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Philosophy's Shame: Reflections on an Ambivalent/Ambiviolent Relationship with Science

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Abstract In this paper, I take inspiration from some themes in Ann Murphy's recent book, *Violence and the Philosophical Imaginary*, especially her argument that philosophy's identity and relation to itself depends on an intimate relationship with that which is designated as not itself (e.g. other academic disciplines and non-philosophy in general), the latter of which is a potential source of shame that calls for some form of response. I argue that this shame is particularly acute in regard to the natural sciences, which have gone on in various ways to distance themselves from their progenitor discipline and to achieve both agreement and technical progress in a way that could never be said of philosophy. I trace out some of the reactions to this shame that have dominated in the twentieth century and been a factor in the so-called analytic-continental 'divide'. The options here are many and varied, but they range from cannibalism (philosophy as queen of the sciences, thus conferring some of the prestige of science upon the philosophy, which alone can unite or ground the various ontic sciences), scientific naturalism (the philosopher defers to the sciences, and most forms of meta-philosophy are rejected as an outmoded remnant of first philosophy), or some kind of irenic separatism about methods or domains such that science and philosophy do not encroach upon the territory of each other. My aims here are mainly diagnostic, but I will indicate where I think that certain responses to this shame are unproductive and unhelpful, with divergent weaknesses associated with the traditions that have come to be labelled 'analytic' and 'continental' respectively. My tacit suggestion, then, is that philosophy needs to become post-analytic and meta-continental, but I will also briefly criticize some recent efforts to do precisely this in what is sometimes called the 'scientific turn' in contemporary continental (or post-continental) philosophy.

Keywords Meta-philosophy · Science · Methodology · Analytic · Continental · Shame

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In this paper, I take inspiration from some themes in Ann Murphy's recent book, *Violence and the Philosophical Imaginary* (2013), but explore them in a direction that she might not herself endorse. In particular, I want to take up Murphy's argument that philosophy's identity and relation to itself (as a body or corpus proper) depends on an intimate relationship with that which is designated as not itself (e.g. other academic disciplines and non-philosophy in general), the latter of which is a potential source of shame that calls for some form of response. Unlike Murphy, however, I focus upon what I call the 'ambivalent/ambiviolent' relationship with science that is characteristic of philosophy in the twentieth century. I will argue that the shame, and policing of the borders of which Murphy, Michèle Le Doeuff and others speak, is particularly acute in regard to the natural sciences, which have, of course, gone on in various ways to distance themselves from their progenitor discipline and to achieve prestige, agreement and technical progress in a way that could never be said of philosophy. I trace out some of the reactions to this shame that have dominated in the twentieth century and been a factor in the so-called analytic-continental 'divide'. The options here are many and varied, but they range from cannibalism (philosophy as queen of the sciences, thus conferring some of the prestige of science upon the philosophy, which alone can unite or ground the various ontic sciences), scientific naturalism (the philosopher defers to the sciences and most forms of meta-philosophy are rejected as an outmoded remnant of first philosophy) or some kind of irenic separatism—ostensibly pluralist and ecumenical—about methods or domains such that science and philosophy do not encroach upon the territory of each other. All, in some way or another, are responses to philosophy not having the pre-eminent role it once did and needing to establish what is proper to it in interaction with, and contradistinction from, science. My aims here will be mainly diagnostic, but I will indicate where I think that certain responses to this shame are unproductive and unhelpful, with divergent weaknesses associated with the traditions that have come to be called 'analytic' and 'continental' respectively. My tacit suggestion, then, is that philosophy needs to become post-analytic and meta-continental, avoiding certain problematic ways of dealing with this shame vis-à-vis science that have been major factors in the twentieth century. In conclusion, I will also briefly criticize some recent efforts to do precisely this in what is sometimes called the 'scientific turn' in contemporary continental (or post-continental) philosophy.

Ann Murphy: On Philosophy, Shame and Meta-Philosophy

Drawing on the work of Le Doeuff and Judith Butler, amongst others, Murphy gives us an insightful account of philosophy's ever-changing self-conception, highlighting the manner in which this requires a constant engagement with that which is ostensibly not philosophy, whether that be other academic disciplines or the pre-philosophical and non-philosophical more generally. Murphy's key meta-philosophical claim, one that is broadly deconstructive and with which I agree, is that 'the disciplinary borders of philosophy delineate a field that is subject to perpetual disintegration and dissemination… it would appear, however, that this disciplinary vulnerability is not something philosophy can readily abide' (Murphy 2013, 25). Her book as a whole shows that 'the philosophical imaginary's reliance on images of violence signals discomfort … with its own body proper, its own

disciplinary borders, and its own circumscription' (Murphy 2013, 25). While the use of metaphors of violence will not be my prime concern here, as interesting and symptomatic as they undoubtedly are, Murphy claims that philosophy is inevitably beset by other disciplines—provoked to think by science, art, etc.—in a way that calls what philosophy is into question, and demands a response, perhaps a waking to wonder, to simultaneously invoke Plato, Husserl and the recent work on this topic by Marguerite La Caze (2013).

For Murphy, what we experience and confront is something like a pre-moral experience of shame, although we could also call this a 'being placed in question before the other' for those philosophers averse to talk of shame. And, this 'shame' is ambivalent, potentially related to what we (perhaps too readily) call 'violence', but not necessarily so. It can impel us to open up the question of what is philosophy in hospitable fashion and remake philosophy in creative ways, but it also contains within it the possibility of the exclusion of other ways of thinking. Without something like the experience of shame, we are philosophically and existentially complacent, perhaps ensconced in the cave for Plato, the natural attitude for Husserl, or opinion and doxa more generally. Nonetheless, this being placed in question, whether it be by potentially encroaching disciplines (most notably, physics, biology, historicism, psychologism, neuroscience and psychoanalysis[1]) or by experiences of love, art, science and politics (philosophy's 'conditions' for Badiou), can provoke a defensive reaction. A defensive reaction to this shame, a *manning* of the borders, will involve either the attempt to expel such disciplines (e.g. philosophy is not that) and/or these putative conditions (e.g. love, art and politics have nothing to do with philosophy) or appropriating them in some way and bringing them within the purview of philosophy. For Murphy, 'both of these movements—an exposure to others and a "riveting" to the self—are performatively announced in philosophy's anxious and frustrated policing of its own disciplinary borders' (Murphy 2013, 33). Philosophy is not science, not history, not literature, not rhetoric, not sophistry, rather 'philosophy is the remainder that persists after the other disciplines have been expelled' (Murphy 2013, 34). But, Murphy's claim is that if philosophy is fundamentally defined by reference to what it is not, it also depends on what it is not, and this 'implicates philosophy in a kind of disciplinary autoimmunity wherein philosophy cannot extricate itself from its disciplinary doubles without further asserting their necessity. Shame would mark the dynamic…' (Murphy 2013, 35). One consequence of such a position is that philosophy can never be pure, autonomous or presuppositionless. Indeed, if what Murphy says is true, we seem forced to conclude that there is no secure method—beyond ongoing vigilance—for ensuring that philosophy does not end up committing inhospitable and non-philosophical moves occasioned by shame. As Derrida puts this point, which has both a methodological and socio-political register, 'there is no reliable prophylaxis against the auto-immune' (Derrida 2004, 150–1)

Now, it is not entirely clear (to me at least) whether Murphy's claim about shame is meant to be distinctive to the self-reflection that is involved in philosophy or generalizable to other disciplines. What might Albert Einstein have experienced, for example, if he read Heidegger on time? We know that he quite stridently dismissed Bergson's

[1] Drawing on the work of Badiou, Lacan and others, Justin Clemens (2012) considers psychoanalysis to be an anti-philosophy.

work when they met a conference (see Ansell-Pearson 2001). Without being able to justify this here, I think that the sort of experiential provocation that Murphy illuminates is not distinctive of philosophy, even if it is perhaps especially acute for philosophers. It can awaken other disciplines to wonder too, but it can also provoke border control and the fortification of the discipline in question against outsiders, as with the aggression that some of these disciplines also reciprocally direct at philosophy, whether that be the philo-physics of Stephen Hawking, Lawrence Krauss and Neil de Grasse Tyson or historicizing/psychologizing/experimental philosophy style debunking accounts of philosophy. Some of them seem to define themselves precisely in opposition to philosophy too, wanting to expel and deny any continuity with philosophy, albeit also proclaiming themselves able to judge philosophy from the outside and thus ambivalently appropriating philosophy for themselves, if not during their weekday work, then at least in regard to what those scientists say 'in an edifying tone of voice on Sundays' (Ryle 1952, 74–5). In the rest of this paper, I will deploy Murphy's framework in order to consider a couple of issues that are not the main focus of her work but which benefit from being understood in the light of it: The question of philosophy's (im)proper relationship with science, as well as the bifurcation of philosophy into types that is a feature of philosophy in the twentieth century, which is significantly related to the question of the relationship between philosophy and science (and hence to meta-philosophy).

Philosophy and Science

It is well-known that philosophy has been involved in the birth of various disciplines that have subsequently gone on to distance themselves from their progenitor, starting with the natural sciences and mathematics, but more recently including psychology and the social sciences. The apocryphal joke might be that whenever philosophy has any success, it ceases to be philosophy—this is why Merleau-Ponty and others have said that the philosopher 'limps'—and this history begins to offer an explanation about why philosophers are arguably especially intent on guarding the borders. Moreover, even upon their ostensible disciplinary separation, philosophy and science were (comparatively) able to work together for a long period of time and also able to be understood by the learned public, even if that *res publica* was itself comparatively elite and privileged. Given the advance of modernity, and the specialization and development in various sciences post Newton, this is now less the case. Philosophers are hence confronted by a twofold dilemma in a way that was not always the case or at least was not experienced so acutely: (a) when philosophy is 'successful', it thereby becomes a particular science and thus ceases to be philosophy and (b) however well-intentioned a philosopher may be, he or she will fail to have a view of the scientific whole that is anywhere near adequate (this point holds for the scientist too, perhaps especially the philo-physicist who is committed to the thesis of the unity of science and purports to know the whole, at least in principle). Today, we all do philosophy in that situation, including the many self-proclaimed naturalists, and this induces a feeling of shame in Murphy's pre-moral sense and calls on us all to respond, whether or not we ever explicitly take a position on this meta-philosophical issue. While there are many varied positions on this issue, the core options seem to be *cannibalist incorporatism*

(philosophy as queen of the sciences, thus conferring some of the prestige of science upon the philosophy, which alone can unite or ground the various ontic sciences), *scientific naturalism* (defer to the sciences, with the philosopher having a diminished role, and any meta-philosophy treated as an outmoded remnant of first philosophy) or some kind of irenic *methodological separatism*—ostensibly pluralist and ecumenical—about methods or domains of inquiry such that science and philosophy do not encroach upon the territory of each other.

While this final option may seem tolerant and pluralist, it is still a response to a discipline in question and understandable as an attempt to set up a form of immunity against outsiders calling the discipline into question. After all, *if* philosophy has a special domain, attitude or method for dealing with problems, then other disciplines are no longer a potential threat but also no longer a potential boon or gift. This kind of strategy might include, for example, identifying philosophy exclusively with description rather than explanation, with reasons rather than causes, with the first-person perspective rather than the third, and with 'why questions' rather than 'how questions', and leaving the other questions to the scientists. There is something to this sort of methodological separatism, of course, but even this putatively non-aggressive move has its own hidden 'violence'. It seems to follow from such a view that, *qua* philosopher, one can learn nothing at all from science (and the irenic position seems to have related consequences for art, love, politics, etc.), and it might be wondered just how plausible such a view is. It looks to be a kind of disciplinary 'siloism' that ignores the complex encroachments and entanglements posed by various disciplines to each other. Moreover, in the absence of any attempt to understand how such different knowledge claims might ultimately fit together, there also seems to be a risk of such a position becoming an ecumenical relativism for which there is no principled way of preferring, say, the epistemological credentials of philosophical (or scientific) discourse to dinner conversations at Richard Rorty's, as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari lament (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 10), or even to contemporary marketing as they also complain (cf. also Malabou 2008).

All of these options are responses to philosophy not having the pre-eminent role it once did and needing to establish what it can do only in interaction with the scientific frame. I think that the analytic-continental divide has a lot to do with differing ways of responding to the shame engendered by this situation. Naturalism has often been seen as one of the key points of contestation. Even though there are non-naturalist analytic traditions (e.g. Wittgenstein, ordinary language philosophy, etc.), they are very much in the minority even if more 'liberal' and 'near' naturalisms are on the rise. By contrast, exceedingly few continental philosophers could be called scientific naturalists of either an ontological or methodological kind: The former of which is usually taken to denote a commitment to physicalism and the idea that what is real is the entities postulated by our best fundamental sciences; the latter of which involves a commitment to the idea that the only reliable methods or ways of knowing are those practiced by the natural sciences, with a distinct preference for third-personal accounts. There is hence a prima facie case for the relationship to science being one of the key points of dispute between so-called analytic and continental philosophy throughout the twentieth century. In what follows, I will briefly sketch one of the core trajectories within the analytic tradition (one which takes the meta-philosophical question to be a mistake, not something requiring a response), before turning to the continental tradition where the meta-philosophical question is faced but often in cannibalist/incorporatist mode or at least

in the milder aggression of irenic methodological separatism that is shared with the post-Wittgensteinian ordinary language tradition (see Chase and Reynolds 2016).

Analytic Philosophy, Science and Shame

Although G. E. Moore is not so committal on this point, it is well known that Bertrand Russell aligns the emerging analytic tradition with science in various respects. Even if logico-linguistic analysis is not strictly a science, it aims to be much closer to a science than philosophy has hitherto been. Kevin Mulligan (1993) draws attention to the following representative remark from Russell:

> There have been far too many heroic solutions in philosophy; detailed work has too often been neglected; there has been too little patience. As was once the case in physics, a hypothesis is invented, and on top of this hypothesis a bizarre world is constructed, there is no effort to compare this world with the real world. The true method, in philosophy as in science, will be inductive, meticulous, and will not believe that it is the duty of every philosopher to solve every problem by himself. This is the method that inspires analytic realism and it is the only method, if I am not mistaken, by which philosophy will succeed in obtaining results which are as solid as those of science (Russell 1911, 61).

Russell contends here that the true philosophical method is inductive, thus evincing his 'methodological empiricism', in which the philosopher aims, where possible, to confine themselves to empirically respectable terrain (cf. Chase and Reynolds 2011). Russell also notes that it is not the duty of philosopher to solve every problem by themselves. Both claims were being challenged by the emerging phenomenological tradition at the time they were uttered, and both claims involve a deflationary response to meta-philosophy in a manner that has been influential upon the subsequent analytic tradition. Indeed, Russell directly confronts the dilemma we have been considering: Philosophy does not seem to have progressed, and yet, science has. He contends that for philosophical progress to be made, an emulation of the sciences is required, including the idea of piecemeal problem resolution within a community of inquirers, the adoption of some related methods and the attempt to ensure results' continuity with relevant sciences (or, at worst, to minimize one's philosophical footprint in matters that are not empirically well-grounded).

To put this point in the context of Murphy's work, Russell's remarks are exemplary of the way in which many analytic philosophers respond to their shame by (a) conceiving of philosophy as a kind of science, and (sometimes) contending more substantively that deference to the natural sciences is required or (b) adopting a quietest position concerning meta-philosophy that, in its extreme therapeutic form with the work of the late Wittgenstein, becomes bound up with an attempt to stop philosophizing.[2] In fact, it is arguable that both responses are of a piece, despite one trajectory

[2] Of course, Wittgenstein famously notes in a letter to Rush Rhees that this quietest move was ultimately impossible for him personally, even if normatively still desirable, but it is certainly one response to the crisis of philosophy brought about by contemporary science.

being decidedly pro-science and the other contending that the problem is the bewitchment of philosophers by science. Both rule out the possibility of a distinctively philosophical response that might enable philosophy to justify or renew itself in the face of the twofold dilemma described above. Faced with the fact of philosophy's relatively impoverished status, the key is not to seek to recover a special philosophical domain or put forward a new first philosophy or rigorous science, notwithstanding Russell's logical atomism and the logical positivist program in the first half of the twentieth century. Meta-philosophy will either be deflated, or philosophy joins forces with science and polices that philosophy is from a philosophical construal of science called scientific naturalism.

Without being able to fully justify these admittedly rather sweeping generalizations here, it is worth sketching out some key instances of this sort of response, including in the work of philosophers who are not scientific naturalists. Despite his detailed work on meta-philosophy, which sometimes advocates a form of methodological separatism that borrows heavily from both Husserl and Heidegger (Thomasson 2002), the deflationary position is perhaps best exemplified by Gilbert Ryle, at least in certain famous remarks. In 'Ordinary Language', for example, he maintains that 'preoccupation with questions about methods tends to distract us from prosecuting the methods themselves. We run as a rule, worse, not better, if we think a lot about our feet. So let us… not speak of it all but just do it'. (Ryle 2009, 331). Now, the part I have omitted from this quote refers to this 'rule' as being desirable on 'alternate days' only, and it hence seems that Ryle acknowledges the inevitability of meta-philosophy even if he thinks it would be desirable if it were minimized. Ryle's position is hence somewhat ambivalent, and unsurprisingly so, given that Thomasson has argued that Ryle's ongoing meta-philosophical labours constitute his biggest influence within the analytic tradition (Thomasson 2002). But in a related vein, consider Ted Sider's more recent comments on the methodology of analytic metaphysics in his *Four Dimensionalism*:

> I have no good epistemology of metaphysics to offer. It should not be thought, though, that this uncertainty makes metaphysics a worthless enterprise. It would be foolish to require generally that epistemological foundations be established before substantive inquiry can begin. Mathematics did not proceed foundation-first. Nor did physics. Nor has ethics, traditionally. (Sider 2001, xiv)

Sider's argument here is clear enough. Physics proceeds without a precise definition of what makes something physical, as does biology without any sort of agreement on what constitutes life. Even the idea that cognitive science requires a proper understanding of what cognition is before it can get down to business has few defenders (cf. Rowlands 2010, 107–8). While Heidegger, Husserl and others in the phenomenological tradition seek to ground science and provide its conditions of possibility (since it cannot ground itself without circularity), this move is strongly resisted in much of the analytic tradition. Even in his book titled *Philosophy of Philosophy*, despite a call to arms at the end of his book subtitled 'Must Do Better', Timothy Williamson (ambivalently) argues for the necessity and desirability of this situation. Rather than seek a way for philosophy to adequately ground either the sciences or itself, the philosopher needs to be disciplined by other disciplines: notably, for Williamson, logic and the natural sciences, even if in his case without signing up to naturalism (Williamson 2008, 285–6). The

problem with any 'first philosophy', by contrast, is that there is no such discipline. In his 'Afterword', Williamson also notes that while we need both rigor and depth in philosophy, only the former should be pursued as a goal; to pursue the latter is said to be self-defeating in the same way as if we make happiness our explicit goal (Williamson 2008, 289). Despite the title of his book, then, Williamson's *Philosophy of Philosophy* ends up concluding that to seek a distinctively philosophical response to shame would be over-reaching and self-undermining. Unable to autonomously ground and secure its own epistemic credentials, the philosopher, for Williamson, is stuck in *media res*, aboard Neurath's raft.

Consider also the following remark from Scott Soames, in reply to Richard Rorty's review of Soames' two-volume epic *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century* (2005). On the question of whether philosophy can or should still aspire to any sort of grand synthesis (e.g. a view of the whole, including other disciplines and the pre-philosophical), Soames is pessimistic, stating that:

> Rorty's distrust of specialisation and his desire for a grand synthesis ignore the quality and quantity of what there is to synthesise… In earlier eras, when it was not obvious that the scope of human knowledge far exceeded what could be encompassed by a single mind, the challenge of explaining how everything hung together was not so clearly unmanageable. Today, it is, and the solution is not to do badly what cannot be done, but to do well what can be: to construct a series of limited, but accurate and overlapping syntheses that together illuminate reality as we know it. This is what we should ask of analytic philosophy (Soames 2005).

Soames' position is arguably the dominant self-understanding within analytic philosophy today, and it is often accompanied by a practice of conditionalization and a hypothetical dimension to the philosophical project; a sort of weak agnosticism about both particular claims being promulgated and the philosophical project *tout court* (see Chase 2010). While from the perspective(s) of traditional and continental philosophy it can only be a 'mark of shame that a given brand of philosophy is unable to provide an adequate account of itself' (Preston 2006),[3] the analytic meta-philosophical move is often (perhaps predominantly) a negative one: not to be Fuehrer as Ryle polemically accuses phenomenology of at the infamous 1958 Royaumont colloquium,[4] not to take philosophy as queen of the sciences etc., but to deferentially work with the sciences. The justification, then, is not only doubled, with one view on what happens across the chunnel and the history of philosophy and its lack of obvious progress but also disciplined by science and where possible emulating its methods, modes of organization, and enjoying results' continuity with those sciences. Indeed, many analytic

[3] Preston adds: 'given the value, analysts have traditionally placed upon clarity and rigor, one might expect that they themselves would be alarmed by the fact that what it means to be an analytic philosopher is presently unclear. That they tend not to be is a puzzle whose explanation will become clear further on. For now, it should simply be noted that the failure of analytic philosophers to provide a meta-philosophical and methodological account of their manner of philosophizing counts as a tremendous oversight that makes their philosophizing un-philosophical in an important sense' (Preston 2006, 8).

[4] According to Ryle, Husserl philosophized and acted as if he had never met a scientist—of course, at Gottingen, Husserl worked with renowned mathematicians including Felix Klein and David Hilbert, as well as the physicist Max Born.

philosophers are able to exclude the former—i.e. the history of philosophy and continental philosophy—through a philosophical rendering of the practices of the natural sciences (naturalism). As Quine famously put it, 'philosophy of science is philosophy enough' (1966, 151).

Now, plenty of exceptions can be found within the analytic tradition, and we have already briefly recognized some, but this is a dominant trajectory that began with logical positivism and endures to this day. Indeed, without being able to justify this claim here (but cf. Preston 2006), it seems that the crises regarding logical positivism—whether or not the verifiability criterion of meaning was itself verifiable—had, in the end, a pragmatic and deflationary consequence for the analytic tradition. Meta-philosophy itself tended not to be pursued, seemingly on the basis of a suspicion that it led to what is variously called the Münchausen/Agrippa trilemma, in which the search for epistemic justifications confront a trilemma, being either circular, involving an infinite regress, or resting on an unexamined axiom or dogma. The circularity horn of the dilemma is perhaps the most commonly accepted horn of the dilemma, tacitly or otherwise, in the many current forms of holism and coherentism and in the defeasible role accorded to intuition by many analytic philosophers as a starting place for their reflections. But if these remarks are at all plausible as a generalization, the analytic response to Murphy's meta-philosophical shame is primarily to seek to disavow it, and this can only be justified in a negative way—e.g. by contending that all disciplines have this problem, and then to point to the wrong way to respond to this shame, with that often being said to be the inflated meta-philosophical way of German Idealism, of phenomenology and of continental philosophy more generally.

Continental Philosophy, Science and Shame

The cliché of continental philosophy as ignoring or uninterested in science is clearly wrong. If we think about some of the canonical figures from the early twentieth century—like Bergson, Heidegger and Husserl—they all thought long and hard about science (indeed, Bergson and Husserl both began as mathematicians), as have many others since that time, including Gurwitsch, Merleau-Ponty, Ruyer, Cavailles, Canguilhelm, Foucault, etc. In fact, on the account that I am giving here, drawing on Murphy's work, science will be pivotal to the identity of continental philosophy too, albeit with two responses dominant that are less commonly seen in the analytic tradition: what I am calling 'incorporatist cannibalism' or 'methodological separatism', both of which seem to depend on what Foucault calls the 'empirico-transcendental doublet' of modern thought (Foucault 1970, 318–9).

In Husserl's case, phenomenology is expressly established as a reaction to empirical science and psychologism, and it was an institutional and socio-political battle too. At the start of the twentieth century, philosophy chairs were increasingly going to experimental psychologists, hence the *Psychologismus Streit* that Husserl led, and wrote the most famous treatise for (the Prolegomena to his *Logical Investigations*), until the Great War made other political issues more pressing. In Husserl's hands, phenomenology aimed to be a science of consciousness, albeit a rigorous science with methods that are very different from those utilized in empirical science. And, from the time of his

transcendental turn around 1906, we know that, according to Husserl, natural science works entirely within the natural attitude, but transcendental phenomenology does not. The contrast could not be starker, even if precisely how we are to understand the significance of this change in perspective, this phenomenological bracketing, remains contested to this day. But whatever view we take on this, phenomenological philosophy is unveiled by reference to what it is not; in this case, it is not any sort of empirical science and especially not psychology. Phenomenology hence does not rest only upon itself as Husserl contended but is defined expressly in opposition to empirical science and naturalism, which Husserl describes as the 'original sin' (Moran 2013, 92). Indeed, science also comes to be seen in his later work (e.g. *Crisis*) as the 'greatest danger', both culturally and politically, as it becomes increasingly abstracted from the *Lebenswelt*.

Husserl's long and complex relationship with mathematics and science is well attested, but I also want to agree with Patricia Glazebrook who claims that all of Heidegger's thinking for 60 years is a thinking through, and sometimes against, science. This might seem like an unlikely claim, but it is more compelling if we understand it in the light of Murphy's account. Heidegger's philosophy is initially marked by the ambition to fulfil Husserl's hopes and make phenomenology itself a science (albeit not a natural science), but it is also marked by a polemical relation to science that involves a strident differentiation of the essence of thinking from scientific calculation. Glazebrook correctly emphasizes that 'it is when Heidegger comes to his discussion of natural science in sec 69b of *Being and Time* that he says his preliminary conception of phenomenology "will be developed for the first time"' (Glazebrook 2012, 97). Science, then, is the lynchpin that enables Heidegger to define his project of fundamental ontology as opposed to the ontic sciences that presuppose the meaning of Being. In his influential 1929 lecture 'What is Metaphysics?', Heidegger casts some of the claims from *Being and Time* in a slightly different register, focusing on the contrast between beings and the Nothing instead of on the contrast between Being and beings. He is careful here to strongly distinguish philosophy from science, with phenomenological ontology being concerned with the question of Being (roughly equivalent to the Nothing), or the forgetting of this question, and with regional ontologies and empirical sciences being concerned with entities and things. Heidegger claims that science wants to 'know nothing of the nothing', and it is on account of such claims that he feels entitled to eventually claim—infamously and provocatively—that science does not think. Whatever one makes of Heidegger's project, it clearly depends upon understanding that it is not an ontic science (cf. Overgaard 2004), which is not to preclude the possibility that one might make good empirical use of Heidegger's philosophy, as philosophers like Michael Wheeler, Hubert Dreyfus and others have done.

My basic suggestion, then, is that Husserl and Heidegger's response to science and its success (institutionally and epistemically) is to turn to meta-philosophy and to perform a gesture of expelling the sciences from the proper remit of philosophy (phenomenological psychology, for example, is not proper phenomenology) but also seeking at the same time to ground those sciences, asymmetrically, such that the scientist has a need for the philosopher, but the reverse does not obtain. This seems to be what Murphy calls 'a hermetic vision of philosophy', which 'can rid the discipline of impurity and return us to the canon' (Murphy 2013, 26). Without being able to argue against such purism here (but see Reynolds 2017), something akin to the experience of

shame provokes a genuine meta-philosophical response that involves a strict methodological separation between philosophy and science, as well as a hierarchy, and order of subordination, in regard to that opposition. In both cases, there is nothing like the sort of deflationary and/or pragmatic gesture that I have suggested is characteristic of large parts of the analytic tradition. And this tendency perdures, to at least some extent, in so-called continental philosophy thereafter. While I will have to leave in abeyance questions concerning the more modest engagement with science in the work of Merleau-Ponty amongst others, it remains the case that almost none of the 'usual suspects' associated with continental philosophy are ontological or methodological naturalists, except in a very weak sense. Beyond Althusser, few of the well-known continental philosophers defer to science, and few are prepared to accept the pragmatic/deflationary response to meta-philosophical questions. Rather, science poses significant questions about philosophy that the philosopher has to answer qua *philosopher*, and often, those answers seek to limit or critique science and indeed do a certain 'violence' to science, by interrogating or interrupting its own self understanding and by exposing to it to considerations that are usually neglected, especially socio-historical ones. Others, like Bergson and Deleuze, seek to give science the metaphysics that it needs, but in a way that challenges or problematizes science rather than reifies it, as is arguably the case with scientific naturalism.

The Scientific Turn in Contemporary Post-Continental Philosophy?

In more recent times, however, there has been a counter-move going on within contemporary continental philosophy in regard to science. It has even been claimed to constitute a '*post*-continental philosophy' because it seeks to leave behind the heritage of transcendental phenomenology and associated construals of science. John Mullarkey, for example, claims that there is an 'ecstatic naturalism' (2006, 5) in the work of various post-continental thinkers, which for him includes Michel Henry, Alain Badiou, Gilles Deleuze and François Laruelle. Some of John Protevi and Keith Ansell-Pearson's work explores the 'affirmative naturalism' of Nietzsche, Deleuze and others. Dorothea Olkowski has suggested that there has been a scientific turn in contemporary continental thought (Olkowski 2012), and others have seen the speculative materialists/realists as important players in this respect, especially Quentin Meillassoux and Ray Brassier. While the claims of Badiou and Meillassoux are perhaps oversold, since their engagements are much more with mathematics and set theory than with any of the empirical sciences of interest to post-Quinean trajectories in analytic naturalism as Brassier notes (2008), it nonetheless behooves us to consider two of the key figures associated with this 'turn' and for whom the turn is not simply to mathematics but to the empirical sciences more generally: Brassier and Catherine Malabou.

In *Nihil Unbound*, Brassier captures some significant dimensions of this view when he draws on Meillassoux's work to ask:

> Don't science's ancestral and descendent statements strongly imply that those ontologically generative conditions of spatiotemporal manifestation privileged by correlationists – Dasein, life, consciousness, and so on – are themselves merely spatiotemporal occurrences like any other? If we begin to take these questions

> seriously, then the haughty condescension with which post-Kantian continental philosophy deigns to consider what the natural sciences say about the world begins to appear less like aristocratic detachment and more like infantile disavowal… Ironically enough, it is precisely those philosophers who see the fundamental task of philosophy as critique who have proved to be among the staunchest defenders of the legitimacy of the manifest image. (Brassier 2008, 53).

While Brassier is perhaps conflating some different parts of contemporary continental philosophy here—phenomenologists do not typically emphasize critique[5]—I think he is partly right in such an assessment. Many of those associated with continental philosophy have an ambivalent/ambiviolent relationship with science, as we have seen, on account of their strong transcendental-empirical distinction (cf. Brassier 2008, 63). There is something to be said for the terms of his critique, even if philosophers might protest about this or that continental philosopher who has been drawn into the correlationist circle by speculative realists, or even if others might attempt to repackage the phenomenological project more modestly and minimally in order to avoid these charges.

However, whether Brassier's own positive philosophical position is an improvement, and has what we might call 'staying power', is entirely another matter. Wedded to both the eliminative naturalism favoured by James Ladyman and Don Ross in their book, *Everything Must Go*, while retaining a speculative role for metaphysics, his arguments in this respect are not new, also drawing heavily on Sellars, Churchland and others. This is not the place to attempt an argument against eliminativism here, except to say that I think that worries concerning performative contradiction are much deeper and more pervasive than Brassier himself concedes (cf. Brassier 2008, 15). Moreover, philosophies of finitude and correlationism are proving much more obstinate than partisans of the post-continental trajectory might think (cf. Mullarkey 2006, 5), also returning within analytic philosophy. Time will tell whether they are a 'wrinkle in our knowledge' (Foucault 1970, xxiii), a footprint in the ocean destined to be washed away as Foucault famously said about 'man', but I think there is a version of Hilary Putnam's pessimistic meta-induction that we might draw here about these purported eliminations of the manifest-image in philosophy.[6] Their track record has not been especially good since projects of elimination and global reduction began around the 1970s. This does not rule future success out, but it arguably entitles one to be agnostic on this score and transfers the burden of proof to the putative reducer. As Lynne Baker puts a related point, to my mind convincingly:

> I do not expect that anyone who makes a claim that a higher level property is reduced to microphysical properties will be able to specify which microphysical properties are in the supervenience base of the higher level property. Nevertheless, I do expect that anyone who makes a claim that a higher-level property is reduced to … lower level properties will have some justification for this claim - other than, What else can it be? A bare assertion of reduction is just magical thinking (Baker 2012, 116).

[5] Michael Marder, however, shows the persistence of the term and idea within phenomenology in his recent book, *Phenomenology Critique Logos* (2014).

[6] Although not himself advocating any such elimination, Sellars likewise recognizes that 'Man is that being which conceives of itself in terms of the manifest image. To the extent that the manifest image does not survive […] to that extent man himself would not survive' (Sellars 1963, 18).

Now, this sort of objection does not so clearly apply to Malabou's work. While her career began with an engagement with 'continental' figures like Hegel, Heidegger and Derrida, her recent work attempts to take cognitive neuroscience seriously, sometimes appearing to avoid eliminativism and reductionism but sometimes also seeming to embrace at least the latter, as we will see. The key motif of her work throughout, plasticity, is meant to problematize the naturalism or non-naturalism dilemma, but it is not entirely clear how successful such a move is. That is because unlike Brassier, whose case is largely theoretical and metaphysical, Malabou's engagement seems to take place in terms of a more fundamental and pre-given agenda that is socio-political. Malabou aims to differentiate plasticity from flexibility and critique the latter concept in both its gendered and corporate usage. She is even prepared to argue that any attempts to improve quality of life must be rejected in the name of what we really need: explosion (2008, 79); 'resistance is what we need. Resistance to flexibility, to this ideological norm advanced consciously or otherwise by a reductionist discourse….' (Malabou 2008, 68). The talk of explosion needs to retained, Malabou says, without the link to terrorism. Violent images abound here, much as Murphy's analysis has suggested is the case with any conception of philosophy as critique. In some respects, of course, Malabou's basic point is well made: neuroscience, cognitive science and allied disciplines often presuppose harmonious adjustment to one's environment and circumstances as a goal or norm, points that are well made by Williams (this volume) in regard to accounts of the extended mind, but which might also be extended to recent work concerned with predictive coding in which, in short, the brain is envisaged as creating models of the environment in order to reduce prediction error and maximise adaptive fitness: 'avoid surprises and you will last longer' (cf. Hohwy 2013, 2). I think, however, that the work to critique any such image of cognition and thought cannot be adequately done by simply assuming an alternative conception on socio-political grounds. Malabou sometimes appears to do this, claiming, for example, that: 'To produce consciousness of the brain is not to interrupt the identity of brain and world and their mutual speculative relation; it is just the opposite, to emphasize them and to place scientific discovery at the service of an emancipatory political understanding' (Malabou 2008, 53). While we might wonder just what a 'mutual speculative relation' is, given that it also preserves the 'identity' of brain and world, it is the second clause of this sentence that is more revelatory. To think about science solely so as to use it in the name of some extra-scientific agenda seems problematic, repeating the culture wars and begging the question against the scientist. There are, no doubt, many encroachments between science and politics, but to simply take one up for the sake of the other seems liable to lead to an impoverished understanding of science and the broader epistemic questions at stake.[7] In her more recent book, *New Wounded*, Malabou focuses more on this identity of brain and world in such a way that she comes close to accepting a form of reductionism. She claims that '*the only valid philosophical path* today lies in the elaboration of a new materialism that would precisely refuse to envisage the least separation, not only between the brain and thought, but also between the brain and the

[7] In his review of Malabou's book, Jan Slaby notes that, 'The presentation of research in neuroscience on neuronal plasticity is highly selective and not at all up to date, shunning a lot of complexity'. He adds that Malabou's 'little book is in the end no more than a call to arms without much of a battle plan. Rhetorically impressive, timely, much-needed—but not more than a very first step. It is time to follow up and go to work' (Slaby 2010).

unconscious… cerebrality as an axiological principle entirely articulated in terms of the formation and deformation of neuronal connections' (Malabou 2012, 211). Is the 'only path' really to refuse any separation between the brain and thought? It seems, then, that our reminiscence of a petite Madeleine cake (aka Proust) is identical to a third-person description of neurons, synapses, and brain processes. This is a bold move, one liable to the charge of a category mistake by Ryleans and phenomenologists, especially given that Malabou's arguments for such a strong position are difficult to discern beyond some critical remarks about psychoanalysis and neuroscience—criticisms that might explain incline one to look for other explanations and perhaps even infer that other explanations are better, but it is hard to see they entitle the strong claim to be 'the only valid philosophical path'. While her earlier view seems to 'suture' philosophy to politics, this latter view appears to suture philosophy to science.[8] When there is suturing moves of this sort, philosophy proclaims to have privileged access to the truth, derived in the first case from politics and in the second case from science, and other approaches are too readily dismissed.

Conclusion

This, then, has been a rather shameful story. I have given a short and provocative taxonomy of some different ways of responding to the shame engendered by the placing of the discipline in question, which is today primarily induced by science.

The cannibalist move literally consumes (and thereby controls) its other and seeks to remake philosophy in response to this being called in question, whether by naturalism, psychologism, etc. In this vein, I have suggested that transcendental phenomenology attempts to both expel its scientific other through meta-philosophy (framing itself as avowedly not science) and then colonize its scientific other by asymmetrically grounding it and thereby partaking in its prestige. We have also seen that there has been some push back against this trajectory in recent times, which risks suturing philosophy to science, albeit with a socio-political dimension retained that is not characteristic of analytic naturalism or the work of many practicing scientists.[9] Indeed, to relate this back to Murphy's book, there is a much more explicit iconography of violent images and metaphors in the continental tradition than in its analytic counterpart, partly because of the significance of the idea of philosophy as critique and as having a socio-political remit. In some cases, like Malabou's, this is perhaps overly forced, but it is clear what is at stake: As with Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*, such philosophy wants to change the world (or disclose new worlds that we have passed over) not just understand it.

The pragmatist/deflationary meta-philosophical move, by contrast, seeks to downplay shame and to 'just do it', as Ryle explicitly said, and as seems to be the implicit view of philosophers as different as Williamson, Soames and Sider. This view responds to shame by noting its inevitability and refusing any strictly philosophical move of justification, beyond a negative one (not continental), and a pragmatic one (other

[8] Badiou (rightly) bemoans the suturing of philosophy to any single one of its conditions—love, art, science, politics, etc.

[9] Slavoj Žižek also makes this point on the blurb of Malabou's 2008 book: 'as a rule, neuroscientists avoid two things like a vampire avoids garlic: any links to European metaphysics, political engagement and reflection upon the social conditions which gave rise to their science. Catherine Malabou does exactly this…'

disciplines have similar issues but continue to function perfectly well). Explicit themes and metaphor of violence will not be the order of the day, since such a conception of philosophy is much more like normal science within a paradigm (cf. Levy 2003), and a community of industrious workers, but there will inevitably be implicit forms of violence (see, for example, Ferrell 1993; La Caze 2001; cf. Williams this volume). Indeed, there is an interesting ambivalence here. Malabou and the continental tradition that she remains a part of typically emphasize social conditions, and social pathologies, and critique the methodological individualism of neuroscience. At the same time, their meta-philosophical position remains a romantic individualist one in certain core respects, being dissident, critical of doxa and the 'they', and acting as a resistance figure or prophetic seer in regard to unknown futures to come. By contrast, the neuroscientist and naturalist cum analytic philosopher is tied to networks with others (what Preston 2007 calls 'conformism', an image of the professional philosopher that was instantiated by Russell) and yet at the same time does not generally look at deeper socio-political forces that condition and sometimes constrain their collective research activities (e.g. modernity, capitalism, etc.).

Now, the philosophical colonists of science, the methodological separatists, and the scientific naturalists, have all produced significant philosophical interventions. But the time is perhaps right for us to consider some less committal and defensive possibilities. One such response might be a deconstructive one, which refuses the purity of philosophy and acknowledges its irremediable contamination with and by other disciplines, albeit noting that Derrida himself did not explore empirical science in any detail. Another option, and indeed one that might be conjoined with this deconstructive position might be to develop a 'bastard phenomenology' in which phenomenology depends for its justification on a dialectical relation with non-phenomenology, including empirical science (cf. Reynolds 2017). But that is a long story. For now, let me simply conclude by saying that I think that as philosophers we ought to engage with science, but not be deferentially captured by it or interpret it in exclusively socio-political terms.

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