The problem of knowledge occupies an important position in the philosophical writings of all thinkers from Plato upto recent times. But what is knowledge? Before answering the question we must notice the ambiguity of the word 'know'. Let us consider the following examples with the verb 'know', employed.

(a) He knows swimming;
(b) I know him;
(c) I know that something is the case.

In (a) the word 'know' has been used in the sense of ability or competence;
In (b) it has been used in the sense of acquaintance;
while In (c) it gives some information.

The sense of 'know' which is relevant for philosophical study, is the information sense of 'know'. That is, the word 'know' is used to give information regarding something.

We shall confine ourselves to the information sense of 'know'.

It is convenient to put the question - what is knowledge in the form: What is it for someone to know that something is the case? When a person S is said to know that p?

To have knowledge of something what is needed is satisfaction of some necessary and sufficient conditions. Thus, an attempt to
define knowledge is directed toward the formulation of some conditions. These conditions are three in number:

A person S knows that p, if and only if,

(a) p is true - truth-condition;
(b) S believes that p - belief-condition;
(c) S has sufficient evidence for p - justification-condition.

The truth-condition suggests that knowing that p entails the truth of p. We can speak of knowledge, if the thing to be known is, in fact, the case. If it is not the case, the cognitive attitude cannot be called knowledge.

The belief-condition implies that a person S cannot be said to know that p, unless he believes that p, unless he believes that p is true and is genuinely convinced of the truth of p. It follows that 'S knows that p' entails 'S truly believes that p'. But true belief does not entail knowledge.

But these two conditions are not sufficient. It may be the case that S does not know that p even, though p is true and S believes that p. Thus, the two conditions mentioned above may be true but do not constitute the sufficient condition of knowledge. Hence comes the need of a third condition that is, the justification condition: if a person S knows that p, S is completely justified in believing that p. That is, S has sufficient evidence for p.

So the analysis of knowledge thus formulated is:

S knows that p, if and only if,
(a) it is true that p ;
(b) S believes that p ;
(c) S is completely justified in believing that p.

Edmund L. Gettier has argued that these above conditions are not sufficient to define knowledge and so we have what is called the problem of the fourth condition. But we shall not discuss the problem as it is not relevant to Austin's analysis of 'I know'.

Austin is not concerned with an analysis of the concept of knowledge, nor does he seem to have aimed at a theory of knowledge. His chief concern is to apply his method to the utterance 'I know' and not with the question, 'What is knowledge ?' When his contribution to epistemology is assessed, a major part of attention is given to the utterance 'I know', as elucidated by him.

Let us consider the implications of the utterance 'I know'.

We are faced with two questions in issuing the utterance 'I know': What is the nature of objects claimed to be known? What are the conditions of knowing? That is, what do we know and how do we know? The nature of object may be either physical like table, chair or bird, or mental like one's own feelings or the feelings of others. Austin, however, is not concerned with the nature of object nor with the relation of the object to the knowing mind. He thinks that whenever one issues the utterance, 'I know that there is a physical object or feeling of other mind', the speaker is faced with the

question 'How do you know?' This question is supposed to be the most important in connection with the utterance 'I know' and is answering the question Austin seems to suggest the conditions for knowing.

The second point to be noted in connection with the utterance 'I know' is, Austin's performative analysis of knowledge. In saying 'I know', the speaker proposes to do something and that is to give others word or authority to say the same. The purpose is to assign a practical function to 'I know' as distinct from an informative one and this approach is altogether new.

The third remarkable feature is Austin's opinion regarding the relation of knowledge and belief and this seems to be his most important contribution to the history of thought. He says that in issuing the utterance 'I know' the speaker does not report or describe a specific psychological activity.

All these discussions appear in his paper "Other Minds" - part of a symposium with Dr Wisdom. We shall confine ourselves to this paper.

I. HOW DO YOU KNOW? Supposing a speaker says, 'I know that there is a gold-finch in the garden'. He is immediately asked, 'how do you know?' Austin suggests that we may know on the basis of testimony, authority and experience. In the current example the speaker may cite testimony and authority and say, 'I know as my sister informs me, or the gardener makes me aware of the fact or my friend who is an ornithologist tells me so'. Why should we
accept the testimony and authority of others? Austin says that the fundamental condition of speech situation is to believe others and rely on others. In the absence of this condition the whole purpose of the speech act is defeated. "Believing persons, accepting testimony, is the, or one main point of talking". So in spite of the defects involved in this type of knowledge, we have to accept it.

This type of knowledge is called by Austin "Knowledge at second hand". But this type of knowledge is not to be identified with indirect knowledge. To show the difference between 'Knowledge at second hand' and 'knowing indirectly', Austin gives the example of a murderer who 'confesses' his crime. In this case it cannot be said that 'We know indirectly that he did it'. But we only have a second hand knowledge based on the information supplied by the murderer himself.

This testimony, however, may not always be trustworthy. There may be reasons to doubt the testimony and in that case the testimony must be doubted. Thus, if a person is known to be biased or lying or exaggerating everything, his testimony may be doubted.

The other source of saying 'I know' is experience both past and present. When a speaker says 'I know that it is a particular bird', he means to say that on previous occasions he saw the bird and in the present case, as soon as he sees the bird, he can recog-


3 Ibid., p. 82.
nize it as similar to that previously experienced. Without this process of recognition it is not possible to identify a particular fact. Hence Austin remarks:

"Our claim, in saying we know (i.e., that we can tell) is to recognize". So to say 'I know that it is a particular empirical fact', the speaker has to depend both on the past and present experience. How 'thoroughly' or 'intimately' we know depends on the previous experience and how 'definitely' we do know depends on the current experience.

When the speaker says, 'I know that it is a gold-finch', he suggests that he has been able to recognize the particular bird with its peculiar feature or features which are similar to those previously experienced.

Next Austin refers to the linguistic expressions used by the speaker to answer the question 'How do you know?' Thus if he is asked: 'How do you know it is a gold-finch?' He will refer to the peculiar feature or features which he has recognized and may use expressions like:

"from its red head";
or "by its red head";
or "because it has a red head".

Of these expressions the one beginning with 'because' is 'definite', while the two others are vague. For he suggests that whenever we

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4 Ibid., p. 82.
5 Ibid., p. 85.
assign some reason we use 'because' formula. This is a mark of knowledge that any claim to know something must be backed by proof or evidence. As the phrase 'because' performs the function of giving reason, it must be taken as definite.

So although Austin formulates some empirical conditions for saying 'I know that it is a particular empirical fact', he also acknowledges the necessity for conclusive evidence for issuing such an utterance. The same condition may be applied to the question 'how do you know the other mind's feeling?' Austin here confines himself to the feeling of anger.

Austin, however, is aware of the fact that the case of other mind's feeling is different from that of gold-finch. In case of the other mind there remains a doubt whether the actual feeling is being manifested or not. Hence there remains the possibility of being deceived.

The general trend in this connection is to set a dualism between the mental feeling on one hand and the external manifestation on the other. The feelings of other minds are indirectly known through the behavioural manifestation, the physical 'symptom' or 'sign'. Austin does not believe in this dualism between mental feeling and external symptom. He contends that we may know the feelings of other minds but not in this way. To him the contrast between the physical and the mental seems to be absurd. For there are many feelings which should be regarded as mental but we ordinarily treat them as physical, such as giddiness, hunger or fatigue,
as well as some feelings which are neither physical nor mental, such as jealousy or anger.

Secondly, Austin objects to the use of the word 'symptom' in connection with the expression of feeling. He says that the term 'symptom' is a term of medical usage. Symptom is supposed to be the indication of a disease which is yet to appear. When the doctor becomes sure of the disease, he no longer speaks of the symptom but the disease itself. So Austin thinks that the words 'symptom' or 'sign' can be used only when the item is hidden as it is the case with the disease. Austin remarks, "When we talk of 'Sign of a storm' we mean signs of an impending storm, or of a past storm, or of a storm beyond the horizon: we do not mean a storm on the top of us". 6

Now what happens if the word 'symptom' is applied in respect of feeling of other minds? Symptoms of anger are not the inner feeling of anger but the manifestation of anger. From the 'restricted use' of the term 'symptom' we may say that when we seek to consider another mind's feeling, say, of being angry, what we get is not the feeling but the actual display of anger. Then should we say that we are never aware of the feeling of anger in other minds? Austin says that we never do talk in that way. When one gets at the symptom of anger, one may believe that the person concerned is angry but cannot know that he is actually so. That is, from the 'symptoms' alone we cannot know. For, it may be the case that a person can suppress his feeling and does not display it. Or, else what he shows may not

6 Ibid., p. 106.
be his genuine feeling. So Austin thinks that there is no reason to believe that other people always give true introspective reports about their states of mind. In view of these difficulties Austin rejects the idea of knowing other minds indirectly through external manifestation. Then how can one know another man's feelings?

Austin answers that familiarity and acquaintance with the type of person or particular individual in this type of situation may help in knowing the feelings of other minds. As in the case of physical object, here also, a great deal depends on previous experience.

He further suggests that to know other mind's feeling, we have to consider a number of events. The first event is that we ourselves should have an experience of the feeling concerned, so that we can imagine or guess other man's feeling. Secondly, whenever we have a feeling there is a natural manner of 'venting' it and we have a natural impulse to do some particular actions. Thus, having been angry we must be acquainted with the natural manifestation of anger. Thirdly, there are some natural 'occasions' when we become angry and these 'occasions' must be experienced by us. So to know that other man is angry, we have to take into account the occasion, symptom, feeling and manifestation of anger with which we are already acquainted. So he declares that the belief in other minds is: "an irreducible part of our experience." Austin, however, admits that we may not always be very much sure in detecting the feeling and moreover we can not give a proof of it.

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7 Ibid., p. 115.
II. \textbf{PERFORMATIVE ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE} : The striking feature of his discussion of knowledge is his insistence on the first person, singular number, present tense use of the verb 'know'. That is, he seems to offer a performative analysis of knowledge, he suggests that in saying 'I know' we do not describe or report about our mental states. He remarks:

"To suppose that 'I know' is a descriptive phrase, is only one example of the \textbf{descriptive fallacy}, so common in philosophy." \(^{8}\)

Then how should we explain the utterance 'I know'? Austin claims that in saying 'I know' one proposes to do something, as it is done in case of performative utterances like 'I promise'. But what do we propose to do? Austin answers, that in saying 'I know that p', the speaker gives his word or authority to the hearer to say the same. He commits himself to the assertion that p and is prepared to accept the responsibility of being wrong. Then should we say that in saying 'I know' one cannot be mistaken? Austin is well aware of the fact that as man is fallible, it may naturally be possible to be mistaken. If the person is mistaken there must be some concrete reasons for being mistaken and in that case he should not say 'I know'.

In support of his view Austin makes a comparison between the two utterances 'I promise', his original instance of performative utterance and 'I know' and tracing out the parallel between the two comes to the conclusion that 'I know' functions as 'I promise'. The

\(^{8}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 103.
first point is, Austin observes, that both the verbs 'know' and 'promise', behave in the same manner in their first person, singular number, present tense use. As in the case of promising the speaker promises with the utterance 'I promise', so also in saying 'I know' the speaker gives his word and that he cannot be mistaken or wrong.

When the speaker says 'I promise' or he promises, the speaker describes the act of promising, while he performs his own act of promising in saying 'I promise'. Similarly, when the utterance 'I know' is put into first person, singular number, present tense use, it implies that 'I cannot be wrong'. As Austin says:

"'If I knew, I can't have been wrong', or 'If she knows she can't be wrong' are not worrying in the way that 'If I know, I cannot be wrong' is worrying'".  

Both the utterances 'I know' and 'I promise' are tied up to a concrete speech situation, where both the speaker and the hearer are involved. In saying 'I promise' the speaker is supposed to keep his promise. If he fails 'his reputation is staked' as Austin says. Similarly when a person says, 'I know that S is p', he gives his word or authority to his hearer so that the latter may accept the statement he has made. The knowledge on the part of hearer, thus received is, of course, 'knowledge at second hand' which Austin has recognized. If the speaker misinforms the hearer that is, if S is not P, he loses his reputation. That is, in both cases the speaker has to shoulder some responsibility so that the hearer may rely on

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9 Ibid., p. 99 (foot note).
It or can accept it. If the speaker fails, in either case, the hearer has the right to reproach the speaker. To quote Austin:

"When I say 'I promise', a new plunge is taken: I have not merely announced my intention, but by using this formula (performing the ritual), I have bound myself to others, and staked my reputation in a new way." \(^{10}\)

Similarly in saying 'I know', I give others my word. I give others my authority for saying that S is P.

In both cases we are faced with a challenge, as Austin puts it 'Are you in a position to know'? \(^ {11}\) If by saying 'I know' we give others our word or authority, or in promising we announce our intention, we must be prepared to show that something is within our cognizance in our sayings 'I promise'. But the problem may arise if the things 'may' turn out badly \(^ {12}\) over which we have no control, e.g., if a person says 'I know that the train will arrive at 3', but the train comes late due to some unavoidable circumstances. Or, he may say 'I promise to come by 3', but could not go because of heavy rain. In such cases we may fail to know or keep promises. But Austin says that even in such cases we are perfectly justified in saying 'I know' or 'I promise', for the conditions which are within our cognizance are present and past and not future ones.

\(^{10}\) Ibid., p. 99.
\(^{11}\) Ibid., p. 100.
\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 101.
Austin, however, considers a contrast between the two types of utterances. In case of promising if one fails to keep one's promise we say 'he promised but . . .'. But in case of knowing when a person fails to know, we say he did not know. Austin, however, thinks that "the contrast is more apparent than real". The reason for such remark is: Austin thinks that there is a 'sense' of promise in which the failure to do what has been promised means that the person did not promise.

III. KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF: Let us consider Austin's opinion about the relation of knowledge and belief, a controversial issue of philosophy. That knowledge entails belief is the considered opinion of many thinkers. Those who strongly assert belief-condition suggest that knowledge entails certainty. Certainty is a stronger notion of belief. So the difference between knowledge and belief seems to be in the condition of certainty. That is, when a person A knows that p, he is completely sure or certain that p. But when one believes that p, he is not completely certain of it.

The second point of these thinkers is that both knowledge and belief are states of mind but the respective states of mind differ while knowing and believing, that is, the difference between knowledge and belief consists in degree.

The opposite view is that knowledge includes belief. But it might so happen that one knows something without believing it. We may refer to the famous example of a woman who knows from reliable witness with circumstantial evidence that her husband has been killed in an accident, but still she does not believe it. Or, it may so happen that a person believes something without knowing it. As for example, suppose some people intend to go for a walk beside a flowing stream, but at that time the stream is supposed to be dry. So one protests. But another person says "I believe that it won't be dry although I have no particular reason for thinking so." Thus he believes without knowing it and he may be correct also.

Moreover, knowledge is infallible whereas belief is fallible and it is not always easy to identify false beliefs. For, people having false beliefs may be as fully convinced of their truth as they are, when they know something. It may further be noted that if both knowledge and belief are to be considered as states of mind, the distinction between them becomes impossible, if beliefs are held with full conviction.

A more sophisticated attack comes from Austin when he declares that knowledge is not a state of mind and hence the difference between knowledge and belief is of kind and not of degree. Although both verbs "believe" and "know" belong to the expositive class of performative, the utterances 'I know . . .' and 'I believe . . .' are far from so.

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Let us first quote Austin's most explicit remark indicating the difference between knowledge and belief. To say 'I know':

"... it is not saying 'I have performed a specially striking feat of a cognition, superior, in the same scale as believing and being sure, even to being merely quite sure?" 15

Austin here explicitly remarks that knowledge is not to be regarded as a mental state which is superior to belief which again is a mental state. Knowledge and belief are not to be put on the same scale. That is, the difference between knowledge and belief is not of degree but of kind. Then, how are we to show the difference between knowledge and belief?

Austin says that the expressions like 'I believe', 'I am sure', 'I am certain' are the description of subjective mental states. But the utterance 'I know' does not express a subjective mental state nor does it describe something - the utterance is performative. In saying, 'I know that S is P', the speaker gives his authority to say S is P.

The existence of belief is never challenged i.e., one who believes is not supposed to give evidence. But evidence is one of the necessary conditions of knowledge. Whenever the speaker says 'I know . . .', he must have sufficient proof for saying so. When one believes something, one may be confronted with the question

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'Why do you believe?' but not with the question 'how do you believe?' But in case of knowledge, the most important question, as Austin thinks, is, 'how do you know?'

In saying 'I know', the speaker informs the hearer about the truth of the statement which he has made. He gives his hearer the authority to say the same. Here the speaker is bound up with obligation and if he is mistaken or wrong, the hearer has the right to pull him up or reproach him. But when the speaker says 'I believe . . .', the belief may be false, it may misinform the hearer. The speaker may believe in something which is not the case and that does not involve contradiction. In saying 'I believe . . .', the speaker has no responsibility or obligation to the hearer.

In saying 'I believe . . .', without believing, we misinform the hearer about our mental attitude, but in saying 'I know . . .', without knowing or without being able to prove anything, we misinform the hearer about the truth of the statement.

Thus, marking the difference between knowledge and belief, Austin makes an important contribution to history of thought.

IV. OBSERVATION: Is Austin justified in elucidating a performative analysis of knowledge? We have already noted the resemblances between the two utterances viz., 'I know' and 'I promise', which serve the basis of regarding 'I know' as performative. But there are dissimilarities too and we must now turn our attention to the fact.
The utterance 'I promise' is not in any way related to truth/falsity assessment, as Austin says. But 'I know' is necessarily related to truth/falsity, dimension. Thus while saying 'I promise', the speaker commits himself to do something but not to the truth of the fact he promises. But in saying 'I know that p', the speaker commits himself to the truth of p. From this observation it follows that to say 'I know' the speaker has to depend on objective facts which will determine the truth of the supplementation of 'I know'. But in saying 'I promise' the speaker does not depend on objective facts, what is needed is his creative act of will.

Austin makes it clear that the resemblance between the two utterances, viz., 'I know' and 'I promise' consists in the point that in uttering either of them, the speaker gives others his word. But Jonathon Harrison cites some contrary instances where this point does not hold good. To quote him:

"If X says to me 'I know that you are determined to make a fool of yourself' he is surely not correctly described as having given me his word, pledged his authority, that I will make a fool of myself." 16

That is, the addition of the prefix 'I know' does not necessarily lead to giving words or authority. Jonathon Harrison, however, appreciates Austin's discovery of new uses of language. That he makes an important improvement by suggesting that the use of

language is not only descriptive but creative. Austin is perfectly justified in his explanation of the utterances like 'I promise', 'I do', 'I warn'. But Harrison objects to the application of the same use in case of the more important philosophical word like 'know'.

But unfortunately Jonathon Harrison himself does not attach philosophical importance to the use of the word 'know' in the example given above. Here the verb appears to be used in the sense of 'am sure', 'presume', 'am of the opinion', 'am afraid' and not as important philosophical words. Hence his charge against Austin does not seem justified.

In spite of the dissimilarities between two expressions noted above, it must be admitted that the explanation of 'I know' is a departure from the old tradition that knowing is a psychological or mental activity. It has also been recognized that the use of the verb in the first person, singular number, present tense is not descriptive. It assigns to the expression 'I know', a "practical function" as distinct from a purely informative one. Thus the whole procedure seems to open a new dimension to the use of the word 'know'.

But the question remains: Why does Austin put emphasis on the use of the verb 'know' in the first person, singular number, present tense? There are four grammatical combinations of tense and persons possible in assertion of knowledge - present or past tense, and first person or other than first person. There are

important logical differences in the different forms of the verb 'to know'. In the context of Austin's discussion we are more concerned with two expressions: 'I know' and 'he knows'. In saying 'I know', the speaker is used to make a claim to know. But the utterance 'he knows' or 'you know' is to judge or validate a claim. Thus Austin seems to be justified in distinguishing between two expressions viz., 'I know' and 'he knows' for purpose of demonstrating the difference of the operation of the verb in two forms.

Thus the utterance 'I know that p' does not amount to knowing that p but a claim to know that p. A charge might be levelled against Austin at this juncture viz., that he makes a confusion between knowledge itself and the claim to know. But it may be said in his support that the speaker can claim to know something when he is in a position to know it, that is, he has sufficient ground or conclusive evidence for saying 'I know'. So to claim knowledge is a matter of having logically conclusive evidence.

As to the relation of knowledge and belief, it has been argued by some thinkers that 'I know that p' is, after all, compatible with 'I believe that p'. It is of course true that nobody is entitled to say something unless he is sure of it or certain of it. As W.H.F. Barness says that in saying 'I know that p', the speaker not only commits himself to the assertion that p but also implies that he is sure or certain of it. He also remarks that if 'being certain' is a psychological or mental fact, there is an "oblique reference" to a psychological fact and the expression 'I know'.
We may say that although 'I know . . .' implies that 'I am certain of it, 'I know' is not interchangeable with 'I am certain' or 'I am sure'. A reasonable claim to know that P requires something more than being merely certain.

Although Austin's performative analysis of knowledge has been exposed to severe criticism, the thinkers like R.M. Chisholm and A. C. Danto have recognized, at least partially, the performative nature of 'I know'. Chisholm concedes that 'I know' may be regarded as a performative in the "extended" sense of the performative but not in the 'strict' sense as Austin seems to assume. His contention is that knowing is not an 'act' which can be performed in saying 'I know'. But the expression 'I know' may be related to other performatives like 'I guarantee'. An utterance like 'I know' serves two-fold functions. It says something about 'me', the speaker and provides the hearer with guarantee. The former function is descriptive, while the latter is performative. If we overlook the former and concentrate on the latter, we commit a performative fallacy.

A. C. Danto also speaks in a similar vein that the expression 'I know' is both performative and descriptive. In saying 'I know', the speaker gives his word as well as describes a relationship between himself and something else.

19 A. C. Danto : Analytical Philosophy of Knowledge, Cambridge, At the University Press, 1968, p.120.
But both the thinkers are of high opinion about Austin's brilliant suggestion, which has helped to clear up some of the muddles of theory of knowledge.

So far we have discussed the charges against Austin, particularly his performative analysis of knowledge and tried to defend him. Now, we would like to present an alternative suggestion in conformity with Austin's view.

As we have already separated performative from illocution in our early chapters, we would like to offer an illocutionary analysis of knowledge instead of a performative one. It is quite sure that the expression 'I know' does not conform to social convention, which is the characteristic feature of a pure performative. Let us see whether the utterance 'I know' possesses an illocutionary force.

When the speaker issues the utterance \( S \) \( P \), it is not clear whether he believes it or is sure of it or guesses it. But when it is made explicit in saying 'I know that \( S \) is \( P \)' the whole implication of the locutionary content becomes clear. May we not suggest that the utterance has the illocutionary force of giving words or authority to the hearer of saying so? Thus, when the utterance 'I know that \( S \) is \( P \)' is issued seriously by appropriate person, in appropriate circumstance, the speaker commits himself to the hearer to the truth of \( S \) is \( P \) and thus the hearer is supposed to have a knowledge at second hand.

The addition of 'I know' prefix may seem superfluous. It is true that ordinarily we do not add 'I know' to any utterance. But
in a concrete speech-situation, the phrase 'I know' amounts to a way of saying something. When the speaker is asked 'Do you know?' the answer beginning with 'I know' removes doubt and shows that the speaker has evidence in his favour. The addition of "know" closes questions, stops debates".

We may further suggest that Austin's 'I know' formula fulfills all the conditions of knowledge which we mentioned in the beginning of the chapter.

Austin remarks that in saying 'I know that S is P', the speaker gives his word or authority to the hearer to say S is P. If S is not P, the speaker cannot say 'I know that P', he commits himself to the truth of P and accepts the responsibility of being wrong. Thus, Austin seems to suggest truth-condition that if a person A knows that p, p must be true.

Secondly, Austin remarks that whenever we say S is P, it implies that at least we believe that S is P. Thus, utterance 'I know that S is P' includes some belief. Moreover, 'I know that P' entails that 'I am certain that P but not vice versa. So Austin seems to include belief-condition in his explanation of the expression 'I know'.

Thirdly, Austin says that to say 'I know that S is P', the speaker must be able to prove it, he must have sufficient ground and conclusive evidence for saying so. Is it not the justification condition?

May we not suggest that as Austin's analysis fulfils all the traditionally recognized conditions of knowledge, it is to be accepted? May we not take it for granted in the interest of ordinary situation as well as for scientific purposes? True, knowledge, thus explained, is confined within a limit. But could we not be more definite and more scientific following this approach?

For Austin, philosophy is much more of a science than art. The joy he seeks to derive from philosophy is "the joy of discovery the less-interested joy of knowledge for its own sake". 21

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