

## Pragmatic encroachment and practical reasons

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Defenders of pragmatic encroachment in epistemology hold that practical factors have implications for a belief's epistemic status. Paradigm defenders of pragmatic encroachment have held—to state their positions roughly—that whether someone's belief that *p* constitutes knowledge depends on the practical reasons that she has (Stanley 2005), that knowing *p* is necessary and sufficient for treating *p* as a reason for action (Hawthorne and Stanley 2008), or that knowing *p* is sufficient for reasonably acting as if *p* (Fantl and McGrath 2009: 66). Although their defenders may not always pose their theses in the language of practical reasons, the idea of a practical reason is central to each of these views. Yet there remain issues concerning the nature and basis of practical reasons on which defenders of pragmatic encroachment have not taken a position, including—as I will explain—the issue of whether internalism or externalism about reasons is true. It may be thought that the position the defender of pragmatic encroachment takes on this does not make a difference to the truth or falsity of her main thesis. In this paper, I will show that it does matter, in the sense that her view will generate different verdicts about cases depending on whether she endorses internalism or externalism about reasons. Given the role of cases in providing intuitive support for or against the theory, this, in turn, makes a difference to the plausibility of pragmatic encroachment.

### 1. Pragmatic encroachment

Traditionally, epistemologists have assumed that whether or not a belief is justified, warranted, or (in the case of true beliefs) an instance of knowledge, “depends exclusively on truth-related factors: for example, on whether the true belief was formed in a reliable way, or was supported by good evidence, and so on.” (Grimm 2011: 705; see further Stanley 2005: 2, Fantl and McGrath 2007: 558, Kim 2017: 1) Pragmatic encroachment theorists deny this. They argue that there are non-truth-related

factors—specifically, practical factors—that have implications for a belief’s epistemic status.<sup>1</sup>

To see why defenders of pragmatic encroachment think this, we may consider some of the cases that many take to provide *prima facie* motivation for pragmatic encroachment. One pair of cases was introduced by Keith DeRose (1992) and stated by Jason Stanley (2005) as follows:

***Bank Case 1***

Hannah and her wife Sarah are driving home on a Friday afternoon. They plan to stop at the bank on the way home to deposit their paychecks. It is not important that they do so, as they have no impending bills. But as they drive past the bank, they notice that the lines inside are very long, as they often are on Friday afternoons. Realizing that it isn’t very important that their paychecks are deposited right away, Hannah says, “I know the bank will be open tomorrow, since I was just there two weeks ago on Saturday morning. So we can deposit our paychecks tomorrow morning.” (Stanley 2005: 3–4).

***Bank Case 2***

Hannah and her wife Sarah are driving home on a Friday afternoon. They plan to stop at the bank on the way home to deposit their paychecks. Since they have an impending bill coming due, and very little in their account, it is very important that they deposit their paychecks by Saturday. Hannah notes that she was at the bank two weeks before on a Saturday morning, and it was open. But, as Sarah points out, banks do change their hours. Hannah says, “I guess you’re right. I don’t know that the bank will be open tomorrow.” (Stanley 2005: 4).

Even if we suppose that the bank will be open the following day, it seems to many that Hannah’s remarks are true in *both* these cases: that she knows in the first case and doesn’t know in the second case. Yet there is no difference between the two cases when it comes to purely truth-related factors: no difference, for example, in how reliably formed Hannah’s belief is, how well-supported by the evidence, and so on. The difference, rather, is a practical one: Hannah has more at stake in the second case than the first.

A second set of cases comes from Jeremy Fantl and Matthew McGrath (2002):

***Train Case 1***

Matt is at Back Bay Station in Boston preparing to take the commuter rail to Providence. He’s going to see friends. It will be a relaxing vacation. He’s been in a rather boring conversation with a guy standing beside him, who is also going to visit

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kim 2017. Kim understands the category of pragmatic encroachment more broadly, to include positions according to which practical factors are relevant for determining whether or not a subject believes (which he calls “belief encroachment”) and positions according to which practical factors are relevant for determining the meaning of knows in a conversational context (i.e. contextualism).

friends in Providence. As the train rolls into the station, Matt continues the conversation by asking the guy, “Does this train make all those little stops, in Foxboro, Attleboro, etc?” It doesn’t matter much to Matt whether the train is the “Express” or not, though he’d mildly prefer it was. The guy answers, “Yeah, this one makes all those little stops. They told me when I bought the ticket.” Nothing about him seems particularly untrustworthy. Matt believes what he says. (Fantl and McGrath 2002: 67, edited to give the person a name.)

### ***Train Case 2***

Matt absolutely needs to be in Foxboro, the sooner the better. His career depends on it. He’s got tickets for a southbound train that leaves in two hours and gets into Foxboro in the nick of time. He overhears a conversation like that in Train Case 1 concerning the train that just rolled into the station and leaves in 15 minutes. He thinks, “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.” (Fantl and McGrath 2002: 67-8, edited to give the person a name.)

It seems to many that Matt is warranted in believing, or has “good enough evidence to know”,<sup>2</sup> in the first case, but not in the second case. Yet, again, the difference is not a matter of truth-related facts, but a matter of practical factors: Matt has more at stake in the second case than the first.

We can accommodate our intuitions about these cases, and others like them, if we hold that practical factors have implications for a belief’s epistemic status (e.g. whether it is warranted, justified, or counts as knowledge). To account for this, defenders of pragmatic encroachment hold that there is a connection between knowledge and practical reasons. They may hold, for example:

**KRN:** If it is appropriate for S to treat the proposition that p as a reason for action, then S knows that p.<sup>3</sup>

**KRS:** If S knows that p, then is it appropriate for S to treat the proposition that p as a reason for action.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Fantl and McGrath 2002: 67.

<sup>3</sup> Consider e.g. “One should act only on what one knows” (Stanley 2005: 9); “One ought only to use that which one knows as a premise in one’s deliberations.” (Hawthorne 2004: 30) The differences between these formulations and KRN will not make a difference in what follows. See further footnotes 8 and 10.

<sup>4</sup> Consider e.g. “If you know that p, then p is warranted enough to be a reason you have to  $\phi$ , for any  $\phi$ .” (Fantl and McGrath 2009: 69) The differences between this formulation and KRS will not make a difference in what follows. See further footnotes 8 and 10.

**KR:** S knows that p iff it is appropriate for S to treat the proposition that p as a reason for action.<sup>5</sup>

These principles explain the truth of our intuitions about the Bank and Train Cases. First, consider KRS. In the second of each pair of cases, the high-stakes case, it wouldn't be appropriate for S to treat the proposition that p as a reason for action, because the stakes have gone up, in contrast with the first case of the pair. KRS implies that, because of this, the subject does not know—which, indeed, is in line with our intuitions about those cases. KRS thus explains the truth of our intuitions about the second, high-stakes cases. Second, consider KRN. KRN explains the truth of the intuitions we have about the first of each pair of cases, the low-stakes case. In these cases, it's appropriate for the subject to treat the proposition that p as a reason for action. KRN implies that, because of this, the subject knows that p—which, again, is in line with our intuitions about the cases. KRN thus explains the truth of our intuitions about the first, low-stakes cases.<sup>6</sup> Finally, KR, being the conjunction of KRS and KRN, explains the truth of the intuitions we have about both sets of cases.

## 2. The practical implications of the appropriateness of treating a proposition as a reason

My thesis in this paper concerns the practical reasons that play a role in pragmatic encroachment. Notice that whether or not it is appropriate for a subject to treat p as a reason has implications for the subject's practical reasons. We can see this by reflecting on the Bank and Train Cases. In Bank Case 2, it is *not* appropriate for Hannah to treat the proposition that p—that the bank will be open the following day—as a reason for action (in this case, a reason for leaving the bank and returning the following morning). The implication is that Hannah has certain practical reasons: reason to double-check the bank's hours, or to change her plan and wait in line. In Bank Case 1, by contrast, it *is* appropriate for Hannah to treat p as a reason for action; here the implication is that—other things being equal—she does *not* have reason to double-check the bank hours, or to change her plan.

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<sup>5</sup> Consider e.g. “Where one’s choice is p-dependent, it is appropriate to treat the proposition that p as a reason for acting iff you know that p.” (Hawthorne and Stanley 2008: 578) I do not think it is necessary to include the caveat that one’s choice be p-dependent, and so I do not include it in the KRN principles, but the reader may take it as assumed, if she thinks it is important; it will not make a difference to my argument here.

<sup>6</sup> KRN finds further support in the fact that we would challenge someone if they were to treat a proposition as a reason for action without knowing it (e.g. “why did you use that paint for the baby’s room if you didn’t know it was safe?”).

Likewise, in Train Case 2, it is not appropriate for Matt to treat the proposition that  $p$ —that the train isn't an express—as a reason for action, and, correspondingly, he has reason to double-check the train schedule, or to take a different train that is more obviously not an express; in Train Case 1, by contrast, it *is* appropriate for Matt to treat  $p$  as a reason, and, correspondingly, he does *not* have reason to double-check or to take a different train.

In light of this, we should accept the following principle:

**TPR:** It is appropriate for  $S$  to treat the proposition that  $p$  as a reason for action iff  $S$  does not have reason to double-check whether  $p$ .<sup>7</sup>

(To simplify, I have made the principle concern double-checking in particular, but it should be clear how the same general point may be made, *mutatis mutandis*, to other actions on the subject's radar, such as, in Hannah's case, waiting in line on Friday to make sure her check is deposited, or, in Matt's case, taking a different train.)

What TPR makes explicit is that, although the KR principles concern the appropriateness of the subject's treating a proposition as a reason for action, these principles have implications concerning the practical reasons the subject has, or lacks—for example, reasons to double-check whether  $p$ . This is important because, as I will argue in the remainder of the paper, there are issues concerning the nature and basis of practical reasons that will make a difference to the practical reasons subjects have in variants of the cases above, and, thus, to the plausibility of KRN, KRS and KR. Hereafter, I will focus exclusively on KR, assuming it will be obvious how the points I make here bear on KRN and KRS as well.

### 3. Pragmatic encroachment and practical reasons

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<sup>7</sup> I have formulated TPR to facilitate discussion of the KR principles, the formulation of which, in turn, correspond most closely to Hawthorne and Stanley's principle (see footnote 6), but I believe we have no less reason to accept the following variations of TPR, corresponding to the principles defended by Stanley, Hawthorne, and Fantl and McGrath, respectively, cited above (see footnotes 4 and 5):

APR:  $S$  should act on the proposition that  $p$  iff  $S$  does not have reason to double-check that  $p$ .

PPR: It is appropriate for  $S$  to treat the proposition that  $p$  as a premise in one's deliberations iff  $S$  does not have reason to double-check that  $p$ .

WPR:  $p$  is warranted enough to be a reason  $S$  has to  $\phi$ , for any  $\phi$ , iff  $S$  does not have reason to double-check that  $p$ .

Bringing practical reasons to the fore in pragmatic encroachment reminds us of the rich philosophical literature exploring the nature and basis of practical reasons. The practical reasons of central concern here are normative reasons, where, on one popular definition, a normative reason to  $\varphi$  is a consideration that counts in favor of  $\varphi$ -ing. (Scanlon 1998) Questions raised in this literature, about which there is no consensus, include the following: Can we have practical reasons that are not ultimately rooted in our desires or preferences? Are claims about what we have reason to do capable of being literally true or false? Are some kinds of reasons, such as moral reasons, overriding, such that “even the weakest moral reason trumps the strongest nonmoral reason”? (Portmore 2008: 370) Even the very definition of a practical reason I mentioned above—that a reason is a consideration that counts in favor of an action or attitude—is disputed. (Hieronimi 2005, 2011)

It may be thought that issues concerning the nature and basis of practical reasons are of limited importance in a discussion of pragmatic encroachment. After all, although the position a defender of pragmatic encroachment takes on these issues may help us understand her view in its entirety, the way she answers these questions will—it may be argued—make no difference to our evaluation of the principle she defends. By way of analogy: people hold a wide range of views about the nature of justification, but this does not prevent us from evaluating the analysis of knowledge as justified true belief. Just as we can evaluate this analysis of knowledge independently of how the individuals who accept this analysis understand justification, so too—it may seem—can we evaluate principles like KR independently of how their defenders understand practical reasons.

Whatever we wish to say about the evaluation of this analysis of knowledge, we cannot, I propose, evaluate KR independently of questions about the nature and basis of practical reasons. This is because practical reasons play a central role in KR, and the way that they are understood can make a difference for what it implies about cases, and thus for how plausible it is.

We can see this by considering an example. Consider these two possible, alternative, views of what agents have reason to do:

**Subjective Desire Theory of Reasons (SDR):** “what agents have reason, or ought, to do or intend is just what, given what they believe their circumstances to be, would best satisfy their strongest, present intrinsic desires taken as a whole.”

**The Objective Desire Theory of Reasons (ODR):** “agents have reason, or ought, to do or intend just what, given what their circumstances actually are, would best satisfy their strongest, present intrinsic desires taken as a whole.”

(Kolodny and Brunero 2016)

To see how a commitment to one or the other of these makes a difference to the implications and plausibility of KR, we can consider the conjunction of these views with KR, which we can represent as KR+SDR and KR+ODR, respectively. At first glance, it may not be clear why it should matter which of these views KR is conjoined with. After all, it doesn't seem to make a difference to the Bank Cases or Train Cases described above.

However, in other cases, the difference between KR+SDR and KR+ODR emerges. Consider the following variant on the Bank Cases, which Stanley dubs "Ignorant High Stakes":

### ***Ignorant High Stakes***

Hannah and her wife Sarah are driving home on a Friday afternoon. They plan to stop at the bank on the way home to deposit their paychecks. Since they have an impending bill coming due, and very little in their account, it is very important that they deposit their paychecks by Saturday. **But neither Hannah nor Sarah is aware of the impending bill, nor of the paucity of available funds.** Looking at the lines, Hannah says to Sarah, 'I know the bank will be open tomorrow, since I was there just two weeks ago on Saturday morning. So we can deposit our paychecks tomorrow morning.' (Stanley 2005: 5, emphasis added)

KR+SDR gives a different verdict on this case than KR+ODR. According to KR, Hannah knows that the bank will be open the following day iff it is appropriate for her to treat the proposition that the bank will be open the following day as a reason for action. And, according to TPR, it is appropriate for her to treat that proposition as a reason for action iff she does not have reason to double-check whether it is true. Therefore, Hannah knows that the bank will be open the following day iff she does not have reason to double-check whether the bank will be open the following day. Now, according to SDR, Hannah has reason to do what would best satisfy her strongest present, intrinsic desires taken as a whole, *given what she believes her circumstances to be*. However, in the circumstances that Hannah *believes* herself to be in—circumstances where there is no impending bill and plenty of money in her account—it is not double-checking the bank's hours that would satisfy her strongest, present intrinsic desires, but getting home to a hot meal and a cold beer. Therefore, KR+SDR implies that Hannah doesn't have reason to double-check that the bank will be open the following day, and thus that she knows that the bank will be open the following day. By contrast, according to ODR, Hannah has reason to do what would best satisfy her strongest, present, intrinsic desires taken as a whole, *given what her circumstances actually are*. Given what Hannah's circumstances actually are—circumstances where there is an impending bill and a paucity of available funds—double-checking the bank's hours

would best satisfy her strongest, present, intrinsic desires taken as a whole. Therefore, KR+ODR implies that Hannah has reason to double-check whether the bank will be open the following day, and thus that she doesn't know that the bank will be open the following day.

This example illustrates how KR generates different verdicts about cases, depending on the view about the nature and basis of practical reasons with which it is conjoined—not, perhaps, about the original cases that have been taken to provide *prima facie* motivation for KR, but about similar, easily constructed variations on these cases. In his discussion of *Ignorant High Stakes*, Stanley says that “our reaction is that Hannah’s utterance of ‘I know the bank will be open tomorrow’ is false”. (Stanley 2005: 5) This intuition will be vindicated by KR+ODR, but not by KR+SDR. The view of reasons KR is conjoined with makes a difference.

#### 4. Pragmatic encroachment and external reasons

It may be thought that the above point is of limited importance, since it is a minority of philosophers who accept either ODR or SDR. But there are other issues about reasons, important issues, on which most philosophers do—perhaps must—take a stance, and which also make a difference to what KR, in conjunction with this stance, implies about different cases. One such issue is whether a person may have “external” reasons for action, or whether they can have only “internal” reasons.

Bernard Williams (1981) introduces the idea of a person’s “subjective motivational set”, which comprises all of the person’s desires, commitments, goals, interests, projects, and so on. According to Williams, S has reason to  $\varphi$  only if  $\varphi$ -ing advances some element in S’s subjective motivational set. His view of practical reasons is therefore “internalist”, in that practical reasons are “internal” to the motivations of the person who has them. Alternatively, one could be an “externalist” about practical reasons, believing that a person may have practical reasons for action that do not flow from her subjective motivational set. Thus an “externalist” may hold that we have reason to, for example, help others and refrain from harming them, even if we don’t have any corresponding desire, commitment, etc.

For our purposes, we may understand these views as follows:<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This formulation makes externalism, rather than internalism, consistent with skepticism about practical reasons. This will not make a difference to the argument; it is merely to simplify the presentation.



**Internalism (IR):** S has reason to  $\varphi$  iff  $\varphi$ -ing advances some element in S's subjective motivational set.

**Externalism (ER):** Internalism is false.

And we can say that someone has *internal* reason to  $\varphi$  iff  $\varphi$ -ing advances some element in her subjective motivational set, and that someone has *external reason* to  $\varphi$  iff she has reason to  $\varphi$  but does not have internal reason to  $\varphi$ .

Whether KR is conjoined with IR or ER appears to make no difference to the verdicts KR will generate about the original Bank and Train cases. In Bank Case 2, for example, Hannah presumably cares about the consequences of failing to pay her bills, and so has internal reason to double-check whether the bank will be open the following day, and thus, according to KR+IR, and assuming TPR, doesn't know that the bank is open. But the defender of ER will likely also think that Hannah has reason to double-check whether the bank will be open. She may think that Hannah has good reason to avoid the consequences of failing to pay her bills, whether she cares about these consequences or not. She may also think—as most externalists do—that we often have at least some *prima facie* reason to satisfy the contents of our subjective motivational sets (and so that, in this sense, we have both internal and external reasons). Such theorists would take the fact that Hannah cares about the consequences of failing to pay her bill to provide reason for her to act accordingly (albeit a reason that could be outweighed or undercut by other reasons, including reasons that do not flow from Hannah's subjective motivational set). In either event, the defender of ER will agree with the defender of IR that Hannah has reason to double-check whether the bank will be open, and thus both KR+IR and KR+ER can generate the verdict that Hannah does not know. And likewise for Matt in Train Case 2: both internalists and externalists about reasons will likely agree that Matt has reason to double-check whether the train is an express, and thus both KR+IR and KR+ER can generate the verdict that he does not know.

It has been suggested that defenders of KR may remain neutral on the issue of whether IR or ER is true. Fantl and McGrath, for example, write:

The apparatus of reasons allows us to stay neutral on debates about the role of preferences and desires in rational action. Humeans will insist that a fact cannot be a reason a person has unless it connects appropriately with some desire or pro-attitude; anti-Humeans will disagree. We don't need to take any stand on the matter. (Fantl and McGrath 2009: 76)

But we can see how the issue makes a difference to KR by considering situations in which whether the stakes are raised depends on whether IR or ER is true. To illustrate, consider the following example given by Nomy Arpaly:

“...imagine a group of people...eating sushi for the first time.... One of them, Todd, contemplates the green stuff on his plate, which is in fact wasabi, and asks, “What’s the green stuff?” Jay shrugs and says, “Avocado.” Todd goes ahead and eats a spoonful of wasabi; unsurprisingly, this is a very painful experience for him. It is only natural that Todd should feel Jay has shown himself to be a little less than a good person on this occasion. The question he is likely to ask himself is this: Had the wasabi been on Jay’s plate rather than on Todd’s, would Jay have leapt to his conclusion that it was avocado so quickly? Or would he have been less certain?” (Arpaly 2011:79)

Imagine that Jay really is so solipsistic as to only care about his own painful taste experiences, and not about Todd’s (that there is nothing corresponding in Jay’s subjective motivational set). Assuming pragmatic encroachment, it is tempting to say that, when Todd’s pain is at stake, the stakes are raised for Jay, such that his belief that the green stuff is avocado cannot be justified or amount to knowledge. But we can say this only if we allow that there are external reasons.

To drive the point home, we can devise cases, modeled on the Bank Cases and Train Cases above, that will help us illustrate how KR will generate different verdicts about cases depending on whether it is conjoined with IR or ER. Consider first:

### ***Painting Case 1***

Amit cares nothing about preserving fine artworks, and only wants to clean junk. One day at the junkyard he finds a painting which he identifies as being mass-produced for IKEA. Amit once heard in a lecture that a safe and effective way to clean paintings is with spit—which is, indeed, true. His friend wonders how they can clean the painting. Amit says, “I know how—we can use spit. I once heard that in a lecture.”

### ***Painting Case 2***

Amit cares nothing about preserving fine artworks, and only wants to clean junk. One day at the junkyard he finds a painting which he identifies as an Old Master. Amit once heard in a lecture that a safe and effective way to clean paintings is with spit—which is, indeed, true. His friend wonders how they can clean the painting. Amit says, “I know how—we can use spit. I once heard that in a lecture.”

Let us grant that Amit really does just care about cleaning junk, and not about preserving fine artworks

(or selling them, or impressing people with them, etc.). According to the internalist, then, Amit has no reason to double-check whether it's safe to clean the painting with spit—no reason to do anything other than go ahead and clean the painting with spit—in either case. Thus KR+IR, assuming TPR, will yield the verdict that, in both cases, Amit knows that it's safe to clean the painting with spit. By contrast, the externalist is free to say that Amit has reason to double-check in the second case, and the defender of KR+ER is free to say that Amit doesn't know in the second case, even though he thinks he does.

Painting Case 2 give us an example of a case in which KR+IR, but not KR+ER, implies that a subject knows. There are also cases in which KR+IR, but not KR+ER, implies that a subject does *not* know. These are cases in which a person has reason to double-check whether some proposition is true if internalism is true, but not necessarily if externalism is true. Here's an example:

### ***Application Case 1***

Brenda is reviewing applications for an administrative position in her department at a public university. After careful consideration of one application, she determines that the applicant is unqualified for the position, and tosses the application on the rejection pile. As she does so, she sees that the Office of Equal Opportunity's questionnaire, which is collected from all applicants, but which is supposed to be removed by the time the applications reach her desk, has accidentally been included in the application. The questionnaire invites individuals to indicate their race/ethnicity, and Brenda sees that the individual has identified as "white". Brenda removes the questionnaire from the application, for the sake of confidentiality, returns the application to the rejection pile, and turns to the next application.

### ***Application Case 2***

Brenda is reviewing applications for a position in her department at a public university. After careful consideration of one application, she determines that the applicant is unqualified for the position, and tosses the application on the rejection pile. As she does so, she sees that the Office of Equal Opportunity's questionnaire, which is collected from all applicants, but which is supposed to be removed by the time the applications reach her desk, has accidentally been included in the application. The questionnaire invites individuals to indicate their race/ethnicity, and Brenda sees that the individual has identified as "white". Brenda is deeply racist: she has a profound antipathy towards people of color, and on this basis strongly prefers to work with a white person. Despite having carefully determined a moment ago that the applicant was unqualified, she decides she had better double-check.

Let us assume that in the first case Brenda knows the applicant is unqualified. If we grant that

indulging her racist tendencies really would best satisfy the items in Brenda's subjective motivational set—that she really is that deeply racist—then, according to the internalist, Brenda has reason to double-check in the second case; thus KR+IR, assuming TPR, will yield the verdict that Brenda doesn't know the applicant is unqualified in the second case. The externalist, by contrast, is free to deny this—to say that Brenda does not have a genuine reason to double-check whether the applicant is unqualified, even if doing so advances some element in her subjective motivational set—and thus the defender of KR+ER is free to say that Brenda still knows the applicant is unqualified in the second case.<sup>9</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

The view of practical reasons KR is conjoined with makes a difference to what the defender of KR is able to say about cases. This is important because what the defender of KR is able to say about cases matters for the plausibility of KR. First, many defenders of pragmatic encroachment appeal to our intuitions about the Bank Cases and Train Cases, or others like them, to motivate their views.<sup>10</sup> They must therefore be concerned about whether pragmatic encroachment generates intuitive verdicts about other cases. Second, although some defenders of pragmatic encroachment offer theoretical arguments not based on intuitions in defense of their view,<sup>11</sup> it speaks against a view if it generates counter-intuitive verdicts. This, it seems to me, is what KR, in combination with IR, does: it gives the intuitively wrong verdicts about Amit and Brenda. Intuitively, when an Old Master is at stake, rather than a piece of junk, Amit doesn't really know that it is safe to clean a painting with spit, regardless of whether he cares about Old Masters or not. And, intuitively, if Brenda, after careful consideration of an application, knows that the applicant is unqualified, she cannot fail to know this simply because she is racist and the applicant is white. Only KR+ER can vindicate these intuitions.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> In this presentation, I have targeted KR assumed TPR, but the same argument can be given, *mutatis mutandis*, targeting the principles defended by Stanley, Hawthorne, and Fantl and McGrath, assuming APR, PPR, and WPR, respectively. See footnotes 4, 5, and 8.

<sup>10</sup> Stanley 2005, Hawthorne 2004, Hawthorne and Stanley 2008.

<sup>11</sup> See Fantl and McGrath 2009, Chapter 3, especially p. 63.

<sup>12</sup> Taken in itself, this is a point in favor of KR+ER. However, given the arguments of Williams and others against the existence of external reasons, it may be that KR+ER has other costs, and—given that one must accept either ER or IR—the KR theorist is confronted with a dilemma.

The view of practical reasons KR is conjoined with, then, makes a difference to the plausibility of KR. Given the centrality of practical reasons to KR, we must evaluate it not in isolation, but in conjunction with answers to our various philosophical questions about the nature and basis of practical reasons. I have focused on KR, but the above discussion suggests that issues concerning the nature and basis of practical reasons, such as whether internalism or externalism about reasons is true, will also make a difference to principles analogous to KR concerning some other epistemic status, such as justification or warrant.<sup>13</sup> When evaluating any such view, philosophical questions about the nature and basis of practical reasons should not be ignored.

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<sup>13</sup> E.g. "S is justified in believing that p only if S is rational to act as if p." (Fantl and McGrath 2002: 78)

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