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Pragmatic encroachment in epistemology

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Abstract

Epistemology orthodoxy is a purist one in the sense that it separates out the epistemic from the practical. What counts as evidence is independent of what we care about. Which beliefs count as justified and which count as knowledge are independent of our practical concerns. In recent years, many epistemologists have abandoned such purist views and embraced varying degrees of pragmatic encroachment on the epistemic. I survey a variety of these views and explore the main arguments that proponents of pragmatic encroachment have offered in addition to the main criticisms of the pragmatic approach.

1 | INTRODUCTION

According to philosophical lore, epistemological orthodoxy is a purist epistemology in which epistemic concepts are characterized to be pure and free from practical concerns. On this purist view, what counts as knowledge, for example, is independent of what we care about, and what is good or bad for us is independent of what we have evidence to believe or accept. So one is a purist to the extent that one believes that the epistemic realm is independent of the practical realm and that our epistemic concepts are independent from our practical ones.[1]

In recent years, a number of challenges have been posed against purism from proponents of pragmatic encroachment, who adhere to the slogan that the practical encroaches on the epistemic.[2] Let us call any view that adheres to this slogan pragmatic. Since proponents of pragmatic encroachment represent a variety of philosophical approaches and views, the slogan is purposely ambiguous, open to a variety of interpretations and applications. I shall, however, begin our discussion by focusing on one specific interpretation. Once we have done so, we can then raise questions about how we have interpreted the slogan and explore alternatives that widen and/or change the scope of the slogan's application. I will do so by offering a taxonomy of pragmatic views in section 4.

We start by specifying what we mean by "the practical" by appealing to a demarcation of practical from nonpractical factors that corresponds with the demarcation between non-truth-relevant and truth-relevant factors. Relative to some proposition p, a factor is truth-relevant just in case it affects the likelihood that p is true or false. So anything that raises or lowers the objective or subjective probability that p counts as truth-relevant.[3] For example, relative to the proposition that it will rain today, any proposition q (e.g., that there are clouds in the sky) such that the conditional probability that it will rain today given q is not equal to the unconditional probability that it will rain today will count as truth-relevant. On this initial interpretation, practical factors are just nontruth-relevant factors.[4]

Next, since knowledge is often taken as the central object of theoretical concern for epistemology, the most widely discussed question about pragmatic encroachment is the question of whether or not practical factors are

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relevant in determining what a subject knows. And so we begin our discussion by interpreting the epistemic as anything that is relevant for knowing.

Despite these precisifications, the claim that practical factors are relevant for knowledge is still ambiguous. The ambiguity arises from the fact that knowledge is typically understood as a conjunctive concept with alethic, doxastic, and justificatory components.[5] By definition, practical factors are not relevant in determining the truth of the target proposition p, so practical factors can encroach on knowledge only if they are relevant for either determining whether or not a subject possesses a suitable belief that p or for determining whether or not the subject's epistemic state with respect to p is strong enough to meet the standards required for knowledge. In addition, if the meaning of "knows" is context-sensitive and if practical factors can affect what is meant by knows in a context of use, then practical factors can be relevant in determining whether an utterance of "S knows that p" is true or false. We are left with three pragmatic claims about knowledge.

Belief Encroachment Practical factors are relevant in determining whether or not a subject believes that p.[6]

Justification Encroachment Practical factors are relevant in determining whether or not the strength of a subject's epistemic state is strong enough to meet the epistemic standards required for knowledge.[7]

Contextualism Practical factors are relevant for determining the meaning of knows in a conversational context.[8]

These theses identify distinct ways in which the practical might encroach on knowledge. Of course, it could turn out that the practical encroaches on knowledge in all three ways: on belief, justification, and meaning. So one may coherently accept all three theses at once. However, these three views have typically been presented as competitors. As we will see in the next section, the debate about pragmatic encroachment on knowledge has focused on three types of arguments. In each case, proponents of the above theses have offered competing explanations of the relevant phenomena and competing answers to the relevant questions.

2 | ARGUMENTS FOR PRAGMATIC ENCROACHMENT ON KNOWLEDGE

There are generally three types of arguments in favor of pragmatic encroachment on knowledge: arguments from the ordinary use of knows, arguments from the epistemic norms governing reasoning and action, and arguments from the exploration of an antiskeptical, fallibilist epistemology.

2.1 | Ordinary use of 'knows'

We begin with the argument from the ordinary use of knows. Proponents of pragmatic encroachment have appealed to the context-sensitivity of our attributions and denials of knowledge to argue for their respective positions. And since we are interested in the relevance of practical factors, the cases that interest us involve attributions and denials of knowledge across situations where the practical situation of the speaker as well as the purported subject of knowledge varies while the epistemic states of both speakers and subjects remain unchanged. I shall offer a brief discussion of the debate since the topic has been covered, from a more general perspective, in Pinillos (2011) and Buckwalter (2012). Let us consider an abbreviated description of the cases presented in DeRose (2009: 4-5).

Thelma, Louise, and Lena are coworkers on their day off and involved in a small office bet over whether their often-absent co-worker John will show up at the office that day. They briefly stop by the office to check, and they see John's hat hanging on his office door, which is typically a sure sign that he is at work. In addition, they hear their coworker Frank shout, "Why don't you clear that letter with John before you send it off?" Satisfied that they can settle their bets, the friends part ways.

Thelma goes to meet another coworker who had bet that John would not be at the office. She tells him to pay up, asserting that she knows John was at the office. When asked how she knows, Thelma reports that she saw John's hat and heard Frank's remark. Satisfied, the co-worker pays up and wondering if Lena knows to collect as well, asks, "Does Lena know that John was in the office?" Thelma replies, "Yes she does. She was also with me at the office."

Shortly after parting with Thelma and Lena, Louise is stopped by the police who are conducting an important investigation of a crime. They are trying to determine whether John was at work that day. The police ask Louise whether she could testify that John was at work. She replies, "Well, no, I didn't see him. However, I did see his hat and heard Frank make a remark that seems to indicate that John was at work. So, it does seem quite likely." The police then ask whether Lena might know if John was at work. Louise replies, "No, she was at the office with me and saw what I saw. Like me, she doesn't know that John was there."

At first glance, Thelma's attributions of knowledge appear appropriate and true as do Louise's denials of knowledge.[9] Contextualists have argued that the context-sensitivity of these attributions and denials is best explained by fact that the meaning of knows is context-sensitive and that the expressed meaning can depend upon the practical stakes governing the speaker's context. After all, if Thelma's attribution of knowledge to Lena and Louise's denial of knowledge to Lena are both true and if, relative to the proposition that John was at the office, Thelma, Louise, and Lena all possess epistemic states of equal strength, then the difference in truth-value can only be explained by the fact that their truth-conditions depend upon the nonepistemic (i.e., non-truth-relevant) features of the speaker's context.

In opposition, many have responded that our ordinary use can be explained by an invariantist account of knows. For example, proponents of belief encroachment have argued that our attributions and denials of knowledge can be explained by appealing to the context-sensitivity of our attributions and denials of belief.[10] After all, as we noted, knowledge is conjunctive concept and so the question of what the subject believes is relevant for the question of what the subject knows. Jennifer Nagel offers one such view by arguing that the psychological mechanisms underlying belief formation predict that changes in a subject's practical situation can make a difference to whether he or she believes a proposition. Appealing to the psychological notion of a subject's need-for-closure, which corresponds to the desire of the subject to come to a settled judgment, Nagel proposes that "other things being equal, high stakes subjects experience low need-for-closure, and low stakes subjects experience neutral (neither high nor low) need-for-closure."[11] And in high stakes, low need-for-closure cases, subjects tend to put in more cognitive effort when trying to decide what to believe, and the increased cognitive effort results in a lower confidence than high need-for-closure subjects. Therefore, since higher practical stakes are correlated with lower confidence, the higher the stakes, the harder it is to attribute knowledge to one's self.

While this explains Thelma's self-attribution and Louise's self-denial of knowledge, it fails to explain the third-person attributions and denials, which DeRose has presented as the best evidence for contextualism.[12] In order to account for the third-person cases, some invariantists have argued that some of our intuitions concern the warranted assertibility of knowledge attributions and denials rather than their truth, and they further argue that such intuitions are compatible with invariantism.[13] Other invariantists have appealed to error theories, arguing that some of the core intuitions driving the debate are simply mistaken.[14] Along with these objections, purists have also proposed that both contextualism and justification encroachment have unacceptable consequences (see section 3).[15]

Some have raised worries about the linguistic data driving the debate, and others have posed challenges for a contextualist semantics for knows.[16] In addition, new types of cases and data have been used to argue for and against contextualism.[17] Finally, there is a growing experimental literature that collects data about the intuitions of ordinary speakers and compares them to those proposed by philosophers.[18] These experiments test for the effects of practical stakes and the salience of error on the ordinary practice of attributing and denying knowledge. Unfortunately, the experimental results have not yet proved conclusive.

2.2 | Epistemic norms

The second type of argument arises from the intuitive connections between knowledge and our practical behavior. These connections have been explicated through a variety of epistemic norms such as those connecting knowledge and assertion,[19] action,[20] reasoning,[21] and preference.[22] In what follows, I shall focus the discussion on one norm that connects knowledge and action since the general structure of the argument does not depend upon which particular norm we consider.

The argument schema relies upon necessary conditions for knowledge, which articulate what knowledge permits one to do. Using *acting as if* as the practical behavior of interest, we can produce the following argument:

1. If *s* knows that *p*, then *s* may act as if *p*.
2. There exist a pair of cases, where the epistemic states of two subjects with respect to *p* is identical; their practical situations differ, and one subject may act as if *p* but the other subject may not.
3. The subject, who may act as if *p*, knows that *p*.
4. Therefore, a subject's practical situation may be relevant in determining whether he or she knows that *p*.

The following is a description of a possible pair of cases (taken from Fantl & McGrath, 2002).

> Jeremy is at Back Bay Station in Boston preparing to take the commuter rail to Providence for vacation. He asks a man, "Does this train make all those little stops in Foxboro, Attleboro, etc.?" It does not matter much to Jeremy whether the train is express or not. The man answers, "Yea, this one makes all those little stops. That's what I was told when I bought the ticket." Jeremy believes what he says.

> It is of dire importance that Matt gets to Foxboro and the sooner the better. While he has a ticket that gets to Foxboro in two hours, which is just in the nick of time, a train rolls into the station and he overhears the conversation above. Matt thinks to himself, "That guy may have misheard. After all, he doesn't care so he probably didn't pay careful attention. I better go check it out myself."

Jeremy appears to know that the train will stop at Foxboro. After all, supposing that the man received his testimony from a reliable source and is telling the truth, this seems to be sufficient for the transmission of knowledge. Next, we can note that both Jeremy and Matt possess the same evidence and so their epistemic states are equal in strength with respect to the proposition that the incoming train will stop at Foxboro. However, only Jeremy seems justified and permitted in acting as if the train stops at Foxboro. Matt should go and double-check. It would be inappropriate for him to act as if the train stopped at Foxboro and to jump on the incoming train. From the norm connecting knowledge and acting as if, we can infer that Matt does not know that the incoming train will stop at Foxboro. Thus, given the analogous epistemic states of the two subjects, we may conclude that a subject's practical situation can be relevant for knowing.

Two important points are worth making about the argument. First, the soundness of the argument only depends upon the existence of one such pair of cases. Second, while these cases are quite similar to those described in section 2.1, there are some important differences. Most importantly, our evidence for the second premise does not come from our linguistic intuitions. After all, in presenting the cases, we are not asking what ordinary folk will in fact say nor are we asking what it would be appropriate to say. Rather, the evidence comes from our intuitions about the truth and falsity of certain propositions (e.g., that Jeremy knows that the train will stop in Foxboro and that Matt may not act as if the train stops in Foxboro).

While this argument has primarily been used in favor of justification encroachment, many have resisted this conclusion. The most direct response has been to reject the proposed epistemic norms by presenting counter-examples and problematic cases for these norms. Blake Roeber and Jessica Brown have argued that knowledge is not sufficient for acting as if.[23] For example, the responsible surgeon who has studied a patient's chart may

know that the left kidney is to be removed but seems reasonable in double-checking just prior to the start of the operation.[24] Ram Neta has proposed that if such principles are true, then we can find ourselves in puzzling situations where the subject's epistemic position with respect to *p* and with respect to *q* are identical yet the subject knows *p* but not *q*.[25] Baron Reed and Keith DeRose have argued that if a subject can be in two different practical contexts at the same time, this can result in situations where the subject both knows and does not know that *p*.[26]

Williamson (2002) offers a slightly more concessive response on behalf of the purist. He concedes that there is an intuitive link between knowledge and practical reasoning. However, he argues that even if we take such norms for granted, the purist can resist the pragmatic conclusion. Williamson argues that our judgments about the respective appropriateness and inappropriateness of Jeremy and Matt's practical reasoning may be compatible with the fact that both know that the train will stop at Foxboro. While both subjects possess first-order knowledge, they lack second-order knowledge. And when the stakes are higher, as in Matt's case, failures of second-order knowledge are viewed more harshly. Thus, Williamson proposes that our judgment in Matt's case depends upon a more complicated assessment wherein we judge that while Matt may take the train's schedule for granted, he is not in a position to know this. Moreover, if he did so, he would have done something wrong.

Alternatively, some have used these cases and the proposed norms as arguments for other pragmatic views. For example, proponents of belief encroachment have offered a competing explanation of our intuitions in these cases by appealing to the hypothesis that the reason why the two subjects differ in what they know is because what a subject believes is sensitive to his or her practical situation.[27] A problem with some responses of this kind is that, as we noted, these cases do not depend upon our linguistic intuitions. More specifically, these cases do not depend upon how we actually attribute belief. So we may simply stipulate that both subjects believe that the train will stop in Foxboro. This might be evidenced by the fact that both get on the incoming train. Nevertheless, it seems that Jeremy knows and may act as if the train will stop in Foxboro while Matt may not act as if the train will stop in Foxboro and so fails to know.

Since the debate about these arguments depends upon the status of the various epistemic norms, we must explore these norms in more details. For example, we should inquire into whether these principles stand and fall together. Is there some overarching norm from which all these particular norms can be derived? Perhaps, some are valid while others are problematic. To resolve this question, we should consider whether knowledge plays a specific normative role and whether this role can offer a completely general explanation of its connection with practical behavior.[28]

2.3 | Skepticism and fallibilism

The third type of argument arises from the aim of developing an anti-skeptical, fallibilist account of knowledge. Some fallibilists have argued that the best way to be an anti-skeptical fallibilist is to accept some type of pragmatic encroachment on knowledge. There are two different avenues into this inquiry. The first, discussed in DeRose (1995) and Hawthorne (2004), comes from the challenge posed by skeptical arguments that arise from knowledge closure principles and our inability to rule out skeptical hypotheses. Consider the following argument schema from DeRose and Warfield (1999):

1. You do not know that not-H (e.g., that you are not a brain in a vat).

2. If you do not know that not-H and you know that O (e.g., that you have hands) entails not-H, then you do not know that O.

3. Therefore, you do not know that O.

Let us respectively refer to H and O as the skeptical hypothesis and the ordinary proposition (i.e., propositions that we ordinarily think we know). Hawthorne and DeRose adopt different views in response to the skeptical challenge. DeRose offers a contextualist solution. Because 'knows' can refer to different knowledge relations with

differing epistemic standards, then relative to low standards knowledge, we do know that skeptical hypotheses are false and that ordinary propositions are true. However, relative to higher standards knowledge, we know neither. The difficulty for the contextualist is to explain how we can know that skeptical hypotheses do not obtain when we seemingly possess no evidence that can rule them out.[29]

Hawthorne explores a response that embraces justification encroachment. On this view, the meaning of 'knows' is fixed so there is only one knowledge relation, but the standards required for knowledge depend upon the subject's practical context. When the subject's practical context entails a low standard, then the subject knows that the skeptical hypothesis is false and that the ordinary proposition is true. When the context entails a high standard, then the subject knows neither. Of course, proponents of this view must also explain how we can know that skeptical hypotheses do not obtain, and they are further burdened by the task of explaining how the raising of skeptical hypotheses, which has no effect on one's practical situation, should make it harder to attribute knowledge. Without an explanation of the latter, we would have no explanation of the force of these skeptical arguments.[30]

Another avenue into this inquiry comes from an exploration of fallibilism, which claims that knowledge is possible even if one possesses a less than maximal degree of justification.[31] For example, Fantl and McGrath (2009a) define strong epistemic fallibilism as the view that you can know that p even though there is a non-zero epistemic chance for you that not-p. All varieties of fallibilism face the threshold problem, which is the problem of identifying just how strong one's epistemic state must be in order to count as knowing. So to solve this problem for Fantl and McGrath version of fallibilism, one must identify how probable (in the epistemic sense) p must to be in order for one to count as knowing.[32] The challenge is to explain how this threshold is determined.[33] And pragmatists have proposed that the standards required for knowledge are determined by the subject's practical context.[34] Fantl and McGrath propose that one's epistemic probability for p is "knowledge-level iff the probability that not-p doesn't stand in the way of p's being put to work as a basis for belief and action."[35]

Purists have resisted both types of arguments and have offered anti-skeptical, fallibilist epistemologies that have no place for practical factors. Reliabilist and virtue-theoretic accounts of knowledge offer some alternatives.[36]

3 | CHALLENGES FOR PRAGMATIC ENCROACHMENT

Pragmatic accounts of knowledge face both internal and external challenges, which are closely intertwined. The main internal challenge is to clearly specify how the subject's practical situation factors into our epistemic evaluations. If the practical encroaches on the knowledge, then we must identify which practical factors are relevant and how they are relevant.

Charity Anderson and John Hawthorne offer a detailed discussion of this issue by raising questions about the ways that pragmatists have talked about the relationship between the practical and knowledge.[37] Some pragmatists have appealed to the locution of stakes, proposing the general rule that the higher the practical stakes, the harder it is to know. Others have appealed to the notion of practical adequacy, whereby one's epistemic position is practically adequate just in case the gap between one's actual epistemic position and a perfect epistemic position makes no practical difference to one's decision. As Anderson and Hawthorne note, it is not clear how to interpret "practical stakes" in a way that makes the general pragmatic rule true. They consider a variety of interpretations. One intuitive interpretation proposes that the magnitude of the stakes in a given decision problem correlates with the largest difference in possible outcomes at any given state of the world. For example, consider three bets on the flip of a coin of unknown bias. The first bet offers $100 if heads, nothing otherwise. The second offers $75 if tails, nothing otherwise. The third offers $75 if heads, $25 if tails. On the proposed interpretation, a decision problem where one is choosing between the first and second bet would be of higher stakes than a decision between the first and third bets. The first decision problem is higher in stakes because the largest difference in outcomes is $100 (if the coin lands heads) whereas the largest difference in the second choice problem is $50 (if the coin lands tails). So there's more at stake in the first decision problem. However, as they note, on this interpretation, the practical adequacy of one's

epistemic position does not relate to stakes in any clear way. Pragmatists must clarify what they mean by the practical and specify how the practical relates to knowledge.

Closely related to this first challenge is another internal challenge for the pragmatist. As many pragmatists have noted, rejecting purism seems mad. While arguments have been given, pragmatists also need to explain away the intuitiveness of purism.[38] This task first requires the pragmatist to get clear about what is wrong with purism by specifying what sorts of additional factors are relevant for knowledge. Once this has been done, the pragmatist can explain why these additional factors should be incorporated into our epistemology.

Of course, the problem of articulating how the practical relates to knowledge can be used as an external challenge to pragmatic encroachment. The primary criticism of the pragmatic account is that it leaves us with unintuitive and unacceptable consequences. Critics have offered a number of examples in which odd factors seem to make a difference to whether one knows. On some pragmatic accounts, one may go from a situation in which one fails to know that p to one in which one knows that p because the cost of obtaining additional evidence regarding p increases.[39] Another example is one in which a subject gains additional evidence in favor of p but, in doing so, loses one's knowledge that p.[40] These criticisms are associated with the general worry that the pragmatic account makes knowledge too unstable. Knowledge seems to come and go from one moment to the next for very strange reasons. So if stability is a general feature of knowledge, then pragmatists must account for this stability.[41]

Other unintuitive consequences have been proposed. For example, some have argued that pragmatic accounts of knowledge entail the denial of single premise closure principles[42] and others have argued that the pragmatic account of belief undermines some important features of belief–desire psychology.[43] As we can see, the internal and external challenges for pragmatic encroachment are intricately tied together. In order to understand the pragmatic view of knowledge, we must identify how the subject's practical situation is relevant for knowledge. And once we have done so, we can evaluate whether or not the pragmatic account leaves us with an unacceptable view of knowledge. So together, the proponents and critics of pragmatic encroachment have work to do in order to provide a detailed and accurate picture of the pragmatic view of knowledge.

4 | VARIETIES OF PRAGMATIC ENCROACHMENT

We began by noting that proponents of pragmatic encroachment embrace the slogan that the practical encroaches on the epistemic. Having explored the debate about pragmatic encroachment on knowledge, let us now widen our discussion by exploring any and all views that fit within the spirit of the pragmatic slogan. To do so, I shall offer a taxonomy of the many ways in which the practical might encroach on the epistemic, situating some contemporary discussions within the taxonomy.

4.1 | Cognitive attitudes and states

We have already considered whether believing might depend upon practical factors. While we have explored this question in relation to the broader question about whether knowing depends upon the practical, we can divorce the two questions and focus just on belief and other cognitive states. For example, we can ask whether possessing a categorical belief or a particular degree of belief depends upon practical factors. Brad Armendt has explored this issue as it relates to categorical belief, degrees of belief, and imprecise belief.[44]

Such inquiries are just the tip of the iceberg. We might also ask whether practical factors are relevant for the suspension of belief.[45] And we could expand the question of pragmatic encroachment with regards to any and all cognitive attitudes and states. For example, can having faith or hope in a proposition depend upon the practical situation of the subject?[46] So one way in which practical factors can encroach on the epistemic is by being relevant for determining whether a subject possesses a certain cognitive attitude or is in a particular cognitive state.

4.2 | Reasons

The second way in which the practical can encroach on the epistemic is in the demarcation of what can count as a motivating or justifying reason for adopting one or another cognitive attitude.[47] What sorts of factors can count as a motivating or justifying reason for believing, expecting, and suspending judgment? The practical could encroach on the epistemic if we can have practical reasons for adopting one or another of these attitudes. As it pertains to the adoption of categorical beliefs, this topic has been discussed within the debate about the ethics of belief.[48]

As part of this exploration, we should also raise a question about what it means for a factor or reason to be practical. We previously assumed that all non-truth-relevant factors counted as practical factors. However, certain non-truth-relevant factors do not appear to be paradigmatically practical. For example, the amount of information one hypothesis has over another is not always relevant for assessing probability.[49] Thus, on our previous demarcation, informational value will count as a practical factor as might other factors like simplicity and elegance.[50] A more careful examination of the distinction between the practical and non-practical is required.[51]

4.3 | Epistemic standards

Once we have demarcated what might count as a justifying reason for adopting some cognitive attitude, we can then ask whether one's reasons are strong enough to justify the adoption of this attitude. For example, do the reasons we have for believing make the belief justified or rational? Thus, another way in which the practical can encroach on the epistemic is if practical factors are relevant in determining the epistemic standards that must be met in order for a subject's cognitive attitudes to be justified or rational.

In section 2, we considered whether practical factors can be relevant in determining whether a belief is knowledge-level justified. However, we can also consider more broadly whether practical factors can be relevant in determining whether a subject is generally rational in possessing a certain cognitive attitude such as a particular degree of belief, a suspension of belief, faith, hope, etc. For example, are our reasons or evidence for a certain degree of belief strong enough to make that degree of belief a rational one?

4.4 | Strength of reasons

The practical could encroach on the epistemic by determining whether one possesses a certain cognitive attitude, identifying what counts as a reason for the adoption of these attitudes, and determining the epistemic standards that govern the adoption of these attitudes. Although that may seem to exhaust matters, there is a radical way in which the practical might encroach on the epistemic. The following is radical because this type of encroachment may threaten the existence of anything that is purely epistemic. After all, if anything is purely epistemic, surely measures of epistemic strength are. For example, if we want to measure how strong our reasons are for believing, we naturally consider how much evidence we have and this measure seems like a purely truth-relevant matter. In fact, our discussion up to this point has presumed that there is a non-pragmatic way of measuring the strength of one's epistemic state. However, one could propose that practical factors affect how strong one's reasons are. On this view, how strong one's epistemic state is with respect to some proposition depends upon the practical situation of the subject.[52] This view is independent of whether or not practical factors are relevant for determining whether one's epistemic state is strong enough to meet the relevant standard.

Of course, if we adopted such a view, we would be left in a puzzling situation, seemingly unable to distinguish the practical from the non-practical. After all, we contrasted the practical with the truth-relevant and defined truth-relevance in terms of factors that affected the likelihood of a proposition. However, if the notions of evidential support and epistemic probability are encroached upon by the practical, then our previous demarcation of the practical and non-practical would be useless because the "truth-relevant" would include the practical. Therefore, by adopting this radical pragmatic position, it is an open question whether any concept can count as purely epistemic.

4.5 | Meaning and value

While the four categories above are clearly not exhaustive, they offer a natural division of the ways in which the practical can encroach on the epistemic. There are, however, at least two other ways that the practical can encroach on the epistemic, which these categories fail to capture. The first is exhibited by practical encroachment on meaning, embraced by contextualists. As we have seen, practical factors can be relevant in determining the truth and falsity of knowledge attributions and denials. One could also embrace a contextualism about any epistemic term where the meaning of these terms may vary depending upon the practical situation in the context of use.[53]

Finally, the practical may encroach on epistemic value, virtue, and excellence. Explorations of these topics have become both central and influential in epistemology.[54] However, as the focus of these discussions is on persons rather than propositional attitudes, virtues, values, and excellences do not naturally fit into the above categories. We thereby need an additional category in our taxonomy to capture views where a subject's practical situation can affect whether or not subjects possess some epistemic value, virtue, and excellence.[55]

5 | CONCLUDING REMARKS

Although the topic of pragmatic encroachment can be viewed as a debate about a variety of epistemological theses, it can also be viewed as an exploration of the relationship between the epistemic and the practical. From this point of view, the topic is a central one to epistemology, whatever stand one takes on the particular theses. Just as philosophers discuss whether and how we can distinguish facts from values, we should also discuss whether and how we can distinguish different domains of value. So how should we demarcate the practical from the epistemic? One way to do so is by considering the whole family of pragmatic proposals. As is clear from our discussion, one may embrace the encroachment of the practical on the epistemic to varying degrees. So even if one defends the purity of many of our epistemic concepts, one may nevertheless admit to the possibility that some of our epistemic concepts incorporate pragmatic concerns. Therefore, by exploring the topic, we not only evaluate the plausibility of particular pragmatic proposals, we develop a map of the epistemological landscape, demarcating what, if anything, is purely epistemic and what, if anything, is encroached upon by the practical.

ENDNOTES

[1] While the two work together in decision making, classical approaches to decision theory (e.g., Savage, 1972) separate out the evaluation of belief and desire. Jeffrey (1983) offers an alternative account.

[2] Dougherty (2009) notes that the term "pragmatic encroachment" was coined by Jonathan Kvanvig on the Certain Doubts blog.

[3] With regards to subjective probabilities, not any change in a subject's confidence will count since these degrees of belief must be probabilistically coherent.

[4] This proposal is found in footnote 25 of DeRose (2009).

[5] Of course, knowledge-first epistemologists (e.g. Williamson 2002) deny that knowledge is a conjunctive concept.

[6] Weatherson (2005), Thomason (2007), Ganson, (2008), Nagel (2008, 2010a, 2010b), Ross & Schroeder (2014), and Thomason (2014)

[7] Since this claim is one about whether one is in a position to know rather than one about whether one's belief is justified, it would be more accurate to call this encroachment on knowledge-level justification. However, for stylistic reasons, I will simply call this justification encroachment. See Fantl & McGrath (2002), Hawthorne (2004), Stanley (2005), Fantl & McGrath (2009a), Weatherson (2011), and Weatherson (2012).

[8] Contextualists have typically adopted a purist account of knowledge-relations in conjunction with their view about the context-sensitive meaning of knows. And so contextualists have advertised their overall epistemological view as a purist one, rejecting pragmatic encroachment on knowledge. Although this division makes sense when one is contrasting contextualism from justification encroachment, it makes less sense when one is contrasting it with the views of those

who reject that the practical encroaches on knowledge in any way. Of course, it is in theory possible to adopt a form of contextualism that rejects the relevance of practical factors in any sense. However, most contextualist do not adopt such an approach. More importantly, some writers (e.g., Adler, 2012) have categorized contextualist accounts of knowledge as pragmatic. For this reason, I have included the epistemological views proposed by the contextualist as a type of pragmatism. See Cohen (1988), DeRose (2009), and Blome-Tillmann (2014) for contextualist accounts of knowledge.

[9] There are different ways of presenting the linguistic data. Some have appealed to our intuitions about the truth and falsity of knowledge attributions and denials while others have appealed to their appropriateness.

[10] Weatherson (2005) and Nagel (2008) both explore how pragmatic accounts of belief can explain certain aspects of the context-sensitivity of knowledge attributions.

[11] p.288, Nagel (2008)

[12] One prominent objection is called the "now you know it, now you don't" objection, which proposes that certain pragmatic views unacceptably entail that speakers are warranted in asserting that they (do not) know, but they would (not) know had the practical situation been different. DeRose (2009) offers a detailed discussion of this objection and argues that the contextualist can address this objection. Kim (2016) offers a response on behalf of the proponents of justification encroachment.

[13] See Rysiew (2002), Bach (2005), Brown (2005), and Brown (2006).

[14] Hawthorne (2004) and Williamson (2005) argue that in cases where non-actualized possibilities of error are raised, the availability heuristic distorts our attributions of knowledge. See Nagel (2010a) for a criticism of this error theory.

[15] See Chapter 6 of DeRose (2009) for a detailed discussion.

[16] Kim (2016) raises a worry for our intuitions about third-person denials of knowledge that are central to the contextualist argument. Stanley (2005) raises some problems for a contextualist semantics for knows. Schaffer and Szabo (2013) responds to these latter challenges.

[17] Stanley (2005) proposes a different type of case that we can situate within DeRose's vignette. Suppose that Thelma is asked whether Louise also knows about John's presence at work. It is natural to think that Thelma would assert that Louise does know as they were in the office together. Stanley has proposed that we intuitively think that Thelma's assertion is false. Blome-Tillmann (2009) appeals to embedded knowledge claims to argue for contextualism.

[18] See May et al. (2010), Buckwalter (2012), Schaffer and Knobe (2012), Sripada and Stanley (2012), and Buckwalter and Schaffer, 2015. Also, see Brown (2013) for a discussion of the potential significance of experimental results.

[19] See Unger (1975), DeRose (2002) and Williamson (2002).

[20] See Fantl & McGrath (2009a) and Weatherson (2012).

[21] See Hawthorne and Stanley (2008).

[22] See Fantl & McGrath, (2002)

[23] See Brown (2008a), Brown (2008b), Brown (2012), and Roeber (forthcoming).

[24] This example is taken from Brown (2008a).

[25] See Neta (2012).

[26] See DeRose (2009) and Reed (2010).

[27] One slightly confusing aspect of the debate is that many proponents of justification encroachment adopt pragmatic credal reductivism, which is the view that "pragmatic factors can affect whether an agent is justified in believing a proposition, not by affecting what level of confidence she is justified in having it, but rather by affecting whether the agents having this level of justified confidence is sufficient, under the circumstances, for the agent to count as believing the proposition." p.260 Ross and Schroeder (2014). On this view, we cannot separate the question of what a subject categorically believes from the question of what a subject is justified in believing.

[28] See Smithies (2012).

[29] See DeRose (2000).

[30] Both Hawthorne (2004) and Stanley (2005) offer an error theory that explains this phenomenon. Nagel (2010a) offers a critical discussion of the proposed error theory.

[31] See Reed (2002) for a discussion of how to define fallibilism.

[32] Fantl and McGrath (2009b) offers a slightly different argument for justification encroachment on the grounds of developing a plausible fallibilist account of knowledge.

[33] The natural minimum of probability .5 seems to identify too low of a standard while the maximum of 1 is not a fallibilist position. While it seems intuitive to think that there is a threshold that is neither the minimum nor the maximum, it is

difficult to identify a threshold that can be principally determined. Furthermore, the lottery paradox (Kyburg, 1961) purports to show that any threshold less than the minimum has undesirable consequences.

[34] Hawthorne and Stanley (2008), Fantl and McGrath, (2009a), Grimm, (2011) offer pragmatic solutions to the threshold problem. Brown (2014) criticizes this approach, and Hannon (forthcoming) offers a non-pragmatic solution to the problem.

[35] See p.26 of Fantl & McGrath (2009a).

[36] Goldman (1979) presents a reliabilist account of knowledge. Riggs (2003), Sosa (2010), and Greco (2012) offer virtue-theoretic accounts. Alternatively, Craig (1990) offers a view that appeals to the social role of knowledge.

[37] See Anderson & Hawthorne (forthcoming)

[38] Kim (2016) offers an explanation that appeals to contingent historical facts about the attempts to provide an analysis of knowledge.

[39] See Anderson and Hawthorne (forthcoming).

[40] See Eaton & Pickavance (forthcoming)

[41] Independently of the debate about pragmatic encroachment, there are important questions about the stability of knowledge. Some of these issues have been brought to the fore by the dogmatism paradox first discussed in Kripke (2011) and subsequently in Harman (1973).

[42] Zweber forthcoming

[43] Ichikawa, Jarvis, & Rubin, 2012

[44] See Armendt (2010) and Armendt (2014). Although DeRose appeals to a stable notion of belief in his presentation of the contextualist cases, he acknowledges that many notions of belief are not stable relative to conversational contexts or to practical factors

[45] Friedman (2013b) argues that suspended judgment is not a lack of belief, and Friedman (2013a) argues that suspended judgment is part of a broader class of attitudes that are question-directed.

[46] There are, of course, questions about what faith and hope is. And it may turn out that these are not purely cognitive attitudes. For example, Howard-Snyder (2013) has argued that faith consists of a conative component in addition to a cognitive component.

[47] See Sylvan (forthcoming-a) and Sylvan (forthcoming-b) for a survey of the topic of epistemic reasons.

[48] The origin of the contemporary debate comes from Clifford (1999) and James (1897). For a survey of the topic, see Chignell (2010), Marusic (2011), and Reisner (forthcoming).

[49] One can consistently claim that the informational value of two hypotheses differs while their probabilities are equivalent. For a view that appeals to some notion of informational value that is not merely a function of probability see Kaplan (1981), who offers an account of rational acceptance that appeals to the notion of comprehensiveness.

[50] It is a difficult question how truth is related to concepts like simplicity. Kelly (2007) offers a discussion of this question.

[51] A related discussion under the heading of moral encroachment (Pace, 2011) explores the epistemic relevance of moral considerations.

[52] Comesana (2013) explores this possibility by arguing that if one believes that the practical encroaches on the epistemic to the degree that it encroaches on our epistemic standards, then one must also conclude that the practical encroaches on our evaluation of the strength of our reasons (i.e. measures of epistemic strength). Of course, if we embraced this view, it would be impossible, relative to some proposition, that two subjects be in different practical situations yet in identical epistemic position. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for making this point.

[53] See Kim and Vasudevan (forthcoming) for a contextualist account of expectation and surprise that is compatible with a pragmatism regarding of both concepts.

[54] See Battaly (2008)

[55] Baril (2013) argues for a pragmatic thesis by using an argument that is similar to the argument from epistemic norms described in section 2.2.

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