

58th Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 27th August 2013
KNOWLEDGE IS NOTHING BUT KNOWLEDGE
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1. “Why,” Ludwig Wittgenstein asks, “should the language-game rest on some kind of knowledge?”¹
2. We must obviously distinguish between knowledge (the established systems of knowledge) and the language-game.
3. The language-game sustains all knowledge without being knowledge itself.
4. *Language-game* is Wittgenstein’s term for this purely functional plane that marks the boundary between knowledge and the unknowable, between consciousness and the unconscious, between life and death, between logos and chaos.
5. It constitutes the frame and the consistency of the established reality.
6. Slavoj Žižek has accordingly emphasized the homogeneity of the language-game and the form of life with the symbolic order, which Lacan also calls the *big Other*.
7. The decisive step the late Wittgenstein’s thinking takes, Žižek writes, is the *assertion* of an “irreducible—albeit imperceptible and ineffable—*gap* separating ‘objective certainty’ from ‘truth.’ ‘Objective certainty’ does not concern ‘truth’; on the contrary, it is ‘a matter of attitude,’ a stance implied by the existing life-form where there is no assurance that ‘something *really unheard-of*’ will not emerge which will undermine ‘objective certainty,’ upon which our ‘sense of reality’ is grounded.”²
8. The function of the form of life and the language-game consists in *not obscuring* the *non-functioning* that the smooth processes taking place on the plane of reality threaten to conceal.
9. For we must distinguish between the reality of certainty that is the cognitive world of these processes—and truth, whose status is non-cognitive.
10. This distinction is irreconcilable.
11. It has the quality of an irreducible conflict.

1 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Über Gewissheit. On Certainty*, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, trans. Denis Paul and G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), 63e.

2 Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do. Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (London: Verso, 2002), 151.