



Routledge Studies in Epistemology

PRAGMATIC ENCROACHMENT IN EPISTEMOLOGY

Edited by
Brian Kim and Matthew McGrath



Pragmatic Encroachment in Epistemology

Recent work in epistemology has blurred the conceptual line between the epistemic or theoretical, and the practical: knowledge and evidence have become tightly connected in normative ways to one's practical interests and reasons for action. This volume is a welcome collection of new essays which explore this debate and take it in new directions.

—**Matthew A. Benton**, *Seattle Pacific University*

According to philosophical lore, epistemological orthodoxy is a purist epistemology in which epistemic concepts such as belief, evidence, and knowledge are characterized to be pure and free from practical concerns. In recent years, the debate has focused narrowly on the concept of knowledge and a number of challenges have been posed against the orthodox, purist view of knowledge. While the debate about knowledge is still a lively one, the pragmatic exploration in epistemology has just begun.

This collection takes on the task of expanding this exploration into new areas. It discusses how the practical might encroach on all areas of our epistemic lives from the way we think about belief, confidence, probability, and evidence to our ideas about epistemic value and excellence. The contributors also delve into the ramifications of pragmatic views in epistemology for questions about the value of knowledge and its practical role. *Pragmatic Encroachment in Epistemology* will be of interest to a broad range of epistemologists, as well as scholars working on virtue theory and practical reason.

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1 Introduction

Matthew McGrath and Brian Kim

Even on orthodox views, knowledge is related to action and to practical reasoning. For, knowledge implies belief, and of course belief influences action. Knowledge also implies truth and justification, and so action on the basis of knowledge will often have good features. It will tend to be successful and reasonable. But if belief is understood, as it often is in the tradition, as merely having high confidence, one won't always be willing to act on one's knowledge. You might have a high degree of confidence that a dish on the menu doesn't contain shellfish, but if you're allergic, a high degree of confidence won't be enough for you to order the dish. Similarly, if justification is understood, as it usually is in the tradition, as merely having good reasons or evidence, one won't always be reasonable to act on one's knowledge in situations in which that knowledge is relevant. You might not be reasonable to order that dish, if you are allergic.

So, on orthodox accounts of knowledge, although there are connections between knowledge and the practical, they hold only for the most part. Perhaps they are part of the "normal" course of events. But they are not strict. When the stakes get high enough or when the odds are long enough, things aren't normal and one will not—and reasonably will not—act on the basis of knowledge. So, all in all, on orthodox accounts, knowledge doesn't require any practical condition. Instead, the relationship between knowledge and action is merely a heuristic and usually holds in normal circumstances.

In its roughest most general meaning, the thesis of "pragmatic encroachment" holds that there are stronger connections between knowledge and the practical than the orthodox account allows. Why think this? We mention two core reasons found in the writings of Fantl and McGrath as well as Hawthorne and Stanley.

It will help to have an example to bear in mind. Consider William Clifford's shipowner, who has good reason to think his ship is seaworthy but some reason to doubt this. He must decide whether to accept payment so that his ship can be used to transport a group of people. For Clifford, even if he has good reason, and even if the belief in shipworthiness is true, this is not enough to make his action on the basis of that belief right. He needs sufficient evidence, and having good reason isn't good enough when lives

are at stake. What goes for action goes for practical reasoning. Clifford's shipowner may have good reasons for his true belief that his ship is seaworthy, and yet he shouldn't use that belief in reasoning about whether to lease his ship for the voyage.

Now for the two core reasons. First, consider criticisms and defenses of action. Consider how, after the fact, we might criticize Clifford's shipowner's action by saying, "The ship turned out to be seaworthy but he didn't know it was". Why would this seem an appropriate criticism if the case is not normal because of the lives at stake? Or consider how the shipowner might try to defend his action and how we would reply to it. He might say, "I knew it was seaworthy, so I knew all would be alright". We would not reply by saying, "yes, you knew it was seaworthy, but you needed to know for sure". We would much more likely say, "no, you didn't know", perhaps adding something like, "you should have taken the ship in for an inspection before sending it out with passengers". But it is hard to see why the shipowner's defense should function to "ward off" the objection that he needed to know for sure, if orthodox theories of knowledge are correct. However, all these phenomena make much better sense if there were a strict connection between knowing something and being appropriate to act on it.

One might object to this argument by insisting that such data show us, in the first instance, only something about how we use "know". Not all features of use reveal features of meaning. Perhaps the orthodox account is perfectly correct and only needs supplementation from Gricean pragmatics to accommodate data about the use of "know" in defenses and criticisms of action. However, if the data about defenses and criticisms did not show us anything about knowledge, then we would expect that it would be difficult to find direct arguments linking knowledge and action which subsume and explain this data. But such direct arguments do not seem difficult to come by, as we point out next.

A second reason to assert a stronger connection between knowledge and reasonable action proceeds from considering general reasoning about knowledge and action. Intuitively, it seems that if Clifford's shipowner knew the ship was seaworthy, then he would be able to conclude and thereby know that it would function well at sea with a normal load of passengers. And if he knew the latter, it seems he would know that the ship's condition would not pose a problem for the proposed voyage. Knowing the latter, together with knowing that the forecast is for calm seas and perhaps some other ancillary propositions, seems sufficient for knowing that all would go well if he hired his ship out in this case. And the shipowner's having *that* knowledge seems enough to make him reasonable in hiring out the ship. Generally, if you know that all would go well if you performed a certain action, then it is reasonable for you to perform it. This makes sense of the phenomena concerning knowledge-citing criticisms and defenses of action, and it is not what we would expect if the orthodox account of knowledge were true.

Even if these reasons seem initially compelling, we have to ask just what the consequences of pragmatic encroachment are. Most pragmatic encroachment theorists admit and even emphasize that some consequences would be counterintuitive. As Hawthorne puts it, knowledge “would come and go with ease”. Fantl and McGrath note that if pragmatic encroachment is true, one could, surprisingly, lose knowledge by writing a big check. But at the same time, it is counterintuitive to think that one could know that a certain action would work out for the best and yet be unreasonable to perform it. Here “working out for the best” can be understood in whatever terms fit one’s preferred account—best consequences, best balance of good consequences and satisfaction of certain side constraints, etc. As is familiar in philosophical disputes, it seems there are counterintuitive consequences attending both the orthodox account and accounts embracing pragmatic encroachment. There is a large literature at the moment surveying the consequences of siding with or departing from orthodoxy.

There is a small but growing literature about exactly how to formulate a “pragmatist” theory of knowledge. Here, we will discuss several key issues that arise.

First, which practical conditions on knowledge should the encroachment theorist endorse? Consider three similar conditions: *being rational to act as if p* (Fantl and McGrath 2002), *having p a reason for action* (Fantl and McGrath 2009), *being appropriate to use p as a premise in practical reasoning* (Hawthorne 2003; Stanley 2005). Which should the pragmatist work with? Does it matter? Are they all equivalent? The answer to the last question seems to be *no*, and therefore it may well matter which the pragmatist selects. To see this, consider what it is to be rational to act as if p, as defined in Fantl and McGrath (2002): to be rational to act as if p is to be rational to do the act(s) that are rational to do *given p* (i.e., conditional on p). This condition is now called the *practical adequacy* condition (Anderson and Hawthorne 2019). Consider a variant of an example given in a lecture by Hawthorne circa 2007. You can choose between two cheese sandwiches, which appear exactly the same. You don’t have probability 1 for either of them being cheese sandwiches, but the probability is very high, e.g., .995 (or something of the sort). Hawthorne pointed out that intuitively you know of each sandwich that it is a cheese sandwich, and yet given that sandwich 1 is a cheese sandwich, you should pick sandwich 1, even though you are in fact rational to pick either sandwich as things stand. So, you know sandwich 1 is a cheese sandwich, and yet you are not rational to act as if it is. There may well be ways to block this result by tinkering with the concept of *being rational to act as if p* so as to weaken it. But notice that there is no temptation to think that you don’t have, as a reason, the fact that sandwich 1 is a cheese sandwich (and the same for sandwich 2). They both qualify epistemically as reasons. And both count as appropriate to use in practical reasoning. This point suggests grounds for preferring formulating the practical condition in terms of reasons or reasoning rather than practical adequacy.¹

Second, should the pragmatist think that is the practical condition on knowledge a basic condition or can we derive it from something more basic? Consider practical adequacy. If it is a condition on knowledge, it becomes tempting to think that this is only because there is *preferential adequacy* condition on knowledge (Fantl and McGrath 2002). Clifford's shipowner, it seems, is rational to act as if *p*, only because he is rational to arrange his preferences as if *p*. Or consider the reasons-based approach. Here it is attractive to think that knowing *p* is sufficient for having *p* available as a practical reason only because it is sufficient for having *p* available as a reason more generally, e.g., as a reason to believe other propositions, but also a reason to have certain emotions. The shipowner intuitively can't reasonably be pleased that his ship will not sink at sea due to structural problems. But if the shipowner had *the ship is seaworthy* available as a reason, it seems he could be reasonably pleased. He could think to himself, reasonably: the ship is seaworthy; so, it won't sink at sea due to structural problems. Or think about the DeRose's high-stakes bank case. Recall that, intuitively, the protagonist (Keith) doesn't know the bank is open Saturday and so can't reasonably plan to skip the long lines today in favor of coming back tomorrow. But consider reasons. Does Keith have *the bank will be open Saturday* available as a reason to rest content that he can successfully deposit his check Saturday? Intuitively, no. Similar observations can be made about the *practical* reasoning condition. It seems it is a condition on knowledge only because there is a general *reasoning* condition on knowledge. Pragmatists therefore might take the practical condition on knowledge to stem from a more fundamental claim on knowledge. In the view of Fantl and McGrath (forthcoming), the more fundamental claim will try to capture the idea that if you know *p*, then *p* is something you can *rely* on, *can count on*. The appeal to conditionalizing on *p*, to reasons, or to reasoning attempt to articulate this core idea.

If the pragmatist sees the practical condition as stemming from a more fundamental and broader condition on knowledge, this might assist her in fending off certain sorts of objections (see Anderson and Hawthorne 2019). For instance, suppose in the high-stakes bank case we offer to pay Keith \$50,000 to wait to deposit the check Saturday. Intuitively, this wouldn't affect whether Keith knows the bank is open tomorrow. But it seems to affect *practical* adequacy, because now Keith is rational to do in fact what he would be rational to do given that the bank was open Saturday: wait till Saturday. Now, I think it wouldn't be attractive to think that Keith gained *the bank is open Saturday* as a potential practical reason or as a fact he can appropriately use in practical reasoning. But one might ask why. After all, in this revised case, Keith is reasonable to come back Saturday. Now, just because he is reasonable to do something and some consideration *would* support doing that, it doesn't follow that the consideration is a reason he has (or is something he can appropriately use as a reason). But we can see better why this is so, if we think about what else Keith can't reasonably

do, which he could reasonably do if he knew. Plausibly, Keith is *not* reasonable to feel assured that he will be able to deposit his check if he waits till Saturday, even if he is reasonable to be assured that he'll be financially fine (because of the \$50,000). Similarly, it doesn't seem Keith can now properly employ *the bank will be open Saturday* in his reasoning generally (e.g., reasoning that since the bank will be open Saturday, he will not only have \$50,000 but also deposit the \$1000 check and so have a total of \$51,000 more money in the bank). Thus, if having *p* available as a reason, or being appropriate to use *p* in reasoning, is a necessary condition of knowledge, then the pragmatist can be assured that offering Keith \$50,000 didn't magically give him knowledge, which is a good result. And, again, if the core idea of pragmatism is that one can rely on what one knows, this result makes a lot of sense: Keith can't suddenly rely on *the bank is open Saturday* when offered the \$50,000 for waiting till Saturday to deposit his check.

Third, the pragmatist also faces the question of the sorts of epistemological theory one might embed a pragmatist theory of knowledge within. A major choice point concerns fallibilism vs. infallibilism about knowledge. Whereas the fallibilist about knowledge takes knowledge to be compatible with the possibility of error, the infallibilist denies this. Thus, Fantl and McGrath's argument that knowledge can vary with practical features depends essentially on the assumption of fallibilism; the arguments from Hawthorne and Stanley do not. Which way a pragmatist goes here might depend importantly on how the pragmatist thinks of the relations between knowledge, probability, and rational credence. If one thinks that knowledge requires probability 1 and rational credence 1, then one will side with the infallibilists. If one thinks that knowledge requires neither of these, one will side with the fallibilists. There is an interesting and relatively unexplored middle ground on which there are two notions of epistemic probability, one connected to knowledge and one not, and two accompanying notions of rational credence, one for each of the notions of epistemic probability. For instance, DeRose (2009, 190–193) distinguishes stable from unstable confidence. If the stakes are high, one might not be willing to rely on *p* in reasoning, even though one would rely on it in lower stakes situations. We might hope to explain what is going on here, and how it is reasonable, in terms of two notions of rational confidence (or credence), one tied to knowledge and one not.

These are just a few of the many issues a pragmatist must sort out. But what is interesting is that these issues aren't the preserve of pragmatists alone. It seems the disputes about pragmatic encroachment have helped to open up a new area of philosophy, one focused not only on the relatively narrow question of whether the orthodox approach to knowledge is correct or not, but on a range of issues concerning epistemology and its interface with practical philosophy. Previously questions of how the epistemic relates to the practical were mainly restricted to decision theory, with its probabilities and utilities. Now, they are part of normative philosophy generally. The

guiding question of this new field is how the epistemic generally bears on the practical and vice versa. Included under the practical is no longer merely prudence or self-interest, but moral statuses, including the rightness and wrongness of actions (and possibly even belief), and moral responsibility. Included, as well, under the practical are not merely actions and plans but states such as *faith*, *trust*, and *commitment*. In fact, some philosophers argue that we should understand belief as itself a kind of commitment to the truth, a commitment that is not merely a matter of assigning a high credence to a proposition or to feeling a high degree of conviction.

This volume features essays that contribute to this burgeoning field. Moreover, these contributions offer examples of how the recent pragmatic turn in epistemology can inspire new inquiries and explorations into the relationship between the epistemic and the practical. Thus, our aim in this volume is to highlight avenues of research that will broaden and deepen our understanding of the pragmatist perspective, whether from the point of view of the critic or the proponent.

The following essays roughly fit into three camps. The first group of essays present internal explorations into our pragmatist epistemologies. Two of these contributions explore alternative motivations for the pragmatist point of view. Dorit Ganson does so by investigating the relationship between degrees of belief and outright belief. She argues for a *Hybrid Doxastic Pragmatism*, which advocates for a robust connection between outright belief and degrees of belief. Unlike standard reductive threshold views of outright belief, Ganson proposes that the relevant threshold is sensitive to many features of the context, including the subject's practical context, and uses this pragmatic sensitivity to avoid a number of problems with the standard reductive account. Appealing to this new pragmatist view, Ganson proposes that the practical nature of the relation between degrees of belief and outright belief can help explain why there is pragmatic encroachment on knowledge.

Kate Nolfi offers an alternative route to a pragmatist epistemology. While the context-sensitivity of knowledge is often the primary motivation for the pragmatic turn, Nolfi proposes to start with an action-oriented approach to epistemology. This approach focuses on the functional role that belief plays in action production. Nolfi argues that if we consider the role that belief has in subserving action and if the epistemic status of a belief depends upon it fulfilling this role adequately, then we have good reasons to think that the ideal cognitive functioning of belief is sensitive to practical factors. Furthermore, it is argued that the resulting pragmatist account avoids some of the central problems of pragmatic encroachment, particularly the instability of knowledge—a problem highlighted by Cohen's essay.

The next two internal explorations aim to help us understand what a pragmatist epistemology ought to look like. Anne Baril explores how the debate about internalism and externalism about reasons relates to recent discussions of pragmatic encroachment. She argues that adopting one or

the other account of reasons will result in accounts that make quite different judgments about what we know in various cases. Since these varying judgments can make or break the plausibility of our pragmatist accounts, pragmatists must address the issue.

The topic of externalism continues in Brian Kim's discussion. He argues that Gettier cases bring to light a lacuna with many contemporary pragmatist epistemologies. While such epistemologies have been explicated on the basis of reason-theoretic and decision-theoretic accounts of rational deliberation and choice, these accounts have not been wholly suitable. What is missing is a sufficiently rich externalist account of rational deliberation. Kim proposes that we can enrich expected utility theory by incorporating into the theory an account of how we frame decision problems. By offering the outlines of a novel externalist decision theory and developing a pragmatist epistemology on its basis, Kim argues that we can account for Gettier cases and address some well-known criticisms of pragmatic encroachment, such as the one raised by Anderson and Hawthorne in this volume.

The second group of essays explores criticisms of the pragmatist's approach. Stewart Cohen explores a problematic consequence of pragmatic encroachment on knowledge, arguing that the view leaves us with an implausibly unstable account of knowledge. Cohen reconsiders the arguments that motivated the pragmatist view and identifies a key but problematic inference from knowing that *p* to possessing *p* as a reason to act. Cohen acknowledges that it is hard to reject this inference, but he argues that we are already forced to give up this inference in cases of purely epistemic rationality. Given that we must already reject the inference, there is little cost in extending it to cases of practical rationality. Moreover, doing so provides a unified account of both the practical and epistemic cases.

Charity Anderson and John Hawthorne raise a challenge for the pragmatist account of knowledge by exploring its relationship with epistemic closure principles. They consider two versions of the pragmatist theory, one that relies on the notion of practical adequacy and another that appeals to stakes-sensitivity. They show that both versions are incompatible with single-premise closure of knowledge and argue that it is difficult to see how to remedy the problem.

Mikkel Gerken presents a challenge for the pragmatists' account of knowledge by showing that their current framework, with its focus on practical stakes and personal interests, appears unable to account for and explain the trademark features of scientific knowledge. Gerken explores the possibility of combining an anti-realist view of science, such as constructive empiricism, with pragmatic encroachment about scientific knowledge. But he argues that this combination raises new problems about the role of values in science.

The final group of essays expand the scope of our inquiries by identifying under-explored areas where the pragmatist point of view might provide new insight. These essays also expand the scope of the pragmatist's inquiry by

considering alternative concepts of the relationship between knowledge and the practical. N. Ángel Pinillos offers a cognitive account of how we make skeptical judgments that one does not know. He proposes that there is a special purpose skeptical module that has been shaped by natural selection and interacts with internalized knowledge-action principles, which are central to the pragmatist account. By understanding the mechanisms behind our skeptical judgments, Pinillos proposes to offer a more satisfactory response to the skeptic's arguments.

Brad Armendt expands on his previous inquiries into how practical factors interact with our beliefs by considering the possibility of stakes-sensitive rational degrees of belief. By appealing to the theory of deliberation dynamics, which explores how self-aware decision makers change their mind over the course of an extended deliberation, Armendt argues that there are cases that can arguably be interpreted as examples of rational stakes-sensitive degrees of belief.

Rima Basu and Mark Schroeder explore the question of whether we can wrong one another by what we believe. Motivating this idea with examples, they focus on addressing two theoretical difficulties that it faces. The first problem is that our beliefs do not seem to be under our voluntary control. The second problem is that there appear to be conflicts between the epistemic and moral norms governing belief. Both problems, they argue, can be resolved given moral encroachment, the view that the epistemic norms governing belief are sensitive to the moral norms governing belief.

Juan Comesaña explores a combination of Bayesian decision theory and the view that knowledge = evidence, which he calls knowledge-first decision theory. He argues that, at first glance, this combined view gives the wrong results in a number of choice problems. However, he suggests that if knowledge-first decision theorists are willing to adopt a practical adequacy condition on knowledge, as pragmatists do, they can address this problem.

Note

1. Alternatively, it may be argued that these competing formulations actually govern different types of reasoning. (e.g. monotonic vs non-monotonic, deductive vs inductive vs abductive). So further exploration of these proposed practical conditions on knowledge may be required.

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2 Great Expectations

Belief and the Case for Pragmatic Encroachment¹

Dorit Ganson

*Then I saw her face, now I'm a believer
Not a trace of doubt in my mind . . .
I'm a believer, I couldn't leave her if I tried.*
—The Monkees

According to the thesis of *pragmatic encroachment*, the pragmatic “encroaches” on the epistemic: practical considerations such as the potential costs of acting on *p* if *p* is false or benefits of acting on *p* if *p* is true can make a difference when it comes to whether or not an agent’s belief that *p* is epistemically rational, epistemically justified, or involves her knowing that *p*. Two subjects in different practical circumstances can differ with respect to whether they are epistemically justified in believing that *p* even though they are the same with respect to all truth-relevant, intellectual factors, such as the quantity and quality of their evidence for and against *p*, the reliability of the methods they rely on in forming their attitudes towards *p*, etc. Sometimes more evidence is needed to know or to be epistemically justified in believing as the stakes get higher and the odds longer.

Many of the recent criticisms of the case for pragmatic encroachment raise objections to the conclusion itself (how can knowledge come and go with sudden inheritance, new-found indifference, etc.),² or take issue with some of the principles connecting knowledge and practical reason that are crucial premises in the central arguments in its favor.³ Whatever the outcome of such attacks, they leave open the possibility that pragmatic encroachment could still be, surprisingly, true of other significant epistemic relations, as well as the possibility that there are other routes to pragmatic encroachment which don’t begin with the principles in question. Perhaps reflection on what it takes for someone’s degree of confidence, expectation, or trust to be accompanied by or to give rise to outright belief could help enhance our understanding of the source and scope of pragmatic encroachment.⁴

One convenient way to execute this strategy would be by way of a threshold model of the relationship between *degree of belief* that *p* and the categorical attitudes of *belief* that *p*, *suspension* of belief with respect to *p*,

and belief that p is false (*disbelief*). It is rather tempting to think that when expectations become great enough, they somehow tip the scales towards belief; when low enough, towards disbelief. It can certainly appear this way sometimes. One may be inclined at such moments to think that belief is essentially high enough confidence, disbelief low enough, and suspension middling confidence—where the boundaries of these ranges are somewhat vague and variable with circumstance. Say our strength of confidence with respect to p can range anywhere from absolute certainty that p is false (degree of belief or subjective probability = 0) to maximal certainty that it is true (degree of belief or subjective probability = 1). Perhaps there are potentially contextually variant thresholds which set how close to 1 our degree of belief *has to be and is sufficient for it* to serve as belief, or how close to 0 it *has to be and is sufficient for it* to serve as disbelief. We'll call such an account *The Reductive Threshold View of Belief*: degree of belief, or subjective probability, above a potentially contextually variant threshold is necessary and sufficient for belief.

Such an account reduces belief, suspension, and disbelief to degree of belief within certain contextually relevant spectrums of confidence levels. This sort of a view seems to be what's on the table in Hájek (2000).

I assume here and elsewhere that talk of beliefs and talk of sufficiently high subjective probabilities are intertranslatable.

(Hájek 2000, p. 200)

Here is a good rule of thumb, I suggest: we should generally associate agnosticism with “middling” probability assignments, belief with “high” probability assignments, and disbelief with “low” probability assignments.

(Hájek 1998, p. 204)

X is agnostic about A iff x gives a probability assignment to A that is not close to a sharp 0 or 1—the standards for “closeness” being determined by context. That includes all sharp assignments that are not “close” (according to the operative standards) to 0 or 1; and indeed all sets of assignments that include values that are not “close” (according to the operative standards) to 0 or 1.

(Hájek 1998, p. 205)

Such a view accords well with the thesis of pragmatic encroachment. Suppose that practical factors are relevant to fixing the placement of the threshold—extreme risk situations with respect to acting on p potentially raising the bar; low risk situations potentially lowering the bar. If we think that it's in the nature of outright belief to be subject to this sort of variance with changes in practical setting, we should expect that the normative epistemic assessment of outright belief will be as well. We can well imagine two individuals who have the same evidence and level of epistemically justified

credence for *p*, but who differ in the peril of their circumstances. For the person in the more demanding setting, say this level of credence falls below the threshold for belief; for the person in the less demanding setting, let's suppose this level of credence is well above the threshold. The second person can, from the standpoint of epistemic evaluation, appropriately believe *p*; the first cannot and should be agnostic about *p*. Such a view can nicely be combined with a conception of outright belief as akin to the engagement of heuristics—something that involves fast, energy sparing, and at times inaccurate shortcuts, allowing us to bypass costly calculations with subjective probabilities until the situation demands greater attentiveness to our actual degrees of confidence.

Despite its initial appeal, a simple, Reductive Threshold account of the relationship between categorical belief and degree of belief is not viable, for reasons—some familiar, some unfamiliar—I will present next. Rather than give up on the threshold picture entirely, however, I suggest that we retain part of it, and combine it with a dispositionalist account of belief along the lines of what Ryle envisioned (minus the behaviorism, as Eric Schwitzgebel⁵ would say). As Ryle observes in *The Concept of Mind*, belief involves a wide spectrum of proclivities and dispositions—some automatic and some deliberate—involving reasoning, reflecting, asserting, imagining, acting, reacting, and feeling.

Belief might be said to be like knowledge, and unlike trust in persons, zeal for causes, or addiction to smoking, in that it is “propositional”; but this, though not far wrong, is too narrow. Certainly to believe that the ice is dangerously thin is to be unhesitant in telling oneself and others that it is thin, in acquiescing to other people's assertion to that effect, in objecting to statements to the contrary, in drawing consequences from the original proposition, and so forth. But it is also to be prone to skate warily, to shudder, to dwell in imagination on possible disasters and to warn other skaters. It is also a propensity not only to make certain theoretical moves but also to have certain feelings.

(Ryle 1949, p. 92)

Suspension of belief involves its own spectrum, and the deactivation of these propensities and the engagement of those typical of belief does not *all* come down to a transition from middling to high enough degrees of confidence or expectation. While I won't attempt a full defense of the threshold-dispositionalist hybrid I call *Hybrid Doxastic Pragmatism* here, I at least hope to show that such a hybrid can avert some of the main problems that face the Reductive Threshold View on its own, and yet still provide us with a satisfying sketch of the relationship between belief and degree of belief that can complement and bolster the case for pragmatic encroachment.

1. Interesting and Robust Relations Between Degrees of Confidence/Expectation and the Categorical Attitudes

Even if normative and non-normative facts involving belief, suspension of belief, and disbelief don't supervene on facts involving degrees of belief and degree of belief thresholds, we still have good reason to suppose that there are some kinds of interesting and robust relations between the two realms. Consider our old, reliable belief-desire folk psychology which has served us so well throughout the ages. Countless successful explanations (though not all) work just as well when we substitute "believes that" with "is highly confident that", or "disbelieves" with "has very low confidence that".

- (a) Snow White does not give up hope because she believes that someday her prince will come.
- (b) Snow White does not give up hope because she is highly confident that someday her prince will come.
- (a) Grumpy is crying because he does not believe/disbelieves that Snow White will ever wake from her slumber.
- (b) Grumpy is crying because he has very low confidence that Snow White will ever wake from her slumber.

For explanations appealing to belief suspension, the transition is a bit bumpier, but expressions in terms of degrees of confidence seem equally effective and informative (if not more so).

- (a) Snow White failed to appreciate the danger of her situation because even after due consideration she remained agnostic/suspended judgment about the existence of witches and evil magic.
- (b) Snow White failed to appreciate the danger of her situation because even after due consideration she remained no more confident that witches and evil magic exist than that witches and evil magic do not exist.

Furthermore, some folk-psychological explanations explicitly invoke the notion that opinions are held with varying relative degrees of strength. We are entirely at ease in speaking in comparative terms.

- (a) The Queen wasn't absolutely sure, but she strongly believed that one dose of poison would be enough to kill Snow White. Since she believed even more strongly that two doses would be sufficient, and so ardently wished for Snow White's demise, she sprang for the expense of an extra dose.

On occasion we are aware that we are transitioning from disbelief to suspension of belief to belief as evidence steadily accumulates, while at the

same time we sense a gradual change in our level of confidence. Our expectation is at first very low and grows stronger and stronger still until we finally reach a point where we have reversed our former state of opinion. I had such an experience on the night of the 2016 Presidential Election. I began the evening with little expectation that Hilary Clinton would lose the election, only to see my disbelief that she would lose abandoned and eventually replaced with outright belief that she would lose when all was said and done. Here's another (more fanciful) example, inspired by the case studies in Pinillos (2012).

- (a) An unconfident typist, Doc very quickly types out the lyrics to *Heigh-Ho*. At first he disbelieves that the typed document has no typographical errors, i.e. he believes that it is false that it has no typos. He has each dwarf check it over for errors in order from the dwarf least likely to find a mistake (Dopey), and to the one who is the most meticulous (himself), and then carefully checks it two more times. Throughout the process, Doc's confidence that the document contains no typographical errors gradually increases; by the end, his disbelief has been replaced with belief.

When we encounter belief and degree of confidence moving in tandem in this fashion as evidence steadily streams in, it is hard to resist the thought that they relate to one another in a significant way. So what's the problem with the Reductive Threshold picture?

2. Interesting and Robust Relations, but not Reduction

I shall now present a number of objections to the Reductive Threshold View.

(1) Familiar strike: Lotteries

A major and familiar strike against a simple threshold picture is that lottery considerations speak against it. If someone purchases a ticket for a fair lottery with n tickets (where n is very large), that person can have a very high degree of credence $(n-1)/n$ for *my ticket is a losing ticket*, yet suspend judgment with respect to, and fail to believe *my ticket is a losing ticket* until the winner is announced and the ticket is tossed into the garbage. It may be reasonable for her to do so, and it is at the very least possible for her to do so. We can image bigger and bigger lotteries, accompanied by ever higher credence levels which fail to ensure belief and exclude suspension. No credence level short of 1 seems to do the job, and that is not a very helpful observation. What's more, before the announcement, the lottery ticket owner can have many other outright beliefs which are accompanied by degrees of confidence much lower than $(n-1)/n$. Outright belief cannot then simply be a matter of a level of credence tipping over a threshold and