Critical Study of John Hawthorne, *Knowledge and Lotteries* and Jason Stanley, *Knowledge and Practical Interests*

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I. Introduction

In two important recent books, John Hawthorne and Jason Stanley each argue that non-evidential factors, such as the cost of being wrong and salience of possible error, have a place in epistemological theorizing. This point is familiar from the work of epistemological contextualists, who emphasize non-evidential speaker factors: factors which, when present in a speaker's conversational context, affect the semantic content of her knowledge attributions. According to Hawthorne and Stanley, the appropriate focus is on the *subject*, rather than the speaker: when the relevant non-evidential factors are present in a subject they can affect whether the subject knows. This suggests a reorientation for epistemology, away from the standard "intellectualist" (Stanley's term) model, endorsed even by contextualists, according to which only evidential or more broadly *truth-related* factors (evidence, safety, sensitivity, reliability, etc.) bear on whether a subject knows. If Hawthorne and Stanley are right, then the contextualist program should give way to a program of anti-intellectualist invariantism, or to use a more common label, *subject-sensitive invariantism* (SSI).[1]

The books explore in insightful and original fashion a range of important issues in epistemology, all focused on the concept of knowledge: the lottery puzzle, skepticism, the knowledge rule of assertion, the relation of knowledge to objective chance, epistemic closure, etc. Here, we limit ourselves to the relative merits of SSI.

II. Hawthorne and Stanley on contextualism

[1] Hawthorne's term is "sensitive moderate invariantism," though he at most only tentatively endorses the view. "Subject-sensitive invariantism" is DeRose's (2004) term.

Stanley claims that the only plausible argument for contextualism is based on intuitions about certain stakes-shifting cases (like Keith DeRose's bank cases and Stewart Cohen's airport case). (84) This is because he takes the contextualist about knowledge attributions to be positing a sort of context-sensitivity which departs significantly from the familiar sorts. He painstakingly backs up this claim in chapters 2 and 3. In chapter 2, 'know' is shown not to be a gradable expression (it doesn't admit modifiers and has no associated comparative), and so the assumption that gradable expressions are context-sensitive is no evidence that 'know' is. Chapter 3 argues for two general points: first, our use of propositional anaphora ('what I said') and speech reports ('I said that I knew') doesn't follow the pattern displayed by familiar context-sensitive expressions (like modals, demonstratives, quantifiers, gradable expressions); second, we do not find the sorts of intra-discourse context-shifts that we find with the uncontroversial examples and which we would expect to find given the plausible assumption that context-sensitivity has its source in particular occurrences of elements in logical form.[2] Stanley's conclusion is that if the intuitions in the stakes-shifting cases can be explained away adequately without resorting to contextualism, we would have little reason to accept contextualism.[3]

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[2] Hawthorne, too, provides linguistic evidence against contextualism in his chapter 2. We disquote rather freely when reporting what subjects who make knowledge claims in other contexts believe. If I say 'I know that p', then you in a different context can correctly report my belief by saying 'He believes he knows that p'. This is not how it works for core indexicals. Admittedly, we do disquote for other putatively context-sensitive expressions (e.g., 'tall'), but Hawthorne claims that when it comes to such expressions – but not when it comes to 'knows' – we can advert to devices of clarification to explain ourselves.

This argument has been forcefully rebutted by DeRose (2005). If Louise, in a high stakes situation being questioned by the police, is asked, "Does Thelma believe she knows John was in the office?" where Louise knows Thelma's evidence is just what hers is, then if Louise says "I don't know he was in the office," she will certainly not be happy adding "But Thelma thinks she knows." Here Louise doesn't disquote freely.

It's another question, though, whether, were Louise to do so, she would speak falsely. As DeRose himself argues, intuitions of unacceptability are less reliable as indications of falsehood than intuitions of acceptability are as indications of truth. Perhaps Louise can't appropriately say "Thelma thinks she knows" because by saying this she implicates something false, viz. that it would behoove the police to question Thelma. There would be stronger reason to think this belief report is false if Louise could appropriately say "Thelma doesn't believe she knows."

[3] One position Stanley does not consider is what might be called speech act contextualism (after Cappellen and LePore (2005); see Stainton (forthcoming) and Harman (2007)), according to which the semantic content of knowledge-ascribing sentences does not vary with ascriber context; what varies is what an ascriber thereby asserts (for Harman what varies is what a speaker means). Some of Stanley's arguments against contextualism apply to this

If Stanley is right about the dialectical situation, the ramifications for epistemology are significant. Contextualists have wanted to argue that, because these cases force us to acknowledge dramatic shifts in epistemic standards across contexts of use, we have good reason to think that even more dramatic shifts could be the source of the appeal of skeptical arguments. Without an independent reason to think that dramatic shifts occur, contextualists have no good answer to the charge that their response of skepticism is ad hoc, the sort of easy response available to solve almost any philosophical puzzle.

With all this in mind, here are DeRose's original (1992) bank cases:

> *Bank Case A* (Low Stakes). My wife and I are driving home on a Friday afternoon. We plan to stop at the bank on the way home to deposit our paychecks. But as we drive past the bank, we notice that the lines inside are very long, as they often are on Friday afternoons. Although we generally like to deposit our paychecks as soon as possible, it is not especially important in this case that they be deposited right away, so I suggest that we drive straight home and deposit our paychecks on Saturday morning. My wife says, "Maybe the bank won't be open tomorrow. Lots of banks are closed on Saturdays." I reply, "No, I know it'll be open. I was just there two weeks ago on Saturday. It's open until noon."
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> *Bank Case B* (High Stakes). My wife and I drive past the bank on a Friday afternoon, as in Case A, and notice the long lines. I again suggest that we deposit our paychecks on Saturday morning, explaining that I was at the bank on Saturday morning only two weeks ago and discovered that it was open until noon. But in this case, we have just written a very large and important check. If our paychecks are not deposited into our checking account before Monday morning, the important check we wrote will bounce, leaving us in a *very* bad situation. And, of course, the bank is not open on Sunday. My wife reminds me of these facts. She then says, "Banks do change their hours. Do you know the bank will be open tomorrow?" Remaining as confident as I was before that the bank will be open then, still, I reply, "Well, no. I'd better go in and make sure." (913)

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position, too, in particular the arguments about propositional anaphora and indirect speech reports. But these are some of the weaker arguments Stanley gives (e.g., see the minimal pairs RICH vs. KNOWS).

We submit that there is a straightforward reason why contextualists have not explored this option. It seems to require a certain chauvinism that contextualists have wanted, naturally, to avoid. If a sentence of the form 'I know that the bank is open on Saturdays' expresses the same proposition in high stakes contexts as well as low stakes contexts, and if we continue to accept intellectualism, it seems we'll have to say that in one of the two cases the semantic content of the sentence uttered is *false.* Of course, the speech act contextualist might claim that in neither context is the subject asserting/denying knowledge. But this seems implausible; if not in these sorts of contexts, do people *ever* assert the semantic contents of epistemic sentences? And if the claim is instead that only in *Low* is the subject asserting something about knowledge, one must explain why. The mainstream semantic-content contextualist avoids these problems.

How do these cases support contextualism?[4] It seems (premise 1), you speak the truth in both cases. But (premise 2) you have the same evidence and generally the same truth-related factors regarding the proposition in question. Therefore, (conclusion) the sentence 'I know that the bank will be open on Saturday' must differ in semantic content in these two contexts of use, due to a difference in content associated with 'know': contextualism is true.[5]

Stanley grants both premises but denies the conclusion. The conclusion follows only on the assumption of intellectualism – only on the assumption that, if the content of 'I know that the bank is open on Saturday' is the same in the two cases, a difference in the sentence's truth-value across the cases requires a difference in the evidence for *the bank is open on Saturday*. But perhaps intellectualism is false: even if 'I know that the bank will be open on Saturday' has the same content across the cases, it could be true in one case but false in the other because the practical facts differ. SSI can handle the bank cases just as well as contextualism.

DeRose's bank cases are cases of first-person present-tense knowledge attributions in which the attributor is aware of his practical interests. SSI delivers the same results as contextualism for these cases. The same goes for first-person versions of the lottery puzzle. The contextualist says that the sentence 'I don't know my ticket is a loser' is true in a context in which the possibility that one wins is salient, even though it wasn't true in a previous context when that possibility wasn't salient (e.g., because, as in Hawthorne's example, one is thinking about whether one will have enough money to go on Safari next year). For the contextualist, the

[4] The argument that follows might need to be finessed if it is to stay neutral between various contextualist positions. For example, Jonathan Schaffer (2004) is a contextualist but thinks that 'knows' is invariant in content; what varies for him are the associated contrast propositions. The argument also ignores the possibility of speech act contextualism, discussed in the previous note.

[5] The second premise is taken to be obvious, but DeRose (and Cohen who gives a similar argument) takes some care to defend the first premise. In his (2005), he argues for two mutually reinforcing strands of evidence. One is straightforward intuition. The other is a sort of argument from charity: we do tend to talk in the ways indicated in the cases, when we are in situations like those described. We don't seem to be guilty of any errors of fact or to be victims of any misinformation; so there is a strong presumption that we speak the truth.

change in truth-value is due to the association of a higher epistemic standard in the later context than in the former, and this association is made possible by the content-shifting power of salience. The SSIist, piggybacking off the contextualist, may say that salience destroys knowledge. When the possibility of your winning wasn't salient, you knew you would lose. Now that it is, you don't know. And the same case could be made for skeptical arguments. The SSIist might say that the salience of the possibility that one is a brain in a vat strips one of much of one's empirical knowledge.

These anti-intellectualist maneuvers incur an explanatory burden, for it is unclear how salience of possible error, or raised practical stakes, could destroy knowledge. But the view does at least match contextualism in its claims about the truth-values of first-person present-tense knowledge attributions and denials. Moreover, the SSIist doesn't make the vindication of our intuitions about cases dependent on delicate use/mention issues, such as the distinction between the question of whether what is said in uttering 'I know that p' is true and the question of *whether the subject knows that p.*

It appears, then, that we have a prima facie case for thinking that either contextualism or SSI is true. But which? One consideration that might seem to favor contextualism is the fact that SSI predicts the truth of odd-sounding temporal and modal embeddings. It sounds wrong to say "I don't know that p, but, assuming p is true, I used to know that p," or "If I didn't have so much at stake, then if p were true, I'd know it was." But SSIists seem committed to the potential truth of both of these utterances. Is this a reason to favor contextualism over SSI?

Stanley suggests (pp. 107-13) that contextualists might find themselves committed to similarly peculiar temporal and modal embeddings, depending on how they explain the source of context-sensitivity. If so, these oddities would be no reason to favor contextualism over SSI. He

considers in particular David Lewis's (1996) contextualism, according to which knowledge-ascribing sentences contain a context-sensitive quantifier under semantic analysis. Under Lewis's account, 'S knows that p' is true in a context iff 'S has evidence which rules out all possibilities in which not-p' is true in the context, with 'all possibilities' contextually restricted to those that are not being properly ignored in the context, where attention to a possibility is one way of not being properly ignored. Because the best semantic account of quantifiers holds that they express properties, it would seem that Lewis is committed to thinking that the relevant property is *not being properly ignored by A,* where A is the attributor. But then we should expect that a sentence such as 'If A were properly ignoring more possibilities than he is, S would know that p, if p were true' to be acceptable, which of course it isn't.

We have a reservation about Stanley's argument. Consider his example of 'every bottle'. In a context of use, this expresses a property, e.g., *being a bottle on such and such shelf. Which* property it expresses depends on what is salient to the attributor or conversational participants, but the property expressed itself is not *about* salience to a certain attributor. Thus, 'John bought every bottle but wouldn't have if I had been thinking about a different grocery store' won't come out true. Similarly, it seemed to us that one could revamp Lewis's view by proposing that which property 'all possibilities' expresses in a context of use depends on what the attributor is properly ignoring but the property expressed isn't itself about the attributor and his ignorings.

So, perhaps SSI is committed to the peculiar sounding embeddings in a way that contextualism isn't. Nonetheless, there are ways to soften the blow. As Hawthorne (177n40) remarks, anyone who thinks barn façade cases are Gettier cases must say that in many cases in which you look at a barn it is true to say, "I know that's a barn, but if unbeknownst to me there were a lot of barn facades around then even if this one was a barn I wouldn't know it was." The

defeasibility of knowledge, too, generates odd-sounding predictions like this: "I don't know that Mary is sick, now that her boyfriend told me she was faking it, but if he is misleading me, then if he hadn't told me anything, I would know (having seen her coughing earlier today)." If we can live with these embeddings, perhaps we can live with SSI's temporal and modal embeddings as well.

SSIists, however, must further part company with contextualists on third person knowledge attributions. When Mary and John, whose evidence is the same as Smith's, utter not only 'We don't know' but also 'And neither does Smith,' the intellectualist contextualist will say that Mary and John speak the truth about Smith if they speak the truth about themselves. The SSIist will of course have to insist that this move is in general illicit, because, e.g., less might be at stake for Smith than for Mary and John or fewer counterpossibilities of error salient to him. Yet we seem to make this move on a regular basis. It would be very odd for Mary and John to wonder, "We don't know whether the plane stops in Chicago, but if it does, then Smith knows it does." The SSIist has to explain away mistakes about third-person knowledge attributions and denials. Keith DeRose (2004) has called this *the* problem with SSI. Hawthorne and Stanley are well aware of it, and propose their own solutions. The core idea behind both proposals, spelled out most clearly in Stanley (who is trying to improve upon Hawthorne's account (see pp. 162-66)), is that we treat others as if they were in our situation, having our stakes (or finding salient possibilities we find salient). Stanley puts it this way: our real aim is to deny that if they were in our situation they'd know. Indeed, they wouldn't. But what is strictly said, that they don't know, is false. (101-4)

This proposal is committed to an error theory about some of our knowledge attributions. But, as Hawthorne and Stanley would be quick to point out, contextualism has a similar problem

because as we noted above, contextualists place heavy weight on the use/mention distinction. Mary and John are happy to assert not only 'Smith doesn't know' but 'What Smith said is false. He doesn't know any more than we do.' Equally worrisome, Stanley notes that contextualists have to strain, more than SSIists, to accommodate intuitions about other third person cases – cases in which the attributor has lower stakes than the subject. Stanley calls such cases *Low Attributor-High Stakes* and claims that contextualism delivers the wrong result about them. Intuitively, Stanley claims, the speaker's attribution of knowledge to the subject is false, whereas contextualism predicts its truth. Contextualism in his view also fares worse than SSI in certain first person cases, such as *Ignorant High Stakes* (in which a subject thinks her stakes are low but they are actually high). He concludes that the overall weight of the various versions of the stakes-shifting cases[6] favors SSI over contextualism. (120)

Anti-intellectualism, unlike SSI, does not entail that contextualism is false. Therefore, there is a way to accommodate without strain Stanley's intuitions about all the versions of the stakes shifting cases, by allowing for a contextualist version of anti-intellectualism.[7] Perhaps it is part of the invariant truth-conditions for knowledge attributions that 'knows that p' applies only when the subject is proper to act as if p in light of the subject's actual stakes. So, when a low-stakes attributor says of a high-stakes subject "He knows that p," the attributor speaks falsely – an intuition that intellectualist contextualism, it seems, will have to strain to accommodate. This takes care of all but *High-on-Low*: there, the subject has actual low stakes,

[6] Stanley notes fives such versions: *High Stakes* and *Low Stakes* (corresponding to DeRose's original bank cases), *Ignorant High Stakes* (subject thinks her stakes are low but they are actually high), *Low Attributor-High Stakes* (a low stakes attributor says of a person in a *High Stakes* case "She knows"), and *High Attributor-Low Stakes* (a high stakes attributor says of the person in a *Low Stakes* case, "She doesn't know."). We might add to this list *Ignorant High Attributor-Low Stakes*, *Ignorant Low Stakes*, and *Ignorant Low Attributor-High Stakes*. We leave it to the reader to decipher which of these cases favor anti-intellectualist treatments and which favor contextualist treatments.

[7] This sort of view is mentioned in an aside by Hawthorne (188). Notice that if contextualism can accommodate our intuitions about the temporal and modal embeddings, the conjunction of contextualism and anti-intellectualism can accommodate those intuitions as well.

but we still have the intuition the high-stakes attributor speaks truly when she says, "He doesn't know that p." To handle this case, we add the contextualist element. Perhaps when one's stakes require that one meet a certain standard to know, 'knows' in one's speech context becomes semantically associated with having an epistemic position that at least meets that standard, so that if a subject doesn't meet it with respect to p, the subject doesn't satisfy 'knows' with respect to p in one's speech context. Another possibility for handling all the stakes-shifting cases is to combine anti-intellectualism with assessment relativism, a view which would also have the advantage over contextualism that it doesn't predict substantially different intuitions depending on whether the speakers say "He's wrong" or "What he said is false" rather than "He doesn't know" (cf. MacFarlane 2004).

The possibility of these combinations of views, moreover, points up the need to distinguish the *epistemological* question of whether intellectualism is true from both the *semantic* question of whether knowledge-ascribing sentences vary in content across contexts of use and the *metaphysical* question of whether knowledge-ascribing propositions can only be true relative to an index (e.g., a judge or an epistemic standard). Stanley is surely right that retaining intellectualism is a main motivation for contextualism (and indeed for relativism) in the face of stakes-shifting cases. As Stewart Cohen (1999) remarks in drawing contextualist conclusions from his case of Smith and Mary and John, "if what is printed in the itinerary is a good enough reason for Smith to know, then it is a good enough reason for John and Mary to know." (58) But there is no reason why an anti-intellectualist cannot help herself to whatever semantic or metaphysical tools are needed to accommodate intuitions such as those in the stake-shifting cases. Perhaps the resulting views are unacceptable hodgepodges – and as far as we know no one currently is on record as accepting them – but they do fit the cases.

Putting aside these hybrids, we are left with intellectualist contextualism and SSI, each of which is committed to error theories about our reactions to some of the cases (or, at least, has to strain to accommodate those reactions). It will seem to some readers that all this "post haste and rummage in the land" is an overreaction. Consider what Hawthorne calls (simple) moderate invariantism. This is intellectualist invariantism combined with the anti-skeptical claim that the standards for knowledge are low enough so that a great many of our knowledge claims are in fact true. Once it is granted that contextualism and SSI are committed to error theories of their own about the various versions of the bank cases, there is now no decisive reason, stemming from consideration of those cases, to reject *moderate invariantism* just because it requires its own error theory to handle them.[8] What we need, to tip the balance against moderate invariantism, is a principled reason to believe that knowledge, or even 'knowledge,' is relevantly related to salience or practical environment in the first place. After all, such factors are not truth-related (internally or externally), unlike the conditions used in standard Gettier fixes – safety, sensitivity – and unlike misleading evidence. Why let them into the picture at all?

Unlike Hawthorne, we see little promise in treating salience of possible error as a subject factor. There seems to us to be no compelling reason, other than the need to fit the cases, to posit a connection between knowledge and salience of possible mistakes.[9] The situation is more complex for knowledge and action. This is the topic of our final section.

III. Knowledge and Action

III.1 The practical environment constraint

[8] One significant difficulty for the moderate invariantist is to devise plausible explanations of why subjects in high stakes cases would deny themselves knowledge when they do in fact know and of why we are ordinarily happy to agree with knowledge-denials high-stakes subjects make.

[9] Hawthorne considers three models of the knowledge-destroying power of salience, the belief removal model, the evidence model and the authority model (169-72). The last two, as Hawthorne points out, are not at all plausible. The first is more plausible, but it lacks much explanatory power, because the key epistemological problems were not so much about knowledge, we think, but about *being positioned to know* or *having good enough epistemic position to know*. It's not clear how much credence Hawthorne wants to give to this first model.

Hawthorne asks us to consider the following scenario:

> You are offered a cent for a lottery ticket that cost a dollar, in a 10,000 ticket lottery with a $5000 first prize and reason as follows:
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> I will lose the lottery.
>
> If I keep the ticket I will get nothing.
>
> If I sell the ticket, I will get a cent.
>
> So I ought to sell the ticket. (174)

This reasoning, he claims, is "intuitively awful." Why? The natural explanation is that you don't know the first premise is true.

Compare this lottery case to Hawthorne's "bookstore" case:

> A month or so ago, you bought a lottery ticket in a 10,000 ticket lottery. At the moment, you're in a bookstore looking at travel guides. You reason:
>
> I won't have enough money to go on Safari next year.
>
> So I'll choose the less expensive local destination guide as opposed to the worldwide destination guide. (177)

This reasoning is acceptable. Why? In Hawthorne's view, it's because you know the premise is true. Examples like these are used to support Hawthorne's *Practical Environment Constraint*:

> (PEC) one is proper to use p as a premise in practical reasoning if and only if one knows that p.[10]

Hawthorne concedes that it is "very tempting to give the following explanation: the difference between the bookstore decision and the other decision [i.e., the lottery sale decision] is that in the bookstore case the chance for the subject that he will win is small enough so as to be

[10] Stanley suggests in a footnote that a promising account of the intuitive notion of "acting on a proposition" is using it as a premise in practical reasoning.

irrelevant to the practical issues at hand: he can safely disregard the small epistemic chance that [it is true]." (177) This explanation leaves knowledge out altogether, in favor of a principle about chances: you can use p in practical deliberation just in case the chance that p is false is irrelevant, i.e., just in case it can be safely disregarded in your practical deliberation. Call this *the Irrelevant Chance Principle.*

If this explanation is so tempting, why shouldn't we give in and accept it? Hawthorne's immediate reply is to appeal to the *Epistemic Possibility Constraint*, according to which knowing that p is necessary and sufficient for p's having epistemic probability 1, or equivalently, for not-p's being epistemically impossible, or again, for there being no epistemic chance for the subject that not-p.[11] Either the epistemic chance of losing is the same in both cases or not. If it is the same, then by the Epistemic Possibility Constraint, you don't know that you will lose in the bookstore case; after all, you don't know, in the lottery case, that you will lose the lottery. But if you don't *that,* then by closure you don't know that you won't have enough money to go on Safari. But the latter seems to be a perfectly ordinary piece of knowledge. Thus, Hawthorne concludes that if the epistemic chance of losing is the same in the two cases, then skepticism follows. So, putting skepticism aside, the chance for you of winning differs between the cases, and so by the Epistemic Possibility Constraint, the two cases differ with respect to your knowledge that your ticket will lose. It follows that practical environment can affect knowledge in the way PEC specifies.

We can think of two ways to respond to Hawthorne's argument. First, one might argue that denying you know in the bookstore case isn't tantamount to embracing skepticism. After

[11] There is certainly a linguistic case to be made that knowing requires probability 1 ("So you admit it's possible; you don't know, then, do you?!" (Hawthorne, 25), and Williamson (2000)). But there is also a linguistic case to be made for the other side ("Sure, it's possible that I'm wrong – anything is *possible* – but I know in this case that I'm not.").

all, in the bookstore case you do have a lottery ticket, and so – it might be argued – you have a special reason to think you might have enough money to go on Safari next year. In response (following Vogel (1990)) Hawthorne (pp. 3-7) argues that lottery cases can be constructed at will for just about any of our mundane claims to knowledge. If so, then there is nothing particularly special about the bookstore case, because there is nothing particularly special about the physical piece of paper that is a lottery ticket.

Second, one might question the Epistemic Possibility Constraint. We sympathize with this second response. Epistemic probabilities are presumably the probabilities relevant to rational choice between gambles. If your epistemic probability for p is 1, then, it should follow that you would be rational to accept a gamble on p at any odds.[12] But surely you wouldn't be rational to do this for very many propositions. (Hawthorne himself doesn't think he would "bet on the law of non-contradiction at any odds". (29)) Thus, the Epistemic Possibility Constraint seems to imply skepticism. One can try to block this conclusion, as Hawthorne does, by denying intellectualism about epistemic probability, and so allowing that how probable a proposition is for a person can vary with practical environment. This seems to us highly implausible. If you offer me a high-stakes bet on the proposition *this die will come up 6*, that doesn't seem to lower its probability and certainly not to raise the probability that it will come up 1-5.[13]

[12] This is perhaps too quick. One might argue that the answer is *no* because whether one is rational to accept such a gamble depends on one's knowing that the epistemic probability is 1, which is not guaranteed by its being 1. However, this offers rather cold comfort. Surely we do know that we know many mundane propositions, and yet we wouldn't be rational to bet the house on them.

[13] Could one defend Hawthorne here by claiming that, while practical environment can't move probabilities other than 0 or 1, it can move them from 0 and 1 (that is, assuming the Epistemic Possibility Constraint, it can destroy knowledge)? There are a number of problems, here. We'll mention just two. 1) In general it is impossible to isolate probability movements in the intended way unless one is willing to bite a further bullet and take practical environment regarding a proposition p with probability 1 to alter the conditional probabilities of propositions on p. 2) When the stakes are raised on propositions for which our probability is 1 (so that we lose knowledge), does the probability always decrease to exactly what it must be for the expected utilities to work out just right? Why would this be? Why couldn't the probability of p decrease from 1 but the expected utility of betting on p still be higher than that of the refusing the bet?

Let us set aside the Epistemic Possibility Constraint. Is there any other reason to bring knowledge into the explanation of why certain pieces of practical reasoning are proper and others aren't? Why not just rely exclusively on the Irrelevant Chance Principle?

If you ask an ordinary person, when offered a cent for his lottery ticket, why he isn't willing to sell it, he will likely tell you that he doesn't know that the ticket will lose. If you asked the same ordinary person, in the bookstore, why he picks the local destination guide rather than the worldwide one, given that he dreams of going on Safari, he will likely answer that he knows he won't have enough money to go on Safari. Ordinary folk seem to cite knowledge (and its lack) to defend their actions. As Stanley notes,

> A standard use of knowledge attributions is to justify action. When I am asked why I went to the store on the left, rather than the store on the right, I will respond by saying that I knew that the store on the left had the newspaper I wanted, but I did not know whether the store on the right did. When my wife asks me why I turned left rather than going straight, I reply that I knew that it was the shortest direction to go to the restaurant. (10)

If we could have a view that makes knowledge relevant but doesn't commit us to the Epistemic Possibility Constraint, this might seem to strike just the right balance. And it appears such a view is available. We can claim that knowledge is compatible with a non-zero epistemic chance of error but only an irrelevant one. This view retains at least the right-to-left direction of Hawthorne's PEC.[14]

Some philosophers will of course want to understand the data Stanley cites as having pragmatic rather than semantic significance. The idea would be that while there are cases in which one knows something but isn't proper to act on it, claiming that one knows something often conversationally implicates, or at least in some way "pragmatically imparts," that one is

[14] Hawthorne (p. 178) alludes to such a position. See Fantl and McGrath (2002, 2007, forthcoming) for developments of such a view. Why, then, do subject say "I don't know" in cases like Bank Case B? One explanation is that in such cases it is clear that it takes knowledge that p in order to properly act on p.

proper to act on it (Rysiew 2001). Stanley is well aware of this response, and lays down a challenge to come up with a viable pragmatic story. We agree that it is not easy to give such a story (see our 2007), but we worry that he too quickly shifts the burden of proof. As we mentioned above, many intellectualists, in our view *rightly*, will insist that denying intellectualism is a greater theoretical cost than positing underexplained errors or specially suited pragmatic implications. Denying intellectualism commits us to the claim that you can lose or gain knowledge, not by forgetting information or by learning new evidence, but by writing or tearing up a sufficiently large check. And that seems deeply counterintuitive.

Is there a more principled argument available for a strong knowledge-action link?

III.2 Knowledge and Reasons

When it comes to theoretical reasoning, few would deny that propositions, when known, can be reasons to believe other propositions. It does not follow from the mere fact that your car's battery is dead, nor even from the fact that you truly believe this, that you have a reason to believe that your car's headlights won't turn on. But suppose you know that your car's battery is dead. Then you have an excellent reason to believe that your car's headlights won't turn on, viz. that your car's battery is dead.

So, when it comes to belief, we do want to say that, when you know that p, p can be among your theoretical reasons, i.e., your reasons for belief. Of course, sometimes, when you know that p, p can fail to be among your theoretical reasons for some belief, q, for the very obvious reason that p has nothing to do with q. Even if you know that your car's battery is dead, that it is dead is not a reason you have for believing that Pluto is farther from the sun than Mars. But its failure to be a reason you have, in this case, is not the result of the chance for you that

your car's battery is not dead (nor the result of any other epistemic weakness you have with respect to the proposition that your car's battery is dead). When you know that p, in short, the chance for you that not-p doesn't stand in the way of p being a reason you have for believing anything.

We can say something very similar about action. At the very least, there are facts such that, when you know them to be true, they can be reasons you have to do things. The fact that your child will be hit by a car which is careening onto the sidewalk unless you grab him and pull him back in the next few seconds certainly seems to be such a fact. Notice that the mere existence of this fact would not entail that you have any reason to grab your son (having no idea of the situation, you would be justified, it seems, in simply continuing walking along on the sidewalk with your son). Nor would your mere belief in it (even if true) be enough if that belief itself were not justified. But if you know this fact, then you do have a reason to grab your son. This is a perfect mirror of the theoretical situation.

As with the theoretical situation, sometimes when you know that p, p might fail to be a reason you have for doing something, but not because of any epistemic weakness of yours with respect to p – not because of, for example, the chance for you that not-p. You might know that your car's battery is dead. But this (in normal cases) is not a reason you have to pull your son out of the way of an oncoming car. Again, though, its failure to be a reason you have is not due to any epistemic lack with respect to the proposition that your car's battery is dead.

There seems little obstacle to treating the practical and the theoretical cases alike in the way suggested by the following Unity Thesis:

(Unity Thesis) If the chance that not-p doesn't stand in the way of p being a reason you have for believing q, for any q, then the chance that not-p doesn't stand in the way of p being a reason you have for doing A, for any A.

This thesis, among other virtues, makes sense of the fact that, when we conclude that p in the course of deliberating about what to do, we don't then screen p off from our decision about what to do. When we conclude p, we can *use* p.

But, we've already noted that, when you know that p, then the chance that not-p doesn't stand in the way of p being a reason you have for believing anything. This, in conjunction with the Unity Thesis, entails a general knowledge-reasons link not unlike those suggested by Unger (1974), Hyman (1999), and more recently in a joint paper by Hawthorne and Stanley (forthcoming)[15]:

(KR) If you know that p, then the chance that not-p doesn't stand in the way of p being a reason you have for believing anything or doing anything.[16]

KR presents a problem for intellectualism if there are pairs of subjects for whom the chance that not-p is the same, but are such that the chance that not-p stands in the way of p being a reason one has but not the other. Consider again the airport case: Smith and Mary and John are alike with respect to the respective chances that the plane stops in Chicago. According to the moderate invariantist, Smith and Mary and John all know that the plane stops in Chicago. Given KR, the chance that the plane doesn't stop in Chicago thus doesn't stand in the way of it being a reason they have to, say, board. In Smith's case, there's nothing really at issue. For Mary and John, there is. Given KR and the moderate invariantist's assumption that Mary and John have

[15] See ch. 3 of our (forthcoming) for a more thorough defense of the claim that what is epistemically fitted to be a reason you have for belief is also epistemically fitted to be a reason you have for action.

[16] Why else might p fail to be one's reason? P might fail to be one's reason if there is no decision possibility that hangs on p.

knowledge, Mary and John have an excellent reason not to bother checking with the information desk – it's a waste of time. However, the case is devised so that they *should* check with the information desk, given all that is at stake. So, the moderate invariantist had better not allow Mary and John's excellent reason to just go ahead and board to justify Mary and John in just going ahead and boarding.

How might the moderate invariantist disallow this, while still allowing that *the plane stops in Chicago* is a reason that Mary and John have to board the plane? Suppose that, even if they have a very good reason to wait in line, their reason is defeated by some other reason they have. The defeater? A proposition about the chances of error together with the value of the relevant outcomes, or to use the jargon, a proposition to the effect that checking further maximizes expected utility. A general intellectualist strategy, then, for accepting KR is to make a two-part claim: first, reasons having to do with chances of error can conflict with reasons about what is in fact the case and, and second, when the stakes are high enough, reasons about chances of error can beat out reasons about what is in fact the case.

This strategy is problematic. For this strategy would seem to endorse the following sort of reasoning:

> On the one hand, the plane stops Chicago. On the other hand, it might not. And if it doesn't (though it does), the costs are too great. I'd better check further to confirm it stops in Chicago (which it does).

This is not what we do when we weigh reasons we have. What we do when we weigh reasons is compare the reasons at face value and decide which is more important: "On the one hand, ice cream tastes good. On the other hand, it's fattening. Which is more important, the good taste, or the calories?" On that score, it's clear both that we don't weigh facts against the chance that

those facts don't obtain, and, if we were to, facts would win: "On the one hand, the plane is going to Chicago. On the other hand, it might not be. Which is more important, the fact that it is, or the chance that it isn't?"

In short, the intellectualist two-part strategy violates what seems to be a fundamental principle about having reasons. When you have a reason to do, believe, consider, or wonder about something – generally, when you have a reason to φ – you get to take that reason for granted in deciding whether to φ. This is not to say that, whenever you have a reason to φ, you should φ. But it is to say that, when you actually have that reason, you get to put it into battle with other reasons you have without considering the relative probabilities of those reasons. In this sense, reasons you have are "safe." You might not have as reasons that it will rain nor that you will have to wait 10 minutes for the bus. If you do not, then when considering whether to take your umbrella, you might have to weigh the probability that it will rain against how long you think you'll have to wait for the bus. However, if you have both as reasons, then you can use both in your reasoning without considering their probabilities: "It's going to rain, and I'll have to wait 10 minutes. So, I'm going to get drenched if I don't take the umbrella. I'll bring it."

Because this fundamental "safe reasons" principle cuts off the two-part intellectualist strategy, there is nothing preventing us from concluding, on the basis of KR, that if knowledge is consistent with a chance of error, then knowledge can come and go with mere changes in the practical environment. If Hawthorne's Epistemic Possibility Constraint is false, so is intellectualism.[17]

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[17] We thank Keith DeRose and especially Earl Conee for helpful comments that improved this essay.

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