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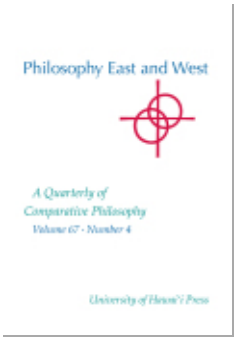

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"Chinese Philosophy" at European Universities: A Threefold Utopia

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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. I have argued in the past that the futility of rational arguments is related to our emotional attachment to entities that fall beyond our control, such as the institutions where we are trained, and that, like a family, shape our views on a subconscious level.[1] This essay is not yet another argument in favor of Chinese philosophy, but turns to the institutional level, more specifically the European universities. More than anywhere else in the world, they perpetuate an implicit bias against anything non-Western. Recent initiatives to include some non-Western content in the curricula are often well meant *ad hoc* corrections that actually allow the dominant framework to persist. In order to make this more general point, my focus here will be on the issue of "Chinese philosophy."

The question of whether or not early Chinese thought should be taught in Philosophy departments is, in at least three senses, a matter of "place," the topic of the Eleventh East-West Philosophers' Conference in Hawai'i in May 2016. The most obvious place involved in the controversy is, of course, China as a controversial object of teaching in Western Philosophy departments: was China ever, like Europe, a cradle of philosophy? Place is, second, also involved in the locations that do or do not include Chinese thought in their philosophy departments. The "legitimacy of Chinese philosophy" (*Zhongguo zhexue hefaxing* 中國哲學合法性) controversy that peaked around the turn of this century has clearly shown the crucial relevance of place in this second sense: while most Western Philosophy departments exclude Chinese thought, the Chinese almost unanimously include it.[2] In the West, the recent state-of-the-art concerning this issue has, moreover, focused on the situation in the United States, leaving Europe out of the picture, except as the culprit for Western ethnocentrism.[3] A third sense in which place matters is the academic discipline or department where early Chinese thought is taught: while this often happens in other than Philosophy departments—such as Asian Studies, Sinology, Language, History, or Religion[4]—the reflection on its status does not seem to fall under any of them.

This very reflection is nevertheless the ambition of the present essay by elaborating on the three types of place, or rather non-place, "u-topia": China as a contested cradle of philosophy, Europe as an overlooked academic space, and a non-existing department from where to tackle the question. In the two first senses—China as

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the non-object of study in Philosophy departments, and Europe as an academic non-location—this essay consists of, respectively, a continuation of my earlier reflections[5] and a supply of novel information with a focus on institutional matters. The disciplinary non-place is more tricky: many scholars of Chinese thought are not particularly well equipped to discuss seriously the (non)location of China at their home institutions; and potentially better equipped scholars of Sociology, Education, or Psychology have thus far not shown any interest in what for them is probably a non-issue. These three types of "non-place" thus form the crossroads where I resume the analysis of the issue of the legitimacy of Chinese philosophy. They come together at an academic core around which we keep circling.

I. The Meeting Point of Three Non-places

A simple question such as "Should Chinese philosophy (or thought, texts, etc.) be studied and taught (and hence, financed) at Philosophy departments" is a matter of three places: (pre-modern) China as the origin of the texts, Europe as the place where they should (not) be studied, and finally the university departments or disciplines that are involved.

China as Object of Study

As for the object of inquiry—Chinese thought in Philosophy departments—the debate has been notoriously inconclusive, with arguments on both sides lacking the persuasive force to convince opponents.[6] To begin with, the unsettled definition of philosophy has rendered opposite arguments equally defensible: the view that Chinese philosophy has never existed (and hence deserves no place at Western philosophy departments) because philosophy has always been Western[7] versus the claim that Chinese thought is profoundly philosophical—not merely philosophically interesting in the way that religion, art, and literature can be.[8] Most arguments in favor of Chinese philosophy have fallen on deaf ears in the West:[9] the advantage of mutual inspiration, the benefits from engaging with different ways of thinking, the philosophical call to engage with one's own tacit assumptions, the inclusion of "others" as a salutary check on disciplinary self-deception, the need for philosophical pluralism in a globalizing world, the changing student population, the increasing relevance of Chinese masters, the intellectual duty to treat others with respect, appeals to intellectual integrity, et cetera.[10] Counter-arguments from Western philosophers have been less numerous (because less necessary) and often amount to a division of labor that somewhat condescendingly allows to China a wonderful sort of wisdom instead of philosophy.[11]

The fact that such claims by faculty members at Western Philosophy departments are hardly supported by any close reading or thorough investigation of the texts has led scholars of Chinese philosophy to accuse them of ignorance, intellectual laziness, and racist or chauvinistic ethnocentrism.[12] Even though there is a great deal of truth both in the arguments in favor of Chinese philosophy and in these accusations, they also risk leaving something out. In other words, the continuous repetition of

apparently futile arguments alternating with mutual irritation indicates the existence of a sore spot. This is related, I have argued, to our emotional attachment to the institutions where we are trained. Since scholars at the Philosophy department are all hired on the basis of exclusively Western expertise, they understandably lack the time, interest, and language skills to judge the non-Western source material.[13] Hence, their ignorance results from the vicious circle that the educational system perpetuates: "Because we don't know their work, they have little impact on our philosophy. Because they have little impact on our philosophy, we believe we are justified in remaining ignorant about their work."[14] Since I agree with Robert Bernasconi that "more important than what academic philosophers think are the institutional practices they endorse,"[15] the next step in my analysis consciously leaves behind philosophical argumentation and focuses instead on institutional matters such as university curricula, course listings, appointments, research grants, the composition of committees, conferences, journal policies, ranking systems, job searches, and library categories.[16] My double aim is to illustrate the European situation (part 2) and reflect on it (part 3).

Europe as Locus of Study

The focus on institutional matters forces us to narrow the attention to a second nonplace, namely Europe, which used to be subsumed under the broader category of "the West" in earlier discussions. But considering the institutional differences between the Anglo-Saxon (especially North American) world and Europe, this broad category is no longer workable. In very general terms and overlooking evolutions and variations, area-related studies can be roughly divided into two types. "Sinology" in Europe originated from Oriental studies, which for a long time focused on philology and a mix of types of expertise in the humanities; "China Studies" in the United States boomed during the Cold War, and focused on contemporary topics through a multidisciplinary lens with dominant attention to the social sciences.[17]

It is therefore not surprising that recent reflections on the (non-)place of Chinese philosophy by North American scholars have focused on the situation in the United States, sometimes touching on Australia, Singapore, and Hong Kong.[18] Another reason why information on the European situation is lacking is its own silence on this topic. This silence comes with gradations. There is, first, an academic silence in the sense that thus far the treatment of China (along with other non-Western regions) in the European academy has hardly been actively or systematically researched. Whenever some scholars (usually from area-related studies) have discussed it, a second, equally passive type of silence consists in ignoring them.[19] Third, an enforced silence is evidenced in the fact that attempts to speak up in the local media are being censored.[20] The combination of these three types of silence must ring a bell for scholars of contemporary China.[21]

In this void of information, the current contribution starts in a somewhat artificially narrowed fashion by exploring one European academic institution in detail, namely my own: the University of Leuven, KU (Katholieke Universiteit) Leuven. It is located in Flanders, the northern region of Belgium, which is responsible for its

own education and research. Within KU Leuven, I further focus on two disciplines, namely History and Philosophy. Even though all sciences have been described as being determined by their particular place,[22] this is all the more obvious for the humanities, where knowledge of the places under scrutiny and their languages matters a great deal. The History department is selected to show that the academic exclusion of China is the result of not just a Western philosophical bias, but also of a more generally European one. The selected focus on two disciplines in one university is, admittedly, very narrow: it does not entail any comparison with other institutions in the region, nor does it take the specifics of other disciplines into account. However, I do believe that in a very general sense, the results can be cautiously extrapolated to the humanities and social sciences in the rest of Flanders and even much of Europe.[23] But for risking this bold claim, we need to jump to the third and most problematic non-place of this study.

The Academic Place of This Research

The relative futility of rational arguments in the legitimacy debate suggests that the expertise of most China scholars in, for example, Sinology, History, Religion, or Philosophy may not equip us to comprehend fully the mechanisms that have consistently excluded China (along with most other non-Western regions) from institutions that nevertheless claim to be broadly interested in the world. Experts in Sociology, Psychology, the Educational sciences, or even Anthropology might be better trained to study the academic habits, institutional attachments, dominant paradigms, discursive regimes, and symbolic violence all functioning below the surface of rationality.[24] But these experts are generally uninterested in the systematic exclusion of China in their own institutions. This lack of expertise on one side combined with a lack of interest on the other explains not only the academic silence but also the occasionally tentative tone of those China scholars who have spoken up. It is probably no coincidence that major parts of the recent legitimacy debate in the West can be found in blogs, newsletters, journals, and internet communities; they rely heavily on circumstantial evidence such as conversations, personal anecdotes, and emails and phone calls to editors, deans, and chairs of search committees.[25] Since area-related scholars are academically often not entitled (or funded)[26] to do this type of research, and since those who might be entitled are unanimously uninterested, the current topic thus far has remained somewhat understudied.[27]

The awkwardness of being incapable, invisible, unnoticed, or sometimes even silenced results from falling between the niches of academic disciplines. At least in Europe, Sinology as an all-around study of China cannot be identified with any clear set of methodologies, except perhaps the art of "in-betweenness" itself. A significant part of the methodology of the area-specialist may result from wandering between regions and disciplines, and consist in suspending certainties by thinking aloud about the strangeness that is familiar to the field.[28] An alternative illustration of this type of non-place could be Michel de Certeau's image of the cartoon figure Felix the Cat briskly walking on the edge of a cliff and noticing too late that there is no longer ground under his feet.[29] Despite expertise in a China-related field (e.g.,

philosophy or intellectual history) and years of experience within the academy, when they reflect upon the institutional system that shapes its members and frames their discourse, area-related scholars switch from being specialized experts to concerned intellectuals. And while hanging in the air over an academic cliff, they also drag their reluctant colleagues along into this void. However, by pointing at the fissures between the bones of our current educational body, I do not mean to challenge the expertise of the individual historians and philosophers presented anonymously in this essay, but only to highlight the institutional system that is largely taken for granted.

The focus on institutional data does not guarantee a serene atmosphere. On the contrary, the mere presentation of institutional information arouses emotional reactions, since scholars are not addressed in their expertise but in its foundation. They feel held accountable for the general system in which they function rather than for their individual contribution to it. Similar to the way it is for Felix the Cat, the experience of hanging in the air over the academic cliff edge is indeed an uncomfortable exercise compared to being on top of the mountain engaged in the expert research for which one is hired and admired. When questioned on this fundamental level, scholars feel threatened and respond accordingly:[30] they either keep silent or reduce critical remarks to the individual frustration of an ill-informed minority.[31] I am therefore particularly grateful to those History and Philosophy scholars who have read this essay and commented on it.

II. A Glimpse at the History and Philosophy Departments at KU Leuven

One possible implication of the "in-between" metaphor is the glimpse-like nature of what can be seen. Far from claiming to reveal once and for all the "true facts" of the European academy, this essay takes no more than a snapshot of two disciplines at one university on the basis of their websites in the academic year 2015–2016.[32] The focus on such apparently irrelevant data as course listings, faculty hiring, and research programs is like peeping through a very narrow gap and describing the view. Behind my back is a plane of wider issues such as orientalism, neocolonialism, sinologism,[33] and Sinology versus China studies, all topics that I will not tackle here. Beyond my data stretches a world that they represent: namely Europe, as the locus of research and teaching, and the "non-West" as the largely neglected object of expertise. Even though regional areas cannot be easily distinguished into categories, I use the rough taxonomy in table 1 as a heuristic tool.

Table 1. Taxonomy of places as objects of expertise

Paradigmatic **Non-West**	Partly Western	Paradigmatic West
China, Japan, Korea, . . .	Near East, the Slavonic world, Latin America, . . .	(Western) Europe, USA, Canada, . . .

While I consider China here as paradigmatic for the overlooked "non-West," we could probably add many African and Arabic regions, or India and Indonesia (especially when studied in more than only Western sources). Paradigmatically "Western" regions are, along with Europe, the (mostly) English-writing world, including the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. "Partly Western," finally, are other regions that historically, linguistically, religiously, or culturally are also associated with Europe, such as the Near East, the Slavonic world, and Latin America. While this division is far from perfect, as a temporary heuristic tool it is an improvement upon the outlandish opposition between the "non-West" and the "West."

The data of this study concern such items as the structure of the institutes and the status of various Bachelor's and Master's courses: How many discuss or substantially "bring in" China? Are they optional or mandatory? What is the percentage of faculty members specializing in China, reading Chinese sources, publishing in Chinese, and attending Chinese conferences? Which percentage of Master's theses, Ph.D. dissertations, or research projects concern China? What is the regional expertise of their applicants, their supervisors, and the council members awarding the projects? And, last but not least, to what extent is the regional limitation of courses and research explicitly stated? For instance, is China as a topic simply left out in a course titled "Introduction to Philosophy" or rather in an "Introduction to Western Philosophy"? And if the latter is the case, do the lecture notes then explain or support this implicit limitation, for example by claiming a lack of expertise in non-Western matters or by stating that philosophy is inherently Western? Some of these questions will be explored in this essay.

There are limitations to such a project of institutional data collection on the basis of a university's websites. Being no more reliable than its sources, the information may be contingent, cryptic, unclear, or even deficient. The exclusive focus on one moment in time, moreover, in this case the academic year 2015–2016, fails to show evolutions and may therefore no longer be representative for the situation today.[34] My general background information thus far suggests, however, that the data are nevertheless representative in a very general sense. Despite unmistakable evolutions toward broadening the regional scope, and notwithstanding important differences between the various disciplines, universities, and countries, I am confident that some of the information is also relevant for non-Western regions other than China.[35]

But my approach also has advantages. One is that it gives a voice to what usually remains unspoken. For instance, the fact that universities locate non-Western thought outside the Philosophy department—like bookstores placing the *Laozi* between the sections on astrology and foot massage—consolidates a conviction that is seldom explicitly stated and defended. The websites, moreover, contain a remarkable tension between the department's daily functioning in the face of these hard facts versus their self-representations and the flashy mission statements on their front pages.

The History Department at KU Leuven

The History department at KU Leuven belongs to the Faculty of Arts. Its curriculum consists of four years—three Bachelor's years and one Master's year—at least for the

"norm students" who proceed well in their studies. From the outset, the students choose between two trajectories: a minor one called "antiquity" (mostly ancient Greece and Rome) and a more general one, "from antiquity to the present." The aim of the Bachelor's program is that students gain insight into history, learn to treat sources critically, and grasp the connections between history and the other human sciences.[36]

Aside from a number of mandatory courses for all students (e.g., research skills, historical overviews of various periods in European history, and a course on intercultural contacts), there are also some mandatory options (e.g., between text readings in various European languages, between various disciplines). For each of the two trajectories—"antiquity" and "from antiquity to the present"—there is again a set of mandatory courses, optional courses, and modules. In the trajectory "from antiquity to the present,"[37] there are four mandatory courses (including one on European colonization) and optional courses on the history of France, Great Britain, and Germany (two courses for each). The four modules are: "antiquity," "contemporary society," "broadening the scope" (mostly with various disciplines), and "world history" (of a variety of areas). In the last module, the students choose six courses from a list of twelve regional histories, two of which are on China (see table 2).

Table 2. Bachelor's in History

<table>
<tr><td colspan="7">—Mandatory courses *2*
—Optional courses</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">From Antiquity to the Present
—Mandatory courses *3*
—Optional courses</td><td colspan="3">Antiquity
—Mandatory courses
—Optional courses</td></tr>
<tr><td>Antiquty</td><td>Contemporary society</td><td>Broadening the scope</td><td>World history *1*</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

What is the place of China in this curriculum? It fully figures in the titles and course descriptions of two elective courses for students in the "world history" module, within the "from antiquity to the present" trajectory (see *1* in table 2): "History of China till 1600" and "History of modern China." As a result, history students at KU Leuven can easily graduate, and actually do, without having taken any courses on China or, for that matter, on any other non-Western region (two students chose Chinese history, while sixty-seven students went for American history.[38] The history of Africa or Congo is not even an option). Such courses are gathered in the list of elective courses within the "world history" module. To the department's credit, the history program does express awareness of the importance of other than Western cultures and of the danger of European ethnocentrism, evidenced by the mandatory

course on intercultural contacts (see *2* in table 2) and the mandatory course on European colonization within the trajectory "from antiquity to the present" (see *3*). The former aims at "calling into question Eurocentric views of history,"[39] while the latter "aims at showing and critically evaluating colonization history."[40]

The Master's program consists of one year in which students learn to "independently and carefully describe a historical problem and thus learn to thoroughly understand the past and hence *all human activities*" (italics added). Students can again choose between four profiles, namely the "middle ages," "modern times," "cultural history after 1750," and "European society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries." Except for this last profile, which explicitly indicates its regional demarcation in most course titles and content descriptions, there seems to be a dominant assumption that "all human activities" have taken place in the West.[41]

The fact that the Master's program is, implicitly or explicitly, more restricted to the West (mostly to Europe) is because of the profile of the five research groups, four of which are implicitly or explicitly limited to the West in their self-descriptions: "ancient history" (explicitly focused on ancient Greece and Rome),[42] "medieval history" (explicitly Western),[43] "early modern history" (explicitly focused on the Low Countries),[44] "cultural history since 1750" (implicitly Western),[45] and "modernity and society from 1800 to 2000" (explicitly global).[46] These five research groups are home to all the staff members, among them twenty-five full-time professors. None of them does primary research on any "non-Western" topic. As a result, if any of these regions happens to be touched upon, it is never on the basis of sources in the relevant language, nor is it the central focus of attention. There is some work done on what I have identified as the "partly Western," for example on Latin America and the Slavonic world.[47]

Next, the research groups and areas of expertise determine the topics on which students are invited to write their Master's thesis. There are more than four hundred topics proposed by almost forty staff members, including assisting and part-time faculty.[48] The taxonomy "West," "partly Western," and "non-West" must be abandoned here, because almost all topics belong to a region within the first category, namely Europe. In figure 1 I have therefore adopted the following categories: (1) regions that more or less belong under what is today called Flanders and Belgium, including the Low Countries; (2) other regions that belong under what is now considered Europe; and (3) regions that are farther away, namely the "non-West," the "partly Western," and the non-European parts of the West (e.g., the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand). According to a tentative count, almost three hundred topics (equal to 75 percent) belong to (1); about sixty-five topics (16 percent) belong to (2), and about thirty-five topics (9 percent) belong to (3).

Even when using all the data indicated in figure 1 with the necessary caution, the combined evidence of the History program's structure, the status and content of the courses, the research groups and their projects, staff members' expertise and projects, and the Master's thesis topics of the academic year 2015–2016 all attest to the dominance of the home region, with an overwhelming focus on our own region. For North American scholars, "it would be unthinkable for departments of history,

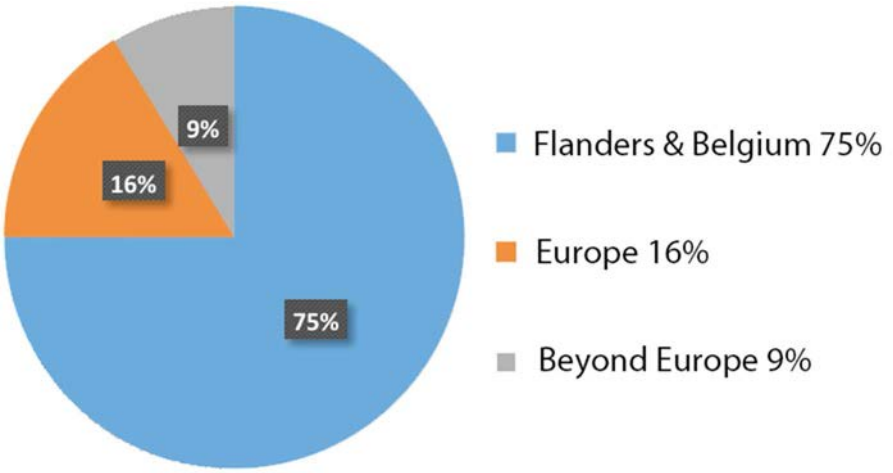

Figure 1. Proposed Master's thesis topics in History.

religion, or art to have specialists only in European and Anglo-American history, religion, or art."[49] Here, the unthinkable is reality. Of course, some degree of regional focus on oneself is normal and legitimate, especially since only Belgian and Dutch scholars have the motivation and linguistic skills to undertake most of this specific research. There is also, moreover, a growing interest in regions farther away from home, not only in the two courses mentioned above (*2* and *3*), but also in a host of other correcting initiatives listed below (see part 3). But the academic interest in Flanders (a region with a geographical area somewhat less than 1/700th that of China), Belgium, and Europe is nevertheless disproportionate, and the corrections are thus far no more than ad hoc solutions that consolidate the basic frame.

Philosophy Department at KU Leuven

The Philosophy department at KU Leuven, called the Institute of Philosophy, is an independent institute, HIW (Hoger Instituut Wijsbegeerte), with the status of a Faculty. It was founded in 1889, and over more than four decades it has had an international program completely run in English parallel with the one in Dutch. It has an impressive number of faculty members—thirty-nine fully employed professors, along with a much longer list of partially employed and (partially active) retired faculty members.[50] The faculty members all belong to one of the Institute's five research centers,[51] namely the "Center for Ethics, Social, and Political Philosophy" (implicitly Western),[52] the "Center for Logic and Analytic Philosophy" (explicitly analytic philosophy),[53] the "Center for Metaphysics, Philosophy of Religion, and Philosophy of Culture" (implicitly Western),[54] the "De Wulf-Mansion Center for Ancient, Medieval, and Renaissance Philosophy" (implicitly Western),[55] and finally the "Husserl Archives Center for Phenomenology and Continental Philosophy" (explicitly Western).[56]

The standard curriculum consists of three Bachelor's years, one Master's year, and one more year for a research Master's (M.Phil.) for students focusing on research.

The Institute wants to acquaint students "with the historical traditions of philosophy as well as with contemporary movements in English-speaking and continental philosophy," thus offering "a broad philosophical education."[57] The fact that international students "from America to China, from India and the Philippines to Mexico" study there accounts for its international atmosphere. Hence, to "practice philosophy looking at the whole world: in Leuven it is reality!"[58]

Let us focus on the Dutch program, which is older and more elaborate than the international one, but not fundamentally different. The three Bachelor's years consist of a part shared by all students *(truncus communis)* and an elective option. The former contains ten basic courses, seven historical overviews, one research skill course supported by one seminar to be chosen from the five research options, and one course on religion (see table 3). Within the *truncus communis* students also have to choose one course from either the list of twelve "socio-ethical" courses or "world philosophies," including "Chinese philosophy," "Arabic philosophy," "Jewish philosophy," "Russian Philosophy," and "East-West perspectives in philosophy." The second, elective part of the program consists of ten modules, including "general option," "law," "physics," and "economy."

Table 3. Bachelor's in Philosophy

—Mandatory courses: basics, history courses, religion, research skills (including the selection of one seminar) —Elective course: either socio-ethics or world philosophies *1*									
General *2*	Law	Sociology	Psychology	History	Physics				

What is the place of China (or any other non-Western region) in this curriculum? As for the *truncus communis,* China figures explicitly in the title of one elective course that can be chosen from two lists of altogether more than fifteen courses, and perhaps implicitly in the course "East-West perspectives" on the same list (see *1*). Moreover, within one of the modules, the one called "general," the choice of one world philosophy course is no longer optional but mandatory (*2*). Hence, with one elective course for all students and one mandatory course within one elective module out of ten, the large majority of philosophy students at KU Leuven can and do graduate without having taken any courses on any non-Western or partly Western philosophy, let alone on Chinese thought.[59] At the same time, the title of the list "world philosophies" does suggest that, in one way or another, non-Western thought is also considered philosophy.

The Master's program, according to the website, "crosses the boundaries of all philosophical disciplines, traditions, and approaches" to help students form their "own well-rounded view."[60] While students can still choose a world philosophy, the courses at this stage are even more exclusively Western because of the stronger con-

nection with the Institute's own expertise at its research centers. Students also write a thesis under the guidance of a faculty member. The list for 2015–2016 contains the proposals of fifty-five potential supervisors with their own expertise.[61] Since nobody focuses on Flanders or Belgium alone, the taxonomy "West," "partly Western," and "non-West" can be applied, even though the last category remains empty (see figure 2). If any regional division can be roughly made, it is between Continental (around four fifths) and Anglo-Saxon (around one fifth).

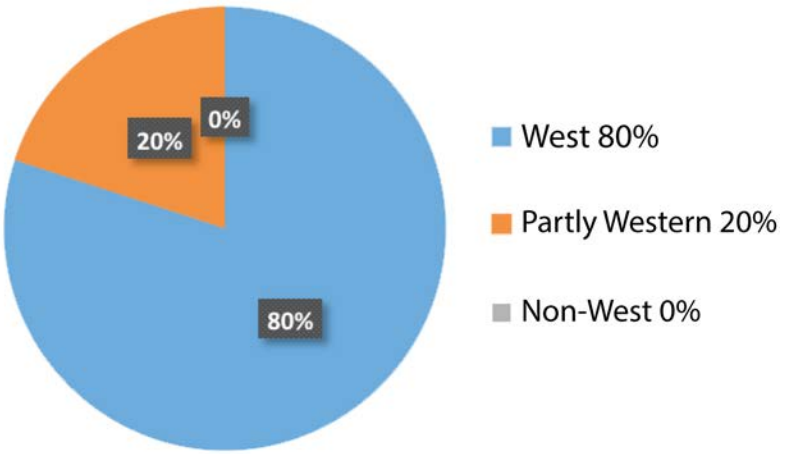

Figure 2. Available Master's thesis expertise in Philosophy.

Considering the location of Leuven at the center of Europe and its long-standing tradition, the prevalence of Continental topics is not surprising. With Russian and Jewish philosophy, there is also some expertise on what I have identified as the "partly Western."[62] There is no expert available for students who might want to work on the other so-called world philosophies or non-Western thought. With eleven colleagues counting Kant among their research topics, and eight mentioning Foucault, there is a total absence of expertise on Confucius, Mozi, Mencius, Laozi, Zhuangzi, Xunzi, Shang Yang, Shen Buhai, Shen Dao, Han Feizi, Guanzi, Heguanzi, Huainanzi, Shizi,[63] Wang Chong, Lu Jia, Jia Yi, Huan Tan, Liu Xin, Dong Zhongshu, Yang Xiong, Liezi, Lu Sheng, Han Yu, Li Ao, Liu Zongyuan, Luo Yin, Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, Cheng Yi, Cheng Hao, Zhu Xi, Wang Yangming, Li Zhi, Fu Shan, Wang Gen, He Xinyin, Wang Fuzhi, Wang Zhong, Fang Dongshu, Weng Fanggang, Gu Yanwu, Zhang Xuecheng, Huang Zongxi, Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Zhang Taiyan, Wu Yu, Hu Shi, Feng Youlan, Fu Sinian, Liang Shuming, Xiong Shili, Mou Zongsan, Qiang Zhongshu, Tang Junyi, and Li Zehou, to name only some. However important Kant and Foucault undeniably are, one wonders if they really offset the totality of all

Chinese thinkers, not to mention the Arabic, Japanese, Indian, Latin-American, and African ones.[64]

Again, taking the data with the necessary grain of salt, this combined evidence of the Philosophy program's structure, the courses, the research centers, their awarded projects, and the supervisors' expertise shows that there is an even more overwhelming, but mostly implicit bias in favor of the West than in the History department. The proclaimed "international atmosphere" at the Institute is apparently considered an automatic result of the fact that the student population comes from various countries; it is not visibly related to the faculty's intellectual openness toward different ways of thinking. Crossing the boundaries "of all philosophical disciplines, traditions, and approaches" does not take one beyond the West.

III. Europe and Philosophy

As David Livingstone has argued, science has a geography, despite its practitioners' claim to a placeless place and their efforts to transcend the parochial.[65] Within the humanities and also in the social sciences, Livingstone's statement is not as controversial as it might have been in the natural sciences. But even within the humanities, disciplines all differ in their double treatment of places: those they inhabit and those they study. Anthropology, for instance, thrives on the study of the other; and in many non-European universities, the non-West has some place within departments. I have chosen to focus on one discipline aside from Philosophy, namely History, which is remarkably similar and yet undeniably different. In their similarity both departments are somewhat representative of the "soft sciences" (mostly the humanities, but also the social sciences) in the European context. But the fact that in its ethnocentric stance the KU Leuven Philosophy department resembles those in the United States also indicates some typically Western philosophical traits—hence the difference. The situation of Chinese (and other non-Western) philosophy at KU Leuven (and at other European philosophy departments) can thus tentatively be divided into two parts: being European, it differs gradually from the rest of the world (see "Soft Sciences in Europe" below); being philosophy, it differs gradually from other disciplines (see "Philosophy Being Philosophy" below). The overlap between both aspects and the gradual differences between regions and disciplines tend to blur the distinction between being European and being philosophy.

Soft Sciences in Europe

Imagine a Flemish (Belgian, European) youngster interested in the history of the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864), a civil war in which an estimated twenty to thirty million people died. What should she study? Before answering this question, I must admit that this case is highly hypothetical since, like most events in Chinese (and non-Western) history, the Taiping Rebellion is unknown and never mentioned in Belgian high schools. But what if? In Belgium, this student would have to study Sinology, where she would learn about China's culture and history, practice its language and

script, read primary and secondary sources in a variety of languages, and be urged to take as many methodology courses as possible at the History department. In the United States, this student would aim for a History department where Chinese history is taught and researched. The same holds for Chinese universities treating topics of Western or world history.

In an attempt to make the difference visual, we could project the underlying institutional framework onto one line, reaching from an area-focused training (*in casu* China) at one extreme to a disciplinary expertise (*in casu* History) at the other (see figure 3). The middle of the line would indicate scholars who are well trained in both: acquainted with the methodologies, trends, ways of thinking, terminology, and discourses within their discipline while at the same time knowing well the region of research and being fluent in its main language(s) so as to be able to read sources, attend conferences, create networks, and gain a sense of belonging there.

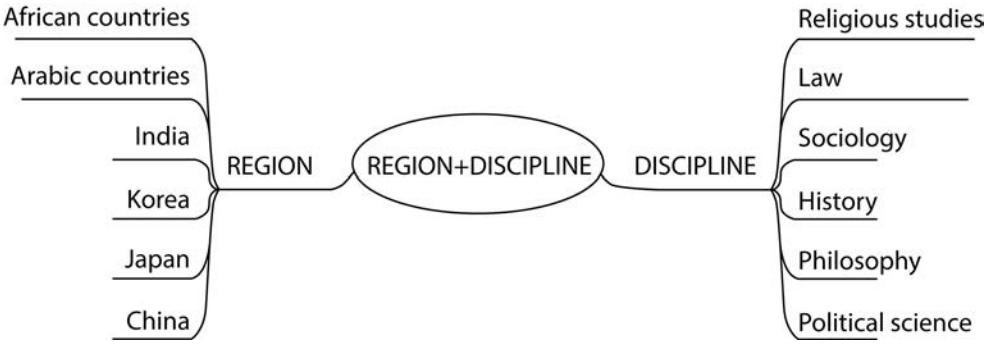

Figure 3. Institutional frame of regions and disciplines at KU Leuven.

I believe that KU Leuven is representative of most European universities in keeping the two extremes farther apart than many universities in the rest of the world, even in poor countries.[66] While the disciplines at one extreme are exclusively local (at most touching upon China in the margin of a course), the area-related studies at the other side submerge the student in a bath of regional expertise (with minimal training in specific methodologies). Only in a second step would scholars on both sides move toward the middle by learning, respectively, the languages or the methodologies of the discipline. The disadvantages of the European system have been abundantly exposed in the ongoing Discipline-versus-Area-Studies controversy. Without resuming this debate, let me point out three weaknesses that are more prominent in the European system.

One immediate result of the fact that discipline experts are hardly trained in any region beyond their own is the remarkable lack of knowledge of the Chinese, Japanese, or Arab world, not only at universities but also beyond: in schools, media,

and public debates.[67] Second, since scholars almost exclusively think in terms of supposedly universal disciplines, doing interdisciplinary research (e.g., combining History with Economics, or Philosophy with Physics) is, in their eyes, the climax of all-around scholarship, even though it largely remains restricted to only one part of the globe. Due to the absence of truly challenging voices from outside, there is the risk of a lack of novelty, flexibility, and self-criticism. Hence, most European academics think about themselves as the center of the world, possessing all the uncontested concepts and criteria for evaluating others.[68] A third and last problem, specifically for area-related scholars, is that research funding is determined by committees made up almost exclusively of faculty from those disciplines. The FWO (Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek, or Fund for Scientific Research) in Flanders is a case in point. The current panel of sixteen experts granting philosophy projects are all based in Philosophy departments and have expertise in exclusively Western disciplines.[69] A project on Chinese philosophy, therefore, may have some hurdles to jump in order to be awarded: compete with more familiar, Western projects; include enough regional explanation in order to be comprehensible; use a discourse that the experts recognize as being philosophical; and show acquaintance with the most recent scholarship within at least one branch of their philosophical expertise.[70]

On the basis of this description, non-European scholars may feel confirmed in their dismissal of European scholarship. The situation is better than it seems, however. I therefore want to add two important nuances to the picture painted above. Without rehearsing long-standing arguments in favor of Area Studies such as (New) Sinology, I will first point out one possible richness of the system itself, and then turn to the corrections that are being made to address its inherent biases. As for the former, in the long range of types of expertise between the two extremes, one can look at China in a variety of ways, ranging from discipline specialists who have hardly any acquaintance with the language and the region (situated on the extreme right side), moving over to those having learned some Chinese, toward the "old China hands" who are without any disciplinary expertise (on the extreme left side). Without doubt, a double expertise somewhere around the middle of the spectrum is to be applauded. But I would not exclude the possibility that discipline scholars working on the West may have something very worthwhile to say about China, not just despite their lack of area-expertise but sometimes even because of it.[71] In the field of Chinese philosophy, Herbert Fingarette is a case in point. Without much knowledge of China or Chinese, he gave an enormous boost to Confucius-related scholarship.[72] On the other side, Simon Leys (Pierre Ryckmans) represents in my eyes the all-around China scholar undisturbed by the confines of any specific discipline.[73] These examples show that fine experts positioned in the wide range from discipline to area are not an exclusively European phenomenon. Such admittedly exceptional examples illustrate the value of a variety of academic profiles, sometimes even including the lack of training as a possible asset.

A second reason that makes life in the European academy tolerable is the fact that the constraints of the system are increasingly recognized and addressed, not

only by open-minded faculty members but also on an institutional level. Without fundamentally changing the dominant paradigm itself, the two departments described above have made resourceful attempts to meet the demands of an increasingly global world: they have elective courses on the non-West (including China); occasionally refer to non-Western regions (including China) in other courses; reflect upon topics such as Eurocentrism, exclusion, and symbolic violence (in other cases than the one discussed here); invite visiting scholars and doctoral students working on the non-West (including China);[74] collaborate extensively with colleagues from the area-related studies (including Sinology); invite them to give lectures and contribute papers; welcome them on their advisory boards or evaluation committees; and have become increasingly explicit about the regional demarcations of their courses, modules, profiles, and projects. They also make serious attempts to honor funding applications for projects on non-Western topics. Within the confines of a hardly contested system, my experience is that most colleagues try to be fair and generous, as long as the Eurocentric frame is not fundamentally questioned.

For all these reasons, China—along with other non- or partially Western regions—can be researched at KU Leuven; even within this system, area-related scholars are relatively well off. They are indeed subjected to an implicit form of more-or-less institutional discrimination (depending on the department and the discipline) as described above, but not more severe than a variety of other types of injustice on the basis of gender, race, provenance, age, social class, sexual orientation, health, or genetics. Like myself, almost all area-related scholars working at European universities receiving a salary to do research and teach students are generally on the side of the privileged in most types of discrimination. Moreover, while the slow but steady attempts undertaken within the system to address some inequalities are to be applauded, discrimination is also a valuable experience, as long as it is limited. It increases one's empathy for those who are suffering much more from various types of hardly acknowledged unfairness. The real victims of this bias are therefore not the current area-related scholars at European universities, but the future generations that are taught by teachers and informed by journalists who are all educated in a system that does not prepare them for a respectful communication with and a thorough understanding of the increasingly growing non-Western world.

Philosophy Being Philosophy

But this European bias is only one part of the picture. Despite the similarities between the History and Philosophy departments at KU Leuven accounted for by being European, there are also major differences. Compared to Philosophy, History in general has been more open to accommodate China in a global framework. To begin with, the existence of such a thing as "Chinese history" is not questioned.[75] While History courses and research projects tend to name explicitly the region of their research—"History of the Netherlands" or "History of European colonization"—Philosophy courses exude more universal ambitions, carrying generic titles such as "Ethics," "Logic," or "Metaphysics," while actually being limited to Western

thought. The universal ambitions of the Philosophy department thus go hand in hand with a much stronger and implicit regional restriction. With research topics in History ranging from the smallest Flemish archive to intercontinental evolutions, most philosophical topics are limited to the West. I therefore also wonder what to make "of the apparent tension between the alleged universality of reason and the fact that its upholders are so intent on localizing its historical instantiation."[76]

The exclusion of Chinese thought from European Philosophy departments—at least at KU Leuven—only gradually differs from the United States. Even though some programs in the U.S.A. have compulsory courses on non-Western philosophies, and have fully or partially appointed faculty with expertise in Chinese philosophy,[77] the Philosophy departments in general remain champions of exclusion within the academy. It has been pointed out that "[N]o other humanities discipline demonstrates this systematic neglect of most of the civilizations in its domain."[78] Brian Bruya has argued on the basis of game theory that the ethnocentric reflex of Western philosophy may not disappear soon.[79] Crowdsourcing experiments, moreover, show that groups perceiving themselves as homogeneous consistently express high confidence about their superiority even though they are actually less creative and successful than diverse groups.[80] This also does not sound promising for the currently exclusively Western (and still predominantly white and male)[81] philosophy departments.

But there are ways to cope with this. The easiest one would be to rename the department "Institute of Western Philosophy" and consequently add regional specifications to the course titles. For KU Leuven, this would be a costless and honorable option. The Philosophy Institute really is a wonderful place of lively intellectual reflection on Western, and mostly Continental thought. Pride of this heritage is a legitimate driving force. It may even be a necessary ingredient for Western philosophers to speak with authority, even when Europe as the center of the world has become a phantom. As Dabashi points out, Europe still "has much to teach the world, but now on a far more leveled and democratic playing field, where its philosophy is European philosophy not 'Philosophy'."[82]

The rejection of this option (at least thus far) by the Institute of Philosophy is because philosophy, as opposed to history, is considered by many faculty members an exclusively Western cultural artifact, like Red Port being inherently Portuguese and shadowboxing (*taijiquan* 太極拳) being Chinese: just as the Polish people do not insist on having invented Red Port and Westerners do not claim to always have had their own type of shadowboxing, non-Europeans should not insist on having had philosophy in the past. According to a view that dates from the late eighteenth century, philosophy is a European cultural artifact that did not exist elsewhere before being internationally exported.[83] As I argued over a decade ago, this position can be rationally defended depending on one's definition of philosophy, an issue that according to philosophers is open to debate—but apparently only among the members of a restricted club.[84]

More importantly, this position is to a large extent the expression of a *status quo* in Western Philosophy departments, not of any close knowledge of the relevant

material. Although a lack of knowledge may be considered deplorable, the individual professional philosophers can be excused by their very training: "When Ph.D. students can go through their entire graduate education without ever encountering non-Western thought, it will be difficult to get them to take these traditions seriously once they are professional philosophers themselves."[85] They are to be blamed, however, when the very lack of expertise becomes a condition to be accepted as a philosopher by the champions of open-mindedness. As Amy Olberding has shown, Western philosophers are consistently suspicious of colleagues in the field (with a Ph.D. in Philosophy) who use non-Western languages in their research. Broadening one's scope by learning about other regions is not considered an indication of greater cosmopolitanism but of a deviant and eccentric boutique interest in marginal topics.[86]

The position that I find offensive, however, is an ethnocentric conservatism couched in a discourse of global pretensions. Whether one chooses explicitly to restrict the department to Western philosophy or one considers philosophy an inherently Western artifact, one should defend this parochial position with pride. Claims about international reaches and boundary crossing do not fit well into this picture. Mission statements and self-presentations of philosophy departments or journals abound with terms such as "global," "inclusive," "breadth," "comprehensive," "cosmopolitan," "wide range," "crossing boundaries," "rational," and "critical," which are in sharp contrast with their conservative attitude.[87] The FWO is a case in point: it has a logo, "Opening new horizons," with a long explanation online of how it "does not think in traditional thought patterns," while in fact it does no more than reinforce the institutional biases of the local universities.[88] Like the Leuven Institute for Philosophy, the FWO may be international in attracting scholars from all over the world, but it is not at all groundbreaking or boundary crossing in its vision and respect for other cultures.[89]

Figure 4. The FWO logo.

IV. Conclusion

Scholars inevitably function within a framework or paradigm that determines the relevance and meaning of what they study. Most disciplines, however, undertake attempts to cultivate a healthy skepticism and an openness to what challenges this framework. Philosophy departments, the self-proclaimed advocates of reflection and skepticism, are an exception. The closest they come to accepting novelty is when it is not disturbing: "Show us something we have not seen before, but be sure it looks well and truly familiar to us too."[90] For this reason, contemporary scholars of Chinese philosophy have found it increasingly futile to rehearse arguments for greater diversity.[91] Since the unquestioned Western framework determines what can—and what cannot—be studied, I have focused here on the description and analysis of this framework in a specific, European context.

Hence, without adding any philosophical arguments for the acceptance of Chinese (or any other non-Western) philosophy, or appealing to the philosophical quality of Chinese texts or their current research,[92] I will restrict my suggestions here to two institutional matters, one relatively easy and superficial, the second more difficult and fundamental. Because of the institutional focus of this essay, the arguments that I put forward are not philosophical, nor do they specifically address professional philosophers, but rather appeal to concerned citizens and intellectuals who might at some point have a say in how our educational system is shaped. I appeal to such unphilosophical matters as the increasing non-Western student population, the growing economic and political power of non-Western countries, and the importance of diplomacy. When dealing with other countries and cultures, it does no harm to show them some degree of respect—even in their supposedly mistaken claim to have philosophy—especially now that the West is losing its position of uncontested leader of the world. Despite the undeniable disadvantages of institutional top-down changes, I think that most European Philosophy departments will only open up to the world when forced to do so. As with other types of positive action (e.g., gender and racial equality), changes will take time and meet with resistance from within the system.

The first change that I suggest entails no extra cost: students in all Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines should be expected to take one or two courses in truly unfamiliar regions of their own choice. By studying African history, Japanese politics, Arabic law, or Chinese philosophy, students not only learn about other regions, but also encounter alien terminology, concerns, questions, debates, points of view, and historical settings. Uncomfortable though this obligation originally may be, such an academic experience takes students out of their comfort zone and thereby instills self-reflection. The concrete implementation of this suggestion needs further reflection depending on the department. In Philosophy, for instance, courses provided with an ethnic label such as "Chinese philosophy" are far from ideal: not only are they ridiculously broad in scope,[93] they also suggest some essential characteristics (Chineseness) by which those philosophies would deviate from the supposedly neutral norm.[94] While a variety of specifications can be considered, I think that courses

with generic titles such as "Introduction to philosophy" should simply be informed by more than only Western content, and that the inevitable regional limitation of each course should be explicitly indicated.

Therefore, a second and more important institutional step would be for the disciplines to hire faculty with firsthand expertise in other regions: someone who reads Arabic at the Philosophy department, Japanese for Law, Korean for Sociology, Hindi for Anthropology, Chinese for Religious Studies, et cetera. This is already a reality in the non-European world, except for most Philosophy departments in the West. Thus, when a vacancy comes up in Philosophy, we could spare a bit of expertise on Kant or Foucault to cede some institutional space—possibly in a double appointment with Area Studies—to a specialist of, for example, Kang Youwei, Nishida Kitarō, Homi Bhabha, or Uma Narayan. What would be lost aside from this (half) position? Strictly speaking, nothing would be expected from the current faculty members, who could continue to do what they were hired for: Western philosophy. They would not be expected to suddenly introduce any Arabic or Chinese ideas into their own research or teaching: forced appropriations of foreign ideas risk being superficial and patronizing. Nor would they be asked to show any interest in non-Western thought, just as they are currently often politely indifferent to their colleagues' research in the department.[95] It is not even necessary that they consider Arabic or Chinese thought interesting, relevant, or philosophical. But in the long run the mere presence of outsiders would allow teaching on the basis of a close acquaintance with the relevant region, and hopefully stimulate interaction with at least some students and colleagues. If the political and institutional authorities believe that it is time to show respect to other cultures and countries, they could make it happen.

But this is 2016, exactly the five-hundredth anniversary of Thomas More's *Utopia,* which was first published in my hometown, Leuven, in the year 1516. My threefold reflection on non-place is utopian in both the negative and positive senses. On the one hand, it is an illusion to hope that change will happen anytime soon, considering the inertia of the system and the tardiness with which Philosophy departments cede place to women and non-white people. But it is also a dream. More than seven hundred years ago there was a strong resistance in Paris against a foreign philosophy that, according to many university professors, did not fit in with the curriculum and was not of high quality anyway. But after student riots and debates, the reformers won, and European philosophy was enriched by Arab sources conveying Aristotle's thought.[96] Why would our philosophers not be able to repeat this feat sometime in the future?

Notes

I thank Nicolas Standaert, Idesbald Goddeeris, Bryan Van Norden, Ralph Weber, Maghiel van Crevel, Philippe Major, Frans de Haas, Sarah Schreurs, and the members of my reading group (Trui, Jef, Remi, Stef, and Jan) for their valuable comments.

1 – In Defoort 2001, pp. 407–409, and Defoort 2006, pp. 637–642, I argued that the terms "Chinese" and "philosophy" to some extent function as family names,

and therefore entail a complex combination of conceptual vagueness with emotional attachment.

2 – Along with Western philosophy. Almost all Chinese (and Asian) Philosophy departments teach various courses on at least Western (and sometimes also Chinese) philosophy.

3 – See, e.g., Schwitzgebel 2015.

4 – See, e.g., Angle 2008, p. 2; Van Norden 2008, p. 5; and Weber 2017, p. 384. Some scholars of Chinese thought have also pointed out possible advantages of operating outside the confines of the Philosophy department; see McLeod 2016, pp. 15–17.

5 – Defoort 2001, Defoort 2006, and Defoort 1999.

6 – See, e.g., Tiwald 2008, p. 7, and Garfield and Van Norden 2016. The two sides cannot be sharply distinguished. "Chinese side" means mostly Chinese and, secondarily, China/Sinology scholars. For a selection of Chinese views on this topic, see the issues of *Contemporary Chinese Thought* edited by Defoort and Ge 2005, 2005–2006, and 2006.

7 – According to Robert Bernasconi (1997, pp. 212–214) and Peter Park (2013, p. 2), the view that philosophy was exclusively Greek and hence European dates from the late eighteenth century and quickly became orthodoxy.

8 – The view that some Chinese masters were philosophers was assumed by Westerners in their first encounters with China, and became an explicit conviction in China at the beginning of the twentieth century. See, e.g., Bernasconi 1997 and Defoort 2006, pp. 631–632.

9 – There are, of course, various counter-examples, several of which are quoted in the present essay. See, e.g., Bernasconi 1997 and Solomon 2001.

10 – See, e.g., Angle 2008, p. 3; Ames 2008, p. 3; Tiwald 2008, p. 7; Im 2008, p. 8; Struhl 2010, pp. 288–289; Bruya 2015b, p. 384; Schwitzgebel 2015; Garfield and Van Norden 2016; Ganeri 2016, p. 135; and Olberding 2016, p. 8.

11 – See, e.g., Ganeri 2016, p. 136; Defoort and Ge 2005, pp. 3, 5–6; and Garuba 2012, p. 47, on African thought. See also the opinions quoted in Wu 1998.

12 – For some recent statements, see, e.g., Van Norden 2008, pp. 4–5; Jiang 2011, p. 168; Schwitzgebel 2015; Garfield and Van Norden 2016; Ganeri 2016, p. 134; Huang 2016, p. 18; Cleary 2016; Cline 2016, p. 11; and Van Norden 2016a, p. 24. Paradoxically, one of the few arguments given by Western philosophers is that many classical Chinese texts lack argumentation.

13 – The majority of this material has not been translated. Furthermore, the translation into (modern) Chinese, Japanese, or other languages is often at the very core of philosophical debates, since translations are inevitably carriers of assumptions and implicit worldviews.

14 – Schwitzgebel 2015.

15 – Bernasconi 1997, p. 213.

16 – "Institutional" refers broadly to our universities and funding institutions, primary and secondary education, cultural and political institutions, down to the organization of bookstores.

17 – For more details, see Defoort and Standaert 1997a, pp. 405–408; Wallerstein 2004, pp. 7–11; Bernasconi 1997; Hung 2004; Zürcher 2007; Garuba 2012, pp. 41–43, related to Africa; and LIAS 2016, pp. 1–5. For inspiring attempts to combine the best of both, see, e.g., Barmé 2005 on "New Sinology" and LIAS 2016, pp. 5–10, on "New area studies," including a long reading list of relevant material.

18 – Recent debates focus on the United States or the English-speaking world. See, e.g., Im et al. 2006–2008; Olberding 2008, 2016, and 2017; Angle 2008; Ames 2008; Van Norden 2008; Tiwald 2008; Im 2008; Wong 2008; Jiang 2002 and 2011; Struhl 2010; Schwitzgebel 2015; Bruya 2015b and 2016; Garfield and Van Norden 2016; Cleary 2016; and McLeod 2016.

19 – See, e.g., Defoort and Standaert 1997a, Defoort 2015a, and Defoort 2015b about the absence of China (and other non-Western regions) in all of Flanders' Social Sciences and Humanities. Meetings over the last decades with presidents of our university, vice-presidents of research, deans, the head of the FWO, members of FWO reflection boards, and colleagues have aroused little more than TINA ("there is no alternative") reactions.

20 – Following one single attempt to discuss the situation in a short newspaper article ("Een onzichtbare loper voor censuur," *De Standaard,* February 8, 2016), I was urged to remove the item from our Faculty website (email of 08/02/2016).

21 – As Yu Jiyuan, professor of ancient Greek and Chinese philosophy at Buffalo, points out in an interview, "The Chinese academic world is surprisingly free. . . . But you cannot publish some of those things in a newspaper, or talk about them to a Western journalist." See Romano 2013.

22 – Livingstone 2003, pp. 1–3.

23 – For some European counter-examples, see, e.g., recent evolutions at the Philosophy department of Leiden University (Netherlands). The philosophical pluralism at University College Cork (Ireland) described by Julia Jansen (2013, pp. 128–129) has largely become a matter of the past with the departure of Hans-Georg Müller and Graham Parkes. An overview of the situation in Europe from 2007 to 2014 contains more detailed information; see Weber 2017.

24 – My own expertise in these fields is limited. I have a Ph.D. in Sinology (1993), two MA degrees in Philosophy—from the University of Hawai'i (1990) and from KU Leuven (1993)—and course transcripts in Chinese philosophy from National Taiwan University (1986).

25 – See, e.g., Im et al. 2008, p. 8; Schwitzgebel 2015; Bruya 2015b, p. 381; Olberding 2016, pp. 3–6, and 2017; McLeod 2016, p. 13; and Huang 2016, p. 18.

26 – For the first time in my career, my contribution to an academic conference (this paper for the Eleventh East-West Philosophers' Conference, May 2016) was deemed unworthy of travel reimbursement because of "the unclear methodology and unclear results" of my research (FWO letter of March 10, 2016).

27 – Bruya 2015b, p. 369. Exceptions are, e.g., Amy Olberding and Brian Bruya, both scholars of Chinese philosophy who have done thorough research on the gatekeeping practices and institutional resistance of Western philosophers. There exists also a wealth of studies that are in one way or another closely related to this topic, undertaken by either area-related scholars or scholars of Sociology/Anthropology. A combination of both is Joris Luyendijk, a journalist who has been trained in Arabic studies as well as Anthropology. For his popular analysis of Western media on Near Eastern topics, see Luyendijk [2006] 2015.

28 – This predicament is, of course, far from exclusive for area-related scholars and may have become constitutive of the human condition in an increasingly global world. See, e.g., Defoort and Standaert 1997a, pp. 411–412; Standaert 2015; and Defoort 2015c.

29 – See De Kesel 1996, pp. 122–123.

30 – "Any attempt to reopen the question of the origin of philosophy tends to be treated as an attack on philosophy: it threatens cherished conceptions of philosophy and reason" (Bernasconi 1997, p. 213).

31 – Reduction of criticism to "a small minority" when the government can no longer keep silent is also a commonly used response in contemporary Chinese propaganda. See, e.g., Black and Munro 1993.

32 – The institutional information below is restricted to their locations in the city of Leuven; it does not include the other academic settings of the larger KU Leuven Association set up in 2002.

33 – See, e.g., Hung 2004, Chan 2012, Gu 2013, and Ganeri 2016.

34 – A positive side effect of this limitation in time is that the constantly changing institutional jargon—"faculty," "sub-faculty," "department," "research unit," and "research group"—is used relatively consistently. Since these terms are very volatile, a study over various years would be confusing. Even now, the chosen jargon is not always intuitively clear. Sinology, Japanese studies, Ancient Greek studies, Near Eastern studies, and Slavonic studies nowadays constitute one "research unit" but are not expected to do research together.

35 – For other "non-Western" regions, see, e.g., Goto-Jones 2005 on Japan, Garuba 2012 on Africa, and Dabashi 2013.

36 – https://onderwijsaanbod.kuleuven.be/2015/opleidingen/n/CQ_50268976.htm (accessed May 14, 2016). By "human sciences" *(humane wetenschappen)* the

authors refer to "social sciences," including the humanities. The categories "social sciences," "human sciences," and "humanities" are not always easy to distinguish clearly. See https://onderwijsaanbod.kuleuven.be/2015/opleidingen/n/CQ_50268976.htm (accessed May 14, 2016).

37 – I do not further elaborate on the "antiquity" trajectory since it is a minor option and contains no courses on China or any other non-Western region.

38 – This was on average the case in the last two years (2014–2015 and 2015–2016) (emails of June 28 and July 5, 2016). In 2015–2016, of the graduating students 3.12 percent had chosen a course on Chinese history.

39 – The course touches upon the Silk Route. See https://onderwijsaanbod.kuleuven.be/syllabi/v/e/F0LA9AE.htm#activetab=doelstellingen_idp796864&bl=all (accessed July 9, 2016).

40 – The course has a chapter on Asia (including a part on China). See https://onderwijsaanbod.kuleuven.be/syllabi/e/F0UJ5AE.htm#activetab=doelstellingen_idp34688 (accessed May 14, 2016).

41 – Or what I have labeled the "partly Western." There is one elective course on the history of Brazil. See https://onderwijsaanbod.kuleuven.be/2015/opleidingen/n/CQ_50310751.htm (accessed May 14, 2016).

42 – "Graeco-Roman world from about 800 B.C. to 650 A.D. mainly on the basis of written sources. The research unit contains two sections. The section 'Hellenism' focuses on documentary sources, the section 'Ancient Historiography' on narrative sources" (http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/oudegeschiedenis/english [accessed May 14, 2016]).

43 – It "explores the western Middle Ages from a viewpoint of continuity between the Middle Ages and Late Antiquity, on the one hand, and the Early Modern period, on the other" (http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/middeleeuwen/english [accessed May 14, 2016]).

44 – ". . . particular attention is given to the study of the Low Countries (and its surrounding regions) within their global context, from roughly the late fifteenth until the eighteenth century" (http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/nieuwetijd/english [accessed May 14, 2016]).

45 – No regional limitation is explicitly mentioned, but all research is about the West (http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/cultuurgeschiedenis/en [accessed May 14, 2016]).

46 – ". . . in a Belgian, European and global perspective" (http://www.arts.kuleuven.be/mosa/english [accessed May 14, 2016]). This group is further divided into four: "Mobility and globalization" (including research on, e.g., Poland and India), "Identities and mobilization" (including Poland and Chile), "Policy and politics" (including Poland, Slovakia, Central Europe, and Africa), and "Churches and religions."

47 – See https://www.arts.kuleuven.be/geschiedenis/personeel (accessed May 14, 2016), "persons connected to this unit," only counting "independent academic personnel" (ZAP), including emeriti who are still teaching.

48 – Based on "1516onderwerpen-masterproefGESCH20150914.xlsx." Evidence gained from such data is problematic for the reasons discussed under "Europe as Locus of Study," and therefore carries little weight when taken in isolation.

49 – Talking about the United States, Cline (2016, p. 11) positively compares these disciplines to Philosophy departments.

50 – For a full list, see http://hiw.kuleuven.be/ned/stafleden/index.html (accessed May 14, 2016).

51 – There is also a sixth center, closely associated with the Faculty of Arts, but with no separate faculty: "LECTIO—Leuven Centre for the Study of the Transmission of Texts and Ideas in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance" (implicitly Western) (http://lectio.ghum.kuleuven.be/ [accessed May 14, 2016]).

52 – http://hiw.kuleuven.be/cespf (accessed May 14, 2016). There is a project on multiculturalism.

53 – http://hiw.kuleuven.be/claw/about/index.html (accessed May 14, 2016).

54 – http://hiw.kuleuven.be/ned/onderzoek/cmfc.html and http://www.kuleuven.be/onderzoek/onderzoeksdatabank/onderzoeksgroep/50000141.htm (in English) (accessed May 14, 2016).

55 – http://hiw.kuleuven.be/dwmc/about (accessed May 14, 2016).

56 – http://hiw.kuleuven.be/hua/about (accessed May 14, 2016).

57 – https://onderwijsaanbod.kuleuven.be/opleidingen/e/CQ_50311099.htm (accessed May 14, 2016).

58 – http://hiw.kuleuven.be/ned/algemeen (accessed May 14, 2016).

59 – In the last years, twenty-one students per year have chosen the course on Chinese philosophy, and twenty-seven students have chosen the course on East-West Perspectives in Philosophy. Due to the complexity of the organization, the total number of students for one year is difficult to count (personal communication of the secretary of the Philosophy Institute, and email of July 5, 2016).

60 – https://onderwijsaanbod.kuleuven.be/opleidingen/e/CQ_50269035.htm (accessed May 14, 2016).

61 – "Onderwerpen voor de masterproef 2015–2016. Lijst per centrum (alfabetisch)." Since the expertise of the faculty members is explicitly mentioned and is more stable than the suggested topics for 2015–2016, I have focused on their fields of expertise.

62 – The world philosophies are generally taught by members from outside the Institute, except for the course on "Russian philosophy" (taught by a philosophy professor who is proficient in Russian) and "Jewish philosophy" (on the basis of Western sources). The "East-West perspectives" is yearly taught by different faculty or invited guest-professors.

63 – For pre-Han masters, I rather mean the thought attributed to Confucius, Mozi, etc.

64 – Schwitzgebel (2015, p. 7) has calculated that in the United States the expertise of professional philosophers has the following ratio: Kant in relation to the whole Chinese tradition is 33 to 1, and medieval philosophy to Chinese thought is 19 to 1. See also Cleary 2016 and McLeod 2016, p. 12.

65 – Livingstone 2003, pp. 1–3.

66 – In China (or Japan or Korea) almost no History or Philosophy department would be restricted to China (or Japan or Korea) or to Asia. As Xinyan Jiang (2002, p. 3) points out, "There is hardly any philosophy department in China that does not teach Western philosophy and does not have faculty members specializing in Western philosophy." For the diversity of History courses at, e.g., the University of Botswana, see http://www.thuto.org/ubh/ub/courses.htm (accessed July 8, 2016).

67 – This problem has been addressed by intellectuals who are not located at our universities. See, e.g., Luyendijk (2006) 2015; Koert Debeuf in *Veto,* December 2016, pp. 14–15; Ronny Mosuse in *De Standaard,* January 26, 2016.

68 – Striking evidence of this attitude is a book co-authored by more than fifty KU Leuven professors for the sake of future generations of scholars. In their paragon of multidisciplinary research, the non-West is almost totally absent. See Achten et al. 2015. For critical reviews, see Defoort 2015a and Defoort 2015b.

69 – The Area Studies do not have independent commissions in the FWO. For the current (2015–2016) members of the commission, "Cult5: Filosofie en Ethiek," see http://www.fwo.be/nl/het-fwo/organisatie/fwo-expertpanels/gebied-cultuurwetenschappen/cult5-filosofie-en-ethiek/ (accessed May 15, 2016). Their expertise can be found on their own (or their universities') websites. The same problem exists for search committees (also in the U.S.). See Benson 2008, p. 10; Bruya 2015b, p. 381; Park 2014; and Van Norden 2016a, p. 24.

70 – The situation for each discipline is different. At least the existence of a "Chinese history" or "Chinese literature" is not questioned. For the characteristics of Philosophy, see the section below on "Philosophy Being Philosophy."

71 – But in general, I share Erin Cline's distrust toward non-specialists teaching Chinese philosophy, having "picked up" some insights along the way. See Cline 2016, pp. 10–11.

72 – Fingarette 1972. As a scholar of (almost) exclusively Western philosophy of mind and psychology, Fingarette wrote a little book on Confucius that overturned the field. His lack of training in China matters was an asset as well as a disadvantage.

73 – Leys had a degree in Law and in Art History, but wrote on a wide array of topics, including contemporary politics and literature. For his life and work, see Paquet 2016.

74 – There can also be a problem of "regional" students (e.g., from China) working under a supervisor without any "regional" expertise. See Erbaugh 2002, pp. 213–215, for a reflection on Chinese doctoral students coming to the West to apply Western/universal theories to Chinese material.

75 – Although I believe it could be interestingly questioned, depending on what precisely one calls "history." But that is another story altogether.

76 – Bernasconi 1997, p. 214.

77 – For the most recent situation in the United States, see Garfield and Van Norden 2016; and Cleary 2016.

78 – Garfield and Van Norden 2016. See also Wong 2008, p. 13; Cline 2016, p. 11; and Wong 2016, p. 9.

79 – Bruya 2016, pp. 6–8; Bruya 2017, pp. 991–1018 using the work of Robert Axelrod and Ross Hammond. The "one move" setup of the prisoner's dilemma showed that "ethnocentrism" (in-group favoritism) was more successful than pure altruism, pure egoism, and "treason" (cooperation with the out-group).

80 – Bruya 2016, pp. 2–5; Bruya 2017, pp. 991–1018, using the work of Scott Page, Katherine Phillips, Katie Liljenquist, and Margaret Neale.

81 – See, e.g., Dotson 2012; Romano 2013; Cherry and Schwitzgebel 2016; and Ganeri 2016, p. 136.

82 – Dabashi 2013.

83 – Bernasconi (1997, p. 214) argues that the "specific problem" that triggered European philosophy's reinvention of itself as originally exclusively Greek was "the existence of something in China that looked sufficiently like what they already knew as philosophy to lead some of them to believe that it was indeed philosophy." On the historical context of the initial exclusion of the other in the establishment of philosophy, see Park 2013; for its continuation, see Wu 1998.

84 – Solomon 2001, p. 100.

85 – Schwitzgebel 2015.

86 – See Olberding 2017 on recent "boundary-policing" practices on social media.

87 – Bruya 2015b, pp. 379–380; Ganeri 2016, p. 135; and Weber 2017, p. 386, on the *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* and its ethnocentric content.

88 – See http://www.fwo.be/nl/het-fwo/organisatie/logo-en-huisstijl/ (accessed May 14, 2016).

89 – On the suggestion to check the regions that were studied in the awarded projects and the contribution of scholars acquainted with the relevant languages, the FWO expressed disinterest, explaining that it merely aimed at serving the university system as it happens to be (reflection meeting, FWO, on June 1, 2010).

90 – This is how Olberding (2015, p. 15) summarizes the messages sent out to any type of non-Western thought. Or, as McLeod (2016, p. 14) puts it: "We will accept you as an (almost) equal partner, but only insofar as you come to resemble us."

91 – Garfield and Van Norden 2016. See also Tiwald 2008, p. 6, on the futility of further argumentation.

92 – Worries about the quality of current research in Chinese philosophy have been part of the legitimacy debates. See, e.g., Defoort and Ge 2005, p. 7, and Defoort and Standaert 1997b. Some reasons for these worries are the lack of originality, the infusion of nationalist concerns, the stringent use of jargon, the low status of philosophy in China (seen from, e.g., the low grades in the university examination system), the failure to accept its own hybridity, etc.

93 – McLeod 2016, p. 13.

94 – Chow 1998, p. 4, and Ganeri 2016, p. 137.

95 – Tiwald 2008, p. 7.

96 – See Van Norden 2008, p. 5, and 2016a, p. 25. One controversial defender of logical reasoning in line with Averroes' (twelfth century) reading of Aristotle was Siger of Brabant (thirteenth century), who was condemned by the inquisition in 1277, but died an uncertain death. The present essay is written in Leuven, the capital of the current province of Vlaams Brabant.

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