not.

Wittgenstein's point is that where there is a doubt about the existence of say a fire, then no "philosophical doubt" would arise. Only if the fire was happily burning away could one then pose the philosophical question whether there was or wasn't a fire.

Consider the following case. A man awakes from a nap and observes a fire in his fireplace. He is perplexed because he hadn't started the fire before he went to bed. He shakes his head in order to clear it, stares intently at the fire, and says "Perhaps I'm dreaming that there is fire." With extended hands he moves towards the fireplace to feel the heat of the fire. "Yes, it is hot." He runs out of the room and calls his wife. When they both return to his room, he states "Is this a real fire, or am I dream-ing?"
This man is in doubt as to whether he is dreaming or awake. His utterance as to doubts about being awake is part of his doubting behavior. When a man is having a "philosophical doubt" about whether he is dreaming or is awake he does not perform these actions. If our philosopher did perform these actions, we would no longer say that he had a "philosophical doubt." Behavior which would count as criteria for saying he was in "doubt" as to whether he was awake would count against saying that he was feeling a "philosophical doubt".

Let us compare a doubt which Moore attempts to meet with philosophical proof and the ordinary sense of the concept "doubt" offered above. One of the features of the above illustration was that something extraordinary had occurred. Another was anxiety over whether that was a real fire or just a dream. Now Moore in the British Academy was not trying to meet a doubt about the existence of the external world which had these characteristics. Indeed Moore would have sent such a questioner off to a doctor, rather then try to meet his objections himself. One would not even call them "objections". Rather they are taken to be symptoms of what is called an "emotional problem."
So to have a "philosophical doubt" as to whether the external world exists does not imply that one is in "doubt" as to whether the physical world exists. To call a "philosophical doubt" a "doubt" would be to extend the concept beyond the criteria for its application. In such an extension Moore has uttered factual nonsense. One cannot understand the meaning of the concept "to doubt" for he has not offered any new criteria for its use.

Now for the final set of objections which Wittgenstein makes against Moore's proof. The topic has already been broached in the explication of Wittgenstein's criticism of Moore's use of the concept "to know" in Moore's, "A Defense of Common Sense". There it was developed that Moore's article had the positive significance of bringing to light a group of propositions which had a similar role in the logic of our language. A further clarification of this can now be given.

Moore thought that in offering a proof for the justification of the statement "There are external objects", that this statement and others like it were empirical propositions. Wittgenstein will show that in point of linguistic fact that they are not empirical propositions at all, in that Moore attempts to prove this proposition - here we are assuming, contrary to fact, that Moore did offer a "proof" to meet "doubts" raised - as one would prove an
empirical propositions, he is producing nonsense. (C-35)

Wittgenstein writes:

..."A is a physical object" is a piece of instruction which we give only to someone who doesn't yet understand either what "A" means, or what "physical objects" means. Thus it is instruction about the use of words, and "physical object" is a logical concept. (Like colour, quantity,...) And that is why no such proposition as "there are physical objects" can be formulated. Yet we encounter such unsuccessful shots at every turn. (C-36)

Here Wittgenstein begins his criticism with an analysis of the propositions which Moore attempts to prove. Basically, his point is that the assertion "That tree is a physical object" (pointing to a tree) is, from an analysis of its functioning in our language, not an assertion about the world. Indeed to call it an assertion would be a mis-description. Rather the utterance of this expression is a verbal indication of the speaker's intention to use these concepts in a certain way. It is then an expression of the speaker's decision to have the concepts function in a particular way, i.e. to mean something particular by its utterance.

Wittgenstein's point then is that to assume that the proposition "There are physical objects" is asserting something about the world is to assume that the truth of this proposition can be obtained by showing one's grounds or evidence. Assertions can be tested.
This is exactly what Moore attempts to do. His proof for the existence of the external world consists in offering his evidence for the truth of this proposition. The grounds he presents are his two hands. This is the test by which he thought one could demonstrate the truth of the proposition. "There is an external world."

Imagine the following situation of a child talking to its mother. A. "Mother what is that (pointing to a radio)?" B. "That is a Radio." A. "What is a radio?" B. "Well, a radio is a physical object. Over it we get radio waves which..." A. "But why is it a physical object?" B. "Well...it sits on the table, we can see it, etc." A. "But why do you say that it is a physical object just because it..." B. "Well we just call things like radios physical objects that's all." A. "But why..." B. "Now stop it, your asking silly questions."

Here is a common situation where one utters "A radio is a physical object." What is happening here? The mother explained to her child that the radio was a physical object because it sat on the table, i.e. it doesn't appear only to disappear.

But this is not a test or evidence for the radio being a physical object. Rather, when the child asked why do we call such things that sit around, things that we can see, etc., physical object, the mother retorts that
we just call them that. To question why we use this expression the way we do is a senseless question to the mother. This is just the way we use the expression. This is its meaning. The child must accept this, if he is to learn his way about.

It could be objected that this is a correct description of how we learn the meaning of "radio" and "physical object". But the meaning of the expression "Radio is a physical object" is not necessarily co-extensive with the way we were taught to use it. This doesn't seem to refute a philosophical use of the expression of the proposition. But what would this use be like?

Surely it's not the following. A. "Well, I just don't know. I get these feelings." B. "What do you feel?" A. "That everything is inside me. It's all inner. There's no outer." B. "I don't quite understand." A. "Well, I know that there is a physical world. But everything looks queer and..."

Here we have a situation where "I know that there is a physical world" makes sense. Speaker A, would not be aided by the arguments offered by a realist. Nor would we call him an idealist. Rather he has "emotional problems". The doctor would not show his patient one hand and then the other, in an attempt to show him the correctness of the statement. The utterance of that proposition
is taken as a symptom of a deeper problem to be dealt with. It is an expression of a conviction which is doubted. We may ask again, what meaning can one give to the uniquely philosophical use of "there are physical objects". At this point no new criteria has been offered.

In ordinary situations "Object A is a physical object" is a piece of instruction on the use of words. "There are physical objects" is an expression of a commitment to a certain set of convictions which are doubted. In neither case is it part of the criteria for these propositions to offer grounds or evidence for their truth.

Wittgenstein has disclosed the meaninglessness of a proof for the existence of the external world and doubts which call forth such a proof. It has been shown that both Moore and the sceptic have covertly withdrawn the ordinary criteria for the use of the concepts "to know", "proof", "to doubt", and "proposition" without replacing these criteria with new, extraordinary criteria which could offer a new meaning on these concepts in their new contexts. The sceptic has generated the illusion of disclosing an unanswerable question. Moore confirms this illusion with an attempted solution to this unanswerable question. But all they have in fact done is to discover a context in
which these expressions become strictly meaningless while retaining a plausible surface appearance of meaningfulness.

We have now completed our examination of *On Certainty* focusing on Wittgenstein's observation on abnormal occasions for the use of certain prominent epistemic concepts. Through an explication of his analysis of the "philosophical use" of these concepts we have partially sketched the limits of factual discourse.
CHAPTER THREE

THE FUNCTION OF FRAMEWORK PROPOSITIONS IN FACTUAL DISCOURSE

In chapter two we mentioned what Wittgenstein regarded as significant in Moore's essay "A Defense of Common Sense". Moore's article was valuable in that it brought into view a set of propositions which played similar roles in the logic of factual discourse. We also had cause to note that Moore attempted to prove a set of propositions which are not subject to a proof. This characteristic is contingent on the fact that these propositions are not testable. In other words, they are not empirical propositions. In concluding this essay, chapter three will explicate Wittgenstein's analysis of the status of these propositions.

In undertaking this task, we will bring together Wittgenstein's logical descriptions of the epistemic concepts resultant upon the disclosure of their limits as offered in chapter two. To be more precise, Wittgenstein develops the thesis that there is a group of role related propositions in which the use of the concept "to doubt" normally carries no meaning. Furthermore, "to be mistaken" is not part of the criteria of these propositions. In that the linguistic presupposition of these propositions "can't be" related to "to doubt" and "to be mistaken", one does not normally use the expression "I know that..." in relation to their utterence. These are propositions, however, that have "to be certain" as one of their criteria.
What sort of propositions are these? They are propositions used in the way we have described as being "bedrock" or "framework" propositions. Among these sorts of propositions are ones like: "I have lived on the earth all my life", "I am called R.M.", and "Object A is a physical object".

Before we proceed to Wittgenstein's analysis of the above, first a review of his analysis of the concept "proposition". It was mentioned that propositions have traditionally been divided into two sorts, analytic and synthetic. Wittgenstein in his grammatical descriptions of the concept "proposition" reveals that this classification is unjustifiable in that it excludes a rule-related group of propositions. We have called these propositions framework or bedrock propositions. As was shown these propositions are neither analytic or synthetic.

Wittgenstein's analysis disclosed that "Framework propositions" are: (1) "Norms of description, or methodological principles for determining whether something exists or not"; (2) "such as to determine of the meaning of certain sort of proposition"; (3) "such as to determine the meaning of empirical propositions and all utterances of this sort"; (4) "a matter of linguistic convention rather then necessary and sufficient conditions";
(5) "arbitrary in that they need no justification for being what they are"; (6) "internalized in linguistic practice, and persons engaged in this activity may be quite unable to say what they are"; (7) "rough and imprecise"; (9) "ones that fluctuate;" and (10) "such that they are not in conflict in the language-game, but can when one language-game confronts another". Here then is a partial description of the concept "proposition".

His analysis also revealed that "empirical propositions" are: (1) "are utterances that can be tested"; (2) "are utterances that can be correct or mistaken"; (3) "they can be true or false"; (4) "they have grounds for or against them"; and (5) "they can be justified". This completes the description of the concept "proposition" as given in On Certainty.

In passing, it should be noted that this analysis has not included "mathematical propositions". Wittgenstein makes only a few scattered remarks to propositions of this sort. Thus, the description of Wittgenstein's analysis of the concept "proposition" is incomplete.

No better introduction to that sort of proposition which excludes as one of its linguistic presuppositions the concept "to doubt" can be given then when Wittgenstein writes:
Can't an assertoric proposition, which is capable of functioning as an hypothesis, also be used as a foundation for research and action? I.E. can't it simply be isolated from doubt, though not according to any explicit rule? It simply gets assumed as a truism, never called in question, perhaps not even formulated. (C-37)

Here Wittgenstein draws attention to the fact that there are assertoric propositions, i.e., empirical propositions which do not function in language as empirical propositions. What particular characteristic of these propositions leads him to suspect that they are not assertions at all?

The answer is given in the above. These propositions are not doubted. As we had seen in the analysis of the expression "empirical proposition", it is part of their criteria that they are the sort of utterance that can be tested. But "to test" means that there can be someone "in doubt" as to the truth of the statement. To illustrate this point two examples will be given. One from the field of scientific research and the other from non-scientific discourse.

Wittgenstein wants to show, by this example and others like it, that all inquiry is set so as to exempt certain propositions from doubt. These propositions may not even be formulated. The important point is that they lie apart from the route traveled by inquiry. (C-58) The first example will be Lavoisier and his chemical investigations. (C-167)
Lavoisier makes experiments with certain substances in his laboratory. He concludes after long months of research that this and that takes place when there is burning. He does not say that it might happen otherwise another time.

Now Wittgenstein wants to say that Lavoisier has a definite world-picture, i.e. a system of framework propositions. He did not invent this. It is not a hypothesis that he draws up. Rather he has learned this as a child. These framework propositions are the matter of course foundation for his research and as such go unmentioned.

Now to make one of them explicit. One of the presuppositions of these experiments as that "A substance X always reacts to substance Y in the same way, given the same circumstances." What role does this presupposition play in Lavoisier's scientific researchs?

Would it not be that this is part of the definition of what is meant by "substance." It is part of the norm of description of what is taken to be a "substance." Substances are taken to be those sorts of things which when you have X and Y reacting under the same circumstances, they will react in the same way as they did the week before.

Within this situation Lavoisier did not formulate, let alone doubt, that a substance is that set of phenomena that always react in the same way, under the same circumstances.
It is something that he would have taken as a truism. What if someone approached him with a doubt as to whether this was really a "substance." Lavoisier would have dismissed him in rather a cursory way. He might jokingly say "I couldn't doubt that." This utterance characterizes one kind of assertion. If our questioner continued in his doubts, Lavoisier might wonder if he was fluent in the English language. (C-631) Does he really understand the English language? For everyone knows that substances are the sort of phenomena that react in the same way under the same circumstances.

If our questioner continued in his doubts and grew more forceful, Lavoisier would not take him as a man who doubts in the normal way. Indeed, this is not a "doubt" at all. Lavoisier would seek aid, for this man is "Emotionally maladjusted."

That "substance" is taken as that particular set of phenomena is not something that Lavoisier decided upon. Rather it is something that he was taught as a child while observing the world around him. It is accepted by all those who were brought up in his culture. This is the meaning of the concept and the majority of people in his culture would not accept doubts about this. Rather it is the foundation of all scientific actions. (C-414)
Now consider the following situation. A man is seated in his study reading. His friend comes walking through the door. As he does the other asks "shut the door." The friend does what was asked. One of the presuppositions of this utterance is that door's are the sort of thing that react under a certain amount of pressure, have a degree of density, etc. It is in other words a "physical object".

It is in this situation impossible for either of the two men "to doubt" that the door is a "physical object". If one of them would have uttered "Yes, that is a physical object" the other might have taken it as a joke. It is a truism that they both accept and act upon. As with Lavoisier's understanding of the concept "substance", it is taken as part of the definition of "door" that it is a physical object. What if someone, a third friend, tried to induce a doubt about whether that was a door or not? The situation would be similar to the one offered in the first example.

In both situations doubts were not found acceptable. Doubts about whether X and Y are substances or whether a door is a physical object are groundless. One can not speak about doubts at all. Rather that X and Y are substances and the door is a physical object are grounds for subsequent doubts. Whether A is helium or not in the
former case, and whether it is wise to shut the door (if it was hot out) for the latter.

That a mistake is logically impossible is the second characteristic of this sort of proposition. The grammar of "framework propositions" are such as to exclude "making a mistake." For an example, recall Situation 9 in chapter one. There it was shown that propositions like "I am R.M.", "I live in Chicago", etc., function in such a way that normally they are not mistaken. How was this shown?

In that situation speaker A refused to accept any evidence to the effect that he was not R.M. To give up or entertain as mistaken his name, A would have to question a set of related propositions like: where he lives, how old he is, what he does for a living, etc., and speaker A would not allow this. All speaker A's past experience spoke in favor of his being R.M. and nothing spoke against it. This would conclusively show that he is in fact R.M.

That these grounds are conclusive is premised on the fact that people are brought up to accept many propositions as unmistakeable, and the grounds which one has for them are considered conclusive. One does not doubt in normal circumstances that one could "be mistaken" about these things.

If one was mistaken about where he put his keys this is nothing unusual, but what would one say of a person who was mistaken about his name? Would one say that he made a
"mistake" in the same sense as being mistaken about his keys? No, one just does not make mistakes about one's name.

To clarify this, Wittgenstein observes that mistakes not only have a "cause", but they also have a "ground". When someone makes a mistake it can in most circumstances be fitted into what he knows. If one is "mistaken" about where he left his keys, he still knows he is in the right house, he knows that he has just come home from work, etc. Here there is a mistake about one particular point in a field of points.

However, the case of someone who made a "mistake" about his identity is different. Joe Smith said he was Jesus Christ and lived in Galilee. He would be mistaken about his whole field and not just one or a couple of points within it. But this kind of mistake is usually called "insanity". One would say that he was "temporarily confused and disoriented" and this is not a "mistake".

In that the concepts "to doubt" and "to be mistaken" are not related to the criteria of "framework proposition", one could not conceive of their criteria as including the concept "to know". The reasons for this are fairly obvious.

The concept "to know" is used in situations where there is a recognition on the part of the speaker that his
assertion might be subject to dispute. The concept "to know" is then used when one is using "empirical propositions".

As we had seen, the concept "to know" means that "one can, if requested, offer one's grounds or evidence for, one's position for, show the possibility of the truth of, and believe that p." "Empirical propositions" are propositions that can be true or false, can have grounds for or against them, and can have evidence for or against them. The concept "to know" and "empirical proposition" just hang together in this way. Per Wittgenstein, to ask why their grammar hang together in this way is a futile question. They just do.

With "framework propositions" the case is quite different. As we have shown framework propositions are just those propositions which are not "in doubt" in a particular linguistic situation. Lavoisier did not even formulate the proposition "A substance always reacts in the same way, under the same circumstances". This linguistic presupposition he could not have been "in doubt" about. But neither would it be grammatically correct to say "I know that substances are called things that react..." in this situation.
Recall that when Lavoisier was questioned about the possibility of whether substance may not mean "something that always reacts in the same way, under the same circumstances", he did not state that he knew such. Rather, he dismissed the question. A doubt about the truth of this proposition was "groundless" in this situation. If "grounds" or "evidence" are lacking one can not speak of knowing. It is part of the criteria of "to know" that one can offer "grounds" for or against the truth of a statement.

One should not be misled into thinking that one could not say "I know that a substance is...". Here one may be giving a report on the discovery of a new material that did not react as the others had. As an empirical matter, one would have to offer one's grounds, evidence, etc., for such a statement. The expression "I know that..." is correctly used. There may be a fluctuation between empirical propositions and framework propositions.

That there is a fluctuation is nothing unusual once the contextualized character of bedrock propositions is understood. A linguistic situation has certain purposes and certain presuppositions and bedrock propositions are among these presuppositions. These may be explained in grammatical propositions. But not all linguistic situations have the same purposes or presuppositions. So what
may be taken as a bedrock proposition in one situation could in another be an empirical proposition.

Though "bedrock propositions" can not be related to "to doubt" or "to be mistaken" and one incorrectly uses the expression "I know that..." with them, they are "certain". Part of the criteria of "bedrock proposition" is certainty behavior.

To use the example of Lavoisier again, he acted like a man who had not the slightest doubt that "substance" means "the sort of thing which reacts in the same way, under the same circumstances". One would say of him that he was convinced of the meaning of the concept "substance". This conviction he shared with his co-workers. If someone approached him who did not share this conviction, one would expect him to attempt to convince this person. This attempt would be made by giving "reasons" and perhaps through other types of "persuasion".

That the proposition Lavoisier takes as certain is certain, is not something he decided. Rather, that the proposition is certain is dependent on its place in the language-game. The most prominent grammatical characteristic of this sort of proposition is that they can not be mistaken. In that "making a mistake" is excluded as a linguistic presupposition of this type of proposition, it is what Wittgenstein calls "objectively certain".
To see this, consider the following. One of the criterion of "framework propositions" is that they are arbitrary. Their arbitrariness is premised on the fact that one needs no justification in holding them. If there is no need to justify them, then there is no need to offer one's grounds, evidence, or position for holding them. Indeed, there are no grounds or evidence for holding them. But, if there are no grounds or evidence for them, then there cannot be grounds or evidence which speak against them. Therefore, one cannot speak of the possibility of these propositions being mistaken within the language-game.

We have now completed the explication of Wittgenstein's analysis of certainty as regards the existence of Physical Objects. He has developed the thesis that "bedrock propositions" are such that they cannot be doubted or mistaken. They are propositions which are held as certain. Amongst this sort of proposition are those which map out the world of physical objects.
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The thesis submitted by Robert Mishlove has been read and approved by members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis, and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

January 17, 1972
Edward A. Mazian
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