

MESSAGE

Philosophy is a subject that deals with numerous and important questions. It produces possible answers to these questions, analyzes them, compares them, and argues for and against them. However, this can be done in many different ways. The voices of Plato, Nāgārjuna, Dōgen, Kant, Nietzsche, Frege, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger are clearly quite distinct, and none of these styles of writing is privileged. There are numerous ways to write great—or good—philosophy. They come with different fortes—and foibles, but in the hands of a good philosopher, all of them can be wielded to great effect. (Of course, poor philosophy can be written in any of these styles, too.) I do not suppose that we have seen the end of the different ways in which effective philosophy can be written.

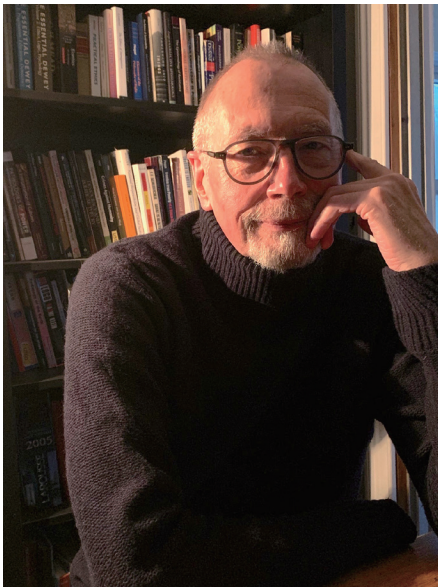
Analytic philosophy is an ill-defined notion. Indeed, what is now termed “analytic philosophy” has itself evolved over what is usually taken to be its history. Defining the notion is virtually impossible. Many of the features it is taken to have are shared with other traditions. For example, it is standard in analytic philosophy to formulate relatively precise theses, argue for them, formulate explicit objections, and reply to them. However, one finds this practice also in Medieval European philosophy and classical Indian philosophy. The notion of analytic philosophy is at best some kind of family resemblance notion, and even a sociological phenomenon, a product of where one was trained, who one’s teachers were, and so on.

Nonetheless, there is a style of writing that currently predominates in English-speaking philosophy. Perhaps the best way to indicate what it is, is to give some paradigm examples, such as the writings of Noel Carroll, Michael Devitt, Miranda Fricker, and the late Charles Mills—to cite an arbitrary collection of philosophers, determined by nothing more than the fact that these are (or were) some of my colleagues at the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center. And when it is done well, as they do it, this style of writing does indeed have notable virtues. In his message in the first issue of this journal, Tim Williamson notes: clarity, precision, accuracy, and rigor. This is a fair comment. I might also add: an avoidance of obscurity and an unpretentiousness.

The style or styles of philosophy that have dominated in Japan for many decades now have not been those of analytic philosophy, but those of the indigenous philosophical traditions and their spin-offs, such as the Kyoto School. And to the extent that Japanese philosophers have engaged with Western ideas, they have largely been those of mainland Europe—in particular,

Germany—rather than those of the English-speaking world. This is not to denigrate the traditions of Japanese philosophy at all. They have many virtues. As one example, the Kyoto School developed a unique way of fusing indigenous Japanese philosophy with European philosophy in an historically unprecedented way. (I am not suggesting that the virtues of analytic philosophy cannot be found in these writings.) As I said, good philosophy is written in many different voices.

However, over recent decades, analytic styles of philosophical writing—whether these be in English or in Japanese—have started to appear in Japan. This is much to be welcomed. The plurality of voices is itself a virtue: we all have things to learn from different traditions. The appearance of the new journal *Review of Analytic Philosophy*, edited by Masaki Ichinose in Tokyo, is placed to play a significant role in this development, and I wish it every success in this enterprise.



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