# In Defense of Subject-Sensitive Invariantism

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#### Abstract

Keith DeRose has argued that the two main problems facing subject-sensitive invariantism (SSI) come from the appropriateness of certain third-person denials of knowledge and the inappropriateness of now you know it, now you don't claims. I argue that proponents of SSI can adequately address both problems. First, I argue that the debate between contextualism and SSI has failed to account for an important pragmatic feature of third-person denials of knowledge. Appealing to these pragmatic features, I show that straightforward third-person denials are inappropriate in the relevant cases. And while there are certain denials that are appropriate, they pose no problems for SSI. Next, I offer an explanation, compatible with SSI, of the oddity of now you know it, now you don't claims. To conclude, I discuss the intuitiveness of purism, whose rejection is the source of many problems for SSI. I propose to explain away the intuitiveness of purism as a side-effect of the narrow focus of previous epistemological inquiries.

Keith DeRose has argued that the appropriateness of third-person denials of knowledge and the inappropriateness of now you know it, now you don't claims are the two greatest problems facing subjective-sensitive invariantism (henceforth SSI). In what follows, I defend SSI by addressing both of these problems. In  $\S 1$ , I argue that denials of knowledge pose no problem for SSI because the debate has made a crucial mistake about which types of denials are appropriate. After clarifying the linguistic data and considering our attributions and denials of knowledge more carefully, I provide, in  $\S 2$ , an SSI-friendly explanation of why most now you know it, now you don't claims are inappropriate to assert. Of course, the problems raised by these claims are just one of the many problems arising from SSI's rejection of purism – the thesis that only truth-relevant factors are relevant in determining whether or not a true belief counts as knowledge. Thus, a full defense of SSI requires some explanation of why purism seems so intuitive. In  $\S 3$ , I offer one explanation on which the intuitiveness of purism is a side-effect of the narrow focus of previous epistemological inquiries.

#### 1 Third-Person Denials and Retractions

The problem cases for SSI are those in which the practical stakes salient to the conversation are high and the practical stakes relevant to the potential subject of knowledge are low.

Mary and John are going to the bank on a Friday afternoon. Seeing a long line out the door, Mary calls Paul to see if he knows whether or not the bank will be open the next

<sup>\*</sup>I would like to thank Bill Woods, John Collins, and Patrick Greenough for their comments on earlier versions of this paper.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>(185: DeRose 2009)

day. Though it is of no significance to Paul whether the bank will be open, it is of crucial importance to both Mary and John that they deposit their paychecks by the close of business on Saturday.

Mary: [After Calling Paul] Paul was here last week on Saturday. He knows

that the bank will be open tomorrow.

John: Banks sometimes do change their hours. Remember, we must deposit

this check by tomorrow or else the bank will foreclose on our house.

Are you sure Paul knows that the bank will be open?

Mary: I completely forgot about that. You're right. Paul doesn't know.

It is generally agreed that once John informs Mary of their precarious situation, it is appropriate for Mary to assert that Paul does not know. Let us call these *straightforward denials* since they straightforwardly assert the negation of the proposition that Paul knows. The contextualist argues that Mary's straightforward denial is appropriate because what she says is true. And since Mary says of Paul that he does know when the practical stakes are low, the use of 'knows' suggests that the standards that a subject must meet in order to count as knowing depend upon the standards that govern the conversational context.<sup>2</sup> When the conversational standards are high, the standards governing knowledge attributions are high and when the conversational standards are low, the standards governing knowledge attributions are low.

In contrast, SSI claims that the standards a subject must meet in order to count as knowing depend upon the subject's practical context. As a result, SSI evaluates Mary's denial of knowledge as false. After all, Paul is in a low stakes situation and so his epistemic state seems strong enough for his true belief to count as knowledge in his low stakes practical context.

Keith DeRose has concluded that "these third-person cases provide a powerful objection – to [his] thinking, a killer objection – to SSI." Of course, it is open for the subject-sensitive invariantist to explain the appropriateness of Mary's denial by appealing to the warranted assertibility of Mary's false denial rather than by appealing to the truth of what is asserted. These proposals have opened up a debate about the validity of these pragmatic appeals.<sup>4</sup> But as I will argue, proponents of SSI, as well as proponents of classical invariantism, need not appeal to any controversial pragmatic explanations because the debate has failed to recognize a problem with these straightforward third-person denials. As I will show, there is a well-known pragmatic feature of factive verbs that makes straightforward third-person denials of knowledge in high stakes conversational contexts inappropriate. Let us turn to this pragmatic feature.

#### 1.1 Factive Presuppositions and Third-Person Denials

Certain sentences, when uttered, trigger presuppositions. "Sentence S presupposes that P if and only if the use of S would be inappropriate in a context in which the speaker was not presupposing that P." The classic example of presupposition triggering comes from the use of definite noun phrases. "The King of France is bald" triggers the presupposition that there exists one and only one King of France. And if a speaker successfully asserts this sentence, it will be presupposed in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>I am adopting DeRose's use of the phrase "count as knowing". A subject counts as knowing just in case "it can be truthfully said that the subject 'knows'." (187: DeRose 2009)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>(65: DeRose 2009)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See chapter 3 of (DeRose 2009) as well as (Bach 2005) and (Brown 2006)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>(7: Stalnaker 1999)

conversational context that there is one and only one King of France. Just as definite noun phrases trigger presuppositions, sentences with factive verbs trigger presuppositions as well.<sup>6</sup>

- (1) John regrets going to the picnic.
- (1') John went to the picnic.
- (2) Bill remembered that he already paid the bill.
- (2') Bill already paid the bill.
- (1) and (2) respectively presuppose (1') and (2'). Since 'knows' is a factive verb, (3) triggers the presupposition that its complement, (3'), is true. Call this the *factive presupposition*.
  - (3) Kate knows that she passed the test.
  - (3') Kate passed the test.

What is important for our discussions is that factive verbs also trigger a factive presupposition under negation.

- (4) John does not regret going to the picnic.
- (5) Bill does not remember that he already paid the bill.
- (6) Kate doesn't know that she passed the test.

Asserting (4), (5), and (6) respectively trigger the presupposition that (1'), (2'), and (3') are true. The fact that 'knows' triggers a factive presupposition under negation has important consequences for the appropriateness of third-person denials of knowledge.

In the high stakes bank case above, it would be inappropriate for Mary to assert that the bank will be open because she does not possess the evidence that would license both her and John to take for granted that the bank will be open the following day. And since asserting that Paul does not know that the bank will be open triggers the presupposition that the bank will be open, it would also be inappropriate for Mary to assert that Paul does not know. Given the presupposition triggering of factive verbs, straightforward third-person denials of knowledge are inappropriate in high stakes conversational contexts. Therefore, the contextualist's main argument against SSI is based upon a false premise.

#### 1.2 Hedged and Unpronounced Denials

Though our discussion could stop there, it would be useful to have a more thorough discussion of the linguistic data that comes from this type of case. After all, the debate between contextualism and SSI has generally assumed that straightforward third-person denials are appropriate when the stakes governing the conversational context are high while the stakes governing the subject's context are low. So it may seem a bit strange to simply insist that such denials are not appropriate. By carefully considering the linguistic data, I hope to clarify and precisify my objection. As I will explain, I am not arguing that all third-person denials of knowledge are inappropriate in these cases. Rather, my

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>See (218-220: Kadmon 2001)

aim is to show first that straightforward denials are inappropriate and second that the linguistic data only supports the appropriateness of a more nuanced set of third-person denials. And as I will argue, these more nuanced denials are perfectly compatible with SSI.

To begin, let's return to some paradigmatic examples found in the literature. In most of these cases, the speaker is retracting a previous knowledge attribution. What is surprising is that the standard view of the retraction data as straightforward denials simply fails to take into account the way the cases were actually presented. Consider the following examples (emphasis mine): DeRose writes, "I guess I didn't know that they were zebras." Stanley writes, "Bill doesn't really know that the bank will be open on Saturday." MacFarlane writes, "No, I suppose I didn't."

In each of these examples, the retractions are hedged in some way or other. And it seems reasonable to interpret them as tantamount to asserting, "I might not know that P." The use of the modal 'might' changes what is expressed in an important way. The hedged retraction expresses that P is epistemically possible in the conversational context. In the bank cases, this retraction achieves its aim by adding back into the common ground a subset of worlds in which the bank is not open the next day. Thus, one appropriate type of denial is a hedged denial. Of course, the proponent of SSI is happy to acknowledge that one may appropriately assert that S might not know that P even though S does in fact know. After all, one may not be warranted in asserting the latter.

Alternatively, in some of the retractions, like the case we considered above, the whole verb phrase (e.g., "No, he doesn't") or just the complement of 'knows' (e.g., "No, he doesn't know") is left unpronounced. Call these unpronounced denials. It has typically been assumed that the unpronounced element should be filled in by a knows-that phrase. Given the problems with this interpretation, we could interpret the assertion by filling in the unpronounced element with the subordinate clause, whether or not P. On this interpretation, the denial seems perfectly appropriate since the assertion that Paul doesn't know whether or not P does not trigger the presupposition that P. As in the case of the hedged denial, the unpronounced denial achieves the aim of introducing back into the common ground worlds in which the bank is not open the following day. Thus, interpreted as a knows-whether claim, the unpronounced denial appropriately retracts the truth of P from the common ground.

Of course, these knows-whether claims need not function as retractions. But if such claims are not functioning as retractions, then they must be updating common ground in some way or other. So what information does the claim that S does not know whether or not P convey? By considering a simple answer to this question, a problem arises for my appeal to knows-whether claims.<sup>13</sup> If Paul does not know whether or not the bank will be open, then this appears to entail that Paul does not know that the bank will be open. Perhaps, by expressing the denial as a knows-whether claim, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>(926: (DeRose 1992))

 $<sup>^8</sup>$ (5: Stanley 2005) Interestingly enough, DeRose recognizes that the use of "really" is problematic but says nothing about retractions that use terms like "guess" or "suppose". (fn.11,59: DeRose 2009)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>(210: MacFarlane 2005)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>There is an interesting question of how to retract P. That is, which not-P worlds should we add back into the common ground? We can solve this problem by appealing to the account offered by the AGM theory of belief revision (c.f. Alchourrón, Gardenfors, and Makinson 1985). Since most of these cases are ones in which the speaker is responding to an assertion that some not-P worlds are possible, it would be reasonable if the speakers retracted to the closest set of possible worlds that contained some of these not-P worlds.

 $<sup>^{11}</sup>$ In DeRose's original presentation, the retraction is simply expressed as "Well, no." (913: DeRose 1992)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>It is worth noting that I am not proposing as (Schaffer 2008) does, that knows-that claims should be understood as making contrastive knowledge claims or knows-whether claims. I am only concerned here with explicit knows-whether claims.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this worry.

speaker simply avoids triggering the presupposition that the bank will be open while at the same time asserting that Paul does not know. If this is correct, then the proponent of SSI is left with the same old problem of trying to explain why it is appropriate to assert this new type of denial when it is true that Paul knows. Fortunately, there are good reasons to reject the entailment.

To provide a complete response, one would need to provide some account of the relationship between the meaning of knows-whether and knows-that claims. However, the debate about the general relationship between knowledge-wh (e.g. knows whether, who, when, etc.) and knowledgethat has grown quite large and sophisticated. So it would go beyond the scope of this paper to argue for one or another view. However, we can use some observations from the debate to highlight why one might reject the entailment from not knowing whether to not knowing that.

It is widely acknowledged that knowledge-wh requires one to know the answer to a question, and that what counts as a good answer to the question at hand depends upon the conversational context. For example, to borrow an example found in (Parent 2014), suppose you assert that you are in Johannesburg in response to the question, do you know where you are? Such a response may count as a good answer in the context where you have just stepped off a plane but not count as a good answer in the context where you are stepping out of a cab in Johannesburg. Thus, while one knows that one is in Johannesburg in both cases, one knows where one is only in the former context. Since the truth-conditions of knowledge-wh claims clearly vary depending upon features of the conversational context, the proponent of SSI should acknowledge that the meaning of knowledgewh claims is context-sensitive. However, the proponent of SSI is also committed to the fact that the meaning of knowledge-that claims are not context-sensitive. By holding both views, one may conclude that there are contexts in which the assertion "Paul knows that the bank will be open" is true while the assertion "Paul knows whether or not the bank will be open" is false. In the high stakes bank case, in order to answer the question of whether or not the bank will be open, Paul must know that the bank will be open having not changed its hours. However, in order to know that the bank will be open in his own practical context, Paul can simply meet the lower standards. And in his context, he need not rule out the possibility that the bank has changed its hours. Therefore, the proponent of SSI can reject the proposed entailment by adopting the view that the truth of knowswhether assertions depend upon the context of utterance but the truth of knows-that assertions do not.<sup>14</sup>

To conclude our discussion of third-person denials, let us consider the example that DeRose has presented as a best type of case for contextualism. <sup>15</sup> The example is particularly interesting since it appears to involve a third-person denial that is not a retraction, has no unpronounced elements, and at first glance, does not appear to be hedged in any way. 16 If such a case existed, then my response to the contextualist's criticism may appear misguided since I have simply ignored the most difficult case for SSI. Since the details of DeRose's example will not matter for our discussion, let me simply restate the relevant denial to fit our bank case. Suppose that Mary possesses the same set of evidence as Paul regarding the bank's hours; they have both been to the bank the Saturday before. In response to John's question, we can imagine Mary asserting, "Paul has the same reason I have for thinking the bank will open but, like me, he doesn't know that the bank will be open."

This type of denial avoids my initial objection since it does not trigger the factive presupposition. But why not? The presupposition seems to be canceled because of the phrase "like me" that pre-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>For further discussion of the relationship between knowledge-wh and knowledge-that, see (Karttunen 1977), (Stanley and Williamson 2001), (Schaffer 2007), (Stanley 2011), and (Parent 2014).  $^{15}(4-5: DeRose\ 2009)$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out these features of the example.

cedes the denial. Thus, the key to understanding this type of denial comes from making sense of this phrase and the function it plays in the conversation. So in what respects is Mary asserting Paul to be like her? In this context, the phrase expresses that both the speaker and the subject of knowledge possess similar evidence with regards to the target proposition. This much is clear. However, is anything else expressed by the phrase? Intuitively, Mary's assertion does seem to provide some other information. If Paul was asked in Mary's conversational context whether or not the bank would be open, he wouldn't be able to say either. Of course, it seems somewhat implausible to think that Mary is identifying this somewhat complicated similarity between her and Paul. However, there is a simple type of similarity that may be expressed that does provide this information. In §3, I will argue that first-person denials of knowledge typically express a lack of confidence or belief. Since my overall defense of SSI will rely on this claim, let me suppose for the moment that it is correct. On this assumption, when Mary denies knowledge to herself, she is expressing a lack of belief. And so if she claims that Paul also fails to know and fails to know for similar reasons, then she seems to be expressing that Paul shares a similar lack of confidence or belief. On this interpretation, the appropriateness of Mary's assertion is perfectly compatible with SSI. For invariantists and contextualists alike, if you lack belief, you lack knowledge regardless of the standards in play.

In summary, it is important to distinguish those third-person denials of knowledge that are appropriate in high stakes contexts and those that are not. Having considered a variety of such denials, we find that in the cases found in the literature, the appropriate denials are hedged, contain unpronounced elements, or involve other complicated phrases. However, none of these denials pose problems for SSI. In addition, the presupposition triggering of factive verbs appears to show that straightforward third-person denials are inappropriate in high stakes contexts. Therefore, by cleaning up the linguistic data, we have undermined the contextualist's most powerful argument against SSI.<sup>17</sup>

# 2 Now You Know It, Now You Don't

Now you know it, now you don't claims are "claims to the effect that matters were (or will be, or would have been) different with regard to whether a subject knows some fact when (or if) such-and-such was (or will be, or had been) the case, where differences in circumstances being imagined between the two situations being compared (one of which is often actual, present situation of the subject) concern only some non-truth-relevant matters." <sup>18</sup> Consider the following examples.

- (a) I know, but what I said before "I don't know" is true.
- (b) I don't know, but I previously did.
- (c) Mary does know that P, but she wouldn't have known if more had been at stake.
- (d) Mary doesn't know that P, but if less were at stake, she would know.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>The contextualist might object to my argument by following (Hazlett 2010) in rejecting the factivity of 'knows'. However, as Hazlett acknowledges in (Hazlett 2012), these arguments concern the semantics of 'knows' while the factive presupposition triggering of 'knows' is merely a pragmatic feature. So these semantic arguments do not threaten the factive presupposition triggering of third-person denials of knowledge. The contextualist may also note that some denials of knowledge are still appropriate in the cases of interest. And notably, these are cases in which the factive presupposition is not triggered. For example, uttering the first-person denial "I don't know that the bank will be open tomorrow" does not trigger the factive presupposition that the bank will be open. However, it is well-known that SSI predicts that in the high stakes bank cases, it is appropriate and true of Mary to say of herself that she does not know. See (61: DeRose 2009) for discussion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>(194: DeRose 2009)

For stylistic purposes, let's call these now-you-don't claims.<sup>19</sup> While these now-you-don't claims are intuitively very odd, SSI entails that now-you-don't claims can be true. As DeRose notes, this consequence of SSI arises from the rejection of purism.<sup>20</sup> As noted above, purism is the thesis that only truth-relevant factors are relevant in determining whether or not a true belief counts as knowledge.<sup>21</sup> Since now-you-don't claims are always false according to purism, purists have a straightforward explanation of their oddity. However, by rejecting purism, proponents of SSI admit that speakers could truly assert now-you-don't claims. While contextualism also entails that certain now-you-don't claims, such as (a), could be true, DeRose has argued – convincingly in my opinion – that contextualists can plausibly explain why now-you-don't claims are odd in virtue of the fact that one may not assert them. He concludes that "contextualism avoids endorsing the problematic [now-you-don't] sentences that plague SSI." <sup>22</sup>

I will set aside DeRose's defense of contextualism since my aim is to respond to his indictment of SSI. In fact, even proponents of SSI have agreed with DeRose's conclusion. While these proponents have followed DeRose by providing their own explanations of why now-you-don't claims are infelicitous, they all agree that these explanations have their limits and have concluded that the felicity of now-you-don't claims is a price one has to pay for abandoning purism.<sup>23</sup> I believe that both critics and defenders of SSI have been too quick in their conclusions. So on behalf of SSI, I will offer an explanation of the infelicity of a broader array of now-you-don't claims. I will then show that the small set of remaining now-you-don't claims are not as problematic as they at first appear.

The four examples of now-you-don't claims listed above correspond to the four types of now-you-don't claims that are relevant for SSI. LOW to HIGH claims are claims to the effect that a subject knows in the current low stakes context but wouldn't if the stakes were higher. HIGH to LOW claims are claims to the effect that a subject doesn't know in the current high stakes context but would if the stakes were lower.

	LOW to HIGH	HIGH to LOW
First-Person	(a)	(b)
Third-Person	(c)	(d)

Table 1: Taxonomy of now-you-don't claims

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>(a) and (b) offer temporal examples. (c) and (d) offer modal examples.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> "The problem for SSI is of course intimately related to the problem [of denying purism] – so much so that it may be best to view these as two faces of a single problem." (195: DeRose 2009)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Fantl and McGrath define purism about knowledge in the following equivalent way: "For any subjects S1 and S2, if S1 and S2 are just alike in their strength of epistemic position with respect to p, then S1 and S2 are just alike in whether they are in a position to know." (29: Fantl and McGrath 2009) Stanley uses the term 'intellectualism' as the label for the thesis that "knowledge does not depend upon practical facts." (5: Stanley 2005) Stanley's thesis is a more inclusive one since intellectualism but not purism is true if believing depends upon practical facts.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>(199: DeRose 2009)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>See (Hawthorne 2006) and (196-198: DeRose 2009). (Stanley 2005) tries to lessen the blow by attempting to show that other accounts of knowledge like reliabilism are also plagued by similar now-you-don't claims.

#### 2.1 HIGH to LOW cases.

It has typically been thought that employed by SSI, the appeal to warranted assertibility only works to rule out first-person HIGH to LOW cases. DeRose writes, "the problem with this escape is that it only helps with some of the problematic sentences that need to be handled, leaving other, equally troublesome examples untouched." <sup>24</sup> And he states that LOW to HIGH cases along with third-person HIGH to LOW cases are not explained by SSI's appeal to unassertibility.

Though DeRose is right about the LOW to HIGH cases, he is wrong about third-person HIGH to LOW cases. For he has failed to recognize that every third-person now-you-don't claim triggers the presupposition that P is true. For example, suppose one asserts that Mary doesn't know that P, but if less were at stake, she would know. This assertion triggers the presupposition that P so a speaker is warranted in asserting (d) only if she is warranted in asserting that P. In HIGH to LOW cases, the speaker is not warranted in asserting that P and as a result, third-person HIGH to LOW claims are inappropriate to assert. Thus, SSI's appeal to the unassertibility of now-you-don't claims covers all HIGH to LOW cases. All that is left to consider are first- and third-person LOW to HIGH cases. Explaining the oddity of these claims will require a more substantial discussion about attributions and denials of knowledge.

#### 2.2 First-person LOW to HIGH cases

First-person LOW to HIGH cases are those in which a speaker asserts, "I know but I wouldn't know if the stakes were higher." In order to explain why these assertions are inappropriate without appealing to purism or contextualism, we must clarify what first-person denials of knowledge express when expressed within these now-you-don't claims. Denials of knowledge have a disjunctive form. A subject may fail to know that P if the alethic, doxastic, or epistemic condition required for knowledge is not satisfied. But each of these distinct ways of not knowing are not all relevant for first-person LOW to HIGH cases. Since the speaker is also asserting that she knows, then in the cases of interest, the alethic condition must be satisfied. If the purportedly known proposition were false, then the now-you-don't assertion would also be false and inappropriate. In addition, the speaker may fail to know because of a change in the speaker's epistemic state when she moves from the LOW to HIGH case. However, since now-you-don't claims do not involve comparisons across situations where the subject's epistemic state changes, we can set this possibility aside. So the remaining cases of interests are ones in which the first-person denials of knowledge are true because were the subject in HIGH, the doxastic condition, the epistemic condition, or both would not be met.

Let me first summarize my strategy in accounting for these cases. I propose that first-person denials of knowledge typically express a lack of confidence. If this is right, then in first-person LOW to HIGH cases, now-you-don't claims express that the speakers knows but would lack sufficient confidence to count as knowing were the speaker in a HIGH case. I will then argue that on this interpretation speakers are not warranted in asserting these claims. In order to justify this explanation, we must first consider what first-person denials of knowledge typically express.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>(196: DeRose 2009)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>I am assuming that in HIGH cases, the speaker is not in a strong enough epistemic position to assert that P. Therefore, this leaves open cases in which the speaker's epistemic state meets the standards required for asserting P in the HIGH conversational context. Because the speaker meets these standards, we cannot appeal to the presupposition triggering of 'knows' to argue that third-person now-you-don't claims are unwarranted. In §2.3.2, I consider cases where the speaker is in a privileged epistemic position with respect to P. While my discussion is situated within a discussion of third-person LOW to HIGH cases, I intend it to explain these third-person HIGH to LOW cases as well.

Denials of knowledge are most frequently found in first-person form, and the most frequently used first-person denials leave the complement unpronounced (e.g., "I don't know"). <sup>26</sup> In the vast majority of these cases, the speaker is responding to a question and the salient question fixes the content of the unpronounced complement. For example, if I assert that I do not know in response to your question about why John was angry, I am simply asserting that I do not know why John was angry. While this may imply that there is some proposition(s) that I do not know, I am not directly asserting that I do not know some particular proposition. <sup>27</sup> So it is worth noting that the majority of first-person denials of knowledge are not expressions of a lack of propositional knowledge but ways of expressing that one does not know the answer to a question.

Limiting our concern to explicit denials of propositional knowledge, what do these denials typically express? Do they express that the alethic, doxastic, or epistemic condition required for knowledge has not been met? The corpus data suggests that first-person denials of propositional knowledge are somewhat uncommon.<sup>28</sup> And if we look through the data, it becomes clear that one can replace almost every use of "I do not know that" with phrases such as "I do not think/believe that", "I am not sure that", or "I have doubts that" without any loss of meaning.<sup>29</sup> For example, consider the following two examples from the concordance data:

- (7) I do not know that men will ever accept that.
- (8) I do not know that he can do anything to secure himself the nomination.

(7) was asserted in response to someone's expressed opinion that it will be a long time before men can accept women wearing so-called men's clothes. This denial expresses that the speaker, in contrast, does not think that men will ever accept this. (8) was asserted in response to the question of what a politician could do to win a race. (8) expresses that the speaker does not believe that there is anything the politician can do. Thus, ordinary use suggests that first-person denials of propositional knowledge are typically used to express a lack of confidence. That is, first-person denials typically express that the doxastic condition required for knowledge has not been met.<sup>30</sup>

In order to bolster the case for this interpretation, consider the difference between the following two assertions as they would be made in a high stakes bank case.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>Data from (COCA, Davies 2008-, accessed March 19, 2014)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>What I assert may imply that I do not know any proposition of the form, John was angry because X. For a summary of debate about the relationship between knowing the answer to a question and knowledge that, see (Parent 2014).

 $<sup>^{28}\</sup>mathrm{My}$  COCA search produced 23 examples of first-person denials of propositional knowledge in comparison to 277 examples of first-person denials where the complement is unpronounced. The contrast is even greater if we include in the latter group first-person denials of the form I do not know why, I do not know who, etc.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>In some cases, asserting that I do not know that P is tantamount to asserting that I cannot say/assert that P. This suggests that the speaker is expressing that she is not in a sufficiently strong epistemic position to assert that P, and thereby is not in a sufficiently strong epistemic position to know that P. While I do not dispute this interpretation, I think that these first-person denials of knowledge also express a lack of confidence. I lay out my argument for this claim below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>Instead of appealing to ordinary language use, we could also appeal to the psychological explanation offered in (Nagel 2008). Nagel argues that that there are plausible psychological reason to think that subjects in high stakes contexts are less confident even though they have access to the same information. Thus, first-person denials of knowledge in high-stakes contexts express a lack of confidence.

- (9) I do not know that the bank will be open but I think that it will be.
- (10) # I do not know that the bank will be open but I believe that it will be open.

Why does (9) appear perfectly appropriate but (10) seem somewhat strange? In fact, without further explanation, (10) appears inappropriate to assert.<sup>31</sup> Assuming that the bank will be open, these embedded first-person denials of knowledge are true if the speaker fails to meet either the doxastic or epistemic condition required for knowledge. Let's first consider the possibility that these first-person denials merely express that the speaker's belief fails to meet the epistemic standard required to know. If that is the case, then (10) is perfectly appropriate to assert for one is simply asserting that one has a belief that does not count as knowledge. And there is nothing unwarranted about asserting facts about one's doxastic states even if these doxastic states fail to meet the epistemic standards required for assertion. Therefore, if first-person denials only expressed the fact that the epistemic condition required for knowledge was not met, then we would be left without a good explanation of why asserting (10) seems inappropriate.<sup>32</sup>

Next consider the possibility that first-person denials express a lack of confidence. On this interpretation, there is a fairly simple explanation of the difference between asserting (9) and (10). It is plausible that merely thinking that p requires less confidence than believing that p. Therefore, if first-person denials express a lack of confidence that is incompatible with believing but not incompatible with thinking then one should be warranted in asserting (9) but not (10).

While the linguistic data suggests that first-person denials of propositional knowledge typically express a lack of confidence, before we apply this interpretation of first-person denials, we must convince ourselves that these denials express a lack of confidence when embedded in now-you-don't claims. After all, first-person denials do not appear to express a lack of confidence when embedded in certain conditionals.<sup>33</sup> For example, consider the following cases:

- (11) If I did not have hands, I would not know that I had hands.
- (12) If I were in fake barn country, I would not know that I was looking at a barn.

As I noted, denials of knowledge have a disjunctive form. And I have proposed that as a default, first-person denials express that the doxastic condition required for knowledge has not been met. While the denials embedded in (11) and (12) do not express a lack of confidence, there is a simple explanation why the default interpretation should not hold. In (11) and (12), the antecedents respectively express that the alethic and epistemic condition required for knowledge has not been met. So the truth of the antecedents is sufficient for the speaker to lack knowledge. Therefore, in these cases, we do not need to appeal to the default that the doxastic condition does not hold. In contrast, in the relevant now-you-don't claims, the imagined scenario is one where the practical situation of the speaker is different. The default interpretation should apply in these cases because even if we

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup>In my COCA search, I did find one case in which the speaker denied knowledge while expressing belief. However, this case as well as others that one might produce are typically accompanied by claims that one has no way of knowing either P or not-P. For example, one my assert, "I believe that John will make it on time but at the moment, but there is no way of knowing." These look like special forced choice cases famously discussed by William James in (James 1956). If James is right, then in cases such as these where one's intellect cannot decide, subjects may rationally choose to believe the proposition that will bring about the better consequences.

 $<sup>^{32}</sup>$ The appeal to warranted assertibility will not work. One may know that one does not know but also know that one believes.

 $<sup>^{33}</sup>$ Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

did assume that the practical situation of the subject was different, this would not entail that either the alethic or epistemic condition did not hold. After all, just because the stakes are higher does not mean that the subject's epistemic state does not meet the standards relevant for the higher stakes. Of course, the practical stakes in the imagined scenario may be extremely high and in such a scenario, it may be clear that the standards required for knowledge are not met. In these cases, the default interpretation does not apply. Let me set aside such cases for the moment since I will consider them below.

Now that we have an interpretation of these denials in the relevant cases, we have the resources to explain the inappropriateness of first-person LOW to HIGH claims. To provide this explanation, consider a variant of the bank case in which it is Friday afternoon and John is advising Mary what to do over the phone.

Mary: I just arrived at the bank to deposit my paycheck but there's a line

out the door.

John: Is there any reason you have to deposit your paycheck now?

Mary: Well, if it were next weekend, I would definitely have had to wait

in line. I have an important payment due next week, and the bank would have foreclosed on my house if I hadn't made my deposit. But at the moment, there's no pressing matter. I would, however,

prefer to get this done before the weekend is over.

John: Well, do you know if the bank is open tomorrow? If it is, you can

just come back then.

Mary: # You're right, I do know that the bank will be open. I was here

two weeks ago on a Saturday and it was open then. I'll just come back. Of course, if this was next Friday, I wouldn't have known

that the bank would be open.

While Mary's final assertions are conjointly inappropriate, we can offer two distinct but compatible explanations of why Mary's assertions are inappropriate. The first explanation applies in a special set of cases that are important for the debate between purism and impurism. DeRose has noted that the sensitivity of 'knows' to practical factors is best made in cases where the subject's confidence remains stable between LOW and HIGH contexts. So if first-person denials typically express a lack of confidence and we are considering just those cases in which the subject's doxastic state remains stable, first-person denials would simply be false. Mary would be falsely asserting that her confidence would be lower in HIGH than in LOW. Therefore, in the cases that are relevant for adjudicating between purism and impurism, there is a simple reason why first-person LOW to HIGH claims are odd. They are simply false.

Even if we widen our consideration of cases, we can offer an alternative explanation of why Mary's now-you-don't claim seems odd and inappropriate. My suggestion is that they are inappropriate because they undermine the speaker's self-attribution of knowledge. Mary, if she is an epistemically rational agent, should assign a confidence that is proportionate to her evidence. In addition, since Mary possesses the same exact information and evidence in both the LOW and HIGH bank cases, if

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> "The key question dividing [purists] from [impurists] on the relation between stakes and knowledge is whether two subject, both of whom are equally confident that a proposition is true, can differ from one another in whether they know the proposition in question just because one but only one of them is in a high-stakes situation in which it is much more important that she be right." (192-193: DeRose 2009)

she were epistemically rational, she should not change her confidence between the two cases.<sup>35</sup> This entails that if Mary's confidence did vacillate, we would have reason to think that Mary's current belief about the bank's hours might not be rational. Under these circumstances, we might conclude that Mary is not sufficiently sensitive to the evidence suggesting that Mary should not count as a knower in the first place.<sup>36</sup> Thus, by asserting that she would not know were the stakes higher, Mary is undermining her initial claim to know. So first-person LOW to HIGH claims are generally inappropriate because they express an incoherent set of claims. First, Mary asserts that she knows and is thereby confident that the bank will be open. Next, on the interpretation of first-person denials that I have argued for, the subsequent counterfactual denial of knowledge expresses that a change in the practical factors alone would reduce Mary's confidence. But this latter claim suggests that Mary should not count as a knower.

### 2.3 Third-person LOW to HIGH cases

To account for the remaining third-person LOW to HIGH cases, we must differentiate two situations where LOW to HIGH claims are asserted in terms of the relative epistemic strength of the subject and attributor of knowledge.

**Privileged Subject:** The subject's epistemic state is strictly stronger with respect to P than the attributor's.

**Privileged Attributor:** The attributor's epistemic state is at least as strong with respect to P as the subject's.

#### 2.3.1 Privileged subject cases

Now-you-don't claims would be odd if asserted in privileged subject cases. In the bank case, we would not say of the bank manager that he fails to know that the bank will be open even if the stakes were fairly high. Though it may be very important to the manager that the bank be open – perhaps his job depends upon it - he may still count as knowing. If the subject has more expertise, we will not be in a position to judge the exact strength of the subject's epistemic position. We simply know that the subject's epistemic position is stronger with respect to the relevant proposition than our own. As a result, we would not be in a position to evaluate whether or not the subject's epistemic state is strong enough for her true belief to count as knowing in the high stakes context. At best, we could offer a hedged denial by asserting that the bank manager might not know. It might be objected that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup>(Nagel 2008) has argued that subjects should have varying degrees of confidence in low and high stakes contexts. It is worth noting that Nagel seems committed to the claim that both first- and third-person LOW to HIGH claims are appropriate. And while I am happy to admit that there may some notion of "confidence" on which the subject should vary their confidence, there are notions of "confidence" on which subject should not vary their confidence. One such notion corresponds to epistemic probability and another notion corresponds to fair betting rates. Since the latter is easier to explain, I will appeal to this notion. Suppose the subject were asked to identify fair betting rates on the proposition that the bank will be open the next day. Let a bet on Q be a game in which one receives the prize P if Q and nothing otherwise. A fair betting rate is then the ratio between the cost C of playing the bet and the prize P such that one would be indifferent between paying to play the bet or selling the bet. Now it seems to me that whether Mary is in a low or high stakes context, given the information available, she should assign the same fair betting rate to the proposition that the bank will be open the next day. If she does not, then a dutch book can be made against her.

 $<sup>^{36}</sup>$ While Mary may be propositionally justified, her belief would lack doxastic justification.

the stakes could be raised high enough that, according to SSI, the bank manager doesn't know. I will return to these extreme cases below.

#### 2.3.2 Privileged attributor cases

We are now left with a final set of LOW to HIGH cases with two important features. First, the speaker is asserting in a conversational context with low standards and she must be warranted in asserting that P.<sup>37</sup> Second, the attributor's epistemic state must be strictly stronger than the subject's. Note that these features are exemplified in the cases that have traditionally been used to analyze knowledge. These traditional cases present situations in which we are asking from an omniscient point of view whether a subject's true belief counts as knowledge. My plan is to consider two types of now-you-don't claims that count as true and appropriate in these situations according to SSI. The first type involves extreme practical stakes, and I will argue that these are special cases for everyone and not just the proponent of SSI. The second and most difficult type of claim involves everyday practical stakes. By clarifying exactly which of these now-you-don't claims are true and appropriate, I will provide an explanation of why these claims seem odd and why their oddity poses no problems for SSI.

Let's begin by considering our original bank case but changing it slightly so that Mary is ascribing knowledge to herself and appealing to her past experiences at the bank as evidence. Before John reminds Mary of their precarious situation, Mary claims to know that the bank will be open. At this point, we can assume that Mary believes that the bank will be open and would act accordingly by returning to the bank the next day. Next, let's assume that we, as attributors, are in a privileged epistemic position. We have heard Mary and John's conversation and earlier in the day, talked to the bank's manager who informed us that the bank's hours have remained unchanged all year and will not change anytime in the near future. Just as the bank was open last Saturday, it will also be open this Saturday. Now, it seems that given our situation, we would say of Mary that she knows that the bank will be open. Of course, she can't rule out the possibility that the bank has changed its hours but, from our epistemically privileged perspective, that is not something that she needs to consider. Similarly, she need not consider a host of other highly unlikely and unactualized alternatives. For example, she does not need to rule out the possibility that the bank explodes between its closing on Friday and opening on Saturday. Thus, from our privileged perspective, it would inappropriate to assert that Mary knows but wouldn't if the stakes were higher.

However, what if we considered a scenario in which the practical stakes were inordinately high. What if Mary's life depended on the bank's being open the next day? Would we say that she knows? In this situation, I suspect that we would not claim that she knows. For in such a case, one would know only if one could be absolutely certain, and neither we nor Mary would be justified in being absolutely certain. As a result, SSI would allow speakers to assert, "Mary knows, but if her life were at stake, she wouldn't know." To my ear, these extreme now-you-don't claims don't sound particularly odd. More importantly, there are plausible explanations for why they are appropriate and why any plausible account of 'knows' should allow one to assert them.

These now-you-don't claims appear to be somewhat unique. As DeRose notes, the subject's level of confidence can and, in fact, ought to change as she moves from a low stakes situation to an extremely high stakes situation. He notes that if the subject's confidence didn't change, this "wildly inappropriate attitude seems capable of resulting in the subject being, or at least seeming to be, a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>As I noted in fn.25, my discussion here is also intended to cover all cases in which the speaker's epistemic state with respect to the target proposition is strong enough to meet the standards governing the conversation.

non-knower."<sup>38</sup> So perhaps, if the subject is to count as knowing even in the low stakes case, she should be the type of subject whose confidence would be lowered in the extreme case.<sup>39</sup> And if the subject's confidence were sufficiently reduced, then she would not meet the doxastic condition needed for knowledge. On this explanation of the example, comparisons of the subject's knowledge between low and extremely high stakes situations are tantamount to asserting that Mary knows that she at the zoo but if she failed to be believe that she were at the zoo, she wouldn't know.

We may offer a distinct but compatible explanation of why these now-you-don't claims are appropriate. Remember that we are limiting our consideration to cases in which our epistemic state is better than Mary's. However, even in that scenario, if Mary's life were at stake, our privileged epistemic position would not be strong enough to determine whether or not Mary knew. To be in that position, we would have to be (close to) infallible with respect to the bank's hours and since we are not, we should not say of Mary that she knows. This is confirmed by the fact that if our lives were at stake, we should not assert that we know.

Cases involving extreme stakes seem to be peculiar cases and as such, they do not appear to pose a special problem for SSI. However, there do remain a set of now-you-don't claims involving ordinary stakes that count as true and appropriate according to SSI. Suppose for the sake of concreteness that from our privileged perspective Mary is justified in adopting a .9 degree of confidence in the proposition that the bank will be open the following day. If Mary is in the practical situation where very little rides on the bank being open, she knows that the bank will be open. However, consider another scenario in which Mary is given the opportunity to bet on the bank being open the following day. By playing this bet, she would win \$95 if the bank is open and lose \$1000 otherwise. According to most versions of SSI, Mary would fail to know in this practical context. Therefore, SSI entails that it would be both true and appropriate to assert, "Mary knows that the bank is open, but if she were in a situation where she were deciding whether or not to accept this bet, she would not know."

Thus, the proponent of SSI must concede that certain now-you-don't claims involving perfectly ordinary stakes are true and appropriate to assert. In response, I hope to first clarify the precise nature of these now-you-don't claims. By doing so, we will not only be able to explain why these claims seem odd but also explain why their oddity is not especially problematic.

Critics of SSI typically describe the problematic now-you-don't claims as those in which we make comparisons between situations that differ solely in terms of practical stakes.<sup>40</sup> However, this is a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>(193: DeRose 2009)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>This claim may seem at odds with the discussion above where I proposed that were a subject's confidence to change from the LOW to HIGH case, she may undermine her own claim to know. My argument for this latter claim was that a subject's confidence should be proportioned to the evidence, and by moving from a low to high stakes context one does not change the available evidence. Therefore, it might be thought that since the shift from a low to extremely high stakes also does not shift the available evidence, a subject's confidence should remain stable between these two contexts as well. While I agree that this shift to an extremely high stakes context does not change the available evidence, it may change what counts as relevant evidence. For example, when betting a dollar on a coin flip, one may simply consider the physical symmetries of the coin to conclude that the coin is fair and so be equally confident in heads and tails. However, if one's life were at stake, one may be reasonable in widening the consideration of what counts as evidence to include the frequency of heads and tails in past flips of the coin as well as other information. Such information may have previously been available but on the simplifying assumption that the coin is fair, the additional information would have be irrelevant.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup>For example, DeRose writes, "this is a nasty problem for SSI, according to which the practical matter of how important it is to the subject that she be right is crucially relevant to whether a subject knows, and according to which, it seems, such 'now you know it, now you don't' claims would be very often true about the situation in question." He does then immediately remark that these are situations where "there is no difference in the subject's level of confidence in the proposition or in any truth-relevant matters." (194: DeRose 2009) It is not clear, however, whether this parenthetical remark is meant to generalize the cases of interest or to merely clarify the fact that the

misleading description since scenarios that differ merely in terms of practical stakes often fail to make a difference in what the subject knows. For example, if we offered Mary a chance to play bet where she would win \$100000 if the bank were open and lose \$5000 if the bank were not, she may very well count as knowing. However, this is a scenario where the practical stakes are much higher than the one in which little rides on the bank's hours. So SSI does not entail that practical importance is the practical factor of crucial relevance for knowledge. Rather, most proponents of SSI propose that the crucial practical factor is the actionability of a proposition. And "p is actionable for a subject just in case...p is warranted enough to be the subject's justifying basis for action." Actionability can make a difference because there is a general connection between knowledge and action: if one knows, then one may act on the basis of P. While Mary is justified acting on the truth of the proposition that the bank will be open when little rides on it, she is not justified in acting on that proposition when deciding whether or not to play a bet on the proposition that the bank will be open at worse than 1:9 odds. The difference in actionability is what makes the crucial difference for knowledge.

Therefore, in order to be be fair to SSI, we must limit our consideration of now-you-don't claims to those that compare situations that differ in terms of the actionability of the target proposition. The most obvious way to do this is to consider claims of the following form: Mary knows that P, but if the practical situation were such that she shouldn't act on P, then she wouldn't know. Such claims do not appear to be particularly strange, and I will explain why below. Of course, any now-you-don't claim that picks out an alternative scenario that has as a consequence a difference in actionability will also count as appropriate. Thus, some assertions of the form, "Mary knows but wouldn't know if the stakes were higher" will count as both true and appropriate when the difference in stakes amounts to a difference in actionability.

By limiting the types of now-you-don't claims that count as true and appropriate according to SSI, we can provide a plausible explanation of why they are odd and why their oddity is neither special nor problematic. As purists have noted, assuming that Mary does know, there is nothing odd about asserting that she wouldn't know if the target proposition were false. In contrast, given the same assumption, there is something very odd about asserting that if the stakes were higher, Mary wouldn't know. I take it that the reason why the former assertion is normal is because it is perfectly clear that the truth of the antecedent entails the truth of the consequent. In contrast, the latter assertion is odd because there is a disconnect between the truth of the antecedent and consequent.

The first thing to note is that the oddity of this latter assertion seems perfectly akin to the oddity of asserting that if Genghis Khan liked oranges, then Chile would have won the World Cup. This assertion is odd for the same exact reasons; there is no reasonable connection between the truth of the antecedent and consequent. Of course, there very well may be a complicated relationship, and were we convinced of this relationship, the assertion would seem to be both true and appropriate. If we consider the odd now-you-don't claims – those that compare situations in terms of practical stakes – proponents of SSI have a perfectly plausible and intuitive explanation of how the truth of the antecedent and consequent are related. Those now-you-don't claims that count as both true and appropriate according to SSI are those that compare situations that differ in terms of actionability, and actionability does make a difference to what we know.

While critics of SSI may not accept the claim that knowledge is related to actionability, there is no denying that the connection is, at first glance, intuitive. My modest proposal is that the intuitiveness of this connection explains why the oddity of now-you-don't claims is neither special nor problematic.

difference in practical importance should not make a difference to the subject's confidence or any other truth-relevant matter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup>(695: Fantl and McGrath 2012)

To summarize, these claims are odd because there is no obvious connection between practical stakes and knowledge. However, as we noted, not all now-you-don't claims that compare situations that differ in terms of practical stakes count as true and appropriate. Only when a difference in practical stakes makes a difference in actionability are these claims true and appropriate. And in these cases, the proponent of SSI can appeal to the connection between action and knowledge to offer a perfectly systematic and intuitive explanation for why the truth of the antecedent entails the truth of the consequent.<sup>42</sup>

# 3 The Intuitiveness of Purism

As DeRose has noted, the debate about now-you-don't claims is very closely tied to the debate about the intuitiveness of purism. <sup>43</sup> As the default account of knowledge, purism is a view that we must have good reasons to abandon. Fantl and McGrath write, "[impurism] seems mad because it entails the falsity of purism. Purism – many will say – seems clearly true." <sup>44</sup> Proponents of impurism have thereby taken on the burden of trying to offer good arguments and reasons to reject purism. (Stanley 2005) argues that our use of 'knows' supports the denial of purism. (Fantl and McGrath 2009) argues that we must reject purism if we want to remain anti-skeptical fallibilists while embracing the intuitive connections between knowledge and action. While the case against purism depends upon these arguments, it would also be beneficial for impurists to offer some story of why purism has seemed so intuitive. Thus, to conclude my defense of SSI, I will offer one such story. Though it is not meant to be the only or best story that can be offered, it has the advantage of being quite simple and straightforward. My proposal is that purism is intuitive because practical factors are simply irrelevant in the standard cases used to analyze knowledge. However, this does not entail that purism is true so long as these so-called standard cases turn out to be special cases.

What are the central features of the cases standardly used to analyze the concept of knowledge? First, the standard cases are those in which a subject fails to know. After all, the standard cases are those that are meant to be counter-examples to proposed analyses of knowledge. And we now have a repository of cases in which subjects have true beliefs, justified true beliefs, and so on but do not know. Second, the standard cases are those in which we, the attributors and evaluators of knowledge, are omniscient. In the very least, we know all the relevant facts.

If we simply look at individual cases that have these two features, then we find that these are cases in which, regardless of the practical context the subject is in, she fails to know. For example, consider cases in which the subject truly believes that P without any evidence. No matter how high or low the stakes involved, we would judge that the subject does not know. Next consider Jones' getterized but justified true belief that someone in the office owns a Ford. Whether or not Jones is betting on this proposition at the cost of \$1 or his life, Jones fails to know. Therefore, in each of the counter-examples to the many failed analyses of knowledge, we possess a large repository of cases in which subjects fail to know regardless of the practical contexts they are in.

Proponents of SSI may grant that there are many examples in which the practical context of the subject is irrelevant in determining whether or not a subject knowledge. After all, these examples,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup>To avoid misunderstanding, we must remember that these claims are only appropriate when the attributor is in a privileged epistemic position since these are the cases in which the attributor would be justified in believing that a difference in practical stakes could make a difference to actionability.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> "This problem for SSI is of course intimately related to the problem" of denying purism, which has a manifest plausibility, "so much so that it may be best to view these as two faces of a single problem." (195: DeRose 2009) <sup>44</sup>(28: Fantl and McGrath 2009)

by themselves, do not entail that the practical context of the subject is wholly irrelevant. To explain, consider an analogous proposal that evidence is irrelevant for knowledge. And now consider all the cases in which the purportedly known proposition is false. In each of these cases, we would judge the subject not to know regardless of the subject's evidence. So in each of these cases, the subject's evidence is irrelevant for determining whether or not a subject knows. Of course, these cases do not entail that the subject's evidence is irrelevant. And we can simply test to see whether the subject's evidence is relevant by considering pairs of cases in which everything is held fixed except for the subject's evidence. If we can find a pair of these cases where the subject knows in one case but not the other, then we will have reason to think that the subject's evidence is relevant for knowledge. And here the right pair of cases are ones in which the subject has a true belief in both.

Of course, it may never have seemed intuitive to think that the subject's evidence was irrelevant to knowing. However, there are truth-relevant factors that may have intuitively seemed irrelevant. Prior to the introduction of Gettier cases, it may have seem intuitive to think that external factors unknown to the subject – other than the truth or falsity of the target proposition – were irrelevant in determining whether or not a subject knew. It was only after we tested this intuition by identifying the right pairs of cases that we came to recognize that these intuitions were simply a result of our philosophical near-sightedness. My suggestion is that the same type of near-sightedness explains the intuitiveness of purism.

In order to see whether the subject's practical context could be relevant, we should consider pairs of cases in which everything is held fixed except for the subject's practical context. Of course, these are exactly the cases that proponents of impurism have focused on. Fantl and McGrath have made it explicit that the argument for impurism depends crucially on the fact that there exists a pair of cases in which only the subject's practical context varies but subject knows in one case and does not know in the other. $^{45}$ 

The intuitiveness of purism may result from the contingent historical fact that the cases typically used to analyze knowledge are those in which the practical context of the subject is irrelevant in determining whether or not a subject knows. And we have mistakenly inferred from these cases to the conclusion that practical factors are wholly irrelevant. After testing this intuition by considering the right pairs of cases, we may find that our intuitions are a product of our near-sightedness. Thus, combined with my response to the contextualist's main criticisms, the case for SSI appears at least as good as the case for contextualism.

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 $<sup>^{45}({\</sup>rm Fantl} \ {\rm and} \ {\rm McGrath} \ 2009)$ 

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