

Moral Encroachment

by

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Abstract

Can practical factors influence a subject's position to know? Traditionally this question has been answered in the negative. A subject's position to know proposition p is not thought to improve merely because the subject wants to know p or has certain practical stakes depend on whether p . Appealing to these wants and practical interests while defending a claim to know is thought to be epistemically inappropriate. We argue, to the contrary, that practical factors can influence (i.e. encroach upon) a subject's position to know and can do so in an epistemically appropriate way. The argument we provide is relatively straightforward. We claim that knowledge of a certain set of propositions requires a prior action taken on behalf of the subject. This prior action can be influenced by practical factors and thus practical factors can influence a subject's position to know. Furthermore, we argue that such a move can be epistemically appropriate if it arises in an instance when the evidence and arguments favoring belief — at least from the subject's own point of view — are inconclusive. We conclude with an argument that the provided account offers a new framework to defend moral encroachment. The prior action taken on behalf of a subject, when it is both practically influenced and is epistemically appropriate, can be interpreted as a moral action.

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Chapter 1

Background

A subject's evidence for a proposition p does not get stronger merely by believing that p , or wanting p to be true, or by having certain practical stakes depend on whether p . These factors may influence the evidence we seek in the future for p , or how we interpret the evidence we currently have for p , but they do nothing to improve one's *evidential position* with respect to p .

A similar situation is thought to occur with knowledge. A subject's *epistemic position* with respect to p does not improve merely because the subject wants to know that p or has a practical investment in p . This view is currently the predominant view in epistemology and is referred to as *intellectualism*.¹ A natural extension of intellectualism that compares the relative epistemic position of two subjects produces the following:

Intellectualism: Two subjects S and S' in the same epistemic position with respect to p are just alike in their position to know that p .

An epistemic position is dependent on the strength of one's evidence, the reliability of the evidence, being aware of counter-possibilities, etc. These factors are claimed to be appropriately truth-related. Other factors, such as those mentioned above that include having a practical investment in whether p , are considered to be non-truth related.

¹Intellectualism is also called 'purism', as in [9].

The factors that determine a subject's epistemic position make up a subject's position to know that p and may not be sufficient for the subject to actually know that p . It may be the case, for example, that one's epistemic position (i.e. the evidence one has for p) is insufficient for knowledge that p . In this case two subjects in the same epistemic position may be alike in their position to know, but this position is such that they cannot know p . One needs to be in a sufficiently strong epistemic position to know that p .

There are two additional factors that play a role in knowing that p that are not directly covered by one's epistemic position. To know that p it must be the case that p is true. Again if this condition is not met, two subjects in the same epistemic position may be alike in their position to know, but this position will be such that they cannot know. As another example, though two subjects may again be alike in their epistemic position with respect to p , it may be the case that one subject finds the evidence sufficient for belief while the other withholds judgment. To know that p one must also believe that p and this belief comes in addition to one's epistemic position. Taking these into account, to know p a subject needs to have a true belief and be in a sufficiently strong epistemic position.

Supposing a true belief from the start we can reproduce one of the traditional definitions of intellectualism: whether a true belief amounts to knowledge depends exclusively on truth-related factors.² In this way, the focus is often on justification since it is (broadly) the component that is needed for a true belief to count as knowledge. The thought is that while non-truth related factors may play a role in belief formation, they play no additional role in whether a subject's true belief counts as knowledge (i.e. they play no additional role in improving one's epistemic position).

Lately it has been argued that whether a true belief amounts to knowledge may depend on certain non-truth related factors (see, for example, [7, 10, 12]). Preferring to stick with the broader, doxastically-neutral definition of intellectualism provided above, this position claims that two subjects in the same epistemic position may not be alike in their position to know. In particular *practicalism* claims:

Practicalism: Two subjects S and S' , equally alike with respect to their epistemic position but who differ with respect to their practical position, may differ with respect

²As in (as in Stanley [20] and Fantl and McGrath [8])

to their position to know that p .

The question, in short, is whether practical factors can influence a subject's position know. I will use the term practicalism throughout, but will also refer (as is popular in the literature) to pragmatic factors encroaching (i.e. pragmatic encroachment) on knowledge.³

The first two chapters look at how pragmatic factors can appropriately influence a subject's epistemic position. If pragmatic factors are non-truth related how can they be claimed to improve a subject's position to know? Why is it not just an act of wishful thinking, or, in the case when a subject comes to acquire a true belief, of epistemic luck? The rest of Chapter 1 will focus on recent accounts given by proponents of practicalism that try to offer positive responses to these questions. Chapter 2 discusses several arguments against practicalism that answer these questions in the negative.

With these discussions in mind Chapter 3 provides a new argument for practicalism that, we argue, overcomes these questions. Chapter 3 is comprised of two parts. The first part provides the argument for practicalism, the second part argues that the provided account of encroachment is best characterized as moral encroachment. Our argument for practicalism is relatively straightforward. In order to know some propositions a subject must hold an appropriate prior belief. This belief can be appropriately pragmatically influenced, and thus pragmatic factors can improve a subject's position to know. What characterizes these particular beliefs amongst other types of beliefs? The answer to this question, we will argue, is that these types of belief are particularly moral beliefs. Our argument for practicalism therefore also provides a new argument for moral encroachment. Appropriate pragmatic encroachment, as we have described it, just is a kind of moral encroachment.

³The term *practicalism* is given by Grimm [12]. As Grimm points out, the associated term *pragmatism* has too many alternative connotations.

1.1 An Example — Low/High Stakes

We will begin with an example for practicalism originally given by DeRose [4].⁴ The *Bank Case* is as follows:

(*Low Stakes*) My wife and I are driving home on a Friday afternoon. We plan to stop at the bank on the way home to deposit our paychecks. But as we drive past the bank, we notice that the lines inside are very long, as they often are on Friday afternoons. Although we generally like to deposit our paychecks as soon as possible, it is not especially important in this case that they be deposited right away, so I suggest that we drive straight home and deposit our paychecks on Saturday morning. My wife says, “Maybe the bank won’t be open tomorrow. Lots of banks are closed on Saturdays.” I reply, “No, I know it’ll be open. I was just there two weeks ago on Saturday. It’s open until noon.”

(*High Stakes*) My wife and I drive past the bank on a Friday afternoon, as in [*Low Stakes*], and notice the long lines. I again suggest that we deposit our paychecks on Saturday morning, explaining that I was at the bank on Saturday morning only two weeks ago and discovered that it was open until noon. But in this case, we have just written a very large and important check. If our paychecks are not deposited into our checking account before Monday morning, the important check we wrote will bounce, leaving us in a very bad situation. And, of course, the bank is not open on Sunday. My wife reminds me of these facts. She then says, “Banks do change their hours. Do you know the bank will be open tomorrow?” Remaining as confident as I was before that the bank will be open then, still, I reply, “Well, no. I’d better go in and make sure.”

Given the intuitive legitimacy of the husband’s response in both *Low* and *High*, it seems that the husband speaks truthfully in both instances.⁵ If we take this to be the case,

⁴Originally this example was put forth as an argument for contextualism. Much of the encroachment literature grew out of debates over contextualism and appeals back to many of the same examples. We will discuss contextualism, which is DeRose’s own view, in Chapter 2.

⁵Chapter 2 will consider several objections to this claim.

and if the husband's epistemic position has not changed from *Low* to *High*, then some non-epistemic factor influenced the husband's position with respect to knowing whether or not the bank will be open or closed on Saturday. These non-epistemic factors are reflected in the differences between *Low* and *High* and may include the varying importance of the check or the varying salience of counter-possibilities. The *Bank Case* therefore poses a possible counter-example to intellectualism. In the coming sections we will look at additional examples and more complicated arguments for practicalism. This thesis will focus on providing a defense of practicalism. In particular, we will argue that these examples point toward an additional, practical condition on knowledge.

1.2 Another Example — Knowledge and Action

Fantl and McGrath offer two additional insights for arguing towards practicalism [8, 10]. The first highlights the connection between intellectualism and certainty. Intellectualism seems to have a difficult time explaining how a subject can know while being in a position less than certainty. Taking this problem as the starting point, Fantl and McGrath offer an alternative argument for encroachment that claims that a subject's practical situation influences the standards of justification necessary to know. They argue for this claim by focusing on the connection between knowledge and action. Unlike other approaches (such as the *Bank Case*) that rest on the interpretation of a scenario, in providing an underlying knowledge-to-action link Fantl and McGrath provide a more substantial, theoretical account of pragmatic encroachment.

Fantl and McGrath's argument for pragmatic justification is relatively short. It relies on the following two premises:

- i. **fallibilism:** a subject can know that p while being in an epistemic position that provides less than maximal justification for p ,⁶ and
- ii. **KA:** if a subject knows that p , then the subject is rational to act as if p .

⁶As taken from [8]. Similarly, fallibilism may claim that a subject can know p even though there is, for the subject, a non-zero epistemic chance that not- p [9, p. 84].

A subject can fallibly know that his car is parked outside (because he parked it there a short while ago) even though his epistemic position could be improved (i.e. his justification would increase) by looking out the window of his house and making sure. A change in a subject's practical situation may no longer make it rational for the subject to act as if p . Given KA, a difference in what action a subject is rational to perform produces a change in the conditions for knowledge, and in this case, a change in the conditions needed for appropriate justification.

Here is their argument:

Suppose fallibilism and KA are true. Then there is a possible subject S who fallibly knows that p and so is rational to act as if p . Now, so long as a subject's epistemic position regarding p is non-maximal with respect to justification, her stakes in whether p can make a difference to whether she is rational to act as if p , independently of her strength of epistemic position regarding p and of the other traditional conditions on knowledge (e.g. belief, truth, proper basing, etc.). For example, if I find out that the police are (for the first time ever) about to ticket illegally parked cars on my quiet, rural street, my stakes in whether my car is legally parked rise. This makes a difference to whether I'm rational to act as if my car is legally parked, even if my strength of epistemic position doesn't change (I still remember — or seem to — legally parking it), my belief doesn't change (I'm just a confident guy), etc. Therefore, there is a possible subject S' just like S with respect to strength of epistemic position regarding p and the other traditional conditions on knowledge, but who, because of her different stakes, is not rational to act as if p . By KA, S' doesn't know that p . Therefore, because S' satisfies all the other traditional conditions on knowledge (S' believes that p , p is true, etc.), S' must not be in a position to know that p . But S is. It follows that [intellectualism] is false. [8, p. 560]

Imagine applying this idea to the *Bank Case*. One subject in *Low* and another subject in *High* are in the same epistemic position. The subject in *Low* is rational to act as if the bank is open on Saturday, while the subject in *High* is not rational to act as if the bank is open on Saturday. The difference in the action considered rational to perform in each case

by the two subjects signals a difference in what each subject knows. Since a subject is no longer in a position to pragmatically act as if p , the subject is no longer justified to believe p .

Fallibilism is a commonly held view in the literature and appeals to the idea that knowledge requires something less than certainty. The majority of Fantl and McGrath's argument rests upon the knowledge-to-action link given by KA. Fantl and McGrath argue for KA by appealing to the common use of knowledge-citations in providing good reasons for defending and criticizing actions. In defending his action to drive past the bank in *Low* the husband may say, "I know that the bank is open Saturday morning." Similarly, (again in *Low*) the wife may criticize her husband's action if he decides to pull over and check to see if the bank is open. In this case the wife may say to her husband, "Why are you pulling over to check the bank's hours when you know that the bank will be open tomorrow?" The husband's defense and the wife's potential criticism only carry weight if we suppose a link between knowledge and action.

This points towards one of the possible benefits of Fantl and McGrath's account over the argument sketched above about the *Bank Case*. What happens if the wife appeals to the irrationality of the husband's actions in *High* when he has gone into the bank to make sure? The wife may say to her husband, "Why are you making sure the bank will be open? You said yourself that you were there two weeks ago and that it was open until noon." This spells trouble for the *Bank-Case-practicalist* because they rely on the intuition that it is both natural and rational for the husband to want to make sure that the bank is open in *High*. The *Bank-Case-practicalist* therefore must address and argue against the wife's charge of irrationality. This possible scenario, however, does little to affect Fantl and McGrath's position, for even in this case the wife's claim continues to support the knowledge-to-action link. So far as there is a rational action for which the standards of justification differs depending on the subject's practical stakes, there is still pragmatic encroachment.

1.3 William James and ‘The Will to Believe’

Arguments for pragmatic encroachment have been put forth before its modern reemergence in cases like the *Bank Case*. Most of the relevant pre-pragmatic encroachment literature concerns evidence and appropriate belief: What amount of evidence is sufficient to hold a justified belief? Can we ever be justified to hold a belief on insufficient evidence? In 1896 William James gave a lecture titled “The Will to Believe” that addresses these issues and argues for a pragmatic condition on belief. James himself describes the lecture as “a defence of our right to adopt a believing attitude . . . in spite of the fact that our merely logical intellect may not have been coerced” [13, p. 1]. This indeed sounds like an argument against intellectualism. Like Fantl and McGrath, James offers a theoretical account of how pragmatic factors influence knowledge, and focuses specifically on the connection between knowledge, action, and skepticism. The practicalism that James defends also focuses on the relationship between pragmatic encroachment and religious beliefs. We will ultimately continue and extend this discussion in Chapter 3, where we argue that these similarities point towards interpreting pragmatic encroachment as a specifically moral encroachment.

The intellectualism that we have so far discussed has assumed that knowledge arises from belief by way of truth-related factors alone. James argues, to the contrary, that knowledge of some propositions do not follow this course. There exists a set of true beliefs that the subject must believe in prior to acquiring the justification that will lead to knowledge. This belief can be pragmatically influenced and in this way a subject is pragmatically justified in forming a belief even though the appropriate truth-related factors remain, at least at that point, agnostic. James’ argument for this claim has two parts. First, he argues that there are a set of propositions where evidence alone cannot justify belief or disbelief from the perspective of the subject. Then he argues that within this set of propositions, justifying evidence cannot be found without first a willful, pragmatic influenced, advance of belief. Putting this another way, for a specific set of truths a pragmatic action must be made on behalf of the subject before knowledge can be acquired. Our discussion of James will be separated into these two parts.

James begins by sectioning off a specific set of propositions that he calls *live hypotheses*. A subject finds a live hypothesis to be a real candidate for belief. A living hypothesis is

appealing and a subject lacks compelling evidence that disconfirms it [14]. By contrast, a dead hypothesis fails to spark any credibility from the subject's perspective. Given an option between two living hypotheses, James focuses on those that are *forced* and *momentous*. When facing many options we have the choice of remaining indifferent or not passing judgment. A forced option cannot be avoided and allows for no such possibility. Many options are also trivial, reversible, or fail to have significant consequences. A momentous option carries weight for the subject and has serious consequences and/or cannot be undone. Options between hypotheses that are living, forced, and momentous, James calls *genuine options*. It is important to emphasize that it is the subject that determines and finds an option to be genuine. Whether or not an example possesses these characteristics will vary from subject to subject. An option that is living for one subject may be dead to another. The reader must keep this in mind when viewing specific examples.

Some genuine options can be resolved by further investigation or analysis. In this way James acknowledges the importance of evidence. Ignoring evidence, failing to seek evidence, and the like, are all objectionable to James. But James argues that there are cases of genuine options that cannot be determined by evidence alone — they are, as described by Jeff Jordan, *intellectually open* [14].⁷ An option being intellectually open is closely tied to James' views on skepticism. We will not argue for skepticism and James' view of it here, but we will point out several passages where James expresses his views on the matter. James gives much credit to the pervasiveness and legitimacy of skeptical possibilities: “We want to have a truth; we want to believe that our experiments and studies and discussions must put us on a continually better and better position towards it; and on this line we agree to fight out our thinking lives. But if a pyrrhonic sceptic asks us *how we know* all this, can our logic find a reply? No! certainly it cannot.” [13, p. 4]. “The trouble may all the time be essential,” James continues, “[the] intellect, even with truth directly in its grasp, may have no infallible signal for knowing whether it be truth or no” [13, p. 8]. Let us at least agree with James on the following point: there are

⁷It may be the case that this is repetitive. Since genuine options are living options, the subject already finds both options credible and lacks the evidence necessary to confirm support for one option over the other. Nevertheless, we find this step in the argument to be significant enough to warrant additional discussion.

some propositions where the evidence and arguments in favor of belief, from a subject's point of view, are inconclusive. How prevalent these situations are will depend on how often evidence is found to be inconclusive. If we agree with James on the prevalence of skeptical possibilities this may be quite frequent. Even if we disagree on this point there will nevertheless be some instances when evidence is inconclusive. We will discuss the relation between the prevalence of skeptical possibilities and the prevalence in pragmatic encroachment again in Section 3.5. Following Pace [18], we will call situations involving genuine options that are intellectually open, *J-cases*.

When confronted with a J-case the subject's evidence is not significant enough to point in either direction; there are always, that is, possibilities for the subject to justify either alternative. James in particular focuses on two epistemic laws that affect our attitude of belief toward a proposition in J-cases. Given an option we may either believe the proposition in the hope of seeking the truth, or abstain from believing the proposition in the hope of avoiding error. Pace uses the following terms to describe these attitudes [18]:

Counsel of Courage: Believe p , so that you have a chance at believing a truth.

Counsel of Caution: Don't believe p , so that you avoid believing a falsehood.

When evidence is inconclusive neither of these attitudes is favored over the other. In these cases the deciding factor depends on the relative importance the subject gives to belief out of courage or caution. According to James no purely epistemic reasons in these cases can justify support for one counsel over another: "When we stick to it that there *is* truth . . . , we do so with our whole nature, and resolve to stand or fall by the results. The sceptic with his whole nature adopts the doubting attitude; but which of us is wiser, Omniscience only knows" [13, p. 11].

Since evidence points in both directions, the choice to prefer one counsel over another is in part based on one's *passional nature*. The counsel a subject adopts is dependent on individual factors that include whether the subject desires p to be true or false, or whether the subject recognizes that belief will further his or her own practical interests [18, p. 9]. These are pragmatic factors and so the counsel we adopt in J-cases can be pragmatically influenced. To ease future discussion we will call a willful advance made on behalf of a subject's passional nature in a J-case a *J-belief*.

It is important to note the significance of intellectual openness to our discussion of pragmatic encroachment.⁸ Intellectual openness defines a subset of hypotheses that pragmatic factors can influence while remaining evidentially appropriate. Since the evidence in a J-case is inconclusive, pragmatic factors cannot conflict with the subject's evidence. In J-cases pragmatic factors can therefore *appropriately* influence the attitude (i.e. counsel) we take towards a proposition.⁹ James goes on to argue that J-beliefs can play an important, non-trivial role in a subject's position to know. The next few paragraphs look at James' argument for this additional claim.

James argues for a set of propositions that require a prior action on behalf of our passional nature before evidence is found to be coercive. James argues for this by way of two analogies: one about personal relationships, the other about scientific practice. Let us look at what James says about personal relationships:

(Friend Example) Turn now [...] to a certain class of questions of fact, questions concerning personal relations, states of mind between one man and another. *Do you like me or not?* — for example: Whether you do or not depends, in countless instances, on whether or not I meet you halfway, am willing to assume that you must like me, and show you trust and expectation. The previous faith on my part in your liking's existence is in such cases what makes your liking come. But if I stand aloof, and refuse to budge an inch until I have objective evidence, until you should have done something apt, as the absolutist say, *ad extorquendum assensum meum*¹⁰, ten to one your liking never comes. [...] The desire for a certain kind of truth here brings about the special truth's existence; and so it is in innumerable cases of other sorts. Who gains promotions, boons, appointments, but the man in whose life they are seen to play the part of live hypotheses, who discounts them, sacrifices other things for their sake before they have come, and takes risk for them in advance? His faith acts

⁸The connection between pragmatic encroachment and intellectual openness also serves as a major motivation to interpret pragmatic encroachment as moral encroachment. We will discuss this connection in Section 3.5.

⁹We will see this connection to intellectual honesty brought up again by Pace in Section 1.5.

¹⁰For compelling my argument

on the powers above him as a claim, and creates its own verification. [13, p. 11]

As the *Friend Example* demonstrates, it may first take an action on behalf of the subject to bring about certain truths. Furthermore, there are certain cases when a desire to bring about an outcome is required before the outcome is achieved. A curmudgeon can be used to demonstrate this point. It seems a person's actions can always be interpreted in a friendly or hostile manner and as being the result of good intentions or bad intentions. The curmudgeon — perhaps through no lack of reason — may only find evidence that favors his or her beliefs. If the curmudgeon does not desire to change his or her mind, no evidence will bring about a change in their pessimistic worldview. As James aptly describes morality: “The question of having moral beliefs at all or not having them is decided by our will. [...] If your heart does not *want* a world of moral reality, your head will assuredly never make you believe in one” [13, p. 11]. In these cases it seems clear that one must possess the desire first and that evidence and justification can only follow.

As James notes, relating justification of beliefs to an analogy about personal relationships may seem like a stretch. James continues, however, with a more concrete account of the workings of the scientist. Here, again, is James on the matter:

(*Research Example*) For purposes of discovery such indifference is to be less highly recommended and science would be far less advanced than she is if the passionate desires of individuals to get their own faiths confirmed had been kept out of the game. . . . The most useful investigator, because the most sensitive observer, is always he whose eager interest in one side of the question is balanced by an equally keen nervousness lest he become deceived. Science has organized this nervousness into a regular *technique*, her so called method of verification; and she has fallen so deeply in love with the method that one may even say that she has ceased to care for truth by itself at all. It is only truth as technically verified that interests her. The truth of truths might come in merely affirmative form, and she would decline to touch it. . . . however indifferent to all but the bare rules of the game the umpire, the abstract intellect, may be, the concrete players who furnish him the materials to judge of are usually, each one of them, in love with some pet ‘live hypothesis’ of his own. [13, p. 10]

An eagerness and desire to resolve one's pet hypothesis is helpful to discover new scientific truths. Let us imagine a scientist facing an option between two hypotheses that are currently equally well supported by evidence (at least from the scientist's perspective). The scientist faces an intellectually open option similar to that of the curmudgeon in the above example.¹¹ As evidence for the curmudgeon supports neither friendly nor hostile behavior, it takes an action on behalf of the curmudgeon's passional nature before further evidence is found to be coercive in differentiating the two options. Facing a similar intellectually open option between two hypotheses, an action on behalf of the scientist's passional nature may be required for the scientist to ultimately find more confirming evidence. As the *Friend* and *Research* example demonstrate, pragmatic influences from our passional nature are required to find coercive evidence and to know. Knowledge of certain propositions therefore require a pragmatic influence: a preliminary action is a necessary condition for obtaining evidence for their truth. We will call these proposition, again following Jordan [14], *dependent propositions*.

Dependent propositions are closely related to J-cases. Without the J-belief needed to find coercive evidence, a subject facing a dependent proposition will find the decision to believe to be intellectual open. According to James, a subject in a J-case is justified to believe (i.e. to hold a J-belief) in the hope that the proposition may be a dependent proposition.

James singles out questions of religious faith — what he calls the religious hypothesis — as a subset of J-cases and in this way links pragmatic factors with moral problems. We will look at this example to highlight how religious faith can be seen as a genuine option. Though there are many individuals that do not take the question of religious faith to be a living option, there are many that do. Among those that do, belief in God and/or religious truths seem (at least to an extent) to be credible options. Many of these individuals also find the religious hypothesis to be momentous and forced. The option is momentous in that accepting the religious hypothesis is supposed to bring benefits to believers. The option

¹¹It is important to note that James has previously stated that many scientific options are not momentous options and are therefore not genuine options. Even though a scientist might find a scientific hypothesis live enough to devote time and research, there is often very little riding on the results. Whether or not this is the case is a different issue, but the analogy still holds as an example of specific truths that rely on a belief prior to finding coercive supporting evidence.

is forced in that an individual either believes in the religious hypothesis or does not. An individual cannot, that is, escape the issue by refusing to act. In addition to being a genuine option, the religious hypothesis is also intellectually open. As in the *Friend Example* these cases are not readily settled by appealing to evidence. As no single event or piece of evidence will provide conclusive evidence that will change the view of the curmudgeon, no evidence will necessarily change or influence the mind of the religious skeptic. Given that the religious hypothesis is a J-case, James argues that it may be a dependent proposition and will require a willful advance before evidence is found to be coercive. In the end, James acknowledges that coercive evidence may not be found to support the religious hypothesis. James argues that he would rather provide a willful advance (and believe) in the hope of finding evidence and at the risk of being in error than close himself off from the possibility of finding the truth.

James provides an alternative account of encroachment where pragmatic factors only influence a subset of the beliefs that may lead to knowledge. He argues that these dependent propositions can only be justified through an action on the side of our passional nature and points out that these beliefs are particularly prevalent amongst religious/moral hypotheses. In the next section, we will discuss a recent claim by Stephen Grimm that pragmatic factors influence the requirements for knowledge. We will finally conclude with looking at one of the most recent works of moral-pragmatic encroachment, which lies at the intersection of James' and Grimm's views.

1.4 Grimm

Grimm points out that there can be two different ways that knowledge can depend on pragmatic factors: one supposes an additional pragmatic requirement for knowledge, the other supposes that pragmatic factors influence the acceptable levels of the traditional requirements for knowledge. Grimm argues that the problems expressed throughout the literature often arise from failing to take into account the difference between these approaches. Grimm finally argues in support of pragmatic factors playing a role in setting the appropriate threshold of the traditional factors that count as knowledge.

Let us return to the *Bank Case*. In *High* the increased stakes make so that the husband's

belief no longer amounts to knowledge. How would we describe this situation in *High?* Natural responses would be that his evidence was not good enough, or that his evidence was not reliable enough, or something of this sort. But these responses all point back to traditional truth-related factors. Grimm argues, as this seems to point out, that though pragmatic factors may play a role in the conditions for knowledge this role is only by way of influencing traditional truth-related factors.

Grimm describes the differences between these accounts using an analogy to the requirements needed to accomplish a goal. Here is Grimm's example about running a race:

(*Race Analogy*) So suppose, then, that Miller and Smith are amateur runners, gearing up for their town's annual Race Day. They both train together for several weeks, their muscles and joints are equally limber, and their cardiovascular conditioning is more or less identical. Focusing especially on their level of cardiovascular conditioning, we might therefore say that they are equally *fit*. Thus, as Miller goes with respect to fitness, so goes Smith.

On Race Day, however, whereas Miller enters the 5k race, Smith tries for the 15k. And while Miller finishes his race easily, unfortunately at about the 11k mark of *his* race, Smith begins to break down. Smith's breathing becomes labored, his joints throb; in short, he runs out of gas. While Smith is as fit as Miller, and while we might even say that he simply is fit, he is not fit enough to finish the 15k. [12, p. 7]

As this example is designed to show, accomplishing a goal (in this case, finishing the race) depends on two factors. The first focuses on things like fitness, durability, and those factors that are required to participate in the race. These are *goal realization* factors. There are also *goal threshold* factors. In the *Race Analogy* these factors have to do with the distance of the race. In these cases the threshold factors determine how much of the realization factor is needed to accomplish the goal. Much like the relationship between pragmatic factors and traditional truth-related factors, when changes along the threshold dimension make a difference it is always in relation to the realization factors.

Grimm argues that knowledge too can be seen as accomplishing a goal. This goal depends on certain realization factors, which are those that are traditionally associated

with knowledge such as belief, evidence, reliability, etc. But knowledge also seems to possess a threshold component as well. For example, for a certain true belief to count as knowledge we often think that evidence needs to be sufficient or good enough. “Thus,” as Grimm states, “just as a change in the distance of the race impacts how fit one needs to be to finish the race, so too, it seems, a change in the thresholds relevant to knowledge will affect how good one’s evidence needs to be, of how reliable one needs to be, if one’s belief is to amount to knowledge” [12, p.12].

Such an account gives rise to two different ways to view intellectualism [12, p. 13]:

Realizer Intellectualism: whether a true belief amounts to knowledge depends, in a goal-realization sense, exclusively on truth-related factors.

Threshold Intellectualism: whether a true belief amounts to knowledge depends, in a goal-threshold sense, exclusively on truth-related factors; alternatively, the various thresholds relevant to knowledge are determined exclusively by our *purely epistemic* (rather than our *practical*) goals and concerns.

Similarly, it may be argued that practical factors are either necessary to realize knowledge (thus challenging realizer intellectualism) or that they play a role in determining what level of evidence is sufficient or good enough for a belief to count as knowledge (thus challenging threshold intellectualism). Realizer intellectualism is traditionally accepted in epistemology and Grimm does not challenge this view. In fact, Grimm argues that cases like the *Bank Case* say little about realizer components of knowledge since these cases only point to changes within the traditional truth-connected factors.¹²

Grimm offers several reasons, however, why threshold intellectualism faces serious problems. It seems, for instance, that many of the beliefs we form are of practical interest. Claiming, then, that these factors play a role in knowledge seems to be the natural, more expansive theory. The burden then lies on the threshold intellectualist to explain the stronger claim that only a small set of truth-related factors influences the conditions for knowledge. Grimm’s main argument is that the intellectualist seems unjustified (using only

¹²We will see in Chapter 2 that several of the arguments against pragmatic encroachment make this same point.

truth-related factors) in choosing the appropriate threshold. From a purely truth-related point of view, why settle for anything less than perfect reliability? Similarly, why settle for one level of reliability over another? Where these are difficult questions for the threshold intellectualist to answer, it is precisely here that practical factors seem so natural. The practicalist can argue that the threshold is determined by our context and situation: the cost of being wrong, for example, or that for all practical purposes it is sufficient enough to act upon them. What cases like the *Bank Case* demonstrate is that the thresholds relevant to knowledge are partly determined by our practical goals and concerns.

1.5 Pace and Moral Encroachment

We have finally arrived at a recent account of moral encroachment given by Michael Pace. Pace argues against what he calls wishful thinking, which are attempts at justification that arise from the subject's own wants and desires but that do not come from strong evidence. Wishful thinking, he claims, has nothing to do with the reasons that are appropriate for determining the truth of a proposition. How, then, can a subject appeal to pragmatic reasons without being charged with wishful thinking? Pace argues that moral-pragmatic arguments can solve this problem while avoiding intellectual dishonesty.

Pace is worried that James' argument by itself is not sufficient to eliminate intellectual dishonesty and provides two arguments to support this. According to Pace, James often favors belief in J-cases when the subject's evidence fails to support one option over another [18, p. 13]. The problem is how a subject can simultaneously believe that the evidence favors neither option while convincing oneself that one option is more favored. Pace believes this is being intellectually dishonest. In these cases withholding belief seems to be accurately assessing one's evidence and to do otherwise seems epistemically inappropriate.

The second argument Pace raises against J-cases involves situations when a subject has evidence that favors one option but does not favor that option significantly enough to provide full on justification for belief. Pace argues that James cannot account for the lack of justification in these case when the pragmatic conditions are favorable enough. Put another way, it is unclear how significantly pragmatic factors can influence epistemic justification. It seems that so long as the evidence points toward one option more than another, James

will argue that pragmatic factors can justify belief. But this seems problematic — can strong pragmatic reasons paired with evidence that favor an option with 55% likelihood really be epistemically justified? Pace thinks not and that there must be a stronger case made for a connection between evidence and pragmatic factors than the one espoused by James.

These problems, as Pace sees them, stem from claiming that pragmatic factors affect evidential factors rather than influencing sufficiency criteria for evidential factors. According to Pace (and in agreement with Grimm), moral-pragmatic factors are appropriate if they influence threshold rather than realizer components of knowledge. Arguing for pragmatic factors that influence the realizer components of knowledge is difficult because pragmatic and evidential factors will be competing with each other and it is not clear how they compete without leading to cases of intellectual dishonesty. Arguing for pragmatic factors that influence the threshold component of knowledge is an easier claim to defend, however. Evidence in this case remains as important as it always has been, and pragmatic factors do not compete but rather play a role in judging when evidence is sufficient for belief. In this way Pace argues that pragmatic factors influence what evidence is good enough for justification.

According to Pace (again, also in agreement with Grimm), there seems to be no principled, purely epistemic way to set the standards of justification. The best way to meet this challenge is to draw upon pragmatic considerations [18, p. 16]. Pace concludes by providing an account of moral encroachment on epistemic justification where the moral-pragmatic component provides justification for the threshold of evidence needed for a belief to count as knowledge. In this way, moral-pragmatic encroachment supplements evidentialism and does not conflict with it. Pace’s account is given below [18, p. 21]:

One has sufficient evidence for justified belief that p in context C if p is more likely than not on one’s total evidence and adopting the Counsel of Courage is morally preferable to adopting the Counsel of Caution for S in C .

One has sufficient evidence for justified belief that p in context C only if p is more likely than not on one’s total evidence and it is not the case that the Counsel of Caution is morally preferable to the Counsel of Courage in C .

Moral considerations therefore help us balance the appropriate Counsel of Caution and Courage when there is no purely-epistemic reason to suppose which level of evidence is required for justification. Pace offers little in terms of describing what is morally preferable. In Chapter 3, we will offer an alternative account of moral encroachment that addresses a solution to this question. At this point, Pace's account serves as a conclusion of our discussion of the pragmatic and moral encroachment literature.

In summary, the encroachment literature (with the exception of James) has settled on the less ambitious claim that pragmatic factors influence the threshold of justification needed for knowledge. This move from realizer anti-intellectualism to threshold anti-intellectualism has opened up conceptual space for pragmatic factors to influence a subject's epistemic position while remaining intellectually honest. The account of practicalism that we will argue for is unique in that pragmatic factors are claimed to be necessary to realize knowledge of a certain set of propositions. Following James, we will argue that pragmatic factors reflected in actions taken on behalf of one's passional nature are required to come to know dependent propositions. The details of this view will be provided in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2

Against Pragmatic Encroachment

The evolution of pragmatic encroachment as seen through the last chapter points towards the increasing need (even amongst practicalists themselves) to come to terms with when and how pragmatic factors interact with the traditional conditions of knowledge. What began as a claim that pragmatic factors place an additional condition on knowledge has been scaled back to the more modest proposal that pragmatic factors influence the acceptable level of the traditional factors needed for a belief to count as knowledge. We will get back to the details practicalists need to work out to address these questions and the appropriateness of their current responses in Chapter 3. For now, we will focus on two broader objections against the move to pragmatic encroachment. These two objections can be distinguished by looking at how they interpret the change in the husband's claims between *Low* and *High*. One objection takes the change in the husband's claims to be insufficient to justify the addition of a pragmatic condition on knowledge. Since the husband's epistemic position is the same in *Low* and *High* it is either sufficient to count as knowledge in both cases or in both cases it is insufficient to count as knowledge. In this case the change in the husband's claims due to a change in practical stakes is inappropriate and one of the husband's claims will fail to meet the truth conditions for knowledge. Similarly, one may claim that though the husband's behavior is telling about how we use and/or make knowledge claims, it fails to justify the need (as pragmatic encroachment claims) for a pragmatic condition on knowledge. Both Fumerton and Kvanvig take this approach and their arguments will be discussed in Section 2.2 and 2.3 respectively. The other objection

we will cover grants the appropriateness of the husband's claims in both *Low* and *High*, but offers an alternative explanation that does not require appealing to pragmatic factors. This alternative explanation — what is labeled contextualism — will be discussed in the following Section 2.1.

2.1 Contextualism and DeRose

Proponents of pragmatic encroachment argue that the differences in the husband's claims between *Low* and *High* point toward a required pragmatic condition on knowledge. There is an alternative option, however, that can still account for the propriety of the husband's claims in *Low* and *High* without invoking additional pragmatic factors on knowledge. *Contextualism* claims that what is meant by 'know' varies depending on the ascriber's context. Returning again to the *Bank Case*, though the husband is in the same epistemic position with respect to knowing that the bank will be open on Saturday in *Low* and *High*, the contextualist will claim that 'know' in each context expresses a different epistemic relation. The use of the term 'know' expresses a certain relationship in *Low* that the husband is able to meet, while 'know' expresses a different, stronger relation in *High* that the husband can no longer meet. Contextualism therefore maintains the propriety of the husbands claims in both *Low* and *High* and does so without appealing to a change in pragmatic factors.

As hinted at in Chapter 1 the *Bank Case* was originally given by DeRose to support contextualism. Pragmatic encroachment and contextualism are similar in that the pragmatic factors that practicalists claim point to a pragmatic condition on knowledge are the same factors that contextualists claim warrant a change in context and the term 'know'. DeRose nonetheless provides two arguments in favor of giving low/high stakes case like the *Bank Case* a contextualist interpretation rather than a practicalist interpretation. One argument purports to reduce pragmatic encroachment to absurdity. The second, which DeRose takes to be the more significant objection to pragmatic encroachment, involves how pragmatic encroachment handles third-person attributions in high stakes cases. We will discuss both of these objections below.

DeRose's first objection is relatively straightforward. Pragmatic encroachment leads

to several counter-intuitive conclusions. For example it seems bizarre to claim that an individual can know more simply by caring less, but this seems to be what pragmatic encroachment suggests. If what makes a belief count as knowledge depends on pragmatic factors, then a change in one's pragmatic relation to a proposition may change whether or not one knows the proposition. Pragmatic encroachment seems to give rise to many of these types of claims [6, p. 194]:

She does know, but she wouldn't have known if more had been at stake.

She doesn't know, but she will know tomorrow, when less will be at stake.

She knows on the weekends when she isn't on duty and is only wondering out of idle curiosity; but on weekdays, when much rides on whether she's right, she doesn't know.

If we hold the truth-related factors constant for the subject across these examples, it is difficult to imagine these examples expressing truths. If they do express truths, we must explain why we rarely hear them and why they seem unnatural. Rarely, for example, does a speaker cite the importance of pragmatic factors in attributing knowledge and rarely do we hear an interlocutor demand it. Imagine a third-person ascription that contains only the first part of one of the above claims — e.g. 'She knows that p '. When does an interlocutor counter with a request for the second half by saying something like, "Maybe, but what is her practical situation? Whether she knows p or not will depend on her practical stakes." Citing pragmatic factors in a knowledge claim and demanding them both seem unnatural.

In addition to supporting these seemingly absurd claims, pragmatic encroachment runs into another problem while explaining cases when different subjects in different contexts make third-party ascriptions. Let us look again at a *Bank Case* that has been slightly modified. The husband is in a high stakes situation like in *High*, but in this case the wife remains in a low stakes situation — the wife, for whatever reason, fails to find a relevant increase in stakes. Furthermore, and just to be clear, the wife and husband only differ with respect to their practical stakes, that is, they are in the same epistemic position with regard to knowing whether or not the bank will be open on Saturday. As in *High* the husband will claim to not be in a position to know. When asked to comment on whether the wife knows that the bank will be open, the husband will claim that she too does not

know that the bank will be open. She, after all, is in the same epistemic position that he is and since he is not in a position to know she must not be in a position to know. But the wife's situation tells a different story. She is in a low stakes situation and will claim that her epistemic position is sufficient for knowledge. Since her husband is in the same epistemic position, when pressed to comment on whether her husband knows that the bank will be open, she will claim he also possesses knowledge. Though both of these situations seem to occur quite naturally, there is a clear disagreement between these positions.

The problem, as DeRose points out, is that pragmatic encroachment cannot readily account for this disagreement. If the subject's practical stakes set the appropriate conditions for knowledge, there should be agreement amongst ascribers on the appropriate conditions for knowledge. Though it is often the case that the ascriber applies the same standards to others, there seems to be no agreement — as practicalists would have it — amongst different ascribers. We can contrast this position with the claim made by contextualism. Contextualism claims that variation in what is meant by 'know' is attached to the context of the speaker of the attribution. According to contextualism other speakers in different contexts can always apply different standards to 'know' and can apply different ascriptions to the same subject. As DeRose writes, “[According to contextualism] In neither of the *Bank Cases* does [the husband] either *simply know* or *simply not know*. . . . [Pragmatic encroachment] holds that the subject's practical situation sets the standard for whether any speaker in any context can truthfully say that the subject 'knows', while contextualism says that the standard set by the subject's context is not necessarily binding on other speakers in other contexts . . .” [6, p.229]. What actually happens seems to support the contextualist's prediction that subjects apply the same standards for knowledge determined by their own context to others. This, as DeRose argues, is another difficulty for pragmatic encroachment (and, of course, is another reason in favor of contextualism).¹

The next two sections will look at objections — the first from Richard Fumerton and

¹This again leads back to DeRose's first objection. What if the husband and wife are asked to take into consideration the other's practical situation, would that change anything? — It doesn't seem like it. Different subjects in different contexts ascribe/deny knowledge to a third-party even if the different subjects have the same knowledge of the third-party's practical situation. As in the first objection, neither tends to take into account the other's practical stakes and ascribe knowledge based on the subject's pragmatic situation.

the second from Johnathan Kvanvig — against the claim that low/high stakes cases like the *Bank Case* point towards a pragmatic condition on knowledge.

2.2 Fumerton

The previous argument against pragmatic encroachment focused on a possible alternative account for the propriety of the husband’s claims in both *Low* and *High*. The next sections focus on how conclusions drawn from the low/high stakes cases like the *Bank Case* fail to support a pragmatic condition on knowledge. Fumerton, in particular, argues against pragmatic factors encroaching on epistemic probability and the underlying epistemic justification upon which it relies. Thus there are some epistemic concepts that must remain free of pragmatic encroachment. He continues by demonstrating that even if we can show that pragmatic factors encroach on some other epistemic concepts, including them as an additional condition on knowledge would make our use of ‘know’ unnecessarily complicated.

When an agent faces a decision on how to act, he or she looks at the consequences of the possible actions open to them. Since it is often difficult to determine the actual consequences of an action, an agent often relies on the probability — from their point of view — of the various possible outcomes. We will call the unadulterated version of these probabilities (i.e the probabilities that are a function of our evidence only and that represent the likelihood of certain outcomes) our *epistemic probabilities*. If the decision is a moral or prudential one, the subject uses additional value preferences to weigh these epistemic probabilities and to ultimately make a decision.

Pragmatic considerations on how to act are not treated any differently. Fumerton agrees that pragmatic factors can play a role in how we weigh our preferences, but he does not see how pragmatic reasons can enter into the initial calculation of epistemic probability. If they did, he argues, practicalists would have to defend against the charge of regress: to reach a conclusion on what is epistemically likely would require answering pragmatic questions, but to answer pragmatic questions would require looking back at epistemic probabilities, and so on. There is no clear solution to the problem and so, at least when it comes to epistemic probabilities, we have an epistemic concept that must remain free of pragmatic influence.

But suppose, Fumerton continues, that a solution can be given that reconciles pragmatic factors with epistemic probability by allowing pragmatic factors to encroach upon a different epistemic concept. Would we then have reason to introduce pragmatic conditions on knowledge? Fumerton argues that this would still be unnecessary. In this case there is no good reason for a subject to take into account their pragmatic relationship to a proposition when claiming to know. Here is an example given by Fumerton against Fantl and McGrath's view. According to Fantl and McGrath what a subject knows is determined by how he or she is willing to act, which sets the appropriate level of justification needed to know. If this is the case, claiming to 'know' would have to reflect both the agent's calculated epistemic probabilities as well as the agent's (subjective) calculation of their own willingness to act. As Fumerton points out, this is overly complicated and unnecessary since we are only interested in the appropriate (more objective) epistemic probabilities. The more efficient and straightforward way seems to involve the speaker stating only the epistemic probabilities from the beginning and then letting the interlocutor perform their own expected utility calculations.

Fumerton concludes with a final petition against pragmatic encroachment. There are many things (pragmatic, prudential, moral, etc.) that influence our use of 'know'. In certain situations there may be legitimate reasons to feign knowledge in order to influence an interlocutor or onlooker. Fumerton provides an example of his wife saying, "I'll just be a minute." Though she is likely to still be fifteen minutes from being ready, we recognize that the meaning of her statement is not a genuine claim to her knowing that she will be a minute. In this case we do not assume, unlike what is often required by contextualists or pragmatic encroachers, that 'minute' has changed its meaning, or that the truth conditions for 'I'll be a minute' have changed, perhaps by pointing towards a pragmatic condition on knowledge. Rather, we acknowledge that the intended use of the statement is different from the literal meaning. Ultimately it is difficult, when we acknowledge that this is the case and that additional pragmatic conditions on knowledge are unnecessarily complicated, to suppose that low/high stakes cases support practicalism.

2.3 Kvanvig

Kvanvig writes, “What difference does it make if practical stakes are included in the nature of knowledge itself rather than simply being linked to knowledge in some way? The latter has always been obvious, but the former view goes beyond this claim to something stronger” [15, p. 79]. Kvanvig argues that the factors typically thought to justify pragmatic encroachment really need only reflect the latter and not the former.

Kvanvig begins by clarifying the distinction between practicalist views and intellectualist views that support a link between knowledge and practice. He points out that the intellectualist has many options available to explain this connection without claiming that practical stakes are epistemically relevant to the nature of knowledge. An intellectualist may claim that knowledge can be relied on in practical affairs, but that such a connection is defeasible. For example, an intellectualist may argue that the connection between knowledge and practice is appropriate because insofar as knowledge involves justification suitable for closure of further inquiry it provides the closure needed to decide and act [15, p. 78-79]. Such an account provides a sufficient connection between knowledge and practice, but leaves open the possibility that the connection to practice may not be part of the nature of knowledge itself: it leaves open the possibility, that is, that knowledge may still serve another function not tied to action. In order for the practicalist to overcome this intellectualist maneuver, they must show that this connection is either not defeasible, or that its defeasibility arises through no fault of one’s epistemic position (i.e. that an additional pragmatic factor can work over and above one’s epistemic position).

Kvanvig has serious doubts that either of these options can work. He begins by pointing out cases when knowledge and practice come apart. There are times when a subject fails to act in accordance with their knowledge because additional factors make him or her resistant to do so. Increased stakes, for example, may make a subject hesitant to act on knowledge or to retract a claim to knowledge.² Another subject may have knowledge but feel that further justification is needed before they can act on that belief. As this last scenario suggests, skeptical possibilities may lead one to fail to act on what one knows. The threat of global skepticism puts this point into relief. Supposing a world where global

²Again, some may describe the husband’s claim in *High* to be one such example.

skepticism is true, practical deliberation must either function as it always has, in which case practical deliberation must be independent to some extent of knowledge, or, skeptical possibilities will lead to paralysis and inaction. Either of these scenarios prove problematic for the practicalist that wants a strong link between knowledge and action.

There are other cases where action is not clearly tied to knowledge. An action can and sometimes must be based on insufficient evidence. In these cases we have to act on whatever beliefs we have even if these beliefs do no count as knowledge. We can go even further and point to cases when practical concerns are irrelevant and/or restricted. Consider knowing q : that whatever you do, the best thing is to act as if you don't know p . Assuming such knowledge is possible, you can possess this knowledge while acting/knowing all the while that one cannot use this knowledge in practical inference. These cases all point against a necessary link between action and practice and it is left up to the practicalist to account for such discrepancies. As "it is hard", Kvanvig writes, "to see how one can claim to be a justificationist about knowledge while admitting that knowledge sometimes occurs without justification. Equally so, it is hard to see how to be a pragmatic encroacher about knowledge while admitting that sometimes the preferred connection between knowledge and practice is absent" [15, p. 84].

Some of the problems above can be circumvented by a different approach to pragmatic encroachment. We could say, as Kvanvig points out, that a failure to act in these cases is not due to a failure in one's traditional epistemic position with respect to the belief, but is due to some property of the belief itself or the act of putting the belief into practice. It may, for example, be a belief that is morally wrong, or a belief that will be used in practical reasoning. Kvanvig claims that the problem with these characterizations is that they are too weak to justify the conclusion drawn by practicalists that pragmatic factors play a role in the conditions for knowledge. They are *ad hoc* in that nothing justifies (or at least, according to Kvanvig, no argument has yet been given) why these particular properties are chosen over any other. It seems that in a similar move we can claim political or aesthetic encroachment. We may claim, for example, that if you know p but p isn't part of some beautiful theory, the reason you cannot use knowledge of p in certain instances is not because of some epistemic weakness you have with respect to p , but is because p is not part of some beautiful theory. Though we can easily place such conditions on knowledge there

is nothing about aesthetic conditions (or political, or pragmatic, or something else of this sort) that requires that they be placed into the nature of knowledge. Kvanvig concludes that practicalists wrongfully attribute a connection between knowledge and practice as a condition on knowledge.

Kvanvig takes these conclusions and offers an alternative explanation of the low/high stakes cases like the *Bank Case*. Kvanvig acknowledges that a theory of knowledge may have to account for both the nature and value of knowledge. What practicalists claim is that the practical value of knowledge should play a role in the nature of knowledge. But Kvanvig equates this move with a value judgment on the side of the practicalist. For practicalism to argue for pragmatic encroachment on knowledge it must argue for a specific value claim on knowledge. Though it certainly is the case that someone can value the practical use of knowledge it is far from clear (and according to Kvanvig, has yet to be argued) that it is *the* value of knowledge. Knowledge can certainly be valuable because of its connection to practice (i.e. its use in practical reasoning), but it may be valuable for other reasons as well. Kvanvig therefore equates a rejection of practicalism as a rejection of a certain value claim on knowledge. A good strategy for arguing against practicalism may then be to argue for the falseness of this presupposition they draw upon the value of knowledge.

Chapter 3

An Alternative Argument for Practicalism

Practicalism claims that a practical factor can influence a subject's position to know. What specifically about a subject's practical position makes their position to know change? This chapter will focus on clearing up some of these details. In particular, we will focus on how practicalism handles the charge of intellectual dishonesty. We acknowledge that caring about knowing that p does not improve a subject's position to know p , and yet some of the previous arguments for practicalism seem to focus on these very stakes. Some of these factors include the practical cost of being wrong, how important it is to the subject that p be true, whether one has a practical reason to make sure that p .

We will offer an alternative argument for practicalism that tries to avoid this tension by remaining epistemically appropriate. It does so by offering a theoretical account that does not appeal to the subject's practical position relative to p , but rather appeals to the subject's epistemic stakes relative to p . We will use the *Bank Case* as a starting point for our discussion but will ultimately go beyond it. Unlike the *Bank Case* that is open to a host of practical/pragmatic factors, we will argue that these factors should be appropriately limited to the particular pragmatic factors related to increased epistemic stakes. Increased epistemic stakes have the same characteristics as J-cases and we can apply James' argument for pragmatically justified belief. In particular, we will provide an argument for practical-

ism that appeals to James' dependent propositions. This will prove significant for three reasons. First, it offers a different and novel account of pragmatic encroachment. During J-cases pragmatic factors can appropriately influence our passional nature and, given the existence of dependent propositions, our position to know. Second, rather than an argument for threshold anti-intellectualism, this is an argument for a necessary pragmatic requirement to realize knowledge and is thus an argument for realizer anti-intellectualism. Pragmatic action on behalf of the subject is necessary to acquire knowledge of dependent propositions. Finally, it offers a new framework to address the connection between pragmatic encroachment (and epistemology in general) and the moral domain. I argue that the existence of dependent propositions can justify moral claims since the process by which we come to know dependent propositions can be seen as a moral process. More of these details will be provided in Section 3.5.

3.1 Is it skepticism or practical stakes?

In the high stakes *Bank Case* it is unclear what brings about a change in the husband's position to know. What is clear is that not just any change will do and that only certain relevant changes in the husband's environment or practical situation may influence his response. We will look at what we mean by relevant below.

As Fantl and McGrath have pointed out there are (at least) two factors that may affect the standards/conditions of knowledge: the raising of error possibilities, and the variation of practical stakes [9]. The *Bank Case* involves both of these factors. The raising of error possibilities includes the references to the possibility that the bank will be closed, while the increased practical stakes arises from the references to the importance of the check being deposited. These factors have a complex relationship that makes it difficult to determine which factor is relevant in leading to a change in the husband's position to know. When more practical factors are at stake, for example, a subject will often focus on possible sources of error. Despite the high correlation between both factors we can imagine cases where the practical environment is held fixed while the salience of skeptical possibilities are varied and vice versa. We will look at these variations of the *Bank Case* to narrow down the factor that does the work in changing the husband's position to know. We will

argue that epistemic stakes must play a primary role in low/high stakes cases.

The *Bank Case* is set up to place less emphasis on skeptical possibilities. In both *Low* and *High* the wife raises a skeptical possibility. Though they are different possibilities, they are similar enough that for all practical purposes we can consider the skeptical environment to be constant between *Low* and *High*. Since the practical stakes is the only thing that changes between *Low* and *High*, the thought is that practical stakes must be the relevant difference that yields the husband to change his response. From this it is tempting to make the bolder claim that practical stakes by themselves can lead to a change in the husband's position to know. In a similar vein, most skeptical arguments are addressed as simply being irrelevant. There are many instances when skeptical scenarios are raised that have little influence on the husband's response. We can imagine the commonly accepted response of, "Yes, but that is crazy." Though this is usually enough to sidestep skeptical possibilities and for the subject to retain their claim to knowledge, such a response does little to solve or address the skeptical problems and the question of whether or not the subject actually has knowledge.

There is a necessary and important link, however, between practical stakes and skeptical possibilities in low/high stakes examples. The problem with dismissing skeptical claims is that practical stakes influence the husband's response only when they are paired with the salience of skeptical scenarios. This becomes obvious when we look at an example that has varying practical stakes and where no skeptical possibilities are addressed. Imagine the following dialogue in a bank case-like scenario:

(*Modified Stakes I*). My wife and I drive past the bank on a Friday afternoon, as in [*Low Stakes*], and notice the long lines. I again suggest that we deposit our paychecks on Saturday morning, explaining that I was at the bank on Saturday morning only two weeks ago and discovered that it was open until noon. But in this case, we have just written a very large and important check. If our paychecks are not deposited into our checking account before Monday morning, the important check we wrote will bounce, leaving us in a very bad situation. And, of course, the bank is not open on Sunday. My wife reminds me of these facts. She then says, "But it is *so* important that we deposit this check. Again, do you know the bank will be open tomorrow?" Remaining as

confident as I was before that the bank will be open then, I reply, “I just told you that I know the bank will be open tomorrow. Just because it is important to us does not change that.”

This situation highlights the fact that raising practical stakes can be dismissed just as easily as raising some bizarre skeptical possibilities. The naturalness of the husband’s reply is a strong indication that practical stakes by themselves do not influence a subject’s position to know. For the husband to appropriately change his response — and more importantly for an appropriate corresponding change in the husband’s position to know — skeptical possibilities must also be salient.

We have argued previously for the importance of skeptical possibilities in influencing the husband’s position to know. Recall that Grimm makes a similar point about pragmatic encroachment (see Section 1.4). Grimm claims that pragmatic encroachment can only arise if it is paired with an insufficiency in some traditional truth-related factor. The husband must be in a position less than certainty in order to find skeptical possibilities relevant. If the husband is certain (or thinks he is certain) he will not take the skeptical possibilities seriously and will not question his position to know.

A connection between skeptical possibilities and a subject’s practical stakes is required for pragmatic encroachment to arise. The husband must find the skeptical possibility relevant and give it serious consideration (which is where practical stakes may come in) for it to lead to a change in the his response and to potentially lead to a change in his position to know. This is often implied in the addition of practical stakes but it is left out if one concludes that a change in practical position alone does the work in changing the husband’s response. Rather than refer to an increase in practical stakes to denote (and possibly confuse) this position, we will refer to an increase in *epistemic stakes* to make this point clear. Focusing on epistemic stakes provides a clearer connection to a change in a subject’s position to know, and we will focus on providing an account of pragmatic encroachment that goes through epistemic stakes. For pragmatic encroachment to be intellectually appropriate it must work through increased epistemic stakes.

3.2 Epistemic Stakes and J-Cases

It can be difficult to differentiate epistemic stakes from practical stakes. As stated before, an increase in practical stakes will often be paired with questioning one's epistemic position and with increased epistemic stakes. Though there may be a high correlation between epistemic stakes and one's practical stakes, epistemic stakes can be more clearly differentiated when compared with one's practical position. A subject can feel an increase in epistemic stakes without a change in practical position. In this section we will give an example that demonstrates this point and helps distinguish epistemic stakes from a subject's practical position.

To see what is meant by epistemic stakes imagine the following scenario. A subject faces an option between accepting or rejecting a hypothesis. Evidence is inconclusive and the subject recognizes that both choices are a possibility and that the decision is an important one. In such a situation the subject feels the weight of balancing the twin truth goals — of accepting a hypothesis in the hope of acquiring a truth or of rejecting the hypothesis in the hope of avoiding error. In feeling the need to balance the twin truth goals the scientist feels increased epistemic stakes.

As the above description already hints towards, increased epistemic stakes are akin to epistemic J-cases. A subject facing increased epistemic stakes is facing a genuine option that is intellectually open. As Pace points out [18, See also Sections 1.3 and 1.5], the immediate benefit of focusing on J-cases is that they offer a situation where pragmatic factors can encroach upon knowledge in a way that is intellectually appropriate. Insofar as the evidence is not coercive a subject may appeal to pragmatic factors to justify the weighing of the twin truth goals without being intellectually dishonest. The pragmatic factors will not go against the subject's evidence because evidence by itself cannot justify which truth goal should be chosen.

Perhaps the clearest differentiation of epistemic stakes from practical stakes come from looking at epistemic relative to two subjects. Different subjects in similar practical and epistemic positions with respect to p may nonetheless have different epistemic stakes towards p . Even with similar practical and epistemic positions towards p , one subject may feel the weight of balancing the twin truth goals with respect to p while the other sub-

ject does not. As James describes, whether an option is alive or dead is not an intrinsic property of the hypothesis itself but is rather a relation to the individual thinker [13, p. 1]. James goes on to say that in some cases whether an option is living or dead is itself a passional decision [13, p. 4]. The difference in epistemic stakes is dependent on the subject's passional nature. Consequences of the work itself, fame, happiness, etc., may all play roles in whether a subject feels the weight of the truth goals and how the subject balances them, but this weight does not come from the practical/epistemic position itself. An additional component on behalf of the subject's passional nature is required to produce a change in epistemic stakes. It is up to the individual to feel the weight of balancing the two truth goals.

3.3 A comment on the subject's and the ascriber's perspective

A common discussion in the *Bank Case* literature is whether the legitimacy of the husband's claims is determined by the husband or an onlooker ascribing a state of knowledge to the husband. Both seem legitimate options and both can produce different results. In the *Bank Case* the husband clearly questions his own knowledge. The skeptical possibility (and the stakes associated with it) is a very real possibility to him. This is not so obvious from the perspective of an onlooker (i.e. the person attributing knowledge). To see why this matters let us look at the *Bank Case* example from the perspective of the wife. Recall that in *Modified I* given above, the addition of practical stakes (and only practical stakes) mentioned by the wife did little to influence the husband's decision. A similar case may arise when the roles are reversed and the wife remains unconvinced by the change in practical (and only practical) stakes on the part of the husband. Imagine this modified case below:

(*Modified Stakes II*). My wife and I drive past the bank on a Friday afternoon, as in [*Low Stakes*], and notice the long lines. I again suggest that we deposit our paychecks on Saturday morning, explaining that I was at the bank on Saturday morning only two weeks ago and discovered that it was open until

noon. But in this case, we have just written a very large and important check. If our paychecks are not deposited into our checking account before Monday morning, the important check we wrote will bounce, leaving us in a very bad situation. And, of course, the bank is not open on Sunday. My wife reminds me of these facts. She then says, “Banks do change their hours. Do you know the bank will be open tomorrow?” Remaining as confident as I was before that the bank will be open then, still, I reply, “Well, no. I’d better go in and make sure.” My wife, questioning the change I made to my claim to knowledge, then says, “So you didn’t know before [when you said in *Low Stakes*] that the bank will be open tomorrow.”

The wife may back up such a claim by appealing (as is the case in the original *Modified I*) to the artificial change due to practical stakes. Since wanting or believing something to be true does not make it true, the addition of only practical stakes does little to change the husband’s position to know. Since the husband has not acquired new evidence from the wife’s perspective, she can express disbelief over the husband’s claims and his apparently artificial epistemic shift. After acknowledging both scenarios the wife may think that the husband either spoke falsely in the high stakes case and that he still really possesses knowledge or that he spoke falsely in the low stakes case when he claimed to know when he really did not. A similar situation may occur if the wife is in a position of increased epistemic stakes and the husband is not. In this case she may describe the situation according to her own high standards while the husband’s description reflects his low epistemic stakes. Though again contrary to the husband’s perspective, the wife’s interpretation of the events in these cases also seems legitimate.

Pragmatic encroachment only arises from the perspective of the subject with increased epistemic stakes. As demonstrated by the wife in *Modified II* above, it is easy (at least in some cases) to dismiss the behavior demonstrated by the husband in the *Bank Case*. What one subject finds to be a genuine (and intellectually open) option may not be found to be a genuine option by another. It is the first subject that experiences the problem as a real one and it is the first subject’s position (if any do so) where pragmatic encroachment may arise and be justified. We will therefore look at the problem from the perspective

of the individual who recognizes the increased epistemic stakes.¹ The reason to do so is twofold. For starters, we certainly find ourselves in situations similar to that of the husband, and though we may dismiss other's husband-type behavior, when we find ourselves facing a genuine option the decision is not so easily brushed aside. Since these options are intellectually open they are difficult to resolve, and in these times additional evidence or arguments provided by others often offers little help. It is important to be able to address how a subject can resolve this problem from their own point of view. Secondly, it is at this point (again, if any) where pragmatic encroachment will be intellectually appropriate. This will become more clear when our argument is established, but there are several ways for pragmatic factors to influence a subject that are only available to a subject in a position of increased epistemic stakes. For example, it may be the case that pragmatic factors influence knowledge precisely at those times when the subject faces a difficult decision like a genuine option, or when a subject is working to improve his or her level of understanding. To dismiss these possibilities may be blocking the very options that give rise to and are needed to justify pragmatic encroachment.²

3.4 James' Dependent Propositions and Pragmatic Belief

The past two sections have argued that in order for pragmatic encroachment to be intellectually honest, it must occur during instances of increased epistemic stakes. Talk of

¹We should note here that such a move enables us to bypass a host of popular solutions to the problem. Many of these approaches attempt to explain the inadequacy of the husband's statements by judging the husband's statements in either *Low* or *High* to be inappropriate or false (i.e. they take the wife's position in the above example). This does not address what I take to be an important issue, which I will now address.

²In the next section we will offer a reason why a pragmatic condition on knowledge may have taken so long to be distinguished from the traditional components of knowledge. In line with the above comments, we offer a reason for the tendency to fail to take into account these factors that are only available to a subject in a position of increased epistemic stakes. In short, we offer an account of why a subject that is not in a position of increased epistemic stakes with respect to p may readily dismiss pragmatic encroachment upon knowing p .

such epistemic encroachment may be too obvious and insofar as epistemic stakes can be addressed by the traditional conditions on knowledge the situation as we have described it may no longer pose a problem. We will now address this issue by providing an argument for practicalism that takes increased epistemic stakes as its starting point. Insofar as there are dependent propositions, knowledge of these dependent propositions must depend on a prior pragmatically influenced belief.

Let us begin by reconstructing the *Bank Case* in light of the discussion in this chapter. The husband is in a position of increased epistemic stakes. The husband faces an intellectually open option and insofar as he takes the option seriously he finds the option to be a genuine option. The husband is in an epistemic J-case. The husband must choose between the twin truth goals given by the Counsel of Courage and the Counsel of Caution. It is here that pragmatic encroachment may arise and it is the next step that needs appropriate pragmatic justification.

This description is very much in line with the analysis given by Pace [18]. Pace argues that to be intellectually appropriate pragmatic factors must play a role in cases such as these when evidence is inconclusive. Pace goes on to claim that James is vague about what determines the appropriate truth goal in a situation, and that depending on how this is done, it may or may not be intellectually appropriate. Favoring belief (i.e. J-belief) in J-cases when the subject's evidence fails to support a belief in one option over another is still intellectually inappropriate.

It is at this step that our argument differs. Pace claims that in some cases James supports the inappropriate view mentioned above. Pace, however, overlooks the existence of dependent propositions and the role they play in James' argument. Recall that dependent propositions require a prior action on behalf of one's passional nature before evidence is found to support the truth of the proposition. It seems that a natural Jamesian reply to Pace's criticism is that it is appropriate to believe p when the subject's evidence favors p 's being a dependent proposition. This additional restriction on J-beliefs will make them intellectually appropriate.

We will describe the details of this view, and then we will argue for its moral significance, which may not be clear from the start. First, some of the details.

Pragmatic Belief: a subject is justified to believe p insofar as the subject's evidence

favors p being a dependent proposition.

Though this description relies on evidence and in this way is truth-related, dependent propositions are by definition importantly independent of evidential considerations. Even though a subject may have evidence of the existence of dependent propositions (as James' analogies demonstrate), their defining characteristic is that evidence is found to be coercive only after an action is taken on behalf of the subject's passional nature. This means that before such a willful advance the option will be intellectually open since the evidence will be found to be inconclusive. Only after this point may the subject find coercive evidence in support of p .

Pragmatic beliefs as we have defined them also account for the importance of increased epistemic stakes. Since dependent propositions will remain intellectually open until a willful advance is made, a subject may experience increased epistemic stakes when facing a decision to believe a dependent proposition. Low/high stakes cases like the *Bank Case* where pragmatic beliefs influence a subject's position to know arise when the subject experiences these increased epistemic stakes. The situation is different for the subject that does not experience increased epistemic stakes. Though this subject faces an opportunity to improve their position to know, they may not exercise this option, and their position to know may not be improved. In this way discussion of the importance of J-cases in low/high stakes cases is still accounted for.

Let us now look at how pragmatic belief supports practicalism. Recall that practicalism states:

Practicalism: Two subjects S and S' , equally alike with respect to their epistemic position but who differ with respect to their practical position, may differ with respect to their position to know that p .

We will provide the clearest instance of practicalism first, and then we will try to argue for its broader applicability. Imagine first that p is a dependent proposition. Both S and S' are in the same epistemic position, but whereas S does not believe in dependent propositions (imagine a subject akin to the curmudgeon from James' *Friend Example* in Chapter 1) S' does. To be more specific we may argue that there is a willful advance on

behalf of the subject S' towards p . It is certainly the case that S' is in a better position to know p than S . Thus, practicalism is true. Belief in a dependent proposition will put one in a better position to know that dependent proposition.

A criticism is readily available: What if dependent truths do not exist? Apart from the two analogies provided in support of their existence, James offers little supporting details. One option along these lines would be to argue against intellectual openness, which would mean that dependent propositions have (though it may be difficult to find) coercive evidence in favor of their support. If this is the case, one may argue that belief is still only appropriate if there is coercive evidence in support of the belief. There are at least two paths to respond to this criticism. In these cases a subject may still need to supply a willful advance. Insofar as this willful advance is pragmatically influenced our argument will still support practicalism. Another response to this criticism may appeal to the usefulness of pragmatic beliefs. It is certainly useful in personal relationships and scientific practice to believe in dependent propositions, and insofar as they are useful it seems we may appeal to pragmatic reasons to justify the belief in their existence. Look again at the *Friend Example*. It need not be the case that the curmudgeon is actually trapped in an evidential vacuum where evidence will never be found to be conclusively in favor of his friend's good or bad intentions. What only needs to be the case is that believing in p will help improve the curmudgeon's position to know p . Insofar as it does so, such a belief argues in favor of practicalism in that it puts the curmudgeon — without a change in his epistemic position — in a better position to know.

Finally, there is an interesting result that follows from our description of dependent propositions. Once a willful advance is made, evidence may be found to be coercive and what was a dependent proposition has in an important sense ceased to be a dependent proposition. The dependent proposition has become a regular proposition in that it now has traditional, coercive evidential support. In this way one may second guess evidence of dependent propositions and come to disbelieve them. It may be easier to find evidence in support of dependent propositions in general after one has gone through the process, but again, since one's current epistemic position no longer favors and provides evidence for their support, it need not be so. This may explain why pragmatic beliefs have such a difficult time being justified. For one group of subjects the evidence and arguments in

support of dependent propositions is unconvincing (for them the existence of dependent propositions is intellectually open). For the other group the question is no longer living. It is either already known, or it is unknown to the point where the subject does not find it to be a candidate for belief. This is another reason to stress the importance of genuine options, increased epistemic stakes, and of the fundamental role of the willful advance in cases like the *Bank Case*. In many low/high stakes examples these factors are neglected or taken for granted at the start.

3.5 The Moral Significance of Dependent Propositions

We have provided an argument for pragmatic encroachment that appeals to dependent propositions. In this section we will argue that this encroachment should be interpreted as moral encroachment.

Recall Pace's argument for moral encroachment (see Section 1.5). Pace focuses on defending an epistemically appropriate place for moral beliefs in epistemic justification. A subject certainly may choose to use one's moral claims in weighing the truth goals, but Pace's proposal leaves open several questions: What makes a belief particularly moral? Why are these moral beliefs significant in weighing the twin epistemic truth goals? We want to argue that there is an alternative argument for moral encroachment that more readily addresses these questions.

In attempting to provide solutions to these questions James' discussion at the end of 'The Will to Believe' will prove useful. Recall that James recognizes the connection between the religious hypothesis and dependent propositions. Since the religious hypothesis shares characteristics of dependent propositions, he argues that one may be pragmatically justified to believe it. After all, he argues, the religious hypothesis may actually be a dependent proposition. Notice here, however, that we risk running into the same problems addressed in the preceding paragraph. Why is it a religious/moral proposition? Is it because the content itself is particularly moral/religious in nature? Pace and James (though perhaps James to a lesser extent) must answer to these questions. There is another approach, however, that readily addresses these questions and takes the connection between dependent propositions and the religious hypothesis as a starting point.

Here is what we have in mind. Looking back at the *Friend Example*, a J-belief is required on behalf of the curmudgeon before the curmudgeon can make a new friend. Now it may be said of this step that the a J-belief is required before the curmudgeon can be friendly to his new friend. But can't we also say that J-belief itself is a friendly action? We think that the latter is also true. Let us now apply this to the James' example of the moral skeptic. Recall that a moral skeptic for James needs to provide a J-belief before they can be confirmed in their belief. As in the case with the curmudgeon, one may say that the J-belief is required before the moral skeptic can find evidence for and ultimately practice his or her moral beliefs. But again, as in the case with the curmudgeon, the J-belief itself can and should be seen as a step in the moral direction and thus as a moral action. In the same way we can say that providing a pragmatic belief is (though phrased slightly confusingly) an epistemic action.

This seems reasonable, and we can apply the same idea to James' argument for belief in the religious hypothesis. James' argument for believing in the religious hypothesis is that it may come to be a dependent proposition. We agree with James that if the religious hypothesis is true, it is likely to be a dependent proposition. If the religious hypothesis is a dependent proposition, then it seems providing the belief needed to know that dependent proposition (and more specifically, the belief James argues for) can be considered a religious action. Could it be that our argument for pragmatic belief is an argument for religious belief? Or, more generally and to the point, could it be that providing a pragmatic belief is at the same time a moral action? The process of believing in and coming to know a dependent proposition may be seen as being moral in nature.

Our argument for pragmatic encroachment therefore offers an alternative to defend moral encroachment on a subject's position to know. The benefit of such an account is that we need not appeal to 'moral' propositions but need only appeal to dependent propositions in general. If this is the case, our account of pragmatic encroachment can be interpreted just as a type of moral encroachment — what characterizes providing pragmatic beliefs from providing beliefs in general is that they are particularly moral beliefs.

Viewing pragmatic beliefs as moral beliefs and vice versa agrees with some interesting albeit surprisingly reasonable conceptions of moral claims. Assuming that the account of pragmatic encroachment that has been given is accurate, what is required of an individual

that is seeking knowledge? For starters, it requires that there will be instances (notably, when the proposition sought is a dependent proposition) when a willful advance will need to be provided on behalf of the individual. This pragmatic belief will not be fully evidentially supported. As pointed out in the previous section, this is because dependent propositions remain intellectually open until a willful advance allows for coercive evidence to be found. Such a maneuver can only be made on faith. One can interpret a pragmatic belief as a moral action because it requires an act of faith. This much is in agreement with (and is pretty much restating) James' defense and justification of J-beliefs. The only difference here is that the act of believing in a dependent proposition is interpreted as a moral action and not just as an action that is necessary before one can confirm one's moral claims.

There are several other conclusions that follow from claiming parity between moral actions and providing pragmatic beliefs. First, pragmatic beliefs are a result of an action taken on behalf of a subject's passional nature. Nothing requires that an individual hold a pragmatic belief, just like nothing requires that an individual be moral. Similarly the process of coming to hold a pragmatic belief is taken up by the individual themselves and the same story can be said of morality. Second, a pragmatic belief is formed independent of evidential considerations and requires looking outside one's evidential position for a solution. This is often a key step needed to recognize one's fallibility and humility. These traits are often thought to be both epistemically and morally preferable. These connections show that the parity between pragmatic encroachment as we have argued for it and the moral domain may be more similar than one may first think.

We will end with a final comment on the prevalence of pragmatic (and what we have just described as moral) encroachment. Our argument for pragmatic encroachment appeals to the existence of dependent propositions. The epistemic J-cases where dependent propositions may arise are more prevalent than one may initially expect. Depending on the prevalence of skeptical scenarios, one may find oneself often in J-cases. Furthermore, research and social knowledge covered by the *Friend Example* and *Research Example* cover a vast set of possible knowledge. If this is the case, moral encroachment may be more common than we may at first think.

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