UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO CEARÁ

INSTITUTO DE CULTURA E ARTE

PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM FILOSOFIA

OCTAVIO ANDRÉS GARCÍA AGUILAR

ON PHILOSOPHY: DISAGREEMENT, SKEPTICISM, AND NORMATIVITY

FORTALEZA
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Dissertação apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Filosofia da Universidade Federal do Ceará, linha de Pesquisa Filosofia da Linguagem e do Conhecimento como requisito parcial à obtenção do título de Mestre em Filosofia. Área de concentração: Filosofia.

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Para Manuel;

Para Juliana

AGRADECIMENTOS

"ACIMA DA VERDADE estão os deuses. A nossa ciência é uma falhada cópia da certeza com que eles sabem que há o Universo." (Ricardo Reis)

RESUMO

A questão sobre a natureza da filosofia é disputada hoje em dia. O problema surge da proposta de Kant sobre filosofia em seu *Crítica da Razão Pura*, que exige a divisão de trabalho entre os da ciência e da filosofia. Alguns filósofos contemporâneos rejeitam a proposta kantiana sobre a filosofia e afirmam que o lugar da filosofia está entre as ciências empíricas. Esse cenário tem criado uma tensão entre as propostas da filosofia que rejeitam o status da filosofia como ciência e as propostas que mantêm o status da filosofia como ciência. Esse cenário torna relevante a questão sobre a natureza da filosofia. Minha tese principal é que a filosofia não se trata de obter conhecimento filosófico, mas de avaliar e criar sistemas de regras que eu chamo de leis filosóficas. Para apoiar isso, proponho uma maneira alternativa de lidar com a investigação sobre a natureza da filosofia. Rejeito a pergunta "o que x é?" pois é uma pergunta malformada. Argumento que se deve começar com a pergunta "qual é o papel das proposições filosóficas?". Posteriormente, identificarei duas visões predominantes do papel cognitivo da filosofia: cognitivismo fraco e cognitivismo forte. O primeiro aceita o naturalismo ontológico, mas rejeita o naturalismo metodológico; o último aceita o naturalismo ontológico e o naturalismo metodológico. No entanto, se mostrará que o cognitivismo fraco é mais semelhante à nossa prática filosófica. Porém, se argumentará contra a ideia de que proposições filosóficas têm um papel cognitivo, uma vez que as condições particulares do desacordo filosófico produzem um veredicto cético sobre o papel cognitivo das proposições filosóficas. Por fim, mostrarei maneiras alternativas ao papel cognitivo das proposições filosóficas que mantem nossa prática filosófica de trocar de razões, argumentando que as proposições filosóficas aporéticas requerem criar leis filosóficas.

Palavras-chave: Metafilosofia. Ceticismo. Desacordo Filosófico. Normatividade.

ABSTRACT

The question about the nature of philosophy is lively contested nowadays. The problem emerges from Kant's account on philosophy in his *Critic of Pure Reason* that requires labor division among philosophy and science aims. Some contemporary philosophers reject the kantian account on philosophy and claim that philosophy place is among the empirical sciences. This scenario has created a tension between accounts on philosophy that reject the status of philosophy as a science and accounts on philosophy that maintain the status of philosophy as a science. This scenario makes the question about the nature of philosophy relevant. My main thesis is that philosophy is not about attaining philosophical knowledge about the world but the assessing and creating of systems of rules that I call philosophical laws. To support this, I adopt an alternative approach to cope with the inquiry about the nature of philosophy. I reject the 'what is x?' question because is an ill-formed question. I argue that one should start with the question 'what is the role of philosophical propositions?'. Subsequently, I will identify two prevalent views on the cognitive role of philosophy: weak cognitivism and strong cognitivism. The first one accepts ontological naturalism but rejects methodological naturalism, the latter accepts ontological naturalism and methodological naturalism. However, I will show that weak cognitivism is more akin with our philosophical practice. Yet, I will argue against the idea that philosophical propositions have a cognitive role since the particular conditions of philosophical disagreement yield a skeptical verdict about the cognitive role of philosophical propositions. Finally, I will posit an alternative to the cognitive role of philosophical propositions that keeps our philosophical practice of exchanging reasons by means of arguing that aporetic philosophical propositions requires us to create philosophical laws.

Keywords: Metaphilosophy. Skepticism. Philosophical Disagreement. Normativity.

SUMÁRIO

1 INTRODUCTION

Philosophy has been many things during its history: a way of life, a therapy, the Queen of Sciences, *ancilla theologiae*, a science, the Tribunal of Reason, an appendix of science, etc. Nevertheless, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* started an erosion process of the scientific role that philosophy had during the Enlightenment from Descartes to Hume by separating philosophy from science and giving to philosophy a specific role as foundational to sciences. Nowadays, Kant's impact has faded and philosophers as Papineau (2009), McGinn (2015), Williamson (2007), Kornblith (2007) argue that philosophy is a science in its own right. So, philosophers at present discuss lively about the nature of philosophy as the post-Kantian traditional role of philosophy loses its force.

From what I said above, it is clear that the history of philosophy affects what roles we attribute to philosophy. And these roles affect what we think is the aim, the object, and the method of philosophy. The philosophers above mentioned believe that the aim of philosophy is to attain knowledge, meanwhile others believe that the aim of philosophy is to cure the disease of asking philosophical questions as Hacker (2009). Whatever be the case, these aims also affect our notions of the object and method of philosophy. The dispute above the aims of philosophy implies a dispute about the object of philosophy and how we do philosophy. These conditions create a burst of metaphilosophical[1] views. Nevertheless, the idea that philosophy is a kind of science is the more common among philosophers nowadays[2].

However, a new threat is on the horizon for the idea that philosophy is a kind of science: the disagreement challenge. Philosophers as Beebee (2018), Kelly (2005), Kelly (2011), Lackey (2010), Christensen (2007), Matheson (2015), Frances (2017) are studying the epistemic significance of disagreement to state how we should proceed when coping with disagreement. General epistemological theories of disagreement apply to philosophical disagreement since

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[1] From now on, I will understand metaphilosophy as a subsection of philosophy that reflects on philosophy in general. I am not claiming that metaphilosophy is a higher-level philosophy nor that metaphilosophy is a discipline in its own right.

[2] Bourget and Chalmers (2013, p. 475-476) survey shows that philosophers mostly lean toward the acceptance of *a priori* knowledge and naturalism about philosophy. So, if we take *a priori* knowledge to be the paradigmatic mode of philosophical knowledge and take naturalism to be the view that states that philosophy is to be closer to sciences, then one may claim that many philosophers believe that philosophy is a kind of *a priori* science. Even if the validity of the results of such survey are contentious, they are the best information we have on philosophers' beliefs.

philosophical disagreement complies with the general conditions of disagreement as that disagreement is among epistemic peers that have evidence of the same quality and are equally competent when assessing such evidence. The main justification for this application relies on the rampant disagreement that exists and has existed among philosophers since the conception of philosophy in Ancient Greece. Many philosophers as Beebee (2018), Feldman (2006), Fumerton (2010), van Inwagen (2010), Machery (2017), Kornblith (2010) nowadays argue that philosophical knowledge is not attainable because of the negative epistemic import of philosophical disagreement. I believe that those philosophers that deny the possibility of attaining philosophical knowledge are right.

But this scenario requires us to simply stop doing philosophy? Should philosophers stop writing books or papers? What is left of philosophy if we abandon the possibility of attaining philosophical knowledge? Why argue in favor or against a philosophical thesis? This cluster of questions reasonably comes to mind to anyone who reads the last paragraphs. Yet, those questions rely on the assumption that the one and only aim of philosophy is to attain philosophical knowledge. I envision an alternative: my main thesis is that philosophy aim is not to attain philosophical knowledge, but to create laws and assess them. Philosophical laws are system of rules that set constraints on possible worlds in order to make sense of tension between philosophical propositions that have the same normative force. So, philosophy is not about describing the world, but is about creating a world that makes sense. If we abandon the assumption that philosophy end is to attain knowledge, then the threat of disagreement disappears since philosophy is not about who is entitled with truth, but what law makes more sense of the world.

My aim with this dissertation is not to put philosophy on the path of sciences, but to understand the idiosyncratic path of philosophy.

To achieve this, first I am going to show why the question about the nature of philosophy is important to understand our concept and professional practice of philosophy[3]. Second, I am going to analyze the common sense question that comes to one's mind when inquiring the nature of

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[3] From now on, whenever I use the term "actual practice of philosophy" or "philosophical practice", I am thinking about the practice of exchanging reasons in philosophy. This is valid for every strain and philosophical tradition. Even if there are limiting cases in obscure or difficult passages of philosophical writing, those limiting cases are understood in terms of reasons. For it is hard to make sense of the idea of philosophy without the exchange of reasons. Even if this criterium is rather vague, it is a methodological strategy to cover philosophy as a whole.

philosophy: What is philosophy? I am going to reject such question because it is not suited to yield an informative answer for it is too general to define what could be a good answer, it deploys Meno's paradox, and it is too demanding since it requires sufficient and necessary conditions. My question is going to be about the role of philosophical propositions. Third, I am going to explore two views about the role of philosophical propositions and its assumptions on the aim, method, and object of philosophy. Fourth, I am going to outline the skeptical challenge in general and state the peculiar conditions of philosophical disagreement that make it more prone to yield skeptical consequences. Fifth, I will argue that the current theories of disagreement yield skeptic consequences when applied to philosophical disagreement. Sixth, I am going to answer to some arguments advanced against the idea that disagreement theories when applied to philosophy yield skeptical consequences about the possibility of philosophical knowledge. Finally, I am going to give an alternative answer to the disagreement problem by arguing that philosophy is not the description of the world but about the creation of philosophical rules that respond to the equal normative force of aporetic philosophical propositions.

2 CHAPTER I: ON THE QUESTION ABOUT PHILOSOPHY

2.1 Historical argument

Philosophy has been said in many ways. It is an historical fact that philosophy has played many roles through history. I think these roles had been determined by the relationship of philosophy with institutions as science, religion, and politics. In antiquity, philosophy was thought as a discipline with a strong ethical import that aimed to think of the ideal political conditions to live well. During medieval times, philosophy was the handmaiden of religion that unraveled the paradoxes of Christianity and gave theoretical grounds for Christianity's world view. More recently, empirical sciences determine the main features of philosophy. There are two basic views about the role of philosophy nowadays that we inherit from the development of empirical sciences during modernity: (a) philosophy is a science and (b) philosophy is not a science.

Still, how we came to these contradictory views requires further explanation. Descartes started a movement of secularization of philosophy. He rejected the previous scholastic tradition to construct a new philosophy based on the scientific world view. The scientific world view requires one to think by oneself and doubt about authorities. This meant the rejection of an authority driven philosophy. The authority independence allowed researchers to experiment and test other's hypothesis and required one to make one's experiments and tests replicable by others.

Consequently, much of philosophers' attention during modernity was dragged to develop a public replicable method to attain knowledge. Descartes, Berkeley Spinoza, Hobbes, Leibniz, Locke, Hume, etc. dedicated part of their inquiries to develop methods or clarify what were their methods to attain knowledge. What is more, these philosophers also reflected on the nature and limits of the knowledge yielded by such methods. During this process of methodological and epistemic awareness, science and philosophy were one and the same thing.

Nevertheless, there was a breakthrough that exposed a qualitative difference between both disciplines. Newton achieved to describe and predict with mathematical methods the movement of virtually any object. That is, the universe became a determined mechanism ruled by mathematical equations, and the explicative power of such mathematical tools rendered much of philosophy useless. Philosophy lost the race against mathematical methods to describe the natural world. Thus, philosophers had to create a task for philosophy so that philosophy could stay relevant.

Therefore, physics, the newborn science, started to differentiate from philosophy. Meanwhile, philosophy started to focus on knowledge claims analyzed as causal processes that leaded to knowledge. Locke´s and Hume´s works go in this direction and culminate in Kant's philosophy. Philosophy lost its niche as knowledge of the natural world and gained a niche as the study of knowledge claims.

Kant initiated this erosion process[4] by arguing that the role of metaphysics as the Queen of Sciences was doubtful, for metaphysic pretension of pure *a priori* investigation rendered the metaphysics a "battlefield of endless controversies" (KrV A VIII). Kant posits an alternative view of metaphysics as merely "[…] the inventory of all we possess through pure reason, ordered systematically" (KrV A XX). For Kant, philosophy is an endeavor that states the normative criteria of our theoretical reasoning, and not a theoretical cognitive endeavor to describe the world.

To support this, Kant claimed that there is no more theoretical philosophy but the one that shows our empirical knowledge limits and validity since philosophy addresses the *a priori* structures of cognition and not the *a priori* structure of reality. Under this view, philosophy is not a theory about the world, but a set of normative constraints for knowledge claims about the world (KrV AXI-AXII).

The subsequent step in the erosion process can be found in the *Tractatus Logicus Philosophicus* (TLP). Wittgenstein (2001) advances thesis which yield skeptical consequences about philosophy. For Wittgenstein (2001), "[p]hilosophy is not one of the natural sciences"; "[p]hilosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity"; and that "[t]he totality of true propositions is the whole of natural science" (TLP 4.11, 4.111, 4.112). Consequently, if philosophy is not one of the natural sciences, and the set of true propositions is equal to the set of natural sciences propositions, then no philosophical proposition is true and thus none of them can be false, assuming

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[4] I call "erosion process" to the progression in which philosophy lost its authority as the science that describes the fundamental structure of reality, and became the authority over knowledge claims. This process started with Locke's work on the causal limits of our knowledge and culminates in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* as a systematic account on the endeavor of justifying our knowledge claims. Of course, during Antiquity, skeptic philosophers stood in the way of dogmatic philosophers, yet modern philosophers' turn towards the conditions of possibility of knowledge was not developed during Antiquity since philosophers during Antiquity were concerned with knowledge claims and not with the subjective conditions of knowledge claims. Also, skeptics in Antiquity claimed that there was no substantive knowledge, yet philosophers during modernity claimed that there were limits to our knowledge. Hence, both philosophical endeavors differ greatly.

that there are philosophical propositions. Even worse, if philosophy is a mere activity, then there are no philosophical propositions, and thus, no philosophical doctrine that could be true or false.

Consequently, Wittgenstein argues that philosophy is an activity that gets rid of philosophical problems by dissolving them through the recognition of the proper logic underlying natural language (TLP 4.112). Philosophy is something we do and not something we know or say.

Other highly influential philosophers continued the trend of eroding philosophical authority to yield knowledge about the world. For instance, Carnap neglected that philosophy, more specifically metaphysics, had a cognitive role and argued that philosophy in general must be constrained to the logical analysis of language. Therefore, philosophy aims to state which sentences are meaningful to science and which are not. (CARNAP, 1935). Others have claimed, as Quine (1969), that the epistemological enterprise must be taken by empirical sciences, implying that epistemology by its own is incapable to give satisfactory answers for epistemological puzzles.

Since Kant, philosophy started to lose its univocal cognitive aim. One can see a debilitating progression of the traditional claim that philosophy attains knowledge of the basic structures of reality. While special sciences continued to gain cognitive niches that once were under philosophical competence, the univocal aim of philosophy started to get blurrier. The blurrier the aim of philosophy is, the blurrier the method and the object of philosophy are. However, the erosion process that that took from philosophy the authority to produce knowledge about the world did not completely eliminate the possibility of philosophical knowledge about the world.

The view that states that philosophy is a science started to gain supporters. Philosophers as Moore (1953) argued that philosophy can yield the more general knowledge about the world. Also, the work of Kripke (1980) revigorated the idea that philosophy can yield knowledge about the natural world by arguing that philosophers can find necessary truths about the essences of natural objects through the identification of microstructural properties or origin properties that fix their reference in all possible worlds. Finally, contemporary philosophers as McGinn (2015) and Williamson (2007) argue to support the idea that philosophy yields knowledge about the world.

As a result, one can claim that Kant's erosion process was not totally successful. And the thought that philosophy is a science or has some characteristics of sciences is again possible. The historical development outlined the tension between two views: philosophy as a science and

philosophy as anything but a science. The tension between these views became explicit, and started the contemporary proliferation of metaphilosophical views and the need of metaphilosophy as a subsection of philosophy designed to cope with this tension became highly relevant.

Also, since philosophy is a rational purposively directed endeavor, one is required to reflect about its purpose and about its purpose direction. Thus, philosophers cannot be unreflectively working under influence of blind historical forces. To be aware of the purpose and purpose direction, philosophers are required to think hard about what they are doing and where they want to direct philosophy. That is, the question about the nature of philosophy matters and matters most in order to avoid the unreflective development of philosophy by blind historical forces.

2.2   Conceptual argument

Early, I argued that philosophy is determined by its relationship with other institutions. During the historical development of philosophy, politics, science, and religion determined philosophers' ideas about philosophical practice. The difference of these ideas trough time on philosophy determines the components of our concept of philosophy (BRANDON, 2001, p. 75). Consequently, our concept of philosophy as its aim, method, and object depends on the historical development of philosophy.

As a result, the historical development of philosophy makes problematic the idea of philosophy and produces a pluralist scenario about the aim, the object, and the method of philosophy by means of the tension between the different forms that philosophy had during its historical development. Because of this pluralist scenario about the aim, object, and the method of philosophy, we require to address questions about the nature of philosophy to do better since "If philosophy misconceives what it is doing, it is likely to do worse" (WILLIAMSON, 2007, IX). Williamson´s quote is a call to inquiry on philosophy itself to have clear criteria about the aim of philosophy to reject or to accept methods available in philosophy, also to reject or to accept certain objects of inquiry as the ones that are pertinent to philosophical inquiry.

The interrelationships among aim, object and method are quite complex. Here I argue that both method and object are determined by the aim to show how doubts about the method and object of philosophy follow from the doubts we have about its aim. Since the aim fixes the object of

inquiry, if one posits that the aim of philosophy is the explanation of mental states, then one ought to study mental states as the object of inquiry to satisfy that aim. Also, the methods used to study a phenomenon depend on the object of inquiry, for instance, it is dubious that by the method of mere introspection one can yield true propositions about our cerebral structure. To hold this, one can argue as follows.

First, the object and the aim determine the method. One can use different methods to deploy an aim on an object, but one cannot modify the object and the aim, and to expect to use the same method. If one is to assess the success of a method, there is a need for criteria given by the aim and by the object. Therefore, if one deploys a repetitive action without determined aim or object, it is hard to say that the action is a method and not merely a repetitive action. For example, it is odd to say that a radar that sounds an alarm whenever an enemy plane is near has a method since it is just responding casually to an information input, even if the radar sounds its alarm because of a specific object. Rather, the application of a method requires an action with certain intention to bring to existence a determinate aim. Hence, the mere possession of an object of inquiry is necessary but not a sufficient condition to say that a method is being applied. One needs an aim. The object determines the concrete application of the method. For instance, if one is to study as object the movement of the planets, it is not recommendable to use the method offered by Descartes in his *Meditations*.

Second, the aim determines the object. One can change the object and maintain one's aim as long as the previous object and the new object of one's aim fall under the same category. For instance, if one has the aim to build, then that object one aims to build must fall under the category of spatiotemporal objects. So, if I change the object of my aim, then the new object of my aim must be an object that falls under the same category as the previous object of my aim, that of spatiotemporal objects. But the change of one's aim requires to change the category of the object. For example, it is absurd to aim to physically build a number, for it is obvious that it is not a proper object for such activity since objects that fall under the aim of building fall under the category spatiotemporal objects as houses, churches, skyscrapers, etc. In the same way, it is absurd to aim to calculate the square root of a house, since houses do not fall under the category of objects of which one can calculate square roots: numbers. Therefore, even if an aim can be applied to a variety of objects that fall under the same category, the same aim cannot be applied to objects that fall

under different categories. Changing the aim without changing the object brings about category mistakes.

Finally, the method and the object of inquiry do not determine the aim. When one fixes the aim, one determines the object and the method. For example, if building aim is to build, then it is reasonable to think that the object of building are objects which are buildable, because of the criteria given by the aim. And if building aims to build, it is reasonable to set steps guided by that aim, this is a method. One can even have an aim without clarity about the object and the method to attain that aim. But one cannot have clarity about the object and the method to attain an aim if one does not have a clear aim.

Consequently, a pluralist scenario about the aims of philosophy because of the tension between philosophy as a science view and philosophy as anything but a science view created by the historical development of philosophy generates the absence of a clear aim for philosophy. This means that also we have a pluralist scenario about the object and methods of philosophy (D´ORO; OVERGAARD, p. 1, 2017). Here the problem is not the pluralist scenario in itself, but the tension among the different proposed aims of philosophy. And the unraveled tension takes us to confusion.

As an instance of this tension between views on philosophy, let's see the discussion between Kornblith (2007) and Goldman (2007). First, Kornblith (2007, p.41) posits that philosophers should do a total revision of their appeal to intuitions in philosophical methodology since new theories about concepts recently developed by psychology reject the Classical View of concepts as a list of necessary and sufficient conditions. That is, concepts are not a list of necessary and sufficient conditions but the result of typicality effect that groups types into categories, varying in the speed of classification through salient characteristics that fall under a category. Therefore, philosophy should leave the analysis of concepts, which traditionally falls under philosophical jurisdiction, to cognitive sciences and redirect the aim of philosophy toward the empirical investigation of natural kinds like knowledge, justice, good, etc. (KORNBLITH, 2007, p. 47).

Second, Goldman (2007, p. 13-16) also calls for a more scientific epistemology by setting as the aim of philosophy the study of personal concepts. In other words, concepts which are personal mental representations of categories that can be elicited by the use of thought experiments. These are examples of how empirical sciences trump philosophers' efforts and require them to abandon areas of inquiry which once were under the jurisdiction of philosophy or require

philosophers to adopt methods of the empirical sciences. To Kornblith (2007), philosophers should abandon areas of inquiry to scientists. To Goldman (2007), philosophers should use standard scientific procedures. However, both maintain that the aim of philosophy is to attain knowledge.

Both cases show that the object determine different methods. On the one hand, Kornblith (2007) rejects the traditional philosophical methodology since concepts are psychological objects. On the other hand, Goldman (2007) maintains the usual philosophical methodology and accepts concepts as psychological entities, but urges that philosophical methodology requires adjustment to be more like scientific methodology.

The dispute among Goldman (2007) and Kornblith (2007) shows how the history of philosophy development has brought about a problematic relationship between philosophy and science. Both philosophers think that philosophy is a science, but both encounter problems to smoothly adjust their views about philosophy as a science with the traditional views on philosophical method and object. Even if the erosion process that started with Kant was not totally successful, it left us with a burden that shows itself when philosophers try to hold that philosophy is a science.

Moreover, this burden has a more concrete expression upon philosophers' professional practice. In the historical development sketched above, one can highlight that the secularization of philosophy implied that philosophy started to professionalize. That is, they gained their specialized function different from any other function within society. Before Kant, philosophers had the differentiated function within society to produce knowledge. After Kant, philosophers lost this function but gained another, that of judging the validity of claims of knowledge.

In favor of this claim, Rorty (1979, p. 132) argues that Kant's philosophy inaugurated philosophy as autonomous and qualitatively different from sciences by claiming that philosophy as epistemology offered a foundational basis to all claims of knowledge. The idea of philosophy as foundational to all knowledge produced the professionalization of the discipline, because the work of Kant put philosophy in the path of science and this path of science required to "[…] get down to the patient labor of sorting out the "given" from the "subjective additions" of the mind […]" (RORTY, 1979, p. 133-134).

Nevertheless, the erosion process started by Kant did not achieve successfully the abandonment of the possibility of philosophical knowledge. During the last fifty years, philosophers considered again the possibility to attain philosophical knowledge about the world. This tension also gets crystalized in the discussion about what problems professional philosophers should address and how they should address what they think are the central issues of philosophy.

First, some philosophers reject philosophy current features as formalization and technical terminology use. Kitcher (2011, p. 249) argues that philosophy should be "[…] making contributions to human lives […]". Thus, philosophy should stay close to the context of those human lives, assess problems that emerge within human lives, and not become an unintelligible technical language to cope with problems that do not attain or make no contribution to human lives. For Kitcher (2011, p. 211), this technification process and the departure of philosophy from what matters most in human lives comes by because

> […] the philosophical questions diminish in size, disagreement and controversy persist, new distinctions are drawn, and yet tinier issues are generated. Decomposition continues downwards, until the interested community becomes too exhausted, too small, or too tired to play the game any further.

Kitcher´s (2011) critique didn't go unnoticed. Baumann (2013, p. 583) answers that

> […] one doesn't have to admit that technical language is illegitimate. Perhaps it is necessary for other reasons? A more detailed understanding of a certain issue often forces one to use technical terms that are not, or not easily, understandable by laypersons. Does that make the use of technical jargon illegitimate?

Consequently, there is a normative dispute about what philosophical problems philosophers should assess and how we should assess them. Baumann's (2013) and Kitcher's (2011) discussion is not an abstract critique of philosophy as an intellectual discipline or a set of propositions, but a concrete critique about how philosophy as a professional endeavor should be carry out. Baumann's (2013) and Kitcher's (2011) are examples of the tension because of the historical development of philosophy, where disagreement about the aims of philosophy amounts to disagreement about how professional philosophers should address philosophical problems and which philosophical problems philosophers should recognize as relevant.

Furthermore, Kitcher (2011, p. 254) sees philosophy as "[…] a synthetic discipline, one that reflects on and responds to the state of inquiry, to the state of a variety of human social practices, and to the felt needs of individual people to make sense of the world and their place in

it". Whereas Baumann (2013, p. 586) thinks that "[p]hilosophy is, among other things, an exercise in finding an equilibrium, for instance between waffle and scholasticism. The difficulty of finding the equilibrium is a serious one […]". For Kitcher (2011), philosophy must reject some characteristics as the use of technical language in order to attain its true aim. For Baumann (2013), the use of philosophical technical language to cope with problems that are not directly related to human lives is allowed because of the aim of philosophy. So, our ideas of which is the aim of philosophy modify the characteristics of what we as philosophers should do and impact the professional ways in which we practice the discipline.

Therefore, one can interpret Kitcher (2011) as a champion of the Kantian erosion, in that he believes that philosophy has to inquire upon human beings and their problems, rather than developing technical languages to cope with phenomena external to human lives. Meanwhile, Baumann (2013) champions a view that rejects the Kantian erosion and claims that philosophy has the tools to know natural phenomena and should focus on natural phenomena. Thus, the tension created by Kant affects also the professional practice of philosophy by restraining what philosophers should address and how they should address it.

In addition, Rorty, in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979) chapter III, shows how the historical, conceptual, and professional approaches are intertwined together by arguing that our concept of philosophy as a foundational theory of knowledge for all disciplines and our professional function as a separate discipline from sciences in its own right is a product of the historical impact that had Kant's philosophy.

Rorty's (1979) remark calls to reflect on philosophy. The historical forces that shape philosophy also shape our concept of philosophy. If one is to carry out philosophy in the most conscious way, one must ask oneself the question about the nature of philosophy. On the contrary, one is condemned to carry the historical heavy burden of assumptions that make the practice of philosophy a blurry matter.

Because of the panorama above, one is required to the question about the nature of philosophy. Not because there is only a way of doing philosophy or to fix the essence of a discipline, but to explore alternative ways of doing philosophy and to assess the fruitfulness or the unfruitfulness of consequences that follow from those alternative ways of doing philosophy.

2.3 Analysis and rejection of the question "What is philosophy?"

Moore (1992, p. 33) argues that

> It appears to me that in Ethics, as in all other philosophical studies, the difficulties and disagreements, of which its history is full, are mainly due to a very simple cause: namely to the attempt to answer questions, without first discovering precisely what question it is which you desire to answer.

So, the first step in any philosophical inquiry is to discuss and clarify one's question to determine what would be a satisfactory answer. Since the question determines the relevant evidence, one is required to have a clear question in one's mind to assess the relevance of the evidence provided to support an answer for one's question (MOORE, 1992, p. 35). For instance, If I answer to the question "what is philosophy?" by using evidence from history books or sociological data, one really has in mind the question "what is the institution called "philosophy"?" Therefore, is of upmost importance, as a methodological first-step, to clarify one's philosophical questions.

Consequently, I am going to analyze the question that first comes to mind when confronting the problematic nature of philosophy. To assess the problem of what is the right aim, right method, and right object of inquiry of philosophy, one can ask "what is philosophy?". This question has the classical form "what is X?" that was used by Plato in his dialogues and remains one of the most widespread questions in philosophy. However, it is dubious that it is the right question to ask for several reasons.

First, Stroud (2001, p. 26) rejects the question "what is philosophy?" for two reasons: First, such a general question leaves indeterminate what the one who ask wants to know. Second, philosophy has been many different things and it has been conducted in many different ways. So, the question does not give enough criteria to determinate what is really being asked. For both reasons, even if the question is intelligible, it is dubious that it is useful. For instance, if one asks "what is a human being?" many answers can be given, and one does not really know if one has the right answer because there is no sufficient information in the question to determine a range of right answers. Also, this question assumes that philosophy is one static discipline with a defined essence. However, the history of philosophy speaks against this assumption.

Second, the question "what is philosophy?" appears to require one to give necessary and sufficient conditions for a human activity that is entangled with many other human activities (PLANT, 2017, p.4-5). The question is a non-starter because philosophy is easily thought as a family resemblance term which overlaps with other disciplines as arts, literature, and sciences. Nevertheless, philosophy is not any of the aforementioned (PLANT, 2017, p.5). This feature of philosophy makes difficult to discern what is and what is not philosophy. For instance, the pre-socratics did philosophy in such a variety of ways that to give sufficient and necessary conditions criteria to demarcate philosophy from other human activities seems hardly realistic (JORDAN, 1990, p. 58-59).

Third, it seems to me that the reference of the word "philosophy" in the question "What is philosophy?" is vague. With this word one refers to a corpus of tenets, like in "the philosophy of Hegel". One can also refer with this word to the whole intellectual tradition from Tales of Miletus to Derek Parfit, even if both are chronologically and theoretically extremes of the philosophical spectrum. Also, one can understand "philosophy" as referring to a group of propositions which are systematically entangled. Finally, "philosophy" can be thought to refer to an activity which is done in universities. Consequently, the vagueness of the term forces one to reject the question because it doesn't make explicit the referent of the word "philosophy". So, methodologically one should reject the question in order to clarify first which is the object that we are taking as the referent of "philosophy"

Finally, the above suggestion requires one to first clarify the referent of "philosophy" yet this clarification triggers Meno's paradox. It is well known that Socrates, in Plato´s dialogues, generally started his inquiries by the question "what is X?", being "X" any of the problematic things that baffled Socrates: beauty, knowledge, virtue, etc. But this kind of inquiry deployed by the question "what is X?" was rejected as incoherent by Meno in the *Meno*. In 79e, Socrates asks Meno "What do you and your friend say that virtue is?". And then Meno answers to Socrates: "How will you look for it, Socrates, when you do not know at all what it is? How will you aim to search for something you do not know at all? If you should meet with it, how will you know that this is the thing that you did not know?" (*Meno* 80d).

The Socratic methodology causes Meno´s paradox because of the initial question "what is X?". The paradox raises two problems. First, there is no way to start the inquiry, because one does

not know what is the thing in question, that is, one has no criteria to determine the object that one is going to investigate. Second, this question form requires one to know already the object that one is going to investigate, otherwise one is unable to recognize the correct answer since one does not have a criterion for the right answer. And if one already knows the determinations of the object of inquiry, the research is futile. The same goes to the question "What is philosophy?". On the one hand, if one does not know what philosophy is, then one cannot recognize instances of philosophy, making the question impossible to answer. On the other hand, if one already knows the determinants of philosophy, then there is no reason to ask the question.

Finally, it seems to me that the heuristic method developed by Chalmers (2011) is useful to show that the question doesn't take us anywhere as it stands. Chalmers (2011) points out that questions like "what is philosophy?' "[d]espite their traditional centrality, disputes over questions like this are particularly liable to involve verbal disputes". For Chalmers, verbal disputes are fruitless because they are not informative with respect to substantive disputes.

More specifically, Chalmers characterize verbal disputes (2011, p. 522) as:

> A dispute over S is (broadly) verbal when, for some expression T in S, the parties disagree about the meaning of T, and the dispute over S arises wholly in virtue of this disagreement regarding T.

To show that the disputes are merely verbal and therefore pointless, Chalmers offers a method and a special case of the method for questions of the form "What is X?" that is called subscript gambit. The subscript gambit goes like this:

> Suppose that two parties are arguing over the answer to "What is X?" One says, 'X is such-and-such', while the other says, 'X is so-and-so'. To apply the subscript gambit, we bar the term X and introduce two new terms X1 and X2 that are stipulated to be equivalent to the two right-hand sides. We can then ask: do the parties have nonverbal disagreements involving X1 and X2, of a sort such that resolving these disagreements will at least partly resolve the original dispute? (CHALMERS, 2011, p. 532).

Now, let us see how this method works in an instance of possible disagreement when answering the question "what is philosophy?". For example, we can take Moore´s definition of philosophy as:

> […] a general description of the *whole* of the Universe, mentioning all the most important kinds of things which we *know* to be in it, considering how far it is likely that there are in it important kinds of things which we do not absolutely *know* to be in it, and also considering the most important ways in which these various kinds of things are related to one another (MOORE, 1953, p. 1).

And also, we can take Wittgenstein's definition of philosophy (1994, TLP 4.111-4.112): "Philosophy is no one of the natural sciences" and "Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity". One can set Philosophy1 as Moore definition and set Philosophy2 as Wittgenstein definition. It is obvious that both authors are talking about different things and trying to set different referents for the word "philosophy". Both philosophers are using the same term to refer to different properties and both extract from those different properties different things that they think the term "philosophy" refers to.

Capellen (2018, p. 189) posits that the process goes like this:

> S1 thinks 'freedom' denotes property P1, thinks being P1 leads to being F, and on that basis says: 'Freedom is F', while speaker S2 thinks 'freedom' denotes property P2 and thinks being P2 leads to being not F and so says 'Freedom is not F'. It looks like they are disagreeing, but they are not.

Therefore, both philosophers, when trying to answer to the question "What is philosophy?", engage a verbal dispute, and therefore the discussion deployed by the question "What is philosophy?" is pointless due to the verbal dispute nature of the answers.

Although, the above conclusions cannot be generalized to all the disputes given about the nature of philosophy deployed by the question "what is philosophy?". One is allowed to reasonably doubt about the fruitfulness of "what is philosophy?" question. This means that the dispute over the nature of philosophy can be pointless until philosophers start to ask the right question which avoids all the problems that I have mentioned.

However, Ballantyne (2016, p. 10-11) argues that to hold that many disputes are pointless verbal disputes, one is required to show that instances of genuine disagreement are really instances verbal disagreement. One can apply Ballantyne's (2016) objection to my claim that disputes about the nature of philosophy that start with the question "what is philosophy?" are merely verbal and thus pointless, for I did not prove that all instances of what we think is genuine disagreement prompted by the question "what is philosophy?" are really verbal disagreements. Ballantyne's objection can be restated to apply to my claim as follows:

First, if one is to hold that philosophical disputes over the nature of philosophy are verbal, one also will encounter philosophers that think that it is not case that disputes over the nature of philosophy are verbal. Therefore, one gets counter evidence that goes against the belief that

disputes over the nature of philosophy are verbal. So, it is contentious that disputes over the nature of philosophy that are deployed by the question "what is philosophy?" are always merely verbal.

Second, in order to assess if it is true that disputes over the nature of philosophy are merely verbal due to the ill-formed question that starts the inquiry, one must have also a vast amount of information of every dispute about the nature of philosophy. This calls for no little effort, and it's nearly impossible to achieve.

Third, Hume's (*Enquiry*, VIII.I) argument, which states that enduring disagreement that remain undecidable is to be regarded as verbal disagreement, requires one to argue why other disagreement explanations as different bodies of evidence, difference in cognitive abilities, bias, etc. don't explain disagreement as well as the verbal dispute explanation.

For my part, I believe that Ballantyne's (2016) objections don't undermine my claim that the question "what is philosophy?" is a non-starter. First, I don't require that all the disputes over the nature of philosophy that start with "what is philosophy?" to be merely verbal. At least one case is enough to undermine the confidence that one has in the philosophical value of the question. So even if one disagrees with other philosopher as intelligent and well informed as one about the verbal nature of the dispute, it is better to avoid to address a question that has been proved to yield verbal disputes at least once than to address such a question even in face of the dubious quality of the question.

Second, I think that one is not required to prove that all debates that emerge from the question "what is philosophy?" are verbal since it is enough to show that at least one case of the question "what is philosophy?" yields an instance of verbal disagreement to reduce our confidence in the fruitfulness the question. However, one can argue that the irresoluble nature of the dispute is not because of the question itself, but because of the carelessness, bias, lack of evidence, difference of cognitive abilities, etc. of the disputants.

Even if this is the case, I think that these scenarios of carelessness, bias, or lack of evidence amplify the possibilities that possible genuine disagreement turns into verbal disagreement since philosophers can be uncaring about definitions, judge without the support of enough evidence, etc. Moreover, there are questions that are more prone to highlight bias, differences in cognitive capacities, etc. On the one hand, if the question by itself yields verbal disagreement, one has reason

to do not address such question. On the other hand, if the question is prone to unfold verbal disagreement due to philosophers' malfunction, also one has reason to not address such question since philosophers often err.

And finally, I am not appealing to time as a criterion to regard disagreement as verbal as Hume does. I am arguing that the question is not disposed to be answered in a satisfactory way because of its characteristics, even if there are different bodies of evidence, difference in cognitive abilities, bias, etc. among philosophers since the question is likely to yield verbal disputes, these possibilities of bias, difference of cognitive abilities, etc. merely amplify the philosophical danger of such a question.

For the reasons here presented, I believe that the question "what is philosophy?" is not the right question to ask when one requires to inquiry into the nature of philosophy.

2.4   A new approach to the question about the nature of philosophy[5]

Because of the rejection of the existence of necessary and sufficient conditions that apply to the term "philosophy", one should adopt what Chalmers (2011, p. 539) calls conceptual pluralism where "…there are multiple interesting concepts (corresponding to multiple interesting roles) in the vicinity of philosophical terms such as 'semantic', 'justified', 'free', and not much of substance depends on which one goes with the term". So, we should think of the concept of philosophy as picking multiple interesting properties[6] which could explain the many roles philosophy has played through history. Thus, philosophy as a concept has many properties that play different roles in human discourse.

However, one still faces the problem of clearly identify which of these roles is the object of inquiry that one has in mind when philosophizing about philosophy. Certainly, it is not the society of philosophers, which is a sociological problem, or the concept of philosophy, which Kornblith

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[5] Even if this approach is not new in general since it was used by in *Philosophical Investigations* §5, §11, etc. by Wittgenstein to address language issues, as far as I know it has not been used to inquire into the nature of philosophy. Therefore, the claim that it is a new approach is not overstated.

[6] Some properties can be more important than others. The criterion is the possibility of a given property to avoid the mayor possible quantity of problems as incoherence, contradiction, or lack of parsimony. For example, if one argues that the role of philosophy is to be nothing but a vacuous utterance is at odds with the possibility of argument or the importance that philosophy has had through the history of western civilization. Obviously, even if this property can be pick up since philosophy is an utterance, it does not amount to a property that one can hold as more important than others.

(2007) argues is the object of an inquiry in neurosciences. Thus, I posit that the object of inquiry is the total set of philosophical propositions as a property of the concept philosophy which is not psychological. This position raises two major questions: which are those philosophical propositions and how we differentiate them from other kinds of propositions?

The answer to these questions could be rejected by a *petitio principi* objection. Yet there is a set of hard problems of human life that is more radical and independent than answers to these problems. For instance, how we ought to live, what do we know, what can we hope, what there is, etc. It is not hard to imagine pre-philosophical peoples asking themselves these questions without relying on any philosophical proposition. Thus, one can answer to those hard problems by using different kinds of propositions as religious or philosophical ones. This suggests that these hard problems can be answered by different kinds of propositions. So, to determine philosophical answers to those problems, I will understand philosophical propositions as those general statements designed to cope with the hard questions of human life in a secular rational way.

Furthermore, following Chalmers, one can avoid this accusation of *petition principii* by adopting a pluralist approach and positing that our concept of philosophical proposition is a kind of concept that captures many properties that have specific roles within human discourse. To know which one is that role, one has to move from the question "What is philosophy?" to the question "What is the role of philosophical propositions in human discourse?".

If one follows this strategy, it is easy to understand the many roles that the concept of philosophical proposition has had during the history of philosophy. Also, we can choose roles which are more fruitful than others in explaining certain phenomena that emerges in the philosophical practice as disagreement.

To sum up, I argued that the history of philosophy shows us that philosophers require to understand and reflect upon the historical development of philosophy to purposively guide what matters most for philosophical inquiry. Furthermore, the historical development shapes our concept of philosophy. Therefore, the concept of philosophy is constantly changing and requires philosophers to reflect upon it to not be dragged by blind forces, but purposively direct our concept of philosophy. Because of these two reasons, I think that the question about the nature of philosophy is of the upmost importance. Nevertheless, I argued that the question about the nature of philosophy is to be analyzed in order to inquire correctly into nature of philosophy. I posited

that one should reject the question "what is philosophy?" and adopt a question about the role of philosophical propositions in our discourse.

3 CHAPTER II: ON DISAGREEMENT AND SKEPTICISM

3.1   On the cognitive role of philosophical propositions

In the last chapter, I argued that the appropriate question to make about the nature of philosophy is the question about the role of philosophical propositions in our discourse. Besides, I argued that the question about the nature of philosophy was important because historical processes affect our concept of philosophy, and these processes require philosophical reflection to make the historical development of philosophy purposively directed. To avoid reflection on philosophy, amounts to have an irrational stance towards the development of our discipline.

Also, I argued that philosophical propositions role has been in tension between the cognitive[7] and non-cognitive. Furthermore, I posited that the erosion process initiated by Kant was successful partially since renowned philosophers nowadays mostly argue that philosophy is a science by its own right. Thus, if one wants to call into question the prevailing role of philosophical propositions[8], one must call into question the cognitive role of philosophical propositions.

First of all, I shall explain what I understand by cognitivism. Cognitivism in general states that some claims can be true (SCANLON, 2014, p. 2; PARFIT, 2013, p. 266). In this case, philosophical cognitivism is the view that maintains that some philosophical claims are true. I will add to this that philosophical cognitivism requires also of epistemic justification and the attitude of belief. That is, philosophical cognitivism is an instance of justified, true, belief. Hence, philosophical cognitivism is the claim that there is philosophical knowledge. I believe that the justified, true, belief definition of knowledge is enough to describe what amounts to philosophical knowledge since epistemologists agree that a definition of knowledge at least has to be extensionally adequate and informative (RODRIGUES, 2013, p.15).

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[7] It can be claimed that there is an explanatory role different from the cognitive role as the description of reality. Brandon (2001) posits that understanding is a broadly cognitive endeavor. For Nozick (1981, p. 10), the explanatory role of philosophy is understanding that has the goal to search for harmony in front of the apparent incompatibility of one accepted claim with respect to another accepted claim. This occurs when one asks how is x possible if y. This type of question differs from scientific questions. However, it has a cognitive role. So, one can subsume Nozick's approach under the cognitive role of philosophical propositions.

[8] Even if many Wittgenstein's followers support that philosophy has a non-cognitive role, it is the case that the cognitive role of philosophy nowadays is most widely accepted among philosophers.

Of course, the claim of philosophical cognitivism is exposed to Gettier's (1963) counterexample. But I believe that Gettier's counterexample does not undermine philosophical cognitivism claim because it is hard to believe that such counterexample can apply to it[9]. First, the counterexample addresses knowledge based on empirical observation, for instance, that Jones drives a certain car, and so on. Gettier relies on the possibility of observation error to derive that one can have justified, true, belief without knowledge. Yet observation in philosophy hardly resembles this kind of empirical observation that allows Gettier's counterexample to work. So, we can say that Gettier's counterexample does not apply to philosophical cognitivism. Second, the idea that we can have a perfect definition of knowledge is excessively demanding. There is no reason to believe that there is a perfect definition of knowledge that applies to any case of knowledge, all things considered it appears that the justified, true, belief definition of knowledge is our best definition of knowledge in general (GUTTING, 2009, p. 87). In the same way, the justified, true, belief definition is our best definition of philosophical knowledge that is claimed to exist by philosophical cognitivism.

Furthermore, I am going to introduce another distinction. One can say that there is philosophical knowledge in two ways[10]: first, there is primary knowledge of the subject matter of a philosophical inquiry. For instance, knowledge about God's properties, about God's existence, about what is knowledge, about causality, etc. Second, there is secondary knowledge of the subject matter of a philosophical inquiry. For instance, one can have knowledge of the arguments, evidence, and beliefs of experts given in the debate about God's properties. In the same fashion, one can have knowledge of the arguments, evidence, and beliefs of the experts given in the debate about what is knowledge. Also, one can have knowledge of the second class, without having knowledge of the first class. I can have knowledge of the evidence, arguments, and the beliefs of the experts without forming a belief for myself about the subject matter of a philosophical enquiry. In the same way, one can have primary knowledge of the subject matter of a philosophical inquiry, without having knowledge of the arguments, evidence, and beliefs of the experts about the subject

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[9]This can be another source of skepticism about philosophy. But I will not explore this possibility here.

[10] This distinction is inspired in Goldman's (2001, p. 92) distinction between first order questions and second order questions in a domain. The first order questions are about the subject matter of a domain. The second order questions are about the arguments, evidence, and belief of philosophers about the subject matter of a domain.

matter of a philosophical inquiry. From here on, the discussion is about primary philosophical knowledge[11].

Specifically, I distinguish between **strong cognitivism** and **weak cognitivism** within the cognitive role of philosophical propositions. Strong cognitivism holds that philosophy as any other science is a naturalist cognitive endeavor and that philosophy has both empirical and *a priori* methodology. Soft cognitivism holds that philosophy is a naturalist cognitive endeavor and that such endeavor relies on general cognitive capacities and not necessarily on empirical or *a priori* methodology.

On the one hand**, strong cognitivism** is supported by McGinn (2015). For McGinn (2015, p. 91) philosophy "[…] is already a science". He supports this tenet by arguing against a misconception of science. To start with, he rejects that sciences can only be defined by being empirical because this would mean to implausibly neglect the science status to mathematics. So, even if sciences as logic or mathematics structure themselves as normative claims that constrain their internal relationships, they cannot be denied the status of sciences without it being outrageous. Also, the non-empirical character that makes philosophy an ampliative science in Kantian sense does not disproves philosophy scientific status since it amounts to disprove the scientific status to mathematics.

Second, McGinn (2015) rejects that sciences are exclusively observational because there are no-observational sciences as mathematics and the observational character of science is contingent and not necessary nor sufficient condition to provide science status to a discipline. For instance, if a brain in a vat were supplied with stimuli that simulate the real world, it could develop an entire science without observation of the external world. Even if one objects that there is at least one external world observation involved since the stimuli are at some point given to the brain in the vat by the scientists who manipulate it, McGinn response is that those scientists could have embedded in their DNA all the evidential knowledge that allows him to know all the data about the world innately, thus eliminating the need for external world observation.

In addition, McGinn (2015) rejects the idea that philosophy is not experimental or not empirical by arguing that philosophers use thought experiments, intuitions, and conceptual analysis

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[11] I am grateful to Ralph Leal Heck to help me see that cognitivism required further explanation.

as experimental designs. That is, conceptual analysis plays the role of a hypothesis that is tested against our intuitions that are a kind of experimental data generated by thought experiments. Therefore, there is not difference between science and philosophy since both rely on experiments, hypothesis, and experience. Hence, if philosophy is conceived as no-observational, it does not cease to be a science. Moreover, if philosophy is required to have observational criteria in order to be a science, it has it. Either way, philosophy is a science.

Finally, McGinn (2015) argues that there are other important characteristics of science that philosophy has. These shared characteristics between sciences and philosophy give to philosophy the status of science. McGinn (2015) posits that philosophy is a natural science because it copes with both things and concepts that are part of natural world. Also, when noticing that there are differences between sciences and philosophy as the nature of disagreement and the amount of progress made by each, he argues that there is indeed disagreement in sciences, and that the difference of progress between sciences and philosophy is because of the difficulty of the questions asked in philosophy.

About the knowledge generated by philosophy, McGinn (2015, p. 90) argues that it is of three types: "[…] certain important distinctions that were previously blurred and unrecognized […]"; articulation of various theoretical options available in an area, even without deciding which are the true ones; knowledge of knowledge and of ignorance, that is, the limits of knowledge.

McGinn's position entails that philosophy is ontologically naturalist and methodologically naturalist because philosophy sets constraints to objects and concepts that both are part of the natural world through the use of experimental methods as thought experiments that rely on experience to refute or verify target analysis given by construction of *a priori* hypothesis.

On the other hand, Williamson (2007) supports **weak cognitivism**. Williamson explores the cognitive role of philosophy arguing that philosophical idiosyncrasy with respect to other cognitive endeavors is to be called into question since "[w]e should expect the cognitive capacities used in philosophy to be a special case of general cognitive capacities used in ordinary life" (WILLIAMSON, 2007, p. 136). Besides, Williamson (2007, p. 162) argues that one has an unwarranted belief in a special philosophical intuition that captures metaphysical modalities since there is a lack of cognitive economy in the thought that there is a special philosophical intuition

that explains the supposedly special cognitive resources that guarantee access to metaphysical modalities.

Rather, Williamson offers an explanation of our knowledge of metaphysical modalities as an upshot of our mundane way of assessing counterfactual conditionals by positing that when one assesses the metaphysical claims of impossibility and possibility, one can reduce that process of assessment to a process in which "[…] one supposes the antecedent and develops the supposition, adding further judgments within the supposition by reasoning, offline predictive mechanisms, and other offline judgments" (WILLIAMSON, 2007, p. 154-155). This process uses imagination as a cognitive capacity in which an offline simulation is exerted. For instance, there is a supposition deployed in the counterfactual conditional "If the bush had not been there, the rock would have ended in the lake" to grasp which are the possible effects of the bush not being there when the rock falls (WILLIAMSON, 2007, p. 142). The assessment of such counterfactual conditional requires the use of offline imagination resources and not a special cognitive ability to grasp metaphysic modalities.

Furthermore, Williamson (2007) rejects the distinction between *a priori* knowledge and *a posteriori* knowledge because it lacks explanatory power to face scenarios in which the empirical data is not evidential nor just enabling. Thus, Williamson posits that there is an *armchair knowledge* "[…] in the sense of knowledge in which experience plays no strictly evidential role, while remembering that such knowledge may not fit the stereotype of the *a priori*, because the contribution of experience was far more than enabling" (WILLIAMSON, 2007, p. 169). Finally, Williamson (2007, p. 141) points out as a reason in favor of his position that the possibility of this kind of knowledge is important in a world with limited resources where one is not able to prove one and every hypothesis.

Williamson's tenets imply that philosophical propositions describe the world through metaphysical modalities. Thus, we can point out that there is a commitment with the description of the natural world through our assessing of counterfactual conditionals within philosophy. More interesting, Williamson view highlights that not only the scientific method is available for the description of the world, but also our assessing of counterfactual conditionals yields information about the world. Thus, Williamson accepts naturalism and rejects methodological naturalism. That is, even if philosophical knowledge is about some aspects of the world, this doesn't entail that

philosophy must employ scientific methods as the only way available to obtain knowledge of such aspects of the world. In this way, Williamson rejects methodological naturalism.

3.2   On the cognitive role more similar to our current philosophical practice

In order to work with the model that is more familiar to our standard philosophical practice, both of the philosophical models described above strong cognitivism and weak cognitivism will be assessed.

As we have seen above, both cognitive models are naturalist in that they both posit that philosophy yields knowledge about the natural world, but both diverge on their assumptions about methodology. The strong cognitivism is akin to methodological naturalism, meanwhile weak cognitivism posits that there is an alternative to scientific methodology used by philosophers that yields knowledge about the world. Strong cognitivism posits that philosophers produce philosophical propositions through the use of experimental designs in thought experiments, whereas weak cognitivism posits that philosophical propositions are produced by thought experiments through the assessing of counterfactual conditionals.

For instance, the hard cognitivist will treat thought experiments as cases in which one deploys an experimental design to test hypothesis against the intuitions yielded by that experimental design. For the hard cognitivist, the Gettier thought experiment is an experimental design that produces experimental data when applied to individuals by eliciting intuitions that refute or verify the *a priori* claim that justified true belief amounts to knowledge. On the contrary, the soft cognitivist rejects such an image, and posits that the Gettier thought experiment yields information about the world in which there can be an actual case of someone having a justified true belief without knowledge, and therefore it is possible that there is someone who has a justified true belief without knowledge. This refutes the claim that necessarily if someone has a justified true belief, then she has knowledge.

To discriminate which model is closer to our actual practice of philosophy, three criteria will be assessed: method, evidence, and actual world practice resemblance. I choose these three criteria since: method is a criterion for the discrimination of disciplines because it outlines the object and the aim of the discipline. Furthermore, evidence also outlines how inquiry is going to

be done, since different kinds of evidence retrieval will require different methods and different research questions. Finally, the model should resemble our traditional philosophy practice.

3.2.1   Method

McGinn's (2015) claims, as an instance of strong cognitivism, are that both empirical investigation and conceptual analysis are not mutually exclusive because concepts are part of the natural world and we can know them by using methods that inquire about the natural world. For example, the Gettier thought experiment challenges a certain conceptual analysis of our concept of knowledge. When one uses that thought experiment, one deploys an experimental design and tests the data yielded against the target analysis. The intuitions generated by such experiment are evidence about our current concept of knowledge.

Therefore, there is an experimental phase and results about the plausibility of our concepts. Consequently, there is no contradiction between the *a priori* analysis of concepts and the experimental method because the experimental method gives us the information to assess our *a priori* analysis of concepts. Also, McGinn (2015, p. 94) argues that when one is having an intuition, one can call that intuition a conceptual experience, that is, when one recognizes by introspection the correct application or misapplication of a concept, one is entitled to call that process experience since one has a conceptual experience.

Furthermore, McGinn (2015) highlights that philosophy is not a supernatural science, it copes with the natural world in the way it copes with concepts which are natural entities because they are psychological entities which one examines by causally interacting with them through conceptual analysis. This view implies that it is possible for philosophers to do philosophical research in third person perspective about concepts by third person observational conceptual analysis, surveys, and research on the neurological mechanisms underlying to concepts.

On the contrary, Williamson (2007) points out that even if conceptual and linguistic approaches are useful to philosophical research, they are not the object of philosophical inquiry. Therefore, Williamson (2007) argues that philosophers inquire about the world and not merely about concepts, although investigation about concepts can be useful to the main focus of philosophical investigations. Furthermore, Williamson's rejection of the *a priori /a posteriori* opposition renders unintelligible the distinction made by McGinn (2015) between conceptual

analysis as *a priori* construction to be tested *posteriori* by an experimental design that is given by conceptual experiences yielded through thought experiments. Also, Williamson (2007) rejects the psychologization of philosophical evidence for two reasons, first, because that is tantamount to reduce philosophy to psychology. Second, since it is hard to see how one can derive from intuitions in the sense of a psychological events the truth of a proposition.

Therefore, one can see that it is hard from the point of view of Williamson (2007) to support third person philosophical investigation about our use of concepts by means of surveys, observation, or description of the neurological mechanisms underlying our use of concepts since philosophical facts are not reducible to psychological facts. Moreover, for Williamson (2007, p.206), the target of epistemology is to inquire on the nature of knowledge and not to inquire on the concept of knowledge. We can get to know truths about knowledge by relying solely on armchair investigation.

Because of the contrast between Williamson's and McGinn's views, one can argue that both philosophers have incompatible notions of philosophical methodology which emerge from their divergence on McGinn's acceptance of methodological naturalism and Williamson's rejection of methodological naturalism.

3.2.2 Evidence

The divergence of methodological principles implies a divergence in what one takes as evidence. For McGinn (2015), evidence comes from experience in a wide sense (conceptual and perceptual). To be justified in believing a philosophical assertion, one has to verify such assertion by evidential use of experience. Whereas for Williamson (2007), evidence consists in propositions because an assertion can be consistent with evidence or be inconsistent. The relationship of inconsistence or consistence is possible because propositions have truth values. Therefore, evidence must consist in propositions and not in psychological events nor perceptual experiences in the wide sense used by McGinn (2015) (WILLIAMSON, 2007, p. 208).

Besides, evidence consists only in true propositions, because if an assertion is inconsistent with evidence, then the assertion is false. Furthermore, if true propositions constitute evidence, then deductive implication guarantees the truth of the conclusions, although evidence can entail

false conclusions in inductive reasoning. To sum up, both authors tenets require different criteria for methodology and therefore both have different criteria for what is evidence.

Consequently, even if both positions hold that philosophical propositions have a cognitive role, only one resembles most our actual philosophical practice. Furthermore, if one wants to discuss an image of philosophy, one must take on the one which resembles more our actual practice of philosophy. Between strong cognitivism and weak cognitivism, one can point out that weak cognitivism renders a more look alike image of our actual philosophical practice for three reasons.

First, its main practice consists in argumentation and not in psychological inquiries about the underlying mechanisms of our intuitions, or the phenomenological characteristics of such intuitions. Besides, even in front of the contentious claims that there is an experimental philosophy as such, one can plausibly point out that philosophers don't execute surveys in order to obtain philosophical knowledge about the world. So, although McGinn (2015) position is interesting, it does not amount to our actual philosophical practice.

Second, many philosophers have rejected the linguistic and conceptual turn (WILLIAMSON, 2007; GOLDMAN, 2007; KORNBLITH, 2007). They claim that we can have philosophical knowledge about the world that goes beyond knowledge about how our language, concepts, or cognitive capacities refer to the world. Even if McGinn (2015) argues that concepts are natural entities, he constructs them as *a priori* entities that are refuted through intuitions provided by thought experiments. Thus, the tendency goes against McGinn's (2015) proposal that philosophy has as target the knowledge of concepts by deploying thought experiments[12].

Third, the use of counter-examples yields propositional content and not psychological states that reject a philosophical analysis or hypothesis. The problem of reducing the results of such counter-examples to intuitions is that there is no clearness about the status, phenomenology, or force of such intuitions as a means to justifiably believe in the rejection or acceptance of an analysis or philosophical hypothesis (WILLIAMSON, 2007). Besides, there is a gap between psychological

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[12] One can argue against this claim that philosophers as Leucippus, Democritus, and Aristotle are strongcognitivists and at the same time philosophically paradigmatic. However, I think Leucippus and Democritus are physicists in its ancient meaning. That is, they were worried with the causal explanation of the human and natural world. Meanwhile, Aristotle addressed philosophical issues through a metaphysical framework that relied heavily on language analysis which is far from the idea that analysis of concepts can be reduced to the analysis of psychological phenomena. Therefore, nor Leucippus, nor Democritus, nor Aristotle are paradigms of strongcognitivist philosophers as McGinn (2015).

states and the truth of a proposition that is hard to overcome, so one is not warranted in believing that a psychological state gives reasons to justifiably believe a proposition.

Moreover, since antiquity the role of counterexamples relied in the possibility or the actuality of a case which is not contemplated within the philosophical analysis or the philosophical hypothesis. For instance, one can look at the methodology of the Platonic dialogues or Aristotelian treatises, and Hume's use of counterexamples in ethics. The counterexamples are possible or actual cases by which we know that a philosophical analysis or philosophical thesis is false or lacking of coverage, thus counterexamples do not rely on intuitions but in propositional content. Since propositional content can be put to work in inferences, meanwhile intuitions cannot enter in such relations because they are psychological states.

What's more, propositions that amount to evidence must consist in true propositions[13](Kvanvig, 2018, p.348). This is also valid to philosophical evidence since it consists in propositions and not in mental states as intuitions. Only in this way, philosophical evidence may enter in inference relationships with other propositions to yield justified beliefs via inductive, deductive, or abductive reasoning. If the proposition that supports a claim is false, then it cannot amount to evidence; and if the proposition that supports a claim is true, then it amounts to evidence because it supports a claim and makes one justified to believe in such claim by entering in an inferential relation with the supported claim. This explains the common talk of a philosophical theory being false, misleading, wrong, etc.

For instance, even if philosophers call philosophical theories intuitive or counter-intuitive, one can reduce the intuitiveness into consistency of a belief with our background information and counter-intuitiveness into inconsistency of a belief with our background information[14]. So, to say

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[13] Relevant evidence to gain knowledge must consist of true propositions because if one has an argument with at least one false premise, then the conclusion is false and thus it cannot amount to knowledge even if believed. So, if at least one premise is false, it is also false that it supports the conclusion, and therefore is not evidence.

[14] Long (2018) argues that one evidence is epistemically meaningfully against background information. The justification of a belief is a function of our background information. For example, if I go back in time and say to Aristotle that humans will get to the moon, he is reasonable in not believing me and rejecting the view as counter-intuitive. However, for us it is not the case not because of our knowledge that humans actually went to the moon, but our background information about physics, aeronautics, etc. Thus, our beliefs, and not only intuitions, can be either intuitive or counterintuitive. Here, background information amounts to the totality of formal and empirical sciences true enthymematic propositions that play a role in our judgments.

"I believe that belief in external world is intuitive" amounts to say "I believe that belief in external world is consistent with our background information".

Furthermore, for two reasons I think that one cannot explain the interaction between philosophy and other disciplines if philosophical evidence does not consist in propositions. First, since scientific evidence is propositional because science requires inferential reasoning, one can hardly see how philosophy is to interact with other fields as biology or physics if our philosophical evidence consists only in philosophical intuitions, or how those fields can yield evidence to philosophy as they do. Second, the public nature of scientific evidence is at odds with the claim that philosophers' intuitions use, which are private events, as evidence to their claims. Therefore, if one accepts the claim that intuitions are the only source of philosophical evidence, one cannot explain how other disciplines that use propositions as evidence interact with philosophical evidence[15] that consists in private mental events.

3.2.3 Current philosophical practice resemblance

Finally, philosophy has been done and is mostly done from a first-person perspective, even in front of the contentious claims of experimental philosophy. It is obvious that philosophical interaction is fruitful and engages the development and improvement of philosophical theories. Yet one tries to show how some evidence gives justification to one's philosophical belief in a philosophical debate, or one tries persuade others that if one is to believe in certain evidence, then one must have some philosophical belief. Both processes above don't require knowledge of the mental states of the counterpart. It suffices with sentences that convey propositions. Therefore, intuitions are superfluous during key points of philosophy.

As we have seen, evidence consist in propositions. So, when one is engaged in a philosophical debate, one expects that evidence is presented as relationship among propositions. There is no place for the third-person observation of the mental states of philosophical opponents, but the first-person assessing of one's philosophical opponent's propositions[16] and the relationships

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[15] Even if it is possible to think that philosophical evidence can be a mixture of propositions and intuitions, it is hard to see how both would interact. That is, how I can draw an inference, which relies only on propositions, with the help of an intuition which is a psychological state. Even if intuitions were constructed as containing propositional content, it is dubious that they have the same status as the propositional content of beliefs that enter into inference patterns.

[16] This does not amount to internalism. As we can see, it is required an external philosophical view output expressed by an opponent to begin the assessment of one's philosophical opponent view.

among those propositions. If we accept the reasons presented above, the picture described by Williamson is far more similar to our current practice of philosophy which relies on a kind of armchair knowledge (WILLIAMSON, 2007, p. 169). To sum up, we have that our philosophical soft cognitive practice relies on the use of argument about world's phenomena by the use of counterexamples and other methods in a first-person perspective with propositions as evidence.

3.3   On the skeptical disagreement challenge

This challenge posits that is hard to see how in front of philosophical disagreement one can hold that there are justified cognitive gains from philosophical practice. To deploy this view, first of all I am going to distinguish two forms of disagreement, then I am going to determine the nature of philosophical disagreement, after that I am going to explain the causes of such philosophical disagreement, and finally I will deploy the skeptic consequences of philosophical disagreement.

3.3.1   Two forms of disagreement

There are two forms of disagreement[17], one is verbal disagreement. As I have said above, such disagreement does not yield any substantive cognitive gain once it is settled, and there is a feeling of pointlessness once it is settled. One can argue that when verbal disagreements are settled, one knows that there was no substantive disagreement, but that renders no cognitive gain about the disputed proposition, but about the nature of the disagreement itself. The other kind of disagreement is genuine disagreement. It is characterized by the conflict amongst doxastic attitudes held by two disputants towards the same proposition (FELDMAN, 2006; MATHESON, 2015). This latter type requires at least two disputants, that both disputants have incompatible doxastic

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[17] Fogelin (1985) distinguishes between two kinds of disagreement: first, disagreements that take place when the argumentative exchange is normal. That is, disagreement that takes place when both disputants share broadly beliefs, preferences, and procedures to resolve disagreements. I will call these normal disagreements. Second, disagreements take place in abnormal contexts where there is no shared background of beliefs, preferences, nor procedures to resolve the disagreement. These are what Fogelin calls deep disagreements. Deep disagreements cannot be resolved by argument. These deep disagreements persist even when normal criticism is answered, and even in the face of facts. Also, this kind of disagreement is not common and, according to Fogelin, there are no rational procedures to their resolution. I will not address deep disagreements for philosophers do have a shared background of beliefs, preferences, and procedures to resolve disagreements, for example, virtually all philosophers accept the validity of modus ponens. Also, philosophical disagreements do not persist in the presence of facts since the majority of philosophers takes science to be an epistemic authority that yields facts. And finally, the only way to explain why philosophers keep arguing is that they believe that there are rational procedures for the resolution of disagreements. That is, philosophical disagreement is not a kind of deep disagreement, but a kind of normal disagreement. I am grateful to Marcos Da Silva Filho for pointing out the possibility of deep disagreements in philosophy.

attitudes toward the same proposition, and that truth values can be attached to the proposition. When this kind of disagreement is settled, there is a cognitive gain about the disputed proposition[18].

This general characterization of disagreement requires qualification when it comes to philosophical disagreement because philosophical disagreement is not like disagreements in science, religion, or politics (KORNBLITH, 2010). The characteristics that make philosophical disagreement peculiar also make philosophical disagreement worrisome with respect to the philosophical endeavor of attaining knowledge. Plant (2012, p. 570) posits that philosophical disagreement is: Persistent, because the historical developing of philosophy is marked by disagreement and there has not been any generalized long consensus about any philosophical substantial issue. Although more formal areas of philosophy tend to gain agreement, this is because formal aspects don't have the kind of disagreement that philosophy has. Pervasive, since no area of philosophy is exempted of disagreement, even areas that one can hope to find agreement that is general and long lasting. Besides, it is worth to mention what I said about the persistence trait, more formal areas have attained agreement because formal driven do not have the kind of disagreement philosophy has. Fundamental, for philosophers disagree and have disagreed about everything: methods, aims, object of philosophy, and philosophy in general.

However, there are philosophers that disagree about Plant's (2012) characterization of philosophical disagreement. Frances (2017) argues that there are propositions which philosophers accept unanimously. Reasons: propositions in favor or against a thesis. Basics: philosophical propositions so obvious that they are not taken as philosophical agreement. Conditionals: for example, a substance dualist would not accept the proposition "everything that is is physical" but would accept "if substance dualism is false, then everything that is is physical".

One can answer to France's (2017) objections by arguing that even if one accepts that disagreement among philosophers is an empirical acknowledgement, one is not bound to accept

[18] When genuine disagreements are settled, there is a cognitive gain because one can regard at least one of the held doxastic attitudes as false, this amounts to say that at least one of the disputants will gain a doxastic attitude that they did not have towards a proposition p. For instance, imagine two disputants, one argues that there is such a planet as Vulcano and the other argues that there is no such planet as Vulcano. By means of astronomical observations, it is settled that there is no such planet as Vulcano. This scenario shows that the disputant who argued that there was such a planet as Vulcano should reject the proposition "there is such a planet as Vulcano" and therefore gains astronomic knowledge because of a change of doxastic attitude towards the propositions "there is no such a planet as Vulcano". If the settling of the question does not give enough evidence to reject any of the claims, then one can say that the disagreement has not been properly settled. This amounts to settings which are concessive, weak, or opaque.

the intuitions of a philosophers who thinks that there is agreement[19]. One should judge the characteristics of philosophical disagreement with the support of empirical data or other means that are thought to yield reliable results. France's (2017) argument does not amount to none of these conditions. So, there are no good reasons to believe that there is agreement among philosophers about reasons, basics, and conditionals.

Furthermore, the fact that there are reasons in favor and against a thesis shows that there is disagreement because philosophers are able to entertain contrary reasons. One does not argue against tenets that are blatantly absurd. Finally, about the basics, one can argue that such basic propositions are a form of folk philosophy or pre-theoretical beliefs that are widely accepted and once they are under philosophical scrutiny, they become dubious. So, it is hard to posit that every philosopher is going to accept them when under philosophical analysis.

Another argument is presented by Frances (2017, p. 52). This argument claims that there is no such peculiarity to philosophical disagreement as Plant (2012) claims. Frances (2017) points out that there is substantive evidence that even the more successful fields of inquiry as physics have comparable rates of disagreement to the disagreement rates that exist in philosophy. Also, the author posits that there are open questions in physics with low agreement rates as in philosophy. Finally, the same author argues that it is not obvious that philosophical problems that are central in current philosophical inquiry have been addressed or even noticed in the past, therefore it is false that disagreement has been persistent since some problems rise due to historically conditions.

To answer Frances' (2017) objections, one can start by showing that there is a difference between philosophical disagreement and scientific disagreement. First, one can expect that disagreement in scientific disciplines to dissolve when scientists acquire better evidence, theories, or techniques. It is hard to support the same with respect to philosophical issues[20]. Second, the nature of science open questions and philosophy open questions is not the same. Open questions in physics can be resolved by better theories, better evidence, or better techniques. It is hard to

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[19] One can argue that some intuitions gain strength because they are shared among philosophers. So, there can be intuitions about agreement on philosophical matters. However, as we have seen above, the epistemic role of intuitions is not clear. Therefore, trying to appeal to the philosophical community intuition that there is agreement amounts to explain the unwarranted with the unwarranted. This means that even if there is a community shared intuition, it does not amount to evidence for the proposition supported by such intuition.

[20] It is hard to see how better evidence, better theories and better techniques would resolve metaphysical problems, for example, on the nature of numbers, for these better theories, techniques, and evidence surely would presuppose use of numbers. This deploys an infinite regress.

support that the same could happen in philosophical inquiry, because evidence, techniques, and theories themselves are within the scope of disagreement.

Furthermore, Floridi (2013) argues that philosophical questions yield answers that can be rationally discussed although they were answered in a satisfactory way. In contrast, logic, mathematical, and empirical questions don't have this property. It is not rational to discuss if 2+2=4 or to discuss if one was born when one has good reasons to believe in the answer. The resources that we need to fulfill the need of a philosophical question are of different kind. Finally, even if certain philosophical questions are not obviously perennial, one must consider that empirical data is not enough to answer to those questions[21]. Thus, once a problem is raised as a philosophical problem, one has reasons to be pessimistic about its resolution since it becomes persistent.

More powerful objections are raised by Cappelen (2017) against the existence of philosophical disagreement. Cappelen's (2017) main statement develops Frances' (2017) point that disagreement among philosophers is an empirical claim and that there is not much empirical work on this issue. Cappelen (2017, p.58-61) criticizes one of the few empirical works that aims to settle quantitatively by a survey the amount of disagreement that exists among philosophers(BOURGET; CHALMERS, 2014). Cappelen (2017) argues that the study uses a no-comparative notion of convergence both with respect to other disciplines and with respect to philosophy itself through time. For instance, one can believe that there were trends due to sociological factors during the historical development of philosophy. Or by comparing the amount of convergence and disagreement between philosophy and biology, maybe one can see a way in which both disciplines follow the same patterns. Yet, all this valuable information is missing in Bourget's and Chalmers' study since a comparative approach in time or with other disciplines was not carried out.

However, Cappelen (2017) argues that the notion of convergence is comparative in the sense that convergence in a discipline is measured with respect to other disciplines, this means that convergence can only be understood clearly if one compares the convergence values of one set of disciplines with the convergence values of other set of disciplines. Furthermore, Cappelen (2017) argues that it is possible that philosophers who took the survey to disagree verbally by using the same words with different meanings. If it is true that there was verbal disagreement among the

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[21] For independent reasons to this claim see Fumerton (1999).

philosophers who took the survey, then the survey does not show that there is actual disagreement, because the only genuine disagreement is substantive disagreement.

Furthermore, Cappelen (2017, p. 61-62) posits that philosophy is to be compared with disciplines as social sciences and cognitive sciences, and not with physics, because philosophy is more akin to those fields than to theoretical physics or mathematics. He also makes the bold empirical assertion that one could find the same degree of disagreement inside disciplines as economics and psychology with respect to core questions as one could find it in philosophy.

Moreover, Cappelen (2017, p. 62) argues that philosophy has an undeniable science spawning function. This is evidence of philosophical converge since consensus about the questions and development of shared methodological standards is a necessary condition for science spawning. Therefore, there are cases of convergence within philosophy that had as result the spawning of special sciences, as physics or psychology.

Finally, Cappelen (2017, p. 62-63) holds that philosophers converge on little questions, but not on the Big Questions. He argues that there is no superior value in responding the Big Questions that undermines little questions response value. When comparing philosophy with other fields of inquiry, for example, economics, Cappelen holds that there is a lack of answers to the Big Question but that little questions have been successfully addressed. Thus, philosophical convergence on little questions has an estimable cognitive value, if convergence on little questions has an estimable cognitive value in comparable disciplines. For instance, answers given to the big question about knowledge remain controversial. Yet philosophers agree on some little questions as whether knowledge is factive.

Cappelen's (2017) objections are too strong to be answered by Plant (2012). It is obvious that an unreliable intuition about the status of disagreement among philosophers supports Plant's (2012) views. Cappelen (2017) objects Plant's views arguing that there is no evidence to support the empirical claim that there is pervasive, universal, and substantial disagreement within philosophy. Therefore, we must seek another way to give support this thesis, one that relies less on empirical data and relies more on how the inner structure of philosophical inquiry yields pervasive, universal, and substantial disagreement. In order to overcome Cappelen's (2017) arguments, we are going to deploy the Evidence Neutrality argument and Aporetic Structure of Philosophy Argument.

3.3.2 Evidence Neutrality Argument

Williamson (2007, p. 210) defines the idea of Evidence Neutrality as:

> […] [W]e want evidence to play the role of neutral arbiter between rival theories […] we might hope that whether a proposition constitutes evidence is *in principle* uncontentiously decidable, in the sense that a community of inquirers can always in principle achieve common knowledge as to whether any given propositions constitutes evidence for the inquiry.

This idea is false, because

> Having good evidence for a belief does not require being able to persuade all corners […] No human beliefs pass that test. Even in principle, we cannot always decide which propositions constitute evidence prior to deciding the main philosophical issue; sometimes the latter is properly implicated in the former (WILLIAMSON, 2007, p. 212).

However, Williamson (2007) states that in some cases there is consensus about the status of evidence, otherwise the notion of evidence would be useless. Although Williamson (2007) employs the falsehood of Evidence Neutrality to show how philosophers tend to psychologize evidence and talk about intuitions, Capellen (2017) thinks this a useful notion to explain disagreement. One of the scenarios that follow from the falsehood of Evidence Neutrality is

> […] a philosophical theory T entails that every mathematical theorem is evidence, while another philosophical theory T* entails that no mathematical theorem is evidence. When proponents of T debate with proponents of T*, whether a given mathematical theorem is evidence is in principle uncontentiously decidable neither positively […] nor negatively (WILLIAMSON, 2007, p. 210).

In the example above, one can see that the falsehood of Evidence Neutrality undermines the capacity of agreement between disputants who assert a thesis since both disputants base their assertions on different evidence criteria that are required by the theories each disputant advances. In philosophy, as noted by Williamson (2007) and Cappelen (2017), the problem emerges because philosophical theories often dictate their own criteria for evidence. For instance, one can think that the disagreement between Plato and Aristotle was due to different views upon evidence criteria. Aristotle rejected what Plato thought was evidence. Thus, evidence in philosophy is usually not disentangled from philosophical theories and metaphilosophical beliefs since our approach to philosophical problems is also an approach from a particular view about what is the correct way to do philosophy and what counts as evidence to philosophy (CAPPELEN, 2017, p.64-66).

First, this line of thought supports philosophical disagreement pervasiveness since it is hard to expect agreement in the face of the falsehood of Evidence Neutrality with respect to

philosophical theories because philosophical theories offer different criteria for evidence. Second, if the conditions of falsehood of Evidence Neutrality generalize and philosophical evidence criteria in fact has this idiosyncratic way of functioning, it is hard to hold that philosophical problems will be solved, therefore the history of philosophy has been and will be the history of disagreement. Consequently, one can think of philosophical disagreement as persistent. Finally, if one has disagreement about evidence criteria, one must have some disagreement about how to get such evidence, that is, about our methods, aims, and objects of inquiry. This makes philosophy disagreement also fundamental and aggravates the disagreement force.

3.3.3 Philosophy's Aporetic Structure Argument

Rescher (2006) argues that philosophy develops from an aporetic structure in which all philosophical propositions are embedded. One does philosophy because such aporetic structure of philosophical propositions appears to us as perplexing and puzzling. Such aporetic structure amalgams propositions that are plausible when taken on their own and conflicting when in sets. That is, one is bound to make a choice with respect to such propositions, even if they are plausible in isolation, because when they appear in clusters or sets of propositions, inconsistency emerges. For instance, on the following cluster of plausible propositions offered as example by Rescher (2006, p. 19)

1. All knowledge is grounded in observation (empiricism)
2. We can only observe matters of empirical fact (positivism)
3. From empirical facts we cannot infer values (the fact-value divide)
4. Knowledge about values in possible (value cognitivism)

One can see that (1), (2) and, (3) yield a conclusion contrary to (4). If one can only observe matters of empirical fact and infer from empirical facts other empirical facts, one cannot infer values. Thus, it is hard to support that knowledge of values is possible, because of hypothesis (1). In the face of such aporia, one can adopt different strategies: (a) reject the whole cluster of propositions and be skeptical (b) reject one of the propositions in order to retain the plausibility and coherence of the remaining cluster (c) use distinctions to make cognitive damage control by weakening some of the propositions to maintain the plausibility and coherence of individual claims. One can distinguish in (1) between external observation and internal observation, external as perception of external objects and internal as perception of what matters for us. Because of this

distinction, one is able to hold that there is a sort of observational inner state that yields information about what is valuable for us. Thus, one can hold (4) but by accepting a weaker sense of (1).

Therefore, facing an aporia as the one above, Rescher (2006, p. 19) states that one is in a situation of forced choice because one must pick one of the alternatives among an inconsistent cluster of plausible propositions. But even if the choice is forced, this does not give us criteria to know which one of the plausible positions is true. Also, the fact that the choice is forced does not mean that one knows which proposition is true. However, one can posit two general rational ways to deal with the aporia clusters: do a problem-solving task by methods of cognitive damage control (reasoned and fruitful distinctions and reasoned rejections of plausible thesis) or be skeptic about the whole cluster.

Consequently, one can infer that because of the generalized aporetic structure of philosophy one can expect that disagreement among philosophers is persistent in that it is constitutive of the philosophical enterprise by means of the drive to resolve the puzzlement and confusion of having clusters of plausible philosophical propositions that are inconsistent amongst them. Also, philosophy disagreement is pervasive in that no area of philosophy is outside this aporetic structure. All areas of philosophy have different positions that are distinguished because of the tenets that they accept, the tenets that they deny, and the distinctions they make. For instance, the free will debate has plenty of positions that come by from the combination of tenets that are accepted, rejected, or distinguished. And finally, philosophical disagreement is fundamental because disagreement is about philosophical fundamental propositions.

3.3.4 Response to Cappelen

We have shown by arguments that don't rely on empirical evidence as surveys or questionnaires that there are good reasons to believe that there is disagreement among philosophers in the way characterized by Plant (2012). In order to answer to Cappelen's (2017) objections, one must note first that philosophy and social sciences are not comparable because social sciences deal with hypothetical propositions that can be true or false[22], while philosophy, as Rescher (2006) argues, deals with plausible propositions.

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[22]For example, it is well documented that diffusionist theories of cultural evolution are false.

First, I think that the disagreement among social scientist is competitive rather than parallel. This means that social science theories succeed one another[23], for example, if theory x is more explicative and parsimonious than theory y, then we have good reasons to believe theory x over theory y[24]. That is not the case in philosophy where there is parallel disagreement. That is, philosophical theories produce parallel responses to the same phenomena, so if one has three plausible philosophical propositions in isolation that are inconsistent amongst each other, one has no way of accepting the three of them without being irrational, and those plausible philosophical propositions do not succeed one another since none of them ceases to be plausible even when inconsistent among each other. Therefore, if one chooses to hold certain tenets or makes distinctions to hold all the tenets, one is deploying an exfoliative pattern. For example, one can trace back idealism and materialism to certain views in Ancient Greece, it is not the case that idealism has succeeded materialism nor the other way around since philosophy does not develop in that way.

For instance, one surely cannot be realist and antirealist at the same time and under the same aspect. These two philosophical strains have their own foliations that are developed in parallel ways, but they do not compete in the way theories compete as successive models in the natural sciences. Kant's realism rejects the possibility of knowledge of things in themselves, but does not deny the possibility that one can think of things in themselves without any determination. Meanwhile, Aristotle's realism allows one to know things in themselves. Kant's distinction between things in themselves and what appears to us tries to solve a problem raised by the tension between the idea of a mechanic determined world and the phenomenology of freedom. Thus, Kant's realism does not really compete with the Aristotle's realism, but addresses a tension that Aristotle could not have seen because of his philosophical setting[25].

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[23] Here I am not claiming that this is the only accurate model of theory substitution in sciences, I am just showing a possible model to show the contrast between philosophy and science.

[24] One can argue that anthropological theories, as cultural materialism or functionalism, survive parallelly, and that research made takes as departure point parallel theories. However, these theories can succeed one another because they can be hypothetically true. Thus, this give us criteria to choose one theory over another theory, theories in this sense are no merely plausible propositions as philosophical ones.

[25] Here I am not arguing that philosophical theories are incommensurable but that philosophical positions must be understood as a foliated development rather than a successive one. Kant´s positions is a foliation of Aristotle´s positions, not its successor. In the same way, *homo sapiens sapiens* is not a successor of *homo neanderthalensis* but a different strain of *homo habilis*.

What's more, if one accepts the falsehood of Evidence Neutrality, it is hard to say what evidence one can have to choose one philosophical theory over other philosophical theory. Consequently, one is allowed to think that philosophical disagreement diverges from social science disagreement not in degree but in kind, one being parallel and the other successive since evidence can outright play the role of neutral evidence in some instances, for example, archeological data often plays the role of an independent arbiter among archeological theories. So, there is no need of further empirical investigation, if one has good reasons to hold that the structure of philosophy and its evidential requirements yield disagreement.

Third, the claim that philosophy has an undeniable science spawning character does not prove that there is convergence since one can advance doubts about the continuity between philosophical theories and scientific theories. That is, both use different methods, answer to different questions, and have different aims, so it is quite contentious to say that Newton physics has a continuity relation with Aristotle *Physiká*. In addition, Cappelen's (2017) claims of undeniability do not explain how philosophy spawning of special sciences is possible, therefore we have no good reasons to believe that philosophy produces special sciences as physics or psychology.

Also, I think that methodological consensus is enough to give rise to a science, for theoretical claims and evidential criteria within scientific enterprises are not always clear. Since scientists regularly do not have and do not need total awareness of the theoretical claims and evidential criteria that they use. This means that philosophical speculation does not undeniably gives rise to special sciences, because philosophy does not fix methodological consensus within a discipline. Try and error methodology, or the naïve use of observation can result in methodological convergence without the intervention of philosophy. For instance, plant domestication does require of a method, do not requires of philosophy.

Fourth, philosophy little questions differ in kind with respect to social science's little questions[26]. Philosophy little questions emerge from the aporetic structure of philosophical inquiry.

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[26] Philosophy's little questions are the ones that are derived from the bigger questions as What can I know? What should I do? and What should I expect? For example, little questions about knowledge can amount to questions about the epistemic value of testimony, epistemic significance of disagreement, etc. Meanwhile, bigger questions in, for example, anthropology as What is the ultimate drive of cultural change? can be discomposed in little questions as what is the relationship between natural resources available in a region and cultural change? or do symbolic drives have the

For instance, when one is working on an aporetic cluster of propositions, one can make distinctions that will give finer-grained answers to a philosophical problem. Little questions are the point where the aporetic foliation structure ends, and therefore it appears that there is agreement about the finer-grained answers to the philosophical questions. However, finer-grained philosophy answers are still part of the aporetic structure and therefore still subject to more distinctions and more aporias in an infinite process of assessment and reassessment of philosophical tenets.

For example, Kripke's theory of direct reference caused a big turmoil in philosophy and a lot of attention was given to Kripke's account. Nevertheless, he did not have the final word about reference theories and subsequent work with more fine-grained philosophical questions and analysis has been made. Thus, philosophical little questions have wide consensus because of being the last aporetic link of a development of philosophical thought or because still there is no one who has found the aporia in finer-grained answers.

Thus, the difference between philosophical little questions with respect to social sciences little questions is of kind and the consensus about philosophical little questions is merely accidental because there is no one yet that has challenged those finer-grained answers, or the answers are so sound that no one yet has found a way to break the apparent equilibrium between the plausible philosophical propositions.

To sum up, two conditions of philosophy that yield its controversial nature and prevents the rise of wide consensus defeat Cappelen's (2017) arguments against the existence of disagreement. One specific form of such disagreement in philosophical matters is peer disagreement.

3.4   On peer disagreement

Plant (2012, p. 571), quoting Johnstone (1954), and Kornblith (2010), argues that philosophical disagreement is specific because it occurs as *faultless disagreement*, that is, disagreement where understanding, knowledge, awareness of relevant evidence, and expertise are evenly distributed between the disputants. This kind of disagreement does not go away just by arguing over the same issues in order to settle the issues that bring on the disagreement.

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same force as material drives for cultural change? It is clear that the kind of questions we are asking and the resources needed for answering them are quite different.

Consequently, one cannot appeal to logical error, lack of evidence, or lack of expertise as disagreement causes.

The more relevant example is that of Van Inwagen and David Lewis disagreement, both important philosophers in the analytic tradition, but opposed in several central issues, for example, the compatibility between the laws of nature and free will. Because of peer disagreement, one has the vague intuition that there are reasons to be skeptic if two major philosophers cannot achieve consensus about issues so substantive as the compatibility of free will with the laws of nature. But a hunch is not enough, there is need to explain the epistemic significance of disagreement to show in full length its skeptical consequences.

To explain the epistemic significance of disagreement, Matheson (2015, p. 21-22) argues that symmetry among epistemic peers in disagreement has two essential aspects: Symmetry with respect to the epistemic virtues and symmetry with respect to evidence access, that is, both peers must have access to an excellent evidential corpus, but this doesn't mean that they must have the same evidential corpus. Moreover, there must exist symmetry with respect to evidence processing, in other words, respect to how good are peers at processing evidence.

Furthermore, the evidence given to break the disagreement symmetry cannot be evidence which is currently part of the disagreement, it must be evidence that is independent of the evidence that is at stake in the disagreement. Finally, first person access to our own evidence does not give privileged access to any sort of evidence. Between peers there is full disclosure. Thus, one can define an epistemic peer by the following formula: "S1 and S2 are epistemic peers regarding p at t just in case S1 and S2 are in an equally good epistemic positions regarding p at t (where one´s epistemic position is determined by one´s evidence and one´s ability to process it well)" (MATHESON, 2015, p. 24).

Now let us explain why epistemic significant disagreement between peers requires symmetry between the disputants about their evidence and assessing of proposition p. For if symmetry is broken, then there is no peerhood in the disagreement, since the deference of a disputant who is in a worse epistemic position to the disputant that is in a better epistemic position dissolves the disagreement. Also, disagreement dissolves if the one who is in a better epistemic position disregards as a peer the disputant who is in a worst epistemic position. Therefore, the disputant who is in an epistemic disadvantage (lack of evidence, lack of epistemic virtues, etc.)

should defer to the one who is in a better epistemic position (better evidence, use of epistemic virtues, etc.), also the disputant in advantage (better evidence, better epistemic virtues) should disregard as a peer the one who is in a worst epistemic position.

Consequently, if symmetry is not broken, then one has good reasons to take a skeptical attitude toward the disputed proposition. For instance, if one of the parties to a peer disagreement lacks important evidence or is not reliable about evidence assessing one can see that this situation undermines their epistemic position with respect to the disputed proposition. Another symmetry breaker is the large consensus about a proposition. For example, if virtually all highly intelligent, reliable, and professional philosophers believe a proposition, it is very likely that one should believe that proposition. That is, the consensus acts like independent evidence about the claim disputed. However, this condition can be challenged for philosophical disagreement. Epistemologist should regard skeptics as peers even if skeptics are a minority and even if they think that skepticism is wrong.

But how disagreement acquires epistemological significance, if it has so? Matheson (2015), Fumerton (2010), Kelly (2011) have argued that disagreement is a kind of evidence about our evidence. There are two kinds of evidence, first-order evidence which is directly related with a proposition p, and higher-order, that is, evidence that supports our first-order evidence. Evidence can be defeated by other evidence that supports a contrary doxastic attitude towards p. Also, those defeaters can be defeated by further evidence, in another words, defeaters can be defeated.

For example, a paper claims that the composer of the Iliad was a single man, another paper claims that the composer of the Iliad was not a single man, but a group of bards. Both papers must give first-order evidence to support such hypotheses as historical accounts, stylometric analyses, etc. But if one finds out that one of the journals more than often publishes unreliable papers that use made up evidence, or one acquires evidence that one of the journals more than often publishes papers with a clear bias, then one has higher-order evidence about the evidence given in the paper published in the journal that allows bias and use of made up evidence. One has a higher-order evidence defeater against the paper first-order evidence. If this defeater does not get a defeater for itself then one is justified to disbelief the first-order evidence. So, I should disbelief or greatly reduce my confidence in the paper published in the journal that allows bias and use of made up evidence.

3.4.1 On the epistemic significance of peer disagreement

There are four ways in which one can interpret the epistemic significance of disagreement scenarios (KELLY, 2016; MATHESON, 2015). Equal Weight View, Right Reasons View, Justificationist View, and Total Evidence View. Each of these views claim that disagreement scenarios have different epistemic evidential weight over our beliefs. First, I am going to outline each view main reasons and conclusions about the nature of disagreement. Secondly, I am going to analyze those positions under the light of philosophical disagreement to show that philosophical disagreement yields skeptic conclusions about philosophy.

The Equal Weight View argues that when one is party to a peer disagreement, one should give equal weight to the disputants' epistemic positions and conciliate with the disputant's doxastic attitude by splitting the difference. For one has good reasons to think that one's peer is reliable, and therefore one cannot dismiss the peer's opinion. Also, because one does not have independent reasons to the disagreement to dismiss one's peer. In this view, disagreement is an undefeated defeater that undermines the justification of our original belief. That is, if one believes p and encounters oneself being party to peer disagreement, where a peer believes not-p, then one should have a conciliatory attitude by splitting the difference of the doxastic attitude with respect to p. One is not fully justified in believing p, since it has been defeated by the fact that there is a peer with as good evidence as one's and as good evidence processing ability as one's who has a contrary doxastic attitude with respect to p. Therefore, one's beliefs justification are defeated by the disagreement. This conclusion requires one to become agnostic about p[27].

The Right Reasons View holds that "[d]isagreement does not provide a good reason for skepticism or to change one's original views" (KELLY, 2005, p. 170). The reasons given by Kelly

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[27] Kelly (2011) argues that belief is a matter of degree rather than one of all-or-nothing. The reasons for this are that if one imagines a world in which there are only two persons and one is agnostic with respect to whether God exists and the other one is a theist with respect to whether God exists, then it is no clear how both are going to split the difference. Therefore, the conciliation does not give a good grip on disagreement in an all-or-nothing view of beliefs. If one supposes that this is the case, one can argue that there can be scenarios where A believes p with a 0.8 of certainty and B believes no-p with a 0.4 of certainty, being 1 totally certain and 0 disbelief. If A and B split the difference, they both should hold believe p with 0.6 of certainty by splitting the difference. This does not amount to suspend judgment and Equal Weight View fails to recommend belief suspension. However, I believe that Kelly's example does not support what he claims, for in a world where there are only two persons and one is theist with respect to whether God exists and the other is agnostic with respect to whether God exists, the agnostic does not hold any believe about whether God exists or does not exists, that is, he does not entertain that p nor that no p. So, no one is required to split the difference in this scenario. The theist is free to hold his belief, since disagreement amounts only to contrary doxastic attitudes with respect to p.

(2005) can be classified in two sets, one that breaks the symmetry between peers and makes at least one of them to defer, another that assumes symmetry but still holds that disagreement is not sufficient to go agnostic about one's views.

In the first set, Kelly (2005) argues that mere existence of disagreement between peers with the same quality of evidence and the same processing capacities is a symmetry breaker. Therefore, one of the peers, the mistaken one, should defer to the other peer, for disagreement itself is evidence of how good and how bad peers have assessed evidence, and amounts to a criterion for being a peer. So, one is able to demote one's peers if the peer is unreliable in assessing evidence, and thus no revision of doxastic attitudes is required. Also, even if the peer has proved to be reliable in other occasion, it is not far-fetched to think that in a specific case of peer disagreement he has failed to correctly assess the evidence. However, one cannot be totally certain that the peer is the one committing an assessment error. By the reasons above, the threat to the justification of one's belief is not the disagreement itself, but the grade in that those who disagree with one's beliefs have good reasons to have one's contrary doxastic attitude towards p.

For the second set of reasons, Kelly (2005) argues that higher-order evidence is not evidence that bears on the target proposition but bears on the evidence itself. If this is true, then one should be skeptic about the evidence and not about the target proposition. Secondly, disagreement is contingent because it is a result of believers' distribution consequence and not a consequence of argument strength. Thus, a tyrant could kill the total population that disagrees with him, but the distribution of the population which disagrees does not diminish the probative strength of the arguments against the tyrant's beliefs on p. Consequently, the fact that no one disagrees with the tyrant is contingent.

Third, even accepting symmetry between peers and therefore the possible defeat through higher-order evidence, one is not allowed to take higher-order evidence as a part of the total evidence, because what one believes is the result of evidence and not part of the evidence pool. For instance, one does not take one's belief in a proposition p as evidence to support p, therefore one can question the legitimate use of one's peer belief as part of one's total pool of evidence. Fourth, even if one accepts that the higher-order evidence is relevant to support the target proposition, this is not a reason to be agnostic in the face of disagreement since peers' contrary doxastic attitudes with respect to p are the result of the unreliability of one of the peers' assessment, therefore

disagreement is not a threat because the evidence assessment was unreliable. Fifth, if one's belief was reasonable before disclosure with one's disputant, there is no reason why the disclosure with one's disputant would make my belief unreasonable. Sixth, first order evidence does not simply vanish from the evidence pool because of the higher-order evidence. One has no reason to be agnostic because the first order evidence plays a role still in support of one's belief that p. Finally, believers' distribution is not a good argument against a position, therefore peerhoood does not give us reasons to be skeptical about our view if they are supported by good reasons.

As we have seen above, the interpretations of the epistemic significance of peer disagreement can be classified in views that mandate to split the difference with our peers by the revision of our belief's justification, and views that claim that it is reasonable to stay put on our beliefs. Also, there is a third and fourth kind of view which is more contextual sensitive than the other Right Reasons View and Equal Weight: these are the Total Evidence View and the Justificationist View. Both views require one to conciliate with one's peers depending on the scenario of the disagreement. For the Justificationist View, it is required to conciliate when there is not a highly justified belief. For the Total Weight View, it is required to conciliate when there is strong higher-order evidence against one's view.

Justificationist View is advanced by Lackey (2010). She firstly proposes a distinction between ordinary disagreement and idealized disagreement. The first one is the one where the peers don't actually satisfy the conditions of the idealized disagreement. Lackey (2010, p. 304) establishes like this:

> Ordinary disagreement: A and B disagree in an ordinary sense if and only if, relative to the question whether p, (1) A and B are aware that they hold differing doxastic attitudes, and (2) prior to recognizing that this is so, A and B take themselves to be roughly epistemic peers with respect to this question.

The key term in this definition is "…A and B take themselves to be roughly epistemic peers…", because the adverb "roughly" allows the possibility of asymmetry between peers even if each peer regards their peer as equal with respect to evidence quality and assessing. This specific aspect of ordinary disagreement can allow one to use symmetry breakers that can't be used in other interpretations of disagreement as Equal Weight View. For instance, personal information about one's reliability in assessing the evidence versus the lack of information one has of one's peer's

personal information about his reliability is used under the justificationist view to break the asymmetry between peers.

Although, it is not sufficient to count with personal information because one also needs a high degree of justified confidence in the belief in question to break peer symmetry. Lackey (2010, p. 319-320) argues that "[…] peer disagreement's epistemic power, or lack thereof, depends on the degree of justified confidence with which the belief in question is held combined with the presence or absence of relevant personal information". That is, the capacity to break the symmetry or the incapacity to break the symmetry between peers does not rely on the disagreement itself, but in the combination of one's personal information and the degree of one's justified confidence in the proposition disputed. For example, if one has a dispute over 2+2=4, and one has personal information that one is reliable at the moment of evidence assessment about a high justified confidence proposition, then one can demote one's peer because he is unreliable at assessing the evidence.

Meanwhile, Total Evidence View that states that the justification of our beliefs is not determined solely because of the high-order evidence, since first-order evidence sometimes can override the defeating effects of high-order evidence (KELLY, 2011). That is, not all scenarios of disagreement are scenarios where one is required to split the difference. In some scenarios, the first-order evidence is the one that decides what we should believe. Kelly's (2011) point is that Equal Weight View and its contrary, Right Reasons View, have higher-order and first-order simplistic evidence interaction models. For the Equal Weight View, the relevant criterion to what is reasonable to believe is doxastic attitude distribution among peers with respect to p. For Right Reasons View, what is reasonable to believe supervenes on the first-order evidence that peers' have. These models by themselves are not enough to fix what is rational to believe.

Kelly (2011) argues against the Equal Weight View first that one can be reasonably skeptical about the higher-order evidential force by being skeptical about the phenomenology of such state, because there is no criterion to distinguish between the phenomenology of a belief reached by impeccable reasoning and the phenomenology of a belief reached by flawed reasoning. So, when peers disagree about higher-order evidence, this doesn't imply that both reliably assessed the evidence, one can be wrong and subjectively feel that one is right about one's doxastic attitude towards p even if both peers have the same phenomenology about their beliefs. This scenario

decreases the evidential force of higher-order evidence. Thus, higher-order evidence is not the last word to resolve the peer disagreement. Thus, what is rational to believe depends on the first order evidence and the higher-order evidence together since our higher-order evidence cannot be the last word.

Against the Right Reasons View, Kelly (2011) says that the higher-order evidence about first-order evidence cancels out when two peers disagree and higher order evidence points out in contrary directions, in this scenario the first-order evidence decides if one belief is justified. However, justification to believe in the disputed proposition is diminished even if the higher-order evidence is canceled out. Therefore, when one gains knowledge that one is party to a disagreement, one should decrease one's confidence in one's justified belief, but one does not necessarily split the difference between epistemic peers.

Earlier, we saw that disagreement is a salient and unavoidable condition of philosophy. However, the epistemic consequences of such disagreement remained unknow. Now, we have enough material to understand which are the epistemic consequences of philosophical disagreement. The question that follows is if philosophical disagreement can avoid the skeptic consequences advanced by the Equal Weight View, or if philosophy can avoid such skeptic consequences by being better understood under the Right Reasons View.

3.5   On the skeptical consequences of philosophical disagreement

Several authors drawn skeptic consequences from the existence of disagreement in philosophy. Foremost, in the face of philosophical disagreement one is not allowed to have strong philosophical beliefs and even some point out that in this scenario the reasonable attitude is to suspend judgment (BEEBEE, 2018; FELDMAN, 2006; MATHESON, 2015; FUMERTON, 2010; KORNBLITH, 2010; VAN INWAGEN, 2010; MACHERY, 2017). It is important to note that this kind of skepticism is not the kind of far-fetched scenario skepticism where evil demons and brains in vats play the central role to undermine all of our beliefs. It is rather a kind of skepticism which source is less remote with respect to the actual world[28] and restricted to philosophy (FELDMAN, 2006, p. 217).

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[28] It is hard to give a full account of remoteness. However, for one part, I think less remoteness means that there are less ontological commitments with fictional and supernatural beings as cartesian evil demons. Also, skeptic scenarios

A strong case of skepticism would show that all the interpretations of the epistemic significance of disagreement yield skeptical consequences with respect to the philosophical disagreement. The case for Equal Weight View is supported by the Mental Math case. The latter consists in a case presented by Christensen (2009, p. 757) where

> Mental Math case - You and your friend have been going out to dinner together regularly for many years. You always tip 20% and split the check (with each person's share rounded up to the nearest dollar), and you each do the requisite calculation in your head upon receiving the check. Most of the time you have agreed, but in the instances when you have not, you have taken out a calculator to check; over the years, you and your friend have been right in these situations equally often. Tonight, you figure out that your shares are $43, and become quite confident of this. But then your friend announces that she is quite confident that your shares are $45. Neither of you has had more wine or coffee, and you do not feel (nor does your friend appear) especially tired or especially perky. How confident should you now be that your shares are $43? Many people agree that in this sort of case, strong conciliation is called for: you should become much less confident in $43 – indeed, you should be about as confident in $45 as in $43.

Nevertheless, this case in particular yields results with respect to the general discussion of disagreement and not to the epistemic significance of philosophical disagreement. Therefore, here I am going to devise a case with a more specific aim: to show that we have good reasons to be skeptics about philosophical beliefs when assessing the nature of philosophical disagreement. We will call this case PHILOSOPHERS.

> PHILOSOPHERS - You and your friend are leading philosophers. Both of you are recognized by the thoroughness of argumentation and vastly knowledge of the relevant literature in both specialized area of philosophy (let's say philosophy of mind). Both of you have published philosophical papers and books in the most renowned journals and editorials. Most of the time both of you agree with respect to peripheral areas of philosophical inquiry which are not far from the specialized area of inquiry of you both (epistemology) and also agree when rejecting arguments because of deficient formal reasoning. Even while friends, both of you have never discussed the research programs which are independently being developed by each

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as brains in vat scenarios cannot be said to be actual but possible. Mere possibility is enough to bring on the skeptical worries. Meanwhile, we have actual cases of philosophical disagreement, so it is not its mere possibility that which brings on the skeptical worries, but actuality. Therefore, less remote skepticism means that it requires less ontological commitments and that at least one case is actual.

one. One day both of you disclose all the research program details to each one and encounter that both have radically contradictory metaphysical views with respect to the mind. Let's say that one of you is a physicalist and the other one propriety dualist. Before, during and after the disclosure both of you are under normal conditions of cognitive functioning. How confident you should be that your theory is the right one?

In this example, we have the conditions expected in an idealized disagreement: both philosophers have an excellent evidential corpus, both philosophers are highly reliable because of their track record, both philosophers know the positions of one another.

The Equal Weight View requires that both philosophers give equal weight to the opinion of one another because both have positive reasons to think that the peer has reliably assessed the evidence due to his epistemic track record and quality of evidence, also, there are no independent reasons to dismiss each peer opinion[29]. Both peers' justification for their beliefs gain an undefeated defeater, because of the higher-order evidence yielded by the disagreement that undermines their first-order evidence. Therefore, both philosophers cannot be as justified as they were before the disclosure of the disagreement. Here the Equal Weight View mandates both philosophers to conciliate their beliefs and suspend the judgment about them or at least reduce greatly the confidence in their beliefs about the nature of mind[30].

The Right Reasons View dictates one to hold on one's beliefs when facing disagreement since this view doesn't yield skeptic outcomes, for one can hold on one's philosophical beliefs even in front of a case like PHILOSOPHERS. However, one can call into question that this kind of steadfastness is reasonable when facing philosophical disagreement.

The first set of reasons given by Kelly (2005) try to break the symmetry in disagreement challenges by taking disagreement itself as evidence of one of the peers unreliability. That is, if

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[29] One can argue that there can be situational error of one of the peers, therefore there is no need of conciliation or belief revision. However, to assume that one's peer has committed a situational error is arbitrary in the face of the excellent evidence, excellent epistemic track record, and the inexistence of independent reasons to dismiss peer's opinion. In the face of this, it is required that both peers to be skeptic about their initial beliefs.

[30] It can be argued that both philosophers are right, but the problem was formulated wrongly. However, obviously this is not a case of genuine disagreement but a case of disagreement that does not contributes nothing to the substantive issue when solved

one and one's peer have high quality evidence and high-quality evidence assessment abilities, and when one of the peers disbelieve p and the other peer believes p, then at least one of the peers has assessed the evidence in an unreliable way. So, there is no need to split the difference and become agnostic with respect to p.

Even under this view, one can arrive to skeptic conclusions since there is no reason to believe that one has the right reason[31] and one's peer has it not. That is, if both peers are equally well informed and have the same evidence assessment abilities, then it is arbitrary to believe that one's peer and not oneself is the one who made a mistake, also it is arbitrary for one's peer to regard one as the one who has make the mistake. If there are not criteria to choose one's opinion above one's peer's opinion, then one can say that the reasonable attitude toward the belief in dispute, even accepting the tenets of the Right Reasons View, is judgment suspension. So, even the Right Reasons View mandates one to become skeptic with respect to the target proposition, because Right Reasons View mandates an unreasonable stance when facing philosophical disagreement.

The second set of reasons are harder to cope with because they accept a basic supposition of the Equal Weight View: symmetry. Kelly (2005) claimed that even if the higher-order evidence has as target the disputed proposition, this is no reason to suspend judgment about the disputed proposition but a reason to suspend judgment about evidence. However, it is difficult to think how one can be skeptic about the evidence that supports a proposition without being skeptic about the target proposition itself. Also, when assessing the distribution of believers, Kelly (2005) points out that distribution of believers is a contingent trait and doesn't weights over the epistemic credentials of a proposition. Still, when one has two bodies of evidence which entail contradictory beliefs, in an intrapersonal level, one is called to suspend judgment about the target proposition. In this example, it is important to underline the fact that there is no distribution of believers, because there is only one believer: oneself. A view that claims that one should maintain one's beliefs even in the face of contradictory beliefs is not reasonable to follow (MATHESON, 2015).

Also, Kelly (2005) claims that the distribution of believers is not a good argument against a position. However, the mere possibility of disagreement distribution has epistemic weight over

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[31] Even if one argues that there is objective unreliability that can break the asymmetry between peers, it is still difficult to the ones involved in the disagreement to say who is the one who is objectively unreliable. Neither of the ones involved in the disagreement has good reasons to adjudicate to their peer that they are being objectively unreliable. Also, if one of the peers adjudicates the other objective unreliability, that peer is making an arbitrary statement.

one's beliefs. So, one is called to split the difference, even if there is no actual distribution of believers but possible distribution of believers. Thus, disagreement epistemic force is not a function of actual distribution of believers but a function of the possibility of the existence of believers which disagree with one's beliefs. For instance, philosophers often have to visualize objections against their own points in advance to hold more vigorously a thesis, one can think of a philosopher so resourceful that for every belief p he has, he can imagine a philosopher that believes no p. The imagined philosopher poses a threat to our actual philosopher about his belief in p.

Kelly (2005) also argues that when one takes the higher-order evidence as a defeater to one's first-order evidence, one is incurring in a double counting, in other words, one is taking one's doxastic attitude, which is a result of the evidence, as a part of that evidence. Nevertheless, van Inwagen (2010, p. 22) argues that one's total evidence pool once one becomes aware that it is valid to infer from the evidential corpus E the proposition p is compounded of one's first-order evidence and one's awareness that it is valid to infer from such evidential corpus the proposition p. So, inference awareness is part of one's total evidence. Therefore, there is no double counting because evidence supports one's belief p. So, when one gains awareness of the inference relationship between E and p, this awareness becomes also part of one's total evidence as evidence that one is an individual who is reliable and makes correct inferences.

Also, Kelly (2005) claims that contrary doxastic attitudes between peers amounts to unreliable assessment results of evidence by any of the two peers. But this objection doesn't give us the criteria to determine which of the peers maintains an ill-formed doxastic attitude. Even if one believed that there is an unreliable assessment by at least one of the peers, it is hard to say who is the one epistemically unreliable because both philosophers presented in PHILOSOPHERS case have an excellent track record and access to evidence of the same quality.

Furthermore, Kelly (2005) argues that there is no reason why my belief in t0 is reasonable and in t1 is unreasonable when in t1 one becomes aware of peer disagreement. One can answer that the reasonable belief in t0 gains a defeater at t1, when disclosed that there is epistemic peer disagreement about proposition p. One can answer the same to Kelly's (2005) claim that the first-order evidence does not simply disappear from the evidence pool as soon as there is disagreement. It is true that the first-order evidence does not disappear, but it gets swamped by the higher-order evidence, that is, the epistemic effects of the first-order evidence are neutralized by the higher-

order evidence(MATHESON, 2015). In conclusion, the Right Reasons View cannot yield a non-skeptic verdict about the case presented above, because it cannot give a criterion to know which one of the peers unreliably assessed the evidence even when rejecting the existence of symmetry and even when accepting the supposition of symmetry.

Lackey's Justificationist View about disagreement relies on a change of peerhood criteria. For Lackey (2010), peers are not idealized peers but roughly peers. This movement allows Lackey (2010) to make a strong case against Equal Weight View because it allows one to rely on personal information plus highly justified beliefs as symmetry breakers. Even if one modifies the status of both philosophers, in PHILOSOPHERS case, as being roughly peers, in other words, by facing the fact that at least one of them has assessed the evidence in an unreliable way, Lackey's (2010) view still fails since it requires personal information and highly justified beliefs, and it is highly controversial to regard philosophical beliefs as highly justified, so at least one of the requirements for steadfastness in one's beliefs does not obtain in PHILOSOPHERS case for justificationism. Therefore, the requirement of highly justified beliefs to break the symmetry between peers fails. Since, few would be ready to acknowledge that there are philosophical beliefs that have the same justification force as beliefs with the propositional content 2+2=4 or that I am looking at my computer screen that is in front of me right now.

Additionally, one can argue against the possibility to assess one's personal information since the fact that I am being reliable is given by my reliability, so there is an infinite regress that does not justifies my personal information. Therefore, without personal information and without highly justified beliefs in a philosophical proposition, Lackey's (2010) account fails to give us reasons to be steadfast on our philosophical beliefs. Even if Lackey's (2010) account is flexible enough to make steadfast and conciliatory intuitions coherent when the case requires it, PHILOSOPHERS case intuitions point out to a conciliatory view akin with Equal Weight View which mandates one to split the difference with one's peer and suspend judgment.

Kelly's (2011) Total Evidence View calls into question the Equal Weight View and the Right Reasons View. The first is found as giving too much weight to the high-order evidence and the second one as giving too much weight to the first-order evidence. It calls to take into account the whole of our evidence: first-order and higher-order. Still, in the case in which the higher-order evidence cancels out, as can be thought of PHILOSOPHERS case, one can still argue that

philosophical first-order evidence is not enough to decide the case between the physicalist and the property dualist. Likewise, because this is a case in which one faces a scenario in which both philosophers could have phenomenological states about their philosophical beliefs that point that they are right even if they are not, one should decrease one confidence in the higher-order evidence. However, as I have said above, first-order evidence is not enough to decide the case between the two philosophers. So, even if one accepts that higher-order evidence does not compel one to suspend judgment, it is contentious that the philosophical first-order evidence could resolve the disagreement. In the two cases in which the Total Evidence View attacks the force of higher-order evidence, it fails and don't give us reason to believe that the first-order evidence is enough to settle the PHILOSOPHERS disagreement. Thus, even the Total Evidence View requires from us judgment suspension when facing a case as PHILOSOPHERS.

By the analysis we have made of the different interpretations of epistemic significance of disagreement applied to a philosophical disagreement case, one can posit that these views support skeptical conclusions with respect to philosophical theorizing. To sum up, the Equal Weight View yields a result in which one is called to split the difference with one's peer and therefore become agnostic about the propositional content of the contentious belief. The hardest case was the Right Reasons View, but due to the arbitrariness with which one could stay steadfast in one's views, the reasonable attitude in that scenario is judgment suspension[32]. Also, in a second strain of the Right Reasons View argument, we have rejected that the Right Reasons View gives us criteria to choose one's beliefs over one's peer beliefs. Thus, decision under the Right Reasons View is arbitrary[33]. Therefore, Right Reasons View verdict with respect to PHILOSOPHERS is that one should suspend one's judgment once one is party to philosophical disagreement. The Justificationist View also mandates judgment suspension in PHILOSOPHERS case due to the lack of both criteria required by the view to maintain one's beliefs when facing disagreement: personal information and highly justified belief. Finally, Total Evidence View fails given that philosophical first-order

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[32] Against this, one can argue that decidability comes by and therefore when it comes by it is not reasonable to keep judgment suspension. Still, I have argued that we have good reasons to believe that decidability over philosophical issues hardly comes by or will come by.

[33] It is possible to object that arbitrariness could be avoided by an appeal to epistemic conservatism. Epistemic conservatism as the claim that beliefs are true until proven otherwise does not apply here, because disagreement gives us reasons to believe that maybe our beliefs are not true. That is, disagreement gives one good reasons to believe one holds a false belief. So, here arbitrariness is an epistemic vice and not a normative right to believe a proposition until some proves it is false.

evidence is not the kind of evidence that yields unequivocal verdicts. Under the Total Evidence View, PHILOSOPHERS case remains as a scenario in which judgment suspension is mandated.

To defend philosophy from the skeptical consequences of the epistemic significance of disagreement, Kelly (2016) has argued that no interpretation of the epistemic significance of disagreement allows one to be skeptical about the justification of philosophical beliefs. Kelly (2016) attacks the Equal Weight View and the conditions that under the Total Evidence View requires one to suspend judgment.

The first argument against the skeptical conclusions of philosophical disagreement appeals to the interconnection of philosophical disagreement, that is, disagreements in an area of philosophy often branch to other areas of philosophy. For instance, if one is an ontological naturalist then one is bound to accept certain theories in philosophy of mind. So, one's disagreements with ontological non-naturalists imply disagreements with dualist philosophers. Thus, Kelly (2016) argues that this characteristic of philosophical disputes makes the argument for skeptical consequences weaker. First, he claims that views as Equal Weight View require isolated disagreements to maintain peerness among disputants, for instance, in the Mental Math case or PHILOSOPHERS case, the dispute is about the truth or falsity of one proposition in a domain and not about the whole of the propositions of a given domain. In Mental Math, the disputants do not disagree about the whole of mathematics, but about an instance of mathematics. The same goes for PHILOSOPHERS case, they argue about the truth of physicalism or property dualism.

Besides, Kelly (2016) argues, philosophical disputes are messy and branch among many philosophical areas, that is, they are not disputes about isolated propositions. It is plausible that both philosophers in PHILOSOPHERS case disagree on many issues that are around the specific disputed claim, for example, one can hold that both philosophers disagree about the nature of causation, ontology, etc. This argument undermines the symmetry between peers, because if one regards one's peer as utterly wrong about peripheral issues, then one is allowed to dismiss that peer's opinion. Supposing this, Kelly (2016) argues that the Equal Weight View does not apply to philosophical disputes, because these disputes don't comply to the symmetry condition required by the Equal Weight View. If philosophical disputes don't comply the requirements of Equal Weight View, then Equal Weight View consequences don't apply to philosophical disputes, and one does not have to become skeptical about one's philosophical beliefs.

However, Kornblith (2010) has convincingly coped with Kelly's (2016) argument. Kornblith (2010) accepts that philosophical disputes are not isolated ones since there are a cluster of beliefs which are disputed. Yet there is a cluster of beliefs on which many agree, and this guarantees symmetry and peerness between philosophers. In philosophical disputes, we don't simply dismiss other philosophers because of an isolated dispute since there is a shared cluster of agreements about argument soundness, consistency, valid reasoning, etc. For instance, in the disagreement between moral realists and moral relativists there is agreement on issues as the valid reasoning, sound philosophical arguments, and related issues that manage to maintain the peerness between contradictory positions. The case envisioned by Kelly (2016) is an extreme one that resembles a dispute between a religion X fundamentalist that argues with a religion Y fundamentalist, among whom there is no agreement whatsoever. Therefore, the religion X fundamentalist or the religion Y fundamentalist do not regard each other as peers[34].

Kelly (2016) provides another argument that appeals to the poor track record of reliability of philosophers in general. Following the Equal Weight View, one is bounded to revise one's beliefs when one finds oneself in a disagreement and also has good reasons, that is, positive reasons, to believe that one's peer has come to the contrary conclusion with respect to one's belief via correct reasoning and good quality evidence. Kelly (2016) also argues that there is a crucial difference between the Mental Math case and philosophical disputes. In the former, both peers are reliable and have been reliable in arithmetical matters, but, in the latter, there is no a reliability track record. Therefore, if one doesn't have good reasons to believe that one's peer is philosophically reliable, then one is not mandated by the Equal Weight View to suspend one's belief about philosophical matters. One should hold to one's beliefs. This kind of argument relies on breaking the symmetry between the peers.

However, one can appeal to Kornblith's (2010) argument. Even if the track record of philosophers is poor about the target propositions, one can argue that there are clusters of propositions on which both philosophers think of each other as reliable. For example, both philosophers have vast knowledge of the literature, can cite names, books, articles, etc.; both philosophers are recognized by the thoroughness of argumentation; both philosophers publish in

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[34] I believe that this is a case of deep disagreement. Obviously, it is not the kind of disagreement that exists in philosophy.

the most renowned journals; both philosophers agree about philosophical issues in many peripherical areas to the area of disagreement; both recognize accurately faulty reasoning and correct reasoning. A philosopher with the characteristics given in the example can be reasonably be held as a peer because of his philosophical abilities and epistemic virtues, even if it is not a peer with respect to the track record about the disputed proposition. So, if one someday faces a disagreement with a philosopher with such an impressive track record, surely one will be bounded to modestly revise one's beliefs[35].

Kelly (2016) also argues that the Equal Weight View, even if one accepts the peerness status of the disputant philosophers, and its consequences, doesn't bring about skeptical consequences to philosophy. That is because the kind of disagreements to which the Equal Weight View applies require the disagreement to be about contradictory propositions believed by evenly divided populations as the Mental Math and PHILOSOPHERS toy models. Kelly (2016) then shows that many philosophical disputes are not evenly divided among the believers appealing to the survey (https://philpapers.org/surveys/results.pl). Consequently, one cannot apply the Equal Weight View to our actual philosophical practice because it is not evenly divided. Therefore, there is no reason to become skeptics about philosophy.

Nevertheless, I believe that the Equal Weight View requires an even divided population of believers in the Mental Math case and that this condition does not apply to the PHILOSOPHERS case. The difference relies in that Mental Math case is based in a set of beliefs of an epistemic community, as mathematics, in which there is growing and robust consensus. In other words, one cannot change consensus in those epistemic communities without undermining the whole consensus or making substantive objections to fundamental claims (KORNBLITH, 2010, p.43). On the one hand, mathematics is a discipline which has a good reliability record. Consequently, in the Mental Math case, if there are more believers in one side, those probably are correct. On the other hand, philosophy is a discipline in which the consensus does not amount to high epistemic weight, since it does not have a good reliability record which supports a robust and growing

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[35] One can argue that if philosophers are not reliable in the first place, then there is no point in remarking that there are philosophers with great track records. However, this unlocks a more radical skeptical conclusion: philosophers are unreliable on every matter. Yet, we need philosophers to be reliable at least in areas which are not in direct relation to philosophy in order to provide a minimum of reliability. This explains why philosophers can be peers with each other. Finally, here we find a dilemma posited by Fumerton (2010). On the one hand, if philosophers are unreliable, one must suspend judgment about philosophical beliefs. On the other, if philosophers are reliable, then the Equal Weight View applies and they are required to suspend judgment when facing peer disagreement.

consensus. Therefore, even if disagreeing philosophers are a minority, they are sufficient to require one to call one's belief to revision because of Equal Weight View.

Consequently, the fact that someone has the status of peer gives them the prerogative to undermine one's philosophical belief, it is not about the distribution of philosophical opinion. For instance, consider the case PHILOSOPHERS. Imagine now that it is the case that there is only one philosopher in the world who is skeptic about the external world and has the same intellectual virtues and evidence access as the rest of the philosophical community. It is reasonable to think that one is called to revise one's beliefs even if the beliefs of the majority are at odds with the one and only skeptic in the world. As we can see, it is a matter of peerness and not a matter of quantity what requires us to revise our beliefs in philosophical disagreement.

Furthermore, even if one accepts the results of Bourget and Chalmers' survey, we have that the compatibilist versus the incompatibilist (12,2 %) about free will debate is highly bended towards the compatibilist (59,1 %) option (https://philpapers.org/surveys/results.pl). If Kelly's (2016) argument is correct, then there is no peerhood between such philosophers as van Inwagen and Lewis, because we can simply dismiss van Inwagen position since he is in the minoritarian group of believers. Yet this is not the case and one can surely affirm that both van Inwagen and Lewis are peers in that both have many epistemic virtues and have evidence of the same quality.

Moreover, Cappelen (2017) argues that the results of the Bourget and Chalmers' (2014) survey are unreliable due to methodological problems as lack of comparative criteria related to other domains and ingenuity with respect to the nature of disagreement among the surveyed philosophers. So, Kelly (2016) cannot rely on this survey to posit that empirical data shows that philosophical debates are not evenly divided among philosopher's population.

As well, Kelly (2016) argues that even if one accepts that there is peer status among philosophers, one is not bound to suspend judgment when facing disagreement because if there is a clear majority of opinion within a group, that makes one more confident about one's opinion. That is, if the distribution shows that there is majority of opinion with respect to a view, then one is to be more confident in one's beliefs if one adopts majority's view. And if one supposes that the Equal Weight View works because of the opinion distribution and supposes that there is a distribution where there is a majority with respect to a philosophical matter, then even the Equal

Weight View requires one to be more confident in one's views. This conclusion is based on the Condorcet Jury Theorem which can be illustrated like this

> Imagine a group of fifty people, each of whom is only slightly better than chance—say, 55% accurate—at answering a certain kind of 'yes' or 'no' question correctly. In order to keep things parallel with the Mental Math Case and the other examples standardly used to motivate conciliatory views, we assume that each person arrives at his or her opinion independently. Of course, when the group splits perfectly down the middle, with twenty-five members of the opinion that p and twenty-five of the opinion that not-p, then the chance that either group is correct given just those facts is 50%. However, when the group splits 55/45, the chance that those in the majority are correct is approximately 73%. Suppose that we increase the size of the community from 50 to 70 while holding their reliability constant at 55%. In that case, when the group splits 55–45, the chance that the majority is correct is over 80%; if instead the group breaks 60–40, the chance that the majority is correct rises to over 94% (KELLY, 2016, p. 16).

However, there are two objections than can be raised to Kelly's (2016) argument. I said earlier that PHILOSOPHERS case doesn't require specific peer distribution to deploy the Equal Weight verdict, thus requiring one to suspend or revise one's beliefs. Also, it is contentious that there is in fact a majority distribution about philosophical issues, so the majority hypothesis is not warranted. Finally, Kelly (2016, p. 16) accepts that

> […] it is manifestly not true that professional philosophers arrive at their philosophical views independently of one another. The toy models are thus meant to be suggestive rather than probative.

This is because the Condorcet Jury Theorem requires that the disputants arrive to their conclusions independently and it is not the case that many of our philosophical views are arrived independently, rather it is plausible to think that our philosophical surroundings affect our philosophical beliefs.

Besides, Kelly (2016) argues that even if philosophers are unreliable, the Equal Weight View mandates one to stick to one's beliefs. This is because splitting the difference when philosophers are unreliable amounts to manage sub-optimally one's opinions. Even if one takes into account the Condorcet Jury Theorem, which yields that the minority is the one with more chance of being correct when people is unreliable, it is not reasonable to split the difference because if one follows the Equal Weight View in this unreliability scenario, one must split the difference with the majority who is unreliable and has more chance of being wrong. Therefore, one has no

reasons to split the difference with an unreliable disputant. This scenario requires one to hold to one's beliefs, consequently the Equal Weight View doesn't yield the skeptic results which supposedly mandates.

Yet, one can give several answers to his objection. First, one can call into question the unreliability claim. One can think that philosophers are unreliable within the traditional fields of philosophy: ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, etc. However, there are areas in which philosophers, whom one can call epistemic peers, are indeed reliable, for example, in the more formal areas of philosophy as logic (KORNBLITH, 2010). If we think of philosophers as being reliable in this way, then is not sub optimally managing one's belief to split the difference when facing philosophical disagreement. Also, if the argument of Kelly is sound, then one is not bound to doubt about one's views when someone who disagrees presents his arguments since philosophers are unreliable about their philosophical beliefs. If we follow that line of thought, we have no reasons to write philosophy papers or books, we can simply stick to our own guns.

Finally, Kelly (2016) argues that even if one holds that philosophers are little more reliable than chance with respect to a domain, one is bound to be confident about the majority's opinion because of the Condorcet Jury Theorem. So, one is not required to become agnostic if one follows the Equal Weight View, but one is mandated to accept the majority's beliefs and be confident about them. The minority is mandated by the Equal Weight View to switch their belief to the belief of the majority but not to become agnostic.

Nevertheless, one can answer in several ways. First, Kelly (2016) posits that one is to suppose that philosophers are reliable about a domain. It is hard to think how philosophers could be reliable with respect to metaphysics or ethics. If philosophers are reliable, one should think that they are reliable about formal issues within philosophy. So, one is mandated to acquire majority's belief and be confident in those beliefs with respect to the formal domain of philosophy. Even for the Equal Weight View is hard to support that one should be agnostic about logic or domains that have proven to be less controversial than philosophy. Therefore, for more contentious domains of philosophy still holds the Equal Weight View and its skeptical conclusions.

In this chapter, we have seen that philosophical propositions have been thought as cognitive, yet different from science. This particular kind of cognitive role was called weak cognitivism and

had as characteristics the acceptance of naturalism but the rejection of methodological naturalism. This kind of cognitive role we considered is more akin to our current philosophical practice.

However, the skeptical disagreement challenge threatens weak cognitivism cognitive role of philosophical propositions. First, I showed that there are good reasons to believe that the structural characteristics of philosophy that also yield the particular nature of philosophical disagreement cause disagreement inside philosophy. Second, I argued that to explain the existence of philosophical disagreement and its peculiarity one can appeal to the Evidence Neutrality argument and the Aporetic Structure argument. Both yield good reasons to believe that there is disagreement of a particular kind[36] among philosophers if one supposes the soft cognitive role of philosophical propositions. Third, I inquired on the epistemic significance of disagreement. The conclusion of this inquiry was that there are good reasons to be skeptical about philosophy's supposedly cognitive role since all disagreement theories yield skeptical results when applied to philosophical disagreement.

Now that we have reached the conclusion that there are good reasons to be skeptical about philosophical beliefs, emerges the question about the reason to continue the philosophical endeavor or if we must abandon our current philosophical practice of exchanging reasons. However, I think there is a way to avoid the skeptical conclusion and maintain our philosophical practice, yet it requires the rejection of the cognitive role of philosophy and the search for a new aim to the philosophical endeavor.

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[36] Here, I am not claiming that I know that there is disagreement in philosophy of a particular kind. There surely are peers who would disagree with this. I am making a weaker statement.

4 CHAPTER III: ON NORMATIVITY AND PHILOSOPHY [37]

4.1   A Philosophical Picture

To avoid self-defeat, I shall not argue in this chapter that I justifiably believe my own view on philosophy nor that my view on philosophy is true, rather I am going to develop my answer to the disagreement challenge as a philosophical picture. But what do we talk about when we talk about a philosophical picture?

Kripke (1980, p. 79), by analyzing the descriptivist theory of proper names, holds that "[…] the theses not only are true but really even give a correct picture of how the reference is determined"[38]. Following Kripke, one is able to argue that philosophical pictures are not like philosophical theories since the main criteria to accept a philosophical theory is the capability to describe facts in an accurate way, rather philosophical pictures need not to be true to be correct[39].

The distinction is possible because the characterization given by philosophical pictures is "[…] less specific than a real set of necessary and sufficient conditions[...]" (KRIPKE, 1980, p. 93). Also, Kripke (1980, p. 93) argues that some philosophical pictures best out other philosophical pictures, so philosophical pictures must have features that make some philosophical pictures more appealing than others. A possibility of what can be this appealing feature that makes a philosophical picture better than another is that the rejected philosophical picture is wrong from the fundamentals (Kripke, 1980, p. 93). These fundamentals are suppositions of how things are done.

For my part, I think that the cognitive picture of philosophy is also wrong from the fundamentals. It is hard to imagine a philosopher that gets philosophical knowledge by using philosophical methods, or philosophers that have highly consensus-based beliefs on a philosophical subject matter. Hacker (2009, p. 130) notes that philosophers are unable to point out in a library a

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[37] I want to thank Ícaro C. Martins, José Gabriel Trindade Santos, and Esteban Fernández for their comments helped me shape this view on philosophy.

[38] I am not going to take a position or to discuss reference theories. I am just putting forward the discussion to contextualize the distinction between a philosophical theory and a philosophical picture.

[39] Kripke (1980, p. 79) imagines a person that goes through a mental ceremony says to himself that such and such property is going to determine the reference of an individual in all possible worlds, and that such individual will bear the proper name X. I take it to be a depiction of a situation that strikes us as odd, but not as blatantly false.

book with an established corpus of philosophical knowledge[40]. Yet scientists can surely point out in a library a book with their most recent knowledge. So, I believe that this image of a philosopher unable to point a book in a library with an established corpus of philosophical knowledge talks against the cognitive picture of philosophy. However, this is not enough to explain how philosophical pictures gain their appeal.

Gutting (2009, p. 81) argues that philosophical pictures gain appeal when there is a process of persuasive elaboration that relies less in "[…] decisive proofs and refutations and more on the combination of rich detail, fruitfulness, and systematic power […]". So, I want not to argue that my picture of philosophy is true, but to develop its details, fruitfulness, and explicative power with respect to the disagreement challenge. Therefore, in this chapter there is not a theory but a picture to guide our thinking (GUTTING, 2009, p. 225).

However, these philosophical pictures don't come by out of whim. They are based on convictions that are "[…] controversial claims that are central in our conceptions of ourselves and have a guiding role in our lives" (GUTTING, 2009, p. 120). These basic beliefs do not require philosophical justification since "[…] they strike us as arising naturally out of experiences we have had, have maintained themselves in the face of various challenges, and are central for our way of life" (GUTTING, 2009, p. 120). For example, free will is part of our experience as human beings, also it is rooted in in our way of life, and it is central to it. However, the free will conviction is contentious in front of powerful determinist arguments. One can abandon such conviction on free will, but the challenger must make a very compelling case for the determinist conviction.

Therefore, convictions do not require of philosophical justification yet this does not mean that convictions are immune to philosophical scrutiny. Philosophy assesses convictions to "[…] clarify, refine, systematize, and otherwise improve the epistemic status of pre-philosophical convictions" (GUTTING, 2009, p. 147). In this way, philosophical pictures best out other philosophical pictures. So, in this chapter I shall clarify, refine, systematize a pre-philosophical conviction trough a persuasive elaboration that yields a compelling, at least, philosophical picture about the nature of philosophy.

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[40] I believe that this is a clear case of a philosophical picture. Imagine the contrary, a philosopher enters in a library and points out a book that he regards as the established philosophical knowledge. I think that this would strike many philosophers as odd.

The advantages of this stance with respect to a more traditional stance that defends the truth of a view are: first, one avoids the disagreement challenge since one is not committed with the truth of the view one wants to portray. Second, further theoretical formulations can be development from a picture, that is, the picture stance does not neglect the possibility of more refined formulations of a philosophical picture. Third, one is able to reject the philosophers' fallacy that consists of the idea that a philosophical successful endeavor involves ultimate understanding of phenomena from perfect definitions that need no further definition[41].

4.2   Philosophy as Law

In antiquity, Parmenides and Plato, philosophers of major importance, were in close contact with juridical aspects of society. Diogenes Laertius (IX, 23) tells us that Speusippus in a work named *On Philosophy* reports that Parmenides gave laws to his fellow citizens of Elea. Meanwhile, Plato wrote *Laws* as a legislation for an ideal city called Magnesia. In the prologue to *Laws* in *Plato Complete Works*, James M. Cooper (1997, p. 1319) states that "[…] Plato and his associates were called upon also for concrete advice about 'laws and constitutions' in reforming existing states and founding new ones". From this, it is clear that philosophy and philosophers were regarded by the philosophical tradition as legislators capable of creating laws.

So, during antiquity philosophers were not only preoccupied with the knowledge of the ultimate structure of reality but with the yielding of laws that could construct better organized cities. Philosophers under this view had the status of jurists among people who lived in the cities where Parmenides and Plato gave laws. However, we inherited the idea that philosophers were preoccupied only with the knowledge of the ultimate structure of reality. This view neglects the main concern of philosophers in Antiquity: how to live a good life.

Hence, one can make a distinction between philosophy as description of the ultimate structure of reality, which latter on we are going to call science, and philosophy as law in a juridical sense. To support the juridical character of philosophy, one can point out that during Antiquity

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[41] Gutting (2009) uses the rejection of the philosophers' fallacy as a means to support that there is in fact a good deal of philosophical knowledge since the philosophers' fallacy sets standards of philosophical knowledge so high that no philosophical formulation amounts to knowledge. However, I am using this idea as a tool to show that there is a false methodological assumption about philosophical endeavors, and not to support that there is primary philosophical knowledge since my rejection of the possibility of philosophical knowledge do not comes because of the philosophers' fallacy but from the disagreement challenge.

philosopher's teachings were called "*δόγμα*", and the word "*δόγμα*" according to the *Pocket Oxford Classical Greek Dictionary* can be translated as "opinion", "decree", "resolution"; "doctrine". The content of this word designates that there is a rational process that fixes the decree, doctrine, or resolution. Students of philosophy in Antiquity learned these doctrines as laws that could help them to live a good life (KARAMANOLIS, 2006, p. 13).

In the same spirit, Karamanolis (2006, p. 13) argues that from this view of philosophical propositions, it follows that

> The *decreta* or *dogmata* are rules imposed by an authority, a legislator, or an assembly, having the right and the ability to legislate. The philosopher is like the legislator; he sets laws crucial for leading a good life, that is, he creates a system of doctrines which enable the attainment of good life.

From this, one can conclude that during Antiquity philosophers were also understood as legislators that gave through rational deliberation a set of laws to achieve a good life. So, the picture of philosophy as law is not a whimsical picture since it once was widely supported among philosophers.

Nevertheless, an objection can be raised against the picture that I am advancing. One can argue that philosophy as law picture is at odds with the tenets of the Enlightenment since acceptance of an external authority was widely rejected by philosophers as Kant, who, for example, claimed that it is only possible to learn to philosophize and impossible to learn philosophy (KrV A838/B866). Since philosophers nowadays reject the imposition of ideas by pure authority, as Kant did, it is hard to believe that the picture of philosophy as law could have any support at present.

However, Kant's account of philosophy maintains the idea that philosophers hold a juridical authority without it being an external one, as happens in Antiquity. For Kant, rational cognitions, that is, cognitions from principles, cannot be learned but drawn from the universal sources of Reason or the entire higher faculty of cognition that lies in all rational beings (KrV A835-6/B863-4). These rational cognitions are philosophical when they are cognitions from concepts, and philosophy is compounded of all philosophical cognitions. Yet, there is a further trait that yields the status of law to philosophy and of legislator to philosophers.

Kant distinguishes two concepts of philosophy, the first one is scholastic and the second one is cosmopolitan. The first concept describes philosophy as the science that consists in a system of cognition that has as end the systematic logical unity of those cognitions. The second concept

of philosophy describes philosophy as the science of the relationship between all cognition to the essential ends of human reason. Under cosmopolitan concept of philosophy, the philosopher "[…] is not an artist but the legislator of human reason" (KrV A839/B867).

Thus, the philosopher is a legislator who advances from all cognitions the essential ends that are "[…] the entire vocation of human beings" (KrV A840/B868). Here, the entire vocation of human beings and the essential ends of human reason take the form of morality, and the philosophy of them takes the form moral philosophy (KrV A840/B868). We have then that philosophers relate all the cognitions and use them as tools to unfold moral progress. Yet, the idea of the philosopher as legislator is not that of philosophers who create arbitrary laws but that of philosophers who unfold the laws that reside in human reason.

Finally, Kant portrays the idea that the philosopher is a legislator when he draws a juridical distinction to explain a crucial step to develop the argument of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In KrV A84, Kant explains how he is going to deduce the pure concepts of understanding without appealing to experience. Kant first distinguishes between *quid juris* as a question about what is lawful and *quid facti* as question that concerns what is the fact of the matter. From this distinction, Kant draws his idea that his deduction of the pure concepts of understanding has a juridical sense since the concepts we use must be lawfully used.

Following this distinction, Kant addresses the difficult question of how he will deduce the concepts of pure understanding without appealing to experience by claiming that his deduction is to establish the entitlement of a legal claim. Philosophy here is not a description drawn from experience of our cognitive apparatus, but laws that entitle us to make lawful use of our *a priori* concepts. Also, philosophers are legislators that do not create the laws that entitle our use of concepts, but those who unfold the laws that are latent in human reason.

From this historical account of the idea of philosophy as law and the philosopher as legislator, is easy to see that the main idea of this chapter does not go without support. Yet it is necessary to develop more in detail what is a philosophical law and how they explain our philosophical practice.

4.3   On the role of philosophical propositions

Philosophical propositions are reasons that require the existence of philosophical laws. Reasons can be thought as primitive or as analyzable in terms of concepts that we grasp independently from that of reasons. For Parfit (2011, p. 31), reasons are considerations that count in favor of a belief, an act, or an emotion. When we try to analyze the considerations that count in favor of something, we are talking about reasons. Also, Scanlon (2014, p. 2) believes, as Parfit (2011), that the concept of reason is primitive and that it is the fundamental concept of the normative domain.

Nonetheless, there is a discussion about whether reasons are really primitive concepts that are analyzable in terms of other concepts that we can grasp independently. Brunero (2018) argues that there are three main views that regard reasons as non-primitive: reasons as evidence, reasons as explanation, and reasons as value. The first view holds that reasons are evidence that one ought to F. The second view holds that reasons can be understood in terms of explanation and ought. The last view analyses reasons in terms of explanation and value[42].

Against the first view, Brunero (2018, p. 327) devices a counterexample in which you are going to the cinema with a friend, and there are only two movie options in the cinema of which you do not know nothing about: A and B. Also, there is no option to not see either movie. You know that your friend has an awful taste for movies. Your friend picks movie A. This gives you evidence that you ought to choose movie B since your friend has an awful taste for movies, yet you have reason to go to see movie A since your friend wanting to see movie A gives you a reason to see movie A. In this case, your friend wanting to see movie A is evidence that you ought not to choose it, but it is at the same time a reason to choose it. That is, you have evidence that you do not ought to do something and have a reason to do that same something that you have evidence that you do not ought to do. So, there is at least one case in which a reason is not evidence that you ought to F[43], and this goes against the idea that reasons are evidence that one ought to F.

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[42] Brunero (2018) develops widely these views and the objections against them. The overall conclusion is that the analysis of reasons of all views is unsatisfactory, therefore reasons primitiveness stands as more plausible. Here I am going to point out only the more fundamental arguments that make unsatisfactory every view.

[43] "F" refers to a phrasal verb. As we saw earlier, reasons are considerations to act, to believe, or to feel. I shall explain all the general features of reasons without getting into the specifics of the F to which they refer to. Later on, I will address this issue to explain how they come to support of philosophical laws.

The main problem with the second view is that it gives implausible verdicts when coping with outweighed reasons since a fact is a reason for one to F if and only if that fact explains why one ought to F. Nonetheless, when a reason is outweighed, and it is not the case that one has that reason to F since it is outweighed, then one must hold the implausible verdict that there is no explanation of why one ought to F (BRUNERO, 2018, p. 323). Taking into account this verdict and recognizing that reasons are often outweighed by other reasons, one is to reject an account that does not give a satisfactory account of outweighed reasons.

Finally, the third view faces the problem that not all reasons give us explanation of what is valuable. Brunero (2018, p. 339) argues that reasons for attitudes are given by the way in which attitudes fit the object. For instance, if in some respect something is admirable, then you have reasons to admire that something. Taking into account this feature, Brunero (2018, p. 339) devices a counterexample in which a person has reasons to envy someone because that someone in enviable. Yet, it is hard to think that the case in which one envies someone explains why envying someone is valuable. So, there is a reason to envy someone, without it being the case that this explains why it is valuable for us to envy someone[44] since it is difficult to hold that envy is valuable for us. From the discussion above, we can infer that reasons are primitive and not capable of being analyzed in terms of other concepts that we grasp independently from that of reasons as the concepts of evidence, explanation, and value.

Another feature of these primitive reasons is that they can be motivational or normative (PAAKKUNAINEN, 2018). The first kind of reasons is explanatory. Motivational reasons explain the psychological states that subjects have to F. For instance, a murderer can have motivational reasons to murder, yet this reason hardly justifies murdering since it merely explains why the murderer committed the murder. The justificatory force can come only from normative reasons, since they recommend or call one to F or to not F. For instance, one has reasons that justify, recommend, or call not to murder someone even if one has motivational reasons to commit a murder. From now on, I will only refer to normative reasons because motivational reasons are to be addressed by psychology.

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[44] This is relative to what we find valuable. Nonetheless, Brunero (2018) argues that under any theory of value it is still hard to find in the particular case of envy what can make envying someone valuable for us.

The distinction between normative and motivational reasons is related with the discussion about externalism and internalism about reasons (PAAKKUNAINEN, 2018). On the one hand, the internalist, as Williams and Hume, claims that motivational reasons are also normative reasons since normative reasons by themselves cannot motivate us to F (PAAKKUNAINEN, 2018). The internalist claims that normative reasons require motivation in order to recommend or call us to F. For example, a murderer can have normative reasons to not to murder, yet he needs also a motivational reason[45] to not to murder. If there is no motivational reason, then the normative reasons by themselves lack force to compel the murderer not to murder. On the other hand, the externalist argues that normative reasons recommendation or calling us to F do not require the existence of a motivation. For instance, I need not a motivation to avoid running over people with my car in the street, I simply have a normative reason that recommends and calls for me to not to run over people with my car in the street.

The internalist view of reasons confronts two major problems. First, Paakkunainen (2018, p. 148) argues that normative reasons recommendation or calling us to F under the internalist view depends on contingent features of motivations. In the case of the murderer, he has a reason to not to murder, but his motivations make him unresponsive to this reason. So, he is not called or recommended to not to murder since his contingent motivational status allows him to do not to recognize the reasons he has to not to murder. However, it is highly probable that murderers recognize that they are normatively called not to murder since their ulterior action of hiding or running away requires the understanding that they did something that they did not ought to do. That is, they recognize that they acted against normative reasons that call not to murder, and this requires at least the recognition of at least one normative reason[46].

Second, Parfit (2011, p. 73-74) develops an argument against the internalist view of reasons called The Agony Argument. Briefly, it is a case in which someone knows that some event in the future will cause agony to him, yet he does not have the motivation to avoid this event in the present time. The verdict is that according to the internalist view, the person who is going to be in agony in the future has no reason to avoid his future agony in the present because he does not have a

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[45] Even if Hume and Williams talk about desires and not motivational reasons, I use motivational reasons because it can capture a wider range of mental dispositions beyond desire that might be internal reasons.

[46] Of course, there are cases of people that cannot recognize such reasons as psychopaths, however they can recognize other sorts of normative reasons as the ones we have to believe a valid argument conclusion after accepting the truth of its premises.

present motivation to avoid his future agony, and this is absurd. So, we ought to reject the internalist view on reasons.

However, the rejection of the internalist view about reasons does not entail acceptance of the externalist view about reasons. Externalists must argue against the externalist's view main contender: John Mackie. Mackie (1990, p. 38-39) develops an argument called The Argument from Querness. This argument has two parts, the first one is metaphysical, the second one, epistemological. Roughly, the first part states that if there are prescriptive objective values[47], they would be entities or qualities of a strange sort that are queer with respect to the furnishing of our world that go against our scientific image of the world. The epistemological part of the argument goes like this, even if one accepts the existence of such queer entities or qualities, there has to be some special way in which one has non-causal contact with such entities or qualities to know them. This is at odds with the causal way in which we get in contact with other entities and qualities of the external world. Mackie holds that the only answer to the epistemological challenge of the supporter of these queer qualities or entities is to appeal to a special kind of intuition. Yet this intuition does not explain how do we contact such queer entities or qualities since the nature of such intuition is rather obscure.

Parfit (2013) devices a counter argument to both the metaphysical and the epistemological part of the Queerness Argument. For Parfit (2013, p. 479), normative properties do not exist as stars, planets, and rocks exist. Since we cannot state the question about the existence of normative properties in the same way in which we state the question about the existence of stars, planets, and rocks. It is not clear how one can make sense of the question about the existence or reality of normative properties because they are not spatiotemporal entities. Meanwhile, one can unproblematically make sense of the question about the existence or reality of stars, planets, and rocks since they are spatiotemporal entities.

Parfit's train of thought implies a difference between Metaphysical Cognitivism and Non-Metaphysical Cognitivism (PARFIT, 2013, p. 479). The first view argues that true claims about spatiotemporal objects have metaphysical implications since one must answer questions about their

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[47] I am here following Scanlon's (2014) clarification which states that even if Mackie is arguing against the existence of objective values, one can restate Mackie's view as one that goes against the idea that there are external reasons, since the existence of objective values entail the more general existence of normative reasons.

existence, this view applies only to spatiotemporal situated objects. The second view holds that true claims about non-spatiotemporal objects do not have positive metaphysical implications since one does not need to answer the question about their existence, this applies to non-spatiotemporal objects. That is, true claims about numbers or normative properties are independent from existence claims. One does not need to respond to the metaphysical question about the existence of numbers to know that 2+2=4 is true or to know that one ought to avoid pain. Also, one can think of a scenario where nothing existed, but it is clear that the normative property that one ought to avoid pain still holds as the arithmetic property that 2+2=4 since both arithmetic properties and normative properties exist in a non-ontological way. This means that normative properties and arithmetic properties are not possible or actual, real or unreal in a relevant sense, they have no ontological status (PARFIT, 2013, p. 484).

Therefore, if one is to follow Parfit (2013), one can see that the Querness Argument fails because it confuses two senses of existence and imposes an existence condition that makes sense for spatiotemporal objects to objects that are not spatiotemporal. For example, even if a valid logical proof is written in a blackboard and the symbols of such proof exist in the spatiotemporal world, the property of being a valid logical proof is not in the spatiotemporal world, and therefore it is not a natural property. Also, the validity of logical proofs gives us decisive reason to accept them, so this decisive reason is not part of the spatiotemporal world (PARFIT, 2013, p. 486). One can say that the symbols to exist is for them to be written in the blackboard, yet it is hard to say what it is to exist for the validity of the proof but it is not hard to recognize that the validity of the proof gives us a decisive reason to accept the proof.

Still, this does not explain how we come to have knowledge of properties that do not have ontological status. Parfit (2013, p. 489-490) rejects the need of a special intuition and argues that we can have knowledge that holds in any possible world of such properties by merely thinking about them[48]. Nevertheless, it is not the case that truths about normative properties hold in any possible world because they are analytical since the badness of pain does not follow from the meaning of the word "pain" or "bad". In conclusion, Parfit (2013, p.491) believes that "[…] beliefs

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[48] Scanlon (2014) accepts the same answer to the epistemological challenge of the Queerness Argument. However, Scanlon states more specifically that one can achieve fallible truths about the normative domain through the use of the Reflective Equilibrium method.

can be justified either by their intrinsic credibility, or by our reasons for having them, or both"[49]. By this argument, Parfit states that knowledge of mathematical truths and normative truths do not require a causal connection with their objects since we arrive to those truths by merely thinking about the content of mathematical and normative statements.

To explain how we come to have such ability of grasping the intrinsic credibility that makes beliefs true, Parfit (2013, p. 498) uses as example the case of computers. Computers cannot be affected causally by mathematical properties yet they surely are reliable at giving mathematical true answers to mathematical problems via programmed valid mathematical reasoning. So mathematical valid reasoning is enough to justify mathematical truths. This supports the idea that mathematical reasoning is enough to get to mathematical true statements. In the same way, mathematical reasoning is enough for us to justify our grasp of mathematical truths. Also, by mere reasoning we know what normative truths obtain and what normative truths do not obtain.

To explain this unique ability of human beings, Parfit (2013, p. 494) argues that human beings were selected because of their responsiveness to reasons as cheetahs were selected because of their speed. Hence, human beings' ability to reason validly and to be responsive to epistemic reasons[50] was developed by a process of natural selection. The possibility to respond to epistemic reasons gives us the ability to form other kinds of true beliefs, beliefs of the future, or beliefs about the different effects of possible acts. This ability gave us an evolutive advantage over other animals that did not have this ability. In the same way, our ability to respond to normative reasons also is the result of evolutive processes.

Finally, to defend how beliefs about normative reasons are justified, Parfit (2013, p. 499-500) develops The Validity Argument. According to this argument physics cannot explain the higher-level fact that computers reliably produce true responses to mathematical questions. This fact needs explanation, otherwise it would entail a highly implausible coincidence. Computers reliably produce truths to mathematical questions because their calculations correspond to valid

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[49] Even if Parfit is talking about justified belief and intrinsic credibility, it is clear that the concept of reason *simpliciter* does the work here.

[50] Epistemic reasons are the reasons that recommend or call to believe p. It is an instance of the general case that human beings respond to reasons.

mathematical reasoning. Hence reasoning validity justifies computers' true answers to mathematical questions. In the same way, normative truths are justified by our reasoning processes.

This argument applies to the case of human beings that produce mathematical true beliefs since human beings were selected to produce true beliefs about mathematical questions that cannot be explained merely by human's natural properties of their brains. Parfit (2013, p. 502) argues that "[t]hough we form true mathematical beliefs only because our reasoning is valid, our response to this validity is non-causal, and compatible with physical laws". So, even if the process of reaching mathematical truths via valid mathematical reasoning is non-causal, it is not contra-causal nor miraculous since causal and rational requirements can be fulfilled when one concludes a truth through valid reasoning.

Having said that, I shall argue that Parfit's (2013) answer to Mackie's (1990) metaphysical objection fails. First, even if Parfit avoids the problem of having to describe the oddity of normative properties by arguing that the question about their existence does not make sense, it does not explain the relationship between natural properties and normative properties. Is well known that Parfit argues in favor of the existence of reason-giving-facts. For example, if I am in a burning building, I have reasons to leave that building. This sounds common sense since the fact that the building in which I am is burning gives me reasons to leave that building. However, under Parfit's metaphysical view one can draw normative reasons that are supported by non-natural normative properties from natural properties, even if natural properties and non-natural normative properties exist in radical different senses. Parfit's distinction between Non-Metaphysical Cognitivism and Metaphysical Cognitivism makes murkier the relationship between facts and normative reasons.

Also, the fact that we cannot make sense of the question about the existence of normative properties that give us normative reasons does not entail that we cannot make better questions about the existence of such objects. Parfit (2013) is merely assuming that there is no other sufficiently clear question that can give us a hint of the kind of existence that normative properties have. Yet Scanlon (2014) posits, about the ontological status of normative properties, that the normative consist in a relationship among facts that gives us normative reasons. This hypothesis avoids the problem of how facts and normative reasons relate and that does not incur in the obscure distinction drawn by Parfit between the ontological and the non-ontological. Nevertheless, Scanlon's (2014) view about reasons and the normative needs to be further clarified.

First, let's see how Scanlon (2014, p. 18) avoids Mackie's (1990) objection[51]. Scanlon (2014) points out that there is a limitation in the view that there are only spatiotemporal physical objects, also in that we merely can quantify abstract objects as numbers that are required by our best theories about the world. For it is not clear how the mere quantifying of objects as sets or numbers, which raise ontological concerns to the view that there are only spatiotemporal physical objects, could justify genuine commitment to their existence. So, the naturalistic commitment fails to explain these kinds of objects since it gives us weak reasons to accept the existence of entities that are required by our best theories about the world.

Subsequently, I believe that Scanlon (2014) suggests that the naturalists' commitment is the one that is queer, since it is clear that there are entities, which mere quantification does not explain, that are no reducible to natural properties. In conclusion, we do not have strong reasons to commit with naturalism. In this way, Scanlon (2014) rejects Mackie's (1990) assumption that there are only spatiotemporal physical objects and keeps open the possibility of the existence of other kinds of objects as normative properties or numbers.

However, it is not enough to reject Mackie's existence assumption. It is required an explanation that bests out the commitment to naturalism by means of quantification. Scanlon (2014) develops what I shall call Domains Theory. Scanlon's (2014, p. 19) makes sense of the idea of ontological commitment by positing that there are different ontological domains with their particular truth conditions, so there is in principle a range of possible ontological commitments that correspond to different ontological domains as long as the domain specific commitments do not interfere with another domain specific commitments. Here "domain" does not mean that there are different kinds of existence, rather it means there are different kind of claims that have concepts specific to every domain. For example, the mathematical domain is not a domain of things, but a domain of claims with concepts as prime, imaginary, irrational etc. In this way, Scanlon (2014) avoids the oddity of two realms of ontologically different things, since even if there are arithmetic pure claims, also there are arithmetic claims mixed with physical spatiotemporal objects claims

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[51] Scanlon's (2014) argument holds against Mackie's Queernes Argument, even if Scanlon's (2014, p. 18) discussion is against the quinean view that we only have access to the physical world since it is the only one capable of having a causal relation with our sensory surfaces.

such as that there are eight planets orbiting the Sun. So, Parfit's problem to relate what is ontological and non-ontological is avoided.

To enhance Parfit's ideas on the truth of such claims about numbers or normative properties, Scalon (2014, p. 20) argues that in every domain there are standards that consist in substantive principles as mathematical axioms or scientific generalizations, yet these principles are not self-evident since they are justified by less codified reasoning about the subject matter in question. Hence, these principles are open to scrutiny and can be revised by the reasoning that commands a specific domain. For example, one can believe that the famous counterexample that Galileo constructed to refute the Aristotelian theory of falling objects was devised by assessing the generalizations that Aristotle made to explain falling objects[52]. This counterexample showed that the Aristotle's generalizations were contradictory if one was to reflect on them. So, if our principles yield contradictory results when one reflects about them, one should reject them altogether, reject at least reject one of the principles of the contradictory pair, make distinctions, or reformulate the principles.

Nevertheless, the idea of domains does not entail that domains are separated and do not interact with each other. It is obvious that the different domains interact among each other, for instance, people have normative reasons to act in such and such way or to believe such and such. So, there is a relationship between the psychological, physical, and normative domains. Since, to act because of a normative reason is to respond psychologically to such a reason and have the physical disposition to conform to such a normative reason. In this case, such domains do interact but do not conflict. But surely there are cases in which claims of different domains conflict. Imagine that there is a domain of magic claims that has certain principles as the contagion principle that states that whatever happens to object A, if an object B gets in contact with object A, will happen to object B. So, if I touch a dead body, I shall die. Thus, this principle of the magic domain conflicts with principles of the domain of science since the principle of the magic domain makes claims about the natural world that do not obtain in most of empirical sciences. So, we have decisive reasons to reject the principles of the magic domain.

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[52] Here I am not claiming that physical laws can be known by mere reflection without any observation. Here I claim, with Scanlon (2014), that it is possible by mere reflection to find contradictions within our most general formulations, for example, natural laws. My point leaves open the possibility to refute natural laws by showing that there are contradictory with respect to observation reports of some natural phenomena.

The view above entails that there are two kind of claims: pure claims and mixed claims (SCANLON, 2014, p. 20-21). The pure claims are the ones that are made solely by using the principles and the modes of reasoning of a given domain. Such as that there are infinite prime numbers. The mixed claims are claims that blend different domains. For instance, that there are 4 apples in the table. In the same spirit, the normative domain claims relate with claims of other domains. Yet it is not a conflicting relationship, rather the normative domain needs facts of the natural world to obtain and to normative reasons get a grip on us. For example, if a knife is sharp, I have a reason to not to press my hand against its edge. That is, I ought not to press my hand against the edge of a sharp knife.

Until now we have seen that Mackie's (1990) objection against the metaphysical existence of normative properties and the possibility of knowing such qualities or entities does not hold. Nevertheless, reasons need to be further explained. As stated previously, I rejected Parfit's characterization of reasons for it did not manage to show how other natural properties give us normative reasons to act, believe, or feel. Now I am going to develop Scanlon's (2014) views on reasons that I believe successfully relate our normative claims with factual claims.

For Scanlon (2014, p. 30), normative reasons that count in favor of something are relations that hold among facts, persons, circumstances, actions or attitudes. It has the form R (p, x, c, a) where p is a fact that holds, x is a person that has a reason, c is such and such circumstance, and a is the action or attitude. So, in the case that this relationship holds, one can say that a person in such and such situation has a reason to do something or to hold an attitude if p holds. For example, the fact that a building is burning, and the circumstance that I am in that building that is burning, gives me reasons to get out of the building in which I am, or gives me reasons to believe that my life is in danger.

Reasons can be objective or subjective. The difference between both kinds of reasons depends on how the fact p is related to the person in such and such circumstance, and how the circumstances c are related to the agent (Scanlon, 2014, p. 31-32). For instance, the fact that a friend is in a burning building, gives me subjective reasons to act in such and such way. As an objective reason, the fact that someone is in a burning building, independently of one's friendship with that someone, gives objective reasons to act in such and such way. In the first case, the fact is essentially related with the person. In the second case, the fact gives reasons to anyone. Also, the

distinction between subjective and objective reasons comes by depending on the circumstances of the person who has a reason. For example, a fire-fighter, because of the institutional circumstances in which she is, has personal reasons to get into a burning building that most of us do not have. In what follows, I shall only take into account the objective reasons.

I believe that Scanlon's (2014) view on reasons is clearer about how facts give us reasons because reasons are not a thing or a property but a relation that can obtain or not obtain if the fact and the circumstances do obtain or do not obtain. Hence there is a link of supervenience[53] between facts and normative reasons that is not logical nor conceptual. Through this relationship, normative reasons will vary if natural facts vary, and normative reasons do not vary if natural facts remain the same (SCANLON, 2014, p. 33). Yet this position requires further argument against an objection that states that it is not possible to derive from facts normative reasons.

In particular, David Hume is known as the one who introduced the fact/value distinction and gave strong arguments in favor of this distinction[54]. Hume (*Treatise* 3.1.1) develops several arguments against the idea that reason is the cause of human action. Firstly, he states that reason gives us only truth and falsity. Secondly, that there is no truth nor falsity about human actions. Thus, reason is not the cause of human actions. Also, Hume makes a distinction between knowledge by relation of ideas and matter of fact to state that if reason is to be the cause of human action, it must be through relation of ideas since it is the only way in which the cause of human actions can be *a priori*.

According to this view, the fact that I am inside a burning building does not give me reasons to leave the building. It is needed a motivation to act since from the fact that the building is burning, one cannot derive that one ought to get out of it. To explain this restriction, Hume (*Treatise* 3.1.1) argues that

> In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remark'd, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surpriz'd to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, *is*, and *is not*, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an *ought*, or an *ought not*. This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence. For as this *ought*, or *ought not*,

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[53] Mclaughlin; Bennett (2018) define "supervenience" as "A set of properties A supervenes upon another set B just in case no two things can differ with respect to A-properties without also differing with respect to their B-properties".

[54] Even if Hume could not have a clue about the future debates about the nature of normativity and the conflict between our scientific image of the world and the existence of normative properties, he recognizes that there are philosophical conundrums about normative claims derived from factual claims.

> expresses some new relation or affirmation, 'tis necessary that it shou'd be observ'd and explain'd; and at the same time that a reason shou'd be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it.

Here, Hume is arguing that there is an invalid passage from the statements that describe a state of things as "The building in which I am is burning" to statements that prescribe a state of things as "I ought to get out of the burning building in which I am". One can say that there is a *non sequitur* fallacy. This argument states a strong objection against Scanlon's (2014) idea that there is a relationship of supervenience between normative reasons and facts.

Against the Humean objection, one can answer that we commonly derive from a state of things a prescriptive state of things. Our common sense would require us to leave a building that is burning, not because of a motivation but merely by knowing that the building is burning. Even if one does not have the motivation to leave the building, one can recognize that one ought to get out of the burning building. That is, one has reasons to leave the burning building. But it is not enough to appeal to our common sense. The relationship of supervenience requires further argument.

Scalon's (2014) Domains Theory gives us an argument to avoid Hume's objection. As noted previously, there are many domains with their own principles and their own modes of reasoning. Hume's argument presupposes that there is only one possible mode of reasoning, since he requires that deduction from claims of states of things must conclude in other claims of states of things. Yet, this is a mode of reasoning suited for scientific reasoning, and not necessarily for practical reasoning. Practical reasoning, as common sense shows, naturally deduces from states of things prescriptive states of things. Also, claims that prescribe a state of things derived from claims about state of things are not a negation or go against state of things, they are compatible with them. That is, the normative domain does not make claims that conflict with the scientific domain.

In addition, let's remember that Scanlon (2014) makes a distinction between pure claims and mixed claims. The pure normative claims are independent of p obtaining. So, the "[…] normative content lies in the claim that, whether p obtains or not, *should* p hold then it is a reason for someone in *c* to do *a*" (SCANLON, 2014, p. 37). This is a pure normative statement since it is normative even if there is no information about p obtaining. These pure normative claims give normative significance to non-normative properties. In this way one can derive from "The building in which I am is burning" to "I ought to get out of building in which I am", if one assumes the pure

normative claim that "Anyone in such circumstances has a reason to do what is necessary to prolong his life" (SCANLON, 2014, p. 39). This pure normative claim allows the move from a statement about state of things to a statement that prescribes a state of things. In this way, Hume's argument against the possibility to derive an ought from an is is avoided.

It remains the question about how these reasons "get a grip on us". That is, about the force of normative reasons. The question about the normative force of reasons is why one must respond to normative reasons. Some philosophers ground the normative force of reasons in our desires or motives as Williams and Hume (PAAKKUNAINEN, 2018; SCANLON, 2014); others, as Korsgaard (1996), ground the normative force of reasons in given facts about our specific identity. However, William's view was showed problematic when we discussed external and internal reasons, and Korsgaard (1996) position supposes reasons since one must have normative reasons to choose a specific identity among others. So, the normative force of reasons is not grounded on any other fact or is constructed by processes, rather it comes from the mere fact that a reason is a consideration to do something or hold and attitude since it is nonsencial to ask what reasons one has to have reasons (SCANLON, 2014, p. 98). Also, in a negative way, one can recognize the normative force of a reason when one is openly rationally criticized when one does not respond to certain normative reason.

This view on reasons as considerations that have certain amount of force brings us to the idea that reasons are to be compared depending on the force they have. For instance, Socrates had to choose between the use rhetorical devices to be absolved from guilt and stay alive, or tell the truth and be put to death. That is, Socrates had to compare the reasons that he had to use rhetorical devices against the reasons he had to tell the truth. Brunero (2018, p. 325) and Broome (2013, p. 52) point out that to compare the force of reasons is like weighing objects on scales[55]. So, the reasons that Socrates had to tell to truth and be put to death were heavier than the reasons he had to use rhetorical devices to save himself. In the same way, we have more reasons to put on the radio if a friend is in an important interview, than to put on the radio if we simply want to enjoy music. Still we have to explain what makes some reasons stronger than others.

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[55] Both, Brunero (2018) and Broome (2013) express that such analogy is not perfect since one can have reasons that are incommensurable, reasons which weights is not always additive, or reasons that do not have a precise numerical value. Yet both accept that the analogy is useful to understand the weighing relations among reasons.

First of all, it is clear that in order to know the relative weight of a reason with respect to another, one has to compare the weight of reasons. Hence reasons weight is compared only with respect to other reasons weight. Parfit (2011, p. 33) says that one has a sufficient reason when such reason is not weaker nor outweighed by other reasons. For instance, I have sufficient reason to believe that the anthropological model of human evolution Out of Africa that states that modern humans evolved in Africa to subsequently spread around the planet Earth is true, even if there are models that state that there were independent evolutive strains outside Africa that led to the development of modern humans. That is, the reasons that I have to hold the belief attitude towards the Out of Africa model are not outweighed nor weaker than the reasons that I have to believe alternative models. Yet, I have no decisive reasons to definitively believe the Out of Africa model since there can be reasons that I am not aware of that can tilt the balance against the Out of Africa model.

Meanwhile, a reason is decisive when these are stronger than our reasons to act or believe in some other way (PARFIT, 2011, p. 32). For instance, if one believes an argument premises to be true, and the argument formal structure is valid, then one has decisive reasons to believe the conclusion. If not, one is prone to heavy rational criticism. Still it is hard to find this kind of reasons outside mathematics or logic. As we can see, both weights, decisive and sufficient, are drawn from the relationship among reasons.

In brief, we have that normative reasons are primitive and hold a relationship of calling, recommending, or requiring one to hold an attitude, to act in some way, or feel something. They count in favor of F-ing, and justify that F-ing. They are conformed by a relationship of facts, persons, attitudes or actions, and circumstances. Facts relate with normative reasons by a relationship of supervenience. And finally, reasons can be weighed by comparing reasons to other reasons. Hence, one can have sufficient or decisive reasons to F.

Above I said that the role of philosophical propositions is to be reasons that require philosophical laws. Hence philosophical propositions inherit all the properties that we have explained about reasons with the particularity that they require philosophical laws, which I shall

explain latter. First, philosophical propositions are primitive[56], since it is hard to come up with a reason to justify philosophical propositions[57]. Second, philosophical propositions are external and objective in the sense that they call, recommend, or require of everyone that recognizes them to hold an attitude, to act in some way, or to feel in a specific way. Third, under this view, philosophical propositions presuppose knowledge[58] of the world and do not yield it nor give foundation for it. Hence, philosophical propositions, and philosophy in general, are a consequence of our knowledge of the world and not the foundation of such knowledge as Kant wanted, or a source of knowledge by its own right as the strongcognitivist and weakcognitivist want. Finally, philosophical propositions can be weighed against each other for they are sufficient to believe, to act, or to feel in some way as long as factual claims and circumstances do not modify the normative force of the reasons that require a philosophical law.

Before getting into the explanation of what is a philosophical law, I will illustrate how this picture of philosophical propositions works. Here is an aporia that besieged Ancient philosophers. First, it is an obvious fact that things change. Second, it is an obvious fact that we use names to refer to things and that using names requires named things to be unchanged. If the first statement is true, the second statement is false. If the second statement is true, the first statement is false. So, or things change, and we cannot name[59] things, or we can name things, and things do not change[60]. The first view on the problem has the form: the fact that things change in any circumstance give reasons to believe that we cannot name things. The second view on the problem has the form: the fact that we can name things in any circumstance give reasons to believe that things do not change.

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[56] It is important to remember that the structure of reasons is the one that is primitive, yet the content of such structure is not. So, philosophical propositions that amount to reasons have a primitive structure, yet its content is not primitive since it depends on contingent facts.

[57] Aristotle apparently saw this too. Here is an argument in favor of the primitiveness of philosophy: If you ought to philosophize you ought to philosophize; and if you ought not to philosophize you ought to philosophize: therefore, in any case you ought to philosophize. For if philosophy exists, we certainly ought to philosophize, since it exists; and if it does not exist, in that case too we ought to inquire why philosophy does not exist and by inquiring we philosophize; for inquiry is the cause of philosophy. (F 51 R (Elias. *Prolegomena Philosophiae* 3.17-23)). This argument is meant to support the idea that philosophy cannot be neglected nor supported, for its neglection or support is philosophical. This position reminds the one Scanlon (2014) has about reasons: it is nonsense to ask what reasons one has to have reasons.

[58] I believe that our total amount of knowledge is the set of all empirical and formal sciences true propositions and common sense true propositions. Even if there can be conflicts between common sense and empirical and formal sciences, common sense can be adjusted to science claims.

[59] This is the choice famously accepted by Cratylus.

[60] This is the choice famously accepted by Parmenides.

Both reasons are what I call a philosophical proposition since both gives reasons that require a philosophical law.

4.4   On Philosophical Laws

Explained the role of philosophical propositions, let's see what is a philosophical law. First of all, a law is a system of prescriptive rules that bears authority over our actions, thoughts, and feelings (GREEN; ADAM, 2019). So, the concept of law can be analyzed in terms of authoritative prescriptive rules that guide our actions, thoughts, and feelings. First, we have to answer what a rule is. Boghossian (2015, p. 4) argues that: since rules are contents of an intentional attitude of acceptance, they are required to be abstract objects as numbers. For instance, I accept the rule that I ought not to take other's private property or I accept the rule that all construction workers ought to wear helmet during work. The content of such intentional attitude specifies permissions or requirements that are truth evaluative in the case in which construction workers do use helmets during work, and general since it applies to all workers. That is, rules are about types of states of affairs, for example, that the construction workers ought to wear helmet during work (BOGHOSSIAN, 2015, p. 6).

Nevertheless, it is the case that laws are created. This fact entails that a system of prescriptive rules that bears authority over our actions, thoughts, and feelings is a created entity. So, Boghossian's (2015) claim that rules are abstract entities is at odds with the idea that one can create abstract objects for it is difficult to make sense of an object that is abstract and at the same time is created[61]. As we have seen above, the idea of abstract objects presents metaphysical and epistemological difficulties, and the way in which Scanlon (2014) resolves such difficulties does not entail the possibility of creating abstract objects as the kind of abstract objects that Boghossian (2015) has in mind. Even if a domain of claims has certain principles and modes of reasoning that can be revised or created, Scanlon's (2014) view does not imply that we create abstract objects since what we create are claims, principles, and modes of reasoning.

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[61] Even if there are abstract objects that are created as equator or a linguistic system, they are not the kind of abstract object that Boghossian has in mind since Boghossian is talking about propositional content. Therefore, Boghossian's claim is that one can create abstract objects of the same category as numbers or propositions which is odd.

Hence, Boghossian's (2015, p. 5) view on abstract objects is prone to Mackie's (1990) objection because abstract objects for Boghossian (2015) are "[…] within a framework in which we talk not about *creating* abstracta, but about *selecting* them, or *discovering* them". Hence one can ask Boghossian (2015) by what means one discovers, or how one discriminates one abstracta from other abstracta in order to select one over another? The answer to both questions requires casual interaction and a sort of intuition to grasp such abstract objects.

Yet, Boghossian (2015, p. 6) tries to avoid such problems by arguing that it is possible to hold without contradiction a temporal and atemporal[62] view on rules. For rules can exist before they become laws. A person who states a law takes previously existing abstract rules and turns them into a legal norm about behavior. For instance, the chess game creator took rules that were abstract and captured them in the laws of behavior that anyone must follow if she has the intention to play chess. So, according to Boghossian (2015) the question is not about whether rules exist or do not exist, but what is needed for rules to be norms of behavior independently of our acceptance of them. In Boghossian's (2015) view, rules are atemporal as long as they are merely rules and come to be temporal when they are articulated into laws that bear authority over our behavior. However, I believe that Boghossian's (2015) argument does not dissolve the tension between the idea that rules are abstract and that rules can be created. Since it is clear that there is a kind of grasp of such atemporal rules that is necessary to make sense of Boghossian (2015) position on rules that remains to be explained and is prone, again, to Mackie's (1990) objection.

In order to avoid the problems raised from the idea that rules are abstract entities, we need to adopt another view on rules. First of all, rules, under Hage's (2015) view, are not regulative. That is, rules do not regulate our behavior nor are normative[63], rather they have a constitutive nature and constrain possible worlds by imposing an ontological structure on the world. As we saw earlier, reasons can fulfil the behavior regulation function that is taken away from rules. So, rules are not true or false, rather they are valid or invalid. A rule is valid when the facts match the rule. For instance, the rule that all thieves are punishable is valid for if somebody is a thief, then he is

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[62] Even if Boghossian (2015) talks solely of the atemporal characteristic of abstract objects, it is obvious that this implies non-spatial characteristics of abstract objects since all objects that are in time also are in space, and vice versa.
[63] This position avoids the problem of how one can follow a rule if the understanding of the rule that one is to follow requires the understanding of a higher-order rule that explains the content of the first-order rule. That is, the idea that one follows rules consciously has a vicious infinite regress (Kozak, 2015).

punishable. This rule brings about the new fact that if someone is a thief, that someone is punishable.

Second, even if "If someone is a thief, that someone is punishable" looks like a descriptive sentence and as a rule at the same time, there is a difference in direction of fit between sentences that describe facts and sentences that constrain possible worlds. Sentences can have one of two directions of fit: word-to-world direction of fit and world-to-word direction of fit (Hage, 2015, p. 17-18). The first direction corresponds to descriptive sentences that achieve their objective if they match the facts that they describe. The second direction corresponds to sentences that express rules that achieve their objective if they impose constraints to the world. To see more clearly this distinction, Green (2017) gives the next example:

> [A] woman sends her husband to the grocery store with a list of things to procure; unbeknownst to him he is also being trailed by a detective concerned to make a list of what the man buys. By the time the husband and detective are in the checkout line, their two lists contain exactly the same items. The contents of the two lists are identical, yet they differ along another dimension. For the contents of the husband's list guide what he puts in his shopping cart.

In the example above, we have identical lists but the difference relies in our attitudes with respect to them. In the case of the detective, if his list fails to describe the groceries that the husband bought, one says that the list is wrong or that it is false. That is, the list fails to describe a fact. Yet, if the husband's groceries list has an item that the husband did not buy, one does not say that the list is wrong or that it is false. That is, since the list of the detective is made with the intention to describe a state of things, we say, when it fails to describe that state of things, that the list is wrong or false. Meanwhile, the husband's list is made with the intention to bring about a state of things, so if it fails, we say that the list is not valid since the list failed to bring about a state of things. This second interpretation is required for the expression of rules as in the sentence "all thieves are punishable".

Hence, we have that rules set constraints on the world because of their direction of fit. Now, let's see more in detail what means to set a constraint on the world. Hage (2015, p. 22) holds that "[c]onstraints determine which states of affairs can go together in a possible world". He defines

"possible worlds"[64] as: "A possible world is a set of states of affairs that are compatible relative to some set of constraints C, in the sense that the facts of that world satisfy the constraints in C". "States of affairs" is understood as the content expressed by a declarative sentence without the necessity that what is expressed is true. That is, what is expressed only needs to be potentially true. Further, "[...] every set of constraints defines a set of worlds that are possible relative to these set" (HAGE, 2015, p. 23). Hence, we have that a possible world that is made of states of affairs can only be possible if it complies with a set of constraints. So, the direction of fit of rules makes a possible world possible only if the states of affairs of this possible world satisfy certain set of constraints. For instance, a logical constraint states that there is no possible world in which John is a thief and John is not a thief. Or a physical constraint states that a world to be possible it is required not to allow objects to travel faster than the speed of light. Or a semantic constraint is that a circle cannot be a square.

Yet, physical, logical, and semantic/conceptual constraints are objective. That is, they are mind independent. This is not the case of rules, which we create and derogate, etc. Hage (2015, p. 26) states that there are two kinds of constraints: hard constraints and soft constraints. Hard constraints are like logical, physical or semantic/conceptual constraints. They appear to be necessary for a world to be possible since worlds that go against those constraints appear to be impossible, and they appear to be constraints that are mind independent. Then, we have that there is a set of basic constraints, as hard constraints, and there is a set of non-basic constraints as soft constraints. For instance, there is no possible world in which a circle is at the same time a square. Meanwhile, rules that we create are soft in the sense that they depend on the existence of humans, as the rule that all thieves are punishable. These rules can exist or not exist in possible worlds where logical constraints necessarily exist (Hage, 2015, p. 25). Having all this in mind, now we can go on to explain what is a philosophical law.

A philosophical law is a system of philosophical rules that sets soft constraints on which worlds are philosophically possible. These philosophical laws are required by philosophical propositions that depend on the current knowledge of the world. Philosophical propositions by means of our knowledge about the world give us reasons to set determinate philosophical

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[64] The use of the philosophical idea of possible world does not entail circularity since I am not giving explanations, thus I cannot suppose what I want to explain. Rather, I am elaborating a philosophical picture that uses the idea of possible world as a philosophical resource to attain systematicity, persuasiveness, and fruitfulness.

constraints on the world. These philosophical rules are not normative but constitutive. And they are created by philosophers by weighing philosophical propositions in tension. Let's remember the aporia that besieged philosophers in Antiquity to illustrate this point. First, it is an obvious fact that things change. Second, it is an obvious fact that we use names to refer to things and that using names requires named things to be unchanged[65]. Yet, if the first one is inconsistent with the second one, then the second one is inconsistent with the first one, and vice versa. To make sense of both philosophical propositions above, philosophers create laws.

Parmenides[66], for example, creates the constraint that there must be an entity, a Being, that is unchangeable in order to make sense of naming, so he rejects that change is embedded in the ultimate structure of reality. This constraint creates the need for further constraints that are required to make full sense of the existence of a realm of the unchangeable as posited by Parmenides. For example, Parmenides needs to hold the further constraint that there is: a world of change and a world of Being that is unchangeable. Yet, this requires from Parmenides a further constraint on how we know this Being, and this takes him to state another set of constraints, and so on. This process goes on until Parmenides has a system of rules that we can call a philosophical law. In this case, Parmenides is legislating upon the world and not describing it. He weighed reasons that are both sufficient but incompatible, and takes the path of unchangeableness over the path of flux. This is a typical example of what philosophers call a trade-off between the reasons we have to believe that the world is such and such and the reasons that we have to believe that it is possible that such and such[67].

One can say the same thing of Plato. He states that these philosophical propositions are compatible if there are unchangeable objects that relate with the changeable objects by means of participation. This takes him to state further constraints on the nature of the soul in order to make it capable to grasp such objects, etc. In this way, Plato creates another system of rules that we can call Plato's laws. Note that Plato's and Parmenides' law systems require further constraints to make sense of their rule systems. So, for Parmenides, a possible world in which we have reasons to

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[65] Rescher (2006) believes that these propositions are plausible but so general that there is no way to know that they are true. Yet we know that one cannot entertain both. It is true that both are reasons, but this does not make true their content.

[66] Here I am not entering in the highly problematic task of interpreting Parmenides' nor Plato's philosophies. My aim is to illustrate in a simple way how the notion of philosophical law works.

[67] One can see this general from in many philosophical disputes. For example, nominalism/platonism, free will/determinism, etc.

believe that everything changes and that we are able to use language, requires of constraints as the existence of Being. For Plato, the same applies, but he creates a different set of constraints to make sense of those reasons.

Earlier, I argued that philosophy is a consequence of our total knowledge of the world. If philosophical reasons depend on our total knowledge of the world, and philosophical laws depend on the tension philosophical reasons, then philosophical laws depend on our total knowledge of the world. Imagine a world in which there is a language that has no substantives but impersonal verbs qualified by adverbs[68]. A sentence of such language can be intelligible without the idea of unchangeability. "The moon is rising" can be translated to "It is mooning upwards". Both describe the same event, the first from the point of view of a language that requires unchangeability because there is a substantive that performs an action. The second one, describes the event from the point of view of a language that does not require unchangeability because there is not an object performing an action, but a process. Under this second view, the philosophical proposition "it is an obvious fact that we use names to refer to things and that using names requires named things to be unchanged" does not hold. Therefore, there is no need to create a philosophical rule that gives us a constraint that ensures the possibility of naming things in the face of change.

Another way in which a philosophical law cannot set constraint on a possible world is when philosophical constraints go against a hard constraint. For example, Plato believed that one has reasons to believe that we name things successfully and that things are always changing. To hold this, he needed to constrain upon the world the existence of Ideas that were in another realm. These Ideas were unchangeable. So, they would fix the reference, even if things in the world continuously change. Yet, this requires the constraint that these Ideas communicate with the changeable world. This raises the third man objection in which if there is a form that informs certain objects, then that form is itself in the set of those certain objects since they share the same form, so, there must be a second order form that informs the first order form. The same happens with this second order form, and it requires another third order form, etc. So, the constraint that Ideas communicate with things in the changeable world via participation fails to be a constraint of a possible world since it goes against the hard constraints of logic. Hence, Plato's rules do not yield a possible world. Nevertheless, there is always the possibility to restate a problematic constraint in another way to

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[68] Jorge Luis Borges conceived such a language in his story Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius (1974).

keep Plato's law capable of constructing a possible world. Also, one can reject the facts that support the philosophical proposition, so that philosophical proposition loses its normative force and is not capable to give rise to tension that requires philosophical rules.

Further, philosophical laws cannot be true nor false because of their direction of fit. They are no descriptive sentences that can be false if they do not obtain. One can say that it is false that one has a reason to require a philosophical rule, but one cannot say that a philosophical rule is false. In this sense, philosophical rules set constraints to bring about to existence certain entities as Being, Ideas, or the Unmoved Mover. If philosophical propositions have normative force to put us in a position of aporia, these philosophical rules posit the existence of certain objects that take away the tension by constraining how it is possible for one to entertain philosophical propositions that gives us contrary reasons to believe.

One can argue that the case of Parmenides and Plato does not apply to current philosophy where problems are piecemeal and do not require whole systems of rules. Yet, I believe that this objection does not hold since philosophers even dealing with piecemeal problems that do not require the construction of a whole set of philosophical rules as the epistemological significance of disagreement utilize constraints to make their points. For instance, we saw that Lackey (2010) makes a distinction between ordinary disagreement and idealized disagreement. This distinction can be interpreted as a constraint on a possible world to make sense of the philosophical propositions "there is disagreement" and "we know propositions on which we disagree". That is, Lackey (2010) wants to hold that we can know propositions on which we disagree if we take them to be under the constraint that they are ordinary disagreements. When she makes this distinction, she is not describing the world, but setting a constraint on a possible world that allows us believe without aporia that we can to know propositions of which we disagree.

4.5   On the consequences of this view

First of all, how this view stands in the face of disagreement? I believe that philosophers disagree not about the reasons, nor the facts that support philosophical constraints, but disagree about the philosophical constraints on possible worlds. For instance, Plato's and Parmenides' disagreement about the possibility of language and change is about what is the rule that produces a more coherent possible world. They do not disagree about the reasons that bring about the aporia

or the facts. So, the disagreement problem in which we were required to be skeptical with respect to philosophical knowledge since one intelligent, well informed, philosopher believes p and another philosopher with the same attributes believes no p dissolves. I did that by introducing a constraint into the world. That is, the idea of a philosophical rule tries to make sense of the fact that philosophers are intelligent and well informed and the fact that we should be skeptical about philosophical knowledge by producing a possible world in which there are philosophical rules that dissolve the tension between the two philosophical propositions by stating the constraint that philosophers create rules rather than acquire knowledge.

Moreover, disagreement comes about when we have contradictory views on p. Yet, since philosophical rules do not have truth values, rather there is a competition among a set of constraints and their capacity to produce coherent possible worlds[69]. This appeals to philosophers' creative forces and not to the description of a state of affairs. So, when philosophers believe that they are describing the world, they are really introducing constraints that make sense of philosophical propositions of the same normative force. This also applies to our practice of exchanging reasons. Philosophers agree on what reasons we have and the tension between certain reasons, yet they exchange opinions on the coherence of the possible worlds that are posited by philosophers, and how those worlds hold in front of hard constraints, or in front of new facts that can make weak the force of certain philosophical propositions. Finally, under this view we can say that philosophers are not to interpret the world nor to change it, but to create one.

5 CONCLUSION

Kant´s philosophy questioned the paradigmatic role of philosophy as a theory about the world. This brought a distinction between science and philosophy that endured centuries. Philosophy after Kant was regarded as the study and foundation of knowledge in general, and specifically of empirical sciences. However, Kant´s influence and his moderate skepticism about

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[69] Here I am not claiming that philosophical rules enter in inferential relations of compatibility or incompatibility with other constraints, rather I am claiming that philosophical rules, that is constitutive rules, are incompatible with other rules in that they strike us as absurd in front of hard constraints or sets of soft constraints. For instance, if I create the constitutive rule that we must have unicorns as the only legal mean of transport, that law does not strike us false, since laws cannot be false, but absurd. In the same way, when a philosophical rule is not compatible with another philosophical rule of the same system of rules, or with a hard constraint, then it strikes us an absurd rather than false. A philosophical example, the idea of Aristotle's Unmoved Mover strikes nowadays as absurd rather than blatantly false, since there could be such an object but it is absurd for such an object to exist.

the capacity of philosophy to produce knowledge about the world diminished during the second half of the XX century, and philosophy started to be regarded again as a science. Yet this movement towards the restoration of the place of philosophy among sciences has been contested. Many philosophers have argued that philosophical disagreement emerges as a challenge that ought to wake us from our dogmatic slumbers. These oscillating movements between pessimism and optimism about the cognitive role of philosophy bring up the question about the path philosophy ought to follow. This shows that philosophy is not an ahistorical discipline, and also stresses the importance of the knowledge of the history of philosophy to address philosophical problems from the perspective of how they have been constructed since our concept of philosophy is historical rather than an *a priori* given abstracta.

The recognition of this oscillation during the history of philosophy required the question about philosophy itself. Philosophy becomes conscious of its problems by looking at its past. Yet, the question about philosophy had to be analyzed and criticized since ill asked questions bring up confusion rather than clarity. Hence, I rejected the question that strikes us as more plausible, and advanced a question that I think would yield less confusion. Philosophical propositions supposedly have a cognitive role. That is, they describe the world. This description could be one that equates philosophical descriptions of the world to scientific descriptions of the world, or be idiosyncratic philosophical descriptions of the world. The first one I called, strong cognitivism, the second one, weak cognitivism. The first one did not resemble what we do as philosophers: exchange reasons. But the second one was more suited to represent our exchange reasons.

Even so, weak cognitivism was tested by the disagreement challenge. Under the four available interpretations of the epistemic significance of disagreement, the possibility of philosophy as a cognitive endeavor did not hold. Disagreement presented itself as a kind of higher-order evidence that defeated our reasons to justifiably have philosophical knowledge, and so defeated the possibility of philosophical propositions of playing a cognitive role. This conclusion raised worrisome questions about philosophical practice. Why would we exchange reasons if the product of such activity is a cognitive failure? In front of this worry, one can abandon once for all philosophy or search for new paths to make our philosophical practice relevant. Even if the first option is tempting, the second one seems to be more fruitful and committed to salvage philosophers' exchange of reasons.

Again, we recurred to history in order to track an alternative view on philosophical practice. Philosophers during antiquity and Kant regarded philosophers as lawgivers. Under this view, philosophers do not passively describe the world, but actively create ways to make sense of it. What triggers this necessity of philosophers to create these ways of making sense of the world is the equal normative force of philosophical propositions in favor of inconsistent propositions. How is it possible that x if y? in order to make sense of such tension, philosophers create constraints that bear on possible worlds to show how our actual world is possible. Thus, philosophers establish constraints by the creation of systems of rules that I called philosophical laws. These systematic constraints require internal coherence and external coherence. The internal coherence is given by the internal relationship of philosophical rules, and external coherence is given by the external relationship of philosophical rules with strong constraints as the ones given by logic. This view preservers the reasons exchange and give philosophers a more active task: that of creating the world.

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