

Knowing is not a State of Mind
a discussion of T.Williamson, "Is Knowing a State of Mind?",
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Please do not quote or cite present version without contacting me:
lizzie.fricker@magd.ox.ac.uk]

1. Introduction: My topic

In an important article "Is Knowing a State of Mind?" (IKASOM) (Mind Vol 104, July 1995, pp.533-555), Tim Williamson proposes and argues for a pair of radical theses. We may label them thus:

NASK: "[N]o analysis of the concept of knowing of the standard kind is correct."
(IKASOM p.541)

KMS: Knowing that P is a mental state; specifically, it is "the most general factive stative [propositional] attitude" (IKASOM p.551)

An analysis of knowing - i.e. of the concept expressed by 'knows' - of the 'standard kind' is one which "take[s] the form of a conjunction of concepts of mental states, in particular of believing that P, with concepts of [irredundant] non-mental conditions, in particular of its being true that P." (IKASOM p.540) So NASK (No Analysis of the Standard Kind) amounts to the thesis that no proposed analysis of 'knows' of the form: 'A knows that P just if A believes that P, P is true... etc', is correct. According to KMS, knowing that P is the generic factive mental state of which factive mental states such as remembering that P, seeing that P, ...etc. are specific instances. The relation parallels that between being coloured and being red, or green or...etc..

The object of IKASOM is to put forward and present a case for KMS. NASK is argued for in support of this main thesis. It is essential to Williamson to maintain NASK: if what it is for someone to know that P admitted of analysis into belief, truth, plus some more, that would entail the falsity of his thesis that knowing is a factive mental state (see sect.3 below). NASK is itself a radical challenge to mainstream thinking in epistemology; KMS challenges both mainstream epistemology, and some deeply entrenched ideas in philosophy of mind.

Williamson's piece might aptly have been called: "Is epistemology based on a mistake?" According to Williamson knowing that P is not a 'hybrid' state, a conjunction of mental and non-mental conditions whose elements can be spelled out, but a simple mental state. If he is right, then the post-war industry seeking to formulate necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge of the standard kind is wrong in principle. Moreover, the radical re-mapping of the terrain of epistemology which is entailed if Williamson's

line is correct, suggests that taking justification to be a fundamental concept in epistemology may be equally mistaken.¹ This being so, evaluating the case made for KMS and NASK in IKASOM is an urgent task for all who labour within the framework of mainstream epistemology. The endangered framing supposition of the mainstream is that states of knowing are compound: when someone knows that P this is so in virtue of the holding of a mental condition short of knowing, which is rendered a case of knowing by the holding of the right extra-mental conditions. Mainstream work cannot properly proceed until Williamson's challenge to this foundational presupposition is answered. In this discussion I clarify what precisely it means to say that knowing is a mental state, make some headway in answering Williamson's arguments, and identify the further, unsettled issues whose resolution would decide the matter. My conclusion is that Williamson's case is not made out, and that as things stand the presumption is still against KMS.

The layout of IKASOM is thus: In sect. V Williamson gives his positive characterisation of 'knows' as a 'factive mental state operator', and of knowing as the factive mental state denoted by it. Sect. VI addresses the problematic issue of how knowing that P relates to believing that P, consistently with the proposed account of knowing. The previous sections are directed to further clearing the way for the account of knowing given in V, in two ways: by giving considerations which are evidence against 'A knows that P' being analysable; and by dealing with a number of other apparent obstacles to accepting the view that knowing is a factive mental state.

A qualification in Williamson's claim for KMS must be noted. The account of V embraces the virtually indisputable point that 'A knows that P' is factive - it entails P. Thus, Williamson acknowledges, any internalist about the mental will, just in virtue of the factiveness of knowing, be unable to countenance the idea that it is a mental state. (An internalist about the mental denies that any aspect of a person's mental state can be constitutively dependent on factors outside her own body.) While Williamson is convinced of KMS, he acknowledges that in IKASOM he offers no decisive arguments to force the paid-up internalist to change her mind on that large general issue, and accept KMS along with externalism more generally. What Williamson purports to demonstrate in IKASOM is what I will call the Weaker Thesis that "[e]xternalism about the attitudes is as defensible as externalism about the contents" (IKASOM p.546)². Despite this disclaimer, sect. IV makes some headway in dismantling 'the internalist challenge' - whether concerning contents, or attitudes to them.

I think that the quality of sects. V and VI of IKASOM is nothing short of brilliant. And there is argument of outstanding ingenuity and rigour throughout. Nonetheless, as I

¹ If KMS is true, then being justified is not a component of knowing. Williamson in IKASOM allows that being justified is necessary for knowing. But Williamson (1997) suggests that justification needs to be explained in terms of knowledge, rather than vice versa: his drift is towards displacing it in favour of knowledge, as the most fundamental concept in normative epistemology.

² Williamson (1998) develops further a line of argument against internalism first introduced in IKASOM sect. IV. The nature of mental predicates and their explanatory role is investigated in depth, and the greater explanatory power of 'broad' state-concepts which do not decompose into a 'narrow' mental component plus an environmental condition, is argued for.

shall seek to show, while Williamson makes progress in removing some obstacles to accepting that knowing is a factive mental state, at the end of IKASOM the overall case for KMS is as yet seriously underargued. Most importantly, the Weaker Thesis is not established, and is false: there are good grounds to resist accepting a class of factive yet strictly mental attitudes, of which knowing is the most general, even for one who is happy to embrace an externalist account of what fixes the contents of mental states. My discussion focusses on the arguments for KMS contained in sects. I-IV, and identifies various gaps which remain in Williamson's case. There are serious barriers to acceptance of KMS which he has not removed, and he does not provide any compelling, as opposed to merely permissive, arguments for KMS. I do not try here to resolve these large matters fully, but my own hunch is that these barriers are not removeable, and that we will never be compelled to accept KMS. If I am right, then Williamson's challenge to the mainstream can eventually be fully answered. Pending this, its status as a fascinating but implausible conjecture permits work in epistemology based on the mainstream presupposition legitimately to continue.

The debate initiated by Williamson in this seminal article concerns matters fundamental for epistemology. The issues raised by his challenge are no less fundamental in philosophy of mind. To enable evaluation of Williamson's claim that a factive state can be strictly mental, I spell out a view of what demarcates the mental, in our ordinary conception of it. I argue contra Williamson that this conception does not readily extend to include factive states, notwithstanding that it can allow that the content of some mental states is fixed by 'external' factors. Thus in responding to KMS I am led to consider what characterises the mental.

Despite the rigour of Williamson's arguments, the overall structure of the case made for KMS in IKASOM is not immediately obvious. Elaboration of the proposed account of knowing is interwoven with a scattering of arguments for it in such a way that one is not entirely clear what has been argued for, and what simply asserted, at various points. Thus, in evaluating the case for KMS made in IKASOM, I will not follow the order of Williamson's discussion, but will offer a reconstruction of what I have found to be the underlying case for KMS presented in IKASOM.

In what follows I first (sect.2) clarify what NASK and more problematically KMS amount to. This last requires the statement of what demarcates the mental. Equipped with a specific account of what it means to say that knowing is a factive mental state, we now know what must be established, to show this. In the light of this clarification, I then (sect.3) spell out the precise relation between NASK and KMS - both their logical relation, and their dialectical relation in the case for KMS made in IKASOM. We will see that while KMS entails NASK, NASK is only necessary, not sufficient, for KMS. This means that establishing the truth of NASK is only a permitting condition in an argument for KMS. The clarification of KMS made in sect.2 reveals what else must be shown, to establish it. Sects 4 and 5 consider these further issues.

2. Clarifications

2.i Clarification of NASK

For purposes of this discussion, I take NASK to be the thesis that 'A knows that P' has no a priori necessary and sufficient condition C of the standard kind which explicates its meaning in the relatively broad sense that: C holds in virtue of the identity of the concept expressed by 'knows'. This broad conception of analysis is appropriate for this discussion given first, that Williamson's historical target is the many 'analytic' accounts of knowledge which have been offered in recent years; their proponents surely offered their accounts as analyses in the broad sense just proposed³. Second, and most importantly (see sect.3), to show that KMS, Williamson needs to show that 'A knows that P' has no analysis of the standard kind even in this broad sense⁴.

If 'knows' has no a priori equivalent condition of the standard kind which holds in virtue of the concept it expresses, what other sort of concept might it be? One possibility is that it has an analysis of a non-standard kind. This would be so if 'A knows that P' were equivalent in meaning to a finite disjunction of more specific factive mental states: 'A hears that P or A sees that P or A remembers that P...etc.'. Williamson thinks this is not so very far from the truth: his positive characterisation in sect.V of 'knows' as a 'factive mental state operator' insists that grasp of the concept of knowing involves appreciation that each of these specific ways of knowing entails 'A knows that P'; and he strongly hints that it is part of grasp of 'knows' to appreciate that: if one knows that P, there is some specific way in which one does so. But the non-standard analysis does not hold, in his view - and we can agree - because the list of possible ways of knowing is open-ended and not specifiable in advance⁵. (The relation exactly parallels that between the concept of being coloured, and the concepts of being red, or green or... .)

Williamson in sect. V sketches his own account of 'knows', as "the most general factive mental state operator". The characterisation is congenial to an account of

³ A plausible fuller account of the intended status of recent 'analyses' of 'knows' is this: i. the analysis captures the extension, over all possible situations, of the concept, by stating explicitly the critical features of those situations which ordinary users of the concept are sensitive to, in their judgements of its applicability; it being a feature of the concept that mastery of it involves such sensitivity. ii. Explicit knowledge of these critical features is attainable a priori for an ordinary user, through enough reflection on examples.

⁴ My account of 'analysis' is weak also in that it does not stipulate that the analysing concepts can be fully understood by one who lacks the analysed concept. This would fail to be so, if those concepts in turn had to be explained in terms of the analysed concept. The usual conception of analysis includes this condition: an analysis of a concept is supposed to provide a reduction to more basic concepts. I omit it here - despite the fact that Williamson clearly has in mind the usual, reductive conception (cf. IKASOM p.543) - because my prime interest is in specifying, with NASK, the weakest thesis which Williamson does and must maintain, to establish KMS. As sect.3 will spell out, KMS is inconsistent with the thesis that 'knows' has an a priori equivalent condition of the standard kind, holding in virtue of the identity of the concept it expresses. This is so even if the concepts in the equivalent condition must themselves be explained by reference back to the concept of knowledge.

⁵ If my suggestion below, that 'knows' is primarily an evaluative concept, is correct, then any such equivalence, even if true, would not be an analysis, but a non-trivial *theory* about how and when a believer has the 'right to be sure' of her belief.

concepts in terms of 'possession conditions' of the kind advocated by Peacocke (1992): two inferential principles involving 'knows' are proposed as constitutive, their tacit grasp being part of mastery of the concept. (Namely, that 'A knows that P' entails P, and, as just mentioned, that 'A knows that P' is entailed by any of a number of more specific factive mental state operators, including 'A sees that P', 'A remembers that P', etc.) But, Williamson insists, 'knows', like other factive mental state operators, is 'semantically unanalysable' (IKASOM p.552)⁶. As remarked (note 4), it is a reductive conception of analysis, not the weaker one adopted here, which Williamson has in mind as his primary target. But he equally denies, and is committed to denying (see sect.3 below, and especially footnote 16), that knows has an analysis even in our non-reductive sense: it is entailed by 'knows' being a FMSO that "[k]nowing does not factorize as standard analyses require" (IKASOM p.551), whether or not into concepts which are more basic.

If 'knows' is indeed semantically unanalysable, even in our weak sense, what possibilities are left? Williamson suggests that if 'knows' is unanalysable, then its semantic role is simply to 'denote an attitude' (IKASOM p.553). It is indeed true that in a Davidson-Tarski style compositional semantics for a language, it would presumably be so treated⁷. But it is important to highlight and expose the falsity of a stronger claim. For convenience, I introduce the following defined term: Say that the expression 'knows' is *semantically simple* if and only if to take it at face value entails taking it to denote a metaphysically simple general type of state - one whose obtaining does not decompose either generally, or in each instance, into the obtaining of a conjunction of component conditions.

Williamson in effect holds that 'knows' is semantically simple in our introduced sense: the whole drift of the argument concerning 'knows' in IKASOM is that taking it at face value entails his view that knowing is a simple mental state. But, as we will now see, merely to show that NASK holds does not establish this. The following claim is false: that if 'knows' is not analysable, then it is semantically simple. To see that this claim is false, consider that a plausible hypothesis about 'knows' consistent with NASK (indeed entailing it), and rival to the account of V, is that it is a vague, open-ended 'family resemblance' concept: it has implicit semantic complexity, in the sense that its users' recognitional capacity for instances is conceptually mediated by sensitivity to critical features which are, with enough reflection, articulable by the user herself (and might be cited to justify her application of the concept). But the critical features to which users are, constitutively, sensitive in particular cases, cannot be set out in an exceptionless analysis of the standard kind because this semantic complexity tacitly grasped by them is open-ended, perhaps also potentially inconsistent, in a way which resists such neat capture. On this view of the ordinary language expression 'knows', taking it at face value would not mean taking particular states of knowing to be metaphysically simple. The family-resemblance hypothesis about 'knows' is one on which NASK is true, but which fits with treating particular states of knowing as 'metaphysically hybrid', a conjunction of mental and non-mental conditions: precisely the view

⁶ The condition of semantic unanalysability is part of the definition of a 'FMSO'. It is further claimed that 'knows' is a FMSO.

⁷ See Davidson (1984). Davies (1981) gives an excellent account of this conception of a theory of meaning for a natural language.

Williamson is out to deny, in propounding KMS. So is another hypothesis, discussed in sect.3 below: that 'knows' is an evaluative concept, one whose application in any case supervenes on evaluation-grounding factors to which users are sensitive, factors which make the case in question be a case of knowledge; but which does not reduce to any general advance statement of these factors.

Thus even if it is true, as Williamson claims, that 'knows' is not analysable, it does not follow that it is semantically simple - that to treat 'knows' at face-value is to treat it as denoting a simple, non-decomposable factive mental state, as is done in IKASOM. As we have just seen, there are at least two other hypotheses about 'knows' consistent with and explaining the supposed absence of an analysis of the standard kind, which fit with the view that states of knowing are complex. As we shall see, the existence of these alternative hypotheses makes a serious dent in the case for KMS put in IKASOM.

2.ii What it means to say that knowing is a factive mental state

To say that knowing is factive is to say that the inference from 'A knows that P' to P is an entailment. This is clear and uncontroversial⁸. IKASOM sect.V proposes that knowing that P is the generic state of which a number of more specific factive mental states are the various species: remembering that P; seeing that P; knowing through the sense of touch that P - as in 'she could feel that the bone was broken'. A complementary characterisation of 'knows' is given, as 'the most general factive mental state operator'. The two key features proposed are first, that 'knows' is "semantically unanalysable"; second, that 'A knows that P' is entailed by any of the other factive mental state operators, those which denote the more specific types of factive mental state - 'A sees that P', 'A remembers that P' etc. And, Williamson suggests, this entailment is one key fix on the ordinary concept of knowledge. Moreover, although 'knows' does not admit of a disjunctive analysis: 'A knows that P just if A sees that P or A remembers that P or...etc', it is a metaphysical necessity that if A knows that P, there is some specific way in which she does so: some more specific factive mental state must constitute her knowing in this case, though perhaps not one we have an ordinary language word for. Thus, it is proposed, knowing that P stands to seeing that P as being coloured stands to being red; and this is portrayed in the syntax and semantics of the natural language expressions for these states.

To say that knowing is a factive state, is to contrast it with a process or event. This is surely right. Williamson clinches the point by citing the deviance of the continuous-past-tense sentence: "She was knowing for 20 minutes". There are hard questions about the individuation of states which remain, but we can get along without pressing them as yet⁹.

⁸ IKASOM V convincingly sees off the suggestion that it is only a conversational implicature, not an entailment.

⁹ Crucially for the present discussion: in sect.3 I maintain that instances of knowing may be complex, though knowing has no complex general essence. This claim, central in my case against KMS, requires that we admit the idea that instances of knowing are realised in a state which admits also of description in other terms. See footnote 20.

The hard issue, and the one which must be clarified, is what it really means to say that a state is a *mental* state. Williamson says that he will not attempt to give a definition of 'mental', but suggests that there are 'various reasonable senses of it', where 'reasonable' means: 'reasonably like the ordinary language meaning'. Knowing, he claims, "...is a mental state in every reasonable sense of that term". (IKASOM p.539). (In contrast, he suggests, 'believes truly' might be mental in some relaxed sense, but is not so in another, stricter, sense.) This is fine so far, but is not enough to fix what is at stake - not enough, that is, to tell us what Williamson's thesis that knowing is a factive *mental* state really amounts to, and hence what would have to be shown for us to accept it.

Reconstructing the argumentative position implicit in IKASOM, we can uncover, and accept, the following picture: The mental (i.e. mental states of persons) is characterised by various characteristic marks. If knowing can be shown to have all these marks of the mental, then there is no ground to deny that knowing is a mental state, and compelling grounds to accept that it is one. So we can clarify KMS thus:

Clarification of KMS: to say that knowing is a factive mental state is to say that it is a factive state which has all the marks of the mental.

This is what the proponent of KMS must establish. Williamson's project, initiated in IKASOM, is to demonstrate this. (Although, as we saw, Williamson does not claim to refute internalism in IKASOM, but only to establish his Weaker Thesis: that anyone who is already an externalist about content has no reason to resist KMS.)

In relation to this project Williamson's strategy in IKASOM, regarding various traditional marks of the mental, is to show either that they have already been abandoned; or that they should be abandoned; or that knowing, contrary to prejudice, does exhibit the mark in question. If he indeed shows all this, he will have established KMS. Thus, in considering whether the case for KMS put in IKASOM succeeds, what we must consider is whether TW succeeds in doing this.

What are the various marks of the mental?¹⁰ Traditionally, and in the currently received view, we have:

Mark 1: Privileged Access. We have psychologically immediate and epistemically non-inferential knowledge of our own mental states. Thus there is an epistemic asymmetry between first-person and third-person mental knowledge: I have a special way of knowing about my own mental states, not based on evidence, which others lack¹¹.

Mark 2: Causal-explanatory Role in relation to action. Mental predicates are apt to feature in causal explanations of action and other behaviour. They do so within an

¹⁰ The following list does not include intentionality or aboutness, often cited as a hallmark of the mental. I do not include it, since my list includes only marks which are purportedly necessary conditions for a state to be a mental state. Intentionality, while a key feature of many mental states, is lacked by sensations. Intentionality is not discussed by Williamson, and is not at issue in the present debate about knowing. However, I do in sect.5 cite their lack of aboutness as disqualifying the internalist's purported narrow fillets of broad contents as genuine contents.

¹¹ Fricker (1998) discusses alternative explanations of this epistemic asymmetry.

everyday theory of the mind, 'folk psychology', of whose principles we all have a tacit grasp. Typical folk psychological explanations rationalise the action explained.

Williamson in IKASOM discusses both M1 and M2, arguing that knowing fulfils them. (He also points out that a stronger conception of first-person special access, as 'transparency' - that is, that one is infallible and all-knowing about one's own mental states - which knowing does not satisfy, has now been generally abandoned.) I discuss these matters in sects.4 and 5. A more controversial putative mark is:

Mark 3: Internality or 'narrowness'. An internalist about the mental holds that a genuine mental state can have no constitutive dependence on any feature of the person's environment - cannot be 'world-involving'. (Given a mild physicalism, this internalism can be expressed as the thesis that a person's mental states supervene on the physical state of her own body - her environment plays no role in fixing them.)

Anyone who holds M3 cannot accept KMS, since knowing is factive. As mentioned, while Williamson himself rejects M3, he does not claim to refute internalism in IKASOM. However he does (in sect.IV) give two arguments which form part of a persuasive case against it. I discuss them in sects. 4 and 5 below.

There is a fourth idea about the 'truly' mental which is the main focus of the argument in IKASOM. It is connected with Mark 3, internalism, but is not the same as it. I will first state this fourth mark, and then explain it.

Mark 4: A state is mental in the fullest sense just if it is Purely mental.

The notion of being Purely mental is introduced by this stipulation: Say a type of state is a *Weakly mental* type just if it exhibits the marks of the mental other than Mark 4. Now, a state-type MS1 is a *Purely mental* state-type just if it is Weakly mental and it is not the case that: a person's being in MS1 consists, in each instance, in her being in some component mental state MS2 distinct from MS1, plus some extra-mental condition obtaining¹². If a state is Weakly mental, but is not Purely mental, I will call it *Impurely mental*. Following Williamson and McDowell (1982), I will also talk of such Impurely mental states being 'metaphysically hybrid'.

We can get the feel of Pure and Impure mentalness with an example. Someone might accept that *seeing that P* is a (factive) Weakly mental state; but insist that each instance of a person's seeing that P consists in her being in some component Purely mental state, plus certain environmental conditions obtaining. Weakly mental predicates,

¹²If internalism is included in the marks of the mental, then it is immediate that all Weakly mental states will be Purely mental. Perhaps it is worth stressing that M4 is different from, and does not entail, M3. The whole point of true externalism (anti-internalism) is to deny that, where an ordinary-language mental state type is world-involving, it follows that it must be metaphysically hybrid, factoring into an internal component together with a worldly condition. True externalism holds that there are mental states whose essence involves the world, as Williamson puts it, but which are not compound states - that is, that there are states which satisfy M4, though not M3. Throughout this discussion, 'externalism' denotes this strong form of externalism.

she agrees, provide a useful classification, since - the environment usually being there - we can, for everyday convenience, combine the Purely mental with the extra-mental components in a person's situation, and get some notational economy, maybe even increased explanatory power, by so doing. But - she continues - strictly, seeing that P is a metaphysically hybrid state, each instance of it consisting of a Purely mental state, plus some environmental conditions. 'Disjunctivism' about perception as propounded by McDowell and others¹³ opposes this view, denying the metaphysical hybridness of seeing. Williamson's main thesis in IKASOM is the extension of this denial that a factive mental state is metaphysically hybrid to factive propositional attitudes generally, and especially to knowing.

Williamson claims that "knowing is a mental state in every reasonable sense" (IKASOM p.539). In particular, he denies that knowing is only Impurely mental: "To know is not merely to believe while various other conditions are met; it is to be in a new kind of state, whose essence involves the world. What is required is ...rejection of a conjunctive account of knowing." (IKASOM p.563) So KMS is to be read as asserting that knowing is mental in the strong sense which includes M4; we are to assess the strength of the case made for KMS so understood. Indeed, arguing that knowing is not metaphysically hybrid, but is a Purely mental state, is the central objective of IKASOM¹⁴. Williamson's strategy in IKASOM is, in effect, to consider M1-M4, and to argue that knowing satisfies M1, M2 and M4; and that M3 should be dropped. Maintaining NASK is essential for this project, since - as we will see in the next section - it is a necessary condition for M4, and hence for KMS. To understand the underlying argument in IKASOM, it must further be noted that although M4 is logically independent of M1 and M2, it is not dialectically independent of them. The way that discussion of M1 and M2 features in IKASOM is this: by arguing that knowing satisfies M1 and M2, Williamson seeks to mount a cumulatively persuasive case that M3 should be dropped, and to undermine prejudices about the mental which generate the idea that knowing must be metaphysically hybrid. This opens the way to accepting that knowing satisfies M4, i.e. that KMS. The implicit argument of IKASOM runs thus: "Since 'knows' is semantically unanalysable, indeed simple, and knowing exhibits the other marks of the mental, there is really no good reason not to take ordinary language at face value, and accept knowing as a factive Purely mental state; no good reason to go on insisting that knowing is and must be metaphysically hybrid."

3. How does NASK relate to KMS?

In the light of the clarifications of the previous section we can now see what precisely the relation is between NASK and KMS. I shall first spell out their logical relation, and then the dialectical relation between them in the case for KMS made in IKASOM.

¹³ See Hinton (1973), McDowell (1982), Child (1994).

¹⁴ Williamson's thesis is that states of knowing are not compound at the mental level. He does not deny a that a person's mental state may supervene on her total physical state, together with that of her environment, and that this determining base consists of separable internal and external components (IKASOM p.544).

3.i The Analytic

We can see immediately that NASK is implied by, and hence is a necessary condition for, KMS¹⁵. KMS is the claim that states of knowing are Purely mental, albeit factive, states. But if states of knowing are not metaphysically hybrid, then - barring an error theory of our own concept, a possibility whose coherence is doubtful in this case, and which we can safely neglect - the concept of ours which denotes those states cannot be a concept of a metaphysically hybrid state. That is to say, 'knows' cannot have an analysis of the standard kind: NASK holds. Putting the point the other way round: NASK is the denial that 'knows' has an analysis into a conjunction of mental and non-mental conditions. If 'knows' had such an analysis then - regardless of whether knowing satisfied the other marks of the mental - the states denoted by 'knows' would not be Purely mental, and knowing would not satisfy M4, as KMS maintains¹⁶.

The point just made instances a more general truth which we can formulate: It is sufficient for a Weakly Mental general type of state expressed by a mental-state predicate M to be only Impurely mental, that M have an analysis into a conjunctive condition, consisting of another mental state, and some extra-mental condition¹⁷. We can spell out equally generally the underlying reason why NASK is only necessary, and not also sufficient, for KMS. That a mental-state predicate M does not admit of analysis into a hybrid complex is not sufficient for metaphysical simplicity of the states picked out by M (their satisfaction of M4); two gaps remain. First, as we saw in sect.2, a predicate has implicit semantic complexity but not an a priori necessary and sufficient condition - and certainly not one of the standard kind - if it is an untidy family resemblance concept; taking such a predicate at face value does not entail taking it to pick out a metaphysically simple type of state. On the contrary, each instance will be metaphysically hybrid; moreover, there is a single general type of state which it picks out, only in a pleonastic sense. This is equally true if the predicate expresses an evaluative concept - our other suggestion about 'knows'.

Second, even if M is semantically simple, so that taking it at face value would mean treating it as denoting a Purely mental general type of state, we are not obliged always to take ordinary language at face value. If we hold even a modest form of realism, we will admit that there may in some cases be divergence between real complexity out there in the world, and complexity or its lack in the linguistic resources by

¹⁵ It is, however, perfectly consistent with KMS, that 'knows' has an analysis of a non-standard kind, as mentioned in sect.2. Williamson does not need to deny this, to maintain KMS - and, as we saw, he thinks that view, though false, is not so very far off the truth.

¹⁶ If there exists such a hybrid a priori necessary and sufficient condition, holding in virtue of the meaning of 'knows', then to think that someone knows that P just is to think that she satisfies those hybrid conditions: the concept of knowing is a concept of a metaphysically hybrid state. This is so even if the concepts in the necessary and sufficient condition themselves must be explained partly in terms of knowing. Thus the weak, non-reductive conception of analysis adopted in sect.2 is apt for the current project: Williamson must show that 'knows' has no standard analysis in even this weak sense.

¹⁷ Thus Williamson is indeed committed to maintaining, as he does, that there is no apriori analysis of any of his factive mental state operators into mental and extra-mental conditions, and that remembering, perceiving etc do not have a priori necessary and sufficient conditions of the standard kind.

means of which we refer to it. (It is, for instance, generally accepted that natural kinds have a complex nature not registered in our everyday concepts of them. On a certain account of them this would hold also of colours - if 'red' is held to refer to the ground of the power in a perceived thing to produce an experience of red in us.) Williamson is no conventionalist-idealist, and he acknowledges that "[a] simple concept might be defined by ostension of complex exemplars." (IKASOM p.543)

Applying these points to the present case, we see that there are at least two ways in which states of knowing could be hybrid, although 'knows' has no a priori necessary and sufficient condition of the standard kind: 'knows' might be a family resemblance concept, or an evaluative one; alternatively, even if 'knows' is semantically simple, there could be complexity in states of knowing unrepresented in the ordinary concept which denotes them¹⁸. All states of knowing might be complex in the same way, as with natural kinds; or each instance of the general state might be a complex, and the sort of complex it is varies. In the first case knowing would have a complex a posteriori essence¹⁹; in the latter there is no *general* real essence of knowing, but each instance of someone's knowing something consists in a hybrid state of affairs, a conjunction of mental and non-mental conditions²⁰.

I have just described a notional possibility; but is there a plausible positive account of the concept of knowing on which states of knowing have no common hybrid essence, but instances of knowing are complex? We saw that this will be so if 'knows' is a family resemblance concept, with a vague, open-ended set of application-conditions implicit in our grasp of it. But there is another interesting and rather plausible account of what kind of concept 'knows' is, with this consequence. If instances of knowing are complex, yet it has no general essence, we have a case of supervenience without reducibility. This combination is characteristic of evaluative concepts: in each case the evaluation is grounded in the features on which it supervenes, yet there are no rules determining this which admit of advance general statement, due to the discretionary open-ended nature of evaluation. Now suppose that our ordinary concept of knowing is fixed by the idea that: if one knows, one has the right to be sure of what one believes and asserts. (It is plausible that everyday communicative social practice with 'knows' is

¹⁸ This means that Williamson's profile of our ordinary concept, the account of 'knows' as a 'factive mental state operator' given in IKASOM sect.V could be absolutely correct, while it is nonetheless false that 'knowing is a mental state' in his intended sense. Moreover, as we shall see, there could be good reason to insist on this discrepancy between language and reality, if knowing was shown to lack marks of the mental other than M4.

¹⁹ True, since knowing is not a natural kind concept - it does not, as it were, have a slot in it, awaiting empirical filling in - we do not have the same reason that we do for natural kinds concepts, to expect to find such an a posteriori essence. Still, it could be that some underlying real nature of knowing causes our judgements about it, as with colours and their categorical bases.

²⁰ Williamson expresses doubts about the idea of a 'state token' (IKASAOM p.557, note 30). We certainly cannot do without the idea of an instance of the general state. The more that is needed, to make sense of the idea that a simple concept of knowing may have complex instances, is to agree that an instance of knowing is a case of its being realised in a particular state, one which admits of description also in other terms - so that one could say, for instance, that A's knowing that P on this occasion consisted in her believing that P, where her belief was based on a veridical perceptual experience as of P. Williamson admits that "No doubt the particular circumstances that in some sense realise the state [of knowing] in a given case can be described in many different ways..." (IKASOM p.549). Talk of realisation will certainly be apt, if 'knows' is a family resemblance concept or an evaluative one.

governed by this rule²¹.) Then any claim to know must be grounded in appropriate features of one's epistemic situation - one must indeed have the right to be sure, and this is grounded in factors such as what evidence one has, how reliable one's relevant faculties are, etc. But the evaluative nature of the claim that one has that right means that what suffices for it does not admit of advance general statement, fixed for all time, but is essentially contestable, and open to theorising. Here we have a plausible account of the concept on which it has no detailed general essence, either a priori or a posteriori, but instances are complex, indeed hybrid²².

We have seen that, while NASK is necessary for KMS, it is not sufficient for it: that 'knows' is semantically simple, and denotes metaphysically simple factive states (Purely mental ones), is one hypothesis consistent with NASK; but there are at least two other hypotheses about 'knows' consistent with NASK on which states of knowing are hybrid; and even if 'knows' were a semantically simple predicate, it is not entailed that the states it denotes are not complex. I will now consider the dialectical relation between NASK and KMS, in the case for KMS made in IKASOM.

3.ii The Dialectic

In the light of what has just been established we can see at once that first, to maintain KMS, Williamson must insist that NASK holds - 'knows' does not have an analysis of the standard kind. But that second, even if NASK is accepted, this does not force, but only permits, the conclusion that KMS. We saw that if 'knows' cannot be analysed, three possibilities remain concerning the nature of the ordinary language concept, and the states it denotes: simple concept, Purely mental states (Williamson's proposal); simple concept, hybrid states (either hybrid general type, or at least hybrid realising instances); family resemblance or evaluative concept²³, hybrid realising instances. Further considerations must be adduced to decide between these possibilities, so that establishing NASK leaves Williamson no more than half-way to demonstrating KMS.

²¹ This rule is grasped early on: "But mummy, I *know* it's safe/ I won't hurt it... etc." my children tell me - insisting on their right to carry on acting on the basis of their belief.

²² Admittedly, on this account there is a programmatic 'hybrid' a priori necessary and sufficient condition: A knows that P just if A believes that P, and A has the right to be sure of her belief. (Thus this view entails the falsity of KMS: knowing consists in having a belief, and satisfying certain further conditions.) But no specific set of necessary conditions holds just in virtue of the meaning of 'knows' - any such proposal would constitute a substantial theory about what confers the right to be sure. So, while this might be deemed an account on which 'knows' does have an analysis of sorts as hybrid, it explains why the 'standard' sorts of detailed hybrid conditions that have been proposed in the literature all fail to be analyses (if indeed they do fail - a point I am not conceding to Williamson). Thus it provides a rival to Williamson's preferred explanation of the supposed failure of these analyses - viz. that 'knows' is semantically simple, and denotes a simple general state.

²³ For convenience I shall bracket these two possibilities together. Both are hypotheses about 'knows' on which it has no analysis of the standard kind, but particular states of knowing are entailed to be complex and hybrid. Moreover there is not a firm line between them, since even if the primary fix on 'knows' is evaluative, once there comes to be entrenched folk theory about what specific conditions provide the 'right to be sure' these will, as it were, seep into the concept, becoming platitudes about it. (We need not espouse a sharp analytic/synthetic distinction here.) Incidentally, this would neatly explain the existence of various a priori/platitudinous necessary conditions for knowing, together with the absence of a condition which is a priori necessary and sufficient.

However we may agree with Williamson that if 'knows' were shown to be semantically simple, then there would be a prima facie case for accepting ordinary language at face value, and taking knowing to be a Purely mental state. Moreover, as he points out, one who insists that the structure of ordinary language is not in this case a guide to the underlying structure of reality has a task on her hands: to say what the components are, in which each case of knowing consists. Thus - knowing being undeniably Weakly mental - she must find a mental 'fillet' of knowing: a mental state which is necessary for knowing, and to which 'knowing adds nothing mental' (IKASOM p.546). If KMS is false, then each case of knowing is realised by a mental condition short of knowing - perhaps believing justifiedly - plus an environmental condition which turns that mental condition into a case of knowing. If 'knows' has an a priori necessary and sufficient condition of the standard kind, these components lie ready to hand. If it does not, then it is up to the opponent of KMS to find and display them. Thus, if 'knows' is semantically simple, the burden of proof is with the opponent of KMS²⁴.

There would be reason to think that the required mental fillet of knowing must be there to be found, if there were some other compelling reason to deny that knowing is a Purely mental state; to insist that despite surface appearance to the contrary, each instance of knowing must involve a more Purely mental component, plus some extra-mental condition. As Williamson observes, a committed internalist has such a compelling reason: no factive state can be Purely mental, according to her conception. But there may remain good reason to resist KMS on other grounds, even for one who accepts externalism about content - Williamson's Weaker Thesis is not obviously true. In the light of our explication in sect.2 we can see that there will be such grounds, if knowing fails to exhibit other marks of the mental. Thus, even supposing that Williamson could establish that 'knows' is semantically simple, to clinch his argument he would need to present a further positive case - showing that knowing satisfies the various marks of the mental other than M4 - in order to confirm that ordinary language should be taken at face value here. (We observed earlier the dialectical relation between the various marks: establishing that knowing satisfied M1 and M2, and that M3 can be dropped, would remove the rationale for resistance to taking ordinary language at face value, and accepting it as also satisfying M4 - that is accepting KMS.) In sects. 4 and 5 I will examine these further issues, and argue that the Weaker Thesis is false, and that there are good grounds, even for an externalist about content, to resist KMS.

In any case, it will certainly not be established as a datum that 'knows' is semantically simple. Even if NASK were independently established, this leaves two possibilities - that 'knows' is semantically simple, or that it is an evaluative or family resemblance concept²⁵. Which of these alternatives is correct will not be decided independently of determining whether there is a plausible positive picture of knowing as a Purely mental state. So there will be feedback from whether we think that knowing

²⁴ These points are made in IKASOM during the discussion of internalism in sect.IV. However, the challenge to find a mental 'fillet' of knowing applies to anyone who wants to deny that knowing is a Purely mental state, whether or not she subscribes to internalism in general.

²⁵ There is also the possibility mentioned at the start of sect.2, hospitable to KMS, of a non-standard analysis. We have seen that this is not a live option, and I shall omit mention of it henceforth.

satisfies the other marks of the mental, to whether we regard 'knows' as a semantically simple concept denoting a simple general state, or as an implicitly complex concept denoting a loosely resembling set of 'hybrid' conjunctive conditions, perhaps also anchored by an evaluative role.

Since NASK is a necessary condition for KMS, Williamson must maintain that NASK holds. How strong is the evidence he adduces in favour of NASK? (This material comes in IKASOM sect.III.) Williamson advances two arguments for NASK: induction on the failure of attempts at standard analysis so far, and a general top-down argument: given what we nowadays think about concepts and language-learning generally, he suggests, there is really no reason to expect any important everyday concept to be analysable: "[b]achelor is a peculiarity, not a proto-type" (IKASOM p.541), and "[t]he pursuit of analyses is a degenerating research programme" (IKASOM p.542). Thus, he concludes "The working hypothesis should be that the concept of knowledge cannot be analysed into more basic concepts." (IKASOM p.543)²⁶ His own account in sect.V of 'knows' as "the most general factive mental state operator" includes the claim of "semantic unanalysability", and we have seen that his argument in effect assumes that 'knows' is semantically simple.

Williamson's second argument in particular has some general force. But, as he himself admits, in the particular case of 'knows' there is a *prima facie* reason to regard it as semantically complex - the fact, acknowledged by Williamson, that it has a number of a priori necessary conditions. Amongst these Williamson himself admits (and invokes in his arguments in sect.IV for the superior explanatory power of knowing over states falling short of it!): if one knows that P, then one believes that P; one's belief is true (IKASOM p.548); it is justified (IKASOM p.546); it is not based on other false beliefs; there are no misleading defeaters (IKASOM pp.548-50). Williamson tells us that the fact that a concept has a priori necessary conditions does not guarantee that these can be supplemented to yield a condition which is necessary and sufficient, and cites as an example where this fails: being coloured/ being red (IKASOM p.542). But this lone example does not provide any insight into why, in the case of knowing, these a priori necessary conditions exist, if not because of implicit semantic complexity in 'knows'. Williamson further suggests that one condition may be a priori necessary for another not because appreciation of this is involved in grasp of either those concepts; rather, it may be that two concepts are such that, though learned independently of any linkage between them, once mastered it is just 'manifest' that 'the conceptual space demarcated by one is included in the space demarcated by the other' (IKASOM p.562). This bold new assertion of the possibility of synthetic a priori truth is intriguing, but without further exploration it remains the case that the existence of various a priori necessary conditions for knowing strongly suggests that 'knows' is either analysable, or has some other kind of semantic complexity: the default hypothesis is that these conditions are knowable by us to be necessary for knowing just through reflection, because our tacit grasp of them mediates our everyday applications of the concept - either as elements in a family resemblance concept, or as deeply entrenched folk theory about what is necessary for the

²⁶ Williamson's first argument tells specifically against NASK; his second tells against there being any analysis of 'knows', standard or non-standard.

'right to be sure'²⁷. Williamson's historical claim that the everyday concept 'knows' has resisted analysis so far would be disputed by some. I will not rake over history here, but merely observe that, in maintaining that 'knows' is semantically simple, Williamson has a good deal of explaining away to do - explaining away the undeniable a priori necessary conditions for knowing; and more than this, explaining the undeniable illumination which the near-misses in the recent attempts at analysing knowledge have provided. If the concept is really semantically so simple, how is it that explanations in terms of justifiedness, or alternatively reliability, have seemed to hit on something we are tacitly aware of - as they do for this ordinary concept-user, at least? These data support the family-resemblance or evaluative concept hypothesis about 'knows', over against the hypothesis of semantic simplicity²⁸.

The upshot of these various factors is that the *independent* case for NASK which emerges from IKASOM, and a fortiori for 'knows' being semantically simple, is quite weak. However, since KMS entails NASK, if KMS were itself conclusively independently established, this would suffice to prove NASK²⁹. More broadly: whatever degree of independent confirmation of KMS we have, this will, as it were, feed back down this entailment to add strength to the case for NASK. Thus the dialectical relation between NASK and KMS in IKASOM is that there are lines of evidential support running in both directions. - The rather weak evidence for NASK is bolstered insofar as it fits with an independently plausible positive picture of knowing as a factive mental state, denoted by a semantically simple predicate. Equally, the circumstantial evidence for NASK cited by Williamson lends some further support to his case for KMS.

There is nothing wrong with this mutual support of two complementary hypotheses. But it does engender a risk of double-counting: Williamson cannot both invoke NASK as independently established and supporting KMS, and simultaneously invoke KMS as independently established and demonstrating that 'knows' is semantically simple. The rather unsystematic way in which the case is presented in IKASOM can, I think, lead to an impression that the overall case for the package NASK-plus-KMS is stronger than it really is, when all such double counting is removed from the weighing of the evidence. Williamson's claim about the nature of knowing is offered as a positive

²⁷ Williamson acknowledges the need to explain why justification and reliability are necessary for knowing. He 'gestures at the possibility of doing so in terms of the metaphysics of states', suggesting that it may be essential to a state of knowing, that it be entered in a certain way (IKASOM p.558). I do not think there is a genuinely different explanation to be had here: why should it be that a state of knowing must have a certain history, if not because our concept includes in it that justification is necessary for knowledge? I do not believe there is a coherent account of the source of these essential features of states other than explaining them as conceptual in origin. Thus '...reduc[ing] epistemology to the metaphysics of mental states' is either just a notational variant on the traditional analytic method, or is deeply misconceived.

²⁸ As remarked, Williamson appeals to a number of the generally accepted necessary conditions for knowing - no misleading defeaters, etc - in his argument in IKASOM sect.IV for the explanatory superiority of knowing over believing, or even believing justifiedly. There is surely a tension here in his methodology. Are all these conditions really 'manifestly included' in knowing, although this is not built into our concept of it?

²⁹ Equally, if NASK were conclusively disproved - as it would be by the display of an evidently correct analysis of 'knows' - this would refute KMS. It is crucial to Williamson's argument to insist that 'knows' has not yet been successfully analysed.

account which provides an *explanation* of the failure so far of attempted analyses of 'knows' - it is a semantically simple expression denoting a simple general type of mental state. But it must be remembered that there is a rival explanation of the same data - that 'knows' is a family resemblance or evaluative concept. The mere fact that 'knows' has no analysis, even suppose it shown true, is no evidence at all for KMS as against the family-resemblance/evaluative concept hypothesis about 'knows'. To show KMS, Williamson must show that his proposal about 'knows' gives a better explanation of the data than this alternative. Against this, the existence of the various a priori necessary conditions for knowing, and the illumination provided by the near-miss analytic accounts of knowing to date, mean that the family resemblance/evaluative concept hypothesis about 'knows' is better supported than Williamson's proposal that 'knows' is semantically simple - failing, that is, other strong evidence for KMS.

Having examined the logical and dialectical relation between NASK and KMS, we can draw this moral: Since the independent evidence for NASK is quite weak, and since it is anyway only a necessary condition for KMS, Williamson cannot make a case for KMS by arguing for NASK, and then citing it as evidence for KMS. But if Williamson had a powerful enough independent case for KMS, this would outweigh the prima facie evidence against 'knows' being semantically simple (the existence of a priori necessary conditions for knowing, and the near-success of past analyses), and establish semantic simplicity, a fortiori NASK, as a corollary.

Thus the crucial question is, for the success of Williamson's project in IKASOM: Is there a strong positive case to be made, that knowing is rightly seen as a factive Purely mental state? Our explication in sect.2 showed us that this turns on whether knowing satisfies the various marks of the mental. In the next section I consider Williamson's Weaker Thesis, and examine whether there is a conclusive argument to be made directly about M4 - whether or not states of knowing are hybrid. I conclude that the chances of finding such a conclusive direct argument are slight. In the absence of one, the case for KMS will turn on the force of indirect, persuasive considerations: whether knowing is shown to satisfy the marks of the mental other than M4 - namely, M1 and M2. My last main section considers this. If NASK is true, and if there are no direct arguments to be had as to whether or not states of knowing are hybrid, then if knowing satisfies M1 and M2, there may be no reason left to resist accepting that knowing is Purely mental, satisfying M4 also. This is, on my reading, Williamson's case in IKASOM. I finish by reviewing the overall strength of the case made in IKASOM for KMS.

4. Evaluating the Weaker Thesis

As we have seen, IKASOM does not purport to offer an unconditionally conclusive case for KMS, since no committed internalist about the mental can accept that a factive state is Purely mental, and Williamson does not try to vanquish internalism within the confines of one paper. (His two persuasive arguments against internalism will be mentioned in what follows.) In this section I examine his Weaker Thesis - that "[e]xternalism about the attitudes is as defensible as externalism about the contents." (IKASOM p.546)

Of course it is true that an externalist about content cannot consistently hold that the 'broadness' of knowing and other factive states ipso facto shows them not to be Purely mental - that would be to assert internalism (M3), which is precisely what she has already

relinquished. But this trivial point does not entail the Weaker Thesis (WT). WT will hold just if all the various arguments against internalism regarding contents have equally sound analogues regarding factive attitudes³⁰. This far-from-trivial thesis is not obviously true. To see whether it is, we need to look back at what the arguments are, which (in my own view) force the acceptance of externalism about content, to check whether they indeed have analogues which go through for factive attitudes. I will argue that they do not, so WT is false: there are good reasons to resist accepting knowing and other factive attitudes as Purely mental, even for an externalist about content. Pace Williamson, to combine externalism about content with the rejection of Purely mental factive attitudes is a stable philosophical position.

I will examine four areas, all of which are raised by Williamson in IKASOM. In two of these I will agree with Williamson that there is a sound argument favouring (but not compelling) externalism about factive attitudes that parallels one favouring externalism about content. But in the other two I maintain that there is not. There is, I maintain, one especially crucial argument which forces externalism about content, but which does not apply - or at least is not shown to in IKASOM - for knowing and other factive attitudes.

In IKASOM sect.IV Williamson develops arguments against internalism on two fronts. On each front an argument is claimed to run equally against internalism about content, and against internalism about attitudes. (The arguments are not claimed to be decisive against internalism, but are supposed to begin the task of dislodging various mistaken internalist prejudices.) The first front concerns causal explanation. Internalists maintain that, since causation operates 'locally', only intrinsic properties are fit to feature in causal explanations. Thus, if mental states are to play their diagnostic role of causally explaining action and other behaviour, they must be 'narrow': to satisfy M2, mental states must conform to M3. This issue has generated an enormous debate in regard to content. I will not recapitulate it, nor will I detail Williamson's parallel arguments regarding knowing. Williamson rightly takes the externalist side in the debate about contents: contrary to the internalist prejudice about causal explanation, 'broad' contents are *needed* to explain actions under their most natural descriptions, which are themselves 'broad' (IKASOM pp.547-8). Then with a series of examples, and a certain conception of what is required for a property to be a good explainer, he argues that knowing is in some cases a better explanatory property than believing, or any mental necessary condition for knowing which falls short of it. Williamson's argument that knowing is a good explainer of action in its own right, and in some cases a better explainer than any mental necessary condition falling short of it, is convincing. In this discussion I will not query this claim, but accept that as regards M2 - the aptness of the mental to feature in causal explanations of action - there are arguments establishing its satisfaction, both by broad contents, and by factive attitudes. So: in relation to this particular mark of the mental, WT holds. However establishing that knowing satisfies M2 does no more than remove an obstacle to seeing knowing as a factive mental state, it persuades for but does not force the

³⁰ Cf. Williamson's suggestion: "...in response to [the internalist] challenge, one overall argumentative strategy is to show that objections to the involvement of factive attitudes in genuine mental states are sound only if corresponding objections to the involvement of wide contents in genuine mental states are also sound." (IKASOM p.550) Showing this is showing that WT holds.

conclusion that knowing is Purely mental. I return to this point regarding M2 in the next section.

The second consideration in favour of externalism (again both about contents, and about factive attitudes) advanced in IKASOM sect.IV was mentioned earlier (sect.3.ii): that ordinary language individuates both contents, and attitudes, 'broadly', so that taking it at face value, as we presumptively should, favours externalism. We can agree with Williamson that there is a presumption in favour of taking ordinary language at face value in each case, and that everyday ascriptions of beliefs and other attitudes ascribe 'broad' contents, favouring externalism about content. Whether ordinary language favours externalism about knowing and other factive attitudes, specifically the denial that they are hybrid, is less clear-cut. It is undeniable that 'knows', 'remembers', 'sees' and other 'factive mental state operators' (IKASOM sect.V) are factive; and these three at least are syntactically primitive. But whether they are semantically primitive is not an uncontroversial datum, but is part of what Williamson is tendentiously arguing for. So ordinary language is not indisputably on the side of externalism, as regards factive attitudes. If 'knows' had an analysis, it would not be so. Still, we can concede that the *syntax* of ordinary language uncontroversially favours externalism, and that a complex semantic analysis of 'knows' needs to be demonstrated. If, per contra, the semantics of 'knows' is as simple as its syntax, then the default treatment is to take it to denote a simple type of state. On one formulation of this issue then, the Weaker Thesis again holds regarding it. But, like the point about explanation, the present point gives only a permissive or persuasive consideration in favour of externalism, not a compelling argument for it - since we saw in sect.3 that a simple concept may nonetheless denote complex hybrid states, and going against ordinary language would be well-motivated, if there were reason to think this was so as regards 'knows'.

There is one type of argument for externalism, whether about contents or attitudes, which, if it were soundly instanced, would provide a compelling, not merely permissive/persuasive argument. Remember that to say that a Weakly mental type of state M is not Purely mental is to say that each instance of M consists in a hybrid state of affairs: the obtaining of a Purely mental condition short of M, which is rendered a case of M by the obtaining of an appropriate environmental condition. (There may or may not be a hybrid general essence of M - if it is a family resemblance or evaluative concept, there will not be.) Thus if it is shown, of some broad mental state M, that its instances have no such Purely mental fillet, this proves that M is, despite its broadness, Purely mental. (Conversely, if it can be demonstrated that each instance of M does have such a Purely mental fillet, this establishes the hybridness of all instances of M.)

Internalists, remember, hold that no broad mental state is Purely mental. Thus the internalist about content is committed to the existence of Purely mental fillets of all broad contents. Since ordinary language individuates contents broadly, the internalist about content has to find for herself the conjectured 'narrow' Purely mental fillets of these broad contents. If, instead, it were demonstrated that no such narrow Purely mental fillets of broad contents exist, then internalism about content would be decisively refuted.

The denier of KMS - who may not be an internalist about content - holds that knowing is not Purely mental. Thus she is committed to the existence of a Purely mental fillet (possibly itself broad, but not factive) of each instance of knowing. If 'knows' had an analysis of the standard kind, then a general decomposition of knowing into its Purely

mental fillet plus environmental condition, revealing its hybrid nature, would be available just through a priori reflection, and KMS would be refuted. If 'knows' is not so analysable, then the denier of KMS must work harder: she must nonetheless display, or at least arguing convincingly for the existence in each case of, a Purely mental fillet of knowing - a Purely mental condition such that 'knowing adds nothing mental' to it. If, instead, it were demonstrated that no such Purely mental fillets of all instances of knowing exist, then (since knowing is clearly at least partly mental) KMS would be conclusively proved.

Of course proving KMS is what *all* the arguments in IKASOM are aimed at. But different arguments address the issue more or less directly. As remarked earlier, Williamson's arguments that knowing exhibits the marks of the mental other than M4 - which means in practice M1 and M2 - serve thus: they aim to convince us that knowing qualifies as a genuine mental state according to those marks, and thus to undermine the idea that knowing *cannot* be a Purely mental state, but must be hybrid, with a Purely mental fillet. That is, they serve as permissive and persuasive arguments in favour of M4. But KMS would be conclusively proved if it could be directly demonstrated that states of knowing are not hybrid.

On this key issue of whether the needed Purely mental fillets can be shown to exist, Williamson's Weaker Thesis founders. We are, in my view, *forced* to accept externalism about content, because ordinary language individuates contents broadly, and the attempts by committed internalists to find a 'narrow' fillet of these broad contents which is still recognisably a mental state, have failed³¹. (Fortunately broad contents have also been shown to satisfy M2; about M1 there is an ongoing debate³².) In contrast, the direct arguments advanced in IKASOM on this key issue about states of knowing leave the matter not proven. Williamson maintains, as we saw he must, that 'knows' has no standard analysis (NASK holds). Suppose we allow him this claim. Still, as we saw in sect.3, 'knows' may be a family resemblance or evaluative concept; and even if 'knows' is semantically simple, there may yet be complexity in states of knowing unrepresented in our concept of them. Knowing might have an a posteriori essence. Failing that, it could still be that each instance of knowing is hybrid: each instance of knowing is realised by a Purely mental state short of knowing - perhaps justified belief - which is rendered a case of knowing by having the right sort of causal history or environmental embedding; though these extra-mental conditions which in each case make the difference between knowing and mere justified belief do not admit of exceptionless advance general statement. (We saw in sect.3 that this would be so, if knows were an evaluative concept, governed by the rule that one knows just if one has the right to be sure of what one believes and claims.)

³¹ For reasons of space I just state my own view here, without defence. If I were wrong, this would not favour KMS; not would it mean that WT holds, if this is read as saying that there are arguments for externalism which work, in each case. The literature on this large issue is huge. Some landmarks are Putnam (1975), Burge (1979), Fodor (1980). Woodfield (1982), Pettit and McDowell (1986).

³² For arguments showing that broad contents are explanatory of action, see Burge (1986), Jackson and Pettit (1988), Peacocke (1993), and Crawford (1998). For references on the tension between externalist individuation of content, and self-knowledge, see footnote 40.

Since whether 'knows' has or lacks a standard analysis does not determine this fundamental issue, it is very hard to find conclusive arguments either way - and the indirect, suasive arguments concerning the other marks of the mental may be the most to be had. But the issue would be decided against KMS, if its opponent could display a mental necessary condition for knowing, M_k , and show that it was sufficient on the mental side for knowing: that in every case 'knowing adds nothing mental' to it. If, that is, it could be shown that, for every possible situation $S(M_k-K)$ in which M_k holds which is not a case of knowing, there is a possible situation $S(M_k+K)$ in which M_k holds and which is a case of knowing, such that the difference between $S(M_k-K)$ and $S(M_k+K)$ consists exclusively in extra-mental factors. Such a condition sufficient on the mental side for knowing would exist, consistently with NASK, if it were only the extra-mental constituents in knowing that resist general statement in advance. This would be so, if 'knows' were evaluative in the way suggested, but it was clear in advance - a piece of platitudinous theory about knowing - that belief and justification are the sole mental ingredients of the right to be sure.

Whether such a general condition exhausting the mental component in knowing can be formulated is thus an absolutely crucial question in the case for KMS. It is discussed in IKASOM sect.IV (pp.545-6), but the issue is misleadingly billed as an issue for the internalist. The internalist is, of course, committed to the existence of a Purely mental fillet of each instance of knowing; but so, equally, is the externalist about content who nonetheless wants to resist KMS. (Only the general internalist is committed to this fillet being a 'narrow' state; the content-externalist resister of KMS can allow the mental constituent of knowing to be a broad, but non-factive, Purely mental state.) We can quickly agree with Williamson that an irrationally held belief could not be knowledge, whatever the environment, and the candidate mental component of knowing is: believing justifiedly³³. If justified belief is the mental component of knowing, then this condition holds:

(J) For any possible situation $S(JB-K)$ of justified belief which is not an instance of knowing, there is a possible situation $S(JB+K)$ which is an instance of knowing, where $S(JB-K)$ and $S(JB+K)$ differ only in extra-mental factors.

Apart from two special cases - belief in a necessarily false proposition, and belief about some aspect of one's own mental state - where (J) fails, but which we surely need not worry about, since they are clearly special, Williamson's case against justified belief being the mental component of knowing for which (J) holds is confined to the claim that there are "...notorious difficulties in stating a correct justification condition on knowledge." (IKASOM p.546) But this is surely not enough argument, on this crunch issue for KMS. Moreover the fact, acknowledged by Williamson, that belief and justification are a priori necessary conditions for knowing tells against KMS. The case made for KMS in IKASOM from direct, potentially conclusive arguments against states of knowing being hybrid, is not proven.

³³ My own view is that justified belief is the mental fillet of knowing, but, while Purely mental, it is not a narrow mental state: being justified is itself a 'broad' (but not factive) Purely mental condition, not one which supervenes on one's physical state. That is another story, not told here.

In the absence of a decisive direct argument as to the hybridness or simplicity of states of knowing, the balance of evidence for KMS at the end of IKASOM turns on the force of Williamson's indirect, permissive/persuasive arguments - the arguments aimed at showing that knowing satisfies the other marks of the mental, and thus undermining our resistance to accepting that knowing satisfies M4. In my last main section I turn to these matters. I first examine further the significance of the fact that knowing is a good explainer of action in its own right, satisfying M2. Then I say a bit more about M3 and the Weaker Thesis. Lastly I raise the question whether knowing satisfies M1 (Privileged Access). Here there is, I maintain, an outstanding problem not dealt with adequately in IKASOM. This is the second area in which, in my view, there is a difference between the case for externalism about contents, and about factive attitudes, so that Williamson's Weaker Thesis is false.

5. Knowing and the Marks of the Mental

In the previous section we accepted Williamson's thesis that knowing is a good explanatory state in its own right - that is, there are at least some situations in which an action is to be explained, where 'A knew that P' is a better explainer than 'A believed that P' or any mental condition falling short of knowing. So knowing satisfies M2. How far does this take Williamson in establishing KMS? We can see at once that this is no more than a permissive result, since M2 is not the only mark of the mental, and it remains to be shown that knowing satisfies the other marks³⁴. Further argument is needed, to show that knowing satisfies M1 (below, I maintain a problem remains over this). But as regards M3 and M4, as we have already seen, showing that knowing satisfies M2 is part of a persuasive case for KMS, which works by undermining our resistance to abandoning M3, and accepting that a factive state can yet be Purely mental.

I use here Williamson's own conception of explanatory goodness of a predicate or state - the one for which his thesis that knowing is sometimes a better explainer than any mental condition falling short of it holds. Williamson (1998) includes a rigorous detailed development of this conception. I acknowledge that the 'prime' predicates discussed in that paper differ from my example in having no general decomposition into a mental condition plus an environmental one. However, the conception of 'prime' predicates developed in that paper actually shows us precisely how we may come to have a concept of a general state which is irreducible, although its instances are hybrid. This being so, what IKASOM and Williamson (1998) together provide a good case for, is the thesis that there are Impurely mental predicates, of which 'knows' is one, which are indeed genuinely mental in a 'relaxed' sense, although their instances are hybrid: there is in each instance a component mental state, which constitutes the wide Impure state in virtue of a certain extra-mental condition holding. This contrasts with content, for which - as I have claimed - there is no component mental state of instances to be found.

So: What does the fact that knowing is a good explainer of action in its own right tell us about M4? Not much, actually. There is absolutely no tension between knowing's being a good explanatory state, and each instance of knowing being a conjunctive, hybrid phenomenon. Consider, for instance, this conjunctive predicate: being-suicidally-

³⁴ If our concept of a mental state were *solely* the concept of a state apt to explain action in a distinctive rationalising way, then showing that knowing plays this role would be showing it to be a mental state. But M1 at least is no less fundamental in our conception of the mental.

depressed-AND-having-to-hand-a-bottle-of-tablets-such-that-an-overdose-would-kill-one. This predicate may be a good explainer of suicide attempts by overdose, and a far better explainer of such suicide attempts than either conjunct taken on its own. (It will be, if someone who is suicidally depressed lacks the initiative to search for tablets.) Whether or not this example is empirically plausible, the general point is clear: a conjunctive phenomenon may be nearly sufficient for the occurrence of a certain type of event, while neither conjunct is anywhere near to being necessary for it. Given this, and if the conjunctive phenomenon occurs frequently, we may gain some economy of notation by having a single predicate picking out this conjunctive phenomenon, and used to give such explanations. Thus, if someone's being in a certain mental state, together with her environment's being a certain way, is nearly sufficient for her to do a certain action, and if her environment is usually that way; then a 'wide' predicate applying just if both the mental and the environmental condition hold will be a useful explainer. But the 'general state' pleonastically associated with this predicate is at most Impurely mental. (No-one would be tempted to say that the hybrid condition in my example is a Purely mental state!)³⁵

Although satisfying M2 is entirely consistent with being hybrid, if knowing satisfies M2 and M1, and if 'knows' seems to be semantically simple, then we might think that continuing to insist that instances of knowing are hybrid is ungrounded clinging to an old internalist prejudice. On the other hand if it were shown that we have, in justified belief, the mental fillet of each case of knowing, the prejudice would be confirmed: knowing would be shown to be at most Impurely mental. For justified belief to be a genuinely mental fillet, it must also satisfy M2 - be capable of explaining action. If Williamson showed us, not just that knowing can sometimes be a better explainer than mere belief, but that mere belief is never a good explainer of action, then he would undermine the idea that knowing and other factive states have a non-factive fillet which is genuinely mental. But he does not argue for this stronger, exclusivist thesis about explanation, and it is not plausible³⁶. Summing up: we have found that knowing satisfies M2, but that this provides only a rather weak persuasive consideration in favour of KMS, easily defeated if there are other reasons to think knowing is hybrid.

What of M3 and M4? I agreed with Williamson that M3 must be abandoned, since we are in my view forced to accept externalism about content. Williamson's Weaker Thesis (WT) implies that an externalist about content has no ground to resist KMS. In the last section I suggested WT holds if and only if all the arguments for externalism about content have parallel versions favouring factive attitudes as Purely mental. To confirm this I now briefly state and reject a shorter argument for WT.

³⁵ If our concept of a mental state were just the concept of a state apt to explain action in a distinctive rationalising way, then showing that knowing plays this role would be showing it to be a mental state. But M1 at least is no less fundamental in our conception of the mental.

³⁶ Here we have a key disanalogy with the situation regarding content: it has been shown - to my satisfaction - that the supposed 'narrow' fillets of mental states with broad content are not apt to explain action, and that only broad contents can do so. (See, for instance, Peacocke (1993), Crawford (1998).) Thus we see that broad contents have no narrow fillet which is still a mental state. This being so, the Weaker Thesis does not hold regarding the stronger, exclusivist thesis about explanation that only broad contents/factive attitudes can explain.

Williamson's suggestion seems to be that once one has taken one dose of externalism, as it were, one can have no grounds for qualms about accepting another. Here is one argument which has this consequence:

"The crucial proposition accepted by an externalist about content is that 'mental states have constitutive dependence on the environment'. Once this proposition has been accepted, it has been so across the board, for all forms of such dependence. So someone who accepts externalism about content cannot consistently find factive mental attitudes counterintuitive."

This argument is unsound, because this is not the crucial proposition. What the externalist about content has crucially accepted is a more specific proposition: that the content of a mental state is typically fixed by certain of its causal-cum-contextual relations to what it is about³⁷. (This means there is no content independently of such relations; which is why there are no narrow *mental* fillets.) I argued in the last section that we are forced to accept externalism about content, because of the lack of the needed 'narrow' mental fillets of broad contents. There are more positive reasons to think that mental content is fixed in part by crucial relations between a person and the referents of some of her content-bearing states - by a 'conceptual role' which extends into the thinker's environment³⁸. But that content is fixed partly by certain causal-cum-contextual relations, so that mental content is 'broad', does not entail, nor even suggest, that there are other ways in which mental states are environmentally dependent. That is a new and independent proposition. WT is not a trivial truth.

This being so, an externalist about content is perfectly entitled to find KMS and its like counter-intuitive, and to seek to resist it. Since, as we saw at the end of the last section, there is - so far as has been shown in IKASOM - no compelling argument for KMS from the non-existence of a mental fillet of knowing, she can continue to do so.

I think that externalism is counter-intuitive, and that we should buy into it no further than we have to. Why is it so? One point is just that we think of a person's mental states as states of that person; discovering a covert relationality in the fixation of their content is therefore surprising, and so would be another similar discovery. But there is a more specific tension. A person's mental states - in contradistinction to, for instance, states of her brain which are not mental - are picked out as states which she is, at least potentially, aware of³⁹. This essential hallmark of the mental is registered in our first

³⁷ The less specific proposition is covertly existential: 'There is some manner in which some mental states depend constitutively on the environment'. Thus of course the externalist about content accepts it also, since it is entailed by the more specific one. She is not thereby committed to believing in other forms of constitutive dependence on the environment.

³⁸ This is not the place to sketch a theory of content. Recent landmarks in the vast literature on this subject are Peacocke (1992) and Fodor (1998).

³⁹ Our post-Freudian conception allows for unconscious beliefs and desires. Their role in explaining behaviour, that is their satisfaction of M2, makes room for this. But unconscious attitudes are an essentially secondary category, and we can make sense of them as nonetheless mental only by thinking of them as prevented from coming to awareness by the action of some special repressive mechanism, in whose absence they would be, like normal attitudes, available in non-inferential self-knowledge.

mark, M1: that we have some form of special non-inferential access to our own mental states.

Williamson discusses this issue in IKASOM sect. I. He acknowledges that we are neither infallible nor all-knowing about what first-level knowledge we have. But, he says (and I agree), the idea that mental states are characterised by perfect transparency to their subject is anyway false, even of paradigm examples of mental states such as hopes and maybe even pains. He accepts that there is nonetheless an asymmetry between mental self-knowledge, and others' knowledge of my mental states: there is a certain kind of non-inferential access which I alone have to my own mental states, yielding knowledge. But, he claims "we may have non-observational knowledge of our own knowledge and ignorance... Any requirement of privileged access met by all [other] mental states is met by the state of knowing that P." (IKASOM p.536)

No argument is given for these bold claims. While Williamson is right that it remains to be investigated whether knowing does or does not satisfy a plausible Privileged Access condition, it is certainly not shown in IKASOM that knowing does satisfy M1. I am skeptical that it can do so. There is already a tension, currently receiving much attention, between M1 and externalist theories of content-fixation. The problem can only be worse with regard to factive states⁴⁰. Moreover casual reflection on everyday epistemic practice does not suggest that one's knowledge of what one knows is epistemically non-inferential or basic: claims to know something are always open to the challenge "How do you know that?", and an adequate response cites one's evidence, or explains how one has had access to that fact. This portrays one's knowledge that one knows not as basic, but as depending on one's knowledge that one has adequate evidence. This issue clearly needs much fuller exploration than these few remarks. But my provisional view is that the M1 axis - which in my view is our most fundamental fix on the mental - provides a strong prima facie reason to reject the view that knowing is a mental state; a fortiori, that it is a Purely mental state. Externalism is counter-intuitive because of the tension with M1, and we should buy into it no further than we are forced.

6. Conclusions

We saw in sect.3 that, while semantic simplicity and a fortiori NASK is a necessary condition for KMS, the independent case for NASK is weak - since the arguments for it are circumstantial, while against that the undenied existence of a priori necessary conditions for knowing must be explained away, and Williamson's arguments on this point are not fully convincing. This being so, we saw, a strong positive case for KMS is needed: from showing that knowing satisfies the marks of the mental other than

⁴⁰ See for instance Burge (1988), Peacocke (1996), and essays by P.Boghossian, B.P.McLaughlin and M.Tye, and M.Davies in Wright etc (1998). Williamson's refusal to accept any analytic account of the conditions for knowledge of course makes it very hard to get a grip on the issue - should we investigate whether one's judgements about what one knows can be expected to be reliably true? Or to have adequate grounds? Or what? In the case of externalism about content, the tension between non-inferential access, and constitutive dependence on facts outside the mind, is eased by the fact that the second-order thought: 'I am thinking that P' just inherits the content of the first-order thought P which is embedded in it; so that one cannot be mistaken about the content of one's current thoughts - at most, one can mistakenly think that one has a specific thought, when one does not (in virtue of an unco-operative environment). I can see no comparable easing of the tension in the case of knowing what one knows.

M4, or from a direct proof that instances of knowing have no Purely mental fillet short of knowing.

I accepted Williamson's arguments that knowing satisfies M2. It being a good explainer of action, we might - pace M1 - agree that this means that knowing is a mental state in the 'relaxed sense' compatible with hybridness: it does good explanatory work in relation to action, and so is a useful Impurely mental category in folk psychology. But Williamson aims to show that knowing is not hybrid. And, as we saw, showing that it is a good explainer does not force, nor even strongly persuade for, that conclusion. Do other arguments in IKASOM persuade at least an externalist about content of this? No: we saw that the Weaker Thesis fails on two counts. First, in the case of content, an argument forcing externalism can be made by showing that the needed narrow mental fillets of broad contents just do not exist; but no such direct demonstration that knowing is not hybrid is given in IKASOM, and the fact that justified belief is an a priori mental necessary condition for knowing strongly suggests that in justified belief we have such a fillet. Second, while the prospects for reconciling the external fixation of content with our non-inferential self-knowledge are quite good, it looks harder to reconcile factiveness of a state with its satisfying M1. This being so, I conclude that at the end of IKASOM no compelling argument for KMS has been given, and there are still at least three good reasons outstanding for an externalist about content to reject KMS, and to continue to hold the commonsense view that factive states such as knowing are hybrid⁴¹: the tension with M1; the lack of a direct argument showing that states of knowing have no Purely mental fillet, and the existence of justified belief as a candidate for this; and the existence of this and other a priori necessary conditions for knowing, which strongly suggests that the concept is not semantically simple, but is either analysable, or a family resemblance concept, or an evaluative concept fixed by its tie to the 'right to be sure' (my own current favourite).

The case made for KMS in IKASOM is thus seriously incomplete so far⁴². But this is hardly surprising, considering the magnitude of the task embarked on. Williamson's paper is one of the most ambitious and exciting pieces of innovative philosophical thinking about knowledge of recent years, and is outstanding for its rigour

⁴¹ I have been arguing that Williamson has not shown that states of knowing are not metaphysically complex, hybrids of belief and some more. This is entirely consistent with the concept of knowing being no less basic than that of believing. It could yet be that we cannot understand what beliefs are, except as attempts at knowledge; and that a creature does not have beliefs (states with objective informational content) at all, unless some of them are knowledge. I think these weaker claims for the non-priority of believing over knowing are true. (Thus I think that 'knows' does not have an analysis in the strong, reductive sense identified and put aside in sect.2.)

⁴² A quite different line of argument for KMS not considered in IKASOM would argue for it from epistemological considerations, generalising the argument employed by McDowell (1982) in his advocacy of 'disjunctivism' about perception. McDowell contends that unless we theorise the mental state one is in, when one knows something through perceiving it to be so, as a 'guaranteeing' state - one such that one could not be in it, unless one's state were indeed a veridical perception - we cannot see how perception yields knowledge at all. But this extreme reading of the maxim that 'if one knows, one can't be wrong' is untenable: it rules inductive inference and defeasible inference more generally incapable in principle of yielding knowledge. And it is unmotivated: one has the right to be sure of one's belief so long as the possibility of error is sufficiently small; insistence that error must be logically impossible is a mistaken Cartesian hang-over.

no less than for its boldness. Williamson has seen that with the demise of the dogma of across-the-board internalism about the mental, a new range of possibilities is opened up concerning how we theorise the mental, and must be explored - both in itself, and in its implications for epistemology. IKASOM starts on that exploration. In this discussion I have aimed to continue it -mainly by clarifying what is at stake, and what needs further work, before we can finally decide whether a factive state may yet be Purely mental⁴³.

Elizabeth Fricker
Magdalen College, Oxford
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⁴³ An earlier version of this paper was presented in Oxford in February 1998. I am especially grateful for comments from Bill Child, Dorothy Edgington, and my co-seminarist Richard Swinburne. Discussion with Christopher Peacocke saved me from several errors. Discussions with Tim Williamson on this and related topics during a stay in Edinburgh in autumn 1997 were invaluable.

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