



Metaphilosophy: Meritorious or Misguided?*

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ABSTRACT: Metaphilosophy studies what philosophy is and how it should be done. A general case against metaphilosophy claims that metaphilosophy is, at best, unnecessary for doing philosophy and, at worst, inimical to doing philosophy. This paper rejects the general case against metaphilosophy. It argues that metaphilosophy is a legitimate and indispensable branch of philosophy.

KEYWORDS: Metaphilosophy, Science, Reliabilism, Agreement, Philosophical method

ABSTRACT: La metafilosofia studia cosa sia la filosofia e come dovrebbe essere fatta. Un argomento generale contro la metafilosofia sostiene che la metafilosofia sia, nel migliore dei casi, non necessaria per filosofare e, nel peggiore dei casi, nemica del filosofare. Questo articolo confuta l'argomento generale contro la metafilosofia e sostiene che la metafilosofia sia un ambito della filosofia legittimo e indispensabile.

KEYWORDS: metafilosofia, scienza, affidabilismo, accordo, metodo filosofico

1. *Introduction*

Criticism of metaphilosophy may take one of two forms, general or special. A special case against metaphilosophy targets a particular conception of metaphilosophy, a particular way of thinking of philosophy. The later Wittgenstein notably sought to displace what he saw as the prevailing conception of philosophy as a theoretical, fact-uncovering enterprise in favour of his conception of philosophy

* I am grateful to Fraser MacBride for discussing an earlier version of this paper.

as a form of therapy that frees us from the perplexities induced by a muddled understanding of language. So, a special case against metaphilosophy rejects some but not every conception of metaphilosophy. By contrast, a general case against metaphilosophy consists in a root and branch rejection of the enterprise of metaphilosophy. The enterprise is rejected as misconceived, pointless or inimical to genuine intellectual inquiry. A general case is usually made as part of a still more general claim: that philosophy, and not just the philosophy of philosophy, is misconceived, pointless or inimical to good thinking. Some thinkers who do not reject philosophy, however, have also endorsed the general case against metaphilosophy. In §2 I will consider the reasons they have offered against metaphilosophy, ones that supposedly do not carry over to philosophy itself. In §3 I discuss why there is a notable lack of convergence in opinion in philosophy as compared with the sciences. In §4 I will consider whether reliabilism can be deployed so as to make metaphilosophy unnecessary.

2. The General Case against Metaphilosophy

My interest here is not in a case against metaphilosophy that is encompassed by a still more general case against philosophy. A case of the latter sort might be offered, for instance, on the grounds that there is no progress in philosophy – specifically, no accumulation of knowledge or emerging consensus about what the correct solutions to philosophical problems are. Others have addressed this issue and I won't pursue it here. My interest is in views that target metaphilosophy, that think there is something seriously defective about it, but which do not target philosophy more broadly. In what follows, by “the general case against metaphilosophy”, I have in mind just this line of criticism of metaphilosophy.

Part of the general case against metaphilosophy charges it with consisting of «vague and sweeping generalisations that can only distract us from the detailed work that needs to be done». Moreover, the very act of thinking about what philosophy is about «may prevent us from doing decent philosophy»¹. We can be doing philosophy well,

¹ Cf. F. MacBride, *Russell v Wittgenstein*, lecture given at Cambridge University on 13th December 2010. Available as a podcast at: <http://www.sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1084822> [05.06.2021].

but if we are pressed to think about how we can do this, we're stymied and this thwarts what we were doing so well before.

Each of these reasons is debatable. First, even if metaphilosophy to date has largely consisted of vague and sweeping generalisations and a neglect of detailed work, then it is open for us to say that what needs to be done is *better metaphilosophy*, not *no metaphilosophy*. The same complaint could equally well have been made of philosophy at many times in its history, or of any nascent branch of science. The answer in each case is the same: doing away with vague and sweeping generalisations does not require doing away with generalisations. That would mean doing away with all theory. Some philosophers, such as the later Wittgenstein and so-called quietists, advocate such a measure, but then they find fault not just with the enterprise of metaphilosophy. They found fault with the idea that philosophy involves theorising and explanation in the first place. There is no call, however, for such drastic measures. Instead, vague and sweeping generalisations, in science or in philosophy, can be replaced by ones that are better supported and more precise.

Second, let's grant that reflecting on a practice and inquiring about how it is conducted can often paralyse our performance of that practice. Just try walking on a tightrope when you're thinking about the physics of what you're doing. Yet abandoning metaphilosophy for such a reason would be an over-reaction. By the same token, asking scientists what it is to explain something, or asking mathematicians what it is to prove a theorem, or asking any of us what it is to think well, is apt to paralyse these practices. That is, if asking metaphilosophical questions can paralyse philosophising, likewise asking philosophical questions can paralyse non-philosophical practices. But that is not to say that any of those questions are misguided. In each case, paralysis is avoided not by complete abstention, but by not allowing reflection to monopolise our resources, cognitive and otherwise. That leaves a time and place to address those questions. Furthermore, if reflection can sometimes frustrate a practice, at other times it can help to criticise and improve it. Failure to reflect on a practice involves acquiescing in whatever method happens to be associated with that practice, regardless of how unreliable or arbitrary that method may happen to be. Such intellectual complacency would be distinctly unphilosophical. I return to this point below.

The foregoing discussion brings out the fact that the metaphilosophical question *What is philosophy?* is tightly connected with the

methodological question *What are the methods of philosophy?* Or, to put the issue in normative terms, the metaphilosophical question *What should philosophy be?* is tightly connected with the methodological question *What should the methods of philosophy be?* For a pair of questions to be tightly connected I mean that to answer one member of the pair is at least partially to answer the other member. One way in which the general case against metaphilosophy has been made is by making a case against the methodological question whether in its descriptive or normative forms. This is the tactic found in D. H. Mellor's trenchant criticisms of metaphilosophy².

The remit of metaphilosophy, Mellor says, is «what philosophy is and how to do it»³. He claims that, even though philosophy reveals presuppositions made by science, «this does not require the methodology of metaphysics to differ from that of the sciences. [...] [The] criteria of scope and success used to judge metaphysical theories are the same as those used in science and mathematics»⁴. Let's grant this. What he then goes on to say, however, is that this is all that can be said about the methodology of metaphysics: «There is nothing peculiar about the methodology of metaphysics. Indeed, there is very little to it beyond a few platitudes that apply equally to all secular non-fiction [...]»⁵. Mellor is concerned with the methodology of metaphysics, not of philosophy more widely. His views about metaphilosophy, though, do not appear to be restricted in any way. How is his position to be defended?

Mellor first comments that «no one, I trust, thinks that studying the methodology of drama would have made Shakespeare a better playwright; merely a less prolific one. The methodology of science is no more helpful to scientists, not even in scientific revolutions»⁶. In reply, I think that writing good drama is a skill and I don't suppose that there is such a thing as «the methodology of drama». If doing metaphysics were what Mellor here supposes it to be, then there would be *no* methodology involved in metaphysics, and *a fortiori* no methodology shared with science. Yet he says otherwise. The analogy with drama is then, even by his own reckoning, spurious. He has already stated that metaphysics

² Cf. D. H. Mellor, *Mind, Meaning and Reality: Essays in Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2012, *Introduction*, §§ 4 and 5, pp. 5-9.

³ *Ivi*, p. 8.

⁴ *Ivi*, pp. 5-6.

⁵ *Ivi*, p. 6.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

and science have a shared methodology (although, curiously, he takes this methodology to consist in little more than «a few platitudes»). It is also vital to mark the difference between practical help and theoretical understanding, and particularly theoretical understanding of why a given subject is as successful as it is. For instance, the valuable research by Alan Bullock or Joachim Fest about how Hitler came to power⁷ need not provide, and was never intended to provide, a how-to guide for mountebanks to become dictators. Far from betraying a shortcoming in those historians' research, it would only expose the obtuseness of any would-be critics who expected otherwise. It is then surprising to find that Mellor makes this elision between practical advice and theoretical understanding in the above quote. Studying the practices of scientists or of philosophers perhaps may not help us in solving the problems that they are engaged in, but it does help in describing and evaluating what scientists or philosophers are doing when they tackle such problems, what they count as a problem in their field, what they would want as an adequate solution to such a problem, and how they think such a problem might go about being solved. Otherwise we should promptly bin the collected works of Bacon, Mill, Popper, Hesse, Kuhn, Cartwright and every other scholar of the philosophy of science because they do not further scientific investigation. That would be an over-reaction: scientific research is worthwhile, yet so too is research about the scientific enterprise itself. But if the philosophical study of science is in good standing, then we've yet to see why the philosophical study of philosophy is any worse placed. And if heuristics are needed to raise our game in philosophy, they can be separately provided⁸.

The comparison with science serves another point. The project of specifying and justifying philosophical methods need not be construed as a project of presenting some small set of simple rules that provide a recipe for doing successful philosophy. It need not be construed in this way any more than the project of specifying and justifying scientific method, the theory of confirmation, is intended to provide a simple recipe for doing future science. Part of the difficulty

⁷ A. Bullock, *Hitler: A Study on Tyranny*, Odhams Press, London 1952, and J. C. Fest, *Hitler: eine Biographie*, Propyläen, Frankfurt am Main-Berlin-Wien 1973 (Engl. transl. by R. and C. Winston, *Hitler*, Vintage book, New York 1975).

⁸ Cf. A. Hájek, *Philosophical Heuristics and Philosophical Methodology*, in H. Cappelen-T. Szabo Gendler-J. Hawthorne (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Methodology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016, pp. 348-373.

in formulating the methods of philosophy (or of science) is that good practice can be hard to distinguish from bad and that good practice itself may be the result of applying an entangled and complex series of principles and considerations. Different areas of the discipline may use different if overlapping sets of these principles, applying them in various context-sensitive ways. For these reasons, talk of *the* scientific method or *the* method of philosophy is, at best, misleading and, at worst, a misnomer. Given the sheer diversity of what passes as philosophy, it seems that there is no commonality to the many things that are called philosophy. “Philosophy” and “metaphilosophy” would then be family resemblance terms. But, even if they are, that would not close off the possibility that there are interesting things for metaphilosophy to say. Consider the (alleged) family resemblance term “game”. Even if there is no commonality to games and so no common rules to them, each game has its set of rules and those rules and the relations between them can be specified. Likewise, each of the splintered sub-disciplines of philosophy may have its methods, methods assumed to achieve that discipline’s goals. So even if there is no one set of rules for metaphilosophy to study, it could profitably study each set of methods in terms of how effective they are in reaching the goals that they are supposed to secure. So we can distinguish between two different scope readings: (1) for every philosophy of x , there is some y such that y is the philosophy of philosophy of x ; (2) some y is such that for every philosophy of x , y is the philosophy of philosophy of x . This is the difference between there being a single metaphilosophy that encompasses every branch of philosophy and there being, for every sub-discipline of philosophy, a metaphilosophy that assesses its methods.

Not only can metaphilosophy be a valuable investigative branch of philosophy even if there is no single method shared across philosophy, assigning a method to a branch of philosophy does not have to be done at the outset of inquiry and it does not have to be a once and for all assignment. There are three tasks. There is the interpretative task of working out what methods a given branch of philosophy is following and what its goals are. There is the evaluative task of assessing how good those methods are for reaching those goals. And there is the prescriptive task of saying what methods would be most conducive to achieving the goals in question – or, indeed, for recommending fresh goals for that branch of philosophy. These tasks run simultaneously. In particular, the assignment of methods to a given branch of philosophy does not have to be prior to the start of inquiry

by that branch. Nor does the assignment have to be once and for all. I envisage a rolling programme in which attributions of method are revised as we understand the branch of philosophy at issue better, but also that the methods used by that branch are revised as their strengths and weaknesses are revealed by metaphilosophy.

Like the practitioners of many other disciplines, philosophers learn their trade through becoming steeped in the practice – by emulating their peers, internalising textbook treatments of issues, and selecting and tackling similar issues in similar ways. What is more, the practitioners of other disciplines do not need to learn a rationale for their discipline’s scope and methods. Why, Mellor asks, should philosophy be different?⁹ I agree that not all philosophers need to learn such a rationale. You can do something well without needing to know how you do it. Fish swim without having explicit propositional knowledge of fluid mechanics. A better question to ask would be whether there is any benefit if philosophers had such a rationale. I think that there is. Whatever the situation may be in the case of other disciplines, there is a notable lack of consensus in philosophy about its scope and methods. This is not simply the fact that a plethora of methodological options is available; the key point is that many, if not all, of these methodological options are controversial and conflicting. Consider some candidates: verificationism, ordinary language, phenomenology, experimental philosophy, intuition, thought experiment, simplicity, appeal to naturalism, appeal to Biblical authority, appeal to clear and distinct ideas. These options can conflict: given a certain problem situation, they may prescribe mutually inconsistent conclusions. Providing a rationale for philosophy would be, in part, to say which of these options are permissible and which are not. It would also be to say which permissible methods take precedence over which others when the outcomes of methods conflict. Without a metaphilosophical investigation of this sort, philosophers would be “flying blind”, unreflectively using the methods that had been bequeathed to them, regardless of their methods’ lack of calibration or unknown degree of accuracy. By way of illustration, consider Mellor’s own dubious appeal to ordinary language. Here he is arguing that things (as opposed to events) lack temporal parts:

But no one would say that only temporal parts of Hilary and

⁹D. H. Mellor, *Mind, Meaning and Reality*, cit., p. 8.

Tenzing climbed only a temporal part of Everest in 1953. The rest of us think the two whole men climbed the one whole mountain. [...]. Likewise, when Churchill published an account of his early life, that is what he called it: *My Early Life*. He did not call it “Early Me”, and the silliness of such a title is no mere triviality¹⁰.

What this passage requires, though, is some reason for thinking that an appeal to ordinary talk is an appeal to a suitably informed source about the metaphysics of time rather than a fallback to naivety or linguistic happenstance. That is a metaphilosophical task. (One indicator that Mellor’s argument is a bad one is that he does think that events have temporal parts. Nevertheless, «no one would say» that every temporal part of the battle of Waterloo preceded a temporal part of Napoleon’s exile on Saint Helena. Appeals to ordinary language such as these elide something true but irrelevant – no one talks in these ways – with something question-begging – were anyone to talk in these ways, they would be saying something false).

What I claim here about philosophy, I’d also claim about science. We need a metascience, which is a part of science, in order to ensure that science pursues reliable methods. Is there an identifiable discipline, metascience, which reliably does this? I think there is and that it involves two notable sub-disciplines: these are statistics and Bayesian confirmation theory. I single these out because they involve general principles that can be profitably applied to evaluate and improve the findings of any branch of empirical science. Now, since the value of metascience (as I call it) is evident, it seems to me that parallel considerations apply to philosophy: it would be valuable to have a discipline that stated general principles that can be applied to evaluate and improve the findings of the (other) branches of philosophy. In short, metaphilosophy is valuable.

3. *The Lack of Convergence of Opinion in Philosophy*

Philosophy contrasts with science with respect to their track records of reaching convergence. Science scores well, whereas philosophy

¹⁰ Id., *Real Time*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1981, p. 105. Cf. also Id., *Real Time II*, Routledge, London 1998, p. 86.

apparently scores badly on this measure. There is widespread agreement in science about a great variety of the topics it investigates. There is precious little, if any, agreement in philosophy about anything. What is responsible for the lack of convergence in philosophy? There is a lack of convergence in philosophy due to the presence of widespread and protracted controversy. But why is controversy itself so endemic and deep-rooted in philosophy? Any attempted solution of a philosophical problem involves (1) various notions involved in (2) various claims that are themselves linked by (3) various inferential steps. Our standards of clarity and justification raise challenges to each of these components. But meeting such challenges involves other specifications of these components – which are themselves open to iterated challenges. Philosophy is then clarification *and* argument without end. This is not to assume that every philosophical problem would need to be solved for any one of those problems to be solved. That may be correct though I suspect it is an exaggeration; in any case, my diagnosis does not require it. The contrast between the track records of science and philosophy comes about because science does not have the exacting standards of clarity and justification that drive philosophers through iterations of (1)-(3). Working scientists uncritically acquiesce in the use of rafts of assumptions and principles in order to get on with the business in hand, their day-to-day research or the application of theory to nature. In contrast, philosophers collectively will not take anything for granted. So-called naturalists in philosophy jib at the idea of seeking standards other than those employed in current science. They regard that idea as defective and distracting. But they cannot leave matters there. For the naturalists' view remains philosophically controversial and they are compelled to address the challenges of their opponents. So, unlike the scientists they emulate, they cannot simply acquiesce in the standards and procedures that they follow, whatever the latter's scientific provenance.

Seeking high standards of clarity and rigour is not the preserve of philosophy. Mathematics seeks such standards too and yet mathematics has an impressive track record of reaching convergence. What explains this difference? I think that the problem is that, although philosophy seeks high standards of clarity, justification and argumentative rigour, it cannot agree about what these standards are, or when they are met. Just which notions are sufficiently clear to be admitted in our ideology? Just which principles of inference should be accepted? In the same vein, philosophers cannot agree about which

principles and what data to work with. Nor do they agree about how to weigh the importance of the principles and the data that they do accept. With disagreement about the basics of the discipline – about how, in any detail, to philosophise – it is unsurprising that there is no agreement about the results¹¹.

Let's take stock. We need not know the method we are following for our philosophical practices to be successful. But we do need to be following a good method for them to be successful. So we have reason to think that our philosophical practices are successful if we have reason to think that we are following a good philosophical method. And in the case of disputes about how our practices should continue – which theoretical options to take, which conclusions to accept – we need to decide what our philosophical methods should be. Knowledge of good methods can enhance our future philosophical practices. The diversity of methods at play in philosophy reflects disagreement about fundamentals – and disagreement about how to settle issues about fundamentals.

4. *Reliabilism to the Rescue?*

It might be that Mellor's animadversions to philosophical method and its study are, in part, motivated by his acceptance of reliabilism about knowledge¹². In Mellor's version of reliabilism, to know that p is to have a true belief that p that has been caused by a reliable process. There is no requirement that you are able to cite reasons, or provide justification for your belief. Carried across to the case of philosophical beliefs, philosophical beliefs would constitute knowledge in just those cases in which the beliefs are true and have been caused by a reliable process – for instance, by a chain of reasoning that has at least a high chance of preserving truth from a premise set to a conclusion. If having knowledge does not require that you are able to give reasons for what you believe, then having philosophical knowledge

¹¹ For further recent discussion of the issue of convergence, see R. Blackford-D. Broderick (eds.), *Philosophy's Future: The Problem of Philosophical Progress*, Blackwell, Oxford 2017, and D. Stoljar, *Philosophical Progress: In Defence of a Reasonable Optimism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2017.

¹² D. H. Mellor, *The Warrant of Induction*, in Id., *Matters of Metaphysics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1991, pp. 254-268.

does not require that you are able to state or justify the procedure by which you formed those beliefs.

This version of reliabilism is controversial¹³, but I will not take issue with it. Instead, my response is that reliabilism so understood lends no support to Mellor's repudiation of philosophical methodology. Consider the central claim of reliabilism: to have propositional knowledge is to have a true belief produced by a reliable process. In the case of philosophical knowledge, what would such a reliable process be? It would be a process that takes you from some data – some beliefs or some experiences or some intuition – to a true philosophical belief. Moreover, for this process to be reliable is for it to have a high chance of taking you from the data to a true philosophical belief. That process is a procedure you would follow. It might not be one that you consciously followed at each step of its development. Perhaps some inferential step you make in the course of the process would go unnoticed to you. But the process would be what was guiding you in reaching your belief. By following this process, however, you would be following a procedure, an internalised and perhaps ingrained set of prescriptions. In other words, you would be following a method. The fact that you need not be consciously aware of each stage of your implementing the method is, as we noted earlier, neither here nor there: you don't have to be aware of following a particular method in order to be acting on that method. Someone might be able to solve a Rubik's cube on demand without being able to say how they can do this. Nevertheless, there is no non-random means of solving a Rubik's cube without following some set of rules¹⁴. So, reliabilism about philosophical knowledge would not dispense with philosophical methods. It would depend upon the implementation of some reliable set of methods. All that would be dispensed with would be our conscious awareness of what those methods are. I leave open whether or not there are such reliable methods in philosophy. I note simply that Mellor implicitly assumes that there are – and that the particular methods he uses are among them. Whether or not his assumptions are correct, they are also not entailed by reliabilism.

¹³ Cf. e.g. J. E. Adler, *Reliabilist Justification (or Knowledge) As a Good Truth-Ratio*, «Pacific Philosophical Quarterly» 65 (2005), pp. 445-458.

¹⁴ The example is Michael Dummett's, quoted by C. Wright, *Rails to Infinity: Essays on Themes from Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA) 2001, p. 228.

To see this, consider Newcomb's problem. The familiar problem is whether you should take one box or two¹⁵. Here's something we can all agree on: if you make a choice and it is for the right option, then you will automatically get the best pay-off. Does that solve Newcomb's problem? Of course not, because it leaves untouched the hard problem: what should you choose? Which choice selects the right option? Likewise, then, in the case of reliabilism, we might grant that if you believe some proposition and your belief is true and the result of a reliable process, then you automatically know that proposition. Does that solve the problem of knowledge? No, because it leaves untouched the hard problem: what should you believe? Which propositions should you believe, so that the process getting you to believe them would guarantee that you knew them? There are many propositions that you could believe. There are some that you do believe. But which ones should you believe? Reliabilism has no answer to these questions.

Lastly, reliabilists have to recognise that knowledge claims can face "defeaters": apparent reasons that defeat our claims to knowledge¹⁶. Such reasons indicate that what is believed is false, or that the process by which the belief came about was not reliable. If a given knowledge claim faces a defeater, the claimant then needs to defeat the defeater – to give a reason to think that the claimant does know what she takes herself to know, despite the apparent defeater of her knowledge. In the case of philosophy, the fact that there is a marked lack of convergence about what we should think seems to be a defeater of philosophical knowledge. To defeat this defeater, Mellor would need to go beyond his reliabilism and give a reason for thinking that he has philosophical knowledge, despite the lack of convergence of opinion in philosophy.

Mellor remarks that philosophy is not a spectator sport: you can evaluate its results only by doing some philosophy yourself¹⁷. I take this to be a consequence of the fact that metaphilosophy is itself part of philosophy. Doing philosophy consists in conducting the philosophical study of some intellectually interesting subject matter. Where that subject matter is philosophy itself, we have the philosophical study

¹⁵ R. Nozick, *Newcomb's Problem and Two Principles of Choice*, in N. Rescher (ed.), *Essays in Honor of Carl G. Hempel*, D. Reidel, Dordrecht 1969, pp. 114-146.

¹⁶ This is itself a serious problem for reliabilism: cf. B. Beddor, *Process Reliabilism's Troubles with Defeat*, «The Philosophical Quarterly» 65 (2015), pp. 145-159.

¹⁷ D. H. Mellor, *Mind, Meaning and Reality*, cit., p. 8.

of philosophy – and that is what I take metaphilosophy to be. The fact that you can evaluate philosophy only if you do some philosophy yourself seems to me to be just a constraint on membership of the class of metaphilosophers: that metaphilosophers have to be philosophers. There seems to be nothing untoward in this. Nor is it anything that would diminish the importance of metaphilosophy¹⁸. To be a creditable inspector of work at a nuclear power plant, you would need to be able to work at such a plant. The role of the inspector remains important – as least as important as the roles of any of the workers. Likewise, a metaphilosopher needs to be a trained up philosopher, but it is consistent with this that the topic they have chosen to specialise in is as important as any other philosophical topic. And this leads to an important point. The question of what metaphilosophy should be – how we are to think of it and how it is to be pursued – is as much an open-ended issue as any other philosophical problem. It is not something we should expect to be settled or stipulated in advance of philosophical inquiry. Instead, it is another object of philosophical inquiry, just as much as (say) the question of what personal identity or freedom of the will consist in. Philosophical problems cannot be compartmentalised: advancing one kind of solution to a certain problem involves making assumptions about, or has implications for, the solutions of other problems. Philosophical questions are tightly connected, in the sense given in §2. Accordingly, where philosophical progress is made, it is made across a broad front, across a range of associated problems. The philosophical problem of what metaphilosophy is is no exception. It is a piece with these other problems. Moreover, proffered solutions to this problem can be indirectly assessed to the extent that they inform viable solutions to other philosophical problems. So, for instance, the failure to solve the problem *What is sentence meaning?* in terms of verification conditions and the failure to solve the problem *What is mathematical truth?* in terms of analyticity, were the principal reasons for the demise of the metaphilosophy of logical positivism. Contrariwise, progress in solving philosophical problems would be reason to think there was progress in our choice of metaphilosophy.

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¹⁸ Pace Mellor. See *ivi*, p. 9.

