

# Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies



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## FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

Amy Olberding

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APA NEWSLETTER ON

# Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies

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AMY OLBERDING, GUEST EDITOR

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## FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

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In this issue, we revisit a subject of recurrent interest: the state of the field in Chinese philosophy. The wider profession is increasingly attentive to longstanding struggles to win inclusion for philosophies outside the traditional Western canon and for philosophers from historically underrepresented demographics. Nonetheless, challenges to winning greater inclusion for Chinese philosophy, and for philosophies that originate outside the traditional Western canon, remain. This issue of the newsletter canvasses several of these challenges, as well as remarking reasons to be hopeful and strategies for doing better than we have so far done. In it, several scholars assay the contemporary scene and provide both analysis of the situation and recommendations for change.

In the first article, I canvass data regarding the inclusion of Chinese philosophy in general audience philosophy journals, suggesting that rendering Chinese philosophy more familiar to, and better integrated into, the profession at large will require winning it greater representation in the discipline's wider philosophical discourses. In the second essay, "Some Reflections on the Status of Chinese Philosophy in U.S. Graduate Programs," David B. Wong hopefully reflects on the intersections of contemporary analytic philosophy and the increasing body of work that draws Chinese philosophy into dialogue with contemporary moral psychology. Third, in her essay, "What's Missing in Philosophy Departments? Specialists in Chinese Philosophy," Erin M. Cline urges caution about current ad hoc strategies for staffing courses in Chinese philosophy. Cline argues that we ought to beware the ways encouraging nonspecialists to fill curricular gaps can implicitly devalue Chinese philosophy, risking troubling assumptions about the ease of teaching it and its place in wider curricula. Alexis McLeod, in his essay "May You Live in Interesting Times: The State of the Field of Chinese Philosophy," describes multiple institutional elements that complicate efforts at greater inclusion, including the power of ranking mechanisms to depreciate work in Chinese (and, indeed, multiple non-Western philosophies); the burdens carried by specialists who may be expected to teach vast philosophical territories identified as "non-Western" or "other"; and the persistent dearth of Ph.D. programs equipped to train specialists in the field. McLeod also notes reasons for hope and remarks on the freedom that may be afforded by the field's residing outside a constricting "mainstream." Yong

Huang's essay, "The 'Double Bind' on Specialists in Chinese Philosophy," begins with observing that specialists often labor under a struggle to demonstrate, simultaneously, the novelty of Chinese philosophical discourse and its relevance to contemporary debates developed independently of it. Huang sees hope that the field can well do both and offers particular examples of distinctive contributions the field can make. Finally, in "Problems and Prospects for the Study of Chinese Philosophy in the English-Speaking World," Bryan W. Van Norden addresses the ignorance and Eurocentrism that continue to bedevil the profession, arguing that while specialists can and should meet the highest scholarly standards, it may be the youngest generations of philosophers, those who are least prey to longstanding biases, that will ultimately improve the profession's inclusivity.

While each of the essays included here adopts a distinct approach, taken cumulatively they indicate challenges we continue to face where our ambition is to make philosophy genuinely global. Diagnosing the issues that persist in the discipline is, of course, but part of our purpose here. Our longer goal is that, by identifying these challenges, we stimulate change in the profession. Indeed, we aspire to a day when the field of Chinese philosophy is simply too diverse, too diffusely distributed throughout the profession, and, put plainly, too large to permit ready treatment in newsletters such as this.

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## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

### GOAL OF THE NEWSLETTER ON "ASIANS AND ASIAN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHERS"

The *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* is sponsored by the APA Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies to report on the philosophical work of Asian and Asian-American philosophy, to report on new work in Asian philosophy, and to provide a forum for the discussion of topics of importance to Asian and Asian-American philosophers and those engaged with Asian and Asian-American philosophy. We encourage a diversity of views and topics within this broad rubric. None of the varied philosophical views provided by authors of newsletter articles necessarily represents the views of any or all the members of the Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies, including the editor(s)

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of the newsletter. The committee and the newsletter are committed to advancing Asian and Asian-American philosophical scholarships and bringing this work and this community to the attention of the larger philosophical community; we do not endorse any particular approach to Asian or Asian-American philosophy.

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1) **Purpose:** The purpose of the newsletter is to publish information about the status of Asians and Asian Americans and their philosophy and to make the resources of Asians and Asian-American philosophy available to a larger philosophical community. The newsletter presents discussions of recent developments in Asians and Asian-American philosophy (including, for example, both modern and classical East-Asian philosophy, both modern and classical South Asian philosophy, and Asians and Asian Americans doing philosophy in its various forms), related work in other disciplines, literature overviews, reviews of the discipline as a whole, timely book reviews, and suggestions for both spreading and improving the teaching of Asian philosophy in the current curriculum. It also informs the profession about the work of the APA Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies. One way the dissemination of knowledge of the relevant areas occurs is by holding highly visible, interactive sessions on Asian philosophy at the American Philosophical Association's three annual divisional meetings. Potential authors should follow the submission guidelines below:

- i) Please submit essays electronically to the editor(s). Articles submitted to the newsletter should be limited to ten double-spaced pages and must follow the APA submission guidelines.
  - i) All manuscripts should be prepared for anonymous review. Each submission shall be sent to two referees. Reports will be shared with authors. References should follow *The Chicago Manual Style*.
  - i) If the paper is accepted, each author is required to sign a copyright transfer form, available on the APA website, prior to publication.
- 2) **Book reviews and reviewers:** If you have published a book that you consider appropriate for review in the newsletter, please ask your publisher to send the editor(s) a copy of your book. Each call for papers may also include a list of books for possible review. To volunteer to review books (or some specific book), kindly send the editor(s) a CV and letter of interest mentioning your areas of research and teaching.
- 3) **Where to send papers/reviews:** Please send all articles, comments, reviews, suggestions, books, and other communications to the editor(s): Jay L. Garfield ([jay.garfield@yale-nus.edu.sg](mailto:jay.garfield@yale-nus.edu.sg)) and Prasanta Bandyopadhyay ([psb@montana.edu](mailto:psb@montana.edu)).

4) **Submission deadlines:** Submissions for spring issues are due by the preceding November 1, and submissions for fall issues are due by the preceding February 1.

5) **Guest editorship:** It is possible that one or more members of the Committee on Asian and Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies could act as guest editors for one of the issues of the newsletter depending on their expertise in the field. To produce a high-quality newsletter, one of the co-editors could even come from outside the members of the committee depending on his/her area of research interest.

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## ARTICLES

### *Chinese Philosophy and Wider Philosophical Discourses: Including Chinese Philosophy in General Audience Philosophy Journals*

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There are surely multiple metrics with which to estimate the state of the field in Chinese philosophy in the United States. In several respects, the field is healthier and more robust than ever. We enjoy multiple lively interpretive paradigms and stimulating debate about the inevitable tensions between them. A broader range of Chinese philosophy is receiving greater exposure and attention in English-language scholarship. New specialist and comparative journals have appeared on the scene, and some prominent general philosophical resources, such as the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and *Philosophy Compass*, regularly add entries in Chinese philosophy. Indeed, the field of Chinese philosophy may even enjoy advantages others areas of philosophy do not. For example, the field is rather catholic in membership, embracing scholars working in neighboring disciplines, such as sinology and religious studies, a breadth in participation that can helpfully keep the field on its methodological toes.

Despite all of these positive developments, it is important to remark that the several signs of health I limn are largely internal to the specialty. If we look instead to measure how well Chinese philosophy is integrated into the discipline at large, it is difficult not to be disappointed. This is evident if we but appeal to what has become a standard gauge for assessing the field: the number of faculty specializing in Chinese philosophy placed in Ph.D.-granting philosophy programs in the United States. There are at present no more Ph.D. programs including Chinese philosophy among their offerings than there were a decade ago.<sup>1</sup> This is a familiar lament. What I wish to canvass here, however, is a problem less often addressed but perhaps equally fundamental to winning greater inclusion for Chinese philosophy: publication rates for work in the field in *nonspecialist journals*. This problem is most readily introduced by way of a simple fictional comparison.

Jack and Mabel are both ethicists. Jack's work operates in an Aristotelian vein, drawing substantive inspiration from Aristotle and appropriating features of Aristotle's virtue ethics for contemporary theorizing. Mabel's work operates similarly, but in a Confucian vein, making use of early Confucian concepts or sensibilities for contemporary theorizing. Both are, in several respects, going about the business of *doing ethics* in similar fashion, drawing from ancient sources in ways pitched at enlivening contemporary ethical philosophy. But the audiences they can expect for their work are far from similar. When Jack finishes his most recent essay, he may entertain placing it in a number of outlets, ranging from specialist journals for ancient Greek philosophy to journals devoted to ethics or to philosophy, full stop. Mabel, in contrast, will face a constricted list of outlets for her work, for the overwhelming majority of work invoking Confucianism appears in outlets for Chinese or Asian philosophy specialists. This has a number of implications for the health of the field and for the profession at large, implications I will address below, but first, let me simply draw away from this fictional comparison and rehearse the data that informs it.

### GENERAL AUDIENCE JOURNAL DATA

In contemporary philosophy, there are many professional journals, and it can be tricky business to classify journals according to intended or likely audience. Still, the profession does have a number of journals that are either pitched as canvassing *philosophy*, absent any qualifiers about *what* philosophy may be included, or are pitched as canvassing some *general philosophical domain*, such as ethics or history. The contents of these journals are ostensibly of broad interest to philosophers generally or to philosophers working within the specified general domain. They presumably operate on an assumption of wide philosophical audience for what they offer. For the purposes of this analysis, I will refer to these journals as general audience journals. My interest is in assaying the extent to which work invoking or addressing Chinese philosophy and, more generally, Asian philosophy appears in such outlets.

In identifying relevant journals to include in my analysis, I simply sought to have a relatively wide cross-section of general audience journals and to review those journals most often lauded as especially influential.<sup>2</sup> From the outset, it was necessary to exclude some journals from my analysis. For example, while I wished to include several general audience journals devoted to the history of philosophy, the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, and the *British Journal of the History of Philosophy* state explicitly in their instructions to prospective authors that they canvass only history of Western philosophy.<sup>3</sup> The journals included in my analysis, then, are a sample of general audience journals that do not explicitly restrict their compass to Western philosophy. Most of these journals also include in their descriptions a commitment to publishing high-quality philosophical work, while noting an expansiveness regarding methodology, tradition, or schools of thought.<sup>4</sup>

In examining the general audience journals' contents, I employed the Philosophers Index (PI) database to retrieve

all of the data included below and restricted my searches of each journal to articles, excluding, e.g., book reviews or discussion pieces from the data. In searching the journals, I used four keywords—"Confucian," "Buddhist," "Daoist," and "Indian"—judging these to be the terms most inevitably and reliably used in much of the work on Asian philosophies.<sup>5</sup> These are not, to be sure, an exhaustive list of the possibilities, but they do represent the areas where scholarship is thickest and reflect terminology a generalist journal article would be most likely to employ. Where I sought more focused comparisons in the data, I employed "Confucian" and "Buddhist" as my comparison classes. The data I have collected is thus restricted in several ways, canvassing only what was included in PI at the time of my research, spring 2015, and employing search terms of convenient frequency and generality. Despite these limitations, I expect that the data yielded is meaningfully indicative of the state of play where inclusion of Asian philosophies in general audience journals is concerned. Let me now present the data itself.

In the first chart, Table 1, I present the most basic picture, listing each journal canvassed, along with the number of articles in Asian philosophy published and the total number of articles published in the period covered by PI for each journal.

As is evident from Table 1, it has been vanishingly rare that general audience journals publish work substantially engaging Asian philosophies. The obvious outlier, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, stands out because in the decades from the 1940s to the 1970s, it published essays in Indian philosophy comparably often. Since 1976, however, it has published only three, with the most recent appearing in 1993. More significantly, even if we do not expect radical shifts toward greater inclusion, a decade-by-decade counting of these journals' articles addressing Asian philosophies does not disclose even incremental change, a result more startling when weighed against the dramatic, exponential increases in work produced in Asian philosophies, represented on Table 2 using work in Buddhism and Confucianism as sample comparisons. Put simply, where scholarship on Confucianism and Buddhism has significantly and measurably increased, its representation in the general audience journals has remained flat.

This decade-by-decade accounting of work published on Confucianism and Buddhism, shown on Table 2, is at once heartening and dispiriting. It is, of course, a boon for the field where increases in available scholarship enlarge our understanding of these traditions and provide access to the philosophical insights they afford. What is dispiriting, however, is how these developments operate independently of wider philosophical conversations and audiences. Indeed, the swelling tide of available work produced in these areas rather directly owes to the establishment of specialist journals over the periods covered. To be sure, the appearance of journals such as *Philosophy East and West*, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, *Dao*, and others has been critically important for the health of the field: for a specialty to develop and thrive, specialists need outlets where they can effectively speak to each other and where a baseline acquaintance with the

**Table 1**

Journal	Date Range	Articles in Asian Philosophies	Total Articles Published in Period Referenced
<i>American Philosophical Quarterly</i>	1964–2013	4	1,547
<i>Australasian Journal of Philosophy</i>	1940–2014	3	1,971
<i>Ethical Theory and Moral Practice: An International Forum</i>	1998–2014	1	522
<i>Ethics</i>	1939–2014	2	2,132
<i>Journal of Ethics: An International Philosophical Review</i>	1997–2014	0	326
<i>Journal of Moral Philosophy</i>	2004–2014	1	261
<i>Journal of Social Philosophy</i>	1970–2013	1	1,134
<i>Journal of Value Inquiry</i>	1967–2014	1	1,393
<i>Mind: A Quarterly Review of Philosophy</i>	1940–2014	1	2,934
<i>Noûs</i>	1967–2013	0	1,325
<i>Philosophy and Phenomenological Research</i>	1940–2014	19	3,962
<i>Philosophers’ Imprint</i>	2001–2014	1	160
<i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i>	1971–2013	0	625
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>18,292</b>

subject matter can operate as a given. However, if this is *all* they have, their conversations risk becoming wholly private, uncoupled from wider philosophical discourses. And this is why it matters that the general audience journals appear to be in a state of stagnation, no different in their receptivity to work substantively engaging Asian philosophies than they were in the 1950s.

These journals, while *general*, are also *current* and thus are less likely to publish work derived from archaic and historical sources. I think this characterization does indeed fit well with how many general audience journals conceive their mission and purview. It would, however, be a mistake to conclude from this that the absence of work relying on and invoking Asian sources is *merely* a natural artifact of a

**Table 2**

Decade	Articles in Asian in General Journals Set	Articles on Confucianism in PI	Articles on Buddhism in PI
1940–1949	3	0	4
1950–1959	7	4	9
1960–1969	3	8	31
1970–1979	4	63	129
1980–1989	4	87	139
1990–1999	6	140	171
2000–2009	3	377	303
2010–2014	4	276	232

It may, of course, be objected that what I characterize as stagnation and as exclusion of Asian philosophies is neither. After all, one might think, much of the work produced in Asian philosophy looks to sources that are quite temporally distant and in many cases ancient. And, with the exception of journals devoted to history, general audience journals are pitched toward addressing live philosophical issues.

benign difference in mission. This is evident if we look at these journals’ practices where other archaic sources are concerned. As I do in my fictional case above, in Table 3, I use Aristotle as my comparison and, in the chart below, present data on how often work invoking and employing Aristotle appears relative to work invoking and employing Asian sources.

**Table 3**

Journal	Date Range	Articles in Asian Philosophies	Articles on or Using Aristotle
<i>American Philosophical Quarterly</i>	1964–2013	4	36
<i>Australasian Journal of Philosophy</i>	1940–2014	3	23
<i>Ethical Theory and Moral Practice: An International Forum</i>	1998–2014	1	20
<i>Ethics</i>	1939–2014	2	28
<i>Journal of Ethics: An International Philosophical Review</i>	1997–2014	0	10
<i>Journal of Moral Philosophy</i>	2004–2014	1	6
<i>Journal of Social Philosophy</i>	1970–2013	1	15
<i>Journal of Value Inquiry</i>	1967–2014	1	50
<i>Mind: A Quarterly Review of Philosophy</i>	1940–2014	1	64
<i>Noûs</i>	1967–2013	0	18
<i>Philosophy and Phenomenological Research</i>	1940–2014	19	59
<i>Philosophers' Imprint</i>	2001–2014	1	4
<i>Philosophy and Public Affairs</i>	1971–2013	0	2
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>335</b>

If a reluctance to publish work that is rooted in archaic or temporally distant sources adequately explained the absence of work concerning Asian philosophy from general audience journals, I would expect to see far less of Aristotle than is evident on Table 3. But, of course, Aristotle is not just an archaic historical curiosity; he can be *useful* for contemporary theorizing and this in part explains his presence in these journals. While I will not make the case here, suffice it to say that there is much in Asian philosophy scholarship that, like much in Aristotle scholarship, engages with subjects of some contemporary relevance, promises to extend the boundaries of longstanding philosophical debates and projects, or offers fruitfully novel philosophical problems or *foci*. That is, just as Aristotle can be useful for us moderns, so too can much of Asian philosophy. Because of this, the significance of the comparison contained on Table 3 bears emphasizing: There is, *by an order of magnitude*, more work available in general audience journals on but *one* ancient Greek philosopher than there is on Asian philosophy in its totality, a totality that represents *hundreds* of philosophers spanning *thousands* of years and *multiple* cultural sites and traditions of inquiry. Given the profession’s history, its long preoccupation with a traditional Western canon, it may be unsurprising that Aristotle outruns all of Asia, but it is nonetheless striking to see by how far and how persistently.

**EXPLANATORY FACTORS**

Recognition that Asian philosophy is underrepresented in general audience journals does not yet tell us *why* this would be so, and I think it a mistake to imagine that the

explanation would be simple. Rather than attempt any full explanation here—an explanation I judge well beyond my powers—let me but offer some observations, observations gleaned from conversations with colleagues in the specialty and correspondence with editors of several of the general audience journals above.

First, while acknowledging the limited explanatory power of anecdotal accounts, it is worth noting that scholars of Asian philosophy have no shortage of “what it’s like”-style stories about submitting their work to general audience journals. These stories include, for example, a journal known particularly for the almost comical speed with which it returns desk rejections, *sans* comment, for work addressing Asian philosophy. They include receiving rejections with referee reports that betray no acquaintance with source material employed in the submission. And referee reports faulting the author for not rehearsing the limited familiar bits of the target sources known to the referee no matter how irrelevant to the essay’s focus and argument, as if every essay on Buddhism *must* talk about emptiness, an insistence akin to saying that one cannot talk about Kant without discussing the transcendental unity of apperception. And, then, there are the referee reports that suggest that whatever claims the author wishes to make *could possibly* be made were the author but to adapt or innovate on work written by a familiar Western philosopher—call this the “couldn’t Aristotle be modified to make a similar point?” objection—as if laboriously adapting some *Western* philosopher (*any* Western philosopher!) is preferable to using an unfamiliar source in which an argument is already

naturally and abundantly seated. Anecdotal reports of experiences that fall into these types indicate that at least part of the underrepresentation of Asian philosophy in the general audience journals owes to multiple factors. Let me try to pull some of these apart.

In the case of wildly hasty desk rejections, it is clear that there is a rather straightforward disinclination to entertain work in Asian philosophy. To be sure, desk rejections are just part of the experience of seeking to publish work, but these may be worrisome when the journal editor making the desk rejection has no acquaintance with the source material or idiom of the work. Systematic desk rejection of work in areas unfamiliar to an editor is problematic insofar as the basis for the judgment cannot be sound. Where such quick and reflexive decisions are systematically made, it would be far preferable for the journal to advertise the limitations of its scope and interest—i.e., to acknowledge in its instructions for prospective authors that it is only interested in soliciting work employing Western philosophical sources. And indeed, I think it would be a benefit to the field if journals exclusively interested in Western-sourced philosophy were to publicly signal that.<sup>6</sup> My own sense, in conversation with editors and colleagues in the field, however, is that there are comparably few journals for which this is an issue. A far more common issue is that reflected in anecdotes about referee reports.

It would be both precipitous and unfair, I think, to fault the editors of the general audience journals for the poor showing of Asian philosophy in their journals. Editors are in many cases importantly committed to responsiveness to their referees, and this is generally as it should be. The trouble where Asian philosophy is concerned, I surmise, is that qualified and suitable referees are thin on the ground. For a general audience journal handling a submission in Asian philosophy faces a double challenge: 1) evaluating the submission in terms of its fidelity and adequacy in its handling of its source material, a task that requires another specialist to evaluate, and 2) evaluating the submission in terms of its availability and suitability as a *general*—that is, accessible and relevant—article for the journal's typical readership. I think the anecdotes about referee reports circulating among specialists are an indication of just how difficult meeting this challenge can be. Editors may have only the most limited familiarity with area-specialists. There are, after all, very few of us in the discipline! And discerning which nonspecialist referees will be both in principle receptive to work in Asian philosophy and in practice able to construct a useful report is, given how infrequently this challenge is likely to arise, difficult.

One factor that may bear on securing better outcomes for work in Asian philosophy—better outcomes which include both greater inclusion and improved referee practices even where these yield rejections—is having a specialist in the field on a journal's editorial board. While the evidence of this having an improved effect is limited, there is some evidence that this helps. John Hacker-Wright, editor of the *Journal of Value Inquiry*, has recently added a specialist in Chinese philosophy, Stephen Angle, to the journal's editorial board. Significantly, while the journal has not subsequently accepted all submissions in Asian

philosophy, it has measurably increased its inclusion of work in the field. From 1967 to 2014, the journal published but one article in Asian philosophy. In 2015, it published seven. Another journal, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, under the editorship of John Heatherington, has added Karyn Lai, also a Chinese philosophy specialist, to its editorial board.<sup>7</sup> These are quite hopeful signs indicating both a commitment to increasing inclusion of Asian philosophy in the journals and recognition that effectively achieving this requires partnership between editors and specialists. So, too, having specialists in Asian philosophy on editorial boards may importantly signal the journal's willingness to receive submissions in Asian philosophy, a willingness I think few Asian philosophy specialists will take for granted absent such signals and given the sorts of unpleasant experiences some have had. This, of course, raises a factor not yet addressed in any of the above: the paucity of submissions in Asian philosophy general audience journals may receive.

In corresponding with several of the editors of the journals included in my study here, it is clear that most of these journals receive submissions in Asian philosophy comparably rarely, a situation many editors report finding regrettable. Low submission rates are, however, in many respects unsurprising given that the percentage of philosophers both trained in Asian philosophy and likely to produce general audience research is small. But here, too, it would be hasty to think that this is the only or principal problem. After all, work in Asian philosophy *has* dramatically increased in recent decades and yet there is *no* corresponding sign of this in the general journals. Insofar as these journals are not seeing an increase in submission rates of work in Asian philosophy, this may owe to the journals' track records. That is, these journals' historically low publication rates for work in Asian philosophy will have considerable influence on the likelihood of their receiving submissions in the area. Most basically, philosophers of all stripes will incline toward submitting their work in the journals they most frequently use in performing their research. Since the general audience journals rarely publish in Asian philosophy, specialists are simply unlikely to identify their work as viable for these outlets. More potently, few philosophers will submit their work to journals that rarely or never publish "work like mine" or, indeed, are perceived to exhibit a bias against "work like mine." There is, in other words, a vicious cycle we cannot discount: the absence of Asian philosophy from a journal's prior issues will depress submissions going forward, producing yet more issues in which the work is absent. And the more persistent the absence, the more likely it will be that prospective authors will infer not just that the journal will be uninterested in their work, but that it will be biased against it.<sup>8</sup> To be clear, such inferences may not, in any particular case, be well-founded, but given that such biases do persist in the discipline at large and have influenced its history, this must be a worry. In this regard, it is useful to look beyond the general audience journals canvassed above and examine general audience journals with distinctly better track records.

Both *Hypatia* and the *Journal of Religious Ethics* are notable for their success in incorporating Asian philosophy into

Table 4

Decade	Articles in Asian philosophy in <i>Hypatia</i>	Articles in Asian philosophy in <i>Journal of Religious Ethics</i>	Articles on Confucianism in PI	Articles on Buddhism in PI
1970–1979	n/a	1 <sup>9</sup>	63	29
1980–1989	0 <sup>10</sup>	2	87	139
1990–1999	2	2	140	171
2000–2009	6	6	377	303
2010–2014	2	5	276	232

their offerings. Like several of the journals referenced above, these are journals that, while focused on a general domain of research (feminist philosophy and religious ethics, respectively), aim to appeal to a broad philosophical audience within those domains.

While neither *Hypatia* nor *Journal of Religious Ethics* have published large numbers of articles in Asian philosophy, the numbers above are much more in keeping with what we would, or perhaps should, expect of general audience journals.<sup>11</sup> Both publish *some* work in the area with *some* reliability. More significantly, both show an uptick in rates of publication in Asian philosophy that reflects the uptick in scholarly production in the area. In the last full decade for which data is available (2000–2009), these *two* journals published *four times* as many articles in Asian philosophy as the *fourteen* journals I canvass above. They are, in short, exemplars of how general audience journals can incorporate Asian philosophy into content with broad appeal in a philosophical domain of inquiry. But, at least in the case of *Hypatia*, they have not achieved this absent effort.<sup>12</sup>

Sally Scholz, editor of *Hypatia*, notes that the journal has made sophisticated and concerted outreach efforts in order to attract submissions in Asian philosophy. In addition to both recruiting scholars of Asian philosophy for *Hypatia*'s editorial board and ensuring that submissions employing Asian source material are delivered to suitable referees, *Hypatia* has actively promoted the journal to wider readership. This has entailed, for example, encouraging the journal's publisher to promote the journal abroad, extending readership and thereby extending the pool from which submissions may come. So, too, the journal has seized opportunities to make direct contact with relevant scholars. For example, Scholz reports that when one of her graduate students attended a conference in Taiwan, she "sent along a number of *Hypatia* postcards and all active calls for papers that [the journal] had," with the result that several scholars reached in this way later contacted the journal to inquire about submitting work. So, too, Scholz observes that even the process of seeking and recruiting specialist referees can send an important message: scholars whose expertise is recognized in the invitation to referee submissions then see the journal as a potentially viable outlet for their own work. In short, referee processes that are more scholarly sound can do double duty as recruiting for additional

submissions. I suspect that many of the journals with lower publication rates of work in Asian philosophies may, given their histories, need to do similar outreach if they wish to emulate the success of journals such as *Hypatia*.

**COSTS**

My analysis of general audience journals' publishing patterns is underwritten, of course, by the conviction that the status quo in the profession is undesirable. That this would be so for scholars of Asian philosophy is, I trust, obvious, but perhaps it is useful to rehearse the costs inflicted on the wider profession by the ongoing exclusion of Asian philosophy from its wider conversations.

The *de facto* exclusion of Asian philosophies from many of the general audience journals has a number of consequences. Insofar as journals symbolically and materially measure what the profession counts as important, the absence of Asian philosophies from the profession's high readership general audience journals implicitly communicates something. At best, we risk suggesting that the philosophies of Asia are simply unimportant, uninteresting, or unconvincing relative to what does appear in the journals—relative, that is, to philosophy constructed within a more limited, distinctively Western canon. At worst, we risk suggesting that philosophy simply does not include Asian traditions, that what philosophy is operates on criteria Asian philosophies simply fail to meet. Most egregiously, any suggestions of this sort—that Asian philosophies are unimportant or that they are simply not philosophy proper—issue from ignorance: because Asian philosophies remain woefully underexposed in the discipline at large, the discipline has no sound basis on which to draw *any* conclusions regarding what they may offer. The concern here, then, is that the *de facto* exclusion of work that substantively engages Asian philosophies does not simply keep work in these areas marginalized, but keeps philosophy itself constricted, both in its membership and in its intellectual scope. This is best made evident, I think, by revisiting my fictive comparison of the ethicists, Jack and Mabel.

Where an ethicist like Jack, working in Aristotelian-inspired ethics, has a variety of outlets in which to place his work, Mabel, working in Confucian-inspired ethics, does not. Embedded in this difference are, of course, a host of consequences attaching to the personal career



prospects of Jack and Mabel. We inhabit a world in which myriad professional goods—goods ranging from winning jobs to achieving tenure and promotion, as well as other markers of status, such as acquiring research funding or winning awards—are significantly influenced by one’s success in securing publications in the best outlets possible. Insofar as the profession counts publishing in the most “prominent” or “top” general journals as one of the most direct pathways to “prominent” or “top” status for individual philosophers,<sup>13</sup> we should not expect anyone working significantly with Asian philosophical sources to succeed in this way. These are, I think, issues that ought to concern us, not least because while this remains the case, the discipline effectively creates significant professional disincentives for newer, younger philosophers to take up any active interest in Asian philosophy. Moreover, those whose interests in Asian philosophy are unshakeable may, and certainly sometimes do, simply go elsewhere—to area studies programs, to religious studies. Apart from issues regarding membership and success in the profession, however, is trouble I think ought concern us even more: the ways in which professional practices influence the intellectual contours of the discipline itself.

I noted above that what appears in the general journals implicitly communicates what the profession finds important, interesting, or compelling. It is likewise useful to emphasize the ways general audience journals can implicitly define domains of inquiry, the ways, for example, that general audience ethics journals implicitly define for us what *ethics itself is*. Here, too, Jack and Mabel are useful explanatory devices. It seems to me that the way the profession is currently structured, we do not and perhaps cannot treat Jack and Mabel as close intellectual kin. However near they may be in practice, method, and the antiquity of their sources—that is, however much they in fact *mirror* one another in all but their sources of inspiration—they are not both, in our current professional practices, treated as *ethicists*. The likelihood that Jack can pass muster as fulfilling *what we mean* when we say “ethicist” is high; Mabel likely cannot so pass.<sup>14</sup> And this difference in how we read what Jack and Mabel are doing owes in no small measure to whom they can expect as audience for their work. Where they publish, where they can publish, inflects how we define what they are doing: Ethicists publish in ethics journals. To be an ethicist is to have one’s work received by and available to the wider community of ethicists, to be communicating with ethicists about ethics. Ethicists like Mabel, who are largely absent from these conversations, will be received not as *doing ethics*, but as specializing in Chinese, Asian, or, most generally, non-Western philosophy. And this entails that ethics itself will be intellectually constricted.

Conversations about “ethics” in the profession transpire largely without input from scholars like Mabel—that is, without challenge or comment derived from sources beyond the West—and, while I will not make this argument here, *ethics* would be *different* were this not the case. *How* it would be different is a matter of speculation, but, at the very least, philosophy would be more expansive, more expansive in its handling of long-standing philosophical problems, to be sure, but also more sophisticated in

estimations of what counts as a philosophical problem. For where we are unacquainted with a wider variety of philosophical approaches, approaches emerging from cultural contexts unlike our own, we may be seduced into facile ignorance regarding the profound influence of our own historical situation in producing our “problems.” The contingent cultural influences on what we count as a philosophical problem will be most obvious where we see familiar problems handled differently than we expect. Yet it may also be evident where other traditions simply do not register our problems as problems or as problems as significant as we are wont to believe. Concerns about how we conceive philosophical problems are ultimately concerns about the philosophical imagination. Where we take seriously the likelihood that our imaginations build what they do based on inherited architectural models and most often use the materials we find nearest to hand, looking at philosophical imaginings constructed elsewhere promises to broaden our possibilities.

There may, of course, still be philosophers who would insist upon philosophy’s standing free of culture or contingent history, and who would thereby deny that ignorance of vast reaches of philosophical tradition costs us something. I cannot reply at length to such objections here. Nonetheless, I think we ought to be suspicious when such claims are made absent *investigation* into what difference a broader compass in sources would make. Indeed, greater inclusion of Asian philosophy would, I venture, provide a salutary check on disciplinary self-deception regarding the expansiveness and comprehensiveness of what we currently identify as philosophy. To borrow from *Hamlet*, too much of the discipline appears content to live bounded in a nutshell while counting itself a king of infinite space, behaving as if the problems, priorities, and approaches identified in a Western idiom represent *human* problems, priorities, and approaches, full stop. Were we to better look beyond our contingent boundaries, we may come usefully to *feel* the smallness of our philosophical territories.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the many journal editors who corresponded with me about their experiences and practices, especially Sally Scholz, John Hacker-Wright, Stephen Hetherington, and Angelo Corlett, who provided quite detailed responses and feedback.

#### NOTES

1. For the most recent study of this issue, see Brian Bruya, “The Tacit Rejection of Multiculturalism in American Philosophy Ph.D. Programs: The Case of Chinese Philosophy,” *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 14 (2015): 369–89.
2. I should also add that since I expected to find higher representation of Asian philosophy in ethics journals, I included more of these.
3. Of these, the *British Journal of the History of Philosophy* does state that while it focuses on Western philosophy, “articles that explore connections to other traditions are also encouraged,” a statement I take to signal receptivity to work addressing non-Western influences as these may feature in some historical sources in Western philosophy. See <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?show=aimsScope&journalCode=rbjh20#.VPS9kYvT5UQ>
4. Only one of these journals, the *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, explicitly cites a willingness to entertain non-Western philosophy, although, as the data below make clear, this does not appear to have yielded higher publication rates of work in this area. Efforts

to contact the editor of this journal to inquire about whether it enjoys higher rates of submission were unsuccessful.

5. In using the term "Indian," I also excluded from my count articles archaically employing this term to refer to indigenous peoples of the Americas.
6. Indeed, I think it would be beneficial to the field if such journals were to more accurately reflect their scope in their titles, such that, e.g., journals devoted exclusively to ethics derived from Western sources flag this with titles announcing their own geo-cultural limitations.
7. While the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* has not seen the dramatic increase evident in the *Journal of Value Inquiry*, it has published one additional article in Chinese philosophy since the data given above was collected.
8. It is perhaps likewise important to note that junior scholars who face significant time pressures in seeing their work into print will, given present conditions, see submission to general audience journals as a rather high-risk strategy—i.e., given historically low publication rates for work sourced in Asian philosophy in general journals, the safer course for junior scholars is submission to specialist outlets where they can emphatically know their work will, in principle, be welcomed. While I cannot address this at length here, insofar as Asian specialists themselves should be more active in submitting work to general audience journals, it seems to me that it is the more senior, tenured members of the field who should lead this charge.
9. *Journal of Religious Ethics* was founded in 1973.
10. *Hypatia* was founded in 1983.
11. To be clear, my expectation is not that journals should radically shift their *foci*, but that insofar as the discipline is to become more inclusive, signs of that inclusivity should (as I think they do in *Hypatia* and *Journal of Religious Ethics*) appear in general audience journals.
12. Efforts to contact the editors of the *Journal of Religious Ethics* were unsuccessful so I cannot speak to any special efforts or procedures this journal may employ.
13. I here employ but do not endorse the language most commonly deployed to describe high-readership journals. Such descriptions are insidious and pernicious, in my opinion, not least because they fail to take account of how hidebound and status quo preserving many of our disciplinary practices regarding matters such as informal journal rankings are—e.g., identifying journal status by using unsystematic popular-opinion-style surveys will but risk mirroring and reinforcing the current skew in professional membership, with those areas currently most "popular" and populated swamping areas currently (and perhaps unjustly) underrepresented.
14. As proof of this, one may want simply to consider the last time one's department sought to hire an ethicist and looked earnestly and closely at candidates drawing substantive inspiration and sourcing for their work in Asian philosophy.

bear more or less prestige, and it is predictable that departments with Ph.D. programs and their deans are swayed by hardheaded pragmatic considerations to put hiring in Chinese philosophy pretty far down the list. A recent *Chronicle* article on the aversion to risk-taking points out the contribution to a similar trend in the sciences by the pressure on researchers to bring in grant money to their universities.<sup>2</sup> One of the ways this pressure is mediated is through review of grant proposals by peers, and Bruya's point about the way that the *Philosophical Gourmet's* graduate programs in philosophy are ranked by reputation as judged by selected raters seems to connect with this point about the way that peer-distributed rewards can make for less risk-taking in the academy.

I know of no other way to change this but the slow, hard way of getting Chinese philosophy greater visibility and "cred" in the philosophical community. Olberding raises a very important issue about the work that needs to be done in relation to general audience philosophy journals. Bruya points out that analytic philosophy departments are dominant in the American community. The way that analytic philosophy is done can often make it harder for its practitioners to see great value in Chinese philosophy, given that many of its great texts do not engage in head-on argument and criticism of opposing views, but rather are primarily focused on delineating ways of understanding and living in the world that often require indirect and metaphorical articulation. In addition, what is articulated is hard-won experience that insightful and deeply reflective people have in the course of trying to do their best in life.

This is not to say that analytic philosophers cannot make sense of the insights on Chinese philosophy, even if they receive little encouragement from their peers in the larger philosophical community. Indeed, I came to believe that an analytic approach can greatly contribute to a clear and rigorous understanding and appreciation of Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist texts, e.g., through discussing the value of Mencius's and Xunzi's metaphors about the basis of morality in human nature, or the opportunity that studying the Confucian-Mohist debate provides some new perspectives on the controversy over impartial moralities such as utilitarianism.

Though trained in hard-core analytic philosophy, I came to appreciate the ways that Chinese philosophy afforded me the opportunity to reconnect in new ways with the original motivation I had for getting into philosophy in the first place: the desire to grapple with and make sense of life experiences that shape who I am. Chinese philosophy is highly unusual for the degree to which it holds itself accountable to such life experience.<sup>3</sup> This is not to underestimate the difficulty of trying to present a clear and rigorous understanding of matters that are often indirectly and metaphorically articulated, sometimes more shown than directed described, and even when described the content may be intended to be addressed to the particular person who is the audience depicted in the text and not to the general reader (this often seems true of the *Analects*, for example), but I have come to believe that analytic philosophy can take on greater value when it is challenged with saying something illuminating about such matters and

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## Some Reflections on the Status of Chinese Philosophy in U.S. Graduate Programs

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Brian Bruya and Amy Olberding have recently given perceptive analyses of why Chinese philosophy is underrepresented in philosophy Ph.D. programs and in general audience philosophy journals.<sup>1</sup> It is my experience that philosophy simply is a very conservative discipline that is slower to change than almost all other academic fields. Add to this the depressed economic situation of American higher education, especially in the humanities, and the current patterns of philosophical subfields that

is not merely utilized to respond to the latest controversy that only professional philosophers can understand or take an interest in.

Moreover, because the Confucians in particular were keenly interested in understanding and enacting methods of moral self-cultivation, their texts are full of psychological insight that are embedded in larger theoretical themes such as the importance of one's embodiment, of culture, and of relationships in one's development, which is why one significant trend in the interaction between analytic and Chinese philosophy lies in the field of moral psychology and the empirically informed work of philosophers such as Erin Cline, Owen Flanagan, Hagop Sarkissian, and Ted Slingerland.<sup>4</sup>

Here are just a couple of examples of the continuing accountability of work done in Chinese philosophy to compelling life experience. Amy Olberding's work on the role of exemplars in the *Analects*, such as Confucius himself and several of his students, makes a strong connection with the way many laypeople think about the ethical life and try to learn from others, not only positively, but by way of negative examples such as that of Zigong, a man of good intention who nevertheless fails to make moral progress because he is afraid to show his weaknesses, and who tries to hide them through technically perfect ritual performances devoid of empathy and feeling.<sup>5</sup> When I read this in Olberding, I think that I know this kind of failure (though not so much with reference to ritual performance) in myself and in others. When Kwong-loi Shun writes of Zhu Xi's analysis of the appropriate measure of anger in response to having been slandered or otherwise done an injustice, and that measure being the same emotional response one would have if the victim had been someone unrelated to oneself, he brings to my mind actual people who have displayed such a rare and admirable lack of undue concern for the self.<sup>6</sup>

I want to end on some notes of hope. I have recently begun serving a term on the APA Board of Officers, and what immediately struck me was the fact that more than half the members were women. What also struck me was how much energy and effort APA members have put into projects of increasing diversity in our profession. Another positive note is that Rutgers, primarily through the efforts of Ruth Chang and Tao Jiang, has in recent years staged conferences in Chinese philosophy, and a good number of Rutgers philosophy department members (none of whom are in Chinese philosophy) have contributed serious and thoughtful commentaries on the papers in Chinese philosophy. Finally, it seems to me that the pool of applicants to competitive Ph.D. graduate programs is gradually increasing the proportion of students (still admittedly very small) who have the analytic skills necessary to qualify for entrance and who have interest in Chinese philosophy either as a possible specialty or a competence. As indicated earlier, it may be necessary for many more of such notes to be struck, because the kind of diversity that involves broadening conceptions of what philosophy is and should be may be the most difficult to promote. Increasing diversity in terms of gender, race, and sexual orientation may contribute to some of broadening in

content and approach, but clearly it needs to be pursued as an end in itself as well. I just want to point out how worthwhile that difficult project is.

#### NOTES

1. Brian Bruya, "The Tacit Rejection of Multiculturalism in American Philosophy Ph.D. Programs: The Case of Chinese Philosophy," *Dao* 14 (2015): 369–89; and Amy Olberding in this newsletter.
2. Paul Voosen, "For Researchers, Risk is a Vanishing Luxury," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 3, 2015, online at <http://chronicle.com/article/For-Researchers-Risk-Is-a/234437>.
3. See Xinyan Jiang, "The Study of Chinese Philosophy in the English Speaking World," *Philosophy Compass* 6, no. 3 (2011): 168–79.
4. For examples of their empirically oriented work, see Erin M. Cline, *Families of Virtue: Confucian and Western Views on Childhood Development* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Owen Flanagan, *Moral Sprouts and Natural Teleologies: 21st Century Moral Psychology Meets Classical Chinese Philosophy (Aquinas Lecture)* (Milwaukee, WI: 2014); Hagop Sarkissian, "Minor Tweaks, Major Payoffs: The Problems and Promise of Situationism in Moral Philosophy," *Philosopher's Imprint* 10, no. 9 (2010): 1–15; and Edward Slingerland, "The Situationist Critique and Early Confucian Ethics," *Ethics* 121, no. 2 (2011): 390–419.
5. Amy Olberding, *Moral Exemplars in the Analects: The Good Person Is That* (New York: Routledge, 2012).
6. Kwong-loi Shun, "On Anger—An Essay in Confucian Moral Psychology." In *Rethinking Zhu Xi: Emerging Patterns within the Supreme Polarity*, ed. David Jones and He Jinli (State University of New York Press, 2015).

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## What's Missing in Philosophy Departments? Specialists in Chinese Philosophy

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This past fall, Eric Schwitzgebel published an op-ed piece in the *L.A. Times* entitled "What's missing in college philosophy classes? Chinese philosophers." Anyone who is interested in Chinese philosophy should read it. Schwitzgebel offers one of the most highly persuasive and concise arguments for the inclusion of Chinese philosophy in the discipline of philosophy that I have seen. I want to highlight one important feature of his argument that might easily be neglected by some philosophers. "In the United States," he points out, "there are about 100 doctorate-granting programs in philosophy. By my count, only seven have a permanent member of the philosophy faculty who specializes in Chinese philosophy." It is worth attending very carefully to what he says here, for one of the things Schwitzgebel highlights is the importance of having *specialists* in Chinese philosophy as permanent members of the faculty.

I highlight this issue because in addition to the underrepresentation of Chinese philosophy in the philosophy curriculum and the difficulty of pursuing graduate study in the field, it is also quite common in the United States for nonspecialists to teach a token course in Chinese philosophy (or Asian philosophy) in philosophy departments. This practice is an often-overlooked

obstacle to the greater inclusion of Chinese philosophy in the discipline because it can prevent departments from ever hiring a specialist. In these cases, departments simply do not feel a need to request a line in Chinese philosophy, because they already have someone who can teach a course in this area for them. Interestingly, these departments appear relatively unconcerned about the *quality* of a course in Chinese philosophy that is taught by someone without graduate-level training in this area. This is what I want to focus on, for it reveals some mistaken and troubling views about Chinese philosophy that are often held by philosophers. Chief among these is the view that no formal training is needed to teach Chinese philosophy. The assumption seems to be that Chinese philosophy is easier to teach than other areas of philosophy, and that it is something that one can “pick up” more easily than other areas. Among other things, there is a lack of awareness of the tremendously large number of texts and philosophers that are a part of the Chinese tradition, as well as their diversity and sophistication. Most philosophers are also unaware that many of these texts (including the rich and extensive commentarial tradition on well-known works) are not available in translation, which makes specialized language training important. Further, most philosophers do not realize that most of these texts are not written in Modern but Classical Chinese—a literary language that requires formal training and cannot simply be “picked up” by those who are proficient or even fluent in Modern Chinese, any more than one who is proficient in Spanish could “pick up” Latin enough to do serious scholarly work in it.

Setting aside the issue of adequate training in the classical language, some philosophy departments might assume that someone gained a background in Chinese philosophy through a high school or undergraduate college course, and that this is adequate preparation for teaching a course in Chinese philosophy. However, this is not something that we do with other areas of philosophy. For instance, we typically do not assume that philosophers who attended Catholic high schools or Catholic universities as undergraduates are well prepared to teach courses on Aquinas. (And some of us who teach at Catholic universities can confirm that most of our students would not be adequately prepared to teach a college course on Aquinas based on their undergraduate education!)

Chinese philosophy requires just as much training as other areas of philosophy, and it does our students just as much of an injustice to have someone who is not formally trained in Chinese philosophy teach them the subject as it does to have someone without any formal training in Greek philosophy or Kant teach them Greek philosophy or Kant. In truth, a good case can be made that it is worse: while virtually anyone who receives a Ph.D. in philosophy studies Greek philosophy and Kant at both the undergraduate and graduate levels—even if they do not specialize in them—most graduate students in philosophy never take a single course on Chinese philosophy. They are far less prepared to teach Chinese philosophy than they would be to teach Greek philosophy or Kant. Yet the practice of having nonspecialists teach Chinese philosophy persists.

There is no question that it is good to see philosophers trained in other areas become interested in Chinese philosophy, and this is something we should encourage. We should also encourage them to pursue further training if they are interested in working and teaching in this area. (Some philosophers have done this by participating in NEH summer institutes or by serving as visiting fellows at the Center for East Asian and Comparative Philosophy in Hong Kong.) But the problem I describe tends to be overlooked, because it is easy to mistake the practice of having interested nonspecialists teach courses on Chinese philosophy for an encouraging sign of interest in Chinese philosophy. Some specialists in Chinese philosophy believe that if departments have someone teach a course in this area—anyone, really—then it will lead to greater interest and eventually they will decide to hire a specialist. But I worry that this is not what usually happens, especially because, as I have argued, the practice of having anyone with an interest in Chinese philosophy teach specialized courses on it reveals a failure to take Chinese philosophy seriously. This suggests that departments who have nonspecialists teaching Chinese philosophy courses will actually be less likely to hire a specialist.

I think most philosophers who hold the views I describe above hold them uncritically and have not reflected on their assumptions. I also think they are well-intentioned. Most philosophers recognize the value of incorporating diverse cultural perspectives in the curriculum; nevertheless, philosophy remains the most Eurocentric discipline in the humanities. (Note that it would be unthinkable for departments of history, religion, or art history to have specialists only in European and Anglo-American history, religion, or art.) It is not a mark of progress for philosophy departments to have nonspecialists teach courses on Chinese philosophy and other areas of non-Western philosophy without making serious attempts to hire specialists in these areas as regular members of the faculty. Instead, I worry that, at least in many cases, it reveals their lack of appreciation for Chinese philosophy as a rich and valuable field in its own right.

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## *May You Live in Interesting Times: The State of the Field of Chinese Philosophy*

Alexus McLeod

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“There is a Chinese curse which says ‘May he live in interesting times.’ Like it or not, we live in interesting times. They are times of danger and uncertainty; but they are also the most creative of any time in the history of mankind.”

– Robert F. Kennedy, Day of Affirmation Address, South Africa, 1966

“May you live in interesting times.” While this apocryphal “Chinese curse” was popularized by Robert F. Kennedy, it was apparently commonly quoted in the diplomatic corps

during the early twentieth century (and still floats around even today, despite its inauthenticity). Perhaps it is a strange way to begin an article looking at the state of the field in Chinese philosophy, but both this quote and RFK's statement about it are oddly applicable to our own time, in a number of ways. First, these are indeed times of crisis and danger in a number of ways for Chinese philosophy, as they are for philosophy, the humanities, and academia more generally. Second, these are times of great possibility and creativity, unlike anything we have seen in the history of scholarship on Chinese philosophy in the West, possible in part *because* of this crisis. Finally, there is widespread misunderstanding of the Chinese philosophical tradition and its place in the wider global intellectual tradition—a fitting analogue to a supposed Chinese quote for which no textual source has ever been found. RFK's quote above is applicable to us, and the overall position I hope to convince you of in this paper is that while things are bleak indeed, we also have an opportunity, one that we may never have again if the field progresses in a certain way, to not only produce the most creative and innovative work that has ever been done in the Western study of Chinese philosophy, but also to perhaps play an instrumental role in the transformation of the field of philosophy in general.

We *do* indeed live in interesting times, for better or worse. The seemingly irresolvable mire in which the field has found itself for the past decade or more is still with us, despite heroic attempts to change our situation. Much like the "interesting times" phrase persists, and one still hears it offered as an authentic ancient Chinese quote, despite the fact that we have known for many years that it is spurious.

I will begin with the bad news. Not because this is any more plentiful or important than the good news, but because the dramatic effect is always better ("yes, things are terrible but..."), and because usually the negative in such situations is foremost in our minds. So let's talk about it.

### THE BAD NEWS

Brian Bruya, in a recent article on representation of Chinese philosophy at Ph.D.-granting philosophy departments in the United States,<sup>1</sup> discusses the dismal situation concerning the dearth of Ph.D.-granting philosophy departments with scholars capable of directing dissertations in Chinese philosophy. The situation in the United States in this regard is worse than it was even ten years ago (although there are *more* options today for students willing to pursue graduate work in Asia—but more on this below). This cannot be completely attributed to a lack of concern on the part of Ph.D.-granting departments alone, however. Bruya catches on to something important when he argues that despite claims of many programs that they would like to hire scholars in Chinese or other non-Western philosophy, numerous constraints make it impossible to do so. Bruya suggests what some of these constraints (real or imagined) might be. I wonder, however, if the interest in non-Western philosophy expressed by departments is indeed authentic, then why haven't things changed in terms of the employment of scholars of Chinese philosophy in Ph.D.-granting departments?

I think much of the problem has to do with our view of what philosophy is, of what is "core" and what is "peripheral"

to the field. Positive views about the usefulness of non-Western philosophy can be consistent with a particular kind of Western-based conception of what philosophy fundamentally is. Some philosophers certainly hold that while non-Western philosophy can be useful, its primary value is to serve as a comparative foil to Western philosophy. That is, the non-West is merely a tool we can use to better understand the West.<sup>2</sup> Such views, while certainly better than the more common earlier views that rejected Chinese philosophy as philosophy, still do not recognize Chinese or other non-Western philosophies as equal partners, or as important in their own right, rather than merely as tools to help us better understand the West. Until more philosophers begin to see non-Western philosophy as a legitimate focus of philosophical attention in its own right and part of the "core" of the field, we will continue to have the problems Bruya discusses concerning Ph.D.-granting departments. In some ways, it's really just as simple as that. One will never see equal or just representation of something that has been relegated to the status of supporting role. To treat something as a mere means is to deny its intrinsic value.

The idea in some departments seems to be that while non-Western philosophy may be interesting and perhaps even important, it is not important *enough* to use valuable tenure lines to bring in specialists, especially when there are always pressing needs viewed as more essential to a philosophy department, such as having a specialist in some aspect of the philosophical thought of Immanuel Kant. This is not meant to be a jab at Kant scholars, but rather to show the severity of the problem as it still exists. When the thought of a single individual is considered more essential than the philosophical thought of the entirety of the world outside of Europe for all of human history, you've got a problem. Thus, while we may think non-Western philosophy is important, if we continue to see it as less important than Kant or Descartes or Plato, we are going to continue to sideline it in our departments of philosophy. Because why bring on a specialist in Chinese or Indian philosophy when you still don't have a specialist on Kant? Especially when financial resources for departments are so limited (and things aren't getting any better), and growth is difficult and something that must often be fought for with administrations. You get a single token, with a hundred possible things to buy—how are you going to use it?<sup>3</sup>

And this raises another difficult issue concerning the position of our field within philosophy. While many of us have specializations within Chinese philosophy, particular texts, thinkers, or schools, scholars in non-Western philosophy are generally expected to have a greater breadth than "mainstream" philosophers. The reason for this is that we are called on to provide expertise about "everything else"—the entirety of philosophical thought outside of Europe and Euro-America, throughout the history of time. While a Kant scholar may be expected to have the breadth to cover modern philosophy within a department, this is within the bounds of reason. Any Kant scholar will need to have a fairly decent grasp of modern European philosophy anyway. And this is a fairly narrow slice of global philosophical thought. It is another thing altogether to be expected to have the breadth to cover "The History

of Philosophy of Every Single Place in the World Through the Entirety of Human History Except Europe and Euro-America.” If some of us heroically try to attain this breadth, it is in part out of a sense of obligation to represent the rest of the world—to demonstrate the value and interest of non-Western philosophy.

I have taught at a number of universities that have courses such as “World Philosophy” or “non-Western philosophy,” which are meant to introduce students to everything outside of the standard Euro-and-Euro-American-centric philosophy curriculum. It just so happens that this kind of “world philosophy” represents the vast majority of philosophy done anywhere in the world through the entirety of human history. Even the way that we specify the specializations sought when we hire for new positions in philosophy departments entails this strange view that one can be a specialist in “Non-Western philosophy.” Departments hire in “Asian philosophy,” “non-Western philosophy,” and “Global philosophy” as often (or perhaps more often) than they hire in Chinese or Indian philosophy, specifically. And even the name “Chinese philosophy” is ridiculously broad. It is categorically similar to the name “European philosophy.” Yet imagine a department making a hire in “European philosophy” with the intention of bringing on someone to cover the entirety of European thought. While generally, a department will expect any philosopher to be able to handle overviews of all areas of philosophy for introductory or even mid-level courses, hardly anyone would think that hiring an individual in “European philosophy” would be sufficient to cover all important aspects of the Western tradition. A department with numerous non-Western specialists and a single specialist in “Western philosophy” (whose primary research is on, say, Kant) expected to cover everything Western would be seen as a ridiculous situation by most. Yet on balance, this is a *less* ridiculous situation than the one that obtains in most of our institutions, in which a single specialist is seen as sufficient to cover the vast majority of world philosophical thought.

But first things first—we should focus on getting more philosophy departments in the United States (especially Ph.D.-granting departments) to include even *one* specialist in things non-Western before we move to the more reasonable position that we should not expect single individuals to be sufficient to cover all of non-Western philosophy. Baby steps. Perhaps we can build on the recognition many philosophers have that non-Western philosophy should be represented in some sense in their departments. The next steps would be to cultivate a broader conception of what philosophy can be that is consistent with accepting philosophical approaches different from those dominant in the “mainstream.” Philosophers in analytic-leaning departments, for example, may have to judge candidates in Chinese philosophy on different grounds than they do other mainstream analytic philosophers. This itself leads to an additional problem, however. If the philosophical approaches of analytic philosophers and those working in Chinese philosophy are so different, how can even a well-intentioned analytic philosopher appraise the work of a candidate in Chinese philosophy? While I, as a philosopher, certainly appreciate the value of anthropology, for example (I even engage

with anthropologists in some of my work), I am in no way qualified to judge the quality of an anthropologist and would have a very difficult time as the member of a hiring committee tasked with hiring someone in anthropology. While I recognize good and interesting work in anthropology, I simply don’t have the expertise to finely distinguish between excellent anthropologists and less-excellent ones in the way that would be necessary for one serving on a hiring committee.

I suspect (and have circumstantial evidence through numerous conversations through the years) that this is part of the issue with hiring in Chinese philosophy (and other non-Western traditions) in analytic-leaning departments. Many philosophers find themselves unable to determine the quality of their candidates or, applying the standards of their own brand of philosophy, find the candidates lacking. There is nothing in itself shocking about this—if I were forced to apply the standards of philosophy to appraising candidates in anthropology, I would likely have to conclude that the candidates were poor philosophers. The only other option would be to defer to the opinions of respected others in the community who work in the relevant areas. That is, I could ask prominent anthropologists, “Are these candidates good? Which ones are best?” This kind of thing does happen in hiring of non-Western specialists. One opinion I have heard voiced in certain corners of the Chinese philosophy community is that a department should appraise any candidate (whether in Chinese philosophy, M&E, or any other area) *as a philosopher* in general. While I think this is a fine ideal, and that it is a good thing to aim for a day in which we can expect a fair appraisal of a scholar of Chinese philosophy on philosophical grounds, we are simply not there yet. And part of the reason we are not there yet is the continued dominance of a conception of philosophy that is grounded in features of the Western tradition. To fairly appraise candidates as simply philosophers (rather than using different standards to appraise scholars of Chinese philosophy) would require a broader and more equitable understanding of what philosophy is than the one currently dominant in our field.

In an ideal world, appraising specialists in Chinese philosophy would be no different than appraising any other philosopher. However, just attainment of this ideal requires a conception of philosophy that simply does not widely persist in our field—one that does not *assume* Western and Eurocentric philosophy as the standard for philosophical thought. If we appraise candidates simply “as philosophers” given the way things stand today, this commits us to the position that specialists in Chinese philosophy are good philosophers only insofar as they resemble specialists in Western philosophy. Which can lead to the situation that specialists in Chinese philosophy (and other non-Western philosophy) are deemed better philosophers the less they focus on Chinese philosophy or take its unique methods seriously.

A true commitment to diversity (in philosophy, as anywhere else) does not entail simply adding specialists in non-Western philosophies, feminist philosophy, etc., who “think the right way” (which necessarily will be a small number), but a commitment to a kind of *intellectual* diversity in

which we broaden our conception of what philosophy is and recognize the legitimacy and value of different ways of approaching the philosophical project. To demand otherwise is to engage in a kind of intellectual colonialism—“We will accept you as an (almost) equal partner, but only insofar as you come to resemble us.”

As Amy Olberding points out in her contribution to this collection, articles in Chinese philosophy are still not well represented in mainstream journals, and despite some positive signs in the job market in Chinese and Asian philosophy more generally (some of which I discuss below), the situation for Chinese philosophy in the United States remains dire. The real growth in the field (as far as number of scholars working in philosophy departments) has been in Asia, particularly Hong Kong and Singapore, in which a number of universities have, with recent moves, become truly world-class centers for the study of Chinese philosophy. Not only have philosophy departments at these universities committed to including multiple philosophers working in non-Western traditions in their departments, but they have also brought in excellent scholars so far. A host of scholars previously worked at U.S. institutions have moved to Hong Kong or Singapore in recent years.<sup>4</sup>

Institutions throughout the Chinese-speaking world are establishing programs in Chinese philosophy aimed at English-speaking students worldwide, including new institutions such as Yale-NUS College in Singapore (the result of collaboration between Yale University and the National University of Singapore), which is also bringing in good scholars in non-Western philosophy from the United States and elsewhere. Truly, Asia is “eating our lunch” as far as Chinese philosophy is concerned. While this is certainly an excellent situation for the study of Chinese philosophy overall, it ought to be concerning to those of us in the United States who desire to improve the situation in the field here at home. And all this while there remains (and data shows there has been for some time) incredible student interest in Chinese philosophy and Asian philosophy more generally. Now well-known is the article in *The Atlantic* on Michael Puett at Harvard (EALC), whose classes draw hundreds of people at a time and are among the most popular at the university.<sup>5</sup> Various universities have recognized the popularity with students of courses in Asian philosophy, and this is why many universities regularly offer such courses. Very few of these courses, however, are taught by full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty, especially at research universities. Within philosophy departments, Asian philosophy is still seen as a curiosity or exoticism that, while it may be popular among students, is not a proper part of the academic study of philosophy.

#### THE SITUATION AT PH.D.-GRANTING DEPARTMENTS

As has been pointed out by many, including Brian Bruya, the dearth of scholars in Ph.D.-granting institutions focusing on Chinese philosophy has continued to fuel the problem. With a dwindling number of institutions in the United States in which one can earn a Ph.D. in Chinese philosophy (within the field of philosophy), few scholars in the area are being produced. Even if some of the institutions offering courses in Chinese or Asian philosophy taught by contingent faculty or nonspecialists wanted to hire specialists, there would be

a very limited pool of candidates. As Bruya shows, the vast majority of new Ph.D.s in Chinese philosophy are coming from Hawai‘i. But even this contingent from Hawai‘i is very small in comparison with the size of other fields. And it is indeed difficult for Ph.D.s from Hawai‘i to get jobs in Ph.D.-granting departments at major research universities, mainly because most such departments in the United States are analytic departments, and, as Bruya mentions, surveys show (and my own experience agrees) that analytic departments are hesitant to hire people from more comparative-leaning departments such as Hawai‘i. While this is certainly a shame, there is only a very small number of “the rest of us,” trained at analytic-leaning departments. And some of these students are now abroad, in Hong Kong or Singapore. The number of such scholars to draw on for analytic-leaning departments (who generally like to hire people trained in other analytic-leaning departments, just as continental departments tend to hire others trained in continental departments) is small. Thus, unless such departments come to gain a more fair view of Hawai‘i graduates, the situation concerning Ph.D. departments is likely to continue. And this will further contribute to the problem “downstream” of few qualified specialists for colleges and universities to hire.

In addition, it is unclear what effect the growth of programs focusing on Chinese philosophy in Singapore and Hong Kong will have on the United States. Will U.S. philosophy departments be willing to hire candidates with Ph.D.s from Asian universities? I don’t see any reason they should not, but of course I also don’t see any reason they should not hire candidates from Hawai‘i, and this has certainly been an issue in the past.

Having scholars at Ph.D. programs in philosophy is important not just for training future specialists in the area, but also for contributing to the view of Chinese philosophy within philosophy overall. When Ph.D. students can go through their entire graduate education without ever encountering non-Western thought, it will be difficult to get them to take these traditions seriously once they are professional philosophers themselves. The exposure to these areas that having just a single faculty member in a department working on them can create is significant. I experienced this in my own graduate education, having studied in such a department. Many of my fellow graduate students during my time at the University of Connecticut gained knowledge and appreciation of non-Western traditions from taking courses with Joel Kupperman or interacting with his students (such as myself), even though they did not work specifically in that area. They gained an appreciation for Asian philosophy, and, to my knowledge, they all still see the study of Asian philosophy as a legitimate and important project within the contemporary academic discipline of philosophy. While I cannot attribute their openness to Asian philosophy wholly to engagement with Joel Kupperman, his presence there and work in Asian philosophy surely had a positive effect, if only reinforcing the idea that Asian philosophy is a legitimate area of philosophical study.

Having graduate courses in Ph.D. programs focusing on non-Western philosophical traditions can show new generations of philosophers that such traditions are

valuable and central to philosophy. This can help to create more positive attitudes concerning these traditions in philosophy departments. What we think is important and which areas we hold as “core areas” in philosophy is largely a function of what we were exposed to in our graduate education, where we learned to become philosophers and learned the standards of the field—both its makeup and its practical norms. The fact that a particular tradition is left out in our education is often reason in itself to think that it is not seen as a proper part of the field by philosophers. When we are educated in such environments, it becomes easy for us to gain the impression that Chinese and other non-Western philosophical traditions are either not important (or not important *enough*) or not philosophy at all. After all, if non-Western traditions were properly part of philosophy, surely we would have heard *something* about them, right? Surely we would have been required to know *something* about them to receive the Ph.D., right?

The million-dollar question here becomes, How do we get more Ph.D. departments to bring on specialists in Chinese and/or non-Western philosophy, especially given the pressures not to do so created by things such as the *Philosophical Gourmet Report*, as Bruya discusses?<sup>6</sup> It seems unlikely that the influence of the PGR will fade anytime soon. Chinese philosophy is currently included on the “specialty areas” section of the PGR, at the bottom of the list under “other areas” along with philosophy of race and feminist philosophy.<sup>7</sup> Indian philosophy is not included, nor are other areas of non-Western philosophy.<sup>8</sup> I don’t see much to gain in focusing on making Chinese philosophy more prominent on the PGR, given its limited and sidelined place on it as things are (a fact due in large part to the issue of its perceived place in philosophy, as discussed above). And concentrating on this would also contribute to the rise of the kinds of constraints and pressures that concern with the PGR creates in philosophy departments in general, including pressures to methodological conformity. This would be a terrible development for the field. We see the potential for this in the PGR list already—the evaluator list for the Chinese philosophy section, while containing unarguably excellent scholars, comes nowhere close to representing the methodological breadth or diversity of the field. If this remains the case, then presumably the only way to place higher on the PGR in Chinese philosophy would be to hire people doing Chinese philosophy with methodologies consistent with theirs, thus undermining the diversity the field, stultifying innovation and new approaches, etc. This kind of thing is exactly what happens with the PGR in general, in other areas of philosophy. The insidious features of the PGR would likely play this same role for Chinese philosophy. Perhaps the answer is to push for greater diversity in the evaluator list for the PGR. But even then, does “getting things right,” insofar as this is possible, on the PGR, help to promote the greater cause of Chinese philosophy? I doubt it. Gatekeeping is hardly a potent stimulus for intellectual growth, innovation, and diversity.

## CHINESE PHILOSOPHY OUTSIDE PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENTS

If we remain sidelined, it will be difficult to continue to develop scholars qualified to take posts in Chinese philosophy in

philosophy departments in the future. It is difficult to do innovative work when you cannot get an education or a job. Thus, the lack of positions at Ph.D.-granting institutions in the United States is certainly a concern. In addition, another concern is that the interest in and development of Chinese philosophy *outside* of philosophy departments seems to be on the rise. Our peers in departments like religious studies, history, and East Asian studies seem to recognize the value of Chinese philosophy, as well as its popularity among students, and its profile appears to be on the rise in such fields. On the whole, this is problematic for philosophy, because when this boost in the profile of Chinese philosophy in other areas does not coincide with a boost in its profile in philosophy departments, it leads to a situation in which the only places to study Chinese philosophy, and seemingly the proper places, are non-philosophy departments. This leads to new problems for philosophy and contributes to existing problems, such as the lingering view, discussed above, that Chinese philosophy is not properly a part of philosophy.

I have increasingly directed interested students toward departments of religious studies and East Asian studies, due to the dearth of philosophy Ph.D. programs with scholars able to direct dissertations in Chinese philosophy. Getting a Ph.D. in religious studies or East Asian studies, however, will make it extremely difficult for one to find a job in a philosophy department. For philosophically minded individuals to pursue Ph.D.s in Chinese philosophy outside of philosophy removes possible candidates from the pool for philosophy positions and makes the situation within philosophy even worse. This could be remedied, of course, by developing more openness to hiring scholars with Ph.D.s in religious studies, history, or East Asian studies in philosophy departments, but this is a less than ideal situation. The reason for this is because someone trained in those fields will not have the kind of philosophical background that philosophers are expected to develop and that is necessary for contribution to teaching in any philosophy department. I imagine a department would be (rightly) horrified by the prospect of hiring someone only qualified to teach Chinese philosophy and nothing else, including introduction to philosophy, or ethics, epistemology, etc. Taking on a Chinese philosophy specialist would require enormous sacrifice in such a case, as a department would take on a faculty member unable to help carry the load in teaching outside of his or her area of specialization. The same situation obtains in the opposite direction, of course. We would not expect departments of religious studies, history, or East Asian studies to be thrilled with the idea of bringing on Chinese philosophy specialists with Ph.D.s in philosophy. Perhaps this will be less of an issue in the future, as more programs offer the possibility for people within philosophy departments to work with scholars in fields in which there are people working on Chinese philosophy. In the philosophy department at Indiana University, for example, it is possible for students to work with scholars in the East Asian studies and religious studies working on Chinese philosophy, while still pursuing Ph.D. work from within the philosophy department. But is this a long-term answer? How sustainable is this for a growing number of students or over a long period of time? Scholars in non-philosophy fields have their own students, and the kind of hybrid “half in, half out” possibility seems



like a band-aid on a bad situation rather than a permanent answer. We certainly cannot *develop* the study of Chinese philosophy within philosophy in this way.

One may argue that if philosophy, as a whole, does not want to engage with non-Western philosophical traditions, so much the worse for philosophy! As long as the study of Chinese philosophy is flourishing in other departments, we should simply go where the interest is. Such a response (which I have seen expressed before) misses much of the point of the concern with the crisis in philosophy. Study of Chinese philosophy within fields such as religious studies or history requires the adoption of the methodological norms of those fields. Those interested in working on Chinese philosophy using the unique tools, methods, and focus of philosophy will find themselves unable to do this within such departments. This is not a flaw of departments of history or religious studies, of course—they are ultimately doing history and religious studies, not philosophy. So in order to study Chinese philosophy within such a department, they will ultimately have to abandon certain philosophical approaches to Chinese texts and thinkers. One could not get away with writing the kind of work in Chinese philosophy that I write, for example, in a history department, just like the work of historians of Chinese philosophy would not fly in most philosophy departments. Insofar as one thinks, as I do, that methodological and disciplinary diversity are good things (in part because they help us learn more about the topics on which we focus), then it is surely a disaster if history and religious studies corner the Chinese philosophy market, and philosophy is left out, just as much as it would be if one of those other fields were to abandon Chinese philosophy. For Chinese philosophy to flourish in departments outside of philosophy is fantastic, but not to have it represented within philosophy as well means that we lose the unique methodologies and tools that philosophers bring to bear in working on texts and arguments. Scholarship on Chinese philosophy in general is less healthy and thriving when important methodologies are neglected—just as it would be stifled if the methodological diversity present in the field now were to be collapsed into a narrow uniformity.

### THE GOOD NEWS: WHAT WE CAN GAIN

While the situation I have described thus far is bleak indeed, there is *some* reason to be hopeful about the future of Chinese philosophy. “Interesting times” bring opportunity, change, and innovation, along with danger.<sup>9</sup> More departments appear to be at least committed to bringing on specialists in the area, if not now, then in the future. There are also more venues for publications, conferences, workshops, and panels at major meetings in Chinese philosophy today than there were when I was a graduate student ten years ago. Conferences and workshops include conferences such as the thriving Midwest Conference on Chinese Thought (now in its twelfth year), the newer Northeast Conference on Chinese Thought (in its fourth year), the Rutgers Workshop on Chinese Philosophy (in its third year), and a growing number of panels at the APA conferences put on by groups such as the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy and the International Society of Chinese Philosophy, among others. There are a number of new and rising journals focused on Chinese and comparative

philosophy as well, and a number of new book series from various publishers. While it is certainly true that it is still very hard to publish Chinese philosophy in “mainstream” journals, the number of area journals is ever increasing, and book publishers are also increasingly interested in publishing work on Chinese philosophy. There are more new works (both books and articles) in Chinese philosophy (and by philosophers!) today than I ever remember there being in the past—this can only be the sign of a field on the rise. In addition, there is not only a greater *quantity* of material being published today in Chinese philosophy, but (in my opinion at least) the quality of this material gives us much to be hopeful about. Scholars working on Chinese philosophy today are unafraid to innovate, to explore, and engage in experimental or comparative work. Some of the most insightful and important works I have read in Chinese philosophy have been written in the past five to ten years. There is more interdisciplinary work done than there was a decade ago, as well as more engagement with scholars outside the United States, in China and elsewhere in Asia.

While being on the philosophical fringes is difficult, there can also be advantages of living in interesting times. *Interesting things happen*. The person who has nothing to lose in some ways has more flexibility and a greater margin for error than others. Some of the problems I have long had with the field of philosophy in general are its insularity, its tendency to focus on very narrow questions, and its occasional fear of, resistance to, or avoidance of novel ways of thinking. Within mainstream philosophy, there are a number of very real pressures to ensure the adherence of philosophers to these narrowing features, including tenure and maintenance of reputation. I doubt (though I have no way to know) that the above-mentioned features of academic philosophy are due to the deep intellectual commitment of its practitioners to these norms. Rather, it is likely that many are swayed away from “risky” projects by institutional pressures, and this perpetuates the narrowness of philosophy mentioned above. This has a number of results—it not only leads to the neglect of non-Western philosophy and more diverse conceptions of philosophy, but it also leads to the kind of insularity that has continued to make philosophy unpalatable to the public in general and to our students in contemporary academia. It is this, I suspect, that is behind the nationwide trend of falling numbers of undergraduate philosophy majors at institutions across the board. This decline cannot be attributed, as some suggest, to a mass exodus of students to more “practical” areas such as STEM fields, business, and the like. Fields such as geology, physics, and botany (all clearly “practical” fields in terms of job prospects and salary) have also seen decline,<sup>10</sup> while in less economically viable fields in the arts and humanities we do not see such a steep decline. Graduates in English language and literature seem to have maintained a steady number since the 1990s, for example, and degrees in foreign languages (taken as a whole) have increased in the same time.<sup>11</sup> The attitude that keeps philosophy resistant to Chinese thought is the same thing as what keeps it increasingly sidelined in the academy and in wider society.

Scholars working in Chinese and other non-Western philosophies have somewhat more freedom in pursuing

projects outside of the “mainstream” and the standard modes of thinking, because as a result of their area they are already outside in this sense. There can be a temptation within Chinese philosophy circles to strive to attain a kind of mainstream respectability, but given the institutional pressures mentioned above, this is a battle we ultimately cannot win. And it is also unclear that we should want to achieve this goal, lest we become subject to the same narrowing pressures that exist in mainstream philosophy. Rather than use our relative freedom to attempt to gain respectability by conforming to mainstream philosophical norms, we can use it to engage in the kinds of innovative and broad-minded projects that our peers in more mainstream philosophical areas often do not have the luxury to undertake. We can create new ways of thinking about what philosophy should be and do philosophy the way we think it should be done, not the way we think the mainstream wants us to do it. We also discover new ideas and projects and consider new ways to bring the wider community into engagement with our projects. One advantage of being on the outside in the first place is that we can be the innovators, as we enjoy somewhat more freedom. This is not to say there are no institutional pressures on those who work in Chinese philosophy—certainly there are. But there are not as many and the same as those that face people working in more mainstream areas. This is the “opportunity” aspect of the crisis.

### WHAT CAN WE ULTIMATELY DO ABOUT THE WAY THINGS ARE?

To this question, there are a number of answers. One thing we can do, as suggested above, is to use our relative obscurity to engage in the kind of work we would never be able to get away with in the mainstream. That is, we can develop new comparative work, look toward interdisciplinarity and integrating techniques of other fields, and also look to develop the kind of large-scale focus that has been absent from much philosophy for the past century or so in the Western world. A number of people in the field are actually engaging in this kind of work, and in my opinion there is more interesting and innovative work going on today in the study of Chinese philosophy, comparative philosophy, and other non-Western philosophy than we have ever seen before. From this perspective, then, the answer is to simply keep doing what we’ve already started to do.

Concerning what we can do about the negative side of living in interesting times, the answers are more complex and may be more difficult to come by. How can we get mainstream philosophy to take us more seriously in general? How do we convince more Ph.D. programs to bring in specialists in Chinese philosophy or other non-Western philosophies? How do we get more mainstream journals to publish work in non-Western philosophy? It seems to me that all of these questions are connected in a fundamental way, and it might be possible to begin to address them.

**1. We know of the popularity of Asian philosophy among students.** The more we can quantify this popularity, in terms of showing comparative enrollments in courses in Asian philosophy to those of other philosophy courses, both within and outside of philosophy departments, the

more we can convince *administrators*, if not philosophers, of the need for developing these areas and hiring scholars working on them. The “top-down” approach to governance in higher education is unfortunate, but as long as it is happening and seems continually on the rise, we may as well take advantage of it. Of course, mandates coming from on high to departments concerning who to hire will likely never be taken well, and these moves may then create resentment toward scholars in non-Western philosophy from their colleagues and peers. So ideally, we should also strive to convince other philosophers of the value of what we do.

**2. We should strive to make Chinese philosophy speak to contemporary philosophy.** This is a project many specialists in Chinese philosophy have been working on for as long as I can remember. In some cases, it manifests itself as the attempt to make Chinese philosophy palatable to mainstream philosophers by offering interpretations of Chinese texts and thinkers as engaged in the same kinds of things as Western philosophers. It is possible to go too far with this project, thus running the danger of both misconstruing early Chinese texts and reading them as doing *nothing more* than Western counterparts. But it is also, I believe, a valuable project to look for points of convergence between Chinese and Western philosophy. It is also, however, valuable to engage in comparative philosophy with respect to non-Western traditions. I believe we have to move beyond seeing Chinese philosophy (and other non-Western philosophies) in light of the Western tradition and focus more effort on comparative work looking at these traditions against the background of one another.

It will be impossible to gain a greater hold in philosophy departments in general without some “buy-in” from philosophers in “mainstream” areas. How do we achieve this? While in the end there is not much we alone can do, the various pressures of globalization and the increasing profile of China (and other nations) on the world stage, the demand for Chinese philosophy from students (high registration ensures more interest in having courses), and the increasing pressure on philosophy departments to try new things to stem the flow of students from our programs will inevitably play a role in changing things, hopefully for the better. Humans have a knack for making virtue of necessity, and perhaps when external forces make it impossible for philosophy to keep ignoring Chinese (and other non-Western) thought, the attitudes of philosophers toward it will change. I think we are seeing the beginnings of this already.

We indeed live in interesting times. There is little we can do about that. Many of the factors that have led to this situation are due to larger social trends that are largely out of our control. But we can, as Zhuangzi might suggest, use these changes to our benefit as best we can, rather than engage in the fruitless project of trying to resist them.

### NOTES

1. Brian Bruya, “The Tacit Rejection of Multiculturalism in American Philosophy Ph.D. Programs: The Case of Chinese Philosophy” *Dao* 14, no. 3 (2015).

2. An example can be found in a quote on the DePaul University philosophy website—one of the departments that values non-Western philosophy: “in the Department of Philosophy at DePaul University, the long and rich tradition of European thought remains an open and vital question, for that tradition is constantly being studied, reassessed, and extended by way of contemporary Continental modes of critique, as well as through comparative analysis with philosophical traditions from around the world, such as those of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.” <http://las.depaul.edu/departments/philosophy/Pages/default.aspx> This quote makes it clear that Europe and European thought is the core of philosophy, and insofar as non-Western philosophy is useful, it is so to help us better understand European thought.
3. While I don’t mention its effect here (it has been widely discussed elsewhere), Brian Bruya notes the effect of the *Philosophical Gourmet Report* in his *Dao* article, cited above. If the aim of a program is to rise in the rankings of the PGR, hiring a specialist in Chinese philosophy is one of the worst things that program can do (outside of hiring in philosophy of race or feminist philosophy). Bruya writes, “in a discipline where program after program cites financial resources as a major factor limiting diversification, hiring in M&E is more economical than hiring in other areas. Hiring in Chinese philosophy is infinitely worse because hiring even the most outstanding scholar in this specialty will statistically yield no noticeable increase in PGR rankings. Programs are strapped for money. Administrators, who hold the purse strings, want concrete numbers demonstrating success. PGR provides those numbers. Which program, in its own rational self-interest, would not yield to this kind of pressure?” The pressures exerted on departments by the PGR are not only detrimental to Chinese philosophy, but to breadth of philosophical coverage in general. Departments can maximize PGR placement by narrowing their focus drastically—stacking top scholars in one or two particular areas in philosophy, especially areas within language, metaphysics, and epistemology. Part of the problem, it seems to me, is with the methodology behind the PGR rankings, as well as with the system of ranking itself, which tends to contribute to many of the narrowing and risk-aversion features we see with philosophy departments because of the PGR and institutions in general because of the influence of the *US News and World Report* rankings. Developing programs and universities becomes a game of maximization of whatever features the rankings in question track, and such rankings rarely, if ever, track the kinds of features that would make for diverse, broad, or intellectually adventurous programs.
4. These scholars include Yong Huang, Franklin Perkins, Chenyang Li, Dan Robins, Eirik Harris, and, before them, P. J. Ivanhoe and Kwong-loi Shun (though Shun has since moved back to the United States, rejoining the philosophy department at Berkeley). Departments in the region have also brought in other prominent scholars of Chinese philosophy from elsewhere outside the United States, such as Hans-Georg Moeller, who recently moved from University College Cork in Ireland to join the philosophy department at the University of Macau.
5. <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/10/why-are-hundreds-of-harvard-students-studying-ancient-chinese-philosophy/280356/>
6. Bruya, “The Tacit Rejection of Multiculturalism in American Philosophy Ph.D. Programs.”
7. <http://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/breakdown.asp>
8. In previous iterations of the PGR, Indian philosophy was included, but has since been removed. I am unaware of the reasons for this.
9. Another oft cited but apocryphal Chinese quote is “within crisis lies both danger and opportunity,” mainly based on the term *weiji* 危機, which includes the individual characters *wei* (“danger”) and *ji* (one meaning of which can be “opportunity”). It was another Kennedy who popularized the use of this spurious Chinese quote—this time, John F. Kennedy. “In the Chinese language, the word ‘crisis’ is composed of two characters, one representing danger and the other, opportunity.” (JFK, United Negro College Fund fundraiser, Indianapolis, IN, April 12, 1959).
10. <http://chronicle.com/article/Fastest-Declining-Academic/126360/>
11. National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 2013, Bachelor’s degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by field of study. [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13\\_322.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_322.10.asp)

## The “Double Bind” on Specialists in Chinese Philosophy

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The situation of Chinese philosophy in the United States in particular and the West in general is, without doubt, regrettable. While there is a significant increase in both the number of panels on Chinese philosophy in all divisions of American Philosophical Association annual meetings (although still mostly in the group rather than main program) and the number of publications of Chinese philosophy in English, there remain at least two major concerns. One is the dearth of scholars with expertise in Chinese philosophy in research universities, particularly the elite ones. This is the focus of a recent study by Brian Bruya, according to which only “four American philosophy Ph.D. programs have full-time specialists in Chinese philosophy who were hired into positions advertising for Chinese (or Asian) philosophy. Overall, philosophy Ph.D. programs in the United States house only nine full-time specialists in Chinese philosophy capable of supervising Ph.D. dissertations.”<sup>1</sup> The other is the scarcity of articles of Chinese philosophy published by general philosophical journals, in contrast to journals specializing in Chinese or Asian philosophy. This is the focus of Amy Olberding’s study in this issue of the APA newsletter, according to which such journals have published only three to four articles about Chinese philosophy in each decade since the 1940s, with no signs of increasing.<sup>2</sup>

What these two studies have shown, of course, only confirms common perceptions that people working in the field have long had, even though vaguely. The question is how to rectify this regrettable situation. To do so, we do well to see what its cause(s) is (are). While mainstream Western philosophers may deny it, there may be some truth in what Bryan van Norden calls “chauvinistic ethnocentrism”<sup>3</sup> or Brian Bruya calls “tacit rejection of multiculturalism.”<sup>4</sup> I think, however, the more immediate cause is the mainstream Western philosophers’ lack of interest in Chinese philosophy, and this lack of interest itself both results in and from an ignorance of (the value of) Chinese philosophy. This is clear from an anecdote reported by Bruya. Surprised by Bruya’s question about which Chinese specialist they had hired in their attempt to build a “top ten” Ph.D. program in philosophy, a department chair asked “how Chinese philosophy could help solve the problems that occupy current philosophers.”<sup>5</sup> The implication is (1) departments would hire Chinese specialists if Chinese philosophy could help solve the problems that occupy current philosophers, and (2) it does not.

We may well challenge the first claim: even if (or precisely because) Chinese philosophy does not help solve the problems that occupy current philosophers, departments should still hire Chinese specialists, who may be able to introduce some problems that currently don’t but should occupy Western philosophers. However, my interest in this paper is to challenge the second claim: Chinese philosophy does not help solve the problems that occupy

current mainstream Western philosophers. Of course, to convince them of this, those of us who are doing Chinese philosophy, instead of merely complaining about this regrettable situation, should take more responsibility in rectifying the situation than the mainstream Western philosophers themselves. Indeed, we cannot expect them, unfamiliar with Chinese philosophy, to someday suddenly become interested in and start to read it, as they are busy with many philosophical issues that are interesting to them and perhaps to us as well. It is, rather, our duty to do things to generate their interest in Chinese philosophy, particularly by showing that precisely on (at least some of) the issues that currently occupy mainstream Western philosophers, Chinese philosophy has some interesting things to say.

It is in this respect that I cannot agree more with Amy Olberding, the guest editor of this issue, who states that there is a *double bind* on these specialists to promote interest in Chinese philosophy among Western philosophers. On the one hand, they not only have “to hook in to existing issues, interests, or paradigms in the dominant discourse,”<sup>6</sup> but also must explain just what Chinese philosophy can offer on such issues, interests, and paradigms that the dominant discourse does not already have. This is important. If scholars of Chinese philosophy do not relate Chinese philosophy to Western philosophy, or do relate Chinese philosophy to Western philosophy but only show that there are some similar ideas of the latter in the former, or do find, in addition, some differences between Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy but cannot show that the former is also interesting, plausible, or convincing, if not more so than the latter, then they can hardly generate interest in Chinese philosophy among those Western philosophers who are not already interested in it. On the other hand, if scholars of Chinese philosophy make Chinese philosophical views appear to “deviate from what western-trained philosophers will find most familiar, where what they offer is transparently novel, this may generate resistance of a different order,”<sup>7</sup> as they may appear to be non-philosophical to those in the dominant Western tradition. Olberding summarizes this double bind this way: “Show us something we have not seen before, but be sure it looks well and truly familiar to us too.”<sup>8</sup>

In my paper, “How to Do Chinese Philosophy in a Western Philosophical Context: Introducing a Unique Approach to Chinese Philosophy,”<sup>9</sup> later integrated into the introduction chapter of my book, *Why Be Moral: Learning from the Neo-Confucian Cheng Brothers*,<sup>10</sup> I made a similar point, even though I didn’t have in mind the goal of redressing the regrettable situation of Chinese philosophy in the West. While my main concern was how to do Chinese philosophy in the Western philosophical context, the point is also about how to generate interest in Chinese philosophy among mainstream Western philosophers. To answer the question of how to do Chinese philosophy in the Western philosophical context, we must answer the question of why we do Chinese philosophy in such a context; and to answer that question, we must be clear about which audience we want to address when we write about Chinese philosophy. Of course, we may intend to write our books and articles to fellow specialists in Chinese philosophy. However, if we want to address philosophers in the West at large, and I

think it is important for us to do so, then we must ask the question of why these Western philosophers who know nothing about Chinese philosophy ought to be interested in it. I think an important answer is that Chinese philosophy has something important to offer on the very issues these Western philosophers are interested in.

To do this job well, we (a) first should familiarize ourselves with issues Western philosophers are interested in, various views that have been developed on these issues in the Western philosophical tradition, and problems there may be with such views, and (b) then try to see whether Chinese philosophers have something new and better to say on such issues. This is essentially what Olberding calls the double bind, stated in a reverse order here. To bring such a double bind to a sharp relief, I made the following statement: “while we let Western philosophy dictate what issues to talk about, we let Chinese philosophy have the final say on each of these issues.”<sup>11</sup> Since we don’t assume that Chinese philosophy is overall superior to Western philosophy, it is unlikely that the issues that we select to discuss in such comparative studies are systematic. On the one hand, in such comparative studies, at least at the initial stage, we will refrain from discussing those philosophical issues in the Chinese tradition that may be very important but may appear too alien to Western philosophers or cannot be readily made relevant to issues that currently occupy them. On the other hand, we will also refrain from discussing those important philosophical issues on which either Western philosophers have already developed satisfactory views (or at least more satisfactory than any views that can be found in the Chinese philosophical tradition), or, where developed views in the Western philosophy are not satisfactory, Chinese philosophy cannot offer anything better either.

There are a few things that should be said about this way of doing Chinese philosophy. First, while its goal is to find better Chinese solutions to issues in the Western philosophical tradition, this does not mean that a scholar adopting this approach must first identify a Western issue and only then start to look for a Chinese solution to it. While this may be the case in some situations, in others a scholar may find a Chinese philosophical view particularly interesting and significant and then try to see how Western philosophers have fared on the same or similar issues. However, either of these ways carries too much contingency: on the one hand, one may find representative positions on a particular issue in the Western philosophical tradition problematic but not be able to find a better alternative in Chinese philosophy; on the other hand, one may find some Chinese philosophical position particularly interesting, which, however, cannot make any significant contribution to Western philosophy, either because this is not an issue in Western philosophy or because it has developed equally interesting or even more interesting positions on its own. In most cases, scholars of comparative study, more or less familiar with both traditions, can identify which issues in Chinese philosophy are most likely to contribute to issues in the Western philosophical tradition, and then a careful study of these issues in both traditions can be undertaken.

Second, although this way of doing Chinese philosophy aims at solutions to issues in the Western philosophical tradition, contrary to appearance, it does not carry with it the danger of twisting Chinese philosophy. On the one hand, it is different from the attempt to use fashionable contemporary Western philosophical theories to interpret traditional Chinese philosophy, which may indeed twist Chinese philosophy. While aiming at developing Confucian (for example) solutions to some issues in (for example) contemporary virtue ethics, we don't have to assume or argue that Confucian ethics is also a virtue ethics, at least a virtue ethics in the Western sense. On the other hand, it is true that the picture of Chinese philosophy presented in such a way of doing Chinese philosophy is not complete, but that is not its goal. This means that it is only one way to do Chinese philosophy, to be supplemented and supported by many other ways.

Third, clearly, this way of doing Chinese philosophy is not merely a textual study, since it aims at developing interesting and plausible alternative solutions to problems which currently occupy Western philosophers, not at merely producing an "insightful interpretation that recreate as closely as possible the initial conditions for a text's reception, and thus perhaps as well authorial intention."<sup>12</sup> However, more importantly, it is also different from purely philosophical construction, with which it may be easily confused. Philosophical construction understood in this way carries with it the danger of "losing touch with the historical sources that provoked one's efforts in the first place,"<sup>13</sup> since "in doing so, one might not have made any direct reference to these two traditions, though one might have included footnote references to acknowledge the sources of one's ideas."<sup>14</sup> In order to show that Chinese philosophy can make important contributions to problems that intrigue contemporary Western philosophers, it is important to show that such contributions are indeed based on solid studies, careful analyses, and plausible interpretations of Chinese philosophical texts, which should be sustainable with the challenge of alternative interpretations of the same texts. Although we must do some picking and choosing when we use Chinese philosophical materials to challenge Western philosophical views, it is important that our use of such materials does not twist their meaning in their original contexts. In this sense, while I applaud the important project that Brian Bruya has recently carried out to challenge Western philosophy from the Chinese philosophical perspectives, his project, at least as he conceives it and not necessarily as it is actually done either by him or by his contributors, is different from the one advocated here, as it "does not require explicit reference to Chinese sources, even though the main ideas must include the Chinese tradition at minimum as an inspirational resource."<sup>15</sup>

Fourth, Olberding is right when she emphasizes that "this double bind for scholars who would promote interest in non-western traditions, then, can register as an importunate, impossible demand,"<sup>16</sup> since it requires us to engage both traditions deeply. One way to handle this issue is to narrow down the focus of our research to a sub-field of philosophy, such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, etc., not only in any particular research projects, but also in our general philosophical interests. For example,

if we want to see how Xunzi can respond to the situationist critique of virtue ethics, we need a full grasp of both the situationist critique of virtue ethics and the text of the *Xunzi*, which, however, is manageable. At the same time, we specialists of Chinese philosophy should not regard it as an extra burden to familiarize ourselves with the contemporary literature in Western philosophy, as it is also a rewarding experience. Chinese philosophy is not in general superior to Western philosophy. We can learn a great deal on those topics on which Western philosophy has better things to say than Chinese philosophy; my own experiences tell me that even on those issues on which we find Chinese philosophy has something better to say, we can still benefit a great deal from engaging Western philosophy.

So I agree with Olberding that more inclusion of Chinese philosophy in the mainstream Anglo-American philosophy "depends on whether it [Anglo-American professional philosophy] can turn its oft-touted critical spirit on itself, whether it can scrutinize its own assumptions, expectations and practices."<sup>17</sup> Still, whether Anglo-American philosophy can be self-critical at least partially depends on the degree to which specialists of Chinese philosophy succeed in meeting the demand of double bind. The marvelous case study of Confucian attention to the deep moral significance of ordinary good manners and etiquette as a possible contribution to contemporary philosophical ethics conducted by Olberding in the paper mentioned above is itself a successful attempt to meet the demand. I myself have previously also done some comparative studies involving Confucius,<sup>18</sup> Zhuangzi,<sup>19</sup> the Cheng brothers,<sup>20</sup> and Zhu Xi,<sup>21</sup> all aiming to address issues that currently occupy Western philosophers by drawing on the ideas of these Chinese philosophers, respectively. While here is not the place to conduct another substantive study of this nature, it helps to show that, while this road has not been well traveled, it can lead to bright destinations. So in what remains of this paper, I would like to briefly mention a few topics, all parts of my current project on the neo-Confucian philosopher Wang Yangming, on which the above-mentioned comparative studies can be fruitfully done.

### KNOWING-THAT, KNOWING-HOW, OR KNOWING-TO?

Gilbert Ryle made the famous distinction between knowing-that and knowing-how.<sup>22</sup> While the former is theoretical, the latter is practical. The point that Ryle attempts to make in drawing this distinction is to highlight the latter, as it has not been paid enough attention to in the history of Western philosophy, which, according to Ryle, is largely intellectualistic. I think this distinction is well made, despite some recent challenges from two opposite directions: some claim that knowing-how is nothing but a form of knowing-that,<sup>23</sup> while others claim that knowing-that is nothing but a form of knowing-how,<sup>24</sup> both trying to collapse the two into one, though in reverse ways. In my view, the problem with Ryle is not the distinction itself, but the common misconception that these two types of knowing are exhaustive. This can partially be seen from the attempts made by a number of scholars of Chinese philosophy, such as Antonio Cua, P. J. Ivanhoe, Weiming Tu, Joel Kupperman, Lisa Raphals, and Chen Lai, among

many others, to regard the Confucian conception of moral knowledge as knowing-how instead of knowing-that. However, what is unique to Confucian knowledge cannot be explained by either knowing-that or knowing-how. Let's use Wang Yangming's *liangzhi* (literally "good knowledge") as an example. *Liangzhi* is not merely the knowledge of what is good and what is evil, but also the knowledge that loves the good and hates the evil; this love for the good and hate for the evil is not included in Ryle's knowing-that or knowing-how. For example, if I know that I ought to love my parents and I know how to love them, both in Ryle's senses, it is still possible that I don't love them. However, if I have the *liangzhi* about love for my parents, I will not only (1) know that I ought to love my parents, but (2) will also be inclined to love them, which will inevitably lead me to seek (3) the most appropriate and efficient ways to love them. While the first is clearly knowing-that and the third the knowing-how, the second is something different. It is what I call knowing-to, not in exactly the same sense as Steve Hetherington and Karyn Lai use it,<sup>25</sup> which in my view is merely a highly developed knowing-how, but in the sense of knowing that inclines one to act accordingly. To fully develop this conception of knowing-to will result in a significant Confucian contribution to contemporary theory of knowledge.

### BELIEF, DESIRE, OR BESIRE?

The contemporary debate between moral reason internalism and externalism accepts the Humean distinction between belief and desire in attempting to explain the reason for action. The debate is about whether belief alone can be a reason for action. Internalists argue that any reason for action must serve some existing desire broadly understood, what Bernard Williams calls the "subjective motivational set,"<sup>26</sup> while externalists argue that belief alone can motivate a person to act.<sup>27</sup> There are some anti-Humeans who hypothesize that there may be a mental state that includes both belief and desire,<sup>28</sup> for which J. A. Altham coined the term "besire."<sup>29</sup> Indeed, Wang Yangming's *liangzhi* is in this sense a kind of besire: it is not merely a belief that something is good and thus should be done, but also a desire to do it. However, from the Humean tradition, the concept of besire is not intelligible; indeed, it is claimed to be bizarre. The main problem is the so-called conflict of the directions of fit: belief is supposed to (be changed to) fit the world, while the world is supposed to (be changed to) fit the desire; and if there is a single mental state "besire," which is belief and desire all at once, there will be a conflict of the directions of fit between it and the world. However, I think Confucians in general and Wang Yangming in particular can provide a response. On the one hand, whether bizarre or not, the mental state of besire does exist. If Wang's *liangzhi* is controversial, what Wang used as an analogy to explain *liangzhi* is obviously not: our love for a beautiful flower and our belief that it is beautiful take place not only simultaneously, but also in a single mental state. On the other hand, at least in the case of Wang Yangming's *liangzhi*, besire is not bizarre if we distinguish two types of belief: descriptive and normative. While the former has to (be changed to) fit the world, the latter does not. For example, if we believe that everyone ought to love his/her parents and yet in the world no one does, this does not mean that our belief has to be changed

to fit the world. Instead, we may demand that the world be changed to fit our belief. In this case, there is the same world-to-mind direction of fit for both belief and desire, and the conflict will not arise.

### MORAL REALISM, ANTI-REALISM, RESPONSE DEPENDENT THEORY, OR STIMULATION DEPENDENT THEORY?

In appearance, situated within the contemporary debate between realism and anti-realism in moral theories on the nature of moral qualities, Wang Yangming would clearly be on the side of anti-realism. He not only makes it clear that the principle that governs everything is within one's heart/mind, he also criticizes Zhu Xi for seeking the principle outside one's heart/mind. For example, the principle that governs one's relationship to one's parent is filial piety, which lies within one's heart/mind and not within the body of one's parents. At the same time, however, Wang also states that the heart/mind naturally knows to be filial *when* seeing one's father, to love *when* seeing one's brother, and to have commiseration *when* seeing a child falling into a well. So while filial piety is within one's heart/mind, one knows to be filial only when one sees one's parents. In this sense, Wang's moral theory is something between realism and anti-realism. P. J. Ivanhoe compares Wang's theory with John McDowell's response-dependent theory as a *via media* between extreme moral realism and antirealism.<sup>30</sup> McDowell regards moral quality as something similar to John Locke's secondary qualities such as colors and sounds, which are response dependent: they are qualities within things but dependent upon the responses from perceivers.<sup>31</sup> However, I think there is a significant difference between Wang and McDowell. For McDowell, moral qualities are in things although they are dependent upon our responses to them. For Wang, however, moral qualities are within our heart/mind although they are dependent upon the stimulations by things. It is in this sense that moral qualities, for Wang, are stimulation dependent. Through an examination of Wang's theory of the heart/mind's stimulation (*gan* 感) by and response (*ying* 應) to external things, we can explore in what sense Wang's theory is unique and how it can avoid some obvious problems with radical moral realism and anti-realism as well as some not-so-obvious problems with McDowell's not-so-radical response-dependent theory, some of which have already been identified by Ivanhoe in the paper mentioned above.

### EMPATHY WITH THE DEVIL: FORGIVING, DISAPPROVING, OR HELPING?

According to Wang Yangming, when the heart/mind or the *liangzhi* is not beclouded by one's selfish desires, one is a person of genuine humanity (*ren*), which means to be in one body with ten thousand things. Here, following Cheng Hao, Wang argues that to be *ren* is to be able to feel the pain and itch of one's body, and so to be genuinely *ren* is to be able to feel the pain and itch of ten thousand things, which form one body with the person of *ren*. As recognized by Michael Slote, what Wang develops here is the idea of empathy, in contrast to sympathy, much earlier than in Western philosophy. However, Slote immediately adds that contemporary philosophical and psychological

studies of empathy have now far surpassed all these earlier discussions, including Wang's.<sup>32</sup> While partially endorsing Slote's assessment, I think we can still learn a great deal from Wang on empathy, particularly his view of empathy with the devil. By this it is not meant, as in an article with the same title by Adam Morton, to understand the external conditions that make a person be a devil and thus *forgive* him/her for the evil done.<sup>33</sup> Nor does it mean what Slote calls the second order empathy. According to Slote, "if a person's actions toward others exhibit a basic lack of empathy, then empathic people will tend to be chilled (or at least 'left cold') by those actions, and I want to say that those (reflective) feelings toward the agent constitute moral *disapproval*."<sup>34</sup> Since an empathic person is supposed to feel what the object of their empathy feels, Slote emphasizes that the reason the empathic person feels such a chill with unempathic people is precisely that such "people are cold (or cold hearted or very cool) in their attitudes or feelings toward other people."<sup>35</sup> However, since the first order sympathy is not merely a feeling of someone's (physical) pain, but is also a motivation to help the person get rid of the pain, then a person of the second order empathy, in parallel, should not only feel the coldness of the unempathic person, but also be motivated to help the person get rid of his or her coldness so that he or she can become an empathic person. This, however, is not something Slote does, and yet is precisely the thing that Wang Yangming emphasizes. Wang establishes an analogy between a person who suffers external or physical pain and a person who suffers internal or characteristic pain (a devil) and complains that, while many people naturally feel the pain and suffering of the former, they don't have the same feeling toward the latter. So a truly empathic person, for Wang, also feels the internal pain the devil should, could, or would feel, accompanied with a desire to cure the (internal or characteristic) disease of the devil so that he or she can cease to be a devil.

In the above, I list, without going into details, a number of philosophical issues currently occupying the interests of contemporary Western philosophers, on which the neo-Confucian philosopher Wang Yangming can make significant contributions. The list is, of course, not exhaustive. Indeed, Wang's view of moral evil can develop a concept of moral luck that is not an oxymoron<sup>36</sup> or paradox;<sup>37</sup> his concept of being in one body with ten thousand things can develop an environmental virtual ethics that is not anthropocentric or even egoistic (in the sense of being concerned about one's own virtue when caring about nature); and his comprehensive discussion of ways of moral cultivation can help respond to the situationist critique of virtue ethics. If we go beyond Wang Yangming and move to other philosophers in the Chinese tradition, this list grows exponentially. While we specialists in Chinese philosophy must go deep into both Chinese and Western philosophical traditions to carry out these projects of comparative philosophy and should keep in mind that we are trying to meet what Olberding calls "importunate, impossible demand," the sheer list can make us confident in responding to the real question put forward by the philosophy department chair, "Could Chinese philosophy help solve the problems that occupy current (Western) philosophers?" with a resounding "Yes!"

## NOTES

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26. Bernard Williams, "Internal and External Reasons," reprinted in Williams, *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 101–13.

27. See T. M. Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 33-34.
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31. McDowell, *Mind, Value, and Reality*, 131-50.
32. Michael Slote, *Moral Sentimentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 6.
33. See Adam Morton, "Empathy for the Devil," in *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, eds. Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
34. Slote, *Moral Sentimentalism*, 35. Emphasis added.
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36. Bernard Williams, *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 251.
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## *Problems and Prospects for the Study of Chinese Philosophy in the English-Speaking World*

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The distinguished Sinologist Michael Puett teaches a course on "Classical Chinese Ethical and Political Theory," which is the third most popular course at Harvard (after Introduction to Economics and Introduction to Computer Science).<sup>1</sup> Though the topic of Puett's course seems clearly philosophical, Puett is in Harvard's Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations and is not even among the "Affiliated Faculty" of the philosophy department. Harvard's Philosophy Department is not at all unusual in ignoring Chinese philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

One leading expert on Chinese philosophy, Justin Tiwald, spoke for many of us on this topic when he wrote,

I have spent a good deal of my time defending the philosophical merits of Chinese thinkers. Although I am utterly convinced of their merits, I have nevertheless come across a number of academic philosophers who, by all appearances, simply can't be persuaded that those thinkers are indeed worthy of philosophical analysis, or at any rate that North American philosophy departments have any business teaching them.<sup>3</sup>

In the face of the invincible ignorance of the sort of people Tiwald describes,<sup>4</sup> the number of philosophers working on Chinese thought remains small. Ironically, as Tiwald also notes, "there are already more than enough graduate students who want to study and teach Chinese philosophy,

and by all indications there are more to come."<sup>5</sup> Moreover, there is a huge and accelerating demand for classes, research monographs, textbooks, scholarly essays, and popular discussions on this topic.

### THE PIPELINE PROBLEM

How narrow is the current "pipeline" of specialists on Chinese philosophy? Eight years ago, when I published "Three Questions about the Crisis in Chinese Philosophy," I noted that there were few opportunities for students who wanted to earn a doctorate in philosophy specializing in Chinese thought.<sup>6</sup> At that time, none of the top twenty-five doctoral programs in philosophy had any faculty with a research interest in Chinese philosophy.<sup>7</sup> Among the top fifty programs, there were four philosophy departments with one faculty member each with a research interest in Chinese philosophy. However, none of the faculty at any of these top fifty programs could read Classical Chinese well enough to supervise research on texts in the original language. How have things changed since then?

In many ways, opportunities to study Chinese philosophy have improved considerably since 2008. Among the top twenty-five doctoral programs in North America, three now offer the opportunity to write a dissertation supervised by a specialist in Chinese philosophy: the University of California at Berkeley (where Kwong-loi Shun is a professor in the philosophy department), Duke University (where David Wong is a professor in the philosophy department), and Indiana University at Bloomington (where Aaron Stalnaker is an adjunct associate professor of philosophy).<sup>8</sup> Four more institutions among the top fifty doctoral programs have an expert on Chinese philosophy: Georgetown University (where Erin Cline is an associate member of the philosophy department), the University of California at Riverside (where Eric Schwitzgebel is a professor of philosophy and Lisa Raphals is cooperating faculty with the philosophy department), the University of British Columbia (where Edward Slingerland is an associate member of the philosophy department), and the University of Connecticut at Storrs (where Alexis McLeod will, in fall 2016, be appointed an assistant professor in the philosophy department). Other U.S. institutions that do not appear among the top fifty but are definitely worth very serious consideration by potential doctoral students include the State University of New York at Buffalo (where Jiyuan Yu is a professor of philosophy), the University of Utah (where Eric Hutton is an associate professor of philosophy), and the University of Oklahoma (where Amy Olberding is an associate professor of philosophy). Outside of the United States, there are two strong English-language programs in Chinese philosophy in Singapore: the National University of Singapore (where Hui Chieh Loy and Sor Hoon Tan are associate professors in the philosophy department) and Nanyang Technological University (where Alan K-L Chan, Franklin Perkins, and Chenyang Li are professors in the philosophy program).<sup>9</sup>

Although we should be happy about the increase in opportunities for doctoral studies in Chinese philosophy over the last eight years, we still have a long way to go in solving the pipeline problem. Notice that many of the faculty at top institutions are not primary members of the



philosophy department, but have roles as “adjunct faculty” or similar positions, reflecting the fact that they were hired and tenured in other departments at their universities but have been granted the right to supervise doctoral students in philosophy. I know for a fact that, in at least some cases, this right was granted grudgingly. Moreover, the fact that faculty can supervise doctoral dissertations in another department does not guarantee that they are actually doing so, or even that doctoral students in philosophy at those institutions are regularly exposed to courses with any non-Western content.

### WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?

Given that students want to learn about Chinese thought and publishers want to produce books, reference works, and articles about it, why aren’t more philosophy departments teaching it? I think three factors are primarily responsible for the unwillingness of philosophy department faculty to encourage and incorporate the study of Chinese philosophy into their discipline. One significant factor is ignorance. Most U.S. philosophers simply don’t know anything about Chinese philosophy. If they do have any familiarity with Chinese thought, it is probably from the *Analects* of Kongzi (Confucius), the *Daodejing* (attributed to Laozi), or the *Yijing* (*I Ching*, or *Classic of Changes*). In my opinion, of all the ancient classics, these three works are the least accessible to contemporary philosophers, especially those in the analytic tradition. As Joel Kupperman explained,

If educated Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese (along with a small number of Western scholars) think that they understand *The Analects* of Confucius, it is because they have read it all, probably more than once. The pithy sayings take on meaning in the larger context. For the Western reader who is not a specialist *The Analects* of Confucius initially will seem like one of those amorphous blots used in Rorschach tests.<sup>10</sup>

The same could be said about the *Daodejing* and the *Yijing*: without a great deal of effort and assistance in understanding their background and influence, it would be easy to walk away from these works thinking that Chinese “philosophy” is nothing but shallow platitudes and pseudo-profound word-salad. However, as Eric Schwitzgebel notes, “Even by the strictest criteria, Mo Tzu and Hsün Tzu are plainly philosophers.”<sup>11</sup> He goes on to note that Mengzi and Zhuangzi are comparable to Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, in that they offer strong *prima facie* arguments even though they do not write in the essay format favored by contemporary philosophers. I imagine Schwitzgebel would agree that there are many interesting and powerful philosophers in the later Chinese tradition as well. To give just two examples: Huayan Buddhist views on the problem of personal identity and its relationship to ethics are well-argued and philosophically viable.<sup>12</sup> In addition, as David S. Nivison said of one major sixteenth-century Confucian philosopher, “There are pages in Wang [Yangming], sometimes, that could almost make acceptable brief notes in contemporary philosophy journals like *Analysis*,” particularly when Wang discusses whether weakness of the will is possible.<sup>13</sup> (He argues that it is not.)<sup>14</sup>

Consequently, one of the reasons why most English-speaking philosophers don’t study Chinese philosophy is simply

historical accident: Because the dominant culture in the United States traces back to Europe, the classical Chinese philosophers were not taught to, and thus not read by, the succeeding generations. Ignorance thus apparently justifies ignorance: Because we don’t know their work, they have little impact on our philosophy; because they have little impact on our philosophy, we are justified in remaining ignorant about their work.

That seems like a regrettable state of affairs, unless we already know that these philosophers wouldn’t have much positive influence on our thinking even if we did read them. But if they are as good as I know them to be, it’s hard to see why reading them wouldn’t have a positive influence on us. . . .<sup>15</sup>

Ignorance about Chinese philosophy reinforces the second major cause of the current situation: racist ethnocentrism, which takes both subtle and explicit forms. Former philosophy doctoral student Eugene Park speaks movingly about his failed efforts to encourage a more diverse approach to philosophy:

I found myself repeatedly confounded by ignorance and, at times, thinly veiled racism. To various faculty, I suggested the possibility of hiring someone who, say, specializes in Chinese philosophy or feminist philosophy or the philosophy of race. I complained about the Eurocentric nature of undergraduate and graduate curricula. Without exception, my comments and suggestions were met with the same rationalizations for why philosophy is the way it is and why it should remain that way. To paraphrase one member of my department, “This is the intellectual tradition we work in. Take it or leave it.”

The pressure to accept and conform to a narrow conception of philosophy was pervasive. When I tried to introduce non-Western and other non-canonical philosophy into my dissertation, a professor in my department suggested that I transfer to the Religious Studies Department or some other department where “ethnic studies” would be more welcome.<sup>16</sup>

Most faculty keep hidden the most abhorrent beliefs that rationalize their ethnocentrism. However, Justice Antonin Scalia stated explicitly what many people think or whisper behind closed doors. He referred to the teachings of Confucius as “the mystical aphorisms of the fortune cookie” and stated that “the world does not expect logic and precision in poetry or inspirational pop-philosophy.”<sup>17</sup>

### RAISING OUR OWN STANDARDS

Those of us knowledgeable about Chinese philosophy will agree that ignorance and ethnocentrism are genuine problems that impede the study and acceptance of Chinese

philosophy in English-speaking philosophy departments. However, I think it is also important to consider a third factor. We need to make sure that the work published in Chinese philosophy would meet the standards of the best “mainstream” philosophy. Even if more philosophers are open-minded enough to make the effort to engage with Chinese philosophy, nothing will change if what they read seems mediocre to them.

There are three standards that anyone working on the history of philosophy should meet. (1) You should be intimately familiar with the primary texts. If you specialize in a particular text, you should be able to paraphrase all of it and recite parts of it from memory. (2) You should know the secondary literature on your topic. If you don’t know it, you should do a search for it and then read it. (3) You should be able to summarize alternative interpretations and give an argument for why you reject them. Your summary of opposing positions should not be a caricature, and your counter-argument should be an actual argument, not just a dismissal. These are currently the minimum standards expected of those working on Western philosophy. Scholars working on Chinese philosophy should all be held to the same standards.

There is certainly much excellent recent research on Chinese philosophy. (The scholars I listed above are some, though surely not all, of the most trustworthy philosophers working in the field.) However, the standards I enumerated are not always met in contemporary journal articles and books about Chinese thought. Errors by scholars working on Chinese philosophy are more “costly” than errors by mainstream philosophical historians, due to confirmation bias on the part of Eurocentric philosophers. Such errors provide ammunition for those seeking to rationalize bias against Chinese philosophy as a whole.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, I am inclined to think that failure to read the primary texts, lack of familiarity with the secondary literature, and poor argumentation are still somewhat more common in English language studies of Chinese philosophy than in, say, work on the history of European philosophy. We cannot make progress in convincing even open-minded philosophers to include Chinese philosophy in the curriculum if the quality of the research on that topic reinforces the worst stereotypes about it.

**DOES THE PAST GIVE US HOPE FOR THE FUTURE?**

Will the situation improve? Allow me to contrast two recent experiences that I had, which point in different directions. I was on a main program panel at the 2016 APA Eastern Division meeting on “Learning from Chinese Political Philosophy.” (K. C. Tan and the other members of the program committee are to be commended for suggesting this event.) The panel was specifically billed as an opportunity for non-specialists to learn about Chinese philosophy. However, at the start time of the panel, there were a total of two people in the audience. (I quickly checked the other panels running at the same time, and each already had a respectable audience.) Over the course of our panel, a handful of other people wandered in and out. Based on the audience questions and comments, I estimate that half were already specialists in Chinese philosophy. After the panel, I joked to a colleague,

“Somehow I don’t feel that this was a good use of my entire professional travel grant for the year.”

I had a very different experience at a recent Workshop on Non-Western Philosophical Traditions hosted by the chapter of Minorities and Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania. Minorities and Philosophy (MAP) is an organization (composed largely of graduate students in the English-speaking world) “that aims to examine and address issues of minority participation in academic philosophy.”<sup>19</sup> I met many young scholars who were very enthusiastic about broadening the canon of texts and thinkers taught in North American philosophy departments. My positive experience at this MAP-organized workshop confirms something that Tiwald observed (in the quotation I opened this essay with): there is a generation gap regarding the issue of intellectual diversity between graduate students and many (but not all) senior philosophy faculty. Consequently, upcoming generations of philosophers may be the ones with the open-mindedness and determination to transform the field in a positive direction, even without institutional support in their doctoral programs. Perhaps in forty years it will be as common for English-speaking philosophers to write about the disagreement between Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming over “the extension of knowledge” as it currently is for them to write about the disagreement between Russell and Kripke over proper names.

If philosophy does become more inclusive, it will not be an unprecedented change. Consider the case of a major European university that began to teach the ideas of a particular non-canonical thinker. Traditionalists on the faculty objected that the new philosophy was watering down the curriculum in the name of a misguided pluralism. Because the new philosophy was inconsistent with many widely held positions, some philosophers resorted to a flaccid relativism, arguing that there were “two truths” on these matters. This sort of approach only convinced the traditionalists that the new philosophy was nonsense. However, one brilliant philosopher argued that the best way to discover the truth is through a pluralistic dialogue with all the major world philosophies. This philosophical genius was Thomas Aquinas. In the thirteenth century at the University of Paris, Aquinas encouraged his students and colleagues (who had previously only learned a form of Platonized Christianity) to expand the canon and learn not just from the philosophy of the pagan Aristotle (only recently rediscovered in Western Europe), but also from Jewish and Muslim thinkers. The result was to reinvigorate and deepen the Western philosophical tradition. (Siger of Brabant, the infamous “Latin Averroist,” was the one who advocated the “two truths” doctrine. Interestingly, there are competing accounts of how Siger died,<sup>20</sup> but I suppose each of them is true, in its own way.)

The case of Aquinas and the re-discovery of Aristotle is just one of many examples that illustrate that the Western philosophical canon is not, and never was, a closed system. Philosophy only becomes richer and approximates the truth more closely as it becomes increasingly diverse and pluralistic.

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## NOTES

1. Christine Gross-Loh, "Why Are Hundreds of Harvard Students Studying Ancient Chinese Philosophy?" *The Atlantic Online*, <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/10/why-are-hundreds-of-harvard-students-studying-ancient-chinese-philosophy/280356/>, posted October 8, 2013, accessed January 12, 2016.
2. To its credit, the Harvard Philosophy Department does have a professor who specializes in Africana Philosophy (Tommie Shelby).
3. Justin Tiwald, "A Case for Chinese Philosophy," *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies*, 8, no. 1 (Fall 2008): 6.
4. "Invincible ignorance" is originally a term from theology, where it referred to the excusable ignorance of those who had never been exposed to Church doctrine. Now, many secular philosophers use the term to refer to culpable ignorance of those who dogmatically resist rational arguments for evolutionary theory, vaccinations, anthropogenic global warming, or the value of teaching Chinese philosophy in philosophy departments.
5. Ibid.
6. Bryan W. Van Norden, "Three Questions about the Crisis in Chinese Philosophy," *APA Newsletter on the Status of Asian and Asian-American Philosophy and Philosophies*, 8, no. 1 (Fall 2008): 3-6.
7. My rankings are taken from the *Philosophical Gourmet Report* (the 2006-2008 report, archived at <http://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/2008/>, and the current report, 2014-2015, at <http://www.philosophicalgourmet.com/>). This is not in any way an uncontroversial or unanimously accepted guide. However, I do think that the fact that a doctoral program is listed among the top twenty-five or the top fifty of the *PGR* tell us *something* about its perceived quality, particularly among English-speaking, mainstream, analytic philosophers. Since the point of this essay is to challenge the views of this constituency, it is directly relevant what they think.
8. Michael Ing also teaches Chinese philosophy at Indiana University at Bloomington but is not currently affiliated with the philosophy department.
9. I have omitted from this list two doctorate-granting institutions in the English-speaking world that I have included in previous lists. In the past, the University of Hawai'i had several high-visibility faculty members specializing in Chinese philosophy. However, my understanding is that they are on the cusp of several retirements. Consequently, we must wait to see what the future of that program will bring. The University of Hong Kong currently has several younger faculty members active in Chinese philosophy. However, I discovered that their doctoral program consists of two courses and writing a thesis (<http://philosophy.hku.hk/?n=Main.Postgrad>). In my opinion, this is inadequate doctoral training.
10. Joel J. Kupperman, *Classic Asian Philosophy: A Guide to the Essential Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 58. Kupperman is now retired, but his works are excellent examples of how to synthesize Chinese and Western philosophy.
11. Eric Schwitzgebel, "Why Don't We Know Our Chinese Philosophy?" *APA Newsletter on the Status of Asian & Asian-American Philosophers & Philosophies* 1, no. 1 (2001): 26-27. The philosophers whom Schwitzgebel refers to are now more commonly known as "Mozi" and "Xunzi." I would add Hanfeizi to the list of ancient Chinese thinkers who are "plainly philosophers." For selections from their works, as well as Mengzi and Zhuangzi (mentioned below), see *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, 2nd ed., ed. Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Van Norden (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2005).
12. See, e.g., Fazang, "The Rafter Dialogue," trans. David Elstein, in *Readings in Later Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Justin Tiwald and Bryan W. Van Norden (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2014), 80-86, and Graham Priest, *One* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 167-235.
13. David S. Nivison, "The Philosophy of Wang Yangming," in *The Ways of Confucianism* (Chicago: Open Court Press, 1996), 218.
14. For an overview of his arguments, see §3. Unity of Knowing and Acting, in Bryan W. Van Norden, "Wang Yangming," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2014 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/wang-yangming/>, accessed January 11, 2016.
15. Schwitzgebel, op. cit.
16. Eugene Park, "Why I Left Academia: Philosophy's Homogeneity Needs Rethinking," [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/hippo-reads/why-i-left-academia\\_b\\_5735320.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/hippo-reads/why-i-left-academia_b_5735320.html), last updated November 3, 2014, accessed January 11, 2016.
17. For the context, see Bryan W. Van Norden, "Confucius on Gay Marriage," *The National Interest*, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/07/confucius-on-gay-marriage/>, posted July 13, 2015, accessed January 11, 2016.
18. I am indebted to Amy Olberding for reminding me of the need to emphasize this point.
19. <http://www.mapforthegap.com/about.html>
20. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siger\\_of\\_Brabant#Death](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siger_of_Brabant#Death)