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dialogue here, although I will return to the foregoing questions about that attitudinal goal towards the end of the present work. At this point and for present purposes, it remains the vastly predominant dialogical goal of philosophical dialogue to defeat one's opponent; and it is this dialogical goal that I will draw upon in subsequent discussions.

1.4 Looking Ahead

In the foregoing sections I hope to have established the following two premises. First, a truth-value commitment made in dialogue does not necessitate any (corresponding or otherwise) truth-value commitment in attitude, nor *vice versa*. It is thus possible to examine commitments in dialogue independently of any potential attitudinal implications of such commitments, since there are no such necessary implications. Second, it is the dialogical goal of participants in analytic philosophical dialogue to persuade (that is, defeat) their respective argumentative opposing party.

Chiefly on the basis of these two premises, I will offer considerations regarding the instrumentally most rational conduct of philosophical dialogue in pursuit of the above goal of persuasion. I will *not* seek to argue that a certain conduct or goal ought to be pursued, nor that any particular conduct or goal of philosophical dialogue is good, right, true, real, or in any other sense appropriate. Rather, I will presuppose the dialogical goal of persuading one's opponent (as just established), and I will seek to argue that the adoption of certain conduct would be practically most conducive to the attainment of this goal. (As such, the present work will not instantiate persuasion dialogue but rather deliberation dialogue – so, notably, the conclusions to be drawn here for philosophical persuasion dialogue do not apply to this work.) These purely advisory purposes of the present work will proceed from a response to the methodological conservatism described at the outset, according to which the employment of standard philosophical methods may continue '[u]nless and until a reason for departing from this standard practice is produced' (Bealer 1996: 30 n. 15).

This methodological conservatism imposes an uneven allocation of the burden of proof that privileges the methodological status quo over challenges to the same. So the first question to be addressed here (in chapter 2) concerns the allocation of the burden of proof in philosophy. If one party to a philosophical dialogue asserts that P (e.g. that *The employment of standard philosophical methods is permissible*) and another party asks whether P is indeed the case, then does the burden of proof lie with the proponent of P, or is this burden incurred by the questioning respondent instead? I will discuss several arguments in favour of either answer, such as the contention that placing the burden upon the respondent would be dogmatic, and the claim that requiring the proponent to shoulder the burden of proof would lead to scepticism. On the basis of the attitude/dialogue separation and the goal of persuasion, I will reject each of the existing arguments for either answer. To resolve the question of the allocation of the burden of proof, I will then consider which allocation would be more conducive to the persuasion of one's opponents. As I will show, it is prudent in this regard for the proponent to take on the burden of proof herself, rather than (as methodological conservatism would have it) seeking to evade that burden by placing it upon the respondent.

Since the burden of proof thus cannot prudently be evaded, the next question to be examined (in chapter 3) is how it can be met. In order to support a questioned

hypothesis H one must provide evidence – abstractly expressed here by proposition E – and one must claim that *E supports H*, which I symbolise as E:H. Of course (due to the conclusion of chapter 2) the party that questioned H may go on to question E or E:H, which would in turn need to be supported. It is thus prudent to avoid not least the employment of any E:H that cannot be supported when questioned. This includes in particular any E:H that crosses an inference barrier, such as Hume's is/ought separation or, indeed, the foregoing attitude/dialogue separation. In distinguishing different types of inference barriers[31] and defusing counter-examples to them, I will argue that a claim E:H must prudently be avoided in supporting H if the propositions E and H are of respectively different *kinds*, e.g. where E is a descriptive proposition while H is a normative proposition. This is because a burden of proof upon such an E:H could never be satisfied. In consequence, chapters 2 and 3 together yield the intermediate conclusion that, prudently, the burden of proof for an asserted and questioned proposition a) lies upon the asserting party and b) must be satisfied without crossing any inference barrier. Being recognisably empiricist in its prescription though dialogical (rather than epistemological) in its scope, I call this intermediate conclusion *dialogical empiricism*.

In order to distil the implications of dialogical empiricism for philosophical methods (in chapter 4), I will focus on one specific inference barrier, which separates the psychological or linguistic content of talk or thought from the world beyond such content. As I will explain, both the objects of philosophical hypotheses, and the types of evidence employed in support of such hypotheses, can each be divided along this content/world separation. In this way, for instance, anthropogenic kinds (located in psycho-linguistic content) can be distinguished from natural kinds (located in the world beyond any psycho-linguistic content). Equally, an intuition employed in support of a hypothesis about kinds (where the evidence is part of one's psycho-linguistic content) can be distinguished from an empirical observation in support of such a hypothesis (where the evidence is part of the world beyond such content). Given the content/world separation, then, an intuition (located in psycho-linguistic content) cannot prudently be employed in support of a hypothesis about natural kinds (which are located in the world beyond any such content). I will draw similar distinctions with regard to other forms of evidence employed in philosophy, and other objects of philosophical hypotheses, detailing the psycho-linguistic content that prudently can no longer be employed in support of hypotheses about the world beyond such content. I will thus argue not only that standard philosophical methods and the evidential relations employed in them must be supported when questioned (contrary to methodological conservatism), but also that supporting many of them is effectively impossible, since such support would require the crossing of the inference barrier between psycho-linguistic content and the world beyond such content.

The results up to this point have considerable impact on substantive philosophical debates, as I will illustrate next (in chapter 5). I will discuss how hypotheses expressing a normative claim, a necessity claim, an epistemological claim or an ontological claim could be supported when questioned, given not least that such support must not involve the crossing of the content/world barrier. As I will argue, it is left practically impossible to support such hypotheses if the claims made in these hypotheses are about the world beyond content – that is, if these hypotheses are metaphysically significant. If, for

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[31] Note that I distinguish between, among other things, *inference barriers* and *implication barriers*.

instance, the *necessity* of the truth of a hypothesis was taken to be part of the very fabric of the world independent of psycho-linguistic content, then no intuitional or other psycho-linguistic content could be employed in support of assertions of that necessity; nor would there seem to be any non-psycho-linguistic evidence (like empirical measurements) available to us to support the claimed necessity; nor would it be open to the proponent of this necessity to seek to evade the burden of proof imposed by the respondent who questioned that necessity. By discussing hypotheses expressing such necessity claims, as well as hypotheses expressing normative, epistemological or ontological claims, I will show that metaphysically significant hypotheses that are supported only by psycho-linguistic content – roughly comprising metaphysical hypotheses that are of philosophical as opposed to scientific interest – are left prudently unsupportable in analytic philosophical dialogue. Hence I will reach the rather radical conclusion that it is prudent to terminate philosophical dialogue about any exclusively philosophically interesting metaphysical hypothesis.

Each of these chapters builds on the conclusions of previous chapters, including not least the attitude/dialogue separation and the goal of persuasion in philosophical dialogue that I have established in the present chapter. The key conclusions of the chapters just outlined may thus be summarised as follows:

Ch. 2: Any proposition asserted by one party and questioned by another party in an analytic philosophical dialogue must prudently be supported by the asserting party, regardless of how basic the questioned proposition may appear to be.

Ch. 3: The asserting party must prudently avoid employing propositions of one kind in support of a questioned proposition of a different kind, such as descriptive propositions employed in support of a questioned normative proposition.

Ch. 4: Many analytic philosophical methods involve the employment of propositions expressing some psychological or linguistic content in support of propositions expressing some aspect of the world beyond such content (thus being of a different kind), and these methods must prudently be avoided in philosophical dialogue.

Ch. 5: Without these methods, many propositions expressing an aspect of the world, i.e. metaphysically significant propositions, are practically unsupportable in analytic philosophical dialogue and must prudently be excised from such dialogue.

Beyond a similar summary of the considerations just outlined, the final chapter will be devoted to assessing potential responses to the same that may be open to methodological conservatives or to analytic philosophers wishing to make metaphysically significant claims. As I will discuss, the imprudence of employing such metaphysically significant propositions may be accommodated, for instance, by employing such propositions only within a coherentist framework – although this would leave analytic philosophers unable to make any claims about reality beyond psycho-linguistic content. Accommodation may also be achieved by discontinuing philosophical *persuasion* dialogue about metaphysically significant propositions and discussing such propositions within other types of dialogue instead – which would, however, seem variously either impractical or incoherent. Rather than accommodating the above results, one might instead prioritise some personal goal outside of the foregoing types of dialogue, and one might thereby fundamentally undermine these persuasion-oriented results. One may, for instance, seek to avoid having one's dialogical position challenged at all, by permanently silencing one's

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present work up to this point. In chapter 1 I have introduced the logical separation between attitudinal and dialogical truth-value commitments. (This separation is clearly qualitative, so in the terminology just adopted it constitutes an *inference* barrier.) I have also shown empirically that defeating one's opposing party is the vastly prevalent goal of philosophical dialogues. On this basis I have argued in chapter 2 that attaining this goal prudently requires the adoption of dialogical egalitarianism in philosophy. A burden of proof thus cannot be evaded and must instead be met. In attempting to meet the burden of proof upon a questioned hypothesis in philosophy, as I have argued in the present chapter, it is prudently necessary that one does not cross any qualitative or inference barrier (e.g. Hume's First Law or Kant's Law). In essence, then: *If party* a *commits to proposition P in philosophical dialogue δ, and party* b *commits to neither P nor ¬P in δ, then* a *must prudently support P to* b *in δ without crossing any inference barrier.*

This thesis is recognisably empiricist, not least as it is recognisably Humean. The most prominent of inference barriers – Hume's is/ought-separation – is of course reaffirmed here as a persuasion barrier (though not as a logical barrier, due to the above counter-examples)[54]. Yet beyond that particular implication, the above thesis is empiricist principally because it coheres in spirit with perhaps the most quintessentially empiricist principle, famously encapsulated in Hume's remark that 'A wise man [...] proportions his belief to the evidence' (1975 [1748]: 110). According to Hume, it is unwise to believe that which is not warranted by the evidence, and therefore unwise to infer from the evidence what is not warranted by it. Hume's concern here is not (in contrast to many theorists following in his path) with the nature of evidence, but rather with the inferences that may or may not be drawn from available evidence. The same applies to my foregoing thesis, which is silent with regard to the nature of evidence and rather addresses the inferences (not) to be drawn from some given evidence in philosophical persuasion dialogue. It is for this reason that I consider my above thesis to be adequately described as *empiricist*.

Yet my thesis differs significantly from other forms of empiricism, being thrice restricted by its prudential force, its metaphilosophical scope, and its dialogical scope. Consider the first of these restrictions. The above thesis is binding only prudentially, as a matter of instrumental rationality or goal-directed action. *If* it is the goal of the dialogue you are engaged in to defeat your opponent in argument, *then* the thesis applies to you and prescribes certain actions. Its force is thus conditional. However, I have also shown that the antecedent of this conditional prescription is true for nearly every philosophical dialogue, as circa 95% of non-embedded philosophical dialogues appear to instantiate persuasion dialogue; and I have argued that the truth of this antecedent must therefore be presumed in all philosophical dialogues. Hence, while its force is conditional, that condition has been shown to be satisfied, thus rendering the thesis binding on prudential grounds upon any party to a philosophical dialogue.[55] Secondly, the sample in the empirical research in chapter 1, which showed the antecedent to be satisfied almost universally, was itself restricted to *philosophical* dialogues. It did not include dialogues in legal contexts, in organic chemistry, in social history, or over in the pub. Consequently, my empiricist thesis does not apply to any discipline or field other than current Western

[54] For an outstanding examination of its status as a logical barrier, see Pigden (2010b).
[55] Cf. section 1.3, especially fn. 27.

analytic philosophy. As the present work will principally seek to address metaphilosophical questions, however, this does nothing to detract from its potential significance with regard to the conduct of philosophy.

Perhaps most crucially, the above empiricist thesis applies only to philosophical *dialogue*. It is entirely silent with regard to recognisably philosophical beliefs and other attitudinal states, making no claim as to how philosophical thought should be conducted or how philosophical knowledge or understanding should be acquired. Its scope is restricted to (current Western analytic) philosophy as it is conducted in various forms of dialogue, ranging from oral discussions and conference presentations over peer-reviewed journal articles to monographs.[56] Contrary to any other form of empiricism, it is thus an exclusively *dialogical* thesis, rather than an exclusively *epistemological* thesis or a thesis that is both epistemological and dialogical. (In the same fashion, as explained above, the present empiricist thesis is not *logical* either, as it does not affirm or even concern inference barriers in logic. Instead, it is only concerned with *dialogical* persuasion barriers.) To emphasise this important yet otherwise easily overlooked restriction, I will call the above thesis *dialogical empiricism*.[57] To repeat, then, the thesis distilling the considerations raised up to this point states that:

Dialogical Empiricism:
If party *a* commits to proposition P in philosophical dialogue δ, and party *b* commits to neither P nor ¬P in δ, then *a* must prudently support P to *b* in δ without crossing any inference barrier.

One may plausibly wonder at this point why I have spent three chapters establishing such a relatively basic and perhaps quite commonsensical thesis. Could I not simply have posited the thesis and then argued less lengthily that it better coheres with our intuitions regarding the conduct of philosophy than any rival account does? Well, the answer is *no* – for two reasons. First, a thesis regarding the conduct of philosophy that itself depends on some controversial thesis regarding the conduct of philosophy would be of little if any deliberative value in guiding said conduct. The thesis that *A theory is preferable (*ceteris paribus*) over a rival theory if the former better coheres with our intuitions than its rival does* is itself very controversial. If that thesis was rejected, then the value of any argumentation I might offer for the intuitive superiority of dialogical empiricism over any rival theories would also be undermined. Arguing for the intuitive superiority of dialogical empiricism would thus potentially be a complete waste of time. To avoid wasting my time, any deliberative advice I offer will have to be grounded independently of any metaphilosophical thesis or, insofar as this is not possible, any metaphilosophical thesis my advice depends upon will need to be thoroughly supported. That is the first reason why I have derived dialogical empiricism on an independent basis

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[56] Insofar as the conduct of philosophical thought is considered to be dependent upon the conduct of philosophical dialogue, my empiricist thesis may of course have consequences for the former. Such consequences, however, are not my concern here. Cf. the discussion of attitudinal goals in section 1.3.

[57] If other forms of dialogical empiricism are distinguished in the future (e.g. dialogical empiricism applying to social history) then my thesis would have to be renamed, in accordance with its other restrictions, as *prudential metaphilosophical dialogical empiricism* – a label I choose to avoid here for obvious reasons of economy.

over the previous three chapters. The second reason for why I could not simply have posited dialogical empiricism and assessed it against its coherence with our intuitions is that, in a sense, I intend to do the reverse – in the next chapter: to assess the importance of a theory's coherence with our intuitions against the independently established demands of dialogical empiricism.

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(section 4.4), before addressing several objections to this inference barrier (section 4.5).

4.2 The Content/World Separation

Possibly the most consequential inferential barrier for philosophical dialogue is the separation between content and the world. This barrier divides explicit or implied mental or linguistic content, on the one hand, from the world beyond such content, on the other hand. According to this *content/world separation*, one cannot infer from the explicit or implied content of one or more people's mind or language to reality beyond such psychological or linguistic (for short: psycho-linguistic) content.[58] That is to say, one cannot employ propositions expressing elements of psycho-linguistic content in support of propositions expressing aspects of the world beyond such content.

It should be noted that psycho-linguistic content is not co-extensive with mental content, though the latter is part of psycho-linguistic content, of course. To the extent that mental content is propositional (which I will subsequently assume to be the case universally, for the sake of expressive simplicity), we may note that a proposition is just a linguistic device that is cognised and thus contained among mental events; and to the extent that mental content is non-propositional, we should note that such qualitative or *experiential* content is invariably dependent upon and thus located within an agent's *experience*. But mental content only comprises the *content* of *thought* and of other psychological events – it comprises neither the content of *talk* or of other unambiguously linguistic events, nor the *occurrence* of thought or talk or of other psychological or linguistic events. Psycho-linguistic content, however, comprises both the content and the occurrence of thought and talk, in particular because the occurrence of thought or talk is itself situated, or contained, within the totality of someone's psychological or linguistic events. As such, mental as well as linguistic content, and the occurrence of either, all constitute psycho-linguistic content.

The content/world separation thus has the appearance of being co-extensive with the related but separate mind-dependent/mind-independent distinction (cf. e.g. Brock and Mares 2007: 4). After all, the content and occurrence of thought and talk are equally mind-dependent and content-located, while all else beyond is both mind-independent and world-located. So is the content/world separation a mere reformulation of the mind-dependent/mind-independent distinction – a cumbersome attempt to reinvent the wheel? I admit that this is very nearly the case, and the distinction between what is mind-dependent and what is mind-independent may in fact serve as a familiar and convenient approximation of the different sides to the content/world separation. Nonetheless, there are two notable differences between the mind-dependent/mind-independent distinction on the one hand, and the content/world separation on the other hand. The first difference concerns philosophical zombies – hypothetical human-like beings that, roughly, lack a mind but engage in dialogue (cf. Chalmers 1996). The linguistic events of such a zombie, including both their content and their occurrence, cannot be dependent upon the zombie's mind, given that these linguistic events occur even though there is no mind to give rise to

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[58] I am implicitly assuming, in line with virtually all analytic philosophers, that one's *access* to at least some psycho-linguistic content is relatively less problematic than one's *access* to reality beyond such content. Note, however, that my considerations only concern the relation *between* psycho-linguistic content and reality beyond such content. They are therefore independent of one's own relation to either, that is, independent of the cited assumption. (For a critique of this assumption see e.g. Rouse 1996: 209.)

them, and so they must be mind-independent. The content/world separation, however, locates a zombie's linguistic engagement in dialogue within content, rather than within the world beyond, as content is not restricted to mental content but also includes linguistic content. While this may be an interesting point, it will become clear below that hypothetical zombies have no import for present purposes.

The second difference, though, is more significant. The mind-dependent/mind-independent distinction concerns the ontological status of putative entities: The existence of some things, such as the god Neptune, may be dependent upon their featuring in some minds, whereas the existence of other things, such as the planet Neptune, might be independent of their being found in any mind. Yet the content/world separation does not concern the ontological status of entities but rather the persuasive effectiveness of inferences between propositions. So although the mind-dependent/mind-independent distinction and the content/world separation are almost entirely co-extensive (save for zombies' engagement in dialogue), the former is ontological whereas the latter is *functional*, being concerned with persuasive effectiveness in philosophical dialogue.

Does this barrier between psycho-linguistic content and the world beyond it, then, hold for all types of inference or only for deductive inferences – that is to say, is it an inference barrier or merely an implication barrier? As discussed in section 3.5, it is logically possible to gather sufficient evidence to prove a hypothesis via an implication barrier, but logically impossible to gather sufficient evidence to prove a hypothesis via an inference barrier. And as is readily clear, the content/world separation is an inference barrier: No increase in the number of propositions expressing an element of psycho-linguistic content would confer any degree of salience upon these propositions in the inference of a proposition expressing an aspect of reality beyond such content, since the premises would be of a different kind from the conclusion. Or to put it differently, any claim to the effect that a proposition expressing an element of psycho-linguistic content supports a hypothesis expressing an aspect of reality beyond such content would, if questioned, face an insurmountable burden of proof. Hence the separation between psycho-linguistic content and the world beyond it is indeed an inference barrier.

Varying versions of this content/world separation have been employed in the past, such as by epistemological sceptics and by logical positivists (both of which I will touch upon again below). Yet for present purposes it suffices to briefly consider two examples for illustration. The first example is Heather Dyke's critique of what she calls 'the representational fallacy' in metaphysics (2008; see also Baz 2017). As Dyke explains, it is common in Anglophone analytic metaphysics to employ facts about the English language as reasons in support of claims about the world beyond any language. In this way, for example, the (supposed) fact that the representation of reality in English is irreducibly tensed (as talk of past events, say, cannot be reduced to tenseless talk) has been argued to provide support for the claim that reality itself is tensed rather than tenseless, and that therefore the past (and present and/or future) exists in some metaphysically significant way. The linguistic evidence invoked in this case is some proposition, allegedly implied in talk of past events, such as that *The past exists (distinctly from the present and/or future)*. By inferring this proposition's metaphysical truth from our ineliminable implicit linguistic commitment to it, metaphysicians commit the fallacy of supporting claims expressing an aspect of reality with claims expressing contents

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substituted by Machiavellian prudential recommendations, then they can nonetheless be supported without crossing any inference barrier, by invoking (typically social scientific) facts as evidence within a deliberation dialogue.

Second, necessary truths are effectively unsupportable in philosophical dialogue whether they be aspects of reality beyond psycho-linguistic content or elements of such content. Neither contingent nor content-located evidence will be of any use, due to the contingent/necessary separation and the content/world separation.

Third, if knowledge were an aspect of reality beyond psycho-linguistic content, then hypotheses about knowledge would be effectively unsupportable in philosophical dialogue, since content-located evidence would prudently have to be avoided while world-located evidence would seem unavailable. But as knowledge very much appears to be an element of psycho-linguistic content, content-located evidence can nonetheless be employed in support of hypotheses about knowledge (so long as the breaching of further inference barriers is avoided).

Fourth, if abstract entities are aspects of reality beyond psycho-linguistic content, then claims to their existence or non-existence are effectively unsupportable in philosophical dialogue, though this is not the case if such entities are fictional elements of psycho-linguistic content. (No parallel implications arise with regard to concrete unobservable entities.)

In light of these consequences, it is worth reiterating that dialogical empiricism is not itself a normative, modal, epistemic or ontological thesis. Dialogical empiricism does not imply that some particular action is forbidden, that some particular truth is necessary, that some particular fact is unknown, or that some particular entity exists, nor any other substantive conclusion. Instead, dialogical empiricism is a purely methodological thesis. Yet even so, the four consequences just summarised all exemplify the general metaphilosophical lesson arising from dialogical empiricism.

Let us first note that hypotheses (or propositions) expressing an aspect of reality beyond psycho-linguistic content may adequately be described as *metaphysically significant hypotheses* (or *propositions*), or simply as *metaphysical hypotheses* (or *propositions*). I will therefore take metaphysical hypotheses to encompass all and only those hypotheses that express an aspect of reality beyond psycho-linguistic content. Given this characterisation, the general lesson from the consequences of dialogical empiricism is the following: Parties to an analytic philosophical dialogue must prudently refrain from committing to the truth or falsity of any metaphysical hypothesis if this hypothesis lacks evidential support expressed in metaphysical propositions.[93]

It is worth noting that metaphysical hypotheses which *do not* lack evidential support from metaphysical propositions are more typically investigated in the natural sciences, rather than in analytic philosophy.[94] (This not least includes hypotheses about some concrete, putatively unobservable entities like black holes.) By contrast, metaphysical hypotheses which *do* lack evidential support from metaphysical

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[93] A hypothesis which actually lacks such support, but does not lack it necessarily, must nonetheless be avoided. After all, you are very unlikely to successfully persuade another party that H by invoking the mere possibility that there may be appropriate evidence in support of H.
[94] Such hypotheses are also sometimes investigated in the philosophy of science, although such research is typically conducted through types of dialogue other than persuasion dialogue, as I will discuss in section 6.2. Cf. fn. 27 in section 1.3.

propositions rarely receive treatment in the natural sciences and are often of significant philosophical interest instead. (Among their number are hypotheses about world-located norms, necessities, knowledge and abstract entities.) As Gary Gutting aptly noted, 'every modern philosophical enterprise has had to guarantee a place for itself by showing that there is something for it to know that escapes the grasp of empirical science' (2001: 50). Of course not all metaphysical hypotheses that lack evidential support from metaphysical propositions are of philosophical interest – as the metaphysically significant contents of, say, religious dogmata are seldom if ever the subject of analytic philosophical debate (though their nature and status may well be). So we may characterise metaphysical hypotheses which a) lack evidential support from metaphysical propositions, and which b) are actually debated by parties to an analytic philosophical dialogue, as *metaphysical hypotheses of philosophical interest*, or simply as *philosophically interesting metaphysical hypotheses*. This terminological choice excludes both metaphysical hypotheses that *do not* lack evidential support from metaphysical propositions, as typically investigated in the natural sciences, and those that do lack such support but are also not the subject of any analytic philosophical debate.[95] On this basis we can restate the general lesson in the following way: Parties to an analytic philosophical dialogue must prudently refrain from committing to the truth or falsity of any philosophically interesting metaphysical hypothesis.

On this general lesson it should further be noted that the prudential requirement to avoid committing to the truth or falsity of a hypothesis renders it prudent to avoid engaging in persuasion dialogue about said hypothesis altogether. For if one does not make a dialogical truth-value commitment regarding the given hypothesis, then one can practically only fail to persuade one's opponents in the game of persuasion, which is of course to be avoided. To give the final statement of the general conclusion, then:

Parties to an analytic philosophical dialogue must prudently refrain from engaging in dialogue about any philosophically interesting metaphysical hypothesis.

Or, to give this conclusion its terminologically deconstructed statement:

Parties to an analytic philosophical dialogue must prudently refrain from engaging in dialogue about any hypothesis expressing an aspect of reality beyond psycho-linguistic content if that hypothesis lacks evidential support from propositions expressing an aspect of reality beyond psycho-linguistic content.

The obvious implication of this general conclusion is that any debate within analytic philosophy that concerns the truth or falsity of what I have called philosophically interesting metaphysical hypotheses must prudently be terminated. This means not least that analytic metaphysics must prudently be excised from philosophical dialogue.[96] But

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[95] My concern here is with the *actual* rather than the *possible* availability of evidence (and equally with the *actual* interest of dialogue parties) because, in essence, the aim of this work remains to contribute to deliberation, rather than to persuasion or other goals; cf. fn. 92 in this section.

[96] Analytic metaphysics would exclude naturalistic metaphysics as advocated by Ladyman *et al*. (2007; cf. Maclaurin and Dyke 2012), but of course only to the extent that naturalistic metaphysics is free from debates about philosophically interesting metaphysical hypotheses as defined above.

it also means that philosophical discussions outside of analytic metaphysics must equally be discontinued if they debate world-located norms, necessities, knowledge, or abstract entities, among other things. However, this general conclusion does not imply the termination of philosophical debates that exclusively have elements of psycho-linguistic content as their object (so long as the breaching of further inference barriers is avoided, as might be achieved, for instance, in debates about the content-located kind *knowledge*).

I have little doubt that the excision of philosophically interesting metaphysical debates from current analytic philosophy may adequately be regarded as the most notable recommendation arising from dialogical empiricism. But in light of this metaphysically quietist recommendation, dialogical empiricism may itself be regarded as more closely related to other anti-metaphysical programmes, such as naturalism (cf. Papineau 2015) or logical positivism (cf. Ayer 1936), than it actually is. On the one hand, naturalists maintain that philosophical research, in metaphysics and elsewhere, ought to be properly informed by, consistent with, and/or continuous with research in the natural sciences. Metaphysical debates about hypotheses which lack evidential support from metaphysical propositions fail to satisfy this naturalistic demand, with the consequence that such debates ought to be discontinued (cf. Maclaurin and Dyke 2012). Although I have considerable sympathy for naturalism, I sought to refrain from relying on any distinctly naturalistic premises in the derivation and subsequent application of dialogical empiricism, so as not to risk undermining the present work if any such naturalistic premises were to be rejected.[97] Besides, naturalists strongly tend to espouse a cognitive (rather than critical) philosophical self-conception, which is not supported by the evidence presented in section 1.3.

On the other hand, dialogical empiricism also fundamentally differs from logical positivism – which difference becomes clear when we note that the metaphysical quietism espoused by the logical positivists was a form of *semantic* quietism (as epitomised by Ludwig Wittgenstein; cf. Virvidakis 2008: 162; Macarthur 2017: 251-2). It stipulated that an expression is meaningful iff it is either analytically true or synthetically verifiable – whereupon metaphysical hypotheses lacking any possibility of evidential support from metaphysical propositions were deemed meaningless.[98] In contrast to this semantic form, the metaphysical quietism arising from dialogical empiricism is not semantic but *aporetic*, following in the Pyrrhonian tradition.[99] Under dialogical empiricism, participation in analytic metaphysical dialogues is identified, not as meaningless, but as imprudent in the reader's pursuit of the dialogical goal of persuasion in analytic philosophical dialogue.[100] It may also be noted that dialogical empiricism is not vulnerable to the major criticisms raised against logical positivism, neither being reflexively self-defeating (like verificationism)[101] nor depending upon the

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[97] Cf. section 3.6.

[98] Carnap's (1950) logical empiricism equally qualifies as espousing a form of semantic quietism, through his distinction between questions that are internal or external to a linguistic framework. Cf. fn. 59 in section 4.2.

[99] In practice, this Pyrrhonian or aporetic quietism does *not* generalise explosively across all areas of philosophical dialogue, as explained in sections 3.3 and 2.2.

[100] Cf. fn. 78 in section 5.2.

[101] Cf. section 2.3.

analytic/synthetic distinction.[102]

Notwithstanding these differences, I am not denying[103] that logical positivism, naturalism, and dialogical empiricism do share a metaphysically quietist conclusion: Like the others, dialogical empiricism (with its associated inference barriers) equally seeks to stand as the proverbial thin red line, between metaphysicians with their psycho-linguistic shadow images in their Platonic cave, and the real world beyond.

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[102] Note that dialogical empiricism also neither presupposes nor entails the *a priori/a posteriori* distinction. Note also that this latter distinction is not co-extensive with the content/world separation, as exemplified not least by experimental philosophers' *a posteriori* research of people's psycho-linguistic *content*.

[103] So, *evidently*, I am denying – cf. section 2.2.