

CONTEST, GAME, DISGRACE: ON PHILOSOPHY AND BUDDHISM



Rafal K. Stepień

S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
issrafal@ntu.edu.sg

Contesting Philosophy: On Borders and Buddhism

Philosophers are an argumentative bunch. Indeed, they pride themselves on it, even going so far as to define philosophy precisely in terms of argument, contestation, and critique.¹ So presumably philosophers should not in the least mind if in this article I pick an argument—two, in fact—with the contemporary practice of philosophy itself. In the section titled “Playing at Arguments: On Buddhism as Philosophy,” I argue against the exclusion of Buddhist philosophy specifically, and other non-Western philosophies more generally, from the domain of philosophy—or rather, against the very game of exclusion itself. In the final section, I argue against excusing philosophers engaged in this game of a charge they (or at least the vast majority of them) will presumably deem unjustified: that of racism. This is, therefore, not so much a philosophical study of Buddhist materials as it is a (meta-)philosophical critique of the manner in which the philosophical study of Buddhist (and other non-Western) philosophical materials is (not) being conducted.² The thread linking my two main arguments is thus the role of non-Western philosophies within the profession/discipline of philosophy as this is professed and practiced today.³

This brings us directly to the question of place and time. Irony surely being the law of the law of karma, it is proper, though nonetheless regrettable, that Buddhist philosophy should find itself first discussed in any substantive and informed detail among Western philosophers at this of all junctures in the history of Western philosophy. For the philosophy of the twentieth and twenty-first century West, and most particularly of the world of English-writing and -reading (a world whose borders go well beyond officially anglophone countries, of course), has been and continues to be dominated, as is well known, by the ‘analytic’ tradition. In what follows, I will outline some of the ways I think the relationship between Buddhist and analytic philosophy can and does function, and dysfunction. Each of the fields I discuss is highly multifaceted, so in speaking of them in general terms I will necessarily engage in some simplification; this I hope to be forgiven in the interest of clarifying certain overarching dynamics.

Part of my motivation in the next section, wherein I refer to critiques already made of arguments purporting to demonstrate that Buddhist philosophy is *not* philosophy, is to show (and show up) how arbitrary and biased, not to mention selectively applied, are the relevant definitions of philosophy: ‘philosophy-because-historically-Western’, ‘philosophy-because-etymologically-Greek’, ‘philosophy-because-argumentative’, and ‘philosophy-because-non-religious’. In so doing, I deliberately engage in a game of definitions, hopefully demonstrating in the process that, whichever of the definitions standardly employed to deny Buddhist philosophy, and more broadly non-Western philosophy, the prestigious moniker—in what Brook Ziporyn eloquently terms “a viciously consequential branding dispute” (Ziporyn 2019, p. 3)—Buddhism nevertheless wins: it *does* count as philosophy (or else pretty much nothing does). Having made that point, however, I go on immediately to effectively undermine it by pointing out that anyone can win the game (indeed, any game) if they get to make up the rules. Of course, getting to make up the rules is what makes up power, and scholars of Buddhist philosophy are right to show up the results of this particular game as crooked. Given, then, that the score is arbitrary, I show up the game itself as absurd. On this basis, in the third and final section of this article I cry foul at the perpetuation of a game still so plainly played on fields far from level. For while the literary conceit I am employing may treat all this as a ‘game’, the rules by which it continues to be regulated are serious indeed, replicating as they do the rule of the majority white philosophical professoriate and thus the continued stifling of minority voices.

Playing at Arguments: On Buddhism as Philosophy

Given the number and unassailable validity of arguments already proffered against the position that philosophy is an exclusively Western enterprise, I see no need to spill further ink attempting to convince philosophers of the philosophicality of non-Western philosophies through philosophical means—that is, through ‘rational arguments’. After all, as Carine Defoort has observed,

The problem of whether “Chinese philosophy” exists and deserves a place in Philosophy departments has not only remained unsolved but has even hardly led to any meaningful debate. The fact that repeated appeals to universality and fairness have largely remained unanswered indicates the limits of rationality in this matter. (Defoort 2017, p. 1049)

Defoort’s “limits of rationality” is a lovely euphemism to denote the absence of rationality underpinning the continued exclusion of non-Western philosophies; limits distinctly at odds, I may add, with the very identification of the discipline of philosophy as the privileged domain of unbiased reason. Indeed, to press the point home in a deliberately provocative manner (or

facetious, depending on one's perspective), if philosophy is conceived as functioning through the exercise of unbiased reason, then, given the absence of such exercise in the case of delimiting philosophy exclusively to its Western variants,⁴ it turns out that philosophy is not philosophy.

Or is it? What rational arguments have been adduced in support of the *prima facie* absurd and conceited position that only one tiny minority of humans now or ever living may rightfully be said to be or have ever been given to attempting to understand reality in a systematic manner through the exercise of unbiased reason, and thus be rightfully counted as philosophers or, *a leviori*, as practicing philosophy? In previous work, I have summarized what arguments there are in support of the exclusion in terms of four distinct though interrelated approaches. Briefly, these are as follows.

1. the Historicist Argument, according to which "Philosophy has historically been practiced in the West; therefore, philosophy is a Western phenomenon (or, more strongly, a Western phenomenon *alone*)";
2. the Terminological Argument, according to which "since there is no (exactly) equivalent term for 'philosophy' in Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan, or take your pick of any other non-European language, therefore that there is no such thing as philosophy practiced in any of these language communities";
3. the Argument Argument, according to which "philosophy is an activity defined by the use of *argument* for or against a given claim. . . [and] only philosophy (that is, Western philosophy) deploys arguments in support of its conclusions"; and
4. the Religion Argument, according to which "philosophy as 'we' (Westerners) understand it, as we practice it, is *not* religion, whereas what some call non-Western philosophies are in fact inveterately religious thought-traditions." (Stepien 2019b, pp. 12–13; emphases original).⁵

These are all self-evidently terrible arguments as arguments go, and I see no need to engage in further refutation here, not least since it has become evident over recent years that refutation through rational argument turns out not to actually convince the majority of (professionally so-called) philosophers. What I want to foreground here for the present is the prevalence of the Religion Argument, for not only is this the typical go-to among Western philosophers, but its premises have also been uncritically adopted, as I see it, by scholars of Buddhist philosophy. Contra the concerted efforts among many (I would say most) such contemporary scholars to render Buddhist philosophy digestible to the analytic palate, I remain convinced that doing away with the religious aspects of Buddhist philosophy is to *denature* rather than to *naturalize* it.⁶ Of course I am aware that to 'naturalize' Buddhist

philosophy means to remove from it what are seen by these practitioners (a deliberately loaded term) as extraneous elements, in the same way that we can remove divine will from our understanding of the universe, say, and just proceed on the basis of natural science. Moreover, to denature a thing in the sense of adapting it for an alternative use (to use a hammer for propping a door open, say, instead of for hammering) is perfectly justifiable, which is why naturalizing Buddhist philosophy works just fine for rendering it (more) amenable to those of a naturalistic bent. It's just that, in the same way that the hammer is no longer functioning as a hammer but as a doorstop, so this naturalized object of analysis is no longer functioning as Buddhist philosophy: it is analytic philosophy done, patronizingly, by contemporary scholars of Buddhist philosophy on behalf of past Buddhist philosophers.⁷

On this score, then, the analytic refusal to consider the history of Buddhist thought as 'philosophy' is, in a manner of speaking, justified. For just as hardcore analytics have thrown to the winds the entire edifice of the history of Western philosophy prior to their own work in the twentieth century as so much religiously motivated verbiage, so too, for consistency's sake, they are justified in dispensing with Buddhism. The same goes for metaphysics. For Buddhist philosophers are constantly arguing about archetypically metaphysical questions such as those concerning the nature (or non-nature) of reality, self, and self-nature itself. If everyone from Plato to contemporary continental 'philosophers' is ruled out from philosophy proper for engaging in onto-theo-logy (even if they are critiquing it), then there is no reason to keep Buddhist 'philosophers' in. The only legitimate manner to include discussion of Buddhist materials within reputable philosophical circles and journals is indeed to naturalize it. This may well be tantamount to denaturing it, but such is the cost: the supernatural elements of the tradition must be tossed aside as so much dross, non-philosophical mumbo-jumbo, and "superstitious nonsense" (Flanagan 2013, p. xi), so that the properly philosophical aspects may be ascertained, appreciated, and analyzed.

Ironically, however, the very bases for dismissing Buddhism from the philosophical clubhouse also serve to pay its membership dues. Is Buddhism a religion? No! It has no God, and therefore no divine creator (or creation), provider (or providence), judge (or last judgment), or savior (or salvation). No eternal heaven or hell, no original sin or final resurrection, no prophets or prophecies, not even a self. That Buddhism is not a religion cannot be doubted. . . at least if 'religion' is understood in more or less overtly Judeo-Christian terms, that is. I have provided a caricature, of course, but one altogether in line with the terms by which religion was debarred from the domain of philosophy by the early analytics. On this score, then, Buddhist philosophy, being not only atheistic but resolutely grounded in impersonal law and the grim realities of the natural order, should be counted as being

as philosophical as any intellectual attempt to understand the way things work.

But perhaps this needs some unpacking. What I am claiming is that Buddhism turns out to be bereft of many of the cardinal features standardly taken to be definitive of or essential to 'religion' (and essentialist definitions and conceptions still abound). As one prominent Buddhologist of the later twentieth century put it, Buddhism is "not religious, for there is no God" (Bugault 1983, p. 58).⁸ Quite apart from its denial of stereotypically religious posits (a denial in every case arrived at as the conclusion of identifiably philosophical arguments), Buddhism's pointed eschewal of speculation on unexplicated questions (questions, moreover, it deems to be rationally/logically/empirically inexplicable) shows it to be different from, even contrary to, definitive religiosity.

As such, if it is deemed sufficient by philosophers to merit *exclusion* from the domain of philosophy a tradition whose posits (and *a fortiori* whose central, foundational posits) are religious in nature, and which, moreover, engages in methods of substantiation and certification of said posits that are likewise religious in nature (methods that may be as varied as divine revelation and mystical transport or priestly imprimatur and papally infallible pronouncement, but which are nonetheless uniformly non-philosophical), then Buddhism should in fact be *included*. After all, its posits (and *a fortiori* its central, foundational posits) are conceived within the tradition as falling within the domain of 'nature' (as opposed to some purported supernatural realm), and moreover it conceives these posits as being arrived at through a combination of reasoned argumentation and empirical observation—eminently philosophical methods. Even if the tradition admits observation of phenomena (such as karmically conditioned rebirth) beyond the range of those standardly or currently accepted (in scientific or philosophical circles) as observable, this is offset by both the empirical fact that countless scientific posits (i.e., theoretical hypotheses) have been made in the absence of contemporaneously observable data only to be observed (or not) subsequently, and this does not routinely count against them as scientific or philosophical posits, and second by the methodological fact that, whatever the correctness of said posits, they are conceived as falling within the purview of observable data and/or reasonably acquirable knowledge—as opposed, say, to the nature of God. Given all this, Buddhism, the non-religion, turns out to be a philosophy: a means of understanding reality through the deployment of human intellect and a rationally cogent and internally as well as externally coherent system instantiating such understanding.

Perhaps more surprisingly still to the average analytic philosopher (and to address more fully a point raised above), Buddhism is founded upon an explicit eschewal of metaphysical speculation. Indeed, my characterization earlier of Buddhist philosophical debates concerning the nature (or non-

nature) of reality, self, and self-nature itself as resolutely ‘metaphysical’ would be rejected by the classical exponents of Buddhist philosophy themselves. For although these philosophers evidently engaged in long and complex arguments regarding what are taken within the Western philosophical tradition at large to be emblematically metaphysical topics, theirs were not metaphysical concerns as such. For starting with the Buddha’s own silence as to questions resolvable only on the basis of intellectual edifices that are themselves ultimately baseless (not to mention ego-affirming), Buddhist philosophers as a cohort were (and are) concerned with ostensibly metaphysical questions only to the extent that the resolution of these is conceived to be soteriologically beneficent. This does not mean that their texts do not contain matter for metaphysics; on the contrary, such meats are many and delicious. But context matters, and the context of these Buddhist discussions makes clear that the purport of the metaphysics to be found therein is not itself metaphysical but ethical (in the broadest possible sense). And so we find that Buddhist philosophy, thus construed, should not be disqualified from the philosophical canon by the analytic authorities on the grounds of its perceived metaphysical characteristics.

On the contrary, seen in this light, Buddhist philosophy right from the Buddha’s own claims down through the centuries can pass the so-called ‘verification principle’ of meaning enamored of the analytics *cum* logical positivists in a manner the established authorities of the Western canon generally cannot. For whereas statements such as “the essence of a thing is what it is said to be in respect of itself” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1029b14) or “*in its own self* everything is in its self-sameness different from itself and self-contradictory” (Hegel, *Science of Logic* 1969, p. 412); emphases original) are, on the empiricist/verificationist theory of meaning, “not merely wrong or false, but meaningless” (Preston 2019, §3a), Buddhist analogues as to the nature of selfhood/reality such as “Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation” (the Buddha’s first *Discourse* [Bodhi 2000, p. 1846])⁹ or “Not from itself nor from another/ Not from both nor without cause// Does any entity whatsoever/ Anywhere arise” (the first verse of Nāgārjuna’s *Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way*)¹⁰ are empirically verifiable (to the extent that any causation is, anyway), and therefore non-tautological, meaningful, scientific. I spoke above of philosophy (quintessentially philosophy) as the unbiased pursuit of truth and of philosophical claims in terms, in part, of empirical verifiability precisely to foreshadow this arch-analytic conception of philosophy as science. If Buddhist statements as to the nature of reality (as causal) can be shown to be analogous to natural scientific claims as to the nature of reality (as causal) insofar as both are verifiable through empirical observation (in other words, to be *Physics* rather than *Metaphysics*), then analytics should, for the sake of self-consistency if nothing else, give Buddhism its philosophical due.

Now, it should be obvious that I am playing here, toying with definitions so as to tease out the biases, and therefore the arbitrarinesses as well as the unjustifiednesses, undergirding them. The point is that, depending on how you define such undefinables as 'Buddhism', 'reason', 'metaphysics', 'religion', 'philosophy', or 'science', Buddhism can be accounted philosophy-because-metaphysical, non-philosophy-because-metaphysical, non-philosophy-because-religious, philosophy-because-scientific. . . and doubtless much else besides if we aren't tired of the game just yet. (As we saw above, even philosophy can be accounted not philosophy if we play it right). But it *is* just a game—and one that the Buddha, if his selective silences are anything to go by at least, would not have been at all interested in playing.

Diversity or Disgrace? Philosophy's Dilemma Today

It is satisfying—although simultaneously frustrating—to show up analytic arguments (such as they are) designed to relegate Buddhism to 'thought' or 'wisdom' (as opposed to 'philosophy') as being irrational, founded on ignorance, even morally odious. And it is definitely worthwhile pressing such philosophical advantages in an effort to overcome the staggering disparities constitutive of present-day institutional philosophy. But as we have seen, counter-arguments are unlikely to convince those whose positions are based on bias anyway. And while this does not entail that those of us committed to diversifying philosophical curricula should throw our hands up in despair, it does mean that we should be wary of wrangling over definitions that are in any case subjective, in recognition of the fact that re-drawing borders, disciplinary or otherwise, is always the prerogative of the powerful.

But the powerful are seeing protest. Indeed, we are living through a veritable era of protest. Movements such as Black Lives Matter and Rhodes Must Fall have rightfully called attention to systemic forms of racism endemic to Western societies, be they the historic results of slavery, colonialism, or any number of other factors. Many people are reflecting on such issues for the first time, or engaging with them at unprecedented levels of awareness and commitment to change. In this final section of my article, I remain fixed on the topic of boundary-policing in philosophy, but rather than contesting definitions or playing at arguments in the abstract, I turn to practical questions of action (What can philosophers do?) and the implications of inaction (What of philosophers who do nothing?).

I am not concerned here with the role of philosophers within society generally. Philosophers the world over can point to rich traditions of texts that have been immensely influential in structuring the societies humans live in—for better and worse. But long gone are the times when philosophers such as Bacon or Hobbes (and Mencius or Avicenna) routinely hobnobbed

with political elites. And besides, it's not as though philosophers ever had all that much sway over rulers anyway: just ask Plato.

So my proposal here has to do with philosophy as a profession, as a predominantly university-based institution, replete with its own history, politics, and power dynamics. I can sum up my agenda in a single word: diversify. I'm hardly the first to say it. The figures are in, and philosophy turns out to be woefully white. . . whether judged in terms of faculty, curricula, or even journals (see Cherry and Schwitzgebel 2016; Schwitzgebel 2020; and Hassoun, Schwitzgebel, and Smith 2018, each of which refers to copious other materials). Some critics have alleged that philosophy must "diversify or die" (Van Norden 2017, p. 8; Davis 2019, abstract). This is an overstatement; philosophy may be "dead white" (Coleman 2014), but it is not dying anytime soon. That doesn't mean, however, that it may not suffer a still more fearful fate: disgrace. Historians, scholars of religion and literature, and other humanists already look upon their discipline's white-washed past with a mixture of apologetic unease, disdain, and commitment to further reform. Scholars of religion, for example, used to assess all religious phenomena through the criteria of a single religious tradition (the Christian); today's researchers understand that this amounts to nothing more than intellectual parochialism,¹¹ colonialism,¹² xenophobia,¹³ bias,¹⁴ hubris.¹⁵ Various professional associations within these fields have incorporated statements in support of diversifying their membership and curricula among their aims and values.¹⁶ Where is philosophy's statement of values? Why does philosophy insist on the Western tradition's uniqueness and superiority? Which side of history will philosophy be on?

This is not to say that other disciplines don't have problems, of course. The UK National Union of Students webpage devoted to the 'Why is My Curriculum White?' movement founded at University College London mentions several disciplines in the arts and humanities that have "work to do" (National Union of Students 2021).¹⁷ It states, for example, that "In History classes the colonisation of India is taught through the lens of the business workings of the British. . . [while] English Literature focuses on pre 1800 white writing." But it singles out "Philosophy and Religion. . . [as] drowned by white, largely male thinkers and a Eurocentric perspective" (National Union of Students 2021).¹⁸ In the context of the renewed 'Rhodes Must Fall' campaign, moreover, an Open Letter to the University of Oxford (at the time of writing, signed by over 10,500 individuals and organizations, all of whom are affiliated with Oxford) alleges that, for all its lip-service, the university does not currently "uphold anti-racist values" (OxfordAntiRacismOpenLetter 2020). Its recommendations regarding faculties are two: "Committing to no all-white shortlists for staff appointments and to greater transparency in faculty hiring practices" and "Redressing the Eurocentrism and imperial amnesia of its curricula, including by hiring staff whose research and teaching focuses on or comes from the Global South, if

necessary by reducing the number of posts focusing solely on Europe and the West” (OxfordAntiRacismOpenLetter 2020).

These recommendations apply to the university as a whole, but given the particularly parlous state of affairs in philosophy, that is my focus here. Along the lines of the two recommendations made to Oxford, I propose that the diversification of professional philosophy should first and foremost take two forms: faculty and curricula. (I thus leave aside other efforts to diversify the field, such as in journal articles, as vitally important but secondary developments: one cannot publish work by diverse philosophers or on diverse philosophies without first diversifying the faculty members trained to produce publishable scholarship and diversifying the range of philosophical traditions taught and thus known to publishing philosophers).¹⁹ That the professoriate should be diversified through a modified form of affirmative action in order to offset generations of ‘insider hiring’, as it were (white men who study white men hiring more white men to study the same white men), is to my mind obvious and intelligently incontestable.²⁰ I say this as a cisgender, heterosexual, white male. I am aware of myriad ways in which this collocation of social identities has enabled me throughout my personal and professional life. I am also aware that I remain *unaware* of countless other ways in which I have benefitted from white, male privilege: awareness is always a work in progress.

But I am also aware of ways in which I and many others who research and teach non-Western philosophies have been *disabled* from practicing our profession—not, mind, by any accidents of our own birth but by those of the philosophers we study. I am getting here at another, more insidious since less visible, form of discrimination rampant in philosophy. This takes more digging to unearth, for it is not found on the glossy exterior of departmental website photos advertising ‘who we are’ but entrenched in the machinery of ‘what we do’. Philosophy programs, after all, teach student-philosophers philosophy, so any attempt to eradicate racism from professional philosophy must deal with not only ‘who teaches’ but ‘who is taught’.

Now, I hope we can all agree that it is ethically unjustifiable to dismiss a given philosopher because of the color of their skin. But if it is unjustified in the makeup of our faculty, why should it be justified in the makeup of our curricula? For a curriculum is not only composed by philosophers, it is comprised of them. Yet from the pre-Socratics to the post-structuralists, the syllabi of philosophy courses in the West is almost entirely comprised of white males. I may be a white male myself, but over more than two decades now I have striven to acquire the tools needed to research firsthand the metaphysics, epistemologies, and ethics of Buddhist and other non-Western—non-white—philosophers: why should their voices be censored, knowledge of them be scorned?

As I have adverted to in the section on “Playing at Arguments: On Buddhism as Philosophy,” the suppression of non-Western philosophers has

been justified in various ways. Nevertheless, the arguments mentioned all ultimately boil down to the univocal claim that only one tradition of thinking, the Western, should properly be called ‘philosophy’ (assuming—problematically—that there actually exists such a unified entity as ‘Western philosophy’).²¹ I call this the ‘soloccidentary’ view (Stepien 2019b, p. 14), and it is worth noting that those who espouse it like to say that they are making a merely historical or terminological claim, akin, say, to stating that what we call ‘classical music’ arose in Europe. But this move relies on an equivocation between ‘philosophy’ as a mode of thinking and as a particular tradition of such a mode of thinking. It is an unassailable empirical fact that classical music arose in Europe (well, classical *European* music anyway), but that in no way precludes the equally unassailable fact that other traditions of music arose elsewhere. Should these not count as music simply because they sound different, use different systems of notation, value different aesthetics? Should philosophers be silenced because they couch their arguments in different terms, on different premises, toward different conclusions than those canonical in the West? The history of Western philosophy itself is a history of radical disagreements, arguments, and counter-arguments: why should non-Western philosophical traditions (themselves just as internally variegated) be excluded on account of being foreign?

The terminological aspect of the claim is brought to the fore when it is argued that ‘philosophy’ is a Greek invention, since the word stems from ancient Greek. Apart from entailing that only Greek speakers can legitimately do philosophy, this would also apparently mean that only Greek poetry is ‘poetry’, only Arabic algebra is ‘algebra’ (Stepien 2019b, p. 13). It is a bizarre and blatantly awful argument. More substantively, the soloccidentary claim is also disingenuous, for it conceals the value judgment at work, according to which one tradition is uniquely endowed with the prestigious mantle of ‘philosophy’, while all others are sidelined as not-quite-philosophy, as mere ‘thought’²² or murky ‘wisdom traditions’.²³ The idea that Buddhist, Islamic, Chinese, or Indian philosophy, say, can be so casually dismissed is not only rooted in profound ignorance of²⁴ (or willful blindness to²⁵) these traditions, but has been refuted repeatedly,²⁶ comprehensively,²⁷ and even hilariously.²⁸ To continue to maintain it in the face of overwhelming evidence is not only irrational; it begins to look a lot like racism.

I am not referring to the uninformed and unabashed racism of some of the brightest stars in the Western philosophical firmament. Though no one today can fail to be appalled, surely, by infamous claims such as Kant’s that “the race of the whites contains all talents and motives in itself” (see Van Norden 2017a, p. 21; Van Norden 2017b),²⁹ or Hegel’s that “*Negroes*, uninterested and lacking in interest, in a state of undisturbed naivety, are to be regarded as a nation of children” (see Moellendorf 1992, p. 246),³⁰ we

nevertheless can (at least attempt to) excuse them on account of the prevailing *Weltanschauung* of their times, their ignorance, as it were, that non-whites might be fully human, too.³¹ But we, cognizant of the ethical repugnance of racism, committed—surely—to eradicating it along with prejudice in all its forms, alive in an era of unprecedented access to knowledge, no longer benefit from any such appeals to innocence. As one commentator has put it, “why study racist philosophers but not philosophers of other races?” (Fernandez 2018).

If we accept Aristotle’s view that ethics is located in good action, then we are obliged to undertake good action if we are to be considered (by others as well as ourselves) ethical individuals. But if we continue to fail to carry out good action even after we are made cognizant of what it is, and of the ways in which our action hitherto has been ethically repugnant, then we lose our claim to ethical standing. I suggest that anyone who advocates that we should continue to pour disproportionately vast human and financial resources into researching the most technical recesses of an avowed racist’s thought but not invest an iota (of energy or money) into studying entire swaths of human thinking is not just whitewashing philosophy; they are complicit in the perpetuation of racism.³²

I mean, seriously: does anyone reading this still believe that the vast majority of humans (for it is a simple fact that the vast majority of humans, past and present, have been and are non-white) do not attempt and have not ever attempted (rationally, systematically, insightfully) ‘to understand how things—in the broadest sense of that term—hang together—in the broadest sense of that term)’ (to use Wilfrid Sellars’ celebrated definition of philosophy)? If you do think that, then at the very least I’d suggest you go do some reading. Thankfully, there now exists a sizable³³ and steadily growing³⁴ body of excellent scholarship on the various philosophical traditions indigenous to the civilizations of Asia, Africa, and the rest of the non-Western world (yes, that’s most of the planet). If any philosophers out there are afraid or unwilling to learn new ways of thinking, then I’d politely suggest they might be in the wrong profession.

For those who agree, I would make one further suggestion. A friend once wryly observed that when a black man or a white man is charged with a crime, popular media typically calls on us to consider the worst facts in the former’s past and the best potentials in the latter’s future. An analogous point may be made regarding philosophers. For critics, unwilling to accept that rational argumentation may be found beyond Europe and its offshoots, typically pick the sourest cherry from the non-Western philosopher’s words and the sweetest one from the white man’s works. It is all too easy to find irrational, religious, or downright weird passages in just about any philosopher—white or not. So enough with the double standards.³⁵

The argument has also been made that, if non-Western forms of philosophy are to be taken seriously by philosophers, incorporated into

philosophy curricula, this should be on account of their worth as philosophy, not on account of their places of origin (see, e.g., Leiter 2014). Agreed wholeheartedly. The problem, however, is that this argument is then taken to justify the conclusion that no non-Western philosophy should in fact be incorporated, since to do so would be on the basis, precisely, of its origins. But quite apart from the circular nature of the ‘reasoning’ here, why should Western philosophy—even *bad* Western philosophy—be included in the canon by dint of originating in the West, but non-Western philosophy—however excellent—be excluded by dint of being non-Western? Again, enough with the double standards. And to the retort that Western philosophy is included not because of its origins but because of its quality, I would reiterate my recommendation to go read some non-Western philosophy. Presumably no one is making claims about the worth of the intellectual output of entire civilizations based on sheer intuition or arrant ignorance—right? No one would be engaging in mental acrobatics of such dizzying splendor as to suggest that diversifying philosophy to include more of its traditions would be a form of reductionism,³⁶ or that bringing the excluded in from the margins would amount to “hegemony” (indeed, “multiculturalist hegemony”—apparently not a contradiction in terms!),³⁷ or that remaking philosophy departments to be more representative of multicultural societies would render them more likely to be defunded—right?³⁸

Many scholars of non-Western philosophies have already given up. In their famous proposal to call philosophy ‘what it really is’, Jay Garfield and Bryan Van Norden lamented that “the profession as a whole remains resolutely Eurocentric. It therefore seems futile to rehearse arguments for greater diversity one more time” (Garfield and Van Norden 2016). Unfortunately, I understand all too well their despair. But history shows us that arguments often need to be repeated, often again and again and again, until at some point, perhaps owing to a sea-change in cultural attitudes such as we are experiencing today, they come to be taken seriously. How many times have women the world over complained of habitual harassment until the #MeToo movement finally opened the eyes of many men to the daily ugly realities of sexism? How many protests have marched against police violence in the U.S. since the brutal beating of Rodney King, falling on deaf ears until more recent movements such as Black Lives Matter? Under these circumstances, I can only hope that the current cultural climate, in which people of various ideologies and identities (above all white men like me) are attaining unprecedented levels of ‘wokedness’, seeps into philosophical waters too.

For the danger, as I said, is disgrace: specifically in the charge of racism. I am going beyond Garfield and Van Norden here. In his Preface to Van Norden’s *Taking Back Philosophy*, Garfield draws on the accepted distinction between “structural” and “individual” racism (Garfield 2017, p. xix). Although Garfield mentions “vitriol, personal attacks, and frank racism”

(ibid., p. xii) in response to his and Van Norden's article (Garfield and Van Norden 2016), and openly affirms that "ignoring non-Western philosophy in our research, curriculum, and hiring decisions is deeply racist" (Garfield 2017, p. xix), nevertheless he shies away from calling those doing so racist, arguing rather that this is an instance of structural, not individual, racism; the embodiment of a system that is "racist without any individual who participates in it being racist" (ibid.).

That systemic racism is endemic to institutional philosophy is unquestionable.³⁹ Indeed, professional philosophy is nothing less than a one-party system, a totalitarian discipline that actively refuses to admit disciplinary integrity to alternative epistemological territories. It is governed, moreover, by a self-appointed autocracy of homogeneous arbitrators; homogeneous, that is, racially (insofar as white), sexually (insofar as male), and ideologically (insofar as committed to the ideal of philosophical purity). There is no need to 'Build the Wall' in philosophy: it defines and delimits the discipline. And woe betide anyone who attempts to innovate philosophy by opening its borders toward foreign conversation-partners: s/he "runs the risk of professional ostracism and, ultimately, failure" (Eugene Park 2014) by being thrown to the no-man's lands of 'Religious Studies', 'Area Studies', or any of the "countless university departments which offer 'studies'" (Murphy 2020).

But this still leaves aside the question of individual or personal racism. It would surely be hard to find a professional philosopher *personally* espousing overtly racist views, right? Of course it would. . . at least if we leave aside the fact that the paranoia evinced by those who perceive disciplinary pluralism as a threat to the philosophical fatherland is uncomfortably reminiscent of the in-group insularity and other-oriented hostility characteristic of the rhetoric of far-right politics.⁴⁰ Given that it is always only individuals who construct and maintain institutional structures and governing systems (of any kind), however, I do accuse (as Garfield does not) those professional philosophers (and all the more so those professional philosophers in positions of institutional power) implicated in perpetuating the racist structures they are heir to—for example by benefitting from the presence of a plethora of available positions and journals in their field, by permitting themselves the white privilege of pursuing a career in ignorance of non-white philosophical others, or by hiring yet another specialist of "Kant or modal metaphysics" instead of a specialist of any non-Western philosophy and thereby betraying that they "take that 'hole' to be *bigger, more in need of filling* than one that comprises all of East Asia, India, Africa and Indigenous America"—of *personally, individually* "endors[ing] a racist view of the relative importance of these areas" (adapting Garfield 2017, p. xx; emphases original).

Let me put it this way: to the extent that professional philosophers have a voice when it comes to (re-)designing their curriculum or creating a new position or replacing a departed colleague, and they use their voice (or their silence) to conserve the old order or hire yet another expert of some sub-

sub-specialization in Western philosophy in preference to someone working on literally *any* aspect of *any* period in the history of *any* philosophical tradition *anywhere* else in the world, they are effectively, if unacknowledgedly, personally endorsing racism.⁴¹ For though these and other such acts of ‘academic service’ may be recognized to be nothing more than contingently constructed professional procedures (hence, in my terms, ‘games’), their prosecution is a political act; an act, therefore, inescapably implicating its agents in the morass of moral responsibility.

I am not naive enough to think that philosophy curricula can be reformed overnight. Change—especially large-scale, long-lasting change—is best accomplished incrementally and with the active and informed participation of all involved. But the will needs to be there, replacing inertia and excuse. A conversation I had with the Chair of a major Faculty of Philosophy comes to mind. I had designed and run what was the first full-length lecture course in any non-Western philosophy ever offered at the faculty in question. Demand wasn’t lacking—students were literally spilling out of the doorway—so I asked the Chair what the prospects were of the faculty offering courses such as mine on a regular basis. His reply remains a truly startling example of circular reasoning in justification of immutability (divine or otherwise): “We cannot hire someone specializing in any non-Western tradition since we do not offer a course in any such tradition, and we cannot design a course of study in any non-Western tradition since we do not have any specialist among our faculty to do so.” Along lines of reasoning such as this, it’s a wonder that philosophy departments have ever managed to incorporate *anything* new.

As this example demonstrates, no one is better placed to engage in sophistry and casuistry than philosophers. No amount of prevarication or obfuscation, however, will refute this simple fact: the conscious perpetuation of disparity based on race is racism. So here’s the rub: to the extent that you silence the vast majority of human contributions to philosophy, that you do not even allow their voices into your classroom, you are part of the problem, you perpetuate racism. ‘White Silence = Violence’ goes the slogan, and it applies just as much to the policing of philosophy’s unspoken laws and orders within our universities as it does to the codified injustices of our streets. Philosophy is left with a simple decision: will history identify it with diversity or disgrace?

Notes

- 1 – For examples of this perspective and discussion of the contribution that Buddhist philosophy may make, see Stepien 2018b.
- 2 – For accounts of the study of Buddhist philosophy worldwide, including in numerous non-Western contexts, see Stepien 2019a.

- 3 – While I focus on anglophone analytic philosophy, it should be evident that much of what I say applies with but minor *mutatis mutandis* to the continental branch of contemporary Western philosophy—as indeed to the practice of professional philosophy in non-Western universities. This last point opens multiple avenues for further discussion, but this is not the forum in which to chart, for example, the (politically and/or intellectually colonialist) historical processes undergirding the formation of philosophy departments in Eastern contexts and in part explaining the prevalence and perseverance of the fallacy of Western philosophical exceptionalism among *Eastern* philosophers and philosophical institutions. Nor is the point in need of pressing—except insofar as it serves to underline the fact that the disparity I am addressing (of Western philosophy-as-philosophy vs. non-Western philosophy-as-non-philosophy) amply overflows the national and institutional borders wherein Western philosophy is ‘home’. Of course, ‘East’, ‘West’, and similar terms are themselves deeply problematic if taken literally as designators of distinct essential features; they are used here as conventional place-holders for what are obviously highly internally variegated spheres.
- 4 – I am not saying this is the only domain wherein reason has not exactly received the exercise it needs among philosophers (its health appears worrisome at times. . .), but I restrict my comments to this, the domain of our concern here.
- 5 – As I note *ad locum*, I draw on prior work by Roy Perrett (2016), Jay Garfield (2002), and Bryan Van Norden (2017a, 2017b) in delineating these arguments.
- 6 – For a much fuller treatment of this issue, see Stepien 2018a. For a prominent attempt to ‘naturalize’ Buddhism in explicit terms, see Flanagan 2013, but I see the approach to be widespread even when not explicitly avowed.
- 7 – Flanagan admits this in acknowledging that his exposition “might not really be Buddhist” (Flanagan 2013, pp. 4–5).
- 8 – Admittedly, in the passage cited Bugault is referring specifically to Nāgārjuna’s “fundamental intention,” but the point is extrapolatable to the tradition as a whole given that this is a commonplace conception.
- 9 – *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* or *Discourse Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma* 11 (1).
- 10 – *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* 1:1.
- 11 – For a study of “the parochialism of mainstream history of philosophy,” see Weinberg 2018.

- 12 – For “a contribution toward the decolonization of philosophy,” see Soldatenko 2015.
- 13 – For a direct accusation that “Western philosophy is racist,” see Van Norden 2017b.
- 14 – For a study of “philosophy’s Western bias,” see Smith 2012.
- 15 – For an effort at diversifying philosophy through “the art of non-domination,” see Kirloskar-Steinbach 2019.
- 16 – See, e.g., the statement on Mission and Values of the American Academy of Religion (AAR), which states that “The AAR recognizes the importance of diversity in teaching, research, and service as well as the scholarly representation of different cultures, social locations, perspectives, disability experiences, and professional standings. These enrich and enlarge our understanding of ourselves and our community” (American Academy of Religion 2021).
- 17 – The movement at UCL has since morphed into the ‘Dismantling The Master’s House’ campaign; see University College London 2021.
- 18 – If, as is asserted, philosophy is the ‘mother of all sciences’, then the aptest image is of children and grandchildren who have for the most part long left home and seen the world, while she stays put cholericly cavilling at anything foreign.
- 19 – For a concerted effort at “publishing papers by under-represented groups in Philosophy. . . across a diverse range of areas, philosophical traditions, and styles” in a premier philosophy journal, see Moore and O’Brien 2018.
- 20 – I call this a ‘modified’ practice in the sense that it applies the hard-won gains of the feminist movement to those movements focused on racial disparities animating today’s agenda. Not that feminism has gotten very far in philosophy, mind: “It is well established that women are under-represented in philosophy at all levels” (Data on Women in Philosophy, 2021).
- 21 – For forays into problematizing the very idea of Western philosophy, see Allais 2016 and Schuringa 2020.
- 22 – For a discussion of the moniker ‘thought’ as opposed to ‘philosophy’ in the Chinese context, see Ge 2014 and, more broadly, the contributions to Defoort and Ge 2014a, including the ‘Editors’ Introduction’, which relates the infamous incident wherein Jacques Derrida declared “China does not have any philosophy, only thought” (Defoort and Ge 2014b, p. 3).

- 23 – For a deeply confused effort, largely along ‘historicist’ and ‘terminological’ argument lines, to argue (against Garfield and Van Norden 2016) that “non-Western wisdom traditions *are not* philosophy,” see Peone 2016 (emphasis original).
- 24 – For an essay that, bizarrely, attempts to rationalize the absence of non-Western materials from philosophical curricula on the basis that “most Anglophone philosophers have *no opinion at all* about non-Western philosophy because they are simply ignorant of it,” see Leiter 2014 (emphasis original)—as if the ignorance in question were some simple given rather than a perquisite of privilege. To be fair, at least Leiter “certainly think[s] that more study of non-Western philosophical traditions would be salutary and illuminating”; it is just that “ignorance, indeed massive ignorance, is inevitable” given the sheer range of philosophy, so philosophers are off the hook for perpetuating it, and for doing so along racist lines.
- 25 – For a study of “the Western blindness to non-Western philosophies,” see Scharfstein 1998.
- 26 – For a list of reference articles on various non-Western philosophies (154 of them at the time of writing), see Oxford Handbooks Online 2021.
- 27 – For comprehensive lists of representative recent general scholarship on Islamic, Chinese, Indian, Asian generally, non-Western still more generally, and Buddhist philosophy (in that order), as well as of works calling for the inclusion of non-Western philosophies in philosophical curricula, see Stepien 2020, pp. 18–21 nn. 11–12.
- 28 – For a highly witty—not to say cynical—rebuttal of the idea that including diverse philosophical traditions within philosophical curricula “undermines what is distinct about philosophy as an intellectual tradition” (Tampio 2016), see Olberding 2016.
- 29 – This is but one of numerous statements by Kant that Van Norden cites in support of his assertion that he “was notoriously racist” (Van Norden 2017a, p. 21; Van Norden 2017b).
- 30 – Moellendorf’s article as a whole is an abundant “exhibition of the relevant passages” of Hegel’s work showing it to be “decidedly racist” (Moellendorf 1992, p. 243).
- 31 – For a richly detailed and unsettling “historical investigation of the exclusion of Africa and Asia from modern histories of philosophy” in the wake of Kant, see Peter Park 2013, which demonstrates among much else that the racism of racist philosophers such as Kant was far from the consensus view of the time. For a discussion of the

implications of Park's book for professional philosophy, see Flory 2017, which "offers an assessment of Peter Park's book in the context of critical race theory" (abstract); Kalmanson 2017, which argues that "the degree requirements for our programs of study. . . serve to transmit this outdated teleology ["of European cultural ascendancy reflecting the natural superiority of the white race"] and the racist narrative regarding white supremacy associated with it" (abstract); Larrimore 2017, which strives "to understand the elimination of Asia and Africa from modern western histories of philosophy. . . [through] the connection of the history of philosophy with the philosophy of history" (abstract); Sikka 2017, which emphasizes how "the Euro-supremacy of contemporary philosophy is continuous with cultural racism" (abstract); and Park's rejoinder, which explains further "why it makes sense to talk of decolonizing the philosophy department" (Peter Park 2017, title).

- 32 – As Kalmanson puts it, "if we do not act, then we are no longer unwitting but knowing accomplices in a racist program of philosophical study" (Kalmanson 2017, p. 64).
- 33 – For a hefty handbook of "introductions to each of the world's major non-European philosophical traditions," see Edelglass and Garfield 2011.
- 34 – For an ongoing effort to provide "a history of philosophy without any gaps," see the "A History of Philosophy" series edited by Peter Adamson (Oxford University Press, 2021).
- 35 – On this point, see also Garfield 2017, pp. xvi–xvii (responding to Tampio 2016), regarding Plato's claim that the original humans were spherical.
- 36 – For a contorted effort to argue that non-Western "Wisdom Traditions" should continue to be excluded from philosophy departments because to include them would somehow entail or imply that various philosophical traditions are "reducible one to another" and "it would be an enormous overreach on the part of philosophers to subsume all other wisdom," as if listening to diverse voices were necessarily premised on their all saying the same thing, see Peone 2016.
- 37 – See Murphy 2020 for a truly eye-opening effort to argue—in response to Van Norden (2017b), who in passing is denounced as apparently "an Internationalist of some kind. Perhaps he's also an International *Socialist*" (emphasis original)—that the proposal to include philosophers stemming from diverse cultures within professional philosophy is in service of a "multiculturalist hegemony"—indeed, a "stronger, more widespread and more complete hegemony" than hitherto, as if the

decentering of authority from a single power were not the literal opposite of hegemonization.

- 38 – See Tampo 2016 for an effort to somehow argue that making philosophy curricula more representative of and thus more relevant to more people and thus more likely to entail more enrolments “fuels the political campaign to defund academic philosophy departments.”
- 39 – Here and throughout, I elide specialist distinctions between “institutional racism (and variants such as ‘structural racism’, ‘systemic racism’, etc.)” because I treat these various forms of racism by “higher-level entities, such as social processes, social forces, and institutions” (Clair and Denis 2015, p. 860) as variants whose differences do not meaningfully have an impact upon my argument.
- 40 – I am thinking here of the dire warnings against the threat of imminent left-wing “hegemony” or of “reasons to eliminate, cut, or defund philosophy departments” made by the likes of Murphy (2020) and Tampo (2016) (see above). That change to or critique of the status quo is in itself dangerous (to the patria, the party, or in this case to the department. . .) is a common topos of arch-conservative discourse.
- 41 – Indeed, all the more so since “institutional racism’s focus on the extra-individual might obscure and absolve the role of individual actors in maintaining racism” (Clair and Denis 2015, p. 861).

References

- Allais, Lucy. 2016. “Problematising Western Philosophy as One Part of Africanising the Curriculum.” *South African Journal of Philosophy* 35, no. 4:537–545.
- American Academy of Religion. 2021. Mission and Values. Accessed February 17, 2021. <https://www.aarweb.org/AARMBR/Who-We-Are/Mission-and-Values.aspx>
- Aristotle. 1984. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Jonathan Barnes. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu, trans. 2000. *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Bugault, Guy. 1983. “Logic and Dialectics in the *Madhyamakakārikās*.” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 11, no. 1.
- Cherry, Myisha, and Eric Schwitzgebel. 2016. “Op-Ed: Like the Oscars, #PhilosophySoWhite.” *Los Angeles Times*, March 4. <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-0306-schwitzgebel-cherry-philosophy-so-white-20160306-story.html>

- Clair, Matthew, and Jeffrey S. Denis. 2015. "Racism, Sociology of." In James D. Wright, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd ed., vol. 19. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Coleman, Nathaniel Adam Tobias. 2014. "Philosophy Is Dead White—And Dead Wrong." *Times Higher Education*, March 20. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/comment/opinion/philosophy-is-deadwhite-and-dead-wrong/2012122.article>
- Data on Women in Philosophy. 2021. "Home." Accessed February 17, 2021. <http://women-in-philosophy.org>
- Davis, Bret W. 2019. "Beyond Philosophical Eurocentrism: Other Ways of—Not Otherwise than—Philosophy." *Philosophy East and West* 69, no. 2(April): 592–619.
- Defoort, Carine. 2017. "'Chinese Philosophy' at European Universities: A Threefold Utopia." *Philosophy East and West* 67, no. 4(October): 1049–1080.
- Defoort, Carine, and Ge Zhaoguang, eds. 2014a. *Contemporary Chinese Thought* 37, no. 1 (Fall).
- . 2014b. "Editors' Introduction." *Contemporary Chinese Thought* 37, no. 1(Fall): 3–10.
- Edelglass, William, and Jay L. Garfield, eds. 2011. *The Oxford Handbook of World Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fernandez, Guillermo. 2018. "Why Study Racist Philosophers but Not Philosophers of Other Races?" *Education*. <https://education.media/why-study-racist-philosophers-but-not-philosophers-of-other-races>
- Flanagan, Owen. 2013. *The Bodhisattva's Brain: Buddhism Naturalized*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Flory, Dan. 2017. "Race, History, and Affect: Comments on Peter K. J. Park's 'Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy'." *Journal of World Philosophies*, no. 2 (Winter): 48–59.
- Garfield, Jay L. 2002. *Empty Words: Buddhist Philosophy and Cross-Cultural Interpretation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 2017. "Foreword." In Bryan W. Van Norden, *Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Garfield, Jay L., and Bryan W. Van Norden. 2016. "If Philosophy Won't Diversify, Let's Call It What It Really Is." *New York Times*, May 11. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/11/opinion/if-philosophy-wont-diversify-lets-call-it-what-it-really-is.html>

- Ge Zhaoguang. 2014. "Why Is It the 'History of Thought'? Reflections on the 'Chinese Philosophy' Issue." *Contemporary Chinese Thought* 37, no. 1(Fall): 43–49.
- Hassoun, Nicole, Eric Schwitzgebel, and Subrena Smith. 2018. "Diversity and Philosophy Journals: Introduction." *Blog of the APA*, August 23. Newark: American Philosophical Association. <https://blog.apaonline.org/2018/08/23/diversity-and-philosophy-journals-introduction/>
- Hegel, G.W.F. 1969. *Hegel's Science of Logic*. Translated by A. V. Miller. New York: Humanities Press.
- Kalmanson, Leah. 2017. "Decolonizing the Department: Peter K. J. Park and the Profession of Philosophy." *Journal of World Philosophies*, no. 2 (Winter): 60–65.
- Kirloskar-Steinbach, Monika. 2019. "Diversifying Philosophy: The Art of Non-Domination." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 51, no. 14:1490–1503.
- Larrimore, Mark. 2017. "Whiteness and the Philosophy of History of Philosophy." *Journal of World Philosophies*, no. 2 (Winter): 74–77.
- Leiter, Brian. 2014. "Ignorance of Philosophy, Identity Politics, and the Cosmopolitan Ideal." *Leiter Reports: A Philosophy Blog*, September 10. <https://leiterreports.typepad.com/blog/2014/09/ignorance-of-philosophy-and-identity-politics.html>
- Moellendorf, Darrel. 1992. "Racism and Rationality in Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit." *History of Political Thought* 13, no. 2(Summer): 243–255.
- Moore, AW, and Lucy O'Brien. 2018. "Diversity and Philosophy Journals: Diverse Aims at MIND." *Blog of the APA*, October 1. Newark: American Philosophical Association. <https://blog.apaonline.org/2018/10/01/diversity-and-philosophy-journals-diverse-aims-at-mind/>
- Murphy, Paul Austin. 2020. "Professor Van Norden, Western Philosophy Is Not Racist." *Medium*, January 3. <https://medium.com/@paulaustinmurphy2000/professor-van-norden-western-philosophy-is-not-racist-fb3cbf30c39>
- National Union of Students. 2021. Accessed February 2021. <https://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/why-is-my-curriculum-white/>
- Olberding, Amy. 2016. "DoD named 'Wise and Good!'" *Department of Deviance: We Would Have Called It Philosophy But That Name Was Already Taken*, September 16. <http://departmentofdeviance.blogspot.com/2016/09/dod-named-wise-and-interesting.html>
- OxfordAntiRacismOpenLetter. 2020. "Open Letter: Oxford University Must Tackle Systemic Racism." *Medium*, June 6. <https://medium.com/@Oxford>

dAntiRacismLetter/open-letter-oxford-university-must-tackle-systemic-racism-db09f3b0b1a3

- Oxford Handbooks Online. 2021. "Non-Western Philosophy." <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/search?t0=ORR%3AAHU02870>
- Oxford University Press. 2021. "A History of Philosophy" series. Accessed February 17, 2021. <https://global.oup.com/academic/content/series/h/a-history-of-philosophy-ahp/?lang=en&cc=sg>
- Park, Eugene. 2014. "Why I Left Academia: Philosophy's Homogeneity Needs Rethinking." *HuffPost*, November 3. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/why-i-left-academia_b_5735320
- Park, Peter K. J. 2013. *Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon, 1780–1830*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- . 2017. "Why It Makes Sense to Talk of Decolonizing the Philosophy Department." *Journal of World Philosophies* 2 (Winter): 66–73.
- Peone, Kyle. 2016. "Yes—Let's Call Philosophy What It Really Is." *Washington Examiner*, May 19. <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/weekly-standard/yes-lets-call-philosophy-what-it-really-is>
- Perrett, Roy W. 2016. *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Preston, Aaron. 2019. "Analytic Philosophy." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed July 9, 2019. <https://www.iep.utm.edu/analytic/>
- Scharfstein, Ben-Ami. 1998. "The Western Blindness to Non-Western Philosophies." *Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy*, August 10–15. <https://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Comp/CompScha.htm>
- Schuringa, Christoph. 2020. "On the Very Idea of 'Western' Philosophy." *Medium*, June 10. <https://medium.com/science-and-philosophy/on-the-very-idea-of-western-philosophy-668c27b3677>
- Schwitzgebel, Eric. 2020. "Diversity in Philosophy Departments: Introduction." *Blog of the APA*, June 11. Newark: American Philosophical Association. <https://blog.apaonline.org/2020/06/11/diversity-in-philosophy-departments-introduction/>
- Sikka, Sonia. 2017. "Racism(s) and Philosophy Curricula: A Response to Park, Kalmanson and Flory." *Journal of World Philosophies* 2 (Winter): 78–81.
- Smith, Justin E. H. 2012. "Philosophy's Western Bias." *New York Times*, June 3. <https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/03/philosophys-western-bias/>

- Soldatenko, Gabriel. 2015. "A Contribution toward the Decolonization of Philosophy: Asserting the Coloniality of Power in the Study of Non-Western Traditions." *Comparative and Continental Philosophy* 7, no. 2:138–156.
- Stepien, Rafal K. 2018a. "Orienting Reason: A Religious Critique of Philosophizing Nāgārjuna." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 86, no. 4:1072–1106.
- . 2018b. "Do Good Philosophers Argue? A Buddhist Approach to Philosophy and Philosophy Prizes." *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 18, no. 1(Fall): 13–15.
- , guest ed. 2019a. "Buddhist Philosophy Worldwide: Perspectives and Programmes." Special issue, *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 18, no. 2(Spring).
- . 2019b. "Buddhist Philosophy? Arguments From Somewhere." In Rafal K. Stepien, guest ed., "Buddhist Philosophy Today: Theories and Forms." Special issue, *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 19, no. 1(Fall): 11–15.
- . 2020. "Philosophy, Literature, Religion: Buddhism as Transdisciplinary Intervention." In Rafal K. Stepien, ed., *Buddhist Literature as Philosophy, Buddhist Philosophy as Literature*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 1–31.
- Tampio, Nicholas. 2016. "Not All Things Wise and Good Are Philosophy." *Aeon*, September 13. <https://aeon.co/ideas/not-all-things-wise-and-good-are-philosophy>
- University College London. 2021. *Dismantling the Master's House*. Accessed February 17, 2021. <http://www.dtmh.ucl.ac.uk>>
- Van Norden, Bryan W. 2017a. *Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 2017b. "Western Philosophy Is Racist." *Aeon*. <https://aeon.co/essays/why-the-western-philosophical-canon-is-xenophobic-and-racist>
- Weinberg, Justin. 2018. "The Parochialism of Mainstream History of Philosophy." *Daily Nous*, April 3. <https://dailynous.com/2018/04/03/parochialism-history-philosophy/>
- Ziporyn, Brook. 2019. "Philosophy, Quo Vadis? Buddhism and the Academic Study of Philosophy." *APA Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies*, guest editor Rafal Stepien, vol. 19, no. 1 (Fall): 3–8.