

SAFETY-BASED EPISTEMOLOGY: WHITHER NOW?

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ABSTRACT: This paper explores the prospects for safety-based theories of knowledge in the light of some recent objections.

I. SAFETY-BASED EPISTEMOLOGY

In a number of places—see, for example, Pritchard (2002a; 2002b; 2004; 2005a; 2007a; 2007b)—I have defended the thesis that the safety principle, in some form at least, needs to play a central role in our theory of knowledge.¹ In particular, in Pritchard (2005a; cf. Pritchard 2004; 2007a), I defended this claim in terms of an epistemological project that I called an *anti-luck epistemology*. The starting point for this project is our overarching intuition that knowledge is incompatible with luck, what I call the *anti-luck platitude*. If we take this platitude seriously, then it suggests a novel way of approaching the problem of offering a definition of knowledge. What is required, it seems, is a three-stage investigation. First, we offer an account of luck. Second, we specify the sense in which knowledge is incompatible with luck. Finally, third, we put all this together to offer an anti-luck analysis of knowledge. Interestingly, it turns out (or so I argue at any rate) that this project of developing an anti-luck epistemology leads directly to the endorsement of a version of the safety principle as a key component in any adequate theory of knowledge.

Essentially, the reason for this was that luck turns out to be a modal notion. Very roughly (the details don't matter for our purposes here), an event is lucky provided that it obtains in the actual world but does not obtain in most near-by possible worlds.² (Think, for example, of a lottery win—a paradigm case of a lucky event—as opposed to an event that is clearly not lucky, such as that the sun has risen this morning.) Unsurprisingly, then, it follows that what is required to eliminate luck (in the relevant sense) from knowledge will turn out to be a modal principle. The core sense in which knowledge is incompatible with luck that I identified concerned

the luck that the belief is true—i.e., when one knows a proposition, it ought not to be a matter of luck that one's belief is true.³ Roughly translated into modal terms, this becomes the claim that one's true belief should not be false in most near-by possible worlds, and that's essentially what safety amounts to.

As has been noted in the literature, adopting safety has a number of important advantages. For example, as Ernest Sosa (1999) points out, it seems it can better account for our inductive and anti-sceptical knowledge when compared with other modal principles, like the sensitivity principle.⁴ Moreover, I have argued—e.g., Pritchard (2007b)—that this proposal can also deal with some other pressing difficulties in epistemology, such as the lottery problem.

The formulation of safety that I have settled upon is as follows:

The Safety Principle

S's belief is safe *iff* in most near-by possible worlds in which *S* continues to form her belief about the target proposition in the same way as in the actual world, and in all very close near-by possible worlds in which *S* continues to form her belief about the target proposition in the same way as the actual world, her belief continues to be true.⁵

A few comments are in order about this formulation of the safety principle.

First, the account only applies to what I call *fully contingent* propositions, where these are propositions which are not necessary in *any* sense (e.g., logically, metaphysically, physically, etc.). For obvious reasons, if one allowed the principle to apply to these propositions then one would encounter problems because these propositions are not false in any near-by possible worlds. Accordingly, if one happened to have a stubborn belief in these propositions—i.e., a belief which one retained across all near-by possible worlds—then one would thereby have a safe belief which was, on this score at least, in the market for knowledge, regardless of the provenance of that belief. Clearly, this would be an unwelcome result.

Notice, however, that it is pretty easy to see how one might go about extending the account of safety to these propositions, even if the details might be tricky. After all, all we need to do is to talk of the doxastic result of the target belief-forming process, whatever that might be, and not focus solely on belief in the target proposition. For example, if one forms one's belief that $2 + 2 = 4$ by tossing a coin, then while there are no near-by possible worlds where *that* belief is false, there is a wide class of near-by possible worlds where that belief-forming process brings about a doxastic result that is false (e.g., a possible world in which one in this way forms the belief that $2 + 2 = 5$). The focus on fully contingent propositions is thus simply a way of simplifying the account; it does not represent an admission that the account only applies to a restricted class of propositions.⁶

Second, we need to be clear about what the relationship is between safety and knowledge on my view. In particular, notice that I do not claim that there is never more to knowledge than safe belief. Indeed, all I actually claim is that because safety captures the anti-luck platitude, a platitude that captures a central insight about the nature of knowledge, it follows that what is core to knowledge

is safe belief. This claim, however, is compatible with the thought that often, and perhaps even always, some further condition would need to be met in order for one to have knowledge.

As it happens, however, I also argue in Pritchard (2005a) that if we want to resolve the skeptical problem, then we will have to allow that at least sometimes there is nothing more to knowing a proposition than having a safe belief. The reason for this is that I independently argue that any adequate response to the skeptical problem will need to defend the thesis that we can know the denials of skeptical hypotheses. Crucially, however, I also argue that the only thing that is epistemically in favor of such beliefs is that, if we know roughly what we think we know, they are safe (for if we do know a great deal, then it follows that possible worlds in which skeptical hypotheses obtain are inevitably far-off possible worlds). That said, I also grant that any such response to the skeptical problem will be intellectually dissatisfying. Allowing that sometimes safe belief suffices for knowledge would not amount to a “happy-face” solution to the problem of radical skepticism.⁷

Finally, third, notice that it is an advantage of the anti-luck account of knowledge that it motivates safety in this way. For one thing, it anchors the safety principle to a more general, and widely accepted, platitude about knowledge. For another, given the undoubted attractions of the safety principle as a condition on knowledge, that the project of anti-luck epistemology should lead to such a principle is also additional evidence in favor of the utility of approaching the problem of defining knowledge in this fashion.

II. McEVROY ON SAFETY

Still, the objections to the view have come thick-and-fast. I have dealt with a number of them elsewhere;⁸ here I want to consider two more recent objections. The first is found in a very interesting paper by Mark McEvoy, “The Lottery Puzzle and Pritchard’s Safety Analysis of Knowledge.”

McEvoy’s chief complaint is that the safety principle is unable to appropriately explain why we lack knowledge in the lottery case. Recall that the lottery puzzle arises because it seems that forming one’s belief that one is the owner of a losing ticket to a fair lottery with long odds by reflecting on the low probabilities involved does not seem to lead one to knowledge. The puzzle, however, is that in this case the evidential support for one’s belief—at least where this is conceived of in terms of probabilistic support for the target proposition—is extremely high, and certainly much higher than other beliefs which one holds which do amount to knowledge. Compare, for example, this belief with a parallel belief that one has lost formed on the basis of reading the result in a reliable newspaper. It seems that in this second case one can come to know that one has lost the lottery in this fashion, even though the astronomical odds of winning the lottery are such that the probability that this newspaper has printed a misprint is significantly higher than the probability that one wins the lottery.

The moral I draw from the lottery case is that knowledge is not a function of the probabilistic strength of one's evidence (in the sense that the greater this probabilistic strength, the more likely it is that you know). Instead, we need to think of knowledge in explicitly modal terms, where possible worlds are in turn thought of as ordered, in the usual way, in terms of their similarity to the actual world rather than in terms of their probabilistic likelihood. This difference makes all the difference, for notice that low probability events, like lottery wins, occur in near-by possible worlds on this similarity ordering. After all, all that needs to be different in order for one's ticket to be a winning ticket is that a few numbered balls fall in a slightly different configuration.

With this in mind, and given the further claim (which I will return to in a moment) that reliable newspapers do not misprint lottery results in near-by possible worlds, it follows that there is a crucial difference between forming one's belief that one has lost the lottery by reflecting on the odds involved and forming that same belief by reading a reliable newspaper. After all, the former belief is unsafe, unlike the latter belief. For if one forms one's belief by considering only the odds involved, then there will be a class of near-by possible worlds—the worlds in which one wins the lottery, but everything else remains the same—in which one forms a false belief via this method. In contrast, since there is no near-by possible world in which the reliable newspaper misprints the lottery result, it follows that there is no near-by possible world in which one forms one's belief in the target proposition in this way and yet forms a false belief.

Now one might object to this by arguing, as McEvoy does, that it is in fact far from obvious that there are no near-by possible worlds in which the reliable newspaper makes a mistake and prints the wrong result. As he puts it, such a world would be one where all that is different is that "the person typing up the lottery results hits a key beside the one that he should have hit" (2009, 13). As it happens, I don't doubt that there are newspapers—local "rags" with one permanent member of staff, say—which are produced in such a way that this is a near-by possibility, but equally I don't think one gains safe belief, and thus potentially knowledge, that one has lost a lottery from these sorts of newspapers. It would, I think, be rash to tear up one's ticket after only checking the result in one of these papers.

The point here is that reliable newspapers—the kind of newspapers that one can use to come to know that one has lost the lottery—have checks built-in to prevent misprints of this sort occurring. The staff are highly trained and diligent, all information is checked and double-checked by efficient copy-editors, and, perhaps most significantly, those checking the results are likely to be lottery ticket owners themselves, and so have a vested interest in the accuracy of the result printed. In short, I think that once we understand the details of the case properly, then it isn't very plausible to suppose that the possible worlds where our hero forms a false belief in the target proposition are close ones.

Moreover, notice that it is entirely consistent with the safety principle as I have defined it to allow that there might be some possible worlds in which the reliable

newspaper prints a misprint in this way. This is because the formulation of the principle that I offer “weights” the near-by possible worlds in terms of how close they are to the actual world. Very close near-by possible worlds are thus more important than not-so-close near-by possible worlds. The rationale for this weighting of worlds is that we become more tolerant of error as we move out through the possible worlds. Thus, that there are some near-by, but not very close, possible worlds where the agent forms a false belief in the target proposition might be tolerated, even though it is not tolerated that there be false belief of this sort in the very close near-by possible worlds. This is important because even if one grants that there are some near-by possible worlds where reliable newspapers print the wrong result, these worlds are clearly not going to be very close near-by worlds. In contrast, the possible worlds in which one wins the lottery are very close, since all that needs to change is that a few colored balls should fall in a slightly different configuration.

Thus, if one reads the details of the example properly, and also keeps the right formulation of the safety principle in mind, this objection to the safety-based approach fails to get a grip.⁹

III. KELP ON SAFETY

A different kind of problem for safety-based accounts of knowledge is posed by Christoph Kelp (2009). Kelp argues that safety cannot be necessary for knowledge because of the existence of “Frankfurt-style” cases where the agent forms her true belief entirely appropriately—and so gains knowledge—but where her belief is nonetheless unsafe.

The example that Kelp offers to illustrate this problem concerns a demon who wants our hero—let’s call him ‘Chris’—to form a belief that the time is 8:22 A.M. when he comes down the stairs first thing in the morning (the demon doesn’t care whether the belief is true). Since he is a demon, with lots of special powers, he is able to ensure that Chris believes this proposition (e.g., by manipulating the clock). Now, suppose that Chris does indeed come downstairs that morning at exactly 8:22 A.M., and so forms a belief that the time is 8:22 A.M. by looking at the clock at the bottom of the stairs. Since Chris is going to form this belief anyway, the demon doesn’t need to do anything to ensure that he forms the belief in the target proposition. Moreover, since Chris is forming his belief by consulting a reliable clock, one would intuitively regard this as an instance of knowledge (or so Kelp argues at any rate). Nevertheless, the belief is clearly unsafe, since there are many near-by possible worlds in which Chris continues to form the belief that it is 8:22 A.M., and yet this belief is false (because of the interference of the demon).

I think this example is ingenious. Its weak point, however, lies in the claim that Chris genuinely does have knowledge in this case. I’m not so sure. As I have argued elsewhere—e.g., Pritchard (forthcoming a; forthcoming b; manuscript)—we need to make a distinction between cognitive achievement and knowledge, where the former is more compatible with luck than the latter. With this distinction in

place, I think it becomes clear that what is in play here is not knowledge but rather a mere cognitive achievement that falls short of knowledge.

I take my account of cognitive achievement from virtue epistemologists, particularly John Greco (e.g., 2002; 2007a; 2008; 2009).¹⁰ The idea is that achievements are successes that are because of ability and hence that cognitive achievements are cognitive successes (i.e., true beliefs) that are because of cognitive abilities (i.e., epistemic virtues, broadly conceived). This account of achievements is, I think, essentially correct. Achievements clearly involve success, but an archer who hits a target while lacking any relevant abilities has not exhibited an achievement even despite her success. Moreover, it is also vital that the archer's success should be because of the exercise of her relevant abilities. A skilful archer who fires at a target, but who is only successful at hitting that target because of a fortuitous series of gusts of wind, does not exhibit an achievement, even though she is successful and also possesses the relevant abilities (this would be a kind of Gettier-style case). What is required, then, is a success that is best explained in terms of the exercise of the agent's abilities—i.e., a success that is *because of* one's ability—and this is what is lacking in this case.¹¹

The same goes for cognitive achievements. Mere cognitive success does not suffice for cognitive achievement, since relevant cognitive ability is also required. Equally, however, neither does the mere conjunction of (relevant) cognitive ability and cognitive success suffice for cognitive achievement if that success is “gettierized.” If one forms a belief that there is a sheep in the field by looking at a big hairy dog that one mistakes for a sheep, then one does not exhibit a cognitive achievement even if one does have the relevant cognitive abilities and even if, as it happens, one's belief is true (e.g., there is a sheep hidden from view behind the big hairy dog). And the natural explanation for why this is the case is that one's true belief is not best explained in terms of one's cognitive abilities, but rather by the good fortune that there happens to be a sheep hidden from view behind the big hairy dog that one is looking at.

Cognitive achievements, like achievements more generally, are clearly important to us. All other things being equal, one would rather get to the truth in this way than by dumb luck, just as, all other things being equal, one would rather hit the target with one's arrow through one's ability rather than by dumb luck. Indeed, given the properties of cognitive achievements, one might also be tempted to hold that knowledge should be analyzed in terms of this notion, such that knowledge just is cognitive achievement.¹² While there are some close ties between the two notions, however, I think this would be a mistake, and one of the reasons for this is that cognitive achievements are less resistant to epistemic luck than knowledge is.¹³

The easiest way to demonstrate this point is by considering the difference between the kind of epistemic luck that is in play in Gettier-style cases, such as the “sheep” case just described, and the very different kind of epistemic luck in play in cases like the “barn façade” case. Recall that in the barn façade case the

agent—let’s call him “Barney”—forms a belief that the object before him is a barn by looking at what is in fact a barn. Unbeknownst to him, however, he is in barn façade county, where all the other barn-shaped objects are clever fakes. In both this case and the sheep case, the agent’s true belief is unsafe, in that there is a wide class of near-by possible worlds in which he continues to believe the target proposition and yet believes falsely. Moreover, I think most would agree that the epistemic luck in play ensures that neither agent has knowledge.¹⁴ That said, the form of epistemic luck in these two cases is clearly different. After all, in the sheep case, the agent doesn’t see a sheep at all; the luck at issue “intervenes” between the agent’s cognitive ability and the fact, albeit in such a way that the belief is true nonetheless. In contrast, in the barn façade case luck of this “intervening” sort is absent, and the luck is instead solely environmental. That is, while Barney really does see a barn, he has the misfortune to be in an environment that is extremely unfriendly from an epistemic point of view, and it is this feature of the environment which ensures that his belief is only luckily true.

Interestingly, while both the “intervening” epistemic luck in play in the Gettier-style cases and the “environmental” epistemic luck in play in barn-façade-style cases is incompatible with knowledge, only the former type of luck is incompatible with cognitive achievements. That is, I want to suggest that a genuine cognitive achievement is exhibited in the barn façade case, even though the agent lacks knowledge. After all, no-one would dispute that Barney is displaying the relevant cognitive abilities. Moreover, and this is the crucial point, it seems entirely natural to say that Barney’s cognitive success in this case is best explained in terms of his cognitive abilities (though we wouldn’t say this in a Gettier-style case, such as the sheep example).

Indeed, I think this point applies to achievements more generally. Imagine an archer who selects a target at random, skillfully fires at that target, and hits the target. If the Gettier-style luck were present—such as if a freak gust of wind blew the arrow off-course but a second freak gust of wind blew it back on course again—then we would not credit the agent with exhibiting an achievement. Her success, we would say, is best explained in terms of the fortuitous gusts of wind than in terms of her relevant abilities. In contrast, suppose that the luck in play were purely environmental. Suppose, for example, that nothing intervenes between the agent’s skillfully firing the arrow and her hitting the target, but that her success is still a matter of luck because she just happened to choose the one target on the range that, unbeknownst to her, is not fitted with an invisible force field that repels arrows. While in both cases the success is lucky and hence unsafe—in the sense that there is a wide class of near-by possible worlds in which the agent’s attempt to hit a target is unsuccessful—we would surely want to say in the second case that the agent exhibits a genuine achievement. After all, her abilities at archery offer the best explanation of why she is successful. It follows, then, that achievements are compatible with environmental luck even though they are incompatible with Gettier-style intervening luck.

Notice that structurally the barn façade case is just like the second archery case just described, in that the luck in play is purely environmental. Moreover, just as we are inclined to credit the archer in this case with exhibiting a genuine achievement, so we are inclined to credit Barney in the barn façade case with exhibiting a genuine cognitive achievement, despite the luck involved in both cases. In any case, the moral of the preceding discussion is that while knowledge and cognitive achievement are closely related notions, one can exhibit a cognitive achievement while failing to know because of the presence of environmental epistemic luck.¹⁵

The import of this point to Kelp's Frankfurt-style case is that what is being exhibited in this example is, I would claim, not knowledge at all, but rather a mere cognitive achievement. In order to see this, one only has to note that this case is essentially a barn-façade-style case in which the agent's true belief is infected by environmental luck. While nothing intervenes between Chris's cognitive ability and his cognitive success—he really does employ his cognitive abilities in order to gain his true belief about the time—he is in a very unfriendly environment from an epistemic point of view. Nevertheless, because the demon doesn't in fact interfere in the actual case, I think we should regard Chris's true belief as a cognitive achievement—his abilities are, after all, the best explanation of why he is successful—even though his belief is only luckily true. Crucially, however, he doesn't have knowledge, because although the environmental luck in play does not prevent him from exhibiting a cognitive achievement, it does prevent him from gaining knowledge, just as it does in the barn façade case.

Given the close connections between knowledge and cognitive achievement that I have already commented on, it is not surprising that our intuitions are less than conclusive in cases like this; after all, often if one exhibits a cognitive achievement then one will also have gained knowledge in the target proposition. Still, once one separates these two notions, then it becomes clear that while there is something very positive, from an epistemic point of view, that can be said about Chris's belief, the epistemic luck in play ensures that this is not a case of knowledge.

IV. WHITHER NOW FOR SAFETY-BASED EPISTEMOLOGY?

While I do not regard the kinds of cases offered by McEvoy and Kelp to be devastating to a safety-based epistemology, it should be noted that I am now more skeptical about the role that safety should play in one's theory of knowledge than I used to be. The reason for this is that it seems inevitable that there will be cases in which an agent has a safe belief but lacks knowledge because the direction of fit between the belief and the fact is all wrong (i.e., where the belief isn't being responsive to the facts, but rather the facts are being responsive to the belief). Consider an agent, let's call him 'Temp,' who is forming his belief about the temperature in the room by consulting a thermometer on the wall. He has no reason to doubt that this thermometer is working. Unbeknownst to him, however, the

thermometer is broken and is fluctuating within a given range. Nevertheless, as it happens this is a great way for Temp to form his beliefs about the temperature of the room because, hidden from view, there is someone in the room next to the thermostat who is observing Temp and ensuring that every time Temp goes to consult the thermometer the reading on the thermometer corresponds to the actual temperature of the room.

Clearly, Temp cannot come to know the temperature of the room by consulting a broken thermometer. Nevertheless, his beliefs are extremely safe, since in all near-by possible worlds where he forms his belief in the target proposition, his belief will be true.¹⁶ What such cases illustrate, it seems to me, is that we need two key components to a theory of knowledge over and above true belief. The first is, of course, the anti-luck condition, expressed as safety—cases like this clearly don't threaten the necessity of safety to an analysis of knowledge. The second, however, is an ability condition of some sort—i.e., a condition to the effect that the true belief was gained via the employment of the agent's reliable cognitive abilities. After all, the reason why we don't credit Temp with knowledge is that the relationship between his belief and the fact is all wrong; the facts are changing to correspond with what he believes rather than vice versa. Were we to stipulate that Temp's true belief should be the product of his cognitive ability, however, then we would be able to handle such cases.

There are two important points to note about this claim that one's theory of knowledge requires both an anti-luck and an ability condition. The first is to emphasize how this is a departure from the earlier view. After all, given that, as I noted above, it was part-and-parcel of the early view to allow that there might need to be a further condition (or conditions) in one's theory of knowledge over and above safe belief, one might naturally wonder what is so radically different about now arguing for the inclusion of an additional ability condition in one's theory of knowledge. The answer to this question is that the way I was conceiving of this additional condition (or conditions) was as merely "tweaking" the safety-based analysis of knowledge, such that it was safety that was capturing what is core to knowledge. On this view, knowledge is, in essence, non-lucky true belief. I now hold, in contrast, that the intuition that knowledge involves cognitive ability is just as strong and as central to our ordinary thinking about knowledge as our intuition that knowledge excludes luck. Moreover, as we have seen, we cannot accommodate this intuition with the anti-luck condition, however it is formulated. Adding the ability condition thus constitutes more than just a mere "tweak" to the original safety-based proposal.

The second point to note about the foregoing is that it is central to the view that the anti-luck condition—safety—and the ability condition (however that is to be formulated) impose *distinct* demands. We have already seen that the safety condition by itself cannot accommodate all cases because one needs the ability condition to deal with the Temp case. Equally, however, no formulation of the ability condition will be able to handle all cases either, since there will be cases which can only be

handled by appeal to an anti-luck condition. We witnessed one such case earlier on when we discussed the barn façade example. In this case there is no dispute that cognitive ability is being appropriately employed by Barney; indeed, it is being employed to the extent that he is properly credited with exhibiting a cognitive achievement. Nevertheless, Barney does not know that what he is looking at is a barn, and the reason for this is that his belief is only luckily true; it is unsafe.¹⁷

So whereas my earlier view was a form of anti-luck epistemology, my current position has altered slightly and I now endorse a different view, what one might call an *anti-luck virtue epistemology*.¹⁸

ENDNOTES

1. Defenses of the safety principle (and related principles) can be found in a number of places. See, for example, Sainsbury 1997; Sosa 1999; and Williamson (2000).
2. For some critical discussions of my account of luck, see Coffman 2007; Riggs 2007 and 2009; and Lackey 2008.
3. The non-core type of luck that is incompatible with knowledge need not concern us here. For further discussion of this secondary type of malignant epistemic luck, see Pritchard 2004; 2005a, chap. 6; 2005b.
4. For more on the sensitivity principle, see Dretske 1970; and Nozick 1981. For more on the relationship between safety and sensitivity more generally, see Pritchard 2005a, chap. 6; 2008b.
5. This is the version of safety that I defend in Pritchard 2007a, and which I claim can avoid various objections that have been proposed for safety by, for example, Greco 2007b.
6. See Miscevic 2007 for one development of the safety-based approach that I defend to non-fully contingent propositions.
7. The phrase is due to Schiffer 1996.
8. Pritchard 2007a discusses some issues raised by Axtell 2007; Coffman 2007; Goldberg 2007; Greco 2007b; Hiller and Neta 2007; Lackey 2007; and Riggs 2007. Pritchard 2008c revisits an earlier symposium on virtue epistemology and epistemic luck involving myself (Pritchard 2003), Greco (2003), and Axtell (2003), and also discusses an additional paper by Becker (2006). For two recent papers that critique the safety principle (albeit not my version of it), see Neta and Rohrbaugh 2004; and Comesaña 2005.
9. Interestingly, McEvoy anticipates this response to his objection, and tries to deal with it by citing some real-life examples of misprints made by reliable newspapers, such as *The New York Times* mistakenly printing that the Dalai Lama had visited Nepal often, rather than just once. I don't think such examples demonstrate what they are meant to demonstrate, however, since the type of mistake involved is very different. That a sub-editor might not realize that the Dalai Lama had only visited Nepal once rather than often is a very different sort of mistake from that same sub-editor not noticing that the lottery results have been printed wrongly; the latter error is clearly much easier to spot, and will be spotted if the sub-editors are doing their job properly.

10. The general idea behind Greco's account of cognitive achievement can be found in earlier works by Sosa (1988; 1991; 2007) and Zagzebski (1996; 1999).
11. There are, of course, other potential ways of reading the "because of" than in explanatory terms. See, for example, Sosa 2007, *passim* for an alternative proposal in this regard. The explanatory account of "because of" strikes me as the most developed in the literature, however, and this is why I opt for it here. That said, as far as this paper goes, nothing of importance rides on which account of this relation one endorses.
12. This is the line taken by Greco 2002; 2007a; 2008; 2009. Cf. Sosa 2007, *passim*.
13. The other reason why I think one shouldn't identify knowledge with cognitive achievement is that there are some cases of knowledge that don't involve cognitive achievement. I discuss such cases in Pritchard 2008a; 2009; forthcoming.
14. For two examples of epistemologists who hold that the agent in the barn façade case does have knowledge, see Hetherington 1998; and Sosa 2007, chap. 2.
15. I defend this line of argument at greater length in Pritchard 2008a; 2009; forthcoming.
16. This might not follow from the example as it is just described, but it will certainly follow if we supplement it in some straightforward ways—e.g., stipulate the person in the room will never desert his post, that he is extremely reliable and diligent in his work, and so on.
17. Although it isn't important for our purposes here, I also hold that sometimes agents can possess knowledge even though they haven't exhibited the corresponding cognitive achievement. For more on this point, see Pritchard 2008a; 2009; forthcoming.
18. I am grateful to Mike DePaul for encouraging me to write this paper, and to Christoph Kelp for helpful discussion of related topics.

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