

PHILOSOPHICAL DISAGREEMENT VERSUS PHILOSOPHICAL KNOWLEDGE ¹

Desacordo filosófico contra o conhecimento filosófico

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ABSTRACT

We will argue that philosophical disagreement gives us good reasons to be skeptical about philosophical knowledge. First, we will present the case of PHILOSOPHERS to produce a skeptical verdict when it comes to philosophical disagreements. Then, we will discuss the symmetry and centrality conditions to clarify why PHILOSOPHERS yields a skeptical verdict. Both conditions make philosophical disagreement an undefeated defeater for our philosophical beliefs. Second, we will discuss the Equal Weight (EW) as the view that requires parties to a disagreement to suspend judgment if parties comply with the symmetry and centrality conditions. Finally, we will discuss Kelly's (2016) arguments against the skeptical outcomes of EW when applied to philosophical disagreement. We conclude that Kelly's defense fails to defuse the skeptical outcomes of EW applied to philosophical disagreement.

Key-words: epistemic peers. philosophical disagreement. skepticism. metaphilosophy

RESUMO

Argumentaremos que o desacordo filosófico nos dá boas razões para sermos céticos sobre o conhecimento filosófico. Primeiro, apresentaremos o caso de FILÓSOFOS para chegar a um veredicto cético quando se trata de desacordos filosóficos. Em seguida, discutiremos as condições de simetria e centralidade para esclarecer por que FILÓSOFOS produz um veredicto cético. Ambas condições fazem que o desacordo filosófico derrote, sem ser derrotado, a justificação de nossas crenças filosóficas. Em segundo lugar, discutiremos Peso Equivalente (PE) como a visão que exige que as partes em desacordo suspendam o julgamento se as partes cumprirem com as condições de

¹ <https://doi.org/10.51359/2357-9986.2022.253892>

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simetria e centralidade. Finalmente, discutiremos os argumentos de Kelly (2016) contra os resultados céticos de PE quando aplicados ao desacordo filosófico. Concluimos que a defesa de Kelly não consegue neutralizar os resultados céticos do PE aplicados ao desacordo filosófico.

Palavras-Chave: pares epistêmicos. desacordo filosófico. ceticismo. meta-filosofia

1.

Disagreement among philosophers has been a long-standing feature of philosophy since its inception. Intuitively, disagreement has consequences on what we should believe. We often find ourselves perplexed by disagreements on religion, science, and politics. Yet, even if there is disagreement among scientists, believers, and politicians, philosophers emerge as a special case, for they belong to a field fraught with disagreement. Normally, we believe scientists and politicians can reach common ground on what to believe. In the case of believers, we believe, for instance, that there is not much use in disagreeing on the nature or quantity of supernatural entities. In the first case, there is still hope of agreement. In the second one, there is hopelessness. Meanwhile, philosophers combine both hope and hopelessness in that they rigorously pursue answers to meaningful and fundamental questions and, at the same time, disagree with each other on those answers.

The following case comprises a common situation among philosophers.

PHILOSOPHERS - You and your friend are leading philosophers because of the dialectical expertise and vast knowledge of the relevant literature in a specialized area of philosophy (say, the philosophy of mind). Both of you publish philosophical papers and books in the most renowned journals and editorials. Most of the time, both agree concerning areas of philosophical inquiry, which are not far from the specialized area of inquiry of both of you (epistemology), and reject arguments because of deficient formal reasoning. Even while friends, both of you have never discussed the research programs independently developed by each one. One day you and your friend disclose all the research program details to each other and en-

counter that you and your friend have contradictory views concerning the metaphysics of the mind. Let's say that you are a physicalist, and your friend is a propriety dualist. Before, during, and after the disclosure, both of you are under normal cognitive functioning conditions. How confident are you that your theory is the right one?

2.

One of the main features of the above case is that disagreement among both philosophers is *faultless*. Some philosophers argue that disagreement among philosophers is faultless since philosophers' parties to disagreement have access to high-quality evidence and have nearly equal assessment capacities⁴ to process that high-quality evidence (PLANT, 2012, p. 571; KORNBLITH, p. 2010). That is, disputants in philosophical disagreements have even access to evidence and assessment capacities. Hence, appeal to defective reasoning, lack of evidence, or uneven cognitive capacities is not a reason to settle a disagreement. In PHILOSOPHERS, it is implausible to point out a lack of evidence or a lack of cognitive capacities to assess the evidence, for both philosophers are aware of the latest philosophical arguments in journals, books, and colloquia. Also, both philosophers publish in journals and editorials with the highest standards. This kind of disagreement, where there is no way to break the tie, raises skeptical worries towards the disputed proposition on the nature of the mind. Intuitively, we recognize that there is no way to decide who speaks the truth about the subject matter in dispute.

This intuition raises because the faultless disagreement is evidence against the evidence that supports a proposition (MATHESON, 2015; FUMERTON, 2010; KELLY, 2011). The relationship between faultless disagreement and the disputed proposition is explained by the relationship between two kinds of evidence: first order evidence that gives epistemic reasons to believe a proposition *p*, and higher-order evidence that gives episte-

⁴ Of course, not all philosophers are peers. Paradigmatic cases of philosophers of outstanding capacities and access to high-quality evidence are not rare. One commonplace example in the disagreement literature is the dispute between Lewis and van Inwagen on the compatibility between determinism and free will. The fact that philosophers of this magnitude disagree on such a fundamental tenet raises suspicion on the epistemic credentials philosophers have to believe in incompatibilism or compatibilism.

mic reasons to believe first-order evidence. That is, faultless disagreement is undefeated higher-order evidence that defeats first-order evidence. In the face of faultless disagreement, the epistemic reasons provided by undefeated higher-order evidence defeat the reasons given by first-order evidence.⁵

Faultless disagreement is possible when parties to the disagreement are epistemic peers. Epistemic peerhood occurs when “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). Faultless disagreement must meet five conditions to raise the skeptical concern. First, faultless disagreement requires a symmetry of epistemic virtues and evidence access⁶ (MATHESON, 2015, p. 21-22). Second, only evidence independent of the faultless disagreement allows settling the disagreement. Third, access by introspection to evidence does not provide a privileged epistemic status to any of the parties to the disagreement. Fourth, there must be full disclosure among the disagreeing parties. Finally, disagreeing parties must have contradictory doxastic attitudes toward proposition p.

3.

There are several interpretations on the epistemic response agents must have when facing faultless disagreement. The conciliationist views argue that agents must sensibly decrease their confidence in the disputed propositions and the non-conciliationist views argue that agents can remain steadfast in their beliefs in the disputed propositions⁷. We will focus on the Equal Weight (EW) conciliationist view because it poses skeptical worries

⁵ Defeaters are reasons that defeat the epistemic rationality of beliefs we have. Defeaters can be rebutting or undermining. The rebutting defeaters are reasons to disbelieve propositions p. The undermining defeaters are reasons that break the connection between a belief and its justification. Faultless disagreement yields undermining defeaters that break the connection between the first-order evidence and the belief that p. Faultless disagreement is neutral on whether p is true or false (BALLANTYNE, 2015, p. 318-319).

⁶ To ask peers to have the same evidence is absurd. Faultless disagreements require disputants to have equal access to high-quality evidence.

⁷ Also, there are context-sensitive views that argue that the verdict to decrease one's confidence in one's beliefs or to remain steadfast in one's beliefs depends on how justified the disputed proposition is or whether the first-order evidence is strong enough to override the epistemic effects of disagreement. See Lackey (2010) and Kelly (2010) for further discussion on context-sensitive views.

about philosophical knowledge. EW requires parties to faultless disagreement to give equal epistemic weight to the views of each epistemic peer if both comply with the epistemic peer requirements stated above. That is, there are no good reasons to believe one or one's opponent has an epistemic advantage because both parties to the disagreement stand in a symmetrical relationship regarding access to high-quality evidence and epistemic virtues (COHEN, 2013, p.99). When there is no reason to believe that one or one's opponent is in an epistemic advantaged position, then rationality requires one to suspend judgment or decrease one's confidence in the disputed proposition. The Equal Weight view relies on the symmetry condition among disagreeing parties when it comes to evidence and evidence assessment.

In PHILOSOPHERS, we have a scenario where both philosophers comply with the symmetry condition since both have the same epistemic virtues and access to high-quality evidence. Both philosophers, in our case, do not have reasons to believe that the opponent is epistemically defective or lacks key evidence. Both philosophers do not have further independent reasons to tilt the balance toward their view, and both cannot rely on introspective access to evidence to achieve a privileged epistemic stance. Yet, one can argue that even if disagreement under the above conditions is epistemically relevant, it lacks the epistemic force to drive us to skepticism. For instance, if both philosophers disagree on a technicality in the philosophy of mind as the range of existing propositional attitudes, this does not call into question the whole philosophy of mind.

However, PHILOSOPHERS calls into question the whole philosophy of mind since disagreement is on a central question of the philosophy of mind, that is, the metaphysics of mind. Disagreement on the central tenet⁸ highlights the epistemic significance of disagreement since the rejection of central tenets can shatter one's web of beliefs (LOUGHEED, 2020). That is, whenever one disagrees on a central tenet with an epistemic peer, one suspends judgment about the very tenet that supports one's web of beliefs. In our case, the metaphysics of mind is under dispute. Whether one suspends judgment about physicalism or property dualism, further consequences fol-

⁸ Carter (2018) argues that disagreement on central tenets rather than peripheral ones is epistemically relevant to assess the epistemic risk of disagreements.

low for views on introspection, supervenience, knowledge, personal identity, etc. In this way, disagreement becomes an undermining defeater that gives us reasons to suspend judgment about a wide range of beliefs on some philosophical topic.

Even more, one can generalize this view by noticing that philosophical disagreement has three characteristics that make the skeptical consequences worrisome (PLANT, 2012, p. 570). Philosophical disagreement is historically persistent, pervasive, and fundamental. That is, philosophical disagreement has been present in all areas of philosophy at a fundamental level since its very inception. If this is the case, then the skeptical consequences of local philosophical disagreement apply to all disciplines and subdisciplines of philosophy in general. Even worst, philosophical disagreement affects central tenets of philosophy in all its areas. That increases the epistemic significance of philosophical disagreement since it spreads on central philosophical tenets that support our total web of philosophical beliefs. Hence, the skeptical consequences of philosophical disagreement are as worrisome as they can be.

4.

However, there are dissident views on the skeptical consequences of philosophical disagreement. Kelly (2016) argues that no interpretation of the EW provides reasons in support of skepticism because of philosophical disagreement. Kelly's main strategy is to argue that philosophical disagreement does not comply with the conditions under which EW requires suspensions of belief. The first line of argument is to show that philosophical disagreement has idiosyncratic features that hinder the EW consequences. The second line of argument appeals to the supposedly uneven distribution of opinion in philosophical disagreements. Both lines of argument aim to show that EW cannot yield skeptical consequences when it comes to philosophical disagreement. Hence, philosophical disagreement is not a reason to doubt philosophy's epistemic credentials. Yet, we will argue that all of Kelly's (2016) arguments fail to make philosophical disagreement epistemically harmless.

Kelly's (2016) first argument is that philosophical disagreement has interconnections that neutralize the skeptical consequences of EW. That is, EW requires isolated disagreement to maintain epistemic peerhood condition since messy disputes over an extensive range of propositions undermine both disputants' reasons to regard each other as peers. Namely, the greater number of propositions under dispute, the greater the chances that one of the disputants lacks epistemic virtues or high-quality evidence. That undermines the symmetry condition and allows disputants to demote each other as epistemic peers. Thus, if specific philosophical disagreements often branch into other areas of philosophy, then the symmetry condition fails to apply to philosophical disagreement, and EW does not require belief suspension on philosophical beliefs. It is implausible that both you and your philosopher friend are peers on every philosophical disagreement in PHILOSOPHERS. There can be disagreements where one of the disputant parties to a disagreement is in a disadvantaged epistemic position. Hence, if there is reason to believe that one's epistemic peer is in a disadvantaged epistemic position in some areas of a given discipline, then there is reason to demote one's antagonist epistemic peer status. Thus, according to Kelly, EW does not have skeptical consequences on philosophical disagreement since messy disagreements hinder the symmetry condition.⁹

However, Kornblith (2010) devises an argument to cope with Kelly's (2016) by arguing that, even in cases of messy philosophical disputes, the symmetry condition still holds since there are no-philosophical grounds that provide good reasons to regard disputants as epistemic peers. First, there is a cluster of agreed beliefs that support the epistemic peerhood and symmetry condition among philosophers. Philosophical disagreement, even if messy, and branched into many areas of philosophy, has a shared cluster of agreements about argument soundness, consistency, valid reasoning, accepted scientific facts, etc. For instance, there is agreement on valid reasoning, sound philosophical argumentation, scientific facts about human behavior, etc. in the disagreement between moral realists and moral relativists. That manages to maintain the epistemic peerhood condition between

⁹ For alternative views on how to maintain the conciliationist verdict of philosophical disagreement while acknowledging that disagreement has more than one disputed proposition, see Loughheed (2020).

disputants and the symmetry condition. That is the case of PHILOSOPHERS, where both philosophers disagree on a fundamental tenet of the philosophy of mind but agree on non-philosophical facts as valid reasoning, scientific facts, etc. Thus, 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 common ground of agreement. Therefore, the religion X fundamentalist and the religion Y fundamentalist do not regard each other as peers.¹⁰

Kelly's (2016) second argument appeals to philosophers' reliability poor track record in general¹¹. The EW requires one to revise one's beliefs in the face of disagreement if one has good reasons to believe that one's opponent has arrived at his belief reliably by using correct reasoning on high-quality evidence. Kelly argues that philosophical disagreement does not comply with these conditions since philosophers have a poor reliability record. Therefore, EW does not require disputants to suspend judgment on their beliefs in philosophical disagreements since philosophers, in general, do not have reliable track records when it comes to philosophy. Thus, there are no good reasons to believe that one's opponent has acquired his belief via correct reasoning on high-quality evidence. In this way, Kelly argues against the symmetry condition by arguing that philosophers in a dispute do not have a reliable track record of correct reasoning on high-quality evidence. Hence, none of the disputants of philosophical disagreements should regard each other as epistemic peers and should not suspend judgment in the face of philosophical disagreement.

Kelly's (2016) argument works if reliability on philosophical matters is the only criteria to assess philosophers' track records. However, that is not the case. Kornblith (2010) argues that philosophers in disagreement scenari-

¹⁰ The scenario described by Kelly (2016) resembles deep disagreements scenarios where there are no shared tenets nor methodology to settle the dispute. For more on this kind of disagreement, see Fogelin (1985).

¹¹ Kelly's argument unlocks a more worrisome straightforward skeptical conclusion: philosophers are unreliable in every matter. However, we know that philosophers can be reliable in at least areas that do not relate directly to philosophy, and this is sufficient to provide a minimum of reliability to philosophers to keep the symmetry condition. Fumerton (2010) poses a dilemma to Kelly's (2016) position: if philosophers are unreliable, one must suspend judgment on philosophical beliefs. Yet, if philosophers are reliable, then EW requires one to suspend judgment in disagreement scenarios. Either way requires suspension of judgment.

os regard each other as reliable on clusters of no-philosophical propositions, even if philosophers have poor records on philosophical matters. For instance, philosophers may be unreliable about whether there is a priori knowledge, but they are reliable about the conjunction elimination rule. Also, there are further conditions of reliability that do not require excellent track records on philosophical topics. Goldman (2001, p. 92) makes a distinction between first-order and second-order questions on a domain. The first-order questions are about the subject matter of a domain, while the second-order questions are about the arguments, the evidence, and experts' opinion of a domain. One can argue that philosophers are not reliable in answering first-order questions but are reliable on second-order questions. PHILOSOPHERS show that criteria as access to evidence, acquaintance with arguments, and awareness of experts' opinion on a domain make philosophers reliable, even if philosophers are not reliable about first-order questions. In PHILOSOPHERS, both philosophers have a vast knowledge of the arguments in favor and against both positions, both can cite relevant researchers, books, papers, etc., and both argue thoroughly. A philosopher with the given track record in PHILOSOPHERS can be reasonably an epistemic peer because of his philosophical expertise on second-order questions and epistemic virtues. Even if the track record on the first-order questions is faulty. Hence, it is implausible that disagreement with a philosopher with such an impressive track record does not require at least belief revision.

Kelly's third argument appeals to opinion distribution in disagreements to defuse the skeptical outcome of EW on philosophical disagreements. Kelly (2016) argues that along with the peerhood condition among philosophers, the skeptical consequences of EW require an evenly divided population on the contradictory beliefs on the disputed propositions. For instance, in disagreements where nine philosophers believe *p*, and there is only one philosopher who believes *no p*, one is bound to believe what the nine philosophers believe. To generalize this point, Kelly cites Bourget and Chalmers' (2014) survey to show that opinion is not evenly distributed among disagreeing parties when it comes to philosophy. For instance, if there is an opinion distribution of 73% who favor compatibilism and there is a 27%

who favor non-compatibilism¹², one is bound to tilt to the compatibilist view, and EW cannot require suspending one's judgment over the dispute between compatibilism and incompatibilism. Kelly (2016), thus, concludes that even if one accepts that both parties to a disagreement are epistemic peers, there is no reason to become skeptical towards philosophical beliefs if the disputants' opinion is not evenly divided. Following Kelly (2016), one can argue that PHILOSOPHERS fails to yield a skeptical verdict, for there is a lack of data on the distribution of the disputant population, and these data determine suspension of judgment.

However, we believe that, in the case of philosophical disagreement, EW does not require an evenly divided distribution of the disagreeing population to raise skeptical concerns. The requirement of the even distribution of opinion among the disagreeing population only applies to epistemic communities where there is growing and robust consensus since to go against consensus in those epistemic communities requires undermining substantive objections to fundamental claims (KORNBLITH, 2010). Thus, if the opinion distribution tilts towards one of the disputing parties, there is reason to defer to the disagreeing party with more believers since robust and growing consensus shows that individuals in that epistemic community have reliable track records and probably hold the right view. Yet, philosophy is not the kind of discipline in which consensus has such epistemic weight because consensus is not the consequence of individual philosophers' good track records but popular trends, historical accidents, etc. Therefore, Kelly's (2016) argument fails since disagreement among philosophers does not have the epistemic features of disagreement in other disciplines to require deference to the majority when there is no evenly distributed opinion among the disagreeing parties.

Also, even in the face of an uneven distribution of opinion in philosophical disagreement scenarios, there is reason to believe that one dissenting epistemic peer is enough to undermine one's philosophical beliefs.

¹² This is a mere example. Opinion distribution could be more complex than p and no p since philosophical views often have many nuances and do not fit in Manichean divisions. For simplicity, we will not discuss how theoretical nuances affect the epistemic assessment of philosophical disagreement. Yet, it appears to yield more worrisome skeptical consequences.

Consider again PHILOSOPHERS. Let's add to the story that the physicalist philosopher is the only physicalist philosopher who there has ever been. This fact does not undermine the symmetry condition since, even if the physicalist philosopher is the only one who there has ever been, she still has the intellectual virtues to assess and access high-quality evidence. Hence, opinion distribution in philosophical disagreements does not appear to be a reason to defer to majorities when it comes to philosophical disagreements. Besides, Cappelen (2017) argues that Bourget and Chalmers' (2014) survey is unreliable because of methodological issues as the lack of comparative criteria of the quantity of disagreement regarding other disciplines and the naïve approach regarding the nature of disagreement among the surveyed philosophers¹³. Thus, Kelly (2016) cannot rely on this survey as an empirical premise to show that philosophical disagreements consist of uneven distributed philosophical opinions.

Finally, Kelly (2016) uses the Condorcet Jury Theorem to argue that EW requires one to remain steadfast on one's views where there is an uneven distribution of opinion among philosophers who reach their opinion independently and in a reliable manner.

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

¹³ Chalmers (2010) distinguishes between genuine disagreements and verbal disagreements. Verbal disagreements are pointless, noninformative, and about the meaning of terms in the disagreement rather than about substantive facts. Meanwhile, genuine disagreements are informative about the facts on which parties disagree, and they yield conflict among doxastic attitudes toward the same proposition (FELDMAN, 2006; MATHESON, 2015). Thus, one can argue that the naïve approach of Bourget and Chalmers (2014) is vulnerable to the possibility that the survey results reflect just verbal disagreement.

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.15).

On the one hand, 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 opinion distribution tilts toward one of the disagreeing parties, that should make one more confident about one's opinion. That is, if the distribution shows that there is a majority of opinion concerning a view, then one is to be more confident in one's beliefs if one adopts the majority's view. And if one supposes that the Equal Weight View works because of the opinion distribution and uneven distribution of opinion, then even the Equal Weight View requires one to be more confident in one's views. However, one can argue against Kelly (2016) that PHILOSOPHERS yields the skeptical verdict independently of the distribution of opinion. Also, there is contentiousness on the actual distribution of opinion among philosophers. So, Kelly's (2016) argument relies on misleading evidence. Finally, Kelly (2016, p. 16) states 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". That is, the Condorcet Jury Theorem requires disputants to arrive independently to their conclusions, yet it is the case that our philosophical surroundings affect our philosophical beliefs. So, one of the main conditions of the Condorcet Jury Theorem fails to apply to philosophical opinion distribution.

On the other hand, if philosophers are unreliable, EW mandates one to stick to one's beliefs (KELLY, 2016). Namely, believing what the majority believes in scenarios where individuals of the opposing epistemic groups are unreliable amounts to increasing one's chances of being wrong. In this scenario, the Condorcet Jury Theorem works backward and states that the majority has more chances of being wrong. If the majority is unreliable, there are no reasons to suspend judgment, and one should remain steadfast in one's beliefs. Hence, it is not reasonable to suspend one's judgment when the unreliable majority tilts towards one of the disputed propositions.

To suspend judgment, as the EW requires, would be unreasonable in this scenario. Thus, EW would require one to acquire unreasonable beliefs or remain steadfast in one's beliefs rather than adopting a skeptical stance toward the disputed proposition.

Nevertheless, one can answer that philosophers are unreliable in first-order questions and reliable in second order questions. Thus, philosophers are unreliable on ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology, yet this does not mean that they are unreliable about the evidence, arguments, and experts' opinion on such fields. Also, reliability does not solely come by because of philosophical expertise since philosophers can be reliable reasoners in general and formal areas of philosophy as logic (KORNBLITH, 2010). If we think of philosophers as being reliable in this way, then suspending judgment as EW mandates will not make us less reasonable in philosophical disagreements with uneven opinion distribution. Also, one of the upshots of Kelly's (2016) argument is that one is not bound to doubt one's philosophical beliefs in philosophical disagreement scenarios since disputants are always unreliable. Yet, if one follows this line of argument, then there is no reason to write philosophy papers or books since we can simply stick to our guns.

Besides, Kelly (2016) holds that if philosophers are a little more reliable than chance, one must be confident about the majority's opinion because of the Condorcet Jury Theorem. Hence, one should not become skeptical toward philosophical views with uneven distribution of opinion. That is, one should accept the majority's opinion and remain confident about it. That is, the minority should switch their opinion to the majority's opinion but should not become skeptical about that opinion. Yet, one can answer Kelly's (2016) argument by positing that it supposes that philosophers are reliable about philosophical first-order questions. As we have seen, disagreement among philosophers is a good reason to believe that philosophers are reliable on second order questions on the arguments, formal methods, scientific facts, etc. Therefore, EW still requires skeptical attitudes toward contentious philosophical domains, for lopsided opinions in philosophical disagreement do not require believing what the majority believes.

5.

As we have seen, philosophical disagreement poses a threat because of its skeptical outcomes. Even worse, PHILOSOPHERS calls into question philosophers' competencies when it comes to first-order philosophical questions. Hence, philosophers' more cherished beliefs are at least highly contentious. Yet, to maintain the epistemic significance of disagreement, we acknowledged that philosophers are reliable about second-order philosophical questions and formal disciplines. However, that is not enough to provide support to philosophical beliefs. First, we showed that the symmetry condition, which is responsible for yielding the skeptical outcome, holds in all of Kelly's devised scenarios to defuse EW. Second, we argued that philosophical disagreement has idiosyncratic features that make it immune to lopsided opinion distribution scenarios that require one to be confident about the majority opinion. We have good reasons to suspend judgment or at least decrease one's confidence in that thesis if there is a skilled well-informed philosopher that disagrees with us about a philosophical thesis. We remain neutral about the truth of philosophical theories. They can be true, yet philosophical are not allowed to believe them justifiably.

Recebido em 05/10/2021

Aprovado em 27/11/2021

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