

Philosophical Criticism of the Hebrew Bible and the Analytic-Continental Divide

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ABSTRACT

This article takes a closer look at how the so-called Analytic-Continental divide within meta-philosophy has manifested itself within various forms of "philosophical criticism" of the HB. It is argued that, based on data collected from recent related conferences, there is evidence of influence from both sides of the divide within both broad/narrow and explicit/implicit types of philosophical criticism. However, in contrast to tense relations elsewhere in generic philosophy, the interdisciplinary intersection of biblical scholarship, philosophy of religion and Jewish philosophy appears to display a general acceptance of methodological diversity.

KEYWORDS: Hebrew Bible (HB), meta-philosophy, Analytic-Continental (A-C) divide, philosophical criticism (PC), philosophy of religion, Jewish philosophy

A INTRODUCTION

In a recent SBL publication, a proposal was made for introducing "philosophical criticism" (PC) as a new species of biblical criticism.¹ Briefly, the latter was idiosyncratically constructed as a proposal for the introduction into biblical studies of a descriptive form of philosophical exegesis aimed only at the clarification of what, if anything, the texts of the HB. Yet despite this seemingly prescriptive specificity as to the form a "philosophical" approach should take, it was nevertheless granted that philosophical interpretation *per se* cannot be limited thusly. This admission follows necessarily upon recognising the herme-

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¹ Jaco Gericke, *The Hebrew Bible and Philosophy of Religion* (SBLRBS 70; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2012), 199-223. This study pioneers the use of philosophy of religion in the study of the HB. After identifying the need for a legitimate philosophical approach to Israelite religion, the volume traces the history of interdisciplinary relations and shows how descriptive varieties of philosophy of religion can aid the clarification of the HB's own metaphysical, epistemological, and moral assumptions. Two new interpretative methodologies are developed and subsequently applied through an introduction to what the biblical texts took for granted about the nature of religious language, the concept of deity, the properties of YHWH, the existence of gods, religious epistemology, and the relation between religion and morality.

neutical possibilities implied by the fact that there are other currents (than descriptive) in philosophy of religion and other disciplines (than religion-oriented) in philosophy itself.²

Just how much diversity could the extension of PC accommodate? Perhaps it is impossible to try to limit the method to certain particular manifestations. Yet at the very least, PC could be constructed to include, *inter alia*, all of the following:

- (i) A descriptive philosophical perspective on texts in the HB;
- (ii) An apologetic attempt at a philosophical justification of truth-claims in the HB;
- (iii) A secular philosophical critique of religious ideas in the HB;
- (iv) An attempt to identify "philosophy" in the HB itself;
- (v) A reading of the HB in dialogue with the ideas of a particular philosopher;
- (vi) An investigation into the reception history of the HB within philosophy;
- (vii) A closer look at the influence of philosophy on HB interpretation;
- (viii) A comparative philosophical perspective on concepts in HB theologies;
- (ix) An attempt to show the philosophical relevance of a text in the HB;
- (x) A meta-philosophical discussion of PC.

This conceptual broadening of the theoretical extension of PC makes room for the possible emergence of multiple agendas within this emerging species of biblical criticism.³ However, even allowing for such diversity, it still

² Gericke, *Hebrew Bible*, 447-452. See also Eugene T. Long, *Twentieth Century Philosophy of Religion 1900–2000* (HCPR 1; Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2000); Max J. Charlesworth, *Philosophy of Religion: The Historic Approaches* (rev. ed.; London: Macmillan, 2002).

³ For recent examples of some of the sub-species see, *inter alia*, Philip R. Davies, "Introducing the Bible as Philosophy," (paper presented at the King James Project Conference, University of Sheffield, 26 May 2011); Yoram Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Gericke, *Hebrew Bible*; Mark Glouberman, "The Holy One: What the Bible's Philosophy Is and What it Isn't," *JPQ* 62 (2013): 43-66; Seizo Sekine, *Philosophical Interpretations of the Old Testament* (trans. J. Randall Short; BZAW 458; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014). Aside from the generic studies above, see also the epistemological turn in some circles, e.g. the related contributions in Mary Healy and Robin Parry, eds., *The Bible and Epistemology: Biblical Soundings of the Knowledge of God* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007); Ryan O'Dowd, *The Wisdom of Torah: Epistemology in Deuteronomy*

begs the meta-philosophical question as to what is meant by "philosophy" and "philosophical," particularly with regard to methodological assumptions, problems, styles and aims.

B A META-PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM

Within meta-philosophy, there is no universal consensus on the nature of philosophical inquiry. For some time now, some meta-philosophers have pointed to the fact that the answer to the question of what philosophy is have tended to depend on which side of what is often called the Analytic-Continental (A-C) divide one is on.⁴ This phenomenon is popularly thought to represent an occupational rift within meta-philosophical theory (and therefore within philosophical practice), allowing for a distinction between thinkers classified as being either "Analytic" or "Continental."⁵ Of relevance to this study is the possibility that, if the constructed division is as entrenched and pervasive as is often suggested, chances are that it might also manifest within philosophical approaches to the HB. In order to determine whether and to what extent such might be the case, the discussion to follow will commence with a brief meta-philosophical introduction to the basics of the abovementioned division before moving on to a selective demonstration of representative examples thereof within various functional types of PC.

C CONTINENTAL VS. ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

Continental philosophies are generally considered the older traditions. It is said to have come about during the 19th century following a rejection of Kant's distinction between reality and appearances. This in turn initiated a historical turn in many philosophies and led to the reconstruction of idealism's ontology into phenomenology early in the 20th century. A few decades later there emerged varieties of what came to be known as "existentialism," ultimately leading to the phenomenon often referred to as "postmodernism." On this account, popular examples of (male) Continental thinkers would include Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Satre, Camus, Lacan, Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, Levinas, Ricoeur, Zizek, among others. In the philosophical study of

and the Wisdom Literature (FRLANT 225; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009) and Dru Johnson, *Biblical Knowing: A Scriptural Epistemology of Error* (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf & Stock, 2013).

⁴ For the concept, see Carlos G. Prado, ed., *A House Divided: Comparing Analytic and Continental Philosophy* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus-Humanity Books, 2003).

⁵ On this, see Neil Levy, "Analytic and Continental Philosophy: Explaining the Differences," *M-P* 34 (2003): 284-304 and Donald E. Cooper, "Analytical and Continental Philosophy," *PAS* 94 (1994): 1-18.

religion in particular, thinkers associated with this tradition are Taylor, Caputo, Marion and Westphal.⁶

Analytic philosophy, in contrast, is said to have had its origins in the so-called Vienna Circle early in the 20th century. In that context, what was criticised was Kant's notion of a synthetic *a priori*. This inspired the philosophical analysis of language and so-called "logical positivism." Following this "the linguistic turn" in philosophy, there came onto the scene various types of linguistic philosophy.⁷ Out of the latter arose contemporary varieties of so-called Analytic philosophy with several specialised sub-fields aside from the traditional philosophical disciplines, for example, philosophy of mind, philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, philosophy of language, *etcetera*. Examples of (male) Analytic philosophers include thinkers like Frege, Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein, Carnap, Quine, Ryle, Davidson, Lewis, Kripke, Dummett, among others. In the philosophy of religion (itself an Analytic designation), popular names associated with this side of the divide include Alston, Mackie, Plantinga, Adams, Swinburne, and Flew.⁸

There is said to be fundamental incommensurability between Analytic and Continental styles of doing philosophy. As illustration of some of the alleged basic differences, the following table (which could be and has been variously constructed) seeks to capture via keywords what is often associated with each side of the divide. It concerns variables such as the related auxiliary fields, academic contexts, models, focal points, assumptions, rhetorical strategies, methods and aims.

⁶ For an introduction to the Continental side, see, *inter alia*, Andrew Cutrofello, *Continental Philosophy: A Contemporary Introduction* (RCIP; New York: Routledge, 2005); Brian Leiter and Martin Rosen, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Continental Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Alan D. Schrift, *The History of Continental Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

⁷ See Richard M. Rorty, *The Linguistic Turn: Essays in Philosophical Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

⁸ On the Analytic tradition see, *inter alia*, Anat Biletzki and Anat Matar, eds., *The Story of Analytic Philosophy: Plot and Heroes* (London: Routledge, 1998); Nicholas Capaldi, *The Enlightenment Project in the Analytic Conversation* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000); Michael Corrado, *The Analytic Tradition in Philosophy: Background and Issues* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1975); Aaron Preston, "Prolegomena to Any Future History of Analytic Philosophy," *M-P* 35/4 (2004): 445-465 and Aaron Preston, "Conformism in Analytic Philosophy: On Shaping Philosophical Boundaries and Prejudices," *Monist* 88/2 (2005): 292-319; Jonathan Cohen, *The Dialogue of Reason: An Analysis of Analytical Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Avrum Stroll, *Twentieth Century Analytic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

Analytic	Continental
Natural science	Arts-humanities
Anglo-Saxon scholars	Mainland European scholars
Specialisation	Interdisciplinary
Propositional truth	Socio-ethical implications
Perennial	Historical
Specialized	Interdisciplinary
Formal	Informal
Arguments	Narration
Discovery	Creation

Although these distinctions can be helpful in understanding some aspects of the different points of emphases in each side of the divide, they are most certainly also generalisations that die the death of a thousand qualifications. A closer look at what philosophy in each of the two constructed contexts actually involves shows that the associated thinkers nowadays not only share many interests and jargon across the divide, they also differ amongst themselves within the particular tradition. Yet the cryptic stereotype also contains partial truths regarding what have at times been very different points of departure, form and objectives as far as philosophical writing is concerned.

As illustration of some of the deep meta-philosophical divisions, one needs to look no further than, *inter alia*, Ayer's arguments with Bataille over the existence of time,⁹ Carnap's criticism of Heidegger's neologisms,¹⁰ Derrida's debate with Searle regarding the speech-act theory of J. L. Austin,¹¹ the opposing of the bestowal of Derrida's honorary doctorate at Cambridge (e.g., by Quine, amongst others) on the grounds that his philosophy amounts to a "semi-intelligible" attack on reason by someone who is thought as not being a "proper philosopher,"¹² the so-called "Sokal affair" (or "hoax") and its aftermath (the "science wars" against the "fashionable nonsense" of alleged "intellectual imposters," i.e. post-modernists),¹³ Chomsky's empiricist attack on the

⁹ See Alfred J. Ayer, *Part of my Life: Memoirs of a Philosopher* (New York: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1977), 288.

¹⁰ See Rudolph Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language," in Alfred J. Ayer, *Logical Positivism* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1959), 60-81; More recently, see Paul Edwards, *Heidegger's Confusions* (New York: Prometheus Press, 2004).

¹¹ See Jacques Derrida, *Limited, Inc.* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988) and John Searle, "Reiterating the Differences," *Glyph* 1 (1977): 198-208.

¹² See Barry Smith et al., "Open Letter against Derrida Receiving an Honorary Doctorate from Cambridge University," *The Times* (London) (Saturday, May 9, 1992).

¹³ See Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont, *Intellectual Impostures* (London: Profile Books, 1998).

so-called academic "charlatanism" of social "theorists,"¹⁴ and so on. In philosophy of religion specifically, one example of contrasting styles that have been noted is that featuring Plantinga (Analytic) vis-à-vis Caputo (Continental).¹⁵

More recently, meta-philosophical attempts at trans-divisionary diplomacy have been made in several articles by scholars seeking to salvage the best of both worlds.¹⁶ This is usually accompanied by the partly condescending (often Analytic) recommendation that (Continental) philosophy should seek to pursue more logically rigorous argument and a greater level of conceptual clarity. Others have (not without reason) questioned whether the concept of a divide (still) represents a functional meta-philosophical (as opposed to a "sociological") distinction.¹⁷ Assuming for the sake of the argument that it is, the question that concerns us now is to what extent the so-called A-C divide might also be present in PC of the HB itself.¹⁸

D THE ANALYTIC-CONTINENTAL DIVIDE AND PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM OF THE HEBREW BIBLE

Before examples of instances of both sides of the divide will be given, two further distinctions within the typology of PC may be helpful.¹⁹ Firstly, one may distinguish a narrow from a broad definition of PC with reference to the HB.

- (i) A *narrow* definition of PC views it as being limited to a species of biblical criticism (i.e. within HB Studies) and as seeking only the philosophical clarification of meaning in HB.

¹⁴ See Noam Chomsky, "Chomsky on Postmodernism," n.p. [cited 10 June 2015]. Online: <http://bactra.org/chomsky-on-postmodernism.html>. Numerous Youtube interviews with Chomsky on these issues are also readily available.

¹⁵ See Nick Trakakis, *The End of Philosophy of Religion* (London: Continuum, 2008), 3-54.

¹⁶ See e.g. Gary Cutting, "Bridging the Analytic Continental Divide," *New York Times* (19 February 2012), n.p. [cited 10 June 2015]. Online: http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/02/19/bridging-the-analytic-continental-divide/?_r=0.

¹⁷ William Blattner, "Some Thoughts on 'Analytic' and 'Continental' Philosophy," n.p. [cited 12 June 2015]. Online: <http://faculty.georgetown.edu/blattnew/contanalytic.html>.

¹⁸ Though representative of a lot of what is going on in philosophy, Continental and Analytic traditions are not the whole story of what philosophy (and therefore PC) involves. Some philosophical traditions (e.g. pragmatism) and thinkers (e.g. Rorty) belong to neither, inhabiting other recognised meta-philosophical positions. Additional philosophical locations falling outside of the divide, straddling both sides or including more than it allows include, *inter alia*, comparative philosophy, historians of philosophy, eastern philosophy, *etcetera*.

¹⁹ To the best of my knowledge, these are my own distinctions. For further senses of the concept of "PC," as is used by e.g. Kant, Gabler, et al., see Gericke, *Hebrew Bible*, 200-201.

- (ii) A *broad* definition of PC includes any approach from any field that involves philosophy as part of the methodological repertoire aimed at engaging the HB for whatever purpose.

Secondly, a useful distinction can be made between explicit and implicit ways of engaging in PC of the HB.

- (i) *Explicit PC* refers to any philosophical approach to the text of the HB that overtly identifies itself as such.
- (ii) *Implicit PC* involves any approach to the HB not overtly called "philosophical" yet may be deeply dependent on philosophical theories, thinkers, and concepts.

With the aid of these typological distinctions it is now possible to offer a nuanced identification of the presence of examples of the A-C divide as these are manifested within the different types of PC of the HB mentioned above. Identification markers include a particular scholar's sources, jargon or style, method and aims.

1 The Analytic-Continental Divide and Explicit Broad/Narrow Forms of Philosophical Criticism of the Hebrew Bible

Interestingly, implicit and explicit varieties of narrow and broad PC of the HB are found across disciplinary lines and may include the following:

- (i) Philosophy of religion
- (ii) Jewish philosophy
- (iii) HB scholarship

With regard to the first category – philosophy of religion – one example of broad explicit PC comes from the program of a conference held at Notre Dame in 2006 with the theme, "My Ways Are Not Your Ways: The Character of the God of the Hebrew Bible." From the paper titles alone²⁰ the placement of

²⁰ See the conference program at Center for Philosophy of Religion, "My Ways Are Not Your Ways: The Character of the God of the Hebrew Bible," (conference hosted by the University of Notre Dame, September 10-12, 2009), n.p. [cited: 10 June 2015]. Online: <http://philreligion.nd.edu/calendar/full-conference-list/my-ways/> Program: Louise Antony, University of Massachusetts, Amherst "Does God Love Us?," Comments: Eleonore Stump, Saint Louis University; Edwin Curley, University of Michigan "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," Comments: Peter van Inwagen, University of Notre Dame; Evan Fales, University of Iowa; "Satanic Verses: Moral Chaos in Holy Writ," Comments: Alvin Plantinga, University of Notre Dame; John Hare, Yale University, "Animal Sacrifices," Comments: James L. Crenshaw, Duke Divinity School, Mark C. Murphy, Georgetown University, "God Beyond Justice," Comments: Wes Morriston, University of Colorado, Boulder; Elenore Stump, Saint Louis Univer-

the particular scholar in the context of the divide may not be *prima facie* all that clear. Yet on closer inspection of the names of the presenters – and given the location of the conference – most thinkers appear to be Analytic (despite the diversity, e.g. Thomist vs. Reformed Epistemology, propositionalist vs. evidentialist, etc.) rather than Continental in meta-philosophical placement. In addition – and true to analytic tendencies – the species and type of PC evidenced in this context is not so much a descriptive philosophical type of biblical criticism as either evaluative apologetic defenses or secular critiques of textual ideologies.

In the second category – Jewish philosophy (and Jewish philosophical theology) – an example of PC would be “The Bible and Philosophy” Conference Series held by the Shalem (now Herzl) Institute in Jerusalem from 2011-2013 and again in 2015. Again most titles on the program do not reveal the meta-philosophical location of the scholar. Yet on finer perusal one also encounters here a few examples of clearly Continental perspectives, despite the overall Analytic slant of the organisers.²¹ For example, a paper by Shmuel Trigano is entitled “The Second Being: The Ontological Landscape of Otherness in the Book of Genesis”; Theodore Perry has “On Qohelet, Levinas, and Philosophy”; then there is also James Diamond’s, “Prophetic Knowing Toward Death: The Silent Sound of Dying for Others.” Both the topics (ontology, ethics) and the jargon (“otherness,” “Levinas” and “toward Death”) are clearly located within a stereotypical Continental context. Yet in the context of Jewish philosophy (and in contrast to philosophy of religion), many speakers come across as being philosophically quasi-generic and not limited to dependence on either side of the divide.

In the third category – HB studies – examples of divisions in PC comes from the 2014-2015 program books of the annual meetings of the SBL in San Diego and Atlanta respectively. Here we see the introduction of a new consul-

sity, “The Problem of Evil and the History of Peoples: Think Amalek,” Comments: Paul Draper, Purdue University; Chair: Joseph Levine, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Richard Swinburne, Oxford University, “What Does the Old Testament Mean?,” Comments: Wes Morriston, University of Colorado, Boulder; Nicholas Wolterstorff, Yale University, “Reading Joshua,” Comments: Louis Antony, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Gary Anderson, University of Notre Dame, “What about the Canaanites?,” Comments: Nicholas Wolterstorff, Yale University; Chair: R. Andrew Compton, University of California, Los Angeles, Christopher Seitz, Wycliffe College, University of Toronto, “Canon and Conquest: The Character of the God of the Hebrew Bible,” Comments: Evan Fales, University of Iowa.

²¹ The organisation is associated with so-called “Analytic Theology” as found at Notre Dame and Innsbruck. For the Jewish Philosophical Theology Project and Shalem/Herzl Conferences, see online <http://bibleandphilosophy.org/> and <http://herzlinstitute.org/en/jewish-philosophy-and-theology/>.

tation session *Hebrew Bible and Philosophy* and again the program details.²² Though a setting primarily for HB scholars, many of the participants also have connections with both the first and second categories (philosophers of religion, Jewish philosophy). One would therefore expect to potentially find both sides of the divide represented here too. However, again some papers cannot be so easily located meta-philosophically from the titles alone. Even so, while both the chairs of the consultation session (Gericke, Johnson) operate mostly in analytic mode – and while some operate comparatively, historically or generic, in the 2014 sessions there was at least one paper with an obviously Continental reading (involving, *inter alia*, Levinas), while the 2015 featured two (both Levinas again).²³

1a Excursion: Extended Examples of Philosophical Criticism from Both Sides of the Analytic-Continental Divide

Though it is impossible to speak of representative instances from either side of the divide – both of which are characterised by internal pluralism in approaches – the following brief summaries of a publication from each side reveals the

²² See <https://hebrewbibleandphilosophy.wordpress.com/2014/04/>. The relevant details of first session were as follows: *Theme*: The Relationship between the Hebrew Bible and Philosophy; *Presiding*: Yoram Hazony, The Herzl Institute; Robin Parry, Wipf and Stock Publishers, "Plato, the Hebrew Bible, and the Goodness of the Body" (25 min); Jaco Gericke, North-West University (South Africa), "A Philosophical Perspective on Theological 'Why?': Questions in the Hebrew Bible" (25 min); Dru Johnson, The King's College (New York City), "What Are We to Do with the Hebrew Bible's Resistance to Metaphysics?" (25 min); Jeff Helmreich, University of California—Irvine, "The Triumph of Love over Legalism: An Interpretation of Biblical Morality" (25 min); *Discussion* (25 min); *Other* (25 min); *And for the second session of 2014 in Hebrew Bible and Philosophy: Theme*: Neglected Philosophical Sub-disciplines in Hebrew Bible Scholarship; *Presiding*: Jaco Gericke, North-West University (South Africa); Joshua Weinstein, Shalem College, Jerusalem, "Physis (Nature) and the Lawfulness of Change in the Hebrew Bible" (25 min); Shira Weiss, Yeshiva University, "Biblical Ethics: Lies and Misleading Truths" (25 min); Yoram Hazony, The Herzl Institute, "The Metaphysics of Creation in Genesis 1" (25 min); Ryan O'Dowd, Cornell University, "The Role of Experience in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes" (25 min); *Discussion* (25 min); *Other* (25 min); *As for the relevant session of 2015 in HB and Philosophy*: Theodore A. Perry, University of Connecticut, "Always Already: Philosophical Exegesis and the Beat of Time Primordial in Job 38" (30 min); Ying Zhang, East China Normal University, "Biblical Exegesis as Way of Philosophizing: The Beginning and the End of Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed" (30 min); Sarah Zhang, GETS Theological Seminary, "Lyrical Slippages, Meaning-Making and Proximity in Song 2:10–13" (30 min); Dru Johnson, The King's College (New York), "Methodological Considerations in Pursuing Bible and Philosophy" (30 min); *Discussion* (30 min).

²³ While often not clear-cut, explicit PC, both broadly and narrowly defined, is therefore thoroughly interdisciplinary.

agreements and differences in approach, jargon and concerns typically encountered.

From the *Continental* side, an example of *broad-explicit* philosophical-critical analysis in HB scholarship might be that of Yvonne Sherwood's edited volume *Derrida's Bible (Reading a Page of Scripture with a Little Help from Derrida)*.²⁴ The book includes readings of biblical texts in relation to "hauntology," namely with reference to traces of the binary logic of western consciousness in their creation and reception. "Philosophical criticism" of sorts is performed by way of utilising Derrida's meditations on language, writing, letters, the human and the role of death in the human experience, as well as on ethics, responsibility, Marxism and the "Bible-as-confronted-by-biblical," that is, as capable of disrupting from within its theologically and philosophically ascribed Truths. Several chapters specifically concerned with the HB feature Derridean concerns expressed in succinct albeit dense concepts typical of the philosopher, for example "beginnings"; "writing, positing, erasing"; "specters and messiahs"; "boundaries/hyphens/identity-markers"; "responsibilities, secrets, gifts"; "endings"; and "postscripts."

Within the *analytic* genre, the recent publication *Knowledge by Ritual* by Dru Johnson is worthy of mention, once more as an instance of *broad-explicit* philosophical criticism.²⁵ The basic concern is the epistemology of cultic actions. By putting biblical rituals in dialogue with philosophical views of knowledge, the former are seen as way of thinking in analogous to scientific theorising; consequently, the HB's emphasis on the epistemic function of rites should not be neglected. Examples in the text of knowing by ritual include what happens in the sacrificial operation performed by Abraham (Gen 15:7-21), as well as the perennial institution of Sabbath (Exod 31:13), the setting up of the Sukkah (Lev 23:43) as well as the construction of rock monuments (Josh 4:6). Johnson argues that these and other rituals of Israel, as portrayed in the biblical texts, were assumed to able the people to obtain some sort of knowledge they could not have possessed without their ritual participation.

²⁴ Yvonne Sherwood, *Derrida's Bible: Reading a Page of Scripture with a Little Help from Derrida* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan Press, 2004). The classification of the type of philosophical criticism as "broad-explicit" seems warranted in light of the fact that more than descriptive philosophical concerns are involved, while the method is clearly and overtly philosophical.

²⁵ Dru Johnson, *Knowledge by Ritual: A Biblical Prolegomenon to Sacramental Theology* (JTISup 13; Warsaw: Eisenbrauns, 2016). Again, this is an example of "broad-explicit" philosophical criticism in as much as its objectives are not limited to a historical-philosophical exegesis of the HB for its own sake, with the perspective offered being unambiguously philosophical in nature.

2 The Analytic-Continental Divide and Implicit Narrow Varieties of Philosophical Criticism of the Hebrew Bible

In contrast to the explicit subtypes of PC discussed above, implicit forms include a variety of philosophical perspectives on the texts mostly limited to biblical scholarship (and therefore "narrow PC"). In this regard, a word-search for "philosophy" and "philosophical" on the SBL Annual and International meetings' pages throws up a host of sessions involving biblical scholars that somehow involve philosophy in their research.²⁶ Interestingly, as can be ascertained from the data, many of these are found, not in the study of the HB but in the context of NT studies, or in research on reception history. As far as the location on either side of the A-C divide is concerned, wherever this is indeed obvious the particular session of implicit PC is often Continental in background.²⁷ However, again some sessions can be meta-philosophically constructed along quasi-generic lines and as not limited to any one of the traditions as such.

E THE ANALYTIC-CONTINENTAL DIVIDE AND METHODOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES IN PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM

At least from the research samples reconstructed above, there seems to be little of the animosity and inability to communicate between scholars from either side in the Analytic *versus* Continental divide and within explicit and implicit types of narrow/broad PC of the HB. Based on this data it would seem that PC is more likely to remain characterised by methodological diversity and tolerance, on the whole continuing to display the traits from both sides of the divide without too much fuss over basic differences in opinion as to what philosophy is or how it is to be done (as opposed to what might be actual dislike of or disregard for the meta-philosophical assumptions of others as this cordially remains unexpressed within the discretion of personal opinion).

Perhaps a far greater a potential for tensions between and miscommunication among scholars exist in contexts where, say, a HB scholar doing PC (nar-

²⁶ Perusing the program book for the 2014-2015 Annual Meetings of the SBL one may reconstruct the following list of relevant implicit types of PC session themes (aside from HB and Philosophy), including, *inter alia*, Jesus and philosophers; Paul and ancient philosophers; Paul and Continental philosophy; Ancient Jewish philosophical reception, especially Philo; Post-modern Jewish philosophical reception history, e.g. Levinas; Ancient classical philosophy and religion, e.g. Greek and Latin; Critical theory, e.g. Frankfurt school; Philosophical issues in biblical theology; Feminist approaches; Philosophical hermeneutics; Biblical ethics; Postmodern literary theory; Ideological criticism; Political theory and interdisciplinary sessions aimed at looking at the philosophical implications of biblical scholarship; etcetera.

²⁷ Because they are Continental, and given the latter side of the divide's interdisciplinary tendencies, it is understandable why the methods involves are classified under historical, literary or social-scientific rather than "philosophical" perspectives.

rowly defined), operates on one side of the A-C divide while her peers or audiences operate with the assumptions of the other side. As paradigms clash and generation gaps appear accusations of the misuse of philosophy in the study of the HB, incomprehension as to how philosophical interpretation can be biblical interpretation proper, charges of exegetical irrelevancy and claims of hermeneutical illegitimacy are likely to occur now and then. For example, a historical-critic only familiar with Continental philosophy in his or her theological training might dismiss the work of a philosophical critic located in on the Analytic side of the divide as amounting to neither philosophy nor biblical scholarship. Alternatively, some analytically trained biblical scholars might dismiss philosophical critics using Continental rhetoric as spouting incomprehensible nonsense.²⁸ As long as it still seems useful to speak of the A-C divide and while anti-philosophical sentiment exists in biblical exegesis and theology, some methodological misunderstandings are unavoidable.

F CONCLUSION

I conclude with the following observations, summing up the main points of the study.

- (i) In meta-philosophy, the concept of an A-C divide is a familiar one.
- (ii) Both sides of the divide are also present in the work of philosophical critics operating within the various species and types of PC.
- (iii) In some contexts in explicit types of PC (e.g. philosophy of religion), the analytic side predominates.
- (iv) In other contexts within implicit types of PC (e.g. in methods in HB studies), the Continental side is in the majority.

²⁸ Examples of the above are not hard to come by. Some HB scholars genuinely open to philosophical approaches, such as James Barr and John Barton (both from generally Analytic contexts), have by implication dismissed much of Continental thinking as not being serious scholarship. See John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 235; James Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament: Biblical Studies at the End of a Millennium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). In addition, the author has personal experiences of friends from Continental German contexts that appear to follow Spinoza and the biblical theology movement in having difficulty seeing how philosophy (which they assumed to be a constructive enterprise) could have any relevance for historical exegesis proper. One exception is the OT theologian Walter Brueggemann, who comes across as Continental (post-modern) in jargon. See Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), *passim*. Yet the latter would probably dismiss any involvement of analytic philosophy as amounting to hermeneutically illegitimate moves.

- (v) At times, however, a scholar engaging in PC cannot be so easily be located on any particular side of the A-C divide.
- (vi) There seems to be little evidence of a serious meta-philosophical controversy currently raging among philosophical critics operating on different sides of the A-C divide.

Of course, PC of the HB in its current forms is still much in its infancy. Perhaps this suggests that, as the new methodology becomes more self-reflective and self-critical in the future, more intensive meta-philosophical scrutiny (and therewith war) might be on the horizon. Whether this will indeed be the case, or whether trans-divisionary issues will themselves eventually fall away by way of synthesis, separation or for whatever other reason, only time will tell.

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