Pragmatic Encroachment, Evidentialism, and Epistemic Rationality

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Pragmatic Encroachment, Evidentialism, and Epistemic Rationality

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ABSTRACT

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Pragmatic Encroachment, Evidentialism, and Epistemic Rationality

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In this thesis, I aim to reconcile Evidentialism about epistemic justification with a version of Pragmatic Encroachment on the epistemic. Evidentialism about epistemic justification is the thesis that the necessary and sufficient condition for a given subject’s epistemic justification is that subject’s available evidence. Pragmatic Encroachment is characterized by any claim which entails that facts about the practical stakes of a situation influence the existence of epistemic facts. At least one prominent account of so-called Pragmatic Encroachment entails the falsity of Evidentialism; a subject’s available evidence alone is not sufficient to ground epistemic justification, and rather what that subject ought to do practically is construed as a necessary condition on epistemic justification. Though diagnoses of certain cases involving a subject’s epistemic justification with respect to the existence of practical stakes appear prima facie plausible, the denial of Evidentialism is steep. In this thesis, I hope to reconcile these two theses which are apparently in competition.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Pragmatic encroachment, in its most general form, is characterized by any claim which entails that practical facts can affect the existence of epistemic facts. One standard account of Pragmatic Encroachment as endorsed by Fantl and McGrath (2002) attempts to locate the encroachment of the pragmatic at the level of an agent’s epistemic justification for holding some belief; their account places a constraint on justified belief such that one is not justified in believing p, for any p, unless one is practically rational to act as if p were true. This necessary constraint on justified belief directly entails the falsity of Evidentialism. Evidentialism is the thesis that the only thing that matters to the epistemic justification of some doxastic attitude towards some proposition is the available evidence for that proposition. Any account of pragmatic encroachment which denies Evidentialism about epistemic justification appears intuitively costly, particularly for those with Evidentialist leanings. Accordingly, in this thesis, though I do not aim to offer original arguments for why Pragmatic Encroachment might be true, I do aim to offer an account of Pragmatic Encroachment that is consistent with Evidentialism about epistemic justification. On my account, the encroachment of the practical is not upon an agent’s epistemic justification, but rather upon an agent’s epistemic rationality more generally. I hope to accomplish an explication of such an encroachment by appealing to certain normative facts about one’s epistemic reasons and rationality in general, and advancing how the existence of certain kinds of practical stakes can lead to one’s having epistemic reason to adopt the doxastic attitude of withholding belief in p, even in cases where one has some modest evidential reason for believing p. But crucially,
my account retains that what is epistemically justified for one to believe is entirely a function of one's available evidence. Although certain fundamental objections remain as to the tenability of any claim that Pragmatic Encroachment is true, I believe my version is better equipped to handle such objections than ones that deny Evidentialism.

The plan is as follows: First, I briefly review the case for Pragmatic Encroachment on epistemic justification as offered by Fantl and McGrath. Next, I shall give a bird's-eye view of Evidentialism, including how it construes epistemic justification, the having of evidence, and the normative prescriptions therein. After that, I will discuss the normative component of epistemology more broadly by way of setting out one of a family of views that characterize epistemic rationality. The rest of the paper is dedicated to attempting to find space in some corner of Evidentialism (namely Evidentialism about the metaphysical status of epistemic justification) for the existence of pragmatically-induced, non-evidential reasons for withholding, reasons themselves which can make an agent epistemically rational for withholding on a belief, which he might otherwise have some evidential reason for holding, and reasons which exist due to salient practical stakes.
CHAPTER 2: FANTL AND McGRATH: TRAIN CASES AND THE PRACTICAL RATIONAL ACTION CONSTRAINT ON EPISTEMIC JUSTIFICATION

In their (2002), Fantl and McGrath set out (in part) to diagnose a particular intuition regarding the existence of knowledge for one and the same subject considered in a pair of cases, an intuition that the subject appears to have knowledge in one case while lacking it in the other. The cases are set up in such a way that the evidential factors relevant to the agent’s justification are identical; S has the same evidence for the truth of some proposition p in the one case that he does in the other. And yet, so the intuition seems to suggest, S knows p in the one case but not in the other. But the only stipulated difference between the two cases is that some practical stake is in play for S regarding p in one case that is not in play for S in the other, and likewise, S arguably seems to not know p in the case where the practical stake is in play, despite arguably knowing p in the case where it isn’t in play. I reprint here in full the pair of cases as they appear in the opening of Fantl and McGrath’s (2002):

Train Case 1

You’re at Back Bay Station in Boston preparing to take the commuter rail to Providence. You’re going to see friends. It will be a relaxing vacation. You’ve been in a rather boring conversation with a guy standing beside you. He, too, is going to visit friends in Providence. As the train rolls into the station, you continue the conversation by asking, “Does this train make all those little stops, in Foxboro, Attleboro, etc.?”. It doesn’t matter much to you whether the train is the “Express” or not, although you’d mildly prefer it was. He answers, “Yeah, this one makes all those
little stops. They told me when I bought the ticket.” Nothing about him seems particularly untrustworthy. You believe what he says.

Train Case 2

You absolutely need to be in Foxboro, the sooner the better. Your career depends on it. You’ve got tickets for a south-bound train that leaves in two hours and gets into Foxboro in the nick of time. You overhear a conversation like that in Train Case L concerning the train that just rolled into the station and leaves in 15 minutes. You think, “That guy’s information might be wrong. What’s it to him whether the train stops in Foxboro? Maybe the ticket-seller misunderstood his question. Maybe he misunderstood the answer. Who knows when he bought the ticket? I don’t want to be wrong about this. I’d better go check it out myself.” [2002, pg. 67]

Fantl and McGrath diagnose each case as follows: “Intuitively, in Train Case 1, you have good enough evidence to know that the train stops in Foxboro. You are epistemically justified in believing that proposition...Intuitively, in Train Case 2, you do not have good enough evidence to know that the train stops in Foxboro. You are not justified in believing that proposition. When so much is at stake, a stranger’s casual word isn’t good enough. You should check further.” [pg. 67]

In Case 1, there are no practical stakes of interest to S that would be entailed by the truth of the proposition ‘The train will stop in Foxboro’. In Case 2, there is such a stake. In Case 2, the practical stake in play, namely S’s career-altering upcoming engagement, is construed as the cause of S’s seeking more evidence for the truth of p, where, in the absence of such a stake in play in 1, S is epistemically
satisfied to not seek further justification. If one has epistemic reason for needing more evidence for the truth or falsity of some proposition before believing such a proposition, then according to Evidentialism, that reason must itself be a function of one’s available evidence, and in particular its lack. But the evidential situations for S in 1 and 2 are identical, and S in 1 is said to know p. So then the Evidentialist seems right to conclude that in H, S is at most acting in something like a practically responsible way in ensuring the truth of p, and not in any epistemically responsible way, since if one has sufficient (undefeated) evidence for the truth or falsity of some proposition, then it is never the case that one has any especial epistemic reason to require MORE than sufficient evidence in order to know p. But because Fantl and McGrath believe that the cases intuitively demonstrate a difference in epistemic justification despite identical evidential situations, they conclude instead that Evidentialism and its diagnosis is false. Accordingly, the constraint on epistemic justification they propose is a constraint of practical action regarding how one ought to practically act with respect to p:

PCA: One is justified in believing p only if one is practically rational to act as if p is true.

With PCA in play, Fantl and McGrath are able to offer what is (arguably) an intuitively satisfying diagnosis of Train Cases 1 and 2, namely that S does know in 1 but not in 2, such that S’s failure to know in 2 is a function of the practical stake in play, a practical stake which makes it practically irrational to act as if p is true. Since by PCA one knows p only if one is practically rational to act as if p is true, and since in 2 S is not practically rational to board the train without further confirming
evidence, S in 2 fails to know p (and so fails to be epistemically justified in believing p). Let us now get a bit clearer on the view that is denied by Fantl and McGrath’s PCA, namely Evidentialism.
CHAPTER 3: EVIDENTIALISM: JUSTIFIED DOXASTIC ATTITUDES, INTERNALISM, AND NORMS OF JUSTIFICATION

Evidentialism is a claim about what is necessary and sufficient for the epistemic justification of a doxastic attitude (primarily belief) towards a given proposition. As the name implies, what Evidentialists take to be necessary and sufficient for such justification is one’s available evidence regarding some proposition p. Conee and Feldman put the point explicitly in their (1985), naming the thesis ‘EJ’:

EJ: Doxastic attitude D toward proposition p is epistemically justified for S at t if and only if having D towards p fits the evidence S has at t.

Conee and Feldman deliberately choose the more general “doxastic attitude” over “belief”, since they think that at least one other doxastic attitude, namely the withholding of belief, is also entirely a function of one’s available deciding evidence between the truth of p and ~p, or more specifically, its lack: “...suspension of judgment is the fitting attitude for each of us toward the proposition that an even number of ducks exist, since our evidence makes it equally likely that the number is odd. Neither belief nor disbelief is epistemically justified when our evidence is equally balanced.” [1985, pg. 2] I take ‘disbelief’ here, as it is being used as a contrast case with “suspension of judgment”, to be equivalent to 'belief in ~p', rather than something like 'not belief in p', which would just be withholding on p. As I interpret the difference, what epistemically justifies disbelief in p, unlike what epistemically justifies suspension of judgment on p, or withholding of belief on p, is evidence for the truth of ~p. So then we might in general talk about the two doxastic attitudes
towards propositions which can stand in the relation of *epistemic justification* to one's evidence on Conee and Feldman's account: belief, and withholding of belief.

Conee and Feldman defend EJ in lockstep with an internalism about justification they call "mentalism", such that what amounts to what justifying evidence S "has at t" are all of those internally, or cognitively accessible, items of evidence, including other beliefs, sensory experiences, etc. of S:

S: The justificatory status of a person’s doxastic attitudes strongly supervenes on the person’s occurrent and dispositional mental states, events, and conditions. [2004]

S, coupled with EJ, give us the following supervenience thesis:

EJ+S: Facts about a given agent’s epistemic justification supervene on facts about what the cognitively accessible evidence for that agent is.

EJ+S is a thoroughgoing metaphysical account of the nature of epistemic justification. According to Conee and Feldman, the facts regarding S’s epistemic justification are completely supervenient on the facts regarding S’s internal, cognitively accessible mental states. Vahid (2010) puts the point nicely regarding the internalist aspect of justification:

Unlike truth, justification is perspectival i.e., it is determined relative to the cognizer’s evidence. If a belief is true, then it is true at all times. Its truth-value remains constant across time or population. By contrast, the justification of a belief depends on the epistemic circumstances of the cognizer holding that belief. Depending on the body of evidence he possesses, the attribution of justified belief varies accordingly. Thus, an agent may be
unjustified in holding a belief $p$ at $t_1$ because he lacks the relevant evidence, whereas the very same belief might be justified for him or another person at $t_2$. The perspectival character of epistemic justification is one of its non-negotiable features, and it is precisely this characteristic that obviates the collapse of epistemic justification into truth.¹ (Vahid, 2010, pg. 85)

Any complete theory of knowledge, or of epistemic justification specifically, is bound to have a normative component. If Evidentialism is such that it only tells us about what metaphysical states of affairs serve as the basis for epistemic justification, then it seems incapable of communicating precisely when one ought to have some doxastic attitude. But it seems our epistemological interest does extend beyond the metaphysical question and into the question of: what reasons ought we follow in adopting this or that doxastic attitude? In a word, we are interested in the agent-centered deliberation and activity that constitutes epistemic justification just as much as we are interested in the metaphysical constitution of such justification.

Recognizing this, Conee and Feldman offer the following Evidentialist construal of the normativity of epistemic justification:

02: For any person $S$, time $t$, and proposition $p$, if $S$ has any doxastic attitude at all toward $p$ at $t$ and $S$’s evidence at $t$ supports $p$, then $S$ epistemically ought to have the attitude toward $p$ supported by $S$’s evidence at $t$. [2004]

¹ We shall return to the importance of the perspectival nature of epistemic justification in the Objections section.
O2 states that if S has any doxastic attitude at all toward p as supported by S’s evidence, then that doxastic attitude ought to be the attitude epistemically justified by S’s available evidence. Conee and Feldman’s defense of O2 turns on their construal of epistemic value, or “oughtness”, in terms of what attitude one is “rational” to adopt. And for Conee and Feldman, what exhausts what attitude one ought to adopt, or what attitude one is rational in adopting, is, appropriately enough, determined entirely by one’s cognitively accessible evidence: “To achieve epistemic value one must, in each case, follow one’s evidence.” [2004, pg. 185] They cash out this principle of epistemic value in the following terms:

V3: When adopting (or maintaining) an attitude toward a proposition, p, a person maximizes epistemic value by adopting (or maintaining) a rational attitude toward p.

I am of the opinion that while the principles V3 and O2 are obviously correct to an extent, they can be meaningfully extended. More specifically, I take it to be the case that what doxastic attitude is rational for some agent to adopt with respect to maximizing “epistemic value” to be a more open ended question than merely the available evidence. No doubt of course, such evidence is necessary for such rationality, and significantly constraints which doxastic attitude is and is not rational to adopt. Indeed, in cases of knowledge-level evidence, it appears right to say that it is in fact only the evidence that serves as a relevant reason for adopting the doxastic attitude of belief toward p or ~p. In order to illustrate why I take such a question to be open, however, and in particular open in cases of non-knowledge-level evidence, it would help to talk a bit about epistemic rationality in general.
CHAPTER 4: EPISTEMIC RATIONALITY AND THE TRUTH GOAL

Philosophers speak of a general division of the rationalities, namely, the epistemic and the practical. An intuitive sense of the distinction is borne out from consideration of the case of Pascal’s Wager. The Wager is such that, despite one not having any epistemic reason to believe the truth of the proposition ‘God exists’, one can still entertain reasons for believing p which stem from concerns of self-interest. Although one has no epistemic reason to believe p is true, and perhaps even some epistemic reason for believing p to be false, failing to believe p, or believing ~p, when it is the case that p is actually true, has enormous repercussions for one’s self-interest. After all, if God is real and I failed to believe in him, I’m going to Hell for eternity, or I’m missing out on an eternity of paradise, regardless of how good my epistemic reasons were for refusing to believe in his existence.

The Wager displays a tension between two basic types of reasoning: reasoning about what is true or false, and reasoning about what is in one’s best interests. Epistemic reasons are those of the kind EJ refers to, those which support the having of some doxastic attitude towards some proposition which is either true or false. By contrast, practical reasons are those which support the undertaking of some action which is in one’s practical self-interest. In the case of The Wager, each type of reason is supporting, or failing to support, the same action, namely, the adoption of a doxastic attitude toward the proposition ‘God exists’. But we can and

\[\text{2 Just what counts as an epistemic reason is of central importance to my project; accordingly, I only assume that by ‘epistemic reason’ here we mean the minimal conception, namely that one given by EJ, i.e. one’s available evidence.}\]
do speak more generally about practical reasons that support non-doxastic action. For example, given that it is in my self-interest to be at school on time, I have a practical reason for undertaking the action of getting into my car with enough time left to drive to school. In this case, my practical reason is supporting some action which strictly speaking has nothing to do with adopting some doxastic attitude. By contrast, epistemic reasons are such that the only thing they support is the adoption of some doxastic attitude. I never have an epistemic reason to get in my car, though epistemic reasons might be relevant to my deciding to get into my car: I have epistemic reason to believe that it is ten minutes until class starts, and getting to class before it starts is in my self-interest, so an epistemic reason is directly related to my getting into my car at t-10, where t is class time.

Although the rationalities are uncontroversially distinct in approximately the way the Wager plays on, they do seem to have at least one property in common: namely their normativity. What is practically rational to do, that is, what one ought practically to do, is a function of which of the available practical means would lead one to achieve some end of self-interest; so one ought to undertake such means, relative to one’s particular end of self-interest, if one is to be practically rational. Similarly, what is epistemically rational to do is a function of which of the best available epistemic means one undertakes to achieve some epistemic end; so one

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3 Of course, more generally, practical reasons can support the adoption of some doxastic attitude. Were it my first day in school, and were I unaware of my class schedule, I might have had practical reasons, in virtue of my practical end of getting to school on time, to check the schedule, and, noting the time, thus forming the belief, “It is best to leave at time t.” The having of this belief is surely conducive to my practical end of getting to school on time. Thanks to John Bender for this note.
ought to undertake the best of such means if one is to be epistemically rational. We are more intuitively familiar with what a practical mean is, and what an end of self-interest looks like. But what is meant here by an “epistemic mean”, or an “epistemic end”? 

With respect to the latter question, many endorse as the epistemic end of epistemic rationality simply the truth itself. A bit more explicitly, an agent A is epistemically rational if and only if A has the truth itself as his goal. The truth goal has many different explicit formulations, mostly intended to capture the following general sentiment: the defining characteristic of the epistemically rational agent is that he seeks to maximize his true beliefs, and minimize his false ones. Roderick Chisholm, for example, claims that one’s epistemic rational goal is that one has “the largest possible set of logically independent beliefs that is such that the true beliefs outnumber the false beliefs” [Chisholm, 1982, pg. 7]. Richard Foley’s view is that what is epistemically rational to do is what done in relation to the goal of “now believing true propositions and not now believing false propositions.” [Foley, 1987, pg. 6] William Alston says of epistemic rationality that, “Epistemic evaluation is undertaken from what we might call the ‘epistemic point of view’. That point of view is defined by the aim of maximizing truth and minimizing falsity in a large body of beliefs” [Alston, 1989, pg. 84]

So then, what is epistemically rational to do, that is, what one ought to do epistemically speaking, is what will lead one, from one’s considered perspective as an epistemic agent, to maximize one’s true beliefs and minimize one’s false beliefs.
If what makes an agent epistemically rational is that his constellation of doxastic attitudes is in an equilibrium of maximal truth and minimum falsity, we might ask: is there one and only one such constellation? We can of course picture something like an ideal epistemic agent, who believes all and only the true propositions and withholds on all and only the false ones. Such an agent, however, is merely that; an ideal. That we believe one less truth than the ideal agent, or believe one more falsehood, does not seem to entail that we are thus epistemically irrational, even if the implication is that we haven’t either maximized our set of true beliefs or minimized our set of false beliefs in some ideal equilibrium. Perhaps being like an ideal knower is the epistemic motivation for being epistemically rational, but it doesn’t seem that being epistemically rational requires an actual such equilibrium of doxastic attitudes towards any large and arbitrary set of propositions about the world.

Perhaps we could say that although the ideal equilibrium doesn’t constitute the mark of epistemic rationality, what does constitute such an ideal equilibrium, for a given epistemic agent, is that the agent in question has maximized his true beliefs and minimized his false ones relative to his justificatory abilities, including his abilities to gather and evaluate evidence. This seems to return a better result. Consider Jim and Jake, each of which have the exact same amount of false beliefs, and every true belief that Jim has is one that Jake has. Jake, however, also has more true beliefs, due to having more true mathematical beliefs, thanks to his superior mathematical intelligence. Although Jake is certainly praiseworthy for his mathematical intelligence and ability to gather and evaluate mathematical evidence,
such praiseworthiness does not seem to entail that Jake is thus more epistemically rational than Jim, so long as Jake and Jim have acquired their doxastic attitudes in accord with their respective levels of justificatory ability.

Such a story, however, appears incomplete. To see why, it is useful to attend to an insight made by William James regarding the inherent tension of our truth goal, a tension between what epistemologists call the Type I errors (failing to believe that which is true) and the Type II errors (believing that which is false):

Believe truth! Shun error! These, we see, are two materially different laws; and by choosing between them we may end by coloring differently our whole intellectual life. We may regard the chase for truth as paramount, and the avoidance of error as secondary; or we may, on the other hand, treat the avoidance of error as more imperative, and let truth take its chance. [1956]

The epistemic risk involved in believing any proposition whatsoever is that we might fall into a Type II error, namely, we risk believing that which is false. Similarly, the epistemic risk involved in withholding belief in any proposition whatsoever is that we might fall into a Type I error, namely, we risk failing to believe that which is true. Each conjunct of the truth goal, “Believe truth!” and “Shun error!” is associated with its own unique and incompatible epistemic risk, and you cannot avoid both risks at the same time in pursuing the truth goal. So then, it seems as though if we are to get a more complete picture of epistemic rationality, we need to account for what, if anything, would amount to the ideal equilibrium, in terms of which epistemic risks are most worth taking. Can such an account be given? Is there any non-arbitrary epistemic risk valuation such that all and only
epistemically rational agents value the avoidance of one of the Type errors over the other to some degree? For my own part, it seems that any unique risk-valuation of weighing Type I and II Errors against each other will be arbitrary if it is called the epistemically rational risk weighing. Rather it appears more plausible that differing agents, each with the truth goal in mind, will simply differ as to which of the Jamesian ‘laws’ is more ‘imperative’. Clearly, however, such a variability of what is and is not epistemically rational for some agent or another should be always constrained by one’s evidence; again, the claim to be advanced regarding the existence of non-evidential epistemic reasons is only that considerations of one’s truth goal and the epistemic risks therein can in part be constitutive of one’s epistemic rationality. So regardless of how much I value the acquisition of truth, such valuing never makes it rational for me to believe some p where I have significant evidence for the falsity of p; similarly, regardless of how much I value the avoidance of falsity, such valuing never makes it rational for me to withhold belief in some p where I have significant decisive evidence between either p or ~p being true.

If it is admitted that the goal of reaching a kind of equilibrium among a maximum number of true beliefs and a minimum number of false beliefs is in part constitutive of an agent’s epistemic rationality, and if the notion of what constitutes such an equilibrium is variable according to how a given agent weighs and values the epistemic risks of having false beliefs vs. missing true ones, then it appears that what constitutes an agent’s epistemic rationality is similarly variable, at least in cases where the evidence is indecisive between one attitude and the other. For
example, Agent A’s risk tolerance might be such that he finds the equilibrium to be best satisfied by believing propositions which have some non-knowledge level, modest amount of evidence in their favor, while Agent B, as a rule, withholds belief in any and all such propositions. Do we condemn A for his riskiness, or do we condemn B for his conservativism? It seems to me no one is deserving of epistemic blame here. Rather, A and B simply have different fundamental epistemic notions about epistemic value, or how best to achieve an equilibrium of a maximum number of true beliefs and a minimum number of false beliefs, notions cashed out in terms of how they value each of the goals and risks involving belief and withholding. Consequently, what is epistemically rational for A, or equivalently, what constitutes epistemic reasons for A’s having some set of doxastic attitudes, is different from what is epistemically rational for B, at least in cases of modest evidence.⁴

Conee and Feldman, in responding to a separate objection, address the issue of what one ought to do in the case of having modest evidence for a proposition:

It’s tempting to think that it’s permissible to believe the proposition and it’s also permissible to suspend judgment about it, on the grounds that belief requires more than just this modest amount of evidence. In support of this line of thought is the idea that believing on only modest amounts of evidence involves taking some epistemic risk. There is no unique amount of risk that is right or rational. Rather, people simply have varying attitudes toward this

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⁴ I will offer a more explicit definition of ‘modest evidence’ in the upcoming section.
risk. My own inclination, which I won’t defend here, is that you should believe when your evidence is supportive rather than neutral, even if the evidence is not at all decisive. [2004, pg. 180]

I oppose the un-argued inclination of Conee and Feldman. I find it more reasonable that instead, “There is no unique amount of risk that is right or rational [in cases of modest evidence]. Rather, people simply have varying attitudes towards this risk.” Perhaps this itself is simply a matter of our varying attitudes towards the case of modest evidence.
CHAPTER 5: MODEST EVIDENCE AND NON-EVIDENTIAL EPISTEMIC REASONS TO WITHHOLD

I am now in a better position to say why I take the normative question of ‘epistemic value’ as deployed in V3 in support of O2 to be more open-ended than that of a purely functional relationship with one’s available evidence. In certain cases of modest evidence for some proposition, where it appears equally epistemically rational to adopt either doxastic attitude of belief or withholding of belief depending upon one’s truth goal valuation, I claim that there can exist non-evidential epistemic reasons to withhold on such propositions, even when the modest evidence is in favor of them, such that it is more epistemically rational to withhold than to believe. First let’s define modest evidence as: evidence for p on the basis of which you would not be epistemically irrational to believe p, but on which alone you would not know p.

Let’s turn to an example where such modest evidence is operative, in order to see how such a non-evidential epistemic reason might come about. Consider Tony, and the picture of how modest evidence alone appears to make belief in p and withholding of belief in p equally epistemically rational, and where what doxastic attitude is epistemically rational for Tony to adopt comes down to how he values the epistemic risk types:

Tony Case 1

Tony has a sore throat. He recalls his shaking hands with many people at last week’s 1,000-person gala, and remembers as well that a few of the guests had just flown in from Spain. Tony also recalls seeing on the news the day after the gala that
recent state-wide vacationers from Spain have been spreading a highly infectious and painful strain of strep throat throughout the state. Tony has had semi-consistent, non strep-related sore throats throughout his life. This one seems slightly sorer, but Tony isn’t sure if it’s just some sort of placebo effect brought on by the news. On the basis of his modest body of evidence, Tony appears equally epistemically rational in having the doxastic attitude of belief in p, where p is “I have caught strep throat”, and of withholding belief in p. Tony believes p.

Now we introduce an alleged non-evidential epistemic reason into the mix:

Tony Case 2

Tony has visited a doctor who examines him. After running some tests, Tony asks the doctor, hoping to garner evidence to push the scales definitively in one direction or the other for adopting some doxastic attitude about whether he does in fact have strep throat, whether he does have it. The doctor replies, “It’s really too close to tell. And besides, there’s no point in speculating now; my machine is running slow. The results will be back tomorrow and we’ll be certain then.”

Tony withholds belief in p.

The alleged non-evidential epistemic reason, namely the future availability of decisive evidence, at least intuitively appears to make it more epistemically rational for Tony to withhold belief in p than believe in p, where before he seemed equally rational in adopting either. In any case it no longer seems just as epistemically

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5 This is essentially Mark Schroeder’s (2012) example of such a non-evidential reason for withholding, though crucially, his example is such that the subject has convincing, and not merely modest, evidence for p.
rational of Tony to believe in \(p\) as it does to withhold with respect to \(p\). As Schroeder notes regarding a similar such case, “it does seem epistemically irrational to make up your mind in advance of getting evidence that you know will be conclusive and could tell [one way or] the other way.” [Schroder, 2012, pg. 279]. And yet such a reason does not itself constitute evidence for \(p\).

Even if the Tony case considerations are right, however, it is only enough to show that non-evidential epistemic reasons for withholding belief, namely the future availability of decisive evidence, can exist in cases of modest evidence; it has yet to be shown that Pragmatic Encroachment in such cases can be true\(^6\). Armed now with the notion of non-evidential epistemic reasons for withholding in cases of modest evidence, I will proceed to offer a picture of how a version of Pragmatic Encroachment on epistemic rationality, in cases of modest evidence, might be possible. In particular, I will hope to show that such non-evidential reasons can be directly brought about by a salient practical stake, and cashed out not in terms of ‘future available evidence’ but rather ‘increased epistemic valuing of avoiding Type II error’.

\(^6\) Though arguably, one could construe the practical stake in question in the Tony Doctor Case as something like, “Not burdening myself unduly with the belief that I have strep, and all of the related conclusions that would follow from holding such a belief.” However, it seems to me that the operative epistemic reason in the Tony Doctor Case is less contentiously interpreted without any such particular practical stake being referenced; what is decisively causing the adoption of the doxastic attitude of withholding is that future evidence is forthcoming, not any particular practical stake associated with withholding.
CHAPTER 6: PRACTICAL ENCROACHMENT ON TRUTH GOAL VALUATION

I find something appealing about the diagnosis Fantl and McGrath offer of the Train Cases, but only when I construe the evidential situations of S in 1 and 2 as one of modest, rather than knowledge-level, evidence. In Train-like cases considered as cases merely of modest evidence, where what doxastic attitude is epistemically rational to adopt is variable according to the agent’s-in-question particular evaluation of the truth goal and the Type I vs Type II error valuations therein, it appears that we can better isolate a potential epistemic function of the practical stake in question. Rather than considering the practical stake’s obvious role in making us practically irrational in acting as if p is true, a la Fantl and McGrath, it seems open to consider that the practical stake about p is raising one’s sensitivity to the fallibility of the evidence available for p, in such a way that one values avoiding Type II risks over the avoidance of Type I risks to some greater degree. Such a conjecture is harder to make coherent in the Train-like cases where evidence is supposedly knowledge-level; if evidence for p truly is knowledge-level, then not only is it a metaphysical fact that one is epistemically justified in believing p (in

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7 John Hawthorne, in describing his ‘Sensitive Moderate Invariantism’, a thesis that entails Pragmatic Encroachment on knowledge directly, describes a salient possibility of error which defeats knowledge as “a certain kind of intellectual seeming” whose propositional content is “basically this: For all the subject knows, p” [pg. 169] It has been argued that such a salience of possibility on its own doesn’t seem up to the task of defeating knowledge; after all, if I know p, why think knowing that p might be false does anything other than illuminate the inherent fallibility of any given piece of knowledge-level justification? On my view, however, something as strong as knowledge isn’t that which is defeated by such salience; merely epistemically rational belief in the face of modest evidence. See Knowledge and Lotteries for more discussion on the salience issue, and Hawthorne’s various models of salience.
virtue of one’s justification supervening on one’s cognitively-available evidence), but it seems that one is epistemically rational to believe p as well, and epistemically irrational otherwise. Fallibilism about knowledge or justification does not on its own give one epistemic reason to question one’s (undefeated) knowledge-level evidence. Even if, as I claim, such a raised sensitivity has the effect of making S value the avoidance of falsity more as an epistemic goal, such a valuation would have to be, as earlier mentioned, ultimately constrained by the available non-modest evidence.

But in cases of modest evidence, this move might be more workable. In cases of modest evidence, the agent is presumably equally rational in either believing or withholding on p, and what makes adopting one or the other attitude the thing the agent epistemically ought to do is a function of how the agent values the truth goal and associated errors therein. If one can read Train Case 2 as a case where the agent in question is, because of the practical stake regarding p, more skeptical of the truth of p due to being unconvinced by the available evidence for p, then it seems as though one plausible diagnosis of this skepticism is that the practical stake has raised the agent’s sensitivity to the fallibilism of his evidence for p, and subsequently the agent’s sensitivity to a potential Type II error regarding belief in p. And if one can read Train Case 2 this way, then surely one can read Train Case 2 the same way when the only difference is that modest evidence, rather than knowledge-level evidence, is present. And in such a modest case, since whatever doxastic attitude one ought to adopt is partly a function of how one values one’s truth goal and the related errors therein, and since it seems plausible that a sensitivity to the
fallibility of one’s evidence could constitute a valuation shift towards “avoid the false”, it seems that so long as a practical stake can be construed as the cause of such a sensitivity, then a practical stake is such that it is directly responsible for a non-evidential, epistemic reason for withholding on some belief about p, a p which one otherwise has some evidence in favor of believing.

Consider the following modified versions of Train Cases 1 and 2, where only modest evidence for S is operative, and where in 2 there is some practical stake in play for S that appears to have the effect of causing S to value the avoidance of Type II errors over the valuing of avoiding Type I errors, i.e., of making it more epistemically rational for S to withhold belief in 2 than it would be for S to withhold belief in 1:

Train Case M1

You’re at Back Bay Station in Boston, watching the trains go by. You’re simply passing the time, and enjoy watching the trains enter and leave the station. You notice the express pulling in, and idly consider whether or not it is the train from Pawtucket. You ask the man sitting next to you, “Is this the express from Pawtucket?” He answers, “I think it might be, but I couldn’t be sure.” Although it isn’t definite one way or the other, the man appears superficially to be a regular train-watcher like yourself. You settle on the belief that it is the express from Pawtucket.

Train Case M2

You’re at Back Bay Station in Boston, watching the trains go by. Your wife will be arriving soon from Pawtucket, and you plan on surprising her for your
anniversary by laying roses down on the platform before she gets off the train. You bought just enough roses for the task, and the wind is such that they will be blown away within minutes of laying them down. You notice the express pulling in. You ask the man sitting next to you, “Is this the express from Pawtucket?” He answers, “I think it might be, but I couldn’t be sure.” How are you to trust his word? You don’t want to risk wasting your anniversary-gesture on the opinion of some stranger in the train station. You scurry off to the ticket master to inquire before the express docks in the station.

In M1 and M2, we are considering the same subject with the same available modest evidence for the proposition ‘This is the Pawtucket express’. In M1, the subject’s epistemic risk-valuation between Type I and Type II errors is such that the subject appears to find the acquisition of a false belief on the basis of modest evidence less risky than the avoidance of a true one; he is “(moderately) epistemically bold”, if you will, and his epistemic rationality does not seem to be negatively affected by his adopting the attitude of belief towards the proposition in question.\(^8\) By contrast, in M2, our subject isn’t so bold. Now it seems as though our subject in M2 values more highly the avoidance of a false belief, that is, the avoidance of a Type II error. But the only difference between the cases is the existence of the practical stake regarding the subject’s one-off anniversary gesture. So then it appears that this practical stake, and in particular its effect in making the subject sensitive to the fallibility of the available modest evidence in question, has

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\(^8\) Indeed, recall the suggestion of Conee and Feldman quoted earlier, that one ought to believe \(p\) even in the case where only modest evidence exists in support of \(p\).
affected a shift in the subject’s truth-goal valuation, towards a higher priority in the avoidance of Type II errors.

Indeed, it seems as though we can cash out how one values one’s truth goal in terms of how sensitive one is to the fallibility of one’s evidence in general. The more sensitive an epistemic agent is to such a fallibilism regarding his modest evidence for p, the more epistemically conservative he is with respect to p, where being ‘epistemically conservative’ is a tendency to withhold belief in modestly-supported propositions. The less sensitive, the more epistemically risky he is, where being ‘epistemically risky’ is a tendency to adopt belief in modestly-supported propositions. And yet there seems to be no definitive answer regarding how sensitive we should be to fallibilism in cases of modest evidence. The goal of epistemic rationality is constant: it is always that we are trying to believe truths and avoid falsehoods whenever we are considered as epistemic rational agents. The goal-content of practical rationality, by contrast, is interest-relative, and accordingly, what is practically rational for one agent to do might not be so rational for another agent. On my view, it is always epistemically rational for agents to seek the acquisition of true beliefs and the avoidance of false ones⁹. It is just that epistemic agents can have legitimate and epistemically grounded reasons, i.e. reasons grounded in their truth goal valuations, for differing about how best to accomplish the goal of epistemic rationality. A kind of interest relativity is then true

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⁹ At least, in cases where having such true or false beliefs in question is a cognitively held goal of an individual. This point will be further elaborated on in the Objections section, Objection 2.
about epistemic rationality; not about what its goal is but about how one ought to go about accomplishing said goal, and I say that at least one plausible instance of such an interest relativity is manifested by the existence of practical stakes for some S, stakes which can serve as epistemic reason for withholding belief in some p, by making S epistemically sensitive to the fallibility of his evidence for p.10

This would be consistent with Evidentialism. After all, on Evidentialism, epistemic justification is entirely a function of one’s cognitively accessible evidence and nothing more. Facts about epistemic risk valuations, in cases of modest evidence, are only relevant facts to which particular doxastic attitude one ought to have, not to the metaphysical status of the epistemic justification of such an attitude. So then to say that a practical stake can affect one’s epistemic risk valuation is not to say that such a stake affects one’s epistemic justification; whether or not such a practical stake is around, and whether or not the epistemic risk valuation so induced is present, it is the case that whatever doxastic attitude(s) is/are epistemically justified to have, they are so justified because of the existent available evidence and nothing more.

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10 Compare Jason Stanley’s (2005) ‘IRI’, or Interest-Relative Invariantism. In Stanley’s case, IRI is a kind of generic rubric applicable to any theory of knowledge or epistemic justification which is consistent with the claim that practical stakes make a difference as to whether someone knows. In my case, the interest-relativity is only at the level of one’s truth goal, and so practical stakes only make a difference as to whether someone is practically rational or not in having some doxastic attitude (and even then, practical stakes are only being construed negatively, that is, solely as the cause of a raise in one’s sensitivity to fallibilism). See Knowledge and Practical Interests for more on IRI.
CHAPTER 7: OBJECTIONS

In this section I’d like to enumerate two general objections one might raise against Pragmatic Encroachment, both on epistemic justification and on epistemic rationality respectively, as well as an objection one might raise against my account in particular, and briefly respond to each.

Objection 1: The Argument from Intellectualist Incredulity

Define ‘Intellectualism’ about epistemic facts to be the position that only truth-conducive entities, like one’s evidence, and evidence-appreciating capacities, are relevant to the existence of epistemic facts. Intellectualism so defined directly entails the falsity of any account of Pragmatic Encroachment, present company included. Kvanvig [2004], for example, argues against so-called “Anti-Intellectualist” theories which entail the truth of Pragmatic Encroachment, and concludes: “there are substantive grounds for rejecting the idea and endorsing the long-standing tradition of intellectualism” (pg. 85). These grounds, however, are only fought over the concept of knowledge. Kvanvig asks: “What must a theory say in order to endorse pragmatic encroachment?” and responds that the criticisms he will be raising are aimed at “pragmatic encroachment into the nature of knowledge”. He never directly argues that any theory of Pragmatic Encroachment whatsoever, however, must be such that it constitutes an encroachment upon knowledge itself, and a fortiori, on epistemic justification. It seems to me that while the more provocative theories of Pragmatic Encroachment are such that they do entail a direct encroachment upon epistemic justification, a la Fantl and McGrath, we are not thus beholden to any theory of Pragmatic Encroachment as one which entails an
encroachment upon epistemic justification directly.11 Referring to practical action, Kvanvig says, “...it is hard, from a purely theoretical point of view, to see why anything stronger than some link between knowledge and practice would be needed or desired. 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.” [pg. 79]. I am in full agreement with Kvanvig on this point; those who would claim that Pragmatic Encroachment on knowledge by way of a practical-action constraint seem to be making too strong of a claim regarding the power of salient practical stakes, or of the practical rationality of action. It is not my position, however, that such practical stakes have any effect on one’s knowledge or epistemic justification whatsoever, since I claim only that practical stakes have an opportunity for encroaching upon an agent’s epistemic rationality in cases of modest evidence, cases of evidence I defined as not being sufficient for knowledge or epistemic justification in the first place. I chose Kvanvig here only as a representative of what are surely a family of arguments from Intellectualist incredulity against Pragmatic Encroachment on knowledge. My response to this style of objection is to assent that I share the same incredulity about such views; but I nevertheless endorse a form of Pragmatic Encroachment on the epistemic. Incredulity rebuttals seem to derive their force from the alleged bald fact that

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11 "What, then, would be the point of such a theory of Pragmatic Encroachment on the epistemic, if not its effect on the justification of belief?" This point might have been salient in the reader’s mind far before reaching this footnote; it will be addressed in Objection 3.
knowledge can be defeated by one’s practical stakes; nothing I have claimed here, however, is an endorsement of such a fact.

Objection 2: Suspicious Mixing of the Rationalities?

Although my view does not entail any kind of Pragmatic Encroachment on knowledge or epistemic justification directly, it does entail a kind of encroachment of the practical upon one’s epistemic rationality. In particular, I say that practical stakes can, by virtue of making the fallibility of one’s evidence especially salient, affect one’s truth-goal valuation and subsequently what doxastic attitude is epistemically rational for one to adopt in certain circumstances of modest evidence. But how are we to reconcile such an interplay between the rationalities? Jason Stanley, whose ‘Interest-Relative Invariantism’ about knowledge entails such an interplay, raises the worry that his account is such that ‘the distinction between practical and theoretical rationality is less clear than one might wish.” [2005, pg. 2]. Thomas Kelly addresses the potential downfalls for any attempt of reducing epistemic rationality to practical, or instrumental, rationality, in his [2004]. There his claim is essentially that, while one’s practical rationality depends upon having this or that particular cognitive goal of action, the notion of one’s having epistemic reasons for belief in p is completely separable from the having of this or that goal, even the so-called ‘truth goal’ of epistemic rationality:

When it is instrumentally rational for me to Φ, this is because Φing promises to promote some goal or goals which I possess. The attempt to assimilate epistemic rationality to instrumental rationality founders on the fact that one
can have epistemic reasons to believe propositions even in cases in which it is clear that one's believing those propositions holds no promise of advancing any goal which one actually possesses. [2004, pg. 25]

Kelly offers the example of a person who is deliberately trying to avoid learning about the ending of some movie. In such a case, having someone say the ending of the movie in front of that person does seem to give that person epistemic reason for believing the proposition p, where p is the statement of the movie's ending. And yet nevertheless, no goal of the person seems satisfied in the acquisition of such a reason; indeed, one goal is directly ruined by such an acquisition, namely the goal of learning the ending in the theater for oneself.

It seems open to me to agree with Kelly that it is at least possible that epistemic reasons, i.e. evidence, for some proposition p can exist which makes belief in p epistemically rational, and yet where no particular goal with respect to p is satisfied. Again, it is important to note that Kelly's target is the attempted reduction of epistemic rationality to practical rationality. I am opposed to such a reduction. The rationalities seem distinct in important and fundamental ways, most noticeably, that practical rationality seems concerned with the satisfaction of this or that goal, while epistemic rationality seems concerned with the satisfaction of one particular kind of goal, namely the truth goal. But perhaps this so-called truth goal is not one that we literally and cognitively have, like this or that practical goal. It certainly appears right to say that I can have reasons, constituted by my available evidence, for believing a proposition which I don't have any explicit goal of actually believing,
If the truth goal in general is not a literal, cognitively held goal like this or that practical goal, then that appears to do further damage to my account of a potential Pragmatic Encroachment on epistemic rationality, for I cashed out the mechanism of such an encroachment on epistemic rationality in terms of an epistemic agent’s sensitivity to the fallibility of his modest evidence, and subsequently his valuation of the distribution of risk between Type 1 and Type II errors regarding \( p \). But on further inspection, such damage is only apparent. For one can still endorse the truth goal as that which defines the distinction between epistemic from practical rationality, while still also endorsing that the truth goal isn’t a constantly held cognitive goal in the sense that this or that particular practical goal is. It seems less controversial instead to say that, \textit{qua} epistemically rational believers, we are always predisposed to believe the truth and avoid belief in the false, and that this tendency towards the truth and away from the false is what constitutes our being epistemically rational. Whether or not the truth-goal as it has been described in this paper is the true marker of the distinction between the rationalities will not be pursued further; it simply seems like at least one plausible way to draw such a distinction.

The real question, however, is whether or not Pragmatic Encroachment in cases of modest evidence as I have described it is consistent with Kelly’s claims regarding the distinction of the rationalities. Since in such cases of Pragmatic Encroachment I refer directly to relevant propositions whose truths the subject in question is in fact interested in knowing, then Kelly’s objection to the combination of the rationalities by way of appealing to the having of epistemic reasons for \( p \),
independently of the having of certain cognitive goals with respect to believing p, do not appear to apply. For in such cases where I claim Pragmatic Encroachment can occur, there is in fact a cognitively held goal of knowing the truth regarding p and adopting the appropriate doxastic attitude towards p on the basis of p-relevant evidence. One can deny that epistemic rationality in general is reducible to practical rationality in general while still endorsing that particular instances of epistemic rational activity can be co-extensive with instances of practical rational activity. All that’s needed for my account to hold water is that, on the assumption that some epistemic truth goal regarding p is actually held, Pragmatic Encroachment on the truth goal valuation of p can occur.

Objection 3: Trivial Encroachment?

Because I have scaled down my encroachment ambitions, I don’t seem open to the incredulity objection posed to views like Fantl and McGrath’s from Pragmatic Encroachment on epistemic justification, nor the suspicious mixing of the rationalities objection posed to views like Stanley’s from Pragmatic Encroachment on epistemic rationality. Indeed, I don’t conceive of any necessary connection between the practical and the epistemic at all; Pragmatic Encroachment on my view is a contingent kind of encroachment on the epistemic facts. But then, what kind of interesting encroachment is it at all? Have I just merely described something like the psychological facts that salient practical stakes can have on how one values the avoidance of Type I vs Type II errors, a valuation which itself is just another psychological fact about rational agents in general? I believe such an interpretation of my account is open. But crucially, I would assent to my account’s being such a
psychological description only if the psychological facts so described are of the relevant epistemic kind, and in particular, those facts relating to the perspectival nature of justification. As was noted in Vahid (2010) earlier, what marks the distinction between the epistemic rationality of \( x \) and the truth of \( x \) is that the epistemic rationality of \( x \) is the perspectival consideration of \( x \), consideration made in accordance with cognitively-accessible evidence for or against \( x \). To consider a proposition at all seems to me to be an inherently psychological process of a given agent, and once more, an epistemically-relevant one. If agents were such that no consideration of the cognitively accessible evidence was possible, then perhaps agents would trivially be epistemically justified, in the metaphysical sense, in believing some proposition \( p \), according to EJ+S. The cognitively accessible evidence would be the evidence that is in principle retrievable, and the agent’s epistemic justification would supervene on such evidence. But without (what appears to be) the psychological ability of considering the evidence as such, it is much less obvious whether or not such an agent could be capable of epistemic rationality, despite being capable of epistemic justification.\(^{12}\)

\(^{12}\) Thomas Kelly notes, in the final section of his [2003], notes the cognitively, or psychologically relevant aspects of epistemic rationality with respect to practical rationality: “We might imagine--with some difficulty, perhaps--a person who has either sensitivity in the absence of the other. That is, we can imagine a being who is perfectly epistemically rational (in the sense that at any given moment she believes all and only those propositions which it is epistemically rational for her to believe at that time) but who constantly fails to undertake those mental activities which she needs to undertake in order to achieve her cognitive goals. On the other hand, we can imagine a being who, being fully instrumentally rational, does undertake the needed mental activities but fails to achieve his cognitive goals in virtue of being pathologically epistemically irrational. Both of these two individuals should, I think, be considered seriously deficient with respect to their
But why should we endorse a notion of epistemic rationality that extends beyond which doxastic attitudes are justified according to knowledge-level evidence? Why should cases of modest evidence be of interest to the epistemologist in the first place? Isn’t the epistemologist’s central interest, after all, in the concept of knowledge?

For my own part, whether or not a given agent is epistemically rational does not seem to start and end with that agent’s relationship to knowledge, and that agent’s standing with respect to knowledge-level evidence. In many everyday instances, the available evidence is simply modest, or non-knowledge-level, and yet doxastic practices like adopting belief nevertheless continue on. Perhaps the epistemologist would wish to contend that such instances of belief are merely those related to one’s practical goals, or are beliefs that, not being potential instances of knowledge, are not of any real epistemic interest. It seems right to say that cases of belief in contexts of modest evidence are not relevant to a proper analysis of knowledge; but it also seems less certain to claim that only that which lends itself to a proper analysis of knowledge ought to be the concern of the epistemologist. And if epistemologists find cases of epistemically rational agents in contexts of modest evidence at all worth their study, then surely Pragmatic Encroachment occurring within such contexts would be a non-trivial fact about such study.

possession of the virtue of theoretical rationality.” [pg. 34]. Kelly’s point appears to be that, while the rationalities are such that they are inherently distinct, there is nevertheless something about the having of cognitive goals in general that underwrites both epistemic and practical success. Accordingly, cognitive, or psychological, facts about agents seem to be at least in principle kinds of epistemic facts about agents.
CONCLUSION

I have not argued that Evidentialism is an incorrect theory about the nature of epistemic justification, either in general or due to pragmatic considerations. In fact, it has been a central aim in this paper to make a version of Pragmatic Encroachment consistent with such a theory. But as a theory of what one epistemically ought to do, at least in cases of modest evidence, it appears insufficient. Cases where the evidence has failed to make the matter decisive one way or the other for some agent are cases where what is epistemically rational to do is ultimately up to the agent and her epistemic valuation of the truth goal.

Pragmatic Encroachment claims are incredulity-inducing no matter how you spin them, but if they are true, then it at least seems like what would also be true is that the practical would have less and less of an effect the more and more decisive one’s evidence is. Had the Train Cases been set up such that instead of the proposition p ‘The train will stop in Foxboro’ we had been considering the proposition ‘3×3=9’, and the evidence for such a proposition was our everyday comprehension of arithmetic, would the intuition that Fantl and McGrath point to, that S in L knows but S in H doesn’t because of some practical stake in H, really be generated? I am of the opinion that the mechanism behind the generation of the intuition in Train Cases is precisely that the evidence in question is on or approaching the borderline of constituting knowledge-level justification, not that it is uncontroversially evidence sufficient for knowledge. By instead drawing the cases explicitly as ones of modest evidence only, I believe we get something of a petri dish for friends of Pragmatic Encroachment. In such cases, there is a kind of opaqueness for the agent between
the status of which doxastic attitude is epistemically justified to hold, and which is epistemically rational to hold. The practical stakes are such that they can arguably be rendered as having the effect of raising one’s sensitivity to the fallibility of modest evidence, and such a raised sensitivity doesn’t seem to be on its own an epistemically irrational sensitivity for the agent to have; after all, surely modest evidence is especially fallible! If we buy the story that such a stake can have such an effect, independently of (or perhaps in conjunction with) its effect on one’s practical rationality, then we buy the existence of Pragmatic Encroachment on one’s epistemic rationality, an encroachment not touching one’s evidential justification. Perhaps buying such a story still induces the incredulous stares from foes of Pragmatic Encroachment. I only hope, in some small way, to have softened the glare.
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