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The Role of Observation in Practical Knowledge

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G. E. M. Anscombe famously argues that our self-knowledge of intentional action ("practical knowledge") is both non-observational and yet concerns happenings in objective reality. This combination seems to present a strong tension. Recently, Adrian Haddock offered a novel account of the role of observation in practical knowledge, claiming that such knowledge is a unity of self-knowledge (non-observational) and other-knowledge (observational), both of which are indispensable. Yet Haddock's view faces several problems. This paper suggests that Sartre's phenomenology resonates deeply with Haddock's account and provides a rich resource for addressing his problems. Through Sartre's discussions of self-consciousness, intentionality, and perception-action unity, we gain a deeper understanding of how observation functions within practical knowledge. This account shows that observation is not merely an aid (as Anscombe suggests) but a constitutive part of practical knowledge.

Keywords: practical knowledge – observation – self-consciousness – G. E. M. Anscombe – Jean-Paul Sartre – Adrian Haddock

Introduction

G. E. M. Anscombe (2000) famously argues that self-knowledge is an essential element of our intentional action. She maintains that our self-knowledge of intentional action – what she calls "practical knowledge" – is fundamentally different from "speculative knowledge." She complains that "in modern philosophy we have an incorrigibly contemplative conception of knowledge" (2000, 57), while her notion of "practical knowledge" plays an indispensable role in action explanation. According to her, practical knowledge has these essential characteristics:

(1) *The Practical Character*: Practical knowledge is "the cause of what it understands," unlike speculative knowledge, which "is derived from the objects known" (Anscombe 2000, 57).
(2) *The Non-Observational Character*: We know our own intentional actions without observation (Anscombe 2000, 13).
(3) *The Factive Character*: The scope of what we know non-observationally is not confined to intentions or bodily movements; rather, it includes actions understood as "happenings in objective reality" (McDowell 2021, 223).

These three characteristics have sparked significant debates, as they seem to present a strong tension. When I describe my action as, e.g., "painting the wall yellow," I am making a claim about a happening in the objective world. But how can I know that the wall is turning yellow without observation? Yet, if we admit that our self-knowledge of action depends on observation, it seems to transform it into speculative knowledge, since knowledge by observation "is derived from the objects known" (Anscombe 2000, 57). To defend her view on the role of observation in practical knowledge, Anscombe offers two considerations:

(1) *Rejection of the "Two-Factor" Account*:[1] This account divides practical knowledge into a non-observational part and an observational part. According to it, while we know our intentions and bodily movements without observation, we can only know the external results of our actions by observation. However, she thinks this view creates an unacceptable gap between mind and world: "The essential thing is just what has gone on in me, and if what happens coincides with what I 'do' in the sphere of intentions, that is just a grace of fate" (Anscombe 2000, 52). She insists that, at least in favorable cases, what we intentionally do is the same as what actually happens in the world, so knowledge of both must be non-observational.
(2) *Observation as Mere Aid*: Regarding the role of observation, she suggests that "our observation is merely an aid" (Anscombe 2000, 53). One can write with one's eyes open, but can also write with the eyes shut. Although with the aid of eyes, one can write more neatly, avoiding the edges of the paper, etc., she emphasizes that "the essential thing he does, namely to write such-and-such, is done without the eyes" (Anscombe 2000, 53).

[1] This terminology is introduced by Falvey (2000).

Anscombe's view has faced many challenges. For instance, even when writing with our eyes shut, we need to rely on tactile feedback from the paper and pen against the hand to write. If all sensory faculties were cut off, could we still write?[2] This suggests that our sensory faculties play a more substantial role than "a *mere* aid." How can we clarify the role of observation in practical knowledge without falling into the two-factor account? Recently, Haddock (2024) proposed an insightful account on this issue, which will be introduced in the next section. In the second and third sections, I argue that Sartre's phenomenology resonates with Haddock's insights while offering a richer description of the issue. I will show that Sartre's account of self-consciousness, intentionality, and perception-action unity helps to clarify some obscurities in Haddock's account and presents an illuminating framework for understanding the role of observation in practical knowledge.

I. Haddock on Observation and Practical Knowledge

Recently, Haddock offered an innovative view on the role of observation in practical knowledge. His core idea is:

> knowledge of one's intentional action is knowledge whose canonical linguistic expression is an utterance of the form "I am doing something to that G": knowledge in which the subject, at once, knows himself "as self" (and so, not by observation), and knows an outer object "as other" (and so, by observation). To characterise this knowledge either as knowledge by observation, or as knowledge not by observation, is to characterise it in a manner that abstracts away from its fundamental unity (Haddock 2024, 716)

Haddock believes that practical knowledge is a *unity* of "self-knowledge" and "other-knowledge" – a "self-and-other-knowledge" (2024, 721). The self-knowledge dimension lies in its immediate character or being knowledge "from within." The other-knowledge dimension lies in the fact that practical knowledge involves external information gained through our sensory faculties. So, how are self-knowledge and other-knowledge unified? First, we need to understand how they are *not* unified. Anscombe writes:

[2] Anscombe defines "observation" as follows: "Where we can speak of separately describable sensations, having which is in some sense our criterion for saying something, then we can speak of observing that thing" (2000, 13). It is evident that, for Anscombe, observation can be supplied not only by vision but also by other senses.

> By the knowledge that a man has of his intentional actions, I mean the knowledge that one denies having if, when asked, e.g., "Why are you ringing that bell?" one replies "Good heavens! I didn't know *I* was ringing it!" (Anscombe 2000, 50 – 51).

Suppose this person comes to know he is ringing the bell by observation. The way he acquires knowledge of his action can be formalized as:

(A) An other-knowledge: "Someone X is ringing the bell," plus
(B) A self-knowledge: "I am X," yields
(C) A knowledge of his action: "I am ringing the bell."

However, the agent here possesses not practical knowledge, but what Haddock calls "*mediated* self-knowledge" (2024, 720). His knowledge relies on an inference based on a mediating identity judgment (B), which is not the way self-knowledge and other-knowledge are unified in practical knowledge.

How, then, is this unity to be understood? Haddock uses perceptual knowledge as a model. Is perceptual knowledge observational or non-observational? From one perspective, perceptual knowledge is clearly observational, as it involves sensory affection by objects. But from another perspective, perceptual knowledge is also non-observational – because it is *unmediated* self-knowledge. When affected by F, we do not first know "someone is affected by F," and then, through a mediating identity judgment, conclude "I am affected by F." Rather, in perceptual knowledge, we *immediately* know "I am affected by F" without self-observation, which is precisely what makes perceptual knowledge a form of self-knowledge. Therefore, describing self-knowledge as "non-observational" can be somewhat misleading, as it seems contradictory to say that perceptual knowledge is "non-observational." A better characterization is that self-knowledge is "identification-free."[3] Based on these considerations, Haddock contends that perceptual knowledge typically exemplifies the unity of self-knowledge and other-knowledge. Through the *other-knowledge* provided by observation, the subject grasps the situations in the external world; and through *self-knowledge*, this other-knowledge is presented immediately to the subject in a first personal manner. Both forms of knowledge are indispensable for perception, and together they form a seamless unity. Thus, perceptual

[3] Schwenkler (2019) and Aucouturier (2022) also suggest that the non-observational character of self-knowledge should be understood as being without self-identification. Anscombe herself also emphasizes the nature of self-knowledge being without self-identification in her famous article "The First Person" (1981) [1975].

knowledge is best described as "unmediated self-and-other-knowledge" (Haddock 2024, 721), as "the phrases 'observation-knowledge' and 'self-knowledge' signify, not two distinct acts of knowledge, but two distinct moments of a single act" (Haddock 2024, 721).

Perceptual knowledge provides us with an excellent model for understanding practical knowledge. Practical knowledge is also a form of "unmediated self-and-other-knowledge." In practical knowledge, we grasp the action as the execution of our *own* intention through *self-knowledge*, and we grasp the action as a "happening in objective reality" through *other-knowledge*. Since both perceptual knowledge and practical knowledge are "self-and-other-knowledge," what distinguishes them? Remember that perceptual knowledge is "speculative knowledge" for Anscombe and must not be conflated with practical knowledge. Haddock thinks their difference is:

> in perceptual knowledge, the subject has self-and-other knowledge of *being affected* by something, in the present species of knowledge in intention, the agent has self-and-other knowledge of *transacting* with something (2024, 722, my emphasis).

In his view, their difference can be illustrated like this:

Knowledge Type	**Self-Knowledge Dimension**	**Other-Knowledge Dimension**
perceptual knowledge	unmediated self-awareness	mere affection
practical knowledge	unmediated self-awareness	transaction

As we can see, the crucial difference lies in the other-knowledge dimension. In perceptual knowledge, we are *merely affected* by external objects; whereas in practical knowledge, we are *transacting* with them. Their difference is:

> In being (knowingly) affected by something, the subject is merely passive: she is merely acted on by the other. But in (knowingly) transacting with something, the subject is active: she is an agent, who transacts with the other (Haddock 2024, 722).

Haddock employs the term "transaction" to denote actions that engage with external objects, exemplified by opening a window or ringing a bell, as opposed to purely bodily movements. He rejects the idea that our sensory access to external objects must be passive. He thinks that the observational knowledge involved in transactions is "knowledge in which we perceive, not as *bystanders*, but as *agents*" (Haddock 2024, 724); to understand transactions,

our understanding of perception must take a "practical turn" (Haddock 2024, 724). This practical form of perception ensures that practical knowledge is both practical and factive. The observation-knowledge (involved in transactions) and self-knowledge form a seamless unity in practical knowledge, and Haddock believes this is how observation "aids" our practical knowledge.

Haddock offers a novel framework for understanding the role of observation in practical knowledge. It gives due weight to the indispensable role of observation in action while maintaining that knowledge of action is *self*-knowledge. However, Haddock's account is only preliminary and contains several obscurities that must be clarified to make this approach more appealing. Here, I raise two questions:

Question (1): How can one understand the unity of self-knowledge and other-knowledge? On the surface, these two forms of knowledge seem fundamentally heterogeneous – one directed inward at the subject and the other outward at an object. It is difficult to see how they are seamlessly connected. Haddock merely states negatively that their connection does not depend on inference but provides little positive explanation. Without a positive account, critics may argue that this "unity" is no more than a mere label.

Question (2): How exactly does *transaction* differ from *mere affection*? Haddock says little about this, aside from noting that in transactions we are "active" or as "agents." However, this remains too abstract. It invites the criticism that "transaction" is simply "affection plus activity" – a mere conjunction of passive sensation and active movement. The problem here is to explain how agency *transforms* the very nature of perception. We need to ask: how does the world appear differently to an agent compared to a mere spectator? Strictly speaking, in Haddock (2024, 723 – 724), it is the *perception* involved in transactions that constitutes the "other-knowledge" dimension of practical knowledge; and what requires further elucidation is the distinction between this agentive perception and mere affection.

In the following sections, we will see that Sartre's phenomenology provides an extremely rich resource for these questions. Through Sartre's discussions of self-consciousness, intentionality, and perception-action unity, the two questions above receive compelling answers.

II. Sartre on Self-Consciousness and Intentionality

Haddock points out that practical knowledge consists of two dimensions: self-knowledge and other-knowledge. But how do they differ, and in what way are they connected? According to typical views in phenomenology (e.g., Sartre

2021; Henry 1973; Zahavi 2020), self-knowledge and other-knowledge can be understood as two fundamentally distinct ways of givenness. For instance, Zahavi (2020, xix) distinguishes between "self-manifestation" and "hetero-manifestation": the former concerns the givenness of the *self*, while the latter concerns the givenness of *others*. In self-manifestation, something is manifested as the same as myself; in hetero-manifestation, something is manifested as different from myself. In more familiar philosophical language, self-manifestation corresponds to *self-consciousness*, and hetero-manifestation corresponds to *intentionality* – that is, the "aboutness" of consciousness, or the fact that consciousness is always about something. One way to understand the relationship between self-consciousness and intentionality is by distinguishing between the *transitive* and *intransitive* uses of "consciousness" (Zahavi 2014, 14). On the one hand, we speak of being conscious *of* an object – an apple, a cup, etc.; on the other hand, we simply speak of someone *being conscious* (as opposed to non-conscious). For normal conscious states, these two aspects are both indispensable: we are conscious *of* something, and we are *self-consciously* so. As Colin McGinn aptly puts it, consciousness is "Janus-faced": "they point outward to the external world but they also present a subjective face to their subject" (1988, 231).

The distinction between self-consciousness and intentionality provides an illuminating framework for understanding the nature of "self-knowledge" and "other-knowledge." It is also a fundamental theme in Sartre's philosophy. Sartre calls *intentionality* "positional consciousness" (Sartre 2021, 9) and *self-consciousness* "non-positional consciousness" (Sartre 2021, 11). Since Sartre describes the "aboutness" of consciousness as the act of *positing* an object, he designates intentionality as "*positional* consciousness" (Sartre 2021, 9). We can leave aside the details of Sartre's terminological choices, and simply treat "positional consciousness" as equivalent to intentionality. The question then arises: why does Sartre describe self-consciousness as "*non-positional*"? In other words, why is self-consciousness *not* a form of intentionality? Sartre argues that, if self-consciousness were positional, it would have to be a *higher-order* positional consciousness that takes the first-order one as its object. But for this higher-order consciousness to be itself conscious, a further higher-order positional consciousness would be required, leading to an infinite regress (Sartre 2021, 11). While proponents of higher-order theories of consciousness might accept an unconscious higher-order state as a starting point (e.g., Rosenthal 1997), Sartre rejects the very notion of an "unconscious

consciousness" as absurd (Sartre 2021, 10). Consequently, Sartre holds that self-consciousness must be *non-positional* consciousness.

Sartre states that "any positional consciousness of an object is at the same time a non-positional consciousness of itself" (Sartre 2021, 11). While his words might seem to suggest that non-positional consciousness is another consciousness superadded to positional consciousness, Sartre explicitly rejects this reading (Sartre 2021, 13), as such a view would erroneously render non-positional consciousness as higher-order consciousness. If non-positional consciousness is not a higher-order consciousness, in what sense does it constitute *self-consciousness?* For Sartre, non-positional consciousness refers to the immediate "self-presence" (Sartre 2021, 160) of every positional consciousness; it expresses the *manner* in which every consciousness is presented – consciousness is always presented *to me*, rather than to anyone else. This point is taken up and articulated with more clarity by Zahavi. Zahavi (2014) maintains that phenomenal consciousness has not only a "what-it-is-like" dimension but also a "for-me" dimension, and that "What-it-is-like-ness is properly speaking what-it-is-like-for-me-ness" (Zahavi 2014, 19). Our experience of tasting a lemon is, more exactly, "lemon-taste-for-me-ness." Importantly, Zahavi stresses that "for-me-ness" is not an extra quale to the "what-it-is-like," as if in eating a lemon one experiences both the sourness and a feel of "I." The "for-me-ness" does not refer to *what* is experienced, but refers to:

> …the distinct manner, or *how*, of experiencing. It refers to the first-personal presence of all my experiential content; it refers to the experiential perspectivalness of phenomenal consciousness. It refers to the fact that the experiences I am living through present themselves differently (but not necessarily better) to me than to anybody else (Zahavi 2014, 22).

This "for-me-ness" captures Sartre's "non-positional consciousness": it is not a higher-order consciousness, but simply the first-personal manner of experiencing. There are many debates surrounding the "for-me-ness," which I shall not pursue here. The central point for our purpose is that Sartre's account offers a valuable elaboration of Haddock's view. It is *positional* consciousness that provides "*other-knowledge*," as it captures the object-directed dimension of consciousness; it is *non-positional* consciousness that provides "*self-knowledge*," as it captures the immediate self-presence of consciousness. However, Haddock's employment of "knowledge" here is somewhat infelicitous. First, knowledge implies truth, whereas our awareness of the world and ourselves is not necessarily veridical. Second, the juxtaposition of "self-knowledge" and "other-

knowledge" seems to imply two distinct epistemic states that are subsequently conjoined, making it difficult to see how they can be unified within one consciousness. Furthermore, in Sartre's terminology, "knowledge" is by definition a form of positional consciousness; thus, non-positional consciousness cannot strictly be classified as "self-knowledge."[4] For these reasons, I suggest it is better to understand Haddock's "self-knowledge" as *self-consciousness*, and his "other-knowledge" as *intentionality*. This reformulation preserves the substance of Haddock's insights while enhancing its conceptual precision.

From this perspective, the unity of self-knowledge (self-consciousness) and other-knowledge (intentionality) rests in the constitutive relationship between non-positional consciousness and positional consciousness: every consciousness is a *positional* consciousness of an object, and this positional consciousness is always *non-positionally* given "for-me." In this sense, every consciousness is "self-and-other-knowledge." For instance, *perception* represents something as "being here or there," self-consciously; *belief* represents something as "being true," self-consciously; *intention* represents something as "to be done," again self-consciously.[5] They are all composed of a *positional* dimension (other-knowledge) and a *non-positional* dimension (self-knowledge).[6] Practical knowledge, accordingly, is also a form of self-and-other-knowledge: we transact with external objects, self-consciously. This leads us to the crucial question: what exactly is *transaction*?

III. Sartre on Perception-Action Unity

Haddock proposes that practical knowledge is a form of "self-and-other-knowledge," and its other-knowledge dimension is "transaction." As noted in section I, Haddock's precise claim is that the agentive form of *perception* involved in transactions constitutes the other-knowledge dimension of practical knowledge. However, Haddock offers no detailed account of this agentive perception beyond the brief suggestion that "we perceive, not as *bystanders*, but as *agents*" (2024, 724). This leaves us with a critical question: how should we understand this agentive perception? As we shall see, Sartre provides an insightful phenomenological account of perception that is illuminating for this issue.

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[4] I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for drawing my attention to this point.

[5] For similar views, see Boyle (2024).

[6] I continue to use the terms "self-knowledge" and "other-knowledge" to maintain terminological consistency with Haddock. However, we must bear in mind that they should be taken as labels for *self-consciousness* and *intentionality*, respectively.

Sartre's main position is succinctly summarized by McCulloch: "[For Sartre,] experience … has an active dimension, in that it is a way of interacting with the world and not a way in which we merely contemplate it" (McCulloch 1994, 13). Sartre rejects the image of the subject as a detached spectator of the world. The world presents itself to us not as a collection of neutral things but as a field of objects to be approached, avoided, utilized, etc. – that is, as potential or actual targets of action. As Sartre writes, "the world, from the moment that my for-itself arises, is disclosed as indicating actions that are to be done" (Sartre 2021, 432). Objects in the world are, for us, doables or affordances. We perceive not only the objective properties of objects but also their practical relevance to our projects. Sartre uses the gerundive form to express this mode of object-givenness, such as "tram-needing-to-be-caught" (Sartre 2004, 8), "Peter-having-to-be-aided" (Sartre 2004, 10), etc. Sartre once referred to this manner of experiencing the world as "pragmatic intuition"[7] (Sartre 2014, 39), which is the very opposite of "purely contemplative consciousness" (Sartre 2021, 432). This provides a phenomenologically rich way for understanding the agentive perception involved in transaction.

Sartre offers some more detailed descriptions of this pragmatic intuition in *Being and Nothingness*. The objects of pragmatic intuition include "potentialities, absences, equipmentality" (Sartre 2021, 433). For instance, in a hundred-meter dash, I view the finish line as a *potential* place "to be reached"; when I notice the *absence* of a fork on the dining table, I rise to fetch one; when picking up a hammer, I do not just experience its shape and weight, but see it as an *equipment* for achieving a certain purpose. Sartre thinks our perceptual field "is not defined by pure spatial coordinates but in relation to axes whose reference is practical" (Sartre 2021, 431). This practical frame of reference is not a kind of objective space – it differs from, e.g., the geographical space defined by latitude and longitude. In this practical frame of reference, the subject occupies the zero point, and external objects are represented perspectivally as near or far, up or down, left or right, etc. Yet these relations are not merely spatial; they are also practical, determined by the agent's ongoing projects and concerns. A multitude of objects form a meaningful system structured by the agent's practical

[7] "Pragmatic intuition" is only mentioned once by Sartre in *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*. I choose this term because "pragmatic intuition" serves as a suitable label for the agentive perception he discusses in *Being and Nothingness*. By integrating the "pragmatic intuition" mentioned in *Sketch* with the account of agentive perception discussed in *Being and Nothingness*, it can be endowed with a more substantial meaning.

interests, providing contextual information for the agent's action. Sartre illustrates this vividly:

> "The glass is *on the tray*": that means we must take care not to knock the glass over if we move the tray. The packet of tobacco is *on the* fireplace: that means you have to cross a distance of three meters if you want to go from the pipe to the tobacco, avoiding certain obstacles, small tables, armchairs, etc. (Sartre 2021, 431 – 432)

Inspired by Gestalt psychology, Sartre characterizes our life space as "*hodological space*"[8] – "it is crisscrossed by paths and by routes; it is instrumental and the *site* of tools" (Sartre 2021, 432). Here, I adopt the detailed interpretation of Sartrean hodological space offered by Mirvish (1984). In the hodological space, objects are given with positive or negative "valences." To enhance positive valences or reduce negative valences, the subject treats certain objects as "instruments" to achieve his goals. The paths the agent traverses for his goals constitute "vectors" in this space, and the obstacles along these paths form "barriers." In short, Sartre thinks that the world is not first experienced as a neutral field and only later invested with practical significance by the subject. Rather, the world is experienced from the outset in a non-neutral manner, structured by the subject's practical interests. For Sartre, the unity of perception and action is explicit: "perception and action are indiscernible" (Sartre 2021, 432). In this respect, he anticipates and resonates with *enactivism* in contemporary philosophy of mind (see Wider 2016 and Zilio 2020).

Thus, Sartre's account of pragmatic intuition offers a rich phenomenological framework for understanding the agentive perception involved in transactions. It substantiates Haddock's claim that "we perceive, not as *bystanders*, but as *agents*" (Haddock 2024, 724). Moreover, Sartre's account illuminates the constitutive role of such agentive perception in practical knowledge. Let me explain this point in detail.

First, I would like to point out that agentive perception qualifies as a form of *observation*, insofar as it involves the employment of sensory faculties to access the external world. For Sartre, it is important that agentive perception does not merely consist in an agent's prospect of what to do with objects, but is a genuine perception of worldly affordances. Sartre maintains that affordances are not our subjective projections onto the world but are "structures of the world" (Sartre 2021, 433); e.g., "tram-needing-to-be-caught"

[8] This term is from the Greek word "hodos," meaning "way" or "path."

is *perceived* by us as a part of the *world*.[9] Moreover, we do not *first* perceive the factual properties of the tram and *then* decide what to do with it. Rather, the tram is "immediately disclosed" (Sartre 2021, 433) to us as "needing-to-be-caught." As our experience of worldly affordances is immediate and objective (Sartre 2021, 433), Sartre regards this experience as a form of perception. Since agentive perception is genuine perception for Sartre, we can describe it as observational.[10]

Second, I want to distinguish between three different roles observation might play in practical knowledge: *enabling* role, *evidential* role, and *constitutive* role. Anscombe is right to deny the *evidential* role: we do not infer what we are doing from observational evidence; otherwise, our knowledge of action would be mere "speculative knowledge." Treating observation as evidence for action entails adopting a spectator's stance toward one's action, rather than an agent's stance. For Anscombe, justification for practical knowledge stems from practical reasoning rather than observation (Anscombe 2000, 57). Nevertheless, she admits that observation can play an *enabling* role (Anscombe 2000, 53) – i.e., a causal precondition for action. Just as light is a necessary aid for reading books, observation is a necessary aid for writing neatly. Yet, light and observation play only an enabling role and do not constitute the formal essence of the action. For Anscombe, the enabling role of observation is necessary for the physical execution of some actions but extrinsic to their formal structure.

It is undeniable that observation can play an enabling role, but this view is too weak. Anscombe correctly denies the evidential role of observation for practical knowledge, as it implies a detached spectator's stance toward our actions. Yet, let us recall the central tenet of Haddock and Sartre: in action, "we perceive, not as *bystanders*, but as *agents*" (Haddock 2024, 724). Now, I want to claim that this agentive perception plays not merely an enabling role, but a *constitutive* role in practical knowledge. My assertion rests on the following claims I have previously discussed:

(1) I accept Haddock's claim that practical knowledge is a "*self-and-other-knowledge*";

[9] For Sartre, the *world* is not an aggregation of neutral things, but consists of meaningful connections of things structured by the agent's practical interests.

[10] This is also compatible with Anscombe's definition of observation (see footnote 2). For Anscombe, observation involves sensation, and it provides criterion for judging external objects. This holds true for agentive perception as well. An agentive perception of "tram-needing-to-be-caught" involves a sensory link between the agent and the tram, and it provides a criterion to judge that "this is a tram."

(2) Based on Sartre's theory of consciousness, I interpret "self-and-other-knowledge" as the unity of *non-positional consciousness* and *positional consciousness*;
(3) I accept Haddock's view that the other-knowledge dimension of practical knowledge is an *agentive perception* involved in transactions;
(4) From (2) and (3), we know that agentive perception is the *positional consciousness* dimension of practical knowledge (because I interpret other-knowledge as positional consciousness).

Claim (4) is precisely the claim that agentive perception *constitutes* a part of practical knowledge – it constitutes its positional consciousness dimension. Take the action of opening a window as an example. According to Sartre's account, we should characterize the structure of consciousness involved as follows: First, we have a *positional consciousness* that "window-to-be-opened." This is an agentive perception: we do not merely perceive the window's color and shape, but perceive it as "to-be-opened." Second, we have a *non-positional consciousness* of our agentive attitude toward the window. This non-positional consciousness ensures that I am aware that it is *I myself* who intends to open the window, rather than anyone else. This awareness is not a second-order consciousness; rather, it consists simply in the fact that the agentive attitude to open the window is immediately self-present, or that it is "for-me." According to this Sartrean account, the positional consciousness and non-positional consciousness here form a unity, and this unity is practical knowledge. This is how I understand the constitutive role of agentive perception in practical knowledge.

In light of these considerations, we can reassess the meaning of the claim that practical knowledge is "non-observational." According to the present account, if practical knowledge is "non-observational," then this "observation" should be understood in a *narrow* sense. It refers to what Haddock calls "mere affection" (Haddock 2024, 722) or Sartre calls "purely contemplative consciousness" (Sartre 2021, 432) – that is, observation which plays a mere *evidential* role. However, we have seen that observation can be understood more *broadly* as the employment of sensory faculties to access the external world, and agentive perception constitutes observation in this sense. This point appears to be overlooked by Anscombe, who seems to recognize only the contemplative form of observation (despite her definition of observation being broader than this, see footnote 2). Anscombe describes the role of observation in writing as serving "to assure him that what he writes actually gets legibly written" (Anscombe 2000, 53). Here, observation plays merely a role of passive

confirmation. She fails to appreciate that the eyes can also play an active guiding role in writing. Sartre also uses the example of writing: "To write is to maintain an active awareness *of the words* as they come to birth under my pen" (Sartre 2014, 36), and this "active awareness" helps to "direct my hand" (Sartre 2014, 38). To grasp Sartre's point, consider the sheet of paper as a micro-"hodological space" where writing is an act of real-time navigation. The margins of the paper are not merely geometric boundaries but constitute "barriers" to the pen's movement. The space within the margins is not simply a blank void, but provides positive "valences" that invite us to write on. The path traced by the pen constitutes "vectors," such that the existing marks continuously guide how the subsequent strokes should be executed. We adjust our spacing, align our characters, and refine the shapes of our strokes in ceaseless responsiveness to the "vectors." This is made possible by the agentive perception provided by our eyes. Far from merely checking that what we write "actually gets legibly written," vision actively guides our movement. Even when writing with eyes shut, tactile feedback from the hand can provide a cruder hodological space, allowing us to perform simple writing tasks.

Conclusion

Haddock's insights regarding "self-and-other-knowledge" and "transaction" offer an attractive perspective on the role of observation in practical knowledge. Sartre's phenomenology, in turn, helps to resolve the obscurities found in Haddock's account. The unity of self-knowledge and other-knowledge can be elucidated through the essential connection between non-positional and positional consciousness. The agentive perception in transactions finds a rich elaboration in Sartre's account of perception–action unity. On this view, observation is no longer regarded as a non-essential aid, but as a constitutive part of practical knowledge.

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