

Preface

OUR LIVES ARE filled with endeavors and projects, ranging from the mundane to the meaningful, which engage us in myriad activities that we almost invariably know how to do. Such knowledge is not idle but seems to play a crucial role in enabling the corresponding activity. In the absence of this “know-how”—knowledge how to tie our shoes, ride a bicycle, make coffee, change a light bulb, tell the time, write an e-mail, encourage a friend, use the elevator, calculate a sum, and so on—it is difficult to imagine how we could intelligently navigate, or even reasonably aspire to so navigate, the complex situations in which we often find ourselves. Whether we act (and interact) skillfully or awkwardly, cunningly or stupidly, wisely or foolishly, we do not in any case do so blindly.

Knowledge how to do things is a pervasive and central element of everyday life. Yet it raises many difficult questions that must be considered by anyone who aspires to understand human cognition and agency. What is the connection between knowing how to do things and knowing that something is the case? Is knowledge how to act simply a type of ability or disposition to behavior? Is there an irreducibly practical form of knowledge? How are we to conceive the relation between theory and practice, and between thinking and doing? What is the role of the intellect in intelligent action?

The present book collects fifteen original essays that address these and many other questions about knowledge, mind, and action. The primary aim of this collection is to gather together state-of-the-art work that directly engages the conceptual, empirical, and linguistic issues surrounding knowledge how. Recently, there has been a surge of interest in the nature of knowing how and a corresponding surge of literature—chiefly in the form of articles scattered across sundry journals and general anthologies. The time has come for a single venue in which philosophers and linguists can assess (or reassess) various positions that have emerged (or are emerging), develop new positions that have not yet been formulated, and pursue implications and applications of these positions for other debates in philosophy and cognate disciplines. This book is meant to offer just such a venue.

A second major goal, not unrelated to the first, is to bring out the broader philosophical significance of knowing how. Knowing how has played an

important role in recent work in ethics, philosophy of action, epistemology, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, and cognitive science. This breadth is reflected in this book's chapters, which forge links between diverse areas and sources, historical as well as contemporary, and cover a wide range of topics dealing with tacit and procedural knowledge, the psychology of skill, expertise, intelligence and intelligent action, the nature of ability, the syntax and semantics of embedded questions, the mind-body problem, phenomenal character, epistemic injustice, moral knowledge, the epistemology of logic, linguistic competence, the connection between knowledge and understanding, and the relation between theory and practice. We hope that these chapters contribute to a growing awareness that philosophical discussion of knowledge how is intimately connected to a host of other debates converging on the nature of the mind and its relation to action.

The book begins with a state-of-play chapter that highlights some of these connections within the context of a survey and critical examination of the main issues, arguments, and views—intellectualist as well as anti-intellectualist—in the philosophical debate surrounding knowledge how. Marking significant developments from the seminal work of Gilbert Ryle to the present day, this opening chapter attempts to systematize various strands in recent discussion of knowledge, mind, and action and, in so doing, situate the study of knowledge how in a larger theoretical setting.

The book is thereafter divided into four parts.

Part I, "Ryle's Legacy," includes two chapters investigating Ryle's treatment of knowledge how to act and its potential implications for contemporary debate. In "Rylean Arguments: Ancient and Modern," Paul F. Snowdon critically evaluates the Rylean paradigm, scrutinizing Ryle's handling of intellectualism and his use of various examples, as well as challenging more recent defense of the idea that knowing how and knowing that are strongly contrastable. In "Ryle's *Knowing-How*, and Knowing How to Act," Jennifer Hornsby argues for the merit of several of Ryle's core contentions—in particular, that acting on propositional knowledge requires a sort of knowledge that could not itself be propositional—and defends them against contemporary attack. Despite their apparently conflicting assessments of Ryle's positive views, Snowdon and Hornsby agree that careful attention to Ryle's discussion enables an improved perspective on recent work regarding the relation between knowing and doing.

The five chapters of Part II, "Philosophical Considerations," focus on various aspects of the contemporary debate between intellectualism and anti-intellectualism. In "Practical Expertise," Julia Annas identifies a notion of practical expertise, intimately related to but perhaps not simply identical to knowledge how, whose difference from mere routine and essential connection

to reason-giving she subsequently details (with an eye to both ancient philosophy and more recent work by positive psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi). In “Knowing How without Knowing That,” Yuri Cath takes up the reductive thesis that knowledge how is a form of knowledge that, arguing that it is vulnerable to three distinct types of counterexample; at the same time, this does not yet support a broadly Rylean or anti-intellectualist view, Cath suggests, because the counterexamples can be avoided by linking knowledge how to propositional attitudes other than knowledge that. In “Knowledge How: A Unified Account,” Berit Brogaard defends the reductive thesis and discusses the relations between knowledge how and both justification and ability, the latter of which she eventually treats disjunctively. In “Nonpropositional Intellectualism,” John Bengson and Marc A. Moffett reject the reductive thesis, arguing that knowledge how is a type of objectual knowledge or understanding that is grounded in, but not reducible to, propositional attitudes. In “Ideology and the Third Realm (Or, a Short Essay on Knowing How to Philosophize),” Alva Noë combines reflection on an intellectualist view of the relation between theory and practice with reflection on styles of argumentation employed in recent discussion of knowledge how, contending that simple appeals to experimental and linguistic data fail to appreciate the “third realm” character of philosophical analysis—which, Noë maintains, like practical knowledge itself, lies between the domain of the provable or the rule governed and the domain of mere taste or feeling.

Part III, “Linguistic Perspectives,” includes three essays on the syntax and semantics of knowledge how constructions and their bearing on the debate between intellectualism and anti-intellectualism. In “How to Resolve *How To*,” Jonathan Ginzburg argues in a nonreductive spirit that there are epistemically oriented attitude terms, including ‘know’, that select for both facts and abilities; he subsequently presents a semantics that distinguishes ‘that’-clauses from (interrogative) “resolutive” complements, including ‘how to’ clauses. In “Knowing How and Knowing Answers,” David Braun defends an austere version of the reductive view, according to which knowledge how to ϕ is knowledge of a proposition that answers the question of how to ϕ ; he maintains that insofar as judgments about whether a given proposition answers such a question vary from context to context, this austere view can accommodate natural language data concerning knowledge how ascriptions. In “Knowledge Ascription by Grammatical Construction,” Laura A. Michaelis draws on the resources of Construction Grammar in arguing that infinitival complements (‘to’-clauses) denote a relation between a person and a procedure, and *wh*-complements (including ‘how’-clauses) denote a relation between a person and a “means” variable in a presupposed open proposition, specifically, the ability to identify that variable.

Part IV, “Implications and Applications,” brings together four essays discussing the relevance of philosophical work on knowing how for ethics, philosophy of mind and cognitive science, philosophy of language, and the philosophy of logic. In “Knowing How and Epistemic Injustice,” Katherine Hawley considers whether and how a distinctively epistemic type of injustice might arise in the case of knowledge how and explores some of the potential social, political, and ethical dimensions of such injustice. In “Knowing What It Is Like,” Michael Tye proposes that recent work on knowledge how and, more generally, knowledge-*wh* might shed light on the nature of *knowing what it is like to have an experience*, as opposed to *knowing the phenomenal character of an experience*: both require objectual knowledge, but only the former involves knowledge that. In “Linguistic Knowledge,” Michael Devitt argues that philosophical arguments in favor of the view that knowledge of language is reducible to a type of knowledge-that are less compelling than the empirical findings regarding the psychology of skill and procedural knowledge, which he maintains speak against it. In “Inference, Deduction, Logic,” Ian Rumfitt seeks to identify fatal flaws in Ryle’s influential account of the nature of logic and of its applicability; he then sketches an alternative approach to the topic that attempts to elucidate the way in which knowing how and knowing that interact as thinkers exercise the capacity for deductive argument.