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## **Reconsidering the Divide between Analytic and Continental Philosophy**

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### **Chair's preface to the E-Proceedings of the Workshop: 'Reconsidering the Divide between Analytic and Continental Philosophy'**

Contemporary philosophy has been haunted by the image of a 'gulf' dividing on the one hand so-called 'analytic', and on the other so-called 'continental' approaches to the subject. By way of an introduction to this idea of a divide, one might briefly mention some highlights from the kinds of polemical, if not in some cases abusive, remarks various prominent representatives of one camp direct against others commonly associated with the opposition.

Rudolf Carnap compared metaphysicians like Martin Heidegger to failed musicians or bad poets, producing nonsense by attempting to express their attitudes towards life in terms of theory.<sup>1</sup> A. J. Ayer later rehashed this accusation, comparing Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre to the king in Alice in wonderland, who in response to Alice's remark that she sees nobody on the road, proclaims 'I only wish that I had such eyes, to be able to see Nobody! And at that distance too!'.<sup>2</sup> Heidegger, in turn, in the midst of his flirtation with Nazism, accused Carnap and the Vienna Circle of being in league with both Soviet communism and American capitalism.<sup>3</sup> Gilbert Ryle's self-proclaimed sympathetic review of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* ends by claiming that phenomenology is doomed to a disastrous mysticism.<sup>4</sup> His review closes by noting that '*Sein und Zeit*, it is worth mentioning, is most beautifully printed and the pages have generous margins'.<sup>5</sup> Ryle would later proclaim that continental philosophy did not progress because it did not benefit from the British development of modern logic.<sup>6</sup> R. M. Hare preferred an institutional explanation: German and French philosophy had suffered from the absence of the Oxford tutorial system.<sup>7</sup> And later on, Jacques Derrida would refuse to use John Searle's name in replying to him, preferring to refer to him as Sarl (the French for limited liability company),<sup>8</sup> while Searle followed Foucault in referring to Derrida as an 'obscurantiste terroriste'.<sup>9</sup>

Yet, despite the picture of an unsurpassable divide that these exchanges have served to conjure,<sup>10</sup> there are reasons to be suspicious of the idea that there is a supposed divide between two (and only two) philosophical traditions. Clearly, philosophers from the continent have been influential in the history of analytic philosophy, and 'continental' philosophy has more or less throughout the twentieth century been in some manner present in the Anglo-Saxon world (e.g. in British Idealism, American Pragmatism).

In recent years, there has been a growing number of attempts to overcome, revise, deflate, or re-conceptualise the very notion of a divide, which has been seen by the majority of its commentators as becoming heretofore untenable. The time seems to be ripe, then, for reconsidering the entrenched assumptions about the particular view of twentieth century philosophy as divided into two camps.

The papers that follow reconsider particular aspects of the divide in question. In their article on Brentano's Polish legacy, Piotr Leśniewski and Katarzyna Gan-Krzywoszyńska survey the ways in which the development of twentieth century philosophy in Poland has been based on effortless crossings of the divide. Susan Gottlöber's article compares between Nagel and Moore's contributions to ethical theory on the one hand, and Scheler's personalism on the other, showing how the latter might provide answers to some of the problems posed by the former. Finally, Søren Gosvig Olesen, drawing from his personal experience in teaching 'continental philosophy' on the continent, asks what, if any, criteria may allow one to think of 'continental philosophy' as a unified phenomenon.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rudolf Carnap, "Überwindung der Metaphysik durch logische Analyse der Sprache," *Erkenntnis*, 2, no. 1 (1931): 219-241.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Ayer, A. J. (1945). "Novelist-Philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre," *Horizon*, 12, no. 67 (1945): 12–26, 18.

<sup>3</sup> See Michael Friedman, *A Parting of the Ways: Carnap, Cassirer, and Heidegger* (Chicago: Open Court, 2000), 22.

<sup>4</sup> Gilbert Ryle, "Review of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*," *Mind*, 38, no. 151 (1929): 355-370.

<sup>5</sup> Ryle, "Review of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*," 370.

<sup>6</sup> For example, at the Royaumont colloquium Ryle notoriously claimed that modern logic was a British invention; see Gilbert Ryle, "Phenomenology vs. *The Concept of Mind*," in *Collected Papers: Critical Essays (Vol. 1)* (London: Hutchinson, 1971): 179-196.

<sup>7</sup> Richard M. Hare, "A School for Philosophers," *Ratio*, 2 no.2 (1960): 107-120.

<sup>8</sup> Jacques Derrida, "Limited Inc, a b c ...," in *Limited Inc*, Samuel Weber (ed.) (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1988): 29-110.

<sup>9</sup> E. Feser, J. R. Searle, & S. R. Postrel, "Reality Principles: An Interview with John R. Searle". *Reason Magazine*, (February 2000): 42-50.

<sup>10</sup> I have elsewhere extensively argued that, though these exchanges have in the past been instrumental in the construction of the idea of the divide, they do not justify thinking that such a divide exists; see Andreas Vrahimis, *Encounters between Analytic and Continental Philosophy* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming).

<sup>11</sup> Søren Gosvig Olesen's article is taken from his book titled *Transcendental History*, (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), and is reprinted here with kind permission by the publisher.