

EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A FIRST-PERSON INVESTIGATION

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ABSTRACT. In this article we propose to examine the epistemological and methodological possibilities of self-research. We start with William James' proposal of differentiating between conceptual and direct knowledge, with emphasis on the concept of experience. Starting with the recognition of these aspects in science in general, as well as how they develop when a new disciplinary field appears, we conclude that direct knowledge is the necessary condition to self-research, and only through that the questions about objectivity could be overcome. This will allow, by its turn, to adjust the necessary methodological tools in order to give proper Foundation to this knowledge.

Key-words: epistemology; methodology; self-research.

INTRODUCTION

This article, more than a finished result, intend to be a reflection or a dialogue about the possibility of a first-person investigation. Therefore we will firstly analyze some traditional conceptions about experience and the justification of scientific knowledge. After, we will show that this justification supposes consensus and negotiations, or impositions. Furthermore, we will examine which epistemological and methodological aspects are taken into consideration when a new science or disciplinary field arises. Finally, we examine the first-person investigation and what are its essential differences when compared to other kinds of investigations.

The word *epistemology* can be understood in a strict or in a broad sense. In the first case, it is defined as the justification of scientific knowledge in particular. In this sense, the criteria of justification of scientific knowledge are specifically analyzed, for instance, the aspects concerning the methods and its relation with

the methodological designs. This meaning is related with the program of positivism, which intended to reduce valid knowledge to scientific knowledge.

On the contrary, if the word *epistemology* is used in a broad sense, the reference is to the theory(ies) of knowledge in general, not only to scientific knowledge. Therefore, it can allude to common sense knowledge, scientific, aesthetic, etc. It is to say, it refers to any kind of knowledge or whatever activity related to knowledge, and the philosophical discipline that studies these “epistemic aspects” is called *Epistemology*. But, on the other hand, these epistemic concepts can be analyzed, classified and systematized, and the discipline that studies the way and criteria in order to accomplish those activities is the *Gnoseology* or *Theory of Knowledge*.

According to the classical doctrines of knowledge (for example, the ones sustained at Plato’s *Thaetetos*) we can differ *belief* [creencia], *personal knowledge* [conocimiento] and *propositional knowledge* [saber]¹. And these three dimensions are the ones developed by Villoro (1984)², although with a different position compared to the classic one. We are interested in this article to analyze these differences between belief, propositional knowledge, and personal knowledge. Villoro (1984) defines *belief* as an ***acquired dispositional state that causes a coherent set of answers and is determined by an object or an apprehended situation***. He will recognise some properties that are linked to this definition. In the first place, since it is a dispositional state, it is referring to a subject’s intern state. Moreover, with the notion that it causes a coherent set of answers, Villoro wants to affirm that it narrows the answer possibilities of the subject. Finally, it argues that what it wants to say with the idea that an object or a situation can be apprehended, is that the subject can obtain it through perception, memory, or understanding.

Here we will analyze, in particular, the *first-person’s belief* due to our interest in the self-research. It is possible to use “belief” in two senses: one weak and another strong. In the weak sense, “I believe that p” is similar to say “I suppose that p”; for example, we say “I believe that tomorrow I will not be able to go to the movies”, this belief is founded in, for example, not being sure if I will be done with my duties to be in the movies at the appropriate time, or if I will have someone to take care of my children, or if I will have money to pay the ticket, etc. Therefore, in this context, the expression “I believe” is being used as a synonym to “I’m not sure”, “it’s not likely”, etc.

On the other hand, in the strong sense the expression, “I believe” supposes certainty and is similar to “possessing sufficient reasons”. In this last case it makes

1 Translator’s note: Villoro proposed to translate ‘saber’ as ‘propositional knowledge’ and ‘conocimiento’ as ‘personal knowledge’ in the english edition of his book. See VILLORO, Luis. *Belief, personal and propositional knowledge*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 1998, p. 224. Available at: books.google.com.br. Accessed in: 20.10.2015.

2 VILLORO, 1984, p. 207.

no sense to say “I believe that p, but probably p will not be the case”. For example, if I affirm with certainty “I believe that the sun is the center of the solar system, but probably it is not,” this statement is not epistemically acceptable. In this strong case of a first-person’s belief, it is possible to understand “to believe” as a synonym of “being sure”, because if I have sufficient reasons I can affirm “I am sure that the sun is the center of the solar system”. From now on when we refer to the first-person’s belief, we will be doing it in the strong sense.

Well now, *beliefs* transform into *propositional knowledge* when they are justified. And, the justification consists in a mental operation through which we infer a proposition³ from another, or by the direct apprehension of a stimulus. Therefore we can interpret that one way to justify this proposition will be by *experience*, and another one by given reasons. The first case we will discuss later; while a justification through reasons will be justified if possesses reasons that are objectively sufficient. And those reasons are *objectively sufficient* if they are *irrevocable*, which is to say, if no other member of the pertinent epistemic community possesses secondary reasons that revoke that belief.

Finally for Villoro (1984), *personal knowledge* is a **dispositional state to act, acquired, determined by an apprehended object or situation, that is joined by a certain guarantee of achievement. And, as part of something personal, it can be characterized through some necessary conditions for its occurrence:** 1) to have or have had direct experiences of this something; 2) to integrate in an object the different experiences acquired; and 3) to have certain intellectual responses towards this object. It is to say, according to this conception, that the *experience* and the *conceptualization* of this experience are the two fundamental characteristics, and affirms that these experiences could be obtained by oneself or by others. Therefore, the personal knowledge of an individual can be a source of discovery of much knowledge, but they will only be knowledge to others if they can be justified on reasons verifiable by anyone. Thus, Villoro (1984) proposes the definition of *propositional knowledge* as a knowledge with objectively sufficient reasons. And by objectively sufficient reasons, one understands not only that they are sufficient for the subject that proposes them, but also to what he calls a pertinent epistemic subject, or a subject that has the same information (such as data, theoretical frameworks, methods and techniques, etc...). Finally, the author affirms that the sciences should be founded on propositional knowledge. Hence he asserts that a knowledge, to be scientifically acceptable (in order to be turned into propositional knowledge) should possess an objective justification, and this objective justification will presuppose an agreement of the pertinent epistemic community.

3 In Logic there is a difference between proposition and utterance. The proposition is the content of a declarative sentence; whilst the utterance is the declarative sentence. A same proposition can be expressed by different utterances, for example, in the following cases the utterances “Está lloviendo”, “It’s raining”, “está chovendo” are different among themselves, but the proposition is the same.

We shall analyse some of the assumptions regarding this conception of personal knowledge, propositional knowledge, and science, examining what we consider the two basic concepts to the goal of this article, *objectivity* and *experience*.

1. THE OBJECTIVITY

Much has been written and discussed about objectivity and objective knowledge as a necessary condition in order to reach a true knowledge. Science, with capital letter, supposes a Method, also with a capital letter, and this proposal have gone so far that Martin Jay (2009) calls it “the fetishization of method”. Jay proposes an interesting discussion about the concept of experience and its relation to the scientific method. We will examine only some of the issues of the scientific method connected to the concept of experience, since it is this particular aspect that we will relate with the possibility or not of performing self-research. However, we will point out that the scientific method presupposes that all sciences have the same procedure to obtain a valid or acceptable knowledge. And this procedure consists in starting with hypothesis, deducing from them other assertions (predictions or retrodictions), and contrasting these with data.

In his interesting book *Cantos de Experiencia [Songs of Experience]* (2009), and as consequence of this fetishization of method, Jay states the following four basic problems that relate experience to scientific method. In the first place, he sustains that the method makes reference to a reliable and secure experience, which is related with verifiability. This way, it is tacitly accepted a subject that has the fruition of a “vision from nowhere”, without subjective reference. This means an impartial subject, and it is still valid in our judgement for proposals that maintain a conventionalism a la Popper. These streams propose an epistemological subject different from the psychological subject. Because they claim that the one who knows is not influenced – in the moment of justifying the knowledge – by his values, intentions, preferences, etc. In this sense, the assumption of objectivity concerning the justification of knowledge is closely related to the assumption of disinterest or impartiality by the researcher.

This first issue is linked tightly to the second one: the transcendentalization and de-humanization of the epistemological subject. To understand the subject in this way allows the unlimited accumulation of knowledge, because the death of the individual does not suppose the end of the knowledge accumulated by him/her, since there exists a community of disinterested researchers that will continue the accumulation of knowledge, and this knowledge will consequently transcend the investigator.

The third issue, according to Jay, is that experience is valid if it is confirmed, meaning that its dignity lies on its reproducibility. This takes history off from the experience, its errors, modifications, context in which it was held, and so on.

Finally, for the author, the last problem resides in that the corporal learning of the senses was replaced by the “objective” instruments of which the register of the exterior world is more precise and impartial, taking away the scientific verification from the subject and displacing it to numbers and instruments.

It is evident that instruments and numbers do not suppose objectivity nor impartiality. For that, it is enough to check countries’ official statistics. What is studied, how it is studied, what is understood by it, how the phenomena connected to interests are interpreted, the assumptions, etc., are not something impartial or something that stays out of the problem of the justification of knowledge. In summary, those “safe” means, as numbers or instruments, do not guarantee objectivity.

Let’s take a look at a simple example. Suppose that a researcher has an experience (sensorial, for example), and observes how a set of rats – that we call Group 1 – increased their sizes soon after having received shots of certain hormones, while other rats – that we call Group 2 – at equal conditions, but receiving injections without hormones, had a 30% smaller size than the former ones. The investigator will affirm: “the rats from Group 1 grew about 30% more than the rats from Group 2”. This, apparently, is objective. But why? Because it is based on data, for instance, the measures and weights of every rat of each group. But we shall make ourselves two questions: what *are* these data? And why are these data acceptable and objective? In reality, the *data* are statements about what the investigator experienced, which are the assertions through which their experiences are passed to language. And these assertions end up being acceptable for several reasons, namely the protocols of experiments, ways of manipulating the rats, certain criteria to measure the size of the rats (measurements of certain variables such as length, width, quantity of fat, etc.) and their weight. All of those supposed experiences are particular observations conducted by the investigator to which no one will have access. The only things left from this *experience* are the assertions, the drawings done on a paper or on a computer that make reference to that experience. These assertions are acceptable or not acceptable based on the instruments that were used, the design of the experiment that was carried out, and so on, and this acceptability occurs only if there is agreement concerning all of those matters. It is because of this agreement and of, as a consequence of it, the existence of common sticks to measure, weight, etc., that the knowledge results objective.

If what makes this knowledge objective is the previous agreement, we can ask what happens when a new field of study appears. We will examine what happened in cases when new disciplines decided to study the human being. This is interesting because human beings were interpreted, studied, and described by other human beings. Let’s take a look at other instances from sociocultural anthropology. An example could be the one of Bronislaw Malinowski, who proposed carrying

out a distinct *experience* from what was conducted until then and, instead of doing his anthropological research from his work place, he considered necessary “getting out” to recollect data to study societies from their own place of origin. This is how, between the years 1915 and 1918, he developed his first field work at the islands Trobriand of New Guinea, in the Southwest Pacific. Obviously, he was not able to communicate because he did not understand the language of the islanders, he did not have this common code and, we do not know what experiences he had, but he had to create a new methodology and new techniques in order to give an account of those experiences in academy. He decided to use a global approach that integrated many social interactions and that gathered magical, religious, social and commercial aspects. In order to do so he needed to develop new methods for obtaining data, since traditional ones were useless to his research interests, and because of that he proposed, among others, the method known as participant observation (which impact was such that it is already considered an accepted methodology). Malinowski did not achieve that through protocols nor previous agreements, but because he was lacking other ways to approach those persons. It is to say, being in that experience he had to create new tools and propose new study approaches.

Furthermore, another anthropologist, Franz Boas together with the Russian anthropologist Julia Averkieva studied the tribe Kwakiutl from Canada for more than 40 years. During the course of their investigation they made numerous films as well as an extensive ethnographic material developing a very thorough study about the Kwakiutl's gestures, motor habits, corporal movements and dances, counting with the help of the painter Stuyvesant Van Deer for the analysis. It is to say, they sought other methods for collecting data, paintings, films, etc. It is because of this that Boas is considered one of the first investigators to develop what is called today Visual Anthropology.

With these examples we want primarily to show how we should think in a flexible manner about the methods and techniques to collect data when a new disciplinary field appears. But these examples also show us that an experience can be understood in different ways, and what is studied can be very diverse. Also, even previously non-existent problems to the discipline or supposedly out of reach, can now be approached. If we think that experience has much longer arms than it was suspected until recently, and that methods can be plural and novel, we will be able to extend our disciplinary fields to dimensions and problems prohibited before. In synthesis, when a new disciplinary field appears, or there is aspiration to study something from a new perspective (for example in the case of the first-person investigation), flexibility must be applied to the methods and techniques to collect data because the epistemic agreement is under construction, and there are no accepted methods, but rather techniques are being evaluated and proposed to an epistemic community. When the techniques and methods had been accepted by a community, then it will be possible to offer objective reasons in order to transform these personal knowledge in propositional knowledge.

2. THE EXPERIENCE

When one reflects about a knowledge that was obtained, sooner or later it will be connected to the way it was accessed. In the epistemological conceptions of the 20th century, when referring to the relationship with experience, it is understood as something given or as something that is not problematized (for example, in Hempel, (1966)). On the other hand, authors as Karl Popper (1980) consider experience as something “obscure” and ineffable that, nonetheless, does not interfere in the moment of justifying the knowledge.

If we reconsider the previous example, the one with the rats, and base ourselves only on the data, we will not know what the investigator experienced, what he saw, what happened to him when he saw it, what he did first and then next, etc. We will only know the *version* of the experience that was left in the protocols or in the *data*. We will not know, for example, if a change in the behavior of the rats to which the hormone in question was given to caught his attention, or if the control group (the one that the hormone was not given to) changed some pattern that does not appear at the data. In fact, in the laboratories there are books of protocols in which a big part of this information is written and that does not get published; only data are published. Only an infinitesimal part of the experience is left. These data are the cadaver of the experience. When one takes all of what it was lived out of the experience, one ends up with cold and objective data.

However, as showed in the Anthropology examples, when a new disciplinary field develops, certain agreements must be settled and, in this case, we consider that the experience has something to say. It seems interesting, in this sense, to analyze some of the statements of the north-american philosopher William James (2009), who claims that there are two kinds of knowledge, the direct and the conceptual. By *direct knowledge* he understands the one based on experience, later on we will see what kind of experience he is referring to. The *conceptual knowledge*, for its part, is based on concepts, on platonic ideas, ideals. The objective of the latter would be to be able to build concepts, laws, terms that could be defined and get fixed. In principle, the scientific knowledge would claim the last one and this gets clear when truth and propositional knowledge are the goals. This knowledge has always been conceived as the deeper one, the one that science must tend in order to achieve truth.

William James (2009) critiques this conception and calls for a theoretical inversion proposed by Henri Bergson affirming that, instead of being the deeper knowledge, it seems to be the most rude and inadequate, and that its unique superiority is saving time while allowing us to do short cuts through experience. In other words, to James, Bergson inverts the platonic notion of real and true knowledge as immutable knowledge, and proposes that true knowledge is the practical one, the experience. Life is completely changeable, however, the majority of the thinkers tell us that it is possible to know the changeable from what is permanent and eternal.

Because of this contradiction or lack of meaning is that William James (2009) considers that when the scientists propose scientific laws, they affirm only coexistences and successions and this is superficial, not deep. Therefore he sustains that *conceptual knowledge* is “the synoptic treatment of phenomena, the vision of the distant and of what seems disperse. But (...) if we have more curiosity for the interior nature of the reality, or for what really makes it move, we must (...) bury ourselves in the density of those passing moments on which surface they fly and at particular points on which they occasionally rest and land themselves”⁴.

What James is telling us is that conceptual knowledge is the one that has truth as goal, it is to say, obtain statements and abstract concepts that make reference to intersubjectively experimentable objects in order to be able to do abstractions about them (remember the definition of propositional knowledge given by Villoro). But for James the *conceptual knowledge* is not the most interesting, but the *direct knowledge*, the one that allows us to deepen ourselves in new and particular experiences, not in the intersubjectively given but in the internal, own, personal; since from this place comes the knowledge. It means to say, one deepens in the knowledge when is able to deepen in one’s own knowledge, singular of the individual person. Therefore, if we change the perspective from the one we are talking about, if we wish to obtain a more complete knowledge of the world (and not just the external world), we should venture ourselves inside our own experience to study it, compare it, etc.

Therefore, recognizing the experience is not just enriching and knowledge allowing, but it is the very thing that allow us to know the deep and the interesting. This knowledge, the direct one, can transform itself or be translated in theoretical terms, in such a way that is translated to conceptual knowledge; however, this translation will mean loss of depth, of what it was lived.

This is coherent with Villoro’s proposal, in the sense that the propositional knowledge and the personal knowledge can come from the experience (direct apprehension) or from reasoning, and these will be the ultimate Foundations of knowledge. However, the relationship between experience and knowledge has been a very little discussed theme during almost all the 20th century and, instead of analyzing where does the knowledge come from, it was discussed how it is justified.

3. THE POSSIBILITY OF FIRST-PERSON INVESTIGATION

Assuming that experience can be thought in a wide way and that when a new knowledge, a new discipline, is started there are always questions, as well as comings and goings to give Foundation to it, then we will ask for the possibility of the existence of first-person investigation.

4 JAMES, 2009, p. 159-160.

The problem that emerges is the following: if our experiences are not intersubjective, then could we study them, analyze them, etc.? In other words: is it possible to have enough distance to research it? The first thing we should ask ourselves is what kind of knowledge we are searching for; is it the one James calls direct or the conceptual? And, whether or not one leads necessarily to the other.

If we start from the notion of the direct knowledge's experience, we should delve ourselves the deepest we can into lived experiences, sensations, or in other words, into individual experiences, and then do what is always done to make this knowledge public, which is narrating it. In this sense, Vieira (2005) narrates his lived experiences in the more exhaustive way possible taking into account variables, to use a word known by everyone, that could or not influence this experience. These variables (time, temperature, humidity, moment of the lived experience in question, position [of the body], etc.) in a certain sense would seem to be external to the experience. Also, in order to narrate his experiences he had to use a set of vocables (lexicon) that allow him to refer to a set of experiences that could represent distinct dispositions, sensations, etc. In this way, what is being carried out is the construction of technical terms that give him the possibility of communicability, of recognizing that other person had a similar experience, even though there are never two identical experiences.

Invariably when a scientist is conducting a research, he/she has many different experiences: he/she may smell odors, see distinct things, have corporal sensations, etc. However, the scientist *decides* that some of these inputs are *data*, for example, following the before mentioned case of the rats, the number indicated by the pointer of the scale, or the temperature showed by the thermometer, whereas other inputs will not be considered as data, for example if two rats become more aggressive or docile, or more quiet or shifting, etc. Therefore, there is an *a priori* theoretical decision about what is important and what is not. We ask, therefore: if a previous decision influences on the data that is taken, wouldn't this decision influence as well on what is narrated of this experience? There would be many other information that, even though exist, are considered spurious to the research in question.

As a consequence of this scenario, we can conclude that when a new disciplinary field is developed there won't be previous agreement concerning which inputs are to be left aside. Thus the experiences must be thoroughly analyzed for researchers to be able to determine which aspect could be or not related to those experiences and how. The inductive method has been largely criticized. However, many disciplines passed through an inductive instance in their beginning, basing themselves on common sense, observations, relationships and comparisons, and getting to propose theories, laws, etc. A paradigmatic case is astronomy. The Egyptians, Mayas, Greeks, and other distinct civilizations conducted observations and

conceptualized them according to the knowledge that had been reached by their cultures, as well as to a set of beliefs about the world. That knowledge gradually changed, being conceived in another way, with other interests and based on other assumptions. But there are questions that apparently continued, for example, the origin of our universe, of the earth, the distances from the stars, why they do not clash, etc. Everyone looked upwards and must have had a countless number of distinct experiences from the narratives of the conceptual knowledge that were left to us (for example, the geocentric, heliocentric, and Big Bang theories, among others). Knowledge that was obtained, partially, as consequence of direct experience and of theoretical reflections.

Therefore, if we want to study our own selves, not a simple task and, probably, the most ambitious and interesting that can exist from a cognitive point of view, we consider reasonable to start from the investigation of personal experiences. Of all experiences, there should be done a narration as descriptively as possible. The topic regarding the possibility of objectivity is the one that overflies or shows itself as suspicious in this point. However, two fundamental and strongly connected things must be clarified. In the first place, objectivity, as already commented before, is necessary when the aim is a personal knowledge becoming a propositional knowledge. However, as we also analyzed above, a personal knowledge is objective when there are sufficient reasons for an epistemically pertinent community – a community that possesses *similar information* – to share this information. How would this hypothetical community be constituted? By individuals that had access to this information, or had the possibility of doing personal experiments within themselves. And, these researchers do not need to be convinced that it is possible to have an experience that they already had.

But what would happen with the rest of the people, with the individuals that have not had that experience yet? This is the second aspect to be analyzed. Probably it will happen the same that Kuhn (1970) had shown in his already classic work, and that occurs in science: when there is a change in a discipline that entails a modification in its conception of the world, in its metaphysical and ontological assumptions, in what does and does not exist in the world, some will be convinced and others will not. Depending on their personal characteristics, beliefs, etc., some researchers will accept or not that knowledge. However, what we are interested in clarifying is that these are problems that appear in the sciences and also, probably, will emerge in this new discipline. Not because it is studying self-consciousness, but because it has to do with the inconvenients at the cognitive level when the intention is to propose a new field or approach in a field already developed.

TRYING TO OFFER SOME PROPOSALS TO THIS NEW FIELD

First of all, it is important to note that the researchers themselves are the ones that find the most appropriate solutions to their own problems, unless they

need the development of a very sophisticated technology, which many times will need mental experiments to overcome those barriers.

One might ask then, whether an experience of self-consciousness could get to constitute a personal knowledge and a propositional knowledge. No doubt, the first obstacle to be faced is that when there is reference to experiences they are always linked to notions of “something” or “object”, and this object must be intersubjectively accessible, which means that different individuals must be able to experience it. Here we would have the first barrier when analyzing the problem of self-consciousness because, in principle, each experience is unique as well as it is personal. However, something similar happens in the social sciences. For instance, in ethnographic studies each informant gives distinct information from their own experiences, and in psychology one *knows* or *understands* which experience, emotion, or value each individual possesses only through their accounts, except in the case of conductist investigations. But in these accounts the information is crossed allowing to infer common patterns. However, one of the problems in social sciences is to know when there is enough data collected to be able to perform an analysis or the generalization of a pattern from the social group in question. One of the answers is when a theoretical saturation is achieved. This means that the testimonials obtained from the distinct informers do not contain any new information about the problem that is being studied, it is to say that the informers repeat part of the information. These accounts do not contain new informative elements.

In a similar way, in the accounts of experiences in the first-person, the experiences are accessible through the accounts, but the difference compared to other sciences is that on those there is an anthropologist, a psychologist, etc.; an *other* that analyzes, makes the relations, and comes to conclusions. On the contrary, in self-research this other would not be there, which creates an apparent problem of achieving an objective knowledge, and the equally apparent impossibility of obtaining a *propositional knowledge* (in the sense Villoro gives to the term). However, part of this process could be carried on through the analysis of cases in athenaeums of discussion. This analysis would suppose not only the self-research itself, but also the possibility that other *epistemically pertinent* persons could detect relationships among the accounts, find common patterns, try to come to conclusions from the distinct informants, etc. And maybe, in this level, it would be interesting the notion of theoretical saturation, since it is not only important to point out those common patterns and similarities among the accounts, but also when these accounts cease to provide new information. What can be proposed from scientific methodologies is a deep description of each account with some guidelines to be taken into consideration so they can be comparable

to one another in order to swiftly find convergences or divergences among them. This process will allow researchers to find common patterns, however, in order to make conceptual claims regarding certain aspects of those lived experiences, it will be necessary the construction of a lexicon of common theoretical terms.

However, the most interesting aspect concerning the proposal of self-research, and this seems to us fundamental to point out, is not the conceptual knowledge, but the direct knowledge. And, the self-research *is* the direct knowledge. The majority of scientists wish to obtain data, and they build huge machines and spend a lot of money to achieve it. The interesting aspect concerning the proposal of self-research is not rooted only in the fact that human beings are always trying to understand themselves, but also in the fact the data necessary to do it can be obtained in a very economical way, with no need for expensive and sophisticated apparatuses that burdens governments or companies. Indeed, Vieira (2005) tells us in the introduction of his book that by the year 2003 he counted with the information from, approximately, 7,653 cases of self-projections or out-of-body experiences (OBEs).

However, this amount of data seemed not be enough to convince scientists about the need to develop this knowledge. In this sense, Kuhn (1970) affirms in a clear way the importance of the insight to *convince* a scientist that something exists, and claims that this process is not rational, it is to say, they will not be convinced only by sufficient reasons or by objective data. This coincides with the example given by Vieira (2013) about how a group of researchers have changed their conducts or prejudices after he declared that one of these researchers had been operated and asked him to open up his shirt. This is a direct knowledge, an experience that was worth more than pure reason.

As a way to conclude, the only thing left to say is that the direct knowledge is the necessary requisite to self-research and its epistemological Foundation. This knowledge will allow us to achieve the aforementioned insight, dissipating the epistemological questions concerning its objectivity. And this will allow, at its turn, to adjust the necessary methodological tools in order to carry out this type of research and, thus, achieve the conceptual or the propositional knowledge.

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