

The Limits of Stanley and Williamson's Attack on Ryle's View About Know-How



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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to discuss Stanley and Williamson's take on Ryle's argument against know-how being know-that. For this, I provide an initial consideration of the possibility of isolating Ryle's argument from his overall philosophical outlook and Stanley and Williamson's purpose in their discussion of Ryle. I then examine in detail Stanley and Williamson's reconstruction of Ryle's argument with the specific aim of showing where they have introduced extraneous elements: I examine what they take to be additional assumptions needed for the argument to be valid and how they construct the premises in order to attempt to show that Ryle's argument is not sound. I end the paper showing the limits of Stanley and Williamson's attack, suggesting how the extraneous elements Stanley and Williamson introduce already bias the discussion against Ryle. The main aim is not to defend a form of Ryle's regress but rather advocate the need for a deeper discussion of Ryle's views of mind and action when discussing his views on know-how.

Keywords: *Know-how, know-that, Ryle, action, agency*

Jason Stanley and Tim Williamson's 2001 paper "Knowing How" [21] has brought back discussion of the difference between know-how and know-that, and also Gilbert Ryle's [17, 18] work on it.¹ Stanley and Williamson argue against the claim that know-how is an ability (a complex of dispositions) while know-that is a relation between a subject and a true proposition –where the former does not consist in or is a form of the other. Their goal is to defend the view that knowing how is a matter of being in a relation to a proposition, that is, that knowing how is a species of knowing that. Since they credit Ryle with the rejection of the claim they wish to defend, Stanley and Williamson establish their own view against the backdrop of a critique of Ryle's work. In doing so, Stanley and Williamson take unwarranted liberties that tend to mark the

way they understand Ryle's point and, more importantly, the way the renewed discussion of Ryle's work, both for an against, is being carried out. In this paper, I wish to advance the overturning of this tendency.

1 Ryle's general philosophical outlook

According to Stanley and Williamson:

Ryle has two extended discussions of the relation between knowledge-how and knowledge-that. Both have as their main focus the rejection of what Ryle took to be the "prevailing doctrine" of the relation between knowledge-that and knowledge-how, which he took to follow from what he called "the intellectualist legend." This doctrine is the thesis that knowledge-how is a species of knowledge-that. [21, p. 411]

Here, Stanley and Williamson credit Ryle with the rejection of the claim that knowledge-how is a species of knowledge-that. They ascribe to Ryle a claim about what kind of thing that knowledge-how is and that it belongs to a different species from that of knowledge-that. They ascribe to Ryle a *metaphysical claim* about kinds of knowledge. Let us consider the merits of this attribution.²

Compare such attribution to the following representative quotations from Ryle's two 'extended discussions' on the topic. First, compare one quote from Ryle's 1945 Presidential address to the Aristotelian Society [17].

I want to turn the tables and to prove that knowledge-how cannot be defined in terms of knowledge-that and further, that knowledge-how is a concept logically prior to the concept of knowledge-that. [17, pp. 4-5]

And now, consider another line from the second chapter of *The Concept of Mind* [18] where Ryle states that

'Intelligent' cannot be defined in terms of 'intellectual' or 'knowing how' in terms of 'knowing that'. [18, p. 20]

Notice that Ryle is making in these two quotations a claim about words and concepts. In the first, Ryle is talking about *concepts* and holds that, first, it is not possible to define the concept of know-how in terms of the concept of know-that and, second, the former is logically prior to

the former. In the second, Ryle seems to be talking about *expressions*: how 'knowing how' cannot be defined in terms of the 'knowing that'. In both cases, it is a matter of the possibility of *definition*. Why do Stanley and Williamson take Ryle's discussion about the possibility of defining expressions and concepts as a metaphysical claim about the nature of knowledge?

It seems to me that Stanley and Williamson take Ryle's discussion about know-how in the Presidential Address [17] and *The Concept of Mind* [18] to be about the nature of kinds of knowledge because, at least in part, those who seem to endorse Ryle's claim also take it so. That is, Stanley and Williamson (Ryle's opponents) seem to take the same approach to Ryle's discussion as at least some of Ryle's purported allies. This can be seen in the paragraph where Stanley and Williamson show instances of philosophers who characterize their own claims in way that seems to endorse a distinction between know-how and know-that as a claim about kinds of knowledge.

For example, Hilary Putnam characterizes the central moral of his work on meaning and understanding in the following terms: "knowing the meaning of the word 'gold' or of the word 'elm' is not a matter of knowing that at all, but a matter of knowing how" (ibid., p. xvi). Yet we are unaware of any passage in which Putnam argues for the distinction. Indeed, even Ryle's positive view that knowledge-how is an ability is widely assumed and crucially exploited in many areas of philosophy outside epistemology. For example, according to David Lewis, knowing what an experience is like amounts to being able to remember, imagine, and recognize the experience. Possession of such abilities, Lewis writes, "isn't knowing that. It's knowing how" (ibid., p. 516). Indeed, according to Lewis, "Know how is ability" (ibid.). Similarly, in the philosophy of language, semantic competence is, according to Michael Devitt "an ability or a skill: a piece of knowledge-how not knowledge-that" [21, p. 411]

Putnam [15], Lewis [11], and Devitt [5] are presented by Stanley and Williamson as examples of philosophers that accept a distinction in kinds of knowledge where on the one hand there is knowledge-how and on the other hand there is knowledge-that. So the question, then, is why Ryle's purported allies in the discussion take Ryle's claims about the possibility of defining *expressions* and *concepts* to express a metaphysical claim about the nature of knowledge?³

Here is a plausible answer: the reason why Ryle's discussion of know-how is often taken both by purported allies and opponents to be about kind of knowledge is because there is a widely spread rejection of Ryle's general philosophical outlook. This 'outlook' is sometimes characterized as a distinct brew of behaviorism (logical or philosophical) that centers in the way words and concepts are used to talk about observable conduct. Rejecting the focus on words, concepts and observable conduct then leaves one open to interpreting Ryle's claims about the concept of mind to be directly about the mind.

Setting aside the question of whether Ryle holds some form of behaviorism (See Tanney [23] for discussion of this issue), the degree of credence that Ryle's overall take on philosophical problems about the mind is meagre compared to the degree of credence that, at least at the time Stanley and Williamson's first published the paper, the distinction between know-how and know-that. There are probably less self-professed behaviorists (See Stout [22] for an example, however) than defenders of the know-how/know-that distinction.

Stanley and Williamson seem to agree that despite the wide acceptance of the difference between know-how and know-that apparently due to Ryle's work, philosophers do not share Ryle's general outlook.

Although few philosophers now share Ryle's general philosophical outlook, his view that knowledge-how is fundamentally different from knowledge-that is widely accepted so much so that arguments for it are rarely presented, even in the works of those philosophers who crucially rely upon it. [21, p. 411]

Their direct target are those philosophers who reject Ryle's general philosophical outlook, ostensibly Ryle's variety of behaviorism, while at the same time hold there is distinction between knowledge-how and knowledge-that based on Ryle's own work on it. On Stanley and Williamson's view, Ryle's own "philosophical outlook" takes second place to how the way it ostensibly has been taken to mark a distinction between know-how and know-that.

Stanley and Williamson, as I will show, take the view that even if one, as it were, scrubs the behaviorism out of Ryle argument and attempts to fill in the gaps in a charitable way, one nevertheless still lacks the tools to mark a distinction between know-how and know-that.

In the following sections I will present Stanley and Williamson's discussion of Ryle on know-how in a way that makes explicit their attempt to make sense of Ryle's work independently of his general philosophical

outlook and how this leads them to the conclusion that Ryle's argument is unsound.

2 The aim of Stanley and Williamson's discussion of Ryle's work

The debate about know-how, as presented by Stanley and Williamson, centers on the question about the nature of knowledge paradigmatically attributed by sentences like [1]:

[1] Fatima knows how to knit.

Stanley and Williamson argue against what was, at the time when they published, a widely held philosophical opinion to the effect that there is a fundamental difference between know-how and know-that. That is, the view that there is a fundamental difference between knowledge paradigmatically attributed by sentences like [1] and knowledge paradigmatically attributed by sentences like [2]:

[2] Fatima knows that ancient Egyptians knitted socks.

Stanley and Williamson deny that there is such fundamental difference. They defend the Intellectualist view according to which knowledge typically attributed by sentences like [1] is of the same kind as knowledge typically attributed by sentences like [2].

To do make such defense, they examine Gilbert Ryle's Anti-intellectualist discussion of know-how, taking the views expressed in Ryle's 1945 Presidential address to the Aristotelian society and the second chapter of *The Concept of Mind* to be the central defense of the claim they wish to overthrow and thus as their main opponent. By opposing Ryle, Stanley and Williamson aim to establish their own view.

In Stanley and Williamson's reading, Ryle's main argument in favor of the claim that know-how is not a species of know-that is broadly based on two premises. First, that if one Fs, one employs knowledge how to F, and, second, that if one employs knowledge that P, one contemplates the proposition that P. These premises purportedly lead to a vicious regress, for, roughly, in order to F, one needs to employ propositional knowledge, which in turn requires employing additional propositional knowledge, which itself requires the employment of propositional knowledge, and so on indefinitely. However, they argue, there is no uniform reading of the premises that makes them both premises true and, thus, there is no uniform reading of the premises that could make the argument sound.

Contrary to Stanley and Williamson’s suggestion, I believe it is not easy to identify a single, standard-form argument from premises to conclusion in Ryle’s discussion of know-how. Ryle offers several considerations and rewordings of his position, so that a clean, sharp argument is not easy to pin down.⁴ Nevertheless, I will set aside the issue, for there are good reasons to focus our attention on the argument as presented by Stanley and Williamson, regardless of whether it is the main argument or not. For, even by Ryle’s own lights, as evidenced in the first presentation of the topic in his presidential address to the Aristotelian Society, there is a common thread to his observations, namely that the view that know-how is a species of know-that generates a vicious regress. And in his later discussion in *The Concept of Mind*, Ryle manifests a similar spirit in the claim that the “crucial objection” to his opponent takes the form of a regress. Thus, there are reasonable enough grounds to adopt a strategy like Stanley and Williamson’s and to try to present Ryle’s main argument as a *reductio ad absurdum* of his opponent’s view.

In the following sections, I present Stanley and Williamson’s formulation of the regress, and on the basis of it explain Stanley and Williamson’s concerns about the validity and soundness of the argument, with the aim of showing how their concerns are grounded on the particular way the attempt to scrub behaviorist claims off from the argument.

3 *The regress argument according to Stanley and Williamson*

Stanley and Williamson present Ryle’s argument in favor of the claim that know-how is not a species of know-that as a regress with the following premises.

[Premise 1] If one *F*s, one employs knowledge how to *F*.

[Premise 2] If one employs knowledge that *p*, one contemplates the proposition that *p*.

[Premise 1] seems to be an intuitive claim about the relation between an occasion where one *F*s and one’s knowledge how to *F*. [Premise 2] is meant to be formulation of the Intellectualist claim to be negated.

There are issues with both of these premises. One the one hand, it seems that a reasonable understanding of the thesis that know-how is a species of know-that, there is a proposition *p* such that one knows how to *F* if and only if one knows that *p*. But in their formulation of

[Premise 2], Stanley and Williamson decide to follow Ryle's formulation and speak not of knowing that p but rather of contemplating that p . Exactly how to understand the notion of 'contemplating that p ' is an issue that will be discussed below. On the other hand, it seems that the formulation of [Premise 1] does not express well the kind of values that F can appropriately take. Exactly what values can F take is also an issue that will be discussed below. For the moment, let us take it to mean roughly an expression of the Intellectualist claim and take the following formulation of the way Stanley and Williamson [21, pp. 414-415] take the regress:

[*Knitting*] Fatima knits. According to [Premise 1], if Fatima knits, she employs knowledge how to knit. If knowing how to knit is propositional, Fatima employs knowledge that p , for some p knowledge of which amounts to knowing how to knit. But employing propositional knowledge that p , according to [Premise 2], requires a contemplation that p . So if Fatima employs knowledge that p , Fatima contemplates that p . Now, according to [Premise 1], it follows that Fatima employs knowledge how to contemplate that p , which amounts, given the thesis that know-how is a species of know-that, to the claim that Fatima employs knowledge of a proposition q , for some q knowledge of which amounts to knowing how to contemplate p . But employing knowledge that q requires the contemplation of q , which in turn requires that Fatima employs knowledge how to contemplate q , and this involves using knowledge of a further proposition r and the corresponding consideration of r . And additional considerations require additional know-how states and these require additional considerations which in turn require further states of their own, and so on ad infinitum. Under the assumption that Fatima knits and that it wouldn't be possible if there were indefinitely many requirements for a finite exercise of agency, the conclusion is that know-how is not a species of know-that.

Does this argument establish the claim that know-how is not a species of know-that? Is it a valid argument? Is it a sound argument? And, moreover, is the argument Stanley and Williamson present genuinely Ryle's argument? In the following section I examine the question of validity and then examine the question about soundness.

4 The validity and soundness of the regress

For the regress presented in the previous section to be valid, Stanley and Williamson remark, two further assumptions must be made. First, there must be a distinct relation between F and the propositional knowledge one employs to F , namely that it must be the case that “distinct actions [map] onto distinct propositions”. That is, that for different values of F there must be different propositions knowledge of which is required in order to F . This is what I will call [Premise 3]. Second, it must be the case that the act of considering p is different from the act of considering the proposition required for considering p , which in turn is different from the act of considering the proposition required for the act of considering the proposition required for considering p . This is what I will call [Premise 4]. These two premises work in the background in order for there to be a genuine regress.

Stanley and Williamson say surprisingly little about these assumptions:

For [Ryle’s regress] to be sound, however, several additional premises are needed. First, it must be the case that the function, which maps acts to propositions, must map distinct actions onto distinct propositions. Second, it must be the case that $C(p)$ is a distinct action from $C(\phi(C(p)))$, which is a distinct action from $C(\phi(C(\phi(C(p)))))$, and so on. We shall not challenge these additional premises in this section. [21, p. 414]

They do not challenge the additional premises; they do not explain them either. Neither do they show how they are meant to be understood in the context of the regress. In the following I explain why these premises are needed for the regress to work and what we can learn from them about the way Stanley and Williamson take the regress argument to be.

4.1 The additional assumptions needed for validity

The first additional premise is about the relation between, on the one hand, the proposition knowledge of which is required to F and, on the other hand, F itself. “Distinct actions [map] onto distinct propositions”, Stanley and Williamson say and this presumably means that for different values of F different propositions need to be known so that the subject

knows-how to F . Let us examine this premise and the way it is meant to work in the regress.

From the claim that know-how is a species of know-that and [Premise 1], one can conclude that if one F s, one employs knowledge that p and that if one G s, one employs knowledge that q . Suppose the negation of the desired conclusion, namely, that distinct actions do *not* map onto distinct propositions. This means that the proposition knowledge of which is employed when one F s and the proposition knowledge of which is employed when one G s *could* be the same for some values of F and G , that it might be the case that $p = q$. But in a situation where F and G are different kinds of actions and yet $p = q$, it is possible for there to be no regress. It might be the case that in order to know how to perform a further act G , one only needs knowledge that p , which, as a previous requirement, it had already been fulfilled. So, in order to be sure that there is an indeterminately long list of requirements, it is important that every additional act in the chain requires further knowledge, which in turn requires more acts and more knowledge. But if the proposition knowledge of which is required for one kind of act could be the same proposition knowledge of which is required for another kind of act, it is possible to stop the regress. Consider the following version of situation describe in [*Knitting*].

[*Knitting 2*] Suppose Fatima knits. According to [Premise 1], if Fatima knits, Fatima employs knowledge how to knit. If knowing how to knit is propositional, Fatima employs knowledge that p , for some p knowledge of which amounts to knowing how to knit. But employing propositional knowledge that p , according to [Premise 2], requires a contemplation that p . So if Fatima employs knowledge that p , Fatima contemplates that p . Now, according to [Premise 1], it follows that Fatima employs knowledge how to contemplate that p , which amounts, given the thesis that know-how is a species of know-that, to the claim that Fatima employs knowledge of a proposition q , for some q knowledge of which amounts to knowing how to contemplate p . But employing knowledge that q requires the contemplation of q , which in turn requires that Fatima employs knowledge how to contemplate q , and this involves using knowledge that p and the corresponding consideration of p . But Fatima has already engaged in the consideration of p , so no further requirement is needed — no additional consideration that employs more know-how,

which in turn employs more considerations and even more know-how. There is no infinite line-up of requirements, for the list comes back in full-circle; thus, there is no problem with the assumption that Fatima knits and that know-how is propositional.

Without the assumption that a different act requires knowledge of a further proposition, there is no guarantee that, at some point, the line-up of requirements will not stop. Say, because the pre-requisites have already been fulfilled. So, in order to generate an infinite regress, a supplementary premise is needed:

[Premise 3] Different values of F require knowledge of different propositions.

The addition of [Premise 3], then, guarantees that the list of requirements will not be met because the purportedly new requirement at each step of the regress has already been fulfilled. If different acts require different pieces of propositional know-how, every new consideration will require knowledge of a further proposition, which in turn requires a further act demanding further knowledge, and so on.

Granting that Ryle needs this premise for the regress argument to work means that either Ryle believes this premise to be an aspect of *Intellectualism*, or that he accepts a version of the premise. We can more generally say that for the argument to work it is important to have a way of determining the relation between purported intelligent acts and the proposition that accompanies them. [Premise 3] ensures that the succession of requirements continues to grow by guaranteeing that further knowledge is always needed. Now let us see that, in a similar manner, a second additional premise makes sure that the series continues to grow by guaranteeing that further *acts* are needed.

Stanley and Williamson formulate the second additional premise in the following way [21, p. 414]. Let $C(P)$ denote the act of contemplating the proposition that p and $\alpha(F)$ denote the proposition knowledge of which is necessary and sufficient for knowing how to F .⁵ The second additional premise states that $C(P)$ is different from $C(\alpha(C(P)))$, which is in turn different from $C(\alpha(C(\alpha(C(P)))))$, and so on. This is [Premise 4]:

[Premise 4] For different propositions p and q , considering p is not identical to, or arises together with, considering q .

Let us now examine how this premise works backstage in the regress argument. From the conjunction of [Premise 1] and [Premise 2] one can conclude that when one F s, one employs knowledge that $\alpha(F)$ and performs a consideration $C(\alpha(F))$, which in turn entails that one employs knowledge that $\alpha(C(\alpha(F)))$ and performs an act $C(\alpha(C(\alpha(F))))$. Now suppose that the: that it is possible that an act $C(\alpha(C(\alpha(F))))$ could be identical to or involve $\alpha(C(\alpha(F)))$. In a situation where these two acts are the same or come together, it is possible to stop the regress, for to generate an indeterminately long list of requirements, it is required that using know-how demands a further act, which in turn requires further know-how, and so on. But if it is possible for considerations of different propositions to come, as it were, in one package, it is possible that instead of a regress we generate a circle. To see how a circle could be generated (instead of an infinite regress), consider the following modification of [*Knitting*].

[*Knitting 3*]. Suppose Fatima knits. According to [Premise 1], if Fatima knits, Fatima employs knowledge how to knit. If knowing how to knit is propositional, Fatima employs knowledge that $\alpha(knit)$. But employing propositional knowledge, according to [Premise 2], requires an action $C(\alpha(knit))$. So, if Fatima employs knowledge that $\alpha(knit)$, she performs a consideration $C(\alpha(knit))$ beforehand. According to [Premise 1], it follows that Fatima employs knowledge how to $C(\alpha(knit))$, which uses knowledge that $\alpha(C(\alpha(knit)))$. But if Fatima employs this piece of knowledge, she performs a consideration $C(\alpha(C(\alpha(knit))))$, which in turn requires her to know how to $C(\alpha(C(\alpha(knit))))$, which uses knowledge that $\alpha(C(\alpha(C(\alpha(knit)))))$ and requires her to perform an action $C(\alpha(C(\alpha(C(\alpha(knit))))))$. But, plausibly, this last consideration does not entail a new requirement because it is identical or was part of the considerations Fatima already engaged in earlier. There is no additional consideration employing more know-how that in turn would employ further considerations and further know-how; there is no infinite list of requirements, for the regress is stopped thanks to previously fulfilled requirement.

Without the assumption that acts of considering do not, as it were, stack and cancel, as it would be the case if [Premise 4] were not true, there is no guarantee that, at some point, the extra consideration required has not already been brought about.

Having spelt out the additional premises, we can now see the full form of the regress Stanley and Williamson attribute to Ryle:

[Premise 1] If one F s, one employs knowledge how to F .

[Premise 2] If one employs knowledge that p , one contemplates the proposition that p .

[Premise 3] Different values of F require knowledge of different propositions.

[Premise 4] For different propositions p and q , considering p is not identical to, or arises together with, considering q .

[Conclusion] Knowledge how to F is not knowledge that p

Stanley and Williamson seem happy to concede the additional premises that seems to make the argument valid on a reasonable understanding of the premises. Instead, they their efforts to showing that there is no reading in which [Premise 1] and [Premise 2] are simultaneously true. Their strategy against Ryle is, accordingly, to show that there is no way of understanding the terms involved in [Premise 1] and [Premise 2] that makes them both true at the same time. The argument is, on their view, not sound.

4.2 *The soundness of the regress*

Stanley and Williamson's main objection to the regress as presented above is that there is no single interpretation of the relevant terms that makes [Premise 1] and [Premise 2] true. Allegedly, the interpretation that makes true [Premise 1] makes [Premise 2] false, and the interpretation that makes [Premise 2] true makes [Premise 1] false.

On the one hand, Stanley and Williamson claim that for [Premise 1] to be true, we must restrict the scope of the premise to that of intentional actions. In other words, [Premise 1] is true only when the values of F are appropriately restricted to intentional actions, that it is true that one employs knowledge how to F when one F s only when the one F intentionally. And on the other hand, Stanley and Williamson claim that for [Premise 2] to be true, contemplating that p must not be an intentional action. In other words, that one contemplates the proposition that p , if one employs knowledge that p only if contemplating a proposition is something short of an intentional action.

The problem Stanley and Williamson raise for the regress is, then, that one premise is only true if it is understood to be a claim about

intentional actions while the second premise is only true if understood to be about something other than an intentional action. But for the premises to work together, without equivocation in the use of the variables involved, they have to be interpreted in the same way. Here is the problem. According to Stanley and Williamson, there is no interpretation of the relevant terms under which the two premises can be rendered true and work together to generate a regress.

In the following sections, I will examine Stanley and Williamson's reading of the premises in order to question the motivations that lead them to their judgment against the regress.

4.2.1 *On the first premise*

[Premise 1] states that if one *F*s, one employs knowledge how to *F*. This, without restrictions on the possible values of *F*, is simply not true. Here are two counterexamples suggested by Stanley and Williamson.

[*Digestion*] Suppose Jane digests food. So, if [Premise 1] is unrestrictedly true, it follows that Jane employs knowledge how to digest. But it is *obviously* wrong to say that one employs knowledge how to digest. Thus, it cannot be the case that [Premise 1] is true without restrictions.

[*Lottery*] Suppose that Jane wins the lottery (without her cheating!). So, if [Premise 1] is unrestrictedly true, it follows that Jane employs knowledge how to win the lottery. But it is *obviously* wrong to say that one employs knowledge how to win the lottery (when one wins fairly). Thus, it cannot be the case that [Premise 1] is true without restrictions.

Is it true that one does not employ knowledge how to digest? Perhaps. But is it really *obviously* so? Stanley and Williamson boldly state: "Digesting food is not the sort of action one knows how to do" [21, p. 414]. *Period*. Why? What is the reason for digestion not to fall into the kind of actions one knows how to do? Is it because we don't normally *say* that one knows how to digest? Stanley and Williamson do not say much about the case of digestion.

Fortunately, they say something more about the reasons for which winning the lottery is not the kind of thing one knows how to do. Stanley and Williamson claim that "[one] does not know how to win the lottery, since it was by sheer chance that [one does] so" [21, pp. 414-415], suggesting that if one's *F*s by sheer chance it is not needed that one knows

how to *F*. Winning the lottery fairly is not the kind of thing one knows how to do because, it seems, it is the kind of thing one does by sheer chance. In an attempt to generalize, one might think the things one knows how to do are the things that one does not do by sheer chance.

I do not think there is a reason to suppose that there is one general way to determine the kind of things one knows how to do and, *a fortiori*, that Stanley and Williamson's apparent criteria could work as a way to determine the kind of things one knows how to do. One simply needs to look at [*Digestion*]. Digestion does not happen by chance, not at least in the sense in which winning the lottery is a matter of luck, and yet by Stanley and Williamson's lights it is not the kind of thing one knows how to do. Moreover, one can reasonably wonder how much and what kind of luck ruins the pot.⁶ At the very least, we can say that it is not only for values of *F* which happen by sheer chance that [Premise 1] is false.

The cases singled out by Stanley and Williamson do not seem to be the only purported counter examples to an unrestricted [Premise 1]. It is not only for biological processes (like digesting) or matters of chance (like winning the lottery), for which it does not seem to follow from the fact that the subject *F*s that they know how to *F*. Here are some purported counter examples.

[*Being in Pain*] Gladis is in pain.

[*Breathing*] Jose breathes while walking home.

[*Living*] Humberto lives in a small cabin in the woods.

If [Premise 1] were unrestrictedly true, cases like [*Being in Pain*], [*Breathing*] and [*Living*] would be cases in which the subject that *F*s would, necessarily, know how to *F*. There have to be some restrictions.

I do not believe either that Ryle holds [Premise 1] without restrictions or even that Stanley and Williamson attribute such a view to Ryle. I think that Stanley and Williamson construct the premise in this way to make explicit the kind of commitments one needs to uphold in order for the [Premise 1] to work in the regress. Here we can begin to see especially clear how Stanley and Williamson take Ryle.

On Stanley and Williamson's reading, Ryle restricts [Premise 1] to values of *F* where the subject *F*s *intelligently*. Thus, digesting and winning the lottery are presumably not the kind of things one knows how to do, for they are not intelligently executed. And they give a further gloss: one *F*s intelligently when one *F*s intentionally. Here is how they present the restriction:

For [Premise 1] to be true, the range of actions must be sufficiently restricted. Indeed, Ryle hints as much, when he speaks, in the above quotation, of “operations [that are] intelligently executed.” Digesting food is not the sort of operation that is executed with intelligence. Similarly, Hannah’s winning the lottery was not intelligently performed. [Premise 1] is true only when the range of actions is restricted to intentional actions. [21, p. 415]

This is quite strange. Stanley and Williamson seem to assume that we have a grasp of what an intelligent execution is independently of what one knows how to do. For Ryle, it seems that precisely the subject of whether an act F is intelligent is tied up to what knowing how to F amounts to. Recall the quotation from Ryle:

‘Intelligent’ cannot be defined in terms of ‘intellectual’ or ‘knowing how’ in terms of ‘knowing that’. [18, p. 20]

And Stanley and Williamson’s train of thought gets stranger, for they take intelligent execution to mean that the values of F ought to be restricted to *intentional actions*. In the quotation above, Stanley and Williamson quickly jump from a formulation of a restriction of the values of F in [Premise 1] in terms of intelligent execution to a formulation of a restriction in terms of intentional actions. I am not sure whether they take Ryle to be talking about intelligent action to be the same as intentional action or whether only intentional actions can be intelligent. So: it is unclear, first, why we should take Ryle to restrict know-how to intelligent execution and, second, why Stanley and Williamson understand this to be a restriction to intentional actions.

Ryle surely didn’t think that one could know-how to digest —at least in so far digestion is something that our bodies do but that is not evidently done by us. However, the attribution of such restrictions seems unwarranted, for it is not clear that Ryle is interested in a general delimitation of the range of things one can have know-how of. His interest in the second chapter of *The Concept of Mind* is the application of intelligence epithets like ‘careful’, ‘clever’, and ‘cunning’ (among many others) and his view is, roughly, that intelligent epithets are appropriately applied depending on a variety of conditions concerning the particular occasion. But this does not immediately entail that all know-how concerns intelligent executions and only them. Even if all intelligent executions require know-how, it does not follow from this that know-how is always

of intelligent operations.⁷ It seems that Ryle explicitly holds only that intelligent exercises of agency are intelligent because of know-how, not that knowing how to *F* is genuine know-how because *F* is an intelligent action.

Stanley and Williamson appear to shift the order of explanation when they attribute to Ryle a general explanation of what know-how is in terms of intelligent actions. Ryle, I submit, is trying instead to explain at the same time intelligent actions and know-how in terms of complex dispositions with indefinitely-heterogeneous manifestations:

Now the higher-grade dispositions of people with which this inquiry is largely concerned are, in general, not single-track dispositions, but dispositions the exercises of which are indefinitely-heterogeneous. When Jane Austen wished to show the specific kind of pride which characterised the heroine of ‘Pride and Prejudice’, she had to represent her actions, words, thoughts and feelings in a thousand different situations. There is no one standard type of action or reaction such that Jane Austen could say ‘My heroine’s kind of pride was just the tendency to do this, whenever a situation of that sort arose’. [18, p. 32]

For Ryle, there is no one standard type of action or reaction that can be the general, unambiguous manifestation of complex dispositions like pride or skill.

However, even if one holds, as Stanley and Williamson do, that Ryle thinks know-how is restricted to intelligent exercises of agency, it is not clear this entails that know-how only concerns intentional actions. Stanley and Williamson quickly move from a restriction to intelligent exercises of agency to a restriction in terms of intentional actions — presumably because they hold that what Ryle expresses in terms of intelligent operations is better characterized by our current philosophical understanding of the notion of intentional action. It is an instance where they seem to be ‘improving’ Ryle’s view by sticking in a new notion into the whole caused by the rejection of Ryle’s general philosophical outlook. Stanley and Williamson do not explain why such characterization is appropriate, and it is not clear to me why one would reduce the wide range of examples discussed by Ryle — examples of practices, operations, actions, activities, and other exercises of agency — to ‘intentional actions’. Intentional actions seem to be just one of the many cases of exercises of agency that Ryle is interested in.

I will come back to examine the way Stanley and Williamson understand [Premise 1]. But first let me present the way they understand [Premise 2].

4.2.2 *On the second premise*

[Premise 2] states that if one employs knowledge that p one considers the proposition that p . But on a so-called ‘natural construal’ of considering/contemplating (recall that we are using them here synonymously), Stanley and Williamson say that it is false that in every case where one employs knowledge that p one contemplates the proposition that p . To support this, Stanley and Williamson present the following quote from Carl Ginet.

I exercise (or manifest) my knowledge that one can get the door open by turning the knob and pushing it (as well as my knowledge that there is a door there) by performing that operation quite automatically as I leave the room; and I may do this, of course, without formulating (in my mind or out loud) that proposition or any other relevant proposition. [9, p. 7]

Ginet’s example of turning the knob is meant to present a case where one employs propositional knowledge and yet does not consider the proposition at hand. In the example, Ginet knows the proposition ‘one can get the door open by turning the knob and pushing it’ and, presumably, employs this knowledge in his opening the door by turning the knob and pushing it. Ginet’s opening the door is, consists in or is the product of, the employment of his propositional knowledge. And even though propositional knowledge is employed, Ginet claims, there is no corresponding considering of a proposition.

In the example, Ginet opens the door ‘quite automatically’ and without apparently formulating any proposition, and this is taken to show that no considering of propositions took place. So, the thought seems to be, Ginet’s opening the door is or is accompanied by the employment of propositional knowledge and yet there is no considering of propositions, at least in the so-called ‘natural construal’, to go with that employment of propositional knowledge.

But what exactly is the ‘natural construal’ of the act of considering a proposition on which, in Stanley and Williamson’s words, “employments of knowledge-that are often unaccompanied by distinct acts of

contemplating propositions”? The purported ‘natural construal’ of the act of contemplating is one that takes it to be an intentional action. Stanley and Williamson argue that the best interpretation of [Premise 1] makes it a claim about intentional action. Thus, if Ryle’s argument is to show that Intellectualism entails a regress on the basis of [Premise 1] and [Premise 2], it better be that [Premise 2] is also a claim about an intentional action. This seems to be the reason why regarding acts of contemplating/considering propositions as intentional actions is ‘natural’, aside from the fact that ordinarily considering an issue is taken to be something like a conscious, intentional mental action.

Ginet’s example is meant to show that when one, for example, opens the door and uses knowledge of the proposition that there is a door there, no further intentional action is performed aside from that of opening the door. And Stanley and Williamson use Ginet’s example to show the more general claim that when one performs an intentional action and uses propositional knowledge, there is no further intentional action of considering a proposition. On the basis of this, they claim that [Premise 2] is false, at least in the ‘natural construal’ of the act of contemplating.

But one might be able to hold on to the ‘natural construal’, accept [Premise 2], and deny that Ginet’s example is problematic. Stanley and Williamson seem to assume, with Ginet, that if one opens a door ‘quite automatically’ it follows that there is no intentional action of considering a proposition involved. This does not seem right to me. It does not follow from the appearance of automaticity in an act that, first, the act really is automatic and, second, that the act is not agential. The act of considering a proposition could happen, as Ryle is willing to concede, in a manner that is “very swift and . . . quite unmarked by the agent” [18, p. 18], and this does not immediately entail that it is not done by the agent. It does not follow from the fact that the agency cannot tell that there is an intentional act of considering a proposition (for it happens ‘quite automatically’ and outside of their awareness), that there is in fact no intentional act of considering a proposition. For the example to work, one needs to commit to the claim that it what happens ‘quite automatically’ is not done intentionally; attention might be otherwise directed and what would otherwise be noticed by the agent flies under their radar. It might seem to be automatic, but this might just be mere appearance. And even if we did commit to a tight link between perfect awareness and intentional action along the lines suggested by Stanley and Williamson, it does not follow that the act of considering a proposition ought to be regarded as non-agential. Suppose that considering

a proposition is not an intentional action, why think it is not an exercise of agency? Furthermore, why think it is a sub-personal operation? Why regard, as suggests, acts of considering proposition to be the triggering of the relevant representations? What is the reason for thinking that if an act of considering is not an intentional action then it is not an exercise of agency and, probably, belongs with the denizens of the sub-personal level? Here, as I will show below, we can also see how Stanley and Williamson's understanding of agency strongly influences their understanding of Ryle's argument.

An alternative construal of the act of considering that might make [Premise 2] true, Stanley and Williamson suggest, is one in which the act of contemplating a proposition is no more intentional than the act of digesting food. If considering a proposition is something automatic and over which the subject has no intentional control then Ginet's opening the door might also involve an act of considering. Thus, there might actually be an act of considering that is not remarked by the agent *because* it is sub-personal. This, apparently saves the premise from the challenge presented by Ginet.

Stanley and Williamson attempt to save [Premise 2] by suggesting that it should be taken to be about a sub-personal activity, but Ginet's example only warrants the claim that the act of considering a proposition should be an 'automatic' activity. Maybe the agent, had they reflected on the moment, would have noticed. Or maybe it is just outside the introspective powers of the agent to notice right at the moment they are, for instance, opening the door that they are also exercising their agency in another way. The example only warrants that, in acting from propositional knowledge, one does not necessarily notice the happening of considering of a proposition.

Even if we commit to a tight link between attention and intentional action along the lines suggested by Stanley and Williamson, it does not follow that the act of considering a proposition ought to be regarded as non-agential. Suppose that considering a proposition is not an intentional action, why think it is not an exercise of agency? Furthermore, why think it is a sub-personal operation? Why regard, as suggests, acts of considering proposition to be the triggering of the relevant representations? What is the reason for thinking that if an act of considering is not an intentional action then it is not an exercise of agency and, probably, belongs with the denizens of the sub-personal level?

5 *The limits of Stanley and Williamson's attack on the regress*

Let us take stock of Stanley and Williamson's view of [Premise 1] and [Premise 2].

Stanley and Williamson's take on [Premise 1] can be summarized with the help of the following three formulations:

[Premise 1] If one Fs, one uses knowledge how to F.

[Premise 1]* If one Fs and it is an intelligent operation, one uses knowledge how to F.

[Premise 1]** If one Fs and does so intentionally, one uses knowledge how to F.

And their take on [Premise 2] can in turn be summarized with the help of the following three formulations:

[Premise 2] If one employs knowledge that p one contemplates the proposition that p

[Premise 2]* If one employs knowledge that p one performs the intentional action of contemplating the proposition that p .

[Premise 2]** If one employs knowledge that p , one performs in a non-agential way the consideration of the proposition that p .

Stanley and Williamson claim that [Premise 1] is straightforwardly false, for there are plenty of counter-examples. In response, they offer [Premise 1]* an expression of the restriction Ryle should have had in mind, and further develop the idea, apparently putting the claim in the contemporary philosophical jargon, in the form of [Premise 1]**. So, on their reading, the appropriate way to understand [Premise 1] is as [Premise 1]**.

With respect to [Premise 2], Stanley and Williamson claim that there is a problem in understanding what Ryle means by contemplating/considering a proposition. Trying to fill in the gap, they claim, one might try to offer [Premise 2]* as a reformulation of the premise according to the so-called natural construal of what it means to consider/contemplate a proposition. This reformulation, Stanley and Williamson allege, makes the premise false in the light of Ginet's example, for the example is taken to show that one need not engage in an

additional intentional action when one is using propositional knowledge. [Premise 2]** presents an alternative reading that is immune to the attack raised on the basis of Ginet's counter-example. So, on Stanley and Williamson reading, the appropriate way to understand [Premise 2] is as [Premise 2]**.

But [Premise 1]** and [Premise 2]** do not generate a regress. For simplicity, consider the following reformulation of the initial regress (one without mention of the additional premises.)

[*Knitting 4*] Suppose Fatima knits. According to [Premise 1]**, if Fatima knits intentionally, she employs knowledge how to knit. If knowing how to knit is propositional, Fatima employs knowledge that p , for some p knowledge of which amounts to knowing how to knit. But employing propositional knowledge that p , according to [Premise 2], requires a non-agential contemplation that p . So, if Fatima employs knowledge that p , Fatima non-agential contemplation that p . So, when Fatima knits intentionally she non-intentionally contemplates a proposition. Period. No further acts are necessary.

Since the values of F in [Premise 1]** are restricted to intentional actions and [Premise 2]** is a premise about the non-intentional act of considering a proposition, there is no way in which the two premises can be put together in order to generate an indeterminably long list of requirements. So, on this reading, there is no regress.

The summary of Stanley and Williamson's understanding of [Premise 1] and [Premise 2], shows why they think that Ryle's regress does not work but also puts us in a position to formulate some questions about their own views on the nature of know-how. It helps me show why their attempt of taking Ryle's views independently of his purported behaviourism already condemns Ryle's point of view.

Take their understanding of [Premise 1]. Why should one follow Stanley and Williamson with their restrictions of the scope of know-how to intentional actions? Why think that this is entailed by, or presents the best possible interpretation of, the restriction imposed by [Premise 1]? One can challenge Stanley and Williamson's take on Ryle at two points, corresponding to the moves from [Premise 1] to [Premise 1]* and from [Premise 1]* to [Premise 1]**. In terms of the three formulations above we can identify two steps in their understanding and accordingly formulate the following questions:

From [Premise 1] to [Premise 1]*:

Why restrict knowledge how to knowing how to perform ‘intelligent operations’? What are the reasons for thinking that know-how is only of operations that can be performed ‘intelligently’? What is the textual evidence for attributing this view to Ryle? Are the reasons for which Ryle purportedly held this view the same as those for which Stanley and Williamson seem to endorse this restriction?

From [Premise 1]* to [Premise 1]**:

Why think that know-how only concerns intentional action? What are Stanley and Williamson’s reasons for attributing this view to Ryle? Is this restriction part of the theoretical background purportedly common to Ryle and Stanley and Williamson?

Now let us look to Stanley and Williamson’s understanding of [Premise 2]. Why should we endorse the claim that an automatic act is not an intentional act? Why think that this is the natural construal of what considering or contemplating a proposition is? Even if the act of considering is not an intentional act, why believe that this means that it is sub-personal? One can challenge Stanley and Williamson’s take on [Premise 1] at two points, corresponding to the moves from [Premise 2] to [Premise 2]* and from [Premise 2]* to [Premise 2]**. In terms of the three formulations above we can identify two steps in their understanding and accordingly formulate the following questions:

From [Premise 2] to [Premise 2]*

Why is it that Ginet’s example forces us away from the so-called ‘natural construal’ of considerations? What are the reasons for thinking that the automaticity of simply employing propositional knowledge entails that there is no further intentional act of considering a proposition? Is an example like Ginet’s something that Ryle really didn’t consider?

From [Premise 2]* to [Premise 2]**

Why think that if an act of considering a proposition happens ‘automatically’, the act of considering ought to be understood as a non-agential operation? Suppose that there are

reasons not to think that it is not an intentional action. Why move from that the idea that the consideration of a proposition is not an intentional action to the idea that it is not agential at all? Why think, in particular, of the operation as a sub-personal mechanism happening in the background outside of the subject's power?

It seems reasonably clear that part of one's know-how concerns what is done intentionally, that is, that intentional actions are among the kind of things we know how to do. But only those? It seems as if Stanley and Williamson regard the realm of know-how as only concerning a very distinct kind of intentional action. For example, when Commodore Davidon intentionally sinks the Bismarck by sending a torpedo to the expected path of the enemy, he is using knowledge we can plausibly call know-how.⁸ And this very same knowledge is part of the explanation of his intentionally sinking the Bismarck. At the very least, know-how seems to be an important part of the explanation of intentional action. The Commodore knows how to aim a torpedo, how to press a button, calculate a trajectory and, indeed, how to sink a battleship, and this knowledge is part of what explains why his sinking the Bismarck is intentional. This suggests that know-how is, at least sometimes, involved in intentional action. But is it equally clear that know-how is *only* of intentional actions? And for all of them? This depends on our more general views of agency and intentional action.

To see the point about the importance of a general view of agency and intentional action in evaluating Ryle's premises, let us reconsider the examples presented in [*Being in Pain*], [*Breathing*] and [*Living*]. Being in the state of being in pain, undergoing the biological process of breathing, or engaging in the activity of living in a small cabin are not typical examples of intentional actions. They are not like the standard story of lifting an arm on command, for example. But, arguably, situations can be described where these examples can be up to the agent and their know-how. Though there are some instances in which they do not denote exercises of agency, there can be occasions when they do. That is, for any of these examples it is possible to construct a scenario where the subject can knowledgeably bring it about and thus be an exercise of agency from know-how.

[*Being in pain 2*] My state of being in pain is up to me, at least partly and in some occasions, in so far I can diminish it using painkillers. It might be said that I know how to be in

pain in so far I know how to use painkillers in order to safely control my pain. I control my pain, in a way, thanks to my knowledge. Am I being in pain intentionally? Probably not, but my pain in pain on that particular occasion is up to me in a way that seems to denote agential control of sorts. So, my know-how is not irrelevant for my being in pain.

[*Breathing 2*] The process of breathing can be partially controlled by taking meditation classes and learning methods of guiding breathing. The Buddhist monk that has trained for years in meditation breathes as an activity: they engage in breathing in a way in which average people do not. Arguably, then, they control their breathing thanks to their knowledge-how. Does that mean they breathe intentionally? Maybe some of the times, but rather the point here is that there is a level of agential control over their breathing that is present in the monk and absent in most of us.

[*Living 2*] Living in a small cabin is something which I plausibly have to learn how to do and so dependent on my knowledge. I ought to learn how to handle cabin fever, and when I do there is a change in the way I go about living. There is a change in the activity because of what I learn how to do. Is living in a cabin an intentional action? Not clearly so, but, again, it does not seem to entail that there is no role for know-how in such activity.

Unlike the examples presented by Stanley and Williamson, in [*Being in pain 2*], [*Breathing 2*], and [*Living 2*] there seems to be space for knowledge how in exercises of agency that are not straightforwardly understood to be intentional actions. These examples attempt to make sense of occasions where there is something ‘up to the agent’ and ‘up to the agent’s knowledge’ because the agent’s knowledge — knowing something about painkillers and pain, breathing and meditation, and handling cabin fever— give agent’s a certain amount of control and agency. We are thus making sense of what happens as an exercise of agency informed by the subject’s knowledge and this seems just the kind of knowledge that Ryle seems to talk about when he talks about know-how.

Ryle talks about a chef’s cooking [18, p. 30], the making of good jokes [18, p. 30], the cannons of aesthetic taste and tactful manners [18, p. 30], the having an inventive technique [18, p. 30], playing chess [18, p. 40], scoring a bull’s eye [18, p. 45], how to tie a knot [18, p. 54], and

others. The variety is impressive. Yet Stanley and Williamson claim that intentional actions are the only kind of things one has know-how of, which seems to foreclose further discussion about whether one can also have know-how of exercises of agency other than intentional actions, or whether we should understand such cases to be related to know-how only indirectly (whether, for example, agency over some states, processes, and activities require know-how in so far they are the products of intentional actions which directly require know-how). Discussion about whether the realm of agency is that of intentional actions is precisely that which gets eliminated when we decide to take out bits and pieces of Ryle's argument.

Stanley and Williamson attempt to save Ryle's [Premise 1] by suggesting that the scope of know-how needs to be restricted to intentional actions. Their defense of this suggestion is, as we have seen, insufficient because it is blind to Ryle's own intentions as expressed by the examples presented. And though it is not an ill-intended interpretation, for I believe they are trying to make best sense of what they take to be a claim of Ryle's that yields absurd results if left unrestricted, it seems unreasonable to restrict know-how to things one intentionally does, and, moreover, it is not obviously the only or the best restriction that would fit with Ryle's purposes. There is more to agency guided by knowledge than intentional action.

6 Conclusion

Stanley and Williamson claim that "few philosophers now share Ryle's general philosophical outlook, [in contrast,] his view that knowledge-how is fundamentally different from knowledge-that is widely accepted" [21, p. 411]. Accordingly, they discuss Ryle's argument independently of his specific view of mind and action, with the aim of overthrowing the acceptance that Ryle's views on know-how enjoy. In this paper, I have shown that to consider Ryle's discussion of know-how in the proper light, we need to adopt a view on mind and action that, at least, does not immediately presuppose the issue against Ryle's own preferred view. That is, Ryle's discussion of know-how should not be taken independently of his general philosophical outlook.

Thus, the aim of this paper has not been to defend a form of Ryle's regress. Unlike other discussions of Ryle's regress (or an argument in the vicinity, like [13]) without an acknowledgement of the role of Ryle's view of mind and action, the aim of the present paper has been to show

how the discussion of the argument involves more than it initially might seem. Stanley and Williamson's paper is rich in moments where a more general discussion is needed. Knowledge-how is not by chance one of the first topics that Ryle discusses in *The Concept of Mind*: it is one of the first instances where Ryle sets forward the picture of mind he favors and is best understood against the backdrop of his philosophical enterprise as presented in the whole book. Some of Ryle's self-professed defenders tend to focus the discussion on know-how and look at the nature of 'contemplation' [4] or of the 'manifestation' of know-how [8] but shy away of discussing any further commitments about the nature of mind. If we are to talk Ryle at his word when he discusses know-how and attempt to discuss it in contemporary terms, we better be prepared to discuss a generally Rylean view of mind. (Perhaps discuss an updated version not unlike the view of mind set forward and defended by Stout [22]). If we are going to consider Ryle's characterization of know-how in dispositional terms, we better consider it in relation to the idea that to be certain state of mind also is to be disposed to act in this or that ways. At the very least, a discussion of Ryle's views on know how ought to be sensitive to the kind of general concerns that moved Ryle. Hornsby [10] and Wiggins [25, 24] are very good examples of this kind of discussion and in this paper I have attempted to show how Stanley and Williamson's discussion is not. Stanley and Williamson's discussion (and those following their lead) needs an explicit acknowledgement and evaluation of the additional commitments plugged into their examination of Ryle's views on know-how. Only then will our understanding of Ryle's discussion of know-how advance.⁹

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Notes

- 1 For two significant sources of new discussion, see Stanley's monograph [20] and a collection of essays edited by Bengson and Moffett [1].
- 2 Ryle claims that there is a difference between the Intellectualist's conception of know-how as know-that and what he believes is our everyday conception of know-how. But his considered view, as expressed in *The Concept of Mind*, does not consist in a strong difference between know-how and know-that. Ryle presents the concept of knowledge, in general, to be a matter of a special kind of disposition. In his words, "Roughly, 'believe' is of the same family as motive words, where 'know' is of the same family as skill words" [18, p. 117]. For Ryle, the concept of belief and the concept knowledge are dispositional but the former is a matter of tendencies while the latter is a matter of capacities. And at this point he is not making any difference between knowledge-that and knowledge-how: both are a matter of capacities. (See sections 1.1 and 1.2 of Hornsby [10] for an elaboration of this point.)
- 3 There are several other ways in which Stanley and Williamson have influenced the discussion on Ryle. Hornsby [10] presents Noe [13] and Rosenfeldt [16] as examples of 'self-styled defenders' of Ryle that follow Stanley and Williamson's reading of Ryle's main claim about know-how. More recent examples of defenses of Ryle influenced Stanley and Williamson, and Stanley's [20] book-length development of the ideas first presented together with Williamson, see Sax [19] and Fantl [6, 8, 7]. Hornsby [10] and Wiggins [25, 24] are some examples of resistance to the trend of reading Ryle through Stanley and Williamson's interpretation.
- 4 Stanley and Williamson say that "Ryle really had only one argument for the thesis that know-how is a species of knowing-that, of which his other arguments were applications". [21, p. 412]. But though some of Ryle's arguments are, no doubt, variations of one same form of regress, it is not evident that all of Ryle's considerations against the claim that knowing how is knowing that are applications of the regress, and Stanley and Williamson do not offer sufficient reasons to think so. In fact, Stanley [20], seems to step away from this generalization and considers the independent merits of Ryle's claims, suggesting also that there is more to Ryle's view than one regress argument in favor of the claim that know-how is not a species of know-that. I shall remain neutral with respect to this issue, for my main interest is how this particular argument is read by Stanley and Williamson.
- 5 I will use 'contemplating' and 'considering' synonymously.
- 6 See, for example, the discussion see the discussion of the relation between epistemic luck and know-how in [2, 3], and the discussion of the relation between intentional action and luck in [12] and [14].
- 7 See Hornsby [10] for reasons to doubt that Ryle in fact is interested in a general theory of know-how and Tanney [23] for reasons to doubt that he would be interested in any kind of general philosophical account.
- 8 I do not mean to suggest here that means-end beliefs can or are always know-how, that is, that the Commodore's belief about the ways in which he can bring about the sinking of the Bismarck constitute his knowing how to sink the Bismarck.

For all that has been said, it is possible that means-end beliefs and know-how both take part in the explanation of the Commodore's intentional action, and yet means-end beliefs and know-how are different. Or they might be the same. There is no commitment either way.

- 9 An earlier version of this work was part of my doctoral thesis. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people I discussed this issue with, especially my supervisor, Guy Longworth, my examiners, Matt Soteriou and Jennifer Hornsby, and my fellow postgraduate students at Warwick University. I am indebted to an anonymous referee and an editor of this journal for their helpful comments regarding the final additions this version needed, and to the philosophy department at the Universidad de la Sabana for granting me the time needed to prepare the work for publication.

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