CHAPTER V

THE LIMITS OF SCEPTICISM: MOORE AND WITTGENSTEIN AGAINST THE SCEPTIC
Moore attacks the sceptic from the common sense point view, using ordinary language as the medium of expression. The common sense point of view is the point of view of a realist. So he takes up the realistic stand against the idealists of different varieties. Subjective idealism of Berkeley-type is the closest enemy of realism. It is not certain whether Moore can be described as a naïve realist. We should not forget that Moore was responsible for introducing sense-data. A naïve realist would hardly understand the idiom of sense-data. Of course Moore converted sense-data into real entities, perhaps more real than even the physical objects.

In his last work On Certainty Wittgenstein has drawn the limits of scepticism. But so also he rejects Moore's attack on scepticism. Scepticism may be wrong. But Moore is also not right in attacking scepticism in the fashion in which he has done. The On Certainty is devoted to Moore's criticism of scepticism.

This chapter, the last chapter of this dissertation, is exclusively devoted to Moore and Wittgenstein. Moore has no sympathy for the sceptic. Wittgenstein opposes scepticism, though certainly not from the common sense point of view. For understanding Moore's view, three of his essays are important, viz., "A Defence of Common sense" (1923), "Proof of An External World" (1939), and "Certainty" (1959). So is important The Philosophy of G.E. Moore edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp (1942). In the case of Wittgenstein, attention has exclusively been paid to On Certainty which attacks both Moore and the sceptic.

1. COMMON SENSE BELIEFS

Moore elucidates the common sense view of the world, contrasting it with the philosophical views, in his article "A Defence of Common sense". He begins his article by highlighting the common sense beliefs i.e. the beliefs, which we happen to have prior
to the entry of the epistemological prejudices into our frame of thinking. Consider some of these beliefs as Moore reports about them, “There exists at present a living human body, which is my body. This body was born at a certain time in the past, and has existed continuously ever since.... Ever since it was born,....there have also existed many other things, having shape and size in three dimensions.... I am a human being, and I have, at different times since my body was born, had many different experiences, of each of many kinds; e.g., I have often perceived both my own body and other things which formed part of its environment, including other bodies; I have not only perceived things of this kind, but have also observed facts about them, such as, for instance, the fact which I am now observing that that mantelpiece is at present nearer to my body than that bookcase;... I have thought of imaginary things and persons and incidents, in the reality of which I did not believe; I have had dreams; and I have had feelings of many different kinds”\textsuperscript{1}. What Moore is doing echoes Cartesian Meditations? The only difference is that the purpose of Descartes’ Meditations was to question the beliefs which we take for granted. Moore had no such aim. His aim to question the epistemology that goes against common sense beliefs. All the beliefs mentioned above, which are a subset of a very large set of common sense beliefs, are true. Moore claims, like an ordinary man, that he knows with certainty their truth. ‘Knowing with certainty’ means the truth of these beliefs is not doubted by a normal person in his normal frame of mind. As Murphy points out, Moore “appeals to the fact that the statements of this sort actually are understood by all of us and are known to be true, on the level on which their truth would be established if any one were really in doubt as to their factual accuracy.”\textsuperscript{2} But Murphy also accepts concerning a common sense belief that “only a fool or an advanced thinker” would be rash enough to doubt it.”\textsuperscript{3} Though himself an advanced thinker, Moore came down to the level of a common sense believer. Such a believer would doubt only when there is some factual inaccuracy. Once the factual correction is made the doubt would be removed. The doubts of an advanced thinker are wholly unlike the doubts of a common man. A common man knows that he dreams, that on
occasions he has illusions and hallucinations, but all this does not lead him to contemplate the possibility of considering the whole world as a dream. Only a sceptic can do it. Moore’s job is to produce hurdles on the way of a sceptic.

Consider now some further implications of accepting the truth of common sense propositions. According to Moore, “the proposition that my body has existed for many years past, and has, at every moment during that time been either in contact with or not far from the earth, is a proposition which implies both the reality of material things... and also the reality of space.” Similarly our common sense view of the world is pluralistic, I am not the only occupant of this world, there are other human beings “who have had human bodies, that were born and lived for some time upon the earth, and who have during the lifetime of those bodies, had many different experiences.” Moore means to say that the other human beings also have experiences not very unlike me. There are philosophers who reject the common sense view of the world. According to them, neither time nor space is real. So also they reject the reality of material objects and question the existence of other persons. Moore exposes these philosophers by showing incoherence in their views. Their remarks are quite inconsistent. If time is unreal then there is no temporal relation between two events. In such a situation one cannot say that the event ‘A’ is temporally prior to the event ‘B’. One simply cannot talk about the succession of events. If time is unreal then, according to Moore, “no philosopher has ever existed.” If a philosopher really existed, then time-dimension can not be avoided. We can not avoid saying that he took birth on such and such a date, and ceased to exist from such and such a date. Similarly, if space were unreal, then where would my body exist? My body has three-dimensional extension. So it would occupy three-dimensional space. If space is unreal then where does my three-dimensional body exist? Those philosophers who consider that space and time are unreal their views are incoherent, they lack consistency. So also those who believe that there are no other persons or other minds exhibit incoherence in their thinking. Expression of their views
presupposes the possibility of other persons. As Moore points out, “one way in which
they have betrayed this inconsistency is by alluding to the existence of other
philosophers. Another way is by alluding to the existence of the human race, and in
particular by using “we” in the sense in which I have already constantly used it, in which
any philosopher who asserts that “we” do so and so, e.g., that “we sometimes believe
propositions that are not true,” is asserting not only that he himself has done the thing in
question, but that very many other human beings, who have had bodies and lived up on
the earth, have done the same.” It is impossible to isolate oneself from others. The
existence of oneself presupposes the existence of others. Again, it is quite absurd to say
that material things are not real. If the material things are not real then we do not have
material bodies. But the fact that we have three-dimensional bodies shows incoherence
in the view that material bodies are unreal.

The section IV of “A Defense of Common sense” is quite interesting. The first
two sections are devoted to the elucidation of common sense beliefs or common sense
propositions. Moore claimed that he knew the truth of those propositions with certainty.
All those philosophers who attempted to doubt the truth of those propositions were
involved in incoherent thinking. The third section of the paper is very short. Moore
does not find any good reason to suppose that all material things were created by God.
So also he does not find any good reason to suppose that human beings will continue to
exist after the death of their bodies. It is in the section IV that he comes back to those
very propositions about which he claimed that he knew their truth with certainty. Now
he makes a distinction between knowing the truth of a proposition and knowing its
correct analysis. As he remarks, “I am not at all sceptical as to the truth of such
propositions as “The earth has existed for many years past”; “Many human bodies have
each lived for many years upon it”, i.e., propositions which assert the existence of
material things.... But I am very sceptical as to what, in certain respects, the correct
analysis of such propositions is.” This means, it is one thing to have common sense
propositions and quite another to give analysis of those propositions. In analysing a
given proposition one transcends common sense. One can say that the concern of
philosophy starts where common sense ends. Analysis is the function of philosophy.
Philosophers have to analyse the propositions handed over by common sense. Moore
finds himself sceptical about the analysis of those propositions of which the truth has
already been established by common sense. However, according Moore, there are
philosophers who find no difficulty in analysing a proposition. They find difficulty only
in establishing its truth. Moore expresses his differences with others concerning the
commonsense propositions, who “while holding that there is no doubt as to their
analysis, seem to have doubted whether any such propositions are true. I, on the other
hand, while holding that there is no doubt whatever that many such propositions are
wholly true, hold also that no philosopher, hitherto, has succeeded in suggesting an
analysis of them, as regards certain important points, which comes anywhere near to
being certainly true.” So Moore fails to doubt where other philosophers succeed in
doubting. So also Moore fails to be certain where other philosophers are certain. Other
philosophers accept the validity of their analysis but reject the truth of propositions,
which they analyse. Moore is unsure about his own analysis, and not only about the
analysis given by others. The difference in analyses does not mean that there is any
uncertainty about the truth of the propositions, which have been analysed. Moore seems
to have missed one point on this issue. It is the analysis of a given proposition that has
led a philosopher to doubt the truth of that proposition. It is through sense-data analysis
of a material object statement that has led a phenomenalist to deny the existence of
material objects, thereby denying the truth of a material object statement. Though not a
phenomenalist, Moore has himself given the sense-datum analysis of material object
statements. He is not sure whether a sense-datum is or is not identical with the surface of
a material object. So Moore’s paper “A Defence of Common sense” is devoted, not
only to the defence of common sense, it is also in defence of his own analysis of
common sense propositions. According to Moore, it is not the business of the
philosophers to establish the truth or falsity of common sense propositions. Their business is only to analyse those propositions.

Moore has clearly introduced two levels for consideration, a lower and a higher level. Epistemic or philosophical level is higher to what may be described as pre-epistemic level. Common sense propositions occur at the pre-epistemic level. At this level there is hardly any difficulty in establishing their truth. When these propositions are brought to the epistemic level, their meaning and truth are analysed. Moore is persuading the epistemologists to remain within their limits. Just as a common man would cross his limit if he starts doing analysis of the propositions that were entertained by him. Similarly, an epistemologist would cross his limit if he starts establishing or refuting the truth of common sense propositions. 'Certainty' for Moore has two different senses, or, one sense with two diverse applications. At the epistemic level 'certainty' is possible only when the analysis is persuasive or convincing. But the question of certainty at the pre-epistemic level is simpler to achieve. A common man would doubt only where there are factual errors. A factual error would be removed by a factual means and as a result certainty would arise. For example, on account of my weak eyesight I may commit factual errors, but those errors are easily removed because my other senses are quite active. They help me in removing my doubt and to achieve certainty. But the epistemologist is not in a position to adopt the simple way of removing doubts, because his doubts are theoretical. Therefore, he has to adopt a persuasive theory. One should not confuse the disagreement in daily life with the disagreement in philosophy. There is no surprise that Moore fails to have any certainty about a given analysis of a proposition. But so far as these propositions are considered at the common sense level he is quite sure about their truth. He is certain about their truth, as the common man would be certain about their truth. Moore is certainly not operating at the epistemic level when he is discussing the question of the truth and meaning of propositions entertained at the pre-epistemic level. So there is not only a
proposition that is entertained at the common sense level, there is also knowledge and
certainly that operates at the very common sense level. Therefore Moore is right in
saying that the kind of certainty, which he has with regard to the truth of common sense
prepositions, he lacks that certainty with regard to the analyses of these propositions.
The reason is simple: he is now operating on a different level, the level of an
epistemologist.

Consider now Moore's analysis of the common sense propositions. Concerning
these propositions he thinks how these propositions "are to be analysed depends on the
question how propositions of another and simpler type are to be analysed. I know, at
present, that I am perceiving a human hand, a pen, a sheet of paper, etc.; and it seems to
me that I cannot know how the proposition "Material things exist" is to be analysed,
until I know how in certain respects, these simpler propositions are to be analysed."^{10}
The simpler propositions are concerning sense-data. So, according to Moore, a material
object statement someway involves a statement about sense-datum. The sense-datum is
numerically different from the material object that it presents. As he says, "what I am
knowing or judging to be true about this sense-datum is not (in general) that it is itself a
hand, or a dog, or the sun, etc., etc., as the case may be."^{11} When Moore was at the
common sense level he looked at his hand and was in a position to say 'this is my hand'.
There was no obstruction between 'his perception of hand' and 'the existence of hand'.
But now he has introduced sense-data, which exist between him and his hand. As a
result of the sense-datum analysis of perception, he has been led to say "to put my view
in terms of the phrase "theory of representative perception", I hold it to be quite certain
that I do not directly perceive my hand."^{12} Obviously, what is directly perceived is a
sense-datum. The sense-datum is made to represent my hand. Of course, all this does
not mean that Moore denies the existence of material objects or even denies that they are
ever perceived. At the common sense level there is no such distinction as the distinction
between direct perception and indirect perception. This distinction is the creation of the

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epistemic situation. The real difficulty is that once sense-data are introduced material objects acquire a secondary status. For the reason that material objects occur only in veridical perception. But sense-data continue to exist even when one is dreaming or having hallucination of any other sort. How the introduction of sense-data changes our view about material objects can be observed in the case of Russell. At the initial stage sense-data failed to introduce any change in Russell’s views about material objects. He continued believing in both, sense-data as well as material objects. But later Russell started considering material objects as logical fictions. As Susan Stebbing points out, “Bertrand Russell, as is well known, took sense-data to be the ‘hardest’ of ‘hard data’ and strove to show that common sense things are logical functions of sense-data.” Of course, Moore did not consider material objects as fictions or functions of any kind.

According to Moore, some philosophers are convinced that beliefs of common sense “are very commonly entertained by mankind: but they are convinced that these things are, in all cases, only believed, not known for certain; and some have expressed this by saying that they are matters of Faith, not of knowledge.” From this remark two issues emerge for further discussion. Belief in the existence of a material world, the world that contains all kinds of bodies, human and material, depends on faith. We cannot have knowledge of such a world. The second issue that arises is the issue concerning the distinction between knowing with certainty and merely believing in something. These issues have been discussed by Moore in detail in two of his other papers, “Proof of an external world” and “Certainty”.

2. MOORE’S PROOF OF AN EXTERNAL WORLD

“Proof of an External World” starts with a quotation from Kant. Moore quotes Kant saying, “It still remains a scandal to philosophy... that the existence of things outside of us... must be accepted merely on faith, and that, if anyone thinks good to
doubt their existence, we are unable to counter his doubts by any satisfactory proof.\textsuperscript{13} From Kant's remark it becomes clear that there is a necessity for proving the existence of things outside of us. In the absence of such a proof, we have to believe in their existence only on faith. The sceptic doubts the existence of things outside of us. How to counter the sceptic? The sceptic can be countered only by providing a proof for the existence of things outside of us. In his paper, "Proof of an External World" Moore has made an attempt to provide such a proof. Need for such a proof was felt by Kant. It is a scandal for philosophy if we continue believing in the existence of the things outside of us merely on faith. We should have \textit{knowledge} of the existence of these things. Such knowledge is possible only when a proof is provided. Of course Moore does not claim that he is the first philosopher to provide a proof for the existence of things outside of us. In the second edition of his \textit{Critique} Kant has himself given such a proof, which, according to Moore, is quite rigorous. Kant's proof was directed towards the 'objective reality of outer intuition,' which according Moore means the same as "the existence of things (or the things) outside of us."\textsuperscript{14} Taking clues from Kant's proof, Moore has provided his own proof. His own proof has emerged in the course of clarifying Kant's proof.

Kant calls 'external things' or 'things out side of us' as the 'things which are \textit{to be met with in space}'. According to Kant, there are also things that are 'presented in space'. But he does not distinguish these things from the things that are to be met with in space. According to Moore, this is objectionable. According to Kant, as Moore points out, "empirical object" "is called \textit{external}, if it is presented (\textit{vorgestellt}) in \textit{space}". He treats, therefore, the phrase "presented in \textit{space}" as if it were equivalent to "to be met with in \textit{space}". But it is easy to find examples of "things", of which it can hardly be denied that they are "presented in \textit{space}," but of which it could, quite naturally, be emphatically denied that they are "to be met with in \textit{space}."\textsuperscript{17} Moore gives the example of an after-image or after-sensation, which is 'presented in \textit{space}' but is not
the kind of object, which can be met with in space. The after-image that I see is restricted to me. Numerically the same after-image cannot be seen by two different persons. But there is no doubt that the after-image that I see is presented in space. According to Moore, "To say that so and so was at a given time "to be met with in space" naturally suggests that there are conditions such that anyone who fulfilled them might, conceivably, have "perceived" the "things" in question—might have seen it, if it was a visible object, have felt it, if it was a tangible one, have heard it, if it was a sound, have smelt it, if it was a smell." An after-image does not satisfy these conditions. Not only an after-image, any sense-datum, as defined by the sense-datum philosophers, fails to satisfy these conditions. A colour-patch, a sound, a smell that is restricted to one person alone is not the kind of object that can be met in space. Of course, they are presented in space. Even bodily pains are presented in space. We talk about tooth-ache and leg-ache. A tooth-ache occurs in the spatial position of a tooth. Similarly, a leg-ache occurs in the spatial position of a leg. But, a tooth-ache or a leg-ache felt by one person cannot be felt by any other person. As Moore points out, "I do not reckon as "external things", after-images, double images, and bodily pains, I also should not reckon as "external things," any of the "images" which we often "see with the mind's eye" when we are awake, nor any of those which we see when we are asleep and dreaming." Things that occur in dreams are not unlike those things, which are restricted to one person alone. A tooth-ache that occurs in waking life is subjective and private. So is private one's meeting the Prime Minister in a dream. One's name is not registered in the Prime Minister's office. No such meeting was held in real life.

If you come across a 'tooth-ache' or a 'leg-ache', you have not 'met any thing with in space'. Hence also you have not come across any object that is literally external to your mind. But if you have come across a 'cat' and a 'dog' then you have certainly met two objects with in space. And these objects are external to your mind. Moore has prepared a ground for his proof of an external world. The objects of such a world would
be those which are ‘met with in space’. As Moore points out, “If I can prove that there exist now both a sheet of paper and a human hand, I shall have proved that there are now “things outside of us”; if I can prove that there exist now both a shoe and sock, I shall have proved that there are now “things outside of us”... Obviously, then, there are thousands of different things such that, if, at anytime, I can prove any one of them, I shall have proved the existence of things outside of us.”20 A sheet of paper, a human hand, a shoe and a sock are qualitatively different kind of objects from a tooth-ache, an after-image, a double image and an image seen with closed eyes. The later class of things cannot be used for producing a proof for the existence of the external world. It is only the former class of things, which provide material for Moore’s proof of an external world. Finally, Moore provides his proof in the following words. “I can prove now, for instance, that two human hands exist. How? By holding up my two hands and saying, as I make a certain gesture with the right, “Here is one hand,” and adding, as I make a certain gesture with the left, “and here is another”. And if, by doing this, I have proved *ipso facto* the existence of external things, you will all see that I can also do it now in numbers of other ways: there is no need to multiply examples.”21 No such proof is possible if Moore had taken the example of such two objects as a tooth-ache and an after-image. It is only following Kant’s definition of external objects that Moore has succeeded in proving the existence of an external world.

One may feel that by raising his two hands Moore has involved himself in a frivolous activity. To those who may think that Moore has given no kind of proof, Moore points out that his proof is ‘perfectly rigorous’ and it is the best proof possible. A proof has to satisfy three conditions. Making explicit those conditions Moore points out, that his proof was no proof “(1) unless the premiss which I adduced as proof of the conclusion was different from the conclusion I adduced it to prove; (2) unless the premiss which I adduced was something which I knew to be the case, and not merely something which I believed but which was by no means certain, or something which,
though in fact true, I did not know to be so; and (3) unless the conclusion did really follow from the premiss. His proof satisfied all these conditions. His conclusion ‘two human hands exist at this moment’ followed from the premiss which is ‘Here is one hand and here is another’. The premiss says more than what is said in the conclusion, and he is quite sure about the premiss. Therefore his proof is rigorous.

Moore is aware that the sceptic will not be satisfied with his proof. Granted that Moore’s conclusion follows from his premiss, but how has he arrived at his premiss? How has he come to know ‘Here is one hand and here is another’. Moore accepts “I am perfectly well aware that, in spite of all that I have said, many philosophers will still feel that I have not given any satisfactory proof of the point in question.” One who doubts the existence of the external world would also doubt the existence of Moore’s hands. But such a doubter is an epistemologist, whose doubt can never be satisfied. Moore is in a position to satisfy an ordinary doubter. An ordinary doubt is not pointless. It is one that can be satisfied. Imagine a situation in which Moore’s proof is questioned by an ordinary doubter. Moore would certainly succeed in satisfying him. As Moore remarks, “If one of you suspected that one of my hands was artificial he might be said to get a proof of my proposition. “Here’s one hand, and here’s another,” by coming up and examining the suspected hand close up, perhaps touching and pressing it, and so establishing that it really was a human hand.” But the sceptic, the epistemologist, raises doubt, which can never be satisfied. How closely one may scrutinise a human hand, if one is a philosophical sceptic, one would never be satisfied that he is scrutinising a human hand. Moore finds it very difficult to satisfy such a sceptic. In order to prove that he is raising his hands he has to prove that he is not dreaming, that he is awake. Though Moore knows that he is awake, like the philosophers of the past, he fails to prove that he is not dreaming. As he remarks on this issue, “How am I to prove now that “Here’s one hand, and here’s another”? I do not believe I can do it. In order to do it, I should need to prove for one thing, as Descarc
pointed out, that I am not now dreaming. But how can I prove that I am not? I have, no doubt, conclusive reasons for asserting that I am not now dreaming; I have conclusive evidence that I am awake: but that is a very different thing from being able to prove it. I could not tell you what all my evidence is; and I should require to do this at least, in order to give you a proof.\textsuperscript{25} Cartesian dream argument has converted Moore into a helpless man. In order to show that he possesses two hands which he attempted to raise, he is required to prove that he is not dreaming. He knows very well that he is not dreaming. He has conclusive evidence that he is not dreaming, yet he cannot prove all this. But the fact that he cannot prove that he is awake does not mean that he does not know that he is awake. ‘Knowing that one is awake’ does not mean the same thing, as ‘proving that one is awake’. The former may hold without the latter holding. So he knows the premises of his proof without proving those premises. Not that these premises lack evidence, they have evidence, conclusive evidence, yet that evidence will not satisfy the sceptic. Therefore Moore does not produce that evidence. Not only that Moore has evidence that he has hands, even those who look at Moor’s hands would consider them to be genuine hands. But neither Moore nor those who attended his lecture were in a position to prove that they were not dreaming. Therefore Moore considers it a futile activity to prove that he is not dreaming. Moore concludes his lecture by saying “I can know things, which I cannot prove; and among things which I certainly did know, even if (as I think) I could not prove them, were the premisses of my two proofs.”\textsuperscript{26}

When Wittgenstein heard about Moore’s lecture, according to Wisdom, he reacted: “Those philosophers who have denied the existence of matter have not wished to deny that under my trousers I wear pants.”\textsuperscript{27} Moore is sharp enough. He responded to Wittgenstein in the following words. “If by this Wittgenstein meant that no philosophers who have ever denied the existence of matter have ever wished to deny that pants exists, I think the statement is simply false. Some philosophers, at all events
sometimes, have meant to deny this: they have meant to assert that no such proposition as that pants exist is true; and it was only against this assertion that I supposed my proof to be a proof." The expression 'material thing' is abstract. Its instances would be pants, shoes, cats, dogs, etc. To deny the existence of material things would be to deny the existence of pants, cats, dogs, etc. This implies that showing the existence of pants, shoes etc, would be showing the existence of material things. Therefore Moore is right in his attack on the sceptic, and Wittgenstein wrong in defending him. Of course, this does not mean that Moore has succeeded in meeting the philosophical sceptic. The philosophical sceptic would doubt Moore's premisses of proof. He would use dream argument to question Moore's premisses of the proof. But this argument is pointless. Its pointlessness can be shown only by coming to the common sense level. If there are genuine doubts, they can be satisfied. This issue has already been discussed earlier.

Philosophers prior to Moore restricted knowledge and certainty to a priori statements, to statements that are called analytic or tautologies. They have prohibited the use of knowledge and certainty to empirical propositions. But Moore allows the use of knowledge and certainty to empirical propositions. The propositions 'This is a hand', 'This is a cat', etc. are empirical. And Moore claims to know their truth with certainty. Moore's proof of an external world presupposes the application of knowledge and certainty to empirical propositions. Premises of Moore's proof are empirical. In order to understand why Moore considers empirical propositions to be certain, one has to come down to the level of common sense. In every day life we make knowledge claims. Since we are not yet philosophers or epistemologists so our doubts are easily removed. Therefore, Malcolm is wrong in commenting on Moore's knowledge and certainty that "people, listening to Moore, sometimes get the impression that Moore thinks that it is by some sort of intuition that he discovers whether the truth of a statement is certain. They get the impression that Moore thinks that certainty is a simple, indefinable quality like yellow, which unaccountable attaches to some statements and not to others."
Knowledge is certainly not an indefinable notion for Moore. So also no statement is specially reserved to be known. A proposition that is doubtful in some situation may be known in other situations. Seeing a white patch of colour, on account of my poor eyesight, I question 'is this a cat'? This shows that I am doubting the proposition 'This is a cat'. But when I am playing with the cat, where is the question of doubt? I know with certainty the truth of the proposition 'This is a cat'. So there is no proposition to which the indefinable quality of knowledge is attached. A proposition that is doubtful in one circumstance becomes certain in another circumstance. So the notion of certainty is not an indefinable simple notion like the notion of goodness. Undoubtedly Moore considers 'goodness' as a simple indefinable notion, but not either 'knowledge' or 'certainty'. Moore has discussed this issue more thoroughly in his paper "Certainty".

3. MOORE ON CERTAINTY

The title of the paper "Certainty" itself suggests that Moore has taken up this issue and the allied issue of 'knowledge' for analysis. But certainty and knowledge were also the issues, which he took up in two of his earlier papers viz., "A Defence of Common Sense" and "Proof of an External World". Now he is a full-fledged epistemologist. Earlier he gave the impression that he is a dogmatist. He dogmatically adhered to common sense propositions. He felt no need of proving that he knows with certainty the truth of common sense propositions. Now he feels the necessity of analysing the notions of 'knowledge' and 'certainty'. He wishes to show that he is not wrong in applying these notions to common sense propositions. Since Moore's approach in this paper is different, he has taken up a different set of common sense propositions to have fresh air. Like the earlier set of propositions, the present set also contains only empirical propositions. Consider the propositions which Moore has taken for analysis: "I am at present, as you can all see, in a room and not in the open air; I am standing up, and not either sitting or lying down; I have clothes on, and am not
absolutely naked; I am speaking in a fairly loud voice, and am not either singing or whispering or keeping quite silent; I have in my hand some sheets of paper with writing on them, there are a good many other people in the same room in which I am; and there are windows in that wall and a door in this one."

Concerning the seven assertions made above, Moore points out that all of them are contingent propositions. They are contingent because their negations are not self contradictory. For example, the negation of the proposition 'I am standing up' would be 'It is not the case that I am standing up'. Though false, the latter proposition is not self-contradictory. When the negation of a proposition does not involve a contradiction in terms then the proposition is technically described as 'contingent'. A contingent proposition is contrasted with a necessary proposition. A necessary proposition is one of which the denial is self-contradictory. Philosophers in the past have not hesitated in ascribing the notion of knowledge and certainty to necessary propositions. But they have not extended the application of these notions to contingent propositions. Moore wishes to show that knowledge and certainty are also ascribed to contingent propositions. The fact that the proposition 'I am standing up' is contingent does not mean that I am debarred from knowing the truth of this proposition with certainty. So Moore has undoubtedly taken very difficult task to perform.

Most of the philosophers, if not all, accept the view that a contingent proposition is such that its truth cannot be known with certainty. Since all empirical propositions are contingent, it has been concluded that the notions of 'knowledge' and 'certainty' cannot be ascribed to them. Moore finds this position difficult to digest. From the fact that a proposition is contingent, only one thing follows that its negation is not self-contradictory. It certainly does not follow that the proposition in question cannot be known with certainty. As Moore argues, "the conjunctive proposition 'I know that I am at present standing up, and yet the proposition that I am is contingent' is certainly not
itself self-contradictory, even if it is false. Is it not obvious that if I say ‘I know that I am at present standing up, although the proposition I am is contingent’, I am certainly not contradicting myself, even if I am saying something which is false? This means I am permitted to say ‘I know that I am at present standing up’, even in the condition in which I maintain that my ‘present standing up is contingent’.

Suppose the proposition which Moore asserts, is ‘I am standing up’, its negation would be ‘I am not standing up’. If the former proposition is known for certain, then the latter should be false. Moore argues that “if I were to assert now 'it is possible that I am standing up' I should naturally be understood to be asserting that I do not know for certain that I am. And hence, if I do know for certain that I am, my assertion that it is possible that I'm not would be false.” Moore is cautious enough. He is showing merely the falsity of the proposition ‘I am not standing up’. He is not showing that this proposition is self-contradictory. If this proposition were self-contradictory, then the proposition ‘I am standing up’ would not be contingent, it would be necessary. Moore is trying to show that a contingent proposition can be known with certainty. He would succeed in achieving this end if he simply shows that its negation is false.

The next step is to show that all the assertions he made at the very start of the paper were not only true but also absolutely certain. Concerning this step he says, “Thus if I do know now that I am standing up, it follows that I can say with truth 'it is absolutely certain that I am standing up'. Since, therefore, the fact that this proposition is contingent is compatible with its being true that I know that I am standing up, it follows that it must also be compatible with its being true that it is absolutely certain that I am standing up.” The connection between knowledge and certainty is such that if one knows one cannot be uncertain.
The distinction between necessary and contingent truths has led some philosophers to think that ‘certainty’ has two different senses, the sense in which necessary truths are certain and the sense in which contingent truths are certain. Similarly, ‘knowledge’ also has two different senses, the sense in which necessary truths are known and the sense in which contingent truths are known. Moore shows awareness of this complication when he remarks “it may be the case that, if I say, ‘I know that’ or ‘It is certain that’ it is not the case that there are any triangular figures which are not trilateral’, or ‘I know that’ or ‘it is certain that it is not the case that there are any human beings who are daughters and yet are not female’, I am using ‘know that’ and ‘it is certain that’ in a different sense from that in which I use them if I say ‘I know that’ or ‘it is certain that ‘I have some clothes on’; and it may be the case that only necessary truths can be known or be certain in the former sense.” For Moore’s position, it hardly matters that necessary truths are certain in one sense and contingent in another. Two different senses of certainty have been invented simply because there is a type-distinction between necessary and contingent truths. Moore has improved over his own position held earlier. Earlier only sense-data statements were free from doubt and uncertainty. Now all kinds of empirical propositions could possibly be certain. Now the proposition ‘I have some clothes on’ can be as certain as ‘This is a red patch of colour’. The new position emerged during his “A Defence of Common Sense” and became matured at the stage of “Certainty”.

Concerning all the seven statements which Moore asserted in the beginning of the paper, he says, “Every one of them asserted something which might have been true, no matter what the condition of my mind had been either at that moment or in the past. For instance, that I was then inside a room is something which might have been true, even if at that time I had been asleep and in a dreamless sleep.” Earlier only sense-data statements were allowed to be true even when one was asleep. My statement ‘This is red’ would remain true even when I am dreaming, i.e., when I am not awake. Now
even material object statements remain true even when I am sleeping. The reason is simple. These statements are independent of the mind of the person who asserted them. From these assertions nothing can be inferred about the mental state of the subject who makes those assertions, whether he is wide awake or in deep sleep.

The last argument has led Moore to conclude concerning those propositions that, "they were all of them propositions which implied the existence of an external world—that is to say, of a world external to my mind."\textsuperscript{36} It is not only statements about the physical objects that are external to ones mind, even the statements about one’s body are independent of one’s mind. The sense of external is so wide that one’s own body is external to one’s mind. In this context Moore uses the transcendental argument for proving the existence of the external world. External world is the presupposition of the seven assertions that Moore made. If these assertions are true, then the presupposition of the external world cannot be avoided.

Ultimately we have to decide between two alternatives. According to Moore, there is "the alternative that none of us ever knows for certain of the existence of anything external to his own mind, and the alternative that all of us-millions of us-constantly do."\textsuperscript{37} Moore’s own view is in support of the millions of us. All of us believe in the external world. But a few philosophers, the sceptics, reject our view i.e., the view of Moore. Those who reject Moore’s view succeed in doing so with the help of the dream argument. Moore accepts that "From the hypothesis that I am dreaming, it would, I think, certainly follow that I don't know that I am standing up."\textsuperscript{38} But Moore tries to encounter the sceptic in a very interesting way. The proposition the ‘I am standing up’ may be true even while I am dreaming. For even in my dream I may be standing up. Moore argues, "from the hypothesis that I am dreaming, it certainly would not follow that I am not standing up; for it is certainly logically possible that a man should be fast asleep and dreaming, while he is standing up and not lying down. It is
therefore logically possible that I should both be standing up and also at the same time
dreaming that I am; just as the story, about a well-known Duke of Devonshire, that he
once dreamt that he was speaking in the House of Lords and, when he woke up, found
that he was speaking in the House of Lords, is certainly logically possible. Contrary
to 'standing up' is 'lying down'. But if in my dream I continue standing up then that
dream would fail to falsify the assertion that I am standing up, made while awake.
Rather my dreaming supports the assertion made while I am awake. Moore's purpose is
to weaken the dream argument, and he has certainly succeeded in doing so. What
happened in the dream of Duke of Devonshire was confirmed when he woke up. Moore
has reversed the order. What happened in the waking life was confirmed by the dream.
The sceptic has taken for granted that dreams falsify the truths of waking experience.
Moore has succeeded in showing that they do not always do so. Moore is only
considering the logical possibility of one's dreams confirming the statements made
while one is awake.

Moore further weakens the dream argument by providing a matching argument
against the dream argument. Moore argues, “since, I do know that I'm standing up, it
follows that I do know that I'm not dreaming; as my opponent can argue: since you
don't know that you're not dreaming, it follows that you don't know that you're
standing up. The one argument is just as good as the other, unless my opponent can give
better reasons for asserting that I don't know that I'm not dreaming, than I can give for
asserting that I do know that I am standing up.”

Moore's final blow to the sceptic is by showing incoherence in his argument. If
the sceptic has ever dreamt then he knows what a dream is. Knowing what a dream is,
presupposes the distinction between the dream experiences and the waking experiences.
Moore shows incoherence in the sceptic's thought by pointing out, that -All the
philosophers I have ever met or heard of certainly did know that dreams have occurred.
we all know that dreams *have* occurred. But can he consistently combine this proposition that he knows that dreams have occurred, with his conclusion that he does not know that he is not dreaming? Can anybody possibly know that dreams have occurred, if, at the time, he does not himself know that he is not dreaming? Imagine two children visiting a zoo. One of them knows very well what a tiger is. He has seen tigers in the past but the other child has only heard about tigers. It is for the first time that he comes to see a tiger in a zoo. He reacts ‘That is perhaps a tiger’. But what would be the reaction of the other child who has already seen tigers, to *this* tiger? He would say ‘This is a tiger’. Is the sceptic like the child who came to see a tiger for the first time? Has the sceptic only heard about dreams? Is it that he was so fortunate that he never had dreams? It is because he never had dreams that he is led to say I may possibly be dreaming. But this would mean that the sceptic is not a normal human being. He lacks certain experiences, which the normal human beings have. We need not worry about him. We should only worry about those sceptics who have all kinds of experiences like us.

In his “Defence of Common Sense” Moore tried to draw the limits of philosophy. Its domain is restricted by the domain of common sense. The raw material of philosophy comes from the domain of common sense. Common sense supplies to philosophy propositions, which philosophers then analyse. It is not the function of philosophy to establish the truth or falsity of these propositions. Its only function is to analyse them. In his “Proof of an External World” Moore tries to show that the denial of the external world involves incoherence. External world means the world of material bodies. Denying the existence of matter means denying the existence of such common objects as hands, tomatoes and cigarettes. Once it is shown that hands, tomatoes and cigarettes exist, it is also shown that material bodies exist.
In his paper on "Certainty" Moore has tried to show that the notions of 'certainty' and 'knowledge' are no less applicable to empirical contingent propositions than to a priori necessary propositions. And there is no special class of empirical propositions that could be known with certainty. Any empirical proposition can be known with certainty. He has very successfully shown the incoherence involved in the dream argument. Perhaps no philosopher of the past has succeeded so well against the sceptic. Moore has shown that the sceptic operates only at the epistemological level, the level of philosophy. He does not and cannot touch the domain of common sense.

4. WITTGENSTEIN'S "ON CERTAINTY": WHY CERTAINTY IS NOT SUBJECTIVE?

The On Certainty was composed by Wittgenstein during the last year and a half of his life. Two papers of Moore form the basic theme of this work. The papers in question are "A Defence of Common Sense" and "Proof of an External World". According Anscombe, Wittgenstein considered Moore's "Defence of Common Sense" as his best article. Moore agreed with Wittgenstein's estimate. Perhaps Moore's article on "Certainty" was the best piece of work against the sceptic. But it was published after Wittgenstein's death. However, Wittgenstein, has provided the strongest argument against the sceptic in his On Certainty.

According to Wittgenstein, Moore seems to have converted 'Knowing' into a mental state, different from the mental state of 'believing'. But neither knowing nor believing is a mental state. Wittgenstein remarks, "One can say "He believes it, but it isn't so", but not "He knows it, but it isn't so". Does this stem from the difference between the mental states of belief and of knowledge? No.- One may for example call "mental state" what is expressed by tone of voice in speaking, by gestures etc. It would thus be possible to speak of a mental state of conviction, and that may be the same
whether it is knowledge or false belief. To think that different states must correspond to the words “believe” and “know” would be as if one believed that different people had to correspond to the words, “I” and the name “Ludwig”, because the concepts are different. Wittgenstein wishes to show that the concept of ‘knowledge’ is different from the concept of ‘belief’. But this does not mean that knowing refers to one mental state and believing another. Moore would hardly disagree with Wittgenstein on this issue. Moore too wishes to distinguish believing from knowing. Taking help of Russell Moore points out, “that from the conjunction of the two facts that a man thinks that a given proposition \( p \) is true, and that \( p \) is in fact true, it does not follow that the man in question knows that \( p \) is true: in order that I may be justified in saying that I know that I am standing up, something more is required than the mere conjunction of the two facts that I both think I am and actually am-as Russell has expressed it, true belief is not identical with knowledge.” Since Moore equates ‘believing’ with ‘thinking’ it can be said that for Moore believing refers to a mental state. But does knowing also refer to a mental state, numerically different from the mental state of believing? Compare Wittgenstein’s remark with that of Moore. For Wittgenstein said, while distinguishing ‘I know’ from ‘I believe’, “It would be correct to say: “I believe...” has subjective truth; but “I know ...” not.” Moore also considers ‘I believe’ as a subjective truth. Something more is required, according to Moore, for converting a subjective truth into an objective truth. If one has a true belief one does not necessarily have knowledge. Would the problem be solved by inventing another mental state, the state of knowledge? Such a solution is useless, for knowledge in such a situation would remain subjective. A mental state is a mental state, be it a state of belief or that of knowledge. A mental state by definition is subjective. There is no implication that Moore has converted knowledge into a mental state. Of course he considers believing as a mental state. And on this issue Wittgenstein hardly disagrees with Moore.
The statement ‘I know..’ does not entail a mental state or mental process. It only stands for epistemic context in which ‘I’ faces the world. When Moore says, ‘I know for certain that the earth has existed for a long time’, this statement does not mean a mental state of Moore. Rather it expresses the knowledge, which Moore has regarding the world. In this connection Wittgenstein says, that ‘knowledge’ and ‘certainty’ belong to two different categories. They are not two mental states like, say, ‘surmising’ and ‘being sure’. According to Wittgenstein, we are interested not in being sure but in knowledge. The certainty of propositions lies in their truth. Wittgenstein says, “My “mental state”, the “knowing”, gives me no guarantee of what will happen. But it consists in this, that I should not understand where a doubt could get a foothold nor where a further test was possible.” Wittgenstein means to say that if one knows then are cannot doubt. So also once I know then there is no need for further verification. With knowledge the culmination of testing has reached.

Norman Malcolm has recorded a conversation he had with Wittgenstein on the topic of certainty. Malcolm reports Wittgenstein as saying, “There is a tendency to think of knowledge as mental state ... mental states, such as anxiety and pain, have degrees. Certainty also has degree, e.g., “How certain are you?” Since certainty has degrees we are helped to have the idea that knowledge is a mental state. Moore would like to stare at the house that is only twenty feet away and say, with a peculiar intonation, “I know that there is a house”. He does this because he wants to have in himself the feeling of knowing. He wants to exhibit knowing for certain to himself. In this way he has the idea that he is replying to sceptic philosopher who claims that every day examples of knowing that there is a dog in the backyard or that the neighbor’s house is on fire, are not really or strictly knowledge, are not knowing in the highest degree. It is as if someone said “you don’t really feel pain when you are pinched” and Moore then pinched himself in order to feel the pain, and thus prove to himself that the other is wrong. Moore treats the sentence “I know so and so” like the sentence “I have pain”.

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The criterion that he knows so and so will be that he says that he does.47 Moore’s own remarks concerning his use of the expression ‘I know’ have led Wittgenstein to interpret Moore, that for him ‘knowing’ is not very unlike ‘being in pain’. Moore refuses to produce any evidence in support of his claim. Just as one fails to demonstrate one’s having of a pain as one demonstrates as having of a pen or a book, Moore fails to demonstrate his having of knowledge. So having of knowledge is not very unlike having of a pain. However, pain is something that is private and subjective, but knowledge is something that is public and objective. Though I may be the only person knowing something at a given time, but others are not debarred from knowing what I know. This distinguishes knowledge from belief.

There is always the danger of trying to find the meaning of an expression by contemplating on the expression itself and the frame of mind in which one uses it, instead of thinking about the practice or use. That is why one repeats, like Moore, the expression to oneself so often, because it is as if one must see what one is looking for in the expression and in the feelings expressed in it. But this is wrong. The mental process is irrelevant for the meaning of an expression. Its meaning depends on the use. In mathematical knowledge, for example, one has to keep in mind the unimportance of the inner process or of state. Here the interesting thing is, how we use mathematical propositions in our every day life. Thus knowledge is related to practice and not to the mental context. So Wittgenstein says: “- For ‘I know’ seems to describe a state of affairs which guarantees what is known, guarantees it as a fact...” The concept ‘know’, therefore, is not analogous to the concepts ‘surmise’, ‘doubt’, etc., in that the statement ‘I know....’cannot be a mistake, that is, there can be an inference from such an utterance to the truth of the assertion.

In the case of ‘I believe’ one can ask for justification of the belief, but not so in the case of ‘I know’. ‘I know’ is in no need of justification since it excludes all doubts.
‘I know’ is the signal that there is no scope for doubt. But this does not licence one to use this expression where there is no occasion for it. Moore, according to Wittgenstein, misuses this expression. Wittgenstein says, “The wrong use made by Moore of the proposition ‘I know...’ lies in his regarding it as an utterance as little subject to doubt as ‘I am in pain’. And since from ‘I know it is so’ there follows ‘it is so’, then the latter can’t be doubted either.”\(^49\) Logically speaking ‘I know’ contrasts with ‘I am in pain’ because in ‘I am in pain’ there is the need of a suitable occasion for it to be true, that is, when I am really in pain. So this statement is self-justifiably true. ‘I know’, on the contrary, is without justification and so without use in most of the cognitive contexts.

The concept of belief cannot be understood merely as the expression of a state of mind. Knowledge and belief are essentially directed at truth. Belief, as it were, aims at truth, whereas knowledge purports to have arrived at it. The statement ‘I know’ relates to the possibility of demonstrating the truth. In the case of knowledge, a person is right in claiming that he knows something only if what he claims to know is, in fact, true and so if he does know then it follows that what he knows is true. Wittgenstein writes, “And in fact, isn’t the use of the word “know” as a pre-eminently philosophical word altogether wrong? If “know” has this interest, why not “being certain”? Apparently because it would be too subjective. But isn’t “know” just as subjective? Isn’t one misled simply by the grammatical peculiarity that “p” follows from “I know P”? (OC, Sec. 415). Let us assume that his answer to the above question is not ‘yes’ in each case since he admits that ‘I know p’ does not have a subjective truth. Wittgenstein emphasises that a claim of knowledge, unlike a claim of belief, is not independent of the truth of what is being claimed. He says that a claim to knowledge does not have subjective truth. This connects with the remark that the use of ‘I know’ as a predominantly philosophical word is wrong. Wittgenstein says, “It is as if “I know” did not tolerate a metaphysical emphasis.”\(^50\) That is, the expression ‘I know’ cannot be used in the way Moore tried to use it, as part of a philosophical argument, in order to counter the
sceptical arguments or the claims of the idealist. However, one can argue that 'I know that it is so' is subjective in the sense it involves a claim about the judging subject in the way in which the assertion 'it is so' does not. As Wittgenstein puts it, "What is the proof that I know something? Most certainly not my saying I know it."51 "And so, when writers enumerate all the things they know, that proves nothing whatever. So the possibility of knowledge about physical objects cannot be proved by the protestations of those who believe that they have such knowledge."52 Such claims do not dispose scepticism.

5. WITTGENSTEIN AGAINST SCEPTICISM.

According to Wittgenstein, in using 'I know' Moore has left himself open to the criticism of the philosophers who say 'I believe merely strikes as if you know it? For Moore's remarks were directed at the sceptic who denies the existence of things in the world that is external to the mind. Moore is aware that scepticism is wrong. So he claims to know that certain truths are absolutely certain for him. Wittgenstein says, "I should like to say: Moore does not know what he asserts he knows, but it stands fast for him, as also for me; regarding it as absolutely solid is part of our method of doubt and enquiry."53 Thus, according to him, Moore's statement of knowledge could be appropriate to the removal of a practical doubt but not to the doubts of the idealist or the sceptic. For the sceptic there is a doubt behind a practical doubt. Therefore, Moore's attempt to refute scepticism fails.

The distinction between a practical and philosophical doubt is very similar to the distinction between doubts, which can in principle be settled by the ordinary relevant criteria, and doubts which call those very criteria in question. Wittgenstein makes the following remark on the distinction. "Someone who doubted whether earth had existed for 100 years might have a scientific, or on the other hand a philosophical, doubt."54

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Doubting the existence of the external world, for example, does not mean doubting the existence of a planet. The first doubt is philosophical and the second is scientific. The scientific doubt can be refuted but not the philosophical one. Philosophical doubts can never be answered. So Wittgenstein points out that it is possible to point out the discovery of the planet to the doubter but such proof is not possible in the case of the existence of the world. Moore's saying 'I know this is a hand' is not like 'I know this is Saturn'. Moore has not discovered his hand like the scientist who discovered the Saturn. So Moore cannot prove that the external world exists by saying that 'I know this is a hand'.

Moore's insistence that he knows that there is a hand, though it could well be appropriate in certain situations, does nothing to meet those doubts, which the sceptical or idealist arguments put forward. So Moore's use of 'I know' does nothing to meet the difficulties which Moore's adversaries emphasise, and that Moore was misled into thinking that he has refuted scepticism and idealism, by assertions about what he knows to be true. As Wittgenstein expresses this: "Moore's mistake lies in this - countering the assertion that one cannot know that, by saying "I do know it."" Wittgenstein thinks 'I know' can be used only under certain circumstances, that is, only when there is a need to assert one's knowledge against the background of doubt. Wittgenstein says, "it is not a matter of Moore's knowing that there's a hand there, but rather we should not understand him if he were to say, "of course I may be wrong about this." We should ask "what is it like to make such a mistake as that?" - e.g., What's it like to discover that it was a mistake?" That is to say there is no reason or ground as to why, like Moore, one should say 'I know I have a hand'. One does not have to assert such a simple truth as that one has a hand; one cannot be mistaken about it as such. But we should not understand him if he were to say that he might be wrong in this case. Whether or not one is right in claiming to know that he has a hand depends, according to
Wittgenstein, on whether or not he shows he has not made a mistake. But as Wittgenstein says, in the case where Moore asserts that he knows that he has a hand, we can ask: what would it be like to make a mistake here?

Wittgenstein holds that one can say 'I know' when one has compelling grounds by appeal to which the truth of what one claims to know can be demonstrated. He gave several examples of the correct use of the expression 'I know'. They are all cases of being able to say how one knows. From all this we can make two general points: that Wittgenstein sees a claim to knowledge as essentially connected with evidence which can be given in support or confirmation of what one knows, and that this claim is something about which it is possible to be mistaken. Thus, Wittgenstein says, knowledge and evidence go together, so that to claim to know something is to be able to show how one knows, that is, to show the evidence for it. Knowledge is not possible where evidences are not available.

Wittgenstein is undermining a long tradition in epistemology, which seeks to establish knowledge on a sure foundation by refuting scepticism. It seeks to justify knowledge by excluding all doubts. Descartes thought that he had found such knowledge when he stated his doctrine of clear and distinct ideas and when he established the indubitable truth: Cogito ergo sum. G.E Moore likewise has proposed a number of statements as being immune from doubt so as to constitute the safe items of knowledge. Both these proposals are based on clear refutation of scepticism. Wittgenstein is refuting this epistemological tradition when he denies that 'I know I am in pain' is a correct example of what one can be said to know indubitably and with certainty. If it is used as a case of indubitable knowledge against scepticism, it does not provide an example of something known against which most other claims can be measured and can be seen to fall short. In Philosophical Investigations II, Wittgenstein argues that one's knowledge of one's own pain is found out to be not a representative of genuine knowledge. He says, "If you
bring up against me the case of people’s saying “But I must know if I am in pain!... you should consider the occasion and purpose of these phrases, “War is war” is not an example of the law of identity, either.” One of the purposes of the phrase ‘I know...’ is to contrast my own relation to my sensations with that of the others. Other people have to use the evidence for what I say in order to claim anything about what I feel. They may be wrong in their knowledge of my being in pain. But I cannot myself be wrong about my own pain. So I do not need evidence for my knowing of my pain. In Moore’s example this contrast is forgotten. Moore says, ‘I know that I have two hands’. But the question is: what is the evidence I require in knowing that I have two hands? Is it not something, which is prior to all evidence, and therefore itself is not an item of knowledge? Wittgenstein believes that ‘I know I have two hands’ is not a genuine case of knowledge at all. He writes, “One says “ I know” when one is ready to give compelling grounds. “ I know” relates to possibility of demonstrating the truth. Whether someone knows something can come to light, assuming that he is convinced of it. But if what he believes is of such a kind that the grounds that he can give are no surer than his assertion, then he cannot say that he knows what he believes.” This point is an essential part of Wittgenstein’s overall position. This shows that genuine knowledge is evidence-based. To argue against this view is to say that knowing that something is true is separable from an account of the relevant evidence. Therefore, the case of pseudo-knowledge like “ I know that I have two hands” will be possible.

Moore has not suggested that the things which he claims to know play any foundational role in a system of knowledge. He only shows that they are superior evidences for one’s knowledge that there is an external world, and that it would be absurd to raise any doubt about that. Wittgenstein accepts that Moore has given examples of things, which, in most circumstances, are indubitable. But he denies that these are the things, which it makes any sense to claim to know. He says that ‘I know’ is conceived as a grammatical proposition and it properly means that there is no
such thing as doubt in this case, that is, the expression 'I do not know' makes no sense in this case. That is why 'I know' makes no sense either. Wittgenstein is not interested in either confirming or denying that Moore knows whatever he claims to know, he is concerned only with the question whether it makes sense to say one knows. He is concerned with the conditions under which alone one can make genuine knowledge-claim. According to him, there are things, which are not a part of our knowledge-claims, but are there as the grounds of the language games involving knowledge-claims.

6. LIMITS OF SCEPTICISM: WITTGENSTEIN AND MOORE.

Wittgenstein says that his objection against Moore is that Moore has conflated the genuine knowledge-claim like 'I know my friend is dead' with the pseudo-knowledge-claim that 'I know that my friend is a human being'. The latter claim does not take off at all; it is not a move in a language-game. It has no context, no cognitive purpose. Wittgenstein says that each one of Moore's examples could be given a context and provided with circumstances in which they can be imagined. But, as such, as they have no genuine context and so fail in achieving any cognitive purpose. Wittgenstein sarcastically says, "I could imagine Moore being captured by a wild tribe, and their expressing the suspicion that he has come from somewhere between the earth and the moon. Moore tells them that he knows etc. but he can't give them the grounds for his certainty, because they have fantastic ideas of human ability to fly and know nothing about Physics. This would be an occasion for making that statement." Wittgenstein, thus, says that when one uses 'I know' without context and cognitive purpose, is bound to commit the logical error of making pseudo-move in our cognitive language-game. Wittgenstein is very suggestive in explaining the logical error in the following way: "My difficulty can also be shewn like this: I am sitting talking to a friend. Suddenly I say: 'I knew all along that you were so-and-so'. Is that really just a superfluous, though true,
remark? I feel as if these words were like "Good morning" said to someone in the middle of conversation."  

Wittgenstein thought that Moore was right against the sceptic in claiming that some propositions about the external world could have the same epistemological status as mathematical propositions. But he thought that Moore was wrong in thinking that these propositions provided a proof of external world: not because these propositions were false, but because the claim to knowledge of them was senseless. Wittgenstein claimed that both Moore and the sceptics misunderstood the nature of doubt, knowledge and certainty, though in different ways. Wittgenstein rejected the sceptical position not so much because scepticism, i.e. universal doubt, is false, but because it is meaningless. Scepticism is an impossible position because it doubts even that which cannot be doubted. So it become a meaningless exercise of illegitimate doubt.

For Wittgenstein, an expression of doubt makes sense only in the relevant circumstances. Accordingly, the circumstances in which we can have claim to knowledge or certainty are also the circumstances in which doubt is possible. That is to say, doubt is possible where knowledge is possible. Doubt and certainty, belong to the same language-game. Wittgenstein argues that doubts are limited to cognitive languages-games where evidences for certainty are lacking. Doubts in these circumstances are legitimate.

As Wittgenstein has made it clear, 'certainty' is presupposed by 'doubt'. The game of doubting itself presupposes certainty (OC, Sec.115). That is to say, one can doubt if only something else is not doubted. There are truths, which are exempted from doubt. In this sense a mistake is logically excluded in the case of these truths. Descartes thought that he found such a case in his Cogito. Wittgenstein, like Descartes and Moore, accepts such indubitable truths, but claims, unlike them, that such truths are
not to be proved or claimed to have been known. They are part of our frame of reference and the bed-rock truths. Wittgenstein writes, "The truth of certain empirical propositions belongs to our frame of reference."\(^{67}\) Wittgenstein raises the question: can one be mistaken about such propositions? Can one doubt that one exists or that the earth has existed long before one's birth?

All genuine mistakes show that there is an essential connection between mistakes and knowledge. A mistake has ground, and grounds are to be contrasted with the cause of the mistake. The mistaken judgement can be fitted into the overall system of knowledge. Mistakes form the system as much as knowledge does. But if one is mistaken about the system of knowledge and its foundations, one can be declared crazy, since the notion of mistake itself is inapplicable in this case. According to Wittgenstein, doubt needs ground. So he says, "So rational suspicion must have grounds? We might also say: 'the reasonable man believes this'"\(^{68}\) A reasonable man knows under what conditions doubts are possible. Doubts are based on reasoning. But sceptical doubts are generally irrational, since they are concerning the very grounds of knowledge. Wittgenstein, therefore, shows the difference between the case where doubt is reasonable and where doubt is impossible logically. Sceptical doubts are not only unreasonable but also logically impossible.\(^{69}\) If someone doubts the existence of material objects, this doubt does not make any difference in practice. In order to express the doubt that \(p\), one must understand what is meant by saying that \(p\). As Wittgenstein puts it, "If you are not certain of any fact, you cannot be certain of the meaning of your words either."\(^{70}\) 'I don't know if this is a hand' presupposed that I know what the word 'hand' means. A consistent sceptic should doubt the meaning of the words he uses. Wittgenstein rejects this kind of doubt as meaningless and so as finding no place in language-game. For it is, as Wittgenstein points out, an empirical fact that English or Latin words have the meanings they have. If scepticism is taken thus far, it refutes itself.

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Wittgenstein claims that expression of doubt presupposes that the language-game within which it is expressed is not doubted. Besides, in particular, the nature of the language-game itself may exclude a doubt about the things, which have a place in the language-game. If, for example, one asks: What right have I not to doubt existence of my hands?, he is overlooking the fact that a doubt about existence only works against the background of a language-game involving hands. According to Wittgenstein, if we doubt everything then it would not be a genuine doubt; it can at best a pathological one. Doubt is possible where testing is possible (OC, sec.125) and test presupposes something is not doubted and not tested. (OC, sec.163, 377). Our doubts depend on the fact that some propositions are exempted from doubt, are, as it were, like the hinges on which those turn. (OC, sec.341).

Wittgenstein has listed a number of propositions about which he thinks mistake is impossible and doubt is impossible. For example, 'I have never been on the moon' can not be doubted. Similarly, one cannot doubt that one has two hands or that one has a brain inside the skull. These propositions are very much like Moore-like propositions. Wittgenstein writes, "Imagine a language-game "When I call you, come in through the door". In any ordinary case, a doubt whether there really is a door there, will be impossible." He wants to show that a doubt such as this is not possible and so is not the presupposition of any language-game. The proposition that there is a door is to be understood as an example of something that is objectively certain - which is supposed to mean that doubt is logically excluded. Certainty is ascribed to the language-game as such and not to the single proposition about the door. All the propositions about the door point to its existence. Thus, certainty precludes all existential doubts. Wittgenstein argues that objective certainties of human life are not threatened by the philosophical imagining of unheard of occurrences. This argument is against scepticism. Besides, he
argues against those like Moore who provide epistemic proofs of our knowledge of the objective certainty. Certainty is a matter to be shown in practice and not to be proved.\footnote{72}

Both Moore and Wittgenstein regard certainty as a human attitude towards the truth of something. Both understand certainty to be characterised by the impossibility of being mistaken. But whereas Moore believes that there is an epistemic proposition of certainty, Wittgenstein thinks that it can only be shown in our life, that is, in our language-game. Certainty is rooted in life and language and how we see it or believe it. Wittgenstein writes: "My life shews that I know or am certain that there is a chair over there, or a door, and so on. – I tell a friend e.g., "Take that chair over there", "shut the door", etc.etc."\footnote{73}

Wittgenstein argues against the sceptics that sceptical doubt is self-refuting, and so meaningless. Therefore, universal doubt is excluded by our language-game. Descartes recommended universal doubt as a method of arriving at certainty. Wittgenstein has rejected this as something repugnant to the system of our language and knowledge. Wittgenstein says that the possibility of language-game does not depend on everything being doubted that could be doubted. Descartes thinks that he has to doubt everything that can be doubted in order to establish certainty in our knowledge-system. Any claim to knowledge or procedure of testing can then be justified in an ultimate sense by displaying its place in the system of knowledge. Wittgenstein, on the contrary, claims that a language-game such as that of testing and weighing the evidence for or against any claim to knowledge cannot be justified in this ultimate sense. If one tries to doubt everything one cannot get as far as doubting anything. One cannot simply doubt everything. The sceptic cannot intelligibly doubt the things, which he claims to doubt, because thereby he undermines the language-game in which the words he uses have their meaning.\footnote{74} Wittgenstein’s notion of language is at the centre of this argument. So scepticism is ruled out by language.
Wittgenstein differs from Moore in his defence of knowledge and language against the sceptic. Unlike Moore, he claims that the justification of knowledge is unwarranted and that proofs are not needed. What counts, as a proof in mathematics or in empirical knowledge is a matter of description of the language-game in mathematics and in ordinary language. Moore’s proofs are of not available in refuting scepticism. since the sceptic is unconcerned by the arguments of Moore’s. That one has two hands cannot therefore be a matter of proof. The fact is that this is a matter shown in the very language-game in which we talk about hands and other material bodies. So Wittgenstein argues that doubt about one’s hands is impossible. As Wittgenstein says earlier in the Tractates “Scepticism is not irrefutable, but obviously nonsensical, when it raises doubts where no questions can be asked”. Wittgenstein says that the sceptics’ question may be dismissed because it lacks meaning. The meaningfulness of a question is derived from the meaningfulness of the statements, which can be made in answering it. This comes out in Wittgenstein’s explanation of just why the sceptics’ question must be called meaningless. So he writes “For doubt can exist only where a question exists, a question only where an answer exists, and an answer only where something can be said.” If a question can be framed at all, it is also possible to answer it. If there is no determinate answer to a question, then the concepts do not have a determinate sense. If scepticism raises meaningless question, any refutation of it by arguing against it in the Moorean way is also meaningless. Moore’s defence of commonsense and the proof of external world is an exercise in linguistic futility.
7. THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND THE GRAMMATICAL MODELS OF CERTAINTY.

G.E. Moore has argued for a kind of certainty with which Wittgenstein did not agree. He has his own model of certainty that can be called the grammatical model of certainty. Moore’s view is a little complicated. He operates at two different levels while employing the concepts of ‘certainty’ and ‘knowledge’. These levels have already been distinguished earlier as epistemological and pre-epistemological. Propositions are entertained and their truth or falsity established at the pre-epistemical level. They are merely analysed at the epistemological level. Moore is not so much concerned in meeting the sceptic at the pre-epistemological level. He is not concerned with an ordinary doubter whose doubts can be removed by practical means. He is concerned with the philosophical sceptic who operates at the epistemological level. Philosophical sceptic denies knowledge and certainty. Against philosophical sceptic Moore wishes to show that one can have knowledge and certainty. So Moore’s model of certainty can be described as epistemological model. Wittgenstein’s model of certainty is unique. He agrees neither with Moore nor with the sceptic. It would be proper to describe Wittgenstein as the holder of the grammatical model; Certainty is inherent in the grammar of language.

Wittgenstein talks of grammar of propositions, and their interconnections in the network of propositions. He believes that propositions, of whatever kind, have a place in the system of propositions. So they can be considered within the grammar of language. Wittgenstein’s *On Certainty* is a grammatical reflection on the Moore-type propositions. The Moore-type propositions are such that they can be called grammatical propositions. Grammatical propositions express how the system of language functions, that is they express the rule of the language-games. The grammatical propositions have a place in language like that of the rules, e.g., ‘Every rod has a length’, ‘Red is a colour’, ‘$2 \times 2 = 4$’ etc. From the grammatical point of view, the propositions considered by Moore have a very different role. They do not express subjective
certainty; rather they are universal and necessary. They express the grammatical and the logical certainty.

Wittgenstein considers any utterance as non-sensical if it is not in conformity with the rules of language-game. On this view the utterance of any proposition, empirical or non-empirical, must have a place in the language-game. He goes to the extent of saying that propositions are non-sensical if they are excluded by our language-games. Even those propositions, which are taken for granted or presupposed by our language-games are, taken to be beyond our cognitive claims. It is non-sensical to make a testable knowledge claim when the propositions at issue are indubitable.

According to Wittgenstein, the epistemic model suffers from the lack of a proper understanding of empirical propositions. Empirical propositions are taken as if they are without a foundation and they need one in experience. Experience is taken as the source of the certainty of these propositions.

According to Wittgenstein, empirical propositions are verified through experiences, but their certainty is not derived from experience. He writes, "No, experience is not the ground for our game of judging. Nor is its outstanding success." One interpretation suggests that Wittgenstein's empirical propositions are contingent propositions. But Wittgenstein seems to make a distinction between "empirical" and "contingent" propositions. For him, empirical propositions also belong to 'our frame of reference' (OC, sec. 83) and propositions having the form of empirical propositions can be foundational for our language-games. They therefore cease to be contingent. Wittgenstein writes, "I want to say: propositions of the form of empirical propositions, and not only propositions of logic, form the foundation of all operating with thoughts (with language). -This observation is not of the form "I know ... " -I know ... " states what I know, and that is not of logical interest." Wittgenstein further notes that the
empirical propositions, like Moore-type propositions, can play a logical role in the system of propositions. He writes. "When Moore says he knows such and such, he is really enumerating a lot of empirical propositions which we affirm without special testing; propositions, that is, which have a peculiar logical role in the system of our empirical propositions."82

The view that empirical propositions need not be contingent follow from the fact that we cannot conceive of the opposite of such empirical-looking propositions such as ‘There are physical objects’ and ‘object remains in existence when not perceived’ etc. These propositions are in fact, logical propositions, which cannot be contradicted in experience.83

Wittgenstein’s distinction between ‘empirical’ and ‘contingent’ propositions shows that for him certainty cannot be in the empiricity of the propositions. Rather certainty lies in their grammar, that is, in their role in the system of propositions. So Wittgenstein has given the grammatical propositions a unique status in our language. Grammatical propositions include not only the propositions of logic and mathematics but also those propositions, which are concerning the foundations of our empirical knowledge. Language-games concerning knowledge and belief presuppose a set of propositions which can be called the ‘foundation-walls’. Wittgenstein writes, "I have arrived at the rock bottom of my convictions. And one might almost say that these foundation-walls are carried by the whole house."84

Wittgenstein finds fault with Moor’s epistemic concept of certainty, that is, certainty, as it is available in our knowledge of the world. Epistemic certainty is no doubt important. But that is not at all. Besides, that is not available. For example, according to Wittgenstein, the Moore-type propositions do not at all ensure epistemic certainty. These propositions are taken for granted by everyone. So they are universally
available and are certain by virtue of their logical role, not by being asserted by the competent knower. Assertions of the Moore-type propositions do not add anything to their content. They are either already known or not known at all, irrespective of who the knower is. Wittgenstein remarks, "I do not explicitly learn the propositions that stand fast for me. I can discover them subsequently like the axis around which a body rotates. This axis is not fixed in the sense that anything holds it fast, but the movement around it determines its immobility." These propositions constitute the 'world-picture' which we inherit as a background for our language-games. But the world-picture is not based on reasoning and justification. Wittgenstein says, "But I did not get picture of the world by satisfying myself of its correctness; nor do I have it because I am satisfied of its correctness. No: it is the inherited background against which I distinguish between the truth and false."  

Moore's model is vulnerable to scepticism in the sense that there is no reason why the sceptic cannot doubt the so-called epistemic justifications. Justifications depend on more basic justifications. But then they can be doubted. Knowledge is only gained to the extent that matters dubitable in a hypothetical context are not doubted but held fast. However, Moore does not escape from the circle of justifications and proofs. So there is no final resting-place against scepticism. Wittgenstein believes that there is a resting-place. But that is not something which can hold as a proof. It is something more basic, more fundamental than a proof. So Wittgenstein writes, "Giving grounds, however, justifying the evidence, comes to an end; -- but the end is not certain propositions', striking us immediately as true, i.e., it is not a kind of seeing on our part, it is our acting, which lies at the bottom of the language-game." What Wittgenstein suggests is that there is a domain of truths, which cannot be doubted, yet it is beyond our epistemic justification. Like Descartes, Wittgenstein is concerned to draw attention to the numberless matters that persons unhesitatingly believe. But Wittgenstein does not ask us to doubt everything that can be doubted. In fact, he says that doubting everything
that can be doubted is not a presupposition of our language-games.\textsuperscript{88} So, "If you tried to doubt everything you would not get as far as doubting anything. The game of doubting itself presupposes certainty."\textsuperscript{89} Descartes, however, believed that certainty must come after doubt and cannot already be presupposed. So he writes, "I have realised that if I wished to have any firm and constant knowledge in the sciences, I would have to undertake, once and for all, to set aside all the opinions, which I had previously accepted among my beliefs and start again from the very beginning."\textsuperscript{90} Thus, for Descartes, certainty is a matter of proof. It is something, which we have to arrive at after painstaking effort. Moore likewise contended that proofs are the sure way to certainty. Both contended that scepticism could be refuted by demonstrating that certainty is possible. Thus the Cartesian model which Moore endorses is a framework of doubt preceding knowledge and certainty. Wittgenstein, on the contrary, believes that certainty precedes doubt. For example, the propositions 'There are physical objects and Objects continue in existence when not perceived' express matters that are never matters for testing nor can they ever be doubted. They belong to the foundation of everything we know.

Besides, there are cases in which a proposition $P$ is not a matter that can be justified and doubted in ordinary context. But it can be a matter for which corroborating evidences can be found. Suppose, I say 'I have two hands' and 'My name is Ananda Sagar'. I can't doubt or seeks to justify the above utterances without jeopardizing my ability to judge at all. To doubt my own name signals the break-down of my ability to use language. Hence, I cannot seriously doubt that I am so and so.

There are cases in which $P$ is a matter that can be justified and doubted although there is no need to do so. Suppose I say that Mr. X told me this and I believe it to be true. In such a case I take that Mr. X is truthful and reliable. I can examine the
contents; grounds are available to make me more certain, but such checking seems otiose.

There are cases in which testing what is questioned and giving justifications are appropriate and necessary moves. Suppose I say, ‘There is going to be rain tomorrow’. Here I must support my assertion with justification. This claim can be challenged and so the claimant must be able to produce good grounds for the claim.

The sceptical position refuted by Moore is a familiar and general one. The sceptic says that ‘we can’t know the existence of physical objects’, because we may be in delusion or dreaming. But we can give the grounds for thinking that we are not deluded or not imagining things. Moore claims that one can prove that there are physical objects. The proof is as follows:\(^91\):

Here is one hand
Here is another hand.
Therefore, two hands exit.

So Moore claims ‘I know that I have two hands’. He believes that this is a sufficient refutation of the sceptic’s position that we do not know the existence of physical objects. Wittgenstein claims that Moore commits a mistake in his proof. He says, “Moore’s mistake lies in this—countering the assertion that one cannot know that, by saying ‘I do know it.’”\(^92\) Further he says, “... If Moore is attacking those who say that one cannot really know such a thing, he can’t do it by assuring them that he knows this and that. \(^93\) Moore’s premises in the proof are those which he asserts he knows. Based on them is the conclusion, which he also claims to know. What Wittgenstein objects to is that Moore can assert that he knows that two hands exist. Wittgenstein claims that ‘I know I have two hands’ is as inadmissible the knowledge-claim as ‘I know that I am in pain’ and ‘I know that the earth has existed for many years’. It is not the case that Moore knows these things, though they are undoubtedly true. These propositions are
such that one does not claim to have evidence for their truth, and with regard to them a request for grounds is a sign of misunderstanding. The ‘pain’ example is the case of self-knowledge regarding one’s own pain. In this case, which is a first-person utterance, no evidences or criteria are needed for assessing whether it is a true judgement or not. For Wittgenstein, it is not a descriptive judgement at all; it is an expression or avowal. The logic of avowal shows that they are without the need for ground or evidence, so one cannot claim to know that one is in pain.

Wittgenstein’s strategy thus is to show that it is misleading to say either that we do or can know such matters or we do not and cannot know them. They are neither justified nor unjustified but simply embedded as certainties in our practices i.e., our actions and understanding. Wittgenstein concludes, “the language-game is... not based on grounds. It is not reasonable or unreasonable. It is there like our life” (OC, sec. 559). The end is an ungrounded way of action (OC, sec. 110). A genuine case of knowing is a matter of having cognitive authority. ‘I know... ’ means, “I have this special qualification or authority.” It is always conceivable that the knower is not so qualified. It, therefore, makes sense to say, ‘I know P’ only if it also makes sense to say that ‘I don’t know P’, or that I am not specially qualified. But in the cases where Moore claims to know things, the things, which he claims to know, are such that one cannot fail to know them. They are so universally known. Wittgenstein writes, “The truths which Moore says he knows, are such as, roughly speaking, all of us know, if he knows them”(OC, Sec. 100). Thus there is no special warrant for claiming to know these truths. There is no question of not knowing them. That is the reason why claiming to know is meaningless. Wittgenstein puts it as follows: “If ‘I know etc.’ is conceived as a grammatical proposition, of course the ‘I’ cannot be important. And it properly means, “There is no such thing as a doubt in this case” or “The expression ‘I don’t know’ makes no sense in this case”. And of course it follows from this that ‘I know’ makes no sense either.”
Wittgenstein concludes that one slips into using 'I know' mistakenly, since the truths he claims to know are such that we cannot conceive of their contrary. Believing in their contrary is to play a different language-game altogether. That language-game is not ours, however, Wittgenstein says, "The propositions presenting what Moore 'knows' are all of such a kind that it is difficult to imagine why anyone should believe the contrary. E.g. the proposition that Moore has spent his whole life in close proximity to the earth. - Once more I can speak of myself here instead of speaking of Moore. What could induce me to believe the opposite? Either a memory or having been told. — Every thing that I have seen or heard gives me the conviction that no man has ever been far from the earth. Nothing in my picture of the world speaks in favour of the opposite."  

The sceptic's argument that we do not have any certainty in knowledge is thus countered by Wittgenstein by dismissing that we can ever prove against the sceptic that we know certain truths in Moore's way. Moore's way leads us back to scepticism.

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6 Ibid., p. 53.
7 Ibid., pp. 53-4.
8 Ibid., p. 62.
9 Ibid., p. 62.
10 Ibid., p. 63.
11 Ibid., p. 63.
12 Ibid., p. 64.
14 "A Defence of Common Sense", p. 55.

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OC, Sec. 243.

62 OC, Sec. 264.

63 Ibid., Sec. 464.

64 Cf., OC, Sec. 10.

65 Ibid., Sec. 389-92.

66 Ibid., Sec. 341.

67 Ibid., Sec. 83.

68 Ibid., Sec. 323.

69 Ibid., Sec. 454.

70 Ibid., Sec. 114.

71 Ibid., Sec. 391.

72 See *Wittgenstein and Knowledge*, Chap. 1.

73 OC, Sec. 7.


76 Ibid., Sec. 6. 51.


78 OC, Sec. 131.

79 For more discussion on this, see *Wittgenstein and Knowledge*, p.36.

80 Cf. Ibid., p. 36.

81 OC, Sec. 401.

82 Ibid., Sec. 136.

83 OC, Sec.35.

84 Ibid., Sec. 248.

85 Ibid., Sec. 152.

86 Ibid., Sec. 94.

87 Ibid., Sec. 204.

88 Ibid., Sec. 446.

89 Ibid., Sec. 115.


92 OC, Sec. 521.

93 Ibid., Sec. 520.


96 See *Wittgenstein and Knowledge*, Chap. 1.


98 OC, Sec. 58.

99 Ibid., Sec. 93.