

TOMAS BOGARDUS

A VINDICATION OF THE EQUAL-WEIGHT VIEW

ABSTRACT

Some philosophers believe that when epistemic peers disagree, each has an obligation to accord the other's assessment the same weight as her own. I first make the antecedent of this Equal-Weight View more precise, and then I motivate the View by describing cases in which it gives the intuitively correct verdict. Next I introduce some apparent counterexamples—cases of apparent peer disagreement in which, intuitively, one should not give equal weight to the other party's assessment. To defuse these apparent counterexamples, an advocate of the View might try to explain how they are not genuine cases of peer disagreement. I examine David Christensen's and Adam Elga's explanations and find them wanting. I then offer a novel explanation, which turns on a distinction between knowledge from reports and knowledge from direct acquaintance. Finally, I extend my explanation to provide a handy and satisfying response to the charge of self-defeat.

1. THE EQUAL-WEIGHT VIEW¹

Some philosophers believe that when epistemic peers disagree, each has an obligation to accord the other's assessment the same weight as her own. Call this "the Equal-Weight View." Recent advocates include Adam Elga (2007), Richard Feldman (2006), and David Christensen (2007). Elga puts his general view of disagreement this way:

Your probability in a given disputed claim should equal your prior conditional probability in that claim. Prior to what? Prior to your thinking through the claim, and finding out what your advisor thinks of it. Conditional on what? On whatever you have learned about the circumstances of how you and your advisor have evaluated the claim. (500, n. 26)

The "prior" here needn't be temporal priority. Elga clarifies elsewhere (489–90) that your credence in a disputed claim should equal your conditional probability in that claim *setting aside* "your detailed reasoning (and what you know of your friend's reasoning) about the disputed issue." That is, you are meant to conditionalize on a proper subset of your evidence—a subset which includes what you know of

A VINDICATION OF THE EQUAL-WEIGHT VIEW

the circumstances of disagreement, but excludes the particular contents of your assessments and any reasoning by which you arrived at them.

Let me now carefully describe a case of peer disagreement, to see what Elga's general view of disagreement recommends. Suppose Smith and Jones disagree about whether p on the basis of some shared body of evidence. Smith learns this and believes that (prior to the disagreement) she's as reliable as Jones² on the issue given what she's learned about the circumstances of evaluation. Elga's view would say here that Smith's probability in p should equal her probability in p conditional on these things she's learned, setting aside her and Jones's reasoning on the issue and the content of their assessments themselves.³ Setting these aside, Elga says, Smith should think it 50% likely that she's correct (488), i.e., give Jones's assessment the same weight as her own. So, I take it, Elga would agree with the following conditional as an instance of his general view of disagreement:

(Equal-Weight View) For any subjects Smith and Jones and for any p , if . . .
(Smith Judges) Smith's credence in p on her evidence E relevant to p is $n1$, and
(Jones Judges) Jones's credence in p on E is $n2$, and
(Disagreement) $n1 \neq n2$, and
(Full Disclosure) Smith learns these three things, and
(Peerhood) Smith believes that she's as reliable as Jones on this issue in the circumstances of evaluation, excluding the assessments themselves and any reasoning by which she and Jones arrived at them,⁴
... then Smith should give Jones's assessment of p on this evidence the same weight as her own.

Some philosophers have apparently taken this consequent to entail that Smith's credence in p on this evidence should be (at least roughly) the average of $n1$ and $n2$.⁵ For example, Christensen said⁶ that in cases of peer disagreement one should "come close to 'splitting the difference'" (203) between the initial assessments. And—working on an all-or-nothing model of belief and speaking of peers who take equally firm but opposing stances on the disputed issue—Feldman said that after full disclosure, "suspension of judgment is called for." (235) In this paper, I'll be concerned with the Equal-Weight View above, and I won't take a stand on either Elga's general view of disagreement or a general difference-splitting rule for giving equal weight.

2. MOTIVATING THE VIEW

I take it that many people believe the Equal-Weight View (or something like it) because it delivers intuitively correct verdicts in a wide variety of cases. For example:

Feldman's Quad

Suppose that you and I are standing by the window looking out on the quad. We think we have comparable vision and we know each other to be honest. I seem to see what looks to me like a person in a blue coat in the middle of the quad. (Assume that this

Tomas Bogardus

is not something odd.) I believe that a person with a blue coat is standing on the quad. Meanwhile, you seem to see nothing of the kind there. You think that no one is standing in the middle of the quad. (223)

In this case, you and Feldman consider all and only the same evidence (namely, the scene before you and any relevant background knowledge). Feldman's visual faculties report to him that there is a person in a blue coat in the middle of the quad; his credence in that proposition on the available evidence is high. Your faculties report otherwise; your credence in that proposition on the evidence is low. And you think your faculties are as reliable as Feldman's. So what should you do in such a case, after full disclosure? Clearly you should revise your belief to give the report of your faculties and the report of his equal weight, just as you would do with disagreeing but equally reliable thermometers, clocks, etc. And so the Equal-Weight View delivers the right result.

The View also gives the right result in some cases involving a priori calculations. For example, Elga (492) and Christensen (193) both consider a case in which friends mentally divide a restaurant check:

Restaurant Check

Suppose that five of us go out to dinner. It's time to pay the check, so the question we're interested in is how much we each owe. We can all see the bill total clearly, we all agree to give a 20% tip, and we further agree to split the whole cost evenly... I do the math in my head and become highly confident that our shares are \$43 each. Meanwhile, my friend does the math in her head and becomes highly confident that our shares are \$45 each. (Christensen, 193)

To differentiate this case from Feldman's Quad and others crucially involving sense perception, let's stipulate not only that all parties can clearly see the check, but that they all *know* its total. If we stipulate also that all parties think the disagreement is between peers, Christensen and Elga think that, after full disclosure, each should give the other's assessment the same weight as her own. I agree. Here again the View issues the right verdict.

I take it that concrete case intuitions like these strongly motivate the Equal-Weight View. If it weren't for this intuitive support, arguments for the View – such as Elga's Bootstrapping Argument (486–8) – would lose much or all of their force.

3. APPARENT COUNTEREXAMPLES

It's not all sunshine for the Equal-Weight View, however: in some cases it apparently gives the wrong result. Advocates such as Christensen and Elga try to explain why these apparent counterexamples are merely apparent. I'll describe some problematic cases in this section, and in the next I'll lay out Christensen's and Elga's explanations and say why I find them inadequate. Finally, I'll offer my own explanation of these cases, which vindicates the Equal-Weight View.

A VINDICATION OF THE EQUAL-WEIGHT VIEW

First, a problematic variation of Restaurant Check:

Extreme Restaurant Check

Consider an (admittedly unrealistic) variant on the restaurant case, in which my friend becomes confident that our shares of the check are \$450 – quite a bit over the whole tab. (Christensen, 199)

Intuitively, one shouldn't significantly alter her initial assessment of the shares in this case. Christensen and Elga agree. Christensen says, "Here, I think that I need not significantly reduce my confidence in my \$43 answer, or raise my very low confidence in the \$450 answer." (199) Elga says, "It certainly seems as though you should be more confident that you are right than that your friend is." (490–1) But, they admit, the Equal-Weight View seems to recommend otherwise.

Consider a new case: **Dual Introspection**. Suppose there's a region of the brain responsible for bodily sensations. And suppose you justifiably believe Alex Byrne when he says "I must have some sort of mechanism... for detecting my own mental states..." (2005) Suppose a trustworthy neuroscientist persuades you that she has hooked up your brain and introspective mechanism with Jones's so that you and Jones now regularly have (at least type-) identical bodily sensations and equal introspective abilities with respect to these experiences.

This neuroscientist causes you (and thereby Jones) to have complicated bodily sensations as of fleeting pains, itches, and tickles, and asks you both to report on the phenomenal character of your experiences. Given your beliefs about the setup and your long track record, you're both comfortable issuing reports of the forms "**We** are experiencing _____," and "**S/he** is experiencing _____," based on introspection. Usually, these reports are true. But due to the kaleidoscopic phenomenology of some of these experiences, occasionally you're mistaken. You learn this. Jones proves to be as reliable as you in her introspective abilities, so you count her as a peer here. You also believe that she's completely honest.

The two of you are asked to introspect a complicated bodily sensation and assess the claim that you (the reader) are experiencing pain. You introspect and find a fleeting sensation that may have been a pain, but then again, perhaps it was just an oppressive itch. Finally, suppose you and Jones disagree about whether you're in pain after full disclosure. It seems that in this case you should give her assessment equal weight. Perhaps she introspectively got a better look at that elusive sensation than you did after all.

However, consider a variant case: **Extreme Dual Introspection**. The setup is the same, except this time you introspect and (seem to) find fierce pain. Your credence in the claim that you (the reader) are experiencing pain is therefore very high. Jones introspects and reports that her credence in this proposition is low. What should you do? Obviously, you shouldn't significantly alter your initial assessment. But the Equal-Weight View seems to recommend otherwise.

An explanation of how its antecedent may not be met in these cases would snatch the Equal-Weight View from the jaws of the apparent counterexamples.

Tomas Bogardus

Ideally, this explanation would be general enough not to founder on variations of the problematic cases. Christensen and Elga offer such explanations. I'll now describe these and say why I find them unsatisfactory.

4. CHRISTENSEN'S EXPLANATION

Christensen considers Extreme Restaurant Check and offers this explanation:

It is much more likely that she calculated and has not brought common-sense checking to bear. Now I take it that this sort of common-sense checking is much less liable to error than mental arithmetic. (201)

Later, Christensen adds:

The real ground for thinking that my friend made the error in the Extreme Restaurant Case derives from the fact I have evidence that my assessment of the disputed proposition is supported by an extremely reliable kind of reasoning, but I have no basis for supposing the same about my friend's contrary assessment. (201)

The idea seems to be that in this case you come to learn something relevant about the reasoning you and your friend used to answer the question. You learn that she probably didn't use a highly reliable procedure—namely commonsense checking—which you have reason to believe you did use. Conditional on your using commonsense checking and your friend's failing to use it, you shouldn't think that she's as reliable as you on this issue, in which case (Christensen apparently thinks) the **Peerhood** condition in the antecedent of the Equal-Weight View is not satisfied. If so, the View doesn't issue the counterintuitive conciliatory verdict.

This explanation is unsatisfactory for two reasons. First, a motivating insight behind the Equal-Weight View is that—to avoid being unacceptably arbitrary or question-begging—each party's evaluation of the other as peer or non-peer should be independent of (or “prior to,” as Elga says) the content of the disagreeing assessments and any reasoning that led to these assessments. As Christensen says, “I should assess explanations for the disagreement in a way that's independent of my reasoning on the matter under dispute.” (199) I find it hard to see how in Extreme Restaurant Check Christensen's evidence that his “assessment of the disputed proposition is supported by an extremely reliable kind of reasoning” is independent of that reasoning.

By way of explanation, Christensen says, “My grounds for discounting my friend's belief are based on considerations about my reasoning, but not on that reasoning itself.” (201) But it isn't clear to me that this is so if Christensen's ground for discounting his friend's belief is his evidence that he used commonsense checking. Presumably, Christensen's evidence that he used commonsense checking is first-personal—based on introspection or memory.⁷ It's hard to see what Christensen would be introspecting or remembering, other than his reasoning

A VINDICATION OF THE EQUAL-WEIGHT VIEW

process itself, in which case his evidence that he used commonsense checking wouldn't be independent of that reasoning. The reasoning hasn't been set aside or bracketed off, it's been remembered or introspected.⁸ But if that evidence isn't independent of his reasoning, then according to Christensen's own test, it fails to support an explanation in terms of his friend's failure. So by Christensen's own standard, this cannot be the explanation of why the Equal-Weight View fails to apply in this case.

The second reason Christensen's explanation is unsatisfactory is that it doesn't cover variant cases. Suppose you come to know that in fact your friend did use the same highly reliable procedures you used. In this case, we cannot appeal to any difference in reasoning procedures to justify the claim that **Peerhood** (or any other condition) is not met. And yet even in this variant case, the intuition persists that we should not accord her (obviously false) assessment equal weight. Christensen's explanation does not tell us why this is so.

For instance, stipulate in Extreme Dual Introspection that Jones uses only the same procedure (namely introspection) as you used to arrive at her judgment, so you cannot demote her from peerhood for the reason Christensen suggests in Extreme Restaurant Check. Still, intuitively you shouldn't accord her assessment that you are not in pain the same weight as your own assessment that you are in pain. And so it still seems that the Equal-Weight View delivers counterintuitive verdicts. If the antecedent of the View actually fails to be met in these cases, we don't yet know why.

5. ELGA'S EXPLANATION

Elga takes care to point out that **Peerhood** requires conditionalization on the circumstances of disagreement. Elga then says this: "...the circumstances of disagreement might include such factors as: ...how absurd each of you finds the other's answer." (490) Later, he adds:

And one circumstance of the split-the-check disagreement is that you are *extremely* confident that your advisor's answer is wrong—much more confident than you are that your answer is right. Indeed, her answer strikes you as obviously insane. So in order to apply the equal weight view, we must determine your prior probability that you would be right, conditional on these circumstances arising. (491)

Elga's explanation seems to be this: it's natural to assume that there's something about the circumstance of disagreement that should demote your friend from peerhood, namely the fact that you find her answer insane. Assuming that you take the prior probability that you would be right conditional on this asymmetry to be greater than 0.5, **Peerhood** is not met.

However, variant cases are problematic for Elga's explanation. If symmetry is restored—if we stipulate, that is, that your friend also finds *your* answer

Tomas Bogardus

insane – then, according to Elga, the description of the case doesn't settle whether **Peerhood** is satisfied. Elga considers such a symmetrical case and says that the Equal-Weight View's verdict depends on the answer to the question "Conditional on the two of us disagreeing, and each of us finding the other's answer to be insane, do I think that the two of us are equally likely to be right?" If the answer is "yes," Elga says, then the View rules that you should be conciliatory. Elga says that he finds that plausible.

I, however, find that deeply implausible. And so I don't find Elga's explanation satisfactory. I think that in this symmetrical variant of Extreme Restaurant Check, you should not give your friend's assessment equal weight even if the answer to that last question is "yes," since your friend's answer is obviously false. Given that, you shouldn't significantly alter your assessment, regardless of how she feels about your answer, and regardless of your track record of disagreement with her. You are entitled to believe that your friend's answer is wrong – and therefore not be conciliatory – *come what may*. But Elga disagrees.

For similar reasons, Elga's explanation fares poorly when applied to a variant of the Extreme Dual Introspection case. Recall that Jones introspects and reports that she fails to find any pain. You, however, introspect and (seem to) find fierce, excruciating pain, as though you've stepped in an angry bear trap. Suppose you are both highly confident that the other is wrong, and suppose you have a track record such that you answer "yes" to the question "Conditional on the two of us disagreeing and each of us finding the other's answer insane, do I think that we're equally likely to be right?" According to Elga, you should now significantly weaken – and perhaps even abandon – your belief that you're in pain.

But isn't it obvious that you should not significantly weaken that belief? You are *directly acquainted* with fierce, excruciating pain; the pain is staring (slapping?) you in the face, so to speak. The belief that you're in pain is certain for you, and should not be abandoned no matter what you come to think about Jones's opinions of your belief, your track record, etc. But then Elga's explanation stumbles here. If the Equal-Weight View fails to apply to these cases, we don't yet know why.

6. MY EXPLANATION

I'll now explain why the Equal-Weight View doesn't issue counterintuitive verdicts in the extreme cases described above. If my explanation succeeds in those cases on which Elga's and Christensen's explanations founder, then my explanation should be preferred.

Sometimes we see that p is true by seeing that some other proposition q is true.⁹ In those cases, we might say our knowledge that p comes by way of a report, indication, or representation. Other times, we *just* see that p is true, directly. Occasionally – it's said – we just see that p , with our eyes. Here "just see" is used in

a literal sense. Looking down, one might say, “I just see that I have hands – there they are, directly in front of me.” On other occasions we metaphorically just see that p , without the aid of our eyes. For example, we just see that no prime minister is a prime number and that $2+2=4$. It is this metaphorical sense of the ordinary English expression “just see” that interests me for the rest of this paper.

In Extreme Restaurant Check, Smith just sees – in the metaphorical sense – that her friend’s answer is wrong. And in the Extreme Dual Introspection case, Smith just sees – in that same sense – that she’s in pain. In philosophy-speak, we might say Smith comes to have *knowledge from direct acquaintance* in the problematic cases described above. A relevant piece of evidence is intellectually obvious to Smith; she has unmediated cognitive access to the truth of a pertinent proposition. Her knowledge does not rely on any report, indication, or representation.

And that’s why Smith shouldn’t be conciliatory about the proposition in question on her evidence: her evidence she can just see – call it “immediately accessible evidence” – includes either her answer or the negation of her friend’s answer. Via rational intuition, the proposition that *it’s not the case that each share of this check is \$450* is part of Smith’s immediately accessible evidence in Extreme Restaurant Check. Via introspection, the proposition that *I am in pain* is part of Smith’s immediately accessible evidence in Extreme Dual Introspection.¹⁰ These are pertinent facts about the situations that Smith appreciates; they have thereby entered Smith’s cognitive economy.

Given that, in the problematic cases, Smith – sensible person that she is – may reflect on the state of Jones’s cognitive economy in roughly the following way: “I just see the truth of a relevant piece of evidence. Jones does as well, or she doesn’t. If she doesn’t, then I have evidence she lacks, and so **Jones Judges** isn’t met. If she does, then either there’s merely apparent disagreement,¹¹ or Jones just sees the truth of some proposition and yet believes it’s false. If the former, then **Disagreement** isn’t met. If the latter, then here in the circumstances of evaluation, Jones suffers from cognitive malfunction and so is not as reliable as I am on this issue, even setting aside the particular contents of our answers and any reasoning that led us to them.”

Full Disclosure and **Peerhood** require that Smith believe certain things. If Smith reasons in this sensible and straightforward way, she’ll reject some belief such that at least one of those conditions isn’t met. If so, the View’s antecedent won’t be satisfied in the problematic cases above, and so the View won’t issue counterintuitive conciliatory verdicts. (If Smith doesn’t reason this sensible and straightforward way, then while the antecedent of the View may be met, the conciliatory recommendation won’t be counterintuitive.)

Why does the Equal-Weight View give the intuitive verdict in the non-extreme cases? There, the relevant knowledge Smith gains is *knowledge from reports*: Smith doesn’t just see that p but rather receives a report that p from her faculties. Smith then learns of the disagreeing report of Jones’s faculties. And if someone has disagreeing reports from two sources she takes to be equally reliable, then *ceteris*

Tomas Bogardus

paribus she should give them equal weight. This goes for thermometers, clocks, and – in the case of Feldman’s Quad – visual faculties.

We non-savants enlist a cadre of cognitive faculties for complex calculations, and we lean heavily on memory. In Restaurant Check, we don’t just see that each share of the check is \$43 (though we do just see that each share of the check isn’t \$450). Rather, our faculties report the answer, after some complicated calculations. And if I take my faculties to be as reliable as yours, then I should be conciliatory when I learn of the disagreeing report from your faculties.

In the non-extreme Dual Introspection case, though I am directly acquainted with pain (if it’s there), its elusiveness prevents a level of attention sufficient to come to know from this acquaintance that *I am in pain*. While I just see the pain (if it’s there), I don’t just see that *I am in pain*. I judge that I am in pain, but here my judgment crucially relies on the reports of memory. When I receive the report of your faculties in the case as described, I should be conciliatory.

Rational intuition and introspection do not merely give us knowledge from reports. With at least some cases of introspection and rational intuition, there is no appearance/reality distinction, and so no appearance that reports or represents reality. Introspection does not merely *represent* that there is pain, as my visual experience represents that there is a computer before me. No, by introspecting I can become directly aware of pain itself, and with sufficient attention I can thereby just see that I am in pain. Rational intuition does not merely testify that $2+2=4$ as my kindergarten teacher did. No, via rational intuition I can just see that $2+2=4$. And while it would be unacceptably arbitrary to dismiss the report that p from your friend’s faculties on the basis of the report that not- p from your own faculties (when you take your faculties to be equally reliable), it is not unacceptably arbitrary to do so on the basis of not- p when you just see that not- p . In fact, such steadfastness is called for.

Our ability to just see the truth of propositions distinguishes us from thermometers, clocks, etc., which merely report, and explains why the Equal-Weight View does not issue counterintuitive recommendations. By giving such an explanation, I have vindicated the View from those apparent counterexamples. And my explanation covers variations of these cases on which Christensen’s and Elga’s explanations founder. Therefore, my explanation should be preferred. Let me now vindicate the View from one more objection.

7. SELF-DEFEAT?

Critics have charged that if an adherent of the Equal-Weight View knows of even one equally informed peer who disbelieves it strongly enough, then giving the peer’s assessment equal weight will require giving up the View itself. The critics often graciously volunteer to play the role of the disagreeing peer. So – they conclude – if the View is true, we shouldn’t believe it. And of course if it’s false we shouldn’t believe it either.¹²

A VINDICATION OF THE EQUAL-WEIGHT VIEW

But this objection should not trouble the adherent of the Equal-Weight View, since the explanation I gave above provides a handy and satisfying response. There we learned how the antecedent of the Equal-Weight View might not be satisfied in cases involving knowledge from that unmediated access to the truth of propositions sometimes afforded by rational intuition. And it's plausible that the Equal-Weight View is itself a deliverance of rational intuition. Even Thomas Kelly, a prominent opponent of the View, admits that "reflection on certain kinds of cases can make it seem almost trivial or obviously true." (forthcoming)

With further reflection, I think, one can come to just see the truth of the View—not only does it *seem* obvious, but upon further reflection it just *is* obvious.^{13,14} Its non-adherents have, for all their virtues, failed to fully appreciate this. And if an adherent of the View does just see its truth, its antecedent will not be satisfied when she reflects on the skeptic's cognitive economy in the way described above. If so, the View won't recommend giving itself up merely because there are intelligent, informed, and firm disbelievers of the View, and so the View won't be self-defeating.

REFERENCES

- Byrne, Alex.** 2005. "Introspection." *Philosophical Topics* 33(1): 79–104.
- Christensen, David.** 2007. "Epistemology of Disagreement: The Good News." *Philosophical Review* 116: 187–217.
- Elga, Adam.** 2007. "Reflection and Disagreement." *Nous* 41: 478–502.
- Feldman, Richard.** 2006. "Puzzles about Disagreement." In S. Hetherington (ed.), *Epistemology Futures*, pp. 216–36. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kelly, Thomas.** Forthcoming. "Peer Disagreement and Higher Order Evidence." In R. Feldman and T. Warfield (eds.), *Disagreement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Plantinga, Alvin.** 2000. "Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism." In P. Quinn and K. Meeker (eds.), *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity*, pp. 172–92. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

NOTES

- 1 For helpful conversations, many thanks to Nathan Ballantyne, David Barnett, David Christensen, Earl Conee, Tom Crisp, Enrico Grube, Andrew Moon, Tim Pickavance, and especially Adam Pautz and David Sosa.
- 2 In this paper, to avoid a cumbersome sentence structure, I intend the admittedly strained reading of "Smith is as reliable as Jones" that entails that both Smith and Jones are reliable. I'm not concerned with cases of disagreement in which both parties are *unreliable*, but to the same degree. I owe that revelation about myself to Nathan King.

Tomas Bogardus

- 3 For example, if Smith's credence in p is 0.8 and Jones's credence is 0.2, the evidence on which Smith conditionalizes should include those facts, but should of course exclude p itself or any instance of the schema $P(p) = n$.
- 4 **Objection:** If Smith excludes Jones's reasoning and her own, then if Smith learns that her reasoning was fantastic and Jones's was shabby, the View will deliver a counterintuitive conciliatory verdict. **Response:** Before Smith's evidence is updated, the View gives the intuitive conciliatory verdict. After the update, if the other antecedent conditions of the View are met, **Peerhood** plausibly won't be, since Smith would sensibly reason in roughly this way: "Jones knows that her assessment (whatever it is) was unreasonable (for whatever reason). Yet nevertheless she sticks with it. So, she suffers from cognitive malfunction and therefore is not as reliable as I am here in the circumstances of evaluation, even setting aside the particular contents of our assessments and any reasoning by which we arrived at them." If Smith doesn't reason this way, then while the antecedent of the View may be met, the conciliatory verdict won't be counterintuitive.
- 5 And I suspect some have thought that one's credence in p on one's evidence relevant to p should equal one's credence in p simpliciter, so Smith's credence in p simpliciter should also be (at least roughly) the average of $n1$ and $n2$.
- 6 The past tense in this paragraph is intentional. In light of things they've very recently said and written, I suspect (though I'm not certain) that Christensen and Feldman would no longer say what they then said on this issue.
- 7 If that evidence is not first-personal, but based instead on Christensen's track record, dispositions, epistemic virtues, etc., then it's not clear that there is no parallel evidence in favor of thinking that his friend also used commonsense checking. (Or at least there's a problematic case in which there is such evidence.) But in that case we can't accept Christensen's explanation of why **Peerhood** isn't met.
- 8 Clearly, Christensen's evidence could be independent of the *result* of his reasoning: his introspective/memorial evidence need not presuppose that his reasoning was *accurate* in the end. I worry that such a narrow principle of independence will license steadfastness when one should be conciliatory, though I can't develop that worry here. **Peerhood** should require setting aside *both* one's answer *and* any reasoning that delivered it.
- 9 For example, the forest ranger sees that the forest floor is on fire by seeing that smoke rises from the treetops.
- 10 N.b., I'm not claiming that a proposition of the form *it seems to me that p* or *I have the intuition that p* gets into one's immediately accessible evidence here. Rather, p itself (one's answer or the negation of one's friend's answer) enters one's immediately accessible evidence in these cases.
- 11 E.g., Jones is honestly misreporting or dishonestly reporting, or Smith has misunderstood Jones's report.
- 12 Plantinga (2000) offers this type of objection.
- 13 Though not, of course, *as* obvious as, e.g., that *each share of this check isn't \$450* in Extreme Restaurant Check. Obviousness comes in degrees.
- 14 **Objection:** The Equal-Weight View is complicated and obscure, and so not plausibly a proposition one can just see the truth of. **Response:** Don't sell yourself short. Also, it often happens that a complicated and obscure *sentence* expresses an obviously

A VINDICATION OF THE EQUAL-WEIGHT VIEW

true *proposition*. For many of us, this is the case with “Kein Premierminister ist eine Primzahl.” Likewise with some statements of the Equal-Weight View, I believe.

Tomas Bogardus is writing his doctoral dissertation on the mind-body problem for the Philosophy Department of the University of Texas at Austin.