The Tacit Rejection of Multiculturalism in American Philosophy Ph.D. Programs: The Case of Chinese Philosophy

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Abstract

At the confluence of the philosophy of education and social/political philosophy lies the question of how we should educate the next generation of philosophy professors. Part of the question involves how broad such an education should be in order to educate teachers with the ability to, themselves, educate citizens competent to function in a diverse, globalized world. As traditional Western education systems from elementary schools through universities have embraced multicultural sources over the last few decades, philosophy Ph.D. programs have bucked this trend, clinging tightly to traditional Western sources and problems. While this claim will come as no surprise to those working in the field, there is little published evidence or discussion of the tacit rejection of multiculturalism by philosophy Ph.D. programs, and few people outside the field realize how Eurocentric these programs remain. This article provides evidence and discussion of this fact, focusing on the case of Chinese philosophy in American Ph.D. programs.

Keywords: Chinese philosophy, philosophy Ph.D. programs, multiculturalism, diversity, philosophy of education, social philosophy
Ph.D. programs in philosophy have two main missions outside of educating graduate students for their own sake: doing original research and producing the next generation of college professors. In these two respects, the status of multiculturalism in American philosophy Ph.D. programs is at a crisis point. Too few professors are being produced who are capable of teaching non-Western traditions, and not enough philosophical research in those traditions is being undertaken. As a result, the American academy is, itself, in however small of a fashion, worse off. This article investigates the place of Chinese philosophy in American Ph.D. programs as a case study in the failure of these programs to embrace non-Western traditions. What is said here of Chinese philosophy, can, though the details will differ, also be said for Indian philosophy, Japanese philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, Islamic philosophy, African philosophy, and Latin American philosophy, including all of their subtraditions and allied non-mainstream philosophy, such as the philosophy of race.

**Where We Stand**

At this writing, 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 U.S. house only nine full-time specialists in Chinese philosophy capable of supervising Ph.D. dissertations Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialist</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Graduating University</th>
<th>Graduating Department</th>
<th>Hired AOS</th>
<th># of Ph.D. graduates over last decade</th>
<th># of Faculty in current Dept.</th>
<th>Current Department Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>University 1</td>
<td>University 2</td>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Research Specialization</td>
<td>Projects in Progress</td>
<td>Research Focus</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pluralist³</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chung-ying Cheng</td>
<td>U. of Hawai‘i</td>
<td>Harvard U.</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Chinese philosophy</td>
<td>10 (several in progress)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Comparative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Harrington</td>
<td>Duquesne U.</td>
<td>Boston College</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Medieval philosophy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Continental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Hutton</td>
<td>U. of Utah</td>
<td>Stanford U.</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>1 (1 in progress)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analytic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Olberding</td>
<td>U. of Oklahoma</td>
<td>U. of Hawai‘i</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Chinese philosophy</td>
<td>0 (1 in progress)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analytic, leaning comparative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Perkins</td>
<td>DePaul U.</td>
<td>Penn. State</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Modern philosophy</td>
<td>0 (3 in progress)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Continental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Wong</td>
<td>Duke U.</td>
<td>Princeton U.</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>1 (2 in progress)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analytic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiyuan Yu</td>
<td>SUNY, Buffalo</td>
<td>U. of Guelph</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Ancient Greek</td>
<td>2 (2 in progress)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analytic, leaning pluralist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Full-time specialists in Chinese philosophy in American philosophy Ph.D. programs capable of supervising dissertations in Chinese philosophy

The issue of research is difficult to evaluate in a concrete way, but the obvious is worth stating. If there are only a handful of professors in research universities, the field will suffer in both the quality and quantity of output.⁴

To get an understanding of how American philosophy Ph.D. programs are serving the educational needs of students across the country, three modest projects of data collection and/or analysis were undertaken. The first involved an analysis of the last nine years of advertisements in Jobs for Philosophers; the second involved a survey of departments across the country with regard to the prior hiring of professors in Chinese (or Asian) philosophy; and the third is an analysis of a ranking of departments and its potential effect on the field of Chinese philosophy.
Jobs in Chinese Philosophy

*Jobs for Philosophers* (JFP) is a publication produced by the American Philosophical Association (APA). Until 2012, it was published four times per year, in October, November, February, and May, plus occasional online additions (and since has become online only). The customary method that hiring departments use in searching for job candidates is to advertise in the fall and interview in the first few months of the new year for a hire to begin the following fall term. The vast majority of all searches for hires in college and university philosophy programs during this period were advertised through *Jobs for Philosophers*, making it a historical document as well as a necessary tool for job seekers and employers.

Job advertisements in JFP generally list the following information relevant to this discussion: incoming rank, whether the position is tenure track, area(s) of specialty (AOS) necessary or desired, and area(s) of competence (AOC) necessary or desired. In this study, nine years of JFP data were collected and analyzed for information related to positions in Chinese philosophy. Eligible data were limited to jobs in college or university tenure-track positions for which a specialty or competence in Chinese philosophy would be particularly appropriate, including jobs that advertised for non-Western philosophy, Eastern philosophy, Asian philosophy, etc., which will be referred to here collectively as “non-Western (NW) philosophy.”

This information was organized by year, averaged, and compared with similar numbers for jobs in all areas.

The results (Figure 1) indicate that there is a robust demand for jobs in NW philosophy, amounting to at least 4% of all tenure-track philosophy job openings per year. The trend is consistent and possibly growing. For SF 2005, just over 4% of all advertisements included a desire or need for some category of NW philosophy. For SF 2013, that proportion had risen by over 50%. Over the past nine years, there were four years in which NW job openings accounted for greater
than 6% of the total job openings in philosophy and three out of those four were in the last four years.

![Job Ads in Non-Western* Philosophy as a Percentage of All Philosophy Job Ads Per Year](image)

* Focus on China.

Figure 1. Job ads in non-Western philosophy (focus on China) as a percentage of all jobs advertised in JFP in a year.

Not only is the overall demand for NW philosophy robust with respect to all fields of philosophy, but the demand for specialists is also strong relative to the demand for mere competence, indicating that philosophers are accepting non-Western philosophy as a serious field of research able to contribute not only to instruction but to the enterprise of creating new knowledge and insight (Figure 2). For SF 2005, the ratio of AOS to AOC in NW philosophy was 0.3, and in SF
2013, it was 0.6, a doubling, that may point to future growth.

Figure 2. Ratio of JFP advertisements with AOS in NW philosophy (focus on China) to advertisements with AOC in NW philosophy (focus on China) per year.

From this analysis, it can be concluded that the demand for NW philosophy is robust across American colleges and universities and may even be growing. The question arises, then, are American philosophy Ph.D. programs producing professors to meet the demand? The answer appears to be an unequivocal, no.

**New Ph.D.s in Chinese Philosophy**

There are two workable ways to get at information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the job market in NW philosophy. One is to survey departments who are producing graduates to see how many they are producing and what kind of feedback they are getting about the job market, and the other is to survey the hiring departments, themselves, about the depth and quality of the
applicant pool.

Let’s begin with the producing departments. As Table 1 shows, about 3.5 Ph.D.s in the field of Chinese philosophy are produced by these departments per year, the vast majority produced by Hawai‘i. Hawai‘i’s profile can be considered Comparative, with specialists in Indian, Buddhist, and Japanese philosophy, in addition to standard areas of analytic, history, American, and Continental philosophy. The other departments producing Ph.D.s in Chinese philosophy are generally either solidly Continental or solidly analytic, with the exceptions of Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, which emphasizes American philosophy, while leaning Continental; the State University of New York, Buffalo, which is strongly analytic but rounded out with specialists in other areas that mark it as leaning pluralist; and Oklahoma, which now has a specialist in Tibetan philosophy in addition to its Chinese specialist, who together lend a Comparative tenor to the program. Department orientations are important when it comes to the hiring side because hiring departments report that they tend to prefer hiring from departments with profiles that resemble their own, and analytic departments appear to be the most sensitive in this respect. As a result, we can see from Table 1 that while hiring departments that tend toward Comparativism or Pluralism are well-served by the University of Hawai‘i, departments that are solidly analytic, as many Ph.D. programs are, will not be as content with the current market. This sentiment is borne out by surveys conducted with hiring departments.

Twenty-eight departments who posted ads from SF 2008 to SF 2013 in JFP were contacted based on ads that included at least one AOS in some branch of non-Western philosophy. Departments that advertised more than once over the past ten years in AOS or AOC NW were also contacted. Queries were posed with regard to the number of applicants, the quality of the pool, and the universities where they were educated. 17 hiring departments offered comments in response. Results show that while many hires were from Hawai‘i and that those hiring departments consistently expressed great satisfaction, the pool of candidates was reported to be small compared
to hires in other areas—often just a quarter, or even less, than usual. One department (primarily Continental) reported that for an ad in AOS “Asian,” they had only 30 applicants, and only six actually specialized in Asian philosophy. The hired candidate was from Hawai‘i, and the department reports to be very satisfied. Other departments, however, felt the pool was insufficient. One professor in a small department that appears to have a somewhat analytic lean said, “There were not very many applicants relative to other philosophy searches, and the applicants we had were of generally poor quality.” Another professor in a Pluralist department said that they attempted two searches in Chinese philosophy, first for an AOC, but none of their strong applicants had an AOC in Chinese. After that, they tried a search for an AOS in Chinese but had only twenty applicants (compared to a more typical number of 150-200). They did not find a satisfactory candidate and ended up canceling the search.

The overwhelming sentiment from hiring departments was that the pool for specialists in NW philosophy, especially Chinese philosophy, is very, very small. One department reported that an ad for Asian philosophy brought in more specialists in Indian philosophy than Chinese. This may, indeed, be the case more broadly, as not only does Hawai‘i have a strong Indian program, so does the University of New Mexico, and there are other philosophy Ph.D. programs, as well, that are capable of producing Ph.D.s in Indian philosophy.¹⁰

As would be expected with such a small pool, a significant number of candidates hailed from programs outside of the U.S., and some of these have been successful in being selected. Departments have reported hiring in NW philosophy from New Zealand, Hong Kong, Ghana, Mexico, India, and Germany.

Hiring departments were also queried about their rationales for hiring in NW philosophy. Responses ranged from filling an existing position vacated by a retirement, expanding the program, a commitment to pluralism / diversity, meeting a growing demand, and the aspiration to “have the strongest baccalaureate program in the region.” The general overall sentiment was that the
students and the faculty would all be better off by introducing a Non-Western perspective. The professor above who was the most dissatisfied with the candidate pool, said it best, “We want students to think about classical philosophical problems from a distinctly different background. This can help them highlight assumptions taken for granted in the West and perhaps aid their skill in thinking critically about their lives.” A philosophy Ph.D. program that advertised for a specialty in non-Western philosophy to fill a vacated position expressed a sentiment that should, from the above information, now seem obvious, namely, that graduating Ph.D.s with at least a competence in a branch of non-Western philosophy will have a significant advantage in an otherwise very competitive job market.

To state this more plainly, the placement record in non-Western philosophy is outstanding, far surpassing the general placement rate, for the simple reason that the number of graduates nearly matches the number of openings.

**How We Got Here**

Evaluating how we got into the situation in which we find ourselves with respect to the dearth of Chinese philosophy in American philosophy Ph.D. programs is complicated. While there are many contributing factors, two stand out—one that promoted non-Western philosophy, and one that squelched it. The first is the worldview that went hand in hand with American reconstruction efforts in Europe and parts of Asia after World War II, namely, that more understanding across cultures would contribute to a more peaceful world. It is not clear how much hiring there was in non-Western philosophy in the 1950s and early 1960s, but there were several philosophers at major universities who, while not Asia specialists, did recognize the value of Asian thought. These include F.S.C. Northrop, Sterling Professor of Philosophy and Law, Yale University; W. T. Stace, professor of philosophy, Princeton University; and W. H. Werkmeister, Director, School of Philosophy, University of Southern California. They published in the field and
participated in relevant conferences. By the late 1960s and 1970s, when the post-war sentiment of pluralism had grown in liberal circles, there were a number of hires. It was at this time that the University of Hawaiʻi, which had already established its reputation in comparative philosophy under Charles Moore and Wing-tsit Chan (not to mention Harold McCarthy, Kenneth Inada, and Chung-yuan Chang), brought in Eliot Deutsch (Indian / Comparative), S. K. Saksena (Indian), Thomas Kasulis (Japanese / Buddhist), Chung-ying Cheng (Chinese), Lenn Goodman (Islamic), and Roger Ames (Chinese). Elsewhere, Michigan hired Donald Munro (Chinese); Stanford brought in David Nivison (Chinese); Minnesota hired Karl Potter (Indian), who later moved to Washington; Missouri brought in Bina Gupta (Indian); SUNY Buffalo recruited Inada (Buddhist / Chinese) from Hawaiʻi; and Ohio State hired Kasulis away from Hawaiʻi. In the 1980s, major hires included Stephen Phillips (Indian) at Texas, and Kwong-loi Shun (Chinese) at UC, Berkeley.

The second major factor—the squelching factor—was the growth and eventual ascendancy in elite universities of logical positivism and the philosophy of language, which tended to take an ahistoric, scientistic view of philosophy. Although the more extreme forms of Logical Positivism proved untenable, the ahistoric, scientistic presuppositions have persisted. This force has proved to be much more robust than pluralism or multiculturalism to the point that most philosophy departments at elite universities are focused largely on core analytic concerns: philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, metaphysics, epistemology, logic, and philosophy of science. Through the end of the 1970s, the effect on all branches of philosophy outside of core analytic concerns had been devastating. In the 1990s and into the 21st century, we have begun to see a swing back toward balance. Ethics programs, for instance, have grown considerably; Continental philosophy, while still generally only a token in elite departments, is not vilified the way it had been; and Ancient philosophy is making a comeback by demonstrating its continued relevance.

Those are the two major forces contributing to the situation in Chinese philosophy, as a
subset of non-Western philosophy, today. The first has morphed into a robust movement toward multiculturalism, diversity, and globalism that is sweeping universities across the country and which may be getting a toe-hold in philosophy departments, though that remains to be seen. As the second force dwindles in influence, one would think that a multicultural shift would be inevitable. There is a third force, however, that is standing in the way and which must not be overlooked.

Around the turn of the 21st century, something decisive happened that is now cementing the status quo in elite departments. Just at the time that US News and World Reports rankings of U.S. universities established itself in the minds of students, parents, and university administrators as the authoritative comparative gauge of universities, Brian Leiter's Philosophical Gourmet Report (PGR) came on the scene. Developed initially as a guide for students applying for graduate school, it soon took on a status similar to that of USNWR's rankings in the eyes of professors and administrators, who now use it as a tool to gauge a department's success and status (Saul 2012; Wilson 2005; Ernst 2009).

The PGR has, however, been severely criticized for a number of questionable assumptions and methodological flaws. Some of these have been published in peer-reviewed journals (Saul 2012, Walker 2004, Wilshire 2002, Frodeman & Rowland 2009), while others appear on blogs and webpages. These have not seemed to diminish its influence, however.

Looking closely at the existing critiques of the PGR, one can see that, in virtue of its deep flaws, what the PGR actually offers (a ranking of departments by a narrow set of philosophers hailing from a narrow set of universities, focusing on a limited set of subfields) varies considerably from what it claims to offer (a general ranking by a valid sample set of all philosophers). What matters here is not that it is flawed but that it is influential despite its flaws. And more importantly, its biases may be leading to an eventual uniformity in the profession that systematically excludes specialties that are already marginalized, such as Chinese philosophy.

According to evidence in the critiques of the PGR, although philosophers often
recommend that the rankings be taken with a grain of salt, the PGR is now used widely as an objective gauge of program success. If this is true, it stands to reason that programs that want to be viewed as successful will want to improve their PGR rankings and will thus very quickly examine how best to do that. From reading just the rankings, one would get the impression that hiring any expert with an outstanding reputation in any philosophical specialty would give an equal boost to a program, but as Leiter, himself, notes, statistical analysis of the report shows that specialties are not of equal weight in the make-up of the rankings:

The sociologist Kieran Healy (Duke) found in studying prior iterations of the survey, all else being equal, appointing someone in language / mind / metaphysics / epistemology gives a program a bigger boost in the overall results than appointing someone in, say, history of philosophy. (Leiter 2012)

Leiter writes this off as an artifact of the field of philosophy, itself, rather than as proof of bias in his evaluator sample. However, the latter is much more likely because the sample of evaluators is biased right from the start. This bias, in contradiction to standard sampling procedures, produces results that skew the entire report toward an orientation known as "M&E," or metaphysics and epistemology done in a way consistent with the analytic tradition outlined above.

For the purposes of a small number of graduate students interested in studying at PGR top-ranked schools and who have a prospective future teaching at those schools, the PGR is conceivably a valuable resource, but when it is used by universities and programs to build those programs, its effects become pernicious. For example, because of the biases built into the PGR, hiring in any subfield of M&E would bring a bigger payoff than hiring in a subfield of Value (ethics, political philosophy, philosophy of art, etc.) or History (including Continental subfields), and infinitely more so than hiring in Other (Chinese philosophy, philosophy of race, feminist
philosophy). In other words, 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 implications for Chinese philosophy in the profession are easy to see. Any program that wishes to maintain its place in the PGR top 50, or to break into the top 50, is incentivized to not hire in Chinese philosophy (or any already marginalized specialty). Under this set of circumstances, a department head could go so far as to claim a fiduciary responsibility not to hire in Chinese philosophy, as it would be a misappropriation of limited resources.

Where We're Going

When I spoke with one fairly prominent analytical program about the possibility of hiring in Chinese philosophy, the department chair told me that the administration advises them to hire in the area of their existing strengths, presumably to make a name for themselves in that area. This is consistent with the worry above—that balance across specialties in a program is irrelevant to one's PGR rankings, and therefore irrelevant to one's perceived level of success.

In comparison to previous years, it appears as though we still have two major forces affecting potential hires in Chinese (and non-Western) philosophy. The force for multiculturalism and diversity continues to grow, and with the global influence of China steadily increasing, there should be an additional momentum. Across the country, universities are supplementing their curricula by adding courses and concentrations in global, multicultural, and diversity areas. But we also have the PGR as a significant drag. Let me say a little about the forces for multiculturalism
and what some programs are doing about them and then entertain an argument in favor of pluralism.

*Philosophy and the Globalizing Curriculum*

The multicultural wars in the realm of general education requirements have pretty much ended, and the result is that non-Western cultures have been elevated to the status of equal on paper. That is to say that common core and general education programs usually require some non-Western content for all students, and distribution requirements include any non-Western cultures for which specialists can be found to teach them. For instance, Columbia University's vaunted "Core Curriculum" includes a "global requirement," the courses of which ask "students to engage directly with the variety of civilizations and the diversity of traditions that, along with the West, have formed the world and continue to interact in it today." The University of Chicago's program--"this famed Core curriculum, a model for American general education"—integrates non-Western content into its six quarters of "Humanities, Civilization Studies, and the Arts" requirement. Indeed, most universities use a similar model, although calling it a "core" is not entirely accurate, since there are so many offerings, no two students take exactly the same set of courses to meet their requirements. Many universities prefer the admittedly less elegant but more accurate locution, "general education" (in fact, in Chicago's course catalog, it is referred to in just that way, as "General Education"). Including some form of non-Western content as a significant option in general education requirements is now the standard across universities.

General education is not the only way that multiculturalism is getting a foothold in American universities. There has recently been a massive push toward funding a wide variety of curricular initiatives under the rubric of "globalization." Generally, this refers less to pre-modern cultural content and more to contemporary socio-political concerns across the world. It also refers to integrating the university into what is perceived to be a global context by initiating cooperative
ties with institutions around the world, promoting study abroad programs, highlighting the number of a school's international students, and even establishing campuses in other countries.

In both of these movements there has been and will continue to be a role for the field of philosophy. In pre-modern contexts, it goes without saying that philosophy is perfectly positioned to contribute to general education programs that require courses in "culture," "civilization," "thought," or "texts," as they are variously called. Likewise, philosophy can contribute to the current conversation of globalization, particularly in the area of ethics, where it concerns equity, cultural norms, and environmental stewardship.

The sad fact, however, is that philosophy programs are not meeting their potential. Where programs have the input of specific disciplines, philosophy is generally absent with regard to any participation in the non-Western curriculum for the simple fact that very few philosophy programs at top universities have specialists in non-Western philosophy who are capable of teaching, or even supervising the teaching of, such courses. Columbia, for instance, which has a member of the philosophy faculty on the Committee of the Core Curriculum, lists 109 courses in its approved list of Global Core courses, and not a single one is associated with the Philosophy Department. Departments not associated with a particular region of the world that have courses in the list are: History with 20 courses, Anthropology with 18, Religion with 5, Art History and Archaeology with 5, and Music with 4. Even Economics and Sociology each have a course on the list. Philosophy could easily have several courses—if they only had the faculty to offer them.

The University of Chicago offers eight (three-course) sequences of courses for its Core requirement of "Interpretation of Historical, Literary, and Philosophical Texts." Many of these have general cultural content, as Introduction to the Humanities; two refer specifically to a multicultural world ("Readings in World Literature" and "Reading Cultures: Collection, Travel, Exchange"); one targets a specific culture, namely, Greek; and one is specifically philosophical, "Philosophical Perspectives." According to the catalog description, this last course covers
"fundamental questions about the place of human beings in the world, and as a historically situated
discipline interacting with and responding to developments in other areas of thought and
culture." There is nothing Euro-centric in this description, and it would be fair to expect to read
any number of non-Western texts over its three semesters, especially since the explicitly
multicultural sequences do not include philosophical content, as such. But when it comes to the
descriptions of the courses in the sequence, they are decidedly Eurocentric: all European (or
American) authors (and all male): Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Melville, etc. I
was able to find online a complete set of syllabi for 4 to 7 sections of each of the three semesters
of this sequence, and of those 17 syllabi, not one contained a single non-Western text. The
situation suggests to students that there is nothing of enduring philosophical value in any cultural
tradition outside of the European and that philosophy is nothing but European.

Columbia and Chicago are, indeed, considered model general education programs, so it is
not unexpected that other universities also offer little in the way of non-Western philosophy to
undergraduates. But the problem goes deeper than that, to the question of what philosophy as a
discipline is. It appears from reading some university websites that the very discipline of
philosophy is defined by and bounded by the Western tradition. The University of Chicago
website, for instance, announces a "commitment to philosophical inclusiveness and breadth" and
yet limits its program entirely to the Western tradition. The only conclusion to make from this is
that philosophy does not exist outside the European tradition—otherwise, the program could not
be "inclusive." A similar conclusion can be drawn from Columbia University's Philosophy website,
which says, "Our department provides a comprehensive academic atmosphere for pursuing
advanced study in a wide range of philosophical subjects and methods—systematic, analytic, and
historical," and yet among the listed faculty specialties, they have no specialists in any branch
of philosophy outside of the Western tradition, not in any of the branches of early Buddhism,
Tibetan Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism, Japanese Buddhism, not in and period of Daoism or
Confucianism, not in any of the many branches of Indian philosophy or Islamic philosophy, not in any of the contemporary explorations of African or Latin American philosophy, and not in any explorations of Post-Colonialism, or Critical Race Theory. One could go on and on with such examples. And of course, given the lack of non-Western specialists across nearly all U.S. philosophy Ph.D. programs, the situation is repeated across the country. Whenever a philosophy program website claims that it is inclusive or comprehensive or broad or that it covers a range of human concerns, it almost always means within a Eurocentric view, and the impression that one takes away is that that view is all that matters philosophically. It is ironic, tragic even, that while most universities are moving toward multicultural curricula and global involvement, philosophy departments are generally content to remain within Eurocentric walls. The irony is particularly redolent on the West Coast, where all twelve major universities bill themselves as "Pacific Rim" schools and are even members of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, and yet not one of the twelve has a full-time specialist in any branch of Asian philosophy.

But the situation is not entirely pessimistic. Some programs are capitalizing on the multicultural trend and some programs are actively, and actually, globalizing. Yale University has opened a campus in Singapore and recently hired two specialists in Asian philosophy for that campus. New York University opened a "portal" in Shanghai and may hire a specialist in Asian philosophy, who will be a regular faculty of the NYU department, rotating through the NYU campus and serving on Ph.D. committees (there is a similar potential for their Abu Dhabi portal). NYU has also recently hired Kwame Anthony Appiah away from Princeton.

Given the paucity of programs producing specialists in Asian philosophy and the small size of the field, there are complicating factors when it comes to making a hire. This first goes back to a tendency mentioned above—that departments tend to hire from departments with similar profiles. At present, there are no solidly analytic departments regularly producing Ph.D.'s in Chinese philosophy, so even if a solidly analytic department wanted to hire, they would find the
field of candidates vanishingly small (even considering English-speaking Ph.D. programs outside the U.S., where the situation is not very different). An added complication is that when one wants to make a hire, one wants to ensure that the hire has a good possibility of fulfilling her research goals on the way to getting tenure. Tenure evaluation, however, relies on the abilities of the tenure committee to effectively evaluate the work of the applicant, and the small number of specialists makes that job challenging as well. A similar issue arises for hiring at the senior level—for instance, a university may require as many as 20 senior specialists on a list of potential external referees.

Some departments who profess a recognition of the interest for, and need to provide courses in, non-Western philosophy have found ways around hiring a full-time specialist. Princeton, for instance, has brought in at least one Asian specialist as a visiting scholar. Indiana University welcomes Asian specialists from other disciplines as adjuncts and cross-lists their courses in philosophy. Several programs, such as Yale, Berkeley, UC Davis, UC Santa Barbara, and Colorado, have faculty with a side interest in Asian philosophy who offer courses aligned with that interest. All of these resourceful attempts to meet demand for Asian philosophy, especially for purposes of multicultural general education, are laudable.

In communicating by email and telephone with the Chairs of fourteen departments with philosophy Ph.D. programs, I got the sense that philosophy departments have recognized a demand for non-Western philosophy but have not yet begun to make significant changes in faculty profiles to address the demand. No programs were hostile to the idea (unless you consider the six (out of 20) non-responses hostile), and the predominant excuse for not acting was financial—that although they would love to have someone in Asian philosophy, the funding just isn't there. Generally, I prefer to take people at their word and as a former chair, myself, I understand the difficult decisions that must be made when choosing which specialties to emphasize in searches. This excuse sometimes stretches credulity, however, for example, when one of the largest
departments in the country professes to not have the resources. Nevertheless, the simple fact seems to be that the intrinsic value of non-Western philosophy is not being realized.

*Programs with Chinese Philosophy*

Along this line, it is worth looking at programs that do include Chinese philosophy as a regular part of their program and assess what value it offers. For this, I contacted many of the Chairs of departments with Ph.D. programs that have full-time specialists in Chinese philosophy and the specialists, themselves. The specialists report a high level of interest in their courses from both undergraduate majors and non-majors. One of their major contributions is as interdisciplinary bridges to areas outside the department, specifically Asian Studies. Most of these specialists have been active in Asian Studies administration or committees, have opened courses that meet non-Western general education requirements, and regularly work with faculty and students outside the philosophy department. Given the push toward interdisciplinarity in many universities, this kind of cooperation is an obvious asset for a department.

An equally important consideration is what kind of change a representative of Non-Western philosophy brings to the intellectual climate of a department. A revealing answer comes from Leslie Francis, former chair of Philosophy at the University of Utah and now Utah's Associate Dean for Faculty Research and Development and Alfred C. Emery Professor of Law, who wrote a short piece entitled, "I Cannot Imagine our Department without Asian Philosophy" (Francis 2009: 17). Francis says that in addition to the value of interdisciplinarity that their two Asianists bring (Eric Hutton in Chinese philosophy and Deen Chatterjee in Indian philosophy32), they also broaden the perspectives of their fields, bringing in a comparative aspect that that makes the subject matter in their respective fields of ethics and political philosophy more relevant to current issues. This fact, she says, helps attract talented students to the department.

Michael Naas, chair of Philosophy at DePaul University echoes this sentiment with great
enthusiasm. Naas, when asked whether his department would hire in Chinese philosophy again if their specialist (Franklin Perkins) were to leave, said that if he had been asked such a question many years ago, the answer would certainly have been, no (Perkins, having two specialties, was not hired in Chinese philosophy). Now, however, having witnessed the enormous contributions of Chinese philosophy to the department, the answer would be an unhesitant, yes. According to Naas, Perkins has been instrumental in attracting quality students to the program, not only at the undergraduate level but also at the graduate level.

Another insightful perspective comes from Alex Rosenberg, chair of Philosophy at Duke. His comments are succinct and worth quoting:

[Courses in Chinese philosophy at Duke] fulfill a significant demand for this subject.

Comparative cultural studies are indispensable, therefore so is Chinese philosophy.

Some of our best grad students come to study Chinese Philosophy with David Wong. Many undergrads are introduced to it by Wong and [Owen] Flanagan.

[The perspectives that Chinese philosophy brings to discussions] are breaking down boundaries assumed in Western philosophy. Asian studies is increasing in importance everywhere at Duke.

[The role that Chinese philosophy plays with respect to multiculturalism in the department and the university is] crucial to the fact of multiculturalism and the symbolism of it.
These three department chairs are representative of other departments with Chinese specialists in evincing a recognition that a significant mission of a university is delivering instruction in the liberal arts, and that multiculturalism is now a significant part of a liberal arts curriculum, and further, that Chinese philosophy can help fulfill this role. Beyond that, however, they also represent the common view that Chinese philosophy brings an important and vital perspective to the programs, which would be impoverished without it.

Democracy and Pluralism

I mentioned above that a major force working against the trend toward multiculturalism in the philosophical academy is the rankings of the Philosophical Gourmet Report. It is possible to view this effect of the PGR on academia as an unintended consequence of administrators taking it more seriously than it was ever intended to be taken. I suspect that many of the prominent philosophers who associate themselves with the PGR and who should be able to recognize a flawed instrument when they see one, take this perspective. It is easy to make a statistical argument for expanding the pool of PGR poll participants. But there is another argument to be made in this direction, and that is a democratic one, which hinges on the notion of pluralism.

There have been a number of discussions on Brian Leiter's blog related to pluralism, largely as a response to underrepresentation of certain Continental philosophy departments in the PGR. I want to steer clear of that confrontation. One cannot say that Leiter is intellectually opposed to pluralism. He matter-of-factly calls himself a pluralist by virtue of his diverse interests, and he includes a decent variety of specialties in the PGR (although one could easily argue for more). That he includes the small field of Chinese philosophy in the PGR is one indication of his pluralist commitment. Before I move to an argument for pluralism from the position of democratic values, let us get clear on what kind of pluralism we are discussing.

The best arguments for pluralism in departments can be found in a set of papers presented
at an Issues in the Profession session of the Eastern APA. The papers are at once insightful, provocative, ironic, humorous, and constructive.

John Lachs begins his introduction to this set of papers with an anecdote:

In 1978, when "pluralists" first voiced organized objections to what they viewed as the narrowness of the profession, a colleague from Harvard attempted to deflect criticism of his department by professing not to understand its basis. "How can you say that Harvard is narrow," he asked in a tone of hurt but sincere amazement, "when we have both Quine and Rawls? (Lachs 1996: 167)

Lachs very quickly moves on to his terse but insightful conclusions:

First, one of our central responsibilities as teachers is to expose undergraduates to a wide variety of philosophical ideas and methods. Second, because philosophers don't agree even on how best to do philosophy, we must keep all potentially fruitful approaches open for the next generation of thinkers. Third, we cannot hope to find the truth we seek without the stimulation, the challenge and the insights of those who are different and think differently. Fourth, since philosophy does not come near to providing a body of knowledge, and even knowledge is fallible, we must acknowledge that our own way of advancing the discipline is not the only valid one. (Lachs 1996: 167-168)

It is difficult to gainsay Lachs' conclusions here, even absent an extensive argument, though the argument is provided by John Stuhr, in his contribution to the panel.

Stuhr (1996) elucidates a utilitarian desideratum—the larger number of useful perspectives brought to bear on a problem, the more we are more likely to learn, and the better off
we'll be for it. In this sense, he says, the only philosophers who would be opposed to pluralism would be those who think they have it correct now and for all time. The rest of us would pursue pluralism as a matter of course, simply because it leads to better results in the end.

Kathleen Wright, in her paper, describes a program at Haverford College that exemplifies the pluralism described by Lachs and Stuhr. She provides a list of her program's faculty at the time and their specialties:

L. Aryeh Kosman: Ancient philosophy, Medieval philosophy, Modern philosophy, Jewish philosophy
Ashok Gangadean: Comparative philosophy; Buddhist, Hindu and Zen philosophy; metaphysics and philosophy of language; meditative thinking
Kathleen Wright: Continental philosophy; Kant, German Idealism, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Hermeneutics and Post-Structuralism; Aesthetics and philosophy of literature

As one can see, it is a small but very diverse program; in fact, it is hard to see how it could be more diverse. But there is a potential problem in the diversity advocated by Stuhr. Pluralism, he notes, implies not only a diversity of perspectives but a diversity of opinions. How plural is a department, really, if everyone is in fundamental agreement? And if disagreements abound, harmonious working relationships will be at risk, and then, how productive will a department be, even if diverse? Wright explains that in order to develop a mutually productive relationship, the faculty at Haverford committed themselves to a weekly reading group that focuses on core
readings from the various traditions. They also have a regular speaker series in the same spirit. As a result, they are able to maintain a diverse curriculum in a harmoniously productive department, with students pursuing a diverse set of interests for their capstone projects. Her assessment echoes that of the three chairs above—that pluralism can be achieved to the benefit of both faculty and students.

But Philipp Quinn (1996) introduces a more vexing obstacle. Quinn, who moved from a small department at Brown to a large department at Notre Dame, notes a tension between graduate and undergraduate programs. Undergraduate programs, like Haverford, are tasked with introducing the field of philosophy broadly to students, whereas graduate programs, especially small ones, must concentrate their resources in limited areas in order to engender a synergy that promotes strong research results. Even in large programs, given the high number of subfields in philosophy, no program could have the number of experts in all specialties such that it could have both maximum pluralism and sufficient critical mass for cooperative working relationships within specialties and their allied subfields. Quinn's solution is to advert to the hope that the invisible hand of the market would introduce diversity in concentrations from one graduate program to the next. When a program aspires to improve its visibility to both peers and prospective graduate students, it will naturally gravitate toward unrepresented specialties, thereby carving out a niche for itself that will improve its reputation and improve the placement prospects of its graduate students. No doubt, this mechanism exists. As shown above, however, there is a countervailing force that is stymieing the invisible hand, namely, the PGR. If a program seeks to raise its rank in the PGR, but hiring in some specialties—because of biases built in to the PGR methodology—will not raise a program's overall rank (even if they have the best of the best within their specialty), then attempting to carve out such a niche would be counterproductive. Any branch of non-Western philosophy would be one of those counterproductive specialties. To my surprise, however, the importance of non-Western philosophy was discussed at length by all three conference papers—
and this was in 1996.

Quinn, for example, notes a specific lack of non-Western philosophy just as it becoming more warranted:

It has seemed to me that analytic philosophy, broadly construed, has been pitted against continental philosophy and American philosophy,... a dispute entirely and exclusively within Western philosophy. The more inclusive pluralism I favor would consist of a conversation that contains many more non-Western philosophical voices. We have much to learn about and from the philosophical theology of medieval Islam, Indian logic and metaphysics, Buddhist philosophy of mind and language, Confucian and Taoist ethics and social philosophy, Zen spirituality and other non-Western traditions. Changing demographics suggest that our students will increasingly want us to teach them about such traditions. And the waxing economic power of Asia provides an argument from prudence for the conclusion that Americans ought to be learning a lot more than they currently are about Asian cultures, including their philosophical traditions. (Quinn 1996: 171-172)

Quinn reaches beyond the two-pronged utilitarian argument (for our own good as researchers and for the students' good in expanding their knowledge and understanding) to an argument that has more to do with democracy and, thus, with justice—"the students want us to teach them about such traditions." What should we make of this?

John Dewey, who spent two years in China around 1920, and emphasized how our educational systems are reflections of our values, once said that "pluralism is the greatest philosophical idea of our times." He went on to say: 
How are we going to make the most of the new values we set on variety, difference, and individuality—how are we going to realize their possibility in every field and at the same time not sacrifice that plurality to the cooperation we need so much? How can we bring things together as we must without losing sight of plurality? There is an intellectual problem for philosophers to get busy upon!33

Hilary Putnam and Ruth Ann Putnam embarked on just such a project with respect to education, examining the role of multiculturalism in a culturally plural America. They report that there was a very strong multicultural movement in education in the decades prior to WWI, when a variety of European immigrant groups maintained tightly knit, culturally homogenous communities that were not well integrated. The perceived result was misunderstanding and strife, necessitating a move toward integration and mutual understanding. The momentum generated by this movement was curtailed with the advent of WWI and not picked up again until the civil strife of the 1960s brought the issue back into sharp focus, but with regard to a different set of ethnic groups.

In analyzing the place of multiculturalism in America, Putnam and Putnam draw one basic conclusion, namely that:

[the aim of a] culturally diverse curriculum… is to prepare the future citizens of a pluralistic society. A pluralistic society, as we understand the term, is not simply a society in which many different racial, ethnic, and religious groups can be found; it is not simply a society in which all these groups enjoy equal civil and political rights; rather, a pluralistic society is a society in which members of each group respect the cultures and values of the other groups. Respect, unlike mere tolerance, requires some knowledge of the other culture; one cannot respect what one does not know at all. (Putnam and Putnam
Just as arguments in favor of diversity in faculty appointments (generally with regard to women and underrepresented ethnicities) hinge on claims for equity, the same argument can be made for diversity of content in philosophy programs. It demonstrates a respect for the vast and deep traditions represented by the American populace, who are not represented culturally without it.

**Conclusion**

John Dewey saw both life and philosophy as processes of exploration. As such, the more good ideas that are brought into the process, the better the outcome will be. And one cannot easily foreclose perspectives from the start because the process itself is dynamic, with the boundaries of specific means and ends shifting over time. What may have seemed like a dead-end at one time, may open up into a productive path when conditions have changed.

In analytic philosophy, there is a tendency to view the discipline as quasi-mathematical, with clearly stated axioms, precisely defined terms (often abbreviated for modular manipulation), and inferences that follow necessarily and undeniably, correct in the timeless fashion of mathematics. In the field of Mathematics, no one insists that our students learn African or Chinese mathematics, and if philosophy is the same kind of enterprise, why should we teach our students to chase multicultural chimera? But, on closer inspection, one notices that Mathematics as a field, itself, is constantly evolving, and looks very different today from what it looked like just a century ago. Contemporary philosophy, as inextricably tied to human concerns, cannot pretend to ignore contributions from cultures represented by three quarters of the world's population.

I sympathize with the view of philosophy as involving an aspiration toward precision and clear conclusions and attempt to effect these in my own work. But we must recognize that clarity and precision do not exclude broad perspectives and in the long run demand them. We must seek
new ways of thinking through old problems as well as old ways of thinking through new problems. In this way, pluralism in education is at once a matter of exploration toward good results and integration of values toward the good. For the stewards of education to foreclose this possibility is to shortsightedly express a preference for the power of position over the value of productive education and cooperation. As Putnam and Putnam say, "Insofar as the dominant group fails to interact cooperatively with other groups, the society as a whole fails to have shared values developed through democratic inquiry" (Putnam and Putnam 1993: 373).

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Works Cited


Wright, Kathleen (1996). "Pluralism on the Undergraduate Level." Proceedings and Addresses of
Notes

1 Philosophy Ph.D. programs are not the only programs capable of producing scholars competent in Chinese philosophy. Combinations that bring together some philosophy background with work in fields such as religious studies or languages and cultures are also possible. The lack of openings in American research university philosophy departments forces scholars and students into other disciplines and even other countries. Also, although job openings at many research universities advertise simply for AOS: Open, presumably if there were an interest in filling a gap in non-Western philosophy, that would appear somewhere in the advertisement. It is not clear in the cases of Hutton and Wong that their expertise in Chinese philosophy played a factor in their being hired into their present positions. That is why I stress that of the nine, for only four was expertise in Chinese philosophy a factor in their being hired.

2 Self-report.

3 The difference between comparative and pluralist, as I am construing them, is that in a comparative program diverse traditions are taught within a single course, while in pluralist departments there is a compartmentalization. For instance, in a Metaphysics course in a comparative department, one may look not only at prominent issues of Western and contemporary concerns but also at major ideas in India and Japanese Buddhism. In a pluralist department, by contrast, one would need to take a course on Indian or Asian philosophy to get a treatment of Indian metaphysics.

4 This is not to say that the work of my valiant colleagues in Chinese philosophy is not first-rate or that they lack enthusiasm. I think we're one of the most active and high-achieving sub-groups of philosophy out there (see, for example, the quality of work in *The Philosophical Challenge from*...
China [Bruya, forthcoming 2015]), but if there were more of us in positions at research universities, that enthusiasm and achievement would be magnified many fold.

5 The APA was able to provide searchable pdf files of the latest nine years, along with aspx files that contain the latest nine years and many years prior to that. Because neither source of data was entirely complete in itself, both were combined where necessary to supplement the other, from which it was possible to form complete years—from 2004 through 2012, or "Starting Fall (SF) 2005" to "SF 2013."

6 Job ads were searched by the use of automatic searches for key words. I selected only jobs ads for which a person specializing in Chinese philosophy would be qualified, so my use of "Non-Western" here is not the usual usage, since a job ad for "non-Western philosophy" would count for purposes here, but an ad for "Indian philosophy" would not. The purpose in doing this was to prevent inflating the numbers for Non-Western positions and to keep the numbers relevant to the discussion regarding the status of Chinese philosophy.

7 I am a graduate of the University of Hawai'i M.A. / Ph.D. program in Philosophy.

8 Although Continental-oriented departments do not often have a full complement of Non-Western specialists, they appear to be less exclusive when it comes to hiring from Pluralist or Comparative departments.

9 Many of the sources I spoke with expressed a preference to remain anonymous due to privacy issues surrounding searches.

10 Such as the University of Texas, Austin and the University of Missouri. Furthermore, programs such as Asian Studies and Religious Studies are more likely to produce candidates in Indian or Buddhist philosophy than in Chinese philosophy because common construals of their traditions recognize the need for a strong grasp of complex philosophical arguments and positions from the
early period in the traditions, whereas the same is not true for common construals of the Chinese tradition.


12 Approximately half of all respondents teach at or graduated from just eight universities in the northeast corner of the country, meaning that those programs are essentially driving the results of the survey.


14 Columbia University Committee on Global Core, "Course Review for the Global Core Requirement."

15 University of Chicago, "The Core."

16 University of Chicago, "Humanities."

17 University of Chicago, "The Curriculum."

18 Columbia University, "Curriculum Development."

19 Columbia University, "Global Core Approved Course List."

20 University of Chicago, "Humanities."

21 http://home.uchicago.edu/bridges/philosophicalperspectives/syllabi.htm. Multiple queries to the chair of the Philosophy Department about current-year offerings went unanswered.
University of Chicago, "The Department of Philosophy."

Chicago does have Martha Nussbaum, of course, who works in global ethics.

Columbia University, "Department of Philosophy."

Columbia University, "Faculty (Regular)."

To the department’s credit, Akeel Bilgrami (regular faculty) does some work in recent global political philosophy, and they do list two faculty affiliates who do non-Western philosophy. Gyatri Spivak is University Professor of the Humanities from the Department of English (and affiliate faculty in Philosophy), who is famous for her work in post-colonial philosophy, and Souleymane Bachir Diagne is a professor of French (also affiliate faculty in Philosophy) who does African philosophy, including Islamic. A search of the Philosophy course offerings for 2013-2014 (Philosophy > Fall2013 and Philosophy > Fall 2014 at http://www.columbia.edu/cu/bulletin/uwb, accessed February 27, 2014) yielded one course with obvious content in non-Western philosophy—Philosophy 84062, Global Political Thought, taught by Sudipta Kaviraj (Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies), Akeel Bilgrami, and Souleymane B. Diagne (http://www.columbia.edu/cu/bulletin/uwb, accessed February 27, 2014). Christopher Peacocke (Department Chair) informs me that students are allowed to take courses on Buddhism in the Religion Department for Philosophy credit and that the department is making a major appointment in Afro-American political thought. Peacocke added the following comment, stressing that it was from his own personal perspective: "I would certainly like to see some aspects of Indian philosophy loom much larger in the general philosophical consciousness in Anglophone philosophy. I was introduced to it when I was a junior colleague in Oxford in the same college (All Souls) as the much-missed Bimal Matilal. It would be good if we had more like him."

Association of Pacific Rim Universities, "Members Map." Berkeley has brought Kwong-loi Shun back on a part-time basis. Oregon has Alejandro Vallega, who does Latin American
philosophy, and Naomi Zack, who does philosophy of race. Washington's famed Indian specialist Karl Potter retired, and I'm told that there are no plans to hire in that field (Michael Rosenthal, Chair, personal communication).

28 Personal correspondence with Don Garrett, Chair of NYU Philosophy.

29 Duke would be an exception, depending on how one construes the term "regularly."

30 Michael Smith, Chair, personal communication.

31 Indiana University, Bloomington, "History of Philosophy."

32 Chaterjee has since moved out of the Philosophy Department into Utah's College of Law. No one has been brought in to fill the gap in the Indian tradition.

33 John Dewey, in his last lecture to his graduate students, as recorded by John Herman Randall. Found in Ralph B. Winn, John Dewey: Dictionary of Education, s.v. Pluralism.