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# Encroachment on Emotion

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## Abstract

This paper introduces a novel form of pragmatic encroachment: one that makes a difference to the status of emotion rather than the status of belief. I begin by isolating a distinctive standard in terms of which we can evaluate emotion – one sometimes called “subjective fittingness,” “epistemic justification,” or “warrant.” I then show how this standard for emotion could face a kind of pragmatic encroachment importantly similar to the more familiar encroachment on epistemic standards for belief. Encroachment on warranted emotion is a striking proposal that deserves attention. In fact, there are good reasons to think that encroachment on warranted emotion deserves to be considered the default view for those who already accept pragmatic encroachment on the epistemic status of belief. I support this parity claim by arguing for a principle that establishes a limited coordination between the conditions that warrant emotion and the conditions that justify belief.

**Keywords:** Emotion; fittingness; pragmatic encroachment; moral encroachment; impurism; epistemic justification; coherence

Defenders of *pragmatic or moral encroachment on the epistemic status of belief* (for short, “encroachment on belief”<sup>1</sup>) claim that the epistemic status of a belief that *p* can depend on certain practical or moral considerations –including ones that do not bear on the truth or likelihood of *p*.<sup>2</sup> This is a surprising claim. After all, we first get a grip on the notion of

<sup>1</sup>The phrase “encroachment on belief” might suggest a view on which truth-irrelevant considerations make a difference to whether someone counts as believing a proposition (see Weatherson 2005; Ganson 2008). Note that this is not my usage.

<sup>2</sup>Pragmatic and moral encroachment come in many varieties; for surveys, see Kim (2017) and Bolinger (2020). It’s worth noting that pragmatic encroachers have in mind a particular kind of dependence, one that’s importantly distinct from mere *causal* dependence. Many prominent discussions of encroachment take the relevant sort of dependence to bring with it a *shifty* epistemology, wherein the epistemic status of belief varies across cases where traditionally epistemic features are held fixed. (For this assumption, see Stanley 2005: 2; Weatherson 2005: 594; Gardiner 2018; Moss 2018: 190). But some also use “pragmatic encroachment” to pick out views on which pragmatic and moral features play a background role in

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distinctively *epistemic* standards for belief by setting aside certain truth-irrelevant practical factors, like incentives and disincentives for believing. Being offered a monetary reward for believing that Bigfoot exists, for instance, may make it *desirable* or *useful* for you to have that belief. It might even make it the case that you have *most reason* to, or that you *all-things-considered ought* to, believe that Bigfoot exists. But it's very tempting to think that there are at least some modes of belief-evaluation that are not sensitive to incentives like this; a bribe cannot make a difference to whether you are *epistemically justified* in believing, or to whether you *know*, that Bigfoot exists. Defenders of encroachment on belief take this tempting thought at face value. They accept that there is a narrowly epistemic mode of belief-evaluation, one which sets aside factors like bribes and threats for believing. (This is what distinguishes encroachers from *pragmatists*.) But they insist, nevertheless, that a belief's epistemic status is nevertheless subtly sensitive to certain other practical or moral facts. (This is what distinguishes encroachers from *purists*.)<sup>3</sup>

Suppose that there is indeed encroachment on the epistemic status of belief. Is the phenomenon limited to the standards that we use to evaluate belief? Or are there other standards – ones that might seem to be insulated from practical and moral facts – that are similarly subject to a surprising kind of encroachment?

When we raise this question about the reach of encroachment, a natural first place to look is emotion. There are some questions about the status of emotion that bear striking similarities to questions about the epistemic status of belief.<sup>4</sup> Take, for instance, the question of whether anger is *fitting*. Just as we first get a grip on distinctively *epistemic* questions about belief by setting aside certain facts about the costs and benefits of believing, we first get a grip on the question of whether an emotion is fitting by setting aside certain facts about the costs and benefits of emoting. The fact that my anger is unproductive, for example, may mean that my anger is undesirable or that I *all-things-considered ought not* to have it. But it does not make my anger unfitting.

At least some important standards for the evaluation of emotion, then, aspire to insulation from a certain kind of practical and moral consideration. There are, in other words, standards for the evaluation of emotion regarding which pragmatic or moral encroachment would be a surprising claim, and one worthy of discussion. But, while encroachment on belief has enjoyed robust discussion over the last twenty years, the possibility of encroachment on emotion has gone largely unnoticed. And where it has been briefly mentioned, the discussion has been notably skeptical.<sup>5</sup> This paper offers a sympathetic introduction to this much-neglected proposal. I aim to show not only that encroachment on emotion is a striking proposal worthy of serious attention, but further, that it should be the default view for those who already accept

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explaining highly stable, non-shifty epistemic facts. (See, for instance, Locke 2017; Hannon 2020.) This paper will focus on the former sort of dependence.

<sup>3</sup>Worsnip (2021) draws a similar distinction between “hard pragmatists,” “moderate pragmatists” (including pragmatic and moral encroachers), and “anti-pragmatists.”

<sup>4</sup>This point plays a prominent role in motivating arguments regarding moral encroachment in Fritz (2020) and Howard (2021).

<sup>5</sup>Howard (2021) and Leary (Forthcoming) both mention, and then dismiss, the proposal that there is encroachment on emotion. Leary argues that encroachment on emotion sets the evidential threshold for warranted emotion in a way that is unprincipled and unattractive. I hope that the model I offer in this paper's third section will help readers to see that a defender of encroachment on emotion can set evidential requirements on warranted emotion in a way that's entirely principled and attractive. I set aside Howard's challenges here, since they are aimed not at encroachment on emotion per se but at a particular way to develop the view – one inspired by the view defended by Basu and Schroeder (2019).

encroachment on belief. If this is right, then the contemporary discussion's narrow focus on encroachment on belief has been needlessly parochial.

The first part of the paper will explain what it would mean for there to be encroachment on fitting emotion. Its second part notes that some prominent defenses of encroachment on belief are naturally extended to provide similar defenses of encroachment on emotion. And its final part offers some initial moves in support of a principle coordinating standards for warranted emotion and justified belief. Given the plausibility of this principle, I argue, the defenders of encroachment on belief have good reason to be friendly to the possibility of encroachment on emotion as well.

## 1. What Is Encroachment on Emotion?

Encroachment on belief is a claim about the *epistemic status* of belief depending on *truth-irrelevant* practical or moral considerations.<sup>6</sup> What would it mean for this phenomenon to afflict emotion?

Certain views of the relationship between belief and emotion make it very easy to answer this question. *Cognitivists* about emotion, for instance, claim that emotions *constitutively involve* a certain kind of evaluative belief.<sup>7</sup> If cognitivism is correct, then anger constitutively involves a belief to the effect that someone has transgressed, pride constitutively involves a belief that something reflects well on one, and so on. For cognitivists about emotion, encroachment on emotion would be no great mystery: they can understand the phenomenon straightforwardly in terms of the more familiar phenomenon of encroachment on the epistemic status of (a particular kind of evaluative) belief.

In what follows, I won't assume the truth of cognitivism; I want to make room for the possibility of encroachment on emotion even for those who endorse a looser connection between emotion and belief. This makes more pressing the question of how to formulate the claim that there is encroachment on emotion. My gloss on encroachment on belief mentions *truth-irrelevant* factors, but it's not clear that emotions, like beliefs, can be *true* or *false*.<sup>8</sup> And some, wanting to reserve the label "epistemic" for norms that apply to doxastic states alone, will reject the claim that emotions can have an *epistemic status*.<sup>9</sup> I aim to formulate the thesis that there is encroachment on emotion in a way that even these anti-cognitivist theorists can embrace. In order to do so, I'll lean on an analogy with a distinguished history: the analogy between the truth of belief and the *fittingness* of emotion.

What does it mean to call an emotion *fitting*? Well, many defenders of fitting emotion hold that fittingness is difficult to define or analyze. But it is a familiar property: it's fitting to fear things that are fearsome, to feel disgust toward things that are disgusting, to admire people who are admirable, to feel shame when one has done something

<sup>6</sup>On the influential formulation offered by DeRose (2009: 25), a factor is irrelevant to the truth of *p* just in case it makes no difference to the probability of *p* from the believer's point of view perspective or any more objective point of view.

<sup>7</sup>For defenses of cognitivism, see Solomon (1976), Neu (2000), and Nussbaum (2001).

<sup>8</sup>For the view that emotions can literally be true or false, see Nussbaum (2001: 46), DeSousa (2002), and Salmela (2006).

<sup>9</sup>For this restrictive approach of the term "epistemic," see Kelly (2003); for a less restrictive one, see Kauppinen (2018).

shameful, and so on.<sup>10</sup> The fittingness of an emotion, like the truth of a belief, is not a matter of that emotion being prudent to have, or virtuous to have, or a useful means to one's ends. For an emotion to be fitting is for it to *match* or *fit* the object toward which it is directed, in a certain difficult-to-analyze sense.

To bring out the sort of match in question, contrast two episodes of anger. Suppose that Akari and Bashir both believe that they've been wronged by a co-worker, and on those grounds, they both feel anger. But as it turns out, only Akari has been wronged by a co-worker; Bashir simply received some misleading evidence, and has not been wronged by the co-worker in question. Even those who think that anger is always unproductive, or always morally vicious, or always best-avoided, can agree that there is an important difference between Akari and Bashir here. Akari's anger matches the way that the world actually is; Bashir's anger does not. This is the kind of match we have in mind when we assess the fittingness of emotion.

The canonical discussions of fitting emotion – including ones that reject cognitivism about emotion – hold that there is an important analogy to be drawn between true belief and fitting emotion.<sup>11</sup> In fact, some think that fitting emotions and true beliefs are two species of the same normatively significant genus: fitting (or “correct”) attitudes.<sup>12</sup> Once this initial analogy between fitting emotion and true belief is on the table, other fruitful analogies between belief and emotion come into view. For instance, nearly every view of epistemic norms says that misleading evidence can make a person *epistemically justified* in holding a false belief.<sup>13</sup> And many discussions of fitting emotion make an analogous claim. When Bashir gets misleading evidence that he has been wronged, his anger is unfitting; it does not match the way the world really is. But there is a sense in which his anger is a good fit, or a good match, for his situation: it fits the way that the world is presented by his epistemic position.<sup>14</sup> Many discussions of fitting emotion use a different label to pick out this feature of Bashir's case: they say that emotions like his, while unfitting, are *subjectively fitting*, or *warranted*, or *cognitively rational*, or *epistemically justified*.<sup>15</sup> Now, it's surely no accident that many of the labels used to pick out emotions like Bashir's – such as *rational*, *warranted*, and *epistemically justified* – are also frequently applied to beliefs that meet important epistemic standards. Just as the fittingness of emotion is importantly analogous to true belief, these subjectivized fittingness-properties are importantly analogous to (at least some) epistemic properties of belief.

<sup>10</sup>For introductions to the notion of fitting emotion, see D'Arms and Jacobson (2000) and Howard (2018).

<sup>11</sup>See D'Arms and Jacobson (2000: 72; 2003).

<sup>12</sup>See Schroeder (2012b), McHugh (2014), McHugh and Way (2016), and Sharadin (2016).

<sup>13</sup>For exceptions to this rule, see Littlejohn (2012) and Sutton (2005).

<sup>14</sup>Some may balk at the idea that Akari's anger is fitting in a way that Bashir's is not; if fittingness is simply a matter of emotion *matching the world*, then one can have a fitting emotion irresponsibly, or on the basis of no evidence at all. And this sort of emotion might not seem worthy of the positive appraisal “fitting.” (Thanks to Baron Reed for this challenge.) But note that the same points can be made about true belief; one can have a true belief irresponsibly, or on the basis of no evidence at all. Despite this, it's widely agreed that there is an important sense in which beliefs (unlike other propositional attitudes like *wonderings* or *imaginings*) are successful when true, and unsuccessful when false. This is the kind of success involved in fitting emotion.

<sup>15</sup>“Subjective fittingness” appears in Chappell (2012: 689n10). “Warrant” appears in D'Arms and Jacobson (2000: 78) and Scarantino and De Sousa (2018: sec. 10.1). “Cognitive rationality” appears in DeSousa (1987: 163–4), where it is contrasted with “strategic rationality.” And “epistemic justification” appears in Echeverri (2019: 544).

These two analogies give us the tools we need to offer a more theoretically neutral formulation of the proposal that there is encroachment on emotion. Drawing on the much-cited analogy between true belief and fitting emotion, we can replace our focus on *truth-irrelevant* practical or moral considerations with a focus on *fittingness-irrelevant* practical or moral considerations. In other words, we should focus on practical or moral considerations that do not bear on the fittingness, or on the probable fittingness, of the emotion in question.

We now have a way of picking out the surprising moral and practical facts that do the encroaching. But what is the feature of belief that is encroached upon? Clearly, not fittingness itself. The idea that the fittingness of an emotion can depend on fittingness-irrelevant factors is a non-starter. But the *subjectivized* fittingness-properties that I've surveyed – including rationality, warrant, and epistemic justification – all seem like eligible targets for encroachment. For one, they are importantly analogous to properties of belief – like *epistemic rationality* and *epistemic justification* – that are paradigmatic loci for traditional encroachment views. What's more, it's initially tempting to offer all of these properties of emotion a *purist* treatment: that is, to hold that they do not depend on fittingness-irrelevant factors. To see this, consider examples involving “reasons of the wrong kind” regarding whether to feel an emotion. Just as incentives for believing seem unable to affect whether a belief is epistemically justified, incentives for feeling angry seem unable to affect whether anger is warranted (or epistemically justified, or cognitively rational). Purism is a natural – though, the encroacher will say, a misguided – response to cases like these.

Now, there may be important differences between some of the properties I've canvassed. Some theorists, for instance, will say that emotion cannot be *rational* or *justified*, and will prefer talk of whether emotion is warranted or subjectively fitting.<sup>16</sup> In what follows, I'll use the term “warranted” as a theory-neutral placeholder for the property that emotions have when they “fit,” or “match,” the world as presented by one's epistemic position. Having made this simplification, I offer the following formulation of encroachment on emotion:

There is **pragmatic or moral encroachment on warranted emotion** (for short, “encroachment on emotion”) just in case the warrant for at least one emotion can depend on practical or moral considerations – including ones that do not bear on the fittingness or probable fittingness of that emotion.

It's worth emphasizing that this formulation does not assume, though it leaves open the possibility, that *all* emotions are subject to encroachment.

With this formulation in hand, we can draw a crucial distinction: the distinction between cases where practical and moral considerations make a difference to emotional warrant *via* encroachment, and cases where practical or moral considerations make a difference to emotional warrant *without* encroachment. Everyone should agree that there are cases of the latter sort. New evidence that someone has morally wronged me, for instance, can make a difference to whether I'm warranted in feeling anger toward them. And learning that someone has extraordinary moral virtue can render you warranted in admiring them. But neither of these cases illustrates any kind of encroachment. My formulation explains why: in both cases, the moral considerations that make a difference to your warrant for an emotion are *also* the considerations

<sup>16</sup>See, for instance, Farrell (2004) and Döring (2014).

that make that emotion fitting. Facts about moral wrongdoing are among the facts that can make anger fitting, and facts about moral virtue are among the facts that can make admiration fitting. So these are not cases in which *fittingness-irrelevant* moral or practical considerations make a difference to warrant. If we want an example of encroachment on fitting emotion, we'll have to look elsewhere.

What would it look like for a *fittingness-irrelevant* factor to make a difference to the warrant for emotion? I'll offer the following case-pair as an illustration. I do not insist that there is in fact a difference in emotional warrant across the two cases. But if there is such a difference, that difference stems from encroachment on emotion.

**Engagement Low Stakes** Ximena, Yuri, and Zahra are close friends. Each of them is in a long-term relationship, and each of them wants very badly to be engaged. In fact, the friends are so excited about marriage that they've promised to plan engagement parties for one another. Ximena has sworn to plan Yuri's engagement party, Yuri has sworn to plan Zahra's, and Zahra to plan Ximena's.

One day, Zahra posts a picture to social media. In the picture, she is looking very happy next to her significant other while both stand together on a mountain-top. The caption reads, "I can't believe it – I've been dreaming of this for my whole life, and this past weekend, my dream finally came true! Can't wait to celebrate." On this social media platform, the most probable explanation for a post of this sort is an engagement. Ximena sees the post and, assuming that Zahra is now engaged, feels envious of Zahra.

**Engagement High Stakes** Yuri sees the same social media post that Ximena sees. He recalls that he's sworn to plan Zahra's engagement party. He then sees an advertisement for a limited-time offer for a riverboat party. Zahra and her significant other have said on multiple occasions that they would especially love a riverboat party, and that they would also especially love for it to be planned for them as a surprise. So following the advertisement would be a convenient way to fulfill one of Yuri's commitments. But the fee to book the party is expensive, and the cancellation fee unforgiving. Given the possibility that Zahra is not actually engaged yet, Yuri (rationally and prudentially) ought to confirm that Zahra is engaged before booking the party. Yuri feels envious of Zahra.

Ximena and Yuri have equally strong epistemic support for the proposition that Zahra is engaged to be married. But there is a practical difference between their situations; Yuri, unlike Ximena, is faced with a choice about whether to book the riverboat party. Importantly, however, the fact that Yuri has to choose whether to book the riverboat party is not the sort of consideration that bears on whether envy of Zahra is *fitting*. It does not, in other words, make any more or less probable the claim that something about Zahra's life is genuinely *enviable*. Encroachment on emotion opens up the possibility that, even though the choice that Yuri faces is irrelevant to the *fittingness* of his envy, it makes a difference to whether his envy is *warranted*. Only defenders of encroachment on emotion, in other words, can claim that Ximena's envy of Zahra is warranted while Yuri's envy of Zahra is not warranted.

Now, as I've mentioned, I do not insist that this is the right verdict to reach about Ximena's and Yuri's emotions. My goal at this stage is not to argue that there is in fact

encroachment on emotion, but instead to bring the thesis more clearly into view.<sup>17</sup> Nor do I intend to use intuitive responses to any case-pairs to drive an argument for encroachment on emotion. I agree with Brown (2013) and Roeber (2020) that the most compelling arguments in favor of encroachment on belief do not rest primarily on intuitions about whether subjects have knowledge across high-stakes/low-stakes case-pairs. And I suspect that a similar point holds for encroachment on emotion.

Now that we have a firmer grip on the claim that there is encroachment on emotion, we can turn to the question of whether we should accept that claim. The remainder of the paper offers a limited case in favor of encroachment on emotion. My dialectical goals will be modest: I will not attempt to persuade those who reject encroachment on belief of encroachment on emotion. Nor will I attempt to prove that it's confused or contradictory to defend a view on which encroachment afflicts belief but not emotion. Instead, I'll argue that, for a host of reasons, encroachment on belief and encroachment on emotion are a natural fit. The view that encroachment afflicts standards of warrant for at least some emotions should, I argue, have a sort of default status for defenders of encroachment on belief.

## 2. From Encroachment on Belief to Encroachment on Emotion

I'll argue in two stages for the conclusion that defenders of encroachment on belief should be friendly to encroachment on emotion. First, I'll note that some central motivations for encroachment on belief also seem apt to motivate encroachment on emotion. Second, I'll make a case for a general coordination between standards for warranted emotion and justified belief. If this sort of coordination holds, I'll argue, those who endorse encroachment on belief should also endorse encroachment on emotion.

Some defenses of encroachment on belief lend themselves readily to analogous defenses of encroachment on emotion. To show this, I'll now consider two prominent dialectical moves made in defense of pragmatic encroachment, and show that each is naturally extended to provide support for encroachment on emotion. My goal at this stage is not to say that either of these moves is ultimately successful, either in supporting encroachment on belief or in supporting encroachment on emotion.<sup>18</sup> My goal, instead, is to show that some of the most heavily traveled roads to encroachment on belief are also roads to encroachment on emotion.

One common rhetorical strategy for encroachers involves pointing to questions about epistemic norms that seem hard to answer solely by appeal to truth-relevant considerations. David Owens, for instance, influentially poses the following question to purists: "how are you going to tell us, in purely evidential terms, what level of evidence is needed to justify belief?" (Owens 2000: 26). Owens, here, is raising a question about

<sup>17</sup>There are some high-/low- stakes case-pairs that are much more likely to elicit the intuition of a difference in warranted emotion. McGrath (2018) makes this point about DeRose's classic bank cases; when the stakes are low, McGrath notes, relief that the bank will be open on Saturday seems "appropriate," but when the stakes are high, relief that the bank will be open on Saturday does not seem "appropriate." This is an interesting point, but it's not clear that it demonstrates the truth of encroachment on emotion, precisely because it's not obvious how to understand the fittingness-conditions for relief. (For a look at a similarly vexed question about attitudes that are intimately connected to our expectations, see Baras and Na'aman (Forthcoming) on the fittingness-conditions for surprise.)

<sup>18</sup>In fact, I've argued in other work against the latter approach; see Fritz (2020) and Fritz and Jackson (2021).

(what some have called) the *threshold* for justified belief. He suspects that there is no satisfying way of answering this threshold question without appeal to moral or practical facts. Many encroachers share Owens's suspicion that moral and practical facts are the only ones that could settle certain questions about epistemic standards. And that suspicion can be seen doing important work in a host of arguments for encroachment, including the ones in Pace (2011), Schroeder (2012a), Case (2019), and Hannon (2020).

Strikingly, this rhetorical strategy loses no plausibility when applied to warranted emotion. Standards of warranted emotion must also answer a threshold question; in order to find out whether my emotion is warranted, we need to know not only *how much* gradable epistemic support I have for the emotion's fittingness, but also whether that gradable epistemic support is *enough*. Fittingness-relevant facts – that is, facts that bear on the fittingness or probable fittingness of my anger – seem apt to address the first of these two questions. But it's not clear how they could address the latter. Suppose, for instance, that Robin's evidence justifies a credence of 0.8 that her cousin has wronged her. Is this enough to make Robin warranted in feeling anger toward her cousin? Facts that make the wronging more or less probable, by themselves, do not seem to address this question. Those who suspect that encroachment is the best way to address the threshold question about justified belief will likely be tempted to adopt the same strategy – that is, to appeal to encroachment on emotion – when answering the threshold question for warranted emotion.

A second prominent strategy in recent defenses of encroachment involves appeal to the notion of *doxastic wrongdoing*. Schroeder (2018) and Basu (2019) argue that some beliefs morally wrong others, and further, that they can do so *directly* – that is, in a way that does not solely depend on how they influence one's behavior. Example cases help Schroeder and Basu to make this point; in some cases of racial profiling, and in some cases of believing the worst about a close friend, there seems to be a moral failing. Basu and Schroeder further argue that the moral failing in these cases is a *directed* one; it's the sort of wrong that can morally require an apology to some particular party. General reflections on the nature of belief add plausibility to this picture. Schroeder argues, for instance, that “our interpersonal relationships are in part constituted by our beliefs about one another” (2018: 121), and that this makes beliefs morally significant in their own right.

The case for emotional wrongdoing seems just as strong as – and perhaps even stronger than – the case for doxastic wrongdoing. Racist resentment or fear can be morally troubling, even if it never influences the racist person's behavior. Further, to the extent that it seems plausible that some beliefs require apology, it seems equally plausible that some emotions also require apologies. Finally, emotions, no less than beliefs, partly constitute our interpersonal relationships. For all these reasons, defenders of doxastic wrongdoing will very likely be friendly to emotional wrongdoing as well.

Now, importantly, defending doxastic wrongdoing is not the same as defending moral encroachment on belief; doxastic wrongdoing is a claim about the moral status of belief, whereas moral encroachment is a claim about the *epistemic* status of belief.<sup>19</sup> But Basu and Schroeder both argue that moral encroachment offers a useful tool for defenders of doxastic wrongdoing, because it allows them to minimize the possibility of morally wrongful but epistemically rational belief. More concretely: it allows us to claim that a belief formed through racial profiling is, even if based on probabilistically strong evidence, not just *morally* but also *epistemically* deficient. Again, this move is no less attractive when

<sup>19</sup>For discussion of the relationship between these theses, see Basu (2021).

we move to emotion. If one is troubled by the possibility that belief's distinctive standard – epistemic norms – could permit racist, morally wrongful belief, one will also probably be troubled by the possibility that the distinctive standard for emotion – which I'm supposing, for present purposes, is *warrant* – could permit racist, morally wrongful emotion. And if moral encroachment on belief is the best tool for reducing the former sort of tension, then moral encroachment on emotion will, for similar reasons, be the best tool for reducing the latter sort of tension.

There are, then, some prominent defenses of encroachment on belief that are very naturally extended to provide support for encroachment on emotion as well. But, of course, encroachment on belief can be defended in many other ways as well. And I want to grant that some other prominent defenses of encroachment on belief may not be so easily translated into analogous defenses of encroachment on emotion. So, instead of continuing to support encroachment on emotion through this piecemeal approach, I'll now do so by offering three lines of argument that are more robustly neutral between visions of encroachment on belief.

The three lines of argument that I'll offer all share a common goal. They're aimed at supporting the following claim, which I call "Coordination" because it demands a limited coordination between the evidential standards for warranted emotion and justified belief.

**Coordination** There is at least one emotion-type, *E*, such that tokens of *E* can only be warranted for *S* in epistemic situations that also justify *S* in believing, of the fittingness-conditions for *E*, that they are met.

A few clarifications are in order. First, when I mention warrant and justification in Coordination, I have in mind *ex ante*, not *ex post*, warrant and justification. Second, Coordination involves a requirement that a certain kind of belief be (*ex ante*) justified. My description of that belief's content should be read as a description of the belief *de re*, not *de dicto*; in other words, the believer in question need not be in a position to justifiably form beliefs about fittingness-conditions while thinking about them *as fittingness-conditions*. (To make this more concrete, imagine a character who is angry at Eric, and who is epistemically justified in believing *Eric wronged me*. That character need not, in order to meet the condition I've sketched, also be justified in forming the belief *anger is fitting in my situation*. Since being wronged by Eric makes anger at Eric fitting, the belief *Eric wronged me* is enough.) Finally, it's worth emphasizing that Coordination stops short of the view that *every* emotion is warranted only when certain beliefs are justified.

If Coordination is true, then it's very plausible that encroachment on belief brings with it encroachment on warranted emotion.<sup>20</sup> Coordination says, loosely speaking, that the lack of justification for belief precludes the possibility of warranted emotion. But if there is encroachment on justification for belief, then factors irrelevant to the truth of a belief can preclude justification for that belief. And since the belief in question is a belief that some fittingness-conditions for an emotion are met (*de re*), the factors

<sup>20</sup>There are a few assumptions in the background of this argument. First: encroachment on belief afflicts justification, and not knowledge alone (for an encroachment view that rejects this common assumption, see Moss 2018). Second: beliefs about fittingness-conditions for emotions can, in some circumstances, be justified. Third: in a range of cases where beliefs about fittingness-conditions are justified, emotions are also warranted.

irrelevant to the truth of the belief in question are also factors irrelevant to the fittingness of the emotion in question. So (given Coordination), these fittingness-irrelevant factors preclude not only justified belief but also warranted emotion. Fittingness-irrelevant factors, then, can make a difference to whether an emotion is warranted. In other words, there is encroachment on emotion.

We can illustrate this idea using the Engagement Low Stakes/High Stakes pair from section 1. Many defenders of encroachment on belief will accept that this case illustrates a gap in the justification of belief; they will hold, in other words, that while Ximena has justification to believe that Zahra is engaged, Yuri does not.<sup>21</sup> Now, assume that envy is one of the emotions of which Coordination is true: envy cannot be warranted in cases that do not justify a belief about something enviable. Since Yuri is not justified in believing that Zahra has become engaged (and we can suppose that he is also not justified in believing that anything else enviable is happening in her life), Coordination says that he is not warranted in envying her. If all of this is right, then it seems that fittingness-irrelevant practical facts about Yuri's choice situation are a crucial part of the explanation for why Yuri's envy is unwarranted.<sup>22</sup>

Defenders of encroachment on belief who endorse Coordination, then, should also endorse encroachment on emotion. So we should see what there is to be said in favor of Coordination.

### 3. A Case for Coordination

#### 3.1. *The Kernel of Truth in Cognitivism*

In section 1, I mentioned cognitivism about emotion: the view that emotion constitutively involves (a certain kind of) evaluative belief. Cognitivists about emotion will be very likely to accept Coordination. The most attractive way for a cognitivist to make sense of standards of warrant for emotion is simply to identify those standards with epistemic standards for the beliefs involved in emotion. And nothing coordinates two standards quite as stably as their being identical. So cognitivists who also endorse encroachment on belief will be very likely to accept encroachment on emotion.

A case for Coordination that assumed the truth of cognitivism about emotions, however, would be a very weak case, because cognitivism faces serious challenges. One of the most significant hurdles for cognitivism involves cases of *recalcitrant* emotion. One's emotion is recalcitrant when one feels the emotion while also believing that its fittingness-condition is not met. Suppose, for instance, that I fear a spider despite staunchly believing that it is in no way dangerous. Cognitivists seem forced to say that, in this case, I have contradictory beliefs: I believe both that the spider is dangerous and that it is not. This is a surprising, and *prima facie* implausible, claim. Many have argued that the cognitivist imputes the wrong type of normative failing to recalcitrant emotion, and that we should understand those emotions, instead, as involving a kind of

<sup>21</sup>Many encroachers who defend a tight connection between epistemic norms and practical reasoning will be friendly to this result; see, for instance, Fantl and McGrath (2007, 2009), Hawthorne and Stanley (2008), and Ross and Schroeder (2014).

<sup>22</sup>Some might suspect that neither Ximena's nor Yuri's case provides sufficient evidence for warranted envy. But we can revise the cases so that both characters have much stronger evidence; as long as we also raise the stakes associated with Yuri's choice high enough, many pragmatic encroachers will still hold that he lacks justification.

“conflict without contradiction.”<sup>23</sup> There are serious worries, then, as to whether cognitivism offers the correct account of the nature of emotion.

Despite these worries, however, cognitivism is widely regarded as getting some important things right. One of its virtues is that it reliably identifies a range of cases in which emotions are unwarranted. In cases where I have epistemic justification to believe that my cousin has done nothing wrong, cognitivism rightly says that anger toward my cousin would be unwarranted. In cases where I lack any evidence that my neighbor’s life is better than mine in any respect, cognitivism rightly says that envy toward my neighbor is unwarranted. Even if there are compelling reasons to reject cognitivism’s story about *why* emotions are warranted, then, it’s not clear that there are any good reasons to reject cognitivism’s verdicts about the *cases in which* emotions are warranted. Perhaps for this reason, several prominent rejections of cognitivism take pains to retain the view’s implications about the extension of fitting and warranted emotion.<sup>24</sup> In a slogan: it’s attractive to think that the kernel of truth in cognitivism lies not in its approach to the *nature* of emotion, but instead in its verdicts about the *normative status* of emotion. And cognitivism’s approach to the normative status of emotion amounts to a ringing endorsement of Coordination.

Cognitivism’s track-record of success in identifying the cases that warrant emotion, then, provides one reason to treat Coordination as the default view of warranted emotion. This is a default that might be overturned under further investigation; it might be that, once we start to look carefully at the case for Coordination, it will turn out that any given emotion can in some cases be warranted even though outright belief would be unjustified. But it’s striking that, even though cases of this sort would constitute counterexamples to cognitivism, they have not been widely used as objections to the view. This is some reason to think that the burden of proof is on the theorist who rejects Coordination.

### 3.2. Emotions and Statistical Evidence

Buchak (2014) observes that something seems troubling about emotions based on merely statistical evidence. She supports the point by offering an example in which you learn that one of two people in a room has stolen an iPhone. One of the two, Jake, is a man; the other, Barbara, is a woman. Given sufficiently different base rates of theft in men and women, Buchak says, this might make it highly probable on your evidence that Jake is the one who has stolen the iPhone. On those grounds, she says, you might be in a position to have a *high credence* that Jake stole the iPhone. But, she insists, you are not in a position to justifiably *believe* that Jake stole the iPhone. Nor are you in a position to justifiably take up certain reactive attitudes, like resentment and indignation, that would be characteristic of blaming Jake.

Buchak concludes, on the basis of this and other examples of “naked statistical evidence,” that the norm telling us which evidential situations justify resentment and indignation cannot be understood in terms of credence alone; it must make reference to belief. In fact, Buchak goes even further: she proposes that resentment itself (along with other reactive attitudes, including indignation and gratitude) “*essentially rests on belief rather than credence*” (2014: 300). Now, one way of reading this proposal is as

<sup>23</sup>This phrase is drawn from Döring (2008). For criticism of cognitivism’s approach to recalcitrant emotion, see also Greenspan (1981), Roberts (1988), and Brady (2009).

<sup>24</sup>See especially D’Arms and Jacobson (2003) and Grzankowski (2020).

a straightforward endorsement of cognitivism about resentment – that is, the claim that one *cannot* be resentful without forming an outright belief. But it would be good news for Buchak’s project if it were not hostage to the success of cognitivism about emotion. And, happily, it is not. We can account for Buchak’s data, without assuming that resentment always involves outright belief, by endorsing Coordination. On this less committal picture, it may be psychologically possible to resent someone without believing that they have done wrong. (In fact, this seems like a plausible description of some cases of recalcitrant resentment.) But, because of the coordination in the evidential standards for warranted resentment and justified beliefs about wrongdoing, my resentment of a person is unwarranted whenever I am not justified to believe that they have done wrong.<sup>25</sup>

Some might suspect that Buchak’s examples reflect an important point about the conditions under which resentment is *morally appropriate* or *morally virtuous*, but nothing at all about the conditions under which resentment is *warranted*. And it’s important, when evaluating the case for Coordination, to keep our focus firmly trained on questions about whether emotions are warranted, rather than questions about emotions are morally virtuous. So I’ll offer two reasons to think that, in Buchak’s example, resentment is not only morally deficient but also unwarranted.

The first reason is a simple one: Buchak’s iPhone example does not seem like a case where resentment is appropriate in one sense, but inappropriate in another. For a case of that sort, consider an example in which I feel *schadenfreude* while watching a self-important businessman slip and spill papers everywhere. The intuitive reaction to this sort of emotion is a mixed one; there is something morally vicious, but also something warranted, about this sort of reaction. Buchak’s case, to the contrary, seems like a case where resentment fails to meet any important (evidence-sensitive) normative standard. Resentment in this case would amount to jumping the gun, not just in one sense but in every sense. So, insofar as it shows that resentment based on merely statistical evidence is morally deficient, it seems equally apt to show that resentment based on merely statistical evidence is unwarranted.

The second reason is one that has been emphasized by Enoch and Spectre (2021). Many different emotions based on “naked statistical evidence” seem, in some important sense, undersupported. And, as Enoch and Spectre note, the problem in many of these cases does not seem to be a moral one. Suppose that I like you solely on the basis of the fact that you belong to a group whose members statistically tend to have traits that I enjoy in my friends. Or suppose that I admire you solely because a high percentage of members of your profession happen to speak truth to power.<sup>26</sup> Something has gone wrong in these cases, but the failing does not seem to be a moral one. Enoch and Spectre rightly conclude that “what’s wrong with statistical resentment does not seem to be morality-specific” (2021). Once we take a broader look at the relationship between emotions and statistical evidence, then, it becomes highly implausible that the only problem arising in Buchak’s example is a moral one.

It’s worth noting that my argument here does not presuppose any particular explanation for *why* beliefs and emotions based on “naked statistical evidence” are problematic. Some might think that moral encroachment is needed to explain why mere

<sup>25</sup>We could also account for Buchak’s data by making a weaker claim: that merely statistical evidence cannot support either warranted resentment or justified belief. But, since Coordination offers a more unified and illuminating account of a range of conditions in which emotions like resentment and indignation are unwarranted, it offers a far more natural starting-point in theorizing about cases like Buchak’s.

<sup>26</sup>Both of these examples are drawn from Enoch and Spectre (2021).

statistics do not support certain beliefs about other people. But I leave open whether that's true.<sup>27</sup> There are a host of other proposals about the problem with beliefs based on merely statistical evidence; perhaps, for instance, evidence fails to support belief when it makes the possibility of error *salient*, or when it makes it impossible for one's belief to meet a *safety* or *sensitivity* condition.<sup>28</sup> My goal in this subsection has been to point out that cases of naked statistical evidence speak in favor of Coordination. These grounds in favor of accepting Coordination do not also provide grounds in favor of encroachment on belief. But if there is in fact encroachment on belief, Coordination will bring with it encroachment on emotion.

### 3.3. Coherence

Many prominent arguments for encroachment on belief appeal to principles linking knowledge to action.<sup>29</sup> And one reason to be attracted to these principles is that they rule out the possibility that epistemic norms will force a rational agent into a troubling kind of *incoherence*.<sup>30</sup> To see the worry, suppose that epistemic norms justify you in believing outright that the best thing for you to do is to  $\phi$ . Also suppose that you face a high-stakes choice, such that there's a chance that the costs associated with your  $\phi$ ing will be enormous. Suppose that the risks associated with  $\phi$ ing are so serious, and the alternative to  $\phi$ ing so comparatively safe, that it would be irrationally risky for you to  $\phi$ . Epistemic norms and rational norms on action, here, are conspiring to require something like *akrasia*: they're jointly requiring you to believe that it's best for you to  $\phi$  and also to refrain from  $\phi$ ing. Several defenders of encroachment on belief have argued against epistemic purism by noting that it pushes agents toward incoherence of this sort in an implausible range of cases.<sup>31</sup>

Just as there are some troublingly incoherent combinations of belief and action, there are also some troublingly incoherent combinations of belief and emotion. Suppose, for instance, that you believe that Wallace has done nothing wrong, but you also find yourself resenting Wallace. Or suppose that, despite your belief that there's nothing admirable about a swaggering television anti-hero, you nevertheless admire that anti-hero. Cases like these are familiar from the literature on recalcitrant emotions, and they are widely understood to illustrate incoherence between a person's doxastic and emotional lives. So beliefs and emotions can stand in relationships of incoherence.

It also seems plausible that at least some emotions can stand in relationships of incoherence with suspension of judgment. Suppose, for instance, that you suspend judgment as to whether Wallace has done anything wrong, but still find yourself resenting Wallace. Or suppose that you admire Violet while suspending judgment about whether there's anything admirable about Violet. These cases seem to involve a kind of incoherence. And the incoherence is a robust one; even if you think it's *highly probable* that Wallace has done something wrong, there's a tension involved in resenting Wallace while genuinely suspending judgment about whether he's done wrong. (This is

<sup>27</sup>Enoch and Spectre (2021) offer a critical look at this view.

<sup>28</sup>For the salience approach, see Jackson (2020); for an approach that emphasizes sensitivity, see Enoch *et al.* (2012). See also Smith (2010), who calls belief justified only when it has "normic support" from a body of evidence.

<sup>29</sup>See, for instance, Fantl and McGrath (2007, 2009), Hawthorne and Stanley (2008), and Ross and Schroeder (2014).

<sup>30</sup>I lean on this insight to offer an argument for moral encroachment in Fritz (2021).

<sup>31</sup>See Fantl and McGrath (2007), Roeber (2020), and Fritz (2021).

not to say that this type of incoherence is unusual, blameworthy, or on-balance worth correcting. *Akrasia*, after all, involves incoherence, but it's certainly not unusual, and it needn't be blameworthy or on-balance worth correcting.)

Why, in general, is incoherence normatively significant? Here is a currently popular answer: incoherence between attitudes (or actions) indicates that at least one of those attitudes, individually, falls short of an important normative standard. When I believe both  $p$  and  $\neg p$ , my beliefs are incoherent, and that indicates that at least one of the two must be false. When I act akratically – that is, when I  $\varphi$  while believing that I should not  $\varphi$  – my belief and action are incoherent, and that indicates that either my belief is false or my action is not choiceworthy. Several theorists find this general insight about norms of coherence so compelling that they claim it is fully general.<sup>32</sup> They claim, in other words, that incoherence between a set of attitudes *guarantees* that at least one of them must individually fall short of an important normative standard. Following Worsnip (2022), I'll call this the Guarantee Hypothesis.

If the Guarantee Hypothesis is correct, then incoherence between suspension of judgment and emotion guarantees that either the suspension of judgment or the emotion falls short of an important normative standard. This means that, for defenders of the Guarantee Hypothesis, the claim I've called Coordination will be hard to resist. To see this, imagine a case in which the antecedent of Coordination is true: you resent Wallace, and your resentment is warranted. Now, you have three (coarse-grained) doxastic options with respect to the proposition that Wallace has done something wrong: belief, suspension of judgment, and disbelief. But your resentment would stand in a relationship of incoherence with either disbelief (that is, the belief that he's done nothing wrong) or suspension of judgment. This means that your only coherent option – and, given the Guarantee Hypothesis, your only individually epistemically justified option – is belief.<sup>33</sup> So, if we approach suspension-emotion incoherence through the lens of the Guarantee Hypothesis, Coordination looks very plausible.

Although the Guarantee Hypothesis is popular, it is not uncontroversial. And, indeed, some *permissive* cases seem to make trouble for the idea that the Guarantee Hypothesis holds in full generality. Consider, for instance, a case in which I have time to visit either the museum or the skate park, but lack the time to visit both. In that case, the intention to visit the museum and the intention to visit the skate park might both be permissible when considered individually. But it would be problematically incoherent for me to simultaneously have both intentions. Cases of this sort inspire some to reject the Guarantee Hypothesis. The major competitor for the Guarantee Hypothesis is the view that we can fully capture the problem with incoherence per se simply through *wide-scope* requirements regarding combinations of attitudes, such as: one ought not (intend to  $\varphi$  and intend to  $\neg\varphi$ ).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup>See, for instance, Kolodny (2007), Kiesewetter (2017), and Lord (2018). Particularly noteworthy in this context is Grzankowski (2020), who seeks to explain the incoherence involved in recalcitrant emotion by appealing to a local version of the Guarantee Hypothesis.

<sup>33</sup>I assume that there is at least one epistemically justified option for you with respect to the proposition at hand. (If the only way to resist encroachment on emotion is to posit an explosion of epistemic dilemmas, then encroachment on emotion should surely be the default view.)

<sup>34</sup>Broome (2004, 2007) influentially defends the view that the requirements of rationality have this wide-scope form.

Now, those who reject the Guarantee Hypothesis face challenges of their own.<sup>35</sup> But I want to grant that the Guarantee Hypothesis might be false. For the purpose of the argument I offer here, it will suffice to note that defenders of encroachment on belief seem uniquely ill-placed to say that the tension between suspension and emotion is *solely* a matter of a wide-scope requirement being violated.

To see why, take any case in which, according to defenders of encroachment on belief, high stakes defeat justification for belief. Let's suppose that Yuri's case is one such case; in virtue of the choice he faces, he is not epistemically justified to believe that Zahra is engaged. Now, importantly, the encroacher cannot say that the problem with outright belief in this case is *simply* a matter of violating a wide-scope requirement. If the only problem with Yuri's belief were that it failed to cohere with, say, certain cautious patterns of action, Yuri could render the belief entirely unproblematic by blazing ahead and (unwisely) booking the riverboat party without checking with Zahra. But this is not the verdict that encroachers want to give about Yuri's case; instead, they want to claim that Yuri is unjustified to believe that Zahra is engaged *no matter how* he in fact intends to act. So encroachers will not say, in high-stakes cases where belief is epistemically unjustified, that outright belief would have been individually permissible but for its failure to cohere with certain other actually-held attitudes or actions. Instead, they'll say that the belief falls short *on its own terms*: no matter what else he thinks, feels, or does, Yuri lacks a sufficiently strong epistemic position to believe.

Now, a belief-encroacher could say that, although wide-scope requirements do not fully explain why Yuri is not justified to believe, they do fully explain the problem with his being envious. It's open, in other words, for the encroacher to say that Yuri's envy would only be problematic if he suspended judgment about Zahra's engagement, because those two attitudes would be in tension. But this would be an odd position for the encroacher, for two reasons. First, it's a strangely asymmetrical approach to the source of normative problems with belief and the source of normative problems with emotion. The encroacher insists that wide-scope coherence requirements, by themselves, do not fully account for the problem with *belief* in high-stakes cases. Why insist on the opposite verdict when it comes to emotion?

There is at least one way to defend this asymmetrical approach to belief and emotion: some will be inclined to say that the relationship between belief and one's epistemic position is *immediate*, while the relationship between emotion and one's epistemic position is *mediated by belief*. On this approach, the question of whether a *belief* is justified is not just the question of whether it coheres well with our other mental states; a coherent package of beliefs can still be unjustified if it is not properly based on one's epistemic position. But, the thought goes, the role of *emotion* is to follow where belief leads. Our emotions gain their warrant not by being directly responsive to our evidence, but by being based on the beliefs we actually have.<sup>36</sup> This asymmetrical picture may be initially tempting, but there are good reasons to reject it. To see why, imagine a case in which emotion, but not belief, is sensitive to the evidence. Suppose, for instance, that you have excellent evidence that a con artist has cheated you. Then, the con artist manages to convince you, through a combination of charisma and flimsy argumentative tricks, that you have not been cheated. But even though you now believe that you have not been cheated, you find yourself resenting the con artist. In a case like this, your emotions might exhibit reliable sensitivity to the evidence in a way that your beliefs

<sup>35</sup>See Kolodny (2005).

<sup>36</sup>Thanks to Baron Reed for this objection.

do not. Cases like this one raise trouble for the view that emotional warrant is entirely a matter of coherence. Your resentment coheres poorly with your beliefs, but that doesn't make it unwarranted; to the contrary, your resentment deserves a positive evaluation precisely because it's properly based on sufficient epistemic support. So the encroacher still lacks a principled answer to the question posed above: why take an asymmetrical approach to the source of normative problems with belief and emotion?

Let's move on to a second problem for the encroacher who takes the wide-scope approach. Recall that we can avoid violating wide-scope requirements simply by abandoning some of the attitudes we actually have. So if the *only* problem with Yuri's emotion were that it violated a wide-scope requirement when combined with suspension of judgment, then Yuri could solve that problem simply by unjustifiably going in for the belief that Zahra is engaged. This view has odd results. Imagine that someone criticizes Yuri's envy by saying, "your envy was premature – you didn't have strong enough evidence to believe that Zahra was really engaged!" On the view we're now considering, Yuri could aptly deflect this criticism by saying, "you're right that I wasn't justified in believing that Zahra was engaged. But I happened to believe, unjustifiably, that she was. So, although my belief was premature, my envy wasn't; in fact, there was no problem at all with my envy." This response does not seem apt.

Everyone should acknowledge that emotions can stand in relationships of incoherence with doxastic states like belief and suspension of judgment. And, at least for those who defend encroachment on belief, the most promising way to understand that incoherence involves embracing the view that standards for warranted emotion and standards for justified belief shift together in high-stakes cases; in other words, those standards are coordinated. Again, it seems that we've found good reasons to consider Coordination – and therefore, encroachment on emotion – the default view for defenders of encroachment on belief.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this paper, I've put forward the proposal that there is encroachment on emotion on the table, and I've offered some reasons for taking that proposal seriously. There are a great many additional questions to be asked about encroachment on emotion – questions about which I've remained neutral for the purposes of this project, but which merit further investigation. I'll close by mentioning three.

*Which emotions are, and which emotions are not, subject to encroachment?* As my focus on Coordination indicates, I think that there's a particularly compelling case to be made for encroachment on emotions that are most at-home in conditions that justify belief. But there might be other emotions that are most at-home in conditions that do *not* justify belief – consider, for instance, worry, excitement, and fear. How to think about the plausibility of encroachment on these emotions will depend in part on how we think about the conditions that make them fitting.<sup>37</sup>

*Which practical or moral features do the encroaching, and how?* Defenders of encroachment on belief offer a dizzying array of different views of the precise mechanism for encroachment. One point of divergence concerns *which* practical or moral facts influence epistemic norms; another concerns the *way* in which these facts influence epistemic norms. A similar array of options greets any would-be defender for encroachment on emotion.

<sup>37</sup>See Fritz ([Forthcoming](#)) for more on the epistemic conditions on fitting hope and worry.

*Is there any emotional analogue for suspending judgment while remaining highly confident?* Most defenders of encroachment on belief hold that there is at least one doxastic state that is not afflicted by encroachment: credences, or degrees of belief. This softens the blow of encroachment on belief; even if a high-stakes case renders me unjustified in believing that *p*, I can still be justified in retaining a high credence that *p*. But it's not entirely clear there's any similar way to soften the blow of emotional encroachment; in conditions where my strong evidence that I've been wronged is no longer sufficient to justify resentment, is there any way for my emotional life to continue registering the high probability that I've been wronged?<sup>38</sup> If not, then encroachment on emotion might pack an even harder punch than encroachment on belief.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Drucker (2019) offers an interesting suggestion in this vicinity; he argues that, even in conditions of notably incomplete information, we can be warranted in having "generalized attitudes" – the sort that we might express with "if someone wronged me, then I resent them."

<sup>39</sup>I'm grateful to have discussed this paper with an audience at the 2021 *Episteme* conference and an audience at the 2022 meeting of the Central Division of the APA. And I'm especially grateful for the detailed written comments provided by Ethan Brauer, Baron Reed, and Daniel Wilkenfeld.

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