

4 A Neo-Pyrrhonian Approach to the Epistemology of Disagreement

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1. INTRODUCTION

The epistemic and practical implications of disagreement are a central topic of discussion in the extant works of Sextus Empiricus, our main source for Pyrrhonian skepticism. He constantly refers to both actual and possible disputes in any area of philosophy or ordinary life, from epistemology, logic, and natural philosophy to metaphysics, ethics, and religion. In his treatment of these disagreements, he tells us that the Pyrrhonist is unable to prefer any one of the positions over its rivals because they strike him as equipollent or equally credible. This inability to resolve the disputes results in suspension of judgment, which is the hallmark of Pyrrhonian skepticism. Leaving aside for the moment the question of whether withholding assent in the face of equipollent disagreement should be construed as a rational requirement or a psychological constraint, what Sextus' texts show is that there is a close connection between disagreement and skepticism—in this case, in its agnostic version. A similar intimate link can be found in contemporary metaethics, where the argument from disagreement has been one of the bases for ethical skepticism in its antirealist form, as can be seen particularly in John Mackie's moral error theory. In the current epistemological discussion of the significance of disagreement between epistemic peers,¹ the potential skeptical implications of controversy are also a focus of attention. However, few authors defend a skeptical stance—much less a radical skeptical stance like the one adopted by the Pyrrhonist or Mackie. And among those who reject a skeptical approach to peer disagreement, most do not carry out a careful and thorough examination of such an approach, which is sometimes simply dismissed out of hand.

The purpose of this essay is to explore how the Pyrrhonian stance could be applied to the present epistemological debate about what attitude should be adopted in the face of peer dispute. In particular, the aim is to use the Pyrrhonian argumentative strategies both to argue that such debate rests on problematic presuppositions and to block some maneuvers intended to offer an efficacious way of resolving a considerable number of peer controversies. Although there are several questions in the current disagreement literature

which are worth examining from a Pyrrhonian perspective, for reasons of space I will here focus on the following three views: (i) there is an objective fact of the matter on at least most controversial issues, (ii) there is theory-neutral evidence by means of which we can access the truth of the matter, and (iii) many peer disagreements can be settled by determining who has correctly responded to such evidence.

The reason for focusing on Pyrrhonian skepticism is not merely that disagreement is a topic of detailed discussion in the Sextan corpus and that the skepticizing aspects present in some recent positions on peer disagreement are reminiscent of Pyrrhonism. The main reason is rather that, to my mind, the present-day debate about the epistemic significance of disagreement would profit from taking account of that form of skepticism. It should be noted that some of the skeptical arguments and considerations that will be offered are not found in the Sextan works. So when I talk of a “Pyrrhonian” perspective on the epistemology of disagreement, I use this term to also refer to Pyrrhonian-like strategies which either are extensions of strategies applied by Sextus or are compatible with the Pyrrhonian spirit. That is, I will also make use of arguments which Sextus could have used had he witnessed contemporary discussions of disagreement not only in epistemology but also in metaethics and philosophy of science. This is why I call “neo-Pyrrhonian” the skeptical outlook that is presented, and adopted, in this essay.

Before getting down to business, I would like to make two preliminary remarks to ward off misunderstandings. The first is that, when talking about the “resolution” of a disagreement, I will be referring to different possible ways of settling it. The claim that a given controversy has been resolved may be made either from the vantage point of those involved in it or from the vantage point of a third-party onlooker. In the former case, the controversy is deemed to be settled when the disputants come to consensus by sharing the reasons for their respective views and/or when from a first-person perspective one comes to the conclusion that one’s view is the one supported by the total evidence. In the latter case, the onlooker thinks that the reasons offered by the disputants have allowed him to come to know the truth of the disputed matter, even if the disputants themselves have failed to recognize what that is. The skeptical arguments that will be developed in this essay are intended to highlight the problems faced by these three ways in which a disagreement may be deemed to be settled.

The second preliminary remark is that, in arguing against certain epistemological positions, I will be following the Pyrrhonian argumentative practice. That is, my arguments will not be put forth in order to prove that the positions they target are incorrect or that those they support are correct. Rather, they are intended to show that opposite and apparently equipollent arguments may be advanced on the issues under consideration. In other words, the arguments which will be put forth against the views on peer disagreement discussed in this essay do not strike me as being stronger than those which have been advanced in favor of such views. Relatedly, it should

be noted that each countervailing argument will be meant to target a specific view, and so might be ineffective against other views.

The discussion will be organized as follows. In Section 2, I will explore the assumption, unchallenged in the disagreement literature, that factualism is true. In Section 3, I will examine the equally unchallenged view that there is objective evidence bearing on at least most disputed matters and that such evidence can grant us access to the truth of those matters. In so doing, I will consider the disagreement about the notion of evidence, the problem of theory-ladenness, and the question of the underdetermination of theory by evidence. Next, in Section 4, I will discuss two views which maintain that, in quite a number of cases, peer disputes can be settled by attending to which of the contending parties has correctly evaluated the total body of evidence bearing on the contested issue. In so doing, I will tackle the question of the ineliminability of the first-person perspective and discuss the dialectical conception of evidence and justification. Finally, in Section 5, I will consider a general objection to the skeptical approach of this essay.

2. FACTUALISM

Those engaged in the debate about the epistemic relevance of peer disagreement are committed to at least two of the following three claims: (i) there is an objective fact of the matter about at least most disputed questions, and hence an objective truth regarding them, (ii) we possess theory-independent evidence bearing on those questions which in principle grants us access to the truth of the matter, and (iii) a considerable number of peer controversies can in fact be resolved by attending to which disputant has correctly evaluated that evidence.² Commitment to (i) and (ii) is unanimous among both conciliationists and nonconciliationists, whereas only the latter endorse (iii) or similar claims. I will argue that all three claims can be called into question from a neo-Pyrrhonian perspective. In this section, I will deal with (i); in the next two sections I will address (ii) and (iii).

The presupposition that there is an objective fact of the matter regarding at least most controversial issues strikes me as arbitrary. The reason is not that I deny that there is such a thing as objective facts; the reason is rather that we do not seem entitled to take that for granted. It may be argued that the philosophical inquiry into the epistemic significance of disagreement should also include the discussion of whether the existence of deep and widespread controversies is at least partially an indication that there is no objective fact of the matter. A cursory look at a familiar discussion in metaethics may help to make my point clear.

John Mackie (1977) based his moral error theory on two arguments, one of which is the argument from relativity, which exploits the pervasive disagreements about moral matters.³ In his view, the impossibility of settling moral disputes is best explained by the nonexistence of objective moral

values, properties, or facts. It is true that Mackie (1980) also complemented his error theoretic position with the thesis of moral objectification or projectivism in order to offer an explanation of the origin of our pro-morality intuitions which does not presuppose their truth. But for present purposes what is important is that the very existence of moral disagreements should make us aware of the *possibility* that there may not be a fact of the matter about the disputed moral issues. In fact, the debate about whether the argument from moral disagreement succeeds in undermining moral realism is one of the main debates in metaethics.

It is crucial to note that the neo-Pyrrhonist would not espouse Mackie's argument from relativity but would only take it into consideration as a possible account of the existence of widespread and long-running moral disputes. He would point out that, just as there are metaethicists who believe that there is a fact of the matter about disputed moral issues, so too are there metaethicists who claim that there are no moral facts or properties. The former believe that those disagreements are in principle resolvable even if in many cases it is an arduous task to arrive at resolution and even if some people will continue to defend views which are proved to be wrong. The latter affirm that none of the competing moral views is epistemically justified, even if in many cases some of them can be pragmatically justified, for some views have desirable or beneficial consequences regardless of their truth. In case each of the rival parties to this dispute attempted to prove that their view is correct, the neo-Pyrrhonist would appeal to three of the so-called Five Modes of Agrippa, namely, the modes of infinite regress, reciprocity, and hypothesis—the famous Agrippa's trilemma. He would argue that any such proof would either continue *ad infinitum*, or be circular, or rest on an arbitrary assumption. In the face of this second-order controversy between moral factualists and nonfactualists, the neo-Pyrrhonist feels psychologically compelled to suspend judgment.

The common assumption that there is an objective fact or truth of the matter about most of the questions which are subject to dispute is very rarely mentioned in the peer disagreement literature. For instance, Thomas Kelly is well aware of the possibility of nonfactualism, but decides not to pursue the question of whether this view is true. The reason is that he is quite confident that there are domains in which there is a genuine fact of the matter, and his aim is to determine how disagreements in those domains should affect our beliefs (2005: 172–73; cf. 2006: sect. 4). In a similar vein, at the beginning of an article offering an overview of the epistemology of disagreement, David Christensen limits himself to saying that his focus “will be on disagreement on issues where the factuality of the subject matter is not in dispute” (2009: 766 n.1). The problem with the view of these two authors is that whether factualism is true seems to be something that should be established rather than taken for granted by any systematic and thorough exploration of the epistemic implications of disagreement. Contrary to what happens particularly in discussions of disagreement in metaethics, epistemologists start the analysis one level up.

An attitude towards factualism similar to Kelly's and Christensen's is adopted by David Enoch, who at the beginning of his discussion of peer disagreement makes the following preliminary remark:

Our concern here is with cases in which some metaphysical non-factualism, or relativism of some sort, is just not a relevant option (perhaps because we have strong independent reasons to rule it out). Our question, then, is entirely epistemological. (2010: 955)

And in a note, he adds:

The only way to insist that there is something illegitimate about restricting the discussion to just the epistemological question, it seems to me, is to argue that there cannot be cases of disagreement of the relevant kind where we are justifiably metaphysically confident in the status of the relevant subject matter. I do not see why we should believe that this is so. (2010: 955 n.4)

Two interrelated remarks are in order. The first concerns Enoch's claim that the question he is addressing is purely epistemological. Even though one can of course decide to leave metaphysical issues aside and focus on epistemological ones, in the present case such a move seems arbitrary if one does not offer epistemic reasons for so doing. As already noted, the phenomenon of disagreement is relevant for epistemology also insofar as it makes us wonder whether there is a genuine fact of the matter. I mean, is it epistemologically beside the point to wonder whether there is a fact of the matter which would render our beliefs true? I do not think that the metaphysical question can simply be kept apart from the epistemological one. Still, it might be argued that, for practical purposes, one may legitimately decide not to discuss some key aspects of an issue. Although this may be a legitimate decision, I do not think that it applies to the present case. For, in the second passage above, Enoch seems to be claiming that, in the context of the discussion of the epistemic implications of peer dispute, it is irrelevant or arbitrary to pose the metaphysical question, which brings me to my second remark.

If I understand Enoch correctly, what he is saying in the passage under consideration is that, in order to question or challenge the view that there is a genuine fact of the matter about contested issues, one should adopt a nonfactualist or antirealist stance. But why on earth would that be the case? A neo-Pyrrhonist may ask factualists to lay out the allegedly compelling arguments in favor of their metaphysical view, *just like* he may ask nonfactualists to lay out the purportedly sound arguments in favor of their contrary metaphysical view. In order to cast doubt on either of these views, he does not need to embrace the opposite view but only to appeal to the disagreement between them. Indeed, if factualists or nonfactualists simply start the discussion of the epistemic implications of disagreement presupposing the

truth of their views, then the neo-Pyrrhonist will point out that they are taking for granted something which is the object of a long-standing and fierce dispute that needs to be resolved in a clear-cut way. It is thus perfectly possible that factualism (or nonfactualism) be questioned or challenged by someone who approaches the topic of peer disagreement with an agnostic and open-minded attitude.

3. EVIDENCE

Even if we grant for the sake of argument that there is such a thing as an objective fact of the matter about at least most controversial issues,⁴ we must still address the problems faced by the claim that there is theory-independent first-order evidence by means of which we can access the truth of the matter. The first problem concerns the existence of diverging conceptions of evidence. A contemporary Pyrrhonist could emphasize, for example, the intricate debate among logical positivists about the character and the epistemic status of “protocol sentences,” i.e., basic or elementary observational statements which are supposed to serve as our ultimate evidence on the basis of which other more complex statements can be justified or verified. There was disagreement about whether such basic statements refer to the subject’s private sensory experiences or to public physical events, about whether it is possible to compare statements with facts or rather only possible to talk of logical relations between statements, and about whether protocol sentences are incorrigible.⁵ The problem was that each party to these disagreements showed that the rival position posed intractable difficulties. The neo-Pyrrhonist would use this debate to argue that not even philosophers belonging to the same school or movement reach agreement about both the nature of evidence and the sorts of things which are eligible to count as evidence. In contemporary philosophy in general one finds quite different conceptions of what evidence is: facts, sense data, the stimulation of our sensory receptors, known propositions, our occurrent thoughts (see Kelly 2006, 2008). Any present-day Pyrrhonist worthy of the name would exploit this philosophical controversy about the notion of evidence to make the point that epistemological discussions of disagreement take for granted something which is itself a matter of an intense and unresolved debate.

Even if we grant that there is consensus about the right conception of evidence, it is not clear that there is such a thing as objective evidence which is there to be discovered and examined and which supports or justifies one or more of the conflicting views which are held regarding the disputed matter or some other view which could be held regarding that matter. One of the main topics of fierce debate in the philosophy of science is whether, and to what extent, theory influences observation. We are all familiar with Thomas Kuhn’s view that what each of the proponents of rival scientific theories regards as objective evidence is at least in part dependent on the theory he

endorses. When a paradigm changes due to a scientific revolution, scientists see the world in a radically different way by experiencing something similar to a Gestalt switch (Kuhn 1996). In a similar vein, Paul Feyerabend claimed that each scientific theory possesses its own experience, so that there is no overlap in the experiences of competing scientific theories, and that experimental evidence consists, not of pure facts, but of facts “manufactured” according to some theory (Feyerabend 1962, 1965). Analogous views had already been advanced by less well-known authors such as Ludwik Fleck (1935/79)—who held that facts are socially invented rather than discovered—and Norwood Hanson (1958)—who maintained that observation is theory-laden or theory-loaded. For these two authors, it is not possible to choose among rival scientific theories by appealing to observational data which are objective or theory-neutral. Thus, on all these views, what counts as evidence and how it is described hinges at least to a considerable extent on the various belief-systems with which scientists approach experience, so that any report of observational evidence is, partially at least, theory-dependent. Thus, the existence of disputes should make us aware of the *possibility* that persistent disagreements among seemingly competent and fully informed scientists are to be explained by the fact that there is no objective evidence that could function as neutral arbiter among contending theories. As far as I can see, the same possibility cannot be dismissed without careful examination in the case of disputed issues in any area of philosophy or ordinary life.

As with Mackie’s argument from relativity, the neo-Pyrrhonist does not espouse the views of the theory-ladenness of observation advanced by Kuhn, Feyerabend, Fleck, or Hanson, but only takes them into consideration as possible accounts of the existence of persistent scientific disputes. He observes that, just as there are philosophers of science who believe that there is objective evidence that serves as an epistemic touchstone which makes it possible to adjudicate scientific disagreements, so too are there philosophers of science who claim that there is no such thing as objective evidence which serves as a neutral arbiter. And if each of the contending parties attempted to prove that their view is correct, the neo-Pyrrhonist would appeal to the Agrippan trilemma, arguing that any such proof would either continue *ad infinitum*, or be circular, or rest on an arbitrary assumption. In the face of this higher-order dispute, the neo-Pyrrhonist feels psychologically forced to suspend judgment.

Even granting that there is such a thing as theory-neutral evidence, there remains the question of whether such evidence grants us epistemic access to the objective fact of the matter about the contested issue. Reflection on the familiar skeptical challenges to the possibility of knowledge or justified belief shows, at least for some of us, that we cannot simply take for granted that we are able, by means of the evidence we possess, to gain epistemic access to objective facts, and hence to come to know or form justified beliefs about the fact of the matter regarding questions subject to dispute. But also the very phenomenon of peer disagreement should make us wonder

whether such epistemic access is possible. For it might be argued that, if it were indeed possible, then there would not have been over the centuries rival groups of seemingly equally clever, well-trained, knowledgeable, and honest thinkers disagreeing about key moral, political, religious, or philosophical issues. Let us take, for example, the case of religious disagreement. It is clear that, in defending religious exclusivism, Alvin Plantinga (2000) believes that he has access to evidence which conclusively establishes the truth of the Christian dogmas. From this it follows that those atheistic or agnostic philosophers who *a priori* seem to be his epistemic peers either are denied access to such conclusive evidence or else do have access to it but are unable to realize what it actually establishes. In order to explain how this is possible, one could appeal, for example, to some sort of capacity of insight that either grants us access to the relevant evidence or allows us to understand what it is evidence for.⁶ I do not have the space to fully expound the reasons why such a move strikes me as ineffective. I will only point out that the problem of disagreement reemerges in case the atheistic or agnostic philosopher retorts that his own capacity of insight allows him to see either that the theist lacks the conclusive evidence he claims to possess or that the shared evidence actually compellingly establishes the incorrectness of theism. As far as I can see, we here reach an impasse and any choice between the two camps seems arbitrary, from both a third-person and a first-person perspective. An onlooker observes that the rival sides make the exact same moves and he cannot therefore decide whom he should trust. And once each of the disputants becomes aware that his opponent follows the very same line of reasoning, he might question whether it in fact establishes that he is the one who is right. I will say more on the first-person perspective in the next section.

Someone might also argue that the reason why there are persistent and widespread disagreements particularly, but not exclusively, in areas such as morals, religion, politics, economics, law, and philosophy, is that the total body of available evidence *E* is insufficient to decide which of the disagreeing positions should be adopted. That is to say, we cannot dismiss out of hand the possibility that disputes are due, not to the fact that some of the rival positions miscalculate *E* or do not have access to part of *E*, but to the fact that the choice between the disagreeing positions is underdetermined by *E*. The positions are thus incompatible with each other but compatible with the available evidential data, which supports them equally well. That is, the contending views constitute equally good explanations of *E*.⁷ Epistemologists do agree that there are situations in which the available evidence is insufficient, and that in such situations suspension of judgment is required, but they believe that this is not what happens in the great majority of cases. By contrast, the position under consideration here concerns, not specific disputes, but peer disputes in general, claiming that the very existence of long-standing and pervasive controversies between individuals who are taken to be epistemic peers is best explained by the view that their opinions

are underdetermined by the evidence: if the available evidence compellingly favored one of the contending opinions, all the parties would recognize it by now. On this view, no disagreement can be resolved by appealing to shared evidence even if there were consensus about what counts as the total body of relevant evidence on the disputed issue and even if there were no asymmetries in the cognitive capacities exercised by the disputants. It is crucial to note that the neo-Pyrrhonist would not present the underdetermination thesis as the correct account of disagreements, but only as a possible account which appears to him to be as plausible as the misevaluation account or the partial-evidence account.

It might be objected that, in problematizing the appeal to evidence in the debate on peer disagreement, the preceding neo-Pyrrhonian arguments create a problem not only for nonconciliationism but also for conciliationism, which is usually taken to occupy the skeptical side in the debate. Given that conciliationist arguments assume that there is objective evidence, undermining this assumption would dissolve the skeptical problem of peer disagreement and would then be a double-edged sword for the neo-Pyrrhonist. Let us examine this objection more closely. As noted in the introductory chapter, conciliationism bears an intimate connection with the Uniqueness Thesis:

Uniqueness Thesis (UT)

The total body of available evidence E bearing upon proposition p epistemically justifies only one doxastic attitude towards p or one degree of confidence in p .

Even though UT could be understood in relativistic terms,⁸ to the best of my knowledge the notion of evidence that the proponents of this thesis have in mind is that of objective evidence. Now, conciliationism maintains that, in the face of peer disagreement, all the contending parties should significantly revise their beliefs. Such a revision always amounts to suspension of judgment on a coarse-grained approach to doxastic attitudes; on a fine-grained approach, whether suspension is required will depend on each instance of peer disagreement. Given that on an all-or-nothing model of belief conciliationism seems to come very close to Pyrrhonian skepticism, it might be thought that undermining UT backfires on the neo-Pyrrhonist by evaporating the skeptical problem stemming from peer disagreement. The difficulty in question is, however, merely apparent, because the similarity between Pyrrhonism and conciliationism is actually rather superficial. First, the neo-Pyrrhonist suspends his judgment about all the disagreements he has so far investigated, whereas even radical conciliationists claim that the suspension of judgment they recommend is local. This is why the neo-Pyrrhonist also suspends judgment with respect to the higher-level controversy between proponents and detractors of UT. Second, this is not a problem for him because his suspension is not based on a commitment to UT, so that his attack on it does not backfire on him.

Indeed, the neo-Pyrrhonist does not claim that we are rationally required to suspend judgment in the face of equipollent disagreement whenever that is the attitude best supported by the objective evidence. Rather, suspension is a state of mind that supervenes on him as a result of his own psychological constitution. It is by virtue of this constitution that he cannot refrain from withholding belief whenever conflicting views strike him as equipollent. This is to be understood, not in the sense that these views *are* equal in respect of credibility and incredibility, but only that they appear thus to him. In other words, he does not claim that there is a fact of the matter about what the objective evidence supports.⁹ In sum, undercutting UT does not dissolve all versions of the skeptical problem stemming from (peer) disagreement.

4. EVIDENCE ASSESSMENT AND THE FIRST-PERSON PERSPECTIVE

Even if we grant for the sake of argument that there is consensus about the notion of evidence, that there is such a thing as theory-neutral evidence, and that in most cases the available evidence does not underdetermine the choice between the contending views, we still have to deal with the problem of evidence assessment. That is, we still have to address the question of whether it is possible to determine which of the disagreeing parties has correctly evaluated the total body of available evidence bearing on the disputed matter. I will examine this issue in relation to the stances on peer disagreement advocated by Thomas Kelly and David Enoch.

In his widely known 2005 article, Kelly argues that, even when there is general epistemic equality between the parties to a dispute, it is not always irrational to prefer the opinion of one party over that of the other. The reason is that, on a given occasion, a peer controversy can be resolved by appealing to the way in which the pertinent evidence is evaluated by the disputants: one disputant can prefer his own interpretation of the evidence over that of his rival provided his interpretation is the result of correct evaluation or assessment. As Kelly remarks, how well the epistemically equal parties have evaluated the evidence and arguments “with respect to a given question is . . . exactly the sort of consideration that is capable of producing the kind of asymmetry that would justify privileging one of the two parties to the dispute over the other party” (2005: 179). Kelly also examines whether the higher-order evidence provided by the fact of my disagreement with an epistemic peer about which hypothesis is supported by the first-order evidence we both share should be treated as evidence relevant to the disputed question. In his view, even if the higher-order evidence is treated that way, agnostic skepticism does not follow. Before learning about one’s epistemic peer’s disagreement, one’s total body of evidence consisted of the first-order evidence *E*, whereas after learning about his disagreement the total body of evidence *E'* includes (i) the first-order evidence *E*, (ii) the fact that one holds

hypothesis H on the basis of E, and (iii) the fact that one's epistemic peer holds hypothesis not-H on the basis of E. According to Kelly, the reason why the new evidence E' does not entail agnosticism is that,

if we give equal weight to (ii) and (iii), then H will be more probable than not-H on the new evidence E', given that it was more probable on the original evidence E. Our original evidence E does not simply vanish or become irrelevant once we learn what the other person believes on the basis of that evidence: rather, it continues to play a role as an important subset of the new total evidence E'. In general, what one is and is not justified in believing on the basis of E' will depend a great deal on the character of the first-order evidence E. (2005: 190)

In his 2010 essay, Kelly develops, and in important respects modifies, this line of argument by defending what he calls the "Total Evidence View" (TEV). He objects that advocates of the Equal Weight View (EWV)¹⁰ maintain that the first-order evidence should be ignored and that we must only attend to the disagreement itself, that is, we must only attend to the fact that my opponent and I hold opposite beliefs, thus disregarding who has appropriately responded to the original evidence.¹¹ In other words, in cases in which both first-order evidence and second-order evidence are available, proponents of EWV claim that the latter is the only evidence that matters, as if there were no difference from cases in which one has no access to the first-order evidence (Kelly 2010: 122–24). TEV, by contrast, claims that both types of evidence must be taken into consideration, and that whether peer disagreement should cause one either to slightly decrease one's degree of confidence in one's opinion, or to suspend judgment, or to adopt an opinion which is closer to one's opponent's than to one's own, depends on how substantial the two types evidence are compared to each other. A key departure from his 2005 essay is that Kelly now believes that the higher-order evidence provided by one's peer's disagreement is always epistemically significant, and hence that one's confidence in one's own belief about the disputed matter is always at least slightly diminished when confronted with such disagreement (cf. Kelly 2005: 181–82, 187–88). This is so even if one has in fact adequately responded to the first-order evidence. Despite this difference between the two essays, Kelly still thinks that, in some cases, the fact that one has correctly evaluated the initial evidence justifies one in preferring one's own opinion over that of one's peer—although not with the same degree of confidence. This idea of correct evidence assessment is the main target of the criticism that follows.

Provided I understand Kelly correctly, there are at least four reasons why he fails to show that, in certain cases, one can retain one's belief in the face of peer disagreement, thereby avoiding agnostic skepticism.¹² The first reason is that one should bear in mind that what the epistemic peers disagree about is precisely the evaluation of the first-order evidence. That is, once

they find out about their competing views on the question whether p , their debate consists in an argumentative exchange through which each tries to offer compelling reasons in favor of their own evaluation of the first-order evidence E . That is the whole point of the debate. Hence, even if E is the key part of the total evidence E' —as Kelly claims in the quoted passage above—one still needs to come up with compelling reasons for thinking that one has in fact adequately evaluated E , and hence that E does actually support one's own view. Claiming that it does in fact do so seems to be an arbitrary move—the famous principle of independence defended by conciliatonists is intended to avoid such arbitrariness. Hence, unless one can find some undisputed way of establishing that, suspension of judgment seems to follow. And this applies not only to the view proposed in Kelly (2005), but also to that advanced in Kelly (2010). For in this latter paper he maintains that, in a number of cases, the first-order evidence is the key part of the total evidence, and hence tends to swamp the higher-order evidence. In this case, the disputant who has in fact appropriately responded to the first-order evidence can prefer his own view over his dissenter's. In his 2010 essay, Kelly is well aware of the present criticism, which he considers to be based upon the so-called dialectical conception of evidence. Since I tackle this conception of evidence at the end of the present section, I postpone discussion until then.

My second reason for rejecting Kelly's position has to do with a point he makes in the course of explaining why, upon learning that a peer disagrees with one regarding p , one should always change one's degree of confidence:

One should give some weight to one's peer's opinion, even when from the God's-eye point of view one has evaluated the evidence correctly and he has not. But why? Exactly because one does not occupy the God's-eye point of view with respect to the question of who has evaluated the evidence correctly and who has not. (2010: 138, cf. 154–55)

I may be missing something here, but if the fact that one has no access to the vantage point of a neutral and omniscient external observer determines that one cannot dismiss out of hand one's peer's opinion, why does such a fact not determine as well that one should give equal weight to one's opinion and that of one's peer? To put the point differently, why does such a fact allow one, in certain cases, to retain a high degree of confidence in one's original opinion? Kelly might respond by saying that, in certain circumstances, one may have strong reasons for preferring one's own opinion over that of one's epistemic peer, and that the purpose of the God's-eye point is only to remind one of one's own fallibility, thus preventing one from dismissing out of hand the beliefs of one's epistemic equals. I will tackle the second part of this possible response when expounding my fourth reason for being unconvinced by Kelly's view. In relation to the first part, let me note that Kelly maintains that one can be justified in thinking that one has appropriately responded to the first-order evidence even in the absence of independent evidence that

one has done so. For the reason why one takes up a given belief is precisely that one *recognizes* that it is supported by the evidence one possesses, and one would not be able to recognize this if one were unjustified in thinking that the evidence does support the belief in question (2010: 155–56). I confess that I cannot see how this move is not question-begging all the way through. Just as one can affirm that one’s opinion is justified because one recognizes that the available evidence supports it, so too one’s opponent can affirm that his opinion is justified because he recognizes that the available evidence supports it. And if one were to argue that one’s opponent is clearly mistaken because one would not recognize that one’s belief is supported by the evidence if one were not justified in thinking that it is, one’s opponent would retort that it is he who cannot be mistaken simply because he would not recognize that the evidence supports his belief were he not justified in so thinking. It is clear that TEV is a form of internalism about justification, and Kelly himself says so. But then it is faced with the problem that, when the evidence does not support one’s belief, there might be no indication that this is so, and hence “when one’s judgment as to the epistemic status of some belief that one holds is faulty, there is nothing that guarantees that this fact will be revealed by further reflection, no matter how conscientiously such reflection is conducted” (2010: 169). Given his acknowledgment that his view is faced with this kind of conundrum, one would expect Kelly to end up in a state of agnosticism. Far from that, he seeks consolation in the fact that it is dubious that such a conundrum can be “avoided by any plausible view about justification, including paradigmatically internalist ones” (2010: 169–70).¹³ What is supposed to be the epistemic value of this claim? Does the fact that a thorny difficulty is not faced exclusively by one’s view but by most or all related views make one’s view immune to it? The difficulty is still there, and if it is deemed to be a genuine problem, then one must either show how it is to be solved or else accept that one’s stance is seriously undermined.

The third reason for considering Kelly’s maneuver unsuccessful is that, by appealing to the Modes of Agrippa, the neo-Pyrrhonist would point out that it is not clear that any one of the disputants can establish nonarbitrarily or non-question-beggingly that it is him, and not his rival, who has in fact correctly evaluated the first-order evidence. For he would argue that any attempt at proving that, on a given occasion, one of the epistemic peers has assessed the evidence better than his rival would be the target of a combined attack of Agrippa’s trilemma. That is, any such proof would either continue *ad infinitum*, or be circular, or rest on an arbitrary claim. In fact, Kelly’s move seems to amount to a bare assertion. If so, the neo-Pyrrhonist would point out—following Sextus (*PH* I 173)—that such a move fails since, if Kelly is credible when he puts forth the bare assertion in question, his opponent can simply put forth the opposite assertion and, in so doing, he will be no less credible.

The final reason why Kelly’s view seems problematic is that one should bear in mind that many times in the past it has happened to one that, despite being highly confident that one had correctly evaluated the evidence and

that one's opponent was therefore mistaken, one later changed one's mind and regarded one's opponent's view as correct. Even supposing that no such thing has happened to one, at least many times in the past one has witnessed how one's opponent, despite feeling extremely confident about the truth of a given belief, later discovered that one was right. Either of these memories should make one wonder whether at present one is not experiencing the same misleading confidence, and hence whether one has in fact correctly evaluated the first-order evidence relevant to the matter under dispute. It would probably be argued that this only shows that we are fallible with regard to our capacity to adequately assess the evidence. I must confess that I do not see how awareness of this fallibility should not significantly lower one's confidence that one has correctly assessed the evidence when one is involved in a peer disagreement. Kelly himself recognizes that the question of which of the disagreeing parties has *in fact* correctly assessed the evidence is a "non-trivial, substantive intellectual question" (2005: 180). However, surprisingly enough, this does not undermine his confidence in the correctness of his view, for he immediately declares:

But here as elsewhere, life is difficult. On any plausible conception of evidence, we will be extremely fallible with respect to questions about what our evidence supports. The amount of disagreement that we find among well-informed individuals simply makes this fact more salient than would otherwise be the case. (2005: 180; cf. 2010: 165)

If a person is fully aware of his extreme fallibility and this explains his past mistakes even in those occasions when he was highly confident that he had adequately responded to the first-order evidence, how can he now, when faced with a disagreeing peer, claim that it is he who has correctly evaluated the first-order evidence? How can he not end up suspending judgment about the disputed matter? The existence of peer disagreements does expose more clearly how uncertain our epistemic situation is but, *pace* Kelly, reflection on the serious difficulties surrounding our lives seems to lead to agnostic skepticism.

The second view on peer disagreement I want to consider is that proposed by Enoch (2010), who argues that the proponents of EWV mistakenly believe that one's disagreement with another person cannot or should not be taken as evidence against that person's reliability. His argument is based on the ineliminability of the first-person perspective and the self-trust that follows from it.¹⁴ That the first-person perspective in general cannot be completely eliminated seems to be clear, but let us focus on the case of disagreement. When encountering someone who disagrees with my opinion on a given matter, it is I who judge whether that person is my epistemic peer or rather my epistemic inferior or superior, and hence it is I who determine whether or not I am rationally required to revise my opinion and to what extent. Thus, from a first-person perspective, the role that I play when examining a disagreement to which I am a party differs in a key way from the

role played by my rival. Even if I take a third-person perspective towards myself, the first-person perspective cannot in the end be eliminated, since the analysis done from an external vantage point is ultimately conducted from a first-person vantage point: it is I who determine how the issue would look from an allegedly purely neutral viewpoint. There thus seems to be an unavoidable degree of trust in my own opinions.

Returning to Enoch's argument, he claims that the eliminability of the first-person perspective renders unproblematic my taking, on the basis of my belief in the truth of p , my opponent's belief in *not-p* as a mistake, and hence as evidence of his unreliability on the topic in question. In his view, proceeding thus is not question-begging, or at least not in a way that is objectionable. The reason is that such a procedure is not exclusive to his view on peer disagreement: whenever we deliberate epistemically about anything we start from our own vantage point. But Enoch is aware that things are not so easy, for he adds:

If this is a cause for concern, it is a cause for much more general concern (indeed, if this fact undermines justification, the most radical of scepticisms seems to follow, a point to which I return below). . . . The point, then, quite simply, is this: perhaps there is something suspicious in your taking the disagreement itself as evidence that [your opponent] is less reliable than you may have thought, indeed as stronger evidence for his unreliability than for your own. But there is nothing *more* suspicious in this piece of evidence compared to pretty much all others. Hoping for the kind of justification that avoids this difficulty is a hope most of us have come to resist, perhaps a part of epistemically growing up. (2010: 980–81, cf. 992)

So even if Enoch's move is question-begging, allegedly this is not problematic because the reason why it is so is the same reason why attempts at justification in general are question-begging. But why on earth does the question-begging character of his position become innocuous for the simple reason that it is not exclusive to it? May one not rather think that his view is objectionable precisely because it cannot avoid the question-begging character of justification in general? It seems to me that Enoch's move is to be explained by his belief that radical skepticism about justification is not an option worth considering. I will come back to his attitude towards skepticism in a moment.

Enoch regards as an objection to his view Christensen's claim that disagreement itself can be taken as evidence not only against my opponent's reliability but also against my own reliability, which preserves the epistemic symmetry (2007: 196). Enoch argues that this line of thought is mistaken because my reason for demoting my rival from the status of an epistemic peer is not that he believes *not-p* whereas I believe p , but rather that he believes *not-p* whereas p . That is, the reason is not that his belief is different from

mine but that it is false. He is aware that this move might well be challenged by a skeptic, but once again he simply dismisses skepticism out of hand:

We can put this by saying that your reason to change your mind about [your opponent's] reliability is—together with his belief that *not-p*—not *that you believe p*, but rather *that p (as you believe)*. But to insist that the 'as you believe' qualifier rules out *that p* as a reason for belief is precisely to ignore the ineliminability point, and to insist on the impossibly high standard that leads to scepticism more generally. Let us not do that, then. (2010: 982)

At least four remarks are in order concerning this passage. First, we are faced here with a problem already mentioned in relation to Kelly's view: the subject of the dispute between my rival and me is precisely whether *that p* or *that not-p* (not whether I believe that *p* or he believes that *not-p*), that is, we are engaged in a dialectical exchange in order to determine which is true: my belief that *p* or rather his belief that *not-p*. And so Enoch is again faced with the charge that his solution falls prey to the fallacy of *petitio principii*. Of course, he tries to meet this charge by appealing once more to the first-person perspective, but, as I will argue, his move does not seem successful.

Second, later on in his article, Enoch recognizes that just as I can take *that p* (as I believe) as evidence against my opponent's reliability, so too can he take *that not-p* (as he believes) as evidence against my reliability. He is forced to accept this in order to differentiate his position from Kelly's, since "the appropriate epistemic response to peer disagreement cannot fully depend on who is right" (2010: 984). It is therefore clear that the disagreement cannot be settled from the vantage point of an external observer—as Enoch himself acknowledges (985: 986 n.62). But what is more important for the present discussion is that, from the first-person point of view, it seems that once I become aware (as does Enoch) that my rival can demote me because *that not-p* (as he believes), I may wonder whether *that p* is really the case. Enoch himself recognizes that my reason for demoting my rival is not factive because "this can be [my] reason (what [I] take to be the normatively relevant feature of the circumstances) even if in fact [my rival] is not wrong" (984). Hence, despite what he claims, the symmetry that remains seems to be precisely the kind of symmetry that may lead to suspension of judgment. He argues that the symmetry I am committed to is that between my view and my rival's, not between *p* and *not-p* (insofar as I believe *p*), and so my reason for demoting my rival (i.e., *that p*) is not a reason I have for demoting myself. But, once again, my rival can reason in exactly the same way (something of which I am fully aware), and so there seems to remain a crucial symmetry after all. If I say to my rival "You're wrong, not because of my *believing that p*, but because *that p*," and he retorts, "No, you're the one who's wrong, not because of my *believing that not-p*, but because *that not-p*," then it seems that we are faced with an *aporia* insofar as each of us is reasoning in the

same way and therefore needs to come up with a clear-cut, impartial way of resolving the dispute. One may argue that I know that a person witnessing the disagreement between me and my rival should suspend judgment, but that my knowing so gives me no reason for doing the same precisely because I am privy to the first-order evidence the external observer lacks (cf. Enoch 2010: 986 n.62). But the important point is that my rival is also privy to that same evidence and our controversy revolves around the question of whether the total body of first-order evidence bearing on the matter at hand establishes *that p* or *that not-p*.

My third remark concerning Enoch's view is that, although it seems clear that the first-person perspective cannot be fully eliminated, this does not entail that we are justified in holding the beliefs we hold when confronted with people who disagree with us. That is, even if the first-person vantage point is inescapable, this inescapability by itself does not in any way confer epistemic justification on some of our beliefs—or so it seems to me. One can exercise radical self-criticism, as I am doing now, and so refrain from epistemic self-trust by suspending judgment. It might be objected that, in so doing, I am still trusting my beliefs about what attitude should be adopted towards the ineliminable first-person perspective, and so my view is self-defeating. This problem is thus intimately related to what we may call “the disagreeing about disagreement argument,” an issue I cannot address here.¹⁵ Let me just note that the neo-Pyrrhonist does not maintain that it is rationally required or epistemically justified to suspend judgment about the epistemic justification of one's own vantage point, but only reports that, when confronted with the question of the inescapability of the first-person perspective, he finds himself as a matter of fact in a state of suspension, which is a *pathos* that imposes itself upon him (see *PH I 7*).¹⁶ Even if we find this unconvincing and believe that a certain degree of self-trust is ultimately ineliminable, it is still possible to engage in radical self-criticism and to conclude, from a first-person perspective, that the attitude to be adopted in the face of peer disagreement is suspension of judgment. It will of course be argued that some people (Enoch for one) believe that the first-person perspective does allow us to settle peer controversies. Far from being a problem for the neo-Pyrrhonist, I think this will work in his favor since it would be yet another indication of the pervasiveness of disagreement, which keeps re-emerging every time we try to find a solution.

My final remark regarding Enoch's view is that the fact that some epistemic standards are high does not by itself imply that they are incorrect, and so if they lead us to skepticism and we consider skepticism to be deeply threatening to our intellectual goals, then we must seek for reasons for refuting it, instead of simply dismissing it out of hand. The same disparaging attitude towards skepticism is found in Enoch's discussion of Adam Elga's objection that nonconciliationist views on peer disagreement are subject to the problem of bootstrapping (2007: 486–88).¹⁷ He recognizes that his own view cannot escape this objection but, instead of regarding this as a serious

predicament, he claims that such an objection shows that the connection between EWV and skepticism is more intimate than often noticed. The reason is that the bootstrapping objection is a particular instance or a close analogue of the problem of easy knowledge. EWV is thus ultimately based upon assumptions that lead to skepticism, in which case this view “is—even worse than false—quite uninteresting” (2010: 991–92). Unfortunately, Enoch does not explain why skepticism is uninteresting and not worthy of careful consideration, and so I take it that he thinks this is an obvious fact. However, those of us who think that skeptical arguments pose serious epistemological challenges but who do not assert (nor deny) that they are unanswerable do expect more than bare assertions. We expect elaborate antiskeptical strategies that show how such arguments can be met. Enoch himself seems to recognize that the challenges posed by skepticism are more serious than he would like to admit when he points out that, “even if I do not know how exactly to solve [the bootstrapping problem], I think I can be reasonably confident that (if scepticism can be avoided) it *can* be solved” (992). I assume that this last conditional clause (even if parenthetical) is an acknowledgment that skepticism is an outlook that needs to be taken seriously and cannot be arbitrarily ignored.

I would like to conclude this section by addressing the following objection: my arguments against Kelly and Enoch rely on both a dialectical conception of evidence (DCE) and a dialectical conception of justification (DCJ), and since these are highly dubious epistemological views, the arguments lose much of their force and appeal. According to DCE, in order for something to be genuine evidence for one’s belief that *p*, it must be evidence that could persuade one’s opponent of the truth of *p*. The problem with this view is that it is perfectly possible to have justifying evidence for one’s beliefs even if one is unable to supply potentially persuasive evidence. For its part, DCJ claims that one’s belief that *p* is epistemically justified if and only if, when challenged, one can defend it by offering potentially persuasive reasons for it. Here again the problem is that one might well be justified in believing that *p* even if one is unable to provide the challenger with such reasons.¹⁸ Given that the two conceptions in question are highly questionable, the objection goes, the skeptical arguments developed in this section might at most prove that there is dialectical symmetry between the disagreeing peers, but not epistemic symmetry.¹⁹

Several remarks are in order. First, as noted in Section 1, the neo-Pyrrhonist is not committed to the soundness of the arguments he advances against his rivals. His chameleonic argumentative practice is characterized by the use of whatever arguments allow him to test the strength of the views he happens to be considering. This is why he may well construct arguments that appeal to DCE and DCJ so as to see if they appear to be as strong as those advanced in support of the target views.

Second, although DCE and DCJ have been under fierce attack,²⁰ they also have their keen supporters.²¹ Far from being a problem for the neo-Pyrrhonist, this second-order disagreement would be grist for his mill, as he would

emphasize how intractable disagreement keeps re-emerging. That is, when faced with the claim that DCE and DCJ are dubious or mistaken, he would point out that seemingly intelligent, well-informed, and thorough epistemologists believe them to be the right views on evidence and justification.

Third, in Section 1, I mentioned three compatible ways in which a controversy may be deemed to be resolved: (i) the parties reach a consensus, (ii) from a first-person perspective one comes to the conclusion that one's belief is the one warranted by the evidence, (iii) an onlooker to the debate believes that the arguments put forth by the disputants have allowed him to come to know the fact or the truth of the matter. Although the arguments which appeal to DCE and DCJ create problems only for (i) and (iii), my discussion of whether one can resolve a peer disagreement from the first-person perspective was intended to show that there are also arguments that create problems for (ii). Hence, my arguments do not rely exclusively on DCE and DCJ. At this point, someone might argue, à la Moore, that one's belief may be epistemically justified even though one is unable to cite the reasons which ground that belief not only to others *but also to oneself* (see Sosa 2010: 295–96). Moreover, it could be argued that my discussion of the first-person perspective relies on access internalism and that this is a version of DCE or DCJ. For in one's own head one could play the role of a potential opponent and challenge one's belief by asking for citable evidence or reasons (cf. Williamson 2004: 122). I do not have the space to fully address this Moorean move here. I will only note that the inaccessibility to the epistemic reasons that in theory ground one's beliefs should be more disturbing than usually recognized. For that means that one is unable to decide whether one's reasons for presently holding a given belief are rationally grounded considerations or rather prejudices, one's blind acceptance of authority, certain past pleasant or unpleasant experiences, or one's current emotional states. If so, then it seems that such a cognitive limitation should undermine one's preference of one's own view over that of one's dissenter. Be that as it may, my discussion of the first-person perspective was intended not so much to call into question the possibility of reflective access to the reasons for our beliefs, but rather to show that reflection seems to provide us with reasons for suspending judgment.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Let me sum up the main points of this essay. First, I have argued that epistemological views on peer disagreement illegitimately take for granted the truth of factualism, and hence that there is a fact of the matter about at least most disputed issues. Second, even if one grants for the sake of argument that there is such a thing as objective facts, one faces the problem that there are long-standing disagreements about the definition of the notion of evidence or the sorts of things that count as evidence. Third, one can-

not discount without argument the possibility that what we regard as the evidence bearing on the contested matter is theory-laden, so that any report of a piece of evidence already presupposes a given belief-system in relation to which that which we call evidence is described and assessed. Fourth, even if one concedes for the sake of argument that there is such a thing as theory-independent evidence, the very existence of enduring peer controversies should make us wonder whether such evidence can grant us epistemic access to the fact of the matter on disputed issues. For instance, one cannot rule out without argument the possibility that the total body of available evidence bearing on the contested matter underdetermines the choice between the rival positions. Fifth, it is not clear that we can non-question-beggingly determine that one of the disagreeing parties has correctly responded to the first-order evidence. There seems to be a crucial symmetry in the kind of arguments and considerations that each of the disputants can put forth in favor of their own view. Finally, although the first-person perspective is ineliminable, this by itself does not confer epistemic justification on some of one's beliefs, and hence does not allow one to resolve disagreements with people whom one regards as epistemic peers. I have emphasized that the thorough examination of a dispute unfolds other complex disputes and the examination of these unfolds, in turn, further intricate disputes.

As a neo-Pyrrhonist, I do not deny (nor affirm) that peer disagreements can be settled, but only limit myself to reporting that, at least at this point, I do not see how this could be done. This might give rise to the following general objection to the skeptical approach of this essay: just as the neo-Pyrrhonist reports that rival arguments appear equipollent to him, so too could the nonskeptic report that some arguments appear to him to be stronger than others, and hence that he does not feel psychologically compelled to suspend his judgment. It therefore seems that the neo-Pyrrhonist can avoid commitment to controversial epistemic principles only at the expense of depriving his skepticism of its bite. For nonskeptics can argue that, given that the neo-Pyrrhonist is rationally uncommitted, it is not clear what canons of rationality they violate when retaining their beliefs in the face of peer disagreement, or if they do violate certain canons, it is not clear why this should be a problem.²² I think this objection fails for several reasons. The first thing to note is that the neo-Pyrrhonist does not claim that his appearances are epistemically superior to those of others, and so has no qualms about accepting that things appear differently to nonskeptics. What he calls into question is the epistemic credentials of the appearances, i.e., whether things are as they appear to be. Second, a considerable number of his arguments are *ad hominem*, i.e., they work with his rivals' beliefs and epistemic principles with the aim of showing that their own views seem to commit them to suspension of judgment. Hence, the canons of rationality his rivals violate when retaining their contested beliefs are those they themselves endorse. The problem would disappear if they gave up such canons, but they are not willing to do so because of what is at stake: their whole

worldview seems to hinge on them. Finally, the fact that the proponent of an argument does not endorse it does not entail that the argument is unsound or that it cannot convince those at whom it is directed. Accordingly, whether the neo-Pyrrhonist's arguments work depends on whether his opponents regard their premises as true or plausible and their inferences as valid.²³

NOTES

1. As noted in the introductory chapter, epistemic peerhood means that the disputants are familiar with the relevant evidence and arguments, and possess roughly the same intellectual virtues and skills.
2. The fact that the parties to the peer-disagreement debate are committed to (i) and (ii) is also noted in Folke Tersman's essay in this volume (chapter 5).
3. The moral error theory is, roughly, the view that all basic moral judgments are false. That is, all judgments are false which ascribe a moral property to something or which imply or presuppose the instantiation of a moral property. Thus, judgments such as "Nothing is morally wrong objectively speaking," "There are no objective moral facts," or "Paul thinks that killing an innocent is morally wrong" would not qualify as basic moral judgments.
4. This concessive pattern of argumentation is commonly used by Sextus and can be traced back to Gorgias' treatise *On What Is Not*, which is summarized in Sextus' *Against the Logicians* (I 65–86) and in the anonymous *On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias* (979a11–980b22).
5. See, e.g., Hempel (1945a, 1945b, 1965), Ayer (1959b: 13–14, 17–21; 1959c), Carnap (1959), Neurath (1959), and Schlick (1959).
6. For the view that disagreements can be settled by relying on insight or intuition, see van Inwagen (1996, 2010), Wedgwood (2007, 2010), and Bogardus (2009).
7. For a useful overview of underdetermination, see Kelly (2008: 935–37, 952 n.2). It is worth noting that the idea of theory being underdetermined by data is already found in Sextus' exposition of the second of the eight modes which Aenesidemus directed against causal explanations: "[S]ome people often give a single causal explanation of the object of investigation, although there is a rich variety of alternative explanations" (*Pyrrhonian Outlines* [hereafter *PH*] I 181).
8. That is, one could interpret UT thus: "Within each belief-system, the total body of available theory-laden evidence E bearing upon proposition *p* epistemically justifies only one doxastic attitude towards *p* or one degree of confidence in *p*." Thanks to Markus Lammenranta for discussion on this point.
9. I develop this interpretation of Pyrrhonian suspension and provide references to the primary texts and the secondary literature in Machuca (2011b: 71–72).
10. As noted in the introductory chapter of this volume (chapter 1), EWV is the conciliationist view according to which it is rationally required to give equal weight to the opinions of all the parties to a peer dispute when there is no reason for preferring one opinion over the others which is independent of the very disagreement between the disputants.
11. This charge is also leveled by Enoch (2010: 969).
12. Given that Weatherston (2013) agrees with and follows the main line of argument advanced by Kelly (2010), the following reasons also apply to his non-conciliationist stance.
13. As we will see later on, a similar consolation is sought by Enoch.

14. For a similar view, see Foley (1994: 64–66; 2001: 65–66, 79) and Kelly (2005: 179). For discussion of the first-person perspective in relation to peer disagreement, see also Christensen (2007: 196–98, 204).
15. On this argument, see Elga (2010) and Weatherson (2013). I tackle the argument and propose a Pyrrhonian response to it in Machuca (MS).
16. The Greek *pathos* designates a physical or psychological condition someone or something is in as a result of being affected by an agent.
17. For a nonconciliationist reply to the bootstrapping objection, see Duncan Pritchard's essay in this volume (chapter 8).
18. Although DCE and DCJ might be taken to ultimately amount to the same position, I think they should be kept apart. The reason is that DCJ seems to take reasons for belief to be propositions, and in Section 2 we saw that there are different views about what sorts of things count as evidence. If evidence is (partially) propositional, then the two views are the same, but if all evidence is nonpropositional, then they are distinct. In any case, the present discussion does not hang on whether DCE and DCJ are in the end the same position.
19. It is perhaps worth noting that Feldman (2005: 116) seems to believe that dialectical symmetry implies or indicates epistemic symmetry.
20. Detractors include Alston (1985), Audi (1993), Goldman (1994, 2004, 2010), Pryor (2004), Williamson (2004), and Kelly (2010).
21. These include Sellars (1956), Annis (1978), Williams (1999, 2001, 2004, 2007), Leite (2004, 2005), Aikin (2011), Lammenranta (2011a, 2011b), and Lammenranta's essay in this volume (chapter 3).
22. I think this objection is close to the one Plantinga (2000: 178) levels against the religious pluralist.
23. An ancestor of this essay formed part of a talk I gave at Northwestern University in September 2011. I am grateful to the audience for their critical discussion. I would also like to thank Markus Lammenranta for his comments on a previous version of this paper. Special thanks are due to Nathan King for his insightful criticisms and for pressing me to clarify my stance on several issues.

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