

Knowing What an Experience is Like and the Reductive Theory of Knowledge-*Wh*

Kevin Lynch

1. Introduction

Though the term ‘knows’ is found in a number of grammatically different constructions, philosophers have been preoccupied with the ‘*S* knows that *p*’ form, where ‘*p*’ represents some true proposition or fact. It also seems fair to say that this construction has been treated as having a sort of primacy, with other superficially different constructions often thought to be reducible to this form. Some constructions, however, have been argued to not or not always reduce to ‘knowledge-*that*’ and thus to represent fundamental epistemic kinds distinct from factual knowledge. ‘*S* knows how to *v*’, where ‘*v*’ represent a verb/verb-phrase, has been presented as one such construction. So has ‘*S* knows *n*’, where ‘*n*’ represents a noun/noun phrase.

The ‘*S* knows *wh*’ construction, where ‘*wh*’ represents an interrogative clause (that is, a clause beginning with a question word, as in ‘Tom knows what time it is.’) is a very common construction that covers a large variety of knowledge ascriptions, ascriptions concerning knowledge of place, time, people, reasons, and more.¹ Many philosophers have maintained that such ‘knowledge-*wh*’ is straightforwardly reducible to factual knowledge. However, others have drawn attention to kinds of knowledge-*wh* that might resist this reductionist treatment. The mentioned knowing how to do something is the best-known example of this (knowledge-*how* being a kind of knowledge-*wh*), and other sorts of putative counterexample have been proposed (e.g., Farkas 2016).

In this article I wish to call attention to another species of knowledge-*wh* that might defy the conventional reductionist treatment, namely, *knowing what an experience is like*, which for brevity’s sake I will call ‘experiential knowledge’. No argument will be given here

¹ Philosophers often segue between talking about knowledge and knowledge *ascriptions*, and this paper will be no different. The assumption here is that a correct theory of certain knowledge ascriptions will reflect the nature of the sort of knowledge denoted by those ascriptions, the way a correct definition of ‘bachelor’, say, would reflect ‘the nature of bachelors’.

which proves that it is impossible to reduce experiential knowledge to factual knowledge however. The ambition is only to show that the standard theory used for reducing knowledge-*wh* to knowledge-*that* does not work for experiential knowledge (note that this allows that it might work perfectly well for other forms of knowledge-*wh*; I have no general antipathy towards these reductionist analyses). This would make it an open question whether experiential knowledge is a kind of factual knowledge; if experiential knowledge is so reducible, new arguments will be needed to show that. Such arguments might be available, but it is also possible that this article will be a step towards appreciating the distinctiveness of experiential knowledge.

The article will proceed as follows. The standard reductionist theory of knowledge-*wh* will be outlined in the next section. Then in section 3, we will see how this theory has been applied to experiential knowledge. In section 4, a case of experiential knowledge is described that is an apparent counterexample to this theory, and in the following two sections, two objections to the proposed counterexample are responded to.

2 The Standard Reductive Theory of knowledge-*wh*

As was mentioned, in knowledge-*wh* ascriptions ‘knows’ is followed by an interrogative complement beginning with a question word such as ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘which’, or ‘how’, and more archaically, ‘whence’ and ‘whither’. Such sentences are said to contain (implicitly) ‘embedded questions’. Examples with their respective embedded questions include the following:

<u>Knowledge ascription</u>	<u>Embedded question</u>
Frank knows who won the rugby final.	Who won the rugby final?
Isabella knows why Frank fell out with Bob.	Why did Frank fall out with Bob?
Bob knows how to stay healthy.	How do you stay healthy?

These sorts of knowledge ascriptions have aroused the interest of philosophers, and various reductionist analyses of them have been developed giving them a uniform treatment, often inspired by work done in linguistics. The original and most basic version, which I will call the *Standard Theory* of knowledge-*wh*, gets formulated roughly as follows:

S knows-*wh* if and only if *S* knows that *p*, where the answer to the question embedded in the knowledge-*wh* ascription is that *p* (see Kallestrup 2009: 469; Mastro 2010: 395; Parent 2014: 85; Schaffer 2007: 385²).

(Note that sometimes there will be a number of distinct, equally appropriate answers to the relevant question (the example ‘Where can I buy an Italian newspaper?’ is often given), and here knowing that *p* where *p* is *an* answer to the question could suffice (Stanley and Williamson 2001: 425-426)). So suppose that the All Blacks won the rugby final. In that case, the right answer to ‘Who won the final?’ is that the All Blacks won the final. Accordingly, if Frank knows that the All Blacks won the final, then Frank knows who won the final, and the converse is also true. In this way, knowledge-*wh* tidily reduces to knowledge-*that*.

A number of neo-reductionist views have emerged recently, prompted by perceived difficulties with the original view. One such difficulty concerns cases where apparently one knows that *p*, where that answers the relevant question, but where one does not know that it answers the question. Megan Mastro (2010: 396), for instance, gives the case of Amy, who knows that Bob was late for work every day last week. Bob was fired for this, though Amy does not know that. So here, the answer to the question ‘Why was Bob fired?’ is, apparently, that he was late for work every day last week. That fact is something Amy knows so she should know why Bob was fired according to the Standard Theory, but by hypothesis she does not know this.

In response to such difficulties some philosophers have developed accounts emphasizing that subjects must be aware that what they know is the answer to the question. Jonathan Schaffer (2007), for instance, proposes the view that, as Ted Parent concisely expresses it, ‘*S* knows-*wh* iff: *S* knows that *p*, where *p* is an answer to the embedded question, and *S* knows that it is an answer to the question’ (2014: 86). Similarly, Mastro claims that to know-*wh* is to know what the answer to the *wh*-question is (2010: 401).³ We need not get

² These references are for recent statements of the reductive view, not for people who uphold it. According to Brogaard, advocates of this view have included Jaakko Hintikka, David Lewis, Steven Boër, William Lycan, James Higginbotham, Kent Bach and David Braun. See (Brogaard 2009: 439) for references.

³ Though these new approaches might overcome certain problems with the Standard Theory, they could also generate new difficulties, such as with attributing knowledge-*wh* to animals. Consider Rex, who knows where the ball is, because he knows that it is behind Bertha’s back. However, being a dog, it seems dubious to say that he knows that *as* the answer to the question ‘Where is the ball?’, since, bereft of language, he cannot formulate questions or answers in his mind, and cannot give answers or understand questions. Some might argue, however, that knowing an answer is just knowing that *p* where *p* is the answer (though Mastro’s Amy case suggests otherwise), and Rex does satisfy this condition. So this matter would require further discussion.

detained adjudicating between these different neo-reductionist⁴ views and the original one however, since it should be easy to see that if our putative counterexample works against the original view, it will work against these newer ones also. Therefore I will mainly focus on the original view in what follows.

3 Application of the Standard Theory to experiential knowledge

Michael Tye is one of the few philosophers to have applied the Standard Theory of knowledge-*wh* specifically to experiential knowledge (also see Cath 2019; Hellie 2004; Lycan 1996: 92-94). This application is instructive and we will pay particular attention to it here.

In a 2011 paper, Tye rightly observes that ascriptions of experiential knowledge are knowledge-*wh* ascriptions. Thus, ‘Mary knows what it is like to see red.’ contains the embedded *wh*-question, ‘What is it like to see red?’. Tye then attempts to show that the ‘standard semantics’ (2011: 304) can satisfactorily handle such ascriptions, a view that he formulates as follows: knowledge-*wh* ascriptions ‘are true if and only if the relevant subjects know some proposition that is a legitimate or acceptable answer to the embedded question’ (2011: 301)⁵. Therefore, knowing what it is like to see red is knowing that *p*, where a legitimate or acceptable answer to the question ‘What is it like to see red?’ is that *p*.

But what would be a legitimate or acceptable answer to the question, ‘What is it like to see red?’? Fortunately, Tye has a proposal: ‘an acceptable answer is that seeing red is (phenomenally) like *this*, where *this* is an experience having the phenomenal character of the experience of red’ (2011: 304). Hellie offers the same view: ‘seeing a red thing is like this’

⁴ Schaffer is sometimes called an ‘anti-reductionist’ about knowing-*wh*, but as Kallestrup (2009: 468-469) and Parent (2014: 86) point out, Schaffer does not deny that knowing-*wh* boils down to knowing-*that*. He only denies that this knowing-*that* is a two-place relation between a subject and a proposition, *Ksp*, thinking instead that it’s a three-place relation between a subject, the indirect question of the *wh*-clause, and the answer to that question, *KspQ*. Thus I prefer the term ‘neo-reductionist’ to describe Schaffer’s view.

⁵ Philosophers often don’t discriminate between knowing a proposition and knowing that *p* in this debate. We should note, however, that in ‘*S* knows the proposition that *p*’, ‘knows’ is followed by a *noun phrase*, and not by a *that*-clause as in ‘*S* knows that *p*’. This is indicative of acquaintance knowledge rather than factual/propositional knowledge, where what one is acquainted with is a proposition, and these can have quite different properties. For instance, one can know a proposition while disbelieving it, and even though it is false (see Longworth 2008: 67-70). For example, I know the Creationist’s proposition that the Earth is less than 10,000 years old, though I don’t believe it and it is false. This just means that I’m aware of this claim; I know that this has been stated and is believed by Creationists. Since the reductionist intends to reduce knowledge-*wh* to *factual* knowledge he should avoid talking of knowing propositions.

(2004: 344) is an acceptable answer. Is this the *only* acceptable answer in their opinion? There are indications that Tye thinks so at least, since he says that ‘[t]o know what it is like to experience red, one *needs* to know that experiencing red is (phenomenally) like this, where the demonstrative concept at play in one’s knowledge was introduced into one’s mental economy via an act of attending to the relevant phenomenal character in one’s own visual experience’ (2011: 313, emphasis added). This coupled with the fact that he gives no suggestions for other acceptable answers hints that he thinks it is the only acceptable answer. I will attempt to explain why he might think this in the next section.

Though in this paper Tye only discusses the experience of seeing red, he gives the impression that he intends for his remarks to be analytically significant, applying to experiential knowledge in general. Let us assume this at any rate. We may therefore generalize Tye’s claims to reach the following analysis of experiential knowledge. For any experience *E* and any subject *S*,

S knows what experience *E* is like if and only if *S* knows that *p*, where an acceptable answer to ‘What is *E* like?’ is that *p*.

Generalizing also on Tye’s suggestion for what is the right answer to ‘What is it like to see red?’, we can fill in for *p* and arrive at the following account:

S knows what experience *E* is like if and only if *S* knows that *E* is like *this* (where ‘this’ refers to the phenomenal character of that experience).

This we can take to be Tye’s analysis of experiential knowledge in its essentials.⁶ It has the advantages of being relatively simple and easy to grasp, and of bringing our understanding of experiential knowledge neatly into line with how we understand other cases of knowledge-*wh*. But does experiential knowledge fit comfortably into that fold?

⁶ Tye’s analysis of experiential knowledge in (2011) differs from earlier analyses of his, such as in (2009: 120) where he understood it to be a form of ‘thing/objectual knowledge’ or ‘acquaintance knowledge’, or as involving ‘a mixture of factual and objectual knowledge’ (2009: 132), and in (2004), where he developed a hybrid factual knowledge/Ability Hypothesis account. Tye’s thinking about experiential knowledge is ever-evolving, and in a co-authored paper just published (Grzankowski and Tye 2019) he rejects the idea that an appropriate answer to the ‘What’s it like?’ question must contain a demonstrative. He now sympathises with ideas that will be covered in section 5.2.

4 Experiential knowledge as a difficulty for the reductive theory

The position taken here is that the standard reductive analysis of knowledge-*wh* comes to grief with the case of experiential knowledge, and in this section a counterexample will be presented which shows this. But to set things up for that a distinction must first be made.

4.1 Effable and ineffable experiences

There is a major shortcoming that philosophical discussions of experiential knowledge have had that explains Tye's apparent assumption that an acceptable answer to 'What's the experience like?' must contain a demonstrative. The examples of experiences which philosophers have reflected on when thinking about experiential knowledge have almost invariably been of a certain and special kind, namely, experiences of distinct perceptible or sensory qualities (or 'phenomenal qualities'), as with the experiences of seeing red, of hearing the sound of an oboe, or of tasting vegemite (to mention some stock cases). The fixation with these sorts of experiences seems largely due to the fact that the debate about experiential knowledge emerged out of discussions of Frank Jackson's (1982) Knowledge Argument against physicalism, which were focused on the case of Mary and her first experience of seeing red.

The key feature of these experiences for our purposes is that we often feel that they cannot be described (Hellie 2004: 342), or at least not adequately. By 'adequately' we could mean described in such a way that could give someone who has never had the experience an impression of what it would be like. This, I suggest, is why Tye felt the need to have a demonstrative in his answer to 'What is it like to see red?'. Because no satisfactory description of this experience seems forthcoming, he can only respond, 'It's like *this*' (or 'It's like *that* [experience I had at time *t*]') if there is no relevant current experience for 'this' to refer to). Let us call these 'ineffable experiences'.

Ineffable experiences contrast with another class of experiences however, which we may call 'effable experiences'. These are experiences concerning which descriptions of their character can be given, though the extent to which this is possible may vary from case to case (there will probably be a continuum of cases between the poles of the clearly effable and clearly ineffable⁷). The range of examples is endless: the experiences of going hang-gliding,

⁷ The status of an experience as effable or ineffable might also not be absolute but could depend on contingent factors like one's vocabulary or discriminative skill (Dennett 2002: 243-244).

of being a parent, of doing time in prison, of suffering from Parkinson's disease, and so on.⁸ Effable experiences have been neglected in philosophical discussions of experiential knowledge, which has greatly impoverished thinking on this matter in my view.

When our attention is fixed on ineffable experiences, it can seem that the only possible answer to the question 'What is *E* like?' (where '*E*' represents an experience) is of the form, 'It's like this!'. In that case, the Standard Theory would imply that *S* knows what an experience is like iff *S* knows that the experience is like *this* (where 'this' refers to the character of that experience). We could then argue that only those who have had the experience can know that it's like *this* (Tye thinks that to know that seeing red is 'like this', you must have or must have had 'object knowledge' or 'acquaintance knowledge' of that experience (2011: 313).

However, once we consider effable experiences, we see that we can give demonstrative-free descriptions in response to the question, 'What's it like?', frequently rich and detailed ones, which often seem to be acceptable answers. Furthermore, one can know the truths expressed in these descriptions without ever having had the experience. And because one has never had the experience, it can seem wrong (in at least some cases) to ascribe to one knowledge of what the experience is like.

4.2 *The counterexample*

Consider the following case. Murphy has recently started drinking alcohol, and has had his first few experiences of being drunk. Burke, a friend of Murphy, does not drink for religious reasons. However, he's quite curious about it and, knowing that Murphy drinks, he asks him, 'What's it like to be drunk?'. Murphy reflects on his experiences and then gives a detailed answer something like as follows: 'You feel more elated and cheerful, more chatty and sociable, more confident, carefree, and more positive about the future; you're less alert and responsive, and are more prone to clumsiness; you're less inhibited, and more emotional and impulsive; jokes seem funnier ...', and he continues in this manner, mentioning all other noteworthy aspects of the experience. Burke listens intently and notes that Murphy's description is corroborated by how he has seen drinkers behave on various occasions. Suppose also that Burke understands and retains everything that Murphy says in memory. So

⁸ Incidentally, another category of experiences ignored in these debates is experiences of particular historical events, like living through the Red Terror, or experiencing Bob's wedding party. There is no type/token distinction in relation to these unique, unrepeatable experiences.

from listening to Murphy, Burke acquires the knowledge that when one is drunk one feels elated, less inhibited, and so on.

Now it seems that the above description of drunkenness passed for an acceptable answer to the question ‘What’s it like to be drunk?’ in the above situation. For when Burke asked his friend that question he was *asking for a description*, an account of what the experience involves. Murphy delivered, and Burke, we can imagine, was satisfied with the answer he got. Clearly if Murphy was to have answered ‘It’s like this [experience I’m having now]/that [experience I had last Friday night]’, this would *not* have been acceptable in that context, as it would have been uninformative and of no use to Burke (we will discuss in more detail the nature of acceptable answers to ‘What’s *E* like?’ questions later).

That being so, it seems that both Burke and Murphy satisfy the Standard Theory’s conditions for knowing what it is like to be drunk. For they both know that when one is drunk one feels such-and-such, and ‘When one is drunk one feels such-and-such’ was an acceptable answer to the embedded question. Incidentally, they also satisfy the conditions of certain neo-reductionist views like Mastro’s and Schaffer’s; they not only know that *p* where *p* is the answer to the relevant *wh*-question, but they also know that this is the answer to that question (Schaffer), and they know what the answer to the *wh*-question is (Mastro).

Yet intuitively, Burke does not know what it is like to be drunk, while Murphy does know what it is like (I present evidence in section 6 that most people agree with these judgments). And the reason, presumably, has to do with the fact that Burke has never had the experience, while Murphy has. (This is not necessarily to say that having the experience is metaphysically/logically necessary for knowing what it is like. We will investigate the possible basis for these intuitions in the final section; for now we need only note the intuitions.) When Burke learned the facts expressed in Murphy’s answer, this was not sufficient to give him knowledge of what it is like to be drunk. Burke would be committing no contradiction in saying ‘I know that when drunk one feels such-and-such, but I don’t know what it’s like to be drunk’, though Burke would be entitled to say that he knows what being drunk is *supposed to be like*. Therefore, ascriptions of experiential knowledge, apparently, have quite different requirements from other knowledge-*wh* ascriptions.

4.3 Clarifications

Some clarifications about this case should now be made. First, note that it is not being claimed that both Murphy and Burke have the exact same factual knowledge about the

experience of being drunk. We can happily admit that there are certain facts about being drunk that Murphy knows but not Burke, perhaps including the fact that being drunk is like *this* (said as one is drunk). All we need to be concerned with is the proposition that was expressed in what was an acceptable answer to the relevant *wh*-question, since that is all that matters as far as the Standard Theory is concerned.

Secondly, attributions of and questions regarding experiential knowledge are often expressed with infinitive clauses, and some features of the syntax of such clauses may be relevant to the interpretation of these constructions. Though infinitive clauses sometimes have an overt subject, for example, (infinitive clauses are underlined) ‘Smith wants Rogers to leave’, sometimes they do not, as with ‘Smith wants to leave’. To preserve their status as clauses, which require a subject, and to account for various phenomena, linguists in the generative tradition posit an unpronounced pronoun PRO in such structures, as in ‘Smith wants PRO to leave’. Here ‘PRO’ refers back to or is ‘controlled by’ the subject of the main clause, as if we were to say ‘Smith wants himself to leave’. PRO can be controlled by the subject or object of the main clause, but sometimes it can refer to something outside the sentence, or have ‘arbitrary reference’ (Radford 2004: 111; Stanley and Williamson 2001: 423). The latter we see in ‘It’s wrong PRO to steal’. This pronoun becomes overt in ‘It’s wrong for one to steal’.

Thus we could take attributions of experiential knowledge to have this omitted element, as in ‘Murphy knows what it is like PRO to be drunk’. ‘PRO’ can then be interpreted as referring to the subject of the main clause or as having arbitrary reference. These elements become overt in ‘Murphy knows what it is like for him to be drunk.’ and ‘Murphy knows what it is like for one to be drunk.’ Similarly, Burke’s question to Murphy could have two interpretations: ‘What is it like for you to be drunk?’ or ‘What is it like for one to be drunk?’ Which should be favored?

I believe that the latter interpretation is more natural here. It seems that, typically, when we ask the *person-relative* kind of question we are not inquiring about the general features of the experience as such but want to know how that particular person found it or what his reaction to it was. And this we might wonder about *even if we have had the experience ourselves and know what it is like*. This could occur in a situation where Murphy got drunk for the first time with some friends, where afterwards they discussed their experiences, asking each other, ‘What was it like for you?’. Experiences, however, can also be considered as sharable things with characteristic features, abstracted from any specific

experiencers, and we can plausibly imagine that this was what Burke was asking about. This would perhaps have come out more clearly if he were to have used the equally appropriate non-clausal gerund form ‘What’s it like *being drunk?*’ (where no concealed PRO will be ascribed). This interpretation also seems the most plausible in light of Murphy’s use of the generic pronoun ‘you’ in his answer. So to clarify, the intuition is that Murphy does but Burke does not know what it is like *for one* to be drunk/know what *being drunk* is like. Hellie (2004: 339) would also find this interpretation the most natural.

Thirdly, I should emphasize that I make no claim that the description of being drunk given above is a particularly good one, and it was left open-ended to allow the reader to imagine Murphy mentioning whatever important details I might have missed. But would a better description, one that specifies the phenomenology in greater detail, make a difference to whether we would ascribe experiential knowledge to Burke? It’s difficult to see how it would. Such a description would be only better by degree and not ‘in kind’, and it is therefore difficult to see how it would lead to a major turnaround in our intuitions about the case. And as we will see when investigating the basis for this intuition in section 6, the problem might not be with any lack of detail in the description but with the ‘second-hand’ nature of that type of evidential source.

4.4 A supplementary argument

A supplementary argument to strengthen our interpretation of this case can now be given. Its first premise is that wonderment and curiosity are incompatible with knowledge (Stanley 2011: 42). So for instance, one cannot wonder whether *p* if one knows that *p*. Similarly, one cannot wonder what an experience is like if one knows what it is like. These claims, however, are in need of qualification, since as Jane Freidman (2017) has pointed out it is possible to forget what one knows and then to wonder about that matter, as when you forget where you put your key and then wonder where it is. As Freidman says, when you eventually remember where you put it, you don’t learn something new but recall what you already knew. So we must add a qualifier stating that this knowledge must be mentally accessible, that is, it must not be forgotten or blocked somehow. If we assume proper cognitive functioning, we can maintain these claims.

Consider now the aftermath of Murphy describing the experience of being drunk to Burke. Suppose that Burke has *not* forgotten what Murphy said; he knows and remembers it well. Now I maintain that it is possible for Burke to *still wonder* about what it is like to be

drunk. Curiosity might remain (indeed, it might have been stimulated further by Murphy's description), a curiosity that cannot be slaked by hearing it described further or better. But then, given the first premise, it would follow that he does not know what it is like to be drunk. (I do not think I am confusing curiosity with the desire for a pleasant experience here. We could change the example to one involving an exotic but unpleasant experience, such as a 'bad trip' from a psychoactive drug or a psychotic episode, to rule out this explanation.)

The proposed counterexample—a very ordinary and simple sort of case—has now been presented. (This ordinariness and simplicity, by the way, is a strength; sometimes the more fanciful, bizarre, or complex a case is the less clear it is what we should say about it.⁹) Next we must examine the replies that could be made on the reductionist's behalf. The above case purports to show that there can be a subject, *S*, who knows that *p*, where this proposition correctly answers the question embedded in a knowledge-*wh* ascription, but where intuitively *S* fails to have the relevant knowledge-*wh*. There seems to be only two ways of avoiding this interpretation: either deny that the proposition was an acceptable answer to the embedded question, or assert that Burke does, in fact, have the relevant knowledge-*wh*. The next two sections will deal with these replies in turn.

5 Acceptable answers to 'What's *E* like?' questions

As was said, one way to invalidate the above counterexample would be to successfully argue that the description given in response to 'What's it like to be drunk?' was not an acceptable answer to that question. Let us look into this.

5.1 Acceptability and context

Regarding what count as acceptable answers to *wh*-questions, many philosophers, including Tye (2011: 303), agree that this generally depends on the context. Ginet, for instance, thinks it depends on contextual factors like the interests and purposes of the questioner (1975: 3), as do some others according to Parent (2014: 88). Aloni claims that it depends on the 'information state' of the questioner (2001: 8). Parent describes a pair of cases sometimes used to illustrate this context-dependency (2014: 84):

⁹ One reason for this could be as follows: with strange cases we must *judge* what we *would* say about them *if* they were to happen. But with ordinary cases we can simply *recall* what we *actually* do say about them *when* they happen.

Situation 1: Woman stepping off a plane in Johannesburg.

Flight-attendant: ‘Do you know where you are?’

Lucia: ‘Johannesburg.’

Situation 2: Woman stepping out of a taxi in Johannesburg.

Taxi-driver: ‘Do you know where you are?’

Lucia: ‘Johannesburg.’

Though Lucia gives the same answer to the same question in both situations, an answer that is a true statement concerning her location, the answer is inappropriate in the second case and fails to show, in that context, that she knows where she is. If context determines what counts as an appropriate answer for many kinds of *wh*-question, then we could expect the same to apply to questions about what experiences are like.

Regarding the latter, Tye says that his demonstrative-containing answer is ‘acceptable in normal contexts’ (2011: 307). (At least he said this about the experience of seeing red, but if his point is to be analytically significant, he must generalize to all experiences.) But Tye was not thinking about real human interactions when he said this, and was not taking into account the purposes or expectations of typical questioners. Generally speaking, when we ask someone about what an experience is or was like, as with ‘What’s it like being Head of Department?’ or ‘What was it like being in prison?’¹⁰,—something we typically do when we have never had those experiences and are curious about them—we are *requesting a description* of the experience. Being given a curt ‘It’s like this [experience I’m having now]/that [experience I had last year]’ would clearly be unacceptable to the questioner, since it would be completely uninformative. Descriptions are not just acceptable in certain contexts; they are *the norm* as far as answering such questions is concerned. But this only becomes clear once we consider experiences that *can* be described (effable experiences). Answers such as ‘It’s like this.’ might be acceptable in certain situations, and Tye seems to have in mind the rather artificial case where a person asks *herself* ‘What’s it like to see red?’ (artificial, because we are left wondering why one would ask oneself such a question; Tye does not describe any

¹⁰ That these questions are about experiences can be seen from the fact that, after some rejigging perhaps, we can insert ‘the experience of’ into them. For instance, ‘What was it like being in prison?’ is equivalent to ‘What was being in prison like?’, and ‘the experience of’ fits into this: ‘What was [the experience of] being in prison like?’

surrounding circumstances which would make this behavior intelligible). But in a two-person case like that of Murphy and Burke, this answer would clearly be aberrant.

Perhaps it will be said, ‘By everyday standards such descriptions may count as acceptable answers to “What’s it like?” questions, but we need not be beholden to those standards’. But why shouldn’t we? After all, the ‘What’s it like?’ locution is an expression of natural, everyday language. Given that we are analyzing an everyday expression, it is not clear why we should ignore everyday standards such as informativeness for determining acceptability. Moreover, if such standards determine the acceptability of answers to other *wh*-questions, then we would need special reasons to ignore them for these sorts of *wh*-questions. It seems that being informative, or giving the information desired or expected by the questioner, is important for determining whether one’s answer to other *wh*-questions is legitimate (see Parent 2014: 88). For instance, if I ask ‘Who won the tennis game?’, you are, in a sense, giving a true answer in saying, ‘The person that scored the most’. But in normal contexts this ‘smart answer’ would just tell me something I already know and would not show that you know who won the game. For that, you would need to provide the name or an appropriate definite description of the winner.

Even restricting our attention to demonstrative-containing answers to ‘What’s *E* like?’ questions, it’s not clear that Tye is on safe ground. Consider the demonstrative ‘that’, rather than ‘this’. Suppose I am asked ‘What’s being drunk like?’, and I say in appropriate circumstances, ‘It’s like that experience Murry is having over there’.¹¹ This could be a true answer. But could it be an ‘acceptable or legitimate’ answer? If it is, then this might prove worrisome for Tye, since I could know that without ever having experienced being drunk myself, and thus, plausibly, without knowing what it is like. If it is not, then we would need to think of a non-tendentious reason for holding ‘It’s like *this*’ to be acceptable, but not ‘It’s like *that*’.

In summary, it seems doubtful that one could successfully argue either that descriptions in general are not appropriate answers to questions about what experiences are like, or that Murphy’s descriptive answer in particular (or something along those lines), in the case above, was not an acceptable answer to Burke’s question.

¹¹ I assume that this statement can have a non-comparative meaning (that is, it isn’t just saying that being drunk is *similar to* that experience Murry is having, rather, it is saying that being drunk *is* that experience he is having). If it doesn’t have this non-comparative meaning, then presumably neither does Tye’s ‘It’s like this’.

5.2 Bennett and Hacker on questions about what experiences are like

An alternative view on what sorts of answers we are looking for when we ask questions about what experiences are like has recently emerged which deserves our attention. Bennett and Hacker (2003: 271-281) have argued that some philosophers have confused two different sorts of questions, questions about what an *experience* is like, and questions about what the *thing experienced* is like (e.g., ‘... what it is like to see green is just what green is like from our perspective’ (Kulvicki 2007: 217)). They suggest that when we ask about what an *experience* is like, as in ‘What was it like seeing red?’, we are not asking about the qualitative character of the object of experience (redness), but are inquiring about the affective or attitudinal responses that the experience aroused or arouses in us, or what Snowdon (2010: 16) calls ‘the tone’ of the experience. Thus if one asked Jackson’s Mary after she saw red for the first time, ‘What was it like to see red?’, she would be giving an appropriate answer in replying ‘Wonderful’, ‘Intriguing’, or ‘Surprising’ (other philosophers have made similar observations¹²), though normally there is *nothing* that it is like for us to see red, since normally the experience provokes no attitudinal or emotional response. On the other hand, we can ask ‘What is red like?’ and *here* we have a question about the qualitative character of redness, one that commonly leaves us dumbstruck.

Bennett and Hacker have a point, as there are many contexts where these sorts of answers seem right. For instance, if Jones was recently jilted at the altar, Smith might ask him ‘What was it like getting jilted at the altar?’. Jones might then reply ‘It was deeply humiliating’, and that could be a satisfactory and complete answer, and all that Smith was looking for. The universality of this view may be doubted however, since often when we ask ‘What’s *E* like?’ we seem to be asking about what the experience *involves* (Bennett and Hacker seems to acknowledge this (2003: 278)). The following exchanges seem natural for instance: A: ‘What’s it like being a policeman?’ B: ‘There’s a surprising amount of paperwork. You often don’t get much respect ...’. A: ‘What’s living in a monastery like?’ B: ‘You have to get up very early. Much time is spent in silent meditation. Strict rules must be obeyed ...’. These answers are not limited to mentioning affective attitudes.¹³

¹² See (Hellie 2004: 337; Lormand 2004: 309; Snowdon 2010: 16). In a very recent co-authored paper (Grzankowski and Tye 2019) Tye now accepts that these are acceptable answers, and thus he has given up the idea that acceptable answers must contain a demonstrative.

¹³ Furthermore, it is not always possible to cleanly distinguish between the experience and the object of experience, such as when the experience is of something mental, like feeling drunk.

Nevertheless, let us consider a context where Bennett and Hacker's suggestion applies. Suppose again that Jones' reply, 'It was deeply humiliating', was an acceptable answer to Smith's question, 'What was it like getting jilted at the altar?'. In that case, the Standard Theory would imply that Smith now knows what it is like getting jilted at the altar, since he knows the truth expressed in what was an acceptable answer to that question. That is, Smith knows that getting jilted at the altar is deeply humiliating, after being reliably informed of this by Jones. However, this seems incorrect: given that Smith himself (let us suppose) has never been jilted at the altar, he does not know what it is like.¹⁴ So on Bennett and Hacker's view of what are (sometimes, if not always) acceptable answers to questions about what experiences are like, the Standard Theory also gets it wrong.

6 Why Burke does not know what it is like to be drunk

The other way of objecting to our interpretation of the Burke-Murphy case is to argue that Burke, like Murphy, knows what it is like to be drunk. To this end, one might claim that if Burke can accurately describe what it is like being drunk, then he knows what it is like. One might say, 'How else can we describe someone who possesses information about what an experience is like, and can answer our queries, than to say that he knows what it's like? He might, indeed, know it to a *lesser extent* than Murphy, but he knows it nonetheless.'

It was suggested, however, that what we would naturally say is that while Murphy knows what it is like being drunk, Burke does not. What underlying principles, if any, might underpin this judgment? Two views can be identified in the literature regarding what is required for experiential knowledge that could explain it, a stronger view and a weaker one. It is worthwhile exploring these, even though, as we will see, the argument of this paper does not depend on either being true (though I lean toward the stronger view).

6.1 The stronger view

Firstly, some have held that having the experience is necessary for knowing what it is like. Among these is Tye, who believes that experiential knowledge requires being 'acquainted' with the phenomenal character of the experience (2011: 313). This view would clearly entail

¹⁴ Though Smith *knows that* it is humiliating getting jilted at the altar, he does not *know the humiliation* of getting jilted at the altar. It is more plausible to suppose that the latter is what is important for knowing what it is like to get jilted at the altar.

that Burke does not know what it is like to be drunk, and its being correct would explain why we make that judgment.

A number of philosophers, however, have claimed that having the experience is not metaphysically or logically necessary for knowing what it is like. D. H. Mellor, for instance, writes that ‘knowing what experiences of a certain kind are like does not entail having had them’ (1993: 6), and Paul Noordhof (2003) concurs. These philosophers formed this opinion from considering a case originally discussed by David Lewis (1988/2004: 79) of a musician reading a musical score and imagining the tune. As Mellor describes it, ‘reading a musical score enables many musicians to imagine, i.e. to hear in their mind’s ear, the sound of music they have never actually heard before’ (1993: 5). And this imaginative exercise can give the musician, in Lewis, Mellor and Noordhof’s view, ‘experiential knowledge’ of hearing the tune (why I use scare-quotes here will become clear).

A rejoinder to this is possible however, based on a subtle distinction that has been noted by Carl Ginet. This is the distinction between knowing what an experience *is* like, and knowing what an experience *would be* like. Ginet explains it as follows:

‘S knows what it is like to *VP*’ where ‘*VP*’ refers to some action or experience ... implies that S is *acquainted* with the particular kind of property of experience ... [On the other hand,] ‘S knows what it would be like to *VP*’, seems to imply that S does not have acquaintance with the property in question but that he would be able to recognize the property should it occur in his experience. Though he’s never had the experience itself, he has a well-founded accurate idea of it ... (1975: 5-6).

Lewis’ musician falls into this latter category.

The suggestion here is that there are two kinds of knowledge that we have seen fit to label with separate locutions: knowledge of the character of an experience gained through having it, and knowledge of the character of an experience gained not through having it but in some other way, for example, through testimony or imaginative construction.¹⁵ Armed with this distinction, we could then make the charge of *ignoratio elenchi* and say that the musician does not know what it *is* like to hear the tune, but only knows what it *would be* like to hear

¹⁵ Consider, for instance, the difference between saying, in the attempt to console and empathise with a bereaved person, ‘I know what it’s like to lose someone dear’ and ‘I know what it would be like to lose someone dear’. Which does and which does not carry the implication that I have lost someone dear myself?

the tune, a different thing altogether. And it is not insignificant to point out in this regard that the above philosophers use this very phrase to describe the musician's knowledge. Thus Noordhof says that by reading the score the musician can come to 'know what [the] experience [of hearing the tune] would be like' (2003: 23), and Lewis writes that he would 'know what it would be like to hear the music' (1988/2004: 79; hence the scare-quotes above).¹⁶ Moreover, this answers our critic's question concerning how we ought to describe Burke's epistemic condition: Burke knows what it would be like to be drunk, or even better, he knows what it is *supposed to be* like.¹⁷ (To examine this distinction further, I encourage the reader to do Internet searches of the phrases 'knows what it is like' and 'knows what it would be like' and to compare the contexts of utterance.)

Why might we have found this distinction important enough to mark with separate locutions? I suggest it is for the following reason. Have as vivid an imagination as you like, being able to imagine experiencing something *is no substitute* for experiencing it. Imagining hearing a great piece of music is no substitute for hearing it. Imagining being in pain is nothing like being in pain (one does not *suffer* from the former). Knowing what something would be like or what it is supposed to be like is generally no substitute for knowing what it is like.

Lewis (1988/2004: 78), among others (see Alter 2008: 254-255), presented another kind of case designed to show that experiential knowledge does not require having the experience. If a brain-state were produced in someone through advanced neurosurgery identical to what would be caused in him by having the experience, he would, according to Lewis, know what the experience is like without having had it.

Caution should be advised when reflecting on science-fiction cases like this. The rules governing the use of 'knows what it is like' were not formed with such alien scenarios in mind and it might be indeterminate what we should say here. This case seems to be pulling us in opposite directions in stating that, on the one hand, the subject never had the experience, but on the other, that he is physically identical (in the relevant respects) to how he would be if

¹⁶ Similarly, William Child, when discussing Hume's well-known 'missing shade of blue' case, describes it thus: 'Hume's man has never experienced the missing shade of blue. But [from imagining it] he knows what it would be like to experience it' (2015: 85). Jackson (1982: 132) describes it the same way.

¹⁷ To my ear, there is a difference even between these two constructions: 'supposed to' is more natural to use where the knowledge is based on testimony, as in the Burke case, while 'would' is more appropriate for the musician case, which is based on imaginative construction. Relatedly, we say that a book is 'supposed to be good' if we have heard that it is good, and not that it 'would be good'. And if someone proposes a pleasant activity, from imagining it I could say, 'That would be good,' but not, 'That's supposed to be good'.

he had had the experience. Whether strong philosophical conclusions can be drawn from such examples is unclear. (The case also assumes that there are specific brain-states underpinning our knowledge of what specific experiences are like, which is not a trivial assumption). Nevertheless, even if Lewis' judgment is correct here, it still does not affect the core argument of this paper. But before we see why, let us consider a different explanation for why Burke does not know what it is like being drunk.

6.2 *The weaker view*

A different set of requirements for experiential knowledge is contained in Lewis' positive view. For Lewis, to know what an experience is like, one need only have a number of abilities related to it, namely, the interrelated abilities to imagine it, recognize it, and remember it (1988/2004: 97-102; though he suggested that having the brain-state associated with having the experience is sufficient, he presumably meant that this brain-state should be correlated with these abilities). As Lewis explains, for many experiences, like tasting chocolate, we have little hope of ever being able to imagine it unless we have the experience first. But for others, such as hearing a certain piece of music, we can (or some of us can) successfully imagine the experience without having it, by studying the score for instance. This view of experiential knowledge is called the Ability Hypothesis.

The correctness of such a view could also explain why we judge that Burke does not know what it is like to be drunk, since we might think that Burke's descriptive knowledge would not be enough to enable him to accurately imagine what it is like. Knowing and understanding a correct description of an experience does not necessarily mean that one can imagine that experience well, and Burke might still remain curious about what it is like (just as we might remain curious about what it is like to take some exotic recreational drug even after hearing a detailed description of it). This could be so even if Burke has experienced all the components in Murphy's description independently, that is to say, he has experienced being elated, feeling chatty, feeling dizzy etcetera, because the way they come together in the experience of being drunk could have its own 'gestalt' that could still elude him.

We could even change the details of the case here to put more distance between knowledge of the description and imaginative ability. For some people are just poor at imagining and an even smaller minority cannot conjure up mental images at all—a recently recognized condition called *aphantasia*—and we could stipulate that Burke is such a person. So despite knowing Murphy's description, Burke could have little or no ability to accurately

imagine being drunk.¹⁸ Also, since Burke has never been drunk, he obviously cannot remember being drunk. We should concede, however, that from knowing and understanding Murphy's description he would probably be able to recognize an experience as one of being drunk, were he to have it. So Burke might meet one of Lewis' three conditions, a rather poor overall score.

6.3 *The dispensability of the strong and weak view*

We have explored some ideas concerning what might be required for experiential knowledge that might explain our intuition that Burke does not know what it is like being drunk, namely, the idea that having the experience is required, and the idea that having certain abilities is required. It is important to note, however, that the core argument of this paper does *not depend* on any of these theses being true. No universal claim needs to be defended here. We are trying to *refute* a universal claim, and for that purpose all that is needed is a counterexample. In other words, what essentially matters for our purposes is not *why* Burke does not know what it is like being drunk. What matters is *that* he does not know what it is like being drunk, since then we have our exception to the standard reductive theory of knowledge-*wh*. And *we can be surer of this judgment than of any underlying principle that might explain it*. Indeed, this is a common situation to find ourselves in with counterexamples. It was the situation that many people found themselves in with the Gettier counterexample to the justified true belief theory of knowledge for instance.

That said, I still think it is correct to say that Burke does not know what it is like to be drunk *because he never experienced it*. But this does not oblige me to defend the idea that having an experience is metaphysically/logically necessary for knowing what it is like. For suppose that Lewis' advanced neurosurgery case shows that one can know what an experience is like without having it, just by having the appropriate brain-state. Very well, but that is not what was going on in the Burke-Murphy case. Burke has never been drunk, and what's more, *he has never had any advanced neurosurgery* giving him the brain-state he would be left with from that experience. So he does not know what it is like because he never experienced it, that being the *only available way*, given current technology, of getting the necessary brain-state.

¹⁸ I assume here that this would not negate the assumption that Burke *understands* Murphy's description. In general at least, understanding something does not require being able to imagine it. I understand what a hectogon (a one hundred-sided figure) is for instance, but cannot imagine one, at least not in such a way that my image would be distinct from my image of a dihectagon (see Descartes 2008 [1641]: 51-52).

6.4 The reliability of the intuition

There might be some who will worry about a possible bias or idiosyncrasy in my judgment that ‘intuitively, Burke does not know what it is like to be drunk’ – a bias perhaps due to my interests or theoretical persuasions – who would like to see some survey data on what others find intuitive about this case. However, it would be a mistake to regard my claim about Burke as simply being ‘based on intuition’. It might indeed, on first considering the case, ‘strike one as being correct’ that Burke does not know this. But that does not mean that justifications cannot be given for trusting any such initial ‘intuition’, and these I have tried to give.

Nevertheless, since it might be of some interest to ascertain the views of others about this case, I conducted an informal survey, giving a version of the Burke-Murphy case¹⁹ to 135 people, all native English speakers (colleagues, acquaintances, family, friends and others). Subjects were asked whether Murphy and Burke know what it is like being drunk, and were given ‘yes’, ‘no’, or ‘not sure’ options. For Murphy, 121 (89.6%) answered yes, 9 (6.7%) answered no, and 5 (3.7%) were not sure. For Burke, 22 (16.3%) answered yes, 99 (73.3%) answered no, and 14 (10.4%) were not sure.

This appears to support my interpretation of the case, but I do not put a lot of weight on these results, for two reasons. First, there are many relevant things that one should consider before deciding whether Burke knows what it is like being drunk (such as the supplementary argument, and the distinctions between knowing what an experience is like, what it is supposed to be like, and what it would be like), which a person cannot easily be apprised of in a survey situation. Furthermore, respondents gave all sorts of different reasons for judging as they did, which suggests that their judgments were not simply based on brute intuitions. But if these judgments were based on reasons then the question arises of whether they were good or bad reasons, though answering this would also take us out of the survey

¹⁹ The vignette went as follows:

Murphy is a young man who has had his first few experiences drinking alcohol. He has gotten drunk a number of times.

Burke is a friend of Murphy who never has and never will drink alcohol because of his religion. Nevertheless he’s very curious about its effects. He asks Murphy about his experiences. Murphy gives him a detailed description of the experience of being drunk (“You feel more chatty and sociable, more confident, more positive about the future, less alert, less inhibited, more emotional and impulsive, you are more prone to clumsiness, jokes seem funnier” etcetera.) Burke listens intently, and notes that Murphy’s description corresponds with how he has seen drinkers behave on various occasions. He understands and retains everything that Murphy said in memory, and can now give as good an answer as Murphy to anyone who asks for a description of the experience of being drunk, but he has never had the experience himself.

situation, and into philosophical discussion. These judgments, then, are bound to be poor substitutes for judgments made after informed philosophical discussion and reflection.

6.5 *Modes of presentation*

Let's look at one more possible defence of the Standard Theory that has been recently advocated by Cath (2019), one of the few philosophers to have reflected on effable experiences and the challenge they pose. According to this defence, we can make a move to save the Standard Theory analogous to the move that Stanley and Williamson made to save it from an apparent counterexample relating to knowledge-how (which is another kind of knowledge-*wh*), a move that appropriates the Fregean notion of a mode of presentation (I will assume familiarity with this topic here). It will be remembered that Stanley and Williamson discussed the case of Hannah (2001: 428), who has never ridden a bike before. She is shown John riding a bike and is told, 'That is a way for you to ride a bike'. This, Stanley and Williamson suggest, correctly answers the question 'How do you ride a bike?' and Hannah knows it, but intuitively, she does not know how to ride a bike (she still lacks that skill). Stanley and Williamson then claim that it is only when she knows the relevant fact under a *practical mode of presentation* that she will have the knowledge-how. John knew that fact under a practical mode of presentation perhaps, but Hannah only knew it under a 'demonstrative mode of presentation'.²⁰

The analogous move with the Burke-Murphy case would go something like this. Let us say that facts about experiences can be known in different ways or under different modes of presentation, including an *experiential* (or 'phenomenal', as Cath prefers²¹) mode of presentation, and a *testimonial* mode of presentation. The former requires having had the experience, while the latter does not. Now in the Burke-Murphy case, both these characters were said to know the same fact, namely, that when drunk one feels such-and-such, yet Murphy knew what being drunk is like while Burke did not. And the reason why, according to this view, is that Murphy knew that fact under an experiential mode of presentation while Burke only knew it under a testimonial mode of presentation.

²⁰ It is worth noting, however, that 'demonstrative' and 'practical' are not mutually exclusive. For as Stanley and Williamson suggest later (2001: 433), John might be unable to describe in non-indexical terms the way he rides a bike. He might only be able to say that 'I ride a bicycle *this way*', said as he demonstrates the way. Presumably for Stanley and Williamson this would be knowing the way to ride a bike under both a practical and a demonstrative mode of presentation.

²¹ I want to avoid this term as it might suggest that there is a distinct 'phenomenal character' associated with different types of experience. But this does not seem true of many effable experiences.

I will just make a few points about this, which will not close the issue. First, if this account were correct, it would still mean that the Standard Theory, *strictly speaking*, fails to deal adequately with experiential knowledge. For the Standard Theory does not say anything about modes of presentation, and does not need to for most knowledge-*wh*. So this move would be an admission that the Standard Theory is not *by itself* up to the task. It would also be an admission that there is something distinctive about experiential knowledge, since its analysis requires the introduction of the novel concept of an experiential mode of presentation (different from the *practical* modes of presentation required, according to Stanley and Williamson, for the analysis of knowledge-how). On the other hand, this account would be a modification of the Standard Theory, and would save reductionism about knowledge-*wh*. So we couldn't get too celebratory here.

But is this sort of account going to satisfy us? Many philosophers have expressed discomfort or befuddlement, including Tye (2011: 302), at the perceived fast and loose appropriation of modes of presentation talk by Stanley and Williamson. It is probably the most widely criticized aspect of their theory of knowledge-how, and has not won many advocates among other intellectualists. Would talk of experiential and testimonial modes of presentation get any more sympathy? Part of the trouble here is that we have no prior or independent understanding of what these are (though we do understand that direct experience and testimony are different ways of *learning* a fact about experience).

It is worth noting, however, that if the modes of presentation gambit is legitimate then we may as well concede total victory to the reductionist forthwith, regarding all kinds of knowledge. For the reductionist will always be able to portray any apparently different kind of knowledge as knowledge-that by postulating an appropriate mode of presentation. Glick (2015: 554-555), for instance, in a satirizing spirit, has shown that we can manufacture 'acquaintance-based modes of presentation' to reduce acquaintance knowledge to knowledge-that, analyzing 'Smith knows Jones' as 'Smith knows that Jones exists, and knows this under an acquaintance-based mode of presentation'. The worry here is that the appeal to tailor-made modes of presentation to save knows-that reductionism from apparent counterexample is becoming a glib response to hard cases in the epistemology literature.

A further point to make here concerns what would be doing the work in this analysis. Consider the analysis being suggested:

S knows what experience E is like iff S knows that p , where an acceptable answer to the question ‘What is E like?’ is that p , and S knows that p under an experiential mode of presentation.

Though the idea of knowing that p under an experiential mode of presentation might not be so clear to us, we at least know that it is supposed to require that S has experienced E . But then one wonders whether it is just this that is doing all the work in the analysis and giving it whatever plausibility it has, with the rest just getting a free ride. For mightn’t it be the case that one can know what an experience is like just in virtue of having it (or having had it and having not forgotten it)? There needs to be a reason to resort to this more complex theory other than to make experiential knowledge conform to other knowledge-*wh* (e.g., that other, simpler accounts of experiential knowledge are inadequate).

I have not proven, however, that this sort of analysis could not be made intelligible and rendered plausible, nor have I tried to give a positive account of experiential knowledge with which this approach could be compared as better or worse (but see Stoljar (2018), for the possibility of a ‘free-relative’ reading of ‘knows what it’s like’ sentences). These endeavours are beyond the scope of this paper, and I must leave this matter to the reader’s own judgment for now.

7 Conclusion

Overt grammatical similarities between sentences can lead us to expect that the natures of the denoted phenomena are essentially similar. But from the early days of analytic philosophy we have learned that grammatical form can be misleading in this respect (e.g., Ayer 1936 [1964]: 42-43; Ryle 1932; Wittgenstein 1958 [1980]). In this paper I have argued that the analysis of experiential knowledge using the standard reductive theory of knowledge-*wh* gets its veneer of plausibility from our fixation with experiences of simple perceptible and sensory qualities, and that things start to look different once we consider cases involving effable experiences. Needless to say, the final word has not been said on these matters here. But it has at least been shown that with experiential knowledge there are some hard cases for the reductionist to deal with. If the Standard Theory ultimately cannot handle these cases, then this will raise further questions. For instance, are there other considerations that might show that all experiential knowledge is a kind of factual knowledge? Or should we adopt the Ability

Hypothesis instead, which reduces it to knowledge-how/ability, or an acquaintance knowledge view, and can those views accommodate the effable experience cases presented above? Or could experiential knowledge be a distinctive epistemic kind, not reducible to other knowledge types? We must leave these questions for another occasion.

Acknowledgements

I thank Ivan Ivanov, Rowland Stout, and the anonymous reviewers of this and other journals for their comments on this material. Versions of this paper were presented at the Aristotelian Society Joint Session in the University of Exeter in 2013, the European Epistemology Network Meeting in the Autonomous University of Madrid in 2014, a seminar in University College Dublin in 2014, and in 2017 at workshops at Huaqiao University, Xiamen, and the China University of Political Science and Law, Beijing, and I thank the audiences for their comments.

References

- Aloni, M. 2001. *Quantification under Conceptual Covers*. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Amsterdam.
- Alter, T. 2008. Phenomenal knowledge without experience. In E. Wright, ed. *The Case for Qualia*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. 247-268.
- Ayer, A.J. 1964 [1936]. *Language, Truth and Logic*. London: Victor Gollancz.
- Bennett, M. R. & Hacker, P. M. S. 2003. *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience*. Oxford, etc.: Blackwell.
- Brogaard, B. 2009. What Mary did yesterday: Reflections on knowledge-wh. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 78(2), 439-467.
- Cath, Y. 2019. Knowing what it is like and testimony. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 97(1), 105-120.
- Child, W. 2015. Wittgenstein and phenomenal concepts. In M. Campbell & M. O'Sullivan, eds. *Wittgenstein and Perception*. London; New York: Routledge. 84-103.
- Dennett, D. C. 2002. Quining qualia. In D. J. Chalmers, ed. *Philosophy of Mind: Classical and Contemporary Readings*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press. 226-246.

- Descartes, R. 2008 [1641]. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Farkas, K. 2016. Know-wh does not reduce to know-that. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 53(2), 109-122.
- Friedman, J. 2017. Why Suspend Judging? *No  s*, 51(2), 302-326.
- Ginet, C. 1975. *Knowledge, Perception, and Memory*. Dordrecht; London: Reidel.
- Glick, E. 2015. Practical Modes of Presentation. *No  s*, 49(3), 538-559.
- Grzankowski, A. & Tye, M. 2019. What acquaintance teaches. In T. Raleigh & J. Knowles (eds), *Acquaintance: New Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hellie, B. 2004. Inexpressible truths and the allure of the knowledge argument. In P. Ludlow, Y. Nagasawa, & D. Stoljar, eds. *There's Something About Mary: Essays on Phenomenal Consciousness and Frank Jackson's Knowledge Argument*. Cambridge, Ma: MIT Press. 333-364.
- Jackson, F. 1982. Epiphenomenal qualia. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 32(127), 127-136.
- Kallestrup, J. 2009. Knowledge-wh and the problem of convergent knowledge. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 78(2), 468-476.
- Kulvicki, J. 2007. What is what it's like? Introducing perceptual modes of presentation. *Synthese*, 156(2), 205-229.
- Lewis, D. 1988 [2004]. What experience teaches. In P. Ludlow, Y. Nagasawa, & D. Stoljar, eds. *There's Something About Mary: Essays on Phenomenal Consciousness and Frank Jackson's Knowledge Argument*. Cambridge, Ma: MIT Press. 77-103.
- Longworth, G. 2008. Linguistic Understanding and Knowledge. *No  s*, 42(1), 50-79.
- Lormand, E. 2004. The explanatory stopgap. *The Philosophical Review*, 113(3), 303-357.
- Lycan, W. G. 1996. *Consciousness and Experience*. Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press.
- Masto, M. 2010. Questions, answers, and knowledge-wh. *Philosophical Studies*, 147(3), 395-413.
- Mellor, D. H. 1993. Nothing like experience. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 93(1), 1-16.
- Noordhof, P. 2003. Something like ability. *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 81(1), 21-40.
- Parent, T. 2014. Knowing-wh and embedded questions. *Philosophy Compass*, 9(2), 81-95.
- Radford, A. 2004. *Minimalist Syntax: Exploring the Structure of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Ryle, G. 1932) Systematically misleading expressions. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 32(139), 139-170.
- Schaffer, J. 2007. Knowing the answer. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 75(2), 383-403.
- Snowdon, P. 2010. On the what-it-is-like-ness of experience. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 48(1), 8-27.
- Stanley, J. 2011. *Know How*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stanley, J. and Williamson, T. 2001. Knowing how. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 98(8), 411-444.
- Stoljar, D. 2018. The knowledge argument and two interpretations of ‘knowing what it’s like’. In D. Jacquette, ed. *The Bloomsbury Companion to the Philosophy of Consciousness*. Bloomsbury. 108-125.
- Tye, M. 2011. Knowing what it is like. In J. Bengson & M. Moffett, eds. *Knowing How: Essays on Knowledge, Mind, and Action*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press. 300-313.
- Tye, M. 2009. *Consciousness Revisited: Materialism without Phenomenal Concepts*. Cambridge, Mass; London: MIT Press.
- Tye, M. 2004. Knowing what it is like: the ability hypothesis and the knowledge argument. In P. Ludlow, Y. Nagasawa, & D. Stoljar, eds. *There’s Something About Mary: Essays on Phenomenal Consciousness and Frank Jackson’s Knowledge Argument*. Cambridge, Ma: MIT Press. 143-160.
- Wittgenstein, L. 1980 [1958]. *The Blue Book*. In Wittgenstein, L. 1980 [1958]. *The Blue and Brown Books*. HarperCollins.