

## “HOW TO MOVE FORWARD: POINTS OF CONVERGENCE BETWEEN ANALYTIC AND CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY”

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### **Abstract:**

My aim is both theoretical and practical. By characterizing what I call points of convergence between analytic and continental philosophy, I offer suggestions about how to bridge the gap. I do not attempt to retrace the moment at which the divide occurred nor offer historical explanations of the rift, but instead discuss points of convergence, with reference to Kant. I summarize this discussion in two tables. I give theoretical and practical suggestions for moving forward. I conclude with some comments on the need for dialogue and reflect on the historicity of philosophy. I compare the current situation to that of ancient Greece and Rome, when there was also a plurality of schools. By comparison, philosophers today specialize more, making it difficult to converse with philosophers from other schools or even to other sub-disciplines within their own school. Moreover, there is an enormous quantity of philosophical texts to read, and contemporary philosophers are not very tied to the idea of philosophy as the love of wisdom. The paper's topic opens up the deeper queries, “How does philosophy differ from scientific and other disciplines” and “What is philosophy?” It includes a bibliography of the recent, growing literature on the divide.

**Key words:** analytic philosophy, continental philosophy, points of convergence, metaphilosophy.

### **1. Introduction**

First, a confession: this piece is first and foremost a proposal. These ideas grew out of personal experiences while studying analytic and continental philosophy in the Americas (Brazil, USA) and Europe (France, Germany, Austria, Italy). In other words, I have something at stake.

My aim is programmatic and (if the term be allowed) pragmatic: by characterizing what I call *points of convergence* between the two traditions, and therefore building on recent analyses of the themes, problems, and methods of the two camps

(Critchley 1997; Critchley 2001; Levy 2003; Rorty 2003; Cutrofello 2005; Glendinning 2006), I wish to offer a few suggestions about how to move forward and achieve some rapport between them.

A word about what I will *not* do: I will not try to retrace the moment in which problems arose (though I agree with the general verdict: some time shortly after Kant), nor offer historical explanations for why the split occurred (for that, see Reisch 2005; Friedman 2000). I certainly won't be analyzing the philosophical arguments of border crossers such as John Searle, Hubert Dreyfus, Robert Brandom, John McDowell, or, more recently, Shaun Gallagher, Dan Zahavi, or Alain Badiou. But I will point out points of convergence.

This journal's issue is a timely one. There is growing interest in understanding and overcoming the analytic/continental divide (or, the continental/analytic divide). There has been interest for some time now (Cooper 1994; D'agostini 1997; Mulligan 1998), and there continues to be sustained interest in this topic (Braver 2007; Dolcini 2007; Christensen 2009; Chase and Reynolds 2010; Chase *et al* 2010). Still, problems persist. Scholars and other people interested in this “two camps problem” risk being the only ones who care about it at all, the only philosophers engaging in dialogue. The two schools risk remaining like a couple after a nasty tiff: silent, yet still somehow bothered by, and curious about, what the other person is up to. Little good is done if the go-betweens –you, me, readers of this issue – are the only philosophers doing the talking.

So I hope to encourage constructive dialogue. If, as the latest pop psychology magazine will tell you, talking through a problem is the first step to overcoming it, more publications like this issue will help solve the impasse. And then we can move forward. In accordance with the theme “The Dialogue

between Continental and Analytic Philosophy,” I would therefore like to characterize points of convergence between the analytic and the continental philosophical traditions, make some comments about how to move forward, and then make some concluding remarks about our situation in comparison with ancient philosophy as well as about the historical nature of philosophy in general.

## 2. Points of Convergence

As descriptions of two philosophical traditions that developed in the twentieth century, the terms “analytic” and “continental” are, at the very least, misleading. Whereas “analytic” literally refers to a method and style of argumentation (i.e., analysis), “continental” derives from a specific geographical region. To the unschooled, “continental philosophy” sounds like a bad breakfast conversation, like talking about the meaning of life over coffee and a croissant. Moreover, we have the noted problem that analytic philosophers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein and Gottlieb Frege grew up and were educated in the European continent.

Despite the confusion the terms can cause to undergraduates, friends, and family members, they are in fact widely used by philosophical institutions today in the United States: the American Philosophical Association (the USA’s main national society, to which even continentals usually pay dues) and the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (where analytics usually don’t return the favor). The labels are also used in European philosophical circles (e.g., Italian Society of Analytic Philosophy, European Society for Analytic Philosophy). For better or for worse, it appears that the appellations will continue to be applied for some time into the future. They are here to stay.

So, a clarification is in order: “continental philosophy” here refers to the philosophical views that developed in twentieth-century Europe and continue to be developed and defended today. Collectively, these views make up a tradition that includes the philosophical movements or schools known as phenomenology, existentialism (perhaps in decline), philosophical hermeneutics, structuralism (again, more passé), feminist philosophy, critical race theory, post-structuralism and deconstruction, and the Frankfurt school and critical theory. “Analytic philosophy” here designates the philosophical tradition

that originated in the philosophy of Bertrand Russell, G.E. Moore, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. It has its historical foundations in logical positivism, the Vienna Circle, and ordinary language philosophy (and the critics thereof, who were still playing the analytic game). Analytic philosophy today still persists. It consists in the analysis of concepts and propositions using the tools of logic, and it often uses thought experiments and other armchair methods, notwithstanding the recent rise of experimental philosophy. It maintains, or at least tries to maintain, high standards of argumentation and clarity, focuses on details, and often assumes or directly claims that philosophy is either continuous with science or somehow its assistant (cf. Leiter 2010).<sup>1</sup>

Although neither camp refers to a discrete set of accepted doctrines or propositions, each school does have certain tendencies that I will try to characterize. Of course, there is not always internal agreement about methods or problems within schools: there is a fair amount of in-fighting. Moreover, it goes without saying that I am painting with broad strokes here; naturally there will be some exceptions to the following generalizations.

Continental philosophers tend to focus on texts, and they do so by paying careful attention to historical context and intellectual history. By contrast, analytics are inclined to focus on philosophical problems rather than texts. Likewise, continental philosophy emphasizes proper names and historical figures such as Nietzsche, Hegel, and Husserl, whereas analytic philosophy is more concerned with *problems* than with the entire philosophy of the author in question – consider James Van Cleve’s (1999) aptly titled *Problems from Kant* (cf. Jonathan Bennett’s analytic, verificationist study, *Kant’s Dialectic*, 1990). Continentals thus tend to put more emphasis on who or what makes it into their version of the canon of philosophy than do analytics. Unsurprisingly, which texts (or problems) are taken to be canonical differ in the two schools. However, there is some convergence here: Kant, Hegel, Brentano, et al., are common to both canons.

What of metaphysics? After the late Heidegger, continental philosophy tends to reject metaphysics altogether; its ontological orientation is therefore anti-metaphysical. Analytic philosophy tends to

<sup>1</sup> For another plausible, if biased, characterization of the two schools, see Brian Leiter, “‘Analytic’ and ‘Continental’ Philosophy” (Leiter 2010).

endorse a revised, linguistic-logical, post-empiricism. The latter still counts as a kind of metaphysics: analytics are thus still playing the metaphysical game, whereas continentals have given it up. Both camps, however, are anti-foundational. (In the case of continental philosophy, anti-foundationalism simply follows from being anti-metaphysical).

When it comes to epistemology, both schools are anti-psychologistic. Psychologism is here understood as the attempt to explain the normative discipline of logic and math in terms of descriptive psychology. Thus, they oppose the attempt (e.g., J.S. Mill’s logical psychologism) to establish logical and mathematical principles upon psychological mental operations and psychological facts or laws. However, this characterization requires some qualification in the case of analytic philosophy: whereas Frege and Fregeans are clearly anti-psychologistic, with the emergence of experimental philosophy and neurophilosophy, allied with the cognitive sciences, there has been a recent resurgence of using empirical methods in philosophy and explaining normative principles (even morality) in terms of psychological facts. While continental philosophy is largely anti-realist (Braver 2007), analytic philosophy seems split between realists such as Hilary Putnam (and among neurophilosophers who are allied with the brain sciences) and anti-realists such as Michael Dummett (as well as philosophers like McDowell and Brandom, alike inspired by both Kant and Hegel).

Continental methods are manifold: the phenomenological method, the hermeneutic method, deconstruction of texts, even psychoanalysis. The methods associated with critical theory, feminist philosophy, critical race theory, and post-colonialism are also used. Each of these methods is of course closely allied with their corresponding sub-disciplines within continental philosophy. The methods (though perhaps not the positions) of analytic philosophy, by contrast, are more unified: analysis of concepts and intuitions through armchair thought experiments, sometimes with the formalization of arguments. Some analytic philosophy employs the methods of the social sciences, as in the case of experimental philosophy. (Indeed, critics of the latter sometimes charge that for that very reason, the new movement counts as psychology, not philosophy.)

When it comes to metaphilosophy, or a conception of the nature and aims of philosophy, the two schools reflect two sides of philosophy that can be traced back to Socrates: the critical, practical, ethical element (evident in Plato’s Socratic dialogues) and the natural, scientific aspect (found in Aristophanes’ Socrates, who gives a physicalist, mechanistic explanation of thunder in the *The Clouds*). Continental philosophy inherited the first strain: it tends to criticize worldviews, encourage social reform, and ask, “What, then, ought to be done?” It has a practical (ethical, political) orientation, even in areas that are not strictly ethics or political philosophy (e.g., the analysis of technology). Analytic philosophy, by contrast, for the most part inherited the second strain. It aims to clarify concepts and usually has a scientific orientation, attempting to contribute to our knowledge about the natural world and the human mind and so on. It strives to produce more and more accurate (or defensible) theories, and to assist the physical and social sciences. Although some sub-disciplines of analytic philosophy are devoted to ethics and political philosophy, and thus certainly have an ethical and practical dimension, even when these sub-disciplines (e.g., analytic feminist philosophy, ethics, political philosophy) turn to these issues, they employ the aforementioned analytic methods. They strive for clearly presented arguments, sometimes formalized.

When it comes to subject matter and what counts as worthy of philosophical investigation, continental philosophy has a large degree of variety. There is less agreement about problems, topics, and themes, as evidenced by the diversity of viable schools in contemporary continental philosophy. By contrast, analytic philosophy has relatively more agreement about problems, themes, and research programs, although even here total conformity is absent. In fact, both schools have a high degree of compartmentalization and specialization. For instance, it would be rare to find an analytic ethicist who closely follows the latest debates in contemporary analytic philosophy of logic. For members of both schools, but especially the analytics, it is a challenge to keep up with the enormous output of theories in the relevant academic journals.

Changing gears for a moment, there are also several features of the two schools that are not strictly philosophical yet still are interesting. Consider the conceptions of what is considered to be an acceptable form of writing, the different views of

how to present a philosophical argument. Continental philosophy has looser standards of what form philosophical writing must take: it is more open to literary texts, to narrative fiction, theatre, even to poetry, in addition to the standard academic essay. It does not consider clarity to consist mainly in short, academic articles or in the logical inferences contained therein, as analytic philosophy tends to do. The latter has, or strives to have, strict standards of written form, clarity, and argument. Although it surely welcomes formal logical notation to present arguments, it is possible for an article to omit it and still be acceptable or even influential. Continentals seem to esteem monographs more than do analytics, who seem to prefer the short academic article. Although analytics naturally write and publish monographs, the business of published philosophy is for the most part carried out via journal articles, reviews, discussions, and similar publications.

There is a primary language of research in analytic philosophy: English. Strikingly, this usually is true even in non-English speaking countries: Italian, Norwegian, Brazilian, and German analytics alike tend to write in English, especially when writing for international audiences. (This seems to be mostly because analytic philosophy was largely developed in anglophone countries.) In continental philosophy, by contrast, there is a plurality of languages: Italian, Spanish, French, German, Portuguese, and so on, in addition to English. Continental philosophy often cites and analyzes the original language of a philosophical figure. This fact is not surprising, given the sensitivity to a text's literary qualities. In analytic philosophy, such attention to original language is less widespread or expected.

As mentioned, there are common philosophical origins between the camps (Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Kant, Brentano), but there are also shared historical origins, insofar as both schools are rooted in European history.

As the latest Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy program will reveal, there are many viable schools in continental philosophy: Frankfurt school and critical theory, deconstruction and post-structuralism, philosophical hermeneutics, phenomenology, feminist philosophy, and post-colonialism, just to name a few. However, some previously thriving schools are now mostly relics for intellectual history (Existentialism, Marxism, Saussurean structuralism). Analytic philosophy also has its share of passé schools, e.g. logical positivism and

ordinary language philosophy. Nonetheless, analytic pragmatism, postanalytic philosophy, neurophilosophy, post-empiricism, and experimental philosophy are flourishing schools in analytic philosophy.

These aforementioned features are summarized below in Table 1 and Table 2, and points of convergence are presented in **bold font**.

I would like to focus on the points of convergence. It is evident that, despite many differences in key philosophical figures and history, there is some overlap in figures (Descartes, Kant, Brentano) as well as a shared history – European history. Consider also the reception of historical figures who are important to both camps, e.g., Kant. John McDowell's *Mind and World* (1994) attempted to redirect analytic philosophy back to Kantian themes of receptivity and sensibility. Further developments in the analytic reception of Kant include, as Günter Zöller (1993) points out, the shift from interest in a general discussion of transcendental arguments to the analysis and evaluation of particular proofs in Kant, and the emergence of a body of literature, from the 1990s onward, on Kant's philosophy of mind. The latter discussion centered around the idea of a 'transcendental psychology,' to use a term popularized by Patricia Kitcher (1990)<sup>2</sup>. The continental reception of Kant, by contrast, seems to have been more sustained and to have had less ebb and flow, so I will not pursue it here.

So, what is a point of convergence? Consider Husserl's understanding of the a priori in relation to Kant's conception. To clarify his argument, Husserl uses Kant's position as a foil. Husserl's early writings on the philosophy of arithmetic contain his criticisms of Kant's concept of a priori synthesis. Moreover, even the later Husserl's genetic phenomenology as presented in *Experience and Judgment* (1975) criticizes Kant's a priori/a posteriori distinction and other Kantian dualities. By criticizing a philosopher who deals with many of the same problems, Husserl characterizes his own position more clearly. The concept of a point of convergence contains the idea of two entities aiming toward a single limit. In short: one philosopher deals with the same philosophical problem or theme as a predecessor, making explicit reference to the latter yet (possibly) arriving at a different conclusion. Such an intellectual junction is a point of convergence with

<sup>2</sup> See also Patricia Kitcher's forthcoming book, *Kant's Thinker* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Table 1. Philosophical Features of the Two Schools.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Continental Philosophy</b>	<b>Analytic Philosophy</b>
View of the history of philosophy	On what is the focus of the history of philosophy?	Focus is on texts in their historical context	Focus is on philosophical “problems”; less focus on texts in historical context
	Is there emphasis on proper names and historical figures (e.g., Hegel)?	Heavy emphasis	Less emphasis
	Is there an accepted historical tradition? A canon of philosophical texts?	Has an accepted <b>historical tradition and canon (Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Brentano, et al.)</b>	Has an overlapping, yet different, <b>historical tradition and canon (Hume, Kant, Hegel, Brentano, Frege, Russell, Moore, et al.)</b>
Ontological orientation	What are its ontological assumptions?	Anti-metaphysical (from late Heidegger on)	An updated, linguistic-logical, post-empiricism;
Epistemological orientation	What are its epistemological assumptions?	<b>Anti-foundational</b> It tends to be <b>anti-psychologistic</b> .	<b>Anti-foundational</b> <b>i-psychologistic</b> (Fregeans), mental philosophy and  Split between anti-realists and realists.
Methodological orientation	What are its methods?	Tends to be anti-realist. Phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical theory, deconstruction, feminist philosophy, post-colonialism, psychoanalysis	Analysis of concepts and intuitions in thought experiments; use of formal logic; allied with cognitive sciences; use of social science methods in philosophical “experimentation”
Metaphilosophy	What is the task of philosophy?	To criticize worldviews; social reform; has ethical, political, practical focus	To clarify concepts; to assist the hard and soft sciences: has a scientific orientation; also contains practical philosophy (but even such sub-disciplines employ analytic methods)
Subject matter	To what extent is there an accepted set of philosophical problems?		
	Much variety concerning philosophical problems <sup>3</sup>	More agreement about philosophical problems	

<sup>3</sup> See below the large number of viable schools that are living options, under the row “Schools.”

Table 2. Not-Strictly-Philosophical, but Still Interesting Features of the Two Schools.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Continental Philosophy</b>	<b>Analytic Philosophy</b>
Writing style	What is the standard writing form?	More acceptance of literary forms; more emphasis on monographs than in analytic philosophy	Esteems the short, academic essay or article
	How should arguments be presented?	Arguments usually presented in prose, but can be presented in narrative or poetry; logical notation nearly always repudiated	Has strict standards of written form, clarity, argument; endorses formal logic in arguments, though not always used
Research language	Is there a primary language of research?	Plurality of languages: Italian, Spanish, French, German, English, etc.	Primarily English, even in non-English speaking countries
Language of citations	To what extent is the original language of another philosopher cited and analyzed?	Often	Less common
History	Are there common philosophical origins?	<b>Yes: Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Kant, Brentano, et al.</b>	
	What are the common historical origins?		
Schools	What schools of philosophy are there within the tradition?	<b>European History</b> Past schools: existentialism Marxism structuralism	Past schools: logical positivism, Vienna Circle, ordinary language philosophy
		Viable schools: Frankfurt school and critical theory, deconstruction and post-structuralism, hermeneutics, phenomenology, feminist philosophy, post-colonialism, etc.	Viable schools: analytic pragmatism, postanalytic philosophy, neurophilosophy, post-empiricism, experimental philosophy, etc.

regard to a concept (the a priori). Such points are not limited to convergences in subject matter, theme, or problems, but can also be found with respect to methodological, ontological, or epistemological assumptions.

By looking at these meeting places between philosophers from both camps, we can better understand the two camps' themes, problems, tendencies, traditions, and figures. In fact, this is what I take Lee Braver to be doing in his exemplary book on anti-realism (2007). By examining the points of convergence that can be found in Table 1 and Table 2, one can better understand and bridge the gap between the analytic and continental traditions.

So, what are the points of convergence for the present purposes? As mentioned, the ontology of both schools is largely anti-foundationalist, and the epistemology non-psychologistic (at least if one puts aside the recent development of experimental philosophy and the incorporation of cognitive science and neuroscience into neurophilosophy and neurophenomenology).

Note that there can be much disagreement within a particular school. Within the analytic school, for instance, defenders of the analysis of intuitions via armchair thought experiments oppose the rise of experimental philosophy and the application of the methods of the social sciences to philosophical problems. Experimental philosophers, and other empirically inclined philosophers, in turn argue that the armchair method is inadequate by itself and at the very least needs to be supplemented, or even wholly replaced, by experimental methods.

Similar internal disagreement can be found within continental philosophy. Feminist problems and issues often are not aligned with those of phenomenology, and vice versa. Both continental feminist philosophy and phenomenology have different concerns than proponents of post-structuralist deconstruction. Some sub-schools have more affinity with each other than others. The methods, problems, and issues of continental feminist philosophy seem to overlap more with those of the Frankfurt school, critical theory, critical race theory, and post-colonialism. (It is worth noting that *analytic* philosophers, too, address feminist concerns. However, when they do so, they largely use the techniques cherished by analytic philosophy: conceptual analysis, formalization, and so on.)

### 3. What to do?

There should be more dialogue between the analytic and continental traditions today. Some philosophers are trying – in my opinion correctly – to move beyond using the labels as modes of pigeonholing and are attempting to make actual progress.<sup>4</sup> How can we continue this progress? Here are some ways to improve the relations, from two perspectives. From a theoretical perspective:

1. Understand, criticize, and appreciate each other's philosophical orientation and methodological, epistemological, and ontological assumptions.
2. Discuss areas of agreement and disagreement.
3. Return to, and emphasize, points of convergence and overlap rather than disagreement.
4. Characterize how points of convergence came about historically, e.g., through the Frege-Husserl debate, the reception of Wittgenstein in anglophone countries, etc.
5. Acquaint oneself with each camp's vocabulary and terminology.
6. Understand what each school sees as its philosophical themes and problems.

From a practical perspective:

1. Read, study, and teach the texts of the other tradition. (No one said it would be easy!)
2. Provide translations of important primary texts and philosophical sources.
3. Create, and contribute to, more philosophical journals that appeal to and examine both traditions. (This issue is a case in hand.)
4. Publish monographs and articles devoted to the history, presuppositions, methods, problems, themes, styles, etc., of the two traditions.
5. Seek agreement on subject matter and problems by organizing conferences, creating online forums, broadening calls for papers, and carrying out collaborative projects.

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<sup>4</sup> For instance, see the well-intended forum (though some entries are quite heated), "The analytic/continental divide," moderated by Derek Allan. Available at <http://philpapers.org>. Cited 20 Dec 2010.

6. Encourage philosophy departments (especially ones with graduate programs that educate philosophers) to offer a more balanced representation of both schools, thus hiring analytic philosophers in continental departments and vice versa.

I limit myself to just one comment on these recommendations. Richard Rorty claimed that it is pointless to bridge the split because it is not a matter of the two camps addressing the same problems with different methods, but rather they are addressing different *problems* (1982: pp. 225-226). While I agree that the two schools are usually addressing different problems, I do not share Rorty's pessimism about the possibility of seeking a rapport. Both sides can, after all, understand each other's problems. I do not claim that it is easy to do so, just that it is possible – so long as there is some effort and enough good will and patience.

#### 4. Conclusion

There should be mutual understanding and cooperation among philosophers from both the analytic and continental traditions. Stressing the points of convergence between these two schools is a step towards this desirable aim. Intellectual cooperation and coordination can not only bring about better theories but can also indirectly lead to tangible benefits by promoting cross-cultural understanding. It can even perhaps show to the wider public that philosophers of various stripes are able to overcome philosophical differences and provide intelligent and even useful arguments.

How does our current predicament compare with other situations in which there were rival schools? I wonder whether the current situation is in fact unique, especially when compared to that of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The schools of the Academicians, Stoics, Cynics, and Epicureans disagreed with each other on the goals and content of philosophy. One might suggest that there was more philosophical dialogue at that time than there is today. However, should one be tempted by this thought, consider the healthy exchanges and insights offered by Searle, Dreyfus, Brandom, McDowell, Gallagher, and Zahavi.

There are still some important differences between the two historical situations. The first has to do with the proliferations of printed and online texts and the specialization of academia today. Insofar as the current rift is unlike the ancient divide, it is because philosophers today are so specialized that it is hard to converse with philosophers from other schools. And there may be just too much to read. Moreover, for better or worse, we are less tied to philosophy as “love of wisdom” than the ancients – even those schools, such as the Epicureans, that put prudence before philosophy were, in demoting the latter, explicitly conscious of the ideal of philosophy as love of wisdom. Perhaps we should return to the original conception of philosophy and allow it to add to and complement our current conception of philosophy.

In addition, perhaps we should be more aware of the historical contexts in which earlier philosophers were writing. Even if, admittedly, several philosophers from both camps give exceptionally nuanced and insightful readings of the history of philosophy, on the whole we can do much better. I think this will improve the quality of our philosophical work. For, if we are overly ‘presentist’ in our interpretations of the past ideas, we might commit grave errors of anachronism; we might think past philosophers are saying or thinking something that in fact they are not. Moreover, like it or not, philosophy necessarily has a historical dimension: the philosopher always inherits underlying assumptions that are grounded in earlier intellectual developments. Many contemporary analytic philosophers would like to neglect the inheritance and history-ladenness of philosophical theory, with the hope that their own philosophical views remain wholly devoid of presuppositions. (Contemporary continental philosophers are generally less susceptible to the faults of subscribing to a-historicism and of believing that their philosophical positions lack presuppositions.) Insofar as philosophy requires the examination of hidden assumptions and presuppositions, this lack of desire to examine one's assumptions seems to be downright unphilosophical, an embarrassing mistake for a philosopher of any stripe to make.

In this short piece, I have inevitably left many questions untouched. Can, and should, the history of philosophy be considered a third approach? Can interesting and innovative philosophy be carried out in an a-historical manner? For reasons listed in the previous paragraph, I myself suspect that this cannot



be done. If it cannot, are analytics and continentals both in some sense doing ‘history’ of philosophy? If so, this implies that, strictly speaking, the history of philosophy is not some third way, but is simply assumed by doing any good philosophy at all. (For, if one’s work turns out to be intellectual *history*, then it naturally cannot be philosophy – it could not say anything philosophically new or interesting.)

In short, our topic opens up the deeper queries, “How does philosophy differ from scientific and other disciplines” and, most fundamentally, “What, after all, is philosophy?”

These metaphilosophical questions are important in their own right, but answering them can also lead to desirable consequences. Having a clear view of the nature of our discipline can also help us overcome the continental/analytic divide, and it is healthy for both sides to try to answer these questions. Needless to say, we should not presuppose that one camp has exclusive access to reasonable and defensible responses to such questions.

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