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# On Two Recent Arguments against Intellectualism

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## Abstract

Several authors have recently argued against intellectualism, the view that one's epistemic position with respect to  $p$  depends exclusively on one's truth-relevant factors with respect to  $p$ . In this paper, I first examine two prominent arguments for the anti-intellectualist position and find both of them wanting. More precisely, I argue that these arguments, by themselves, are underdetermined between intellectualism and anti-intellectualism. I then manifest the intuitive plausibility of intellectualism by examining the

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ordinary conversational pattern of challenging a claim.

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# On Two Recent Arguments against Intellectualism\*

## I. Introduction

Let ‘S’s epistemic position with respect to p’ stand for whatever condition that turns S’s true belief that p into knowledge. According to the view known as *intellectualism*, S’s epistemic position with respect to p depends exclusively on S’s *truth-relevant factors* such as S’s evidence or epistemic reasons, the reliability of S’s belief-forming process, etc. The denial of intellectualism, i.e., *anti-intellectualism*, is the view that S’s epistemic position, in addition of being dependent on truth-relevant factors, also depends on *pragmatic factors* such as stakes, interests, purposes, etc.

While intellectualism has been the orthodox view, recently, a number of authors have argued for certain anti-intellectualist positions. The goal of this paper is to examine and assess two anti-intellectualist arguments proposed by Jason Stanley (2005) and Jeremy Fantl and Matthew McGrath (2009) respectively. I will argue that their arguments are by and large unsuccessful in rejecting intellectualism. On the contrary, I suggest, at the end of this paper, a case can be made that Stanley’s and Fantl and

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McGrath's arguments are better interpreted as arguments for an alternative view to anti-intellectualism, which is compatible with intellectualism.

This paper will be structured as follows. In Section 2, I will introduce intellectualism and anti-intellectualism. I will also introduce the view that I call 'epistemic pragmatism', which will prove to be instrumental for the discussion of this paper. Section 3 addresses Stanley's argument against intellectualism. Section 4 examines Fantl and McGrath's arguments against intellectualism. Section 5 replies to a possible reply to my diagnosis of Stanley's and Fantl and McGrath's arguments. Section 6 addresses the general attractiveness of intellectualism. Section 7 takes stock.

## **II. Intellectualism, Anti-Intellectualism, and Epistemic Pragmatism**

According to Stanley, intellectualism<sup>1</sup> is "the thesis that knowledge does not depend upon practical facts" (Stanley 2005: 6). Keith DeRose takes intellectualism to be the view that "the factors in virtue of which a true belief amounts to knowledge are exclusively truth-relevant" (DeRose 2009: 24). The standard way of formulating this view is as follows:

Intellectualism. S's epistemic position with respect to p depends exclusively on S's truth-relevant factors with respect

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'intellectualism' is from Stanley (2005) and is subsequently adopted by DeRose (2009). Fantl and McGrath call it 'purism about knowledge' (Fantl and McGrath 2009).

to p.<sup>2</sup>

The denial of intellectualism, hence, is the following:

*Anti-Intellectualism.* S's epistemic position with respect to p depends in part on S's pragmatic factors with respect to p.

Let us make two comments. First, as defined, anti-intellectualism is compatible with the idea that S's epistemic position with respect to p depends on S's truth-relevant factors with respect to p; what anti-intellectualism rejects is that truth-relevant factors are the only determinants of epistemic position.

Second, underneath the standard formulation of intellectualism (and for that matter anti-intellectualism) lies an equivocation that has largely gone unnoticed in the literature. The crux of this equivocation is that the relation of dependence is equivocal between two interpretations.

To elaborate, let us distinguish between what I will call *constitutive determinants* and *non-constitutive determinants*. A constitutive determinant of C is a condition the obtaining of which *constitutes* the obtaining of C, namely, constitutive determinants are constituents. For instance, being single is a constitutive determinant of being a bachelor—part of being a bachelor is to be single. A non-constitutive determinant of C is not a constitutive determinant (constituent) of C but rather a condition

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<sup>2</sup> Grimm (2011) distinguishes between *realizer intellectualism* and *threshold intellectualism*. Using the present terminology, realizer intellectualism is roughly tantamount to the present formulation of intellectualism, whereas threshold intellectualism is the view that the standards that specifies how strong S's epistemic position has to be in order for S to be in a position to know are depends exclusively on S's truth-relevant factors. For simplicity's sake, I will focus on realizer intellectualism, but notice that what my points about realizer intellectualism are readily applicable to threshold intellectualism.

the obtaining of which has a (non-constitutive) impact on whether a constitutive determinant (constituent) of C obtains or not. For instance, being financially insecure is not a constitutive determinant of being a bachelor. But suppose that whether one is financially insecure or not has an impact on whether one is single or not—one is more likely to remain single if one is financially insecure. In this sense, being financially insecure is a non-constitutive determinant of being a bachelor, as the former has an impact on a constitutive determinant of the latter, i.e. being single. Likewise, killing a person is a constitutive determinant of committing a murder—part of committing a murder is to kill the victim. Having a violent temper, by contrast, is not a constitutive determinant of committing a murder. But suppose that whether one has a violent temper has an impact on whether or not one will murder a person. In this sense, having a violent temper is a non-constitutive determinant of committing a murder, as the former has an impact on a constitutive determinant of the latter, i.e., killing a person.

What is important for the present purposes is to note that when the construction ‘A depends on B’ is used, B can be either a constitutive determinant of A or a non-constitutive determinant of A. As noted in *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, “if something depends on something else, it is directly affected or decided by that thing”. Similarly, *The Cambridge English Dictionary* defines ‘depend on something’ as “to be decided by or to chance according to the stated thing”. Now, while constitutive determinants can certainly play a role in affecting, deciding, or changing the obtaining of something, the same role can also be played by non-constitutive determinants. Hence, both constitutive and non-constitutive determinants can satisfy the dependence relation. For instance, while it is natural for us to say “Whether John is a bachelor or not depends

(in part) on whether he is single or not”, there can also be a true reading of “Whether John is a bachelor or not depends (in part) on whether he is financially insecure or not”. However, notice that while being single is a constitutive determinant of being a bachelor, being financially insecure is just a non-constitutive determinant of being a bachelor. Likewise, just as it sounds natural to say “Whether Mary has committed to a murder or not depends (in part) on whether she has killed the victim or not”, there can also be a felicitous reading of “Whether Mary has committed to a murder or not depends (in part) on whether she has a violent temper or not”. But while killing the victim is a constitutive determinant of committing to a murder, having a violent temper is just a non-constitutive determinant of committing to a murder.

As noted, the standard formulation of intellectualism also uses the construction ‘A depends on B’, and since this construction can be read as indicating either B is a constitutive determinant of A or B is a non-constitutive determinant of A, the standard formulation can also be interpreted in two different ways:

*Intellectualism A.* S’s truth-relevant factors with respect to p are the only constitutive determinants of S’s epistemic position with respect to p.

*Intellectualism B.* S’s truth-relevant factors with respect to p are the only non-constitutive determinant of S’s epistemic position with respect to p.

Obviously, *Intellectualism A* is more plausible than *Intellectualism B*—according to the ordinary concept of knowledge, truth-relevant factors are a constitutive, rather than non-constitutive, determinant of epistemic

position. For instance, part of knowing that *p* is to possess certain truth-relevant factors with respect to *p* such as having evidence for *p*, generating *p* in terms of a reliable belief-forming process etc. For this reason, ‘intellectualism’ is used to denote *Intellectualism A* hereafter. Likewise, ‘anti-intellectualism’ will denote the denial of *Intellectualism A*, namely, the view that pragmatic factors are also a constitutive determinant of epistemic position.

Recently, a number of philosophers appear to substantiate a certain anti-intellectualist position. For instance, in *Knowledge and Lottery*, John Hawthorne writes that:

[W]hether a particular subject-time-proposition triple is included in the extension of ‘know’ depends not merely upon the kinds of factors traditionally adverted to in accounts of knowledge—whether the subject believes the proposition, whether that proposition is true, whether the subject has good evidence, whether the subject is using a reliable method, and so on—but also upon the kinds of factors ... [that] include (some or all of) the attention, interests, and stakes of that subject at that time. (Hawthorne 2004: 158)

On a natural reading, Hawthorne’s view is that *S*’s epistemic position with respect to *p* depends constitutively on both *S*’s evidence for *p*, *S*’s belief-forming process, etc. (“the kinds of factors traditionally adverted to in accounts of knowledge”) and pragmatic factors such as *S*’s attention, interests, and stakes, and so on. Hawthorne’s view, hence, can be classified as a brand of anti-intellectualism by the present formulation.

In *Knowledge and Practical Interest*, Jason Stanley has argued for the



view that he calls *interest-relative invariantism* (IRI), which is also anti-intellectualist by nature:

So far, I have just appealed to an account of knowledge according to which knowing a true proposition one believes is a matter of having good evidence for it (where ‘good’ is explained in terms of some notion of probability). The way that IRI enters into this so far familiar account of knowledge is via the notion of a serious practical question... If what is at issue in a given knowledge ascription is a proposition that is a serious practical question for the subject of ascription at the time of the putative knowing, then the subject must have evidence that reduces the probability of the negation of this proposition to a sufficiently low level, where what is sufficiently low is determined, by the costs of being wrong. (Stanley 2005: 91–92)

The general rationale for IRI is that “it is immensely plausible to take knowledge to be *constitutively* connected to action, in the sense that one should act only on what one knows” (Stanley 2005: 9; my italics). In the present terminology, Stanley’s view is that the constitutive determinants of S’s epistemic position with respect to p include both S’s evidence for p and pragmatic factors such as whether or not p is a serious practical question for S.

In *Knowledge in an Uncertain World*, Jeremy Fantl and Matthew McGrath claim that knowledge is closely connected to action such that:

(KJ) If one knows that p, then p is warranted enough to justify one in  $\Phi$ -ing, for any  $\Phi$ ,

where  $p$  is warranted enough to justify one in  $\Phi$ -ing means that one's truth-relevant factors<sup>3</sup> with respect to  $p$  do not stand in the way of  $p$  justifying one in  $\Phi$ -ing (Fantl and McGrath 2009: 66). According to Fantl and McGrath, KJ together with the view that they call *fallibilism*—the view that one can know that  $p$  even if there is, for one, a non-zero epistemic chance that  $p$  is false—imply *pragmatic encroachment*, the view that “[epistemic position] can vary with variations in pragmatic factors, holding fixed truth-related factors” (Fantl and McGrath 2009: 194). On a quite natural interpretation, pragmatic encroachment is an anti-intellectualist view that implies that the pragmatic condition that  $p$  is warrant enough to justify one in  $\Phi$ -ing is a constitutive determinant of  $S$ 's epistemic position with respect to  $p$ .

In brief, anti-intellectualism appears to have gradually gained a purchase on several fine works in the field. Since intellectualism has been the orthodox view, it is sensible for us to examine closely the arguments for anti-intellectualism that these philosophers propose.

But before we get to two main arguments against intellectualism, let us introduce a view that plays an instrumental role in the present discussion:

*Epistemic pragmatism.*  $S$ 's epistemic position may vary with pragmatic factors such as stakes, interests, etc. in an epistemically interesting way.

Epistemic pragmatism implies that there can be two subjects  $S1$  and  $S2$ , who are identical in all aspects except for certain pragmatic factors, say,

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<sup>3</sup> Fantl and McGrath use the term ‘epistemic position’ to refer to what I call truth-relevant factors.

the stakes in whether or not  $p$  are high for  $S1$  but low for  $S2$ , and that  $S2$  (but not  $S1$ ) is in a position to know that  $p$ .

Now, anti-intellectualism is a special case of epistemic pragmatism:  $S$ 's epistemic position will certainly vary with pragmatic factors if pragmatic factors are a constitutive determinant of  $S$ 's epistemic position. However, perhaps surprisingly, intellectualism is also compatible with epistemic pragmatism. The distinction between constitutive and non-constitutive determinants allows us to see clearly how to combine epistemic pragmatism with intellectualism. Consider the view that pragmatic factors are not constitutive determinants but rather non-constitutive determinants of  $S$ 's epistemic position. Call this view *pragmatic penetration* (also cf. Lee 2016). Pragmatic penetration is a kind of epistemic pragmatism as  $S$ 's epistemic position will vary with pragmatic factors if pragmatic factors are a non-constitutive determinant of epistemic position. However, pragmatic penetration is compatible with intellectualism as it regards pragmatic factors as merely non-constitutive determinants of epistemic positions.

Put differently, anti-intellectualism and pragmatic penetration are two special cases of epistemic pragmatism. While anti-intellectualism rejects intellectualism, pragmatic penetration is compatible with intellectualism. This shows that epistemic pragmatism, by itself, is compatible with intellectualism. For the present purposes, it is important to be clear on the relation among epistemic pragmatism, intellectualism, anti-intellectualism, and pragmatic penetration, since two of the most prominent arguments for anti-intellectualism, by themselves, do not favor anti-intellectualism over pragmatic penetration (or *vice versa*), or so I will argue. Moreover, as will become clear below, denying intellectualism comes with a very high price (cf. Section 6). So, perhaps it is better to take the alleged arguments for

anti-intellectualism to be arguments for pragmatic penetration instead (cf. Section 7).

A final note. I have said that pragmatic penetration and anti-intellectualism are two special cases of epistemic pragmatism. Since pragmatic penetration is compatible with intellectualism, while anti-intellectualism is not, they are two incompatible views. But does that mean that epistemic pragmatism, which has two incompatible special cases, is an incoherent view? Not really. Consider an analogy. In the discussion of free will, hard determinism and libertarianism are two incompatible views. Moreover, hard determinism and libertarianism are two special cases of anti-compatibilism. Anti-compatibilism, however, is by no means an incoherent view.

### III. Stanley's Argument against Intellectualism

Stanley has offered an argument against intellectualism based on the idea that knowledge is intrinsically connected to action. His argument relies on a pair of *stakes-shifting cases*<sup>4</sup> such as the following:

*Low Stakes.* Hannah and her wife Sarah are driving home on 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

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<sup>4</sup> The term is used in Schaffer (2006).

important that their paychecks are deposited right away, Hannah says, ‘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.’

*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 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: 3–4)

Our intuitions regarding *Stakes* are that Hannah knows that the bank will be open tomorrow” in *Low Stakes* but not in *High Stakes*. Moreover, it is clear that it is appropriate for Hannah to act on the proposition *The bank will be open tomorrow* in *Low Stakes* but not in *High Stakes*. That is, it is appropriate for Hannah to deposit their paychecks on Saturday morning in *Low Stakes* but not in *High Stakes*. In other words, whether or not Hannah knows that the bank will be open tomorrow co-varies with whether or not it is appropriate for Hannah to act on *The bank will be open tomorrow*. Stanley concludes that cases like *Stakes* “make vivid our commitment to the conceptual connection between knowledge and practical reasoning” (Stanley 2005: 98). The conceptual commitment between knowledge and practical reasoning provides “a prima facie case for the thesis that knowledge is not just a matter of non-practical facts, but is also a matter of *how much is at stake*” (Stanley 2005: 6).

For the sake of argument, we may reconstruct Stanley's argument as follows. Let us call the following "Stanley Thesis":

(ST) S knows that p only if S can act upon p.

An important implication of (ST) is that:

(1) Knowledge has a pragmatic condition that the subject can act upon the proposition claimed to be known.

Now, it seems undeniable that whether or not S can act upon p depends in part on pragmatic factors such as S's stakes in whether or not p. (1), thus, implies that:

(2) Whether or not S knows that p depends in part on pragmatic factors such as S's stakes in whether or not p.

In the aforementioned argument, Stanley has taken (2) to imply the denial of intellectualism. But is it?

Notice that Stanley does not address the two senses of dependence articulated above. With the distinction between constitutive and non-constitutive determinants at hand, however, we are in a position to "disambiguate" (2) into two variants:

(2a) Pragmatic factors such as S's stakes in whether or not p are a constitutive determinants of S's knowledge that p.

(2b) Pragmatic factors such as S's stakes in whether or not p are a non-constitutive determinants of S's knowledge that p.

In other words, from the premises (ST) and (1), we can deduce either (2a) or (2b). This is important as it is not hard to recognize that while (2a) represents anti-intellectualism, (2b) represents pragmatic penetration, which is compatible with intellectualism—that is, only (2a), but not (2b), implies the denial of intellectualism.

But if (ST) and (1) imply either (2a) or (2b), then we do not get the result that (ST) and (1) imply the denial of intellectualism. By contrast, (ST) and (1) will imply the denial of intellectualism only if we assume that (2b) does not hold, namely, only if we assume that pragmatic penetration is false. Since Stanley's original argument consists of (ST) and (1), it follows that Stanley's argument by itself does not support anti-intellectualism, not unless it presupposes that pragmatic penetration, or (2b), is false.

Put in another way, (2), by itself, merely indicates epistemic pragmatism, which is compatible with both (2a) and (2b). Since anti-intellectualism and pragmatic penetration are two special cases of epistemic pragmatism, Stanley's argument thus fails to support anti-intellectualism over pragmatic penetration and *vice versa*. Since pragmatic penetration is compatible with intellectualism, this indicates that Stanley's argument fails to support anti-intellectualism over intellectualism, too.

#### **IV. Fantl and McGrath's Argument against Intellectualism**

Fantl and McGrath (2009) argue that fallibilism together with KJ imply the falsity of intellectualism. Recall that fallibilism is the view that one can know that *p* even if there is, for one, a non-zero epistemic chance that *p* is false.

Fantl and McGrath's argument also appeals to stakes-shifting cases. But for the ease of presentation, I will not address their own pair of cases but rather introduce their argument in terms of *Stakes*. Suppose that, in *Low Stakes*, Hannah fallibly knows that the bank will be open tomorrow. By fallibilism, the epistemic chance for Hannah that the bank will not be open tomorrow is non-zero in *Low Stakes*. Since Hannah knows that the bank will be open tomorrow, by KJ, Hannah's truth-relevant factors with respect to *The bank will be open tomorrow* do not stand in the way of *The bank will be open tomorrow* justifying Hannah in depositing their paychecks on Saturday morning. This is testified by *Low Stakes*, as it seems appropriate for Hannah to deposit their paycheck on Saturday morning.

Now, since the epistemic chance for Hannah that the bank will not be open tomorrow is non-zero, we can construct a case where the small chance of error could have made a difference to whether or not Hannah should deposit their paychecks on Saturday morning. Let *High Stakes* be such a case. In *High Stakes*, since Hannah's stakes in whether or not the bank will be open tomorrow are so high, her truth-relevant factors—i.e., there is a very small, though non-zero, epistemic chance for her that the bank will not be open tomorrow—clearly stand in the way of *The bank will be open tomorrow* justifying her in depositing their paychecks on Saturday morning. If, so, then, by KJ, Hannah does not know that the bank will be open tomorrow in *High Stakes*. Fantl and McGrath further claim that Hannah's truth-relevant factors with respect to *The bank will be open tomorrow* are such that they remain constant across *Low Stakes* and *High Stakes*.

As a result, Hannah knows that the bank will be open tomorrow in *Low Stakes* but not in *High Stakes*. Similarly, Hannah's truth relevant factors do not stand in the way of *The bank will be open tomorrow*



justifying Hannah in depositing their paychecks on Saturday morning in *Low Stakes*, while her truth-relevant factors fail to do so in *High Stakes*. Since Hannah's truth relevant factors are stipulated to remain constant across *Low Stakes* and *High Stakes*, the shift of Hannah's knowledge status must not depend on her truth-relevant factors alone. Fantl and McGrath then conclude that the pragmatic factors such as stakes are a constituent (constitutive determinant) of S's epistemic position with respect to p. To sum up, fallibilism and KJ imply the denial of intellectualism.

Let us reconstruct Fantl and McGrath's argument. As noted, Fantl and McGrath contend that:

(KJ) If one knows that p, then p is warranted enough to justify one in  $\Phi$ -ing, for any  $\Phi$ .

Based on (KJ) and fallibilism, Fantl and McGrath then construct a pair cases such as *Low* and *High Stakes* in which the following hold:

(3) S knows that p in a low-stakes scenario  $C_L$  but not in a high-stakes scenario  $C_H$ , where the main difference between these two cases consists in the stakes in play.

Now, based on the ordinary conception of knowledge and the specification of  $C_L$  and  $C_H$ , the following appear to hold:

(4) If (3), then either S's truth-relevant factors with respect to p do vary with  $C_L$  and  $C_H$ , or pragmatic factors such as stakes are a constituent (constitutive determinant) of S's epistemic position with respect to p.

Moreover, Fantl and McGrath assume that:

- (5) S's truth-relevant factors with respect to p do not vary with  $C_L$  and  $C_H$ .

From (3) to (5), we can conclude that:

- (6) Pragmatic factors such as stakes are a constituent (constitutive determinant) of S's epistemic position with respect to p.

Does Fantl and McGrath's argument successfully repudiate intellectualism? I do not think so. Surely, the argument from (3) to (6) is a valid argument, and (6) is the denial of intellectualism. Still, this argument is in a position to deny intellectualism only if all of its premises are true—in particular, (5) is true. But we have seen that the truth of (5) is assumed, rather than argued, by Fantl and McGrath. This is problematic as it is by no means mandatory for the intellectualist to accept (5).

Suppose the intellectualist adopts pragmatic penetration, i.e., the view that S's truth-relevant factors depends constitutively on pragmatic factors such as stakes. She is thus in a position to deny (5), namely, she can claim that S's truth-relevant factors with respect to p do vary with  $C_L$  and  $C_H$ , as the stakes in play have been different between  $C_L$  and  $C_H$ . Obviously, if the intellectualist does not accept (5), she does not have to accept (6) either.

Put in another way, (3) by itself only gives rise to epistemic pragmatism—if (3) holds, then either pragmatic penetration holds (i.e., S's truth-relevant factors with respect to do vary with  $C_L$  and  $C_H$ ) or anti-intellectualism holds (i.e., pragmatic factors such as stakes are a constitutive determinant of S's epistemic position with respect to p). Since Fantl and McGrath only assume, rather than argue, that pragmatic penetration does not hold, their argument by itself fails to support anti-

intellectualism over pragmatic penetration and *vice versa*. Since pragmatic penetration is compatible with intellectualism, this indicates that Fantl and McGrath's argument, too, fails to support anti-intellectualism over intellectualism.

Where are we now? We have seen that two of the most prominent arguments for anti-intellectualism are really arguments for epistemic pragmatism instead. In particular, these arguments, by themselves, do not favor anti-intellectualism over pragmatic penetration and *vice versa*. And since pragmatic penetration is compatible with intellectualism, these arguments, by themselves, do not favor anti-intellectualism over intellectualism and *vice versa*.

But perhaps we can turn the table on the proponents of anti-intellectualism. In the following two sections, I will argue that there is no principled reason to reject pragmatic penetration and that accepting intellectualism intuitively plausible. If so, perhaps it is more plausible to regard the alleged arguments against (for) intellectualism (anti-intellectualism) as arguments for (against) intellectualism (anti-intellectualism) instead.

## **V. Worry about Pragmatic Penetration**

I have noted that Fantl and McGrath's argument against intellectualism has presupposed, rather than argued for, the denial of pragmatic penetration. But to be fair, while they do not argue against pragmatic penetration in their (2009), they do appear to offer such an argument in their (2011). Their argument, if successful, would give rise to a principled reason against pragmatic penetration and so justify taking the

aforementioned arguments to be arguments not just for epistemic pragmatism but also for anti-intellectualism. In what follows, let us examine and assess Fantl and McGrath's argument.

Fantl and McGrath have argued that pragmatic factors have a direct bearing on one's truth-conducive factors with regard to  $p$  (in their terms, the 'epistemic dimensions one stands on with respect to  $p$ ')

[Y]our standing on many epistemic dimensions isn't plausibly affected by mere changes in practical environment. Consider probability: you are offered a high-stakes bet on the proposition this die will come up 6, that doesn't seem to lower its possibility for you and it certainly does not raise the probability for you that it will come up 1-5, or any of 1-5 individually. We see no reason to think that matters are different when the probabilities approach 1, and so when it can seem plausible that, before being offered the bet, you know. (Fantl and McGrath 2011: 653)

Here, one's truth-relevant factors with respect to  $p$  are characterized by the probability for one that  $p$  is the case. It does seem plausible, at least initially, that the probability for one that the die will come up 6 is not affected by whether or not one has a stake in the die coming up 6.

It seems to me that Fantl and McGrath's line of objection crystallizes a widespread, if only implicitly, worry about pragmatic penetration. Many, I suspect, will be sympathetic to Fantl and McGrath's idea that pragmatic factors such as stakes do not affect the probability for one that  $p$  is the case. But I think Fantl and McGrath's counterexample to pragmatic penetration is essentially misguided. I will offer two objections.

Firstly, Fantl and McGrath's case, strictly, does not falsify pragmatic penetration. In principle, pragmatic penetration is compatible with the claim that the probability for one that, say, the die will come up 6 is not affected by whether or not one has a stake in the die coming up 6. Pragmatic penetration requires that pragmatic factors *sometimes* (or in *some* cases) play a role in determining one's truth-relevant factors with regard to *p*; the view does not require that pragmatic factors *always* (or in *all* cases) play such a role. For according to pragmatic penetration, pragmatic factors *may* have a (non-constitutive) impact on some of the constitutive determinants of knowledge, say truth-relevant factors, but this does not imply that pragmatic factors *must* have an impact on truth-relevant factors. Hence, pragmatic penetration is perfectly compatible with the alleged intuition that the probability for one that the die will come up 6 is insensitive to the variation of one's stakes in whether or not the die will come up 6.

Secondly, and more importantly, the conclusion Fantl and McGrath draw is contentious. Fantl and McGrath simply claim that having high stakes in whether or not the die will come up 6 "doesn't seem to lower its possibility for you", but this claim is problematic. To illustrate, we need to distinguish between *objective probability* and *epistemic probability*—here, objective probability denotes physical probability or chances, while epistemic probability, probability determined by one's evidence (cf. Williamson 2000). It seems overwhelmingly plausible that the objective probability that the die will come up 6 in Fantl and McGrath's case is not affected by whether or not the subject has a stake in the die coming up 6. Objective probability, however, cannot be used to characterize humans' epistemic position, as it is not always accessible to humans.

When Fantl and McGrath talk about "the probability for you that [the

die] will come up 1-5”, they are best interpreted as talking about epistemic probability. Roughly, S’s epistemic probability of p is the probability of p for S *conditional on S’s total body of evidence and background knowledge*. However, it is less clear that one’s epistemic probability of p is never affected by whether or not one has a stake in p being the case. For instance, if one’s stakes in whether or not p is the case are high, it seems that one would tend to be more cautious and take fewer things for granted (thereby “shrinking” one’s background knowledge), and this may have an effect on one’s epistemic probability of p. To illustrate, suppose that, in Fantl and McGrath’s case, the agent’s initial epistemic probability of *The die will come up 6* is 1/6. Arguably, the agent’s epistemic probability of *The die will come up 6* is based on her background knowledge (or evidence) that the die is fair. When the stakes are high, however, it seems that the agent would (should) cease to take *The die is fair* for granted and would (should) take the (arguably very low) probability of the die being unfair into account. In other words, it seems plausible that the agent would have a different epistemic probability of *The die will come up 6* when the stakes are high. Pragmatic penetration, hence, survives Fantl and McGrath’s counterexample.

## VI. Intellectualism and the Norm of Challenging a Claim

If what has been said is correct, there is no principled reason to reject pragmatic penetration. In this section, I want to further argue that preserving intellectualism is a very plausible move or that denying intellectualism comes with a very high price. And so, there is a very good reason to interpret Stanley’s and Fantl and McGrath’s aforementioned

arguments as arguments for pragmatic penetration instead.

The most powerful support for intellectualism is really its intuitive plausibility. Keith DeRose calls intellectualism a “highly intuitive thesis” (DeRose 2009: 24). Even Fantl and McGrath admit that the view “seems clearly true” for many (Fantl and McGrath 2009: 28). To bring home this point, I will examine the ordinary pattern of raising a challenge, i.e., how we typically challenge or raise questions about someone’s claims.

Again, the distinction between constitutive and non-constitutive determinant is instrumental here. An important difference between a constitutive determinant of C and a non-constitutive determinant of C is that when assessing whether or not C obtains, one must take all C’s constitutive determinant into account. For instance, when assessing whether or not John is a bachelor, one must take into account whether John is single or not. By contrast, no non-constitutive determinant of C should be taken into account when assessing whether or not C obtains. For instance, it will be inappropriate if one takes Jim being financially insecure into account when considering whether Jim is a bachelor or not.

As a result, if A is a constitutive determinant of C, it is always appropriate for one to challenge someone’s claim that C obtains by claiming that A does not obtain (or an alternative A\* obtains) or questioning whether A obtains or not. Consider the following:

Sue: “John is a bachelor.”

Jean: “But John is a girl!”

Jean\*: “Do you know that John is not a dude?”

Jean’s and Jean\*’s challenges to Sue’s claim are appropriate, since being a

male is a constitutive determinant of being a bachelor. So, when assessing whether someone is a bachelor or not, one must take into account whether this person is a male or not.

Notice that being a constitutive determinant is a *transitive* relation: if A is a constitutive determinant of B, and B is a constitutive determinant of C, then A is a constitutive determinant of C. For instance, suppose that having the XY chromosome is a constitutive determinant of being a male. By the transitivity of constitutive determinants, having the XY chromosome is also a constitutive determinant of being a male.

Sometimes, it seems odd to challenge someone's claim that C obtains by claiming that A does not obtain or questioning whether A obtains or not, when A is a constitutive determinant of C. For instance:

Sue: "John is a bachelor."

Joe: "But John does not even have the XY chromosome!"

Joe\*: "Do you know that John does not have the XY chromosome?"

Admittedly, Joe's and Joe\*'s challenges to Sue's claim may sound a bit odd. But this does not undermine the aforementioned claim, as it should be clear that the oddity is not an indication of inappropriateness or violation of conversational norms. After all, a constitutive determinant of being a bachelor is to have the XY chromosome, and so, strictly speaking, it is perfectly proper to challenge someone's claim that S is a bachelor by claiming that S lacks the XY chromosome. Rather, the oddity in play has its roots in the fact that we do not ordinarily cite genetic facts in daily conversation—perhaps this should not be surprising as ordinary people



seldom discuss genetic facts and typically lack a comprehensive grasp of the XY sex-determination system. If Sue, Joe, and Joe\* all are biologists specialized in genetics, the aforementioned dialogue may not sound as odd.

Let us now turn to non-constitutive determinants. Non-constitutive determinants are in stark contrast to constitutive determinants: if B is a non-constitutive determinant of C, then it is always inappropriate for one to challenge someone's claim that C obtains by claiming that B does not obtain (or an alternative B\* obtains) or questioning whether B obtains or not. Perhaps this should not be very surprising: since only the constitutive determinants of C are what should be considered when assessing whether C obtains or not, there is no point in challenging a claim that C obtains by raising questions concerning C's non-constitutive determinants. To illustrate, consider the following dialogue:

Samantha: "Jim is a bachelor."

John: "But Jim has a really thin wallet!" (?)

John\*: "Do you know that Jim has a thin wallet?" (?)

John's and John\*'s challenge to Samantha's claim are inappropriate, as having a thin wallet is not a constitutive determinant but at best a non-constitutive determinant of being a bachelor. This manifests that when assessing whether someone is a bachelor or not, one must not take into account whether this person has a thin wallet or not.

This phenomenon of challenging a claim carries over to challenging knowledge attributions. If A is a constitutive determinant of S's status of knowing, then it is always appropriate for us to challenge someone's claim that S knows that p by claiming that A does not obtain (or an alternative

A\* obtains) or questioning whether A obtains or not. Consider:

Linda: "I know that John is a policeman."

Adam: "But John is not a policeman!"

Adam\*: "Do you know that John is not a policeman?"

On the standard account, truth is a constitutive determinant of knowledge, or p being true is a constitutive determinant of knowing that p. This explains why it is appropriate for Adam and Adam\* to challenge Linda's knowledge attribution by raising questions related to the truth of the proposition that John is a policeman.

By contrast, if B is a non-constitutive determinant of S's status of knowing, then it is always inappropriate for one to challenge someone's claim that C obtains by claiming that B does not obtain (or an alternative B\* obtains) or questioning whether B obtains or not. Consider the following:

Lisa: "I know that James is an NBA player."

Alan: "But James is a Taiwanese!" (?)

Alan\*: "Do you know that James is a Taiwanese?" (?)

Suppose that being drafted is a constitutive determinant of being an NBA player and that being a Taiwanese renders one less likely to be drafted by an NBA team and so less likely to be an NBA player. That is, being a Taiwanese is a non-constitutive determinant of being an NBA player. This explains why it is inappropriate for Alan and Alan\* to challenge Lisa's knowledge attribution by raising questions related to James' nationality.

If what has been said is correct, we have a straightforward way to see whether pragmatic factors are a constitutive or non-constitutive determinant of knowledge. Since S's epistemic position with respect to p is a constitutive determinant of S's knowledge that p, if a certain pragmatic factor  $\Phi$  is a constitutive determinant of S's epistemic position with respect to p, then by the transitivity of constitutive determinants,  $\Phi$  is also a constitutive determinant of S's knowledge that p. But if  $\Phi$  is a constitutive determinant of S's knowledge that p, we should find it appropriate to challenge someone's knowledge attribution that S knows that p by claiming that  $\Phi$  does not obtain (or an alternative  $\Phi^*$  obtains) or questioning whether  $\Phi$  obtains or not. Otherwise, we should take  $\Phi$  to be merely a non-constitutive determinant of S's knowledge that p. Viewed in this light, consider the following:

Liz: "I know that James is an NBA player."

Ted: "But your stakes in whether or not James is an NBA player are too high!" (?)

Ted\*: "Do you know that your stakes in whether or not James is an NBA player are very high?" (?)

To the extent that Ted's and Ted\*'s challenges of Liz's knowledge attribution sound inappropriate, this indicates that pragmatic factors such as stakes are not a constitutive determinant of one's epistemic position: if pragmatic factors were a constitutive determinant of one's epistemic position, they are also a constitutive determinant of one's status of knowledge, and if so, it should be appropriate for one to challenge someone's knowledge claim by raising questions related to such factors. In other words, linguistic data such as the aforementioned dialogue indicate

that pragmatic factors are merely a non-constitutive determinant of one's status of knowledge, and hence that anti-intellectualism is false.

By way of rounding up this section, let me clarify two points. First, if what has been said is correct, linguistic data concerning challenging a claim manifest that intellectualism (anti-intellectualism) is intuitively very plausible (implausible). Admittedly, this is not a conclusive reason for (against) intellectualism (anti-intellectualism). But providing conclusive arguments is not my goal in the first place. My goal, rather, is to highlight the very high cost of denying (endorsing) intellectualism (anti-intellectualism), for this will arguably shift the burden of proof back to anti-intellectualists, so much so that in the absence of overturning evidence to the contrary, we should refrain from committing ourselves to anti-intellectualism.

Second, a crucial thesis of the aforementioned argument is that it is appropriate (inappropriate) to challenge one's claim that C obtains by claiming that A does not obtain (or an alternative A\* obtains) or questioning whether A obtains or not, where A is a constitutive (non-constitutive) determinant of C. I want to clarify that, by accepting this thesis, I do not mean to deny that a speaker may choose to challenge a claim that C obtains by raising questions regarding C's non-constitutive determinants. Nor do I deny that challenging a claim that C obtains by raising questions regarding C's non-constitutive determinants may sometimes play a communicative role. The reason is that while raising questions concerning non-constitutive determinants violates the conversational norm of challenging a claim, sometimes such a violation may serve some conversational purposes. Consider an analogy. Conversational implicatures are sometimes generated by explicitly violating certain conversational

norms (cf. Grice 1975). So, perhaps it is also possible to violate the norm of challenging a claim if the point of the conversation in play is to implicate something else.

Be that as it may, notice that just because violating a certain conversational norm may serve some specific conversational purposes, it does not follow that there is no difference between conforming to and violating a norm. What the aforementioned dialogues show is not that one *cannot* challenge a claim that C obtains by raising questions concerning C's non-constitutive determinants but rather that doing so is not a way to conform to the norm of challenging a claim.

## VII. Taking Stock

Intellectualism is intuitively plausible. Specifically, the denial of intellectualism does not square well with the conversational pattern of challenging a claim. Hence, other things being equal, we should give up this view only if there is sufficient overturning evidence showing that the cost of keeping it is too high.

Stanley has argued that intellectualism is incompatible with our commitment to the conceptual connection between knowledge and action, whereas Fantl and McGrath have argued that intellectualism is incompatible with fallibilism and KJ. Contrary to these theorists, I argue that their arguments are really arguments for epistemic pragmatism, of which both anti-intellectualism and pragmatic penetration are special cases—more exactly, their arguments, by themselves, do not favor anti-intellectualism over pragmatic penetration (and *vice versa*).

Perhaps Stanley's and Fantl McGrath's arguments against

intellectualism can still be salvaged, if there is a principled reason against pragmatic penetration. But the prospects of this line of defense are dim, as careful scrutiny reveals that a widespread argument against pragmatic penetration is indeed misguided.

Now given that intellectualism is intuitively plausible—that anti-intellectualism comes with a significant cost—and that there is no principled reason to reject pragmatic penetration (at least not off-handedly), perhaps we should draw a different conclusion here: to the extent that we should preserve intellectualism, we should refrain from taking Stanley's and Fantl and McGrath's arguments to be arguments for anti-intellectualism and instead take them to be arguments for pragmatic penetration. But if so, intellectualism survives Stanley's and Fantl and McGrath's arguments, for as noted, pragmatic penetration is compatible with intellectualism.

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# 論最近兩個反對智性主義的 論證

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## 摘要

根據智性主義 (intellectualism)，影響 S 對 p 的認知地位 (epistemic position) 的因素，只能是與 p 是否為真相關的因素 (truth-relevant factor)。近年來，有不少的哲學家對智性主義提出強而有力的反對論證。本文將探討其中兩個重要的反對論證。筆者主張，這兩個論證其實並沒有辦法證明，非智性主義比智性主義更合理。並且，通過檢視日常語言中，挑戰一個宣稱 (challenging a claim) 的語言資料 (linguistic data)，筆者將說明智性主義是非常符合一般人的直覺的。

關鍵詞：智性主義、知性實用主義、實用入侵主義、實用穿透主義、利益相對不變主義、知識的本質

