

The Epistemology of Moral Disagreement

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Abstract This article is about the implications of a conciliatory view about the epistemology of peer disagreement for our moral beliefs. Many have endorsed a conciliatory view about the epistemology of peer disagreement according to which if we find ourselves in a disagreement about some matter with another whom we should judge to be our epistemic peer on that matter, we must revise our judgment about that matter. This article focuses on three issues about the implications of conciliationism for our moral beliefs. The first is whether there is an asymmetry between the implications of conciliationism for the epistemic status of our moral beliefs and the implications of conciliationism for the epistemic status of our non-moral beliefs; for instance, some have argued that conciliationism leads to epistemological moral skepticism but not to epistemological nonmoral skepticism. The second is what the implications of conciliationism are for the epistemic status of particular moral beliefs. The third is whether conciliationism's impact on the epistemic status of our moral beliefs has practical implications.

1. Conciliationism

We frequently find ourselves in deep seemingly irresolvable disagreements about moral issues. For instance, we find ourselves in disagreements about the morality of abortion, bombing other countries, torture, strongly redistributive taxation, killing one person to save five, euthanasia, and eating meat for fun. Many of these disagreements seem to be deep because they seem to be disagreements that are due to disagreements in fundamental nonderivative moral judgments. For instance, many pro-lifers think that fetuses have a moral status, many pro-choicers disagree, and there is no more fundamental moral judgment that these conflicting moral judgments derived from. ... Deep seemingly irresolvable disagreements seem particularly troubling when those with whom we disagree seem to be open-minded, seem to have thought about the moral issues that are in contention at least as much as we have, and seem to be just as well informed as we are about the nonmoral morally relevant facts; that is, deep seemingly irresolvable disagreements seem particularly troubling when we find ourselves in moral disagreements with those who are approximately our epistemic equals. For when we find ourselves in a moral disagreement with our epistemic equals, we might wonder how we could be justified in thinking that we and not them are correct about the moral issue about which we disagree.

Conciliationism about epistemic peer disagreement may explain why finding ourselves in deep seemingly irresolvable disagreements about morality with our epistemic equals is particularly troubling. For according to conciliationism, approximately, if we find ourselves in a disagreement about some matter p and there is a substantial division of opinion regarding whether p amongst those who are our epistemic equals about whether p , then we are not justified in believing that p or that not p ; in such circumstances, according to conciliationism, we should suspend belief regarding whether p . In the rest of this section, I will explain conciliationism in detail before, in the rest of this article, discussing the implications of conciliationism for the epistemic status of our moral beliefs.

1.1 Epistemic Peerhood

Our epistemic peers about a matter are our epistemic equals on this matter.¹ Those with whom we took high school math classes and who were about as good as we were at mental math in these classes are plausibly our epistemic peers when it comes to mental math questions. We might see those with whom we went to grad school as our epistemic peers about any randomly chosen question about contemporary philosophy or the history of philosophy. And most people that we talk to in person are our epistemic peers about whether it is raining where we are when we talk to them.

There are two main views about exactly what it takes for another to be our epistemic peer on some matter. According to the epistemic virtues view, A is our epistemic peer about p if A has been exposed to the same evidence and arguments regarding whether p has the same relevant background knowledge as we have and possesses general epistemic virtues (such as intelligence, freedom from bias, and reasoning skill) to the same degree that we do.² According to the likelihood view, A is our epistemic peer about whether p if A is as likely as we are to be right about whether p .³

There are cases in which these two views come apart. Suppose that Alex is a professional mathematician who is generally more epistemically virtuous than I am. And suppose that Alex and I are both asked to figure out 4×12 . The likelihood that we will provide the right answer is the same; so according to the likelihood view, we are epistemic peers on this issue. But according to the epistemic virtues view, Alex is my epistemic superior regarding 4×12 .⁴ However, it does not seem right that Alex is my epistemic superior in this case, for although Alex is my epistemic superior regarding mathematics—and regarding other matters that engage the capacities that make her more epistemically virtuous than I am—she seems to be my epistemic equal regarding the answer to 4×12 .⁵ So, it seems that we should accept the likelihood view.⁶

However, in order to figure out whether another is as likely to be right about a particular proposition p as we are, we need to ascertain whether they have similar evidence and background knowledge to us regarding p and whether they have similar reasoning skill to us regarding p . And sometimes, the only evidence that we have regarding another's reasoning ability regarding a particular proposition is their reasoning ability regarding other (relevantly similar) propositions. So, although we should accept the likelihood view, we might often talk as if we accept the epistemic virtues view because often when thinking about whether another is as likely to be right about a particular proposition p as we are, we will think about the evidence they possessed, their reasoning skill or other epistemic virtues that they have.

1.1 The Epistemic Significance of Peer Disagreement

I will call the circumstance of finding oneself in a disagreement with another whom one should believe to be one's epistemic peer about whether p a circumstance in which one finds oneself in a peer disagreement about whether p .⁷ There is a debate about the epistemic significance of peer disagreement, and this debate is a debate about whether, and the extent to which, we should revise our belief about some matters after finding ourselves in a peer disagreement regarding the content of that belief. If we should revise our belief about whether p in light of peer disagreement about whether p , then peer

disagreement undermines the epistemic justification of the belief that we previously had.

We can think of views about how we should respond to peer disagreements as falling along a spectrum.⁸ According to views towards one end of this spectrum, which we can call more conciliatory views, finding oneself in a peer disagreement about some matters should typically lead one to revise one's view or one's confidence in one's view about that matter. According to views towards the other end of this spectrum, which we can call more steadfast views, finding oneself in a peer disagreement about some matters usually or often should not lead one to revise one's beliefs or one's confidence about that matter.⁹

In this article, I am interested in the implications of conciliatory views for our moral beliefs. There are problems with conciliatory views.¹⁰ But many philosophers, including many moral philosophers, have argued for conciliatory views.¹¹ And our intuitions about certain cases support a certain conciliatory view. To see this, suppose that in

Restaurant. I am at dinner with a large number of my friends, at the end of dinner my friends and I decide to split the bill. And I decide that I am going to mentally calculate how much everyone owes for dinner. I calculate that everyone owes \$35. But when I tell one of my friends about my calculation, she tells me that she has also mentally calculated how much we each owe and has come to the conclusion that we each owe \$40. I have known this friend well for twenty years and I know that she is just as good at mental mathematical calculations as I am.

It seems that in this case, I should suspend belief about whether everyone owes \$35 or \$40 for dinner.¹²

1.3 All-or-Nothing Belief or Degrees of Belief

In restaurant, it seems that we should adjust our all-or-nothing belief about how much everyone owes (that is, we should adjust whether we believe or do not believe that everyone owes \$35).¹³ But sometimes peer disagreement can require changes in our degree of confidence or degree of belief without requiring a change in our all-or-nothing belief. For instance, suppose that my friend Laura is my epistemic peer about whether we have free will, but her degree of belief that we do not have free will is barely sufficient to constitute an all-or-nothing belief that we do not have free will, and I have a degree of confidence that we do have free will that is extremely high. In this case, if I take Laura's belief and my own about free will equally seriously and so split the difference between our views, then it seems that I will still have an all-or-nothing belief that we have free will but just have less confidence in this belief.¹⁴ ...

1.4 The Importance of a Substantial Division of Opinion Amongst Peers

It seems to me that it is crucial in restaurant that there is a substantial division of opinion amongst peers; in this case, I have only one peer with a view about how much everyone owes, and this peer and I disagree. But if there was not a substantial division of opinion

about how much everyone owes, it would not seem that I should revise my belief in this case. Suppose that I reasonably believed everyone at dinner to be my epistemic peer when it comes to mental mathematics, everyone mentally calculated how much everyone owes for dinner, and 19/20 of those other than me at dinner came to the conclusion that we each owe \$35; 1/20 came to the conclusion that we each owe \$40. In this variation of restaurant, the fact that one of my friends came to the conclusion that we each owe \$40 does not obviously seem to make it the case that I should revise my judgment about how much each of us owe for dinner. For in this case, I have reason to believe that she (the 1/20) rather than I has made a mental mathematical mistake because most of those who are as reliable as I am at mental mathematics have come to the same conclusion as I have come to rather than the conclusion that she has come to. And because most of my peers agree with me, the best explanation of my disagreement with my friend in this case seems to be that she, rather than I, made a mistake.¹⁷

1.5. Conciliationism

So, we have reason to accept a conciliationist view about cases of peer disagreement in which there is a substantial division of opinion amongst peers. Take a substantial division of opinion amongst peers about whether p to be (approximately) between a 40/60 and a 60/40 split about whether p According to the view that I will hereafter refer to as

*Conciliationism. If we find ourselves in a position in which we should believe that there is a substantial division of opinion amongst our epistemic peers regarding whether p , and that we and our epistemic peers are approximately as confident as one another regarding whether p , then, other things equal, we should suspend belief about whether p .*¹⁸

1.6. The Implications of Conciliationism for the Status of Our Moral Beliefs

There is a good prima facie case for the view that conciliationism will have important implications for the epistemic status of our moral beliefs. Surveys seem to show that U.S. opinion splits close to 50/50 on the morality of abortion, the death penalty, same-sex relationships, and physician-assisted suicide.¹⁹ And according to a recent philpapers survey, tenured political philosophers split exactly 50/50 on whether justice requires equality and tenured moral philosophers split 35%/23%/12%/30% on whether deontology, consequentialism, virtue ethics, or some “other” view is the right view about normative ethics.²⁰ These surveys seem to show that for any controversial moral view that we hold we have reason to believe that there is a substantial division of opinion amongst our epistemic peers about this moral issue.²¹

In response to this prima facie case, it might be argued that conciliationism has very few implications for any of our beliefs because, for any p , no one is exactly as likely as we are to be correct about whether p , so no one is (exactly) our epistemic peer about whether p , and we should not believe that anyone is exactly our epistemic peer regarding whether p . However, it seems that in the cases discussed above, we have good evidence that others are approximately our epistemic peers about a variety of moral issues. And in these cases, we should believe that many others are either our epistemic peers or superiors regarding the relevant moral issues.²² ...

2. Asymmetric Views of the Implications of Conciliationism in the Moral and Nonmoral Domains

2.1. *Are Our Moral Beliefs Insulated from the Consequences of Conciliationism?*

Some have argued that our moral beliefs are particularly insulated from the implications of conciliationism. According to this view, although conciliationism entails that we must revise some or many of our nonmoral beliefs in light of peer disagreement, conciliationism does not entail that we must revise many or any of our moral views in light of peer disagreement. ...

Kieran Setiya ... argues that even if a conciliatory view about nonmoral peer disagreements is plausible, a conciliatory view about moral peer disagreements is implausible. So, if conciliationism holds, it holds only for our nonmoral beliefs.³¹ Setiya claims that our intuitions about the following types of case show that conciliationism about peer disagreements about moral issues is implausible. Suppose that we were confronted with members of a community of human beings who share all of our nonmoral beliefs and are clearly just as intelligent and socially developed as we are but who have uniformly horrific moral beliefs; suppose that, for instance, they believe that we should brutally kill the innocent for the pleasure of the many. According to Setiya, a conciliatory view would entail that in this case we should alter our judgment about whether it is wrong to brutally kill the innocent for the pleasure of the many. But this is implausible for “we should not defer to moral monsters but condemn them, however numerous they are.”³² So, according to Setiya, we should reject a conciliatory view about peer disagreement regarding moral issues.

However, although Setiya is right that we should not defer to moral monsters, this does not show that we should reject a conciliatory view about peer disagreement regarding moral issues. This is because we have no reason to believe that Setiya's moral monsters are our epistemic peers about moral issues; for if we encounter people who have all the same nonmoral beliefs as we have but who have uniformly very different horrific moral beliefs, then we have not encountered people whom we yet have any reason to believe to be our epistemic peers about moral issues. For in order to have reason to believe that someone is our epistemic peer about some matters, we have to have reason to believe that they are as likely to be right about this matter as we are. But the fact that someone shares all the same nonmoral beliefs as us is no reason to believe that they are as likely to be right about moral matters as we are; just as the fact that A is as likely to be right about any mental mathematical calculation as we are is no reason to believe that A is as likely to be right about any matter of physics or philosophy as we are. And conciliationism only holds that we should revise our beliefs about an issue in light of disagreement with others whom we should believe to be our epistemic peers on this issue rather than that we should revise our beliefs about an issue in light of disagreement with others whom we do not know are not our epistemic peers on this issue.³³

2.1. *Does Conciliationism Lead to Moral Skepticism (Without Leading to Nonmoral Skepticism)?*

Some have argued that conciliationism entails epistemological moral skepticism but does not entail epistemological nonmoral skepticism.³⁴ The most prominent argument

for this view concerns our ability to identify moral experts. There are experts whom we can and should often defer to regarding nonmoral issues. And it is relatively easy to independently identify these experts. For instance, we can identify those who are experts about the weather because their predictions in the past have turned out to be correct. And so, for many disagreements about nonmoral issues, we can figure out whether the experts are on our side because regarding nonmoral issues, we can all agree about who the experts are on these issues by looking at putative experts' past track record about these kinds of issues. We can then ascertain with whom the experts agree. And we need not revise our beliefs about some issue because some of our epistemic peers about this issue disagree with us if we justifiably believe that the experts are on our side on this issue.

But it seems plausible that we cannot preserve the epistemic status of our moral beliefs in light of peer disagreement by coming to justifiably believe that the experts are on our side. For some have argued that, and it seems plausible that, with purely moral issues, we cannot identify moral experts because there is no independent check for whose views have latched onto or correctly predicted the lay of the purely moral land in the past; although we can, via an independent check, identify experts about what the consequences of an action or policy would be, we cannot, via an independent check, identify experts regarding the purely moral issue of whether these consequences are good or bad and whether we ought to perform an action or undertake a policy that has particular consequences. So, the peer disagreements that we find ourselves in about empirical matters can be rendered epistemically unproblematic for our beliefs about these empirical matters when we know that the experts agree with us about these matters. But the peer disagreements that we find ourselves in about many moral topics in which there is a substantial division of opinion amongst peers cannot be rendered epistemically unproblematic for our beliefs about these moral topics in the same way.³⁵ Call this argument for the view that conciliationism leads to moral skepticism without leading to nonmoral skepticism the expertise argument.

However, the expertise argument seems to entail that

No Experts No Knowledge. If we find ourselves in a disagreement about whether p in which there is a substantial division of opinion regarding whether p amongst our epistemic peers about whether p, and we cannot identify via an independent check whom the experts are regarding p, then we do not have justified beliefs about whether p.

And *no experts no knowledge* seems to generate (implausibly) skeptical consequences regarding our non-moral beliefs. For instance, Jason Decker and Daniel Groll have argued that *no experts no knowledge* entails that neither we nor evolutionary biologists know that the earth is millions of years old. Because we and evolutionary biologists disagree with young earth creationists not only about the age of the earth but also about who counts as an expert about the age of the earth. Young earthers believe that their pastors are the experts when it comes to the age of the earth, and we believe that evolutionary biologists are the experts when it comes to the age of the earth. And there is no independent check that we can refer to that justifies us in believing that evolutionary biologists are the real experts when it comes to the age of the earth. Because all of the evidences that might seem to show that evolutionary biologists are

the real experts when it comes to the age of the earth, such as the fossil record, are consistent with the views of some young earth pastors who believe that this evidence, such as the fossil record, is a misleading evidence that was planted by God. And if *no experts no knowledge* entails that neither we nor evolutionary biologists know that the earth is millions of years old, then the expertise argument does not establish that conciliationism leads to epistemological moral skepticism but not epistemological nonmoral skepticism as it aims to.³⁶ (And the fact that the expertise arguments entails *no experts no knowledge* and *no experts no knowledge* has such general epistemologically skeptical consequences seems to undermine the expertise argument).³⁷

3. Applying Conciliationism to Beliefs About Specific Moral Issues

As I have discussed, it seems that (a) our moral beliefs are not insulated from the implications of conciliationism and (b) conciliationism does not lead to wholesale epistemological moral skepticism. If (a) and (b) hold, there is an interesting issue in applied moral epistemology about the implications of conciliationism for particular moral beliefs. Some have begun to discuss the implications of conciliationism for our beliefs about particular moral issues.

Ben Sherman discusses whether conciliationism entails that those of us who believe that marriage equality—that is the recognition of same-sex marriages—and gender equality are morally right is not epistemically justified in these beliefs given the peer disagreement that we find about these issues. Sherman argues that we should not take others to be our epistemic peers regarding whether *p* if

- a. we have reason to believe that their beliefs regarding whether *p*
 - i are dogmatic or are the result of other dogmatic beliefs;
 - ii are status-quo beliefs; and
 - iii are the result of, or are informed by, other cognitive biases, such as “implicit prejudices, misunderstandings of statistics, predictive errors and un-charitable interpretations of positions” and
- b. we do not have such reason to believe that our beliefs regarding whether *p* instantiate (i–iii).³⁸

And Sherman argues that the beliefs about the moral status of gender and marriage equality that are held by most of those who believe that gender and marriage equality is wrong are beliefs that instantiate (i–iii). But the beliefs about the moral status of gender and marriage equality that are held by most of those of us who believe that gender and marriage equality is right are not beliefs that instantiate (i–iii). So, we should believe that most of those who believe that gender and marriage equality is wrong are not our epistemic peers about the moral status of gender and marriage equality. But most of those who believe that gender and marriage equality is right are our epistemic peers about this issue. And in this case, peer disagreement about the morality of gender and marriage equality does not undermine the epistemic status of our belief that gender and marriage equality is right because most of our epistemic peers about this issue agree with us.³⁹

However, (i) seems to be true of the beliefs about gender and marriage equality of at least many of us who believe that gender and marriage equality is right: many of us are very dogmatic about the immorality of gender inequality. (ii) does not seem to be a plausible epistemic vice of a belief. For the view that instantiating (ii) is an epistemic vice of a belief would seem to entail that Nietzschean immoralists and egoists can claim an epistemic advantage for their moral beliefs on the basis that they, unlike their opponents, hold radically contra-status-quo views.⁴⁰ And this does not seem to be an advantage of these views—even if their radically contra-status-quo status is not a disadvantage of these views either. And a more robust case that (iii) holds of most of those who believe that gender and marriage equality is wrong beliefs about this issue but that (iii) does not hold of the beliefs of most of those who believe that gender and marriage equality is right seems to be needed.⁴¹

So, it seems that Sherman fails to show that if conciliationism holds, then peer disagreement about the morality of gender and marriage equality does not undermine the epistemic status of our belief that gender and marriage equality is right. But Sherman's discussion does illuminate our understanding of the kind of considerations that are relevant to carefully considering the implications of conciliationism for the epistemic status of particular moral beliefs that we hold.⁴² ...

4. Practical Implications of Conciliationism's Impact on the Status of Our Moral Beliefs

So, conciliationism has significant implications for the epistemic status of some—and seemingly many—of our moral beliefs. If conciliationism undermines our justification for some of our moral beliefs, this will have practical implications for what we ought to do.

Consider

Epistemic → Metaphysical. If we are not justified in believing that it is permissible for us to ϕ and/or we must suspend judgement about whether it is permissible for us to ϕ , then it is not permissible for us to ϕ .⁴⁹

Certain cases support Epistemic → Metaphysical. For instance, suppose that Penny is a police officer who is at a shooting range about to shoot at a target. But Penny is not justified in believing that there is not a cleaner moving around behind the targets who would be very likely hit if Penny took a shot at the target. So, Penny is not justified in believing that it is permissible for her to shoot at the target. But because Penny is not justified in believing that it is permissible for her to shoot it seems that it is also not permissible for Penny to shoot.⁵⁰ Now if epistemic → metaphysical holds, and peer disagreement (due to conciliationism) undermines our justification for believing that many actions, which we believe to be permissible, are permissible, then it is not permissible for us to perform many of the actions that we believe to be permissible. For instance, if peer disagreement (due to conciliationism) undermines nonvegetarians' beliefs that nonvegetarianism is permissible, and epistemic → metaphysical holds, then it is not permissible to eat meat.⁵¹ ...

5. Conclusion

Contra many including Sarah McGrath and Kieran Setiya, conciliationism does not seem to have implications for the epistemic status of our moral beliefs that are radically different from the implications that it has for the epistemic status of our nonmoral beliefs. Conciliationism does seem to have significant implications for the epistemic status of at least some—and seemingly many—of our moral beliefs about controversial moral issues (such as beliefs about the permissibility of eating animals and beliefs about the moral status of abortion). ... And it seems that conciliationism has significant practical implications for what we all ought to do ...

ENDNOTES

- ¹ See Matheson (2015, §2.1) and Goldman and Blanchard (2015, §3.4).
- ² See Kelly (2005, *p.* 168, *n.* 2) and Christensen (2009, pp. 756-757).
- ³ See, for instance, Elga (2007, *p.* 493). The likelihood view and the view that our epistemic peers about a particular matter are those who are just as reliable as we are when it comes to that matter are sometimes taken to be equivalent; see, for instance, Worsnip (2014, *p.* 2). For discussion of both views, see Killoren (2010, pp. 15-20).
- ⁴ See Frances (2014, *p.* 45).
- ⁵ As stated, the epistemic virtues view will also entail the counter-intuitive result that those who are generally extremely epistemically virtuous but have a blind spot for issues in a particular domain *D* are our epistemic peers about matters in *D* even if we are extremely generally epistemically virtuous and do not have the same blind spot. However, this problem could be ameliorated by revising the epistemic virtues view to the view that *A* is our epistemic peer about *p* if *A* is as generally epistemically virtuous as we are and as epistemically virtuous regarding *p* (or issues in the same domain as *p*) in particular as we are.
- ⁶ See also Worsnip (2014, *p.* 2). Perhaps, the epistemic virtues view could be revised in the following way: *A* is *B*'s epistemic peer regarding *p* if *A* has epistemic virtues relevant to *p* to the same extent as *B*. However, it seems to me that so revised such a version of the epistemic virtues view may just collapse into or be extensionally equivalent to the likelihood view (at least in the vast majority of cases); for it seems that if *A* has the epistemic virtues relevant to *p* to the same extent as *B*, then *A* will be as likely to be right regarding *p* as *B*. (Analogously, some such as Hooker (2002) argue that the best version of virtue ethics collapses into a form of rule-consequentialism).
- ⁷ I will presume with Christensen (2009, *p.* 756) and Wietmarschen (2013, *p.* 395) that the debate about the epistemic significance of peer disagreement is a debate mainly about how we should respond to disagreements that we should, or have good reason to, believe to be peer disagreements. See also Setiya (2012, pp. 16-17).
- ⁸ See Christensen (2009, *p.* 756).
- ⁹ For an introduction to these views, see Christensen (2009) and Matheson (2015, §3-4).
- ¹⁰ For an introduction to these problems, see Matheson (2015, §4.2). For a particularly helpful articulation and pressing of the self-defeat objection, see Decker (2014). For discussion of some of these objections, see *infra* note 11.
- ¹¹ For an introduction, see Matheson (2015, §4.1). For the most well-known articulations, discussions, and defences of more conciliatory views, see Christensen (2007, 2011), Elga (2007), Feldman (2006), Kelly (2010), and Lackey (2010). For moral philosophers articulating conciliatory views, see, for instance, Sidgwick (1907/1981, *p.* 342), Parfit (2011, pp. 427-428), and McGrath (2008). For more steadfast views, see, for instance, Kelly (2005), Wedgwood (2010), and Enoch (2010).
- ¹² See Christensen (2007, pp. 193-194; Christensen, 2009, *p.* 757).
- ¹³ See Christensen (2007, pp. 213-214).
- ¹⁴ *ibidem* *p.* 214
- ¹⁵ This explanation seems to me to be a better explanation because it involves attributing less error. On whether the number of peers matters, see McGrath (2008, pp. 94-95), Setiya (2012, pp. 18-19), Lackey (2013), and Frances (2014, pp. 94-99).
- ¹⁶ What if the majority of *A*'s epistemic peers regarding *p* disagree with *A* regarding *p*? In this case, *ceteris paribus*, *A* should at least give up her belief regarding *p*, and *A* should perhaps convert to the view that her epistemic peers regarding *p* hold. (However, see the discussion of moral deference in §2 below).
- ¹⁷ See McCarthy (2014).
- ¹⁸ See <http://philpapers.org/surveys>.
- ¹⁹ See also McGrath (2008, pp. 94-95).

²² See Matheson (2015, §2.2).

³¹ It might seem that I have mischaracterized Setiya's view as an asymmetry view because it might seem that Setiya takes the argument that he makes—see below—to show the falsity of conciliatory views quite generally. However, first, some of what Setiya says seems to imply that he takes his argument to be restricted to moral epistemology only; see, for instance, Setiya (2012, pp. 5-6). Second, it seems that showing that there are counter-examples to conciliationism when applied to disagreements with epistemic peers about moral issues only counts in favor of the view that a conciliatory view does not apply regarding peer disagreement about moral issues; especially if conciliationism about nonmoral issues is independently plausible, as it seems to be; see §1. Third, it is not obvious that counter-examples of exactly the same type as the one that Setiya utilizes to argue against conciliationism about the epistemology of peer disagreement about moral issues present themselves regarding nonmoral issues or at least regarding nonmoral issues that are not philosophical or religious issues.

³² See Setiya (2012, p. 20).

³³ See Vavova (2014, p. 305). See also Frances (2014, pp. 47-49). ³⁴ This view is the epistemic analogue of the view that facts about moral disagreement lead to antirealist consequences about moral metaphysics, but facts about nonmoral disagreement do not lead to antirealist consequences about nonmoral metaphysics; see Bennigson (1996), Machery, Kelly, and Stich (2005), Doris and Stich (2005), Doris and Plakias (2008), Rawls (1999, p. 290, p. 301), Mackie (1977, pp. 36-38), and Cosker-Rowland (forthcoming). For responses to arguments for this view, see Shafer-Landau (2003, p. 228), McGrath (2010, p. 64, p. 76), and Fitzpatrick (2014).

³⁵ See McGrath (2008, pp. 96-99), Driver (2006), and Cholbi (2007).

³⁶ See Decker and Groll (2013, esp. pp. 142-152).

³⁷ 1. Even if Decker and Groll's argument fails to undermine the expertise argument, it does not seem to me that the expertise argument shows that conciliationism leads to radical epistemological moral skepticism. This is because, first, there does not seem to be moral disagreement (no matter moral peer disagreement) about certain moral claims such as that pain is bad and that killing is sometimes wrong, and so the expertise argument could not show that conciliationism entails that we have no moral knowledge or justified moral beliefs at all. Second, as I discuss in §4 below, even if we cannot identify moral experts, many moral philosophers may justifiably believe that they do not find themselves in peer disagreements about certain topics that they are at the forefront of research regarding. In this case, the combination of the expertise argument and conciliationism would not entail that these moral philosophers do not have justified moral beliefs about certain controversial moral issues. 2. A different argument has been made, which might seem to be an argument for an asymmetric view of the implications of conciliationism. Some have argued that conciliationism will, or may, have more skeptical implications regarding our moral views than regarding our nonmoral views if moral intuitions play a certain key role in justifying our moral beliefs, or play this key role in a particular way; see Besong (2014) and Killoren (2010), cf. Wedgwood (2010). However, these arguments are understood by their authors to be, if successful, reductions of views according to which moral intuitions play a certain key role in justifying our moral beliefs.

³⁸ See Sherman (2014, esp. pp. 11-14).

³⁹ See *ibidem* especially pp. 9-15.

⁴⁰ See Cf. Kahane (2011, p. 113).

⁴¹ Sherman (2014, pp. 13-14) claims that (iii) holds of most of those who believe that gender and marriage equality is wrong beliefs about this issue, but (iii) does not hold of the beliefs about this issue of most of those who believe that gender and marriage equality is right because most of those who have learned about such cognitive biases hold that gender and marriage equality is right and

Those who have learned about these kinds of failings are more likely to be on guard against them, and those who have regular interactions with those who have such training are more likely to have their errors brought to their attention.

However, some have argued that being aware of cognitive biases, such as being aware of implicit biases, does not in fact reduce one's implicit bias and propensity to treat others in line with such biases (and there is a way in which this should not be too surprising with implicit biases because such biases act implicitly rather than explicitly); see, for instance, Byrne and Tanesini (2015, pp. 1255-1256).

⁴² David Killoren (2010, pp. 20-25) discusses whether conciliationism undermines our justification for believing that slavery is wrong. However, the argument that Killoren discusses for the conclusion that conciliationism does so undermine our justification for this belief relies on the view, which is not, and should not be, part of conciliationism, that the fact that someone whom one does not know to not be one's epistemic peer regarding *p* disagrees with one regarding *p* undermines the justification of one's belief regarding whether *p* in the same way that peer disagreement regarding *p* does; see §2.2.

⁴⁹ See Kiesewetter (forthcoming) and Matheson (2016).

⁵⁰ See Harman (2015, p. 58). For discussion of exactly what cases like these can establish, see Harman (2015). For a response to one popular objection to principles like Epistemic $\rightarrow$ Metaphysical, see Sepielli (2016).

- ⁵¹ See Matheson (2016, pp. 126-129). The combination of epistemic $\rightarrow$ metaphysical and conciliationism would seem to entail that we must give almost everything that we earn to charity if we should believe that act-consequentialists are our epistemic peers about whether act-consequentialism holds or not. However, this consequence of epistemic $\rightarrow$ metaphysical may show that epistemic $\rightarrow$ metaphysical is only plausible if an additional condition is added to the antecedent of Epistemic $\rightarrow$ Metaphysical, namely, “and ϕ -ing would not be extremely costly.”

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