

DAVID LÖWENSTEIN

# Know-how as Competence

A Rylean Responsibilist Account

Studies in  
Theoretical  
Philosophy

vol. 4

KLOSTERMANN



# STUDIES IN THEORETICAL PHILOSOPHY

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und Benjamin Schnieder

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vol. 4



VITTORIO KLOSTERMANN

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Gedruckt mit Unterstützung des Förderungs-  
und Beihilfefonds Wissenschaft der VG Wort

Bibliographische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek  
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen  
Nationalbibliographie; detaillierte bibliographische Daten sind im Internet über  
*<http://dnb.dnb.de>* abrufbar.

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Gedruckt auf Alster Werkdruck der Firma Geese, Hamburg,  
alterungsbeständig  ISO 9706 und PEFC-zertifiziert .

Druck: docupoint GmbH, Magdeburg

Printed in Germany

ISSN 2199-5214

ISBN 978-3-465-03880-1

for Leonhard  
the one who made me sing



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# Preface

This book was long in the making. I started to work on the problem of know-how in 2010, when I first read the seminal article “Knowing How” by Jason Stanley and Timothy Williamson (2001). Like many others, I found myself fascinated, outraged, and perplexed at the same time, and I maintained this wonderful combination of attitudes for some time because of the intriguing mixture of explanatory aims and methodological approaches in the ensuing literature. Eventually, I started to focus on the origins of this recent and current debate, the texts of Gilbert Ryle (1945a; 1949), where I finally found an approach to know-how, and the beginnings of an account of this notion, which pointed me to a firm and promising path into the thicket of the discussion. In any case, this is the path I chose to take.

The first version of this book was completed in 2014 and defended in the same year as my doctoral dissertation, which was supervised by Holm Tetens and Tobias Rosefeldt. Since then, I have continued to discuss this material in many ways and to work on the text off and on, eventually turning the thesis into this book. Time and distance have allowed me to improve the book significantly, whatever its remaining flaws may be. I fear that I was unable to give due credit to all of the fascinating work which has been published in the meantime. But then again, what is a book but a temporary snapshot of continuously developing thought.

In working on this project, I had intellectual homes with wonderful colleagues at Freie Universität Berlin and at Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, and I was able to discuss my ideas at several conferences and in a number of reading groups and departmental colloquia at Freie Universität Berlin, at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, at Technische Universität Berlin, at Ruhr-Universität Bochum, at the University of Cologne, at the University of Duisburg-Essen, at Technische Universität Dresden, at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, in Kirchberg am Wechsel, at the University of Konstanz, at Universität Leipzig, at Université du Luxembourg, at West-

fälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, at the University of Osnabrück, at the University of Riga, at the University of St Andrews, and at the University of Vienna.

At these occasions, and in uncounted further conversations, I was immeasurably fortunate to be able to discuss my work with more and with more wonderful friends and colleagues than I could ever have wished. For their criticism, care, and charity, I am deeply, deeply grateful. This book still has many shortcomings. Without this help and support, there would have been many, many more.

Some have accompanied my work on this book from beginning to end, some have touched on it only slightly, and some may even be ignorant of how much they helped me. While I am unable to give due credit to these contributions individually, the least I can do is try, and most certainly fail, to list the names of those who would have deserved this. These are Adam Westra, Alexander Dinges, Andrea Kern, Andreas Müller, Anna Wehofsits, Ansgar Seide, Barbara Vetter, Beate Sachsenweger, Bolesław Czarnecki, Christian Kietzmann, Christian Nimitz, Christian Quast, David Lauer, David Ludwig, Dirk Kindermann, Dirk Koppelberg, Ellen Fridland, Eliot Michaelson, Emanuel Viebahn, Erik Rietveld, Ernest Sosa, Eugen Pissarskoi, Eva-Maria Jung, Fabian Börchers, Greg Sax, Gregor Betz, Hans-Johann Glock, Hannes Worthmann, Helen Bohse, Henry Jackman, Holm Tetens, Jacob Langeloh, James Andow, Jan Constantin, Jan Janzen, Jan Slaby, Jason Stanley, Jason Streitfeld, Jessica Brown, Joshua Habgood-Coote, Julia Zakkou, Kilu von Prince, Lars Dänzer, Luz Christopher Seiberth, Martin Grajner, Martin Kusch, Martin Weicholt, Matthias Haase, Miguel Hoeltje, Nadja El Kassar, Patrick Shirreff, Pedro Schmechtig, Pirmin Stekeler-Weithofer, Raphael Van Riel, Robert Brandom, Romy Jaster, Sebastian Rödl, Stefan Tolksdorf, Thomas Jussuf Spiegel, Tim Kraft, and Tobias Rosefeldt.

I would like to express my gratitude to the editors and the editorial board of *Studies in Theoretical Philosophy* for including my book in this series, and to Anastasia Urban at Vittorio Klostermann Verlag for her guidance and support during the publication process. I also gratefully acknowledge that the publication of this printed book and e-book have been generously supported by the Verwertungsgesellschaft Wort and by the School of Humanities at Freie Universität Berlin.

Finally, my greatest debt and gratitude is to Kilu, for sharing this journey with me, and for so much more.