

9 Disagreement and Defeat

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tilda is a friend and a peer. She is someone you trust to try to be truthful and someone you expect to be as truthful as you when she tries. One day over lunch, you discover that you and Tilda disagree about whether p . You believe p . She believes $\sim p$. You learn that this disagreement does not arise because you have evidence she does not or she has evidence you do not. What should you do in light of this disagreement?

If you and Tilda knew that you were peers (i.e., you are equally intelligent, equally virtuous, equally careful on this occasion, and that both of you had the same evidence concerning p prior to your disagreement), the equal weight view (EW) says that you should significantly decrease your confidence in p and she should significantly decrease her confidence in $\sim p$.¹ Neither of you should be more confident that you were right and that the other was wrong. Neither of you should be more confident that you responded rightly to the evidence. Suppose you both decrease your confidence in keeping with EW. If you do that and Tilda does likewise, the disagreement disappears. If you are no more confident in p than in $\sim p$, you no longer believe p . If you no longer believe p , you no longer disagree with anyone who believes $\sim p$.²

There are different theoretical explanations as to why it would be right to decrease your confidence in keeping with EW. Someone could say that once you learn about this kind of disagreement and acquire new evidence, you can see that it is just as likely given your evidence that you were right as it was that Tilda was right. If the evidence for p and for $\sim p$ is equally strong, believing p rather than $\sim p$ (or believing $\sim p$ rather than p) is the wrong way to respond to the evidence. In responding that way, you might end up with the right belief because you might end up with a true belief, but you do not end up believing rightly. That is, you have no right to the belief.

This first approach seems wrongheaded. Suppose that prior to the disagreement, your evidence supported Tilda's position rather than your own. In learning about the disagreement, you and Tilda acquire new evidence. It is conceivable that this new evidence lends some support to your view, but this seems rather unlikely that it will and all that more unlikely that the

total evidence now supports p and $\sim p$ equally. By hypothesis, you had no evidence for p prior to the disagreement. Facts about the way you handled your evidence *might* be evidence for p , but I see no reason to think that the evidence you acquire for believing p in learning about your disagreement will counterbalance the evidence that Tilda had in support of $\sim p$.³

There is a better way of understanding EW. You should not decrease your confidence when you discover that you and a peer disagree because you have counterbalancing evidence, but because you acquire a defeater that undermines the support the old evidence might have provided. You should not believe p without adequate reason. Moreover, you should not believe p unless you have adequately responded to the reasons that you have. The fact that you and Tilda disagree might be some evidence that bears on whether p , but there is no reason to think that this evidence swings so much weight that its discovery means that you and Tilda now both have equally good evidence for p and for $\sim p$. Instead, the fact that you disagree is a reason to think that you and Tilda were out of your depths or that one of you suffered from a performance error. This evidence undercuts the support that the evidence initially provided for your belief and for hers. It does so equally because you are just as likely to have mismanaged your evidence. My suggestion is that in learning about the disagreement, you acquire a defeater because you acquire evidence that you did not properly handle the evidence concerning p in forming your opinion about p . This can undermine the justificatory support the original evidence provided.

One reason that EW is so interesting is that it seems to imply that there are far fewer rational disagreements than we ordinarily think. Rational disagreements require disputes in which the parties take up opposing and incompatible positions and remain fully rational in their commitments even while they acknowledge that there is a peer who disagrees. If, as often seems to be the case, disagreements about interesting propositions involve peers, parties to these disagreements ought to decrease their confidence in such a way that the disagreement dissipates. Because the disagreement persists, the peers who disagree seem to be less than fully rational. Take a case that is near and dear to me. Like Feldman, I am a complacent atheist. We both think that there is strong evidence for the nonexistence of God. It is hard to remain complacent if we also accept a conciliatory view such as EW. To complacently believe that there is no God, I would have to think that those who disagree with me are not my peers (i.e., we have different evidence, different abilities, or the differences in our beliefs result from differences in the amount of care we have taken in trying to settle this question), and that seems to fly in the face of my own evidence. Perhaps if EW is correct, I should not be so complacent in my atheism. If so, I can take some comfort in the fact that I can criticize others for their complacency.

My aim in this essay is not to try to show that EW is correct. I do not know that it is correct. I think it is quite plausible and that there is an interesting argument to offer on its behalf. My reasons for focusing on the view are

these. First, EW has not received a fair shake in the recent literature. Second, EW is the most controversial premise in an interesting skeptical argument from disagreement. This argument deserves careful consideration.

Here is a sketch of the skeptical argument from disagreement. Most of the interesting things we believe (i.e., most of what we believe about epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, politics, and religion) are controversial. Much of this controversy seems to involve peers who disagree with each other fully aware of the fact that they disagree with their peers. Because EW is correct, we cannot rationally remain committed to these controversial propositions. Thus, few of the interesting things we believe we believe rationally. To remedy this situation, we might look for new evidence and appeal to new arguments, but we should expect that much of the evidence we will find has been found and most of the arguments that seem new to us are just that. The pessimistic conclusion is that we should suspend judgment on most of the interesting things we believe.

Is the skeptical argument sound? Even if EW is correct, there might be ways of resisting the skeptical argument. People can say, for example, that while EW might be correct, this is nothing to them because they often find that those who disagree with them do not share their evidence. In the case of the disagreement between the atheist and the theist, for example, there is some temptation for theists to claim that they have evidence that the atheists lack (e.g., provided by mystical experience) and some temptation for the atheists to claim that they have a body of evidence that the theists could not share and rationally remain committed to theism (e.g., a body of evidence that supports the argument from evil). Whether this response is adequate depends upon some tricky questions about what evidence is and what evidence the disagreeing parties have. In many cases, it is hard to see how someone who accepts EW could respond to disagreement with indifference because it is hard to see how parties to the disagreement could have different bodies of evidence. So, I suspect that a fully satisfying response to skeptical arguments from disagreement requires a refutation of EW.

Owing to skepticism about EW, perhaps few do find the skeptical argument from disagreement all that threatening. I shall offer a limited defense of EW. It seems that much of the skepticism about EW is misplaced. If so, confidence that the skeptical argument from disagreement will fail is unwarranted. In the next section, I shall present an argument for EW. After that, I shall explain why recent attempts to undermine EW have been unsuccessful. Here, my focus will be on the charge that EW is self-defeating and the charge that EW is committed to an objectionable form of epistemic selflessness.

2. AN ANALOGICAL ARGUMENT FOR EW

What reason is there for adopting a conciliatory view such as EW as opposed to a steadfast view that tells us to (sometimes) maintain confidence in the face of peer disagreement. Consider an argument by analogy.⁴ Suppose your

disagreement with Tilda concerns the time. You looked at your watch and judged that it was 5:00. She looked at her watch and judged that it was 5:05. When you learn why you disagree, it does seem plainly irrational for you to stick to your guns and for her to stick to hers if neither of you has any independent reason to think that one of these watches is more reliable than the other. Suppose your disagreement concerns the temperature. You looked at your thermometer and judged that it was fifty degrees Fahrenheit. She looked at her thermometer and judged that it was sixty degrees Fahrenheit. When you come to see why you disagree, it does seem quite plainly irrational to stick to your guns if neither of you has any reason to think that one thermometer is more reliable than the other. If other disagreements are similar in the relevant respects, perhaps it is plainly irrational to stick to your guns. Steadfast views tell you that you should sometimes stick to your guns in cases of peer disagreement, so it seems we have good reason to reject steadfast views.

To block this sort of argument, EW's critics might respond in one of two ways:

- Type-I: Maintain that it can be proper to stick to your guns by sticking to your favorite thermometer or watch.
- Type-II: Maintain that the analogy between disagreeing instruments and disagreeing peers breaks down.

It seems to me that Type-II responses are the only plausible responses to the analogical argument.

EW tells peers that their response to disagreement should be *symmetrical* and *conciliatory*. If the analogical argument fails and EW is mistaken, the right response to disagreement either does not require the parties to disagreement to concede as much as EW requires or for it encourages the parties to respond differently. Because it says that the proper response is symmetrical, EW says in effect that, even if someone's response to the evidence as initially the correct response, they are no better off once the disagreement arises than the peer who responded to the evidence incorrectly. Because of this, it is not clear what work the original evidence can do once the disagreement surfaces (see Kelly 2007). EW seems to give too much weight to facts about the way we respond to our evidence and not enough to the facts that constitute our original evidence in determining what we should believe. Moreover, it seems odd that both parties to the disagreement share equal responsibility for modifying their attitudes in the wake of disagreement when the mess made might be entirely the result of the way that one party to the disagreement has mismanaged his or her epistemic obligations. Why are you obligated to modify your attitudes in light of Tilda's mistakes?

You also might take issue with the idea that the proper response to peer disagreement is always conciliatory. True, the discovery that your peer disagrees

with you is upsetting. True, this discovery seems to provide new evidence that has some bearing on whether your original judgment is right. The problem with EW is that the fact of disagreement is one bit of evidence that should be considered alongside a much larger body of evidence and the facts about disagreement should not lead you to toss out the original evidence that you took to support your view. By telling you that you must meet in the middle, EW seems to tell you to adjust your attitudes in such a way that the original evidence is completely neutralized. This seems like overkill.⁵

If properly developed, there might be something to these criticisms. I want to stress two points. First, these criticisms have no force when directed against views that tell you that it is wrong to stick to your guns by sticking to your thermometer or watch. If they have any force against EW, it must be because epistemology tells us that we should not always treat persons as if they are not mere truthometers (i.e., instruments for uncovering truths). If, however, the proper way to treat persons is as instruments for uncovering truths, there must be something right about EW. Second, even if objections to EW surface that show that the view calls for some revision, it might be that the revisions that EW calls for are so minor. If some moderately conciliatory view is left intact, the skeptical argument from disagreement might emerge unscathed. It might be, for example, that justified belief in an interesting proposition requires some high degree of confidence in the truth of that proposition. Such confidence is warranted only if you have strong evidence for believing that proposition. You might think that the fact that your peer disagrees with you provides enough evidence against your belief that this high degree of confidence is no longer warranted. Alternatively, you might think that the fact that your peer disagrees with you is good evidence for believing that you have not responded properly to the evidence either because you lack the ability to settle the relevant question by means of the evidence you had or because something went wrong in the way that you responded to this body of evidence. If such evidence can defeat the justificatory support you had initially, perhaps maintaining a high degree of confidence in the wake of the discovery of peer disagreement is not warranted. What seems completely unwarranted is treating the discovery of peer disagreement with indifference. If you discovered that thousands of peers disagreed with you and you alone thought that you were right, it seems that your steadfast adherence to your original view would be unreasonable.⁶ Would it be unreasonable if the numbers were stacked against you to some lesser degree? It seems so. If the fact that two peers disagree with you and no peer has your back is enough to undermine your confidence to some degree, surely one peer should undermine your confidence to some degree.⁷ Perhaps all the skeptical argument requires is that some small concession is called for on your part. If such a small concession is sufficient to undermine the kind of justification needed for knowledge, it is enough to suit the purposes of the skeptical argument.

3. ARE CONCILIATORY VIEWS SELF-DEFEATING?

Some have argued that we ought to reject EW on the grounds that it is self-defeating. It is not self-defeating to give equal weight to two thermometers or calculators you know to be equally reliable. So, if EW ought to be rejected on the grounds that it is self-defeating, there must be something about us that justifies treating persons as more than mere truthometers.⁸ I shall focus on Elga's discussion of the objection because it is the most developed version of the objection in the literature.⁹

As Elga (2010: 179) states the objection, it comes to this. EW tells us how to respond to disagreements about all kinds of things. Some of these disagreements might have to do with the weather or football. Some have to do with disagreement itself. Suppose you and Tilda disagreed about disagreement. You accept EW, but she rejects it. Now what should you do? It seems that EW calls for its own rejection. That is to say, if EW is correct, you should now believe it not to be. Or, perhaps, you should not believe it to be correct.

If a view calls for its own rejection, Elga says, that view is incoherent. Fleshing this out a bit, he says that the problem with EW is that EW is an inductive method (i.e., a method for taking evidence into account and forming beliefs in light of it) and that no inductive method can coherently recommend a competing inductive method over itself. Competing inductive methods are methods that offer contrary recommendations about how to respond to evidence. If an inductive method tells you to follow some competing inductive method, the methods will deliver contrary verdicts about what to do in some circumstance. Elga thinks any such method is incoherent.

Elga offers this example to illustrate EW's difficulties:

Suppose that *Consumer Reports* says, "Buy only toaster X," while *Smart Shopper* says, "Buy only toaster Y." And suppose that *Consumer Reports* also says, "*Consumer Reports* is worthless. *Smart Shopper* magazine is the ratings magazine to follow." Then *Consumer Reports* offers inconsistent advice about toasters. For, on the one hand, it says directly to buy only Toaster X. But, on the other hand, it also says to trust *Smart Shopper*, which says to buy only Toaster Y. And it is impossible to follow both pieces of advice . . . Moral: . . . no inductive method can coherently recommend a competing inductive method over itself . . . it is incoherent for an inductive method to recommend two incompatible responses to a single course of experience. But that is exactly what a method does if it ever recommends a competing method over itself. (Elga 2010: 181)

I agree that something has gone wrong at *Consumer Reports* if it starts issuing this sort of advice. To state the precise nature of the problem, Elga suggests that there is "a completely general constraint that applies to any fundamental policy, rule, or method . . . [which is that] to be consistent, a fundamental policy, rule, or method must be dogmatic with respect to its own correctness"

(2010: 185). It should be noted that if this objection shows that EW is false, it does so because it shows that every view that tells you to be conciliatory when it comes to your views about disagreement is false. Thus, if the objection to EW is sound, it is a sound objection to most extant views about the proper attitude to take towards views about disagreement. Thus, if you think that the justified degree of confidence you can have in your views about disagreement ought to decrease when armies of peers tell you that they reject your views, you should worry that there is something amiss with Elga's self-defeat objection to EW.¹⁰

In arguing that a view such as EW is self-defeating, what do EW's critics hope to show? They might try to show that the view cannot be rationally believed or that the view implies that there are conditions under which the view cannot be rationally believed. If some view implied that there are conditions under which the view could not be rationally believed, there is a sense in which the view might call for its own rejection, but rejecting views that you realize you cannot rationally believe is not the same thing as believing that the view is mistaken. It seems to me that defenders of EW might accept that their view is not a view that they can rationally believe without conceding that their view is mistaken. It seems that Elga wants to try to show that EW is mistaken. The crucial question for our purposes is whether Elga can show that EW is incoherent in a way that shows that it is mistaken.

Consider four ways of trying to show that a view is incoherent:

- IC1: View X is incoherent if X implies there is body of evidence E such that it is possible for you to have E and view X says that you ought to disbelieve X if you have E.
- IC2: View X is incoherent if X implies there is a body of evidence E such that it is possible for you to have E and view X says you should not believe X if you have E.
- IC3: View X is incoherent if X implies that there is a situation in which you should believe p and should not believe p .
- IC4: View X is incoherent if X implies that there is a situation in which you should believe p and it is not the case that you should believe p .

It seems that *Consumer Reports* might be incoherent in all four ways. It might tell you to read another magazine to see if it should be trusted and that other magazine might tell you not to trust it. It might tell you on one page that you should believe some toaster is reliable and tell you on another page that you should not believe anything the magazine has to say about toasters. It might also tell you that it is not the case that you should believe anything it says about toasters and also tell you that it is the case that you should believe anything it says about toasters. Is EW incoherent in any of these ways? If so, is it mistaken?

Consider the first two incoherence charges, IC1 and IC2.¹¹ Is EW incoherent in either of these ways? EW do you does seem to imply that situations could

arise in which, given your evidence, you should either refrain from believing EW or believe that EW is mistaken. It is not clear why this would show that EW is mistaken. Think about the right reasons view (RR).¹² Among other things, RR tells you to believe those views supported by your evidence and stick by those views even when you discover a peer disagrees. It certainly seems possible that graduate students confined to Rochester might have evidence that supports EW, might have no evidence against EW, and might not have any reason to think that their capacity for responding to reasons has been compromised. If your epistemic obligation is to follow the evidence, it seems possible that you could have (misleading?) evidence against RR. It seems that, given your evidence, you should either reject RR or refrain from accepting it. If so, IC1 and IC2 can also be leveled against RR. It can also be leveled against the evidentialist view that tells you that it is permissible to believe if you have sufficient evidence and impermissible to believe if you do not have sufficient evidence. Graduate students tied to chairs in William James' basement might have had evidence that supports a pragmatist view that implies that it is sometimes proper to believe propositions without sufficient evidence. It certainly seems that they could have rationally believed that James' anti-evidentialist views were correct even if those views were mistaken.

As a general point, it seems that the justified acceptance of any philosophical view depends upon the quality of the evidence you have for believing it. Conee and Feldman provide a sketch of a model of confirmation that seems plausible in rough outline:

We believe that sometimes when a person contemplates a proposition, the person acquires evidence supporting its truth. It is not necessarily the case that everyone gets this sort of *a priori* evidence by contemplating the same propositions. Just as some people have more acute visual faculties, some may be better able to get the evidence for some truths than others in this *a priori* way . . . In considering propositions that are the best candidates for immediate *a priori* justification, one becomes conscious of something about the relations among the concepts employed in considering the proposition. This non-doxastic awareness of conceptual relations provides the evidence. Thought experiments can provide a different sort of *a priori* justification. Intuitive judgments about hypothetical particular examples can gain evidence from awareness of conceptual relations, as before. But philosophical principles that are properly generalized from thought experiments are not supported by such conceptual evidence. The *a priori* evidence for the principles supports them in a broadly inductive way. (Conee & Feldman 2008: 93)

It seems that most of our philosophical views (including views about the proper response to disagreement) are going to be supported in this "broadly inductive way" by the intuitions that we have about various examples. If this is the way that these philosophical beliefs are justified, it seems that the best

support we can hope to have for our philosophical beliefs will be fallible. Fallible grounds can fail you. If they lead you astray, you still might be justified in your false philosophical beliefs. I do not see why views about disagreement would be any exception. Thus, whatever the true view about disagreement is, we should not be surprised if the view implied that it might be proper for you to reject or refuse to accept that view.

If IC1 and IC2 apply to many independently plausible views (e.g., most of the extant alternatives to EW), EW might not be in bad company. Why would it matter if IC1 or IC2 stuck? Elga's answer is that inductive methods like EW have to be dogmatic with respect to their own correctness. If that means that EW has to say that you should believe EW whatever your evidence happens to be, then there is indeed a problem with EW. Your evidence could point against EW, in which case you should reject or refuse to accept EW. If, however, EW (i) tells you that you should believe that EW is correct and (ii) tells you that it is not the case that you should believe that EW is correct, the fourth incoherence charge sticks.

The problem with this retooled objection to EW is that EW does *not* say that you should believe EW. It might imply that you should believe EW if your evidence supports EW, but it does not tell you to believe EW whatever your evidence happens to be. The failure of Kantian ethics is not that we cannot derive from the categorical imperative the imperative to believe that the fundamental principle of morality is the categorical imperative. The categorical imperative is dogmatic with respect to its own correctness because it does not tell you to violate it by following some principle that tells you to act on maxims that cannot be universalized. If a moral view can be dogmatic with respect to its own correctness even if it allows that you can properly believe the view to be mistaken, maybe the same holds true for epistemic views. If a view can permit you to believe that it is false or require you to believe that it is false and still be dogmatic with respect to its own correctness, perhaps IC1 and IC2 stick and EW *is* dogmatic with respect to its own correctness.

Maybe what Elga meant when he said that EW has to be dogmatic with respect to its own correctness is *not* that EW has to require you to believe that EW is correct, but only that EW cannot offer a set of prescriptions that, *inter alia*, require you to violate EW. That is, it cannot require you to form beliefs in such a way that you violate EW. If it did that, EW would not be dogmatic with respect to its own correctness. Nothing we have seen thus far, however, indicates that EW tells you to believe some proposition it tells you to refrain from believing. Nothing we have seen thus far indicates that EW tells you that you should believe p and that it is not the case that you should believe p . Thus, nothing said thus far indicates that IC3 or IC4 sticks.

Elga might have thought that EW is not dogmatic with respect to its own correctness because it implies that you can have evidence that supports the hypothesis that some competing inductive method should be followed rather than EW. Suppose, for example, that your evidence supports RR. If you justifiably believe that RR is correct, you justifiably believe that you ought

to follow RR rather than EW. If you are permitted to follow RR rather than EW and EW implies that this is so, then *this* is why EW is not dogmatic with respect to its own correctness. Thus, it might seem that if IC1 or IC2 stick, IC3 or IC4 must also stick. If so, we surely must reject EW.

The problem with this version of the objection is that it assumes that if you justifiably believe RR is correct, you have the right to follow RR and the right to violate EW. This assumes that anything you justifiably believe to be an inductive method must thereby be a genuine inductive method since that method can provide you with permissions to believe propositions other methods forbid you to believe. This is false, however, and this is why neither IC3 nor IC4 applies to EW. It is possible for you to justifiably believe that some method for determining your moral obligations is correct even if your evidence is misleading and your obligation is often to refrain from acting in the ways that your method requires. If this is possible, we have to draw a distinction between the methods justifiably believed to be correct and the methods that justify (i.e., the correct methods). Methods that are incorrect (i.e., that do not offer justifications for belief or for action) do not turn into correct methods just because your (misleading) evidence indicates that these methods are correct.¹³ The opposing view seems to rest on the idea that, if your evidence indicates that M is a genuine inductive method and M says that you ought to believe *p*, you can justifiably believe that you ought to believe *p* and can justifiably believe *p*. This idea is not very plausible. It seems much more plausible that you might have misleading evidence about which inductive methods are genuine. It seems incoherent to say that objective relations between your evidence and hypotheses about the correctness of inductive methods determine which inductive methods are indeed correct if those very same methods might subsequently say that these objective relations between evidence and hypotheses cannot justify the acceptance of these methods. This seems to be the point that Elga was trying to make, yet this point causes trouble for the view that any inductive method you justifiably believe to be genuine is a method that issues justifications.

To sum up, the only incoherence charge that could show that EW is false is IC3 or IC4. These incoherence charges stick only if EW issues contrary prescriptions. The thought that it does either rests on the mistaken thought that EW tells us to believe EW (and then indirectly tells us that we are not to believe it) or the mistaken thought that anything you justifiably take to be an inductive method is one. At best, the self-defeat objection shows that it can sometimes be unreasonable to believe EW. In this respect, EW is like most views on the epistemology of disagreement.

4. THE VIRTUES OF SELFLESSNESS

EW tells us that there is an agent-neutral epistemic norm, one that tells both parties to the disagreement to be conciliatory. To show that rational disagreement is possible, Huemer has suggested that there might be agent-centered

epistemic norms. If there are some agent-centered epistemic norms, rational disagreements of just the sort EW says are impossible might turn out to be possible after all:

Suppose two subjects have perfect . . . knowledge of one another's epistemically relevant states (sensory experiences, memories, intuitions, or whatever is relevant to what one is justified in believing). Suppose that neither party makes any *procedural* error in forming beliefs: for instance, neither party makes any oversights or incorrect inferences, neither party incorrectly weighs two pieces of evidence, and neither party accepts premises he is not justified in accepting. Both parties form their beliefs by the methods one ought to use in forming beliefs. Could these individuals still end up with unresolved differences of opinion?

On the *agent-neutral* view, both parties must fully agree with one another on all factual questions, for they have the same available evidence, and they weigh that evidence in the same way. On the agent-neutral view, though *what evidence one has* often differs from one person to another, the epistemic force of a given piece of evidence is not itself agent-relative. That is, for any given piece of evidence, there is an objective degree to which that evidence supports a given conclusion, which should guide the thinking of any person who is aware of the evidence. But for the agent-centrist, two parties could rationally assign different weights to the same piece of evidence, depending on *whose* evidence it was, even though both parties were equally certain of the existence of that evidence. This has the consequence that the two parties described above might rationally disagree after all is said and done. (Huemer 2011: 19–20)

If there are agent-centered epistemic norms, perhaps it is a mistake to treat yourself as just one truthometer amongst many. Are there any agent-centered epistemic norms? If so, do they undermine the analogical argument for EW?

The epistemic egoist believes there are agent-centered epistemic norms that tell us that it is sometimes proper to display a kind of trust in your own attitudes that you do not give to others.¹⁴ An agent-centered epistemic norm would identify a condition C such that if you were in C, you would have some *prima facie* reason to believe *p* even if someone else would not have an equally good reason to believe *p* if they knew you were in C (Huemer 2011: 18).¹⁵ On some formulations of epistemic egoism, the subject's non-doxastic mental conditions determine which reasons she has. On others, C is specified in terms of the subject's beliefs. Huemer opts for the first sort of formulation.

In previous work, Huemer (2007) defends phenomenal conservatism (PC), a view that holds that if it seems to you that *p*, you thereby have some degree of justification for believing *p*. On his way of stating the view, if a seeming or appearance is firm enough and you have no defeating reasons

available to you, the beliefs you form will be justified by seemings or appearances, non-factive mental states that he takes to be distinct from beliefs. He thinks that it would be better to formulate phenomenal conservatism in such a way that it recognizes agent-centered epistemic norms (2011: 23). Moreover, he thinks there are cases where it is intuitive to say that an agent-neutral approach gets things wrong. Suppose Tilda finds p intuitive and she has no defeaters. She might have some degree of justification for believing p . He does not think, however, that her intuition provides the same degree of justification for *you* to believe p . If you do not have her intuition but know about her intuition, he thinks we would agree that she has a degree of justification you do not. The lesson he draws from this is that an agent-centered approach to intuitive justification is appropriate. If it is, then it seems that those disagreements that arise (in part) because of a difference in intuitions might be perfectly reasonable disagreements. If such disagreements involve peers, EW is mistaken to say that parties to this disagreement are somehow less than perfectly reasonable.¹⁶

Is an agent-centered approach plausible for other kinds of seemings or appearances? It does not seem plausible for the case of perceptual seemings or appearances. Here it seems that that perceptual appearances and seemings are like the readings on a thermometer.¹⁷ If perceptual appearances do not confer different degrees of justification upon two subjects' beliefs by virtue of the fact that these seemings are states of one of these subjects and not the other, I think that agent-centered PC (ACPC) faces an important objection. One of the (supposed) advantages of PC is that it can accommodate an intuition that Huemer takes to be the central intuition behind internalism:

It is that there cannot be a pair of cases in which everything seems to a subject to be the same in all epistemically relevant respects, and yet the subject ought, rationally, to take different doxastic attitudes in the two cases—for instance, in one case to affirm a proposition and in the other to withhold. (2006: 151)

If you compare, say, two of your own intuitions concerning p and q respectively and you found that both p and q were intuitive, the internalist would say that if all else is equal, either both intuitions would justify or neither would. If you compared two of your perceptual experiences, the internalist who accepts the internalist intuition would say that, *ceteris paribus*, both experiences justify your beliefs or neither experience justifies your beliefs. To say otherwise, you would have to say that the following absurd speech could be true:

I seem to be aware of a dog, just as I seem to be aware of a unicorn. These two experiences seem equally reliable to me, and in general, seem alike in all epistemically relevant respects. However, I believe that there is a unicorn, and I do not believe that there is a dog. I have no reason to

think that the unicorn experience is any more likely to be accurate than the dog experience; I just accept the content of the one and not the other, for no apparent reason. (2006: 150)

If the absurd speech is absurd and the upshot is that two experiences justify equally provided that the subject has no reason to distrust one of the experiences, the same seems to apply to the subject's intuitions. Indeed, the same seems to apply to the full range of seeming states that confer justification (e.g., intuitions, apparent perceptions, apparent memories). Suppose the internalist intuition seems to tell us to trust our seeming states equally. Suppose further that we should trust our experiences and the experiences of others equally provided that we know about them perfectly well and have no reason to distrust them. Now it seems that there are two cases perfectly alike in all epistemically relevant respects that ACPC tells you to treat differently: the case in which someone tells you that p is true where you know that their belief is based on an apparent perception and the case in which someone tells you that q is true where their belief is based on an intuition.

It looks as if ACPC has to reject the internalist intuition, admit that your (token) intuitions can justify your beliefs as well as it justifies the beliefs held by others, or say experiences will justify beliefs to varying degrees depending upon whose beliefs they are. It seems quite implausible to say that if you and I both know about my experiences and have no defeaters, what I know about my experiences justifies my beliefs to a greater degree than what you know about my experiences can justify yours. Perhaps we should just take the internalist intuition at face value and say that your intuitions can confer the same degree of justification upon your beliefs as it does upon beliefs held by others. If so, intuitions about the epistemic force of intuition would lend no support to ACPC.

Those sympathetic to ACPC might resist and insist that a token intuition's epistemic efficacy can vary from person to person depending upon whose intuition it is. Now, suppose that while reflecting on some trolley cases, you walk through a device that you take to be a security scanner at the airport. The technician says that the device you walked through was actually a teletransporter, not a scanner. You are concerned. You thought that you had just moments earlier had the intuition that it was wrong to push someone off of a footbridge. You realize now that if the teletransporter had been on, it was just someone very similar to you that had that intuition. You ask the technician whether the machine was on and she says that it was off. In discovering that you are numerically identical with the person who walked through the scanner, should your confidence in your own judgment about the permissibility of pushing someone off the bridge 'tick up' now that you know that the intuition was truly yours? I have a hard time believing identity is what matters here.

There is a further strange feature of ACPC worth mentioning. If you had thought that you were somehow better than Tilda at uncovering the truth,

you might have reasonably thought that your seemings and appearances were better at justifying beliefs than her seemings and appearances were. Remember that this is *not* what you think. By your lights, Tilda is just as likely to uncover the truth as you are. If someone wanted to find out whether p and was trying to figure out whether to send you or to send Tilda on a fact finding mission, you could say that it should not matter to them who they decided to send on this fact finding mission. If you justifiably believe that you and Tilda really are peers, surely you must think that there is an explanation as to why this is. It would be easier to explain why you and Tilda are peers if you can assume that your seemings and appearances justify equally well. If you were convinced that your seemings and appearances did not justify your respective beliefs equally well, you would be hard-pressed to explain why you and Tilda are equally good at uncovering the truth. Of course, defenders of ACPC would not say that your seemings and appearances are better at justifying your beliefs than her seemings and appearances are at justifying her beliefs. They would say that your appearances and seemings are better at justifying your beliefs than hers and that her seemings are better at justifying her beliefs than yours. This is modeled on the ethical egoist's idea that considerations having to do with your well-being can give you a reason to act even if it gives Tilda no reason to act. The obscurity of ACPC seems to be that you can know that your reasons are better at justifying you in your beliefs than Tilda's are at justifying your beliefs even if you know that neither you nor Tilda enjoys an advantage over the other when it comes to uncovering truth. It is hard to believe that you can know your reasons to be better for the purposes of justifying your beliefs when your information indicates that your reasons are just as likely to lead to truth as Tilda's reasons are. Perhaps the obscurity is due to the idea that in the ethical case, the egoist believes that there is not some common aim that all agents pursue in common. Each agent should perform the action that serves their interests and there is no common set of interests we all share in common. In the epistemic case, there is a common aim that all should pursue in common, which is to fit our beliefs to the facts. The facts do not vary from person to person in the way that some outcomes will serve the interests of some agents better than others.

To motivate ACPC, Huemer appealed to the intuition that your intuitions might justify your beliefs in ways that they do not justify Tilda's beliefs. Something in the neighborhood of this intuition can be accommodated by a view that recognizes only agent-neutral norms. Think about the case of visual experience. If you and Tilda are in different places and your experiences differ, Tilda's experiences might justify your beliefs if you know about her experiences. Suppose, however, that you and Tilda are both in equally good position to see what is happening in the street below and she has an experience as of a car zipping down the road and you do not. In this case, you might know about her experience and her experience might not provide much justification for your belief. Given that you both had similar

vantage points on the street below, you should expect your experiences to be similar and the fact that you did not have an appearance that she did is some reason to distrust the experiences you and her had. Similarly, if you and Tilda are considering the same intuition pumps or the same proposition and your intuitions subsequently differed, it seems you would both have reasons to worry about your intuitions. If, however, Tilda has considered some intuition pump that you have not and you know that she finds some proposition intuitive, you might think that Tilda's intuition gives you some reason to believe much in the way that the experiences she had when she had a better vantage point gave you reasons to believe things were the way they seemed to her to be.

PC might be able to accommodate these points even if ACPC cannot. Remember that PC says that if it seems to you as if p , you have some degree of justification for believing p . The pressure to endorse ACPC came from the thought that I can know about your seemings without this knowledge providing me with much justification for my beliefs. There is a difference between (i) p seeming true to me and (ii) me knowing of a seeming state that has p as its content. You can know of this state without the content of this state seeming true. PC says that you have some degree of justification for believing what seems true to you. If I look out the window and see a fox in the garden, it seems to me that there is a fox in the garden. If I am hallucinating and my experience is indistinguishable from the experience I had when I saw a fox, it seems to me that there is a fox in the garden. If you know that I am having an experience, it does not seem to you that there is a fox in the garden. Knowing that I am in a state by virtue of which it seems to me that p does not put you in a state by virtue of which it seems to you that p . Suppose that it visually seems to you that there is a fox in the garden and Tilda knows that you are having this experience. (In knowing that you have this experience, it need not seem to her that there is a fox in the garden.) Properly understood, PC says (i) you have some degree of justification for believing that there is a fox in the garden, (ii) that Tilda could have had that same degree of justification for believing there to be a fox in the garden if (contrary to fact) it seemed to her that there is a fox in the garden, and (iii) that Tilda has some degree of justification for believing that you have a certain kind of visual experience. It does *not* say that you and Tilda are epistemic peers because it does not say that your reasons and her reasons are identical. Your reason for believing that you should not let the kids play in the garden is that there is a fox in the garden (as there appears to be) and her reason for believing that it is not good to let the kids play in the garden is that it seems to *you* that there is a fox there. These are different reasons. Her reason is a proposition about your experiences, but your reason is not. To say otherwise is to insist that *your* reasons are limited to the facts that Tilda knows. Tilda knows that you have such and such a kind of experience, but not whether what you experienced is so. Surely your reasons include the things that you yourself can plainly see.

There is no inconsistency in saying that you have non-inferential justification for believing p when p seems true to you and in saying that seemings or appearances are not themselves the reasons that provide this justification. Seemings and appearances might play the role of evidence that can justify belief inferentially, in which case knowledge of them might provide a very different sort of justification for your beliefs than the justification you have when something seems to you to be true. There is no need for agent-centered norms in this account. Once we get rid of the agent-centered norms, we can see that PC gives us no reason to doubt EW. The combination of EW and PC would say that in cases of peer disagreement where everything that seemed true to you seemed true to Tilda and everything that seemed true to Tilda seemed true to you, you and Tilda cannot rationally disagree. In this state, you and Tilda would not just have the same knowledge of seemings, there would be no difference in what seemed true to you. It certainly seems plausible that in this state if you and Tilda discovered that you had incompatible beliefs while every proposition you considered you agreed seemed true or seemed false you could not both be rational.

Not all epistemic egoists think that we should think of your reasons as consisting of seemings and appearances. Some who defend the view that there is a justifiable bias in favor of your own position explicitly reject the view that our reasons are limited to seemings and appearances.¹⁸ Instead, our reasons include things that seem true or things that appear true. If we move away from the view that limits our reasons to states of mind or facts about such states to what appears true to us (i.e., the apparent facts), we might formulate a more plausible form of epistemic egoism.¹⁹

Enoch argues that we cannot and should not treat ourselves merely as truthometers. He accepts that we should treat thermometers as thermometers. Why should we treat ourselves different from mere instruments to the truth? If we suppose that EW is correct, then:

‘upon finding out that an advisor disagrees, your probability that you are right should equal your prior conditional probability that you would be right.’ But, of course, the prior conditional probability mentioned here is your prior conditional probability. And here too you may be wrong. Indeed, you may have views on how likely it is that your prior conditional probability is right . . . and how likely it is that, say, Adam’s prior probability is right. Perhaps, for instance, you think both of you are equally likely to be right about such matters. So if you and Adam differ on the relevant prior conditional probability, the Equal Weight View requires that you give both your views equal weight. But of course what does the work here is *your* prior conditional probability that you or Adam would be right about prior conditional probabilities. And here too you may have views about how likely you and others are to get it right, but here too this view will be *your* view, and so on, perhaps ad infinitum. (2010: 961)

The argument is supposed to show that *you* play an ineliminable role in revising your own beliefs, a role that others cannot possibly occupy.²⁰ This is supposed to show that a kind of detachment from the first-person perspective that comes with treating oneself merely as a truthometer is not genuinely possible. Not only are there limits to the extent that we *can* treat ourselves as truthometers, he argues that it would not be ideal to regard oneself as a mere truthometer. He suggests that once we appreciate that the ineliminability of the first-person perspective involves some degree of self-trust, we should sometimes treat the disagreement that arises between you and your peer as a reason to revise your views about the reliability of your peer without accepting that there is an equally good reason to revise your views about your own reliability (2010: 979).

So far, all Enoch has argued is that we might be psychologically constituted in such a way that it would be difficult or impossible to live up to the epistemic ideals EW puts forward, not that we should think that these ideals are no such thing. To show that there is nothing particularly good about living up to EW's standards, he offers an interesting objection to the view. Assuming that the first-person perspective truly is ineliminable, it is appropriate to have some moderate degree of self-trust. Because it is appropriate to have this self-trust, he thinks it is appropriate to regard Tilda's belief that $\sim p$ as a reason to believe that she is less reliable than you initially reckoned:

[W]hen you believe p , you do not just entertain the thought that p . . . you take p to be true. And so you take Tilda's belief in $\sim p$ to be a mistake. And, of course, each mistake someone makes . . . makes him somewhat less reliable . . . and makes you somewhat more justified in treating him as less reliable. (Enoch 2010: 983)

Enoch's argument that it can be proper to demote a peer for disagreeing with you seems to be this. To determine how reliable someone else is you need to see how well their attitudes fit with the facts. Suppose that they believe p but p is actually false. If you know about this mismatch, you have some evidence that concerns the reliability of this subject. In judging that they falsely believe something about p , you enter into a disagreement with this subject.

Christensen (2007) says that while disagreement might be a piece of evidence against Tilda's reliability, it is equally evidence against your reliability. If so, your position and Tilda's position are symmetrical and the objection to the equal weight view is removed. Enoch says that the objection is confused. Since your reason for demoting Tilda is that p is true and her belief about p does not fit the facts (and not that she has a belief that differs from one of your beliefs), you have a reason to demote her that is not also a reason to demote yourself.

Enoch agrees that there *is* evidence against your reliability when you discover that you and Tilda disagree. He seems to think that you can justifiably reason as follows:

It is a fact that p .

Tilda believes $\sim p$.

There is evidence against Tilda's reliability.

Moreover, it seems that he thinks that Tilda can justifiably reason as follows:

It is a fact that $\sim p$.

You believe p .

There is evidence against your reliability.

Thus, there is a kind of symmetry here, but not the kind of symmetry in which you (justifiably) demote yourself and your peer equally in the wake of a disagreement. If this is right, the upshot is supposed to be that there is an important difference between how you treat yourself and a thermometer. If two thermometers disagree, you should not take the disagreement to be asymmetrical evidence about the unreliability of a thermometer. If two truthometers disagree (and you are neither truthometer), the same point applies. If, however, you discover that you disagree with a truthometer, you are not epistemically required to demote yourself in the way that you would demote others. Presumably this is because only one of the two arguments just sketched above is available to you and the one available to you is one that you can justifiably rely on to demote someone previously taken to be a peer.

The success of the objection seems to depend upon whether the reasoning sketched above could justify you in demoting Tilda. (It also depends upon whether the reasoning above could justify Tilda in demoting you.) This much is clear. You can run through the first argument, Tilda can run through the second, but neither of you can run through both. Only someone who believes p can reason from the first premise of the first argument and only someone who believes $\sim p$ can run through the first premise of the second. Since neither you nor Tilda believe both p and $\sim p$, neither of you can run through both arguments. The crucial question, however, is not simply whether an argument is available to you that is not available to Tilda, but whether you can justifiably accept the argument's conclusion on the basis of accepting its premises. That depends (in part) upon whether you can justifiably accept the argument's premises. I do not see why we should think that you do justifiably accept the premises. Enoch is right that we often deploy this kind of reasoning when we try to work out who our peers are. He is also right to suggest that we are often justified in relying on this kind of reasoning to make these assessments. This is a special case. This is a case where the equal weight view says you cannot justifiably accept the first premise even if you do maintain belief in the wake of the discovery that you disagree with Tilda. Enoch's objection seems to beg the question against EW.

Enoch's egoist view has some strange implications that should make us suspicious of epistemic egoism in all of its forms. You probably should not think to yourself that it is just as likely that she is right about p . You know

that you disagree and if you are committed to saying that it is just as likely that p as $\sim p$, you cannot persist in your belief that p is true. Not rationally, at any rate. So, you must banish from your mind the thought that it is just as likely that Tilda is right. Presumably on Enoch's view you could *know* that the proper response is sometimes to maintain your belief and demote Tilda. Focus on the first part, the thought that it is proper for you to maintain your belief. If you can know this, what can you say when others ask? Suppose some friends ask about the disagreement you recently had with Tilda. They know that when you are forced to concede that you are mistaken or forced to concede that you did not know you were right, you tend to get a bit blue. You do not seem blue, they say, so what happened? You say you really do not want to talk about the disagreement, but you admit that you can properly remain confident that you were right and that Tilda was wrong. Later you discover that your friends (who happen to all be peers of yours) were telling others that *they* were confident that you were right and that Tilda was wrong. You ask them what their grounds were for demoting her from peer status. They say that you said earlier that you knew that you were properly confident that what happened was that she responded incorrectly to the evidence and that you did not. At this point, you might say one of two things. First, you might say that this is indeed a good reason for them to think that you responded to the evidence correctly and that Tilda should be demoted. Second, you might say that this is no reason for them to think that you responded to the evidence correctly and no reason to demote Tilda.

The problem with the first response is that it seems that from a third-person perspective we are all truthometers and that the proper way to respond to disagreement between truthometers when you are not a party to the disagreement is to treat them as *mere* truthometers. As such, you should treat them as mere instruments. Knowing this, you cannot endorse others treating you as something more than a mere truthometer or a mere instrument. You should not treat yourself that way, Enoch might say, but you surely cannot condone others treating you as somehow better than equally reliable truthometers. You cannot say that *they* have any good reason to demote Tilda given their epistemic position as outsiders.

The problem with the second response is that it seems quite plausible that if you know p , you can properly assert that p . That is to say, there cannot be a purely epistemic case against telling someone p if you yourself know that p . Intuitively, it does seem that it would be *improper* for you to tell others that *they* can be properly confident that you responded to the evidence correctly. This is in keeping with Enoch's view, of course, because Enoch's view implies that if others were to believe that it would be proper for them to be more confident that you responded correctly to the evidence than Tilda did, that belief would be mistaken. The oddity of Enoch's view comes to this: you know that it would be improper for you to say that others should be more confident that you responded rightly to the evidence and that Tilda did not, but it would be proper for you to say that you yourself should be

more confident that you responded rightly to the evidence than you are that Tilda did. If your peers then asked why you could say that *you* knew that it was proper for you to be more confident that you responded rightly to the evidence when *they* could not know that it was proper for you to do so, they might suspect that you know something they do not. No, you assure them, you do *not* know something they do not. You do not have insider's information, you tell them, you are simply an insider. At that point, your friends will stop listening to you. If I were you, I would expect a demotion.

Here is one final worry about epistemic egoism. Earlier, I distinguished between two ways of responding to the analogical argument. The Type-I response was to say that it can be proper to stick to your guns by sticking to your favorite thermometer or watch even when your watch or thermometer conflicts with instruments you previously thought with good reason were equally reliable. The Type-II response was to say that there is an important difference between sticking to your guns and sticking to your favorite instruments. Suppose that you enjoy building thermometers. You take two thermometers and put them into a beaker containing water and discover that the thermometers give different readings. The first says that the water is seven degrees Fahrenheit cooler than the second thermometer says it is. Because of your previous experiences you had thought that both thermometers were equally reliable. At this point you can see no reason for trusting one thermometer over the other. You notice that the first thermometer has your initials carved into the handle and that the second has Tilda's initials carved into the handle. You know that you build your thermometers the way that you do because you have considered the evidence carefully and have carefully considered beliefs about the proper way to build a thermometer. You know that Tilda has her own considered views about the proper way to build a thermometer and know that her way of doing things is not exactly the way that you do things. Since your thermometer is constructed the way it is because you believe that this is how thermometers should be made and her thermometer is constructed the way it is because she believes that there are better ways of making thermometers, I cannot see how the epistemic egoist could dissuade you from thinking that this new bit of information about the construction of the devices gives you the right to think that it would be proper to be more confident in the first thermometer's reading than the second. Thus, it seems as if the line between Type-I and Type-II responses to the analogical argument has been blurred. To maintain that these truly are different kinds of response, it seems we have to bracket facts about an agent's beliefs and the relations between those beliefs and the construction of instruments in determining what response is appropriate when instruments offer different readings. I do not see how the epistemic egoist could insist on bracketing these sorts of facts. If the (apparent) fact that this is the right way to build thermometers can justify further beliefs that you have and justify having greater confidence in your own beliefs than you have in Tilda's, why wouldn't these (allegedly) justified beliefs justify further beliefs in the confi-

dence in your instruments? Since, however, it seems that the only facts that you can properly bring to bear in determining how confident you can be in your instruments are the facts that you knew prior to discovering which of the thermometers was made by you (i.e., facts about past successes and failures that determine a track record), it seems facts that the epistemic egoists take to justify your greater self-confidence cannot justify greater confidence in your own interests.

5. CONCLUSION

It is tempting to attack EW in the hopes of undermining the skeptical argument from disagreement, but I think we should resist this temptation. Contrary to what EW's critics have argued, considerations of self-defeat do not show that EW is mistaken. There is nothing self-defeating about treating yourself as one instrument amongst many that might be used for uncovering the truth. Contrary to what the epistemic egoists have argued, there is no reason for having greater confidence in yourself and your own opinions than you have in your peers and their opinions. If people are, from the epistemic point of view, simply sophisticated truthometers, perhaps we should be treated as such.

NOTES

1. Elga (2007) once defended EW, but does not accept EW as it is understood here. EW applies to all views, and Elga (2010) thinks that we should not be conciliatory when it comes to views about disagreement. Feldman (2007) once defended the view, but his views have changed. See Feldman (2009). Christensen (2007) seems to be attracted to the view, but it is not clear whether he accepts it. Matheson (2009) defends EW from a number of objections, and he has said that he accepts the view.
2. There is some disagreement as to how to understand 'disagreement.' On a narrow understanding, two parties disagree about p iff one party believes p and the other believes $\sim p$. If you initially believe p , Tilda initially believes $\sim p$, but then you suspend judgment, the disagreement does not persist even if Tilda does not budge. (In this sense of 'disagreement,' the agnostic does not disagree with the theist who asserts that God exists but the atheist does disagree.) On this narrow understanding, a disagreement between you and Tilda can disappear even if you and Tilda have differing degrees of confidence concerning p provided that you are not sufficiently confident in p so as to count as believing p or she is not sufficiently confident in $\sim p$ so as to count as believing $\sim p$. There is a broader sense of 'disagreement' according to which two people who are both very confident that p disagree if they have different degrees of confidence in p . To simplify discussion, I focus on this narrower sense of 'disagreement.'
3. For discussion, see Kelly (2010) and Weatherson (2012). Matheson (2009) argues that higher-order evidence functions as a defeater in explaining why the discovery of disagreement requires parties to the disagreement to be conciliatory.
4. For discussion of the analogical argument, see Christensen (2007), Enoch (2010), Feldman (2007), Kelly (2010), and White (2009).

5. It might seem that the requirement to be conciliatory in response to disagreement follows from the requirement that parties to the disagreement respond in symmetric ways. This might be correct, but it is not obviously correct. A symmetric response might be one in which neither party to the disagreement budges.
6. See Kelly (2010) and Lackey (2010).
7. Matheson (2009) makes the same point.
8. Matheson reminds me that one difference between persons and thermometers is that thermometers never disagree about whether it is good to use a thermometer. Fair enough. Instruments, however, might disagree about whether it is good to use certain instruments. Brains are instruments and we disagree about which brains to trust because of our brains.
9. I first heard a version of this objection from Matt Weiner. In addition to Elga (2010), see Kelly (2005) and Weatherson (2012).
10. Plantinga (2000) makes a similar point.
11. For the record, I do not think that IC1 or IC2 have any force. It seems that a perfectly coherent view might tell you to disbelieve it or refrain from believing it. A *person* would be incoherent if he followed this advice while adhering to the view, but IC1 and IC2 have to do with the coherence of a *view*, not a *person*.
12. See Kelly (2005: 180) for an introduction.
13. Matheson reminded me that the evidence might not ‘turn’ an inductive method into a correct inductive method, but it might give you a good argument. If, say, your evidence supports RR, would this not be a good argument: (P1) RR says to believe *p* in situation *S*; (P2) I’m in *S*; (P3) RR is correct; (C) Thus, I should keep believing *p*. This might be a good argument, but only if we distinguish good arguments from sound arguments. We know that different bodies of evidence will provide support to different versions of this argument (e.g., a version of this argument where RR is replaced with EW), so we know that if arguments of this kind are good, they are not good because they are sound. In what way are they good? Perhaps they are good because the subject can rationally accept their conclusions when the premises are rationally accepted. Can subjects who justifiably believe (C) justifiably believe *p*? I do not think so. Someone might justifiably believe (C) because of the evidence they have even if (C) is mistaken. It might be thought that anyone who rationally believes (C) would be rational to believe *p*, but it is not obvious that this would be the case. Just as rational acceptance of a false moral view does not justify or permit acting in accordance with that view, rational acceptance of a false epistemic principle does not justify or permit believing in accordance with that view. If RR endorses a false epistemic principle, believing what RR permits is not always permitted. This is what it means for RR to endorse a false epistemic principle, after all. In the moral case, it is often thought that factual ignorance can exculpate even if moral ignorance cannot. I am happy to say that there is something similar in the epistemic case. If you are ignorant of (nonepistemic) facts, you might be excused for believing what you do. If your ignorance has to do with epistemic principles, however, and you accept the wrong epistemic principles, it is not obvious to me that this exculpates. You are still on the hook for your beliefs just as you might be legally on the hook when you act from ignorance of the law. The intuition that you can rationally believe *p* if you rationally believe (C) on the basis of the argument sketched above might just be further evidence that what you rationally believe is not the same thing as what you justifiably believe.
14. For a critical discussion of epistemic egoism, see Foley (2001).
15. One reason Huemer thinks that phenomenal conservatism (PC) should recognize agent-centered epistemic norms is that he thinks the arguments for PC do not support an agent-neutral principle that states that each of us should treat

- the seemings and appearances of all subjects as reasons for our beliefs. Since I do not think the arguments he has offered for PC lend any support to PC, I do not think this provides much support to an agent-centered formulation of PC.
16. Just to be clear, the reason that Huemer thinks that seemings and appearances confer different degrees of justification upon your beliefs and beliefs held by others is not that you have better access to your seemings and appearances, and not because it is possible for others to have defeaters that you lack. Even if you and Tilda had the same defeaters and the same knowledge of your intuitions (never mind how), your intuitions can justify your beliefs to a better degree than they justify hers.
 17. This is a point on which Enoch (2010), Huemer (2011), and I agree.
 18. See Enoch (2010) and Wedgwood (2010).
 19. Williamson (2000) defends this approach. In Littlejohn (2012), I defend a propositional account of reasons that is more modest than Williamson's account.
 20. Wedgwood (2010) makes a similar point.

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