

# Philosophical and Metaphilosophical Disagreement

## Some Thoughts on Third-Stage-Scepticism

“*[P]hilosophy is dead.*”<sup>1</sup>

Especially in recent years philosophy often became target of epistemic critique. Scientists often claim that philosophy fails to make progress, since philosophers disagree about almost everything for 3000 years. This critique, I think, should not bother us. There is no satisfying criteria of progress that have been given so far. Therefore, this criticism is doomed to be too vague to be persuasive.

Unfortunately, philosophers have find ways of attacking philosophy more persuasively. In the last few years a new kind of scepticism emerged: The metaphilosophical scepticism or, as I call it, Second-Stage-Scepticism. Thomas Grundmann captured the basic idea as follows<sup>2</sup>:

- (S<sup>2</sup>) (P<sub>1</sub>) **“If we believe that we are in a GSE-disagreement, then we acquire a (doxastic) rebutting defeater for believing that p.”**
- (P<sub>2</sub>) **“In philosophy, we cannot escape from believing that we are in GSE-disagreement about almost everything.”**
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- (K<sub>1</sub>) **„In philosophy, we cannot escape from acquiring rebutting defeaters to almost everything, and hence we lack ultima facie justification for almost all our philosophical beliefs.“**

Some clarifications are in order: A GSE-disagreement is a genuine, symmetric peer disagreement. D is a genuine disagreement, if it is not possible to settle D solely by means of disambiguation. D is a symmetric disagreement, if on all sides of D there is an equal number of proponents. And D is a peer disagreement if every person who is involved in D has the same competencies in order to evaluate the given evidence. Grundmann tries to refute (S<sup>2</sup>) by arguing that philosophers usually do not believe that they are involved in a peer disagreement. In the talk I want, firstly, discuss Grundmanns position. My claim is that although Grundmann's defense is not persuasive, there are sufficiently strong defeaters of (S<sup>2</sup>).

In the second step I will introduce a new kind of metaphilosophical scepticism—the Third-Stage-Scepticism. I develop the main argument, which is supposed to support this kind of scepticism, in my PhD-Thesis<sup>3</sup>. It goes as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Hawking, S./Mlodinow, L. (2010): *The Grand Design*. New York: Bentham Books.

<sup>2</sup> See Grundmann, Thomas (2013): *Doubts about Philosophy? The Alleged Challenge from Disagreement*. In: Henning, Tim/Schweikard, David P. (Ed.): *Knowledge, Virtue, and Action. Essays on Putting Epistemic Virtues to Work*. New York/London: Routledge 2013. S. 72-98.

<sup>3</sup> See Minkin, Daniel (2021): *Rationalität philosophischer Forschung. Grundlagen einer metaphilosophischen Positionierung*. Paderborn: Mentis 2021.

(S<sup>3</sup>) (P<sub>1</sub>) If position P is taken without a rational justification in the sense of a recourse to criteria of adequacy that are not premised by P, then P is epistemically not justified and dogmatic.

(P<sub>2</sub>) No metaphilosophical position is in the named sense justified.

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(K<sub>1</sub>) Every metaphilosophical position is dogmatic.

(P<sub>3</sub>) Every taking of a philosophical position presupposes a taking of a metaphilosophical position.

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(K<sub>2</sub>) No philosophical position is in the named sense justified.

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(K<sub>3</sub>) Every philosophical position is dogmatic.

In the talk I want to elucidate and discuss this argument.