The first decade of a new century of academic philosophy would seem as good a time as any for a taking-stock of the last century and some cognizant speculation as to how the discipline is likely to develop in the coming years. Brian Leiter, in his editorial comments for his anthology, *The Future for Philosophy*, construes this project in thoroughly metaphilosophical terms and adduces myriad pertinent contexts for philosophy’s self-reflection. We are to understand that the self-reflection of philosophy, in terms of its past, present or future, will characteristically have claim to being philosophy in its own right and warrant consideration as having substantive philosophical content independent of more specific sub-disciplines. On the other hand, Leiter notes the intrinsic metaphilosophical character of the self-aware contribution to any philosophical field: in writing within a philosophical community, one takes up a position relative to that discourse, and this must be accompanied by an awareness of the context in which one is writing and what one hopes to contribute to that discourse.

Leiter is therefore equipped with a rationale by which to admit any sort of philosophical work into his anthology on metaphilosophical grounds. If it is explicitly about philosophy, says Leiter, then it is appropriate for inclusion. If it is not explicitly about philosophy, Leiter suggests, all philosophical texts are really about philosophy in some sense anyway and so again, it may be included. On certain readings this insight is sound and ought to license a certain latitude in terms of subject matter in order to allow for richness of thematic content. And in many respects, this is the spirit in which this anthology is collected and towards which it makes a valiant effort. However, on certain points, Leiter’s principle for selection of materials is too lenient and the anthology suffers from a resultant dilution in terms of its overall theme.

The editor’s introduction is a comprehensive survey of the themes upon which each of the thirteen essays is to touch, and he provides a satisfactory overview of them. It is heavily cited and most informative; it is perhaps the most explicit reflection on the state of philosophy to be found in the volume. It offers views of philosophy in terms of the late collapse of the analytic/continental distinction, the takeover of continental scholarship by analytic philosophy, the renewed historicizing of analytic philosophy and the analysis of style and subject matter in analytic and continental trends. Leiter discusses philosophy’s new pluralist paradigm, the mutual
interdependence of practice and theory, the mutual interdependence of philosophy and metaphilosophy, the interdependence of philosophy in history and history of philosophy. He references recent debates on new ways of taxonomizing philosophical disciplines, the institutionalization and the professionalization of philosophy and the perils of overspecialization within philosophy. He also makes mention of popular myths about philosophy and takes these as a portal into issues about philosophy’s self-conception, the state of the field, and philosophy’s public image. In fact, beside the introduction, a review offering a general summary of themes in the volume runs the risk of redundancy; what is left to this reviewer is an assessment of whether or not Leiter’s portrait of how the anthology hangs together is true to fact, or whether, and in what ways, the collection is more diffuse than this.

The first two essays comprise a thematic pairing: they are both reflections on the history of philosophy, and both of them take this opportunity to reflect on the role of the history of philosophy within philosophy itself. The interplay between ways of understanding historical philosophy, and the philosophy discovered therein, we learn, stands to reinvigorate contemporary inquiry. Julia Annas’ contribution outlines first a history of the scholarship of ancient philosophy in the latter half of the twentieth century and uses this to set out the problematic of the study of ancient philosophy as we receive it. A tension is suggested between studying ancient philosophy as if it were contemporary philosophy (which runs the risk of anachronism) and studying it in context as a historical text (which strays all too often into endless philology). Annas suggests that the dialectic between these two tendencies constitutes one of the central impetuses of what was the burgeoning field of ancient philosophy and accounts in some part for the reintroduction of a historical awareness back into the traditionally ahistorical Anglo-American tradition of the twentieth century, an awareness which has only made English-speaking philosophy more articulate.

Don Garrett isn’t afraid to explore the several complexities that the consideration of philosophy in a historical context elicits and, in his account of the role, history, and methodology of the study of modern philosophy (philosophy from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries), he identifies distinct, simultaneous studies that must be pursued in any inquiry into the philosophies of the past; these include the history of the history of modern philosophy, the philosophy of the history of modern philosophy, the philosophy of the history of the history of modern philosophy and the history of the philosophy of the history of modern philosophy. Needless to say, this isn’t casual reading, and Garrett’s obtuse style does not help
matters. But his labours bear intriguing fruits and, in brief, he identifies four objectives discernable within the methodology of the history of philosophy: contextualisation, interpretation, evaluation and application. According to Garrett, all four ought to be honoured when doing philosophy of history, but in proportions relative to the ultimate purpose of the undertaking. Garrett’s essay is a valuable contribution to metaphilosophy, too, because it proffers a systematic methodology for approaching analytic philosophy’s emergent history, a history which, as it recedes, will present more and more contextual and interpretative problems.

Leiter’s own contribution, “The Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Recovering Marx, Nietzsche and Freud,” appears first as being somewhat overambitious. Suggesting that these three thinkers are to be considered the paradigm “philosophers of suspicion,” who each, in his own way, advocated suspicion of “our conscious understandings and experience,” whether in political, ethical or psychological domains (p.74). Leiter argues that recent interpretations have tried to suppress the positive claims of each of these philosophers and have instead subsumed them under a moralizing lens. This view prefers to draw on them in terms of what they can tell us in justificatory argument than to put stock in the veracity of their respective systems.

His goal is to rejuvenate their positive claims, rehabilitating them as “naturalist thinkers” (p. 77), who ought to be taken seriously. To this end, he engages recent Marx scholarship, for instance, seeking to suggest how Marx might not have been misguided, as recent criticism tends to suggest, that the proletariat will at some point inevitably revolt. The strain of synthesizing three diverse thinkers under one scheme begins to show when he gets down to the actual analysis. Where Leiter is faithful to the scholarship of his three writers, his claims are banal and where his claims are more substantive, he crucially misrepresents the tradition to which he is responding. Leiter is also intemperate; in three supposedly benign examples of the Gettier problem he takes colourful swipes at the George W. Bush administration, fundamentalist belief systems, and the phenomenon of theism. While one isn’t inclined to impugn his sensibilities, the essay might have stood on its own without such interjections. Nevertheless, Leiter’s ambitions here are interesting and pertinent to an era where scientific research increasingly offers challenges to received commonsense notions, and the overall impression of the piece is of a good conclusion which hasn’t found the right argument yet, nor the appropriate exponent.

Timothy Williamson, in his article, cautions against the abandonment of the insights of the ‘linguistic turn’ of the twentieth century, lest the
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diminished attention to the sense in which language lays hold of our empirical observations hamper in some respect the linguistically naïve, empirical naturalism of the contemporary period. His analysis of the problem of vagueness and how this supports his critique is technical, nuanced and difficult to dispute. Nevertheless, his essay presages a general move away from explicitly metaphilosophical content within the collection. It is hard to see how this work might not have been more appropriately anthologized in a volume dealing with the philosophy of science, or of language. Williamson attempts to couch the exploration in terms that justify its inclusion and ends the piece with suggestions for how his argument might affect the development of the field. But these observations are not substantially different from the contextualising statements of any piece of philosophy and they don’t quite warrant its inclusion here.

This trend continues into the next thematic pairing: that of Jaegwon Kim’s and David Chalmers’ contributions concerning the philosophy of mind. Both are fine monographs on the state of play in the philosophy of mind, and both identify clearly their respective intentions, and follow through well and with solid, convincing authority. But neither contributes substantively to the metaphilosophical theme of the volume, nor do they justify their being included here. Kim recapitulates on his work in the philosophy of mind and on the standing challenge to reduce consciousness to a lower level theory as the best defense against eliminativism. Interestingly, he revises his own position on the reducibility of consciousness and suggests a fruitful avenue of inquiry that might make use of both scientific and phenomenological accounts. These remarks are not expanded upon enough, however, to satisfy the anthology’s charter. Chalmers’ construal of the central themes within philosophy of mind in terms of a historical reading of different forms of representationalism all has about it the feel of a worthy article within the philosophy of mind. Unfortunately, it refuses to offer implications outside its field in terms of interdisciplinary avenues, the role of philosophy, or of the future of philosophy broadly conceived.

For similar reasons, we may pass over in brief Nancy Cartwright’s history of the notion of causality in the philosophy of science and its emergent heterogeneity in response to careful analysis. We must also neglect Thomas Hurka’s elegant account of the history of normative ethics and his critique of ethical foundationalism.

However, the book does contain some excellent metaphilosophical efforts, and it is to these we will now turn. In the nascent field of social epistemology, there are two valuable contributions. Alvin Goldman argues for an interdisciplinary research project united under the banner of ‘social
epistemology,’ since the disparate efforts at those goals by, variously, social anthropologists, psychologists and sociologists on the one hand, and socially-minded epistemologists on the other, haven’t managed to give it a distinctive mandate within the academy. Goldman suggests that the crucial contribution that might be made by philosophical epistemologists to such a field is a veritistic social epistemology which makes central a concern with the issues important to philosophical epistemologists, such as truth and justification. These concepts, says Goldman, all run the risk of being left out of a sociologically-dominated social epistemology, since within sociology notions like ‘truth’ are considered vacuous, in line with a domain-wide, principled belief-relativism. Goldman’s numerous examples, from science as a social activity, to judicial matters, to the question of authority on the internet and in terms of competing experts, produce convincing justification for his project. Also of note is the suggestion that a normative account of social epistemology, like that of Wilfrid Sellars, might become an indispensable aid to such a project. The philosophy of normativity in general is one earmarked here for future growth within philosophy – a topical recognition. In light of this, and the interdisciplinary scope of Goldman’s suggestion, the article fits well into the anthology’s overarching theme.

Similarly, Philip Kitcher’s article tackles the sciences directly and takes the various social critiques of them in the twentieth century as constituting a useful global context in which to found them. His project envisages a more concrete place for the sciences within society, and sees such an arrangement as making explicit the political commitments of science, which, according to thinkers like Feyerabend, are, in the current state of affairs, ignored or concealed to the detriment of the sciences. Kitcher’s inquiry takes the shape of asking “what are the ends (goals) of the sciences” (p.210), and finding a heterogenous set of answers to this question, Kitcher proposes a social-contractarian-style reorganization of the sciences, wherein their goals are finding “true answers to those questions that would strike particular groups as significant if they worked out their collective will in an ideal deliberation” (p.228). In his picture, this requires a self-reflective capacity on the part of scientists, so that they may best represent their goals in the inquiry, and an interested engagement on the part of a wider society in the deliberation about which goals ought to be considered more important, since it is not given a priori which type of goal we ought to endorse. Kitcher’s inclusion is justified by the following: the scope of his proposal (which offers a reconception of philosophy), the synthesis of social philosophy and philosophy of science and the creative use of the social critique of science
to fortify scientific endeavor as a reconceptualized social institution.

Peter Railton’s “Towards an Ethics that Inhabits the World” attempts a similar reorientation of ethics in the light of recent philosophy, such as that of Gilbert Harman and John Doris. Railton advises that ethics take seriously the findings of social psychology and graduate to a causal/explanatory model of ethical behaviour, which takes account of the actual nature of human beings before normative questions are addressed. He feels that recent disgruntled noises from within the virtue-ethics tradition suggest that we are seeing the resumption of the old dichotomy between explanation and understanding in ethics, this time with the sides split between empirical science and normative ethics. Instead, Railton sees an opportunity for the field of ethics to grow from the collapse of that dichotomy, allowing both normative and causal accounts to contribute to an ethical philosophy which has more practical relevance to the world in which people live.

Rae Langton’s contribution to the book is an attempt to look at feminism across the split between analytic and continental philosophies during the twentieth century, and she takes into account two varieties of feminism which have tended towards mutual antagonism, both sporting different methodologies and substantial interests. She considers how the notion of “projection” (p.286), used by French philosophers such as Luce Irigaray to analyze the sexual objectification of women in pornography and society at large, might complement the analytic feminist’s traditional concern with the analysis of the curtailment of “autonomy” (p.285). In the process, Langton subsumes both approaches under a Kantian framework, which reveals their complementary qualities. Langton’s paper can be seen as supplementing Leiter’s, in that ultimately she suggests that a healthy suspicion ought to accompany any hermeneutic of sexual politics in society. Furthermore, her transatlantic scope echoes Leiter’s own sympathies for looking on the analytic/continental split as being a thing of the past. Langton’s contribution, however, is entirely more accomplished, and this makes more evident the metaphilosophical content of the offering.

Finally, Philip Pettit’s “Existentialism, Quietism and the Role of Philosophy” finishes the collection with perhaps the most metaphilosophical reflections of all the contributions, attempting to redefine the role of philosophy in the light of its current position, poised between the unrealistically radical demands of existentialist strands of philosophy (which Pettit also takes to include Churchlandian eliminative materialism) and the anti-theoretical stance of the Wittgensteinian quietists. Taking as his context the metaphilosophical frameworks of Edmund Husserl and Wilfrid Sellars, Pettit argues for a conception of philosophy as the reflective
tendency which grows out of commonsense theory-like conceptions and the practice in which those theory-like conceptions are actualized. As Sellars would have it, the Scientific Image of Man grew out of the Manifest Image and then in important senses was forced to challenge it. Pettit sees the existential and quietist tendencies as reactions to this challenge, the quietists siding with the manifest image at the expense of all theory, and the existentialists advocating the abandonment of the commonsense frameworks in favour of the newer, systematic ones. Pettit sees neither of these options as particularly fruitful. In a rather Sellarsian move, he argues for seeing the role of philosophy as being a sort of meditation on this scenario: conciliating these two poles, adjudicating their correctness relative to certain types of inquiry and not to others, and partitioning for philosophy itself the space in which it might do this - in which it might take its place as the Husserlian ideal of mankind’s self reflection. As the concluding sentiment in the anthology, this deserves applause.

As what is explicitly a metaphilosophical anthology, *The Future for Philosophy* deviates from its mandate, but is nonetheless a stimulating survey of the state of philosophy, which offers a substantive, pluralistic vision of the possible paths of development it is likely to take in the next half century. Midway through, the book undergoes a marked slump in relevance to the overarching topic of concern, although as standalone works each of these papers can be considered worthy additions to their fields. While failing to quite patch up this disparity, Leiter’s editorial defense of this deviation, as outlined earlier, does manage to construe the volume in a latitudinarian, dialectic spirit, and this inclines us to overlook the editorial shortcomings in favour of the broad themes it does manage to pick out. Far from indispensable, Leiter’s effort presents a heterogeneous range of essays, eclectically gathered, which will be of interest to the generalist and which is bound to offer some novel ideas to the determined reader.

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