

Topic 3: To know a thing we must love it, and to love a thing we must know it.  
(Kitaro Nishida)

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This sounds rather paradoxical. To know one has to love and yet to love one has to know. It appears as if Kitaro Nishida is coming to the conclusion that love and knowledge are more or less equal. No one without the other. He doesn't explain in this quotation, from which to start, the knowing or the loving, he just points out that this is how it is. Knowledge produces love, and love makes one want to increase the amount of one's knowledge on the object of one's love.

Nishida uses some wide-range terms in this quote. First there's the term "know". There are some definitions on the field of philosophy for knowledge. Probably the best known is Plato's classical definition of knowledge. According to Plato knowledge is a well-stated true belief. There are also some other "requirements" for knowledge. There is the element of believing and the element of truth. This means that in order for one to claim something to be knowledge, one has to believe it. It surely affects the opinion of other party in the conversation if one was to say "I know that  $5-2=3$  but I don't believe it". In a case like this the value of the argument comes questionable. The element of truth may be harder to find depending on the question, but one can't possibly claim to know that all cats are born with six legs. The other party of the discussion surely knows at least by experience that this argument does not work in practise and is therefore untrue.

Love is another terrifyingly big term. Whether there is any basic philosophical definition for love, it's unclear. Even though knowledge and love are both uncountable things, it still seems that it's easier to try to measure the amount of one's knowledge by testing than the amount of one's love. Still even the ways of testing the amount of knowledge remain imperfect. Although for example nominalists claim that even the abstract terms, as yellow or truth, exist as independent creatures, that their existence is not based on human minds, even in that case the terms love and knowledge are impossible to measure and compare with each other in a trustworthy way. Still both knowledge and love are a part of everyday life and have an effect on people. An average daily life is full of empiric proof of knowledge and love. One knows by experience that falling down hurts, and at the same time hopes that people close to him do not hurt themselves, which can be interpreted as the feeling of love and concern.

It's also possible for one to question Nishida's argument. To know a thing one has to love it, and to love a thing one has to know it. It seems that Nishida is referring to a complete and through-out knowing of something. In this kind of thinking the problem of many differing arguments about the possibility of through-out knowing rises. Fundamentalists claim that it is possible to know the absolute, unwavering, ultimate final truth about something. Many rationalists have agreed, that the final truth can be reached by logical deductions. Then there are some less solid sides. Fallibilists do not believe in finding the absolute truth, but they believe that knowledge is true until something comes up to tip it over or correct it to be more accurate. It doesn't become clear from Nishida's quotation, how he believes, but there's an allusion that he means ultimate knowing.

One term that also makes the argument of Nishida quite interesting, is "a thing". This comes back to the knowing of a thing. "Thing" is really a wide term. There are many things in the world. Still Nishida doesn't make any limitations to what we can know if we only love it. It seems to an average person that knowing a dead leaf and knowing the main point

Wittgenstein makes in *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* do not have the same status. In Nishida's argument there's the element of love involved, but it feels rather unbelievable to claim that, if we assume that the final truth can be known, one can truly and through-out know these two things similarly with the aid of something as fickle as love. Or more accurately put, can't know either without the aid of something as fickle as love. Although in philosophy all schools do not make much of a difference between material and mental things, in ordinary everyday-life the difference in understanding and knowing them is crude. In the mists of weekdays it seems that even though we might claim that we know for example our own pockets, even love doesn't help us to know whether it's right to have an abortion or whether the killing of a human being is justified. But it's a lot easier to say that I like chocolate ice-cream more than vanilla, because I just love chocolate. Chocolate ice-cream is a material thing, whereas saying whether something is right or wrong is not.

It's also possible that Nishida means a different kind of knowing. The term knowing is usually linked with studying, books and testing. The possibility of the simple love towards something bringing in the knowing of the thing makes people shrug and perhaps laugh up their sleeves with prejudices about daydreamers and romantics. However, the word intuition is not completely unknown in philosophy and could be associated with a sort of a level of knowing a priori. Whether the trigger to the intuition is love towards something seems as good of an alternative as the other possible forces.

It seems that love for something does make people think they also know the thing. Therefore it seems somewhat acceptable to claim that love increases the knowing of a thing to a certain extent. But it seems rather bold to claim that one can't know a thing without loving it. Many workers are good in what they do, and they might even like what they do, but it still doesn't mean that they love what they do. The feeling of love towards something might give the necessary willpower to gather knowledge about something, but it's not required. Other feelings can also make it seem that one knows something completely. There are things that people know painfully clear, but do not love. It's possible for one to completely and utterly know the feeling of for example envy, and hate the fact that he knows the feeling. The fact that it's unwanted and unwelcome doesn't make it any less known or powerful than if he would love it. So maybe the more accurate form of the argument could be: "To know something we have to feel **something** towards it." Not necessarily love, for there are other powerful and overwhelming feelings as well.

Is it possible then, to know a thing completely free of emotion of any kind? The modern world has shown that it's possible to contain information completely free of emotions. That's what thermometers, books and computers do. These items have information, but whether it can be called knowledge is a different thing altogether. The term knowledge also requires a self-conscious agent in hold of information. So far humans are the only self-conscious agents that science has discovered, and emotions are essential in human existence. So for humans, to know something completely without any feeling for it is impossible. Even ignorance isn't the same as lack of feeling.

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For a fallibilist it's a real challenge to try to accept that something could be known through and through. For a self-conscious agent it's a real challenge to try to accept whether something could be known without feeling something, should it be love in this case. For personal beliefs and preferences it's a real challenge to try to accept that feelings could

increase the amount of knowledge, but still believe in the power of intuition. Fortunately the philosophical world revolves around challenges.