

## Pragmatism, Truth, and Cognitive Agency

### 1. Introduction

Pragmatism about knowledge is the view that practical interests can make a difference between knowledge and belief falling short of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> It is one way of accounting for intuitions about the shiftiness of knowledge attributions (Stanley 2005). It is also supported by independently motivated principles, such as principles connecting knowledge to reasons for action (Fantl & McGrath 2009). Pragmatism is gaining adherents in the literature. But it is still controversial. Shifty intuitions about knowledge attributions can be accounted for in other ways (e.g. contextualism (DeRose 2005; 2009), relativism (MacFarlane 2014), and varieties of invariantism (Brown 2013)). Principles in support of pragmatism have fairly compelling counterexamples (Brown 2008). For these and other reasons, many in epistemology remain purists. Purism about knowledge denies that practical interests can make a difference between knowledge and belief falling short of knowledge.

In a recent paper, Blake Roeber (2018) argues that the most prominent purist objection to pragmatism fails. According to Roeber, the most prominent objection is that pragmatism entails that *truth-irrelevant* factors can make a difference between knowledge and belief falling short of knowledge. Roeber argues that this feature of pragmatism is actually far less controversial than it seems. In fact, even purists should

---

<sup>1</sup> Henceforth, for ease of exposition, unless stated otherwise I will simply use the term ‘pragmatism’ (as opposed to ‘pragmatism about knowledge’) to refer to the view that practical interests can make a difference between knowledge and belief falling short of knowledge.

endorse the idea that truth-irrelevant factors play a role in knowledge. If that's the case, then the purist's main objection to pragmatism fails.<sup>2</sup>

Roeber is right that purists should endorse the idea that truth-irrelevant factors can play a role in knowledge. But in this paper, I present another way of thinking about the dispute between purists and pragmatists. I do so by formulating a new objection to pragmatism. The objection is that pragmatism entails that factors irrelevant to both truth and "cognitive agency" can make a difference to knowledge. Importantly, my aim is not to settle the dispute between purism and pragmatism. Rather, it is to argue that—despite Roeber's challenge—purists have resources available for mounting a case against pragmatism that do not undermine their own view. This is an important result in its own right. But my argument has interesting additional upshots. One is a connection revealed between the debate between pragmatists and purists about knowledge, and the debate between "alethists" and pragmatists about reasons for belief.

Section 2 presents Roeber's argument against the most prominent purist objection to pragmatism. Section 3 sets the stage for a way of objecting to pragmatism while avoiding the problem Roeber identifies. Section 4 fills in some details by introducing an account of "cognitive agency" and what it means for a factor to be "relevant to cognitive agency". Section 5 presents the new objection and explains its advantages.

## **2. Roeber's Argument**

A factor is truth-relevant just in case it affects the probability that one's belief is true, either from one's own point of view, or from some more objective perspective (Roeber

---

<sup>2</sup> Roeber attributes the main objection to pragmatism to DeRose (2009), Grimm (2011), and Reed (2014).

2018, 437).<sup>3</sup> A factor is truth-*irrelevant* if it does not so affect the probability that one's belief is true. Call *anti-intellectualism* the view that truth-irrelevant factors can make a difference between knowledge and belief falling short of knowledge. To put Roeber's point a bit differently, the main purist objection to pragmatism is the claim that pragmatism entails anti-intellectualism. Let's have a look at Roeber's argument against this objection.

The argument turns on a case in which the facts about whether S knows that p change over time, while all the truth-relevant facts surrounding S's true belief that p remain the same. Consider Penny, a first-year epistemology student learning about testimonial justification. The professor asks Penny for an example of a belief for which she is intuitively justified in virtue of having heard it from someone else. She offers her belief that emus are omnivores—something she recently learned from the zookeeper at the local zoo. The professor goes on to advance an argument that she is not justified in this belief after all, given the fact that people sometimes misspeak, and the zookeeper may have misspoken during this particular exchange with Penny. The professor advances a battery of convincing arguments in favour of this position, and no arguments in favour of more moderate fallibilist positions. According to Roeber, at this time, T1, Penny intuitively does not know that emus are omnivores.

But Penny goes on to become a philosophy major. She studies hard and learns a great deal about fallibilism. She gradually comes to have lots of good reasons to think that a more moderate fallibilist position is true. As it happens, she has retained exactly the same credence in the original proposition that emus are omnivores, and has the exact

---

<sup>3</sup> Evidence and reliability of belief-forming process are paradigm examples of factors that affect the probability of a belief.

same evidence—indeed, all the truth-relevant considerations remain fixed. But, intuitively, at this time, T2, she knows that emus are omnivores.

Here are three premises:

(P1) At T1, Penny's belief that emus are omnivores falls short of knowledge.

(P2) At T2, Penny knows that emus are omnivores.

(P3) There is no truth-relevant difference between the world at T1 and the world at T2 with respect to Penny's belief that emus are omnivores.

These premises taken together entail anti-intellectualism. Note there is no difference in Penny's practical interests at T1 and T2; so the case suggests that truth-irrelevant factors can affect whether an agent knows, regardless of whether practical interests can affect whether an agent knows. If that's right, the purist's objection to pragmatism—that it entails anti-intellectualism—seems flawed, at least dialectically speaking. The purist needs to say more about why a commitment to anti-intellectualism is bad for the pragmatist, but not for herself.

Is the argument compelling? Start with (P3). On the face of it, Penny's epistemological views about fallibilism do not affect the probability of the proposition that emus are omnivores (either from her own perspective, or some more objective one). As a contingent matter, Penny's reflections on fallibilism *could* make a truth-relevant difference in her belief that emus are omnivores (say, by affecting the reliability of her

judgment). But they don't *entail* any such difference. So Roeber claims anti-intellectuals can simply stipulate (P3). In response, we might consider the relationship between higher-order evidence and evidence. Penny's scenario is one in which she gains, at T1, higher-order evidence that her evidence about emus is insufficient, and then at T2, that it is sufficient. Those who maintain that evidence of evidence is evidence (see Tal and Comesaña 2017) could argue that it follows from this description of the case that we must reject (P3) after all. If evidence of evidence is evidence, then it would seem that there is a difference between Penny's evidence at T1 and T2, and so a truth-relevant difference between T1 and T2. This is a controversial issue, so I won't take a stand here.

In my view, the most controversial premise is (P1). For instance, it implies that sceptical arguments can destroy knowledge, even if they are invalid or otherwise bad arguments. In any case, Roeber himself has lots to say in defense of each premise. So my strategy is to grant for the sake of argument that Roeber is right that purists must embrace anti-intellectualism. I want to argue that there is nevertheless an objection to pragmatism that purist anti-intellectuals can advance without undermining their own view.

### **3. Anti-Intellectualism and Traditional Epistemology**

Note that anti-intellectualism is formulated as the view that differences in truth-irrelevant factors can entail differences between knowledge and *belief* falling short of knowledge. In other words, it is formulated as the view that differences in truth-irrelevant factors can entail differences in knowledge, and do so without entailing any difference in what the relevant person believes. This is for the reason—as pointed out in Stanley (2005)—that truth-irrelevant factors can *of course* entail differences in knowledge, by making

differences in the relevant belief.<sup>4</sup> No party to the debate between pragmatists and purists, intellectuals and anti-intellectuals, disputes this. Indeed, Stanley (2005) claims that the prominent label ‘subject sensitive invariantism’ is a misleading label for the position he calls ‘interest-relative invariantism’ (IRI), precisely for this reason. Here is Stanley:

...Every coherent theory of knowledge is such that whether someone knows that p will depend upon facts about that person. It is certainly not the sensitivity to facts about the subject of the putative knowing that makes IRI distinctive. It is rather sensitivity to certain *non-traditional* facts about the subject—namely, the subject’s practical interests (122).

The point of this qualification is to make pragmatism interesting—i.e. a view that is committed to something that not every other coherent theory of knowledge is committed to. Pragmatism would hardly be an interesting view if all it said was that truth-irrelevant factors can make a difference to knowledge by affecting the subject such that they no longer meet one of traditional epistemology’s necessary conditions for knowledge. If anything, that sort of view would simply be a further example of traditional epistemology.

What to make of Roeber’s observation that Penny’s view about fallibilism can make a difference to her knowledge? Presumably, the way in which Penny’s view about fallibilism has an impact on her knowledge is by issuing in a belief about one of her first-order beliefs (at T1, or T2). That is, her view about fallibilism at T1 issues in the belief that her belief about emus is not justified. Meanwhile, her view about fallibilism at T2

---

<sup>4</sup> The point is made by many others; see Fantl & McGrath (2009, 27).

issues in the belief that her belief about emus *is* justified. Thus, Roeber's observation effectively amounts to the claim that *what a person believes about what they believe* can make a difference to what they know.

To be fair, Roeber is not entirely clear about whether a second-order belief affects Penny's knowledge, or whether a second-order belief that Penny *ought* to have affects her knowledge. For example, on one hand, Roeber describes the case such that Penny has 'changed her mind about the amount of evidence required for justified belief, and consequently changed her mind about whether her belief that emus are omnivores is justified' (442). On the other hand, Roeber explicitly claims (e.g., 456) that we need not attribute a second-order belief to Penny, but rather only focus on what she *has reason* to believe at T1 and T2 respectively. In my view, the best way for Roeber to defend the controversial (P1) is by emphasizing the earlier description of the case. But this point does not really matter for my purposes. My argument goes through either way.

Note that the kind of second-order belief (or second-order belief that Penny *ought* to have) in Roeber's Penny case is another one of traditional epistemology's necessary conditions for knowledge. Numerous mainstream theories of knowledge—of both internalist and externalist persuasion—hold that facts about what a person believes about what they believe (or what they *ought* to believe about what they believe) can make a difference to whether that person knows. For example, Michael Bergmann claims 'it's possible to know that p without believing that one's belief that p is "epistemically well-credentialed" (2005, 419), but not possible to know that p while believing (or being epistemically obliged to believe) that one's belief that p is not epistemically well-credentialed (2005, 420-7)' (Roeber 2018, 447). Roeber himself also highlights how

Penny's second-order beliefs (or second-order beliefs that she ought to have) at T1 would disqualify her as knowing that emus are omnivores according to the views of Ram Neta (forthcoming), Brian Weatherson (2012), and Ernie Sosa (2015). It is hard to think of a better way to point out that facts about what a person believes about what they believe (or what they ought to believe about what they believe) are epistemologically traditional facts about the subject.

Meanwhile, the sorts of truth-irrelevant factors that pragmatists claim make a difference to knowledge are facts about a person's practical interests. As Stanley points out, these are not traditional facts about the subject. In light of all this, we can begin to formulate an objection to pragmatism that avoids the problem Roeber identifies. We can do so by arguing that pragmatism entails that truth-irrelevant factors can make a difference to knowledge without making a difference to whether the subject meets traditional conditions on knowledge. Of course, stated as such, this is no objection to pragmatism. Why should we care about traditional conditions on knowledge? Certainly not just because they are traditional. There is still work to do explaining what is plausible about traditional conditions on knowledge. Next I argue that purists can do this in a straightforward and well-motivated way.

#### **4. Truth and Cognitive Agency**

Roeber might suggest that the purist's basic idea has always been: what is plausible about traditional conditions on knowledge is that they are all truth-relevant factors. But that can't be right. The belief condition makes this clear. Instead, I propose what is plausible



about traditional conditions on knowledge is that they specify factors relevant to either i) truth, or ii) the exercise of cognitive agency.

Distinguish between agency, and two species of agency—cognitive agency and practical agency. This is a prominent distinction. I'll draw on work from Tim Scanlon (2008) and Angela Smith (2012) in filling it out.

Let agency be the capacity to respond to reasons and to express evaluative commitments in one's actions and attitudes. The difference between falling down the stairs and walking down them is a matter of agency. The latter is something one *does* as a result of responding to and deliberating on the reasons one has (however implicitly) (Scanlon 2008). The former simply happens to one. Our actions and attitudes can also be exercises of agency insofar as they are expressions of things we care about. Your best friend fails to show up for your birthday. She simply forgot, and so did not strictly speaking do it *for a reason*. The failure to show up is nevertheless an exercise of your friend's agency insofar as it is an expression of her (lack of) concern for you and your birthday. Indeed, as such, it is something you can hold her accountable for (Smith 2012).

The purist can go on to maintain that practical agency is the capacity to respond to practical reasons, and express one's practical (instrumental, moral) evaluative commitments in one's actions and attitudes. Meanwhile, cognitive agency is the capacity to respond to epistemic reasons, and to express one's epistemic-evaluative commitments in one's judgments and attitudes. The purist can say that responding to epistemic reasons is a matter of responding to evidence, or other truth-relevant considerations.<sup>5</sup> Expressing epistemic evaluative commitments is a matter of expressing a concern for evidential and

---

<sup>5</sup> To take a paradigm example, I may respond to the visual appearance of snow falling in the window by forming the belief that it's snowing outside.

truth-relevant considerations in one's judgments and attitudes.<sup>6</sup> According to the purist, a person exercises cognitive agency in forming beliefs, suspending judgment, disbelieving, and forming beliefs about one's beliefs.

We have an account of what it means to be “truth-relevant”. Again, a factor is truth-relevant (with respect to p) just in case it affects the probability that one's belief (that p) is true, either from one's own point of view, or from some more objective perspective. What does it mean to say that a factor is “relevant to cognitive agency”? Drawing on recent work from Jonathan Way (2016), I propose the following account: a factor is relevant to cognitive agency with respect to p just in case it can be the input or output of good reasoning concerning whether p.<sup>7</sup> A piece of evidence that p is a factor relevant to cognitive agency with respect to p. It is a kind of input for good reasoning concerning whether p. The formation of a belief that p is a factor relevant to cognitive agency. If all goes well, it is a kind of output of good reasoning concerning whether p. Meanwhile, facts about a person's practical interests with respect to p—typically facts about what they desire to be the case when it comes to the question whether p—are not factors relevant to cognitive agency with respect to p. Intuitively, they can be neither input nor output of an agent's good reasoning concerning whether p. But they are of course relevant to exercises of practical agency. A factor is relevant to practical agency

---

<sup>6</sup> A scientist considering the results of some experiment may badly want them to have been different—perhaps it would have led to a great publication in a big journal. But they nevertheless lower their credence in their hypothesis. As such they express an epistemic evaluative commitment: a concern for appropriate methods in scientific inquiry.

<sup>7</sup> Some may want to leave out the restriction to *good* reasoning. Whether or not one is happy to do so depends in part on whether one thinks it is psychologically impossible to reason about whether p from truth-irrelevant considerations, or whether it is merely impossible to reason *well* about whether p from truth-irrelevant considerations. I remain officially neutral on this issue—though I lean towards the latter view. It seems like an empirical fact that people sometimes reason about whether p from truth-irrelevant considerations. What is less obvious to me is whether doing so counts as good reasoning. This point overlaps with my discussion of argument b) for ‘alethism’ below (p. 12).

just in case it can be the input or output of good *practical* reasoning. A desire is a kind of input for good practical reasoning. The formation of an intention to  $\emptyset$  is an output of good practical reasoning concerning whether to  $\emptyset$ .

To fill the basic idea in with an example, the mere fact that I desire that my car is still parked in lot 6A cannot be input for good reasoning concerning whether it is still in 6A. Treating it as such would be a paradigm case of wishful thinking. The fact that someone told me they just saw my car there—that piece of evidence—can be input for good reasoning concerning whether it is still in 6A. This is why my desire is not relevant to cognitive agency, in the sense just specified, while the evidence is.

Surely factors relevant to an agent's practical agency—including their desires and general interests—are in *some* sense crucial for exercises of cognitive agency? People often have to want to find things out before they come to know them. Does the account above not portray cognitive agents as passive receivers of the evidence in a problematic way? I don't think so. Desires and other factors relevant to practical agency are of course essential for inquiry, which is in turn an essential causal component in the production of outputs of cognitive agency. But, on the purist picture, desires and other factors relevant to practical agency do not figure constitutively in the production of outputs of cognitive agency—that is, they don't figure in good reasoning concerning whether p.

Those sympathetic to pragmatism may counter that this approach to the notion of cognitive agency begs the question against pragmatism, or in some way presupposes the falsity of certain pragmatist commitments. For example, the approach seems to assume a special connection between cognitive agency and truth. To reject this account of which factors are relevant to the exercise of cognitive agency, pragmatists might argue that there

is no special connection between cognitive agency and truth. For example, perhaps there can be *practical* reasons for belief.

The debate about whether there can be practical reasons for belief is a central live debate in contemporary epistemology. In a recent paper, Stephanie Leary (2017) labels theorists who think there cannot be practical reasons for belief ‘alethists’. Thomas Kelly (2002), Nishi Shah (2006), Judith Thomson (2008), Derek Parfit (2011), Daniel Whiting (2014), and Jonathan Way (2016) are examples of philosophers who fall under this heading. I follow Leary in holding that the two most prominent arguments for alethism are a) appeals to the ‘constitutive standard of correctness’ of belief; and b) appeals to the idea that only evidential factors can be *motivating* reasons for belief. The basic idea behind a) is that it follows from facts about the nature of belief that belief has a constitutive standard of correctness. The nature of belief is to represent the world accurately (some say this is the *function* or *aim* of belief). So, a token belief is ‘correct’ if and only if it is true. Argument b) appeals to a general principle requiring all normative reasons to be motivating reasons. It claims that practical reasons can be motivating reasons for action, but not for belief; and so argues that there cannot be practical normative reasons for belief. Along with Blaise Pascal (1670), William James (1897), Andrew Reisner (2009), Julia Markovits (2014), Susanna Rinard (2015, 2017), and Maguire & Woods (2020), Leary herself thinks there can be practical (normative) reasons for belief. She and others have presented arguments against both a) and b).

While the jury is out on whether a) or b) is successful, here is one observation. My approach to cognitive agency appeals to neither of these prominent arguments for alethism. Instead it appeals to a connection between cognitive agency and the idea of

good reasoning. A factor is relevant to cognitive agency with respect to  $p$  just in case it can be the input or output of good reasoning concerning whether  $p$ . I think all parties to the dispute between purism and pragmatism can accept this claim. However, pragmatists will likely want to dispute what ‘good reasoning concerning whether  $p$ ’ consists in. That there is room for dispute here, however, is to be expected, since the notion of ‘good reasoning’ is a normative notion.

As Way points out, one way of backing up my claims about ‘good reasoning’ is by claiming that there is a tight connection between good reasoning and good *arguments*. He proposes the following principle:

**Link:** It is good reasoning to move from believing  $p, q, r, \dots$  to believing  $c$  only if ‘ $p, q, r, \dots, \text{so}, c$ ’ is a good argument (Way 2016, 816).

Link has a lot of independent intuitive plausibility. We can also put together arguments in support of it. For example, as Way notes, we often use arguments to *express* our reasoning (Way 2016, 816). Link would explain why such a practice makes sense. Another simple argument is as follows. Consider William, who sincerely asserts that ‘ $p, q, r, \dots, \text{so}, c$ ’ is a very bad argument for  $c$ . He also sincerely endorses his chain of reasoning from  $p, q, r, \dots$  to believing  $c$ . William’s combined stance on the argument and his own chain of reasoning is puzzling. Link explains why it is puzzling.<sup>8</sup> The pragmatist may want to resist Link, and respond to such arguments. But the point for present purposes is that Link doesn’t in any obvious way depend for its plausibility on the

---

<sup>8</sup> In addition to the point about arguments as expressing reasoning, Way presents three other arguments in support of Link (Way 2016, 816). I won’t get into the details of these arguments.

rejection of pragmatism. My approach to cognitive agency does not beg the question against pragmatism.

Settling the alethist-pragmatist debate about reasons for belief is beyond the scope of this paper. But my aim here does not require settling that debate. Rather it requires showing that—contra Roeber’s argument—the purist has resources available to mount a case against pragmatism without undermining their own view. Let me explain how this can be done.

## **5. Truth, Cognitive Agency, and Pragmatism**

The new purist objection to pragmatism is that pragmatism entails the following view: factors beyond those relevant to both truth and the exercise of cognitive agency can make a difference to knowledge and belief falling short of knowledge. Call such a view *anti-intellectualism+*. Advancing the dialectic beyond Roeber’s argument against purism comes with two tasks: i) arguing that anti-intellectualism+ is an implausible view; ii) arguing that purists can accuse pragmatists of being committed to anti-intellectualism+ without undermining their own position.

Why think anti-intellectualism+ is an implausible view? Here is an argument. Those committed to anti-intellectualism+ are committed to the view that factors irrelevant to cognitive agency can make a difference to knowledge. But knowledge seems like a paradigm result of cognitive agency.<sup>9</sup> It is the result of a particularly successful exercise of cognitive agency. It is implausible that factors irrelevant to cognitive agency could make a difference to a paradigm result of cognitive agency. So, anti-

---

<sup>9</sup> Some will argue that knowledge is itself an exercise of cognitive agency, as opposed to a ‘result’ of cognitive agency (Sosa 2015; Zagzebski 2003). However, note that “result” can be read here either in terms of a causal *or* constitutive relation. I will remain neutral on this issue.

intellectualism+ is implausible. This argument does not depend on the mere claim that practical factors are irrelevant to the truth of p. Rather, it depends on the claim that such factors are irrelevant to both the truth of p and the exercise of one's cognitive agency with respect to p. Knowledge is not just about truth and truth-relevant factors. It is about grasping or being responsive to the truth and other truth-relevant factors in the right sort of way. It is the result of an exercise of cognitive agency. Meanwhile, exercises of practical agency don't seem like ways of grasping or being responsive to the truth of p. In terms of the familiar metaphor, the inputs and outputs of practical agency (seem to) have the wrong 'direction of fit'. A fortiori, exercises of practical agency are not ways of grasping or being responsive to the truth of p in the right sort of way. So they are not factors that can make a difference to knowledge and belief falling short of knowledge.

Can this objection be stated without undermining purism in the process? To see that it can, return to Roeber's argument. Given our natural and pervasive framework for agency, note that second-order beliefs, and second-order beliefs agents *ought* to have—such as those in the Penny case—are clear-cut examples of factors relevant to the exercise of cognitive agency. Recall, a factor is relevant to cognitive agency with respect to p just in case it can be the input or output of good reasoning concerning whether p. The formation of a second-order belief can be the output of good reasoning concerning whether p. Second-order beliefs agents ought to have can be inputs to good reasoning concerning whether p. It follows that the Penny case is no argument for anti-intellectualism+. It is not an argument showing that factors irrelevant to both i) truth and ii) the exercise of cognitive agency can make a difference to knowledge and belief falling short of knowledge. Thus, the objection that pragmatism entails anti-intellectualism+ can

be stated without undermining purism. Purists can accuse pragmatists of being committed to anti-intellectualism+ without undermining their own view.

One might worry that factors relevant to the exercise of cognitive agency are not really something over and above truth-relevant factors. Perhaps many are not. For example—and as we have seen—differences in *confidence* can make a difference to *reliability*. That is an example of cognitive agency being truth-relevant. But beliefs, second-order beliefs, and second-order beliefs someone ought to have can also be truth-irrelevant. This is one lesson of Roeber's argument. While I have differentiated the notion of cognitive agency from practical agency largely in terms of good reasoning, which in turn is connected to truth, good reasoning is not necessarily itself a truth-relevant factor (when it comes to differences in attributions of knowledge). To put this another way: good reasoning is a *response* to truth-relevant factors (to the probability that p is true), but it is not itself something that need affect the probability that p is true.

The pragmatist might also object that the factors they claim make a difference to knowledge—practical interests—also make a difference to cognitive agency in the relevant cases. So perhaps these factors are relevant to cognitive agency after all. Thus, perhaps it's false to say that their view entails that factors irrelevant to both truth and cognitive agency make a difference to knowledge.

For example, in the standard pairs of cases, facts about what the agent *believes* change between the low and high-stakes scenarios. In DeRose's (2005) high stakes bank case, the agent *believes* that they might lose their house if the bank is not open tomorrow. In the low stakes case, they have no such belief. So, while it is true that factors seemingly irrelevant to cognitive agency change between the cases—the costs of being wrong, for



example—they seem to make a difference to knowledge via beliefs of the agent, and so via the agent’s cognitive agency.<sup>10</sup>

In response, note that while this is a standard description of the case, we can generate the same intuitions about knowledge-attributions with versions in which the stakes are higher and the agent does not believe that they are. Thus pragmatism entails that factors irrelevant to truth and cognitive agency can make a difference to knowledge, without making a difference to cognitive agency. Moreover, even in versions in which the relevant belief has changed, the fact *that* the agent has the belief is not what’s salient in the explanation of why the agent no longer seems to know. Rather, the *content* of the belief is what’s salient in the explanation of why the agent no longer seems to know. In the standard sort of case, the content is that there would be significant costs to being wrong. So, the role for cognitive agency in the pragmatist’s account of the difference between standard cases is incidental.<sup>11</sup>

## References

- Bergmann, M. 2005. Defeaters and higher-level requirements. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 55: 419-436.
- Brown, J. 2008 Subject-sensitive invariantism and the knowledge norm for practical reasoning. *Noûs*, 42:167-189.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2013. Impurism, practical reasoning, and the threshold problem. *Noûs*, 47: 179-192.
- DeRose, K. 2009. *The Case for Contextualism*. Oxford: OUP.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2005. The ordinary language basis for contextualism, and the new invariantism. *Philosophical Quarterly*, 55: 172-198.

---

<sup>10</sup> Of course, purists deny that such factors actually make a difference to knowledge. For non-pragmatist interpretations of the appearances, see (Williamson 2005; Leite 2007; Brown 2013; DeRose 2005; 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Thanks to Blake Roeber, Nick Hughes, participants at the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Riding Mountain Pre-Read Philosophy Workshop, and an anonymous referee for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

- Fantl, J. & McGrath, M. *Knowledge in an Uncertain World*. Oxford: OUP.
- Grimm, S. 2011. On intellectualism in epistemology. *Mind*, 120.
- James, W. 1897 (1979). *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kelly, T. 2002. The rationality of belief and some other propositional attitudes. *Philosophical Studies* 110: 163–96.
- Leite, A. 2007. How to link assertion and knowledge without going contextualist: a reply to DeRose's 'Assertion, knowledge, and context'. *Philosophical Studies* 134: 111-129.
- MacFarlane, J. 2014. *Assessment Sensitivity: Relative Truth and its Applications*. Oxford: OUP.
- Maguire, B. & Woods, J. 2020. The game of belief. *The Philosophical Review*, 129: 211-249.
- Markovits, J. 2014. *Moral Reason*, Oxford: OUP.
- Neta, R. Forthcoming. Basing = treating. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*.
- Parfit, D. 2011. *On What Matters, Volume One*. Oxford: OUP.
- Pascal, B. 1670 (1910). *Pensées*, trans. W.F. Trotter, London: Dent.
- Reed, B. 2014. Practical matters do not affect whether you know. In *Contemporary Debates in Epistemology*, eds. M. Steup, J. Turri, & E. Sosa. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.
- Reisner, A. 2009. The possibility of pragmatic reasons for belief and the wrong kind of reasons problem. *Philosophical Studies* 145: 257–72
- Rinard, S. 2015. Against the new evidentialists, *Philosophical Issues* 25: 208–23.
- Rinard, S. 2017. No exception for belief. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 94: 121-143.
- Roeber, B. 2018. Anti-Intellectualism. *Mind*, 127.
- Scanlon, T. 2008. *Moral dimensions: Permissibility, Meaning, Blame*. Belknap Press: Cambridge, MA.
- Shah, N. 2006. A new argument for evidentialism. *The Philosophical Quarterly* 56: 481–98.

- Smith, A. 2012. Attributability, answerability, and accountability: in defense of a unified account. *Ethics*, 122: 575-589.
- Sosa, E. 2015. *Judgment and Agency*. Oxford: OUP.
- Stanley, J. 2005. *Knowledge and Practical Interests*. Oxford: OUP.
- Tal, E. & Comesaña, J. 2017. Is evidence if evidence evidence? *Noûs*, 51.
- Thomson, J.J. 2008. *Normativity*, Chicago: Open Court.
- Way, J. 2016. Two arguments for Evidentialism. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 66: 265.
- Weatherson, B. 2012. Knowledge, bets, and interests. In *Knowledge Ascriptions*, eds. J. Brown and M. Gerken. Oxford: OUP.
- Whiting, D. 2014. Reasons for belief, reasons for action, the aim of belief, and the aim of action. In *Epistemic Norms: New Essays on Action, Belief, and Assertion*, ed. Clayton Littlejohn and John Turri, Oxford: OUP.
- Williamson, T. 2005. Contextualism, subject-sensitive invariantism and knowledge of knowledge. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 55: 213-235.
- Zagzebski, L. 2003. The search for the source of epistemic good. *Metaphilosophy*, 34:12-28.