

Knowing How and Being Able

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Abstract. With perhaps one exception, intellectualists about know-how maintain that knowing how to φ does not entail having the ability to φ . So, it's supposed to be an attractive feature of intellectualism that it can explain cases of know-how without ability, while anti-intellectualism—the view that knowing-how *is* a kind of ability—cannot. I show that intellectualism fails to explain the very cases that are supposed to showcase this feature of the view. The upshot, however, is not an objection to intellectualism *per se*, but to the anti-entailment claim that intellectualists tend to endorse. I conclude by offering the intellectualist a new case to make for their view: if knowing-how entails being able, then so does knowing-that. This turns out to be very good news for the intellectualist who argues that knowing how is a species of knowing that.

I. Introduction

This paper draws a broadly applicable lesson from the well-known ski instructor case in the literature about know-how. Stanley and Williamson (2001) are the first to mention the case, and they do it to illustrate a point they credit to Carl Ginet (1975): that ascriptions of knowledge-how do not entail the ascription of the corresponding ability. The case is just this: that “a ski instructor may know how to perform a certain complex stunt, without being able to perform it herself” (416).¹ John Bengson and Marc Moffett (2011b) fill in the details and use the case to make a similar point: that knowledge-how to φ does not require the ability to φ . For my purposes, I will treat these claims—Ginet’s and Bengson’s and Moffett’s—as the same.

My main contention is that neither Stanley and Williamson nor Bengson and Moffett do right by the ski instructor. This is for different reasons in each case. The reason Stanley and Williamson fail by the ski instructor is that, on the view they develop, it turns out that the ski instructor neither knows how to perform a certain complex stunt (in the relevant sense) nor has the ability to perform that stunt. On Bengson’s and Moffett’s view, the ski instructor *does* turn out to know how to perform a certain complex stunt, but only at a steep cost. The surprising upshot is that neither view can explain why we should think the ski instructor knows how to perform a certain complex stunt despite being unable to perform the stunt. The ski instructor case is not a one-off case—it is one instance of a kind of case that purports to show that know-how comes without ability. For this, we can substitute ‘ski instructor’ for any kind of instructor, teacher, or coach. My contention will be the same: the intellectualist doesn’t show that the instructor, teacher, or coach without ability nonetheless has know-how in the relevant sense.

¹ The case they credit to Jeff King, though.

Two takeaways for the know-how literature follow. First, we have another reason to think that Stanley-and-Williamson-style intellectualism doesn't yield an account on which knowledge-how does not entail ability (for the other, see Glick 2015). And, second, it turns out that ski-instructor-type cases don't motivate intellectualism over anti-intellectualism about knowledge-how. The upshot: the intellectualist shouldn't appeal to these cases.² However, none of this amounts to an objection to intellectualism *per se*. It amounts to an objection to the intellectualist's claim that know-how does not entail ability. My purpose, then, is to nudge intellectualism away from this claim that doesn't benefit their view. In the end, I offer the intellectualist a better case to make for their view: the intellectualist can show that *if* knowing-how entails being able, then so does knowing-that. This is very good news for intellectualists like Stanley and Williamson, who maintain that knowing-how is a species of knowing-that.

In the next section, I tell the ski instructor's story and explain why it matters to the debate about knowledge-how. After that, I take the two intellectualist views under consideration in turn. In section III, I argue that Stanley and Williamson don't get their intended result in the ski instructor case. In section IV, I argue that Bengson and Moffett *do* get their intended result, but at a steep cost. In section V, I respond to some case types that don't fit the ski-instructor paradigm, and I conclude with remarks about what this means for intellectualism about know-how.

II. The ski instructor

My aim in this paper is to level a similar charge against two distinct views about know-how—that they fail to make good on a key case. Both views share this core commitment:

x knows how to φ in virtue of x 's having some propositional attitude(s) regarding φ -ing. (BM 2011b, 162)

Commitment to this claim suffices to make a view about know-how *intellectualist*, so the two views I address are versions of intellectualism about know-how. I'll abbreviate views and authors. Stanley and Williamson will be SW, and their view will be *SW intellectualism* (or *the SW view*); similarly, Bengson and Moffett will be BM, and their view will be *BM intellectualism* (or *the BM view*).

In this section, I'll present the case in more detail and say why it matters to the know-how debate. Then, I'll turn to the views under consideration and show that neither gets their intended result regarding the ski instructor, at least without steep cost.

² Cf. Carlotta Pavese (2021)—Pavese is an intellectualist who grants that knowledge-how entails ability.

Stanley and Williamson mention the ski instructor only briefly, so I'll adopt Bengson's and Moffett's elaboration:

Ski Instructor. Pat has been a ski instructor for twenty years, teaching people how to do complex ski stunts. He is in high demand as an instructor, since he is considered to be the best at what he does. Although an accomplished skier, he has never been able to do the stunts himself. Nonetheless, over the years he has taught many people how to do them well. In fact, a number of his students have won medals in international competitions and competed in the Olympic games. (BM 2011b, p. 168)

SW and BM find it apt to ascribe knowledge of how to perform these complex ski stunts to Pat—we should be able to say that Pat *knows how* to perform these stunts—even though Pat can't perform the stunts himself. So, the idea *Ski Instructor* should motivate is that knowing-how does not entail corresponding ability (the *anti-entailment claim*). Neither SW nor BM tell us *why* Pat can't perform the stunts.³ Perhaps he lacks the strength or stamina required to see them through. Whatever the reason, Pat can't do the stunts, but he knows how. BM help our intuitions in a footnote:

Suppose a novice ski jumper were to enter the ski lodge and say, "My goal is to learn how to do ski stunts. Who here knows how to do them?" An employee may then reply, while pointing to Pat, "He does." Notice also that it would be more than a little odd for Pat (or the employee) to tell students that Pat does not know how to do the stunts, but he will teach them how to do the stunts anyway. (2011b, p. 168, fn. 19)

What's more, Bengson and Moffett and Wright (2009) find that "the vast majority of ordinary English speakers judged that the subject in the example both knows how and is unable."

The ski instructor matters to the debate about know-how because the anti-intellectualist about know-how tends to argue that knowing-how *requires* ability (if not also that a certain kind of ability suffices for knowing-how).⁴ If Pat has know-how without ability, Pat looks like a compelling counterexample to anti-intellectualism. Because the intellectualist tends to argue that knowledge-how is a kind of propositional knowledge or—as Bengson and Moffett argue—a kind of understanding

³ To be fair, they may have good reason for this. As soon as they specify *why* Pat can't perform the stunts, they are open to one of two lines of argument from the anti-intellectualist. If the reason Pat can't do the stunts is environmental (e.g., broken skis), then know-how and ability don't come apart *per se*—it's just that contingent features of the environment prevent the exercise of his know-how/ability (for another example along these lines, consider the pastry chef who has run out of flour). If the reason Pat can't do the stunts is *something about him qua agent* (e.g., injury), then the anti-intellectualist will appeal to counterfactual success to preserve the link between knowing how and being able (along these lines see, e.g., Hawley 2003, Noë 2005, Glick 2012; for response see Bengson, Moffett, and Wright 2009, fn. 10).

⁴ As I will point out concluding remarks, however, the anti-intellectualist view does not consist in this claim about entailment.

relation to an action type, it seems to get the right result in Pat's case because Pat *has* the requisite propositional knowledge or understanding. This is why it seems right to say Pat knows how to do the stunts. I will argue that this is not quite right.

III. SW intellectualism

In this section, I present the SW view and argue that SW don't get the result they wanted for *Ski Instructor*. To keep this in view: it should turn out, on their view, that Pat *knows how* to perform a certain complex ski stunt despite being unable to. I will argue that Pat does not know how *in the relevant sense*.⁵

SW claim that knowledge-how is a subspecies of knowledge-that, so one knows how in virtue of having a certain kind of relation to a proposition. Their argument for this is linguistic: all knowledge-how ascriptions have embedded questions, and the ascription effectively says that the ascriber knows a contextually relevant answer to the question. Without getting into the linguistic analysis, here is what this amounts to:

1. Sam knows where to see a movie. / Sam knows a proposition that answers the question *where can we see a movie?* / Sam knows *that* we can see a movie at Music Box Theater.
2. Kristen knows what time the movie starts. / Kristen knows a proposition that answers the question *when does the movie start?* / Kristen knows *that* the movie starts at 6:00pm.
3. Tiffany knows how to pull an espresso. / Tiffany knows a proposition that answers the question *how can she pull an espresso?* / Tiffany knows *that this* is a way she can pull an espresso.

SW argue we should treat knowledge-how ascriptions in the same way we treat knowledge-*when*, -*where*, and -*why* ascriptions—as ascriptions of propositional knowledge. Part of the appeal of the SW view is that it doesn't make a special case of knowledge-how. What helps knowledge-how seem plausibly propositional is that the proposition need not be articulable,⁶ and it can be indexical. So, on the view so far: Tiffany knows how to pull an espresso *iff* she knows of some contextually relevant way *w* that *w* is a way she can pull an espresso, and she needn't be able to articulate *w* in order to know that *w* is a way she can pull an espresso.

This is not yet the full story, however, because I can watch Tiffany pull an espresso and think “*That's* a way for *me* to pull an espresso!” This looks like knowing a proposition that answers the question *how could I pull an espresso?* If I were to do what I just watched Tiffany do, I *would* pull an

⁵ More carefully: I do *not* mean to show that it's “incorrect” to say Pat knows how. I *do* mean to show that when we say Pat knows how, we mean ‘knows how’ in a sense that is not the same as the ‘know how’ SW give an account of.

⁶ Or, more carefully: the individual who knows the proposition need not be able to articulate it to know it.

espresso, so the proposition is true. But this doesn't look like knowing-how—no one should trust me with their La Marzocco espresso machine on this basis.

SW develop a solution by articulating *how* someone who knows how must be related to the relevant proposition. They clarify: the relevant propositions are about ways, and ways are properties of token events. If a way is a property, “an element of a standard Russellian proposition, then it must be possible for it to be entertained under different modes of presentation” (427). Their solution, then, will be to specify the mode of presentation on which the relevant proposition (about a way) must be entertained in order for the propositional attitude to amount to knowledge-how.

They develop the requisite mode of presentation by analogy with a case that demonstrates the role of modes of presentation for Russellian propositions. They consider John, who believes he is looking through a window when he observes a man whose pants are on fire. Unbeknownst to John, he's actually looking in a mirror, and the pants are his own.

4. John believes that that man has burning pants.
5. John believes that he himself has burning pants.

In this context, (4) is true while (5) is false. But because “that man” and “he himself” have the same referent, (4) and (5) express the same proposition. So, the way to make sense of the difference in truth value is by appeal to mode of presentation. John entertains the relevant proposition under a *demonstrative* mode of presentation, whereas, for (5) to be true, he would need to entertain that same proposition under a *first-personal* mode of presentation.

SW apply this lesson to Hannah. Hannah doesn't know how to ride a bike, but she watches John ride a bike, and John says “*This* is a way for you to ride a bike!” If Hannah is paying attention, then she knows a proposition about a way for her to ride a bike.

6. Hannah knows that *that* way is a way for her to ride a bike.
7. Hannah knows how to ride a bike.

In this context, (6) is true and (7) false. The reason is that Hannah doesn't yet entertain the proposition about a way for her to ride the bike under what SW call a *practical mode of presentation* (PMP). So, knowledge-how requires that one entertain the relevant proposition under a PMP.

Stanley and Williamson remain agnostic as to whether modes of presentation are semantically relevant, so their complete account comes with two options, depending on what the reader finds most plausible. If PMPs are semantically relevant, then (7)

is true relative to a context c if and only if there is some contextually relevant way w such that Hannah stands in the knowledge-that relation to the Russellian proposition that w is a way for Hannah to ride a bicycle, and Hannah entertains this proposition under a practical mode of presentation. (430)

Otherwise, using (7) *pragmatically conveys* that Hannah entertains the relevant proposition under a PMP, but its truth does not depend on this.

At this point, though, it becomes evident that Stanley and Williamson have forgotten about the ski instructor. Remember Pat:

8. Pat knows how to perform a certain complex ski stunt.

On SW's view, (8) is true relative to a context c iff there is some contextually relevant way w such that Pat stands in the knowledge-that relation to the Russellian proposition that w is a way for Pat to perform the stunt, and Pat entertains this proposition under a PMP. (Or, the ascription pragmatically implies the PMP). I submit there are two problems here. The first has to do with mode of presentation and the second has to do with the proposition Pat needs to know. Each problem should lead us to think that Pat *doesn't* know how to perform the ski stunt, at least not in the sense in which John knows how to ride a bike. The first problem is this: it's not clear that Pat entertains the relevant proposition under the relevant mode of presentation. In order to be good at what he does, he doesn't need to know the propositions he knows under a PMP. He's not performing the stunts himself, so it suffices for his purposes that he can articulate propositions about ways in which his students can perform the stunts. So, insofar as our willingness to ascribe knowledge-how to Pat is grounded in his being an in-demand ski instructor, it's not clear that we should think what Pat knows amounts to knowledge-how on the SW view.

This first problem might be unconvincing without a fuller treatment of what it means to entertain a proposition under a PMP (for which, see Glick 2015 and Pavese 2019). Instead of wading into the weeds, I concede and move on to the second problem: mode of presentation aside, it's highly implausible that Pat knows, of some contextually relevant way w , that w is a way for *him* to perform the stunt. At least, it seems the proposition about a way for *him* to perform the stunt is irrelevant to the know-how we ascribe him: what we take him to know when we say he knows how to perform the stunts is, at best, whatever it is his *students* need to know to perform the stunts. So, he knows about ways for his students to perform the stunts. Whether one or more of these ways is also a way for *him* to perform the stunt is beside the point.

Here's why it's implausible that Pat knows of a way for *him* to perform the stunt. Whatever way he knows would have to be a way for him to surmount whatever it is that keeps him from being *able* to perform the stunt, as *Ski Instructor* stipulates. Otherwise, the way isn't a way for *him* to perform the stunt. And if he knows of a way *he* could perform the stunt that surmounts whatever it is that keeps him from being able to perform it, then the position that holds he *knows* this proposition *and* that he *can't* perform the stunt becomes quite tenuous.⁷ I'll return to this thought at the end of this section.

Meanwhile, here's what I think has happened. SW left Pat behind at the disambiguation of 'knows how' ascriptions. SW identify four readings of ordinary 'knows how' ascriptions.

9. Hannah knows how to ride a bicycle.

can be read in each of the following ways, depending on how we fill out context:

10. (a) Hannah knows how she ought to ride a bicycle.
- (b) Hannah knows how one ought to ride a bicycle.
- (c) Hannah knows how she could ride a bicycle.
- (d) Hannah knows how one could ride a bicycle.

The reading SW care about for the purposes of developing an account of knowledge-how is (10c):

Relative to a context in which (9) is interpreted as (10c), (9) is true if and only if, for some contextually relevant way *w* which is a way for Hannah to ride a bicycle, Hannah knows that *w* is a way for her to ride a bicycle. Thus, to say that someone knows how to *F* is always to ascribe to them knowledge-that. (SW 2001, p. 426; sentence numbers modified)

So, the reading of (9) that SW tailor their account of knowledge-how to is (10c), and with good reason. But it's the (10c) equivalent for Pat—which will be (12c)—that is so very implausible.

11. Pat knows how to perform a certain complex ski stunt.

can be read in each of the following ways:

12. (a) Pat knows how he ought to perform a certain complex ski stunt.
- (b) Pat knows how one ought to perform a certain complex ski stunt.
- (c) Pat knows how he could perform a certain complex ski stunt.
- (d) Pat knows how one could perform a certain complex ski stunt.

⁷ Or, if we grant Pat knows how *he* could perform complex ski stunts in the context *c* in which he has the requisite strength or stamina, we risk trivializing know-how. I'd get to claim that I know how to fly: I've read enough about birds to know how I could fly. It's just that, in the context in which I *could* fly in the way I know how to, I have wings (and hollow bones). It's too bad that I don't have wings (or hollow bones) and so *can't* fly, but at least I know how to fly.

I submit that it's (12d), not (12c), that makes (11) ring true in *Ski Instructor*.⁸ So, while it may just as well turn out that Pat "knows how to perform a certain complex ski stunt," the sense in which he knows how to perform a complex ski stunt is the sense in which I know how to pull an espresso on a La Marzocco: I know, generally, how *one* does it, but I don't know a way for *me* to do it.

Why harp on *Ski Instructor*? Well, it was, for SW, supposed to motivate the intuition that knowing-how doesn't require ability. It acted as a *desideratum* for the development of SW's view: an account of know-how should be such that knowing-how does not require corresponding ability. Satisfying this *desideratum* is supposed make SW intellectualism more compelling than anti-intellectualism, which claims knowing-how requires (or just is) ability. But SW don't end up with an account that satisfies the *Ski Instructor desideratum*. Pat knows how to perform the stunt only in a different sense of 'knows how to' than the one SW articulate necessary and sufficient conditions for. At best (for SW), it's indeterminate whether the SW view of know-how is a view on which knowing-how requires ability. At worst (for SW), the tension I identified above is a reason to think that the relevant sense of 'knows how to' *does* require ability: whenever S knows, of a contextually relevant way w to ϕ , that w is a way for S to ϕ , and S entertains the proposition about w under a practical mode of presentation, it follows that S has the ability to ϕ in way w . If it doesn't follow, the burden of proof is on SW.⁹

IV. BM intellectualism

BM, like SW, take *Ski Instructor* to show that knowledge-how does not require ability. But BM anticipate the above objection to *Ski Instructor*. Pat knows how *one* performs the ski stunts, but it does not follow from knowing-how-*one* ϕ -s that one knows how *to* ϕ . So, as-is, *Ski Instructor* fails to show that Pat knows how *to* ϕ . This objection to *Ski Instructor* introduces what BM call the 'one-to distinction'.

By way of reply, BM accept the one-to distinction, and they aim to show that, even still, what Pat has really is knowledge-how-*to*, and not mere knowledge-how-*one*. They do this by contrasting Pat with Albert.

⁸ I believe Alva Noë (2005) is the first to make this particular point about SW's ski instructor, and he credits Kent Bach: "She can know how one jumps, or how jumping is done, after all, without knowing how to do it" (284). Cf. Pavese (2021).

⁹ Which I don't think they'd meet anyway, since they acknowledge, "Thinking of a way under a practical mode of presentation undoubtedly entails the possession of certain complex dispositions. It is for this reason that there are intricate connections between knowing-how and dispositional states" (429).

[Albert is] an unathletic (nonskiing) scientist who studies the mechanics of skiing, including but not limited to the mechanics of complicated ski stunts. As a result of his theoretical studies, Albert knows how *one* does the stunts (namely, by contracting such-and-such muscles in such-and-such ways). (169)

BM suppose that Pat knows these mechanics, too. So, Pat and Albert are alike insofar as both *know how one does the stunts*, and neither is able to do the stunts. The key for BM is that we should nonetheless intuit a significant difference between Pat and Albert: “only Pat knows how to do the stunts. Indeed, even though Pat cannot do them, he grasps the stunts in a way that Albert, who only knows the theory, does not” (169). If they’re right, then the one-to distinction can’t help the anti-intellectualist show that Pat fails to know how in the relevant sense. So, the idea is that contrasting Pat-the-instructor with Albert-the-physiologist should help us see that Pat really does *know how to* do the stunts.

I actually think that Albert hurts BM’s case more than he helps it. I don’t think there is a difference between Pat and Albert with respect to knowing how to do the stunts, so introducing Albert amounts to introducing another kind of expert who knows how *one* does them. I’ll make the case for this, but the conclusion I reach will be a conditional: if, on the BM view, Pat knows how to do the stunts, then so does Albert. BM argue that Pat knows how to do the stunts, so, if they’re right, so does Albert. This is the cost their view pays: they’re stuck with the counterintuitive claim that Albert—the unathletic physiologist!—*knows how to* do the stunts. If this cost is too steep, then BM can concede that Pat and Albert only know how *one* does the stunts. But this means BM don’t meet their aim in appealing to the *Ski Instructor*: to show that knowing-how *in the relevant sense* doesn’t entail corresponding ability.

I’ll start here—why think there’s no *relevant* difference between Pat and Albert? Recall that the difference we’re looking for is a difference in the relation each has to *performing the stunts* (target action type). BM expect our intuitions will be that neither is able, both know how *one*, only Pat knows how *to*. I want to point out two possible illicit influences on our intuitions here, which we should resist. Here’s the first: I suspect one reason we might be tempted to intuit a difference between Pat and Albert regarding *knowing how to perform the stunts* is that Pat seems *more likely* to be able to perform the stunts. Two ways to spell this out: there is a possible world in which Pat is able to perform the stunt that’s closer than the closest possible world in which Albert is able to perform the stunt. Or, if Pat tries to perform one of these stunts, he’s likely to get closer to success than Albert (even if he cannot, by stipulation, fully succeed). But, as far as BM are concerned, this is an illicit influence on our intuitions. If *this* is what motivates us to think Pat knows how *to* perform the stunt while Albert does

not, then the reason we intuit that Pat has know-how in the relevant sense is that he's related to the corresponding ability in a way that Albert is not. But if this is the case, the Pat–Albert contrast (and so *Ski Instructor*) defeats its purpose—it tips the scales in favor of the claim that knowing-how entails corresponding ability, rather than against it. So, in our intuiting, we must hold fixed the fact that Pat and Albert would be equally likely to succeed if they tried.

The second temptation is to conflate Pat's *knowing how to perform the stunts* and Pat's *knowing how to teach* how to perform the stunts. These are different action types—knowing how to perform the stunts doesn't entail knowing how to teach them, and knowing how to teach them doesn't entail knowing how to perform them. As Gilbert Ryle (1946) makes the distinction, there's a knowing how for pedagogy, and it's not the same as the learner's knowing how: “Sometimes a man might give good advice who did not know how to behave. Knowing how to advise about behaviour is not the same thing as knowing how to behave. It requires at least three extra techniques: ability to abstract, ability to express and ability to impress” (1946, 13). BM want us to intuit that Pat knows how to perform the stunts and not just that (as instructor) he knows how to teach how to perform them.¹⁰ So, what we should *not* do, in thinking about Pat, is let his pedagogical abilities to abstract, express, and impress drive the intuition that he *knows how to*, since these abilities relate Pat to the activity of teaching, not performing the stunts.

If we are able to resist these illicit influences on our intuitions, I think it turns out to be very difficult to intuit a difference between Pat and Albert—that Pat knows how to perform the stunts while Albert does not. But my argument won't depend on this claim about intuitions. So, granting that there is nonetheless a significant, relevant difference between Pat and Albert, I'll show that BM aren't able to account for it—the BM view of know-how predicts that both Pat and Albert *know how to perform the stunts*.

So, how do BM mean to account for a difference between Pat and Albert? In the relevant part of their argument, BM aim to vindicate the intuition that knowledge-how is, somehow, distinctively practical. They want to do justice to the intuitions that motivate anti-intellectualism without ending up with an anti-intellectualist view themselves (at this point, they've already argued that anti-intellectualism is untenable). They arrive at this view:

¹⁰ One might think it is *in virtue of* knowing how to teach that Pat knows how to perform—if he can teach others, maybe he can teach himself! To my ear, though, this sounds like saying he could convert his knowledge-how-*one* into knowledge-how-*to because* he knows how to teach. It doesn't mean that he presently *knows how to perform the stunts*. But what BM want is a Pat who presently knows how to perform the stunts while Albert doesn't. (If Pat could teach himself, perhaps he could also teach the unathletic Albert. In which case, they're not different in the relevant sense.)

[V] Knowledge how to φ is a state σ such that: if x is in σ , then it is possible for there to be some individual y such that y 's exercise of σ underlies and explains y 's successfully and intentionally φ -ing—that is, σ guides y in successfully, intentionally φ -ing. (177)

Knowledge-how is the kind of state that has the potential to guide action. I can grant this seems to do right by Pat: although Pat is unable to perform the ski stunts, he is nonetheless in a state such that if he *were* to perform the stunt, his state *would* guide him in performing the stunt. His state is action-guiding. As BM explain:

If a ski instructor knows how to do ski stunts, then even if he or she cannot do—and thus never does—them, it remains possible that there be someone in the same state who successfully and intentionally does the stunts, and does so on the basis of exercising that very state: in this way, the ski instructor's state (his or her know-how) is such that it *can* guide the intentional execution of the stunts, even if it does not actually do so for him or her. (176)

Fair enough. I think this makes sense of Pat's aim as an instructor: to instill in his students the same state *he* has so that that state will guide *their* intentional execution of the stunts. I won't try to show that BM are wrong about Pat. The trouble now is with Albert, since this is what is supposed to account for the significant difference between Pat and Albert: the state Pat is in is action guiding, so it's *knowledge-how-to*. The state Albert is in is *not* action guiding, so, at best, it's *knowledge-how-one*. But to show this, BM would need to tell us why Albert's state is such that it *wouldn't* guide his attempt to perform the ski stunts, if he were to try. Sure, Albert wouldn't be very good at this at first—neither would Pat!—but he nonetheless has some relevant knowledge that he can (or, at least, that *one could*) put to use. We can imagine him thinking, while skiing a slope, “contract *this* muscle now, then relax *that* muscle in order to take *this* turn just so, and...” The fact that he might fail to move in precisely the ways he has in mind, or that he might fail to move gracefully, is no reason to think his state is not action-guiding. The point is we have no criteria for thinking Pat's state *is* action-guiding (and so knowledge-how-to) while Albert's is not (and so mere knowledge-how-one).¹¹

Here's another way of making the point. It's worth noticing that Albert *also* has knowledge that would be valuable to a student who wants to learn how to do the stunts. Albert might be a poor teacher—he might lack the instructor's ability to express and impress—but Albert's *state* is such that

¹¹ I won't press this, but I have a deeper worry here. One might wonder whether there is such a thing as a state that is distinctively action guiding. Are there kinds (or instances?) of knowledge that can't guide action? (Consider, e.g., my knowledge that P should guide my answering questions like “P?” Is there a way of knowing P that doesn't entail my ability to answer whether P?)

it looks like the kind of thing a student would benefit from if Albert *could* ‘express and impress’. If this is right, it seems that Albert is in a state σ such that “it is possible for there to be some individual y such that y ’s exercise of σ underlies and explains y ’s successfully and intentionally ϕ -ing—that is, σ guides y in successfully, intentionally ϕ -ing” (177). It looks like Albert knows how to do the stunts.¹²

I’ve argued that the BM view predicts that *both* Pat and Albert know how to perform the stunts although neither is able to perform the stunts. This might seem like a win for BM, who set out to develop an account according to which know-how doesn’t entail ability. Here we have two knowers-how without ability. However, the cost is that *Albert knows how to do the stunts, too*. BM clearly think this is counterintuitive, since it’s why they appealed to Albert in the first place. And I think they’re right, that not many people will intuit that Albert knows how to perform the stunts.¹³ If this is right, it’s a failure of the BM view that it can’t rule out Albert’s know-how.

Here is what the argument of this section has been. BM appeal to *Ski Instructor* to show that knowledge-how can occur without corresponding ability. Pat has the knowledge-how without ability. To the objector who responds that Pat has mere knowledge-how-*one* and not the target knowledge-how-*to*,¹⁴ BM recommend Albert—someone who has knowledge-how-*one* while clearly lacking Pat’s *je ne sais quoi*. We are supposed to see that Pat’s *je ne sais quoi* just is his knowing-how-*to* because it’s what Albert lacks despite his knowledge-how-*one*. What makes the difference, on the BM view, is that Pat’s state is action-guiding while Albert’s is not. However, once we agree that Pat’s state is action guiding, the pressure becomes overwhelming to say the same thing of Albert. We have no reason to think Albert *doesn’t* have the same state in the same way as Pat. If this is right, then *Ski Instructor* gives us no reason to prefer the BM view over anti-intellectualism, which at least would not need to distinguish Albert from Pat.

Before I move on to other cases, it is worth noticing that *Ski Instructor* brings out a more general point: once we fix the relevant sense of *knows-how-to* and show that *this* is what we ascribe in cases like

¹² Here, BM might point out that although Albert knows what muscle movements to make and when to make them, his knowledge doesn’t amount to knowing how those movements constitute the target action type, performing the stunt. Albert’s expertise provides him with knowledge at a different level of description than Pat’s—Pat’s amounts to knowing how those muscle movements constitute the target action type. *This*, they might say, is why Pat knows how *to* perform the stunts while Albert merely knows how *one* performs them. However, I don’t think this works. This is for two reasons: (1) this isn’t a reason to think Albert’s state *doesn’t* satisfy their definition of knowledge-how-*to*; (2) Albert’s expertise *is* about how to perform the stunts—he’s a physiologist who has applied himself to studying ski stunts. We have reason to think he *does* know about muscle movements under the right level of description, same as Pat. So, this possible response is a non-starter.

¹³ I take this to be a reason to judge that Pat doesn’t know how to perform the stunts, either.

¹⁴ As I did above, but see also Noë (2005), who mentions that Kent Bach is also on board for this objection.

Pat's, it becomes very difficult to see how the knower-how fails to have the corresponding ability, at least in any meaningful way. As soon as we agree that Pat knows, of some contextually relevant way w to perform a certain ski stunt, that w is a way for *him* to perform that stunt, and Pat entertains the proposition about w under a practical mode of presentation, it becomes difficult to see how he *couldn't* perform the stunt if he tried in the way he knows how (setting aside unlucky environmental conditions, etc.). Applied to BM's view, as soon as we allow that Pat's conception of how to perform the stunt is action-guiding, it's hard to see how he wouldn't be able to do the stunt in the way he knows how to (again, setting aside unlucky environmental conditions, etc.). At best, what SW and BM show with cases like *Ski Instructor* is that knowledge-how-*one* comes without ability. But this just isn't the kind of knowledge-how that either the intellectualist or the anti-intellectualist cared to account for in the first place.¹⁵

V. Concluding remarks

My arguments in this paper have focused on *Ski Instructor*, but of course *Ski Instructor* isn't the only case an intellectualist can appeal to to motivate the intuition that knowledge-how doesn't require ability. BM list others:

One might know how to run a marathon without being able to (because one has severe asthma). One might know how to dunk a basketball without being able to (because one is too short). Or one might know how to sink a very long but perfectly straight putt without being able to do so (because such putts are, in fact, extremely difficult). And so on. (169)

For these examples to count in favor of the anti-entailment claim, however, they must be ascriptions of knowledge-how in the target sense: they must be cases of knowledge-how-*to*, and not mere knowledge-how-*one*. I've argued that neither SW nor BM give us compelling reason to think the ski instructor has the target knowledge-how-*to*, and I suspect that similar considerations will apply to the cases of the marathon runner, basketball player, golfer, and so on.¹⁶ If my arguments in this paper are sound, these cases will fail to motivate intellectualism over anti-intellectualism just as *Ski Instructor* has.

Because my aim has been to nudge the intellectualist away from the claim that know-how does not entail ability, I should respond to some cases in this spirit that are quite different than *Ski Instructor*.

¹⁵ Cf. Glick (2012) for careful reasoning about the relevant sense of know-how.

¹⁶ Cf. Two example sentences from SW (2001, p. 426):

- (a) The warden of the prison knows how to escape from it.
- (b) The expert pitching coach knows how to pitch to a dangerous switch-hitter.

In one kind of case, it seems a knower-how has some technical or procedural knowledge-how-to without the ability to implement it. *Pi*, from BM, is this kind of case:

Pi. Louis, a competent mathematician, knows how to find the n^{th} numeral, for any numeral n , in the decimal expansion of π . He knows the algorithm and knows how to apply it in a given case. However, because of principled computational limits, Louis (like all ordinary human beings) is unable to find the 10^{46} numeral in the decimal expansion of π . (170)

Is this a case of know-how without ability? I don't think so. If Louis can embark on calculating the 10^{46} numeral in the decimal expansion of π , then he has the ability that corresponds to his knowing-how to calculate the 10^{46} numeral in the decimal expansion of π . What's more, *he can exercise this ability*. It's just that he'll never complete the activity that is the exercise of his ability. So I don't think this kind of case helps the intellectualist show that knowing how does not entail ability either.

The other kind of case is a swampman case:

Swampman. Alpha is an adult human who knows how to swim. Omega is the Davidsonsque swampman counterpart to Alpha, and Omega comes into being at time t . Omega is a cognitive and physical duplicate of Alpha, but Omega has never gone swimming. (see BM 2011b, fn. 17)

Does Omega know how to swim? BM think that if Alpha knows how to swim, then so does Omega. If this is right, then what matters to our know-how ascription is Omega's cognitive state, and not whether he has ever exercised or will ever exercise that state in swimming. At least, this is the purpose of appealing to Omega. As-is, though, this case isn't a compelling case of know-how without ability because it gives us no reason to think that Omega *lacks* the ability to swim. Never-having-gone-swimming does not entail lack of ability to swim. Try a variation:

Swampman II. Phelps is an adult human who knows how to swim. Schmelps is the Davidsonsque swampman counterpart to Phelps. Schmelps comes into being at time t , where t is 50 years from now, when Phelps is 38. Schmelps is a cognitive and physical duplicate of Phelps, age 88 at t , but Schmelps has never gone swimming.

The idea behind this variation is that, because Schmelps is a duplicate of an 88-year-old Phelps, his physical condition is such that he probably can't swim. So, let's grant that Schmelps lacks the ability to swim. But because he's a duplicate of Phelps, it may be tempting to judge that Schmelps knows how to swim. However, I don't think we should give in to this case, either. It seems to me that if Phelps at 88 has know-how about swimming, it's not the target know-how, but knowledge about how *one* swims. He probably remembers the techniques he learned and used, but these techniques will not

be what he needs to know now in order to *know how to swim*, at 88. And if Phelps knows how *one* swims but not how *to* swim, then the same goes for Schmelps.

Swampman II allows me to clarify what I've accomplished here. I have not argued that all knowledge-how entails ability. I can grant there *is* a sense in which Phelps and Schmelps both know how without being able. I have argued that knowledge-how *in the relevant sense* entails ability, where by 'relevant sense' I mean knowledge-how-*to*, the knowledge-how that SW, BM, and, as far as I can tell, the rest of the literature aims to account for. So, it's consistent with my view that some know-how does not entail ability.¹⁷ It's just that the know-how that does not entail ability is not the target know-how.

So where does this leave intellectualism about know-how? I've argued that the target concept of know-how entails ability, and I actually think this is good news for the intellectualist who relinquishes the anti-entailment claim. In particular, I think this is good news for SW-style intellectualists, who argue that knowing-how is a species of knowing-that. *That* knowing-how in the relevant sense entails ability is good news for these intellectualists because *so does knowing-that*. Minimally, knowing that P entails the ability to answer whether P. Variations on my arguments here are available for defense of this claim.¹⁸ Very briefly, here are two counterexamples with responses. Consider, for example, an apparent inability to answer whether P due to severe laryngitis. The person with severe laryngitis hasn't lost their knowledge that P by having laryngitis, but neither have they lost their ability to answer whether P—they just can't exercise it under their current condition. Or, consider the person who at a sub-personal level knows that P but has so thoroughly deceived themselves about P that they go around avowing $\sim P$ (because, say, it would be an emotional blow to accept that P). Is this knowing that P without the ability to answer whether P? I don't think so. The appropriate response here is to say that this self-deceived person has the ability to answer whether P but will not (or, if you prefer, *cannot*) exercise it because the emotional toll is too high.¹⁹ So, the intellectualist who accepts ability entailment as I recommend gains another way of demonstrating that knowing-how and knowing-that *are a lot alike*.

One might still wonder whether it costs the intellectualist anything to accept the ability entailment claim—doesn't the intellectualist thereby close the distance between their view and the anti-intellecutalist's? I don't think so. Here's how BM characterize anti-intellecutalism:

¹⁷ Glick (2012) makes a similar distinction. He argues that at least some knowledge how to ϕ is the ability to ϕ .

¹⁸ In fact, I have a hunch that many of the anti-intellecutalist's arguments will only end up helping the intellectualist make their case for ability entailment (for both knowing-how and -that). It would be the task of another paper to show this.

¹⁹ What these cases amount to, as aphorism: 'can't' doesn't signal *lack of ability*.

x knows how to φ in virtue of x 's having some power—some ability or disposition—to φ , rather than propositional attitudes. (ibid.)

It doesn't follow from the ability entailment claim that one has know-how *in virtue of* having the ability to φ . So, the intellectualist doesn't have to distance the concept of knowledge-how from ability in order to maintain distance between their view and its counterpart. They just have to reject the anti-intellectualist's *in-virtue-of* claim. Accepting ability entailment doesn't concede anything significant to the anti-intellectualist.

Finally, I'll just observe that my arguments here help focus the debate about know-how. The intellectualist doesn't need to appeal to cases like *Ski Instructor*, and the anti-intellectualist doesn't need to respond to them. Whatever knowing how consists in, both parties to the debate can accept that knowing how *in the relevant sense* entails corresponding ability.

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