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Deep Disagreement, Hinge Commitments, and Intellectual Humility

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Abstract

Why is it that some instances of disagreement appear to be so intractable? And what is the appropriate way to handle such disagreements, especially concerning matters about which there are important practical and political needs for us to come to a consensus? In this paper, I consider an explanation of the apparent intractability of deep disagreement offered by hinge epistemology. According to this explanation, at least some deep disagreements are rationally unresolvable because they concern 'hinge' commitments that are unresponsive to rational considerations. This explanation, if correct, seems to have troubling implications for how we should respond to deep disagreement. If my position on a topic is not responsive to rational considerations, then what choice have I but to dogmatically hold to that position, and simply dismiss the views of those with whom I disagree? I address this problem by identifying an attitude of intellectual humility that is appropriate to have towards one's hinge commitments, and suggest that this attitude provides the basis for a non-rational, constructive way to resolve deep disagreement.

Keywords: Hinge epistemology; deep disagreement; intellectual humility; epistemic relativism; epistemology of disagreement

1. Introduction

I take the following to be a paradigmatic instance of deep disagreement:

> **Alex and Billie**: Alex is a deeply religious Christian. Her views on a variety of topics are influenced by her Christian identity. For instance, she believes that God implants a soul at the moment of conception. This belief informs Alex's firm pro-life stance on the topic of abortion. Billie is an atheist. He was raised in a secular household. Billie believes that morality is independent of religion, and is pro-choice. Alex and Billie regard each other as generally intelligent and reasonable, but when it comes to abortion, they do not see eye to eye. Neither accepts the reasons offered by the other for their respective positions. Whenever the topic comes up, Alex and Billie's discussion either becomes heated, or they avoid talking about their views and change the subject.

What makes this a paradigmatic instance of deep disagreement, intuitively, is that – in contrast to ordinary disagreement – it is persistent and cries out for resolution. We

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can imagine that in a case like this, ordinary methods for resolving disagreement, such as gathering more evidence, compromising, clarifying the positions of the disputants, etc., are ineffective in bringing about a consensus. Yet Alex and Billie, we can imagine, each continues to think that they are right and the other is wrong, rather than suspending judgment or lowering confidence in their own view. Could such a steadfast response to a disagreement of this sort be anything other than irrational?

There are several explanations of the persistence of deep disagreement. I shall focus (in section 3) on an account of deep disagreement, offered by hinge epistemology, that I find plausible at least for a limited but significant range of cases.[1] This account holds that deep disagreements are not directly rationally resolvable when they concern a hinge commitment of one of the disputants – that is, a commitment held with maximal subjective certainty yet which lacks rational grounding (in a sense to be explained).

Though I focus here on hinge epistemology, the issue I aim to explore in this paper – namely, that of how intellectual humility can be useful in navigating deep disagreement – is relevant for other accounts that also explain the persistence of deep disagreement by appeal to beliefs, principles, or assumptions that are particularly resistant to change by rational means.[2] So I shall not primarily be arguing for the theoretical advantages of a particular explanation of the persistence of deep disagreement. (Indeed, I see no reason to think that the persistence of all cases of deep disagreement must be explained in just one way.) Nevertheless, I shall frame the issues throughout in terms of hinge epistemology, since I find that to provide a plausible account of the disagreements of interest, and to provide a framework suitable for illuminating the points I wish to make about intellectual humility.

The conclusion that seems to be invited by the hinge epistemic approach is that when one's hinge commitments are challenged, the only rational response available is to dogmatically hold to them, and thus if a resolution to the disagreement is possible at all, it will have to proceed (at least initially) through non-rational means.[3] This conclusion appears unappealing for two reasons: first, because it seems to endorse *dogmatism* or *arrogance* as a response to certain disagreements, and second, because it possibly leaves us with something like propaganda or even force as the only available means of resolving deep disagreements on pressing matters. However, I shall identify (in section 4) an attitude of intellectual humility that it *is* appropriate to have towards our hinge commitments, and discuss how this attitude can be useful for navigating deep disagreement.

2. What is deep disagreement?

Intuitively, part of what makes a disagreement deep rather than shallow has to do with how easily the disagreement could be rationally resolved by the disputants' lights. Let us restrict our discussion to disagreements of the following sort: disagreement that occurs when A claims that p, and B denies that p, where A and B are each aware of the other's claim and denial, respectively. Here is how I propose to capture the distinction between shallow and deep disagreement:

> *Shallow disagreement*: A disagreement is shallow just in case the disputants are fairly easily able to reach a *substantive consensus* by rational means; that is, through

[1]See Pritchard (2018) and Ranalli (2018*a*, 2018*b*). Siegel (2019) provides a critical response to the hinge epistemic account of deep disagreement.

[2]For instance, Lynch (2010, 2012, 2016) explains deep disagreement in terms of disagreement concerning fundamental epistemic principles. See also Kappel (2012).

[3]Pritchard, for instance, talks of persuasion in a 'side-on' fashion (2018: 7).

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an exchange of their reasons, acquiring further reasons, or correcting any simple errors in reasoning.

By 'substantive consensus', I mean a response to a disagreement concerning whether p where all disputants come to agree either that p is the case, or that not-p is the case. This rules out cases where disputants 'resolve' their disagreement by agreeing to disagree or by suspending judgment concerning whether p.[4] If shallow disagreement were defined simply as disagreement that can fairly easily be rationally resolved, *including* by agreeing to disagree or by suspending judgment, then it would seem that almost all disagreement is shallow (since in almost any disagreement, disputants could rationally choose either to agree to disagree or to suspend judgment), and so we would have lost the distinction we set out to capture.[5] However, in a more restricted range of disagreement – the range that is of interest for this paper – it is not rational even for disputants to agree to disagree or to suspend judgment (more on this below).

By resolving disagreement through *rational means*, I mean 'rational' in an internalist sense; rational by the lights of each disputant (or perhaps an idealized version of each disputant), given what they believe and what epistemic principles they endorse. This internalist understanding has the result that when disputants disagree not just concerning whether p, but also on facts relevant to assessing the truth of p or on what would even count as evidence for p, the disagreement is not a shallow one.

The problem of disagreement I go on to discuss concerns what, from the first-person perspective, as parties to a disagreement, we ought to do to resolve it. Thus, what matters is not what is *in fact* objectively good reason for belief, but instead what reasons disputants will *take* as good reasons. So understood, the focus in this paper can be understood as a *dialectical* one about the reasons we can offer each other. When I am in a disagreement, it will be no help for me to 'inform' my interlocutor that I have objectively good reason for my position – this is part of what is at issue between us.[6]

In appealing to what the disputants would find rational by their own lights, it might seem that my account makes deep disagreement too easy to come by. Imagine a 'stubborn' disputant who holds to his claim come what may, and rejects any principle of rationality that would make it rational for him to abandon his claim. On my view,

[4]So understood, the standard 'restaurant bill' case discussed in the epistemology of disagreement is a shallow peer disagreement. In that case, two people have agreed to split the bill at a restaurant, but when the bill comes, and each calculates how much they owe, they arrive at different amounts. This disagreement is shallow because both parties will likely find that simply double-checking calculations or using a calculator will be sufficient to resolve the disagreement towards a substantive consensus. Conciliatory views in the epistemology of disagreement hold that the rational response in the restaurant bill case is for disputants to suspend judgment, or at least lower their confidence in their initial calculations, after learning that they disagree with an epistemic peer (see Feldman 2005, Christensen 2007, and Elga 2007 for defenses of conciliatory views). My depiction of shallow disagreement is compatible with the conciliatory conclusion about this case: *initially*, the rational thing to do is to suspend judgment. But eventually, and probably sooner rather than later, the disputants in the case will come to a substantive consensus.

[5]Conciliatory views in the epistemology of disagreement, of course, claim that all *peer* disagreement can be resolved in just this way. However, it is not clear that the notion of peer disagreement that conciliationism focuses on captures the interesting aspects of *deep* disagreement. What demarcates deep from shallow disagreement, on my view, has to do with the ease with which the disagreement might *eventually* be resolved; not with whether the mere fact of disagreement is epistemically significant.

[6]We might distinguish between two kinds of problem of disagreement; there are disagreements that are deep in an internalist sense, in that there are no reasons the disputants themselves would both accept that would lead to a substantive consensus. And then there may be disagreements that are deep in an externalist sense, in that the evidence itself equally supports two incompatible propositions. My concern is with the former sense.

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any disagreement with this stubborn interlocutor will not be a shallow disagreement, unless it is *us* who would easily be convinced by him. I do not see this as a problem, however. We should ask whether the stubborn interlocutor *genuinely* holds to his commitment with such certainty that he finds it reasonable to reject any reasons which might call his commitment into question, or whether he is only posing, perhaps in order to play devil's advocate, or perhaps because he just likes to argue.[7] If the former, then I think we may indeed be faced with a deep disagreement. If the latter, then we are not facing deep disagreement, for the interlocutor is not truly making an assessment of what it is rational to believe, and is instead engaging in some other kind of activity. This reveals that in order for deep disagreement to occur, it must at least be the case that the disputants share some epistemic goals; they must be concerned with truth, and with deciding what it is rational to believe.[8] (As we shall be in a position to see later, those who persist in disagreement without sharing a concern for the truth cannot exhibit the sort of intellectual humility I go on to identify.)

The notion of deep disagreement that is of interest for the present project I define as follows:[9]

> *Deep Disagreement*: A disagreement is deep just in case (i) it is *persistent*, in that the disputants cannot easily reach a substantive consensus through an exchange of their reasons, acquiring further reasons, or correcting any simple errors in reasoning, (again, by their own lights) and (ii) there is a felt rational pressure among the disputants towards reaching a substantive consensus.

(i) distinguishes deep disagreement from shallow disagreement. But (i) alone, I think, is not sufficient to capture what is characteristic of paradigmatically deep disagreement. In some disagreements, it may be that no substantive consensus can easily be reached, but nevertheless disputants *do* find it reasonable to agree to disagree, or to suspend judgment, or to judge that there is no knowable objective truth of the matter. For instance, we might have a persistent disagreement over how many hairs were on Aristotle's head at the moment he died, but the reason we cannot reach a substantive consensus here is just that we recognize that we cannot know the answer. This may qualify as deep disagreement in some sense, but the range of disagreement of interest here are disagreements where there is rational pressure towards consensus, in the sense of there being a commitment to there being a *knowable truth* of the matter.[10]

Part of what is distinctive of deep disagreement is that it is cause for *cognitive concern*. Alex and Billie are unable to easily reach a substantive consensus through an

[7]See Pritchard (2017: 27–9) on dialectical poseurs.

[8]Thanks to Michael Lynch for highlighting this point about shared epistemic goals.

[9]Henceforth, I simply call this 'deep disagreement', but it should be understood that I leave room for other sorts of deep disagreement – for instance, disagreement where no substantive consensus can easily be reached, but where disputants can rationally suspend judgment or agree to disagree.

[10]Note that this disagreement is not shallow just because it concerns a trivial matter where there is no need to reach consensus, but because the answer is unknowable (for us). Suppose A and B disagree in their predictions about global warming; A believes the effects of global warming will have catastrophic effects for human life in 30 years, while B believes it will have catastrophic effects in 75 years. A lot seems to hang on getting things right here. But, we can imagine, the evidence currently available does not allow us to ascertain whether A is correct or B is correct. Here, I submit, we ought not assign a very high degree of credence to either A's prediction or B's prediction, when it comes to deciding what to believe. Yet we may have practical reasons to 'play it safe' and accept (where this is distinct from believing) A's prediction for the purpose of making policy decisions and adjusting our individual behavior. Thanks to Dorit Bar-On for raising this issue.

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exchange of reasons, acquiring further reasons, or correcting errors in reasoning. But we can imagine that Alex and Billie are not content, *as a purely rational, epistemic response* to the disagreement, to suspend judgment or agree to disagree, or think that there is no knowable objective truth of the matter.[11] (They may of course agree to disagree for *other* reasons, such as a desire to maintain their friendship). Each thinks that there is a correct position to take on the issue, and that it is possible to discover what that position is; they take each other to be in error, and each thinks the error of the other could be corrected if the other side would only see things the right way (that is, by using the principles of reasoning and assessing evidence that their *own* side endorses).[12] We can suppose, for instance, that Alex thinks Billie does not give adequate weight to the sanctity of life in his thoughts about abortion, and Billie thinks Alex does not give enough weight to the right to control over one's body. After all, if they did not each think there was an objectively correct position, or if they did but thought it was impossible to discover, why would they continue to *insist* (or at least hope) that their interlocutor change their mind?

2.1. Explaining deep disagreement

One might think that the persistence of deep disagreement is evidence that neither disputant is wrong, in any objective sense. This could be because either there is no objective truth about the matter of dispute, or because disputants are simply talking past each other without realizing it.[13] Think of (some) disagreements on matters of taste – if I find Coltrane's music more beautiful than Mozart's, and you find the opposite, there is no objective sense in which one of us must be wrong, and so nothing that could rationally compel us to converge on a single answer. Though this might explain why some 'disagreements' over taste persist, disagreements about taste do not manifest (ii) – there is no pressure towards resolution, as we are content to agree to disagree on the matter, and so these are not true instances of deep disagreement as I understand it.[14] Now, we might continue to disagree because we mistakenly think there is an objective fact of the matter – there *would* then be a felt rational pressure towards resolution. I allow that some deep disagreement might be explained in this way – by the fact that disputants mistakenly take there to be an objectively correct position on the matter. In the case of Alex and Billie, however, it seems implausible to explain the disagreement

[11]Feature (ii) of deep disagreement may seem similar to Crispin Wright's (1992: 144–6) notion of cognitive command, but there is an important difference. A topic that exhibits cognitive command is such that we would take there to be no faultless disagreement concerning that topic: A and B would not continue to disagree unless one of them were making a cognitive mistake, by either reasoning incorrectly, or failing to acquire the correct evidence. However, I make room for the possibility that for some proposition p, A and B may disagree, and rightly refuse to 'agree to disagree', even where neither A nor B is making a cognitive mistake. One of A or B must *be* wrong in having a false belief, but neither has culpably *gone* wrong in their reasoning or in collecting evidence. (We thus have *epistemic* relativism without relativism about *truth* concerning the topic of dispute. See Pritchard (2009). And see Ashton (2019) for a defense of an epistemic relativist version of hinge epistemology.)

[12]Thanks to Michael Lynch for pushing me to think about whether A and B must share any principles of reasoning to have a deep disagreement.

[13]Shields (2018), for instance, argues that deep disagreement is best construed as disagreement over conflicting understandings of some of the concepts involved in the contested claim.

[14]Some do take deep disagreement even in domains where there is pressure towards resolution, such as in ethics, to give us reason to be skeptical that there are objective truths in that domain at all. These sorts of moral anti-realist arguments from disagreement are controversial, however, and it would take us too far afield to consider them in depth. See Shafer-Landau (2003: Ch. 9), Enoch (2011, Ch. 8), Audi (2014), and Wedgwood (2014) for critical responses to these sorts of arguments against objectivist moral realism.

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as merely verbal, or to think there is no objectively correct position to take (barring moral nihilism or relativism of some sort). Alex straightforwardly believes, while Billie denies, as they are both aware, the proposition that abortion is almost always morally impermissible.

One may try to explain the persistence of deep disagreement by appealing to the difficulty of the issues involved, or to limitations on the cognitive abilities of the disputants, rather than accepting the surface appearance of deep disagreement as being rationally unresolvable. Perhaps we see persistent disagreement in philosophy, for instance, because philosophical problems are just really hard to figure out. There are simply contingent limitations on our cognitive abilities that explain why we might persistently disagree on a matter about which there is an objectively correct answer. Crucially, however, for this to succeed as an explanation of deep disagreement, it seems the cognitive limitations we face must be limitations we are unaware of.[15] For if disputants were *aware* that their cognitive limitations are responsible for their continued disagreement, then they should each find it rational to suspend judgment (and so there would no longer be a felt pressure towards rational resolution); after all, the sort of cognitive limitation under consideration here seems to defeat knowledge.[16] But where the cognitive limitations are 'hidden', disputants may (mistakenly) think that there is a knowable correct position to take (their own, of course), and so persist in the disagreement.

Again, 'hidden' cognitive limitations may adequately explain some instances of genuine deep disagreement. But I do not think that *all* deep disagreements are best explained in this way. For instance, in the case of Alex and Billie, it seems to me that there are no obvious cognitive limitations that may be at work which Alex or Billie could be ignorant of. While I do not endorse any particular moral epistemology here, to my mind, a feature of moral thought is that we are, simply in virtue of being moral agents, competent judges in many moral matters (though this is of course no guarantee of infallibility). There is no special expertise required to be able to form justified moral beliefs. In the absence of any other general cognitive limitations, then, it seems Alex and Billie do not face any hidden cognitive limitations in the abortion case.[17]

Both of the possible explanations so far explained features (i) and (ii) of deep disagreement in terms of *misunderstandings* of the nature of the disagreement on the part of the disputants; in the first explanation, disputants are in error in thinking there is some objectively correct position to take in the first place, or whether they are talking past each other, and in the second explanation, disputants are in error about the nuances and difficulties involved in forming a justified belief about the topic at hand. In both cases, the disagreement could eventually be rationally resolved; if disputants could realize their misunderstanding, then they should find it rational to suspend judgment or agree to disagree, and the felt pressure towards rational resolution would

[15]Thanks to Michael Lynch for pushing me to think about this point.

[16]Conciliatory views in the epistemology of disagreement, of course, would advance this conclusion.

[17]One might object that the sophistication of philosophical arguments concerning the permissibility of abortion indicates that most non-philosophers have not considered the issue with sufficient depth to have an epistemically justified view on the matter. I worry this reasoning would over-generate skeptical conclusions – there is sophisticated philosophical work to be done in thinking about what is generally wrong with killing, for instance, but we shouldn't conclude from this that most people do not justifiably believe (much less know) that killing is generally wrong. This is for the same reason that one does not need to understand the intricacies of our best physics to form reasonable predictions about, say, how a billiard ball will behave when one hits it in a certain way. It seems to me that ordinary people are capable of thinking through even complex moral dilemmas in an intellectually responsible way, though philosophical training no doubt can aid in sharpening our moral reasoning.

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disappear. But in some instances of deep disagreement, I submit, disputants are not rational in suspending judgment, lowering confidence, or agreeing to disagree. That is, in some instances of deep disagreement, disputants are in fact not talking past each other, and there is an objectively correct position to take that is knowable, both disputants are epistemically blameless in holding the views they do, yet at least one of them has a false belief. The case of Alex and Billie is meant as an example of such a case.

The possibility of this kind of disagreement should not surprise us. As Rawls (2005) tells us, it is part of living in a liberal democracy that there be a plurality of reasonable religious, moral, and philosophical doctrines. We must have some convictions, and these will inevitably conflict with the convictions of others. This brings us to the third possible explanation of the persistence of deep disagreement; some deep disagreements *appear* not to be directly rationally resolvable because they really are not directly rationally resolvable. The hinge epistemic account of deep disagreement is one instance of this strategy, and I turn to this in the next section.[18]

3. Hinge epistemology

The hinge epistemic account of deep disagreement holds that deep disagreements are not rationally resolvable when they concern hinge commitments. According to the brand of hinge epistemology I prefer (due to Pritchard 2012, 2016, *inter alia*), 'hinges' are commitments which are held with maximal subjective certainty, yet which are (for that very reason) not directly responsive to rational considerations and difficult to abandon. Because these commitments are not directly responsive to rational considerations and difficult to abandon, neither the mere fact of disagreement, nor the reasons put forward in the course of an argument can lead one to rationally doubt the hinge, and neither can one simply abandon the hinge and thereby come to be able to subject the relevant contested proposition to rational evaluation.[19]

Hinge epistemology, which takes inspiration from Wittgenstein's *On Certainty* (1969), is often presented as a response to radical epistemological skepticism. The core idea, shared by various accounts of hinge epistemology, is that certain of our commitments are exempt from doubt, because of the special role those commitments play in making the epistemic practice of giving and asking for reasons (including raising doubts) possible in the first place.

There are different views on how best to understand the notion of a hinge commitment, each with different implications for the analysis of disagreement. Here are four

[18]As noted above, the hinge epistemic account is not the only account explaining the apparent rational unresolvability in this way. Another account of deep disagreement, the fundamental epistemic principle account, holds that these disagreements are not rationally resolvable when they concern fundamental epistemic principles; that is, principles concerning how one ought to form one's beliefs and which are not in turn based on any further epistemic principles (Lynch 2010, 2012, 2016). These principles cannot be defended without circularity. When a disagreement concerns fundamental epistemic principles, there will be in principle no evidence that can settle the dispute to the satisfaction of those involved, since the disputants will not be able to offer reasons in favor of the fundamental epistemic principles they accept that will be convincing to someone who does not also accept those principles. Although I shall use the hinge epistemic framework for explaining deep disagreement, the conclusions I want to draw about intellectual humility apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the fundamental epistemic principle account. See Ranalli (2018*a*) for a comparison between the fundamental epistemic principle account and the hinge epistemic account of deep disagreement.

[19]I thank an anonymous reviewer for pushing me to consider the latter possibility – namely, of a subject abandoning her hinge commitment, and thereby gaining the capacity to directly rationally consider arguments bearing on the relevant proposition.

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dimensions along which hinge epistemologies differ. First, there is a division among views that take hinge commitments to have propositions as their objects (including, *inter alia*, Wright 1986, 2004; Coliva 2010, 2015, 2016; Pritchard 2012, 2016), and those that take hinge commitments to concern non-propositional objects that are neither true nor false (Moyal-Sharrock 2004, 2016). There is then a second division between views that take hinge commitments to have a positive epistemic status[20] (Williams 1991; Wright 2004), on the one hand, and views that take the attitude of hinge commitment to be removed from the scope of rational evaluation altogether, and so not even enjoying epistemic entitlement (Coliva 2010, 2015, 2016; Pritchard 2012, 2016), on the other hand. Relatedly, whereas on Wright's view our entitlement to accept a hinge proposition is defeasible, in that one may only rationally accept the hinge in the absence of any reason to think the hinge false (Wright 2004: 181), for Pritchard, our hinges are not responsive to evidence even in this way. On Pritchard's view, *because* hinges are held with maximal subjective certainty, any reason that might be offered for thinking the hinge false will seem less certain to one than the hinge itself, and so one would instead have reason to reject the purported counter-evidence rather than the hinge.

Third, some views seem to take hinge commitment to be a context-sensitive notion, in that an attitude's status as hinge commitment is specific either to a particular domain of inquiry or intellectual project (e.g., Williams 1991; Wright 2004). Other views take a commitment's status as a hinge commitment for a person to be largely independent of the context of inquiry (Pritchard 2012, 2016). For instance, on Williams' view, the proposition that the world did not come into existence just five minutes ago will count as a hinge commitment relative to certain domains of inquiry (e.g., history), but not relative to others (e.g., philosophical reflection on skepticism) (Williams 1991: 121–5). By contrast, on Pritchard's view, if the proposition that the earth did not come into existence just five minutes ago is held as a hinge commitment by someone, then that person will hold this as a hinge commitment regardless of context of inquiry (2016: 106).

And finally, some views hold that there are principled limits on what kinds of propositions can play the hinge commitment role (Wright 2004; Coliva 2016) – in particular, only 'Moorean certainties' such as the proposition that one has two hands can be hinge propositions. Whereas others hold that (almost) any proposition can be a hinge commitment for a particular person, so long as it plays the relevant role – namely, being held with maximum subjective certainty (Pritchard 2012, 2016). Thus, on Pritchard's view it could be that, in the right circumstances (given one's upbringing, the beliefs of one's culture, etc.), one could be maximally subjectively certain of, and therefore have a hinge commitment to, just about any proposition. It is this feature of Pritchard's view that I think makes it the most natural framework for developing a hinge epistemic account of *disagreement*.

Although Pritchard's view allows for variability in personal hinge commitments, it also captures what all hinges have in common, in virtue of which they are hinges: namely, the functional role the hinge commitment plays in the cognitive economy of the person holding it. All hinges are alike in that they are immune from direct rational evaluation and difficult to abandon, because they are held with maximal subjective certainty. And despite the possibility for variation in hinge commitment between people, we should also expect that generally there will be agreement in our hinge commitments; indeed, Moorean certainties (such as commitment to the proposition that one has two hands) and anti-skeptical commitments (such as commitment to the proposition that the earth did not pop into existence just five minutes ago) are hinge commitments

[20]This may be either because we are entitled to place rational trust in them, or because they are possible pieces of knowledge, despite the fact that we lack strong justification for thinking the hinge.

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that nearly everyone will share.[21] As I think of hinge epistemology, in the game of giving and asking for reasons, hinge commitments are like the board on which this game is played, in that they are not themselves subject to requests for reasons, nor do they directly provide reasons (they are not moves on the board), but they are commitments we must hold if we are to give and ask for reasons at all (they *are* the board).[22]

Thus, drawing from Pritchard's non-epistemic propositional view, we can define the notion of 'hinge commitment' as follows:

> *Hinge Commitment*: S has a hinge commitment to the proposition that p just in case S is subjectively maximally certain that p is true, where (for that reason) S's commitment is *a*rationally held, in that it is not based on any particular reasons for thinking p true, and is generally resistant to purported reasons for thinking p false.

The arationality and the maximal subjective certainty are crucially related. Because hinges are maximally subjectively certain, no evidence can lead one to rationally reject one's hinge (again, by one's own lights), as the hinge will be more certain than any reasons speaking against it. But by the same token, no evidence can speak in favor of a hinge, either, as any such evidence will also be less certain than the hinge itself. Thus, we should understand Pritchard's view as adopting the following principle, which I dub 'the rational grounding principle' (see Pritchard 2012: 256–7; 2016: 63–6):

> *The Rational Grounding Principle*: Rational grounds for S to doubt (or believe) proposition p must themselves be more subjectively certain to S than the proposition p which is to be doubted or believed.

When we combine this principle with the observation that, for any epistemic agent, there will be some propositions the agent holds with a maximum subjective degree of certainty, the core commitments of Pritchard's hinge epistemology fall out:[23] First, whatever is held to a maximum degree of subjective certainty must be rationally groundless – by definition, there is nothing more certain for the agent that could stand as its rational ground. Second, whatever is held to a maximum degree of subjective certainty cannot directly provide rational grounds for knowledge of other initially less certain

[21] As Pritchard puts it, all the various personal hinge commitments 'codify' the more basic 'über hinge commitment' we all share to the proposition that one is not fundamentally and radically mistaken in one's beliefs. This über hinge commitment then entails the denials of skeptical hypotheses, thus generating anti-skeptical hinge commitments which will also be nearly universally shared (Pritchard 2016: 94–103).

[22] This feature of hinge commitments (their being removed from the scope of rational evaluation) distinguishes them from fundamental epistemic principles (as discussed by Lynch 2010, 2012, 2016). Fundamental epistemic principles cannot themselves be epistemically justified in a non-circular manner, yet they do still provide a source of epistemic justification for beliefs. Hinge commitments do not themselves directly justify other beliefs; rather, holding the hinge commitment is a prerequisite for being able to have justification for one's beliefs.

[23] One might wonder why it would be true that epistemic agents must hold some commitments that are maximally subjectively certain and yet arational. A full defense of hinge epistemology goes beyond the scope of the present paper, but the basic thought is that it is part of the 'logic' of rational evaluation that if some grounds are to be 'more' or 'less' certain for S, they are so only relative to some maximally certain proposition(s) that S holds. Given the rational grounding principle, however, such a proposition could not be directly rationally supported by other propositions – hence, it is rationally groundless for S. And since such a proposition is rationally groundless for S, it also could not directly rationally support other propositions for S. Thus, holding some propositions with maximal certainty is a prerequisite for rational evaluation altogether, yet such propositions would be immune from rational evaluation themselves. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pressing me to clarify this point.

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propositions. For, the hinge, being itself rationally groundless, cannot serve as the rational ground for accepting other propositions. If it could, then reason to doubt the proposition so grounded could provide reason to doubt the hinge commitment grounding that proposition – but hinges, being maximally subjectively certain, are immune to rational doubt. As a result, hinge commitments are themselves arational, standing outside of our ordinary epistemic practices. Yet we must have *some* hinge commitments in place, because it is only relative to (though not by appeal to) these maximally subjectively certain commitments that we are able to provide rational grounds for doubting and believing other propositions. As Pritchard concludes, the fact that hinge commitments stand outside the scope of rational evaluation shows that our practices of rational evaluation are necessarily local – it is thus simply not possible to subject all of one's cognitive commitments to doubt at once, as radical skepticism would have us do.

3.1. The Hinge epistemic account of deep disagreement

In what follows, I propose an application of Pritchard's version of hinge epistemology to the problem of deep disagreement. Because a hinge commitment is an attitude towards a proposition that involves commitment to the *truth* of that proposition, and given that there can be *divergence* between the hinge commitments of individuals it makes sense to say we can *disagree* about hinges. Now, as noted earlier, the attitude of hinge commitment towards a proposition is not directly responsive to epistemic reasons for thinking that proposition true or false, and not easily abandoned. This is why disagreements that directly concern hinge commitments will be persistent and rationally unresolvable. Nevertheless, hinge commitments can change over time, so there remains the possibility that hinge disagreement can eventually be resolved (I consider a proposal for how this might be accomplished in section 4).[24]

Despite the fact that there can be variation in the hinge commitments of individuals, we should expect hinge disagreement to be relatively rare. As noted earlier, Pritchard (echoing Davidson) holds that we must share a wide range of our hinge commitments if we are even to be intelligible to each other (2018: 6). So, we should not expect widespread disagreement in hinge commitment, but, when such disagreement does occur, it will be intractable, again, because of the role hinge commitments play.[25]

[24]A reviewer suggests the possibility that hinge disagreement might be rationally resolvable if the relevant hinge commitment is abandoned as a hinge. For then it would be open for disputants to rationally consider evidence that has bearing on the contested proposition, leading to a rational resolution. While such a possibility is logically consistent with the definition of hinge commitment considered in this paper, it is not in the spirit of Pritchard's reading of Wittgenstein that I follow. In particular, Pritchard emphasizes the 'animalistic' nature of hinge commitment (a feature also emphasized in Moyal-Sharrock) as making such commitments psychologically very difficult to simply abandon. Nevertheless, I concede that if indeed it is psychologically realistic in some case for S to abandon her hinge commitment to p (though I doubt this is generally so), then S would indeed be able to consider evidence bearing on p in response to disagreement, as the reviewer suggests.

[25]Here are some suggestive passages from Wittgenstein on this point: "Suppose some adult had told a child that he had been on the moon. The child tells me the story, and I say it was only a joke, the man hadn't been on the moon; no one has ever been on the moon; the moon is a long way off and it is impossible to climb up there or fly there. – If now the child insists, saying perhaps there is a way of getting there which I don't know, etc. *what reply could I make to him*? *What reply could I make* to the adults of a tribe who believe that people sometimes go to the moon (perhaps that is how they interpret their dreams), and who indeed grant that there are no ordinary means of climbing up to it or flying there?" (Wittgenstein 1969: passage 106, emphasis added). We could ask all sorts of questions ("how did this person make it to the moon?", etc.), "But suppose that instead of all these answers we met the reply: 'We don't know how one gets to the moon, but those who get there know at once that they are there; and even you

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Though hinge disagreement will be rare, I do think that there are some real life instances. It is difficult to say to any degree of precision whether a given disagreement is a hinge disagreement, because this will largely depend on the role that the proposition under dispute plays in the cognitive economy of each disputant. Pritchard offers the following as examples: "someone raised in a religious community where God's existence is taken as an obvious fact of life is likely to have religious hinge commitments that would be alien to someone raised in a largely secular environment. Or consider someone raised in a deeply politically conservative social milieu, as opposed to someone brought up in a commune exclusively populated by people of a left-wing political persuasion. Clearly, one would expect this to lead to individuals with very different hinge commitments regarding core political matters" (Pritchard 2018: 3).

I would add, as a possible historical example, the attitudes held by white slave-owners towards slavery in the pre-civil war American South, compared with the attitudes of abolitionists. It would not be surprising, I think, for a white person raised in a plantation setting, confronted with slavery as an everyday fact of life, to hold that the institution of slavery is morally justified as a hinge commitment. Racist attitudes held even today may, for some people, play the hinge commitment role.[26] As a concrete instance, I offer the case of Derek Black, a former white nationalist. From a young age, Black was raised to accept white nationalist ideals – "his father, Don Black, had created Stormfront, the Internet's first and largest white nationalist site, with 300,000 users and counting. His mother, Chloe, had once been married to David Duke, one of the country's most infamous racial zealots, and Duke had become Derek's godfather," and "Derek had been taught that America was intended as a place for white Europeans and that everyone else would eventually have to leave. He was told to be suspicious of other races, of the U.S. government, of tap water and of pop culture" (Saslow 2016).[27] Given this sort of upbringing, I suggest that Black's white nationalist views (prior to his conversion – more on this in section 4) are plausible candidates for hinge commitments with which we should disagree.

3.2. Resolving hinge disagreement: a first pass

I have claimed that when a disagreement concerns hinge commitments, that disagreement will be rationally unresolvable. However a more fine-grained analysis of how a disagreement can concern a hinge commitment is required. It will be useful to distinguish *immediate* from *mediate* hinge disagreement.[28] Immediate hinge disagreement is disagreement that directly concerns one's hinge commitment; A is committed to p in the hinge way, and B denies that p. *Mediate* hinge disagreement is a disagreement over some proposition p, where that disagreement is explained by a further difference in the hinge commitments of the disputants, but where p itself is not a hinge commitment of either disputant. Consider a case of disagreement over abortion, like the disagreement between Alex and Billie. The crucial question here is what *explains* the disagreement. It may be an immediate conflict in hinge commitment, if either Alex or Billie adheres to their position in the hinge way. But the disagreement here may

can't explain everything.' We should feel ourselves very intellectually distant from someone who said this" (Wittgenstein 1969: passage 108).

[26]These examples illustrate, of course, that hinge commitments are not guaranteed to be true.

[27]Thanks to Tracy Llanera for introducing me to this story and influencing my thinking on it.

[28]Ranalli (2018*a*: 6) similarly distinguishes between direct and indirect hinge disagreement. I use 'immediate' and 'mediate' to avoid confusion, as I shall be simultaneously discussing direct and indirect methods for resolving hinge disagreement.

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be based in a further disagreement concerning other propositions, such as the proposition that God implants a soul in the fetus from the moment of conception – this further proposition may represent a hinge commitment of Alex, but not of Billie.

When a disagreement whether p is an immediate hinge disagreement, the disagreement will indeed be rationally unresolvable.[29] But when a disagreement whether p is a mediate hinge disagreement, so that the disagreement is explained by a further hinge disagreement concerning whether q, then the disagreement concerning whether *p* may be *indirectly* rationally resolvable. In the case of mediate hinge disagreement about abortion considered above, I suggest that Alex's position (that abortion is generally morally impermissible) is generally responsive to reasons, but it exhibits a *reasons blind spot*. That is, Alex's position on abortion is responsive *only* to reasons that do not call into question Alex's underlying religious hinge commitment. So, Alex and Billie may be able to rationally resolve their disagreement concerning abortion, but this will have to be done by appeal to reasons that have no bearing on whether it is the case that God has implanted a soul in each fetus at the moment of conception. For instance, perhaps Billie could rationally persuade Alex that even if souls are implanted at conception, there are overriding considerations in many cases that morally justify abortion, even though this may not be Billie's own reason for thinking abortion generally permissible.[30] A rational resolution such as this may well be possible, provided that Alex and Billie share enough *other* hinge commitments. Thus, where disagreement is initially based in further difference in hinge commitment, there is likely available an alternative route for accomplishing rational resolution: appealing to reasons that do not impact the relevant hinge commitments.[31]

This explains how some deep disagreements, when they are best thought of as cases of mediate hinge disagreement, might nevertheless be rationally resolvable. It remains to be seen, however, how we ought to respond to immediate hinge disagreement, as I speculate might be the case with disagreement with the white nationalist views of Black (pre-conversion). I take this up in section 4.2.

4. The value of intellectual humility

In this section, I consider the question: What is the intellectually humble response to disagreement generally? And why might intellectual humility be valuable as a response

[29]This contrasts with other approaches to hinge epistemology. It is at least open to Wright, for instance, to allow that the fact of disagreement provides some reason to doubt the relevant proposition, thus defeating what otherwise might have been an entitlement to rationally trust that proposition (Wright 2004: 181).

[30]We can understand Thomson's (1971) "A Defense of Abortion" as taking this kind of argumentative strategy. She grants the premise that the fetus is a person with a right to life from the moment of conception. By doing so, Thomson does not call into question religious commitments that support thinking God implants a soul at the moment of conception. Thomson goes on to present arguments for the permissibility of abortion that are compatible with this religious commitment.

[31]The indirect method just envisioned accords with some of Pritchard's own take on deep disagreement. Pritchard recommends addressing hinge disagreements by finding common ground, and working from there to gradually shift the hinge commitments of one's interlocutor in a 'side-on' fashion. Where Pritchard maintains that disagreement *immediately* concerning hinge commitments can be *indirectly* rationally resolved in a side-on way, what I am considering here is how *mediate* hinge disagreement might be indirectly rationally responsive. In a Rawlsian spirit, then, the idea is that we can address disagreement based in a downstream conflict in hinge commitment by appeal to reasons which a reasonable interlocutor *could* accept. I am less optimistic about Pritchard's own take on the prospects for indirect rational persuasion concerning immediate hinge disagreement. Though hinge commitments can change as one's surrounding worldview changes, this sort of change seems likely to involve a radical gestalt shift, or a conversion process – not the sort of thing that is done piecemeal through indirect rational persuasion.

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to disagreement? Intuitively, it seems that the intellectually humble response to peer disagreement is to at least lower one's initial confidence, and this seems generally to be epistemically valuable because it takes proper account of the potential evidence possessed by one's interlocutor. But when it comes to hinge commitments, one cannot exhibit intellectual humility in this way; one cannot rationally lower one's confidence in one's hinge. And as a result, the potential evidence of one's interlocutor can seemingly have no bearing on one's view. So, on this intuitive understanding of the intellectually humble response to disagreement, we cannot have intellectual humility as a response to hinge disagreement.

The intuitive understanding just canvassed has some support in the literature. It is sometimes simply assumed that the intellectually humble response to disclosed peer disagreement is the one advanced by conciliatory views as also being the rational response: the rational response to peer disagreement, *and* the intellectually humble response, is to at least lower one's confidence in the initial belief. See for instance, Carter and Pritchard (2016): "A widely shared insight in the disagreement literature is that, in the face of a disagreement with a recognised epistemic peer (such as between Hawking and Penrose), the epistemically virtuous agent should adopt a stance of *intellectual humility – that is, a stance where one exhibits some measure of epistemic deference by reducing one's initial confidence in the matter of contention*" (2016: 3, emphasis added, footnote omitted).[32]

This assumption is not unreasonable, at least concerning shallow peer disagreements. After all, when faced with a disagreement with someone whom you take to be your epistemic peer regarding the topic of disagreement, it is a mark of intellectual *arrogance* to simply hold to one's belief. Such a response also appears to be *irrational* (or so conciliatory views claim), as the peer disagreement itself provides reason for you to adjust your doxastic state. The very thing that makes this response irrational also explains why it is arrogant; one would be dismissing the potential evidence of one's peer for *no good reason*, where this exhibits an undue or improper confidence in one's own epistemic position in relation to one's peer.

Another reason for thinking intellectual humility is valuable for responding to disagreement is offered by Lynch (2018). Lynch argues that having an attitude of intellectual *arrogance*, an attitude opposed to intellectual humility, is not only epistemically harmful to the arrogant agent, but is further harmful to the reasonableness of public discourse, and thus to democracy (as a space of reasons) (2018: 290). Intellectual humility then is epistemically valuable insofar as possessing intellectual humility will prevent the harms that intellectual arrogance causes. One of the reasons Lynch offers for thinking that intellectual arrogance is harmful for public discourse is captured in the following line of thought: to be epistemically arrogant is to think that your worldview is not open to improvement by the evidence or experience of others. Insofar as you have this attitude towards your worldview, you will view yourself as being in a different epistemic playing field compared with others (this is an other-regarding aspect of arrogance); you think that you know, while others are ignorant. As a result, you will not see yourself as epistemically accountable to others; you would see yourself as exempt from demands for reasons. Not only is this harmful for public discourse, it also fails to show proper respect for others as epistemic agents (Lynch 2018: 291–3).

So, intellectual humility appears to be valuable (all else being equal) for navigating disagreement both because it is the rational response to disagreement – intellectual

[32]Though Allan Hazlett (2012) offers an alternative; one can exhibit intellectual humility by adjusting one's higher-order attitude towards one's initial belief, while still retaining that belief. As we shall see, my own view is similar to Hazlett's.

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humility is epistemically valuable for the humble agent – and also because it is necessary for reasonable public discourse – it is required for fulfilling our epistemic duties to others. But if the hinge epistemic explanation of deep disagreement is correct, it cannot be rational for one to adjust one's confidence in one's hinge commitments when one discovers that others disagree with that hinge. This is because the hinge is not responsive to rational evaluation. It cannot be that one ought, rationally, to adjust one's attitude towards a proposition when the very nature of that attitude is such that it does not respond to reasons in the first place.

The problem can also be illustrated by considering Lynch's argument for the value of intellectual humility. Intellectual arrogance, according to Lynch, involves taking the attitude that one's worldview is not open to improvement by the evidence or experience of others. But it is hard to see how we could *fail* to have such an attitude of arrogance towards our hinge commitments. To the extent that you see your worldview as open to improvement, it seems, you will have to be less than absolutely certain it is correct.

Thus, even if intellectual humility is a valuable attitude for navigating peer disagreement, it apparently cannot be the appropriate attitude to have in deep disagreements explained by hinge disagreement, because it is not an attitude one *can* have with regard to hinge commitments. Given that deep disagreements are characterized by a pressure towards resolution, what methods are left to us? One might begin to worry that the only options here are morally and epistemically problematic; violence, propaganda, manipulation, and coercion come to mind. Wittgenstein suggests we think of what happens when missionaries convert natives, but this does not bring much comfort when we reflect on some of the practices in which missionaries have engaged in the name of their cause.[33]

4.1. Intellectual humility for hinge commitment

If there are disagreements that directly concern incompatible hinge commitments held by the disputants, doesn't that mean there just can be no *rational* way for the discussion to continue? In that case, isn't persuasion by non-rational means the best we can hope for? In this section I will suggest that we can identify a kind of intellectual humility it is possible to have even concerning our hinge commitments that is valuable for navigating deep disagreement in a constructive, even if non-rational manner.

The attitude of intellectual humility it is appropriate to have towards one's hinge commitments involves:

> *Intellectual Humility for Hinge Commitment*: (i) a self-awareness of one's hinge commitments *as hinge commitments*, and so as *not* being beliefs enjoying reflectively accessible epistemic justification, or even epistemic entitlement, and (ii) a willingness to stand by one's hinge commitments, in the sense of taking proper responsibility for the hinge commitments one has.

Regarding (i): I do not see this as requiring that ordinary folks be aware of the details of hinge epistemology. Rather, realizing the rational groundlessness of certain of one's commitments is a way of owning the fact that one has not 'earned' those commitments

[33]"Where two principles really do meet which cannot be reconciled with each other, then each man declares the other a fool and a heretic. I said I would 'combat' the other man – but wouldn't I give him *reasons*? Certainly; but how far do they go? At the end of reasons come *persuasion*. (Think what happens when missionaries convert natives)" (Wittgenstein 1969: passages 611–12).

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through intellectual effort (it is thus a way of owning one's limitations).[34] This recognizes the Wittgensteinian point that it is part of becoming a member of a community of epistemic agents that we must 'swallow down' some propositions as being beyond doubt without argument.[35] A failure to recognize the rational groundlessness of certain of one's commitments amounts to intellectual *hubris*. This may provide a possible interpretation for why Wittgenstein admonishes Moore for asserting that he *knows* he has hands (1969: passage 151); in so doing, Moore presents himself as being in a position to demonstrate that this is so – Moore exhibits intellectual hubris. In this sense, arguments for radical skepticism can be seen as an important corrective, and are properly regarded as humbling.[36]

But in considering arguments for radical skepticism, we should not become overly modest in our estimation of our epistemic positions. An acceptance of radical skepticism in this regard would amount to an intellectual *meekness*. The radical skeptic underestimates her epistemic abilities to such an extent that she claims no knowledge whatsoever; in attempting to doubt even that she has hands, she attempts to disavow any intellectual commitments at all. This is why the proper attitude towards our hinge commitments will involve (ii) – taking responsibility for the hinge commitments one in fact has. As I understand it, 'standing by' one's hinge commitments means recognizing their subjective certainty and continuing to endorse them. In more mundane contexts, where radical skepticism is not under discussion, taking proper responsibility for one's hinge commitments might include not concealing those commitments (including in self-deception).[37] One cannot exhibit humility concerning one's convictions if one pretends not to have any. In the context of deep disagreements, one way to *fail* to take responsibility for one's hinge commitment is to (misleadingly) present that commitment as though it were an ordinary (if firmly held) belief, in principle open to rational revision. This can occur when one engages in a dialogue concerning whether p while concealing the fact that the question of whether p is not genuinely open for one – this would be a bad faith effort at dialogue.

The self-awareness involved in the intellectually humble attitude to take towards one's hinge commitments is (following Whitcomb *et al.* 2017) a mean between oblivi-

[34]In this way, the view fits with Whitcomb *et al.*'s (2017) view of intellectual humility as appropriate awareness and taking ownership of one's cognitive limitations. But the limitation here is not merely a contingent limit; it is not as if we could persuade everyone if only we were excellent debaters. Rather, this is a principled limit.

[35]Wittgenstein (1969: passage 143): "I am told, for example, that someone climbed this mountain many years ago. Do I always enquire into the reliability of the teller of this story, and whether the mountain did exist years ago? A child learns there are reliable and unreliable informants much later than it learns facts which are told it. It doesn't learn at all that that mountain has existed for a long time: that is, the question whether it is so doesn't arise at all. It swallows this consequence down, so to speak, together with what it learns".

[36]In this respect, the attitude of intellectual humility I identify is similar to Hazlett's (2012), since on his view, one can exhibit intellectual humility regarding one's own knowledge by taking up a higher-order attitude of agnosticism about *whether* one knows – one can have knowledge and yet suspend judgment about whether one does have that knowledge. Similarly, I am maintaining, we can recognize the rational groundlessness of certain of our beliefs, without thereby being rationally compelled to abandon those beliefs.

[37]This relates to Pritchard's discussion of 'dialectical posturing' (2017: 27–9). A dialectical poseur engages in a debate inauthentically. "By this I mean that there are parties to the dispute who, far from expressing their genuine convictions about the subject matter at hand, are instead merely playing a certain role, wearing a dialectical hat, if you will" (27) – whether they consciously mean to or not, I would add. Someone who asserts (and so presents themselves as knowing) that there is no such thing as knowledge is a dialectical poseur, in this sense.

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ousness and obsessiveness over one's limitations. Obliviousness to one's hinges would amount to a failure to recognize where one's reasons give out. The oblivious person will continue to offer reasons that do not really have any bearing on their own commitment; the provided reasons would be a post-hoc rationalization of the commitment. Obsessiveness over one's limitations may lead one to think reasons have given out before they really have; the obsessive would be so uncertain of his own ability to present his authentic reasons for belief, that he will likely avoid argument too often.

4.2. Resolving deep disagreement

How might this understanding of intellectual humility with regard to hinge commitments help when it comes to disagreements immediately concerning those hinges? As already discussed, resolving such disagreements will not proceed by an exchange of reasons. So how are we to proceed?

When it comes to *mediate* hinge disagreements, being appropriately aware of one's own hinge commitments and the hinge commitments of others can help lead to an indirect rational resolution. When interlocutors can identify their respective hinge commitments, they can set limits on their conversation so as to make it more intellectually fruitful. One cannot in good faith enter into discussion over whether p when one holds p as a hinge commitment, because entering into such a discussion is to present oneself as open to defending p with one's reasons and to rejecting p in response to the reasons offered by one's interlocutors, but one is not open in this way regarding one's hinges. Alex would thus be a responsible interlocutor in explicitly making her religious hinge commitment that God implants a soul at conception 'out of bounds' in her discussions with Billie. And Billie, likewise, engages in discussion concerning the permissibility of abortion responsibly by not challenging Alex's religious hinge, even if he may think it is false. In sum: with regard to the hinge commitments of others, proper awareness can alert us to which arguments *not* to engage in. With regard to our *own* convictions, proper awareness of their rational groundlessness will alert us to where our reasons will give out, and so when to cease offering arguments.

When it comes to *immediate* hinge commitments, indirect rational resolution is off the table (as discussed in section 3.2). However, intellectual humility is still valuable for addressing such disagreements. Intellectual humility is valuable in confronting *im*mediate hinge disagreement because it allows us to see that *no* line of rational argument will be effective. Without the relevant humility, disputants may continue to engage in argument, or cease arguing out frustration, because they each take their interlocutor to *just not get it*. We can argue (online or off) with the Derek Blacks of the world all we want, but it would be naive to think that reasoned argument alone will be very effective. This position is compatible with there still being a felt rational pressure towards substantive consensus (this is part of taking proper responsibility for one's hinge commitments); we should take it to be possible to *know* that white nationalist ideals are false and pernicious, and so we should not be content to 'agree to disagree' with white nationalists and leave it at that.

At first, this position may seem to amount to an endorsement of *dogmatism*, rather than an articulation of a peculiar kind of intellectual humility. After all, my account maintains that even after we recognize that some of our commitments are rationally groundless, we may nevertheless continue to adhere to those commitments, and indeed hold them to a maximum degree of certainty.[38] However, I think the attitude I have recommended we take towards our hinge commitments is properly described as one

[38]I thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this worry.

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of intellectual humility, rather than dogmatism, for the following two reasons. First, 'dogmatism' carries with it the implication that the dogmatic are *culpably* unresponsive to reasons: the dogmatic *improperly* refuse to believe in accordance with their evidence. It strikes me that one can only refuse to do what one (thinks one) can do. We cannot willingly lower our confidence in our hinge commitments, even in the face of purported counter-evidence – thus, we cannot improperly refuse to do so. We are epistemically innocent with respect to the rational non-responsiveness of our hinge commitments. Second, the attitude of humility I identify – that of realizing the groundlessness of the hinge commitments – *is* under the voluntary control of agents. This attitude reflects the features of other general accounts of intellectual humility, including taking ownership of one's cognitive limitations, as discussed earlier (Whitcomb *et al.* 2017). When it comes to hinge disagreement, I suggest that one can exhibit intellectual humility by doing what it takes to recognize a limit on one's dialectical position. Eventually, reasons give out, and when they do, we should see that we are all equals in the groundlessness of our believing. The first step towards addressing immediate hinge disagreement, then, is realizing that one's abilities to logically debate the matter are sometimes beside the point and pursuing such debate will only increase tensions.[39]

If reasoned debate is of no avail, how *ought* we respond to direct hinge disagreement? Here I think we can learn from the conversion experience of Derek Black. Black's conversion away from white nationalism was arguably sparked by his developing a friendship with Matthew Stevenson, who had invited Black to his weekly Shabbat dinners. Stevenson's approach here seems to me an instance of an (initially) non-rational, but also non-manipulative method for attempting to change the hinge commitment of another. "Matthew decided his best chance to affect Derek's thinking was not to ignore him or confront him, but simply to include him. 'Maybe he'd never spent time with a Jewish person before,' Matthew remembered thinking." Developing a friendship with the attendees of Stevenson's dinners seems to have been a deciding factor in Blacks eventual repudiation of white nationalism, although eventually discussions of race were involved as well. Eventually, "[Black] decided early in his final year at New College to finally respond on the forum. He wanted his friends on campus to feel comfortable, even if he still believed some of their homelands were elsewhere. He sat at a coffee shop and began writing his post, softening his ideology with each successive draft." Finally, Black would go on to fully reject his previous views. The key to Stevenson's strategy, I suggest, was that rather than immediately engaging in reasoned argument with Black, Stevenson sought first simply to include Black in a community.

But of course, this non-rational strategy will only be effective in changing the hinge commitments of those who are open, at least to some degree, to sharing experiences and building relationships with those with whom they have significant differences; it is easy to imagine Black simply rejecting Stevenson's initial invitation. Lynch understands intellectual humility as an attitude of seeing aspects of one's worldview as open to improvement by the evidence and experiences of others (2018). When it comes to hinge commitments, reasons give out, and so one perhaps cannot view them as open to improvement by the *evidence* of others. Nevertheless, *if* one sees one's worldview at least as open to improvement by the *experiences* of others – and by sharing

[39]Still, it might be thought strange to describe an attitude of total certainty as also somehow exhibiting intellectual humility. I do not think the view is so strange though, once we have clarified the target of the attitude of humility. The idea is that humility for a hinge commitment to p is an attitude of humility concerning the rational standing of the commitment to p, rather than an attitude of intellectual humility regarding p itself. This is roughly along the lines of Hazlett's proposal about intellectual humility as a higher-order attitude (2012). Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pressing me on this point.

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experiences with others – then one's hinge commitments will be open to change. Being intellectually humble in the right way about our firmest convictions makes possible a constructive albeit non-rational strategy for addressing deep disagreement.

5. Concluding remarks

Opening oneself up to the experiences (if not the evidence) of others, and sharing one's experiences with others, is a start to resolving immediate deep disagreement. This strategy involves influencing the hinge commitments of others. However, this strategy is not without risks and drawbacks. First, there is a risk involved, in that by developing a connection with those whom one disagrees in hinge commitment, one opens up the possibility that one's *own* hinge commitments will shift. This is not a bad thing in itself, though; if we never opened ourselves up to our convictions shifting in this way, how would our worldviews ever improve? Opening oneself up is the mature way to relate to one's worldview.[40] Nevertheless, with opening oneself up to the experiences of others comes the risk that one's one worldview may shift for the worse.

Second, such a strategy requires significant personal investment; reaching out to develop relationships and share experiences with those whose views one might find pernicious takes time and energy. These concerns may explain why it is we sometimes judge that seeking to resolve certain conflicts is 'just not worth it', and that it is better not to engage. But at the same time, deciding that it is 'not worth it' to build connections and shared experiences with those whom we disagree with is also a way of excluding those people from our communities. Insofar as a democratic society is an ideal, we may need to make a commitment to forging and maintaining relationships that reach across deep disagreements. I leave it as a question for further consideration to what extent we might have an obligation to change the views of those who we regard as having morally pernicious hinge commitments.[41]

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[40]As Halteman and Halteman Zwart (2016) remind us, according to Gadamer (1992), the hermeneutically experienced person is disposed to seek out experiences which may challenge and bring to consciousness her assumptions. "Gadamer is not claiming that experienced people are bereft of (even strong) commitments; his point is that their awareness of the influence of hidden prejudices keeps these from acting as immovable obstacles to learning from assumption-challenging experiences" (2016: note 12).

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