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A Very Short Introduction

Simon Critchley 著

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Preface

Academic philosophy in England has for some time been largely limited to logic and theory of knowledge, and there is a tendency to confine philosophy to this sense and to regard its traditional association with general moral and intellectual systems as an error. This is a powerful but very local habit.

Raymond Williams, *Keywords*

On 5 October 1999, when pressed for her current views on the prospect of a European union, Margaret Thatcher remarked, 'All the problems in my lifetime have come from Continental Europe, all the solutions have come from the English-speaking world'. Despite its evident falsehood, this statement expresses a deep truth: namely, that for many inhabitants of the English-speaking world, and indeed for some living outside it, there is a real divide between their world and the societies, languages, political systems, traditions, and geography of Continental Europe. British politics, especially but by no means exclusively on the right, is defined in terms of the distinction between 'Europhobes' and 'Europhiles', known to their opponents as 'Eurosceptics' and 'Eurofanatics' respectively. That is, there is a cultural distinction, some would say a divide – perhaps even an abyss – between the 'Continental' and whatever opposes it, what Baroness Thatcher, in tones deliberately reminiscent of Winston Churchill, calls 'the English-speaking world'. Continental philosophy is one expression of this cultural divide. The

purpose of this short book is to explain why this has happened, why that fact is important, and what it might entail for the activity of philosophy now and in the future.

It is a matter of some contention whether Continental philosophy is a well-defined subject area in philosophy. And if one accepts that it is, then it is also a matter of dispute whether the term 'Continental philosophy' best describes this subject area (rather than, say, 'modern European philosophy', which is often employed as an alternative). Let's just say Continental philosophy is a contested concept. With this in mind, this book has a three-fold aim:

- 1 To show why Continental philosophy is an area of dispute by considering the history and meaning of this term and the way it is differentiated from, and represented by, what it allegedly opposes – namely analytic or Anglo-American philosophy.
- 2 To show how the notion of Continental philosophy can, indeed, be well defined and constitutes a distinct set of philosophical traditions and practices with a compelling range of problems all too often ignored or dismissed by the Anglo-American tradition.
- 3 To show, despite this, how we might in the future do better to talk about philosophy *as such* beyond such professional squabbles as to what or who is Continental or analytic.

I begin by taking a slightly different tack and sketching a larger problem that faces contemporary philosophy: the relation between wisdom and knowledge. There is a gap in much philosophy between theoretical questions of how one knows what one knows, and more practical or existential questions of what it might mean to lead a good or fulfilled human life. Much mainstream philosophy has given up the task of trying to integrate knowledge and wisdom into a single synoptic vision. I will try to show how much of the appeal of Continental philosophy lies in its attempt to bridge or reduce this gap between knowledge and wisdom (or theory and practice), thereby retaining something of an echo of the

ancient definition of philosophy as the love of wisdom. But, as we shall see, in a world which is increasingly modelled on the procedures of the natural sciences, such a view is not without problems of its own.

The next few chapters can be divided in line with another classical philosophical distinction: the historical and the systematic. Chapter 2 sketches different historical ways of making the distinction between *Continental* and *analytic philosophy*. I trace *Continental philosophy* to the reception of the work of Immanuel Kant in the late 18th century, who in many ways is the final great figure common to both *Continental* and *analytic* traditions and also announces the parting of their ways. I shall examine why this is the case by contrasting different approaches to Kant. I shall also look in some detail at the debates which Kant's work inspired in the 1780s and 1790s, and then show how these debates establish the key issue for *German idealism* in the work of J. G. Fichte and G. W. F. Hegel. Crudely stated, that issue is: does Kant's critique of reason end up, completely against its express intention, undermining the basis for moral and religious belief? That is, doesn't the critique of reason, which has to be the critique of all belief, end up in a nightmare of total scepticism and nihilism? We shall follow out the considerable implications of that thought in 19th- and 20th-century *Continental philosophy*.

Chapter 3 begins by considering some problems with the distinction between *Continental* and *analytic philosophy*, before looking at some rather stereotypical, indeed amusing, representations of it in the literature. I then discuss two meanings of *Continental philosophy*: as a professional self-description used by philosophers, and as a cultural feature with a particular history used by many more people, Margaret Thatcher included. I argue that much of the hostility and misunderstanding of *Continental philosophy* by *analytic philosophers* consists in the fact that these two meanings are unhelpfully enmeshed, and that the professional self-description comes to overlay the cultural feature in often harmful ways. I then look at the history and cultural

context for Continental philosophy in the English-speaking world, advancing the thesis that the conflict between philosophical traditions is best understood in terms of C. P. Snow's famous model of 'the two cultures', namely that cultural life in the English-speaking world is marked by a divide between science, on the one hand, and literature or humane understanding on the other. That is to say, Continental philosophy is not so much something foreign that takes place 'over there', but is rather the expression of an antagonism at the heart of something like 'Englishness'. I focus on the instructive historical example of John Stuart Mill in this regard and his key reflections on the English cultural divide between empiricist and speculative habits of thought, which plays out in the antagonism between the romanticism of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham. In conclusion, I turn to other, more recent expressions of the conflict between the two cultures.

In Chapter 4 I try to lay out what is distinctive and compelling about Continental philosophy in a more systematic manner. After making some remarks on how one may account for the difference of practice amongst philosophers, I focus on the notions of tradition and history and show how these terms are interestingly understood in two philosophers: Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. I propose a model for describing philosophical practice in the Continental tradition, organized around three key terms: *critique*, *praxis*, and *emancipation*. This aims to show how and why much Continental philosophy is concerned with giving a critique of the social practices of the modern world, a critique that aspires towards a goal of individual and societal emancipation.

I then return to the key concept of nihilism, the collapse or devaluation of the highest values, such as belief in God or the immortality of the soul, which receives its definitive articulation in the work of Friedrich Nietzsche, and I outline the interesting Russian context for Nietzsche's understanding of nihilism. I then try to show how the cultural and

intellectual pathology which leads to Nietzsche's diagnosis of nihilism bifurcates after him into reactionary and progressive modernism, and how this leads to the particular understanding of the relation of philosophy to non-philosophy in the Continental tradition.

Chapter 6 deals with a specific case study. If there is one dispute that typifies the misunderstandings between Continental and analytic philosophy, then it is that which took place from the early 1930s onwards between Heidegger and Rudolf Carnap. Essentially this is a dispute between the scientific conception of the world advanced by Carnap and the Vienna Circle, and the existential or what is called 'hermeneutic' experience of the world in Heidegger. Much of the recent misunderstandings between analytic and Continental philosophers can be traced back to the curious stand-off between Heidegger and Carnap, so it is worth looking at what exactly went wrong.

In Chapter 7, I extend the discussion of the relation between a scientific and hermeneutic conception of the world by taking up the problem of *scientism* versus *obscurantism*. The fact that so much philosophy in the Continental tradition can be said to respond to a sense of crisis in the modern world, and to attempt to produce a critical consciousness of the present with an emancipatory intent, goes some way to explaining its most salient and dramatic difference from much analytic philosophy, namely its *anti-scientism*. Its critique of scientism resides in the belief that the model of the natural sciences cannot and, moreover, *should* not provide a model for philosophical method, and that the natural sciences do not provide human beings with their primary and most significant access to the world. One finds this belief expressed in a whole range of Continental thinkers, such as Henri Bergson, Husserl, Heidegger, and the philosophers associated with the Frankfurt School from the 1930s onwards. This worry about scientism is legitimate, but in recent decades it has also risked being conflated with an anti-scientific attitude. This is the risk of *obscurantism*. In my view, the two poles that are to be avoided in philosophy are scientism and obscurantism, which

reflect pernicious tendencies within both analytic and Continental philosophy, as the debate between Carnap and Heidegger eloquently shows. As an alternative to the two extremes of scientism and obscurantism, present in both analytic and Continental philosophy, I propose a 'third way' between these two extremes.

I conclude the book with some ruminations about what I continue to see as the *promise of philosophy*. The current divisions in the study of philosophy are a consequence of certain inadequate and sectarian professional self-descriptions (are you an analytic, post-analytic, Continental, or modern European philosopher?). Both Continental and analytic philosophy are, to a great extent, sectarian self-descriptions that are the consequence of the professionalization of the discipline, a professionalization that, in my view, has led to the weakening of philosophy's critical function and to its progressive marginalization in the life of culture. My view is that philosophy should be a vital expression of that life.

A couple of provisos and a word of thanks before we begin. My aim has been to keep references to a minimum to focus on conveying the key ideas as simply as possible. This means that in many places I crib or borrow other philosophers' arguments and ideas, and indeed sometimes ideas of my own that I have published elsewhere. I make no apologies for this, as this book is intended for the intellectually curious but decidedly non-specialist reader. The *References and Further Reading* sections at the end of the book are intended to reveal my sources and to provide interested readers with an idea of where they might go next.

You will not find in this book a survey or summary of all the thinkers, traditions, and movements that make up what we think of as Continental philosophy. As such, there are significant gaps in my coverage. Such summaries already exist, some of them are very good, and it has not been my intention to add to their number. Rather, this book is *more of an argued reflection about the nature of philosophy in*

the Continental tradition, and the style is that of the essay, not the textbook. In other words, what follows is an idiosyncratic view of matters.

This book was initially drafted between March and May 2000, when I had the good fortune to hold the Visiting Lectureship in Philosophy at the University of Sydney, and the finished text is based on my lecture notes. I mention this because of the following coincidence: on the day I arrived in Sydney, 1 March 2000, the Departments of 'General' and 'Traditional and Modern' Philosophy at the University of Sydney were reunited as a single Department of Philosophy after 27 years of divorce. Now, although this divorce – which was not without acrimony it appears, an acrimony which, it must be said, has not disappeared without trace – had its origins in political differences, essentially the participation of Australia in the Vietnam War in the early 1970s, it also had its intellectual differences, most significantly the relation of philosophy to politics, in particular Marxism and feminism. Although it is not accurate to say that the division between departments was explicable in terms of the analytic–Continental split, the latter certainly came to overlay this division in all sorts of more or less egregious ways. I would like to thank my friends, colleagues, and, most of all, my students in Sydney for helping me rethink this division. Finally, this book was not my idea, but that of my wonderful editor at Oxford University Press, Shelley Cox. I would like to thank her for having such good ideas.

前言

有一个时期，英国的学院派哲学大多都只是讨论逻辑和知识论，倾向于把哲学限定在这一范围，而将其传统上与一般道德体系和思想体系之间的联系看作是一种错误。这种趋势很强，但是地域性很明显。

——雷蒙德·威廉斯 (Raymond Williams), 《关键词》

1999年10月5日，撒切尔夫人 (Margaret Thatcher) 在被要求就欧洲联盟的前景发表她当时的观点时说：“我有生之年的所有问题都来自欧洲大陆，而所有的解决办法都来自英语世界。”尽管这种说法显然有误，它却表达了这样一个深刻的真理：就是说，对英语世界的许多人，甚至是对英语世界之外的某些人而言，他们的世界与欧洲大陆的社会、语言、政治制度、传统和地理之间，存在着一种真正的分歧。英国政治，尤其是（但绝不仅限于）保守派，以“惧怕欧洲派”和“热爱欧洲派”之间的区别进行界定，他们的对手将其分别称为“亲欧者”和“恐欧者”。这就是说，有一种文化差异，某些人会说是分歧——或许甚至是一个深渊——存在于“欧洲大陆”与其对立者之间，而这个对立者，撒切尔夫人有意用使人回想起温斯顿·丘吉尔 (Winston Churchill) 的口吻把它称作“英语世界”。欧陆哲学就是这种文化分歧的表现之一。这本小书的目的就是要解释，为什么会发生这种情况，为什么这个事实很是重要，以及它对

现在和未来的哲学活动可能意味着什么。

欧陆哲学是否是一个界定明确的哲学领域，这还颇有争议。即便人们承认它确实是一个哲学领域，“欧陆哲学”这个词是否是最为恰当的名称，也还存在争论（比如，“现代欧洲哲学”这一名称也经常使用）。我们暂且说“欧陆哲学”是一个有争议的概念。牢记这一点，本书就有了三重目的：

1. 梳理“欧陆哲学”一词的历史渊源和含义，以及如何区别于其所谓的对立面，也就是分析哲学或英美哲学，并又如何为其对立面所表现此领域。
2. 表明欧陆哲学的概念如何能够很好地加以界定，并构成一个截然不同的哲学传统和实践体系，包括了一系列通常为英美传统所忽略或抛弃的引人注目的问题。
3. 除此之外，表明我们将来如何能够更好地讨论哲学本身，而非只是局限于谁或者什么属于欧陆哲学亦或分析哲学的专业口角。

我首先会采取略为不同的策略，勾画出当代哲学面临的一个更大的问题，即智慧与知识之间的关系。大多数哲学中都存在着这样一个鸿沟，一方面是关于人们如何知道所知的一切这样的理论问题，另一方面是关于一种善的或充实的生活究竟意味着什么这样的更为实际的或者说是存在论的问题。大多主流哲学都已经放弃了把知识和智慧整合为一个单一的概括性看法的努力。我会试着展示，欧陆哲学的吸引力在多大程度上在于试图连接知识与智慧（或者说是理论与实践），或者缩小这两者之间的鸿沟，从而多少回应了古代把哲学定义为对智慧的热爱的说法。但我们会看到，在一个越来越多地以自然科学的程式塑造的世界中，这样一个观点自身也不是毫无问题的。

接下来的几章可以按照另一种经典的哲学区分方式加以划

分：即历史的和系统的。第二章勾画了导致欧陆哲学与分析哲学之间形成差异的不同历史发展轨迹。我将把欧陆哲学回溯到18世纪晚期人们对伊曼纽尔·康德（Immanuel Kant）思想的接受。康德在许多方面都是欧陆传统和分析传统共同拥赞的最后一个伟大人物，他同时也宣告了这两种传统的分道扬镳。我会比较对待康德的不同方式，以考察为什么会是这样一种情况。我还会比较详细地考察18世纪80到90年代康德思想所引发的争论，然后表明，这些争论如何确立了费希特（J. G. Fichte）和黑格尔（G. W. F. Hegel）著作中的德国唯心论的关键问题。大致地说，这个问题就是：康德的理性批判的结果是否与其所表明的意图相反，事实上损害了道德和宗教信念的基础？也就是说，对理性的批判，必定也是对所有信念的批判，这种批判不正是以彻底的怀疑论和虚无主义的噩梦而告终吗？我们会进一步探究19至20世纪欧陆哲学中这种思想的重要意义。

第三章首先考虑的是与欧陆哲学和分析哲学的差异相关的某些问题，接下来会考察文献中对这一差异的某些模式化的、颇引人发笑的表述。随后，我要讨论欧陆哲学的两重含义：哲学家们使用的、专业的自我描述，以及包括玛格丽特·撒切尔在内的更多人所使用的带有具体历史的文化特征。我认为，分析哲学家们对欧陆哲学所怀有的大多数敌视和误解，都是由于把这两重含义无益地纠缠在一起，都是由于专业的自我描述常常以有害的方式凌驾于文化特征之上。接下来我会考察欧陆哲学在英语世界中的历史渊源和文化语境，提出这样一个观点，即哲学传统之间的冲突只有从斯诺（C. P. Snow）提出的著名的“两种文化”模式的角度来看，才能很好理解。就是说，英语世界的文化生活分为如下两部分：一方面是科学，另一方面是文学或人文精神。这就是说，欧陆哲学并不是发生在“另一个地方”的异域的东西，而只是表达了对以某种“英语方式”为核心的反抗。在这方面，我会重点讨论具有启发意

义的历史实例约翰·斯图尔特·穆勒(John Stuart Mill),集中关注他对于区分为经验主义与思辨哲学思想方式的英语文化的重要反思,这些分歧也是导致了萨缪尔·泰勒·柯尔律治(Samuel Taylor Coleridge)的浪漫主义与杰里米·边沁(Jeremy Bentham)的功利主义之间对立的原因。最后会讨论一些有关这两种文化之间冲突的更为新近的说法。

在第四章,我会尝试以更为系统的方式勾画出欧陆哲学中明显的、令人信服的东西。我会对人们如何去解释哲学家们的不同实践活动给出一些评论,之后,我会集中讨论传统和历史的观念,表明埃德蒙·胡塞尔(Edmund Husserl)和马丁·海德格尔(Martin Heidegger)两位哲学家是如何有趣地理解这些概念的。我提出了用于描述欧陆传统哲学实践的一种模式,以三个关键词把它们组织起来:批判、实践和解放。这旨在表明,大多数欧陆哲学是如何以及为什么要关心对现代世界的社会实践提出批判,这种批判要达到的目标就是个人的和社会的解放。

我接下来会转向虚无主义这一关键概念:最高价值(比如对上帝或灵魂不朽的信仰)的瓦解或贬值,这在弗里德里希·尼采(Friedrich Nietzsche)的著作中得到了明确的表述,我勾画出了帮助尼采理解虚无主义的饶有意味的俄国背景。然后,我试图表明,那种导致了尼采作出虚无主义判断的文化和思想病态,在他之后如何发展为反动的现代主义和进步的现代主义这样两极,这又如何导致了欧陆传统中对哲学与非哲学之间关系的特定理解。

第六章处理一个具体案例研究。如果有一个争论典型地表现出了欧陆哲学与分析哲学之间的误解,那么这就是始于20世纪30年代初的海德格尔与鲁道夫·卡纳普(Rudolf Carnap)之间的争论。实际上,这是一个由卡纳普和维也纳学派提倡的科学的世界观与海德格尔主张的存在的或所谓“阐释学的”世

界体验之间的争论。欧陆哲学家与分析哲学家之间新近的大多数误解，都可以追溯到海德格尔与卡纳普之间的这种令人奇怪的僵持，所以，值得考察一下究竟什么出了问题。

在第七章，我提出了**科学主义与蒙昧主义**的问题，进一步讨论科学的世界观与阐释学的世界观之间的关系。欧洲大陆的许多哲学都可以说是对现代世界中的危机感作出的回应，是怀着解放的目的尝试建立对现实的批判意识，这就在一定程度上解释了欧陆哲学与大部分分析哲学之间最为突出的巨大差别，即其**反科学主义**。它批判科学主义是基于它相信，自然科学的模式无法而且不应当为哲学方法提供模式，自然科学并没有为人类提供通往世界的首要的、更有意义的途径。我们会看到，一系列欧洲大陆的思想家，比如亨利·柏格森（Henri Bergson）、胡塞尔、海德格尔以及20世纪30年代之后的法兰克福学派哲学家均表达了这一信念。对科学主义的这种担心是有道理的，但在最近几十年里，它也招致了被与反科学的态度相提并论的危险。这就是**蒙昧主义**的危险。在我看来，科学主义和蒙昧主义是哲学中应当避免的两个极端，它们反映出了欧陆哲学与分析哲学中有害的倾向，卡纳普与海德格尔之间的争论就清楚地表明了这一点。与存在于分析哲学和欧陆哲学中的科学主义和蒙昧主义这两个极端不同，我提出了在这两个极端之间的“第三条道路”。

在全书的最后，我思考的是一些我不断预见到的哲学的前景。哲学研究中目前的这些区分是某些不恰当的、狭隘的专业自我描述的结果（你是分析主义的或是后分析主义的，抑或是欧陆哲学家，还是现代欧洲哲学家？）。在很大程度上，欧陆哲学和分析哲学都是狭隘的自我描述，这是学科专业化的结果，在我看来，这种专业化导致了哲学批判功能的削弱，使得哲学在文化生活中不断地被边缘化。我认为，哲学应当是对这种生