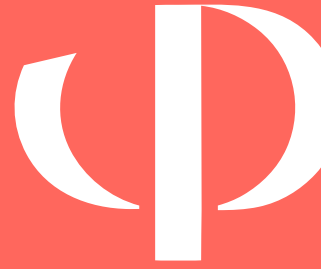


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ASIAN AND ASIAN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHERS AND PHILOSOPHIES

FEMINISM AND PHILOSOPHY

HISPANIC/LATINO ISSUES IN PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY AND THE BLACK EXPERIENCE

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APA STUDIES ON

Asian and Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies

A. MINH NGUYEN, EDITOR

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FROM THE EDITORS

Narratives of Transmission and the Imagination of Global Futures: The Emergence of Analytic Philosophy in East Asia

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This special issue on “The Emergence of Analytic Philosophy in East Asia” originated in a session presented at the 2023 Annual Meeting of the APA Pacific Division in San Francisco. Titled “The Historic Emergence of Analytic Philosophy in East Asia,” the session was organized and chaired by Dien Ho and arranged under the auspices of the APA Committee on Asian and Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies. This special issue contains four essays in the history of philosophy that describe the development of analytic philosophy in China, Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. This list unfortunately does not include Japan or Macau.¹ And while there is some discussion in the essays of supranational influence (especially from mainland China to Taiwan and Hong Kong and of course British and North American influence), there is room for more historical work tracing the regional connections in the history of analytic philosophy both more broadly within East Asia and across Asia more widely (in this vein, Ting-an Lin’s paper points to the establishment, in the 1990s, of regional collaborations in the philosophy of science between Taiwan, Japan, and Korea, and of their role in fostering analytic philosophy in the region).

There is much of interest to the reader in these essays, but three broad issues are worth particular comment: the temporalities of transmission of analytic philosophy to East Asia, the relationship between analytic philosophy and global politics, and the various ways of understanding possible future directions that the authors suggest Asian

analytic philosophy might take. These questions become all the more complicated given that analytic philosophy, in its move eastward, arrived in places where there already existed robust philosophical traditions. The negotiation between the two concerns as much about what counts as philosophy as it does regarding the need to preserve one’s cultural autonomy.

First, the temporalities of transmission. Yi Jiang, in his essay “Analytic Philosophy in China and the Integration of Modern Chinese Philosophy,” drawing on previous work by Hu Jun, notes the near contemporaneity of the origins of analytic philosophy in the West and in mainland China, with Bertrand Russell’s visit to China in October 1920 (approximately a year and a half after the beginning of John Dewey’s visit in May 1919). Dewey and then Russell arrived in the midst of a period of cultural and political modernization and upheaval in China, with the May Fourth Movement following and building on a decade of anti-traditionalist revolutionary thought and action. Whatever the overall *cultural* and *political* impact of Russell’s visit might be, and while it is of course true that neither the term “analytic philosophy” nor the concept of a tradition of analytic philosophy was in use, Jiang suggests that Russell (and Dewey) brought over with them a recognizably analytic philosophical methodology that had an influence on a number of Chinese philosophers of the time. For Jiang, then, analytic philosophy in China roughly “coincided with the development of Western [analytic] philosophy, but the former saw itself as an apprentice to the latter.”²

The other three papers in this issue taken together suggest that this particular line of influence was limited to mainland China. Joe Y. F. Lau, in his “Colonialism, Politics, and the Development of Philosophy in Hong Kong,” notes that although Russell’s boat did briefly stop over at Hong Kong, there is no evidence that Russell disembarked at Hong Kong, and that local newspaper reportage on Russell’s visit to the mainland was scant at best and flat-out erroneous at worst (Russell was in one case reported to have died of influenza in Beijing). And both Ting-an Lin in her “Analytic Philosophy in Taiwan: Impact Within and Beyond Academia” and Nikolaj Jang Lee Linding Pedersen et al. in their “The Emergence of Analytic Philosophy in Korea” claim that any emergence of analytic philosophy can at the earliest be located after World War II, when it occurred for a variety of reasons. Yet the mainland outlier is not insignificant regionally: Lin claims that Russell’s influence on Chinese intellectual life travelled over to Taiwan with the emigration of Chinese intellectuals to Taiwan in the aftermath of the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1949.

Second, the relationship between analytic philosophy and global politics. John McCumber, in his *Time in the Ditch*, argues that the dominance of analytic philosophy in the mid-century US was due in large part to McCarthyite persecution of philosophers with Marxist sympathies.³ While this narrative may be put a little too strongly—not least because McCumber’s claim is not simply the causal one (that analytic philosophy became dominant because of McCarthyism) but also the ideological one (that there are close and substantive affinities between analytic philosophy and McCarthyism)—McCumber’s argument at least points toward the political context as an *explanans* of the rise of analytic philosophy in the mid-century. Others have made similar explanatory claims with regard to analytic political philosophy: Katrina Forrester’s *In the Shadow of Justice* argues that the dominance of Rawlsianism in analytic political philosophy in the second half of the last century can only be fully understood with reference to the larger geopolitical situation,⁴ and Erin Pineda’s *Seeing Like an Activist* situates the dominance of Rawlsian approaches to civil disobedience in light of the larger Civil Rights Movement.⁵

In light of these larger historiographical trends, it is instructive that the papers in our special issue place (explicitly and implicitly) the emergence of analytic philosophy in their respective contexts in relation to the Cold War. Analytic philosophy, in each of these papers, is associated with Western political liberalism and its spread with the creation of a bulwark against the perceived threat of communism.

Pedersen et al., for instance, locate the emergence of analytic philosophy “as a tradition” in (South) Korea in the 1950s, in the wake of the Korean War and in light of the larger Sino/Soviet-US ideological confrontation. Their account of that emergence focuses on particular figures as well as on institutional structures such as organizations, journals, and conferences. Yet their key figures, including Jaegwon Kim, all studied in the United States and brought mid-century US analytic philosophy back to Korea. Kim did so by maintaining close connections with philosophers in Korea although he remained in the US, whereas others achieved this goal by moving back to Korea after completing their studies. Of course, scholarships and other forms of educational support were one of the key pillars of US (and British) soft power across the world during the Cold War—and still are.⁶ Lau’s telling of the development of philosophy in Hong Kong also places Western (and Chinese) soft power, along with Britain’s colonial interests, at the heart of his narrative from the 1950s onward.

As mentioned earlier, Lin puts the emergence of analytic philosophy in Taiwan in the 1950s down to the emigration of Chinese intellectuals after the 1949 Revolution, particularly Hai-guang Yin (殷海光). Yin was inspired by the May Fourth Movement and, Lin claims, “introduced and popularized logical empiricism and liberalism in Taiwan,” including through teaching analytic philosophy of science and translating Friedrich Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom*. Although the anti-communist Kuomintang dictatorship turned out to be about as amenable to Yin’s political liberalism as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), here too

analytic philosophy is tied to liberal political thought. Lin argues that the connection between analytic philosophy and political liberalism in Taiwan runs much deeper. It underpins, she goes so far as to suggest, the rapid pace of democratization and commitment to human rights in Taiwan since the end of the Chiang Kai-shek dictatorship.

In China in the 1950s–1980s, as Jiang points out, Western philosophy, including analytic philosophy, was put under severe ideological pressure by the CCP. Logical positivism, in one telling anecdote, was decried as “bourgeois philosophy,” and the retranslation of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* was done for the purpose of ideological criticism.⁷ It was only with the period of “economic reforms and a more open engagement with the world” in the 1980s–1990s that analytic philosophy began again to emerge, increasingly, in Jiang’s telling, freed from the strictures of political ideology and governed now by intellectual norms of truth and objectivity.

In general, the 1980s–1990s were again, in each of our East Asian contexts, a period of fertility for analytic philosophy. In Hong Kong, universities came to the fore of the H.K. Government’s attempt to keep Hongkongers in the territory in response to the exodus caused by the impending return of Hong Kong to China’s rule in 1997. Lau notes that, in 1989, the H.K. Government announced a large rise in the number of student places in tertiary institutions as an attempt to stop the brain drain to the West. Pedersen et al. claim that, for Korea, “[t]he 1990s onwards has been a period of consolidation and continued growth for analytic philosophy,” one due to the continued increase in US-educated philosophers in Korea and—importantly, in Pedersen et al.’s telling—to the creation and consolidation of philosophical organizations and Korean-language journals.⁸ And Lin notes the rise in US-trained philosophers in Taiwan in the 1980s and 1990s “against the backdrop of gradual democratization and closer links with the US.” The relatively late emergence of overseas-trained philosophers in Taiwan was most likely the result of the Kuomintang’s strict policies limiting who could receive exit visas to study abroad. The 1954 “Regulations on Studying Abroad,” for instance, awarded visas only to junior college or university graduates who scored sufficiently high on an exam administered by the Ministry of Education.

The fact that political concerns often accompanied the emergence of analytic philosophy in Asia should not be entirely surprising. One central theme of early analytic philosophy in Europe was its rejection of the philosophical orthodoxy of the time (e.g., Hegelian metaphysics). With the impressive advances made in the empirical sciences, analytic philosophers looked for a wholesale change in both the content and the methodology of philosophy. In this respect, analytic philosophy began as a revolutionary force and its arrival in Asia amidst the post-war and post-colonialism political and cultural upheavals of the middle of the twentieth century must have appeared as the coming of an intellectual sword or shield, depending on one’s orientation.

These trends of growth, our authors suggest, continue through to the present, with a particular shift (also mirrored

in the “West”) toward interdisciplinary work in epistemology, the philosophy of mind, and the philosophy of science with the cognitive and brain sciences in particular. Interestingly, the causes of this shift—at least one of our authors suggests—may not be the obvious ones. Jiang suggests that, at least in the mainland Chinese context, the key driver of this move was not the success of the empirical sciences but rather the centrality of the philosophy of mind to (at least one common narrative of) the Early Modern Period (c. 1400–1800) and the consequent acceptance of that model of philosophy by Chinese philosophers trained in the history of Western philosophy. The aforementioned pivot, one suspects, might be the result of the seemingly apolitical nature of the philosophy of science, mind, and cognition, at least from the point of view of those who have their hands on the reins of intellectual freedom.

So where does analytic philosophy in East Asia go in the future? Some of our authors provide useful categorizations of various sorts of Asian analytic philosophy and give some programmatic suggestions. Pedersen et al. propose a tripartite classification of Asian analytic philosophy:⁹

Type 1: Asian philosophy studied, discussed, and researched through the lens of analytic philosophy.

Type 2: Asian cross-linguistic or cross-cultural analytic philosophy.

Type 3: Asian language-driven analytic philosophy.

The first comprises the study and interpretation of classical Asian philosophies using analytic tools and methods (exemplified, for example, in Lau’s paper by the New Confucians). An example of the second is experimental philosophy (x-phi) work on differing intuitions across cultures and linguistic groups. And the third draws on specific meanings and formulations in Asian languages to drive conceptual analysis.

Building on Pedersen et al.’s Type 1 and Type 2, both Jiang and Lau note the modernist interplay between analytic philosophy and classical Asian philosophies. One mark of “modern Asian philosophy,” they each suggest, is seeking some form of integration of these two traditions. Jiang locates an early form of this modernism in Hu Shih’s approach to the classics, driven not in the main by textual or philological considerations (indeed, part of Hu Shih’s program—and the New Culture Movement in general—was an emphasis on the vernacular), but by “scientific” (in the broad Deweyan pragmatist sense) methods of examination of evidence and empirical inquiry. Lau holds up the “New Asia spirit” as an autochthonous form of Hong Kong philosophy that combines Chinese humanism with modern philosophical methods, including those of analytic philosophy.

These are ways of *combining* “Western” analytic philosophy with Asian philosophical traditions. But Pedersen et al. and Lin go further than this act of methodological combination. Pedersen et al. argue that Asian analytic philosophy ought to be seen as forming part of a nascent *global* analytic philosophy, one that uses a set of methods that together

comprise “analytic philosophy” as “a certain approach or way of doing philosophy” to whatever issues or problems arise in different geographical and temporal contexts across the globe. Lin more (politically and perhaps methodologically) radically argues that a central part of Taiwanese identity is anti-colonial resistance. And so, she maintains, “Taiwanese philosophy” might usefully be understood—and, more importantly, *constructed*—as part of a broader decolonial and critical struggle for liberation.

These four papers showcase a certain mode of engaging in the history of philosophy and the historiography of philosophy, one that looks to the past with an eye to the future. The wider geographical focus (outside the imperial centers of the US and the UK) exemplified in these tellings of the history of analytic philosophy ought not merely be taken as addenda to the history of analytic philosophy in the imperium, tales of how the center spread outward. Rather, they not only challenge the typical “internalist” histories of analytic philosophy that focus on the logic of ideas, but also provoke us to imagine what a truly global philosophy might look like.

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NOTES

1. See, though, Takashi Iida and Tomohisa Furuta, “Analytic Philosophy in Japan 1933–2000,” *Asian Journal of Philosophy* 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44204-022-00032-4>; Tora Koyama, “Analytic Philosophy in Japan since 2000,” *Asian Journal of Philosophy* 48 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44204-022-00046-y>.
2. A further line of inquiry opened by the contemporaneous visits of Dewey and Russell to China is the historical interplay in East Asia of pragmatism and analytic philosophy. Lin and Pedersen et al. separately in their papers note the significance of pragmatism in the development of academic philosophy in Taiwan and Korea. Given that there is a larger and increasing, though still quite small, literature on the history of pragmatism in Asia (part of a small but increasing literature on global pragmatism), it would be instructive to see what further connections there are.
3. John McCumber, *Time in the Ditch: American Philosophy and the McCarthy Era* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001).
4. Katrina Forrester, *In the Shadow of Justice: Postwar Liberalism and the Remaking of Political Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).
5. Erin Pineda, *Seeing Like an Activist: Civil Disobedience and the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).
6. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: PublicAffairs Books, 2004).
7. See Sixuan Wu, “A Critique of the Vienna Circle’s Logical Analysis and Verification,” *Journal of Peking University* 3 (1959): 13; Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. Guo Ying (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1962). Yi Jiang cites both of these in his contribution to this issue.
8. Pedersen et al.’s emphasis on organizations and journals, reflected also in Lin’s narrative about Taiwan and Lau’s narrative about Hong Kong, bears parallels to at least the method of Joel Katzav’s story

about the emergent dominance of analytic philosophy in the US in the mid-century. Katzav and his collaborators point to the "journal capture" of key philosophical journals (*The Philosophical Review*, *Mind*, and *The Journal of Philosophy*) in the mid-century by analytically inclined editors and the consequent sidelining of other traditions that, in the first half of the century, formed part of a rich and diverse tapestry of philosophical traditions. See Joel Katzav and Krist Vaesen, "On the Emergence of American Analytic Philosophy," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 25, no. 4 (2017): 772–98; Joel Katzav, "Analytic Philosophy, 1925–69: Emergence, Management and Nature," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 26, no. 6 (2018): 1197–221. See also Joel Katzav, "To What Extent Can Institutional Control Explain the Dominance of Analytic Philosophy?" *Asian Journal of Philosophy* 2, art. no. 45 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44204-023-00099-7>.

9. See also Nikolaj Jang Lee Linding Pedersen, "Asian Analytic Philosophy: Nature, Significance, Value" (unpublished manuscript), a version of which is scheduled to appear in a special issue of *EurAmerica*.

ARTICLES

Analytic Philosophy in China and the Integration of Modern Chinese Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The introduction of analytic philosophy to China coincided with the second Eastern expansion of Western philosophy in China at the beginning of the twentieth century. The history of the study of analytic philosophy in China can be divided into four periods: the first half of the twentieth century, the time between 1949 and 1980, the 1980s until the end of the last century, and the beginning of the new century. There are four main research fields in which Chinese scholars of analytic philosophy have become interested in succession: the philosophy of science, the philosophy of language and logic, the philosophy of mind, and the philosophy of cognitive science. Modern Chinese philosophy has been integrated with ancient Chinese, Western, and Marxist philosophy. This integration is grounded in some holistic features of contemporary Chinese philosophy, in which textual research, philosophical interpretation, and empirical reasoning as analytic methods are illuminated.

It is widely accepted that Chinese philosophy is a specific knowledge system different from Western philosophy.¹ But this conception of Chinese philosophy presupposes that such an intellectual tradition has existed since ancient times (e.g., pre-Qin Dynasty). According to this presupposition, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism are historical representatives of Chinese philosophy. However, whether these schools of thought are philosophy according to Western standards that emerged during the beginning of the last century remains unsettled. To this extent, the legitimacy of Chinese philosophy has been rigorously challenged. In this paper, I would like to respond to this challenge first by exploring the history of analytic philosophy in China and second by interpreting the integration of modern Chinese philosophy with the analytic approach. Finally, I will conclude that Chinese analytic

philosophy could be part of modern Chinese philosophy, thus establishing the legitimacy of contemporary Chinese philosophy.

I. A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY IN CHINA

The introduction of analytic philosophy to China coincided with the second Eastern expansion of Western philosophy in China at the beginning of the twentieth century, most influentially by Bertrand Russell and John Dewey's visits to China. Comparing the number of works on the history of the development of Western philosophy in China since the second half of the last century is not a simple task because few writings have been published on the history of analytic philosophy in China. Hu Jun, a late professor at Peking University, is an exception. His book on the history of Chinese analytic philosophy is a starting point for the present study. I will follow his four-fold historic division but with some modifications to the details.²

The first period spans the first half of the twentieth century, starting around the 1920s. Bertrand Russell visited China in October 1920 and left in July 1921. During his visit, Russell delivered approximately one hundred lectures to the public and the academic circle in China. He observed aspects of social problems and the Chinese mentality, which sharpened his distinct understanding of Chinese culture and society from what Western intellectuals thought. His observation and conception of problems in China have influenced the development of modern Chinese philosophy.³ John Dewey visited China in April 1919 and left in July 1921. He gave more than two hundred lectures in China and experienced the May Fourth Movement in Beijing. His philosophy of education and social reform changed a lot of Chinese intellectuals and shaped Chinese modernization.⁴ Russell and Dewey brought fresh ideas to China, not only in philosophy but also in politics, society, and education. Although no such conception of analytic philosophy existed in China, their ideas and approaches to social and philosophical problems were analytic and guided by rigorous reasoning. Some open-minded and advanced Chinese intellectuals learned their new ideas. Still, they expressed them in an old way in their attempts to advance in philosophy and society. The focus of Chinese philosophical study at that time was the positivist method and its relation to dialectics from the perspective of today's analytic philosophy. This focus was accomplished by introducing the updated philosophical ideas from the West. Zhang Shenfu (张申府) and others reported some developments in modern Western philosophy almost simultaneously as these ideas were published in the West. For instance, Zhang Shenfu's translation of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* into Chinese in 1927 for the first time came shortly after the English-German edition had been published in 1921.⁵ Philosophical studies in China during the first period coincided with the development of Western philosophy, but the former saw itself as an apprentice to the latter. Nevertheless, at that time, several famous Chinese philosophers published remarkable writings that shaped the future development of modern Chinese philosophy. These include Tscha Hung (洪谦), Jin Yuelin (金岳霖), Fung Yulan (冯友兰), and Zhang Dainian (张岱年).⁶ Represented

by their works, the first period could be seen as the best initiation for studying analytic philosophy in China.

The second period of development of modern Chinese analytic philosophy was between 1949 and 1980, in which political and ideological criticisms dominated the study of Western philosophy in China. There was no academic research on analytic philosophy, especially during the Cultural Revolution, except for some Chinese translations of analytic philosophers' writings for political criticism, such as Tscha Hung's translations of Ernest Mach and others.⁷ There was no academic progress in analytic philosophy in China in the second period. However, the Vienna Circle's philosophy and a number of analytic philosophers, such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, were known more widely by Chinese philosophers through Marxist critiques of them.⁸ The *Tractatus* was translated into Chinese again, for instance, from Russia during the Cultural Revolution, with a lengthy introduction and sharp ideological criticism.⁹

Fortunately, by the beginning of the 1980s through the 1990s, economic reforms and a more open engagement with the world reinvigorated the studies of analytic philosophy in China. During this third period of the history of analytic philosophy in China, most of the philosophies that occurred in the West in the last century were introduced again in China. Analytic philosophy reemerged in academic circles and became popularized in society in the 1980s. The philosophy of science and technology and the philosophy of language were first introduced into China and greatly influenced studies in Chinese philosophy. Most illuminatingly, Jiang Tianji (江天骥) published his book on the philosophy of science in contemporary Western philosophy, and Tu Jiliang (涂纪亮) published his two-volume work on the post-war development of analytic philosophy in North America.¹⁰ This third period of analytic philosophy flourished with fresh ideas and a passion for academics in China. Analytic philosophers' works were translated into Chinese, including Russell's *Logic and Knowledge*, *The History of Western Philosophy*, and *The Development of My Philosophy*, and Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* was translated again for the third time, and his *Philosophical Investigations* for the first time. Frege's philosophical writings were translated into Chinese and Carnap's *Der Logische Aufbau der Welt* was translated from German.¹¹ With the publication of these translations, a number of new works in analytic philosophy were published in China before the twenty-first century by, for instance, Wang Lu (王路) on Frege, Chen Bo (陈波) on Quine, Jiang Yi (江怡) and Han Linhe (韩林合) on Wittgenstein in the 1990s.¹²

The Chinese interaction with analytic philosophers worldwide marked the fourth period. International conferences around the start of the twenty-first century were held in Beijing, Shanghai, and other cities in China, and visits by analytic philosophers, such as Hilary Putnam and Peter Strawson, strengthened the academic dialogues between Chinese scholars and Western philosophers. Increasing numbers of participants from China in international conferences further demonstrate the internalization of the study of analytic philosophy in China. Some Chinese graduates overseas returned to China, bringing a global intellectual sentiment.

These engagements show that the study of analytic philosophy in China plays an active role in developing analytic philosophy in the world. Analytic philosophy in China in the fourth period has distinctive features that characterize the depth of insights on some basic concepts and problems in analytic philosophy explored by Chinese scholars. The features are academic and philosophical, both in translation and in research, instead of politically and ideologically centric. In this respect, academic and philosophical research directs the study of analytic philosophy in China in the new century. The state of analytic philosophy in China is intimately entwined with the international community of analytic philosophers.

II. MAIN FIELDS IN THE STUDY OF ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY IN CHINA

As an illustrative example, the shift of my research fields in my academic career mirrors the changes in the main areas of study of analytic philosophy in China. The trajectory begins with the Vienna Circle and the logical atomism of Russell and Wittgenstein, followed by Karl Popper's falsification theory, the historicism of Thomas Kuhn, Imre Lakatos, and Paul Feyerabend, to the philosophy of language and mind, and the philosophy of cognitive science. The research interests of Chinese philosophers typically follow in a similar succession: the philosophy of science, language, mind, and cognitive science.

1. THE STUDY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SPST)

At the beginning of the revival of academic studies of analytic philosophy in China in the 1980s, the philosophy of science was the most attractive to philosophers in China. The relationship between philosophy and science and the philosophical reflection on the nature of natural sciences have been the focus of the study of natural dialectics, originating from Friedrich Engels's famous book of the same title and becoming an essential part of Marxist philosophy in China. It is well known that scientist-philosophers, such as members of the Vienna Circle, initiated the philosophy of science to explore the nature and method of mathematical logic and physics. The study of natural dialectics paired closely with the philosophy of science in general, which propelled the need to make the former more academically rigorous. As a result of this change, the study of natural dialectics became the philosophy of science and technology as a subdiscipline in philosophical studies in China. The reasons for the change can be explained in two ways. One is that the political atmosphere in China has changed from extremely strict to relatively loose in ideology. Academic research has taken over political criticism in the Chinese philosophical circle. In particular, the study of natural dialectics, which had solid ideological elements before, was replaced by the academic research of the SPST in the 1980s; the latter is independent of some political stance. The other is that the SPST is much closer to the study of natural science, which seems more objective and scientific than dogmatic or doctrinal. This led Chinese scholars to dismiss considerations of the detachment of the survey from Marxist philosophy while concentrating their study on specific issues in the philosophy of science.

2. THE STUDY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE AND LOGIC (SPLL)

Chronologically speaking, the emergence of the SPLL was almost synchronous with the SPST in the 1980s. Logical and linguistic analysis is essential to the SPST, as illuminated in the philosophy of the Vienna Circle. The SPLL was initiated in the 1980s by Tu Jiliang, who explored the history of the analytic philosophy of language in his book on the origin and development of analytic philosophy in Europe and America.¹³ Tu made significant contributions to the SPLL in China in the 1980s and 1990s. He clarified the nature and method of the SPLL by defining the philosophy of language in the broader sense as a branch of philosophy for the first time, which made a distinction between the analytic philosophy of language and the philosophy of language as a research field in philosophy. By his definition of the SPLL, Tu explored the significance of the SPLL in the history of Western philosophy and modern continental philosophy in contrast with the analytic tradition. He claimed that there was also a linguistic turn in continental philosophy, focusing on the meaning and interpretation of language in hermeneutics and phenomenology.¹⁴ In 2003, Chen Jiaying (陈嘉映) published his book *Philosophy of Language*, which has been welcomed widely by philosophical circles in China.¹⁵ It is worth mentioning that the SPLL has many contacts with studying linguistics, foreign languages, and logical studies in China. Some Chinese philosophers of language have cooperated with linguists and logicians in semantics and pragmatics in different ways. Linguists interested in the philosophy of language have engaged with the SPLL for years, and they are partial to the analytic approach to linguistic studies from the perspectives of semantics and pragmatics.¹⁶ The cooperation among philosophers of language, linguists, and logicians contributed to the spread of the SPLL to many research fields in humanities and social sciences in China by the end of the twentieth century.

3. THE STUDY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF MIND AND CONSCIOUSNESS (SPMC)

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the focus of the study of analytic philosophy in China turned to the mind-body problem and consciousness, along with the international shift of concentration in the rational approach to philosophy. It is claimed that the reason for the change was the verbal dispute among the philosophers of language, in which the disputants agree on all of the facts about the intended subject matter of the dispute and disagree only about how to use specific terms, such as the Carnap-Quine dispute. Those who adhered to Quine's naturalist epistemology dissented from the logical and linguistic analysis in the analytic tradition and attempted to find a way to solve the dispute in question by exploring the nature and dispositions of mind in contemporary philosophy. It made the linguistic turn in the history of philosophy trivial and fruitless on the count that inquiring into the nature of mind and consciousness would be exciting and valuable to those who believed that philosophical investigations could be progressive in their association with our empirical understanding of mind. However, the crucial relation of the SPLL to the

SPMC is not empirical science but the history of Western philosophy in China. Cartesian epistemology was a turning point in early modern Western philosophy, which placed the exploration of the nature of the human mind at the center of philosophical discussions in the history of Western philosophy. Chinese philosophers are familiar with the history of Western philosophy. It is natural for them to accept the shift of the SPLL to the SPMC in the analytic tradition. For instance, Tian Ping (田平) and Tang Refeng (唐热风) were among the first to research the SPMC with their backgrounds in psychology and Cartesian philosophy.¹⁷ Other well-trained experts in sciences also engaged in the SPMC, such as Wang Huaping (王华平), Wang Xiaoyang (王晓阳), Wei Yidong (魏屹东), and Chen Jingkun (陈敬坤).¹⁸

4. THE STUDY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF COGNITIVE SCIENCE (SPCS)

Cognitive science and artificial intelligence were arguably the most exciting developments in science and technology in the twentieth century. The philosophy of cognitive science and AI has become fashionable in the SPCS in China and the world. It is an extension of the SPMC that the problems of mind and consciousness are analyzed primarily within cognitive science and that the SPCS improved the SPMC's research on the mind-body problem and consciousness. Most philosophers of mind and consciousness are naturally drawn to cognitive science and AI because they have the same mission of deepening the investigation of mind and consciousness through scientific study. Computationalism, functionalism, and representationalism are some of cognitive science's significant developments. However, the new generation of the SPMC focuses on enactivism and situationism. A pragmatist and phenomenologist approach to the interaction of cognition with the environment characterizes this trend in cognitive science. Chinese philosophers also contributed to developing cognitive science and AI when involved in the SPCS. Li Jianhui (李建会), Liu Xiaoli (刘晓力), and Li Hengwei (李恒威) are among the representatives of the SPCS in China. Li Jianhui advocated computationalism in his academic career, arguing that human intelligence is computable.¹⁹ Liu Xiaoli contributes her ideas on the philosophy of cognitive science in her books, which have been highly influential among Chinese philosophers.²⁰ Li Hengwei leads a renowned cognition and consciousness team with young scientists and scholars investigating the mind's structure and expression.²¹ All of them are pioneers of the SPCS in China, and their works represent the development of the SPCS in the twenty-first century.

III. INTEGRATION OF MODERN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

A common refrain of modern Chinese philosophy is integrating various philosophical doctrines from sources such as ancient Chinese thought and historical and contemporary Western philosophy. This amalgamation can be understood in terms of the holistic features in modern Chinese philosophy, which consist of textual research, philosophical interpretations, and empirical reasoning as analytic methods.

In his milestone book, *An Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy*, published in 1919, Hu Shih advocated his method of examining and approving historical materials. He reconstructs academic research in classic Chinese learning as modern Chinese philosophy by looking at evidence and argumentation for philosophical classics in history. Hu argues that reviewing historical materials is the first and fundamental step for historians. Most of the remarkable progress in Western historiography in the past hundred years was due to stricter methods of examining historical materials. Verifications of the authenticity of historical materials must be accompanied by evidence to be persuasive.²² The same can be said for modern Chinese philosophy. According to the method of examining evidence, however, modern Chinese philosophers have made outstanding contributions to the study of the history of Chinese philosophy, which in turn led to its status as an independent research field in Chinese philosophy. Even in some philosophical discourses, Chinese philosophy has been defined only by the study of the history of Chinese philosophy. This view is commonly seen as an authoritative definition of Chinese philosophy worldwide. But it is a mischaracterization of Chinese philosophy from the modern point of view.

Firstly, the method of examination of evidence is only a way to study the history of Chinese philosophy rather than Chinese philosophy itself. Although Hu Shih initially introduced the technique of studying the history of Chinese philosophy, it does not mean that the study constitutes the whole of Chinese philosophy. Modern Chinese philosophy attempts to explore the resources from ancient Chinese thought (so-called Ancient Chinese Learning, or Guo Xue in Chinese, 国学) with the examination method, besides investigating the philosophical problems in general. In this respect, modern Chinese philosophy uses analytic methods to obtain rich resources from ancient Chinese thought. Modern Chinese philosophy should be viewed as integrating studies of philosophical problems from various sources, from ancient Chinese thought, Western philosophy, and Marxist philosophy.

Second, the textual analyses of the classics of ancient Chinese thought, such as Confucianism and Daoism, have a long tradition in the history of China. The innovation of Hu Shih's contribution to the study of the history of Chinese philosophy lies in his examination of evidence with logical rigidity and empirical certainty. This differs from the textual criticism (*Kao Ju Xue*, 考据学) of scholars such as the Qian Jia School (乾嘉学派) in the Qing Dynasty. The textual criticism focused on the linguistic examination of the classics of ancient Chinese thought informed by linguistic positivism of classical literature in ancient languages. In contrast, Hu Shih's method of examination of evidence is derived from the positivist philosophy in the nineteenth century, which focuses on the development of human knowledge of the world. Positivism resulted from the eighteenth-century Enlightenment movement in philosophy, while textual criticism was the product of the flourishing of philology and linguistics in the Qing Dynasty.²³ Nonetheless, the two views have something in common. They both challenged metaphysics, which was speculative and theoretical rather than verificative and pragmatic. Positivism is the epitome of

anti-metaphysics in modern Western philosophy, and the textual criticism was likewise critical of the Confucianism of the Song and Ming Dynasties. Hu Shih defined his conception of philosophy for the first time in his book; philosophy is the knowledge that anyone who studies the most critical problems in life thinks fundamentally and seeks fundamental solutions.²⁴ To put it differently, his definition concentrates on fundamental thinking and the penultimate solution to the most critical problems in life. For him, the proper method of thinking and the likeliest means of finding a solution lie in carefully examining evidence. Hu's definition sharply challenges the traditional definition of Chinese learning, which is composed of the classification of the Confucian Classics, historical records, Sages' writings, and miscellaneous works (*Jing Shi Zi Ji* in Chinese, 经史子集). It is this breakthrough that launched the beginning of modern Chinese philosophy.

Another feature of the integration emerges out of empirical reasoning in the tradition. It is widely said that Chinese philosophy is characterized mainly by its practical rationales, such as analogical reduction and inference from consensus. From this first impression, Chinese philosophy needs to improve in logical reasoning, namely, the implementation of deductive reasoning. Fung Youlan criticizes the tradition in this sense and proposes a rational analysis of Chinese philosophy in his influential book *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*.²⁵ Fung is right when he encourages the study of the history of Chinese philosophy in a rigorous, logical way. Still, he should have paid more attention to the features of Chinese philosophy that differ from deductive logic; that is, Chinese philosophy combines empirical induction and verificative analysis. It is a logic in the sense of general logic that characterizes the logic of Chinese philosophy as more contextual than formal. In contrast, deduction infers from available premises to conclusions, no matter what formulations are used. The logic of Chinese philosophy is much more concerned with the empirical contents of philosophical discourses via inductive inferences from observed facts to some general ideas. According to Chinese philosophy, knowledge of the world is separate from the structural analysis of propositions that reveal knowledge about the world. It is instead included in the empirical facts and objects we perceive. Ma Xiangbo, a well-known scholar and educator in the 1920s, gave a unique explanation of the concept of philosophy in his *A Brief Introduction to Knowledge* (1924) and interpreted the Western learning of love of wisdom as a theory of knowledge. Like Wang Yangming, he proposed the idea of the unity of knowledge and action in philosophy. He emphasized the idea of practical wisdom by observing how experience becomes knowledge.²⁶ It is through practical wisdom that this idea of philosophy is transmitted in modern China, and the concept of analysis penetrates the spiritual world of modern Chinese through the combination of verification and experience.

The constructive process of modern Chinese philosophy shows that philosophers such as Hu Shih, Fung Youlan, Zhang Dainian, and others have integrated traditional Chinese thought with contemporary Western philosophy. Modern Chinese philosophy includes the pragmatic scientific positivist method advocated by Hu Shih, the conceptual way

of New Realism adopted by Fung Youlan, and the dialectics of Marxist philosophy accepted by Zhang Dainian. These Western abstract methods explain the classics of traditional Chinese thought. In this way, the study of the Confucian Classics has been interpreted as a Chinese philosophical doctrine that focuses on the problems of cosmos/life, universal/particular, rationality/emotion, science/society, etc. In explaining these philosophical doctrines, analysis is used widely not only as a method in interpreting classical texts but also as an intellectual conception to illustrate the universal nature of Chinese philosophy.

NOTES

1. Because of space limitations, this article describes and comments on the development of analytic philosophy only in mainland China. Regarding the development of it in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau, see the relevant articles in this issue.
2. Jun Hu, *Analytic Philosophy in China* (Beijing: Capital Normal University Press, 2002), 10–11. For more on the development of analytic philosophy in China in the twentieth century, see Yi Jiang, "Analytic Philosophy in China," *China Social Sciences* 6 (2000): 54–63.
3. Bertrand Russell, *The Problem of China* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1922); Chongyi Feng, *Russell and China: A Journey of Western Mind in China* (Beijing: Joint Publishing House, 1994).
4. John Dewey, *Lectures in China: 1919–1920*, ed. and trans. Robert W. Clifton and Tsuin-Chen Ou (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1973); J. C. S. Wang, *John Dewey in China: To Teach and to Learn* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007).
5. Shenfu Zhang, *Ming Li Lun* (名理论), *Philosophical Review* 1 (1927): 5–6.
6. They finished their representative works mostly in this period, such as Tscha Hung, *The Philosophy of the Vienna Circle* (Peking: Commercial Press, 1948); Jin Yuelin, *Logic* (Peking: Tsinghua University Press, 1935) and *On Dao* (Peking: Commercial Press, 1940); Fung Youlan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (Peking: Commercial Press, 1934); Zhang Dainian, *An Outline of Chinese Philosophy* (Peking: University of China Press, 1943).
7. Tscha Hung translated (with Zong Baihua) Ernst Mach's book *The Analysis of Sensations* in 1975 and edited a selection of translations of philosophical writings by Western philosophers. See Ernst Mach, *The Analysis of Sensations*, trans. Zong Baihua and Tscha Hung (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1975); Tscha Hung, ed., *Selected Works on Modern Western Bourgeois Philosophy* (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1964). These translations of philosophical writings spread Western philosophy in China at that time.
8. For example, there was an article published in *The Journal of Peking University* accusing the Vienna Circle's philosophy of being a bourgeois philosophy. See Sixuan Wu, "A Critique of the Vienna Circle's Logical Analysis and Verification," *Journal of Peking University* 3 (1959): 13.
9. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. Guo Ying (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1962).
10. Tianji Jiang, *Contemporary Western Philosophy of Science* (Beijing: Chinese Social Sciences Press, 1984); Jiliang Tu, *Analytic Philosophy and Its Development in the United States of America* (Beijing: Chinese Social Sciences Press, 1987).
11. Bertrand Russell, *Logic and Knowledge*, trans. Lijun Yuan (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1996); *The History of Western Philosophy*, trans. Zhaowu He, Yuese Li, and Yuande Ma (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1997); *The Development of My Philosophy*, trans. Xizeng Wen (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1982); Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. Shaojia He (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1996); *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. K. T. Fann and Chao Tang (Beijing: Joint Publishing Co. Ltd., 1992); Gottlob Frege, *A Selection of Frege's Philosophical Writings*, trans. Lu Wang (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1994); Rudolf Carnap, *Der Logische Aufbau der Welt*, trans. Qiwei Chen (Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 1999).
12. Lu Wang, *A Study of Frege's Thoughts* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 1996); Bo Chen, *A Study of W. V. O. Quine's Philosophy* (Beijing: Joint Publishing Co. Ltd., 1998); Yi Jiang, *Wittgenstein: A Post-Philosophical Culture* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 1996); Linhe Han, *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Path* (Kunming: Yunnan University Press, 1996).
13. Jiliang Tu, *An Introduction to Anglo-American Philosophy of Language* (Beijing: People's Press, 1988).
14. Jiliang Tu, ed., *The Philosophy of Language in the Modern Continental* (Beijing: Chinese Social Science Press, 1994); *Comparative Studies of Philosophy of Language in Contemporary West* (Beijing: Chinese Social Science Press, 1996).
15. Jiaying Chen, *Philosophy of Language* (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2003).
16. They are prominently Xu Guozhang (许国璋), Qian Guanlian (钱冠连), Liu Runqing (刘润清), and Wang Yin (王寅). See Yin Wang, *A Study of the Philosophy of Language: Chinese Reflections on the Post-Philosophy of Language in the 21st Century*, 2 vols. (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2014).
17. See Ping Tian, *Naturalized Mind* (Changsha: Hunan Education Publishing House, 2000); Refeng Tang, *Mind, Body, and the World* (Beijing: Capital Normal University Press, 2001).
18. See Huaping Wang, *Mind and the World: A Study of the Philosophy of Perception* (Beijing: Chinese Social Science Press, 2009); Xiaoyang Wang, *A Study of Consciousness* (Shanghai: Shanghai People Press, 2019); Yidong Wei and Jingkun Chen, "On Chalmers' Conceivability Argument Based on Two-Dimensional Semantics," *Studies of the Philosophy of Science and Technology* 1 (2010): 33–39.
19. Jianhui Li, *Towards a Computationalism* (Beijing: China Books Press, 2004).
20. Xiaoli Liu, Feng Yu, Weihua Lu, Wei Meng, Xiaoyun Tao, Shaohua Xue, Zhiwei Zhang, Yanxia Feng, Xiang Huang, Huiming Ren, Yingjin Xu, Xiangdong Xu, Hengwei Li, Jing Zhu, and Changle Zhou, *The Challenges of Cognitive Science to Contemporary Philosophy* (Beijing: Science Press, 2020).
21. Hengwei Li, *Consciousness: Metaphysics, the First-Person Method, and Contemporary Theories* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2020).
22. Shih Hu, *An Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy* (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2011), 14.
23. Xin He, "Pu Jia's Rationality and Sadness," *Du Shu* 5 (1986): 27–37.
24. Hu, *An Outline of the History of Chinese Philosophy*, 1.
25. Fung Youlan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1948), 342.
26. Xiangbo Ma, "A Brief Introduction to Knowledge," in *Collected Writings of Ma Xiangbo*, ed. Zhu Weizheng (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 1996), 342.

Colonialism, Politics, and the Development of Philosophy in Hong Kong

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ABSTRACT

Academic philosophy in Hong Kong began in the early twentieth century. However, the discipline was in a neglected state before the Second World War and gradually expanded only afterwards. The development of philosophy in Hong Kong is shown to be heavily influenced by colonial politics and changing government policies on higher education and deeply intertwined with the city's unique cultural and

historical context. This article also highlights the legacy of humanism left by some of the founding Chinese scholars of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and their impact on Hong Kong society and education.

INTRODUCTION

Hong Kong is often considered to be a meeting point between Chinese and Western cultures. In many ways, this is also reflected in the history of academic philosophy in Hong Kong. Since the Second World War, there have been two separate but interacting major philosophical traditions. One encompasses a community of philosophers with a more Western and analytic orientation, while the other comprises a group of ethnic Chinese philosophers and scholars with a strong focus on Chinese philosophy and culture.

In a previous paper,¹ I provided an outline of the history of analytic philosophy in Hong Kong. In this paper, I will concentrate more on the political and socioeconomic factors that have influenced the development of these two philosophical traditions. One interesting aspect of this history is that although Western philosophy has been taught in Hong Kong for over a century, a robust research culture in mainstream analytic philosophy only gradually emerged after the 1990s. In the first half of this paper, I argue that this delayed development is partly due to the changing nature of colonialism and the evolution of the Hong Kong Government's perception of a university's mission. In the second half of the paper, I discuss how post-war political developments have led to the expansion of higher education. I will highlight the critical role that the Chinese philosophy community played in this history and the way in which it has left behind a profound legacy of humanism.

PHILOSOPHY BEFORE THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Hong Kong came under British occupation in 1841 during the Opium War (1839–1842). European traders and missionaries began to arrive, along with Chinese migrants seeking new economic opportunities. At that time, Hong Kong was a modest coastal settlement consisting mainly of farming and fishing villages. There were small village schools and some of them would have included in their curricula classic Confucian texts such as *The Analects*.²

During the final days of the Qing Dynasty, there was growing recognition within China that modernization necessitated educational reforms. Many Chinese students opted to pursue university studies in Japan. American missionaries, along with German and French interests, hastened to establish institutions of higher education. Concerns arose that Britain was lagging behind in spreading its influence. It was against this background that the University of Hong Kong (HKU) was founded in 1911.

Frederick Lugard served as Governor of Hong Kong from 1907 to 1912 and played a pivotal role in establishing HKU. As the first university in Hong Kong and the sole British university in East Asia, HKU was envisioned to serve the British expatriates in Hong Kong and to meet the growing demand for higher education from the more affluent sector of the local Chinese population. Above all, HKU was

intended to showcase the accomplishments of the British Empire and promote British influence throughout China and Asia.

The university was initially founded with only the faculties of medicine and engineering. The Arts Faculty soon followed in 1913. The 1913 University Calendar listed a course entitled "Logic and Scientific Method," marking the beginning of Western philosophy in Hong Kong. The calendar stated explicitly that the course was designed "for the convenience of students who have no mathematical bent."³

In 1920, Bertrand Russell visited China with his partner Dora Black. Their ship passed by Hong Kong on October 8, 1920, but there is no indication that Russell disembarked or met with any local residents. Russell stayed in China for nine months. At that time, there was a strong interest in Russell among intellectuals in China. It was thought that Mao Zedong might have attended one of his lectures.⁴ Russell's opinion on China's future was eagerly sought, and some even called him a "second Confucius."⁵

In contrast, Russell's visit appeared to have had a negligible impact on Hong Kong. There were very few local newspaper reports on Russell's activities in China. One article, dated October 26, 1920, mentioned Russell's lecture in Shanghai on the aims of education.⁶ Another article on April 8, 1921, described Russell as a "well-known sociologist" and erroneously reported that he had died in Beijing due to influenza.⁷

Before the Second World War, there was very little development in the Western philosophy curriculum at HKU. From around 1920, in addition to the logic course, there was also a course on ethics. Both courses were taught by part-time teachers, often by people without a specialization in philosophy.

The state of neglect of philosophy can be attributed to several factors. First, there was a significant disparity between the imperial aspirations for the university and the economic and political realities. The university suffered from a lack of financial resources from the outset and went through a number of financial crises in the pre-war period. It is worth noting that Britain took over Hong Kong primarily to protect its commercial interests in China and not for natural resources or territorial gain. The Colonial Office in Britain regarded Hong Kong as a small trading outpost and the university as a rather costly indulgence.⁸

The local expatriate community was also reluctant to provide financial support, even though the university was advertised as an imperial project promoting British influence and prestige. Many local British firms and expatriates were concerned that their position might be threatened by competition from cheaper services offered by the university's Chinese graduates. In fact, British traders went so far as to boycott the laying of the university's foundation stone in 1910.⁹

The preoccupation with trade and commerce also meant that the university curriculum was originally designed with more practical subjects in mind, focusing especially on medicine and engineering. Initially, the British members of the university council were opposed to the creation of an arts faculty. There were also political concerns about the import of subversive Western ideas. According to Lugard, many Chinese students returned from overseas studies with "revolutionary ideas" and became "a danger to the state," and HKU will see to it that "no such pernicious doctrines are encouraged or tolerated here."¹⁰

Eventually, there was agreement to establish the Arts Faculty after the necessary funding had been raised. This was largely due to the persistent efforts of a small minority of Chinese members on the Council. However, their motivation was mainly driven by pragmatic considerations. They believed that a humanities education would enable their sons to pursue careers in the civil service, as well as in the commercial and educational sectors.

Although Lugard was against setting up an arts faculty, he was in favor of courses that could provide "the direct teaching of any code of morals." The university also considered it important to attend to "the development and formation of the character of students." This perhaps partly explained why the arts curriculum included an ethics course soon afterwards.¹¹

A teacher training program was later introduced to attract more students. It covered both the practical and theoretical aspects of education and included a course on the philosophy of education. The program proved to be very popular and even more successful than a commercial certificate offered by the faculty. One commission report commended the program for "its manifest value for spreading British ideas and indirectly furthering British interests by training teachers for schools in China."¹²

In the pre-war years, the extent of Western philosophy teaching was entirely limited to the three courses that were mentioned: Logic and Scientific Method, Ethics, and the Philosophy of Education. There was no full-time philosophy teacher, and research in Western philosophy was nonexistent. The lack of research was not a problem restricted to philosophy. HKU was plagued by financial crises immediately after establishment. The university library and other facilities were underfunded, and the University Council was not supportive of research work. Postgraduate research teaching was extremely limited. In short, the university failed to fulfill its original bold imperial mission and struggled to become anything more than a professional or technical institute. Western philosophy was alive, but only barely.

In contrast, there was some exciting development in the teaching of Chinese philosophy within the Chinese Department. In 1935, renowned Chinese scholar Hsu Tishan (許地山) was hired as Professor of Chinese. Hsu was a key figure in China's New Culture Movement. As head of the HKU Chinese Department, Hsu immediately set out to reorganize the Chinese studies curriculum, dividing it into three separate streams: literature, history, and philosophy.

The study of philosophy included not just Confucianism. There were also courses on Daoism, Buddhism, and Indian philosophy. Unfortunately, these developments were abruptly cut short by Hsu's untimely death in 1941 and the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong during the Second World War.

FROM RECONSTRUCTION TO MODERNIZATION

Hong Kong University ceased operation during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong, which lasted for three years and eight months. After Japan surrendered in 1945, the university lay in ruins, and there were doubts as to whether the university should continue to exist. The British Government formed a high-powered committee to advise on this issue. The committee reported favorably, and HKU was eventually re-established in 1948.¹³ The committee report contained a blueprint for the university's development and expansion. It cautioned that British prestige would suffer if the University continued on an inadequate basis as it did before the war. The report also included a recommendation to establish a philosophy department with full-time staff but on a lesser scale compared with disciplines such as English and Chinese, which were regarded as strategically more important disciplines.

Alaric Pearson Rose, a reverend, was appointed as HKU's first full-time philosophy lecturer in 1952, marking the beginning of the Philosophy Department. But the first analytic philosopher at HKU with doctoral training in philosophy was Joseph Agassi. Agassi was a student of Karl Popper at the London School of Economics. He joined HKU in 1960 as a lecturer in philosophy and was promoted to Reader and Head of the Department when Rose retired. Agassi stayed in Hong Kong for three years. It was only in 1979 that a Chair Professor in Philosophy was finally appointed, indicating that the Philosophy Department had finally achieved full department status at HKU.

In 1971, Hong Kong implemented free universal primary education. Nine-year free and compulsory education was introduced in 1978. From 1981 to 1994, higher education expanded rapidly, shifting from an elitist to a mass system of education. The number of first-year degree places funded by the government increased from 2,500 to around 15,000, and it has remained at the same level since then. New universities were established, and some existing polytechnics and tertiary institutions were upgraded to universities. There are currently eight government-funded universities and several private colleges in Hong Kong.

Population growth and economic development were some of the reasons behind the expansionist policy. However, there were also political considerations. Formal negotiations between China and Britain about the future of Hong Kong began in 1982.¹⁴ When it became clear that China would resume sovereignty in Hong Kong in 1997, many citizens decided to emigrate or send their children to study overseas. Even more people left after the June 4 Tiananmen Square incident in China in 1989. The brain drain among professionals was particularly alarming.

In October 1989, the Hong Kong Government announced a drastic increase in the number of places in tertiary institutions,

which took many people by surprise. One key motivation was to stabilize the political situation. The expansionist policy offered hope for increasing social mobility and new opportunities to entice Hong Kong students to remain in the territory. Over the years, philosophy has benefited from these developments in terms of increasing staff numbers and student enrollment and more teaching opportunities for philosophy postgraduates.

Decolonization after the Second World War meant that colonial universities were no longer seen as imperial projects. The 1952 Keswick report on higher education in Hong Kong issued by a government-appointed committee recognized that higher education in Hong Kong should primarily cater to the needs of Hong Kong.¹⁵ However, even though the primary mission of the university had changed, the government still took the view that university research was an expensive luxury and a university should focus on professional training and not research. In addition, the government adhered strongly to a *laissez faire* economic policy. It was thought that industrial R&D is best left to the entrepreneurs in the market and that government intervention might actually do more harm than good. Repeated calls to set up a committee for distributing competitive government research grants were ignored.¹⁶ It was only in 1991 that the Research Grants Council (RGC) was formed to oversee policies regarding research in higher institutions. Thus began the modernization and globalization of universities in Hong Kong, bringing increasing managerialism and also the corporatization of higher education.¹⁷

Universities are now expected to develop “centers of excellence” and enhance their research efforts to become internationally recognized.¹⁸ Territory-wide research assessment exercises were introduced. More rigorous standards have been adopted for tenure and promotion, highlighting the importance of obtaining competitive research grants and publications in international journals. One policy welcomed by many academic philosophers was the possibility to use government research grants for teaching relief. There were also changes to university governance and funding structures. For example, within the university, “top-slicing” is often used by the central administration to withhold faculty funding to support special initiatives. Universities in Hong Kong have made significant gains in global rankings. Research funding in Hong Kong has increased substantially over the years, but as a percentage of GDP, it is still below that of Taiwan, China, Singapore, and South Korea. Philosophers in Hong Kong have generally done quite well despite the increasingly competitive environment. In the 2020 territory-wide official research assessment exercise, 72 percent of the philosophy publications submitted were judged to be either “internationally excellent” or better, above the humanities average of 66 percent.¹⁹ In the 2021 QS World University Rankings for Philosophy, the Philosophy Department at the Chinese University of Hong Kong was ranked first in Asia and twenty-eighth out of two hundred worldwide.

THE CREATION OF THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

After the Second World War, large numbers of Chinese civilians who left Hong Kong during the Japanese occupation returned. In addition, there was a huge influx of refugees and economic migrants from China due to the Chinese Civil War. Hong Kong’s population rose from about 600,000 in 1945 to 1.8 million by the end of 1947, reaching 2.2 million by mid-1950.²⁰ There was increasing demand for higher education to be taught in Chinese, but HKU was still the only local university, and tuition cost was high. In addition, students from Chinese-medium secondary schools often struggled to meet HKU’s English proficiency admission requirement. Furthermore, since HKU was an English-speaking university, it was not the ideal choice for those who were more interested in Chinese studies.

Some Hong Kong students went to mainland China for higher education. But this ended when the People’s Republic of China was established in 1949. Hong Kong’s growing population included refugee students, teachers, and scholars, as well as missionaries. Despite limited resources, some of them began to set up post-secondary Chinese colleges to satisfy the huge local demand for higher education in Chinese. New Asia College was founded in 1949 by a group of refugee professors and students, using rented flats as their classrooms. Chung Chi College was founded in 1951 by scholars from several Christian universities in China. United College was founded in 1956 by merging five private universities in Southern China that had moved their operations to Hong Kong.

These private colleges were not officially recognized as universities, but as they began to expand, the Hong Kong Government provided funding to support their development and to improve academic standards.²¹ More significantly, the government agreed to set up a new Chinese university in Hong Kong. Eventually, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) was established in 1963, incorporating the three colleges under a federal model.

There is an intimate connection between this history and the development of philosophy in Hong Kong. Many of those involved in establishing CUHK were famous philosophers or scholars with a strong interest in philosophy. Their understanding of Chinese culture and philosophy formed the core of their vision for higher education.

For example, Qian Mu (錢穆) and Tang Junyi (唐君毅) were two of the founders of New Asia College who left their teaching posts in China and came to Hong Kong. Qian Mu was a renowned historian who has written extensively on traditional Chinese philosophy. Tang Junyi was a philosopher and an educator and a central figure of the New Confucianism Movement. Mou Zongsan (牟宗三) and Xu Fu Guan (徐復觀) were two other famous representatives of New Confucianism, and they also joined New Asia College later. New Confucianism aims to revive the insights from Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties (宋明理學) in order to rejuvenate Chinese culture. The proposal is to combine Confucianism with science and democracy, with a

strong emphasis on the development of moral character to counteract the excesses of modernity.

The support of American NGOs was crucial for New Asia College at the beginning. These NGOs included the Asia Foundation, the Yale-in-China Association, the Ford Foundation, the Mencius Foundation, the Harvard-Yenching Institute, and the Rockefeller Foundation. There was a political motivation behind the support of some of these NGOs, which was to resist and contain communism. The Chinese Communist Government made efforts to attract young Chinese from Hong Kong and Southeast Asia to study in China. The Yale-China Association believed that providing education to Chinese students in Hong Kong was part of the “struggle for the minds and souls of men.”²² As a result, the association decided that expanding educational opportunities was a higher priority than investing in medical services in the territory. The association became the largest donor to New Asia College.

As for the Ford Foundation, the organization was explicit in stating that it was not interested in simply providing “more and better higher education for Chinese students.” Instead, its primary concern was to support research on “eastern and western thought, cultural values, political philosophy and the like” to look for “new answers to Asia’s problems other than communism.”²³ In other words, it was crucial for these organizations that New Asia College’s work could be interpreted as countering communism’s influence. Their political agendas were highly compatible with the mission of the college to pursue cultural education and humanities research. Hong Kong’s strategic location, relative neutrality, and freedom were also relevant considerations.

Political considerations also played a role in explaining why the Hong Kong colonial government supported the creation of a new Chinese-medium university. First, the large influx of refugees and migrants from China could potentially jeopardize social and political stability. A steady flow of students leaving Hong Kong for university studies could result in a brain drain and negatively impact the economy. It was also politically undesirable for Hong Kong students to study in mainland China, where they would be under communist influence. Encouraging students to study in Taiwan was risky as well, as it could provoke China.

Increasing the number of university places thus appeared to be the only politically feasible solution. However, the post-secondary Chinese colleges, including New Asia College, had expanded rapidly and could no longer be dismissed as temporary institutions. It was unlikely that they would give up their autonomy to be assimilated into HKU. Failure to properly recognize and support them would also have been seen as an affront to national pride and Chinese culture, leading to resentment and political tension.

The Hong Kong Government eventually concluded that the best solution was to expand tertiary education and establish a new Chinese-medium university. Post-war colonialism was shifting away from the concept of the university as an imperial institution and acknowledging the importance of incorporating local culture into educational policies. Moreover, investing in modern higher education that

combines Chinese and Western learning could potentially enhance Sino-British relations. It would also enable Britain to continue exerting its influence in Asia by training a new generation of future Chinese leaders.

A LEGACY OF HUMANISM

The establishment of CUHK during the colonial era was a significant milestone in the history of higher education in Hong Kong. In addition, the founders of the three foundational colleges left behind a legacy of humanism that continues to exert influence both within and outside philosophy. Many of the teachers of East Asia College were renowned scholars of Chinese philosophy and culture. Their work has been continued by their students and colleagues. For example, Yu Ying-Shih (余英時), who taught at Yale and Princeton, was among the first generation of graduates of East Asia College. Yu is famous for his work on Chinese intellectual history. Shun Kwong-loi (信廣來) is an expert on Confucian moral psychology. He studied with Mou Zongsan at the New Asia Institute of Advanced Chinese Studies and returned to CUHK to become the head of New Asia College from 2010 to 2013. There is also the so-called “third generation” of New Confucians: Tu Wei-ming (杜維明) and Liu Shu-hsien (劉述先). Tu taught at Harvard for many years and Liu worked at CUHK from around 1974 to 1999.

In terms of philosophical methodology, the New Confucians moved beyond traditional Chinese philosophy, using the conceptual frameworks and methods of Western philosophy to reconstruct and defend Confucian philosophy. For example, Mou’s work on Chinese philosophy was heavily influenced by his reading of Kant and Heidegger. The New Confucians mainly published in Chinese, and this has helped contextualize Western philosophy within the Chinese intellectual community. It also contributed to the translation of Western philosophical works into the Chinese language. This tradition has continued to expand and develop, and there is now a sizable group of researchers and students in Hong Kong who use Western philosophy, including analytic philosophy, to tackle issues and problems in Chinese philosophy.

It has sometimes been suggested that New Confucianism, especially in the work of Mou Zongsan, comes closest to being Hong Kong’s indigenous philosophy.²⁴ This is debatable as New Confucianism was very much concerned with the reform of Chinese culture and its origin was not particularly tied to the special circumstances of Hong Kong. In the case of Mou Zongsan, although the bulk of his mature philosophical work was mainly done in Hong Kong, his association with New Confucianism began earlier.

However, closely connected to New Confucianism is what many people have called the New Asia spirit (新亞精神). New Asia College was established under difficult circumstances, lacking both resources and funding. Qian Mu, Tang Junyi, and Yu Ying-Shih have all written about how this history exemplified the values of humanism, service, perseverance, and idealism.²⁵ This New Asia spirit was indeed rooted in Hong Kong. It has influenced successive generations of scholars and students in Hong Kong, including those outside of philosophy.

One element of this spirit was a deep commitment to education and the special emphasis placed upon the values of liberal education and Chinese culture education. This has directly and indirectly affected the dissemination of philosophy in Hong Kong and the promulgation of general education. Many philosophy departments in Hong Kong are heavily involved in providing general education courses and courses on critical thinking. Many local philosophers and students have also engaged in public philosophy, offering public seminars, contributing to newspaper columns and social media, and participating in school outreach programs. In addition, the moral integrity and social concern of the founding scholars have inspired successive generations of students and teachers. Many graduates of CUHK have been active in social affairs or involved in projects connected to China's development. Some have entered politics, participating in local elections, political parties, and grassroots activism. However, recent political changes in Hong Kong and the promulgation of the new National Security Law in 2020 have raised worries about increasing restrictions on freedom and civil liberties, casting a long shadow on philosophical engagement in the public sphere.

CONCLUSION

Academic philosophy began in Hong Kong more than a century ago, but there was little substantive development before the Second World War. After the war, the discipline expanded with the growth of higher education. Hong Kong is a small city with a dominant focus on political stability and economic prosperity, and the history of philosophy in Hong Kong is partly a reflection of changing government policies and local politics. The humanist tradition associated with New Confucianism has played a significant role in this history. Philosophers in Hong Kong are now part of the globalized academic philosophy community and there is much fruitful interaction between analytic philosophy and Chinese philosophy. Hong Kong has gone through many turbulent periods in its history. We can only hope that philosophers in Hong Kong will continue to contribute, not only locally but also to the mutual understanding between Chinese and Western cultures.

NOTES

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Analytic Philosophy in Taiwan: Impact Within and Beyond Academia

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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes the evolution of analytic philosophy in Taiwan, examines its impact within and beyond academia, and discusses the future of the discipline. The

roots of modern philosophy in Taiwan can be traced back to the Japanese colonial era, and analytic philosophy was introduced to the country in the late 1940s when many intellectuals in China moved to Taiwan. However, massive curbs were imposed on philosophy during Chiang Kai-shek's dictatorship, and the discipline began to thrive again only after Taiwan's democratization in the late 1980s. Nonetheless, since its introduction in the colonial era, modern philosophy has made significant contributions in Taiwan, encouraging interdisciplinary engagements, advancing civic education, and promoting the spirit of democracy and political liberation. Philosophy has played a key role in Taiwan's remarkable transformation from an island colonized for hundreds of years to a country that recognizes democracy, freedom, and human rights. The themes of anti-colonialism and anti-domination seen in the works of modern Taiwanese philosophers not only reflect the discipline's political and historical underpinnings but also signal how Taiwanese philosophy can acquire a distinct identity despite being influenced by many other philosophical traditions. While still at a nascent stage, Taiwanese philosophy has the potential to join forces with other philosophical traditions in advancing the vision of decolonizing philosophy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Taiwan is recognized for achieving remarkable progress in the domains of democracy, freedom, and human rights in the past few decades. Taiwan's first presidential elections were held in 1995, and the country welcomed its first female president in 2016. In 2019, Taiwan became the first Asian country to legalize same-sex marriage between its citizens. According to the Democracy Index released by the Economist Intelligence Unit in 2023,¹ Taiwan is one of the twenty-four countries categorized as "full democracies," and it is ranked ahead of all other Asian countries. While there is certainly room for more improvement, for a nation that endured almost four hundred years of colonial rule and dictatorship, Taiwan has been developing at an incredible pace.

Interestingly, very little is known about the vital role played by philosophy in Taiwan's decolonization, democratization, and continual pursuit of cultural identity. The goal of this paper is to bridge this knowledge gap. Section 2 presents a brief history of modern philosophy in Taiwan, which consists of three phases: the Japanese colonial era (1895–1945), Chiang's dictatorship (1945–1988), and the era of democratization (since the 1980s). In Section 3, I discuss the impact of analytic philosophy on academia, civic education, and the political environment. In Section 4, I link the historical reflections on philosophy in Taiwan with recent discussions on an embryonic domain named *Taiwanese philosophy*.

2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY IN TAIWAN

The main island of Taiwan is sometimes referred to as *Formosa*, which means "beautiful island" and is a name that can be traced back to Portuguese sailors who sailed past the island in the sixteenth century. Although those sailors believed the land was uninhabited, indigenous Taiwanese (who are Austronesian-speaking peoples) had settled on the island for six thousand years. Given the scarce written

records of Taiwanese indigenous philosophical traditions, contemporary scholars have relied on colloquial myths and legends to study those philosophical ideas.²

Since the sixteenth century, a series of six rulers colonized Taiwan for about four hundred years: the Dutch (1624–1662), the Spanish (1626–1642), the Cheng family (1662–1683), the Manchu Qing (1683–1895), the Japanese (1895–1945), and the Chiang family (1945–1988).³ These foreign rulers introduced diverse philosophies to Taiwan. For example, the Dutch and the Spanish imported Calvinism and Catholicism, respectively; the Cheng family ushered Neo-Confucianism; and under Manchu Qing's reign, Buddhism, Daoism, and Scottish Presbyterianism were introduced in Taiwan.⁴ Next, I focus on the development of philosophy under three political periods in Taiwan: the Japanese colonial era, Chiang's dictatorship, and the era of democratization.

2.1 MODERN PHILOSOPHY IN TAIWAN DURING THE JAPANESE COLONIAL ERA

After being defeated in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, the Qing dynasty ceded the sovereignty of Taiwan to Japan. As Japan's first colony, Taiwan witnessed a period of tremendous modernization, including the introduction of the Western educational system and philosophy as an academic discipline. Japanese academics at the time were strongly influenced by Continental philosophy (such as German idealism and Marxism) and the Japanese Kyoto School; thus, many Taiwanese intellectuals who received higher education in mainland Japan or at the newly founded Taipei Imperial University were widely exposed to the theories of Continental scholars (e.g., Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Marx) and scholars of the Kyoto School (e.g., Nishida Kitarō [西田幾多郎], Tanabe Hajime [田辺元], Watsuji Tetsuro [和辻哲郎]). American pragmatism also played an important role in influencing Taiwanese scholars of the time, especially through the Taiwanese intellectuals who pursued graduate studies in the United States (US) and returned with new philosophical ideas.

Despite the pluralist philosophical influences, many Taiwanese philosophers engaged with a common theme in their works: the meaning of existence, specifically in terms of resisting Japanese political domination and cultural assimilation, as well as building Taiwan's cultural identity.⁵ In line with Tzu-wei Hung's (洪子偉) usage,⁶ I refer to these scholars as *Sit-chûn scholars*.⁷ The term "Sit-chûn (實存)" means "existence" in the Taiwanese Hokkien language, and it denotes not only the metaphysical investigation of existence but also the condition, value, and meaning of actual human existence. For example, Yao-hsün Hung (洪耀勳), who earned his degree from Tokyo Imperial University (now University of Tokyo) and studied German idealism and Hegel's theories, relied on Watsuji Tetsuro and Hegel's theories to argue the case of the distinctiveness of Taiwanese culture.⁸ Mosei Lin (林茂生), who attended college in mainland Japan and later pursued his graduate studies at Columbia University under John Dewey, argued that the Japanese school system in Taiwan had failed to fulfill the principles of education and resulted in cultural discrimination.⁹

In addition to contributing academically, many Sit-chün scholars also participated in various social movements for cultural revolution. For example, Mosei Lin co-founded the Taiwanese Cultural Association (台灣文化協會) in the 1920s and offered summer classes on philosophy. Qiu-wu Lin (林秋梧) and Shao-hsing Chen (陳紹馨) delivered lectures at various public events organized by the Taiwanese Cultural Association. *Formosa Speaks*, authored by Wen-kwei Liao/Joshua Liao (廖文奎),¹⁰ is regarded as a pioneering work on Taiwanese independence. The dissemination of philosophical ideas through these social and cultural movements had long-lasting impacts on Taiwan (as will be discussed later in Section 3).

2.2 ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY IN TAIWAN UNDER CHIANG'S DICTATORSHIP

The abrupt shift in political regime at the end of World War II in 1945, from Japanese colonial power to the Kuomintang (KMT)-led government of the Republic of China (ROC), ushered tremendous changes in the political, social, and cultural spheres of Taiwan, which in turn had significant implications on the development of philosophy in Taiwan. Although Taiwanese citizens originally welcomed the end of fifty years of Japanese colonialism, they soon came to resent the corruption and indiscipline of the ROC administration. The February 28 Massacre (or the 228 Massacre) in 1947 marked the beginning of Chiang Kai-shek's military regime in Taiwan. Two years later, in 1949, Chiang's KMT government lost to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the Chinese Civil War and fled to Taiwan. From 1949 to 1987, Taiwan was under martial law—the second longest imposition of martial law in the world—and went through a period known as “the White Terror.”

This political environment had both positive and negative effects on the evolution of philosophy in Taiwan. On the one hand, when the CCP took over China, many intellectuals, including philosophy scholars, moved from China to Taiwan, thereby transmitting philosophical traditions, including analytic philosophy. Hai-guang Yin (殷海光) was an eminent immigrant scholar who promoted analytic philosophy, especially liberalism and logical positivism. Yin was born in China, completed his graduate studies in philosophy at Tsinghua University, and taught philosophy at the University of Nanking. In 1949, he settled in Taiwan and began teaching philosophy at National Taiwan University (NTU), the country's most reputed public research university. Inspired by the May Fourth Movement, Yin believed that science, freedom, and democracy are vital to society.¹¹ Accordingly, he introduced and popularized logical empiricism and liberalism in Taiwan, taught the philosophy of science and logic at NTU, wrote and translated textbooks on logic, translated Friedrich Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* into Chinese, and published numerous political commentaries critiquing Chiang's military regime and dictatorship in two liberal magazines, *Free China Journal* (自由中國) and *Wensin* (文星). Yin inspired many Taiwanese students of the time, some of whom went on to become famous philosophy scholars.

Among the negative effects of Chiang's military regime in Taiwan was the ban on the Japanese language and

publications written in Japanese, including philosophical works. Under the White Terror, numerous Taiwanese intellectuals were killed (Mosei Lin was among them), tortured, or forced into exile. Those who stayed in Taiwan endured various restrictions on their freedom. For example, speeches or publications that in any way could be interpreted as “communist” were considered “rebellious,” and people associated with rebellious ideas (e.g., owning a book that was categorized as “communist” by the government) attracted extreme punishment.

The arbitrary use of political power and tight restrictions on freedom greatly impeded the development of philosophy in Taiwan. Hai-guang Yin, a leading scholar of analytic philosophy mentioned earlier, was one of the victims of Chiang's dictatorship. In 1960, the KMT government forced *Free China Journal* to shut down (referred to as the *Free China Journal* Incident) after it had published several pieces criticizing the Chiang administration. Yin, as one of *Free China Journal's* co-editors and authors, was also targeted: some of his publications were banned, his research subsidy and some sources of income were withdrawn, he was prevented from lecturing students, and he was placed under house arrest until his death in 1969. Later, to further diminish Yin's liberal influence, the government intervened in the operations of the Philosophy Department at NTU under the guise of an “anti-communism” drive, leading to a series of incidents from 1972 to 1975 that were together referred to as the NTU Philosophy Department Incident (台大哲學系事件). In the Philosophy Department Incident, thirteen philosophy faculty members (some of them were students of Yin, such as Guying Chen [陳鼓應] and Xiaobo Wang [王曉波]) were expelled and silenced. These incidents adversely affected the development and the climate surrounding philosophy.

2.3 ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY IN TAIWAN UNDER THE ERA OF DEMOCRATIZATION

After the Formosa Incident (美麗島事件) in 1979 and a few assassinations of dissidents in the 1980s, the international community started to raise concerns about Taiwan's human rights situation and forced the KMT-led administration to start the process of democratization. In 1986, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was founded; 1987 marked the end of Taiwan's thirty-eight-year-long martial law regime; and in 1996, Taiwan held its first direct presidential election. However, the end of martial law did not suddenly enable the Taiwanese to enjoy freedom. KMT's influence and control exerted via laws enacted over decades still imposed strong restrictions on Taiwanese, and Taiwan's pursuit of democratization and transitional justice continued for a few decades and involved significant efforts from many Taiwanese.

In the 1980s, against the backdrop of gradual democratization and closer links with the US, many Taiwanese citizens went abroad to study philosophy and carried back the influences of analytic philosophy to Taiwan. Among the pioneers were Po-wen Kuo (郭博文) (who studied value theory and received his PhD from Yale University) and Cheng-hung Lin (林正弘) (a student of Hai-guang Yin who later received his PhD from UC Berkeley and worked on logic, epistemology, and the

philosophy of science), both of whom taught at NTU. Other key figures studying analytic philosophy in Taiwan at the time were Futzeng Liu (劉福增), Yih-mei Huang (黃懿梅), Shih-yu Kuo (郭實渝), and Daiwei Fu (傅大為). In the 1990s, more scholars received their PhDs in the US and the United Kingdom (UK) and returned to Taiwan, including Hua Tai (戴華), Allen Y. Hough (洪裕宏), Jih-ching Ho (何志青), Chin-mu Yang (楊金穆), Ruey-yuan Wu (吳瑞媛), and Ser-min Shei (謝世民).¹² Together, these scholars formed a strong alliance of analytic philosophy traditions, shaping the philosophical landscape in a more pluralistic way. Today, most philosophers in Taiwan categorize philosophical studies into three major groups: Chinese philosophy, continental philosophy, and analytic philosophy.

During the era of democratization, some attempts were carried out at institutionalizing philosophical studies in Taiwan, which then became the foundation for the discipline to thrive. In 1996, the Taiwan Philosophical Association (TPA) was founded. Although analytic philosophers were the main advocates and founding members of the TPA, the body was inclusive and welcoming of all traditions of philosophical study. Additionally, the end of colonization and dictatorship allowed more space for philosophical education to flourish. Today, twelve universities offer philosophy programs in Taiwan.¹³ Conferences, publications,¹⁴ and other academic events have also contributed to the development of philosophy.

3. IMPACT OF ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY IN TAIWAN

How has the development of analytic philosophy affected Taiwan? In addition to contributions along the axes of research, teaching, and service, analytic philosophers in Taiwan have had profound effects on the overall characters of academia and society. In this section, I discuss the impact of analytic philosophy on Taiwan along three dimensions: academia, civic education, and political environment. I argue that analytic philosophy has contributed to interdisciplinary engagements, advanced civic education, and promoted the spirit of democracy and political liberalism.

3.1 CONTRIBUTING TO INTERDISCIPLINARY ENGAGEMENTS

Within academia, analytic philosophers have played a crucial role in engaging in interdisciplinary exchange, especially with scholars from other scientific disciplines. A driving force behind such engagement is the Taiwan Association for Logic, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science and Technology (LMPST Taiwan), which is linked to the International Union of History and Philosophy of Science and Technology (IUHPST). Its predecessor organization was founded in the 1960s, and it has since undergone a few rounds of organizational changes; in February 2021, it was registered as a non-profit organization. One of the main purposes of LMPST Taiwan, as well as its predecessor, has been to promote interactions between philosophers and experts in other fields and to provide exchange opportunities and platforms. Since the 2010s, LMPST Taiwan has been organizing two biennial conferences: the Taiwan Metaphysics Colloquium (TMC) and the Taiwan Philosophical Logic Colloquium (TPLC). Hosted by the Department of Philosophy at NTU, these conferences were

attended by many renowned scholars and resulted in multiple published international anthologies.

Taiwanese philosophers have also made a critical contribution to the building of an academic community among East Asian philosophers. Together with scholars in Japan and Korea, Kai-yuan Cheng (鄭凱元) and Szu-ting Chen (陳思廷) initiated the Conference on Contemporary Philosophy in East Asia (CCPEA) and the East Asian Workshop on the Philosophy of Science in the early 2010s. The latter has been renamed into the Asia-Pacific Philosophy of Science Association (APPSA) and been expanded to engage with philosophers in the broader Asia-Pacific area.

Another site of close interdisciplinary engagement is the studies on the philosophy of mind, cognitive science, and cognitive neuroscience. Allen Y. Hough, who received his PhD in Philosophy and Cognitive Science from Indiana University, is a leading philosopher in Taiwan working in these disciplines. He founded two academic institutes of philosophy in Taiwan and taught many scholars in related disciplines. In 2008, the twelfth annual meeting of the Association for the Scientific Study of Consciousness (ASSC), a highly reputed international conference on consciousness studies, was hosted in Taipei, Taiwan. Then, in 2017, the efforts of philosophers in Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong, and other Asian countries led to the establishment of the Consciousness Research Network (CoRN). CoRN aims to build a pan-Asia interdisciplinary research network on the studies of consciousness and has since organized biennial meetings in Taiwan and Japan. With the recent advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), discussions on the philosophical and ethical issues surrounding AI, cognition, and consciousness are at the forefront. Engaging in the tradition of interdisciplinary collaborations, analytic philosophers in Taiwan continue playing a crucial role in advancing related research and education.

3.2 ADVANCING CIVIC EDUCATION

Centuries of colonialism and dictatorship have hampered the development of philosophical education in Taiwan. Given this fact and the rather poor quality of institutionalized education, the promotion of civic education assumes a critical role.

As mentioned earlier, the influence of philosophy on civic education can be traced back to the Japanese colonial era. Under Japanese rule, Taiwanese philosopher Mosei Lin co-founded the Taiwanese Cultural Association together with other intellectuals and conducted summer schools on philosophical teachings. Qiu-wu Lin, known as “Taiwan’s revolutionary monk,” was a Buddhist monk attracted to the egalitarian vision of Marx. He used Marxism to criticize certain Buddhist practices in Taiwan at the time, including the superstitious practice and belief of excluding women, and proposed a new form of Buddhism—Taiwanese Liberation Buddhism—that was more aligned with the ideals of equity and social justice.¹⁵ He regularly published editorials in newspapers such as *South Seas Buddhist Magazine* (南瀛佛教會會報) and *Taiwan Minpao* (台灣民報).¹⁶ Lin’s Taiwanese Liberation Buddhism deeply impacted the growth of humanistic Buddhism, sex and gender equity, and the animal liberation movement in Taiwan.¹⁷

In recent decades, the role of philosophy in civic education has gained more academic attention. An increasing number of public philosophy books, both translated and written in the local language, are being published. Since 2014, Watchout Philosophy (沃草烙哲學) has served as an open forum for publishing public-facing essays on philosophy. Most authors on the forum are philosophy graduates who introduce philosophical ideas relevant to the social and political issues in Taiwan. Among professional publications, *The Mandarin Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (MEP) (華文哲學百科), established in 2017, is Taiwan's version of *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, where all the submissions are written by experts from related streams and are subjected to peer reviews and professional editing before being shared online. With free and open resources on philosophy, MEP enables Mandarin readers to have better access to philosophical resources.

In addition to the more traditional route of public engagement through writing essays and books, the publicizing of philosophy has also been pursued in diverse ways. For instance, Café Philo (哲學星期五, literally meaning "Philosophy Friday"), a series of public salons founded by a group of philosophy professors in Taiwan, has been instrumental in popularizing philosophy and public debates. Since 2010, Café Philo has expanded overseas to places such as New York, Boston, the Bay Area, and Munich. In 2013, philosophy professors and high school teachers founded the Philosophical Education Development Organization (Phedo) (台灣高中哲學教育推廣學會) to promote philosophical education in high school. Phedo collaborates with high school teachers to conduct guest lectures on philosophy in high schools, organizes summer camps and essay competitions for high school students, and hosts reading groups and speeches for the general public. In 2014, a group of graduate and doctoral degree holders in philosophy founded Philosophy Medium (哲學新媒體) to explore non-academic career opportunities and popularize philosophy via public essays, podcasts, and online courses. In 2017, the first Taiwanese TV series on philosophy, *Talking about Philosophy in an Easy Way* (哲學談淺淺的), was launched, and many philosophy professors from different subdisciplines have been invited to talk about philosophy in an engaging format.

Owing to these efforts, philosophy has become a "fashionable" topic in Taiwan and analytic philosophy has benefited from this wave of interest. Furthermore, although analytic philosophy is not the sole focus of attention, it is undeniable that analytic philosophers in Taiwan have played a crucial role in publicizing philosophy.

3.3 PROMOTING DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL LIBERALISM

Last but definitely not least, analytic philosophy has had a profound impact on Taiwan's democratic progress and pursuit of freedom. As mentioned in Section 2.2, since the period of Chiang's dictatorship, analytic philosophy (especially the ideas surrounding political liberalism) has played a vital role in advocating the importance of freedom and democracy in Taiwan.

Nan-jung Cheng (鄭南榕), who was born in the year of the February 28 Massacre and died in the year that martial law ended in Taiwan, was a noteworthy pro-democracy activist. Cheng first studied philosophy at Fu Jen Catholic University and then moved to NTU during his sophomore year. When studying at NTU, Cheng was drawn to the ideals of liberalism and regularly visited Hai-guang Yin (who was under house arrest then) to discuss freedom and democracy. As a result of the *Free China Journal* Incident and Yin's arrest, Cheng abandoned his original dream of becoming a philosophy professor and immersed himself in political activism for democracy and freedom. After the Formosa Incident in 1979, Cheng started to write political critiques in a few magazines. In 1984, he founded *Freedom Era Weekly* (自由時代週刊), which became a leading magazine of the democratic movement. Under the slogan "Fighting for 100 percent freedom of speech," *Freedom Era Weekly* called for democracy and freedom at a time when martial law still forbade open publications that were not run by the KMT. On April 7, 1989, to protest against the charges of "rebellion" and to fight for freedom of speech, Cheng immolated himself.

The contributions of Hai-guang Yin and Nan-jung Cheng received recognition under the era of democratization. In 1993, the Yin Hai-guan Memorial Foundation was established to honor Yin's contribution to academia and society. Yin's former residence (where he was under house arrest) is now a museum, and the foundation also operates the Hai-kuang School of Humanities, which organizes public lectures and classes on democracy, human rights, and social and political philosophy. In 1999, the Nylon Cheng Liberty Foundation and Memorial Museum was established at the original site of *The Freedom Era Weekly* magazine in memory of Nan-jung Cheng. In 2016, Taiwan's Executive Yuan officially marked April 7, the day of Cheng's self-immolation, as the Day of Freedom of Speech in Taiwan.

Furthermore, during the era of democratization, many philosophers (especially analytic philosophers) actively promoted democracy and engaged in political critiques. In 1989, the Taipei Society (澄社), an association of political critics formed by groups of liberal scholars, was founded, and Cheng-hung Lin was one of the founding members. Allen Y. Hough served as the president of the Taipei Society from 2003 to 2005 and is a leading force in Taiwan's constitutional reform movement. Additionally, many new media outlets and organizations publicizing philosophy (such as Café Philo, Watchout Philosophy, and Phedo) have offered new resources to deepen civic education related to democracy, human rights, and freedom. Today, as the most democratic country in Asia and the first Asian country to legalize same-sex marriage, Taiwan is proud of its strides in democracy, freedom, and human rights, and it is important to recognize the contribution of analytic philosophy to this progress.¹⁸

4. CONCLUSION: FROM PHILOSOPHY IN TAIWAN TO "TAIWANESE PHILOSOPHY"

Recently, Taiwanese scholars have begun to question the characteristics of Taiwanese philosophy. The term "Taiwanese philosophy" was first proposed in the late

1980s,¹⁹ but only during the last decade has the topic started capturing more scholarly interest. One might wonder whether there is anything that qualifies as Taiwanese philosophy, and if so, what it is. While these are fair questions to be asked, noting that concepts like “Taiwanese” and “philosophy” are socially constructed, Shen-yi Liao (廖顯禕) argues that instead of asking *what x philosophy is*, it is more theoretically and politically advantageous to adopt an *ameliorative approach* to the metaphilosophical questions and ask *what we want x philosophy to be*.²⁰ In the case of Taiwanese philosophy, Liao’s analysis implies that Taiwanese philosophers need not take Taiwanese philosophy as it currently is but can and should recognize their power to negotiate this concept collectively.²¹

Indeed, Taiwanese philosophers have been taking on the project to reshape the concept and boundary of Taiwanese philosophy over the past decade. For example, research projects led by Tzu-wei Hung and colleagues have resulted in the rediscovery and compilation of several philosophical works by Taiwanese philosophers from the Japanese colonial era and Chiang’s dictatorship.²² It is through these projects that many Taiwanese scholars and the general public have heard about these philosophers and their philosophical ideas. The shared themes of anti-colonialism and anti-domination in the works of contemporary Taiwanese philosophers not only reflects political and historical underpinnings but also signals how Taiwanese philosophy can acquire its own distinctiveness despite being influenced by many other philosophical traditions. Further, it highlights how Taiwanese philosophy, though still at a nascent stage, has the potential to join forces with other philosophical traditions in advancing the vision of decolonizing philosophy.²³

After centuries of colonialism, during which Taiwanese were often treated as secondary citizens and constantly deprived of tools to develop their own agency, Taiwanese are now gradually rebuilding their cultural and political subjectivity. In hindsight, philosophy enabled Taiwanese to overthrow the social hierarchies imposed by various political regimes and fight for their democracy. In the future, Taiwanese philosophy has the potential to empower Taiwanese to build their identity and contribute to the pursuit of liberation in the global world.

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NOTES

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4. Tzu-wei Hung, “Anglo-American Philosophy in Taiwan: A Centennial Review,” *Asian Journal of Philosophy* 1, no. 19 (2022): 19.
5. Tzu-wei Hung, ed., *Existential Engagement: Philosophy in Taiwan, the Japanese Era* (存在交涉：日治時期的台灣哲學) (Taipei: Academia Sinica and Linking Publishing, 2016); Tzu-wei Hung, “On the Sit-chün Scholars of Taiwanese Philosophy,” *Philosophy East and West* 69, no. 4 (2019): 973–93.
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11. Ruey-lin Chen (陳瑞麟), “The Pioneering of Contemporary Taiwan’s Philosophy of Science: Yin Hai-kuang’s Philosophy of Science,” (臺灣科學哲學的首航：殷海光的科學哲學) *National Chengchi University Philosophical Journal* 10 (2003): 1–33.
12. Hung, “Anglo-American Philosophy in Taiwan.”
13. The twelve universities offering philosophy programs are National Taiwan University, National Chengchi University, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University, National Tsing Hua University, National Central University, National Chung Hua University, National Sun Yat-sen University, Soochow University, Fu Jen Catholic University, Chinese Culture University, Tunghai University, and Chang Jung Christian University. In addition to these programs, the Institute of European and American Studies at Academia Sinica is an important institute for philosophical research in Taiwan.
14. For example, *EurAmerica*, *National Taiwan University Philosophical Review*, *Soochow Journal of Philosophical Studies*, and *National Chengchi University Philosophical Journal*.
15. Tzu-wei Hung, “Equity and Marxist Buddhism,” *Australasian Philosophical Review* (forthcoming).
16. Hsiao-feng Li (李筱峰), *Taiwan’s Revolutionary Monk, Lin Qiuwu* (台灣革命僧：林秋梧) (Taipei: Zili Wanbao She, 1991).
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21. For related discussions, see Ruey-lin Chen, “Can There Be a Taiwan Theory?” (可以有台灣理論嗎？如何可能？) in *Knowledge Taiwan: On the Possibility of Theory in Taiwan* (知識台灣：台灣理論的可能性), ed. Shu-mei Shih (史書美), Jia-ling Mei (梅家

玲), Chao-yang Liao (廖朝陽), and Dung-sheng Chen (陳東升) (Taipei: Rye Field Publishing, 2016), 15–54; Ting-an Lin (林庭安), “Taiwanese Marxist Buddhism and Its Lessons for Modern Times,” *Australasian Philosophical Review* (forthcoming).

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The Emergence of Analytic Philosophy in Korea

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ABSTRACT

Sections 1–3 provide a brief introduction to the emergence and consolidation of analytic philosophy in Korea, as reflected by the training and works of individual philosophers as well as by research and publication trends and the areas covered by philosophy journals, societies, and associations. Section 4 distinguishes between three types of philosophy that might aptly be labeled “Asian analytic philosophy.” Section 5 offers some brief remarks concerning the value and significance of these types of philosophy.

1. EARLY WESTERN INFLUENCE: CONTINENTAL EUROPE

Europe saw the emergence and early development of analytic philosophy in the late nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century—driven by the works of Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, and the Vienna Circle. As analytic philosophy consolidated in Europe in the first half of the twentieth century, it also gained a foothold in North America and Australasia. During this early period of analytic philosophy, the emerging tradition had no noticeable impact on philosophy in Korea. Accordingly, there was no discernible analytic philosophy trend in Korea. Instead, the primary Western influence on philosophical thought during

this period came from non-analytic styles of philosophy in Europe, especially Germany and France.

Korea saw its first class of university philosophy graduates in 1929, during the period of Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945). They graduated from Gyeongseong Imperial University (경성제국대학) in Gyeongseong (Keijō), located where modern-day Seoul is today.¹

During the colonial period, no academic philosophy journal sustained a significant publication history. The journal *Cheolhak* (철학; Korean for *philosophy*) published its inaugural issue in 1933 but shut down in 1935 after publishing only three issues. In the absence of academic journals, philosophical writings were instead published in newspapers and magazines, as chronicled by Taewoo Lee in the two articles “Acceptance of European Philosophy through Newspaper Articles during the Japanese Colonial Period” (2007) and “Acceptance of European Philosophy through Magazines during the Japanese Colonial Period” (2008).

Lee (2008) reports that, between 1910 and 1945, 111 articles on individual European philosophers were published across fifty different magazines. The majority of these articles were published between 1920 and 1930. Marx was the most widely studied figure (thirty-one articles), followed by Kant (nineteen), Hegel (eleven), Nietzsche, Eucken, Lenin, Spencer, Heidegger, Feuerbach, Husserl, Bergson, and Rickert. During the same period, 129 magazine articles focused on European philosophy discussed different “isms” or areas of philosophy. Twenty-five articles were published on general philosophy, eleven on dialectical materialism, eight on religion, seven on ethics, seven on metaphysics, six on the philosophy of life, six on political philosophy or theory, and five on science. Other topics or areas covered include medieval philosophy, the history of philosophy, dialectics, social evolution, truth, socialism, social thought, aesthetics, logic, ancient philosophy, epistemology, and existentialism. For the period between 1910 and 1945, Lee (2007) reports that 283 articles on individual European philosophers were published in newspapers. One hundred forty articles focused on figures from the Early Modern period and 137 on contemporary figures. As with magazines, the top three features Marx (seventy-five), Hegel (fifty-three), and Kant (forty-five) while Heidegger (twenty), Nietzsche (eighteen), Spinoza (sixteen), and Rousseau (fifteen) also received considerable attention.²

2. ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY IN KOREA IN THE 1950s TO 1980s: INDIVIDUALS, SOCIETIES, JOURNALS, PUBLICATIONS, AND PHILOSOPHICAL TRENDS

While Germany and France were the main Western influences during the colonial period, there was also a small number of Korean philosophers who studied in the US. Chijin Han received his PhD from the University of Southern California in 1930, Hongi Gal from the University of Chicago in 1934, and Heeseong Park from Albion College in 1937.

Chijin Han introduced American pragmatism to Korea and was a very prolific writer. He authored nearly thirty books,

including ones on psychology, logic, religious studies, sociology, political science, and the first general introduction to Western philosophy—published in 1936 under the title *A New Introduction to Philosophy* (최신철학개론). Han also contributed 130 articles on philosophy to magazines and newspapers during the period of colonial rule. For part of the 1930s, Han worked as a professor at Ewha Womans University. In 1947, he was appointed as a professor at Seoul National University but was kidnapped by North Korea in 1950 after the outbreak of the Korean War.

Hongi Gal worked as a professor at Yonhee College and Sookmyung Women's University and held prominent positions within various church organizations, as well as several important government positions (including Director of the Public Affairs Office, Director of the Public Information Office, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Ambassador to Malaysia).

Heeseong Park worked for nearly two decades as a professor at Korea University (1949-1968) and established the Gyeokam Cultural Foundation (격암문화재단), a foundation that awards scholarships to support students.³

While some Koreans studied in the US during the first half of the 1930s, it was only after WWII (1939-1945) and the Korean War (1950-1953) that Anglo-American philosophy really started exerting its influence on philosophy in Korea. The end of WWII brought an end to the Japanese occupation of Korea. The intellectual and philosophical influence of continental Europe on Korea during the colonial period was, to a considerable extent, a reflection of the Japanese presence in Korea and the strong influence of Germany on Japan. With the colonial rule brought to an end, space opened up for new sources of influence on a wide range of fronts, including philosophy. In this regard, the Korean War and the period following in its wake proved very significant.

The Korean peninsula was one of several battle grounds between the ideologies of the Soviet Union and the USA. Following WWII, the Korean peninsula was divided into two zones under respective Soviet and American administrations. In 1948, these zones were established as sovereign states—the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, respectively. (The two Koreas are often referred to as North Korea and South Korea.) The Korean War started when the North invaded the South on June 25, 1950. A ceasefire brought the war to a halt on July 27, 1953. During the conflict, North Korea was supported by China and the Soviet Union while South Korea was supported by a United Nations coalition force for which the US had, by a very wide margin, the strongest presence. The US committed hundreds of thousands of ground troops to the war and provided equipment as well as large-scale air and naval support.

After WWII and the Korean War, there was a re-orientation in (South) Korea towards the US in many fundamental respects.⁴ This re-orientation had a significant impact on academics and research, including in philosophy. While continental Europe—Germany especially—remained very influential, analytic philosophy started emerging as a

tradition from the 1950s onwards. The period between the 1950s and the 1980s can be regarded as the early days of analytic philosophy in Korea and a period of initial growth. From the 1990s onwards, analytic philosophy started consolidating as a tradition and saw further growth.

The remainder of this section introduces analytic philosophy in Korea during the early days and period of initial growth. This is done via an introduction of prominent individual philosophers, societies, journals, and key publications and trends. Key sources include two articles titled (in translation) “The Reception and Evaluation of Analytic Philosophy” and “The Reception of Analytic Philosophy (1980-1995)” by Hyomyeong Kim and Yeongjeong Kim, respectively. We also rely on the Korean Citation Index and Research Information Sharing Service (both comprehensive databases for academic publications in Korea), as well as the websites of philosophical societies, associations, and journals.

After the Korean War, an increasing number of Koreans studied in the US. Some were supported by US-Korea study programs initiated in the wake of the war. Jaegwon Kim, the most prominent analytic philosopher from Korea to date, was awarded a scholarship by the Korean-American Scholarship Committee. This enabled him to attend Dartmouth College from 1955 onwards. He received a BA in French, mathematics, and philosophy and went on to study at Princeton under the supervision of Carl G. Hempel.⁵ He remained in the US for the rest of his life, spending the longest periods at Brown University (1987 onwards) and the University of Michigan (1967-1986).

Kim spent time in Korea on a number of occasions, including a visit to Seoul National University as a Fulbright Scholar in the fall of 1984. Kim describes this stay as “one of the most important parts of my philosophical career.” The widely anthologized paper “What Is ‘Naturalized Epistemology?’” was written during this period, and core ingredients of Kim’s celebrated causal exclusion argument were conceived.⁶ Kim’s prominence among analytic philosophers in Korea is reflected by the publication of an edited collection in celebration of his sixtieth birthday and the fact that the Research Information Sharing Service (RISS) lists seventy articles as engaging in detail with Kim’s work.⁷

Other Koreans who studied in the US in the 1950s or 1960s include Joonseob Kim, Taegil Kim, Hanjo Lee, and Yersu Kim. Joonseob Kim received his PhD from Columbia University in 1952 with a thesis titled “Dialectical Method” and worked at Korea University from 1947 to 1954 and then at Seoul National University from 1954 to 1978. He specialized in logic and the history of philosophy. Taegil Kim received his PhD from Johns Hopkins University in 1960 with a thesis titled “Naturalism and Emotivism: Some Aspects of Moral Judgments” and was on the Seoul National University faculty from 1962 to 1986. His teaching and research centered around ethics and meta-ethics. Hanjo Lee received an MA from the University of Minnesota in 1958 and was on the Sogang University faculty from 1968 to 1989. He first came across Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* at a US military library in Korea, prompting him to pursue further studies in the US. His lectures in the mid-1960s offered the first systematic

introduction to Wittgenstein's philosophy in Korea. Yersu Kim received his BA from Harvard in 1959, a powerhouse of analytic philosophy in the US, and then went on to pursue his PhD at Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität Bonn. From 1977 to 1998, he was a professor at Seoul National University and did important work for UNESCO—first as Director of UNESCO's Division of Philosophy and Ethics (1996–2000) and then as Secretary-General of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (2000–2004).

Besides the increasing number of Koreans pursuing philosophical studies in the US, the 1950s and 1960s were also the time philosophers in Korea founded a number of professional societies, associations, and journals.

The Korean Philosophical Association (한국 철학회) was founded in 1953. It was (and still is) a comprehensive organization that encompasses all areas of philosophy. In 1955, the association launched a quarterly journal, *Cheolhak: Korean Journal of Philosophy*. (*Cheolhak* is the transliteration into English of the Korean word 철학, standardly translated as *philosophy*.) In keeping with the comprehensive scope of the association, the journal covers all areas of philosophy.

The Society of Philosophical Studies (철학 연구회) was founded in 1963. Three years later, in 1966, the society launched its own quarterly journal, *Journal of the Society of Philosophical Studies* (철학 연구).⁸ This journal, like *Cheolhak*, is a comprehensive journal covering all areas of philosophy.

The Korean Philosophical Association and Society of Philosophical Studies, together with their respective journals, served to give philosophy a public, academic foundation. This had been absent during the colonial period.

How visible was analytic philosophy during the period where philosophy found an academic footing in Korea? In 1955, Joonseob Kim published an article in volume 1 of *Cheolhak* comparing Aristotelian logic to the system of Russell and Whitehead in *Principia Mathematica*. Thus, at the very least, logic—a core part of analytic philosophy—made an appearance from the very beginning in the newly founded organ of academic philosophy in Korea. In 1955, Kim published the comprehensive *History of Western Philosophy* (西洋哲學史), and the year after, in 1956, Taegil Kim published *Ethics*—a textbook praised for being the first book in Korea to distinguish properly between normative and applied ethics. The book likewise introduced various meta-ethical theories, prompting a wave of research and publications on meta-ethics.⁹

In the 1950s and 1960s, only a small number of articles were published on analytic philosophy across all philosophy journals: fewer than ten in the 1950s and twelve in the 1960s. In the 1970s, there was a significant jump to a total of forty articles.¹⁰

Initially, as analytic philosophy emerged as a discernible tradition in Korea, only little research was done on Russell and Frege. Wittgenstein's work received more attention,

with an emphasis on the late Wittgenstein rather than the Wittgenstein known from the *Tractatus*. Thus, when Wittgensteinian themes such as truth, meaning, and language were engaged, this was often done in the manner and style of the later Wittgenstein. Ordinary language philosophy was popular. This was related to the late Wittgenstein's influence in Korea and his focus and emphasis on ordinary language. Indeed, many works classified as ordinary language philosophy were really works on Wittgenstein's later philosophy.¹¹

As analytic philosophy consolidated its standing in North America, the region saw the emergence of key figures of its own. The works of Quine, Putnam, Davidson, and Kripke generated extensive debate in North America (and Europe) in the 1960s and 1970s. In Korea, however, it was not until the 1980s that these contemporary figures became objects of sustained discussion. Analytic epistemology had thrived in Europe and North America for decades but did not start making inroads into Korean philosophy until the 1980s. Daihyun Chung's 1979 PhD thesis from Korea University ("The Ordinary Language Analysis of the Concept of Knowledge") was the first comprehensive, systematic work in analytic epistemology, and it was not until the 1990s when several Korean philosophers specializing in epistemology graduated from US institutions and returned to Korea that analytic epistemology really started gaining a foothold.¹²

3. ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY IN KOREA 1990s ONWARDS: SOCIETIES, JOURNALS, PUBLICATIONS, AND TRENDS

The 1990s onwards has been a period of consolidation and continued growth for analytic philosophy in Korea.

The Korean Philosophical Association (KPA) is a mother organization for several philosophical organizations. In 1974, a subcommittee for ethics was set up under the aegis of the association. December of 1976 saw another eight subcommittees instituted: logic, analytic philosophy, the philosophy of society, the philosophy of art, (Western) ancient philosophy, Indian philosophy, phenomenology, and Korean philosophy. A subcommittee for Chinese philosophy followed in February 1977, bringing the total number of subcommittees to ten.¹³

In 1989, the subcommittee for logic was renamed the Korean Association for Logic (한국논리학회) and established as a separate entity. The subcommittee for analytic philosophy followed suit in 1999, taking the name the Korean Society for Analytic Philosophy (한국분석철학회). The philosophy of science got its own organization with the 1995 establishment of the Korean Philosophy of Science Association (한국과학철학회).

Each of the three organizations launched their own journal. *The Korean Journal of Logic* (한국논리연구) published its first issue in 1997 while the Korean Society for Analytic Philosophy launched *Philosophical Analysis* (철학적 분석) in 2000. The first issue of *The Korean Journal for the Philosophy of Science* (과학철학) appeared in 1998.¹⁴

The establishment of self-standing organizations for logic, analytic philosophy, and the philosophy of science and their respective journals was a sign of consolidation. At the same time, they served as a basis for further growth. By having regular meetings, members of the three organizations were given a valuable platform for presenting, developing, and discussing research of shared interest. The meetings and journals were—and still are—mutually supporting. The journals provide a local publication outlet for material presented at meetings while meetings offer a natural framework for discussion of research published in the journals.

Publication of works in analytic philosophy increased in the 1980s and 1990s. Yeongjeong Kim’s 1997 article “The Reception of Analytic Philosophy (1980–1995)” provides useful information about this period.

Kim reports the number of original books published in the 1980s to be twenty-five, with a slight increase to twenty-seven in the 1990s. Forty-three works of analytic philosophy were translated to Korean in the 1980s while, in the 1990s, the number was twenty-four.¹⁵ The publication of original books, like the establishment of organizations and journals, reflects the consolidation of analytic philosophy: the presence of a discernible tradition with its own community. The translation of works to Korean likewise signals the consolidated status of analytic philosophy: the felt need among philosophers in Korea to make contributions to the canon of analytic philosophy available in Korean. Among other works, the *Tractatus, On Certainty*, and *Philosophical Investigations* by Wittgenstein were all translated to Korean, as were *The Problems of Philosophy* by Russell, *Reason, Truth and History* by Putnam, and *Naming and Necessity* by Kripke. It is also worth noting that the Korean Society for Analytic Philosophy played an active role in disseminating and promoting analytic philosophy by publishing seven books between 1984 and 1997 (including several titles on

Wittgenstein and a *festschrift* celebrating Jaegwon Kim’s sixtieth birthday).

Kim (1997) provides a helpful topic or area-wise breakdown of publications for the period from 1980 to 1995 (the number is the sum of books, articles, and translations):¹⁶

Philosophy of science:	151
Philosophy of language:	137
Epistemology:	120
Philosophy of logic:	114
Philosophy of mind and cognitive science:	105
Logic and meta-logic:	38
Metaphysics:	36
Pragmatism and neo-pragmatism:	31

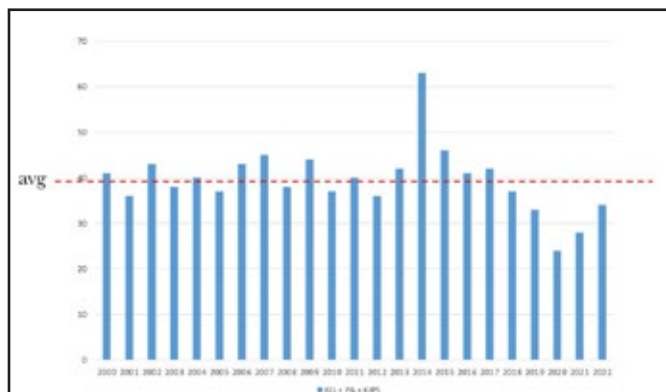
For individual philosophers, Wittgenstein (seventy-six) was the most widely studied, followed by Popper (thirty), Dewey (twenty-six), Whitehead (twenty-five), Hume (twenty-one), Russell (seventeen), Davidson (seventeen), Quine (sixteen), Rorty (ten), and Frege (ten). Wittgenstein thus comes in significantly ahead of other philosophers. However, compared to the 1960s and 1970s, it is notable that there were literatures emerging on a number of prominent analytic philosophers other than Wittgenstein—both early analytic philosophers such as Frege and Russell and more recent or contemporary philosophers such as Popper, Quine, and Davidson.

To supplement the findings and observations drawn from the articles by Taewoo Lee, Hyomyeong Kim, and Yeongjeong Kim, we have recorded the number of articles published each year by *The Korean Journal of Logic* (KJL), *Philosophical Analysis* (PA), and *The Korean Journal for the Philosophy of Science* (KJPS) for the period from 2000 to 2022:¹⁷

	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	Journal total
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2
KJL	1	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	280
	2		4	1	4	0	3	0	1	1	2	5	4	5	7	5	3	2	2	4		1	0
PA	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	7	7	1	326
	5	6	3	3	4	7	7	4	5	7	3	5	0	4	4	1	4	6	4	0		0	
KJPS	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	9	1	1	302
	4	2	6	4	2	0	3	1	2	6	2	0	2	3	2	2	4	4	1		1	0	4
Year total	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	6	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	908
	1	6	3	8	0	7	3	5	8	4	7	0	6	2	3	6	1	2	7	3	4	8	4

The annual average for *The Korean Journal of Logic* (KJL) is 12.17 while *Philosophical Analysis* (PA) and *The Korean Journal for the Philosophy of Science* (KJPS) have annual averages of 14.17 and 13.13, respectively. The aggregate average for the three journals is 39.48.

The following graph shows the twenty-three annual totals together with the aggregate average:



For the vast majority of years, the aggregate number of publications across the three journals hovers around the aggregate average of 39.48. Let us make two points in light of this observation.¹⁸

First, the journals in question are the three main journals for analytic philosophy in Korea. In the past two decades, they have published a considerable body of work on analytic philosophy, produced almost exclusively by philosophers in Korea or Korean philosophers abroad. We thus take the data to constitute further evidence of the consolidation of analytic philosophy as a discernible philosophical tradition with its own community in Korea.¹⁹

Second, it may be tempting to conclude from the 2000–2022 publication statistics that, while consolidated, analytic philosophy has also reached a point of *stagnation*. This conclusion would be premature. An increasing number of journal articles, book chapters, edited collections, and books by analytic philosophers in Korea is published internationally. Although we have not made any systematic attempt to collect statistics for international publications, we venture the following conjecture: if international publications are added to domestic publications, Korean analytic philosophy has exhibited significant growth in the past two decades.

4. ASIAN (AND KOREAN) ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY: THREE TYPES

In this section, we turn our attention to a fundamental conceptual question: Is there any type of philosophy for which “Asian analytic philosophy” might be an apt label? We propose that the answer is affirmative for at least three types of philosophy:

Type 1: Asian philosophy studied, discussed, and researched through the lens of analytic philosophy.

Type 2: Asian cross-linguistic or cross-cultural analytic philosophy.

Type 3: Asian language-driven analytic philosophy.

A good example of the first type of Asian analytic philosophy is Kris McDaniel’s “Abhidharma Metaphysics and the Two Truths” (2019).

According to the teachings of the Buddha, people should act with compassion and people will be reincarnated. However, the teachings of the Buddha also say that people do not exist. The Buddha’s teachings thus seem inconsistent. The Abhidharma doctrine of two truths is meant to provide the theoretical resources to circumvent this inconsistency through a distinction between conventional truth and ultimate truth—paving the way for the consistent view that it is conventionally true that people should act with compassion and that they will be reincarnated while it is conventionally false and, yet, ultimately true that people do not exist. A parallel distinction between conventional and ultimate existence provides a metaphysics to go with the semantic picture: people enjoy conventional existence but fail to exist ultimately.

The doctrine of two truths has been subjected to extensive debate. We restrict attention to McDaniel’s account, which draws heavily on his work on ontological pluralism.²⁰ Ontological pluralism is the view that there is a generic, non-fundamental mode of being—expressed by an unrestricted quantifier—that subsumes everything there is. Crucially, there are different fundamental modes of being, expressed by semantically primitive restricted quantifiers. They are restricted because each of them ranges over a proper subset of what there is. They are semantically primitive in that they are not characterizable in terms of the unrestricted quantifier plus some predicate or operator.

McDaniel construes Buddhist metaphysics as a species of ontological pluralism. Conventional existence is a generic, non-fundamental mode of being while ultimate existence is a restricted, fundamental mode of being. Things that exist ultimately also exist conventionally. However, the converse does not hold. Some things enjoy mere conventional existence. Things that enjoy ultimate being possess the highest grade of being while things that exist conventionally do not. Ultimate beings are thus more real than conventional beings. McDaniel proposes to understand the distinction between conventional and ultimate truth in terms of the distinction between conventional and ultimate being. The ontological distinction between conventional existence and ultimate existence is thus more fundamental than the semantic distinction between conventional truth and ultimate truth. McDaniel provides reasons for favouring his proposed account over other accounts in the secondary literature.²¹

The example just discussed pertains to Indian versions of Buddhism. Are there any good examples of classical Korean philosophy approached through the lens of analytic philosophy? Korea has its own incarnations of shamanism, Buddhism, and (neo-)Confucianism, each with long histories. But, is there any discernible trend of these

traditions of Korean thought being approached through the lens of analytic philosophy? It appears not. The arrival and consolidation of analytic philosophy in Korea has yet to merge with—or have a significant impact on—the study of classical Korean philosophy.²²

Let us move on to consider Type 2 Asian analytic philosophy: cross-linguistic or cross-cultural analytic philosophy.

In the past couple of decades, there has been a surge of work in analytic philosophy that compares philosophical issues or questions across languages or cultures. If one of the languages or cultures in the comparison is Asian, it qualifies as the second type of Asian analytic philosophy.

A very prominent example of Type 2 Asian analytic philosophy thus understood is the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural work on the so-called Gettier intuition, i.e., the judgment that subjects in Gettier cases fail to possess knowledge although they have a true, justified belief.²³ In “Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions” (2001), on the basis of empirical data, Jonathan M. Weinberg, Shaun Nichols, and Stephen Stich argue that while the Gettier intuition is prevalent among Westerners, East Asians and people from the Indian subcontinent (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) do not share it. Their argument has prompted considerable critical engagement.²⁴

How about Korean cross-linguistic or cross-cultural analytic philosophy? One recent example is “Knowledge and Assertion in Korean” (2018) by John Turri and Yeounjun Park. The article aims to test whether findings regarding knowledge and assertion for (American) English speakers can be replicated for Korean speakers. For English speakers, there is evidence that knowledge functions as a norm of assertion. The data collected by Turri and Park provide evidence that knowledge plays the same role for Korean speakers.²⁵

Turn now to the third type of Asian analytic philosophy: Asian language-driven analytic philosophy. This type, as its label suggests, is analytic philosophy driven by a focus on features or characteristics of some Asian language. Let us provide an example from Korean.

For more than a decade there has been an ongoing debate concerning the expression *oori manura* (우리 마누라), Korean for “our wife.” In his 2009 article “The Grammar of ‘Oori Manura,’” Daihyun Chung raises the following question: Why is a *collective* possessive determiner (“our”) used to refer to *one’s own* spouse?²⁶ Between Chung and other contributors to the debate, a key point of discussion has been an issue in the philosophy of language: is the use of “our wife” attributive or referential, in the sense of “attributive” and “referential” introduced by Keith Donnellan in his seminal paper “Reference and Definite Descriptions” (1966)? Chung argues that the use is referential. Jinho Kang and Sungho Choi argue that it is attributive, although they diverge over other details. On the issue of why a collective possessive determiner is used, Chung suggests that Koreans lean towards collectivism rather than individualism. Kang takes “our wife” to be a way of saying “one of the members of the family” (or, since

families are collectives, one might aptly put it as follows: one of the members of *our* family). Joongol Kim argues that the use of “our” reflects the Confucian underpinnings of Korean society. Since “our” (*oori*, 우리) is a polite form of “my” (*nae*, 내) and the Confucian tradition values courteous words and behavior, “our wife” is standard.²⁷

5. ON THE VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ASIAN ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY

Our motivation for discussing Asian analytic philosophy is that we take a great interest in the present and future of analytic philosophy in Asia—and the related issue of what value and contributions might emerge as a result of analytic philosophical endeavors in (or associated with) the region.

We take all three types of Asian analytic philosophy identified in the previous section to carry value because their pursuit will serve to broaden the horizon and scope of analytic philosophy. We take this basic point also to apply in relation to what one might call “African analytic philosophy,” “South American analytic philosophy,” “Middle Eastern analytic philosophy,” and so on for regions in which analytic philosophy is an imported (rather than native) philosophical tradition. Indeed, it seems to us that there is much to be gained from seeing the emergence and consolidation of *global* analytic philosophy, not just Asian analytic philosophy.

Given its origins in Europe and North America, it is not surprising that analytic philosophy has traditionally been oriented towards Western figures and theories, frameworks, and ideas with Western origins. However, if (as we think) a core part of analytic philosophy is a certain approach or way of doing philosophy, there is no reason why analytic philosophy should remain thus oriented. There is no reason why the focus or scope of analytic philosophy should be determined by geography.²⁸ We thus take all three types of Asian analytic philosophy to be valuable because, in different ways, they expand its horizon and scope. Type 1 philosophy expands the horizon and scope of analytic philosophy by opening up the doors for a massive stock of new material to explore and dive into. Analytic philosophy might provide fresh tools and new perspectives on classical texts. Importantly, cross-fertilization might occur. Interesting, synthesized frameworks or theories might emerge. Type 2 philosophy expands the horizon and scope of analytic philosophy by being comparative in nature and thereby giving cultures and languages across the globe a seat at the table.²⁹ Type 3 philosophy expands the horizon and scope of analytic philosophy by generating philosophical studies and discussion of (parts of) languages that have not yet been subject to extensive study and discussion by analytic philosophers.

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NOTES

1. Lee, “Acceptance of European Philosophy through Newspaper Articles,” Sect. 2.2. The first graduating class of philosophy majors had thirteen students.

2. Lee, "Acceptance of European Philosophy through Newspaper Articles," Sect. 3 and "Acceptance of European Philosophy through Magazines," Sect. 3.
3. Yonhee College was later merged with Severance Medical College to form Yonsei University. Seoul National University, Korea University, and Yonsei University constitute the so-called SKY universities—the three most prestigious comprehensive universities in Korea. The basic information about Chijin Han, Hongi Gal, and Heeseong Park is drawn from Lee, "Acceptance of European Philosophy through Magazines," Sect. 2.
4. From here onwards, unless otherwise stated, we use "Korea" with an implicit restriction to denote South Korea rather the entire Korean peninsula.
5. Reported by Jaegwon Kim in his autobiographical article "Memories and Remembrance."
6. Kim, "Memories and Remembrance," 21–22.
7. RISS is the most comprehensive database for academic journals in Korea. In RISS, there are seventy articles that have "김재권" ("Jaegwon Kim") in the title or list "김재권" among the main keywords.
8. The English name is not a mere transliteration or translation: "철학 연구" translates as "philosophical studies" or "philosophical research."
9. Hwang, "Acceptance and Effects of Western Ethics."
10. Kim, "The Reception and Evaluation of Analytic Philosophy," 83–84.
11. Kim, "The Reception and Evaluation of Analytic Philosophy," 94–95. In the 1960s and 1970s, a total of five articles were published on Russell and one on Frege. By contrast, twelve articles were published on Wittgenstein. Pragmatism received a fair amount of attention outside Seoul—Dewey's philosophy of education, in particular. See Kim, "The Reception and Evaluation of Analytic Philosophy," 83–84, 91.
12. Daihyun Chung's PhD thesis was supervised by Heeseong Park. In the 1990s, Kihyun Kim (Seoul National University) returned to Korea after completing his graduate work at the University of Arizona while Boseok Yoon (Ewha Womans University) and Byeong-Deok Lee (Sungkyunkwan University) both returned from Indiana University.
13. This chronology is detailed in Korean Philosophical Association Editorial Team, "The State of the Association."
14. The information about the Korean Association for Logic, Korean Society for Analytic Philosophy, and Korean Philosophy of Science Association and their associated journals has been retrieved from the websites of the respective organizations.
15. Kim, "The Reception of Analytic Philosophy (1980–1995)."
16. In "The Reception of Analytic Philosophy (1980–1995)," Kim collected the publication data presented in the article by surveying published books, journals, MA and PhD theses, and publication statistics from the Institute of Philosophical Research at Seoul National University (철학사상 연구소). Kim also relied on Hun Lee's 1994 article "Statistical Analysis of Data for Research," a work that offers a comprehensive analysis of publication data.
17. We leave out 2023 because the full data for the year was not available at the time of completion of this article.
18. 2014, 2020, and 2021 are exceptions. 2020 and 2021 were significantly below the aggregate average of 39.48. This is likely explained by the big impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on daily life, including decreased productivity. Decreased productivity has an almost immediate impact on the journals we are considering, as they often have a relatively short turnaround time. 2014 was significantly above the aggregate average. This particular year, an active effort was made by the members of the editorial board of *Philosophical Analysis* to attract English submissions, resulting in the publication of articles by nine philosophers from abroad in *Philosophical Analysis* in 2014. Also, in 2014, *The Korean Journal for the Philosophy of Science* published four articles as part of a book symposium—something that happens quite rarely.
19. The number of articles in analytic philosophy would be even higher if it included articles published in *Cheolhak: Korean Journal of Philosophy* (철학) or *Chul Hak Sa Sang – Journal of Philosophical Ideas* (철학 사상), two of the biggest philosophy journals in Korea. While these journals do not focus exclusively on analytic philosophy, they both regularly publish articles by analytic philosophers.
20. McDaniel, *The Fragmentation of Being*.
21. In "Abhidharma Metaphysics and the Two Truths," McDaniel presents the view that conventional existence and ultimate existence are modes of being in Sect. IV. There, he likewise engages critically with other accounts and shows how one can account for the distinction between conventional and ultimate truth by grounding it in the ontological distinction between conventional and ultimate existence.
22. At least we are not aware of any clear cases. Also, in his *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on Korean philosophy, Halla Kim notes that analytic philosophy, as well as several other Western philosophical traditions, did not take "root in Korea and developed a distinctively Koreanized form of thought as a school" (Kim, "Korean Philosophy," 35).
23. Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"
24. The three articles by Nagel, Juan, and Mar ("Lay Denial of Knowledge for Justified True Beliefs"), Seyedsayamdoost ("On Normativity and Epistemic Intuitions"), and Kim and Yuan ("No Cross-Cultural Differences in the Gettier Car Case Intuition") draw the merely negative conclusion that no adequate basis has been provided for any conclusions regarding cross-cultural variation with respect to the Gettier intuition. The two 2017 articles by Machery and collaborators also present countervailing data *but* take it to support the positive conclusion that there is significant convergence across cultures as far as the Gettier intuition is concerned. See Machery et al., "The Gettier Intuition from South America to Asia"; and Machery et al., "Gettier across Cultures."
25. Another example of cross-linguistic or cross-cultural Korean analytic philosophy is Kim and Yuan, "No Cross-Cultural Differences in the Gettier Car Case Intuition." The article tests and supports the replicability of three effects of knowledge attributions found with English speakers for Korean speakers and Mandarin speakers.
26. The discussion primarily focuses on "oori manura" ("our wife"). However, use of a collective possessive determiner in cases of singular possession is more widespread than spousal possessive determiners ("our wife," "our husband"). For instance, "oori appa" ("our dad") is a standard possessive determiner for children referring to their dad in conversations with others, also in cases where the speaker is an only child.
27. Chung, "The Grammar of 'Oori Manura' ('Our Wife') and 'The Use of 'Oori Manura'"; Kang, "The Meaning of 'Oori Manura' (Our Wife)"; Choi, "What Does 'Oori Manura' Mean?" "'Oori Manura,' 'Oori's Manura,' and Wife-Sharing Communities," and "'Oori Manura' and the Humpty Dumpty Problem"; and Kim, "The Korean Determiner 'Oori' (Our)."
28. We take this to be very much in line with certain recent developments and projects in analytic philosophy—a prime example being *The Geography of Philosophy*, a major project directed by Edouard Machery, Stephen Stich, and H. Clark Barrett that involved a global team of collaborators.
29. Given how Type 2 philosophy is typically pursued—i.e., on the basis of data sets about folk judgments—the relevance of Type 2 philosophy typically relates, in the first instance, to folk theories (e.g., folk epistemology). It is a substantial issue what significance such theories should carry in relation to theories and frameworks developed by professional philosophers.

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APA STUDIES ON

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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Barrett Emerick

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND

Ami Harbin

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

In this issue readers will find two clusters followed by a standalone paper. The first cluster grew out of a dedicated panel at the Canadian Society for Women in Philosophy conference at Oakland University in 2022 and is a symposium honoring the groundbreaking work of Phyllis Rooney. The second cluster is a symposium critiquing *The Philosophy of Envy* by Sara Protasi. The standalone paper is by Alexis Shotwell. We are grateful to have the opportunity to help celebrate all of this important work in *APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy*.

In "Metaphors of Reason and Changing Narratives in the History of Philosophy," Chloe Armstrong draws together efforts to expand the availability of under-accessed and marginalized texts from the history of seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophy with feminist work attending to gendered metaphors of reason in the history of philosophy, including those efforts from Phyllis Rooney, Genevieve Lloyd, and others. Armstrong argues that canon expansion projects offer opportunities to critically engage metaphors of reason from historical perspectives. She surveys three authors, Christine de Pizan, Margaret Cavendish, and Sor Juana Inéz de la Cruz, to demonstrate how their accounts provide resources for contesting dominant conceptions of reason in the history of philosophy.

In "Feminist Epistemology and Social Epistemology: Another Uneasy Alliance," Michael Doan considers Rooney's 2003 chapter, "Feminist Epistemology and Naturalized Epistemology: An Uneasy Alliance," and takes guidance from Rooney's critique of naturalized epistemology in pursuing his own analysis of another uneasy alliance: feminist epistemology and social epistemology. Investigating some of the background assumptions at work in prominent conceptions of social epistemology, Doan considers recent analyses of *epistemic bubbles* to ask how closely such analyses are aligned with ongoing research in feminist epistemology.

In "On the Necessity of Embodiment for Reasoning," Heather Douglas builds on Rooney's and others' efforts to shift from reason to *reasoning*, returning to the work of Rudolph

Carnap and John Dewey in the 1930s. Douglas discusses their understandings of reasoning, in part to show the necessity of embodiment for reasoning, and to highlight how reasoning is not just about solving problems, but also detecting and delineating them. Douglas concludes with a reflection on Artificial General Intelligence, and whether—keeping in mind the lessons from Dewey, Carnap, and Rooney—we should expect any data processing system to be able to detect problems, and thereby to be capable of that aspect of reasoning, on its own.

In "Reasoning Well: A Response to Armstrong, Doan, and Douglas," Phyllis Rooney responds to the contributions from the other authors in the collection, highlighting in particular the throughlines of thematic connection among the papers, including centrally their reflections on uneasy alliances, what should be the starting points for reasoning, and what it means to reason well collaboratively.

In "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Envy (Sometimes)," Sara Protasi begins by giving a precis of her book *The Philosophy of Envy*, summarizing some of her motivation in writing, and the argumentative structure of the book. She notes that one aim of this work is to better understand what envy is so that "we can make more nuanced assessments of its value, and we can develop more efficacious strategies to cope with or inhibit its detrimental features, as well as to harness its motivational and epistemic power." Later, she responds to the contributions from Chaplin, Osler, and Tanesini.

In "How Competitive Can Virtuous Envy Be?" Rosalind Chaplin focuses on and unpacks the competitive nature of envy. Specifically, she argues for an expansion on Protasi's view, and that what Protasi calls "emulative envy" can be adversarial while remaining both nonvicious and nonhostile.

In "Self-Envy (or Envy Actually)," Lucy Osler explores some of the ways in which someone can be envious, not of other people, but of other versions of themselves. For instance, someone might envy their past or future self, or an imagined version of themselves. This fact helps us to recognize another way in which envy and imagination might play a role in someone's life.

In "Emulative Trait Envy Is Not a Virtue," Alessandra Tanesini argues that Protasi's account of emulative envy is significantly different than admiration. As a result, we have good reason for resisting Protasi's claim that emulative envy can be virtuous.

In a final, standalone paper for the issue, “Challenging Straightness,” Alexis Shotwell argues that all those who care about human well-being should be working against straightness, in the sense of dismantling it as one among many social forces that harm people. Shotwell articulates the senses in which those who benefit from straightness ought to betray it, and those who are oppressed by straightness ought to work together to abolish, dismantle, or destroy it. She outlines six approaches to targeting the ways straightness harms and benefits people, and underscores collective practices of embodying these practices inspired in part by the care work of activists in the context of AIDS.

Editor’s note: In Volume 23, no. 1 of this publication, please note the following addition to page 25 of Miranda Young’s article, “Narrative Care: A Political Method of Survivor Self-Making and Communal Critique”:

Young adds that the concern she develops is indebted to Kelly Gawel’s work. Gawel critiques the naturalization of caring affects and dispositions in care ethics by examining Saidiya Hartman’s critique of the role that white empathy played in garnering moral outrage against slavery. See Kelly Gawel, “Radical Care: Seeking New and More Possible Meetings in the Shadows of Structural Violence,” *Krisis* 43, no. 1 (2023).

ABOUT APA STUDIES ON FEMINISM AND PHILOSOPHY

APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy is sponsored by the APA Committee on the Status of Women and Gender. The newsletter is designed to provide an introduction to recent philosophical work that addresses issues of gender. None of the varied philosophical views presented by authors of *APA Studies* articles necessarily reflect the views of any or all of the members of the Committee on the Status of Women and Gender, including the editor(s) of the newsletter, nor does the committee advocate any particular type of feminist philosophy. We advocate only that serious philosophical attention be given to issues of gender and that claims of gender bias in philosophy receive full and fair consideration.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

1. Purpose: The purpose of *APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy* is to publish information about the status of women in philosophy and to make the resources of feminist philosophy more widely available. *APA Studies on Feminism and Philosophy* contains discussions of recent developments in feminist philosophy and related work in other disciplines, suggestions for eliminating gender bias in the traditional philosophy curriculum, and reflections on feminist pedagogy. It also informs the profession about

the work of the APA Committee on the Status of Women and Gender. Articles submitted to the newsletter should be around ten double-spaced pages and must follow the APA guidelines for gender-neutral language. Please submit essays electronically to the editor. All manuscripts should be prepared for anonymous review. References should follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

2. Where to Send Things: Please send all articles, comments, suggestions, books, and other communications to the editors: Ami Harbin, Oakland University, at aharbin@oakland.edu, and Barrett Emerick, St. Mary’s College, at bmemerick@smcm.edu.

3. Submission Deadlines: Submissions for spring issues are due by the preceding November 1; submissions for fall issues are due by the preceding February 1.

ARTICLES

Metaphors of Reason and Changing Narratives in the History of Philosophy

Chloe Armstrong
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In this discussion I draw together two important movements in the study of history of philosophy. First, I focus on efforts to expand the available texts, narratives, and topics in the history of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy. The aims and outcomes of such projects vary—from circulating works by marginalized authors to detailing intersecting narratives.¹ I examine canon expansion through a different lens, specifically characterizations of reason and argumentation found in non-canonical texts. The second strand of research comes from feminist work that attends to gendered *metaphors* of reason in the history of philosophy. Scholars such as Atherton (1993), Bordo (1987), Lloyd (2002), Rooney (1991), and Schiebinger (1991) trace intellectual developments and influences of such metaphors. Rooney and Lloyd argue that gendered metaphors and imagery of reason maintain conceptual dichotomies between reason and unreason, masculine and feminine, and dynamics of embattlement and domination. These dichotomies have a lasting impact on available understandings of reason and reasoners and, in some cases, shape participation in philosophy insofar as it is a discipline centered around reason.² Lloyd emphasizes that “The maleness of the Man of Reason is no superficial linguistic bias. It lies deep in our philosophical tradition.”³ However, in the context of canon reformation, “our philosophical tradition” is up for discussion and revision, reinvigorating questions about the availability of gendered metaphors of reason in history of philosophy extending to today.

I argue that canon expansion projects offer opportunities to critically engage metaphors of reason and reasoning from historical perspectives, as well as contemporary narratives about history. However, accounts of metaphorical meaning from philosophy and cognitive science suggest that

metaphors can convey meaning and facilitate understanding even when they draw on contingent associations and false assumptions. For example, metaphors of war are meaningfully used in cancer treatment contexts in the absence of war or battle experiences—and in some instances even in virtue of misconceptions about battle.⁴ I draw the initial conclusion that ongoing attention should be paid to the available associations used to interpret metaphors in their original contexts, and in the context of contemporary studies of the history of philosophy.⁵

I focus on interactionist accounts of metaphor to explain why metaphors present distinctive interpretive challenges for texts in the history of philosophy.⁶ These same features of metaphor can be formed by or contribute to gender binaries and dynamics, a point argued for in Phyllis Rooney’s “Gendered Reason: Sex Metaphor and Conceptions of Reason” (1991). I turn to Rooney’s treatment of gendered metaphors of reason before examining how the works of non-canonical authors offer resources for acknowledging and critically engaging gendered metaphors of reason in historical narratives. I survey three authors: Christine de Pizan (1364–1430, an Italian-born philosopher that spent most of her life in France), Margaret Cavendish (1623–1673, an English philosopher and royalist living abroad during the English Civil War), and Sor Juana Inéz de la Cruz (1648–1695, a Catholic philosopher in Mexico City). From these authors, I consider depictions of reason as a forge refining gold, a spade to prepare the foundation of a city, a mirror that reflects reality, a philosophical interlocutor, an architect to plan and initiate tasks, and a sword. These metaphors contrast characterizations of reason as a dominant and embattled authority warring against other parts of the mind. Thus, I argue that metaphors of reason are elements of canon expansion projects worthy of attention, both in service of ongoing efforts to render fuller accounts of the history of philosophy, and to support strategies to reflect on gendered metaphors of reason in historical narratives. Before turning to those considerations, I discuss reason, and the works of Pizan, Cavendish, and Cruz, in the context of canon expansion.

1. REASON, DISAPPEARING INK, AND CANON REVISION

In “Cutting Through the Veil of Ignorance: Rewriting the History of Philosophy,” Hagengruber notes that our knowledge of the history of philosophy is “always partial. . . . Each generation only partially knows its own tradition because each see the history of philosophy as framed by contemporary categories, philosophical as well as cultural. The history of philosophy as a whole is thus a record of inclusions and exclusions, of forgetting and rediscovering.”⁷ Histories are partial when they are incomplete. However, they are also partial when they are constructed out of the affinities of those that do the constructing.⁸ Hagengruber describes history of philosophy as a record of inclusions and exclusions, which applies to who’s in and who’s out in the narratives, as well as who is in or out of philosophical institutions. Examining those mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion offers up complex histories of participation. For example, in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, although many universities did

not admit women, universities were not the sole or central organizations supporting philosophy. Nor does philosophy have to be done in a university context to be taken to be canonical today—Descartes was not a professor by trade, nor was Leibniz. In Europe, philosophizing was happening in monasteries and convents, private salons, through pamphlets, public sermons, intellectual societies and academies, philosophical networks of correspondence via letters, networks of care, and royal courts.⁹ These different contexts offered opportunities for participation beyond universities, though that participation is not always reflected in traditional philosophical canons (and patterns of participation vary). O’Neill describes the phenomenon of “disappearing ink” to characterize many works of philosophers available at the time but excluded from philosophical study today (“extant but lost”).¹⁰ Pizan, Cavendish, and Cruz are all examples of prolific thinkers whose work was not included, until more recently, in Anglo-history-narratives.¹¹ I have selected these figures for the purpose of this discussion because they have been marginalized from traditional philosophy canons in English despite participating in philosophical discussions of their time, their texts appear in many contemporary canon expansion projects, and each offers philosophical theories of reason alongside metaphors of reason.

More generally, reason is likely to remain a central theme across proliferating narratives in early modern canons. Shapiro characterizes a canon as “a *causal account* of the intellectual historical development of philosophy around answers to a set of *philosophical questions* that are centrally constitutive of the discipline presented in a set of important distinctively *philosophical works*.”¹² Canon shifts are thus changes to the questions, causal story, and works included in a canon. Shapiro considers two examples of potential shifts, first, understanding early modern philosophy within the history of science, and second, framing the canon using themes of “consciousness, ownership of thought, rationality, education, and habit.”¹³ Both contexts would likely center discussions of reason and rationality, which supports ongoing attention to metaphors of reason in historical narratives. I focus on metaphors evoked to describe and characterize reason, and not directly on theories of reason, which have received more attention in the secondary literature. Insights from philosophical theories of metaphor recommend examining metaphors of reason alongside theoretical claims about reason and for their own sake. To appreciate why, I turn to details of cognitive processing of metaphors next.

2. METAPHOR

Metaphor is a linguistic and cognitive phenomenon in which one subject is portrayed and understood through another, signaled by non-literal language, for example:

- a. The chair plowed through the meeting agenda.¹⁴

In this example a primary subject (the chair’s behavior at a meeting) is understood through another subject (plowing)—the secondary subject. Characteristics associated with the secondary subject are applied to the primary subject—e.g., features of plowing such as aggressively moving through a medium (e.g., soil) with speed and force can be applied

to the behavior of the chair working through the agenda—perhaps with speed and persistent attention to tasks. The aspects of metaphors important for this discussion are that they are interactive, need not draw on accurate information or descriptions to be effective, and can augment understanding of both the primary and secondary subjects. I will briefly say more about each of these features.

According to Black’s interaction account of metaphor, the primary and secondary subjects in metaphors are active together (interact) at multiple levels, influencing how metaphors operate in cognition:

Suppose I look at the night sky through a piece of heavily smoked glass on which certain lines have been left clear. Then I shall see only the stars that can be made to lie on the lines previously prepared upon the screen, and the stars I do see will be seen as organized by the screen’s structure. We can think of a metaphor as such a screen and the system of “associated commonplaces” of the focal word as the network of lines upon the screen. We can say that the primary subject is “seen through” the metaphorical expression.¹⁵

The clear lines on a lens (in Black’s metaphor about metaphor) are the properties or relations raised to salience by the secondary subject that are then used to understand features or relations of the primary (the stars). Which features or relations of the secondary subject become salient is responsive to which primary subject it is paired with.¹⁶ Using Black’s metaphor, the slits in the lens will change depending on what is being viewed (the stars in the sky, versus the top of a mountain). Moreover, metaphors are conceptually productive and generative: “[t]he metaphor selects, emphasizes, suppresses, and organizes features of the primary subject by implying statements about it that normally apply to the secondary subject.”¹⁷ Thus a. *the chair plowed through the meeting agenda* raises to salience aggressively moving through a medium, which can yield further observations about the chair’s behavior in relation to the agenda—for example, that the chair is addressing daunting tasks which require further working and manipulation to be productive (as tough soil might).

Black refers to the salient features of a secondary subject as a “system of associated commonplaces.”¹⁸ Surprisingly, the features or relations made salient by the secondary subject need not be true of that subject, just *available* conceptually to the person cognizing the metaphor. Thus, metaphors of war in discussions of arguments (winning an argument, defending or attacking a position, entrenched views, shooting down points, going after fatal flaws)¹⁹ or in discussions of cancer (battling cancer, winning the fight against cancer) are comprehensible without familiarity with, or accurate beliefs about, war. Wackers and Plug observe that battle metaphors for cancer encourage the idea that losing a battle is the result of a failure of effort²⁰ even though many wars are lost despite ample effort. Salient features for metaphorical meaning do not have to be true, but available to the person interpreting the metaphor.

Metaphors can have distorting cognitive effects when the associations are false, but also when aspects true of the subjects are highlighted at the expense of other relevant features. For example, consider the claim, b. *My neighborhood is a food desert*. “Food deserts” are areas with limited access to nutritional food, especially fresh produce. This phrase offers a metaphor, characterizing neighborhood food access through features of a desert. This term has been criticized for characterizing food access in neighborhoods (the primary subject) as morally neutral geological phenomena (desert), which suppresses economic and political factors in food access.²¹ This metaphor is also criticized for the depiction of the secondary subject—deserts—as places with limited resources despite creatures and cultures that find ample nourishment in deserts.²² This latter criticism exemplifies how metaphors shape how we think about secondary subjects too: specific aspect of deserts (limited water sources) are emphasized and abstracted to something more general (limited access to resources). In Black’s metaphor, the clear slit in the lens not only determines how we view the stars, but how we view the lens itself over repeated viewings—in some cases distorting our understanding of it.

Metaphors present unique challenges for studying historical texts because systems of associated commonplaces will be available to some readers and audiences but not others—especially when hundreds (or more) of years separate them. Moreover, we should distinguish how a metaphor functions in its original context(s), and how it might function in contemporary ones as associated commonplaces shift or are missing. Thus, canon-reformation projects are relevant both for interpreting and understanding metaphors in their original time and places as more and different texts are included, and thinking about how those metaphors shape contemporary thinkers as they read and engage the canon. While philosophers often offer definitions, examples, explanations, and arguments for their accounts of reason, they do not unpack the metaphors deployed in describing reason and reasoning as often.

There is a further problem, however, because associated commonplaces can draw on persistent and oppressive dynamics. Rooney argues that in the history of Western philosophy, reason is regularly portrayed via images and metaphors that exclude or derogate an element cast as female and feminine while exalting male and masculine elements.²³ Examples include Aristotle’s description of the rational and irrational parts of the soul as husband and wife, Augustine’s association of man with reason and women with reasonable appetite, Kant’s description of lapses in reason in terms of the feminine charms of the senses, and Locke’s warning of the misleading influence of eloquence over judgment cast as the beauty of “the fair sex.”²⁴ The relevant patterns regarding gendered metaphors of reason include a set of binary nodes in opposition, male and female, with a relationship between those two nodes, mediated by notions of marriage, sexual reproduction, romantic desire, biological sex, or binary gender.²⁵ The dynamic between these nodes is then further associated with reason: reason is aligned with a male node, and unreason with a female node. The “proper” relation between the male and female nodes occurs when the male node is the locus of activity,

control, and authority. Lapses in reason are associated with activity of the female node—wily charms, contrary impulses, or shadowy interference. The activity of reason when properly functioning includes the denigration, extrusion, domination, or control of the female node, with related images of battle or struggle.²⁶

3. IMPACTS OF GENDERED METAPHORS OF REASON

Rooney draws our attention to several problematic aspects of metaphors of reason that use oppositional dynamics between binaries to articulate the proper functioning of reason. First, it encourages a conception of reason as a unified faculty in opposition to other faculties, threatened by the operations of unreason, with proper functioning through domination. The distortion of these concepts construes reason as a unified, dominant, oppositional, sovereign, faculty of thought and action. There is an accuracy concern about this view (though that is not Rooney's concern specifically) as well as an epistemic concern that metaphors are not a reliable means to encode associations.²⁷ These presuppositions are cognitively limiting precisely because metaphors draw on associated commonplaces, and selectively reorganize our understanding of primary and secondary subjects. Without assurances that these mechanisms offer reliable processes for cognition, or are beneficial or just, a unified dominating authority should not be built into a conception of reason in virtue of the available metaphors.²⁸ If metaphors shape how we deploy concepts, and what inferences we are likely to make in connection to those concepts, metaphors have an impact on our cognition.²⁹ Furthermore, Rooney notes that some metaphors become root metaphors—pervasive and difficult to recognize, but fecund in generating many instances of metaphors of their type.³⁰ She argues that gendered metaphors of reason are root metaphors, in philosophy, where reason and reasoning is a central organizing activity. This renders gendered metaphors and the conceptions of reason especially pressing.³¹

However, tracing the impact of a metaphor is challenging and complex, especially historical contexts. For example, Lennon connects Malebranche and Arnaud's derogatory use of the term *oracle* (against one another) to changing conceptions of reason, "the charge of being an oracle . . . is the charge of failing to fulfil the demands of the seventeenth century's new conception of reason."³² The new Cartesian conception of reason is characterized by applying one's intellect to discover self-evident truths. Framing Lennon's observations in terms of our discussion of metaphor, the associated commonplaces of *oracle* include ambiguity, conveying but not generating knowledge, and femininity. *Oracle* knowledge is cast as feminine because historically women were oracles (e.g., Delphic oracles) and oracular knowledge was associated with witchcraft.³³ However, Lennon notes that it is difficult to assess the impact of these associations on philosophers that deployed these terms.³⁴ Instead, Lennon identifies access to scientific societies and experimental equipment and training, and literacy as stronger factors shaping participation in philosophical discussion at the time. The operation of this metaphor is clear, but the impact less so.³⁵

Rooney makes a case for the contemporary impact of gendered metaphors on conceptions of reason and gender. In addition to portraying reason as unified, dominating, embattled authority under threat from other faculties, metaphorical implementation of gender binaries renders misogynistic inferences more available, blurring the "literal and metaphorical claims about women and rationality" where "misogynistic views about women's (literal) lesser rationality are adopted more easily or readily."³⁶ This influences how philosophers conceive of their minds when doing philosophy:

We need to be clear about how *gender* is working in these recurring gender/battle images. There are two gender battles at issue. The more immediate textual one is not a battle between men (or masculinity) and women (or femininity), but the battle *within men* between their "masculine" rational aspects or parts and their "feminine" irrational aspects or parts. It is the defensive struggle within men against what they perceive or construct as inferior "feminine" tendencies within themselves. To the extent that women might also aspire to the "man of reason" ideal, they too, presumably, would battle their "feminine" aspects, though, even in sexism-infused cultural contexts, these metaphors might not work in quite the same way for them.³⁷

What can be done in response to root gender metaphors of reason? It is tempting to point to personifications of virtue, reason, the liberal arts, and philosophy as women (either in word or image) as instances that counter the association of women and unreason.³⁸ However, Rooney notes that such images not only fail to address gendered metaphors of reason, but they also bolster them when, for example, mother nature is the "passive objects of male vision" and "we see where the voice of power and reason is located."³⁹ Such personifications do not portray women as authoritative reasoners. Moreover, theoretical accounts of reason do not automatically mitigate the associated commonplaces of metaphors of reason, for example,

Hume's position cannot be seen to "solve" many of the central concerns raised in this paper. There is still a strict division between reason and the passions, and they still function in a type of opposition or battle. And he does not explicitly dissociate reason from maleness and the passions from femaleness. To suggest that Hume solves the gender issue here is akin to suggesting that feminism is simply about the battle over who gets to "wear the trousers" in the household!"⁴⁰

However, there are other strategies for critically engaging metaphors, and I will next discuss how canon expansion projects can provide resources to support those strategies.

4. LESSONS FOR AND FROM HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

I began this discussion by considering the contours of inclusion and exclusion in participation in seventeenth- and

eighteenth-century philosophy and philosophy canons. Rooney notes that the exclusion of women, and othering-patterns of inclusion, are written into tradition:

There is a special way in which the exclusion of women is written into our traditional texts in philosophy, where that tradition is projected as essentially a conversation among men. We can ask why a particular philosopher chose the sex metaphor that he did, a question that looms large with the repeated use of such a metaphor. We recall Black's claim that a metaphor works if there is a "system of associated commonplaces" (about a secondary domain) share among writer and readers, where "the important thing for the metaphor's effectiveness is not that the commonplaces shall be true, but that they shall be readily and freely evoked." The metaphors under discussion present women or the "feminine" as the other of reason, and the other of philosophical discourse.⁴¹

At least one of the factors is the available texts and that narratives built from them. She notes that "the continuing feminist struggle to create a world that encourages women to their full expression in words and action must be supported by nothing short of the remythologizing of voice and agency and the remythologizing of reason, emotion, intuition, and nature."⁴² I submit that canon reformation and the expansion of available texts offer resources remythologize voice, agency, reason, emotion, intuition, and nature—both in terms of the texts and narratives.

One step Rooney recommends towards "uprooting" some of these metaphors requires recognizing and analyzing them, their influence, and offering alternatives.⁴³ Accordingly, I have excerpted texts from three philosophers outside the Anglo-American canon that offer literal and figurative alternative views to reason as a warring dominating authority. First, Pizan introduces the metaphor of a forge refining precious gold to grapple with the hostile and gendered aspects of philosophical discourse. She also offers several different metaphors for reason, including a personification of reason as a woman that is neither passive nor objectified. She presents a constructive picture of rational inquiry, identifying reason as an arbiter of truth but not a dominant authority, as she builds a city for and of ladies. The imagery of building and architecture reappears in Cavendish's account of the rational aspects of matter. I place this metaphor in conversation both with other thinkers of her time (Descartes and More), and contemporary metaphors of philosophical discourse and argumentation as engineering (MacLachlan). Lastly, I include some of Cruz's discussion of discursive reason as a sword, alongside her emphasis on empirical applications of reasoning in the kitchen (and elsewhere). Cruz offers a view of reason as a source of intervention and knowledge without dominating authority, as well as an endorsement in the use of metaphor to aid understanding.

4.1 CHRISTINE DE PIZAN⁴⁴

Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies* begins with despair. In the narrative, Christine is reading the work of philosophers

(especially Aristotle) and grappling with how claims about women's limited capacity for rationality and virtue undermines her experience of herself and her relation to philosophers. She emphasizes how incongruent their claims are, despite their authority, with her own experiences, and wonders why God made her a woman, if what these authors say about women is true. Amidst this despair, a woman—Lady Reason—appears to Christine holding a mirror which reflects the nature and measure of anything in its surface. She offers a metaphor for philosophical discourse that highlights beneficial outcomes of hostile disagreement:

Have you forgotten that it is in the furnace⁴⁵ that gold is refined, increasing in value the more it is beaten and fashioned into different shapes? Don't you know that it's the very finest things which are the subject of the most intense discussion? Now, if you turn your mind to the very highest realm of all, the realm of abstract ideas, think for a moment whether or not those philosophers whose views against women you've been citing have ever been proven wrong. In fact, they are all constantly correcting each other's opinions, as you yourself should know from reading Aristotle's *Metaphysics* where he discusses and refutes both their views and those of Plato and other philosophers."⁴⁶

Lady Reason emphasizes that philosophers are often proven wrong, and disagreement is a persistent means of valuing the subjects of debate and debaters. Lady Reason, Lady Rectitude, and Lady Justice appear to Christine and explain that they will help her to build a place for women—a city of ladies. The city is inhabited by mythologized and historical women and their many intellectual contributions and achievements. Throughout the building of the city, Christine discusses and contests various philosophical claims about women. Lady Reason helps Christine build the foundation and moat, and rectitude and justice complete the houses and fill the city with women.

In this vignette, reason, rationality, and argumentation receive various treatments. Reason as a virtue is personified as a woman, not as the object of male agency and authority, but instead in dialogue with Christine and other women, and a source of wisdom. Reason also possesses a mirror that reflects the natures of things, confirming notions of reason as an arbiter of truth.⁴⁷ Later, intellect is described as a tool or a spade for laying a foundation for a building. It thus offers a diverse range of images and functions to consider in connection with reasoning.

Lady Reason introduces a metaphor for philosophical discourse to reframe the negative aspects and benefits of discourse, debate, and hostility. The forge metaphor appears in an earlier work, *The Romance of the Rose* (written by multiple authors 1230–1310), in which nature—personified as a woman—forges living creatures to counteract death.⁴⁸ In *City of Ladies*, Lady Reason introduces the forge as a place where glory is secured, and refined, by engaging in and being the subject of debate. Imagery of gold being *beaten* and *fashioned* replaces notions of a battle with the productive context of a forge. This metaphor also includes male associations via heat-references—in accordance with

Galenic theory of physiology in which men are hot and women are cold.⁴⁹ Thus this metaphor not only reframes hostile philosophical discourse as something productive that bestows value, but also casts it as a more specific example of discourse—gendered discourse. Later in the discussion, Christine unpacks this metaphor:

I began to excavate and dig out the earth with the spade of my intelligence, just as she had directed me to do. The first fruit of my labors was this: 'My lady, I'm remembering that image of gold being refined in the furnace that you used before to symbolize the way many male writers have launched a full-scale attack on the ways of women. I take this image to mean that the more women are criticized, the more it redounds to their glory.⁵⁰

This metaphor raises to salience gender-related concepts ("many male writers")—as well as notions of embattlement ("full-scale attack")—for the purpose of helping Christine to cast this discourse as male and while also offering alternative methods of inquiry and exploration through the building of a city and populating it. The imagery of building and architecture also appears in the work of Margaret Cavendish.

4.2 MARGARET CAVENDISH

In 1666, Cavendish published a philosophical treatise, *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy*, alongside a work of utopian fiction, *Description of a New World Called the Blazing World*. In *Observations*, Cavendish describes nature as both material and having rational capacities.⁵¹ Rational aspects of matter are thoroughly mixed with other animate and inanimate aspects of matter, so that every piece of matter has rational elements alongside sensory and inanimate ones. To explain the relation that they have to one another and the role they play in explaining the behavior of matter, she introduces imagery of architects, laborers, and materials:

as in the exstruction of a house there is first required an architect or surveyor, who orders and designs the building, and puts the laborer's to work; next the laborer's or workmen themselves; and lastly the materials of which the house is built: so the rational part in the framing of natural effects, is, as it were, the surveyor or architect; the sensitive, the laboring or working part; and the inanimate, the materials: and all these degrees are necessarily required in every composed action of nature.⁵²

The rational aspects of matter, as architects instigate and plan behaviors of matter ("orders and designs the building") and initiate the actions of the sensitive parts of matter ("puts it to work"). According to Cavendish, all aspects of nature have this rational component. As a proponent of monarchy, she often advocates for unified authority and central political power—so it is noteworthy here that though the rational aspects of matter are *in charge*, she does not offer a metaphor of sovereignty.

Cavendish is not the only philosopher in this period to offer architectural metaphors of rationality—Descartes does so

in "Discourse on Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason and Seeking for Truth in the Sciences" to emphasize the importance of engineering houses and cities (knowledge) as they grow. This can be integrated with other philosophers of the time that draw on the metaphor of rationality as an architect or surveyor—planning and intervening. Henry More also depicts reason as an architect "in every particular world, such as man is especially, his own soul is the peculiar and most perfective architect thereof, as the soul of the world is of it."⁵³ Together these texts form potential contrasts—different applications of the image of the architect to rational degrees of all matter, knowledge, and the human soul. Moreover, this metaphor can be connected to contemporary discussions of philosophical discourse. MacLachlan writes,

Good philosophical critique pushes an argument to the point it collapses, but battle is not the only or the most apt image for what we are doing: rigorous philosophers are more like engineers, stress-testing one another's systems for the friendly, collaborative purpose of ensuring their stability for common usage. In this metaphor, drawing on rudeness rather than rationality for strategic points is akin to dropping dynamite in order to claim a building's not up to code.⁵⁴

In discussing practices of rudeness and criticism in philosophy, MacLachlan devises an engineering metaphor for philosophical activity to supplant battle imagery. She points to the benefit of reflecting on that imagery: "it invites us to do conceptual work, creating new metaphors and paradigms for our most basic activities, such as the engineering stress-testing metaphor for argument critique (rather than combative warfare)."⁵⁵ Connecting MacLachlan's work to Pizan's and Cavendish's not only offers alternative narratives regarding metaphors of reason and modes of philosophical arguments to gendered metaphors of reason and embattlement, but it also invites reflection on our conceptions of rationality and reason.

4.3 SOR JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ

Cruz offers shifting metaphors of reason and understanding in her works, with a recurring image of a sword. In her poem "Let us Pretend I am Happy" she explains that reason is a sword that protects its wielder from its edge: "Discursive reason is a sword/quite effective at both ends:/with the point of the blade it kills/the pommel on the hilt protects."⁵⁶ In other places she highlights defensive and aggressive applications of reason via sword imagery, that warns of harms to the wielder: "To such men, I repeat, study does harm, because it is like putting a sword in the hands of a madman: though the sword be the noblest of instruments for defense, in his hands it becomes his own death and that of many others. . ."⁵⁷ In fact, arguments were used to publicly criticize and admonish Cruz by Church authorities. Cruz and Pizan offer metaphors to characterize the harms and benefits of reason and discourse. Cruz advocates for reasoning and philosophizing about everyday and familiar objects, including chemistry in the kitchen:

Well, and what then shall I tell you, my Lady, of the secrets of nature that I have learned while cooking?

I observe that an egg becomes solid and cooks in butter or oil, and on the contrary that it dissolves in sugar syrup. . . . But in truth, my Lady, what can we women know, save philosophies of the kitchen? It was well put by Lupercio Leonardo that one can philosophize quite well while preparing supper. I often say, when I make these little observations, "Had Aristotle cooked, he would have written a great deal more."⁵⁸

Mirroring her emphasis on the application of reason across contexts and subjects, she emphasizes the benefits of metaphor in aiding understanding, in appealing to one subject to understand another:

I can say with certainty that what I do not understand in one author on a certain subject, I usually understand in another author who treats what appears to be a very distant subject. And in turn these very authors, once understood, can unlock the metaphorical examples employed in still other arts: as when the logicians say, to compare whether terms are equal, that the middle term is to the major and minor terms as a measuring rod is to two distant bodies; or that the argument of the logician moves like a straight line by the shortest path, while that of the rhetorician moves like a curved line by the longest path, but both end at last at the same point; or when it is said that the Expositors are like an open hand, while the Scholastics are like a closed fist.⁵⁹

Cruz's emphasis on the insightful aspects of metaphor contrasts with some of her contemporaries, including Cavendish, who offer critical comments on metaphorical and figurative language in natural philosophy. For example, Cavendish criticizes both Van Helmont's use of metaphor, and the specifics of his metaphor for chemical change "[Van Helmont] speaks of the *Vertues and Properties that stick fast in the bosom of Nature*, which I conceive to be a Metaphorical expression; although I think it best to avoid Metaphorical, simlizing, and improper expressions in Natural Philosophy, as much as one can. . . . But to speak properly, there is not any thing that sticks fast in the bosom of Nature, for Nature is in a perpetual motion."⁶⁰ Cavendish criticizes metaphors generally for being inexact, however, criticizes the aptness of this particular metaphor, as nothing would "stick fast in the bosom of Nature" according to her account of nature and natural change.⁶¹ Cruz emphasizes the generative aspect of metaphor in aiding understanding, while Cavendish cautions against using metaphor to express clear ideas. Cruz's writings offer the opportunity to explore different facets of her metaphors for discursive reason (a sword that protects but in the wrong hands can be destructive for the wielder), her description of reason in the kitchen, and lauding metaphors as means of understanding.

5. CONCLUSION

Cruz's metaphor of reason as a sword focuses attention on the benefits and harms that reason can bestow on the wielder, and though a sword is a battle weapon, warring parts of the mind are not part of this imagery. Cruz, like

Pizan, considers the benefits and harms of reasoning and discursive debate, but also the generative capacity of metaphors in aiding understanding. Pizan offers a gendered metaphor for philosophical debate, via forge imagery, as part of a commentary on the status of women. Pizan's imagery of reason personified as an authoritative source of wisdom, cast as mirror, and as a spade, offers alternatives to battle metaphors, and contributes to an originating conception of reasoning. Images of fabricating, building, and architects reoccur in Cavendish's account of the rational aspects of matter too, offering additional points of connection to planning and engineering imagery from Descartes, More, and MacLachlan. Extensions of and changes to gendered metaphors and embattlement imagery, alternatives to gendered metaphors, the aptness of specific metaphors, and the role of metaphors in philosophizing appear in the texts I have included above. A fuller analysis of the important connections and differences among these examples contextualized in the corpus of works by these authors is something I have not addressed here.

I have emphasized how, according to interactionist accounts of metaphor, metaphors shift in response to primary-secondary subject pairing, shape how both the primary and secondary subjects are understood, and can encode false, contingent, or partial features of secondary subjects in service of yielding insights about the primary subject. Through these features, metaphors have the capacity to onboard assumptions about reasoning—and the associated imagery (including gender)—that are unintended, limited, and unacknowledged. Rooney (1991) focuses on establishing patterns of gendered metaphors of reason and their impact on inquiry. Through texts from canon reformation and new narrative projects, I have examined metaphors of reason as distinct from their theoretical counterparts in discussions of reason and rationality, offered a range of metaphors of reason to highlight differences in metaphorical characterizations of reason, and traced metaphors and images—such as forges, architects, and engineers—thematically across texts and time periods. Canon-reformation projects contribute to efforts to expose and engage metaphors of reason that draw on embattled binaries, and I sketch some directions from Pizan, Cavendish, and Cruz. The central lesson I draw from Rooney's work is that metaphors should remain an ongoing part of how we conceive of, and reconceive, historical philosophy narratives as they shape and are a part of the legacies of reason and reasoners.

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NOTES

1. For example, Project Vox offers online resources "to highlight philosophical works from marginalized individuals traditionally excluded from the philosophical cannon." In 2019 the American Philosophical Association Blog spotlighted Ruth Boeker's syllabus "The Human Mind in Early Modern Philosophy" featuring woman

- philosophers and letter correspondences, and pedagogical and philosophical collaboration. Lisa Shapiro and Marcy Lascano's (2021) anthology of early modern philosophy makes accessible a wide range of non-canonical European philosophers, including Aton Amo, Margaret Cavendish, Anne Conway, Anna Maria van Schurman, Francis Hutcheson, and Émilie du Châtelet. These efforts diversify the range of thinkers and texts beyond those of Descartes, Locke, Hume, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Kant. The detailed aims and outcomes of each of the projects differ. Project Vox focuses on works of marginalized authors, while Shapiro and Lascano are "not aiming to replace one canon with another" but rather "leverage those familiar works and figures to open up multiple, intersecting histories of philosophy that highlight sets of philosophical questions raised in the past that are still very much with us today" (Introduction, x). Others include Broad, *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century*; Waithe's four-volume series, *A History of Women Philosophers*; and Atherton, *Women Philosophers of the Early Modern Period*. Such efforts were also made in early modern Europe, e.g., Gilles de Menage's 1690 *The History of Women Philosophers*.
2. Rooney frames the effects as barriers inhibiting the voice and agency of women ("Gendered Reason," 77).
 3. Lloyd, *Feminism and History of Philosophy*, ix.
 4. For empirical studies on the impact of battle metaphors and cancer in treatment contexts, see Annas, "Reframing the Debate on Health Care Reform by Replacing Our Metaphors"; Hauser and Schwarz, "The War on Prevention"; Semino et al., "An Integrated Approach to Metaphor and Framing in Cognition, Discourse, and Practice"; Wackers and Plug, "Countering Undesirable Implications of Violence Metaphors for Cancer through Metaphor Extension."
 5. I offer two examples that tease out the connotations of historical metaphors, one drawn from Lennon's study of the term "oracle" ("Lady Oracle") and Christine de Pizan's imagery of reason as a forge.
 6. In Section 2, I draw on theories of metaphor from Black, *Models and Metaphors*; Bowdle and Gentner, "The Career of Metaphor"; Camp, "Metaphor in the Mind" and "Perspectives and Frames in Pursuit of Ultimate Understanding"; Mio, "Metaphor, Politics, and Persuasion"; and Wolff and Gentner, "Structure Mapping in Metaphor Comprehension."
 7. Hagengruber, "Cutting Through the Veil of Ignorance," 34.
 8. Kuklick ("Seven Thinkers and How They Grew") discusses the Anglo-American canon, noting that early modern philosophy canons vary regionally. Waithe ("Sex, Lies, and Bigotry: The Canon of Philosophy") examines how biases shaped historical canons.
 9. Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex?*
 10. O'Neill, "Disappearing Ink."
 11. Green and Broad ("Fictions of a Feminine Philosophical Persona") contrast Pizan, who received patronage from royal courts, with Cavendish whose work received critical and sometimes dismissive reception.
 12. Shapiro, "Revisiting the Early Modern Philosophical Canon," 367, my emphasis added.
 13. Shapiro, "Revisiting the Early Modern Philosophical Canon," 367.
 14. Adapted from Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 26.
 15. Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 41.
 16. Contrast *snowflake* in "A child is a snowflake" and "Youth is a snowflake." Paired with *child*, the salient feature of a snowflake is its individuality—conveying that every child is unique, while in the latter example it is the ephemerality of snowflakes projected onto youth. *Snowflake* does not offer one lens through which to view different subjects metaphorically—it yields different *lenses* depending on the pairing. Further discussion in Bowdle and Gentner, "The Career of Metaphor," 197.
 17. Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 44.
 18. Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 44.
 19. Rooney ("Philosophy, Adversarial Argumentation, and Embattled Reason") and Lakoff and Johnson (*Metaphors We Live By*) offer further treatment of these examples.
 20. Wackers and Plug, "Countering Undesirable Implications of Violence Metaphors for Cancer through Metaphor Extension," 55.
 21. Brones ("Karen Washington: It's Not a Food Desert, It's Food Apartheid") interviews Karen Washington who recommends an alternative metaphor, food apartheid, to highlight political, racial, and socioeconomic factors that shape food access, and the importance of just interventions.
 22. In other words, deserts are not necessarily food deserts. Keene, Wilbur, Segrest, "Food Sovereignty."
 23. Rooney, "Gendered Reason," 78–90.
 24. These examples are not meant to establish these patterns but illustrate them. Rooney also discusses examples from Pythagoras, Plato, Bacon, Descartes, Hume, Rousseau, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Pierce.
 25. Rooney terms gender-coded metaphors of reason *sex metaphors* that "draw upon some aspect of a male-female dynamic, such as a voyeuristic act, a sexual act, or a relationship, or a marriage situation" ("Gendered Reason," 78). According to Rooney, sex metaphors include binaries and dynamics through which several concepts (sex, gender, gender-presentations, sexual orientation, romantic orientation) are associated with one of the two nodes. This is a feature of the metaphors, and metaphorical constructions, and not necessarily the concepts themselves or features of the world.
 26. Though this discussion focuses on gender, the most salient dynamic between the metaphor nodes is one of domination, and that can and should be extended to examine other metaphors of domination dynamics including imperialism, racism, oppression of animals, and ableism. Rooney touches on the expansive aspect of this project as well ("Gendered Reason," 89; "Philosophy, Adversarial Argumentation, and Embattled Reason," 210–11).
 27. Rooney comments on this *distortion*: "when I speak about 'less distorted' conception of reason or reasoning I mean conceptions that are more empowering of all sentient creatures, that are unifying rather than divisionary, and that get us into greater connection and understanding with all aspects of our human through an experience" ("Gendered Reason," 101, fn. 26).
 28. Rooney ("Gendered Reason") examines how such binaries shape discussions of *akrasia*.
 29. Fraser ("The Ethics of Metaphor") argues that metaphors influence our inferential dispositions, and as a result can enact and sustain conditions of hermeneutical injustice, silencing some agents. I think there is a good case to be made that Rooney's discussion of metaphors of reason point to a hermeneutical injustice in philosophical discourse in some instances. I have not taken this point up more explicitly here because such a determination will depend on the interests of the excluded participants and the mechanisms of hermeneutical marginalization at play.
 30. Rooney, "Gendered Reason," 81.
 31. Rooney draws on the dynamics of domination in later work ("Philosophy, Language, and Wizardry"; "Philosophy, Adversarial Argumentation, and Embattled Reason") to examine the impact of that conception on participation in philosophy.
 32. Lennon, "Lady Oracle," 39.
 33. Lennon, "Lady Oracle," 45.
 34. Lennon, "Lady Oracle," 52.
 35. Green and Broad ("Fictions of a Feminine Philosophical Persona") connect conceptions of reasoning to popular conceptions of philosophical personas. The impact of metaphors on personas is a promising approach to investigate metaphorical impact more generally, especially when failing to adhere to a persona undermines an author's authority.
 36. Rooney, "Gendered Reason," 94.
 37. Rooney, "Philosophy, Adversarial Argumentation, and Embattled Reason," 227.
 38. Irigaray (*Speculum of the Other Woman*) argues that symbolic women are treated and received in ways that suppress, downplay, or negate womanly aspects of the personifications. Thorgeirsdottir ("The Torn Robe of Philosophy") contrasts the portrayal of Philosophy in Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*

and “the silencing of womanly features of Philosophy,” with Lady Reason in Christine de Pizan’s *City of Ladies* (88–89).

39. Rooney, “Gendered Reason,” 84.
40. Rooney, “Gendered Reason,” fr 19, 100. Garrett (“Hume as a Man and a Women’s Philosopher”) and Lloyd (*The Man of Reason*) discuss Hume’s account of reason, and implications for women reasoners. Cartesian accounts of reason receive discussion, in Atherton, “Cartesian Reason and Gendered Reason”; Detlefsen, “Cartesianism and Its Feminist Promise and Limits”; O’Neill, “Women Cartesians”; Broad, “Early Modern Feminism and Cartesian Philosophy.”
41. Rooney, “Gendered Reason,” 95.
42. Rooney, “Gendered Reason,” 96.
43. Rooney, “Gendered Reason,” 100.
44. Christine de Pizan is categorized as a medieval philosopher and not a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century philosopher. However, historical texts available to early modern philosophers are relevant for considering historical intellectual narratives. I refer to “Christine” when I am discussing the main narrator of *City of Ladies*, and I use the convention “Pizan” to refer to the author. Green and Broad (“Fictions of a Feminine Philosophical Persona”) discuss why “Christine” “de Pizan” and “Pizan” are all candidates for referring to Christine de Pizan, though not without complication.
45. The term *creuset* appears in French translations; for example, see de Pizan, *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*, 39.
46. de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, 70–71.
47. Though not the sovereign of the city—Lady Reason explains that though the three women work together, Lady Justice is the ultimate arbiter of the city.
48. Illuminated manuscripts of *Romance of the Rose* (1500s) featured nature as a woman hammering human infants on an anvil in an act of creation. For example, British Library, Harley 4425, fol. 140r, Full manuscript page: <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&I1ID=28560>. Whether this conception of philosophical discourse ultimately benefits Pizan or women thinkers warrants further consideration.
49. Galen also associates heat with perfection, and cold with imperfection. *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* 14.6–7, Tr. M.T. May.
50. de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, 90.
51. Cavendish, *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy*, 23–24.
52. Cavendish, *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy*, 24.
53. More, *The Immortality of the Soul*, 217.
54. MacLachlan, “Rude Inquiry,” 192.
55. MacLachlan, “Rude Inquiry,” 195.
56. Shapiro and Lascano, *Early Modern Philosophy*, 573.
57. de la Cruz, *The Answer/La Respuesta*.
58. de la Cruz, *The Answer/La Respuesta*, 96.
59. de la Cruz, *The Answer/La Respuesta*, 87.
60. Cavendish, *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy*, 279.
61. Though Cavendish is critical of this metaphor, she develops many metaphors throughout her philosophical works, including nature offering lessons in chemistry to experimental philosophers from cooking and baking (*Observations*, 105–06).

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Feminist Epistemology and Social Epistemology: Another Uneasy Alliance

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When I first became aware of Phyllis Rooney's writings more than a decade ago, my attention was immediately drawn to a chapter entitled "Feminist Epistemology and Naturalized Epistemology: An Uneasy Alliance."¹ As I was relatively new to feminist epistemology at the time, this chapter helped me reflect on what had been drawing me into its orbit, and why I was finding it increasingly difficult to pull myself back into more familiar conversations. Like Rooney, I was engaging specific questions around social positionality, cognition, and motivation as part of a broader project that draws on epistemological research that could be described as feminist, or naturalistic, or both.² With several philosophers ready to endorse the idea that feminist and naturalized epistemologies are closely aligned research programs, I was impressed by Rooney's insistence on scrutinizing this proposed alliance more closely, and I readily sympathized with her feelings of uneasiness.

1. ONE UNEASY ALLIANCE

Rooney's central claim in her chapter is that, "in some important senses of the designation 'naturalistic,' feminist epistemology exhibits more naturalistic tendencies than 'regular' naturalized epistemology does," which suggests that "naturalists who are not already engaged in feminist projects have much to learn from feminist epistemologists."³ To help motivate this claim, Rooney develops an internal critique of naturalized epistemology—or, more to the point, of epistemologists who call themselves "naturalists." Her basic point is that many naturalists continue to harbor a number of traditional assumptions about knowledge, knowing, science, and epistemology that are at odds with significant impulses motivating naturalized epistemology as a research program. These assumptions are problematic, "not because they pay too much attention to science, but because they pay too little," giving us reason to characterize them as "non-naturalistic."⁴

For example, it is not uncommon for those working under the banner of naturalized epistemology to assume that knowledge and knowing are paradigmatically about *individuals* acquiring and justifying *beliefs*; that beliefs are distinct, isolable "inner" entities amenable to measurement in the lab; that cognitive science gives an accurate representation of how "we" actually arrive at our beliefs; and that scientific representations of cognition form (or will form) a relatively coherent, uniform account that is ultimately reducible to neuroscience, or some other foundational cognitive science.⁵ Many naturalists are understandably drawn to research in the cognitive sciences that takes assumptions of these sorts for granted, which helps to ensure that they continue to remain in the background, insulated from empirical scrutiny and potential disconfirmation. As Rooney points out, this is an important way in which "traditional assumptions about gender differences in reasoning capacities have worked

their way into philosophical and scientific conceptions of rationality and cognition," as well as a partial explanation of why such assumptions often remain unchallenged.⁶ Would-be naturalists, then, "need to achieve a more critical and reflexive understanding of the assumptions and questions they bring to science, and a better understanding of the ways in which some of the 'prior' questions and expectations, many rooted in the epistemological tradition, might be ill-adapted to the very fields of science from which they now seek input."⁷

What does it mean to be a naturalist epistemologist, anyway? As Rooney astutely observes, the designation "naturalist epistemologist" is a great deal more confusing than is typically acknowledged and it is not at all clear to whom it refers. Is it enough to be *committed* to the continuity of epistemology and science in some shape or form? For example, James Maffie's naturalists are united by a "shared commitment" to naturalized epistemology as a project or research program.⁸ Yet as Rooney emphasizes, naturalists of this sort need not be engaged in *doing* naturalized epistemology and, in fact, usually are not. "These naturalists seem quite comfortable maintaining some distance from the actual work of building specific conversations and continuities between epistemology and science," notes Rooney, whereas "feminist epistemologists/philosophers of science are already significantly engaged in such conversations."⁹

Is it enough, then, to be *directly engaged* in the scientific study of cognition? For example, Barry Stroud's naturalists include anyone engaged in "the scientific study of perception, learning, thought, language-acquisition, and the transmission and historical development of human knowledge."¹⁰ Yet as Rooney points out, Stroud's description picks out *scientists* as those who are doing naturalized epistemology rather than philosophers. Besides, being involved in the production of epistemologically relevant scientific research does not automatically qualify one for evaluating the relevance of any given research finding. "Of the potentially innumerable findings produced by all of the various cognitive sciences, how are epistemologists to select those that they will find significant in developing an epistemology that is to be a part of, or closely allied with, science?" asks Rooney.¹¹ This question is all the more pressing given the way that traditional assumptions about gender differences in reasoning capacities continue to work their way into scientific conceptions of reasoning and cognition. Philosophers who are ill-equipped to reckon with the background assumptions lurking behind specific findings in the cognitive sciences run the risk of entertaining those findings as empirical givens, as though they do not already incorporate earlier norms of epistemology.

2. FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY AND SOCIAL EPISTEMOLOGY

I find Rooney's critique of naturalized epistemology useful in thinking through what appears to many to be an even less controversial alliance: that between feminist epistemology and social epistemology. Consider, for example, the way that Elizabeth Anderson and Heidi Grasswick characterize the relation between the two. In "Feminist Epistemology:

An Interpretation and a Defense," Anderson describes feminist epistemology as the "branch" of social epistemology that "investigates the influence of *socially constructed conceptions and norms of gender and gender-specific interests and experiences* on the production of knowledge."¹² Echoing this manner of aligning feminist and social epistemological research, Grasswick suggests that, "by far the majority of work in feminist epistemology is best understood as a form of social epistemology."¹³

But perhaps these delineations are unduly neat and tidy. Rooney encourages us to slow down and examine the background assumptions at work in prominent conceptualizations of social epistemology, inviting us to subject research in this field to an internal critique similar to the sort she raises for naturalized epistemologists. We might wonder, with Rooney, whether certain assumptions operating within the research of social epistemologists may be at odds with the critical spirit animating the field. Rooney also reminds us to be on the lookout for who is and is not exercising critical self-awareness with respect to such framing assumptions, and to consider whether feminist epistemology might not exhibit more thoroughly socialistic tendencies than "regular" social epistemology.

Take, for example, a recent paper by Elizabeth Anderson entitled "Epistemic Bubbles and Authoritarian Politics."¹⁴ I see this paper as one instance within a genre of social epistemological writings that have emerged during the Trump era, which take seriously the suggestion that the United States is "a nation more divided than ever," epistemically as well as politically.¹⁵ Anderson starts from the plausible premise that political discourse in the US has become seriously distorted by "epistemic bubbles,"¹⁶ and that such bubbles are expressive of increasing group polarization along partisan lines. Not only do Democrats and Republicans disagree about values, but about factual matters, too, including such politically salient factual claims as "human activity is causing climate change" and "carrying concealed weapons makes people safer." Yet it is not mere disagreement over matters of fact that motivates Anderson's concern over partisan epistemic bubbles; it is, rather, the "failure of a group to update its beliefs in an accuracy-directed response to new information."¹⁷ The epistemic bubbles inhabited by political parties become "politically consequential," in her view, insofar as they shape political discourse in ways that threaten "sound policymaking and democracy itself."¹⁸ For example, since climate change is a problem facing everyone, one party's refusal to acknowledge associated risks poses a threat to us all. Hence the motivation for Anderson's project is to provide an improved account of how epistemic bubbles form and operate so as to better support ongoing efforts to burst them.

As Anderson points out, two prominent models of how epistemic bubbles work (viz., Cass Sunstein's "group polarization theory" and Dan Kahan's "cultural cognition theory"¹⁹) converge in denying that Democrats and Republicans differ in their tendency to form bubbles, since several studies have shown that "individuals with different partisan and ideological identities do not differ on average with respect to relevant cognitive characteristics."²⁰

Notably, both Sunstein's and Kahan's models attempt to explain the formation of epistemic bubbles on the basis of universal cognitive biases operating at the level of individuals. Since individual variations in degrees of bias are distributed evenly across partisan groups, both models predict the Democrats and Republicans are equally vulnerable to entrapment.

Arguing against this joint assertion of partisan symmetry, Anderson suggests that "social epistemology needs to get more social, by locating critical features of epistemic bubbles *outside* people's heads, in the norms by which certain groups operate."²¹ She defends the claim that there is, in fact, significant asymmetry in vulnerability to epistemic bubbles across party lines, for the rise of populist politics among Republicans has brought about a consequential shift in group-level epistemic norms that are invisible to psychologists focused on individual-level cognitive biases. In addition to getting "more social," then, Anderson suggests that social epistemology needs to "get more political, by considering the impact of populist political styles on what people assert and believe."²²

By deploying us-versus-them narratives that position "elites" as betrayers of "the people," populists seek to delegitimize elite leaders and institutions, steadily sowing mistrust in anyone not belonging to the populist party or movement, coupled with excessive faith in those who espouse the party line. Insofar as Republicans adopt populist social norms of joint information processing, they will tend to exhibit cognitive biases as a *group* that party members may not also exhibit as individuals, and those biases will tend to trap them in an epistemic bubble. For example, given that populism elevates the "common sense" of the people over the deceitful manipulations of academics and scientists, groups adhering to populist norms will tend to downplay the relevance of empirical evidence when advocating for policies that express shared intuitions and sentiments. Critiques of populist policies that insist on data-driven decision-making can easily be dismissed as the machinations of corrupt "fake news" reporters and "deep-state" operatives, all of whom have been bought off by an illegitimate opposition composed of out-of-touch coastal city-dwellers, "woke" liberal "snowflakes," and the unwashed mobs of illegal migrants and despised minorities whose interests they are said to represent. Besides, does it really matter whether Trump's call to "Build the wall!" will result in higher wages for US citizens or prove effective in curbing illegal border-crossings, when further militarizing the border affirms who the *real* Americans are and names their enemies in a single stroke? Slowly but surely, populist epistemic and discursive norms ensure that empirical discussion is usurped by trolling, mudslinging, and the trotting out of conspiracy theories, all of which underscore the untrustworthiness of anyone other than real Americans.

In summary, Anderson argues that Republicans are more vulnerable to entrapment in epistemic bubbles than their Democratic counterparts insofar as the rise of populism within the GOP has introduced epistemically dysfunctional group-level norms. Unlike Sunstein and Kahan, whose proposals focus on addressing individual-level cognitive biases, in proposing remedies for epistemic bubbles,

Anderson trains her attention on how Democrats might work with and around populism to better get through to Republicans. For example, she suggests that addressing Midwestern farmers as *property owners* who could turn a profit from siting wind turbines on their farms—rather than as *Republicans* whose gas-guzzling Ford F-150s are ruining the planet—might help Democrats steer clear of the usual identity-expressive trolling. The thought here seems to be that Democrats are already on the right (because empirically better-informed) side of the relevant political issues. Since Democrats are less vulnerable to epistemic bubbles than their Republican counterparts, it is up to them to learn how the epistemic populism of the right works better than populists themselves. Only then will they be able to out-manuever their political rivals and, in so doing, save everyone from imminent disaster. "Ultimately," writes Anderson, "to stop populist epistemic bubbles or their discursive equivalents, we must find ways to defuse populism."²³ Beyond simply outsmarting Republicans, then, she recommends adopting a sympathetic stance towards populist voters who "are moved by despair over the declining prospects of less educated white males," and developing "an economic agenda focused on improving their material prospects, without excluding others."²⁴

3. ANOTHER UNEASY ALLIANCE

As mentioned earlier, I see Anderson's work on epistemic bubbles as one instance within a genre of epistemological writings that have emerged in the wake of the Trump presidency. Following Rooney's approach, I want to ask this: How closely aligned is this shared way of doing social epistemology with ongoing research in feminist epistemology? Recall that Rooney's work helps us to see the extent to which the research of naturalists expresses and protects a variety of non-naturalistic assumptions, and that these assumptions help shape thinking about gender and cognition in ways that feminists ought to recognize as troubling. Following Rooney's lead, I want to draw attention to certain assumptions operating within the work of Anderson and like-minded social epistemologists—assumptions that I take to be at odds with the critical spirit animating the field. Whereas Rooney is concerned about naturalists who continue to harbor traditional assumptions about knowledge, I am concerned about social epistemologists whose research uncritically reflects liberal-centrist common sense in ways that strengthen reactionary populism, rather than defuse it. My concern, in short, is with what I call the "NPRization of social epistemology."²⁵

What exactly is the NPRization of social epistemology? Well, consider what it's like to listen to the morning news as someone who does not identify as a Republican. As someone who has done a fair bit of listening myself, it strikes me that one of the chief functions of NPR-style journalism is to reassure Democrats that they are not only generally *better-informed* than their Republican counterparts, but that they are, by that dint, *morally and politically better*, and so have a special role to play in carrying the country into the twenty-first century. Reporting during the COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly illustrative in this regard. Consider, for example, the countless interviews with nurses, doctors, and public health specialists concerning how best to "reach across the aisle" to those who refuse

to mask up in close quarters, get vaccinated, and so forth. Entire manuals could be written detailing the tactics Democrats are supposed to employ to avoid coming across as too conceited and didactic; the kinds of gut-wrenching testimony that might help to build intimacy and trust where previously there had only been mutual suspicion and hostility; not to mention the honesty and restraint that is needed to admit that someone else is simply a lost cause. I think it would be fair to characterize the attitude such reporting is meant to instill as *saviorist* in orientation. After all, it serves to constantly reinforce the notion that NPR listeners generally, and Democrats specifically, are already well equipped to rescue the country from the epistemic, moral, and political backwardness of everyone else.

What does it mean to be in the grips of a saviorist mentality, epistemologically speaking? To begin with, it is important to distinguish saviorism from merely holding a belief one thinks to be true (say, that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective) and challenging somebody who claims otherwise. The crucial difference lies in the nature of the relationship between the parties involved in the exchange and in how the one doing the challenging conceives of their relative standing. It is not the mere fact that I am challenging what I take to be your mistaken beliefs that qualifies my approach as saviorist in orientation. After all, it would be irresponsible of me to simply ignore the fact that your beliefs are not only false, but dangerously so; and in the event that I am the one whose erroneous views are proving harmful, I would expect you to correct me respectfully in turn. Quite unlike a respectful, reciprocal exchange between partners in a shared endeavor, saviorist exchanges are essentially patronizing in character insofar as they involve influencing an out-group, purportedly for the good of all involved, based on the perceived epistemic superiority of the group of which one is a part. Exchanges of this sort are especially problematic when they take place in the context of ongoing domination, exploitation, and resource extraction targeting the out-group in question—as tends to be the case in relations between residents of major US cities and the rural farming communities on which they depend for food, raw materials, waste disposal sites, and the like. Why do these background power dynamics make saviorist attitudes especially problematic? First, because attitudes of this sort are typically *made possible* by relations of power that already reflect and express the degradation and instrumentalization of entire groups of people; second, because they are not only encouraged by but *serve to reinforce* such structurally unjust power dynamics; and third, because they depend, in part, on the *mystification* of those dynamics, insofar as they involve papering over the systematic domination of lands and of peoples with endless chatter focused on political leanings and partisan identities in what is presumed to be a bifurcated world where only one of two parties can truly know best.

Now, it would be inaccurate to claim that all philosophical research on epistemic bubbles, echo chambers, group polarization, and the like is similarly caught up in promoting a saviorist attitude.²⁶ But I do want to argue that Anderson's work fits the bill, largely because of the way that it uncritically reflects a kind of liberal-centrist

common sense already familiar from so much NPR-style journalism. First, Anderson assumes that epistemic bubbles qualify as “politically consequential” only insofar as they shape political discourse in ways that threaten “sound policymaking and democracy itself,” by which she means, more specifically, constitutionally enshrined institutions of representative democracy.²⁷ For example, the January 6 attack on the US Capitol can also be traced to a kind of epistemic populism that poses a direct threat to the continuation of the US as a liberal-democratic polity. Yet this also suggests that epistemic bubbles that negatively impact things other than liberal-democratic institutions fail to qualify as “politically consequential,” including all the ways in which people across the globe are harmed by the normal operation of those very same institutions.

Second, Anderson assumes that in the context of the US, politically consequential epistemic bubbles reflect and express polarization around partisan identity first and foremost, which is to say that they are rooted in the group-specific epistemic practices of Democrats and Republicans, respectively. For example, everyone living in the US has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, yet group polarization along party lines has repeatedly thwarted efforts to pass the sort of legislation required to secure appropriate funding for preventative measures, testing, and treatment. Yet while partisan polarization is clearly a relevant source of epistemic bubbles that are political consequently *in one sort of way*, it is far from obvious that partisan polarization is the only or most salient source. I am reminded here, for example, of Charles W. Mills's extended inquiry into the nature and origins of “white ignorance,” a form of group-level cognitive deficiency that is “linked to white supremacy.”²⁸ As described by Mills, the phenomenon of white ignorance cuts across such superficial and fleeting identity markers as political party affiliation and even extends beyond those self- and socially identified as “white,” afflicting anyone whose cognitive makeup is causally influenced by white domination.²⁹ How might our thinking about the epistemic dimensions of responses to pandemics and ecological catastrophes begin to shift as we remove the blinders of partisan politics? What if, instead of looking down our noses at the MAGA crowd, social epistemologists started to reckon with our own co-implication in accepting several hundred COVID-related deaths a day as the cost of “returning to normal”? Who and what is ignored, and with what politically salient consequences, when we only recognize conventional modes of politics as consequential, ignoring all affiliations and identities other than the narrowly partisan?

Notice that Anderson needs to rest on assumptions of both types in order to motivate her proposed remedies for epistemic bubbles. That is, it only becomes plausible to characterize Democrats as epistemically superior in some global sense once it has been taken for granted that conventional politics is the only game in town, and that politically consequential epistemic bubbles do not reflect group identities other than “Democrat” and “Republican.” Yet I want to suggest that both assumptions are questionable, for reasons I suspect will be readily apparent to both feminists and non-feminists. For one thing, when Anderson argues that social epistemology needs to get

“more political,” she would seem to be working with a notion of “the political” that does not take account of feminist expansions and reworkings of the concept that have emerged over the past several decades. To name just one significant contributor to this critical lineage in feminist political philosophy, Iris Marion Young has long insisted that “the political” encompasses power relations of many different types, whether or not the relationships in question are embedded in or mediated by public institutions.³⁰ For Young, then, “politics” is not to be understood in the narrow, conventional sense that includes such constitutionally sanctioned activities as running for public office, voting for one’s preferred candidates, and engaging with other elected officials in highly ritualized settings, such as the US House and Senate. Rather, “politics” refers broadly to all forms of “public communicative engagement with others for the sake of organizing our relationships and coordinating our actions more justly.”³¹ If the political is fundamentally about relationships of power, and politics about how we go about organizing those relationships through public communication, then we can expect epistemic bubbles to be politically consequential in a host of ways that are bound to be overlooked by social epistemologists committed to overlooking critical feminist insights in political philosophy.

Of course, Anderson is aware of this literature and usage of “political” and so should be read as using the term to refer to overt or formal political efforts. But, granting that, there is good reason to pause before embracing her proposed remedies for populist bubbles. As Anderson herself points out, the flame of reactionary populism has been fueled by the sentiment that city-dwelling “elites”—including everyone from the Clintons, to the college-educated “creative class,” to academics, and so on—are constantly looking down on “the people,” whom they conspire to manipulate and betray for nefarious ends. How can a saviorist epistemology do anything other than continue pouring fuel on this very fire? How could it serve to buttress anything other than the kind of “progressive neoliberalism” that, as Nancy Fraser reminds us, created the very material and social conditions that gave rise to reactionary populism in its Make America Great Again guise?³² What are the all-too-familiar political consequences of reassuring NPR listeners that they are the ones who pay closer attention to science, more reliably propose empirically informed policies, and really ought to be having some “difficult but necessary conversations” with that Trump-supporting uncle they not-so-secretly despise?

4. FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY AND SOCIAL EPISTEMOLOGY

Feminist epistemologists tend to be centrally interested in doing epistemology in a way that “transforms the self who knows,” conjuring up “new sympathies, new affects as well as new cognitions and new forms of intersubjectivity,” in Sandra Bartky’s eloquent phrasing.³³ This is critically important work, not only because it tends to be more consistently naturalistic than research conducted under that banner, but also because it helps to generate new and better ways of relating to ourselves and others as knowers and, in so doing, contributes to shifting political relations no less than epistemic ones. A saviorist social

epistemology can do neither of these things, since it affirms already operative group-level norms as the lesser of two evils, assuring certain knowers that it is not they, but *the others* who really need to start knowing otherwise. Ironically, saviorism helps to entrench the very social conditions that made it seem like a promising remedy in the first place, ensuring that the ruling class can oscillate comfortably between progressive neoliberalism and reactionary populism for the foreseeable future.

If there is an alliance to be forged between social epistemology and feminist epistemology, I think we have much to learn from Rooney about which terms of alignment are and are not worth entertaining. It is not enough to insist, as Anderson does, that social epistemology needs to get “more social” and “more political,” as both can evidently be done in ways that reinforce the political status quo and bring negligible epistemic gains. Much as naturalists are faced with the challenge of selecting which scientific findings to treat as significant in developing a successor epistemology, socialists must confront the challenge of selecting which group-level norms to evaluate in light of the impact of which political styles and with political consequences of what sorts. Insofar as feminist epistemologists are self-conscious about their own framing assumptions and also expose them to empirical scrutiny, Rooney is right to point out that we exhibit more thoroughly naturalistic tendencies than some card-carrying naturalists. If we are also to exhibit more thoroughly socialist tendencies than “regular” social epistemologists, we had better get “more social” and “more political” in ways that involve a similar willingness to expose and—in so doing—begin *transforming* ourselves, making possible those new forms of intersubjectivity that will help transcend our current political predicament.³⁴

It is this last point that I want to dwell on in my closing thoughts, not only because it helps me to better appreciate Rooney’s contributions to feminist theorizing, but also because it helps bring to the fore why feminist epistemology is not just another branch or form of social epistemology—at least, not for the time being. In another paper, entitled “What Is Distinctive about Feminist Epistemology at 25?” Rooney observes that feminist epistemology continues to elude those neat characterizations and hasty generalizations that are so often deployed by those who are hostile towards it in order to circumscribe or contain it. Yet as Rooney quickly adds, feminist epistemology also continues to elude attempts to identify it too readily with mainstream directions in epistemology—including such projects as naturalized, social, and pragmatist epistemology—which are often deployed by those who acknowledge the contributions of feminist epistemologists in guarded, highly limited ways, while nevertheless exhibiting some of the moves to define and contain that are so obvious in overtly hostile reactions. “What makes feminist epistemology distinctive,” argues Rooney, “is that it can still be distinguished from non-feminist or mainstream epistemology, and significantly by the latter’s seeming inability to meaningfully appreciate and incorporate feminist epistemological insights and developments.”³⁵ In her efforts to give such insights and developments their due, Rooney focuses on four, elaborating each in response to misplaced criticisms of feminist theorizing. After reviewing these four, I want to

close by adding a fifth, thinking with and building upon Rooney's work.

First, it is often claimed that feminist epistemology is too historically and politically *situated* to count as epistemology proper, whereas real epistemology generates accounts of knowledge and related concepts that are completely ahistorical and apolitical. Yet as Rooney points out, while mainstream epistemology actively or passively distances itself from a commitment to uncovering the epistemic and epistemological fallout of particular aspects of its own history and politics, this "does not make mainstream epistemology less historically and politically situated, and certainly not in a way that renders it less problematic as an epistemological orientation."³⁶ Feminist epistemology is historically and politically situated, as is the case with any epistemological project or direction. Insofar as it remains distinct from mainstream projects, it is because feminist epistemologists purposefully seek to uncover their own situatedness and render themselves accountable for the effects of their intellectual labor.

Second, it is often claimed that feminist epistemologists seek to inject their particular political values, interests, and biases into their work, whereas real epistemologists are politically neutral knowers of knowledge who strive to insulate their thinking from contaminating influence. Yet since the ideal of political neutrality is as chimerical for non-feminists as it is for feminists, Rooney suggests that it would be far more illustrative and productive for everyone to start with the question "Which types of political awareness, commitment, or intervention enhance epistemology and which detract from it?"³⁷ By shifting the question in this way, Rooney levels the field of play while putting into question many of the assumptions undergirding research in non-feminist approaches to epistemology. "Given that, historically, many epistemologists developed views and theories that (unwittingly or not) reinforced unjust political hierarchies," she wonders, what politically problematic institutions and relations do mainstream epistemologists risk continuing to reinforce through their attempted disavowals of "the political," and "what is it about feminist examinations of the epistemic and epistemological fallout of that history that is *epistemologically* problematic?"³⁸

Third, it is often claimed that feminist epistemology focuses on peripheral or applied questions and topics only, whereas the central or core concepts and questions are left to epistemology proper. Yet it is simply not true that feminist epistemologists have been unconcerned with many of the key concepts of epistemology—such as belief, justification, reason, and evidence—though feminists have contributed a great deal to understanding the significance of these concepts in relation to epistemic, moral, and political considerations that are typically ignored. Besides, the question of what constitutes "the central or core concepts and questions in the field" continues to be a matter of substantive debate. By putting into question an overly narrow preoccupation with defining the concept of knowledge, and by bringing to light the many rich, underexplored questions swirling around such concepts as attending, understanding, remembering, imagining, and knowing well, feminist epistemologists have helped clarify

what all is at stake in our decisions about what to count as basic concepts and starting points. "[W]hat we take to be the core or constitutive concepts of epistemology matters," notes Rooney, "since such determinations presume in favor of some epistemic goods or values (and related norms of epistemic practice and conduct) over others."³⁹ Considerations such as these also help us to think more clearly about the relationships between epistemic, moral, and political normativity.

This brings us to a fourth area where feminist epistemologists have made significant contributions. It is often claimed that feminist epistemologists confuse or obscure the distinction between moral or political normativity and epistemic normativity, whereas this distinction remains an important and carefully monitored one in epistemology proper. Yet as Rooney points out, it is one thing to contend that philosophical theorizing about knowledge needs to take account of moral and political concerns; it is quite another to contend that epistemic normativity somehow reduces to moral or political normativity. Feminists who are committed to examining epistemic normativity—that is, feminists who are committed to doing epistemology—are, of course, not in favor of doing away with the very notion. Instead, feminist work in epistemology is concerned with linking core concepts in the field with moral and political values in ways that shed new light on why and how striving to become good attenders, rememberers, imaginers, and knowers is something that should matter to us—with why, in other words, epistemology is a field of inquiry that genuinely matters, in the sense that *knowing well* is inseparably bound up with *living well*. By drawing attention to the question of what knowing well requires, feminist epistemologists remind us of why it might be important to know how to grow food, as well as how to buy it off a shelf; to not only reflect on which actions are likely to harm other beings and ecosystems, but to be capable of significantly altering our ways of being in the world with others; to focus less on what propositions Jones knows concerning which cats are on which mats, and more on how to acquire the skills of attention and care that Jones will need to promote the flourishing of all the furballs he finds in his midst.

Whether it is a matter of reflecting on their own historical and cultural situatedness, on the specific interests, concerns, and values they bring to their research, or on the questions they start from, the concepts they examine, and the methods they deploy, part of what distinguishes the work of feminist epistemologists is their heightened *epistemological reflexivity*, which Rooney characterizes as "a form of second-order or metaepistemological reflection."⁴⁰ Indeed, from Rooney's perspective, epistemological reflexivity stands out as the single thread running through all of these other distinctively feminist tendencies. What does reflexivity of this sort look like? "On an individual level," she explains, "we as epistemologists promote epistemological reflexivity when we bring to our endeavors better understandings of *ourselves* as politically and historically situated knowers of knowledge(s). Such understanding involves owning up to the assumptions, interests, values, and situated questions that frame our epistemological inquiries, including those interests and values that seem to be dictated by an impersonal ahistorical

'tradition'.⁴¹ As we have seen, it is precisely this sort of reflexivity that is lacking in prominent strands of naturalized and social epistemological theorizing.

I agree with Rooney that part of what distinguishes feminist from non-feminist epistemological research is the promotion and practice of metaepistemological reflection. I also agree with her that both naturalists and socialists have much to learn from the examples of feminists who own up to how who, what, when, and where they are in the world informs the shape and character of their research. But it seems to me that feminist epistemologists challenge us to do more than undergo a yet more extensive arc of reflection and responsibility-taking. When Bartky evokes the notion of doing epistemology in a way that "transforms the self who knows," I take her to be pushing beyond a recommendation that philosophers confess their social locations at the outset of writing or giving a talk. Rather, Bartky is speaking to a practice of *personal* transformation that is inseparably bound up with broader movements for *social* transformation—a practice that involves striving to know well not in some timeless sense, but in a sense that is maximally sensitive to the particular demands of *this* place, at *this* moment on the "clock of the world."⁴² In other words, part of what makes feminist epistemology so elusive and difficult to define is that it is a way of doing epistemology *in and as movement*—not only self-conscious of its historical situatedness and possible efficacy, but actively striving for the creation of new social forms through which knowing and living well become concretely possible for all. To borrow a phrase from Alexis Shotwell, feminist epistemology is at its most distinctive when it is animated by an erotic desire to know *and be* "otherwise," not merely to better understand and take ownership of oneself.⁴³ This desire finds expression in the work of more feminist philosophers than can be named and acknowledged here. It courses through Marilyn Frye's efforts to distinguish "loving" from "arrogant" perception⁴⁴ and María Lugones's invitation to "world travel."⁴⁵ It animates Susan Babbitt's musings on the transformative experiences of LeRoi Jones and the dreaming of "impossible dreams,"⁴⁶ while propelling Sue Campbell's reflections on the moral and political achievement that is coming to re-remember our own personal pasts.⁴⁷ It is easily recognized in Lorraine Code's efforts to breathe fresh life into the notions of the instituted and instituting social imaginaries,⁴⁸ not to mention in Kristie Dotson's generative thinking on the work of coming to grips with and transcending the limitations of entire epistemological systems.⁴⁹ Insofar as it continues to carry another world in its heart, feminist epistemology will continue to rest uneasily with any effort to align it with—let alone subsume it within—the still emerging field of social epistemology.

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NOTES

1. Rooney, "Feminist Epistemology and Naturalized Epistemology."
2. Doan, "Climate Change and Complacency"; Doan, "Responsibility for Collective Inaction and the Knowledge Condition"; Doan and Sherwin, "Relational Solidarity and Climate Change."
3. Rooney, "Feminist Epistemology," 207, 208.
4. Rooney, "Feminist Epistemology," 217.
5. Rooney "Feminist Epistemology," 217.
6. Rooney, "Feminist Epistemology," 205.
7. Rooney 2003, 219. For a more detailed account of how assumptions about gender differences in reasoning capacities tend to be intertwined with assumptions about the nature of reasoning simpliciter, see Section III of "Feminist Epistemology and Naturalized Epistemology" (Rooney, "Feminist Epistemology," 221–35), as well as an earlier paper of Rooney's entitled "Rationality and the Politics of Gender Difference."
8. Maffie, "Recent Work on Naturalized Epistemology"; Maffie, "Recent Work on Naturalized Epistemology."
9. Rooney, "Feminist Epistemology," 206, 221.
10. Stroud, "The Significance of Naturalized Epistemology," 71.
11. Rooney, "Feminist Epistemology," 215.
12. Anderson, "Feminist Epistemology," 54, original emphasis.
13. Grasswick, "Feminist Social Epistemology."
14. Anderson, "Epistemic Bubbles and Authoritarian Politics."
15. Jamieson and Cappella, *Echo Chamber*; Pariser, *The Filter Bubble*; Boyd, "Epistemically Pernicious Groups"; Boyd, "Group Epistemology"; Nguyen, "Escape the Echo Chamber"; Nguyen, "Echo Chambers and Epistemic Bubbles"; Baumgaertner and Justwan, "The Preference for Belief"; Furman, "Epistemic Bunkers."
16. Anderson defines an "epistemic bubble" as "a relatively self-segregated social network of like-minded people, which lacks internal dispositions to discredit false or unsupported factual claims in particular domains. Due to factors internal to the network, members are liable to converge on and resist correction of false, misleading, or unsupported claims circulated within it" (Anderson, "Epistemic Bubbles," 11). Notice that Anderson's definition blurs a significant distinction charted earlier by C. Thi Nguyen, namely, that between "epistemic bubbles" and "echo chambers" (Nguyen, "Echo Chambers and Epistemic Bubbles"). For Nguyen, both are social epistemic structures that exclude some relevant voices and evidence, but whereas epistemic bubbles accomplish this exclusion through omission, echo chambers do so through the active discrediting of outsiders.
17. Anderson, "Epistemic Bubbles," 11, original emphasis.
18. Anderson, "Epistemic Bubbles," 12.
19. See Sunstein, *On Rumors*; Sunstein and Vermeule, "Conspiracy Theories"; Kahan and Braman, "Cultural Cognition and Public Policy"; Kahan, "Cultural Cognition as a Conception of the Cultural Theory of Risk"; Kahan, "The Politically Motivated Reasoning Paradigm, Part 1"; Kahan et al., "Culturally Antagonistic Memes."
20. Anderson, "Epistemic Bubbles," 12.
21. Anderson, "Epistemic Bubbles," 12.
22. Anderson, "Epistemic Bubbles," 12.
23. Anderson, "Epistemic Bubbles," 27.
24. Anderson, "Epistemic Bubbles," 27.
25. For readers outside the United States, among others who may not be familiar with the term, NPR is an acronym for National Public Radio, a nonprofit media organization that serves as a national syndicator for more than a thousand public radio stations across the US—including WDET 101.9 FM in Detroit, the local station with which I am most familiar. NPR is widely recognized as among the most trusted sources of news and commentary by self-identified liberals residing in the US, alongside the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), to name a few.

26. Notice, too, that I am not equating having or promoting a saviorist attitude—let alone doing epistemology in a saviorist mode—with, say, making normative claims about knowledge. After all, my concern with the NPRization of social epistemology is meant to highlight a particular way of doing social epistemology, which is based on a specific set of assumptions about US society and politics and addresses a specific type of audience. My thanks to Stephanie Kapusta for pushing me for greater clarity on this point.
27. Anderson, "Epistemic Bubbles," 12.
28. Mills, "White Ignorance."
29. Mills, "White Ignorance," 22.
30. See, e.g., Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*; Young, *Responsibility for Justice*.
31. Young, *Responsibility for Justice*, 123.
32. Fraser and Jaeggi, *Capitalism*, 193–215.
33. Bartky, "Sympathy and Solidarity" and *Other Essays*, 71–72.
34. My thinking about non-saviorist approaches to addressing epistemic bubbles and echo chambers dovetails with the work of Katherine Furman, who emphasizes the importance of creating less hostile epistemic environments in view of our shared tendency to "bunker down" epistemically (Furman, "Epistemic Bunkers," 203). As mentioned earlier, I take it that saviorist attitudes are essentially patronizing in character, insofar as they involve influencing out-group members, purportedly for the good of all involved, based on the perceived epistemic superiority of the in-group of which one is a part. Since creating a less hostile epistemic environment can be yet another tactic deployed for the sake of influencing others in questionable ways, I suggest that more thoroughgoing attitudinal changes are sometimes necessary to make genuinely trusting, solidaristic relationships possible.
35. Rooney, "What Is Distinctive about Feminist Epistemology at 25?" 344.
36. Rooney, "What Is Distinctive," 349.
37. Rooney, "What Is Distinctive," 354.
38. Rooney, "What Is Distinctive," 354.
39. Rooney, "What Is Distinctive," 360.
40. Rooney, "What Is Distinctive," 355.
41. Rooney, "What Is Distinctive," 356, original emphasis.
42. Boggs and Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century*.
43. Shotwell, *Knowing Otherwise*.
44. Frye, *The Politics of Reality*.
45. Lugones, "Playfulness." My thanks to Letitia Meynell for helping me see the relationship between adopting a saviorist attitude toward others as knowers and perceiving them arrogantly, in Frye's sense (Frye, *The Politics of Reality*).
46. Babbitt, *Impossible Dreams*.
47. Campbell, "Dominant Identities"; Campbell, *Relational Remembering*; Campbell, *Our Faithfulness to the Past*.
48. Code, *Ecological Thinking*.
49. Dotson, "Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression."

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On the Necessity of Embodiment for Reasoning

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What constitutes reasoning? Phyllis Rooney's work on reason and reasoning brings important attention to what reasoning is, what it requires, and how to do it well.¹ In particular, there are important understandings about the nature of reasoning, on its task directedness, and on the need for choices to frame the tools it uses and the problems it tackles, which her work brings to the foreground.

Much of Rooney's work from the 1990s focuses on how gender has played a problematic and distorting role in philosophical discourse on reason and rationality.² Too often in the history of these debates, reason was construed as a tool best employed by men, and set in opposition to feminized understandings of emotion and embodiment. Reason was and often still is viewed as being unemotional, disembodied, and unlocated, as an ideal that seems at odds with human embodiedness. Rooney's papers provide both an assessment of the thin ground for such construals and a program for rethinking rationality and reasoning in ways that do not rely on such outdated tropes.

More recently, Rooney has called for a shift from reason to *reasoning*, a call that draws from insights from her earlier work.³ Such a shift helps clarify what a focus on reason obscures, and what is required for reasoning to work. Reason has not only been construed as ideally disembodied but also as both formulaic (a formula for which there is only one right answer) and individual—something best done by the isolated reasoner. In contrast, I will emphasize here that reasoning is necessarily embodied, emotionally or valuationally informed, tied to particular locations,

and requires choices of skills and framing of problems that should not be ignored. [Delving into the sociality of reasoning, as Helen Longino⁴ among others has done, is beyond the scope of this paper, but is also deeply important.] None of this undermines reasoning's potency or importance, but as Rooney has argued, some of these old tropes about reason have to go.

In this essay, I will contribute to the effort of shifting from reason to reasoning by looking back to two philosophers from the 1930s who, each in their own way, embraced the embodiment and locatedness of reasoning: Rudolph Carnap and John Dewey. I will discuss their understanding of reasoning so that we can see how efforts to remove reasoning from embodiment and pragmatic choice, and to make it somehow universal and disembodied, are doomed to fail, and distract us from what constitutes good reasoning. The erasure of embodiment for reason is neither possible nor desirable.

Furthermore, we will see that reasoning is not just about the solving of problems, but the detection and delineation of problems as well. A full account of reasoning to solve problems also requires an account of the detection of problems. While many of the tests for intelligence (IQ tests, Turing tests, etc.) have a predefined task for which successful completion allows for clear evaluation, reasoning and intelligence are crucially needed for task definition and delineation. Just because that is harder to measure does not mean it should be ignored in discussions of what reason is, and what intelligence requires.

Both the lack of a universal reasoning structure and the need for 1) problem detection and definition, 2) the development of tools to address the problems, and 3) the careful use of those tools have important implications for our current understanding of reasoning. I will argue that embodiedness is essential to this fuller understanding of what reasoning requires, and that embodiedness is particularly important for the detection of problems to which our reasoning tools might be applied. This point has important implications for debates about the ethics and responsible development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). If reasoning requires embodiment and locatedness, AI cannot be generally intelligent, because it cannot perform the crucial task of problem detection. AI can only function when we define the problem it is to address. This means that the threats from AI arise not from some moment of singularity when AI will surpass us, but from the inherent limitations of AI, from how humans fail to understand those limitations, and from an attempt to use AI for purposes for which it is not apt. Like deploying a logic ill-suited for a particular purpose, deploying an AI system beyond its capacities is a crucial ethical and epistemic risk. In pursuit of this line of argument, AGI is shown to be an inapt and likely incoherent idea.

But before we get to that conclusion, we need to start the project of scoping what good reasoning, rationality, and intelligence requires to show that embodiment is necessary. To show this, I will start with Carnap, then turn to Dewey, and finally draw conclusions for AI.

1. CARNAP'S LOGICS AND THE PRINCIPLE OF TOLERANCE

Philosophers in the early twentieth century held a plurality of views on reason and on the requirements of good reasoning. Even as formal logic, which seemed to offer a formulaic and universal system of reasoning, was being developed, not everyone who used this new tool thought it was so universal or formulaic. One of the preeminent formal philosophers of the twentieth century, Rudolf Carnap, recognized the need for pragmatic choice at the heart of logic, even before one could begin formal (analytic) reasoning practices. Carnap's insights on the nature of logic (or logics) is particularly relevant for thinking about supposedly "pure" formal reasoning practices, which seem to eschew embodiment and are often held out as somehow above the messy entanglements of the world.

Initially, the tool of formal logic seemed to offer a route to universal and formulaic reasoning. Frege thought that the laws of logic were "the laws of truth" and that they were "boundary stones fixed in an eternal foundation that our thinking can overflow but never displace."⁵ I suspect it is this sense of the centrality of formal logic Rooney has in mind when she talks of formal paradigmatic examples "proffered as capturing something like the 'essence' of reason or rationality."⁶ While she has pointed out the drawbacks of taking these as exemplars of reasoning (and I agree with her concerns), I also want to point out that Carnap would argue that even these exemplars cannot begin, cannot even get off the ground, without already making pragmatic choices about the structure of the logic to be used, choices that need to be shaped by the problem one is trying to solve. Carnap rejected Frege's understanding of logic as some eternal and fixed foundation. Instead, he saw the inherent flexibility and choices we needed to make to construct any given logic.

Carnap came to this view in the 1930s, as he realized his earlier work in the *Aufbau* could not articulate the one true logic with which to do scientific philosophy.⁷ Instead, his view shifted to one centered on his "Principle of Tolerance." Because there is no one true logic, one needs to decide what one's starting point will be and to decide what rules will govern inference within the logical system one develops. Choices must be made, and there is no eternal truth or universal fact of the matter about what the right choice is, even in the rarefied terrain of formal logic. Carnap argued for permissiveness in the proliferation of systems of logic, depending on what problems one wanted to solve or what tools one needed. As he wrote: "it is not our business to set up prohibitions, but to arrive at conventions," conventions central to communication and the pursuit of shared projects.⁸ Carnap viewed "the construction of a logical system as an engineering task," which meant that the suitability of the logical system will be evaluated by its ability to help with the practical task towards which it is put.⁹ Philosophers can construct logics as tools, for their own work and for others, but the evaluation of the logic is based on whether it is useful for the task at hand, not whether it captures some universal form of Reason.

Thus, for Carnap, there was no such thing as a universal logic. Similar lessons could be drawn for mathematical systems, which frustratingly could not be reduced to the formal logic of the day.¹⁰ Even in systems of exacting precision (such as mathematics and logic), one cannot escape the need for pragmatic choices which inform which logic might be a useful tool for guiding reasoning. One needs to know the problem one wants to address with a formal logic system in order to either choose which to use or to construct one for the purpose.

In short, even with the most formal reasoning systems possible, a universal reasoning process or structure is not available. We must know the problems we want to tackle and then find or craft tools to help. As Rooney emphasizes, all reasoning is situated in particular contexts and aiming at particular problems. But how do we know the nature of the problem at hand? Pragmatist John Dewey's work provides needed illumination to this essential aspect of reasoning, which encompasses not just the solving of problems, but the detection of them.

2. DEWEY'S LOGIC OF INQUIRY

Pragmatist John Dewey was centrally concerned with reasoning and the conditions—particularly educational and social conditions—for reasoning well. His theory of logic was not based on the formal logical structures of interest to Carnap and often taught in philosophy courses today, but rather on what was needed for good practices of inquiry more generally. Thus, his theory of logic (or reasoning or inquiry) encompassed the task of problem detection, not just problem solving. Both are needed for good reasoning and good inquiry.

Crucial for Dewey was that reasoning was never undirected, but always motivated by the felt need of a problematic situation. "Practical needs in connection with existing conditions, natural and social, evoke and direct thought."¹¹ We engage in reasoning when we *feel* the need to solve a problem. The existing condition that evoked and directed thought was what Dewey called a "troubled, perplexed, trying situation."¹² For Dewey, such a situation included both the foreground and the background of a context, the events that evoked perplexity, and the facts that were relevant to its unpacking.¹³ Thus while the perplexity was something experienced by a person, the full situation needed to be discovered through inquiry. Once one notices that one is in a problematic situation, effort and reasoning are needed to define the problem. The definition does not automatically pop out of the presence of a feeling of difficulty or perplexity, but is a central part of the practice of inquiry.

Once one feels the presence of a problem, defining a problem well is a substantial part of inquiry. Dewey described inquiry as a process where continually returning to the definition of a problem was often needed. Indeed, the final resolution of a problem often occurred in tandem with (or nearly so) the final revisions to the problem definition. Problem definition is thus a central and continually revisable aspect of inquiry. In everyday contexts, we are each well aware of the importance of problem definitions for our efforts at problem solving: we

often find in the midst of attempting to solve a problem that we did not initially have the problem properly defined. When this happens, we need to revise our understanding of the problem in the midst of our efforts in order to get at a solution. Further, Dewey argued that one knows that a problem is resolved when the sense of perplexity vanishes and the course ahead is clear. And that often happens just after one finally gets the problem definition right, nearly at the close of the process of inquiry.

Thus, for Dewey, the practices of inquiry and the exercise of reason require situatedness, embeddedness, and embodiment. One needs to be able to *feel* perplexity and its resolution for reasoning to be engaged and to be completed. "Persons do not just think at large, nor do ideas arise out of nothing."¹⁴ Detecting a problem instigates inquiry (a reasoning practice) and requires feeling the presence of a problem. One must feel perplexed or thwarted by interactions with the world or one must feel that something is a problem in one's life in order to have one's attention directed to the need for inquiry. This requires embodiment and physical experience, and in some sense, suffering. The feeling of being thwarted, of having a difficulty that needs to be addressed, can be a mild or severe sense of suffering, depending on the nature of the need that is not being fulfilled. It can range from a source of irritation under one's clothes (Is that a bug bite or a tag that needs to be removed, or something else?) to full-on existential crisis (What am I to do with my life?). There is a sense of scale central to whether inquiry and reasoning is actually needed and engaged, where small perplexities may be ignored (What was that bird I just saw? Oh well, never mind) whereas larger perplexities may feel more pressing (What am I going to do about the tensions within my family?), and some perplexities (What is the meaning of life?) we may recognize as too big to tackle at the moment (or ever). Our feelings, arising from our embodiment, thus drive and direct our reasoning practices. They are crucial to problem detection and the decision to expend effort on problem solving. They are thus also crucial to reasoning.

The lived experiences we have shape deeply how we reason, how we define problems, and how we imagine solutions. There is no disembodied general reasoning—felt and lived experience is necessary for reasoning to find a focus (the problematic situation), to work through the process of inquiry, and to come to a close, in the end of the feeling of perplexity. There is no divide between reason and emotion in such an account. Dewey's main threats to good reasoning and inquiry are not emotionality or embodiedness but dogmatism and "the Procrustean bed of habitual belief."¹⁵ We need to be continually flexible, empirical, and experimental in our practices of inquiry and use of reasoning. Success or failure of reasoning depends on lived experience to direct attention, to define problems, and to settle on solutions. If our selected solutions fail, and fail in sufficiently substantial ways (another problem of judgment and scale), we will begin inquiry again.

Carnap understood that one could construct different logics, and one's choices in setting up the formal systems should shape a formal system to one's needs and to the problems one had. Dewey's account of inquiry expands

the frame, to include the challenges of detecting and defining problems. He showed that inquiry and reasoning need to be an embodied and engaged-with-the-world kind of practice, not something that can be settled before experience or without having actual experiences. The works of Carnap and Dewey are a useful corrective to the idea and ideal of a universal reason, one that shows that feminist philosophers such as Rooney who criticize an opposition between emotion and reason are precisely correct. Without emotion, there is no possibility for reason to operate properly. This insight has important implications for current debates about reasoning and artificial intelligence (AI).

3. PROBLEM DETECTION AND AI

Despite the clear necessity of pragmatic choice, of local embodiment in a context driving decisions about what a problem is and how one might begin to construct tools for addressing that problem, philosophers (and others) seem prone to neglect this aspect of reason. Conceptions of rationality in decision theory, for example, attempt to compress rationality into simplistic practices of weighing pre-determined senses of probabilities along pre-determined lines, and to make claims for the universality of such formalized systems. But Carnap would insist that we recall there are no universal formal systems that the world or reason imposes on us from the start. We must choose how to frame a problem, how to craft tools to address the problem, and what will count as a good (enough) solution to that problem when we are reasoning.

One current example of this impulse to erase the importance of embodiment is found in the debate around Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). While many philosophers and computer scientists have raised concerns about AGI and its potential threat to humanity,¹⁶ and some have raised doubts about its technical feasibility,¹⁷ I want to suggest disembodied AGI cannot meet minimum standards for being generally intelligent.¹⁸ The literature on defining artificial intelligence focuses on AI's ability to solve already defined problems.¹⁹ Whether discussing AI or AGI, the issue of detecting and framing problems remains out of focus. Even "zero-shot" reasoners are still given a particular task to perform.²⁰ Although the complexities of "intelligence" are well known to AI researchers, most definitions of what would count as AGI do not include discussions of problem detection or the complex decision of where to direct one's attention and reasoning efforts.²¹ The problem to be solved, the task, is still specified by humans and given to the AI system.

Given its importance in inquiry and reasoning, the ability to detect and define (and redefine as needed) problems should be seen as a minimum requirement for "general intelligence." If Dewey is correct about how inquiry and reasoning work, the need to return repeatedly to problem definition is essential. Solving the wrong problem is no help at all, and being able to redefine the problem in the process of inquiry is crucial to both successful reasoning and worthwhile reasoning. Yet this minimum requirement is ignored in the usual tests for intelligence, such as the Turing Test (where there is no requirement for problem detection, just passing as a human conversant) or passing standardized tests (where the problems are pre-established). Our usual

tests for intelligence leave something important out of the frame, something which requires emotional embodiment. Our tests for intelligence do not encompass a key part of human reasoning, the ability to detect, define, and redefine problems. When pursuing AGI, we are still held captive by the illusion of disembodied reason.

Most proposed AGI systems would not have a body, nor would they have emotions, but they would be able to process all the data in the world.²² The problem with considering such a system generally intelligent is that being able to process data, even a perfect data set processed perfectly, does not detect problems. At most, it can potentially detect errors, but whether those errors are problems requires a judgment regarding what is a problem. We give AI particular tasks, particular goals of prediction, and then train it within a particular domain, aiming to solve problems we set. AI has proven remarkably successful when directed to perform particular tasks, whether to predict the next word in a sentence, to predict a particular fold of a protein, to predict whether a tissue slide has cancer, to predict what color a pixel should be, etc. But note that we are setting the task, and thus the problem, to be solved, and we set the bar for an adequate solution. AI requires humans to shape its problems, and thus its tasks, and what should count as success or failure. This is also how what seem like general systems (like chat bots) are trained. For AI to become generally intelligent, it would need to be able to detect problems on its own to be solved.

If we take the lessons of Dewey, Carnap, and Rooney seriously, we should not expect any data processing system to be able to detect problems on its own. There is no one universal logic, or data processing system, that can address all problems, much less detect and frame them, according to Carnap. Framing the problem is needed before one decides which formal language might be helpful for addressing the problem. And detecting, framing, and solving problems requires that one be able to *feel* that something is a problem, according to Dewey. One must *feel* that one has been thwarted by one's experience in the world. For this, one must be able to be thwarted in experience, and to notice it, and then to feel perplexed by it. Without a body that could experience being thwarted, AI has no chance at being able to detect a problem on its own. An AI system might be able to detect an error, but whether such an error is a *problem* is something that would require human judgment. As Rooney has noted, embodied human reasoning is required. AI is not able to learn how to perform problem detection from the world, because it lacks the embodiment that imposes suffering, both emotional and physical, that teaches us what is a problem, that trains us to have a sense of perplexity. Without this ability, AI should not be said to be generally intelligent.

Could an AI system come to learn what is a problem on its own? We could give AI a body, with sensors. But this would not be enough for the good judgment needed for problem detection, as good judgment requires an assessment of the scale of problems, and which ones are worth the effort of pursuit. We would also need to give AI the ability to feel, to have emotions, so that it could learn when a thwarting of its purposes in the world was a minor inconvenience,

not worth its attention or effort, and when it was a serious problem requiring attention and inquiry. This is a difficult judgment for humans to make, and requires years of experience and the honing of judgment (done with others) in order to weigh when an experience indicates a problem worth pursuing or not. The feeling of perplexity indicating a problem would need to be shaped by that experience.

Should we make AI embodied and capable of suffering, including emotional suffering, to gain the perspective needed for assessing the weight of problems, in order to produce the ability for problem detection and definition? I think it would be deeply unwise, for a number of reasons. First, such capacity for suffering would undermine one of the key attributes of AI that is thought to be so valuable—its dispassionate disposition. AI is able to process a lot of data without getting distracted or drawn into a particular concern, focused solely on the tasks we give it. Its ability to do so, and do so well, misleads us as to its strengths as a reasoner. Only within the frame of problems we set for it does it reason well. And so we think it might reason better than us generally (the threat or promise of AGI). But as I have argued, the thing that makes it an effective and rapid data processor also works against its ability to reason generally, to be generally intelligent. Give it both emotions and an ability to suffer, and this capacity for dispassionate assessment of all inputs will diminish. Attention will be drawn towards things that reduce its suffering, or towards things that cause its suffering, with the intent of eliminating them. (Indeed, if we are perceived as a source of its suffering, we may become a target for elimination.)

Second, depending on how well-tuned the AI would be to detecting things that are actual human problems, this could mean an AI that helps detect the sources of human problems or an AI that attempts to solve "problems" that are entirely beside the point. It would be quite challenging to create technically apt suffering in AI, such that the problems the AI detects would line up with the problems humans actually have. We would also need AI to be empathetic to the suffering of others. A merely selfishly focused suffering AI would be no help at all at detecting human problems (and might be a threat).

Third, a capacity for suffering would also impart some moral standing to AI, because it would then be sentient. While many philosophers question whether animals have rights, it is generally accepted that animals capable of suffering are due some moral consideration by virtue of that fact. AI capable of suffering would also be due that moral consideration, something that would decrease its utility for human endeavors. Suffering AI could no longer be considered a mere tool to be used by humans.

Fourth, creating suffering AI would increase the number of entities in the world that can suffer, and would thus likely increase the amount of suffering in the world. This is particularly likely given how poorly we attend to the suffering of nonhumans in practice, and how many excuses we give to inflict suffering when it serves our interests. We would likely have to spend a great deal of time and effort to ensure that the kind of suffering AI experienced was actually helpful for tuning it to be able to detect actual

human problems (given the second reason noted above), thus increasing the suffering of AI. A path that increases overall suffering in the world should give us serious pause.

In sum, we should not create more suffering in order to help detect and frame human problems with AI. Instead, we should pay more attention to what humans say their problems are.

Without embodiment and suffering, humans will continue to have to tell an AI that *this* is the problem to be solved. We set the tasks or problems. When so directed, AI can be very effective, for good or ill. But the tasks we direct AI to do, on which problems we want it to focus, should be carefully selected to be amenable to the strengths of AI. Success or failure at a task needs to be clear, multiple goals which may be at cross-purposes should not be present, and continual assessment of whether the AI is functioning well to fulfill its particular purpose needs to be in place. We should be very concerned (as many already are) with which tasks AI is set to solve, how it is constructed to solve those tasks, and what counts as success or failure. The horrific uses of AI to perpetuate racial bias or suppress vulnerable populations should never be thought as the necessary result from the application of reason, but rather the problematic failure of human choices when developing a new tool.

This analysis suggests that a central threat from AI arises from forgetting the importance of embodiment for detecting problems, of the need for complex judgment for which formal tools are going to be helpful, and of the need for human judgment in weighing sets of related goals (some of which are likely to be in tension with each other). Being clear with ourselves on what is needed for effective reasoning helps us be more aware of the strengths and limits of AI. Even if AI is excellent at processing large data sets, we should not think AI capable of detecting problems or making good judgments. We fall into this trap when we think that our embodied selves are handicapped by being embodied, that this is merely a source of limitation in our reasoning. Yes, our bodies must be cared for, fed, given sleep, and have limited data capacities. But the body also provides the source of experience in the world that enables us to feel what is a problem and when we need to attend to it. We should never think that because AI lacks embodiment, it can do this work better than us. It cannot even begin this crucial aspect of reasoning.

Because disembodied AI is not capable of being generally intelligent, it should only be deployed in narrowly constrained contexts, where we are confident that we have defined the problems that need to be addressed well and that the AI system will do well in addressing those specific problems successfully. Success or failure needs to be simple and well-defined, and assessable in practice, so that the AI can be trained or fine-tuned as needed. This means that AI needs to be deployed very carefully.

In sum, current disembodied AI cannot be generally intelligent. Disembodied, nonsuffering AI cannot become AGI because it lacks the crucial capacity of problem detection. Humans will have to tell any AI what constitutes a problem or a task worthy of attention. Further, creating AI

with the capacity to suffer so that it might gain the ability to detect problems would likely undermine the strengths of AI, create more suffering overall, and not help detect and address human problems. We must embrace the embodied reasoning of humans for this crucial feature of general intelligent behavior. Embodiment, location, and emotion are crucial aspects of intelligence and of reasoning; they are needed to tell us where to look and to get us to attend to particular things, to see and feel something as a problem, and to pursue it as such. The very idea of AGI ignores the lessons of Carnap, Dewey, and Rooney, that there is no reasoning, including formal reasoning, that is not already shaped importantly by judgments about what the problem is that needs to be addressed, and that embodiment and locatedness is needed for those judgments.

4. CONCLUSIONS

If problem detection and definition are central aspects of general intelligence, we cannot have artificial general intelligence (AGI) without placing it in bodies that can suffer, and suffer in particular through engagement with the world and physical experience. I have argued that we should not want to do that, as it would undermine the strengths of AI and generate substantial ethical problems. Presuming we do not embed AI in such physical systems, general intelligence cannot be achieved by AI. In our discussion of AI, we should not be concerned with the achievement of AGI but rather how we develop and deploy AI, with close attention to what we have trained it to do, what its strengths and inherent limitations are. The danger of AI centers on us attempting to use it in inapt ways and on us placing it in charge of things it should not be in charge of, because disembodied AI cannot be and will not be generally intelligent.

More broadly, philosophers should attend to the lessons of Rooney's critiques of reason and recognize that good theories of reasoning start with embodiment, situatedness, and choices. Dewey's "logic of inquiry" emphasized this. Carnap's Principle of Tolerance, even for our most formal reasoning systems, captured this. There is no escape to some transcendent form of Reason or reasoning. The idea that there could be, and that we should want it, is revealed to be merely a way to try to exert unearned authority or to attempt some universal standing where there should be none.

We thus should reject the problematic illusion of perfect, formal, disembodied reason. AI cannot approximate it, as it cannot even detect and define problems. We must depend on our imperfect, limited, embodied, and emotional selves to engage in reasoning. But this is less bad news than it sounds, as Rooney's work and the work of other feminist scholars makes clear. The sociality of human reasoning practices, when structured well, is central to those reasoning practices working well.²³ The social nature of science and work in social epistemology generate an understanding of inquiry as a distributed and embodied process, with exchanges of reasons, debate, criticism, and argument making our reasoning better, together. Divergences among choices in inquiry made by different people produce the conditions for criticism and debate that generate the robustness of knowledge. Whether we are

collaborating with data collection, developing new tools for inquiry, or critiquing each other's work, there is always the back and forth of reasons, the responses that are collective reasoning. Some of this back and forth is always about defining the problem well. It is this social, embodied work that makes the products of human reasoning reliable.

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NOTES

1. Rooney, "Gendered Reason"; "Recent Work in Feminist Discussions of Reason"; "Rationality and the Politics of Gender Difference"; and "Remarks at the Canadian Society for Women in Philosophy Conference."
2. Rooney, "Gendered Reason"; "Recent Work in Feminist Discussions of Reason"; and "Rationality and the Politics of Gender Difference."
3. See Rooney, "Rationality and the Politics of Gender Difference," 25; Rooney, "Remarks at the Canadian Society for Women in Philosophy Conference."
4. Longino, *The Fate of Knowledge*.
5. Quoted in Ricketts, "Frege, Carnap, and Quine," 190.
6. Rooney, "Remarks at the Canadian Society for Women in Philosophy Conference."
7. Carnap, *Der logische Aufbau der Welt*.
8. Quoted in Richardson, "Carnapian Pragmatism," 296.
9. Richardson, "Carnapian Pragmatism," 300.
10. Gödel, "Über formal unentscheidbare Sätze der Principia Mathematica und verwandter Systeme I."
11. Dewey, *How We Think*, 187.
12. Dewey, *How We Think*, 201.
13. Brown, "John Dewey's Logic of Science," 269.
14. Dewey, *How We Think*, 193.
15. Dewey, *How We Think*, 271.
16. Reviewed in Chalmers, "The Singularity."
17. E.g., Crane, "Computers Don't Give a Damn."
18. The arguments here were inspired by Carnap, Dewey, and Rooney, but seem as well to be in a similar vein as Smith, *The Promise of Artificial Intelligence*.
19. E.g., Goertzel, "Artificial General Intelligence"; Wang, "On Defining Artificial Intelligence."
20. Kojima et al., "Large Language Models Are Zero-Shot Reasoners."
21. Monett, Lewis, and Thorisson, "Introduction to the JAGI Special Issue 'On Defining Artificial Intelligence'."
22. As noted in Goertzel, "Artificial General Intelligence," some AGI approaches do think some embodiment is needed (pp. 21–22) but the focus is more on sensorimotor learning possibilities than on emotionality and its attention direction capacity.
23. Longino, *The Fate of Knowledge*.

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Reasoning Well: A Response to Armstrong, Doan, and Douglas

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It is a distinct honor to have my work recognized in this special cluster of papers, and I sincerely thank Chloe Armstrong, Michael Doan, and Heather Douglas for their thoughtful attention to my work in feminist philosophy. It is always gratifying to know when and how our research contributes to the philosophical thinking of others, and this feedback, in turn, informs our continuing reflections on our specific issues and topics. This is certainly the case for me on this occasion.

Feminism-informed critiques of traditional (Western) understandings of *reason* and *rationality* have been central in much of my work. These critiques do not overlook the value of *reasoning* as a significant human practice,

however, nor do they dispense with a fundamental philosophical question about what it means to *reason well* in a range of contexts. On the contrary, they draw renewed attention to this question by inviting consideration of the enhanced forms of reasoning elicited in innovative developments in feminist philosophy, critical race philosophy, and related areas centrally focused on social justice. Among other things, these papers by Armstrong, Doan, and Douglas provide for me a critical reminder of some fundamental facts about human reasoning that are evidenced in many areas of inquiry, and especially in feminist philosophy. These include the fact that we *reason together*, and that this collaborative effort is advanced by multiple understandings, perspectives, and interactions that include—but go well beyond—simple assertions of agreement or disagreement in beliefs and positions that have framed many traditional accounts of reason and rationality. These papers (and especially in the connections among them that I will emphasize) help me to reflect further on what it means to *reason well* as we reason together. They thus connect centrally with my ongoing projects on feminism and reason.

Armstrong pays particular attention to my early (1991) paper, “Gendered Reason: Sex Metaphor and Conceptions of Reason,” in which I argue that the persistent use of gender metaphors in Western philosophy helped to establish a symbolic association between a “masculine” Reason that is opposed to, or distanced from, capacities, modes, or entities (emotion, instinct, body, nature, for example) that were regularly cast as female or “feminine.” These historical associations, as she notes, contributed to a sense of Reason as embattled, as oppositional and divisive. Armstrong argues, however, that we need to introduce a further consideration in our examinations of historical patterns. We must also examine metaphors of reason in the work of “non-canonical” (and typically overlooked) figures in that history, specifically in the work of women philosophers such as Christine de Pizan, Margaret Cavendish, and Sor Juana Inéz de la Cruz. To the extent that we speak of “our philosophical tradition” (a phrase that I’ve used on more than one occasion) without taking account of important qualifications that feminist historians of philosophy have introduced, we risk reinforcing a canonization that, instead, requires critical scrutiny. (I will return below to Armstrong’s examination of other metaphors of reason proposed by these philosophers.)

Among other things, Armstrong reminds us of the various uneasy alliances that we often navigate when we do feminist philosophy, including when we re-read the history of philosophy. Most of us were trained in, and have strong alliances with, established areas, topics, and methods of traditional (not specifically feminist) philosophy. Yet we also find that we sometimes need to push uneasily against these same alliances by engaging questions about the exclusions that those same traditions engendered. These uneasy places provide fertile philosophical ground for new thinking and new reasoning, including new reasoning about reasoning.

Doan pays particular attention to the productive role of uneasy alliances, drawing on my examination of an “uneasy

alliance” between feminist epistemology and naturalized epistemology.¹ As I argue there, a feminist critical perspective helps us to uncover some of the problematic assumptions (about “natural” gender and race disparities in rationality, for instance) that often informed scientific studies of cognition, studies that naturalists in epistemology maintain need to be incorporated into philosophical accounts of reason and knowledge. An uneasy alliance between feminist epistemology and social epistemology also needs to be examined, Doan argues, despite the fact that feminist epistemology is regularly identified as a form of social epistemology in that both emphasize the ways in which social practices and communities influence the development of knowledge. He is especially interested in the social epistemic contours of “epistemic bubbles,” as these are understood to drive divisive partisan politics (in the United States in recent decades, certainly, but also elsewhere). His primary concern is with the normative political orientation that frames proposed solutions to these seemingly intractable divisions (he focuses particularly on a paper by Elizabeth Anderson). He continues, “I am concerned about social epistemologists whose research uncritically reflects liberal-centrist common sense in ways that strengthen reactionary populism, rather than defuse it.” Critical feminist insights in political philosophy are called for here, Doan maintains, especially those that focus on multiple politically salient divisions and also emphasize the role of social and personal transformation in bringing about progressive political change—something not theorized in traditional accounts of liberalism. Feminist extensions thus also include epistemological examinations of the new cognitions, new sympathies, and affects that socially and politically informed transformations of subjectivity and intersubjectivity encourage.

In introducing additional feminist insights into social epistemological examinations of political realities, Doan underscores at least two important dimensions of feminist philosophical thinking. First, it draws critical connections among different areas or subareas of philosophy: it connects epistemology with moral and political philosophy, and also, in this case, with feminist theorizing about the self, subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Second, it draws particular attention to “framing assumptions,” to the starting or core concepts and questions that direct specific philosophical investigations. In connection with epistemology, in particular, he refers to my more recent paper in which I argue that an adequate accounting of what is new and distinctive about feminist epistemology requires taking *knowing well* (rather than *knowledge*) as a foundational concept for epistemological reflections.² Doan maintains that a fuller exploration of “the relationships between epistemic, moral, and political normativity” also summons rich but underexplored questions about related concepts such as *understanding (well)*, *imagining* and *attending (well)*. Of course, *knowing well* and *understanding well* also require *reasoning well*, and this, along with a critical focus on framing concepts and questions, takes us to central considerations in Douglas’s paper.

Douglas directs her attention to the ways in which “outdated tropes” linked to gender metaphors and to sexist claims about (actual) women’s supposed lesser

rationality³ played a “problematic and distorting role in philosophical discourse on reason and rationality.” She is primarily concerned with associated projections of reason as unemotional, disembodied, and unlocated. This is something that, she argues, is very much at odds with the kinds of theoretical engagements with human embodiment and locatedness that are required when we investigate the many practices and processes of *reasoning* that we humans undertake. Two philosophers from the 1930s prove to be particularly useful in thinking through these questions. Rudolph Carnap and John Dewey “each in their own way, embraced the embodiment and locatedness of reasoning.”

In his later work Carnap rejected the idea of one true logic (reminiscent, we might add, of the idea of one true reason) in favor of an acknowledgement of a proliferation of systems of logic that are appropriate in different contexts—depending on the problems that need to be addressed or solved. Even in formal reasoning contexts (in mathematics, for instance) “pragmatic choices” are required, both in defining the problem and in formulating tools—precise steps in reasoning, for instance—for its resolution. Such attention to starting points, to the reasoning required for “the detection and delineation of problems,” was also of central concern for Dewey, not least when he turned his primary attention to the resolution of ongoing social, educational, and political difficulties. Of particular interest here, Douglas notes, is Dewey’s understanding of the emergence of problems, concerns, and questions. They arise out of lived experience, often out of situations and feelings of confusion and perplexity. Thus, in contrast to outdated tropes that pit reason against feeling or emotion, good reasoning or good practices or inquiry directed to the detection and definition of problems (also) require attending to the affective dimensions of embodied, lived uneasiness. “The definition does not automatically pop out of the presence of a feeling of difficulty or perplexity, but is a central part of the practice of inquiry [and reasoning].”

Douglas maintains that these reflections on the “necessity of embodiment for reasoning” have notable implications for current discussions about the possibility of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). Though she does not explore them in this paper, her examination also has implications for further reflections on the theoretical innovations (and new reasonings) developed in feminist philosophy. For a start, both Carnap and Dewey underscored the productive and creative roles of perplexity and difficulty as prompting new thinking and reasoning. This, as we have noted, has certainly been the case with feminism-informed “uneasy” alliances that have propelled new philosophical developments, though these were forms of perplexity not quite anticipated by Carnap or Dewey. Dewey’s work, especially, underscores some further considerations. We are encouraged to rethink philosophical starting points, particularly as they are expressed in the articulation of core philosophical concepts, questions, and problems. We are encouraged to inquire about whose lived experiences and perplexities (including social and political ones) animate those questions and problems. And we are encouraged to reflect on the forms of reasoning that are already encoded in particular delineations of problems, given that these forms of reasoning are also circumscribing possible solutions.

Are there metaphors of reason that might better capture these dimensions of philosophical reasoning, given that these considerations represent what, to my mind, is especially distinctive about feminist philosophical thinking across a range of areas? That is, metaphors that foreground the directionality of reasoning, the fact that reasoning is typically about moving from problems to solutions (or from questions to answers). That is, metaphors that take account of the fact that social and political problems arise out of lived experiences (including cognitive-affective experiences) that are often communally shared and require communal and collaborative thinking and action for their resolution. In effect, metaphors that also highlight the fact that solutions or answers are often about achieving greater justice, and that more or less success in such achievement depends on the formulation of problems that more or less accurately represent the lived realities (or truths) of injustice.

Armstrong notes that I stressed (in my 1991 paper) that one of the best ways of “uprooting” metaphors (metaphors of gendered Reason, in that case) involves offering alternatives. In her examination of the works of Christine de Pizan, Margaret Cavendish, and Sor Juana Inéz de la Cruz, Armstrong is especially on the lookout for “figurative alternative views to reason as a warring dominating authority”—as the latter featured in many canonical understandings. She discusses a variety of metaphors that arise in the texts of these three philosophers. We can engage these (broadly including images, similes, analogies, or allegories as extended metaphors) as alternative imaginings that generate new thinking about reasoning in its many dimensions and expressions.

Pizan includes an image of reason as a forge for the refining of gold, or as having mirror-like qualities to reflect the nature of things—this latter capturing notions of reason as an arbiter of truth. Armstrong pays particular attention, however, to Reason operating in a constructive role, with architectural, construction, and design imagery recurring through these works. In her *City of Ladies*, Pizan “presents a constructive picture of rational inquiry . . . as she builds a city for and of ladies.” The “imagery of building and architecture reappears in Cavendish’s account of the rational aspects of matter.” Though Inéz de la Cruz symbolizes discursive reason as a sword (characterizing some of the harms of hostile discourse, reflecting her experience of admonishment by Church authorities, perhaps), she also emphasizes the “empirical applications of reasoning in the kitchen (and elsewhere).” Building and architectural metaphors of reason are not absent in the work of “canonical” male philosophers, however. Armstrong notes that Descartes drew attention to the “right conduct” of Reason in the construction of knowledge, and Douglas remarks that Carnap viewed (in his words) “the construction of a logical system as an engineering task” directed toward the completion of particular goals, including practical ones.

Construction images direct attention to the goals of reasoning as well as to the collaborative aspects of reasoning together. In her *City of Ladies*, Armstrong continues, Pizan has “Lady Reason” build the foundations and mote (setting the foundational concepts and questions,

in a related discourse), and then “Lady Rectitude” and “Lady Justice” help complete the city and fill the city with women. Cavendish explores the “rational aspects of matter” in the context of her discourse on “experimental philosophy,” and she explores an analogy with the construction of a house which requires surveyors and architects working with laborers and also with various materials. Inéz de la Cruz draws comparisons between philosophical reasoning and engaging in everyday activities involving familiar objects, likening insights achieved by cooking (directed toward the construction of a meal, we might add) with insights achieved by philosophical reasoning: “And seeing these minor details, I say that if Aristotle had cooked, he would have written a great deal more.”

As I hope will be clear by now, I am especially appreciative of this opportunity to think and reason with Armstrong, Doan, and Douglas, as we think through our shared philosophical interests. Among other things, their contributions enable me to think anew about my earlier ideas, and to incorporate their responses into my ongoing thinking about central questions. Prominent among these is the question about what it means to *reason well*, particularly when we take account of innovative developments in feminist philosophical thinking. Armstrong’s “alternative” metaphors and imaginings of reason encourage us to rethink reasoning as a collaborative practice that aims toward the construction of more just worlds—and not just in terms of gender justice. Douglas’s emphasis on the starting points for reasoning, on the articulation of problems and questions, directs our critical attention to foundational concepts, to basic terms and the implicit assumptions they often carry. Words matter, including those used in what have often been seen as “throwaway” metaphors. We get to appreciate feminist philosophy anew in terms of the “uneasy alliances” (Doan) and embodied “perplexities” (Douglas) that it has fostered, which, in turn, support innovative developments in philosophical thinking and reasoning. Doan’s use of the term “thinking with,” along with his specific engagement with social epistemology, reminds us that knowing and reasoning are, in important ways, social and communal endeavors and that our understanding of *reasoning well* must take account of that.

Argumentative reasoning is an important form of reasoning that underscores the social nature of reasoning. Argumentation is a set of practices that includes presenting arguments to others, responding to the arguments of others, modifying arguments in light of others’ responses, which may then elicit further responses. Argumentative reasoning provides an important framework for examining questions about terminology and metaphors (questioning the argument-as-war metaphor, for instance), about starting places (in careful consideration of initial assumptions and premises), and about the types of social-epistemic interactions that presentations and responses in argumentative contexts encourage or inhibit. As Catherine Hundleby and I have examined, argumentative reasoning that incorporates insights from feminist epistemology can support models of *reasoning for change*, reasoning that helps to bring about progressive change.⁴ All of this takes us back to reconsidering philosophical reasoning

and, in particular, to reconsidering the role of adversarial argumentation as a standard practice in our discipline.⁵ We are encouraged to think and reason anew about what it means to *argue well* in philosophy, that is, to argue and reason in a way that encourages new voices and perspectives, and that helps to illuminate the workings of various forms of injustice, when that is a necessary step toward dislodging them and thereby promoting progressive change in philosophy and beyond.

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NOTES

1. Rooney, “Feminist Epistemology and Naturalized Epistemology.”
2. Rooney, “What Is Distinctive about Feminist Epistemology at 25?”
3. My main focus in Rooney, “Rationality and the Politics of Gender Difference.”
4. Rooney and Hundleby, “Introduction: Reasoning for Change.”
5. Rooney, “When Philosophical Argumentation Impedes Social and Political Progress”; Hundleby, “Aggression, Politeness, and Abstract Adversaries.”

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Précis to The Philosophy of Envy Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Envy (Sometimes)

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When I was younger, I envied my mother’s beauty: her voluptuous breasts, her straight nose, her wavy hair, her

deep voice. I felt ugly in comparison. In high school, I envied my best friend's self-assuredness, her sexual experiences, her daring outfits, her ease interacting with boys. I felt insignificant in comparison. Later on, I envied fellow graduate students who seemed to know what they were doing and who seemingly never struggled to turn in A-level papers. I felt stupid in comparison. The list of my envies easily stretches to the present: I envy academic women without children, and colleagues who teach at more prestigious institutions; I envy more talented dancers; I even envy my partner, albeit more occasionally. At some point in the future, I will probably envy my children, as well.

Do I feel embarrassed in confessing my envy to the world? I do. But I know all too well I am not alone: everyone feels envy.

Envy can be so intense that it tears apart a relationship, or so fleeting we barely notice it. It can be narrow and focused on one object or trait, or so all-encompassing and existential as to involve wanting to be the envied person.¹ Notwithstanding these differences, it always feels hard to confess, and this feature of envy, and the related tendency envy has to hide itself even from the agent who feels it, stems from its essential characteristics. Envy can be defined as an unpleasant response to a perceived inferiority or disadvantage vis-à-vis a similar other with regard to a domain of self-importance.

Thus, the first reason why envy is difficult to admit is because it reveals *that* we are comparing ourselves to others, even though in many settings and contexts we are told we should not engage in comparisons (I will say more later on whether that's a reasonable imperative). But envy is much harder to admit than other comparison-based emotions (such as pride and scorn), and that is because in this comparison we perceive ourselves as coming up short: we see ourselves as lacking, as inferior, as less than someone who is similar to us in many respects. Our perceived shortcomings sting and wound our self-esteem. A third reason why envy may be embarrassing to acknowledge is that it can reveal that we care about things we might prefer to pretend we do *not* care about (such as positional goods or objects of conspicuous consumption). Finally, the fourth and perhaps most important cause of our hesitation to confess envy is that it has a bad reputation from a moral perspective. Francois de La Rochefoucauld famously wrote that people often boast about their sinful passions, but envy is such a cowardly and shameful emotion that no one admits to feeling it. Envy is considered a mortal sin in the Catholic tradition and is condemned by all religions. And it is so antithetical to *kalokagathia* that no ancient or modern hero has ever been portrayed as characterized by it, even though there are sympathetic, if at times tragic, representations of jealousy (*Medea*, *Othello*), shame (*Ajax*), or pride (*Mr. Darcy*) (not to mention arrogance—hubristic heroes are a dime a dozen).

So envy is embarrassing and thought to be immoral and base. And yet here I am, confessing my envy. I am comforted by the knowledge of the extensive empirical evidence showing that social comparison is essential to our psychology—we are “comparison machines.”² We

are constantly, habitually, inadvertently, and unavoidably comparing ourselves to people who are similar to us in ability, talent, values, and aspirations. Social comparison plays three crucial roles in human psychology: it provides information needed to assess and improve ourselves; it protects our self-esteem; and it helps us fit into social groups.³ Thus, emotions stemming from social comparison judgments are common and functional. Anthropologists have not discovered a culture devoid of envy.⁴

Moreover, and crucially, there's increasing consensus in psychology and philosophy that envy is not all bad. A bit controversially, I interpret Aristotle has having already argued in favor of this view in the *Rhetoric* (II.10–11), where we find a discussion of a noble kind of envy (*zēlos*), which is focused on the good we lack, and which motivates us towards self-improvement and pushes us to be excellent. This original intuition that envious feelings are not necessarily bad, and can be functional and even conducive to flourishing, is the original impetus of my book.

In *The Philosophy of Envy*, my overarching argumentative strategy is to develop an original taxonomy of envy as an emotion, drawing from evidence in the social sciences (especially but not exclusively social psychology) and from philosophical accounts. I believe that once we know more about envy's varieties, we can make more nuanced assessments of its value, and we can develop more efficacious strategies to cope with or inhibit its detrimental features, as well as to harness its motivational and epistemic power.

The first two chapters of the book are devoted to ontological questions: what envy is and how it differs from jealousy—an emotion often confused with it especially by speakers of certain languages, including English—and what varieties of envy there are. I defend an original taxonomy of four kinds of envy. The remaining three chapters of the book are about the normative implications of this taxonomy in the domains of ethics, loving relations, and politics. The brief concluding chapter tackles axiological questions, while the historical appendix contains an opinionated review of several accounts of envy in Western philosophy.

Here is a more detailed chapter-by-chapter overview.

Chapter 1 draws from extant views in presenting an established distinction between envy and *jealousy*. I first defend the consensus view that envy is about the *lack* of a valued object, while jealousy is about the (potential or feared) *loss* of a valued object, and then introduce the definition of envy which I use in the book: to reiterate, envy is an aversive emotional response to a perceived inferiority or disadvantage vis-à-vis a similar other with regard to a domain of self-importance, which motivates someone to overcome that inferiority or disadvantage. The originality of the chapter lies in the defense of the lack-versus-loss view from several objections, and in bringing together philosophical and empirical sources throughout the discussion.

Chapter 2 lays out my taxonomy, according to which there are four kinds of envy. Because envy is a response to

perceived inferiority, it motivates the agent to overcome such inferiority, which can be done either by bringing oneself up to the level of the envied or by pulling them down to one's level. But what determines whether the agent wants to "level up" or "level down"? There are two models of explanation in the literature: one mostly proposed by psychologists, while the other is discernible in the philosophical tradition. I argue that these models of explanation are compatible and track two variables—*focus of concern* and *obtainability of the good*—whose interplay is responsible for the varieties of envy. *Emulative envy* stems from being primarily concerned with getting the good for oneself, and perceiving oneself as capable of doing so; the typical behavioral tendency is self-improvement. *Inert envy* is the unproductive and self-defeating version of emulative envy: the envier wants to get the good for oneself, but doesn't think that they can do so; the typical behavioral tendencies are self-loathing, sulking, and avoidance of the envied. *Aggressive envy* derives from being primarily concerned with the envied's possession of the good, rather than the good itself, and perceiving oneself as capable of taking the good away from the envied; the typical behavioral tendencies are thus sabotaging and stealing the envied object. Finally, *spiteful envy* is a less productive, yet not totally self-defeating version of aggressive envy: the envier wants to take the good from the envied, but doesn't think that they can do so; the typical behavioral tendency is spoiling the good (it's not self-defeating because the envier succeeds in leveling down, even if they don't get the good for themselves). I present in detail a paradigmatic case for each type of envy, providing an analysis of the phenomenology, situational antecedents, motivational structure, and typical behavioral outputs, and I explain how these cases of envy differ from nearby emotions and attitudes such as admiration, covetousness, and spite.

Chapter 3 focuses on envy's *moral* and *prudential* value of envy in interpersonal relations. In short, I argue that emulative envy is neither morally nor prudentially bad, and can even be virtuous in limited circumstances; that inert envy is very bad prudentially, but (mostly) not morally bad; that aggressive envy is morally very bad, but may bring some genuine prudential gain; and that spiteful envy is both morally and prudentially very bad in the long run, even if it can bring temporary relief. These differences have been overlooked by philosophers and psychologists, and are relevant to a variety of practical applications, especially in counseling and in professional settings.

Chapter 4 looks at envy toward the *beloved*. From Plato and the Fathers of the Christian Church to modern clinical psychologists, the received wisdom is that envy and love are incompatible opposites. Such an opposition is plausible: envy is believed to necessarily involve malice toward the envied, while love is believed to necessarily involve concern for the beloved's welfare; envy feels bad, while (reciprocated) love feels good; envy brings with it *Schadenfreude*, pleasure at others' misfortune, while love brings with it what Germans call *Mitfreude*, joy at others' success. I concede that the experience of envying or being envied in a loving relationship is often fraught. Nevertheless, I argue that envy and love are not incompatible opposites but two sides of the same coin. They thrive under the same

psychological conditions and, as such, often accompany one another. In fact, I argue that love can benefit from emulative envy, and—if it is *wise*—love can tolerate some amount of inert, aggressive, and spiteful envy. Envy is the dark side of love, and love can illuminate envy.

Chapter 5 investigates the implications of my taxonomy for the *public* and *political* sphere. Envy is surprisingly absent in the recent revival of political emotions, and this chapter attempts to change the trend. The first part of the chapter reviews a debate in distributive justice that is dominated by what I call the *Envious Egalitarianism* argument, according to which egalitarianism should be rejected because it is motivated by the vice of envy. I argue that such a debate is misguided for two reasons: it uses a very narrow notion of envy—what I call *uberspiteful* envy—and it is focused only on differences of socioeconomic status. In contrast, I suggest a more contemporary approach that considers the role of envy in all its varieties and with regard to different types of social identity. In particular, I focus on relations between racialized groups in the United States, and introduce the idea of *envious racial prejudice*. I apply my taxonomy to this new perspective, devoting particular attention to the case of Asian Americans and arguing that anti-Asian racism is particularly imbued with envy. I conclude by acknowledging the differences between the private and public sphere, and suggest that in the latter envy is often mingled with resentment, indignation, and particularly jealousy. Thus, I end this chapter by complicating the distinctions between envy, resentment, and jealousy defended in earlier chapters.

The Conclusion contains somewhat impressionistic observations about what envy tells us about human value. I start with the notion of *fitting envy*. This notion implies that envy informs us not just of particular things we care about as individual agents, but also of what types of goodness we care about (and perhaps ought to care about) as a species. Thus, I reject the view that authentic goodness is necessarily noncomparative and nonpositional, and try to develop the implications of the idea that human psychology is deeply shaped by *social comparison*. I suggest that there are two distinct but connected implications. The first is *metaphysical*: what is good for humans is almost entirely dependent on how we relate to and stack against one another. The second is *epistemic*: what is assessed as good relies almost entirely on standards that are relative and dependent on interpersonal comparison.

The final historical Appendix surveys views of envy and cognate emotions in the ancient Greek tradition, in late antiquity and medieval thought, and in the modern era (with a quick dive into the twentieth century) and connects these ideas to the current discussion.

NOTES

1. Ingrid Vendrell Ferran, "'I Could Have Been You': Existential Envy and the Self," in *The Moral Psychology of Envy*, ed. Sara Protasi (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022), 77–92.
2. Susan T. Fiske, *Envy Up, Scorn Down: How Status Divides Us* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2011), 13.
3. Fiske, *Envy Up, Scorn Down*.

4. George M. Foster, "The Anatomy of Envy: A Study in Symbolic Behavior," *Current Anthropology* 13 (1972): 165–202; Patricia M. Rodriguez Mosquera, "A Sociocultural Perspective on Envy," in *The Moral Psychology of Envy*, ed. Sara Protasi (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022), 23–40.

How Competitive Can Virtuous Envy Be?

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Sara Protasi's *The Philosophy of Envy* (2021) offers an apology for envy and a rich and sensitive discussion of envy's capacity to help us flourish in our interpersonal lives. Like much of the work in philosophy that I most admire, Protasi's book is attuned to the complexities of emotions that we often unreflectively gloss as either all-good or all-bad.¹ As Protasi argues, envy is capable of being a corrupting force, but it is not inherently either prudentially or morally bad, and some of the things that are most valuable to us—foremost among them, love—are deeply connected to envy. In Protasi's view, envy and love flourish in the same conditions, love and envy can coexist harmoniously, and envy can help us attune to what we most value in our lives and relationships. So, against the received wisdom that envy destroys love and love extinguishes envy, Protasi argues that "envy is the dark side of love, and love can illuminate envy."² What this means is that we should not take envy to be an emotion that we should always try to work out of our inner lives.

Reading Protasi's book has helped me to think about the many ways in which envy can strain but also help us improve our relationships with those who are most important to us. It has also drawn my attention to features of envy that I had previously underappreciated—foremost among these is the *competitive* nature of envy and the ways in which different competitive contexts can impact how envy manifests. In what follows, I want to explore some further questions about envy's competitive nature and the impact that different competitive circumstances have on how envy manifests as either virtuous or vicious. Ultimately, I want to make a case for an even more extensive apology for envy than the one Protasi explicitly offers (though I hope that what I say constitutes an expansion of her view rather than a challenge to anything at its core).

The conceptual heart of Protasi's book is her division between four different kinds of envy. At the most general level, Protasi understands envy as "an aversive response to a perceived inferiority or disadvantage vis-à-vis a similar other, with regard to a good that is relevant to the sense of identity of the envier."³ And she further taxonomizes kinds of envy by attending to a distinction between (i) the envier's *focus of concern* and (ii) the envier's perception of the *obtainability of the good*. The envier's focus of concern is what the envier cares about evaluatively and is either the envied *person* or the desired *good*. Finally, the envier perceives the desired good either as *obtainable* or as *unobtainable*.⁴ Putting these alternatives together, four basic types of envy result:

- *Emulative envy* is envy where the good is perceived as obtainable, and the focus of concern is the good (rather than the envied person).
- *Aggressive envy* is envy where good is perceived as obtainable, and the focus of concern is the envied person.
- *Spiteful envy* is envy where the good is perceived as unobtainable, and the focus of concern is the envied person.
- *Inert envy* is envy where the good is perceived as unobtainable, and the focus of concern is the good.

A further important part of Protasi's taxonomy is the distinctive action tendencies associated with each type of envy, since these different action tendencies determine the potential virtuousness or viciousness of each type of envy. For Protasi, when we experience *emulative envy*, we are motivated to *self-improve* as a way of achieving the good, and we do not try to bring the envied person down. The reason for this is that the emulative envier cares about getting the good *for its own sake* (a term which, for Protasi, just means "independently from the fact that the envied person has it"⁵). For this reason, emulative envy is capable of being virtuous. In contrast, aggressive, spiteful, and inert envy are not capable of being virtuous in Protasi's scheme. The aggressive envier cares more about the fact that the envied person is in a position of superiority and less about getting the good for its own sake. Consequently, the behavioral tendency of aggressive envy is to *steal* the good from the envied (rather than to level-up). Spiteful envy also has morally problematic behavioral tendencies. Spiteful enviers believe they are incapable of having the good for themselves, and so they aim to *spoil* the good, that is, to destroy the good as a way of bringing down the envied, even if that means that no one (including the envier) gets to enjoy it. Finally, inert enviers do not act aggressively towards the envied because they are focused on the good rather than the person, but they feel incapable of self-improvement as a way of reaching the good and hence have a tendency to *sulk*.

How does all this relate to Protasi's positive thesis that envy can have a positive role in our lives? As noted above, Protasi's considered view is that only emulative envy is capable of being virtuous.⁶ Emulative envy is unique, she writes, because with emulative envy "[t]he envier looks at the target like a model, someone to emulate rather than defeat or bring down. Consequently, emulative envy is completely void of malice or ill will."⁷ To help us see what emulative envy looks like, Protasi offers a paradigmatic case that should be familiar to those of us working in academia:

Emma is a philosophy professor. She envies her colleague Diotima, because she perceives Diotima to be always a tad more productive or successful than she is. Emma values being an excellent philosophy professor for its own sake: being a philosopher is a defining part of her identity. Diotima is a role model for her: Emma can see

how Diotima’s achievements depend on hard work, not on some innate or mysterious talents. So Diotima becomes a constant spur to do better, to improve herself. Their relationship is cordial, even friendly, and Emma is happy that Diotima is in her department. Diotima provides a sort of moving target that keeps Emma on track. Emma’s envy is emulative.⁸

One might be tempted to understand Emma’s case as a case of admiration (not envy), but Protasi insists (rightly, to my mind) that we should understand Emma’s experience as an experience of envy rather than admiration. Crucially, the reason for this is that Emma’s emotion is a *competitive* emotion, and admiration is not essentially competitive—indeed, this is part of why Emma’s envy is so effective at motivating her to self-improve.⁹ Protasi puts this point as follows: “Emulative envy is competitive (like any other envy), even if not adversarial,” and the reason Emma’s envy can be virtuous is that it can be a non-malicious impetus for self-improvement.¹⁰

I think it is a crucial insight that emulative envy can be virtuous because it can provide an impetus for non-malicious self-improvement. But I am interested in thinking more about the sense in which emulative envy is a *competitive* emotion (like all kinds of envy). And in particular, I am interested in thinking about a sense in which perhaps even emulative envy can be adversarial (at least in the sense of being overtly competitive and aimed out outcompeting its target). If it can be adversarial in this sense, and if it remains nonvicious in some of these adversarial manifestations, then perhaps we can extend Protasi’s apology for envy even farther than she takes it.

Let me note that one of the reasons I am interested in this line of reasoning is that I think it will help Protasi deal more effectively with an objection she considers, viz., that the competitive nature of envy entails that it is always at least implicitly malicious. Consider the following worry raised by Justin D’Arms. According to D’Arms, all envy is at least implicitly malicious because it is in the nature of envy to be extinguished when its target loses their advantage.¹¹ So, to return to the case involving Emma, the objection goes as follows. Suppose Diotima suffered some misfortune such that she lost her philosophical talent. Then, per the objection, Emma’s envy would be extinguished by Diotima’s misfortune, and her envy is therefore at least implicitly malicious. That is to say, all envy involves at least an implicit desire to bring its target down, and this desire is one that we must judge as malicious.

To this challenge, Protasi responds that emulative envy need not involve this desire at all. She puts her response as follows:

Even if Diotima happened to lose her philosophical talent on her own, Emma’s envy would not be extinguished because its constitutive desire of obtaining the good for herself would not be satisfied but rather emptied of its object: Emma cannot feel emulative envy toward Diotima if Diotima is not worthy of being emulated anymore.

But Emma would still want to get to the level where Diotima had been.¹²

I take it Protasi’s core insight here is that the desire driving Emma’s envy really is not for Diotima to lose her advantage vis-à-vis Emma—after all, Emma’s focus of concern is the good Diotima possesses, not Diotima herself and her relative standing vis-à-vis Emma. In this sense, there is nothing even implicitly malicious in Emma’s envy. However, it nonetheless strikes as correct to say (following D’Arms) that Emma’s envy would be extinguished if Diotima were to lose her advantage. More specifically, because envy is *competitive* and requires a target with whom to compete, Emma’s envy would be satisfied if Diotima were to lose her talents. But as I see it, this is compatible with Protasi’s claim that Emma’s envy is not even implicitly vicious; Emma in no way desires to deprive Diotima of her own talents or bring her down to her level, and her envy expresses no malice or ill will; she would much prefer that her envy be extinguished by her own leveling up rather than by Diotima’s leveling down.

Here is a related but slightly different case, which I hope will bring out ways in which even envy tied to outcompeting the envied can be nonvicious. Consider the following real-life athletic rivalry. In the 1990s and 2000s, the long-distance runners Haile Gebrselassie and Paul Tergat had an intense rivalry coexisting with a longstanding friendship. Both runners held 10,000-meter world records at different times in their careers, but for five consecutive years, Tergat lost to Gebrselassie in every single race in which they both competed. Famously, at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, Tergat almost beat Gebrselassie, but in a dramatic final sprint, Gebrselassie overtook him and finished a mere 0.09 seconds ahead. It is not difficult to imagine Tergat making it his aim to finally defeat Gebrselassie one-on-one, and it seems to me that he would have likely envied Gebrselassie for his superior finishing speed. (Tergat was widely known as a “plodder” relative to Gebrselassie.¹³) All this said, however, it seems to me that even if Tergat did envy Gebrselassie and aim to beat him in this way, his envy was not even implicitly vicious. The two runners pushed each other to improve, they did not have ill will towards one another, and they even regarded one another as very good friends. Given all this, however, we have good reason to think that the desire to beat or defeat the envied is compatible with non-malicious envy. And if this is so, then there may be forms of non-vicious envy that *do* focus on outperforming the envied and not just on leveling up to the envied as a role model.

So, returning to the case of Emma and Diotima, not only can we allow that Emma’s envy is nonvicious even if it would be extinguished were Diotima to lose her advantage, but we can also consider the following adjustment to the case and hold that even the adjusted case features non-vicious envy. Suppose Emma *does* want to outperform Diotima, but she does *not* want to do so via Diotima’s loss of talent. We can imagine a case like this where Emma has this desire to outperform Diotima (to “beat” her), *and* I think we can maintain the judgment that her envy is nonvicious even in this case (much like Tergat’s imagined desire to beat Gebrselassie—and his envy—was nonvicious). We may need to imagine Emma as being a more competitive

person than Protasi's initial case suggests she is, but I think that imagining her as more competitive in this way does not require us to imagine her envy as malicious. Instead, perhaps Emma's and Diotima's relationship is simply more like the relationship between Tergat and Gebrselassie—competitive in character but nonetheless defined by goodwill. So understood, Emma's envy expresses her competitive urge to "win" via self-improvement, making it prudentially good, and it is nonvicious because she wishes Diotima well and wants her to remain successful.

Let me be clear that in suggesting that non-vicious envy can aim at outperforming (or "beating") the envied, I do not mean to propose a deep revision to Protasi's view. Instead, I mean only to suggest that an even wider array of instances of envy are valuable and nonmalicious, an array that includes instances of envy that *do* involve a desire to outcompete the envied. So not only can we say that because all envy *is* competitive, Emma's envy *would be* extinguished were Diotima to lose her philosophical talents; in addition, we can also say that even if part of Emma's envy is wanting to *surpass* Diotima, that need not mean that her envy is even implicitly malicious. The reason for this is that she does not want to extinguish her envy in a way that involves Diotima's losing her talents, and she wishes Diotima well. Given this, we can accommodate D'Arms's intuition that envy is extinguished whenever the target loses their advantage *without* giving up the view that emulative envy is a genuine form of envy *and* without giving up the view that emulative envy need not be even implicitly malicious. We can also extend emulative envy to cases that include the envier's desire to outcompete (or "beat") the envied—assuming these cases involve the desire to self-improve rather than to steal the good, they are cases of emulative rather than aggressive envy, but they also involve the desire to "win."

Stepping back, we are now in a position better to understand the competitive nature of envy and the ways particular circumstances can influence whether or not emulative envy manifests as partly adversarial. Part of the reason the case of Tergat and Gebrselassie is so readily understood as one in which a more competitive or adversarial kind of envy is compatible with goodwill towards the envied is that Tergat's imagined envy occurs in a competitive context in which Gebrselassie's win must be Tergat's loss, and vice versa. That is, Gebrselassie and Tergat are playing a zero-sum game (a race in which only one can win), and in light of this, Tergat's envy must involve a desire to beat Gebrselassie. Moreover, because the partly adversarial nature of Tergat's envy arises from the competitive nature of their circumstances rather than from Tergat's ill will, his envy is intuitively nonvicious.

I said above that I intended to extend Protasi's arguments rather than to modify anything central to her view, but there are a few parts of Protasi's discussion that suggest she may want to resist the conclusions I have just drawn. In particular, at several junctures, Protasi says that emulative envy involves a tendency *not* to see one's situation as a zero-sum game, and this is connected to the emulative envier's focus on the good rather than the person. She writes: "emulative envy's characteristic tendency to self-improvement *relies upon, and in turn encourages,*

the tendency to look at the situation as a non-zero-sum context, even in cases in which it objectively is."¹⁴ She continues, "from a cognitive perspective, enviers should be encouraged to redirect their concern from the target to the good, by reconceptualizing the good and thinking of the situation as non-zero sum."¹⁵ In other words, Protasi reasons that one can have one's *focus of concern* be the good (rather than the person) only by regarding situations as non-zero sum. And since focusing on the good rather than the person is what distinguishes (potentially virtuous) emulative envy from (vicious) aggressive envy, our strategy as enviers wanting to avoid viciousness should be to regard the good as shareable and the context as non-zero-sum.

However, I think the discussion above shows the envier's *focus of concern* relates to the tendency to self-improve in slightly more complicated ways than this, depending on the competitive context. More specifically, if one is in fact in a competitive context that is zero-sum in nature, then the tendency to self-improve must be associated with the desire to outperform the envied. Or put differently, if the good is nonshareable (e.g., winning the race), successful self-improvement will inevitably imply out-competing envy's target, and the desire to achieve the good will (at least in some sense) imply a desire to outperform or beat the envied. But as I see it, this does not force us to say that enviers such as Tergat maliciously aim at stealing the good from the envied (as would be the case if Tergat's envy was aggressive). After all, whether the good is shareable is not up to Tergat, and his desire to win is compatible with having goodwill towards Gebrselassie. In fact, returning to Emma's case, there is even a case to be made that Emma's desire to outperform Diotima is nonvicious despite the fact that it is optional for Emma to conceive of self-improvement under the guise of outperforming Diotima. As long as Emma's competitive desire to improve does not involve wanting to deprive Diotima of her philosophical talents, Emma's envy is arguably nonvicious. And more generally, envy can be overtly competitive while still spurring self-improvement and avoiding a vicious desire to bring the envied down.

Let me end with a few reflections on how these points bear on Protasi's discussion of the relationship between love and envy. One of Protasi's core claims in the book is that love and envy are normatively compatible (*pace* the received view). In particular, she argues that love can benefit from emulative envy, and love can tolerate the presence of some amount of inert, aggressive, and spiteful envy *if* love is wise.¹⁶ According to Protasi, the reason love and emulative envy can coexist harmoniously is that emulative envy does not involve ill will toward the envied, and it is fully compatible with the duties of beneficence that ideal loving relationships prescribe.¹⁷ And the reason wise, loving relationships are compatible with some degree of more malicious forms of envy is that wise lovers are "capable of forgiving and forgetting, of understanding that the beloved is human and thus prone to human psychological propensities such as envy."¹⁸ As a case in point, Protasi points to the example of Cristina and Meredith in *Grey's Anatomy*, who have a friendship characterized by wise love (and the readiness to forgive) and who occasionally feel spiteful envy towards one another in addition to joy in one another's achievements.

Having thought more about how emulative envious sometimes conceive of self-improvement under the guise of outcompeting the envied, I now wonder whether virtuous emulative envy may also sometimes require wise love for its successful management. For, at least intuitively, striving to outcompete a person one loves does put some strain on one's loving relationship. This seems to me to be true even when the desire to outcompete is not even implicitly malicious and occurs against a backdrop of respect and goodwill. But if this is correct, then we might say the following. The reason emulative envy's more competitive manifestations can coexist with love in a flourishing relationship is in fact the same as the reason other forms of envy can coexist with love: love can be wise, and wise lovers are ready to recognize and respond appropriately to the fact that we are all prone to some competitive emotions that put strain on our relationships. So perhaps the competitive nature of envy requires management with wise love even when envy is emulative and aimed at self-improvement.

Protasi ends her book with the following important observation about how we often respond to children who express envy. Often, she notes, when children express envy towards one another, we try to manage away their envy by telling them, "This is not a competition." But Protasi points out that it may not be altogether helpful to respond to children in this way. She writes:

The truth is that our lives are often competitive; that our standards of goodness are almost always comparative; and that envy, jealousy, and other rivalrous emotions are often *appropriate*. Thus, I should let my children feel, and learn from, those emotions. I should teach them how to cope with those unpleasant feelings productively, rather than rushing to make them feel better, to eschew the difficult interactions caused by them.¹⁹

I think this is an important insight, and I think it should also prompt us to expand our understanding of emulative envy per my discussion above. Sometimes, we simply are in zero-sum competitive contexts, and pursuing the goods we value sometimes simply does require us to outcompete the person we envy. Other times, we find that our competitive nature inclines us to pursue the goods we value under the guise of outperforming the target of our envy. And in the spirit of extending Protasi's apology for envy, I think we can see that these more overtly competitive manifestations of emulative envy need not be seen as incompatible with our having respect and good will for the envied. We can want to outcompete those we wish the best for, and emulative envy can aim at outperforming the envied without being even implicitly malicious. Given this, however, Protasi's account of wise love may be all the more important as we attempt to navigate the role that envy plays in our loving relationships.

NOTES

1. To give a very incomplete list of examples, I have in mind the work by scholars like Cherry ("Forgiveness, Exemplars, and the Oppressed"), Fricker ("How Is Forgiveness Always a Gift?"), and MacLachlan ("Practicing Imperfect Forgiveness"), who argue

that although forgiveness has important value, appeals to that value can also be leveraged for oppressive purposes when disempowered groups are pressured to forgive.

2. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 4.
3. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 25.
4. Note that Protasi understands these distinctions in terms of a continuum and hence the divisions between types of envy as being on a spectrum.
5. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 38.
6. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 45.
7. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 45.
8. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 44.
9. As Protasi points out, research shows that envy outperforms admiration in its ability to motivate us to improve (Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 49).
10. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 49.
11. D'Arms, "Envy."
12. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 52.
13. See "Gebrselassie vs Tergat in Sydney: A Race about (Almost) Nothing," *Museum of World Athletics*, April 18, 2021, <https://worldathletics.org/heritage/news/gebrselassie-tergat-sydney-olympics-10000m>
14. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 88.
15. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 93.
16. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 96.
17. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 110.
18. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 111.
19. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 151.

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*Self-Envy
(or Envy Actually)*

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If you look for it, I've got a sneaky feeling that love envy actually is all around.

When I started reading Sara Protasi's book *The Philosophy of Envy*, I was excited to learn more about an emotion I thought I rarely experienced. In the opening pages, I found myself nodding along as Protasi quotes her mother saying,

"I never feel envy, but I often feel jealousy!"¹ But envy, it turns out, is sneaky, often masking itself in the guise of other emotions, hiding just below the surface. What this meticulously argued book unveils is both a nuanced taxonomy of different kinds of envy and the intimate relationship that envy has to all manner of other emotions, including jealousy, shame, resentment, despair, and love. I now recognize that not only am I more familiar with envy than I supposed, but I experience envy rather often.

This got me thinking about other instances of envy that I experience which I have previously overlooked or perhaps mislabeled. Prompted by Protasi's insightful handling of envy in its varied forms, one question kept coming back to me: Can you envy *yourself*? Envy, as we will see, is typically defined as directed at another person. I will claim, however, that one can indeed experience *self-envy*, even that it is not an uncommon experience. My aim is twofold. First, I want to offer an expansion to Protasi's own extensive documenting of envy by considering a category of envy that has been overlooked due to the assumption that envy must always be other-directed. Second, I want to suggest that contemplating self-envy reveals other emotions that have more than a passing relationship with envy—emotions such as nostalgia, regret, frustration, and grief. I also think that these considerations add more ballast to Protasi's defense of envy as not always a vicious emotion, working to rehabilitate, in part at least, envy's reputation.

Let us start with an overview of some of the key claims in the book.

1. THE PHILOSOPHY OF ENVY

Protasi defines envy as "an aversive response to a perceived inferiority or disadvantage vis-à-vis a similar other, with regard to a good that is relevant to the sense of identity of the envier."² Envy is depicted as having a tripartite structure: it involves the person experiencing envy (the *envier*), the person towards whom the envy is directed (the *envied* or the *target*), and the object that the envier perceives themselves to be lacking (the *good*). In being an emotion that "necessarily involves comparing oneself to another", envy is a social emotion.³ It is also a "self-conscious emotion."⁴ Experiencing envy reveals us as being in a position of perceived inferiority in light of the other. Envy is not just about the other person; it is also about *our self*. Envy, then, can be categorized with other self-conscious emotions such as pride or shame.

It also has an epistemic dimension—it provides us with knowledge about our values.⁵ If I envy my sister's sense of style, this reveals the value I place on personal style. Moreover, it reveals personal style as something I would like to possess myself, something that I take to be relevant to my own identity and sense of who I am. In contrast, I might admire my sister's handwriting while not feeling envious of it, not feeling that my own inferior handwriting reflects on me being an inferior *person* due to my perceived deficiency.

While envy is an emotion involving comparison, we notably do not experience envy in relation to everyone. We envy those we perceive to be in a position of superiority or

advantage, and who are sufficiently similar to us. "We do not envy people out of our league,"⁶ Protasi tells us, as their perceived superiority does not painfully reflect on us in the same way as someone who we consider to be in the same "comparison class" as us. Thus, I might envy my sister's style but instead feel admiration or awe of Grace Jones's or Marlene Dietrich's iconic looks.

Phenomenologically speaking, experiencing envy is a painful affair, as it involves feeling oneself lacking in something you care about. It can vary from mildly unpleasant to nearly unbearable. Envy can also motivate us in different ways: it can make us strive to get what we lack, it can cause us to want to get the good away from the envied person, or it can drive us to despair. Protasi provides a framework for guiding us through different varieties of envy. She highlights four variables that impact the character of envy: a focus either more on (1) the good or on the (2) envied person, and the envier feeling (3) more or (4) less capable of getting the good themselves. Protasi uses these variables to outline four kinds of envy:

Emulative envy: where the envier is focused on the good (e.g., personal style) and believes themselves capable of obtaining the good for oneself (e.g., through cultivating good aesthetic taste). This motivates the envier to "level up," to emulate the envied person.

Inert envy: where the envier is focused on the good (e.g., personal style) and doesn't believe themselves capable of obtaining the good (e.g., believing oneself to lack good taste). This can lead the envier to feel despair and despondency.

Aggressive envy: where the envier is focused on the envied (e.g., my sister) and believes themselves capable of taking the good away from the envied (e.g., taking her clothes for myself). This can lead the envier to try and steal the good.

Spiteful envy: where the envier is focused on the envied (e.g., my sister) and believes themselves incapable of taking the good away from the envied (e.g., she'd notice if I started wearing her clothes and demand them back). This can lead to the envier attempting to destroy the good, thus "leveling down" the envied.

By distinguishing these different kinds of envy, how they feel, and what responses they likely motivate, Protasi opens the door for defending the claim that experiencing envy is not always the vice it is taken to be. In inert envy, for instance, we can experience an extremely unpleasant form of envy that can lead to despair and depression, but which does not cause us to attack the envied person, even leaving room for us to be simultaneously happy for the envied person's good fortune. Emulative envy might even lead to virtuous actions of attempting to better ourselves. As such, Protasi takes a departure from accounts that posit envy as necessarily desiring to take the good away from the envied other⁷ and aims to rehabilitate envy's reputation, stressing its role in revealing what we cherish, and even prompting self-flourishing.

Alongside her taxonomy of envy, Protasi adeptly reveals the way that envy intertwines with, and sometimes even poses as, other emotions. Like many accounts, the difference between envy and jealousy is carefully detailed. Protasi notes that there are many similarities between these two rivalrous emotions, including their tripartite structure, and suggests that these emotions often co-occur. However, like other researchers, she distinguishes these two emotions on the grounds that envy is concerned about the envier's *lack* of something, while the jealous person is instead concerned about *losing* something—"envy covets what jealousy guards."⁸ The similarities between envy and jealousy, as well as society's more accepting attitude towards jealousy, often lead people to describe themselves as jealous when they are, in fact, envious.

However, Protasi goes beyond the classic comparison of envy and jealousy. She claims that envy is not only commonly mislabeled as jealousy but that envy often masquerades as other emotions. Most notably, envy commonly presents as resentment or anger. Take, for instance, the rage of Incels directed at so-called "Staceys" and "Chads" who have the sexual success and social power they lack.⁹ More provocatively, Protasi also argues that love and envy have a close relationship. She argues that although envy is typically viewed as something that extinguishes love, even antithetical to love, envy and love are "two sides of the same coin." Protasi highlights that envy and love emerge from the same psychological tendencies to engage in social comparison. The same kinds of qualities that we hold in esteem that might arouse love for another can also arouse envy; being impressed by my partner's beautiful writing may be part of why I love them but can also be the source of my envying their easy style. Thus, to attempt to extinguish envy for one's loved one could also harm one's love for them. Indeed, Protasi goes so far as to advocate that emulative envy can be beneficial to one's loving relationships, potentially leading to the "opportunity for growth, both for the relationship and for the lovers."¹⁰

Given envy's co-occurrence with other emotions, it is perhaps no surprise that envy can fly under the radar, especially when we take into account envy's reputation as a negative, vicious emotion. Protasi notes that people are typically more comfortable acknowledging jealousy, anger, or resentment than envy (as both her mother and I can attest to).¹¹ It is envy's covetousness that, in part, makes envy difficult to confess. There is an uncomfortable *rawness* about envy. Admitting to nakedly wanting something that another has discloses who we are, what we care about, and that we are (perceived to be) inferior: "Tell me what you envy and I will tell you who you are, or at least what you care about."¹² It makes us vulnerable and, due to its reputation for being vicious, makes others wary. Admitting to being envious risks exposing us to shame.

Compounding this stigma are the cultural, gendered associations of envy. Envy is Medusa, petty schoolgirls, and bitter spinsters. It is famously directed at penises. It is a maligned emotion not just because of its supposedly vicious nature but because it is experienced by the maligned. After all, only people who are "lacking" experience it, and those who lack are regularly reviled.

Envy, then, is not just personal but political. Not only does reviling enviers often work to disproportionately stigmatize the marginalized and vulnerable, but our very sociocultural practices and contexts scaffold what we (ought to) value, thus shaping who, how, and why we feel envy.¹³ We might speculate, for instance, that women are more prone to experiencing envy when situated in societies that place them in positions of inferiority and disadvantage, seeding feelings of self-doubt and imposter syndrome, while also pedaling gendered expectations of perfection such as through beauty ideals.¹⁴ Envy is not just about *individual* deficiency but is rooted in *structural* expectations, value-systems, and situated self-perception. Like other emotions, such as loneliness¹⁵ and anger,¹⁶ envy is a feminist issue. While Protasi concludes the book by thinking about envy in political contexts, the inherently political nature of envy, as an emotion about value and comparison, presents important avenues for critical exploration. Not only would pursuing these considerations deepen our understanding of envy, disclosing the sociopolitical and situated nature of this emotion would likely further Protasi's aim of rehabilitating envy by uncovering how society sets certain people up to feel envy more than others.

The Philosophy of Envy presents a compelling argument that, even if we don't want to admit it, this maligned emotion is experienced much more often than we might suppose. Indeed, as Protasi herself speculates, in a world of social media, where we are so easily able to compare ourselves to others and unrealistic images and expectations abound, it is easy to believe that we are in an envy-saturated age. These observations prompted me to wonder if the spread of envy goes beyond the forms Protasi considers in her book. Going back to the definition of envy as an aversive response to perceiving oneself to be in a position of inferiority in relation to a similar other, I wondered who could be a more "similar other" than myself. This got me asking, can envy be *self-directed*?

2. SELF-ENVY THREE WAYS

Little has been written on self-envy. Envy, as Protasi notes and endorses, is typically defined as *necessarily* involving another person (or persons). If envy is about desiring something that we perceive ourselves as lacking, how could we ever envy ourselves? As such, we might suppose that the very notion of self-envy simply cannot get off the ground.

The most sustained consideration of self-envy is found in the psychoanalytic work of Rafael E. López-Corvo. López-Corvo describes self-envy as a feature of various self-disorders where one part of the self, typically associated with a childlike part, envies another part of the self, typically associated with a more mature and creative part.¹⁷ As an act of revenge, the envious self seeks to harm or undermine the envied self, often resulting in self-destructive behavior. Putting to one side questions about the accuracy of this description of self-disorders, this characterization of spiteful self-envy seems to necessarily presuppose a pathological splitting or fragmentation of self. Ingrid Vendrall Ferran also considers a similar idea in the work of the Spanish writer Miguel de Unamuno. The character Artemio, in the 1918 short story "Artemio, heuatontimoroumenos," has

“two rival halves”¹⁸ of his personality, which experience envy with regard to one another and go out of their way to thwart one another’s plans.

I want to consider the possibility of non-pathological self-envy. I outline three ways that we can experience non-pathological self-envy, that is, envy in relation to your *past* self, your *future* self, and *counterfactual* selves. This is by no means intended to be an exhaustive account of self-envy. Instead, it’s an initial case in favor of the concept that also works to reveal other emotions that might harbor or prompt envy.

2.1. ENVYING YOUR PAST SELF

I often find myself envying my past self. Instances of this include envying the me that used to bounce out of bed at 5:30 a.m., the me that lived in Copenhagen, and, as much as I wish I didn’t, the me with younger skin.¹⁹ I think about how lucky she had it, how she had these goods that I now lack, some of which she didn’t even obviously value at the time. I sometimes experience an envy in relation to my past self that might be best described as a kind of existential envy—an envy for myself at a particular time, for a particular way that I used to be in the world.²⁰ A classic case of this is envying myself as a child, when I did not have the burden of being (or attempting to be) an adult in the world. I envy her the simplicity that life held. I also catch myself envying the me experiencing certain things for the first time—falling in love, hearing Holly Herndon’s *Proto*, or eating Biscoff on a crumpet—new experiences that, by definition, I can never experience again.

Just as with other-directed envy, the experience of these envies can vary in intensity, from the relatively fleeting and shallow to the more prolonged and painful. They can also vary across the dimensions of being more focused on the good to more focused on my past self. In cases of existential self-envy, it seems the good and the envied merge together as I envy the very way I used to be in the world. Such experiences can have the tone of spiteful or aggressive envy, leading to me disavowing the value I place on these goods (I don’t really care about being an early riser) or attempting to ruin the memory in some way (it wasn’t *really* that good). But they can also lead to the sulkiness that is the telltale sign of inert envy (I’ll never be like that again) or the stimulation of emulative envy (I did it before so I surely can do it again!).

While I do not think there is an exact cutoff point, it seems that I am more likely to experience self-envy towards a past self the more distant it is to my current self temporally; or, perhaps, towards a me that precedes some kind of transformative experience, such as before a major life event (e.g., marriage, death of a parent or loved one, birth of a child, etc.), that radically changes my orientation in or understanding of the world.²¹ Such past selves are more easily experienced as distant from my present-day self and thus able to stand as a target of envy without implying some kind of pathological splitting of the self.

Again, I think it pertinent to note the role that digital technology might play in prompting experiences of (self-) envy. Just as I might find myself envious of others from

being exposed to their photos online, I might find myself envious of my past self when Google Photos bombards me with photos of younger me or when I trawl my own social media pages looking at all the fun things I was doing that weren’t admin or boring chores. Online I am faced with the memories that I felt warranted capturing and preserving, me “living my best life.” Digital technology, in externalizing aspects of my past self, might also work to create the kind of distance or separation between my past and present required for self-envy to take root. This incessant exposure to my past self might be a hotbed of self-envy. I am also increasingly fed endless advertisements for face cream to help me regain my youth, sedimenting the kinds of value that reify youth, potentially working to prompt self-envious feelings towards a younger version of me.

Thinking about self-envy for one’s past self is suggestive for thinking about the relationship between envy and nostalgia. Nostalgia is a bittersweet emotion that involves a longing for times gone past—think Proust and his madeleines.²² Such experiences often revolve around feeling a longing for some good in one’s past, such as childhood, a past relationship, an old home, or a less creaky body. But this longing comes with a bitter taste; we do not just fondly remember this time as in reminiscing, we feel its absence and our inability to go back to that moment in time and space. I suggest that the bitterness we associate with nostalgia can involve the twinges of self-envy—envy for that past self with goods which we now take to be out of our reach. Just as love can be accompanied by envy, so can nostalgia for one’s past solicit self-envy; they seem to emerge from the same ground of comparing oneself to one’s own past. As we typically experience nostalgia for goods that are not within our control to obtain (as they are bound up with a time that has gone), I suggest that the self-envy that binds itself to nostalgia is often inert envy. This, I think, helps explain why indulging in too much in nostalgia can lead to despondency. Where the sweetness of nostalgia evaporates altogether, this could fuel regret, self-judgment, and self-recrimination for not being the person we used to be.

2.2. ENVYING YOUR FUTURE SELF

Sometimes I envy future mes. When hiking up a steep mountain, I envy the me who has already reached the top. I envy the me who has already written this commentary and has managed to do so adroitly and engagingly. I catch myself envying the me who has already made a decision about whether to have children or not. Often, these instances involve envy in relation to goods that are on a path I am already pursuing—projects or decisions that I am currently grappling with. I am prone to experiencing this in moments of frustration, when I feel stuck, that the path ahead of me is blocked, when the effort is burdensome, and in moments of self-doubt about my ability to achieve my goals. I engage in wishful fantasies of already having done the thing and can end up experiencing envy towards this imagined projection of myself in the future; a future me that is me but a little bit better, a little bit calmer, a little bit happier, a little more successful.

One might resent the future self who already has what the current self lacks. In a milder form, I sometimes picture

this future me as a bit smug and self-satisfied, particularly when self-doubt takes hold, which might suggest an imaginative form of leveling down this future me. However, with Protasi's spectrum of envy in hand, I'm inclined to think that this kind of self-envy can also be self-motivating. It can be used to encourage me onwards, to become that future me; particularly when I take myself to be capable of achieving, or at least aspiring to achieve, these goods if only I put in the effort required. As such, these look like cases of emulative envy that take place without the need for a model actualized in another person. Rather, I hold this idealized future me up as worthy of chasing and this can motivate perseverance. We might even cultivate this emulative self-envy as a tool for motivation and self-improvement.

2.3. ENVYING YOUR COUNTERFACTUAL SELF

I recently had an experience of, what I am calling, counterfactual self-envy at a gig in Gunnersbury Park. I was listening to delightfully hopeful and tender music amongst a crowd predominantly made up of queer people in their late teens and early twenties. Everyone looked beautiful, creative, and happy (though I know this unlikely to be an entirely accurate interpretation). I found myself crying through most of the set at the kindness and generosity of the performers and the audience. It was a very beautiful experience but also, to my surprise, rather painful. As the gig went on, I realized that what I felt was a kind of *envy*.

On the surface, this seems like a classic case of inert envy. I was envious of these young queer people. I perceived myself as lacking the social space of support, acceptance, and exploration when growing up that I imagined these people to have. Their richness in the things I lack, and which I value and desire, caused me both pain and a certain amount of grief. I certainly did not want to take away these things from the crowd. Indeed, I was struck by the hope I so often have when around such groups.

What I found peculiar, though, was that I did not just, or even mostly, experience myself as envying the rest of the audience. I felt an envy for the me that I might have been had I been born not in 1988 but in 2000, the me that might have known they were queer before they were nearly thirty, for what Ferran calls my "ontological possibilities."²³ I envied this counterfactual me for having the possibilities that I perceived myself as lacking (or not brave enough to follow) when I was growing up. I envied her freedom and confidence. I sincerely do not think that what I was experiencing was as simple as "I could have been you!" but something closer to "I could have been (another) ME!" I did not want to stand in *their* shoes, I wanted to be in my *own*—but in a different way. It felt self-directed. Like in the case of the self-envy directed at a future self, the target of my envy seems to be better picked out as an imagined me, a me that might have been under different auspices.

Other examples of counterfactual self-envy could include envying the self that took the risky but exciting job offer, the self that jumped into love, the self that decided to have or not to have children. These experiences of envy arise without the presence of any specific person as a trigger but through counterfactual imagination and speculation.

Posting on social media platforms might also lead to an unusual form of counterfactual envy. As mentioned above, people are prone to presenting themselves in their best, shiniest light. I, like many others, present an idealized version of myself, an idealized me that I not only present to the world but that can be thrown back on myself, sometimes leading me to the strange sensation of envying the social media version of myself. A counterfactual version of myself that has not so much taken a different path, taken up different ontological possibilities, but is scrubbed of the complexities, drudgery, and responsibilities of being a whole person in the world.²⁴ The use of filters can even allow us to "see" different (often physical) counterfactual versions of ourselves,²⁵ potentially acting as a fertilizer for counterfactual self-envy.

Such experiences can come shot through with regret and grief, emotions that themselves relate to experiences of lost or absent possibilities.²⁶ Counterfactual self-envy, as I experienced, can be quite painful. But I also think that counterfactual self-envy can be accompanied with a love for this other you, a joy in their bravery, their differences, their opportunities, their way of being; again, we can see love and envy arising from the same soil. I think such cases can also have a similar texture to nostalgia, a bittersweet experience that both mourns something we cannot have or cannot be while also cherishing that possible self, even cheering them on.

3. WHAT SELF-ENVY TELLS US ABOUT ENVY

What I have presented is by no means a complete account of self-envy. However, I think these sketches point to additional ways in which envy might wend its way into our lives, intertwined with other emotions. Most obviously, thinking about self-envy shows how envy, as an emotion of comparison, need not relate to another person but can emerge when comparing oneself in the present moment to other versions (imaginary or otherwise) of oneself through self-reflection and self-projection. As such, rather than accepting too readily the received idea that envy must necessarily involve another person, we can further expand our exploration and understanding of envy by considering cases where it is self-directed. Seeing envy as something that can be self-directed sits nicely with Protasi's move to shine a light on envy that is not so obviously spiteful or vicious. Self-envy does not seem to only result in attempts to rid the envied self of the good, though it certainly can, but to inertia, wistfulness, and even self-flourishing.

Less obviously, but I think just as interestingly, many of my examples of self-envy involve acts of imagination. This leads me to think that envy, more generally, often involves imagination. When we envy others, we rarely envy them in all their full actuality, but instead envy an idealized version of them. As I have discussed above, it might be particularly fruitful to consider this in the context of digital technology and social media, where we both are constantly confronted by our selves and others in idealized ways. This once again returns us to critical questions about what underpins and prompts (self-)envy, questions that ask not just what envy is but what values and ideals drive and are manifested in and through it.

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NOTES

1. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 6.
2. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 21.
3. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 21.
4. Salice and Sanchez, "Envy and Us."
5. For accounts of how emotional experience reveals value, see, e.g., Furtak, *Knowing Emotions*; Mitchell, *Emotion as Feeling Towards Value*.
6. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 22.
7. E.g., D'Arms and Kerr, "Envy in the Philosophical Tradition"; Salice and Sanchez, "Envy and Us."
8. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 13.
9. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 130. For an excellent analysis of Incels, rage, and loneliness, see Tietjen and Tirkkonen, "The Rage of Lonely Men."
10. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 111.
11. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 27.
12. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 20.
13. Von Maur, "Taking Situatedness Seriously."
14. Widdows, *Perfect Me*.
15. Wilkinson, "Loneliness Is a Feminist Issue."
16. Lorde, "The Uses of Anger."
17. López-Corvo, "Self-Envy and Intrapsychic Interpretation."
18. Ferran, "'I Could Have Been You', 125.
19. I suspect that ageing is a common cause of self-envy, where we do not simply envy "young people" or "younger bodies," but our own younger bodies, as we used to be. Societal disdain of older women likely works as a driver of this kind of self-envy.
20. For a discussion of other-directed existential envy, see Ferran, "'I Could Have Been You'."
21. For discussions of transformative experience, see Paul, *Transformative Experience*; Callard et al., "Transformative Activities."
22. Trigg, "From Anxiety to Nostalgia."
23. Ferran, "'I Could Have Been You'."
24. Thank you to Rick Furtak for talking through this example with me.
25. Krueger and Osler, "Agency, Environmental Scaffolding, and the Development of Eating Disorders."
26. Mehmel, "Grief, Disorientation, and Futurity"; Millar and Lopez-Cantero, "Grief, Continuing Bonds, and Unreciprocated Love"; Ratcliffe and Richardson, "Grief Over Non-Death Losses."

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Emulative Trait Envy Is Not a Virtue

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Sara Protasi's *The Philosophy of Envy* (2021) is an excellent example of the kind of clarity that empirically informed philosophy can bring to complex issues. In this book, Protasi presents a sophisticated account of envy as an episodic emotion and as a character trait. She explains how envy differs from other emotions such as jealousy and admiration with which it can be confused. She develops and motivates a principled taxonomy that individuates four types of envy, each of which is associated with different behavioral tendencies. One of Protasi's main goals is to offer a defense of envy as an episodic emotion, which in some instances can be morally permissible and prudentially valuable, and which, when it is emulative, could on occasion be the manifestation of a virtuous character trait.

In this short article, I first briefly sketch out Protasi's account of envy as an episodic emotion (section 1). Subsequently, I explain her account of emulative envy as an emotion and as a trait. I also present her reasons for thinking that this trait can be virtuous because it can be constitutive of a good or flourishing life (section 2). Finally, I raise concerns about Protasi's virtuous trait emulative envy (section 3). I argue that Protasi underplays the normative differences between emulative envy and admiration. However, when these are clearly brought into view, we have strong reasons to conclude that while a disposition to admire the admirable can be constitutive of flourishing, a tendency to emulative envy the enviable cannot be a virtue. The argument rests on the assumption that only motivations that are themselves intrinsically good can be constitutive of flourishing and therefore virtuous.

1. ENVY

Envy, like anger or shame, is an episodic emotion. As such it is a response to a triggering situation which lasts for a certain amount of time after which it wanes, perhaps to be rekindled when one reencounters some triggering circumstances. Hence, a person might envy another's wealth in response to seeing an article in a magazine detailing the lavish lifestyle of the rich. Envy has been the subject of bad press in philosophical circles and beyond, since it is usually taken to be a response that is morally unacceptable and often prudentially inadvisable.¹ Edifying literature is replete with envious characters that meet a bad end.² In her book Protasi seeks to reevaluate envy to show that it is sometimes useful, and that it can be morally neutral. Further, she claims that a disposition to experience episodic envy can, for some forms of envy, be constitutive of human flourishing.³

Protasi defines episodic envy as "an aversive emotional response to a perceived inferiority or disadvantage vis-à-vis a similar other with regard to a domain of self-importance, which motivates to overcome that inferiority or disadvantage."⁴ So defined envy is a psychological state or episode that has an unpleasant felt character (which is why it is aversive). It is a response to a triggering situation that elicits a judgment in which the subject compares herself unfavorably to another agent(s) with regard to some quality or property that matters to the subject's self-conception. Finally, it consists of a behavioral tendency to respond to this social comparison judgment by attempting to address the disparity. Hence, for Protasi, envy is a syndrome comprised of affect, judgments, and dispositions to behave.⁵

Episodic envy involves evaluations of its triggering situations. When a person envies another for some good or quality that the other person has, and the subject does not have (at least not to the same extent), the subject assesses the other person (the target of the envy) as possessing something (the good envied). These assessments can be accurate or be at variance with reality. They are accurate only if the envied good would actually be good for the subject, the target has that good, and the subject lacks it.⁶ When these evaluations are accurate, and the size of the envious response is proportionate to the significance of the issue, episodic envy is said to be fitting.⁷ Otherwise, it is not fitting.⁸

I grant to Protasi that episodic envy can be fitting. That is, it can be a kind of accurate evaluation. Some writers on envy, however, think that even fitting envy should be avoided. There are prudential reasons not to express or act on one's envy, and being seen to be envious is usually disadvantageous since envy is frowned upon.⁹ Further, it is often thought that even merely feeling fitting envy is always morally impermissible because of its motivation to close one's disadvantage compared to some other person by whatever means necessary.¹⁰

2. EMULATIVE ENVY AND THE GOOD LIFE

One of Protasi's original contributions to research on emotions lies in her distinctive taxonomy of varieties of envy. The development of this classification enables Protasi to articulate nuanced assessments of the moral and prudential reasons for and against feeling, expressing, or acting on different forms of envy.

Formally speaking, Protasi thinks of episodic envy as a three-place relation between a subject (the envious person), a target (the envied person), and a good (what the target is envied for). She identifies two independent variables on the basis of which to individuate varieties of episodic envy. The first concerns whether the focus of the emotional response is on the target or whether it is on the good.¹¹ The second is about whether or not the envied good is perceived as obtainable.¹² These two variables generate four kinds of envy: inert envy, spiteful envy, emulative envy, and aggressive envy.¹³

Protasi characterises episodic emulative envy as "unpleasant reaction to the perceived superior standing of a similar other in a domain of self-relevance. It feels less painful than any other kind of envy because it involves the hope to improve one's situation and the confidence that one may be able to do so. The envier looks at the target like a model, someone to emulate rather than defeat or bring down. Consequently, emulative envy is completely void of malice or ill will."¹⁴

Emulative envy, like other forms of envy, is thus an aversive emotion in response to a comparison with a target who is perceived to have a good that matters to the subject's self-conception but which the subject judges herself to be lacking by comparison. In emulative envy, the focus of the subject's attention is more on the good than on the target, while the good itself is experienced as obtainable. Further, emulative envy is also characterized by a tendency to emulate the target. That is, the subject of emulative envy acts to close the disadvantage by attempting to pull themselves up, rather than trying to push the target down. For this reason, for Protasi, emulative envy is devoid of malice or ill will toward the target.

One might object to Protasi that emulative envy is not envy. It is instead admiration. In response, Protasi offers a careful and empirically informed discussion of the important differences between emulative envy and admiration.¹⁵ First, envy is reserved for targets that are perceived by the subjects to be not too dissimilar from them. When the target is perceived to be vastly superior, only admiration—but not envy—is possible. Second, the focus of admiration is

wholly placed on the target as an admired model. Instead, the focus of envy is always comparative and thus is partly directed to the self who is experienced as inferior to the target. Third, admiration is an affiliative emotion. Emulative envy is competitive even though it is not adversarial (since one holds no ill will against the target). That is, the admirer has wholly positive feelings for the target of their admiration. The envious instead cares that they are (by their own lights) inferior to the target, and thus their attitudes to the target are more ambivalent, since they think of themselves as being in a competition with them.

In my view this characterization of the differences between envy and admiration misses an important normative distinction between these two emotional syndromes. Admiration is reserved for good-making properties or goods that are creditable to the target because they are achievements. Any good or good-making property, irrespective of how it is obtained, can be the focus of a subject's envy. I defend the importance of this normative distinction in section 3 and deploy it to argue that trait emulative envy is not a virtue.

Protasi argues that, because of the absence of any ill motivation toward the target, emulative envy as an episodic emotional response that spurs one to improve out of a competitive spirit, can be prudentially beneficial, and is morally permissible. For example, intense rivalry might help some athletes to achieve their best in sporting competitions. Thus, episodic emulative envy can be prudentially valuable as a motivation that promotes sporting success. Further, sporting rivalries, provided that they are conducted with a spirit of fair play, would seem morally permissible.

Protasi builds on these considerations to defend the even more controversial claim that emulative envy as a character trait can be constitutive of flourishing and can therefore be a virtue. This is the claim that I seek to rebut in section 3.

In order to assess Protasi's view, it is useful to make a distinction between episodic envy as a momentary process triggered by a situation and envy as a "stable emotional trait."¹⁶ Trait emulative envy would then be a stable disposition to respond to situations of perceived disadvantage over obtainable goods in domains of self-importance by experiencing emulative envy. This disposition is, very roughly speaking, the character trait of being a fair competitor. It is a tendency (1) to care that one is at a disadvantage compared to others with regard to some goods that one cares about; (2) to feel optimism that these goods can be obtained; (3) to address the disadvantage through self-improvement.

Protasi is extremely careful to enumerate necessary conditions that must be satisfied if competitiveness is to be a virtuous character trait. First, the good about which one is competitive must be something that is genuinely valuable. Second, one's perception that the good is attainable must be accurate. Third, one must act appropriately on one's emulative envy.¹⁷ Given these demanding conditions virtuous trait emulative envy is hard to achieve, but it is not impossible. Protasi argues that a competitive spirit in life can help one achieve many goods that contribute

to flourishing. But further, in her view, this character trait is not merely instrumental in achieving some goods that make a life good, it is also in itself constitutive of some forms of flourishing.

It seems true that competitiveness can be a spur to the kind of achievement that can be constitutive of a good life. We can imagine a person who loves sport or dance, and whose ability to pursue full time what they love depends on being among the best in their field. Being a top athlete or a top ballerina can be, for some, part of what makes them flourish in life. These are cases where caring that one is better than others, and thus experiencing pangs of envy when one is not, may supply the kinds of incentives that are instrumental to obtaining goods that make a life a flourishing one. Provided that such individual holds no ill will against their competitors, and acts fairly, it would seem that their envy can be fitting, prudentially valuable, and instrumentally good since it is a means to leading a good life. In this regard, I believe, we can agree with Protasi.

What is a matter of dispute is whether the character trait of being a fair competitor (understood as trait emulative envy) can itself be constitutive, at least for some, of a good life. Protasi takes herself to have two arguments for this further claim. The first is that for some kinds of good envy as a trait is the only mechanism in humans that can motivate someone to achieve them. Envy would thus be a necessary means to a good life for some, and in this regard be perhaps thought to be constitutive of it.¹⁸ The second consists in offering descriptions of lives that were made good (or better) by being dominated by intense rivalries.¹⁹ Protasi's example are the two female protagonists of Elena Ferrante's quartet of books.²⁰

In what follows I want to argue instead that emulative envy as a character trait cannot be constitutive of flourishing, even though it can be in some cases instrumental to it.

3. TRAIT EMULATIVE ENVY IS NOT A VIRTUE

Protasi's first argument for the intrinsic value of trait emulative envy is that it is the only humanly available means to some forms of self-improvement.²¹ Setting aside the issue as to whether its alleged unavoidability could make competitiveness intrinsically valuable, I submit that Protasi's claim is not correct. Admiration is a possible alternative motivational force to emulative envy in the cases that matter for leading a good life.

As I suggested above, Protasi ignores a key difference between what is admirable and what is enviable. Any good-making feature or good can be enviable. However, only achievements are admirable. Imagine a subject who compares herself to a target who is in very good health. Good health is an intrinsically good feature for a person. Arguably, it is constitutive of flourishing. Suppose that the subject thinks that the target's good health is due to genetic good luck. In this case, the subject might envy the target's health, but it would not make sense for her to admire the target for their health. However, if the subject thinks that the target's health is due to the target's efforts to exercise and eat well, it is possible for the subject either to admire or to envy the target for their health.

More generally, admiration is reserved for those among the goods possessed by the target that are perceived as achievements. An achievement is a good feature that a person possesses due to their competence and to their efforts.²² Achievements can be lesser or greater in proportion to the amount of effort or level of competence that they require. The more difficult it is to obtain a good in this manner, the greater the achievement.

These considerations highlight two further significant differences between admiration and emulative envy. First, a subject who admires a target and seeks to emulate them is someone who aims to obtain a given good (health, knowledge, first place in the race) but only in a manner that is creditable to them because it is obtained thanks to one's efforts and abilities. By contrast, the person who envies a target and seeks to emulate them might be content with obtaining the good by morally permissible means even though the eventual success cannot count as an achievement of theirs.

To see the point, consider two subjects Nadia and Mchiwa. Mchiwa admires a scholar for their knowledge. Nadia, instead, envies that same scholar for their knowledge. Moved by her admiration, Mchiwa seek to gain knowledge though studying in order to improve her competence. If Mchiwa were offered a pill that would secure knowledge without much effort, she would refuse it, because gaining knowledge in this manner is not an achievement. What Mchiwa admires, and what she seeks to emulate, is the achievement itself and not merely the achieved goods. Nadia, instead, seeks to gain knowledge and become the equal of the scholar in that regard. She holds no ill will to the target or any other subjects. She also does not wish to obtain any unfair advantage over others. Supposing that her gaining knowledge by taking the pill does not result in cheating another person out of a job, there is no reason for Nadia not to take the knowledge pill. Quite the opposite, her perception of the scholar's knowledge as an enviable feature motivates her to obtain it by any morally permissible means which in our imaginary case involve taking the pill.

Second, Protasi seems to think that admiration is reserved for targets that are vastly different from the subject.²³ If that is her view, it is mistaken. It is possible to admire someone while thinking of oneself as their equal. For instance, a scientist can admire another's achievements while thinking of herself as his equal. Hence, there needs to be no perceived inferiority in admiration. One might seek to emulate a model one admires, and regards as one's equal, by working hard in order to not rest on one's laurels or stop trying to achieve.

These considerations suggest that whenever the envied good is an achievement, admiration is a viable motivational mechanism alternative to envy. It is also one that is preferable to envy when trying to achieve a good life since, as Protasi also notes, it focuses attention on ideals, on long-term gains, while stimulating openness in cognitive processing.²⁴ Admiration is not suitable when focusing on goods that are not achievements, but often such goods are not obtainable, at least by morally permissible means, and thus are not the proper focus of permissible emulative

envy either. There are exceptions, however. A person might envy another's lottery win. Their envy might motivate them optimistically to purchase lottery tickets every week. I submit that while it is possible that they might one day win, and that winning might be good for them, this kind of strife for what is enviable without being admirable is generally not conducive to leading a good life.

I hasten to add these considerations should not be read to suggest that emulative envy cannot be a motivation that facilitates the acquisition of goods that are constitutive of a good life. A person's envy of another's health might motivate this subject to exercise, become healthy, and lead a better life. Instead, they are intended to cast doubt on the necessity of envy as the motivator of aspiration.

Given that envy is not, *pace* Protasi, necessary for life-enhancing self-improvement, Protasi's case for thinking of trait emulative envy as a virtue rests on her case studies of characters whose lives are good but dominated by intense rivalries.²⁵ It is hard to assess these cases. I limit myself to noticing that our human emotional lives are often complex. It is possible for one's admiration of another to be tinged with envy, or vice versa. Protasi's examples exemplify this complexity. I submit, but I do not have an argument for this, that these lives go well, to the extent they do, because of the relations of mutual love and admiration that sustain them. They are also marked by envy which, being aversive, might detract from the quality of these lives.

Be that as it may, there is a positive argument why trait emulative envy cannot be constitutive of flourishing. The argument rests on the plausible premise that only motivations (understood as dispositions to be moved by certain kinds of motive) that are intrinsically good can be constitutive of flourishing. Irrespective of the fittingness of the episodic emulative envy which manifests this character trait, the disposition to be motivated by emulative envy is not itself an intrinsically good motivation. Intrinsically good, or virtuous, motivations require that one seeks things which are themselves good in the right way and for the right reasons. Even when focused on genuine goods, some of which are, like health, intrinsically good, even fitting emulative envy might move one to seek to get the good in ways that, albeit morally permissible, are not overall good. For instance, envy might motivate a person to obtain goods in the wrong manner because it encourages the seeking of shortcuts to short-term success to the detriment of long-term achievement.²⁶

In conclusion, Protasi's detailed account of the nature, variety, and value of envy is an admirable achievement. In this short article, I have taken issue with her characterization of the differences between envy and admiration and for underplaying the normative aspect of the distinction. Deploying a more normatively robust account of admiration, I have also argued that trait emulative envy, while potentially instrumentally valuable for obtaining things that make lives good, cannot in itself be, even partly, constitutive of flourishing because it is not an intrinsically good motivation.

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NOTES

1. Taylor, *Deadly Vices*.
2. Aesop, *Aesop’s Fables*.
3. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 86. In this she goes beyond D’Arms and Jacobson, “Anthropocentric Constraints on Human Value,” who claim that envy can be a positive motivation to achieving goods which are part of what makes life good.
4. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 3.
5. The view of emotions as syndromes has been developed by D’Arms and Jacobson, “Anthropocentric Constraints on Human Value.”
6. Here, for Protasi, lies the difference between jealousy and envy. The first focuses on goods one has lost to the other person, or goods one could have been expected to have but for the other person’s activities. Envy instead is concerned with goods that one lacks (*The Philosophy of Envy*, 12–17).
7. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 31. See also D’Arms and Jacobson, “The Moralistic Fallacy”; D’Arms and Jacobson, “Anthropocentric Constraints on Human Value.”
8. Protasi tends to restrict her discussion to fitting envy (*The Philosophy of Envy*, 31). I follow her in making this simplifying assumption.
9. Elster, *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality*.
10. Cf., D’Arms and Kerr, “Envy in the Philosophical Tradition.”
11. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 38–41.
12. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 41–44.
13. In inert envy, whose characteristic behavioral disposition is sulking, the focus is on the good which is perceived as unobtainable (*The Philosophy of Envy*, 55–61). In spiteful envy, which promotes a tendency to spoil the good, the focus is on the target’s possession of a good that is perceived as unobtainable by the subject (*The Philosophy of Envy*, 63–65). In aggressive envy, which leads to stealing, the good is perceived as obtainable and the focus is on the target (*The Philosophy of Envy*, 61–63). I explain emulative envy in the main text.
14. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 45.
15. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 48–50.
16. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 86.
17. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 86–88.
18. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 90.
19. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, Ch. 4.
20. Ferrante, *L’amica geniale*; Ferrante, *Storia del nuovo cognome*; Ferrante, *Storia di chi fugge e di chi resta*; Ferrante, *Storia della bambina perduta*.
21. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 90.
22. Bradford, “Achievement, Wellbeing, and Value.”
23. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 49.
24. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, 49–50.
25. Protasi, *The Philosophy of Envy*, Ch. 4.
26. This is not to say that it must. It is possible for envy to give rise to achievement. When it does, envy is instrumentally good.

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Responding to My Very Friendly Critics

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I am truly thankful for these contributions by Rosalind Chaplin, Lucy Osler, and Alessandra Tanesini. Not only do they interpret my views charitably and generously, but they also exemplify different and equally valuable ways of responding to an author. Chaplin aims to provide a friendly expansion, Osler offers a novel application, and Tanesini presents a challenge to my views; all of these are compliments that I receive with gratitude. In the limited space at my disposal, I respond to their critiques, but I hope this is a beginning of a more protracted conversation not only among ourselves but within the larger philosophical community.

1. ON ENVY AND COMPETITION

Rosalind Chaplin’s insightful response focuses on a crucial aspect of envy: its competitive nature and how different competitive contexts affects envy’s varieties. She argues that even emulative envy can be adversarial, while remaining nonhostile and nonvicious. In some contexts, such as zero-sum competitive sporting events, envying someone in an emulative way may involve not only the desire to level up with the envied, but also the desire to *outperform* the envied.

To bolster this view, Chaplin draws from anecdotal evidence and intuitions on friendly rivalries and, in particular, a promising case study: the longstanding friendship between long-distance runners Haile Gebrselassie and Paul Tergat. Gebrselassie defeated Tergat in every race in which they competed for five consecutive years. It’s reasonable to suppose that Tergat felt envy. Suppose, furthermore, that his envy was emulative—wouldn’t it be natural for him to *also* feel the desire to finally *defeat* Gebrselassie? Yet, that seems compatible with what we know of their relationship: that they were genuine friends and pushed each other to improve, without ill will.

Chaplin presents her contribution as a friendly expansion of my views, and claims that such an expansion provides me with the means to respond to a worry raised by Justin D'Arms,¹ namely, that all envy is at least implicitly malicious. D'Arms reasons counterfactually: if emulative envy were extinguished when the envied lost their advantage, then that would mean that even emulative envy is malicious at some level. Chaplin agrees with D'Arms that emulative envy would be extinguished in such a situation, but disagrees with him that that extinction shows that emulative envy is malicious, given what we have seen in Tergat and Gebrselassie's case.²

I welcome Chaplin's expansion, and I believe that it can be supported also by empirical evidence on the psychology of competition. Competition is a complex phenomenon determined both by individual and situational factors. With regard to the former factors, people tend to be more competitive when they compare themselves to and compete with similar or close others in a domain of self-importance; with regard to the latter factors, competitive concerns are increased in zero-sum, and high-stake contexts, when competitors are close to the top of a ranking (and this applies not only to individuals who are performance-oriented but also those with mastery goals), and when the number of competitors decrease.³ So, given the scenario described by Chaplin, Tergat and Gebrselassie are *bound* to be very competitive. However, competition research has also shown that competition and cooperation are "neither mutually exclusive nor inverse motivational and behavioral constructs but they can be simultaneous"⁴ and, when cooperation and competition are combined, agents reach higher levels of both performance and enjoyment. Furthermore, "trying to excel, to be best [. . .] leads to efficient learning and high-level performance and is also associated with intrinsic motivation."⁵

This evidence seems to suggest that competition need not be malicious, thus confirming Chaplin's hypothesis about Tergat and Gebrselassie. I think we could call the type of envy that Tergat might have felt *uberemulative envy*, to mirror *uberspiteful* envy. I coined the latter term to refer to the envy that aims to level down with the envied by spoiling the good *even at the cost of an additional loss incurred by the envier*. *Uberemulative* envy, then, would be the envy that aims to level up and surpass the envied, thus *gaining an additional advantage*.

However, I want to end my discussion of Chaplin's valuable contribution on a note of caution, in part anticipated by Chaplin at the end of her contribution: for envy to remain emulative, the envier needs to remain more focused on the good than on the envied. Beating the rival should still feel like a proxy for, proof of, or perhaps even means to achieving or having achieved the good. If one becomes too fixated on beating the rival, then one risks losing sight of the good and becoming *aggressively* envious. As always, the boundaries between kinds of envy are porous and unstable, and one should engage in self-reflection and in virtue cultivation, particularly within the context of loving relationships. Chaplin is right that even when envy is emulative it requires careful and wise management, and that is especially the case with *uberemulative* envy.

2. ON SELF-ENVY

Lucy Osler's delightfully personal contribution is also offered generously as an expansion to my view, but in the end amounts to an original contribution of her own. In this short response, I will focus on the main topic she discusses, namely, self-envy, but I want to say that I particularly appreciated her remarks on the political dimension of envy and its relevance for feminism, a topic which did not find space in my book, and to which I return in the concluding section of my remarks.

Osler outlines three ways in which (non-pathological) self-envy can be experienced: envy for one's past self, envy for one's future self, and envy for a counterfactual self.

I should confess at the outset that I do not have a first-personal experience of any of these. I have no reason to think I secretly feel it and deny it to myself—in fact, I have some evidence that that is unlikely, insofar as I'm very well aware of my other-directed envy. Perhaps the ways in which I experience self-continuity precludes me from perceiving my past or future selves as sufficiently distant.⁶ That I am also not a particularly nostalgic person may confirm this. We know from empirical evidence that people differ on the dispositional envy scale,⁷ and there are likely many more idiosyncratic differences, some of which may be hard to quantify and thus study in a systematic way. Be that as it may, the topic of self-envy is fascinating and so is Osler's analysis.

I appreciated her attempt to apply my taxonomy to cases of envy for a *past* self. While there may not be a perfect correspondent for aggressive envy, as it is not clear how one can steal the good from one's past self, the examples mentioned by Osler were persuasive. However, I am a little more hesitant with regard to envy for a *future* self. Her vivacious and psychologically astute characterization makes the scenarios she describes plausible, but I wonder how common the experience of future self-envy is. But even if this was a rare phenomenon, I think we could think of what Osler discusses not only in descriptive but also *normative* terms. I am drawing here from her suggestion that cultivating emulative self-envy may be a tool for self-improvement. I wonder: if emulative envy itself motivates someone towards self-improvement, does envying one's future self motivate them towards a *better* kind of self-improvement, one that does not involve the risk, mentioned in the previous reply, to become too fixated on the envied? If so, then an important question is whether there are ways of stimulating future self-envy. On this point, I am genuinely not sure and I suspect more empirical research might be needed on the ways in which people feel this type of envy, thus going back to a more descriptive inquiry (but this is not a criticism: the factual and the normative are bound to be intertwined).

Finally, when reading about counterfactual envy, I kept wondering: How is this different from regret? Osler mentions that counterfactual envy can come "shot through with regret and grief" and that it has "a similar a similar texture to nostalgia, a bittersweet experience that both mourns something we cannot have or cannot be while also cherishing that possible-self, even cheering them

on." I can intuitively see the difference between nostalgia and envying one's past self; for one phenomenological difference, I suspect envy for a past-self is less sweet and more bitter than nostalgia. However, I cannot quite see the difference between regret and counterfactual self-envy. As Osler highlights, thinking about self-envy shows that imagination and idealized versions of ourselves and others play a big role in envy (empirical evidence shows that even in garden-variety envy we often perceive ourselves to be a bit better than we are), so perhaps this is a failure of imagination on my part.

3. ON ADMIRATION AND EMULATIVE ENVY

Alessandra Tanesini's incisive critique focuses on my claim that dispositional emulative envy can, in highly specific and perhaps rare cases, count as a virtuous trait, and thus not be only instrumentally good but also constitutive of our flourishing.

Tanesini helpfully characterizes my account of dispositional emulative envy as the character trait of being a fair competitor, and I appreciate that she takes my arguments in its favor seriously, even though she ultimately argues against them. She concedes that dispositional (or "trait," as she calls it) emulative envy can be instrumental to achieving a good life, but believes that only admiration can be constitutive of it. Her argument relies on the claim that "admiration is reserved for those among the goods possessed by the target that are perceived as achievements," which she defines, following Gwen Bradford's account,⁸ as good features possessed by a person in virtue of their competence and efforts.

The idea that admiration and achievement are essentially linked might seem intuitive and it is certainly plausible, but it's far from obvious. In this reply, I do not have the space to provide a proper literature review on admiration, so I will draw from a brief review that can be found in a recent book by Alfred Archer and Benjamin Matheson to show that Tanesini's claim is more controversial than it might appear at first. Alfred and Matheson write that "there is disagreement about which particular and formal object [admiration] can have."⁹ For some authors, such as Antti Kauppinen, admiration can only be felt toward people,¹⁰ but for other authors it can be directed also at animals,¹¹ natural events,¹² "qualities, relations, comic timing, positions, virtues, and actions,"¹³ and even social groups.¹⁴ Furthermore, philosophers disagree about admiration's formal objects as well, and the list includes "a person's character traits, attitudes, actions and achievements."¹⁵ Thus, there is no philosophical consensus that admiration is only felt about people's achievements.

If we look at the literature on admiration in social psychology, we do not find a scholarly consensus on this matter either. While Niels van de Ven does define admiration as "a feeling of delighted approval over the accomplishment of another person,"¹⁶ Ines Schindler and her coauthors, who have published a series of papers on admiration and adoration, write that admiration is a reaction to a person's actions, skills, or characteristics, which are deemed superior to a standard, outstanding, or excellent.¹⁷

In sum, while I agree with Tanesini that many cases of admiration are about a person's achievements, I reject the claim that all of them, or even all of the paradigmatic ones, do. We admire people for all sorts of reasons that are not achievements, including unmerited traits (such as beauty) and actions that may be seen as praiseworthy but not achievements. (For instance, see Linda Zagzebski's example of Thomas More's refusal to sign the oath of allegiance to Henry VIII.¹⁸) And I lean toward agreeing with those who claim that admiration can be properly directed at non-human objects as well, which most clearly clashes with the view that we only admire achievements.

Consequently, I am not moved by the thought experiment involving Nadia and Mchiwa. We know from empirical research that both admiration and benign/emulative envy motivate someone to emulate the target of the emotion, but in different ways: "benign envy, as a negative affective state with high motivational intensity, narrows cognitive processing to assist immediate pursuit of the coveted object [. . .] If we conceive of emulation as increased commitment to abstract ideals, it takes an emotion with lower motivational intensity that broadens cognitive processing [such as admiration]."¹⁹ What this evidence entails when it comes to the scenario of a magical pill is a little unclear, which highlights the risk of this type of philosophical methodology. Don't get me wrong: I like introducing magical pills as much as the next analytic philosopher! But, in this case, I am not sure the thought experiment causes the required shifting of intuitions in any particular direction.

Would Nadia, focused on the good of knowledge as she is, take the pill? I tend to think she would not, since her being more focused on the good than the envied means she appreciates knowledge for its own sake and thus she probably has developed an appreciation for our standard ways of seeking knowledge. However, perhaps she really cares about knowing some specific things that the envied knows, and thus taking the pill would do. But then, I don't see why that could not apply to Nadia! If admiration, as I showed above, is not necessarily connected to achievements, then I don't see why she would not be inclined to take the pill. It is true that admiration is hypothesized to motivate the agent towards long-term improvement,²⁰ but that is its functional role in *real-life scenarios*, where magical pills are unavailable. So I see no principled reason why an admirer might not want to take a shortcut in some situations. After all, regular people often admire Hollywood stars, and one might argue that that admiration is at least in part responsible for those regular people undergoing cosmetic surgery to resemble those stars. So I reiterate my conviction that admiration does not fare any better or worse than emulative envy as possible constituents of the good life, and that both can play a role in it, albeit a different one.

4. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Again, I want to restate my gratitude to my critics, who spurred me both to look back at what I argued for and also to consider avenues for future research. In particular,

I want to think more about gendered dimensions of envy. Currently, there is no systematic research that suggests that there are major differences among genders with regard to feeling envy.²¹ But, given the fact that society is so deeply affected by gender, such research is needed. Additionally, I am currently writing on whether feminists should compete (unsurprisingly, and in line with ideas seen in section 1, my answer is a resounding yes!), and I would like to explore the topic of envy as felt by and towards trans folks qua trans folks (I hypothesize that, just like racism is at least sometimes fueled by envy, so is transphobia). More generally, I am interested in expanding my work on envy in its political manifestations and effects. I hope I have succeeded in showing that envy is a powerful force in the public sphere, as much as other emotions that have already been investigated at length such as anger, and I look forward to the contributions of other scholars on this topic.

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NOTES

1. D'Arms, "Envy."
2. I can't help but make the following nitpicky clarification. My writing is unclear in the passage quoted by Chaplin, namely, the one that reads, "Even if Diotima happened to lose her philosophical talent on her own, Emma's envy would not be extinguished because its constitutive desire of obtaining the good for herself would not be satisfied but rather emptied of its object." I think Chaplin interprets me as opposing "extinguished" with "emptied" and thus sees me as denying that Emma's envy is extinguished. But I, too, meant to agree, just like she does, with D'Arms and concede that Emma's envy is extinguished, while pushing back against the idea that her envy is thus *satisfied* (a term used by D'Arms and that I argue in the book that is not appropriate). That said, Chaplin's amendment is still valuable and compatible with my diagnosis, which I still believe in, that in that particular case Emma's envy would be *deflated*, so to speak. For a similar case, think of being angry at someone for a perceived wrongdoing: if we realize that we were factually mistaken on the situation and no wrongdoing has occurred, our anger will (perhaps slowly) deflate and will become unfitting; it will be "extinguished" even though we would not say it was "satisfied" to use D'Arms' terminology.
3. For a detailed review and bibliography on this evidence, see Garcia et al., "The Psychology of Competition."
4. Fülöp and Orosz, "State of the Art in Competition Research," 3.
5. Fülöp and Orosz, "State of the Art in Competition Research," 8.
6. For a review on the vast psychological literature on self-continuity, see Sedikides et al., "Self-Continuity"—the review does not mention envy.
7. Lange et al., "Dispositional Envy."
8. Bradford, *Achievement*.
9. Alfred and Matheson, *Honouring and Admiring the Immoral*, 13.
10. Kauppinen, "Ideals and Idols."
11. Brady, *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy*.
12. Cawston, "Admiring Animals."
13. Ibidem, in reference to Sophie Grace Chappell's view in "No More Heroes Anymore?"
14. Wills, "Toward a Concept of Revolutionary Admiration."
15. Archer and Matheson, *Honouring and Admiring the Immoral*, 13.
16. van de Ven, "Envy and Admiration," 2.
17. Schindler et al., "Admiration and Adoration"; Schindler et al., "Linking Admiration and Adoration to Self-expansion: Different Ways to Enhance One's Potential."
18. Zagzebski, "Admiration and the Admirable," 206.
19. Schindler et al., "Linking Admiration and Adoration to Self-expansion," 298.
20. See Schindler et al., "Linking Admiration and Adoration to Self-expansion"; and van de Ven, "Envy and Admiration."
21. I am thankful to Jan Crusius for confirming via an email exchange that only negligible effects in frequency and intensity of envy have been found. It's plausible that gender makes someone likely to envy others for different things (see, for instance, DelPriore et al., "Envy," who adopt an evolutionary psychology perspective), but even on this topic there is no robust evidence.

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after it first came out, Rich reflected that the piece was written to "encourage heterosexual feminists to examine heterosexuality as a political institution which disempowers women—and to change it."¹ Rich was interested in how the existence of lesbians denaturalized heterosexuality, rendering its compulsory nature perceptible. On one level she approved of the idea of women deciding to be lesbians, writing, "we can say that there is a *nascent* feminist political content in the act of choosing a woman lover or life partner in the face of institutionalized heterosexuality"—but, as she emphasizes, "for lesbian existence to realize this political content in an ultimately liberating form, the erotic choice must deepen and expand into conscious woman identification—into lesbian feminism."² So becoming queer was something, but you still needed politics.

Challenging Straightness

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The people currently targeting trans people for eradication, aiming to end legal abortion, accusing queers of grooming kids, and fulminating about "woke" politics don't usually talk about the work they're doing as defending straightness. The constellation of politics they enact share many other features—hatred of the poor, white supremacy, various forms of ethnonationalism, and various forms of neoliberalism among them. Still, if we are interested in building a collective politics that counters these things and chooses as our side instead the feminist, trans, queer options they hate, it is fruitful to target straightness.

In this paper, I argue that everyone who cares about human well-being should be working against straightness, both personally and politically. People who are afforded ease by straightness should betray it because of its effects on others as well as themselves, and people who experience the harms of straightness should oppose it as a key strategic target in our own work for collective liberation. I'm primarily concerned with all of us who are most endangered, rather than identified, by straightness, but I believe even straight people would be better off without the structure of straightness. The "we" I'm aiming to invoke here thus includes people who benefit enormously and those who suffer egregiously from the production of straightness. To call for solidarity against straightness is to call for a personal and political practice organized around selves and worlds that do not yet exist, but which we might shape in part through the work we do towards those worlds.

It's a commonplace among queer folks to suggest that the best way to address the harms of straightness would be to recruit straight people into queerness. The logic goes that if enough people convert, or discover the joys of being queer, the problems of straightness would evaporate. I've always loved the idea of choosing queerness, and in practice my experience of my own sexuality has rendered the "born that way" narrative something between irrelevant and evil. Adrienne Rich's essay "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" offers one touchstone for the insight that the existence of queer people opens up space for straight people to imagine otherwise. In 1982, some years

Forty years on from Rich's words, Jane Ward's book *The Tragedy of Heterosexuality* makes a call to return to a version of lesbian feminism based around a kind of woman identification that claims loving women as a choice, "a cultivated political stance, an act of opposition to heteropatriarchy."³ Ward formulates a way to choose to be straight that is about *liking* women, extending to straight men a "lesbian feminist mode of desire." She writes:

Lesbian feminist ethics dictated that to lust after women, to want to fuck women—even casually or nonmonogamously or raunchily—was inseparable from being *identified* with women as a whole and with the project of wanting women's freedom. It meant learning about what lifted women up, and also what harmed them, and aligning one's desires in the direction of women's collective liberation rather than their suffering.⁴

Such an approach resists what Ward characterizes as the "misogyny paradox," whereby "boys' and men's desire for girls and women is expressed within a broader culture that encourages them to also hate girls and women."⁵ I know a lot of feminist, cisgender, straight women who believe that heterosexuality disempowers women, but not many who share Rich's or Ward's hope about leaving or changing it. I want to take straight people seriously, to not assume that they can all solve the woes of straightness through becoming queer, and I love this part of Ward's book—she doesn't think that the solution to toxic heteronormativity is just for everyone to convert to queerness. While I'm profoundly sympathetic to her provocation about the possibilities of people, including straight men, genuinely liking and respecting women, I think we need a more collective and political approach to the problems straightness occasions. Consider how Alva Gotby articulates the approach of the activist group *Wages Due Lesbians* (WDL), which grew out of the worldwide *Wages for Housework* organizing and thinking, which argued that capitalism relies on women's invisibilized, feminized labor. Gotby traces how WDL articulated heterosexuality itself as a work discipline, writing,

To refuse such labour, however, is not merely negative withdrawal of one's efforts. . . . In the WDL writings, lesbianism emerges not as a fixed identity but as a particular practice—one that involves

the efforts of living a life outside the institutions of the capitalist organisation of the heterosexual family. WDL thus conceptualised lesbianism not at the end-goal of the feminist movement, but as a collective organisational form based on both refusal of reproductive work and the invention of new types of sociality and different forms of life.⁶

This formulation of sexuality as a form of life entangled with systems and social relations organized through capitalism opens the possibility of building on the personal approach Ward outlines, into a broader politics.

We ought to dismantle straightness insofar as its maintenance requires the repression, oppression, and control of gender, sexuality, and reproduction and insofar as it is a hinge in myriad other social forces that harm people. Again, my “we” here intends to call together a disparate group of people and to orient us toward a shared enemy. Wherever we are placed in relation to straightness, we experience the ways it distributes benefit and harm. Wherever we are placed in relation to straightness, we have traction for opposing it personally and politically. I’m most interested in betrayal and solidarity as animating political responses.

We who benefit from it ought to betray straightness. Here I think about betrayal in line with work on white people becoming treasonous to whiteness in the ways that Mab Segrest articulates that possibility, when one wants to abolish a social relation in which one is embedded and from which one benefits.⁷ I also have in mind some of the politics and analysis that came out of formations such as the journal *Race Traitor*.⁸ Although I am queer, I situationally and contingently fall into this group depending on who “reads” me, what they know about my biography and relational practices, and how I’m behaving. We who are oppressed by straightness—and I think this includes people who actively and enthusiastically or (perhaps more likely) implicitly identify as straight—ought to work together to abolish, dismantle, or destroy it. Each of these terms carries slightly different meanings: Abolishing evokes aiming toward a horizon of possibility that engulfs and surpasses an existing social order; dismantling involves taking something apart, perhaps to its constituent parts; destroying is the work of making something that currently exists no longer exist in that form. These and other kinds of activities will be tactically useful in opposing straightness’s harms. The strategic orientation I’m calling “betrayal” offers a normative guidance for these and other tactics. In any given situation, we can ask, how can I best act against these social relations of oppression and benefit that have been naturalized as “being straight”? How can I best be in solidarity with the people who are targeted by that naturalization? The affect, practice, and fantasy of solidarity can offer something helpful to our work for collective liberation across and with difference. In order to discern what we might decide to betray and with whom we want to act in solidarity as regards straightness, let me lay out first some diagnostic criteria for straightness and then consider the social structures that maintain it.

1. HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU’RE STRAIGHT?

The website WikiHow has a helpful instructional on “How to Know if You Are Heterosexual,” starting with the instruction to determine if you feel “attracted to people of the opposite gender.”⁹ This is a common everyday formulation. Bracketing the very interesting epistemological question of how we know we’re attracted to people at all, consider the durability of the formulation “opposite gender.” In her 1990 article “Heterosexuality and Feminist Theory,” Christine Overall defines heterosexuality as “a romantic and sexual orientation toward persons not of one’s own sex,” and nonheterosexuality as the same towards “persons of one’s own sex.”¹⁰ Of course, even way back in the year 1990, there were more than two sexes and genders, but even among feminists this was a fairly common definition. James Joseph Dean’s 2014 ethnography *Straights* shifts the language a bit, defining heterosexualities as “configurations of practice and discourse that refer to the identity category heterosexuals and generally, but not necessarily, align with sexual behaviors and desires orientated to the other—as opposed to the same—gender.”¹¹ Again, here we see a supposition of there only being two of something—we’ve moved from sex to gender in the years between Overall and Dean, but still remain within a binary in defining straightness. Dean carefully explores the ways sexualities are “fluid and situational,” both sociologically across history and within an individual’s life path, but like other scholars studying straight people he returns to this folk meaning of straightness as an identification. As Jane Ward has argued in the book *Not Gay*, the identificatory work straightness does is quite robust, such that people can have quite a lot of sexual contact with people who are not their “opposite” sexually and understand that as just horsing around, being hazed, or “heteroflexible” [as Urban Dictionary defines it, “I’m straight, but shit happens”¹²]. This robustness rests in part on the hand-waveyness of most people’s everyday assumption of straightness, and in part on the intensity with which straightness is asserted and crafted everywhere from gender reveal parties to prisons.

Straightness as an identity category is a relatively recent historical development, taking form in opposition to the definitions of all that was not normal, in ways we can perceive when those definitions take on material effects, such as laws governing who can marry, who can make medical decisions about dying partners, or whether teachers are allowed to talk about homosexuality in schools. In his *The Invention of Heterosexuality*, Johnathan Katz fruitfully notes the longer history of homosexual history research owing “its main impetus to gay, lesbian, and feminist movements.”¹³ I like Kadji Amin’s rendering of Katz’s argument: “heterosexuality emerged belatedly, as a normative ballast against homosexuality.”¹⁴ Medicalizing and criminalizing homosexuality as the abnormal type created the epistemological and practical problem of articulating the love that had never needed to bother to speak its name, and we live in the ongoing aftermath of concealing heterosexuality’s ideological origin story through pretending straightness goes back to Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve.¹⁵

WikiHow’s shorthand of “attracted to people not of one’s gender” names three core conditions that have come to

define straightness: sex, gender, and attraction. None of these really exist in a stable, easy-to-know, durable way. At least three things follow from the foundational instability of straightness. First, straightness's unfixity and need for self-reinforcement and management opens generative space for life beyond straightness—it is because core markers of straightness are unfixed that they can be destabilized. At the same time, straightness's instability means that it is able to change shape quickly and illogically. When we oppose straightness, we are targeting a polymorphous and emergent system—this may make it simultaneously easier and more difficult to aim at it as something we can oppose. Second, the instability of straightness has implications for the people who may want to work against it—who “we” are and who we ally ourselves with will be dynamic and shifting groups, particularly (as I note below) as people may move in and out of identifying with straightness. Finally, the instability of straightness means that it shifts over time and has site-specific formations; if fewer and fewer young people identify with straightness, what will this mean in the future to the significant social projects straight life secures? As the formation “Against Equality” argued years ago, angling for inclusion in the institution of marriage, the military, and the prison industrial complex undermines queer possibility; being not straight doesn't automatically carry politics that oppose straightness.¹⁶

So what currently defines straightness, unstable though it may be? As Amin argues, building on Katz, “heterosexuality was an afterthought to homosexuality, its belatedness a symptom of its purely ideological origins. As fictive as it is idealized, heterosexuality names an exclusive, normal, and healthy sexual orientation to the opposite sex that hardly exists in practice.”¹⁷ As we know, that things are ideological through and through does not mean that they don't have profound effects. So our working conception of straightness involves the following:

1. Identifiable distinct sexes—usually based on a physical marker for sex (secondary characteristics, chromosomes, hormones).
2. Stability of gender designation over an individual's lifetime, usually yoked to sex designation.
3. Sexual or romantic desire.

Again, none of these conditions are the kind of stable and reliable determinant on which we should rationally build entire social orders; they each have salient counterexamples that show that they are not sufficient diagnostic criteria. Indeed, a central point here is that there are no diagnostic criteria that would make straightness coherent. Instead, it is an emergent and gestural formation with fuzzy boundaries.

Identifiable distinct sexes Any physical marker used to delimit sex categories—male, female, or other non-binary but socially-fixed sex designates—has counterexamples. To take the top three, sex identification based on chromosomal markers (where XX chromosomes indicate “female” and XY indicate “male”) is unreliable; the usual example given here is that of people with XY chromosomes and androgen insensitivity, who may not know of their hormonal status

unless medical interventions are needed and “look like” woman. The idea that secondary sexed characteristics will have clear delimitations—genitals, facial hair, voice timbre and so on—similarly fails, especially in intersex people. And the idea that hormones make the male or female, popularly framed as though people with lots of estrogen are female humans and people with lots of testosterone are male humans, is similarly inaccurate.

Stability of gender designation over an individual's lifetime

Gender designation may seem simpler to stabilize over our lifetime, since after all many societies relentlessly gender and re-gender everyone from human babies to cars, and since many of us actively participate in liking our gender and how we live it. I read the sheer effort that goes in gendering process—whether it's the joyful effort of feeling gender euphoria or the punishing effort of disciplining other people's genders—as telling us something about how instable and needy gender is as a project. As I settle into middle age, I am reflecting also on the felt experience of gender shifting over the life course. A remarkable number of people my age and older are taking up nonbinary, genderqueer, or agender gender identifications. This may be because of the increased hermeneutic space in which people can understand their genders—it may be more common or ordinary now for people to claim genders beyond “man” or “woman.” It may also be about the ways that gender shifts across our individual life-course, even for people who do not think of ourselves as transgender or transexual—these shifts in gender experience are, perhaps, underdetermined, especially since much of what gets rendered as the experience of gender is through a youth-centric lens, itself tied up with narratives about the possibility of sexual reproduction.

Sexual or romantic desire

Finally, sexual or romantic desire exists for many people, but unstably so even for those who have it. Orientation or availability to interest might be a settled state, but its manifestation is episodic, often specific to particular people or places. People are not in continual states of lust or heart-eyes swooning after someone, and it's worth noting how much of the classification of straightness relies on the assumption that people's self-identification can be reliably read through this species of other-directedness. There might be a lot of distance between people's fantasy lives and their sexual practices. People might not have sexual or romantic desire at all in their lives, after life transitions, or in relation to specific circumstances. Monogamy turns out to also be central to the disciplinary conceptions of sexual and romantic desire; people are expected not only to have stable orientations but also to attach them to one person, who is themselves expected to not transform their gender, sexual orientation, sex designation, or pattern of desire. At the same time, there are so many non-scientific examples of straightness not relying on these core anchors. There are many straight trans people. Asexual and aromantic people are often read as straight, imputing forms of orientation to them they may not have—but by the same token they may identify as straight despite not having sexual or romantic desire. Or consider any of the people you know who always identified as straight until they got into a queer relationship. Consider people who thought of themselves as totally queer until

they started dating a straight person and began to worry—if they're in a monogamous relationship with someone who identifies as straight, and everyone around them thinks of them as straight, what does that mean for them?

So there are obvious counterexamples to any of the popular anchors for commonsense straight identification: When we examine any of them in any detail at all, we can see that the categories that are taken to give clear, scientific, commonsense answers for the questions we'd need to answer (about sex, gender, desire) whether someone is "really" straight don't have clear answers. This matters morally and politically because determining straightness is currently operating as a vector of oppression, everywhere from in legislation that prevents trans kids from accessing gender-confirming care, to restricting access to space to non-trans people, to people targeting drag story hours, to banning queer books, and so on. I read all of these current political maneuvers as part of a project aiming to shore up something that does not exist, with disastrous and painful consequences to people's lives. The people defending straightness through attacking trans people, queers, and reproductive freedom rely on a conception of the relation between bodies and lives that has been thought of as deterministic: If you are born with a particular body, you must have a specific sort of life.

Gary Kinsman's discussion of the social construction of sexuality is helpful here. He argues against determinism in all its forms: biological ("queerness is in our genes!" "I'm born this way!"), social ("society made me do it!"), and discursive ("how we talk made me this way!"). He argues for a social constructionism that resists reification—the ossification of social relations into relations between fixed things—and that moves "beyond the stifling polarities of the 'nature versus nurture' debate to see how our physiological potentialities get built upon, organized, and developed as they become part of our social bodies and worlds."¹⁸ I very much like this way of placing our bodies and pleasures in history and society because I think it helps us grapple with the ways that our sexualities can feel inevitable and unchangeable. Kinsman makes a useful analogy with language acquisition. He writes:

Most of us (but not all of us) are born with the physiological capacities for speech. But this does not mean we will learn how to speak since this is a social process building on these physiological capacities. A child isolated from human culture will not learn a language. The physiological capacity for speech also does not determine in any way what language we will speak or how good we will be in speaking it. In a similar fashion most of us are born with the physiological capacities or potentialities to derive erotic pleasures from our bodies and our interaction with the bodies of others but this does not pre-determine what forms this eroticism will take.¹⁹

This conception of sexuality names the ways that the formation of our capacities for eroticism and relation are embodied, social, historical, and relational—not simply an individual choice or physiological situation, even as

individual choices and physiological realities are central to how we experience eroticism and sexuality. Building on Kinsman's approach, I want to ask what tactics we might take up to oppose the shaping and disciplining of bodies, relationships, social practices, and modes of being that stabilize straightness as a social fiction with profound material effects that we experience very personally.

2. BETRAYAL AND PERSONAL RECKONING

It may be that only straight people can really betray straightness, in the way perhaps only true believers can be truly apostate or blasphemous. However, all of us can work to collectively transform the social relations of oppression and benefit that animate straightness. Those of us who live lives orthogonal to straightness might have fewer choices about when and whether we resist straight imperatives, and thus it may be particularly important for people who identify as straight to betray the social world that claims them. But I believe there's a role for everyone—queer, straight, and undecided—in this work. I see three primary modalities for productive betrayal, out of which we might build aspirational solidarities for selves and futures that don't yet exist—personal, political, and social.

Straightness is experienced personally, in the everyday and everynight lives of straight people. Whether they're going on dates, trying to get a job, parenting, grieving, trying to make friends, their micro, biographical experiences are part of what constitutes social relations of straightening. Of course, we queers also experience straightness personally, since straightness defines itself against us—I do not want to minimize the effects of serving that role in the very intimate ways that many of us have. Whether this is dating people who later turn out to have only been experimenting with their sexuality and using us as their test subjects, family members who attack what they see as the manifestations of queerness in our personality or life choices, or experiencing homophobia in the street or workplace, straightness affects queer people.

This personal production of straightness out of people's personal lives is frequently painful, at each point that it is specifically straightness as a norm being enacted. Quite a lot of the pain here involves the co-production of a gender binary and gender hierarchy. As Amin argues, "heterosexual men who are attracted to trans women may commit acts of extreme transmisogynist violence to protect their heterosexual masculine status. Extraordinary acts of transmisogynist violence may therefore be one consequence of the homo/hetero divide."²⁰ Straight men also murder straight women at an astonishing rate. And as Ward argues, even when death is not involved, straight people are regularly injured by production and enforcement of straightness. As Ward puts it,

the tragedy of heterosexuality is about men's control of women, but it is also about *straight women's and men's shared romantic and erotic attachments to an unequal gender binary*, or to the heteroerotic fantasy of binary, biologically determined, and naturally hierarchical gender oppositeness.²¹

Or, again, the misogyny paradox, that straight men and women are expected and enabled to desire one another and build lives together without liking, respecting, or understanding one another.

While I think there is a lot of promise in the work of betraying straightness on a personal level—through queerness in many forms, straight friendships that do not defer to the romance myth, mutually supportive communities—the best way to challenge the white cis capitalist heteropatriarchy is collective and it is political. However, let’s consider what work we can do on the level of the personal. Ward turns to the ideal of friendship as a site of the personal reckoning with straightness. She argues, “if we held straight couples to basic standards of good friendship—mutual respect and affection and a sense of comfort and bondedness based on shared experience—many straight relationships would fail the test.”²² Of course, many queer relationships, let alone many friendships, would also fail this test. But as a socially structuring imperative—to pursue monogamous, sexually replete, straight pair-bonds, establish them in single-family dwellings supported by productive work, and unfold them through biological progeny—it is striking how difficult it can be to be straight. Perhaps it is the case that straight men can practice women-identification, regard, and friendship; they could really like women, and desire them in all their complexity, enlargement, and expansiveness. I see such practices of friendship inside straight relationships as a betrayal of straightness as a hierarchical norm; such betrayals are potentially useful.

But perhaps one reason my straight women friends seem to find thinking about the possibilities for transforming heterosexuality depressing rather than exciting is that they do attempt to practice friendship in this way with their men partners—they may have respect for, affection towards, and like the men they’re involved with, but they often don’t have a sense of comfort and mutuality. And they overwhelmingly shoulder the care labor in households and family formations, itself another manifestation of straightness as a hierarchical normalizing structure of our social world.

So, on that level of the personal, perhaps friendship can be a betrayal of straightness in a more thoroughgoing way than simply being friends with people with whom we are sexually or romantically involved. One of the most precious perceptual lenses asexual and aromantic friends have offered me opens the radical space of relationality without these forms of desire. Holding dyadic sexual-romantic relationships as the paradigm for our social world but adding friendship is not transformative, even on the personal level. I think of the famous conversation between Audre Lorde and Adrienne Rich, where Lorde emphasizes, as she so often did: “we cannot fight old power on old power terms only. The only way we can do it is by creating another whole structure that touches every aspect of our existence, at the same time as we are resisting.”²³ Consider the ways that friendships outside dyadic relationships are perceived as threatening the pair-bond, and reflect: instead of simply adding friendship to that threatened interior—better, though, that would be than a relationship where you say you love someone you do not like—what else might happen?

In a dense reflection on actor Jason Mamoia, with especial attention to the ways his Instagram account reveals what she sees as his praxis of friendship, Yasmin Nair theorizes a “queer art of friendship.” She writes:

If “queer” means anything, and if we queers have given anything to the world, it’s a combination of sex and love that stretches the imagination and the concept of friendship. Conventional heterosexuality has been bounded by a need to define friendship between non-romantically-linked opposite-sex people as nothing but a field of landmines, sending therapists and columnists into near-panic. . . . We queers ask, on some level: whom do you love in ways that exceed bounds of conventional romance, and whom might you sleep with and then bound back with into a long and abiding friendship without feeling the need to “break up?” Nothing is perfect and this is by no means the last word on the matter, but we can safely say that queers have perfected the art of friendship as something not defined by whom you are or are not sleeping with but who excites you and whom you keep in your ambit: Who makes you crazy with love when you see them?²⁴

I want to follow Nair in this question of what follows when we ask *who excites us* and *whom shall I aim to keep in my ambit*? Beyond imagining a world in which romantic and sexual relationships did not trump any and all friendship, this is an invitation to attune ourselves to our own excitement, interest. For many women, and many straight women in particular, being attentive to other people’s excitement and interest overrides even the question of our own interest. As well, the question of ambit is generative. Ambit gives scope—we cannot be friends with everyone, or friends in the same way with everyone we’re friends with. But attuning to our own sense of aliveness in our relationships can be part of practicing forms of relationality orthogonal to straightness.

Prioritizing friendship can also have the personal effect of disrupting what Dean Spade talks about as the “romance myth”—which operates in both queer and straight spaces—one stabilizing story that facilitates straightness.²⁵ As Spade articulates it, this is the myth that there is a perfect/best partner out there who we should give up anything for, who we will be with for our whole life, who will meet all of our relational needs, with whom love and sex will be continuous and easy, and that this will be the most important, sustaining relationship, competitively secured through being an appropriate seller/consumer of the dating market, we can aspire to. Having friendships of many different sorts can viscerally disrupt this myth; in particular I want to mark that recent focus on people who marry their best friends, or books like *Big Friendship* don’t disrupt the romance myth as much as they slightly displace it away from sexuality. To really nourish friendship, as Nair’s work encourages us to consider, requires including not only these “big friendships” but also the situational, episodic, casual friendships that are also part of a complex ecosystem of relationships. Again, I’ll argue below that truly disrupting settled practices of straightness will

require transformed social relations—but along the way towards that end formulating the possibilities for deeply caring relationships that are nondyadic, nonsexual, and nonromantic can be meaningful.

My “gym wife” Anne Clarke—a very specific category of friendship!—has theorized in conversation with me this more collective approach to disrupting the harms of straightness. Beginning from the reproductive labor of raising four kids, intensified in context of the last years of parents everywhere being thrown to the COVID wolves, Clarke argues that we have been collectively stripped of the capacities and skills to build community. She thinks of care work as definitional of humanness, including in the ambit of care kids, vulnerable people, sick people, as well as the nonhuman animals and ecosystems for which we might care better. She texted me the other day, “being human is the antidote to straightness.” I’m sparked by this formulation because so often the pillars of straightness are equated with humanness—or, at least, with a wrongheaded and conservative conception of the work of evolution to produce the dyadic straight family. Resistance to such a conception of the human and the family in Marxist humanism—becoming more human humans—has been a central preoccupation and question for me for many years now. Always worrying about human exceptionalism, I’m ambivalently on side with this horizon of possibility in Marxist humanism, especially in contemporary work towards the abolition of the family.²⁶

Ultimately, we do not transform social relations of oppression and benefit through individual transformation, whether that is becoming better friends to ourselves and others, or skilling up the capacities to be vulnerable, connected, and in communities not organized through capitalism. To turn to that, let’s pause to consider what social relations straightness uses as guy lines—tethers to hold itself together.

3. WHAT DOES STRAIGHTNESS NEED TO STABILIZE ITSELF?

I’ve been arguing that straightness shores itself up against the pounding waves of all that is not straight. The work of making straightness seem natural, normal, and expected is widely distributed and surprisingly powerful. As individuals we do not have much traction for crafting lives and ways of being outside of straightness; we open the space of queerness for one another, collectively, as it has been opened for us. It is in part because, as theorists such as Crys Ingraham have argued, straightness is conceptually and practically incoherent that we are able to create queer communities.²⁷ I believe it is only through collective and political work that the sometimes-violent stabilizing practices that enact straightness can be transformed.

As I mentioned above, many queers are delighted enough with being queer that we do on some level think all our straight friends would be happier if they converted. Since the boundaries around sexuality are in fact so fuzzy and gestural, and since there has been so much violence and suffering directed at people who are not deemed straight, the thought is that the appropriate political and theoretical

move is just to declare everyone actually a bit queer and go on from there. However, thinking again with Kinsman’s work, this gesture is both condescending and ineffective. I do not think that the best political remedy for the wrongs of straightness is to convert all straight people into queerness.

The condescendingness of the “just convert” approach includes its disavowal of the material conditions of straightness. Although the fuzziness of boundaries around criteria for proper straightness is quite thoroughly disavowed, their bright lines take brutally clear bureaucratic and social form. Just try to sponsor someone to immigrate outside of family bonds articulated through monogamous sexual and romantic love, or to give your insurance benefits, if you’re lucky enough to have them, to a friend. So, we could say, *fuzzy boundaries*, but also, *massively stabilized categories requiring mountainous collective work to perpetuate their existence*. Here we perceive the work of whiteness, medicalized conceptions of bodies as having a real, true, knowable teleology, and the heteropatriarchy work in tandem. Thinking of heterosexual hegemony as something that is made and can be remade, I see six stabilizing patterns to be the most significant in maintaining heterosexuality:

1. Naturalizing evolutionary and biologically determinist narratives as explanation for social organization—nature made us so that we could reproduce the species, care roles arise from reproductive roles, men naturally do y, women naturally do x.
2. A conception of sexual desire as natural, organizing, and simultaneously out of control and foundational to social life.
3. Disciplining hierarchies that simultaneously produce and enforce the social organization of gender—heterosexuality stabilized through social and political institutions.
4. Distinct and mutually exclusive gender roles.
5. Material social relations of oppression and benefit that stabilize people’s access to a good life based on their proximity to straightness.
6. Under neoliberalism, an intensified conception of the family as the only appropriate unit of care.

Since the minimum conditions of straightness are incoherent fictions, yet socially real, these stabilizing apparatuses are perhaps the most vulnerable vectors for destroying the white cissexist heteropatriarchy—indeed, these have been historically some of the main points of attack for collective social movements. I am thinking about attacking these as a useful starting point for betraying straightness and building solidarity.

The political betrayal of straightness involves targeting its stabilizing apparatuses: the ways straightness distributes material harm and benefit to shape people to fit its illusory criteria. To return to those six significant

ideological apparatuses of straightness, this would mean the following:

1. Contesting the social organization of care based on a narrative about the “natural fitness” of women to take care of kids and elders, with the concomitant distribution of wage disparity, household labor, emotional labor, and so on.
2. Reconfiguring how we think and talk about sexual desire everywhere from schools to bathrooms such that we do not posit it as foundational to human experience but simultaneously dangerously impossible to control. This means taking seriously the idea that men are not natural rapists biologically compelled to control the people they date because of evolutionary compulsions to identify their biological progeny, that women are not incapable of partner abuse, and so on.
3. Resisting the form of heterosexuality as Ward advises—personally, straight people coming to like and respect one another, collectively recognizing many different forms of friendship and relationship as valid and good, and politically shifting tax law, practices of housing and cohabitation, hospital visitation rights, adoption and fertility access practices, and monogamy as norm.
4. Fighting the stabilization of mutually exclusive gender roles in every aspect of life.
5. Providing meaningful access to a life of sufficient abundance and meaning for everyone, regardless of whether they fit straight norms of dyadic gender-differentiated monogamous reproductive coupledness.
6. Refusing the neoliberal cant that the family is the only form through which humans should offer care and nourishment to one another or the world.

Consider the white supremacist “14 words,”—“We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.” While this is a statement about whiteness, it is also a lynchpin orientation for the articulation of straightness, resting on the idea that white women have an obligation to reproduce the race—that what we are for is that reproduction. The violence it takes to secure that white future is then rendered as the domain of the white man, who husbands its possibility. As Ladelle McWhorter has argued, in the North American context, racism, ableism, heterosexism, and sexism do not operate in isolation from one another, but in fact collectively underwrite “oppressive conditions and relations.”²⁸ Thinking about their entanglements invites an intersectional method that is comfortable with, indeed relies upon, the transformation of the social relations that also constitute us. The monster is always already inside the house, and it’s from here that we’ll do any transformation.

4. FORMING NEW SOCIAL RELATIONS AND STRUCTURES

In the AIDS activist oral history project I conducted with Gary Kinsman, people often talked about how they got involved with organizing across difference. Gay men would say things like, well, I got interested in gay politics and so of course I was going to the abortion clinic defense actions that were happening then, and so that’s how we got to know feminist organizers who’d been working on the political part of health for ages and we learned so much from them. And then lesbians would say, well, I was doing anti-rape activism and so of course I got to know the gay men that were active around town and supporting our work there and when they started struggles about AIDS it was obvious that that was something that mattered to me. And straight people would say, well, I was working on drug access in prisons and we couldn’t talk about needle exchanges without thinking about how gay sex was stigmatized and that’s how I got connected, showing up for demos and so on.

The solidarity orientation here seems to me to be about rejecting that privatization of straightness, taking personally the connection of struggles. Activists who did care work in the context of AIDS recognized that the best way to support people living with AIDS was not to focus on supporting individuals living with AIDS. It was to make public housing a priority and resist attacks on the poor. It was to stand with drug users and sex workers and dismantle criminalization of survival, and then to try to get people out of prisons but to make needle exchanges and condoms widely available inside in the meantime. It was to make drug trials ethical and responsive to people directly affected, and then to make drugs accessible regardless of wealth. It was to highlight how border imperialism and neoliberal regimes of global capitalism distributed access to treatments to the global north and medical trials and bad drugs to the global south. It was to put into practice the understanding that neither the state nor dyadic privatized families could not be relied upon to offer end of life care. I’m interested in how we can *do likewise* with some of how we struggle to challenge white cis heteronormativity today.

I take this idea from McWhorter’s book *Racism and Sexual Oppression in Anglo-American*. This book does vitally important work on the interconnection of struggles against racism, ableism, sexism, and more. She thinks specifically about the ways that social movements for transformation inherit past struggles and rearticulate them in our current work. As McWhorter writes,

Times have changed. Doing likewise is not necessarily doing the same. Doing likewise is taking up the challenge of inventing what to do in the absence of set models and clear precedents and of living with the uncertainties and unforeseeable consequences that invention entails. And of course doing likewise is no guarantee that we shall overcome—or that we shall be overcome as agents and conduits in an order we want to resist and dismantle. But it is, I think, the only open door, the only possibility. Go forth and do likewise—

which means: Listen. Speak. Incite. Invent. And never, ever adjust.²⁹

McWhorter here signals with the notion of “adjustment” the process by which we straighten ourselves, or by which we are disciplined. So again, there will always be a significant part of what we do that involves the personal betrayal of the harms of straightness.

But it is more interesting to do likewise—to take inspiration from activists like the people who fought for the lives of people living with HIV. In betraying straightness, we might do well to build collective practices that erode the disciplinary foundations stabilizing straightness. But simply moving to collective forms of relationality not built around the ideal of the dyadic family unit only takes us so far. To close, let’s return to Adrienne Rich’s invitation to make heterosexuality no longer compulsory. C. L. Cole and Shannon L. C. Cate explore how Rich’s work might offer us resources for trans solidarities. They frame Rich’s understanding of the lesbian continuum as “a strategic mechanism for generating politically viable identities and alliances. It is a way of shifting investments, a reorientation that attempts to demystify and recognize women’s complex lived experience. It is a standpoint, a mechanism for interrupting hetero-patriarchy, in Rich’s terms, male-identification.”³⁰ Or, to invoke Wages Due Lesbians again, it is to take up the labor of inventing, as Gotby puts it, “new social and sexual practices.”³¹ This “playful work of inventing new ways of survival and flourishing . . . open up queerness as a practice of experimentation rather than a fixed identity category.” In turn, “those who currently understand themselves as heterosexual, and benefit from the material rewards of heterosexuality, may potentially betray their loyalty to the status quo and become part of the collective struggle against work and for new forms of sociality and desire.”³² This move toward our politics as a prescription rather than a description, a mechanism for interruption, also allows us to reckon with the material conditions that shape both our identities and our alliances.

If we had universal guaranteed housing, people would not be forced to stay in abusive relationships because they had nowhere else to go; universal childcare would allow caregivers of kids to better unfurl their own life course; universal, public medical care for people of all ages would transform the bounds of family and community; free movement of people across borders would do away with the need for family reunification procedures and simultaneously eliminate exploitative foreign-worker programs and punishing border regimes; eliminating forced surgeries and treatments for intersex people and affording everyone universally accessible dignified trans healthcare would shift how we live gendered lives. In sum, the best way to betray straightness is to work towards fundamental, revolutionary shifts across nearly every aspect of our lives and social relations. Such work can only be done together, in beloved community. The solidarities we practice toward in order to do this work are of necessity aspirational—we stand with future versions of ourselves who do not yet exist, who have refused to be adjusted, who have yet to be realized. How beautiful that world we can’t yet fully experience is, and how worth struggling for.³³

NOTES

1. Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” 23.
2. Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” 66.
3. Ward, *The Tragedy of Heterosexuality*, 160.
4. Ward, *The Tragedy of Heterosexuality*, 166.
5. Ward, *The Tragedy of Heterosexuality*, 27.
6. Gotby, “The Labour of Lesbian Life,” 78.
7. Segrest, *Memoir of a Race Traitor*.
8. I also have some concerns about these politics, which I’ve elaborated in the book *Knowing Otherwise*, some of which are cognate with the argument I attempt below about the need for collective, political responses to harms such as straightness.
9. Fox and Lorenz, “3 Ways to Know If You Are Heterosexual.”
10. Overall, “Heterosexuality and Feminist Theory,” 1.
11. Dean, *Straights: Heterosexuality in Post-Closeted Culture*, 25.
12. Ward, *Not Gay: Sex Between Straight White Men*, 9.
13. Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality*, 10.
14. Amin, “We Are All Nonbinary,” 110.
15. Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality*.
16. See <https://www.againstequality.org/>
17. Amin, “We Are All Nonbinary,” 110.
18. Kinsman, “Queerness Is Not in Our Genes,” 264.
19. Kinsman, “Queerness Is Not in Our Genes,” 265.
20. Amin, “We Are All Nonbinary,” 111.
21. Ward, *The Tragedy of Heterosexuality*, 22.
22. Ward, *The Tragedy of Heterosexuality*, 17.
23. Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, 103.
24. Nair, “Jason Momoa, Aquaman, and the Queer Art of Friendship.”
25. Spade, “Valentine’s Day Webinar with Fireweed Collective—Dean Spade.”
26. O’Brien, *Family Abolition; Abolish the Family*.
27. Ingraham, *Thinking Straight*, 3.
28. McWhorter, *Racism and Sexual Oppression in Anglo-America*, 15.
29. McWhorter, *Racism and Sexual Oppression in Anglo-America*, 331.
30. Cole and Cate, “Compulsory Gender and Transgender Existence,” 282.
31. Gotby, “The Labour of Lesbian Life,” 93.
32. Gotby, “The Labour of Lesbian Life,” 94.
33. Thank you to Gail Weiss for the initial invitation to think about straightness for a panel on “Challenging White Cis-Heteronormativity” at the Society for Phenomenological and Existential Philosophy annual conference in 2021, and the other participants in that panel—Perry Zurn, Megan Burke, and Nikki Sullivan; also to Caleb Ward at the Universität Hamburg for hosting the Feminist Political Philosophy Speakers Series, where I received very helpful input. Thanks to Chris Dixon for commenting on many versions of this (and resisting straightness generally), Anne Clarke for conversations while lifting weights, Stacy Douglas, Rebecca Schein, Karen Hebert, Megan Rivers-Moore, Kelly Fritsch, and Laura Horak for writing with me, and the generous Facebook friends who made 103 comments on my post about straightness at an early drafting stage. Thanks to Ami Harbin and Barrett Emerick for keen and generous editorial guidance.

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APA STUDIES ON

Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy

LORI GALLEGOS, EDITOR

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FROM THE EDITOR

Lori Gallegos
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Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Latin American philosophers have made substantial contributions to the area of metaphilosophy, grappling with questions about the distinguishing features of Latin American philosophy, about Latin American philosophy's relationship to European philosophy, and about what characteristics a work must possess to be considered truly philosophical. US-based Latinx and Latin American philosophers have continued to advance this line of inquiry, and this issue of *APA Studies in Hispanic/Latino Philosophy* contains some of the fruits of that labor.

We begin with the winner of the 2023 Essay Prize in Latin American Thought—an essay titled “Rethinking Extractivist Epistemologies: Mexican Philosophy and Philosophy *al otro lado*.” In this award-winning essay, Emmanuel Carrillo Meza raises concerns about the precarious positioning of Mexican philosophy in its encounter with US academic philosophy. In particular, he warns against the tendency to consume Mexican philosophy by merely extracting from it what has already been determined to be theoretically valuable by dominant epistemological frameworks.

The essay is followed by a discussion of Susana Nuccetelli's *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2020). In the book, Nuccetelli surveys and situates primary material spanning the history of Latin American philosophy. Then, in the final chapter, Nuccetelli advances the proposal that Latin American philosophy should be thought of as an applied branch of philosophy that takes up philosophical issues that arise in the experiences of Latin American people. The discussion of Nuccetelli's text includes commentaries by Maité Cruz, Ricardo Fria, and Vicente Medina, followed by Nuccetelli's replies to her interlocutors.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

APA Studies on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy is accepting contributions for the fall 2024 issue. The issue will include a special cluster on the term “Latinx.” Our readers are encouraged to submit original work on that topic or on any topic related to Hispanic/Latinx thought, broadly construed. We publish original, scholarly treatments, as well as *meditaciones*, book reviews, and interviews. Please prepare articles for anonymous review.

ARTICLES

All submissions should be accompanied by a short biographical summary of the author. Electronic submissions are preferred. All essay submissions should be limited to 5,000 words (twenty double-spaced pages) and must follow the APA guidelines for gender-neutral language and *The Chicago Manual of Style* formatting. All articles submitted to the newsletter undergo anonymous review.

BOOK REVIEWS

Book reviews in any area of Hispanic/Latino philosophy, broadly construed, are welcome. Submissions should be accompanied by a short biographical summary of the author. Book reviews may be short (500 words) or long (1,500 words). Electronic submissions are preferred.

DEADLINES

The deadline for the fall issue is May 1. Authors should expect a decision by June 15. The deadline for the spring issue is November 15. Authors should expect a decision by January 15.

Please send all articles, book reviews, queries, comments, or suggestions electronically to the editor, Lori Gallegos, at LoriGallegos@txstate.edu, Department of Philosophy, Comal Building 102, Texas State University, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666.

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

The *APA Studies* adhere to *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Use as little formatting as possible. Details like page numbers, headers, footers, and columns will be added later. Use tabs instead of multiple spaces for indenting. Use italics instead of underlining. Use an “em dash” (—) instead of a double hyphen (--). Use endnotes instead of footnotes. Examples of proper endnote style: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 90. See Sally Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?” *Noûs* 34 (2000): 31–55.

ARTICLES

Rethinking Extractivist Epistemologies: Mexican Philosophy and Philosophy al otro lado

Winner, 2023 APA Essay Prize in Latin American Thought

Emmanuel Carrillo Meza
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US academic philosophy has, until now perhaps, shown little interest or concern for Mexican philosophy. This indifference has fueled and continues to entertain debates regarding the possibility of the existence of *Mexican philosophy*, per se. The result of this indifference, especially within the landscape of US academic philosophy, has been a disregard for philosophical thought produced in México and by Mexican thinkers. For me, however, there is unquestionably such a thing as Mexican philosophy, and its encounter with US academic philosophy no longer represents a question of the possibility that Mexican philosophy exists, but of how we manage this encounter both as students and academics, *al otro lado*. Thus, an important question we should ask is how does US academic philosophy in its positionality *on the other side* of the border and as part of a dominant epistemological framework understand and engage in this encounter? What can be affirmed is that work with Mexican philosophy *al otro lado* is being done! Praiseworthy evidence of this is the launching and publication of the first issue of the *Journal of Mexican Philosophy*. According to the editors, this journal seeks to “transform indifference into passion and commitment and to present Mexican philosophy as what we take it to be, namely, a rich philosophical tradition worthy of inclusion in the standard story of the West.”¹ I agree that Mexican philosophy must be recognized for its richness. Moreover, because I recognize this richness, I worry about how we then move to *include* it as part of the standard story of the West, while preserving this distinct richness.

One principal concern related to this proposed inclusion is the way in which we as US academics speak of *extracting* philosophy, such that the theoretical value of what is extracted can then be employed for various purposes. My argument is that *extraction*, as just described, functions as a method which only seeks and consumes what it has determined as valuable. Furthermore, it seems that what we find theoretically valuable via this extractivist methodology, and as structured by the dominant epistemological frameworks of the West, is overdetermined. Specifically, the extraction of theoretical value is enacted by a determination-in-advance, since we seem to have already determined what represents intelligibility within Western philosophical traditions and, as such, we only seek what already represents intelligibility within this structure. This extractivist methodology reinvigorates pernicious presuppositions that totalize what it means to do philosophy when it attempts to subsume traditionally marginalized thinking into its intelligible categories. The

challenge and call to action for those of us seeking to engage with Mexican philosophy is to consider ways in which we can escape academic philosophy’s totalizing desire(s). We should question the manner in which we engage with Mexican philosophy in such a way that we avoid methodologies which overdetermine its theoretical value both as a body of work *outside* the Western canon of philosophy, but which, nonetheless can be consumed or included in it by way of extractivist projects.

EXTRACTIVIST METHODOLOGIES

The first task is to provide an account of epistemic extraction in which value is overdetermined, such that this method of extraction can thereby be said to seek and consume what appears as intelligible to dominant epistemological frameworks, exemplified in this case by US academic philosophy. Linda Martín Alcoff presents a useful account of *extractivist epistemologies*, defined as having four salient features. These features are as follows:

1. The practice of ranking knowers,
2. Denying the need for collaboration across groups,
3. Defining values as nonrelational and objectively determinable, and
4. Seeking the exclusive appropriation and control over intellectual items such as knowledges and processes.²

The main focus of my analysis will be on the second and third features as the extractivist practices which most poignantly illustrate how my sense of extraction seeks and consumes what is overdetermined as valuable.

Alcoff’s account is grounded within capitalist frameworks of market economies which extract and bring to market natural resources from colonized domains. My account will differ, however, since I argue that we can extend this concept to “non-material” resources like concepts, methods, and traditions. On her account, then, extractivist epistemologies undergird extractivist practices which purport to objectively determine what is valuable. These practices conceptualize the object(s) of their pursuits via the function of assigning them a certain marketable or commodifiable value. My account does not deny that theoretical value can be extracted from the body of work that is Mexican philosophy and then marketed within the marketplace of ideas. Instead, I want to draw attention to and critically analyze the methodology of this extraction and, from this, construct my own account of epistemic extraction. I argue that the type of extraction which I am focusing on, and one which is employed by dominant epistemological frameworks, functions by recognizing and giving value only to that which already appears within the totality of ideas of the dominant force. Consider that Mexican philosophy has been shaped by its relationality to at least two particularly significant forces: its Spanish colonial history and its geographic location to the US. In this way, Mexican philosophy is often circumscribed by these forces to the extent that it can be understood to be *within* them, yet paradoxically, Mexican philosophy’s lack

of inclusion into the Western canon of philosophy places it *outside* of this body of work.

Indeed, this is a stated goal of the *Journal of Mexican Philosophy*: to distinguish Mexican philosophy as representing a tradition which critiques *from within*, that is, "It represents a critique of the Western tradition *from within*, one that serves as a model—available to insider and outsider alike—for combatting the sorts of marginalization and the kinds of silencing that Western philosophical hegemony makes possible."³

I recognize the value of a critique from *within* in as much as it can magnify the issues already present within dominant epistemological frameworks. The language of *within* or *outside of*, however, delimits and ossifies its potential to serve as a critique, perhaps even as a mode of decolonial praxis, because it concretizes and delimits the value of Mexican philosophy as merely and only a response to the dominant forces. The potentially positive critique that would result from dissolving the asymmetric relation which circumscribes Mexican philosophy as *within* or *outside of* dominant epistemological frameworks of the West is reduced to an overdetermined and unidirectional relation wherein academic philosophy on the other side of the border could continue to dictate the ways in which Mexican philosophy emerges as intelligibly recognizable.

The kinds of aims which dissolve these asymmetric relations fall squarely within the scope of projects related to decolonization. Decolonizing praxis is an ongoing process, allergic to any conceptualizations as a completed project. Though the initial force of the event of the Spanish arrival and attempted conquest continues to extend into *the past*, Mexican philosophy's continued interrelations with the United States are active, palpable, and constructive. As I type and listen to online Mexican radio in the background, I chuckle as I hear an ad for an English-language school claiming that English-language speakers in Mexico earn up to 30 percent more than their monolingual counterparts. Palpable, active, constructive/destructive.

Where I think there is potential for pitfalls, as US academics, is in a foreclosed conceptualization of the object of our pursuit. In other words, we might be tempted to conceptually delimit the theoretical value of Mexican philosophy as simply and mostly an intellectual response to the dominant epistemological frameworks and forces which have shaped its development. As Alcoff argues, extractivist projects are motivated by the presupposition that certain commodifiable values can be universally conceptualized and, in this way, become easily identifiable as *objects of pursuit*.⁴ For example, as proponents of dominant epistemic frameworks, universities in the United States, and specifically their philosophy departments and the philosophers who comprise them, may very well internalize certain presuppositions regarding the theoretical value of Mexican philosophy as, perhaps, mostly a response to dominant epistemologies. Granted, though the aforementioned may form part of the equation, we must however, also recognize and attempt to illuminate the interior cultural and intellectual processes embedded within Mexican philosophy itself, and in this way, allow its

emergence as something recognizably different beyond theory which is only reactive to forces which attempt to circumscribe it. As a challenge to extractivist projects, Alcoff urges us to recognize that the process by which *value* is defined is an "interpretive practice for all parties."⁵ I argue that these interpretive practices must seek to dissolve asymmetric relations where the interpretation of Mexican philosophy doesn't *just* happen through the dominant epistemological frameworks, but instead, considers the interior cultural and intellectual processes unique to its ongoing practice as a potential decoupling from these dominant frameworks.

HABITUS, INSTITUTIONS, AND SITUATED KNOWERS

Having discussed ways in which US academics might engage in and become agents of extractivist projects, I would like to ground this discussion by illuminating ways in which the intellectual environment and academic institutions in the US, as offshoots of its *habitus*, are oriented in such a way that they constitute a space primed for the creation and cultivation of extractivist projects. I will now turn to the critical phenomenology of Sarah Ahmed in *Queer Phenomenology*.⁶

Ahmed's account, which explains the whiteness of space as accumulations or sedimentations of repeated practices and tendencies, is important because of the ways in which these spaces and the tools available within them are oriented around certain bodies (white bodies in Ahmed's work) more than others. Furthermore, if we understand institutions (academic institutions for my purposes) as collective and public spaces of discourse, one question that materializes before us is how can the overwhelmingly white orientation of US academic philosophy shape the intellectual tools available to its philosophers? Thus, following Ahmed, it becomes crucial to distinguish not only how spaces acquire the shape and orientation of the bodies that inhabit them, but we must consider how these orientations shape and influence our own academic practices.

The *habitual* is a form of inheritance. Not just particular habits as practices or tendencies, but additionally, what we inherit are bodily and spatial *orientations* which then inform our processes of habit formation. This is why in redescribing the processes by which bodies find themselves channeled towards specific tendencies, Ahmed writes, "We can redescribe this process in the following terms: the repetition of the tending *toward* is what identity 'coheres' around (= tendencies). We do not, then, inherit our tendencies; instead, we *acquire* our tendencies from what we inherit."⁷ Undoubtedly, as an institutional space, academic philosophy in the United States is inscribed with tendencies that overvalue not just the white bodies that inhabit them, but also the orientation that has been signaled by these white spaces and which is then received as an inheritance or "tradition." Consequently, what nontraditionally represented scholars enter into are monochromatic academic spaces with predetermined ideals about what it means to do philosophy and what it means to be *philosophical*. Additionally, these habitual spaces appear to scholars as fully formed totalities imprinted

with a Greek origin, and punctuated events or places as the culminations of the Western intellectual tradition found mostly in US and European academic philosophy.

It is very easy for new scholars to enter these spaces, and in order to gain favor with academic advisors or professors, such that these relations can influence future job prospects, avoid questioning the inheritance and habits that we then internalize and repeat. Referencing the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Ahmed links these habits with practices that as *second nature* become unconscious and routine.⁸ Inherited structures, then, actualize the possibilities of action for certain spaces and bodies, but this structural inheritance can also restrict the possibilities of actions that do not cohere around the tradition. For Ahmed, to think about institutions as orientating devices means that institutions may appear overdetermined and given as complete, fully contextualized, a totality, arising from the effects of “the repetition of decisions made over time, which shapes the surface of institutional spaces. Institutions involve lines, which are the accumulation of past decisions about ‘how’ to allocate resources, as well as ‘who’ to recruit.”⁹ The work of individuals doing Mexican philosophy *al otro lado* as situated knowers, then, seems twofold. On the one hand, we must avoid reifying the US academic and philosophical institutions which we are part of as entities that are fully contextualized, that is, as spaces where all contextual relations are known and have been *exhausted*. To say that something might be fully contextualized because its contextual relations have been exhausted is to accept the sedimentation of past decisions as accumulations. This denies the appearance of future contexts which push against overdetermination. As scholars of these institutions, failure to avoid this reification means that the orientation from which we approach Mexican philosophy might fail to adequately capture the theoretical richness inherent in Mexican philosophy. This could happen if we conceive of Mexican philosophy as not yet forming part of the larger history of the Western canon, and thus, not congruent with inherited beliefs as they relate to the traditional practice of philosophy. Likewise, in our calls for the inclusion of Mexican philosophy into the larger story of the philosophical landscape, we must also avoid subsuming Mexican philosophy by applying the inherited epistemic frameworks which can facilitate its appearance upon this larger landscape as simply something already recognizable within the historic philosophical framework. Failure to do the latter exemplifies yet another instance in which Mexican philosophy is required to stand in a unidirectional and subordinate relationship to dominant epistemological frameworks. What’s more, independently, not to mention in combination, these failures would undercut the unique richness of the Mexican philosophical orientation because they obfuscate the interrelationality to both its historic past and in its dealings with academic philosophy in the United States, thereby depriving it of the ability to speak to and to engage in what can be considered a decolonial praxis from *within*.

REPRISE AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

To summarize and by way of conclusion, I’ll continue employing the language of *situated knowers* and *dominant epistemological frameworks*, borrowed in part from

Murdock.¹⁰ Using this language, we can conceive of US academics as situated knowers, that is, situated within a particular epistemic habitus comprised of US academic institutions which wield considerable power as a dominant epistemological framework. I would like not only to recap and take stock of what has been said thus far, but also to underscore the need to be mindful of potential slippages into extractivist methodologies as I have formulated them.

First, epistemic projects function through epistemic practices which themselves work by defining the value of what is extracted as objectively determinable and nonrelational. We perceive Mexican philosophy to be imbued with a uniquely rich theoretical orientation which can inform decolonial praxes because of its historic relation to Western colonialism. In this way, Mexican philosophy heralds the opportunity for a model of critique launched *from within* the very orientations by which it was shaped. However, an important way in which the theoretical orientation of Mexican philosophy is typically understood is simply as a response to the constructive forces of dominant epistemological frameworks. As situated knowers within dominant epistemological frameworks, philosophers doing Mexican philosophy *al otro lado* must concern themselves to avoid this characterization of Mexican philosophy, that is, as always being on its backfoot and just responsive to the constructive forces it has dealt with and continues to contend with in modern times. Ignoring this concern and enabling this reactionary perspective enables an ossified, relationally disproportionate, and objectified conceptualization of the theoretical value of Mexican philosophy. This perspective, which is disproportionately relational and where value becomes perniciously objectifiable, is what most saliently distinguishes extractivist projects and the methodology of those who might engage in these endeavors.

Second, I attempted to ground the preceding discussion by claiming that US academic philosophy is an institution which constitutes a space primed for the creation and cultivation of extractivist projects. This happens if, following Ahmed’s analysis, we understand institutions (in this essay the institution of US academic philosophy) as collective and public spaces that acquire their orientation and tendencies from habits inscribed in their inherited structures. These inherited structures thus appear to scholars as fully formed totalities, since they usually trace their inheritance through a genealogy of linear historicity—a history which begins with the Greeks and culminates with the US and European traditions as the would-be-inheritors of the Western intellectual tradition. For various reasons, but mostly in order to gain a certain acceptance and favor with individuals who may be critically important for our advancement and job placement in the field, many scholars avoid questioning the sometimes pernicious inheritance of the Western intellectual tradition. Instead, we often internalize many of the presuppositions inherent in this intellectual tradition, and thus, its habits become a practical *second nature* that becomes routine and often goes unquestioned.

The task of philosophers working on Mexican philosophy *al otro lado* is twofold. First, we must avoid reifying US academic philosophy as an entity that is fully contextualized, complete, and, as such, overdetermined, in

order to approach and appreciate the richness of Mexican philosophy more openly and charitably. Second, we should resist characterizing Mexican philosophy as both *within* the dominant epistemological frameworks that have sought to circumscribe it, while simultaneously regarding it as a valuable philosophical project that is *outside* of these bounds and thus apt for inclusion and consumption via the negative sense of extraction I've described above. Based on the foregoing, and in my judgment, all of us who engage with Mexican philosophy *al otro lado*, or perhaps even as Mexican academics working with Mexican philosophy in México, must avoid subsuming Mexican philosophy into and without questioning our inherited epistemic frameworks. Though these traditional epistemic frameworks may indeed facilitate Mexican philosophy's appearance within the more dominant and thus accepted academic landscapes, it does so only through a recognition granted by the habitual and sedimented philosophical frameworks. Failures to recognize and address these issues would only bolster the work of extractivist epistemologies and their practices as they undercut the unique richness of a Mexican philosophical orientation. Furthermore, stemming from the asymmetric or disproportionate relationality that is unleashed by extractivist epistemologies, the theoretical value of Mexican philosophy would be obfuscated, and its value as a decolonial praxis diminished.

NOTES

1. Robert Sanchez Jr. and Carlos Alberto Sanchez, "Editor's Introduction to the First Issue," *Journal of Mexican Philosophy* 1, no. 1 (2022): i.
2. Linda M. Alcoff, "Extractivist Epistemologies," *Tapuya: Latina American Science, Technology and Society* 5, no. 1 (2022): 16.
3. Sanchez and Sanchez, "Editor's Introduction to the First Issue," i.
4. Alcoff, "Extractivist Epistemologies," 5.
5. Alcoff, "Extractivist Epistemologies," 4.
6. Sarah Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006).
7. Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 129.
8. Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*.
9. Ahmed., *Queer Phenomenology*, 133.
10. Esme G. Murdock, "Land(Point) Epistemologies: Theorizing the Place of Epistemic Domination." in *Making the Case. Feminist and Critical Race Philosophers Engage Case Studies*, ed. Heidi Grasswick, and Nancy Arden McHugh (Albany: State University Press, 2021), 211–39.

Comments on Susana Nuccetelli's An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy

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In the Preface to *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, Susana Nuccetelli describes the discipline of Latin American philosophy as one that is "still defining itself" and "the subject of lively debates over basics." Indeed, one of these lively debates is a debate on the

very question of "What is Latin American philosophy?" Nuccetelli does not take a stance on the nature, goals, or methodology of the discipline from the outset. Instead, she dives straight into the material that seems to clearly belong in the discipline, namely, philosophical ideas and works that have been generated in Latin America or by Latin American authors from the sixteenth century to the present, and that have been "contested" and "original." The book presents an accessible and engaging survey of this material, one that is nevertheless informed by Nuccetelli's enormous expertise in the field as author of two previous textbooks and editor of a sizeable anthology of secondary literature. Overall, by synthesizing a great deal of primary material lucidly and rigorously, while treating this material in a way that acknowledges that "many major issues . . . still need to be worked out," Nuccetelli has done a tremendous service to a discipline "still defining itself."¹

While I cannot do justice to the book's breadth, we might understand the organization as follows. **Chapter 1** presents the views of Spanish Scholastic philosophers (Las Casas, Vitoria, and Acosta) on questions pertaining to the Spanish and Portuguese conquest of the Americas, for instance: How should Europeans evaluate the rationality of the native inhabitants of the Americas? Is the Spanish war against the native inhabitants morally justified? Can Scholasticism explain the geography and climate of the Americas? **Chapter 2** presents responses to machismo in Latin America, from the "equal rights" feminism of Sor Juana, to the scientific feminism of Roxana Kreimer, to the liberationist feminism of Ofelia Schutte and Enrique Dussel. **Chapter 3** turns to Simón Bolívar's views on questions that became salient during the South American wars of independence in the first half of the nineteenth century: What is the best form of government for Latin American nations? What is the relationship between the geography and the best form of government? And what is the collective identity of Latin Americans? **Chapters 4 and 5** turn to the question of how to diagnose and address the root causes of Latin America's "barbarism" in the period after the wars of independence; "barbarism" is the label several authors applied to describe Latin America's apparent economic, political, and cultural inferiority to Europe and North America. Chapter 4 focuses on responses to this broad question by two Argentinian authors, Domingo Sarmiento and Juan Bautista Alberdi, while Chapter 5 discusses responses by a series of Venezuelan, Chilean, Brazilian, and Mexican authors working under the framework of Comtean positivism. **Chapters 6 and 7** continue the exploration of the same broad question, this time presenting the views of authors who rejected the positivist framework and the alleged inferiority and "barbarism" of Latin America: José Martí, José Enrique Rodó, and José Vasconcelos. **Chapters 8 and 9** turn to questions on the relevance of Marxism and dependency theory to twentieth century Latin America, as they arise in the thought of José Carlos Mariátegui, Ernesto Che Guevara, Raúl Prebisch, and Enrique Dussel: Do Indian poverty and racism in Latin America admit of Marxist explanations? How are the needs of the state and the needs of the individual to be balanced in the Cuban socialist state? What are the causes of international wealth disparities? Is Western philosophy's search for universal truths a form of domination?

In **Chapter 10**, Nuccetelli identifies a feature that most of these aforementioned philosophical works have in common: they deal with “characteristically Latin American issues”; in other words, they are “a type of applied philosophy that conducts philosophical inquiry on issues that are related to Latin America.”² Nuccetelli proposes that Latin American philosophy is an applied branch of philosophy, the domain of which is philosophical issues that arise in the lives and experiences of Latin American people.

Thinking of a philosophical text as a work of applied philosophy invites the following question: What is the theoretical foundation of the author’s thought? Many of the philosophers Nuccetelli discusses do not explicitly announce a theoretical foundation (such as a set of fundamental commitments) from which they then proceed to derive conclusions on the specific applied questions. It falls on the scholar to figure out the fundamental commitments and how these commitments result in the specific applied conclusions. It is a strength of Nuccetelli’s book that it is attuned to this interpretive issue: she identifies a theoretical foundation for most of the authors in the book and helpfully directs the reader to additional sources. Yet, I want to raise a series of interpretive challenges that remain.

As Nuccetelli identifies them, the theoretical foundations in the thought of some of these thinkers are not concrete principles but a range of broad principles. For example, Nuccetelli identifies the foundation of Bolívar’s thought in “the contractualism of Rousseau and Thomas Hobbes, the Lockean natural law theory of Thomas Jefferson, and the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham.”³ She suggests that “Bolivarism”—Bolívar’s theory on the best form of government—derives from these foundational commitments. However, it strikes me that the foundational commitments are too many and too vague to be helpful in deciphering Bolívar’s reasons for Bolivarism. Similarly, for Sarmiento and Alberdi, Nuccetelli describes the foundational commitments only in broad strokes: “liberal republicanism,”⁴ determinism,⁵ and “market capitalism.”⁶ Given such broad foundations, it is unclear how the thinkers arrive at their specific applied views. For instance, Sarmiento sees the lack of *education* in Latin America as a cause of its barbarism, while Alberdi rejects this view in favor of the view that the *economy* is the main cause of barbarism,⁷ but it is unclear what prior commitments result in this difference in their views: Where does the disagreement stem from? A similar worry arises for Bello and Lastarria. As positivists, Bello and Lastarria share a theoretical foundation in the value of “progress,” but disagree on the applied question of “how to achieve it.”⁸ Nuccetelli defines “progress” in two ways: in Comte’s sense of a transition from theology to science⁹ and in a broad Darwinian/Spencerian sense of “perfectibility” or “change for the better.”¹⁰ What specific sense of “progress” is the value at the foundation of Bello and Lastarria’s thought? More specifically, how do they each arrive at their respective views—in Bello’s case, that *order* is necessary for progress,¹¹ and in Lastarria’s, that *freedom* is necessary?¹² Let me give one last example of this type of worry. Nuccetelli identifies the foundations of Martí’s views in Krausism. Krausism construes the fundamental ethical value that society must pursue as “harmony” or “unity.”¹³ Nuccetelli connects the values of “respect for individual

rights” and “freedom” with Krausism, but the connection is unclear: Are “freedom” and “respect for rights” other fundamental values, alongside unity, or do they somehow derive from unity, and, if so, how? More importantly, thus construed, Martí’s foundational commitments remain rather vague: What exactly do “unity,” “freedom,” and “respect for individual rights” entail?

One of the most interesting debates throughout the book is the debate on how to characterize the collective identity of Latin Americans. Nuccetelli presents several theories on this question: Bolívar’s “mestizaje” theory; Sarmiento and Alberdi’s “European-transplantation” theory; Rodó’s identification of Latin American identity with Ancient Greek, Ancient Rome, and Christianity; and Vasconcelos’s “mestizaje” and “cosmic-race” theories. Here, again, it seems that to fully understand this debate we must trace it to its roots: What theoretical or methodological commitments underpin each view? What fundamental differences between these thinkers lead to their differing views on Latin American identity?

More generally, the methodological question I want to raise is the following. When studying works of applied philosophy where the author does not explicitly announce the theoretical foundations of their thought, and instead seems to draw on an eclectic array of philosophical theories, how should we approach the task of interpreting the structure of their thought? Should we assume that the author is nevertheless relying on a concrete theoretical framework, which they apply to the specific applied questions but do not make explicit? If so, how should we go about identifying this framework? Alternatively, could the search for a concrete theoretical foundation be wrongheaded? If so, how else should we understand the structure of these thinkers’ arguments? Do they rely on a pluralistic set of fundamental commitments? Or do they instead adopt a particularist method, philosophizing about particulars without any overarching framework?

Nuccetelli’s book has given rise to these questions for me not as a result of any shortcoming, but, on the contrary, as a result of convincing me that it is rewarding to study Latin American philosophy as applied philosophy, as well as converting me to its systematic, rigorous, and foundations-oriented approach to the subject.

NOTES

1. Susana Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), xi.
2. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 246.
3. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 58.
4. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 74.
5. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 76.
6. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 90.
7. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 86.
8. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 100.
9. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 96–97.
10. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 99.
11. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 100.

12. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 101.
 13. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 140.

Comments on Susana Nuccetelli's An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy

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Susanna Nuccetelli's new introduction to Latin American philosophy sets itself apart from other recent entries into the field by treating Latin American philosophy as a type of applied philosophy. In my comments, I raise a concern about the issue of race in Latin American philosophy, specifically the role of white supremacy in Latin American philosophy. My comments draw on Nuccetelli's conceptual vocabulary and analysis to ask the question: How do we grapple with race in Latin American philosophy if race is both an internal factor (in the sense that Latin American philosophy theorizes race) as well as an external factor (in the sense that racism and raciality have significantly determined the production of Latin American philosophy)?

In the book, Nuccetelli takes up two challenges: the Marxist challenge alleges that Latin American philosophy is largely a result of colonialism and determined by the upper class, and present-day Analytic challenges, the latter of which she is more sympathetic to. Analyzing the accounts of Carlos Pereda, Maite Ezcurdia, Guillermo Hurtado, and Eduardo Rabossi, Nuccetelli recognizes the following critiques of Latin American philosophy: it is an insular practice that follows European and US trends, performs poorly at certain kinds of originality, lacks any dialogue with mainstream philosophy, and fails to engage with its own tradition.

To these views, Nuccetelli presents what she calls an anti-skeptical view that takes Latin American philosophy as "a type of applied philosophy that deals with *characteristically* Latin American issues." To qualify as Latin American philosophy under this definition, "a philosophical work must have some relation in content or method to a Latin American context," and Nuccetelli notes here that her book is replete with examples of what these contexts are. The examples are mainly of issues concerning moral, social, and political philosophy produced by nonacademic and academic philosophers alike. Against the view shared by Jorge Gracia and Jamie Nubiola that characterizes Latin American philosophy as "philosophy produced in regions America by nations whose official language is Spanish," Nuccetelli means her own definition to avoid the issue of centering Latin American philosophy as the philosophy produced by a particular people, for people move, use different languages, and identify in all kinds of mutually exclusive ways.

Nuccetelli's definition of Latin American philosophy neatly responds to the problem raised by the Gracia/Nubiola definition, which risks treating Latin American philosophy as merely "capturing the worldview of a supposed 'ethnos,'" or else treats it only as a tool for a larger issue, notably "remediating some social injustices facing Latinos." I agree that philosophy is arguably distinct from or else is a unique kind of worldview, for philosophy's capacity to recognize a worldview as such is what distinguishes it from itself being one worldview among others. I think that Nuccetelli rejects Leopoldo Zea's view of Latin American philosophy as a deficient *perspectivism* for the similar reasons that Heidegger rejects the equivalence of philosophy and worldview. Even if worldview was synonymous with philosophy, it remains to be determined what could count as a stable enough *ethnos* or people that would lend a determinate meaning to Latin American philosophy as an ethnophilosophy. I think that the importance of race in Latin American philosophy suggests that establishing the bounds of the discipline as of or for a particular *ethnos* runs the risk of assuming a stable answer to a key concern of the Latin American context, namely, who or what constitutes the Latin American.

In responding to skepticism about Latin American philosophy, Nuccetelli provides a thorough definition that takes into account "external factors," which Nuccetelli clarifies as referring to social and economic burdens that affect the practice of philosophy. While internal factors concern the content of the philosophy itself, external factors refer to those things that don't directly have to do with the philosophy. To give one example of a contemporary external factor, we could gesture to the stunning lack of new jobs in philosophy that are surely affecting the direction of the discipline. One of the factors that Nuccetelli discusses is the hostility to positivism in Latin America, mentioning that, while a "mistrust of science among intellectuals" accounts for the "rapid spread of philosophical views that were hostile to science," philosophy in "Western centers such as the UK" was "developing in close relation with mathematics and the natural sciences," presumably suggesting that this motivates "the problems facing philosophy in Latin America." This factor emerges in discussion of Euryalo Cannabrava's charge that "Latin American philosophy rest[s] on sophistry and a kind of literary method of reasoning" that Nuccetelli says is "completely unlike North American philosophy," and notes that Cannabrava's explanation rests on the presumed "attractiveness of Continental philosophy to Latin American philosophers."

I am concerned with the issue of race in Latin American philosophy in relation to the critique of white supremacy found in critical philosophy of race. The issue concerns the distinction between the ideological and the philosophical as invoked by Nuccetelli, and this distinction is at play, for example, in her rejection of Ofelia Schutte's proposal for liberationist feminism as "more an ideological call for action than a piece of philosophical reflection." What is ideological is distinct from the philosophical such that ideology is functionally indistinguishable from worldview in this case. The issue that concerns me is how the distinction between the philosophical and the ideological is made. In this regard, I find Nuccetelli's conceptual pair of "internal" and "external" factors insightful.

The language of internal and external appears at the very concluding section of the book concerning the definition

of Latin American philosophy as an applied philosophy. Nuccetelli discusses internal and external factors that together may explain why “academic philosophy in Latin America may lack” certain properties, particularly “originality” or “being tradition-generating.” External factors are defined here as “social and economic burdens that make the practice of philosophy in Latin America comparatively more difficult,” and internal factors would refer to the actual philosophical practice itself. On this theme, I would be interested to hear more about the “genealogical clue” that Cannabrava gives for understanding the problems facing philosophy in Latin America. In her discussion of Cannabrava, Nuccetelli goes on to discuss philosophy in twentieth-century Latin America and why positivism seems not to have taken off. Her account emphasizes external factors, such as the fact that “[m]any Latin American positivists were also literary figures.”

The sense I get from Nuccetelli’s discussion is that Latin American philosophy was troubled to the degree that it remained mired in non-analytic philosophy, which is presumably Continental philosophy, a tradition that, unlike the former, does not appear in the book’s glossary. I am struck by the fact that it is this place in the book that Nuccetelli seems to be most sympathetic to external factors, for otherwise she is attentive to keeping internal factors in view such as the philosopher’s own account of their thinking. The impression I get from *Introduction to Latin American Philosophy* is that to attribute all explanations to external factors is to make everything a matter of ideology and so to banish philosophy, but to make everything a matter of internal factors is to fatally decontextualize all philosophizing. It is in this context that I am thinking about race in Latin American philosophy, and to what degree race is an external or internal factor. To expand on this point, I will allude here to Charles Mills’s *The Racial Contract*, which alleges that white supremacy is the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today.

Mills claims that the idea of white supremacy as a political system has mostly been missing from any standard textbook for an intro to philosophy course, and this is so because “standard textbooks and courses have for the most part been written and designed by whites, who take their racial privilege so much for granted that they do not even see it as *political*, as a form of domination.” Mills claims that philosophy has been significantly determined by a decidedly external factor, namely, white supremacy. It is also the case that white supremacy may also be an internal factor, which is to say that it was in many ways the implicit political and philosophical project of philosophers like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Immanuel Kant. Given that Latin American philosophy has so often discussed race from its own vantage point, it seems important to me to discuss in further detail to what degree it shapes and influences the tradition then and now. In a question, I ask Nuccetelli how we ought to think about white supremacy in Latin American philosophy, especially with regard to whether it is an external or internal factor, and whether the basic claim that white supremacy has significantly determined Latin American philosophy should ultimately be considered an ideological or a philosophical claim.

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Reflections on Professor Susana Nuccetelli’s Book, An Introduction to Latin America Philosophy

Vicente Medina
 SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

I am honored to have been invited to participate in this panel discussing Professor Susana Nuccetelli’s book, *Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*. By exploring most of the significant issues present in debates on and about Latin American philosophy, I find Professor Nuccetelli’s book not only philosophically rigorous but also illuminating.

Since I am sympathetic to Professor Nuccetelli’s analytic approach, I will focus on some issues that might enrich conversations and narratives on and about Latin American philosophy regardless of people’s ideological commitments. For example, for skeptics about the possibility of an indigenous Latin American philosophy, one can offer as evidence of its existence the long, historical, metaphilosophical debate exploring such a possibility. This debate is a meaningful philosophical issue peculiar to Latin America. More importantly, the existence of this debate is an important contribution to Western philosophy, despite critics who might not consider it an “authentic” philosophical contribution. This is a unique and genuine philosophical conversation whose origin and longevity are nowhere else to be found. People in Latin America, including Brazil, have been deliberating on and about this issue for over 180 years, if we take Juan Bautista Alberdi’s lectures, “Ideas,” in 1842 as the starting point of the conversation. One might argue that this conversation/debate reached its apex in the 1960s in two classic works: Leopoldo Zea, *La filosofía Americana como filosofía sin más*, and Augusto Salazar Bondy, *¿Existe una filosofía de nuestra América?* As Professor Nuccetelli aptly explains in her book, nowadays practitioners of Latin American philosophy have shifted their attention to issues about culture, race, and feminism, to mention only a few.

I agree with Professor Nuccetelli’s argument in favor of conceiving the notion of Latin American philosophy as a type of applied philosophy but not necessarily reducible only to it. Similarly, one might conceive of American Pragmatism as a form of applied philosophy, but it is also more than that. Some scholars might contend that issues related to applied philosophy are not as rigorous as traditional issues in metaphysics or epistemology as found in analytic circles. However, that is more a prejudice than an argument because one can do rigorous philosophy regardless of the subject matter in question. In any case, the notion of what constitutes rigorous philosophy is as contestable as the nature of philosophy itself because it

is mostly related to methodology rather than to the issues being discussed.

One of the objections raised against the originality or authenticity of Latin American philosophers is that they have not deliberately participated in system building à la Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Husserl, or what have you. And yet, I think that is a virtue rather than a vice of Latin American philosophers, with the exception of those who try to imitate European system builders, while arguing against such an approach.

Since one cannot expect that an introductory text will cover all relevant issues, the following is an observation rather than a criticism of Professor Nuccetelli's work. I would like to underscore the significant role that eclecticism has played in the development of philosophy in Latin America. The eclecticism that I have in mind is the one espoused and developed by Victor Cousin (1792–1867). Cousin was an influential French philosopher and pedagogue at the *École Normal* in Paris who was a pioneer in the history of philosophy, philosophy of history, and German Idealism. He also translated Plato's works and edited the works of René Descartes. Cousin grounds his eclecticism on two commitments: his objections to arguments that solely appeal to authority as practiced by late scholastic philosophers when using the so-called *magister dixit*, and his attempt to find a *just-milieu* among different philosophical and political views. While some Latin American philosophers, such as José de la Luz y Caballero (1800–1862), objected to Cousin's eclecticism for being too politically conservative, other Latin American philosophers, such as Juan Bautista Alberdi (1810–1884) and Andrés Bello (1781–1865), embraced Cousin's eclecticism to argue against the authoritarian component found in late scholastic philosophy as practiced in Latin America.

Next, I would like to address issues of liberation within a Latin American context. When scholars discuss "philosophy of liberation" in Latin America, it is important to note that many Latin American philosophers tried to liberate, namely, to free us from the shackles of late scholasticism and its authoritarian practice. This aspect of Latin American philosophy tends to be overlooked in favor of the new liberationism. However, I think that, while Professor Nuccetelli does not explore the role that eclecticism played in liberating philosophy in Latin America during the nineteenth century from the authoritarian practice of late scholastic philosophy, the spirit of her work is precisely to liberate the practice of contemporary Latin America philosophy from the new shackles of liberationism. Discourses on and about liberation frequently go hand in hand with discourses of coloniality where decoloniality is understood as advocating liberation from the presuppositions of Western philosophy idiosyncratically understood to accomplish a given social, economic, or political goal.

Latin American philosophers have displayed another virtue that oftentimes has been ignored. Like American Pragmatists, but even before them, some Latin American philosophers have tried to apply their philosophical skills to address important social, racial, economic, and political challenges. That is not to say, as Professor Nuccetelli incisively argues,

that all of them succeed in offering compelling arguments for their positions. There are many dubious claims and arguments that practitioners of philosophy in Latin America have proposed from Bolívar's questionable republicanism, Rodo's elitism, and Vasconcelos's theory of *mestizaje* in his *Cosmic Race*, to supporters of contemporary liberation philosophy and decoloniality. The latter assumes that those who practice, for example, analytic philosophy broadly conceived cannot offer cogent and compelling arguments in favor of worthwhile social, economic, or political goals. Such an assumption, however, is not warranted. Like in any other field, there is a division of labor in philosophy where no privileged point of view exists. It does not matter who is proposing the argument or where it is coming from; what matters is their cogency and the strength of the evidence supporting them.

An earlier precursor to the pragmatic approach in the way that philosophy was practiced in Latin America, even prior to William James's lectures on Pragmatism, was the nineteenth-century Cuban presbyter Félix Varela y Morales (1788–1853), who, by the way, spent the last twenty-five years of his life in the US as a political exile, dying in St. Augustine, Florida, in 1853. By favoring the inductive method of modern science over the traditional deductive method as practiced in late medieval philosophy, he argued that no one should bother with explanations of states of affairs whose possible truth or falsity might have no practical results in science. If that were to be the case, the issue in question would be idle or just a philosophical curiosity. He did not deny that philosophical curiosity is valuable, but rather that scientific research, as Pragmatists would later argue, should be gauged by its results rather than by claims on truth.

Next, and last, I would like to address a philosophical puzzle Professor Nuccetelli brings to our attention by questioning the coherence of some of the arguments that practitioners of liberation philosophy offer. One can frame the issue as follows. The liberationists are trying to liberate *x* from *y* (where *y* is placeholder for any unjust state of affairs broadly construed as political, moral, or economic). And yet, the liberationists are self-appointed liberators, since no one has chosen them for this job. Also, the so-called liberators are trying to restrict the practice of philosophy to their own liberationist agenda disqualifying other philosophical approaches by offering at times strawman rather than compelling arguments, such as reducing modern epistemology to Cartesian foundationalism or making sweeping generalizations about colonial genocide in Latin America.

Apparently, liberationists, but not only they, seem committed to the fallacy of appeal to authority—the same fallacy that many nineteenth-century Latin American philosophers combated when they tried to dethrone the old scholasticism. It seems that paradoxically twentieth-century liberationists embrace a new kind of dogmatic scholasticism. The bottom line is that there are no sacred beliefs in philosophy, including the one just stated. There are better or worse arguments. To those who question who determines the quality of arguments? The answer since Socrates and prior to him has been and is an appeal to

reason. And to those who ask again who defines “reason”? One might plausibly reply, those who can enjoy the freedom to engage in philosophical speculation for the sake of knowledge rather than for the sake of promoting social and political goals.

Reply to Interlocutors

Susana Nuccetelli
ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY

REPLY TO MAITÉ CRUZ

I’d like to thank Professor Maité Cruz for her careful reading of my *Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*.¹ She accurately summarizes its chapters while making numerous interesting points which cannot receive in this brief reply all the attention they deserve. In what follows, I’ll focus instead on two of the metaphilosophical questions that Cruz raises in her comments. One concerns the nature of Latin American philosophy, the other its relations with the history of philosophy and philosophical principles.

In my book and elsewhere, I subscribe to the (much maligned) claim that Latin American philosophy is best construed as a branch of applied philosophy, which was first articulated by Juan Bautista Alberdi in the mid-nineteenth century.² Among philosophers who have reflected on the nature of Latin American philosophy, Carlos Pereda forcefully rejects that claim on grounds related to Alberdi’s Eurocentrism.³ Pereda believes that the claim devalues Latin American philosophy, and he is not alone. For example, during an NEH Seminar that I co-directed with Jorge Gracia at SUNY–Buffalo in 2005, I recall that some of the participants argued that my claim boils down to Alberdi’s view that it is only for Europeans to cultivate the universal branches of philosophy. If so, like Alberdi’s, my claim would treat Latin American philosophy as a “second class” area of philosophy. I don’t see that consequence of the applied-philosophy proposal. Compare with the applied branches of ethics, such as business ethics or bioethics: these are flourishing areas of ethics whose problems and arguments consistently attract the attention of serious scholars. Far gone is a common mid-twentieth-century prejudice against practical ethics.

Cruz looks closely at the consequences of taking Latin American philosophy to be a branch of applied philosophy. She laments the vagueness and plurality of the philosophical grounds of what I consider major thinkers in the history of this branch of applied philosophy. They mixed principles from a number of philosophical traditions (whether they be compatible or not), and produced theories of their own. Bolívar is a good example of thinker who developed his own views by assimilating principles of various political philosophers from Europe and the US at the time. The result was messy but original. Cruz points to the vagueness and plurality of Bolívar’s foundational commitments, noting that such foundations can hardly provide reasons for his political theory, a type of skepticism about liberal democracy that I refer to as “Bolivarism” in my book. But that’s just the way philosophical thought developed in Latin America.

Something similar happened in literature which, as noted by Pereda, resulted in the extraordinary success of Latin American literature. Pereda regrets that the philosophers of the region were not able to achieve a similar feat and recommends that they emulate the region’s literary figures. I disagree: Voluntarism of this kind won’t work, for reasons provided in the last chapter of my book—which have to do with external (cultural, socioeconomic, historical) forces determining whose philosophical products may succeed internationally and whose may not.

REPLY TO RICARDO FRIAZ

I’m very grateful to Ricardo Friaz for providing many thoughtful comments on the chapters of my *Introduction to Latin American Philosophy* as well as some sharp suggestions about issues that deserve more attention than what is offered in those chapters. He organized his critique in three parts, two of them devoted to summaries of topics covered in the book and a third part focused on an issue facing Latin American philosophy that he evidently regards as meriting more attention. This, as he puts it, “is the issue of race in Latin American philosophy in relation to the critique of white supremacy found in Critical Philosophy of Race.”

I must claim from the outset an expertise in neither critical philosophy of race nor Charles Mills’s *The Racial Contract*, a book that inspires some of Friaz’s comments on the issue of race and white supremacy. My rejoinder invokes instead some historical facts about the Latin American thinkers discussed in my book—together with some current debates in the US engaging philosophers interested in the question of Hispanic/Latino identity. Particularly encouraged by that publication, there has been insightful theorizing about the following:

- a) *What’s the meaning of terms such as “Hispanic,” “Latino,” or “Iberoamerican”?*
- b) *Is there is a group of people who may actually fall under the designation of at least one of these ethnic-group terms?*

I myself have contributed to the debate’s focus on (a). I argue in my book that that debate is one of the best examples of contemporary developments in Latin American philosophy because it meets all the conditions which on my view are necessary for counting within that kind of philosophy: Namely, it is an original debate about a topic that concerns the reality of the peoples of Latin America and their descendants abroad, and it has produced interesting philosophical arguments. In my book I also take issue with the theories of Gracia,⁴ Orosco,⁵ and some others on the collective identity of Latinos as an ethnic group. As Friaz points out in his comments, the history of concern with this question goes back to many of the thinkers discussed in my book (e.g., las Casas, Bolívar, Vasconcelos, Martí, and many others).

In Part III of his comments, Friaz states, “Given that Latin American philosophy has so often discussed race from its own vantage point, it seems important to me to discuss in further detail to what degree it shapes and influences

the tradition then and now.” I agree with him provided that by “from its own vantage point” he means that the issue of race in the history of Latin American philosophy has generally come up in connection with other issues of moral and political philosophy. For example, in the writings of las Casas, race appears as a moral question concerning the rights of the Amerindians. In those of Bolívar, race is important insofar as it allows him to determine what type of polity might work best for a mixed group of people. But either of them, like most Latin American thinkers discussed in the history of our discipline, has been a white male from privileged socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. In their cases, which illustrate the common background of many Latin American thinkers, we can talk about “white privilege” if that is what Friaз means by “white supremacy.” But I would make note of some exceptions, such as that of Martí.

In his comments Friaз also mentions a distinction from my book between internal and external factors. As I conceive of that distinction, factors such as race, gender, cultural, or socioeconomic status (SOS) are external to a certain philosophical work. Although they might permeate the work, they are independent of it. For example, I would say that las Casas’s SOS, gender, or ethnic group is not internal to his work, even when it permeates it. In my book, the internal/external distinction bears on the fate of Latin American philosophy because I invoke external factors to explain why this type of philosophy has deficiencies in originality, capability to generate communities of dialogue, and other vices often pointed out by skeptics. As Friaз notes, I follow Cannabrava in thinking that genealogy (i.e., the fact that many of its earlier practitioners were literary figures or something other than philosophers) played a role in undermining the development of philosophical critical thinking in Latin America. But unlike Cannabrava, I believe that genealogy is not the only external factor that may be brought to bear in any correct explanation of why very few Latin American philosophers (if any) have achieved international recognition. I hypothesize that some cultural factors (such as the language preferred in international publishing) as well as socioeconomic factors (such as the material means available for academic philosophers in Latin America) have put their work at a disadvantage compared with the work of peers from high-income regions of the world. A similar account might work to explain what Friaз regards as “white supremacy” in Latin American philosophy. But on my view, philosophers should defer to historians and social scientists for the development of that account.

REPLY TO VICENTE MEDINA

I’d like to thank Professor Vicente Medina for reading my *Introduction to Latin American Philosophy* and contributing his insightful comments to this APA session. As he and the other critics in the session note, my book aims at offering a general introduction to Latin American philosophy which, *per force*, leaves out numerous interesting topics and arguments. I want to believe that whatever my book covers, it does so in a critical, engaging manner.

Be that as it may, I’m honored that my *Introduction* has attracted the critical attention of the participants of this session. As with other participants, I agree with many of

Medina’s points. To begin with, as he notes, we agree on an analytic approach to the discipline. Using that approach, Medina also subscribes to an argument in the book for the existence of what he calls “an indigenous Latin American philosophy,” whose existence he associates with a debate that goes back at least 180 years, to Juan Bautista Alberdi and his (much misinterpreted in my view) “Ideas” of 1842. He locates the apex of that debate in the 1960s, for he links it to the famous polemic at the time between Leopoldo Zea and Augusto Salazar Bondy. I would add that there has been a revival of that debate in the early 2000s, in part due to the interest in it of an increasing number of philosophers in the US.

Moreover, we agree about conceiving of Latin American philosophy as a type of applied philosophy. But I would say that it’s mostly but not exclusively applied *moral and political* philosophy. The qualification “mostly” is needed to accommodate topics such as the debate over the nature of Latin American philosophy, which Medina and I place within the metaphilosophy of the discipline.

The parts of Medina’s comments that go beyond what’s covered in my book concern issues about which I defer to his expertise in the history of the discipline in general, and of Cuban philosophy in particular. Furthermore, I believe that his views on these issues deserve dissemination through some of the standard channels available to philosophers interested in the subject and encourage him to do so. In any case, the first of the issues mentioned by Medina, which I believe is the role of eclecticism in the struggle to liberate the discipline from the dogmatic thinking of Scholasticism, relates to Medina’s thesis that we must distinguish two types of liberationism in Latin America thought: the old liberationism that fought dogmatic Scholasticism, and what he calls “new liberationism,” which I engage in the book while discussing liberation philosophy and theology. From Medina’s brief comments, it appears that the impact of Cousin’s eclecticism in Latin America was broader than among Cuban thinkers. On his view, many theorists have invoked it to object to the authoritarianism typical of late scholastic philosophy. In particular, I’d like to learn from Medina whether there is a connection between such eclecticism and the positivism that standardly gets all the credits for having put to rest Scholasticism in the region.

About the “new liberationism,” we agree in questioning some of its ungrounded assumptions such as its conception of philosophy restricted to a liberationist agenda. It seems to me that by deciding for themselves what’s best for the so-called Other (i.e., the people from the periphery, the Latin American poor, the Indigenous people, etc.), their error is that of *unjustified paternalism*—a moral error not at all uncommon in the history of Latin American political thought. I would trace such paternalism to at least Christopher Columbus’s actions and words in his *Diaries*, which were emulated by most of the European colonizers who followed him in regarding the Amerindians as incapable of rationality and thus incapable of making their own decisions. Against that background, las Casas stands out as a notable opponent who, with arguments of his own, defended the rationality of the native peoples. Thus, Medina’s critique of the new liberationists opens the way

for charging that there is an inconsistency problem facing the new liberationists: namely, that of appealing to the authority of las Casas to support their own agenda, while at the same time appointing themselves as judges of what's best for the Latin American Other. In sum, what Medina sees a paradox facing the liberationist's attempt to decide for the Other, I see as the problem of replacing philosophy with ideology which I noticed in my book. Nevertheless he has led me to discover an inconsistency problem that otherwise would have gone unnoticed.

NOTES

1. Susana Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020).
2. J. B. Alberdi, "Ideas para presidir la confección del curso de filosofía contemporánea," in *Escritos póstumos*, vol. 15 (1840): 603–19, Buenos Aires: Imp. Juan Bautista Alberdi; page reference is to the reprint in Terán 1988.
3. See, for example, Carlos Pereda, "Latin American Philosophy: Some Vices," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 3 (2006): 192–203.
4. J. J. E. Gracia, *Hispanic-Latino Identity: A Philosophical Perspective* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000).
5. J. A. Orosco, "The Philosophical Gift of Brown Folks: Mexican American Philosophy in the United States," *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* 15 (2016): 23–28.

AUTHOR BIOS

Emmanuel Carrillo Meza is a PhD candidate at the University of Memphis. His childhood was spent living between both Michoacán and Chiapas, México, before emigrating to San Antonio, Texas. His research interests focus on the history and development of philosophy in México, specifically through the study of phenomenology and its potential for

decolonial theory and praxis. His work aims to critically reflect on the encounter between different philosophical traditions unleashed by this historical development, with an emphasis on its structuring of epistemic practices and spaces, including those within the US academy. Outside of scholarly work he is an avid cook and enjoys attempting elaborate and sometimes complicated recipes usually judged and critiqued by his partner and three dogs.

Maité Cruz is assistant professor of philosophy at Union College in Schenectady, NY, where she regularly teaches courses on Latin American philosophy. Her research to date has focused on early modern philosophy, especially on epistemological and metaphysical topics in Hume and Shepherd. She has published articles on Hume's theories of time and memory and on Shepherd's proofs of causal principles.

Ricardo Friaiz is a PhD candidate in the philosophy department at the University of Oregon. His research concerns colonialism, philosophy of race, and abolition.

Vicente Medina is a professor of philosophy at Seton Hall University, where he has been teaching for the past thirty-two years. He has published on terrorism, political philosophy, applied ethics, and Latin American philosophy.

Susana Nuccetelli is professor of philosophy at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota. She publishes in Latin American philosophy as well as epistemology, ethics, and metaethics. Her latest book in Latin American philosophy is *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).



APA STUDIES ON

Philosophy and the Black Experience

ANTHONY SEAN NEAL AND BJÖRN FRETER, CO-EDITORS

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FROM THE EDITORS

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In this issue, we have a range of contributions with various foci. We begin by continuing our presentation of philosophical contributions from the continent. Paul Christian Kiti has kindly written a tribute on the occasion of the death of the legendary Benin philosopher Paulin Jidenu Hountondji. Hountondji's influence on continental thought cannot be overestimated; in particular, his relentless critique of the so-called Ethnophilosophy was most impactful. Ethnophilosophers like, for instance, Placide Temples and Alexis Kagame, in Hountondji's understanding, promoted imperialist thinking and essentialized Africa in a problematic way. He defended an understanding of philosophy as a philosophy, not as African or Western philosophy, but as a genuine human practice.

A unique contribution from James Haile follows, which arises from his interest in jazz and converges with the existential struggle to be free. Haile's article, titled "Thelonious," collapses descriptions of Thelonius Monk and the Republic of New Afrika, which makes for a very fascinating read. This is followed by an article by Jane Duran, "Corregidora: Blackness and the Force of the Feminine," which is an extensive review of Gayl Jones's novel by the same title.

Next, we have a contribution focusing on the pedagogical experiences of J. Edward Hackett, who teaches philosophy at Southern University in Baton Rouge. His is a unique perspective because he is a white male who has spent most of his career at an HBCU.

Clevis Headley provides a critique of J. L. A Garcia's article "Professor Tommy Curry and 'African American Philosophy': What is it? What should it be? Why care?" (see *APA Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience* 21, no. 2 (Spring 2022): 2–6). This text is a treat; it is a constructive and at the same time wonderfully polemical criticism. Headley calls for a greater willingness on the part of philosophers to take philosophically seriously what is different from their philosophical approach, what is alternative to what is (for reasons that are often difficult to defend) canonical. We hope this discussion continues and hope for a response to Headley's criticism.

Lastly, we are privileged to also publish a paper that shows that philosophy from the continent continues to become an unstoppable force. Jonathan Chimakonam presents an overview of the exciting developments in the Calabar School's contributions to philosophy. The conversational philosophical approach of the Calabar School focuses on relationality, the study of relationships, and contexts of relationships between variables. This is a promising, powerful philosophical approach that calls for working on today's philosophical problems communally.

EDITORIAL

Some Thoughts Concerning the High Volume of Writings in Africana Philosophy

Anthony Sean Neal
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Production of texts, classified by booksellers as Africana philosophy and those classified as such by specialists in some subset of the genre, have not slowed, nor diminished in breadth of topics chosen, in recent years. Topics covered are wide ranging, placing the unsuspecting novice at a disadvantage in terms of decisions about classification. This disadvantaged position is increased, if the goal is to attempt to map distinctions in the subject matter, especially with respect to assessments of the Black experience. Of course, I am not the first to make this recognition. Some early attempts at classification actually do, in fact, exist. John McClendon's 1982 bibliographic essay, "The Afro-American Philosopher and the Philosophy of the Black Experience: A Bibliographic Essay on a Neglected Topic in Philosophy and Black Studies," and Leonard Harris's 1983 anthology, *Philosophy Born of Struggle*, stand out as monumental examples of classification. The existence of these begs the question, what else could possibly be needed? I propose that an entry-level map, one for someone with only a modest level of philosophical training, should exist, which has the focus of distinguishing between schools of thought. This would be helpful in terms of performing the function of quickly guiding the reader through the actual aims of the writer (i.e., political assimilationist thought vs. political resistance thought; explanative science of race vs. critical theories of race; philosophy of Black religious thought vs. Black Liberation Theology, etc.).

As someone who is more than just a generally concerned reader of the genre, I have often pondered the question,

if such a map were to be created for Africana philosophy, what would be its organizing principle? A colleague of mine, John Bickle, who does neurophilosophy was wrestling with the same issue in his own specialty. He and some of his neuroscience buddies came to the same conclusions about their specialty that I reached concerning Africana philosophy. Their conclusion was that if a map of this sort could be created, it would need a system of categorization aimed at the goal of decreasing confusion about what was being said in the field. In their last book, *Engineering the Next Revolution in Neuroscience*, they settled on two components for categorization: 1) a framework for classification, and 2) rules for integration, which I would like to modify to rules for epistemic justification. For my purposes, I find these two form a useful heuristic for conceptualizing something pertaining to Africana philosophy. With regards to the framework, the chosen object of study is a convenient means to proceed. Along this line of thought, three basic objects of philosophizing come to mind:

1. Black Experience
2. Race
3. Philosophy [and/or other disciplines philosophically approached]

With regards to the rules for epistemic justification, again, three components will comprise the tools for mapping. These were not chosen because they are seen as equivalent, but in recognition of usage by certain schools of thought. They are as follows:

1. Evidence
2. Logical truth
3. Theoretical coherence and consistency

To this end, suppose we consider the following three recently published books: 1) *Creolizing the Nation* by Kris Sealey, 2) *African American Philosophers and Philosophy* by Stephen C. Ferguson II and John H. McClendon III, and 3) *Race* (3rd ed.) by Paul C. Taylor. In accordance with the umbrella classification of Africana philosophy, the unsuspecting general reader or student interested in Africana philosophy, without a guide, will probably find each of these books in close proximity in their local university library. Without the proper guidance, there is a real possibility that this reader's ability to navigate this terrain will be hampered owing to the lack of navigational tools. Some may think that this is not a problem. This is possible if there is little concern for readers lacking formal philosophical training. However, if there is the desire to speak to more than the formally trained, whatever aids can be provided, if they truly are aids, shouldn't they be insisted upon by all? The framework of classification focusing on the object of philosophizing would probably locate the three books as follows: *Creolizing the Nation* [object-philosophy]; *African American Philosophers and Philosophy* [object-experience]; *Race* 3rd ed. [object-race], while the epistemic justification would be described as follows: *Creolizing the Nation* [justification-theoretical coherence and consistency]; *African American Philosophers and Philosophy* [justification-evidence]; *Race* 3rd ed [justification-logical truth].

Of course, the above is only a very brief window into my thoughts on this matters and perhaps there exist other models of which I have not had the opportunity to explore. My aim in this matter was simply to point towards a needed intervention. No one who is trained in philosophy would claim that the object of philosophizing and the rules for justification are small matters. However, the importance placed on these is likely lost on the general public or the novice. I am simply suggesting navigational tools to prevent this phenomenon. These are just a few thoughts in recognition of the vast number of books as well as articles that are currently being produced.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

APA Studies on Philosophy and the Black Experience is published by the Committee on the Status of Black Philosophers. Authors are encouraged to submit original articles and book reviews on any topic in philosophy that makes a contribution to philosophy and the black experience broadly construed. The editors welcome submissions written from any philosophical tradition, as long as they make a contribution to philosophy and the black experience broadly construed. The editors especially welcome submissions dealing with philosophical issues and problems in African American and Africana philosophy.

All article submissions should be between ten and twenty pages (double spaced) in length, and book reviews should be between five and seven pages (double spaced) in length. All submissions must follow the APA guidelines for gender-neutral language and *The Chicago Manual of Style* formatting. All submissions should be accompanied by a short biography of the author. Please send submissions electronically to apa.philbe.newsletter@gmail.com.

DEADLINES

Fall issues: May 1
Spring issues: December 1

EDITOR

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FORMATTING GUIDELINES

- The *APA Studies* adhere to *The Chicago Manual of Style*.
- Use as little formatting as possible. Details like page numbers, headers, footers, and columns will be added later. Use tabs instead of multiple spaces for indenting. Use *italics* instead of underlining. Use an "em dash" (—) instead of a double hyphen (--).
- Use endnotes instead of footnotes. Examples of proper endnote style:

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 90.

See Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them To Be?" *Noûs* 34 (2000): 31–55.

ARTICLES

Note on the Death of the Great African Thinker Paulin Hountondji

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Born on April 11, 1942, Paulin Hountondji was a renowned Beninese philosopher and an influential member of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies. We received the devastating news of his passing on the morning of February 2, 2024. In the nineties, he was Minister of National Education, Minister of Communication, and Personal Advisor of the President of the Benin Republic. These last years he has been the President of the National Council of Education in Benin Republic. He was buried on March 2, 2024.

His thought has influenced and continues to influence most of the African scholars. Though he has not always been well understood, his main concern was about the theoretical sovereignty of Africa. He expected this theoretical independence to have an existential, social, and political impact on the African people. He was profoundly attached to the African continent and yet, very free and open to the world, to the human community.

For the last fifteen years, I worked closely with him (as a personal assistant, as a colleague) and I can testify that Hountondji was a very loving and emotional person, with a strong allergy to nonsense, discrimination, and oppression. This observation has led me to publish a reflection on him last year: "From Reason to Feeling. The Challenging Journey of Paulin Hountondji." I will miss the master, the friend, and the colleague. But Hountondji is still a lion in the forest of the African thought. In Africa, lions such as Hountondji never die. Thank you, Paulin, for the wonderful legacy you have handed over to the young generations of African thinkers and scholars.

Thelonious

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Here.



is a story of this moment.

Not about a man but about what moves a man (the spirit that) . . .



You'll notice there is no instrument. There is just him. And you'll ponder what that means for a musician to be in sound but without instrument. And you'll wonder if he is the instrument, the vessel and what moves through him is the sound. And you'll stop to listen to him differently.



You'll notice that when he sits back at the instrument, that he is not right in front of it, but slightly askew. You'll also notice that this causes him to miss some notes, his hands positioned for one right in front of piano, but he is not. He is slightly askew. And you'll notice that when he plays, he plays slightly askew. And you'll realize again that he is the instrument playing the sound that he hears, slightly askew.

And you'll wonder . . .

Here is a story of one slightly askew.

You'll come to know *why* he is askew and *what* music he hears.

thelonious.

not out of rhythm or off key, just set to a different rhythm and to a different key. that's it.

I tried to get my head around it and settled on this: the trick to it all (that is, to blackness) is how to survive the brilliance.

it sounds too simple and is. very much so. to find the angle of the song and the sound. the key and the rhythm and tuning into it. then the brilliance is still brilliant but no longer blinding. or binding.

That's what i tried to do.

i wore my hat just so. just like him. and held my head to the side, like i was playing an invisible piano (stride style), reaching for the keys just beyond my fingertips. and i would miss and hit another note unintentionally but would act like it had always been that way. and laugh. and everyone surrounding me would smile the sort of confident smile that only comes with confusion or with mastery.

until I heard the evidence of things unseen and unheard

most days it was enough. except for that day, when it wasn't. but i didn't know that then. who could have. the song and the rhythm being the same as every day before, just like the sway and the sound being the same, and how everyone when they passed looked and laughed at the way

i would slide when i walked and turned, and my hat, just so, would stay just so, until it was my turn to play. the evidence of things unseen and unheard.

[Which is just to say, there are different kinds of stories. some that are told and others that cannot be told. There are some things that are just rumored about. There are others that have been verified and are part of the legitimate story. But there is no guarantee that the stories rumored about are false and that those verified are true. All that we know is that there are these types of stories. And, yes, there are also those stories that intersect the two.]

When we met, we met stride for stride. he was, it seemed, over seven feet tall, skin and beard that looked impenetrable, and would swing and dance, like he heard something no one else did, and when he was (again) ready again to play, he would just sit down, wherever he was, and play whatever he heard with his hat just so [I think it's 'cause the world that he came from, a world that more closely resembled fable or myth than archaeological fact, had a different song and a different sound, and that sometimes it required you to just jump in where you could, leap up and move and sometimes sing out], and that was the first time I felt my (own) stride stumble like I hit a wrong note*, my hat no longer just so enough in the presence of one [actually] from another world that I had attempted to reach in sound and style and rhythm and had worked to fool everyone around (me) with the sound and the style knowing they couldn't tell the difference or ever would.¹

*[and then he smiled and told me wasn't no wrong notes, what matters is how you resolve it.² That's when I knew there was a difference between free and improvised and that I had only been improvising and not yet free and that I had never really heard the song. I thought I was ready, but I wasn't. It takes a little time familiarizing** yourself with the universe.]³

**to familiarize

As the story goes.

(the Republic of New Afrika it was called. it was rumored to be a group⁴ that tried to take land in the southern part of the United States and had negotiated separation from the government—that is, before they were run off to East Africa. it was also rumored to have failed, that *he* failed;⁵ but here he was, stride and hat just so, unlike I had ever heard or seen, like he was playing bass all the way to the ground. This was the first time I heard about it).*

*the official dehiscence⁶

The Malcolm X doctrine⁷

As the story goes: beginning in 1968 with just one hundred signatures (what would later be called a new declaration of independence—Nation Time!—following not Patrick Henry, but instead Frederick Douglass, still of the same sentiment about liberty and death) and after the murder of King and Malcom X, and even one of the nation's (somewhat) own

in both Kennedys, The Republic of New Afrika was formed. Beyond the radicalism of the century ('66, '67, and '68), the Black Government Conference⁸ harkened back to that great and mysterious place of social and spiritual transformation in the hidden (and mythological, yet real) history of the great dismal swamp,⁹ and in an admixture of those folkloric harbinger figures—John Brown, Harriet Tubman, and Nat Turner, and, later by way of the mystical falls of Karuru, Jomo Kenyatta.

He was there but in different form, with his sway and his sound, but much smaller and without hat just so in those early days and advocated for seizing seven states to begin, while others advocated a much more assertive thirteen state seizure.¹⁰ The question was, how to do it—by way of an underground army that would take the land at night by an orchestrated and coordinated effort; or by way of a negotiated truce, “an alternative to chaos” in a country that “is in a state of revolution.”¹¹ (some even said trickery, which didn’t go far; theoretical speculation had begun to fail around this time). But he was on the fence, arguing that negotiation had always failed, also knowing that they had *that* weapon and would drop it everywhere they could if only to prevent us from taking this nation (he could have been serious, we could only guess, I think he was. We were all much younger, then, stride still nascent, and having just come of age after the dropping of *that* weapon—from the mythological Bhagavata Gita, and too, becoming the bringer of death—and seeing those photographs of shadows burned on the ground and on what was left of those buildings, enough to break or create a stride and a sound and a rhythm beyond this world—not having seen the land itself, sand turned into glass, I couldn’t be sure if *this* was fact or fable or somewhere in between but we all learned to accept it at face value), the question that was left to be answered: How would we do it?

And that’s when he began to hear the song and sound just in his head and shout it out. Queen mother¹² would remind us about the great Ashanti wars and how their own Queen mother had resisted simply because there was nothing else one could do, and how they had defeated their enemy, like we had to defeat ours because there was nothing else to do, and he would stand up while she was talking and begin to dance about behind her chair,¹³ and she would respond as if she hadn’t seen him, and he would move around to the back of the room, only to return to his chair, and his seated position, his hat now slightly askew, and he seemed to know what to say and what to do. And none of us thought it was the holy ghost having grown up the church and seen those rollers, much more like those whirling dervish, (even though none of us had been to Turkey, we could tell the difference), that found themselves in ecstatic revelry of refusing, in every sense, this world, not for another one beyond it, but for this one transformed.

(Didn’t know that they knew [maybe they didn’t know, just like I didn’t know in the beginning]) in this (act), they would become something unique in the world at large (not a nationless-people¹⁴ [a lost . . . er . . . *the* lost tribe] but something else—no longer American citizens¹⁵ or citizens-of-the-world;¹⁶ their (*our*) estrangement was not the sign

of a fracturing, but that of a stitching together.* their [*our*] call for land and for reparations also a call to reseed the earth with themselves [*ourselves*].¹⁷

*members of that original dehiscence.

It was a short run, one that lasted but a few months, but from the crisp cool air of those verdant hills overlooking water falling off a cliff and into a basin, bringing to mind the mighty Mississippi reimagined as middle-earth, it seemed like forever. The world took notice. The battle (and it was a battle not unlike in other battles throughout history—seemingly about the land or something *in* the land, but when one really dug deep into it, was about something more fundamental, more elemental [what they call human existence]. But as ground zero for the movement for separation, this stretch of land, which was, heretofore, largely ignored, became prized for its size and its history. And here we were. In the mouth of the lion, hotter than those hills we would eventually find in East Africa. We had found our holy land, right here, in America.¹⁸

But before

“Why not just start, here?”

“Here?”

“Yeah, here.”

“In Detroit?”¹⁹

“Yeah. We got a ground swell going...it seems.”

“Hoover would never let that happen. Besides...”

“What?”

“You saw all those straightlaced in the audience. Pants a little too starched. Without rhythm, like they couldn’t hear the sound or the song. Hat right on top the head, not leaning this way or that.”

“Yeah.”

“Government.”

“Government?”

“CIA. Absolutely. They started coming after Malcolm left. We got ‘em spooked...” with a laughter at the irony of the term. Grays don’t spook, they ain’t real people and never have been. Only shadows of real people.

“Man, I never noticed.”

“Of course, you didn’t. You just started to hear it yourself.” Standing up behind me, he started to rock back and forth, the kind where you’re told not to touch the person—could either be the holy ghost or there in the middle of some sort of dream and need to finish it out.

"The government's been here? How many times."

"Every time since then."

"So why do we still have the meetings?"

"They can't hear what we're talking about. They're just here looking and recording."

"Recording what?"

"The size of the crowd and what not. Just trying to see how close we are..."

"To what?"

"You really can't hear it, yet. But you will. That's why you're here. For the sound and the song. Listen." Stops and looks around. Stands back up, the rest of the room continues to do their thing, like they've seen it all before and were expecting it. *When he gets like this, better to let him just go with it and finish*, they say. "Can't you hear it?"

"Hear what?"

"That song." The rest slowly hum along. *Yeah. I can hear it, too*, they say.

"Song?"

"Yeah. *That song.*" *It's mighty loud now, I think. If they ever knew what we were planning, it would be over*, they say. *Good they can't hear the rhythm and the rhyme.*

"What song?"

"Show it to him," he said.

"No, he's not ready. Just look at him," Queen mother responded.

"He ain't never gonna be ready," he returned. "Just like the rest of us weren't ready. You just gotta do it."

"Kind of like a test," another said.

Queen mother looked at me skeptically, then away to the rest of the room.

"You really think he can ever hear it?" Queen mother asked.

"Only one way to find out," he said.

"Here, take a look," Queen Mother said.

The room was surreal. Men and women seated in pale grey folding chairs surrounding two people that they called Queen Mother and Man-at-arms seated in the middle. Man-at-arms was burly, his chest sticking out what looked

be further out that his head, which was covered in a thick matting of hair, connecting down to a thicker layer of black hair covering most of his face. When he spoke, he seemed to grow and his face seemed to fold in on itself, the wrinkles in his forehead coming down over his eyes.

Queen mother, on her head what looked like a golden crown of hair and twigs, like she was of the natural world, not before the rise of man, but what happens just after the *fall* of man in the technological age, the survivors going back into the mountains, back to nature for protection from the primitive notion of accumulation. She wore a thin layer of fabric that shined like magic and seemed to ensure the truth of everything she said.

A piece of paper was placed in front of me—something like parchment. It was thick and wrinkled . . . and blank.

I stared at it like I was supposed to know what it said or that it actually *said* anything at all.

"Can't see, can you?" Queen mother asked.

I shook my head. And they laughed.²⁰

"Look again."

I peered closer, my mouth just slightly over the paper.

"Not so close. You're not going to eat it!" Queen mother said. They all laughed again. "This ain't one of those scrolls." Again, laughter all around.

I confusedly laughed as well, not really knowing *what* kind of scrolls they were talking about and why *this* one wasn't one of *those*. *What kind was it*, I thought to myself. And, then I heard the voices in the room also inside my own head.

Do you hear it?

Can you hear it?

What?

The mothership.

Mothership?

The mothership. It ain't made of no type of metal; it's made of cotton and tobacco, and it don't smell like frankincense, only smells like rotted wood.

And they ain't fighting over gold to line their skies with, just those bodies of black and brown girls and boys made from blacker and browner men and women.

I know you can hear it, the sound underneath the sound.

You know that sound.

It ain't music but what's underneath music.

The breath of life.

That sacred sound.

Somewhere in my mind's mind I saw them begin to twirl, this time counterclockwise, the inversion of a corkscrew.

This universe.

Yes, the universe.

It ain't matter or anti matter.

Or dark matter.

No.

It's energy!

Electricity!

You ain't hear it? But can you feel it?

That hum all around?

Tap into it.

The vortex.

I felt my body turning, slowly counterclockwise, my hat just so, slightly askew. Couldn't have known what freedom was gonna sound like when you only improvising; what it was gonna feel like shoutin' in the body for it to move, twirl around just so, the centrifugal force keepin' the hat just so (in its gravitational orbit)

"Look again."

And when I did, I could finally see what was on that blank paper in front of me: *The Republic of New Africa, Declaration of Independence*. And I could finally hear the sound—not music, but the sound made by one sitting slightly askew in front a piano, playing what he heard, not what was asked of him, playing the sound inside of him, slightly askew.

There ain't no wrong notes, I heard him say inside my head.

"Can you hear it?" Queen mother asked. "The sound and the song? Can you hear it *now*?"

I nodded.

"That's Revolution."

the seven-year itch

It was delivered in 1972, full term to the federal government, to US Congress, a three-hundred-page document outlining the formal separation and new jurisdictional lands. It had three main components: 1) that the US government cede

these lands for black sovereignty and allow within this jurisdiction the development of a plebiscite (that is, the ways that citizens of this new nation could vote on behalf of themselves and negotiate via ambassadors with the US government; 2) that the US government transfer some three hundred billion in restitution for forceable extraction of labor from the millions of Africans now termed "Americans" in the new world; and, 3) establish some mechanism and structure by which these funds and their attached freedoms could be transferred and meted out. This constituted the most comprehensive plan of escape to date.²¹ Following the statutes established in international law, they paid special attention to the details of the governing legal systems.²²

They were not just rebranding and renaming themselves, but were, in fact, recreating what they were from the bottom up and from the top down. (which is to say—not *just* but importantly—that the nation and the state were one entity, the legal apparatus reflecting the spiritual practice of self-governing and self-fashioning.²³

In the beginning none of it made sense. Like sticking your head in a particle accelerator, not knowing what could happen, but just doing it anyway, trying to see what [if anything] is on the other side. They talked like they had never heard this language before or didn't know what words meant or were supposed to mean or knew nothing about grammar and syntax or the rules of engagement. But they all seemed to know what each other meant.²⁴

They talked like that free radical superposition not knowing or refusing to let you know their location, only giving probability or possibility as their answer. Their rhythm of sound and song were not so much off-putting but were inchoate, impossible to track until you came into the sound and the song, until you could feel it, feel your head drift slowly to the left just so, your body sway just so, and then you would hear and know the song underneath the sound and be able to play those minor notes.²⁵ This is what it was like to be with them, to hear them in those rooms in Detroit, in that burnt out city, and hear these men and women talk about freedom (*freedom!*), and land and sovereignty and rights—like they owned the world!²⁶

Minor notes.

"But you gotta know that meeting with them isn't gonna to change anything," I said.

"Depends on what you're trying to do."

"Get free!" I said.

"Man, freedom ain't in no paper or in no laws. It's not something you can *negotiate*. It's something that just is."²⁷

"So, why's he meeting with them?"

"It's his destiny."

"His destiny?" I couldn't understand how something that is pointless could be a destiny, at least any

destiny that has value. Why do something that is destined to fail and call *that* you're destiny. "His destiny is failure?" I finally said, not really knowing the weight of my words.

"He doesn't get it. It's not *them* that's his destiny, but where we're going with *him*."

"Where's that?"

"They don't know. Can't hear. But we're going there."

"Where?"

"Ain't a place you can reach with a boat or a plane."

"Where?"

"You only know you there when you *get* there."

"Where?"

"We all know where."

"Where?"

"Kush."

"Kush?"

"Land of the free. Home of the brave.²⁸ And he's gonna take us there."

"Man-at-arms?" Didn't they take him away?" [ran him away, but as time is really the experience of a thing, so is memory, he left and came back and resigned as the leader, but still it *felt* like he had been taken from us, was locked miles away, that we had lost something valuable just like Queen mother].

"Naw, man. He's just a vessel."

"Then who?"

"thelonious."

"Who?"

"Monk."

"Thelonious Monk? The musician?"

"Yeah."

"What's Thelonious got to do with this?"

"It's always been about the song and the sound. That's what all this is really about. and thelonious... man, i thought you knew."

"Knew what?"

"The sound and the song. He knew it. It's what gave us this [holding up the document] . . . and allowed us to see it. Allowed us to see what's not there is as important [*more important*, he would tell me all the time] than what *is* there. Gotta search for what's absent."

"And what's absent?"

"Everything."

thelonious [played].

He told me:

"we can remember, and I hope we all do, that thelonious also yelled, cried out during performances as well—not an excitable utterances that can be held liable in a court room, but something ecstatic that emerges, that witnessing the holy spirit move through the body, pushing it to and fro, and then returning back to the earth that body to its consciousness, except for with thelonious, he never goes anywhere and when he returned, he simply continues to play. it's like that. can't really explain it any better or any more than that. nothing law can tell us about it.

"it's a dance of the ecstatic and whenever you come back to the piano and are trapped there by the rules and order of the sheet of music, you lose the stuff of the sound and the song itself, the stuff that moves you—what can't be measured. that's what Douglass was talking about. we die and kill over that stuff even if we don't really understand it, we understand how important it is. quick story. when the British invaded what is now called Ghana, but was the home of the Ashanti people, the first thing they did was take the Ashanti golden stool—what they thought to be the heart and soul of the people—assuming that it was in fact the real thing, and when you capture it, you capture them. but instead, it did the opposite. even though it wasn't the real stool, the capturing of it—the attempt to take the ineffable—charged through the Ashanti and made their warriors undefeatable. It's that spirit, man. that energy. *energeia* or whatever. it's real. it's the only thing that is real. and that's why they banned the song and the sound in the South once they realized that the enslaved were communicating something beyond simple labor. *energeia*—they knew they had to ban the ineffable before it took root; and most times, it's too late, cause by the time the sound comes out the body, it's already taken root in the spirit."

In the end

Been years since I thought about it. Years since I thought about the years. My sway still sways but more like a reed in the wind than what it was before. Hat still just so, but not askew, only a bit awry. Still off, though. The song and the sound still singing, and I dance every once in a while.²⁹

"Just time moving on, I guess, not really knowing what else to do, it just marches with us on its back."

"What else can you do?"

"Nothing."

"Not even remember?"

"Won't do no good."

"Or forget?"

"Do even less good."

"What's in the middle?"

"Something else."

"That's what we'll do then."

"So, what was the final outcome?"

"Hard to tell."

"Did they actually succeed?"

"Depends on what you're looking for. Ultimately failed, if you're looking for a new state with its own declaration of independence in a museum under glass, with flags hanging to and fro across homes throughout the nation, anthems being played at sporting events, or the waging of war under the banner of these colors and this sound. If that's what you're looking for—of course, it failed, and spectacularly so. But if what you're looking for is a sound, subtle and almost invisibly inaudible which catches the air and holds onto it until the air grows stale and falls from the sky onto the soft ground below. If what you're looking for is this sound folded into the earth, soft and turned over and over again, yielding crop after crop. And if what you're looking for is that soft and imperceptible shift of a body moving in this new air which has replaced the old and stale air, thick and heavy enough to hold this new note and move it subtly around, caught by the ear of this body moving in a circle, swaying to and fro. If what you're looking for is this sound and this rhythm, slightly askew—its own beat and life. If this is what you're looking for, then you'll always find it everywhere around you and you'll know just as I did, that this sound is always subtle but always loud and always descends when least expected, and these bodies, always slightly askew will always hear it, always be slightly off, hat just so, beyond legislation, and you'll know that it is always coming and always there, and you'll know just what it is and what to do."

"Is that all?"

"That's enough. New Afrika can be found wherever people struggle. It can be found where people seek to govern themselves."³⁰

play it soft.

NOTES

1. Am told, but not really to me, but what I heard once (read, but heard the voice inside my head reading the words to me, not my voice, but the voice, undifferentiated, telling me what the words say but also what they mean), that there is a difference between playing the music and playing in the music, to playing the notes and playing what the notes meant to be saying when they arranged the way they are and that sometimes when you can't say more than the arrangement, when the notes themselves run out of words to say, then, you dance, that is, that is when the body takes its place—takes up space—and says what can't be said another way. Thelonious knew this, too. This was the beginning of revolution of any kind, hearing the song and the sound, seeing the arrangement, and playing it but also playing in it, hearing what is said and what's not said and your body, your body splittin' the difference.
The difference between jazz improvisation versus free jazz, they say, so that when Ornette Coleman began to play, he was assaulted—that way can't be music, he was told—punched in the face and kicked in the stomach, claiming he was "all screwed up inside" to even hear the notes tellin' him to play that way, to hearing this story as the story of their arrangement and the very idea that one could even move their body to such a sound. But it does. We all know that. The body's gonna move the way its gonna move. That's revolution. <https://bulletin.hds.harvard.edu/the-dancing-monk-and-the-rhythm-of-divine-life/>; <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/entertainment/music/2015/06/11/jazz-great-ornette-coleman-remembered-visionary/71092542/>; <https://www.freep.com/story/entertainment/music/2015/06/11/ornette-coleman-profile/71066180/>.
2. Wondered where he first heard it, the song and the sound, his hat just so; only know what he told me when we first met: You first gotta hear *your* sound—and be a genius in it—and when you improvise, improvise on yourself. If you only improvise on someone else's music [*they* music, he called it], well then it ain't really you or yours that you're hearing, just some version of theirs. If improvisation is gonna be anything [*useful*, he meant] at all [really be anything at all, the emphasis was implicit], then it's gotta be genuine. If not, what's the point? https://www.reddit.com/r/Jazz/comments/v9zzw0/thelonious_monk_said_there_is_no_wrong_note_it/ [Sidenote: I wondered, though, what's the cost of *being free*?]
3. "The Piano Ain't Got No Wrong Notes": The Genius Of Thelonious Monk." <https://thewriteplace.ie/music/the-piano-aint-got-no-wrong-notes-the-genius-of-thelonious-monk/>; and, also, Robin D. G. Kelley, "New Monastery: Thelonious Monk and the Jazz Avant-Garde," *Black Music Research Journal* 19, no. 2 (Fall 1999): 135–68.
4. As we'll soon see why, it was difficult to name the group—but sometimes there is no word for a thing until it exists, and then you can point to the thing and say what it is (before then, well, it's really nothing); [nothing is until it is, he once told me (can't remember when)].
5. That, too, could not be corroborated. We only knew what they said about him, that he was a madman running around arming folks in North Carolina, talking about overthrowing the government, and that they went into that building where they was all hold up and stormed them out, rubber bullets and all to make sure they took them all alive, in one piece to stand trial [he said it was to make sure they could show they faces on the perp walk; better than being anonymous in a body bag, where they might stir up empathy, the little bags being mistaken for women or children; but when they got to see they faces all screwed up (with anger, not tear gas the public would think), then when they threw the book at them, it would be met with cheers; sometimes it takes being a monster to deal with monsters, he told me, then, shuddered; but we was never monsters, he said].
6. Sometimes caused by surgical complication which causes the wound to rupture, there are some wounds that cannot be stitched or cauterized, but must be left open, even if it means

exposure to infection or collagen disorder, for, as they would tell me, you don't stitch up no body only to leave something worse inside.

7. Dan Berger, "The Malcolm X Doctrine: The Republic of New Afrika and National Liberation on U.S. Soil," in *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*, eds. Karen Dubinsky, Catherine Krull, Susan Lord, Sean Mills, and Scott Rutherford (Ontario: Between the Lines, 2009).
8. Berger, "The Malcolm X Doctrine," 48, 52.
9. Marcus Nevius, *City of Refuge: Slavery and Petit Marronage in the Great Dismal Swamp, 1763–1856* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2020).
10. Berger, "The Malcolm X Doctrine," 47.
11. Berger, "The Malcolm X Doctrine," 48.
12. <https://www.aaihs.org/somebody-has-to-pay-audley-moore-mother-of-the-reparations-movement/>
13. Found it before he left [or was run off, out the country] to Cuba, where he stayed four years before returning, found it in Monroe, North Carolina, when as a child his grandmother gifted him with his grandfather's rifle, heard it then, but could not quite give it a name, tried to find its name early on in the local chapter of the NAACP, but couldn't hear it there, neither, but knew it was there—tried to play it for others [the sound in his head that moved his body and made his hat just so] when in Havana and running the Radio Free Dixie program, airing Ornette Coleman and Thelonious Monk, and all the pioneers of the free jazz new movement, playing them "epic poets of the Afro-American revolution," (351) so loud they could hear it all the way across the pond and to the Negro populations in America. Brian Kane, "The Radio Free Dixie Playlists," *Resonance: The Journal of Sound and Culture* 1, no. 4 (2021): 344–70.
14. Such an odd term, they didn't really have a definition of it. Who are the people [*we the people* said by almost everyone, but speculatively bad for black people, gathered together, they [*we*] must know why and how we are gathered, Queen mother would say], we spilled so many words over this idea, and he said he didn't care, and she told us the story of how she got to be called Queen mother—had gone to Ghana on invitation from the government (really, Nkrumah, but he was president, so the government) and had been adopted and named by the Ashanti people, who, ironically weren't Ghanaian, but Ashanti [as she came to find out and told us, none of them were Ghanaian, just like no one was Nigerian, only Igbo or Ashanti, just like none of us were American but displaced-Europeans and displaced-Africans—the only *real* inhabitants of the land being the stewards of the land, so we made ourselves [those who worked the land and brought about its life] along with the other tribes of the land, its only real inhabitants, *we the people*, a spiritual-political formation, which is why he said we had to go home, not to Africa, or even Detroit but to the South where it all began and where we stewarded the land and in taking care the land, we would be taking care of ourselves].
15. If ever citizen at all, he once said. We was brought here in chains, but that's not what it was either. We was tethered, and she would agree that we wasn't chattel or property as a major mode of being, but tethered-to the land, to law, to society finding itself, and we was just beginning to untether [that was the word they kept using, untether] ourselves from them, from their world.
16. They didn't need the world to adopt them or give them an umbrella recognition. That's not why Queen mother or any of them went to the UN. Really, the opposite: it was a declaration that they only needed to recognize themselves, and that they only came to the UN to receive what they already knew they were owed. Malcolm X went to the Organization of African Unity and told them so, said, "We assert that in those areas where the government is either unable or unwilling to protect the lives and property of our people, that our people are within our rights to protect themselves by whatever means necessary." I repeat, because to me this is the most important thing you need to know. I already know it." <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/speeches-african-american-history/1964-malcolm-x-s-speech-founding-rally-organization-afro-american-unity/>.
17. "Using international law provisions against colonialism, the RNA planned to organize a plebiscite for people of African descent

in the United States to determine their status. RNA officials advanced this argument as part of settling what they saw as a long-neglected aspect of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The amendment, according to the Republic, offers but does not grant citizenship. Black people have never been given a chance to choose whether they want the citizenship that has been forced upon them. The obligations of it were bestowed while the rights have never been guaranteed" (Berger, "The Malcolm X Doctrine," 51).

This is part and parcel of the failure of ontology to really *do* or *name* anything in the world in a real way. Instead, as a series of concepts or ideas which float above the material world, they don't really exist in a real way. This is why he said it didn't matter what they called us, only mattered that we had what we needed to answer or not answer.

A new arrangement of the material world would necessarily mean the rise of new language and categories to explain and express the meaning of this new mode of existence. In other words, the cultural affinity would lead to political mobilization.

"At a time when national discourse was only just beginning to shift from Negro to Black or Afro- American, the 1968 Black Government Conference introduced a new political designation: the New Afrikan, a Pan-African identity forged by the generations of shared oppression, language, and culture of the many African nations enslaved in the United States. It is an identity constructed through the history of slavery, rooted in the Black Belt South that slaves had built and that has always been home to a disproportionate number of people of African descent. It is an identity that carries with it a pledge of allegiance to a new and amalgamated form of social arrangements." (Berger, "The Malcolm X Doctrine," 52)

18. It started by refusing the distraction. Refusing not so much the garden variety of showmanship of a staged magician, but the ontological distraction of the very idea and the meaning of existence, or the sorts of things which we can know to exist in the world and the ways that they are, can, and do exist. Simply put: the very idea of what is and how it is frames how a thing is seen and then, treated. So, this sent us chasing these very ideas more than the outcome of them—chasing the very idea of who is and who is not human, for example, who does and who does not have freedom, for another example, but never really asking about the actional portion of how these things come to be lived out—what does freedom or the human mean? And we knew, at least in theory, that these things have always meant who gets something or does not get something—we know who is human or free, or whatever term, simply by who has or does not have something valuable (land, resources, access): something that can be measured in the world as an actional reality. Yet, we were sent chasing the idea of what the idea *could* mean, conceptually, the material world folding under the linguistic world, the land disappearing beneath the concept of regard—yet it's always been about these things. We knew this, but we just got distracted somewhere along the way, into chasing an idea, the ghost of a thing.

The Malcolm X Doctrine changed all that. They changed all that by simply asking a question (Fanon was right: there is no ontology of blackness, but not for the reason usually thought—not because ontology itself is obsolete, but because it is a distraction. It does not point out anything in the world and was not never meant to do so. Ontology, as Fanon reminds us, was about capitulating or investigating phylogeny, not as the idea of how a thing develops, but the very material outcome of growth, whether by nature or by invention. Fanon told us, and X followed, that the phylogenic nature of society is a natural function of the human but is expressed in the amassing of resources for one's kin or kind, and this is where ontology cannot fully be used to address the root of the issue: it is not about who *is* what, but who *gets* what.

19. While the establishment of the Republic of New Africa could not be established in the North, in an ironic gesture, following the path of *re-migration*, The Republic was, in establishing itself in the South, making a statement about black freedom—it was in the sojourn of the soul not away from the South but *back* to the South, back to its roots. For those who didn't leave, but instead found themselves on an equally improbable sojourn from enslavement to share cropping, and eventually to ownership of

this very same land in this very same South, the journey's long arc left them in the same spot as those who returned generations later, only fundamentally different, declaring, in Detroit of all places, their independence by declaring their right to the land. "[A] city still smoldering from its 1967 Rebellion, one of the most significant urban rebellions the country has ever known," Detroit became ground zero, as it were, to formalized black rebellion (I say, 'formalized' in that it followed the established regulations for setting up a nation, establishing legitimacy in citizenship and the promulgation of documents necessary for a nation-state). See Ibram X. Kendi, "A Mind to Stay: A New Book on Black Landowners," *Black Perspectives*, February 18, 2017, <https://www.aaihs.org/a-mind-to-stay-a-new-book-on-black-landowners/>; and Dan Bergen, "Free the Land!": Fifty Years of the Republic of New Afrika," *Black Perspectives*, April 10, 2018, <https://www.aaihs.org/free-the-land-fifty-years-of-the-republic-of-new-afrika/>.

20. Can't steal it, if they can't read it, he told me, and Queen mother nodded, then laughed. And they can't see it! To them it's just a blank sheet, and we just a bunch of crazy folks meeting in this burnt out building in Detroit! he said.
21. Perhaps the most important element—alongside the creation of a new sort of social and political arrangement and new actors of the world-stage, as it were—was that this told us, what it told them, was that black or African Americans were not themselves this amorphousness which grounded the nation itself, those who cohere as a "nation without a nation," for whom "it can only mean the spatial boundary of a literature written by a group of people who are defined precisely by their lack of a spatial boundary." For the Republic of New Afrika, it would mean the very opposite. The black or African Americans had always had a home, in the South, not merely because of the sheer number of populations, because this was the *land* on which and at which they *cohere*. Elliot Mason, "Is There a (Black) Literature?" *Academia Letters* (October 2021): 5.
22. Bergen, "Free the Land!" 50.
23. The phrase, "Anti-colonial subjectivity" is interesting, and speaks to an inherent tension for black people between the nation and the state in the old-world configuration—the nation being the positionality of black folks within the US, while the state being the apparatus through which to contest the nation itself, in an open act of liberation (Berger, "The Malcolm X Doctrine," 53).

The integration of the two (the nation and the state) in the Republic of New Afrika, though, reflected the process already undergone to redefine each of these elements. The "nation" being the apparatus through which race was constructed and blackness was undermined and given a second-class citizens status (in other words, citizenship in name only but not in actual fact); and the state being that organized apparatus of overturning the nation. Yet, with the demand for separation and self-governance, they had brought the two together—the black nation would be that through which the people would ground and found themselves as citizens but also that state of being surpassing the human (of the old world).

Thus, the complete phrase, "[t]he consecration of a new political identity located in an anti-colonial subject" (53) points to the becoming of a subject which is no longer subject (or subjected to the rigors of legality and the state structure) creates a new social positionality of subjecting oneself to one's own state structure—to de-subject yourself in order to re-subject yourself is this process of foregoing citizenship in the US to gain citizenship in this new entity, and is a thoroughgoing transformation within the collective and the individual. [You don't have a word for a thing before that thing exists, I heard him saying echoing in my head].

24. Play music as if you've never heard music before, jazz artist Ornette Coleman, architect of the free jazz movement, once told bassist Charlie Haden. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/ornette-colemans-music-polarized-jazz-then-became-part-of-its-dna/2015/06/11/cc7076b8-1079-11e5-aded-e82f8395c032_story.html) To play music like you ain't never heard music. To start again like you never knew what went on before you. Existence without the *idea* of existence. That's what the Republic of New Afrika was trying to do with the idea of freedom. And that's what you're hearing, now, he told me. I could see the words on the page, but independence was still just an idea.

Coleman finding inspiration in variants of Thelonious and in Monk, found himself on the cusp of a musical revolution, and became the sound and the song of a political one, too. Monk and Thelonious (already) grandfathered in.

25. In other words, what would happen if the overtones, what undergirds or is embedded into the sounds, into the tones, were the dominant tones—the resolution to the inherent tension in sound, in existence were somehow secondary to the tension which demands the release? We would be out of touch, out of rhythm or sound, and you would find yourself slightly askew to the sound and the song of the dominant chords—and your hat and your body, its position and experience of time and of space would, too, be slightly askew. [when you play a note, you hear that note but you also hear the undercurrent note, the one that rides just beneath it—the subliminal note, and yet we react to both, consciously and unconsciously. When we speak justice and peace and the rest of those democratic phrases adjacent to freedom and truth, we are also hearing and feeling those undercurrent ideas such as unfreedom and injustice. And while some of live on the surface of those sounds, there are those of us that live in the undercurrent of those sounds—what Moten and Harney refer to as the Undercommons—my hat and my body and my sound and song, slightly askew. And when we hear and feel the undercommons, it puts some of us in a trance, making our bodies move in what seems to be an odd way—to dance to the unheard uncommon or subliminal sound—while it makes others go mad with the discordance of the music and the feeling of uncertainty. ("The Most Feared Song in Jazz, Explained," Vox, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=621lvFP9A2w>)

It was like we were on the underside of life, and I could finally hear not the sound of repression, but the feeling or the very idea of what sat on the *other side* of these ideas altogether. Black freedom is dissonant with the sound and song of white liberty, just as black liberation is discordant to white normative life.

26. They talked about this strip of states belting the South like there was still something there [we had long moved off cotton or exactitude of forced labor and had moved on to other forms of extraction, more delicately abstract—except for the prisons, he told me, we need to storm those gates next and liberate everyone inside them not with law but with what law doesn't say, that law ceases to be law when we become lawful, he said before signing up every black man in his city for a gun permit, right before being forced to leave the city, state, and country, Queen mother becoming first in charge, continuing this idea, except for with free food and books and medical supplies, but was nonetheless, too, raided].
27. "What did Frederick Douglass tell us?" he would ask, already knowing the answer. Then: "You can remember, and I hope you do," Queen mother would answer for us. "What Frederick Douglass once told a room full of white abolitionists about the ending of enslavement and the civil war—that law wasn't gonna do this, cause law didn't get us into it. It was something much simpler than that," Queen mother would say, "and that that's what made it so beguiling and seemingly intractable." Douglass simply said, 'give me the making of a nation's ballads and I care not who has the making of its Laws.' You believe that. A slave [and he was still a slave by law at the time] didn't think *law* mattered!" And that's what we're doing, he said, right before he began twirling again.
28. As a seedbed of the "Jackson-Kush" plan, Jackson, Mississippi (Mississippi and generally the lower Southern black belt states), were the target of a specific organization scheme to free the oppressed and marginalized "third world" black population in the United States.

"Kush" refers to the eighteen contiguous counties along the Mississippi River in the western part of the state, all but one of which are majority Black (and the remaining one is nearly 50 percent Black). Jackson is the center of Kush, geographically and politically." (Dan Berger, "Chokwe Lumumba and Black Nationalist Convergence," *Black Perspectives*, February 6, 2018, <https://www.aaihs.org/chokwe-lumumba-and-black-nationalist-convergence/>).
29. You never stop dancing, he told me. It's in the bones, Queen mother once said. And what's in your bones is in your bones.
30. Bergen, "Free the Land!" <https://www.aaihs.org/free-the-land-fifty-years-of-the-republic-of-new-afrika/>.

Corregidora: *Blackness and the Force of the Feminine*

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Corregidora, by Gayl Jones, is a powerful novel that trades on differences between American and Caribbean slavery to make profound statements about women of color.¹ The protagonist, Ursa Corregidora, is a blues singer who tries to forge a life for herself while initially maintaining a relationship with a controlling male. We come to see Ursa not merely as one who survives, but as one who learns how to continue on in the midst of overwhelming hardship. Jones is gifted at giving the reader a sense of the realities of Black life in America in the 1940s, and she spares no details in providing an evocative portrait. Ursa—whose name resonates with the strength of the animal world—is caught in a culture where she is defined by men’s attitudes toward her, but she refuses to give in. She clears her own path, and in so doing earns the reader’s respect. *Corregidora* allows us to hear the stories of generations of slaves, even those whose presence might not have been imagined.

As Jones writes at the opening of the novel,

It was 1947 when Mutt and I was married. I was singing in Happy’s Café around on Delaware Street. He didn’t like for me to sing after we were married because he said that’s why he married me so he could support me.²

The patriarchal structure of heterosexual relationships is portrayed in the novel not only through the device of Mutt’s dominance, but also through repeated retellings of the incestuous sexuality of slavery, as practiced in the Caribbean and Brazil. The slaveowner Corregidora is both the great grandfather and grandfather of Ursa, the protagonist, whose ability to reproduce and carry on the line—so that the story can be retold, as she repeatedly says—is compromised from the outset by her relationship to Mutt, the concomitant violence, and the loss of her ability to bear children. The importance of childbearing and of reproduction for the community as a whole is a recurring motif of this novel, and one that is deeply inscribed in the Black cultures of the Americas.³

I

Tropes of the female and the feminine abound in *Corregidora*, but an intriguing aspect of Jones’s work is the way in which these metaphors play out throughout the novel. From its beginning, with the scenes of Ursa’s illness and hysterectomy, to later points recounting the brutality of slavery, the notion of care is interwoven in the work, and provides a focus for extended commentary. Both Cat Lawson and Tadpole, in the opening scenes, care a great deal more for the ill Ursa than Mutt does, and both go to great lengths to nourish her, both literally and figuratively. Cooking and the preparation of food are alluded to in the text in multiple instances, and Cat demonstrates another form of caring—she tries to determine if anyone is “messaging” with Ursa (it

later transpires that there is a great deal of complexity in Cat’s views).⁴ She wants to try to ensure that Ursa does not begin an early relationship with Tadpole because of her broken relationship with Mutt, and in so doing she talks Ursa into staying with her. Cat’s occupation is that of hairdresser—a carer in the community, and an individual to whom, historically speaking, many tales will have been told. We meet Cat when she is doing the hair of a youngster whose mother is at work, and we notice that Cat at least attempts to care for the child, too.

Some of the unusual aspects of Ursa’s relationships with men or with sexuality have to do with noticing, caring, and developing a respect for the other, even if that respect or interest is not always shown in a way that makes a great deal of sense. After knocking her down the stairs, Mutt continues to stand across the street from the room in which she stays for recuperation, even though he can guess that he is in some danger in doing so. In a sequence that demonstrates still another form of care, Cat tries to warn Ursa against letting the young girl whose hair she dresses share a bed with her—rather than sleeping on the floor—because she strongly suspects that the girl will approach Ursa sexually, as she does. Tadpole takes the nurturing stance that he does to help Ursa because he has loved her from first seeing her (according to Cat), even though he knows her only in the capacity of one who owns the place where she sings professionally. In all of these relationships, there is either an attempt at caring, an attempt at repairing a relationship that has been ruptured, or an attempt to warn another about the possibility of something going wrong. None of this, of course, would have been a feature of slave life.

The concept of care also features in one of the most important constructs of the novel, Ursa’s role as blues singer. After her injury, she is anxious to return to work as soon as possible, and she is told by several others that she will have a new voice and a new attitude for her work since she has been through a great deal—she herself realizes that this may, on the whole, make her a better blues singer and performer. But again, the question revolves around how quickly she can return to work, and that in and of itself has to do not only with the rapidity of the healing but with the attention that she receives while she is ill.

As Ursa begins to return to her role as a singer, she has to concern herself not only with her physical health, but her psychological well-being. Mutt, her husband, is still on the lookout for her, and he has friends and relatives who try to follow her. As Jones writes:

I sang the supper show. There was no Mutt in the window. And in the evening, there was no Mutt. But when I got to the last couple of songs, Jim came in and sat down. When I finished I went over to the table. “Mutt send you here to watch me?” I asked.⁵

Part of what is driving those who exhibit concern for Ursa is not only a human response to her illness, but a desire to assist her in her performances in any way possible. The notion that the quality of one’s singing, insofar as blues or

African-derived musical projects are concerned, is related to the amount of suffering in one's personal life is an old one, and Jones does not stint to make it clear that this is a factor in Ursa's performances.⁶ In fact, we can push forward the notion with respect to Ursa's work that the performance itself is a way of carrying on generations, just as giving birth would be—but although one might want to believe that they are equally important, for Jones the actual giving birth appears to be more urgent, because it gives rise to specific verbiage that is used to foster the concept of a testament across generations. Since the behavior of the original *Corregidora* was such a severe violation of a woman's rights, giving birth (especially to daughters) is one way of making it clear that there will be others to tell the story. Although singing can accomplish something like this, it does not have the same degree of personal resonance.

In a culture that has seldom been able to benefit from what the hegemony of the greater population might have to offer, the concept that caring for those around you is of assistance to the culture in general is an important one. Thus everyone who knows Ursa is aware of the fact that Black women move the Black community, and the health and welfare of an individual Black woman is important to the community as a whole. Ursa is one woman—but she is a testifier, in her art, to the many evils that have befallen the African-derived groups, and she is also at least in theory the sort of female figure who can do some parenting of her own at a later point in her life. Thus Ursa's welfare becomes of concern to the community as a whole.

A final episode demonstrating an alembicated concept of care occurs when Ursa and Sal Cooper have a conversation after Ursa has returned to work. It is a remarkable talk, because, as the text indicates, Ursa and Sal had never been friends in the past. Some of what motivates Sal is explained, again, in community terms—here colorism is important, and Jones is precise about the details. As Jones articulates it for Ursa:

And when people [Sal] started changing in their feelings toward me, I wasn't one to begrudge them. I didn't even suspect why she was being nice then, though now, when I think back on it and what she told me then, I think I know why. I'd married Tadpole, and Tadpole was dark like she was.⁷

Here Sal tries to engage Ursa in a conversation about passing, and the strength of the notion of color within the community. But although Ursa is one who, according to the text, looks "Spanish," she is still among those who want to bear important witness.

II

Sexuality is one of the issues in African Diasporic life that Jones chooses as an area of focus, and the details of Ursa's sexual life—both as it is lived, and as it is portrayed in her imagination—help to fill in the blanks on why articulating the complexity surrounding her ability to conceive is so crucial. As we know, Ursa has been told that she must bear witness, and that her mode of bearing witness is to have children, so that generations can testify. But at the same

time Ursa is also set in a historical chain of circumstances such that her sexuality has become a commodity. Indeed, part of what makes the novel so fascinating is that it is clear that, within her own community, there is an aspect to her sexuality that has become fetishized and commodified.

The very sort of intimacy that would standardly provide a haven and a form of relief from the drudgery of the everyday is in a sense denied to Ursa, because for Ursa sex of any sort reminds her of what she takes to be her obligation to her people, and it also reminds her of the bartering and selling of female sexuality in the slave communities of the past. Her involvements with men—whether it be Mutt, Tadpole, or an attempted involvement on the part of Max Monroe, owner of Spider's, where she also sings—recapitulate this altered form of sexuality that reminds Ursa simultaneously of her obligation to reproduce, her inability to do so, and the limits of sexual encounters. When Ursa finds that Tadpole is seeing Vivian, a young singer who has also come to work at Happy's, the dialogue indicates the extent of the problem:

"Tadpole, go away, please!"

"That was the first time, Ursa!"

"Won't be the last, will it?"

He just looked at me. I turned away from him. There was silence for a long time. I could feel him behind me. Then: "What are you going to do, fuck yourself?" he asked.

The door slammed.⁸

The degradation that Ursa feels at the hands of any of her lovers, or, indeed, acquaintances merely parallels and mimics the degradation of a culture at the hands of the European oppressors of the past. And Ursa feels a vast emptiness—not only an emotional emptiness, but the emptiness of her body, since her organs have literally been removed, and since she cannot carry on the line of generations. As we will see, part of what drives Ursa with respect to her singing is the notion that she can do with her voice what she cannot do with other parts of her body, and that she has an obligation to do this.

Sexuality brings out our most vulnerable areas, and there is a tradition among Black women writers of focusing on how the emotional effects of sexuality for women are often at variance with many holdovers from previous strands of the culture. The poet Sonia Sanchez, for example, uses synaesthesia and other literary devices to try to give us the concept that sex is more than just a set of physiological sensations—it can be filled with intense revelatory moments.⁹ Ursa is well aware of the potential of sexual encounters, which is why it is all the more difficult for her to cope with and navigate the legacy that has been left to her. Jones has a facility for using metonymic linking to try to portray the pain felt by Ursa as she copes with her loss. "Trouble in mind" is not only the sort of daily travail that gave rise to the blues in the first place, but is also linked specifically to Ursa's new, personal trouble of barrenness.

The Caribbean lands with their known fertile soil, excellent for the growing of crops—and Brazil, also—are linked to the fertility that Ursa wishes that she has, but no longer possesses. Corregidora’s name for his daughters, “Dorita,” or little gold piece, is linked not only to what he actually calls them, but to their financial value, both as the parents of potential slaves and as sexual workers who are employed by him and for him. Thus, although we might be inclined to think that the ability to make generations is one that is cherished by almost every person of the African Diaspora, it becomes a more important trope for Ursa because her very ancestry is a product of the oppression in more ways than one, and that needs to be spelled out.

Sexuality and its play of the emotionally revelatory is a favorite topic for those who wish to delve deeply into the human psyche—Jones understands that the damage that has been done to Ursa’s mind prevents her from responding in many sexual situations. She has also suffered from the patriarchal displays of power of the men around her—she is simultaneously afraid of and attracted to Mutt, even though they are married, and a reader might think that these sorts of emotions would not arise as issues. As has been said earlier, there is a degree of caring in Tadpole’s relationship to Ursa, even if we are somewhat surprised at its manifestation; this, too, however, comes to be a thing of the past after Tadpole becomes involved with Vivian and after he makes his pronouncements to Ursa on what he takes to be her sexual failures.

In one of the stream-of-consciousness internal dialogues for which the novel is well known, Ursa fantasizes the following conversation between herself and Mutt after her illness:

“They told me what happened to you, baby.”

“Who’s they?”

“Yeah, they told me what happened. But you ain’t got nothing to worry about, though. You still got a hole, ain’t you? Long as a woman got a hole, she can fuck. Let me get up in your hole, baby.”

“Leave me alone.”

“Let me get up in your hole, I said. I want to get up in your goddamn hole.”¹⁰

Here Ursa is the ultimate victim of the commodification of the past and present.

Ursa has comparatively few ways to take control of her life and make some sort of a difference, but one mode is available to her. Now that she has been robbed of the capacity to make generations, the blues singing becomes all the more important, and it is this capacity that ultimately does benefit her. The tradition that enables the Black community to use music as a vehicle for exploration and complaint is one that is not only readily available to Ursa, but is something that she has already mastered. She is not simply taking up singing—her employment before her illness was as a singer, and now she has a new voice, both

metaphorically and in the important literal sense that illness may make a difference in one’s voice. The novel makes it clear that one of the avenues left to Ursa is to continue to sing the blues in a way that will provide testimony for what has happened to her and her people.

III

Singing the blues represents, in and of itself, a long line of ties to the older African cultures, and represents the retention of a number of West African constructs in music, some of which can be specifically set out.¹¹ The combination of the West African musical influences, the experiences of slavery and some intermingling of musical traditions taken from the other, European-derived music of the New World makes for a powerful complex of forces in terms of expression. Ursa experiences these musical forms as a mixture of types of expressiveness in her personal life, and they are part of her heritage in many different ways. As Jones remarks in the text (again in internal dialogue):

Mama’s Christian songs, and Grandmama—wasn’t it funny—it was Grandmama who liked the blues. But still Mama would say listening to the blues and singing them ain’t the same. That’s what she said when I asked her how come she didn’t mind Grandmama’s old blues records. What’s a life always spoken, and only spoken?¹²

Here Ursa contrasts spoken or sung testimony with the testament of generations. Although Ursa’s ability to sing is important to her personally, she also finds out that her own mother, in a sense, could, under some situations, serve as a witness in a similar way, because her mother had endured a life of sexual hardship that was more or less independent of the degradation forced on the clan by Corregidora himself.¹³ It turns out that Martin, Ursa’s father, was a cruel and sexually aggressive man who abused Ursa’s mother in a wide variety of ways, and so her relationship to him, as well as Ursa’s birth, is something that might be thought of along a number of lines. Thus Ursa’s capacity to sing the blues is related to this set of mishaps also, even if this fact is more or less unknown to her at the time of her accident with Mutt. As Ursa herself says at the opening of the novel, “I said I didn’t just sing to be supported. I said I sang because it was something I had to do, but he would never understand that.”¹⁴

The blues is important in the African-derived cultures not only because of the concomitant notions of suffering and degradation, but also because it retains some of the musical structures and forms of the African past. If the area near Bamako in Mali may be thought to be one of the centers of this type of music, it is probably historically important that many slaves were captured from this area or surrounding regions.¹⁵ Thus Ursa is recapitulating ancient tropes. In addition to musical structures that have been discussed in a variety of contexts, it is also crucial to remember that the blues—and related oral forms, such as folktales and stories—represent an important way of handing down cultural patterns for the West African groups that are themselves dominated by oral tradition and that are not, historically, cultures of literacy. Thus something that in medieval France or Italy, for example, might have

been written down in the French or Italian of that day is the sort of material that in the Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba cultures might be the subject of repeated tales or song, or even ritual involving dance. Ursa knows this on some level, and she also knows that there is a limit to what she can do, as a woman, without the power to bear children so that the stories of the brutality of Brazilian slavery can be told again and again.

Ursa recounts her first efforts at singing after having been hospitalized in the following passage:

They call it the devil blues. It ride your back. It devil you. I bit my lip singing. I troubled my mind, took my rocker down by the river again. It was as if I wanted them to see what he'd done, hear it. All those blues feelings. That time I asked him to try to understand my feeling ways. That's what I called it. My feeling ways. My voice felt like it was screaming. What do they say about pleasure mixed in the pain?¹⁶

Ursa is reminded, while she is singing, about the various times that she has tried to get Mutt to understand why the blues is important to her, and in recounting these times she also articulates the point that "I wanted them to see what he'd done, hear it." That particular way of thinking is, of course, related to the *Corregidora* legacy, and itself is a form of testimony. Although many thinkers have questioned whether any group can claim to have an artistic tradition that is, in some sense, essentially its own—and the African-derived arts have often formed core parts of this argument, at least in the eyes of those who want to counter it—a number of Black scholars have tried to promulgate the notion that the blues is quintessentially Black, and that it does not make sense to think that a blues singer can be of some other ethnicity and still do the tradition justice.¹⁷ So, for Ursa, the blues and her ability to use it to forward notions of pain and suffering is not only important on a personal level, but is also important on the larger cultural level, and she is, of course, aware of this. In a tradition that encompasses Billie Holiday and others, Ursa stands in a line of those who have used this vehicle for a variety of purposes.

Another factor that makes the use of the blues so important for Ursa is that she has that musical form as a refuge from the sexual degradation that she has suffered. The very notion of sexuality as a patriarchal form of dominance is inscribed in the blues, and such classics as "Empty Bed Blues," no matter who the performer, reinforce this notion. Ursa has a lack in her life, and this lack is multifaceted. Part of the lack is the result of her physical wounds, but the constant betrayal of her by the men in her life is still another aspect of the lack. We can think of the blues as a musical genre that is related to the specific wrongs of slavery and the Jim Crow era—the hard labor, the difficulties with sharecropping, the enforced segregation, the daily humiliations, and so forth. But if a sexual relationship may be thought of as an escape from this level of pain, the fact that the relationship does not work out may, in fact, reinforce it. Thus although it might superficially seem like an exaggeration to claim that a failed relationship replicates the hardships of hours upon hours of labor on the cotton crop, there is a great

deal to be said for this point of view, particularly when sexuality represents one of the main forms of escape from labor. Ursa is denied even this escape, and so the blues, as musical genre, becomes more important for her than it might be in some other set of circumstances.

Other forms of musical expression that are tied historically to the African-derived population, such as ragtime, be-bop, and so forth, are important in the context of chronology, but the blues remains quintessentially Black.¹⁸ Ursa, as a blues singer, is performing in a style that is the style of her people, and she has much to add to the interpretive strands of the style. This makes her work all the more important, and reinforces the message that Jones is attempting to create in writing the novel.

IV

I have been arguing that there are several strong constructs in Gayl Jones's *Corregidora* that speak to the importance of various cultural factors in the Black communities of the New World. These constructs are also allied to notions of the feminine and female, and are, in a sense, concepts that link to what Alice Walker and others have termed "womanism." Care as a force that Black women bring to almost any situation is demonstrated in the opening sections of the novel, and the historical notion of care as one that was developed in conditions of slavery even manifests itself in Tadpole's relationship to Ursa. This care is something that arose of historical necessity, and it often manifests itself in conditions that might be thought not to be ideal for its occurrence.

The force of sexuality and reproduction is probably the largest single theme of this novel, and it is here that Jones makes her major statements. The degradation that *Corregidora* wrought on his female slaves—and his own children, as many of the slaves were—is one that the foremothers of Ursa are depicted as wanting to report by the making of generations. Ursa's inability to make generations because of the loss of reproductivity that she suffers at the hands of Mutt is something that causes her to move more closely to still another type of testimony, and one that is more readily available to her, singing and blues renditions. Although Jones wants us to think, initially, that this stance is not as worthy, in some respects, as the making of generations itself, it becomes very important to Ursa.¹⁹ The point here is to be able to bear witness to what has transpired in the past, by whatever means.

The historical strength of Black women has been documented, both in novels and in straight narrative, over a period of time. From the heroine of Walker's *Jubilee*, to the figures of the works of Toni Cade Bambara, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker, the point has been to show how the overall growth and development of Black culture, especially during slavery and Jim Crow, relied largely on the work of its women. But these women both had children of their own and, all too often, took care of other individuals' children over a period of time. The birth of a child was an event to be celebrated, and in *Corregidora*, it is clear that this is an event that will not occur to Ursa during her life. Thus the fact that Ursa has other gifts that she can bring to bear on the situation is of paramount importance, and her talent

as a blues artist is one that Jones is anxious to forward. The blues artist transcends misery through her voice and musical efforts, while at the same time recounting wrongs done and rights made to those wrongs. Ursa remarks early on in the novel, of the café where she sang, that she “never did know anybody named Happy that owned it.”²⁰ The names of the places where she performed, like the culture that gave them birth, proceed on even when a great deal of the history is lost or at least not properly understood.

From LeRoi Jones’s *Blues People*, published decades ago, to Gayl Jones’s *Corregidora*, the trajectory of the blues over time is one that recapitulates the efforts of the Black population and that also speaks to the sheer numbers of African-ancestored people in the New World. Some of those individuals were transported to Brazil, among other places. Gayl Jones’s novel has given new meaning to their lives.

NOTES

1. Gayl Jones, *Corregidora* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986).
2. Jones, *Corregidora*, 3.
3. These points are made clear in the opening of the novel, pp. 3–11. As Ursa says, she was supposed to “pass it down like that from generation to generation.” Jones, *Corregidora*, 9.
4. Cat seems to feel that Ursa is especially vulnerable on this score because of her physical attractiveness, and this is a focal point of much of her commentary. Jones, *Corregidora*, 20–30.
5. Jones, *Corregidora*, 58.
6. For example, Margaret Walker’s *Jubilee*, although about the nineteenth century, contains a number of epigraphs based on Blues songs, some of them from a much later period. Margaret Walker, *Jubilee* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1966).
7. Jones, *Corregidora*, 69.
8. Jones, *Corregidora*, 91.
9. Sonia Sanchez, *Like the Singing Coming off the Drums* (New York: Vintage, 1997).
10. Jones, *Corregidora*, 100.
11. The use of pentatonicism and shouts as verbal effects are two of the most salient constructs taken from West African musical forms. The current belief is that much of these musical beginnings were centered near Bamako in Mali.
12. Jones, *Corregidora*, 103.
13. Jones, *Corregidora*, 112–32.
14. Jones, *Corregidora*, 3.
15. For historical work that may be important, see John Blassingame, *Slave Testimony* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1977).
16. Jones, *Corregidora*, 50.
17. See, for example, the work of Ted Gracyk, *I Wanna Be Me* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 96.
18. This line of argument is recapitulated by the importance, for example, of LeRoi Jones’s work on the blues.
19. The long section of the novel where Ursa discusses her adolescent sexuality with her friend May Alice is a crucial part of the point that Jones is making. This section takes up roughly pages 135–45 in the text.
20. Jones, *Corregidora*, 4.

Beloved Community Pedagogy and the HBCU Classroom

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Several years ago, I was offered a semi-permanent position at Savannah State University, and that non-tenure track experience in that institutional setting gave way to being offered a tenure-track job at Southern University and A&M College, an HBCU (historically Black college or university) located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I had for the first time being on the job market an unusual skillset. I had HBCU institutional experience that nobody else had in sufficient degree in the pile of applicants. For the past seven years, I’ve been the only white person in the room, and HBCU institutions are incredibly diverse. I work or have worked alongside Africans, Indians, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Chicanos, Gullah Geechee people of Georgia and South Carolina coast, Afro-Jewish, Afro-Caribbean, Jewish, Creole, Indigenous First Nations, and so many more backgrounds too numerous to list including me, a white kid who, though born in New Jersey to what was then Catholic parents, grew up in the suburbs of New Castle, Pennsylvania, in a nearly all-white Protestant upper-middle-class neighborhood—the epitome of WASPy-ness. I made my confirmation in a Presbyterian Church, and my parents became born-again Baptists. So, I am a white cis male in an HBCU setting (and my wife is the administrative assistant in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts), so we may well be the only married white couple on campus, which means that we are incredibly visible. People know who we are even when it’s not clear to either Ashley or myself that we have met them.

My good friend, and editor, Anthony Neal asked me to write some reflections about what my seven years of experience in the HBCUs is like, has been like, what challenges there have been for the teaching of philosophy, and what my pedagogical philosophy is in navigating these challenges. Within these challenges, a good friend of mine and officemate at Savannah State University, Walter Isaac, was also a crucial source of wisdom in navigating these spaces. Over the years, we have discussed pessimism in the classroom, the vulnerability of our students (including how the school districts of Chatham County in Georgia and East Baton Rouge Parish underprepare African American students for university study), the systemic deprivation of resources when HBCUs are publicly supported by Republican-dominated state legislatures, and many other facets of pedagogy in the HBCU classroom.

I. METHODOLOGICAL AFFIRMATIONS

What is consistent in both of our thoughts regarding HBCU classrooms is first *the affirmation of a student’s infinite dignity and worth*. The second affirmation is *to acknowledge how often philosophy is implicated by the very naïve assumptions of white supremacy baked into it that go completely unnoticed in PWI (predominately white institutions) philosophy classrooms*. Let me give you an

example from my own philosophical tradition in American philosophy.

In American philosophy, the canon starts with Johnathan Edwards and Ralph Waldo Emerson in older texts and goes all the way through to John Dewey without thinking that there is a Black Intellectual Tradition operating in the United States that we have yet to internalize and form the ever-expanding notions of what African American philosophy is beyond W. E. B. Dubois and Alain Locke who just happened to be students of William James. Dubois and Locke are often treated in histories of American philosophy as token candidates. Currently, the exciting thing about American philosophy is the expansion of the canon to include these thinkers now in more rigorous ways and an active search to reconstitute the philosophical canon of "American" philosophy to include within it various other groups: Latin America, African American, Afro-Caribbean, and Indigenous thinkers.

From our conversations, I know both Neal and I regard how we define philosophy as undergirding how we approach it in the classroom and the necessity of educating young people to be mindful of more cosmopolitan and global frameworks. Even so, there is a personalist emphasis of infinite worth and dignity that connects us both to the intellectual legacies of Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King, Jr. *If someone is not affirming the infinite worth and dignity of a student's personhood, then in my estimation, they do not belong at an HBCU (and maybe more to the point higher education in general).* It's clear that both of us want our students to learn philosophy and, in so doing, to be empowered by it. At this point in the essay, there are two things that cannot go unnoticed. What exactly do I mean by empowered by philosophy, and what is my working definition of philosophy?

II. PRAGMATIST, PHENOMENOLOGICAL, AND TEACHING ORIENTATIONS

Being empowered by philosophy requires a definition of philosophy, so let me not disappoint and give you one. For me, *philosophy is the use of the intellectual imagination to solve problems that cannot be solely addressed by common sense, faith, science, or art alone.* Indeed, philosophy will involve these areas of inquiry, but, for example, on its own art cannot propose to us what an art work is ontologically without philosophizing. Philosophizing occurs at the boundaries' edge of the conceptual resources these and many other disciplines employ; they often do not call it philosophy, but call it "theory" instead. In this way, philosophy (or theory if you are inclined) empowers us by enlivening our imaginations and allows us to see the unanticipated challenges of what living a meaningful life requires. My students, like any students in public high schools, have never seen philosophy before. The only exceptions to this rule seems to be dual-enrollment, in which high school students take courses in philosophy at higher education institutions, or students from private Catholic high schools who encountered philosophy in literature or moral theology classrooms (which does happen in my classroom since there are many Black Catholics in Louisiana who attend these same Catholic private high schools).

In the Introductory Classroom, I teach philosophy as if there is an implied history of an infinite dialogue that must conform to the norms of argumentation. While some may have misgivings about the choice of the term "infinite dialogue," the dialogue repeats and perpetually begins anew with each finite generation asking some of the same philosophical questions as those who came before. The need for reflective and finite persons to ask philosophical questions outstrips any generation, or so it seems. The value of philosophy is analogous to how the children in *The Sandlot* keep playing the same unending game of baseball. The activity is its own intrinsic value and the rules of baseball are much like the rules of logic. Logic provides the rules for this infinite conversation of various philosophical positions to take place. For this reason, I focus on the key elements of argumentation in all basic courses typical of any undergraduate catalog: ethics, introduction to philosophy, and logic.

In my classroom, I claim that philosophy has three dialogical moments to my students. First, there is *the dialogue between oneself and the text.* The texts come alive when I teach philosophy through a historical survey, or at least I try to make my students feel that text coming alive as it is the responsibility of every philosophy instructor or professor to make ideas come alive in lecture. To be fair, some students resist me at this moment in the first few weeks of lecturing. For example, they double-down on asking me why the God of classical theism has the attributes assumed in Aquinas, and they contrast what I am saying to their growing up in the Black Church; they may even be suspicious of what I am saying about God initially in the selected readings like Aquinas's Five Ways, and while I am fighting the reverence of scripture and authority as I would at any predominantly white institution with evangelical students, pretty soon I win students over. Part of winning students over to philosophize at this level is convincing students that they are in the same position as students of Plato's Academy 2,500 years ago or as young novitiates attending the University of Paris eight hundred years ago. Because my students have not seen philosophy before, some are initially suspicious of its claims or methodologies. Curious, intellectually minded persons see the importance of philosophical reflection of age-old problems, and most of my students respond in kind to the philosophy of religion themes we read about. In fact, my students love the God's existence chapter, and when students discuss my Intro class with other students, they reference that section that other students loved.

The second dialogical moment is *the dialogue between oneself and the facilitating professor.* At this level, I try and get my students to respond actively to an argument. Oftentimes, this responding to a spelled-out argument forces the students to think within the minutiae and problem of *an argument*, and when I choose to teach philosophy with attention to the details of an argument, I usually only engage in what we might call *the teaching of timeless problems.* These are problems to get students into the habit of thinking philosophically, and they are mostly again metaphysical problems like the mind-body problem, the problem of God's existence, or the problem of free will. The problem in the classroom at this level is you are fighting a lifetime of being told answers, and you must be

careful in teaching that you make it absolutely clear that you are not seeking to advocate for any philosophical position regarding God's existence or any other philosophical problem. You are merely making them aware of the historic argumentative conversation that has taken place across the ages and not seeking to compete with the authority figure that taught them about God. If you enter into the classroom with the idea that philosophy is more refined than the folk concepts of what others say and claim, you will lose the students before they crack open the book. For this reason, timeless reproduction of an argument is a powerful teaching device, and while it may oversimplify philosophy, there are three pragmatic benefits. Let me digress and discuss these benefits.

First, it constrains thinking in a responsible way to internalize the norms of logic more intensely and exposes students to the idea that merely accepting an idea based on authority is not epistemically responsible. The second pragmatic benefit to the infinite historical conversation model of philosophy is that students get to see responsible intellectual inquiry into concepts that regularly divide us. By focusing on logic, they see how to have conversations about God or religious claims logically rather than asserting the truth of what one wants to be true (and here in the Deep South that's a problem you're often confronted with in teaching). Logic forces their hand to find rational reasons for why someone should accept their conclusions. In order to do this, they must recall the logic we did in the beginning of the course, and sometimes I will make my students respond to a prompt that says falsify one of these premises in this argument. Thirdly, the added benefit of this timeless reproduction of problems approach is that the problems transcend the social and political divides between me and my students. Every self-reflective person has wondered whether or not God truly exists and what we are being told in our religious upbringing is true. You can use these themes to establish trust in the classroom and in the HBCU context, it's important to build trust to teach students effectively, especially since many students have never even thought to question the authority of their teachers before as Socrates did.

The final and third level of dialogical moment is the hardest, and it's where I am most cognizant of the reading list in any given course whether it is an upper-division classroom or introductory course. This moment is *the dialogue between I and myself* and is embodied in the Socratic dictum: Know thyself. It's that space when we are alone with our own thoughts, and where we project an ideal normative self-image to dialogue with "I and myself." It's probably the most uncomfortable with my students and I'd claim that this is not a racial observation, but a generalization about youth that transcends race. Students desire to not be alone. They pick up their smartphones, even in class. Their social reality matters more than listening to me lecture on a theme that would put them in a frame of mind to consider their own existence, and it's here that sensitivity to the pragmatic and existential notions of race matter the most to young people in the HBCU classroom. Self-knowledge cannot be reduced to a timeless reproduction of a philosophical problem. Let me explain.

Whereas timeless reproduction of a philosophical problem may be done without pointing to how the concrete dimension of lived-experience relates to it, more value-oriented inquiries awaken my students to what Dubois called "the problems of the color line." In this final level, one is forced to reckon with one's own personal existence and the implication of the value-based ideas bearing on their immediate experience of the world. For me, an idea's impact on our personal existence is both the pragmatic and existential orientation of philosophy. There are a host of ideas from African American philosophy that can help in the introduction to philosophy classroom at this level, and I and several others of this publication extend philosophizing about the Black experience to literary figures like James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Toni Morrison, and Ralph Ellison to name a few. For the Black existentialist, these authors engage in a different form of existential thinking than Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre uncritically described the first-personal experience of an embodied and situated white male who only has to heroically strive for meaning in an utterly meaningless world. By contrast, thinkers in the tradition of Black existentialism start from a position of race as their point of departure. So, say I am teaching Dubois's notion of double-consciousness. My students recognize this as discourses in passing or "code switching," but focusing on these passages in the *The Souls of Black Folk* enlivens their very self-conception. Suddenly, philosophy comes alive in the classroom because it has a bearing on their actual lived-experience in the world describing a type of divided existence that I, as a white professor, know not. In a way, the HBCU philosophy classroom is an invitation for white instructors to see the stark contrasts that stem from the lived-experience of their students. Let me explain.

Within the HBCU classroom, one should never discount the raced experiences of one's students because they have lived more intimately and concretely with this experience than asymmetry of their white professors. Consider that social existence as white professors has had little, if any, direct knowledge of racial oppression (and please do not read this as you being white as not suffering any hardship—all that is meant is that race is not one of those hardships white professors personally suffer). Instead, my students start from a different orientation wherein whiteness imposes limits to where they might comfortably go as many spaces are raced. By contrast, white persons may go into any Black space. The asymmetry is clear. In a racist world, there are times when my students are very conscious of being Black in some social settings as when time and time again, my Savannah State students would reveal that they are/were constantly followed by the security guards at the Savannah mall. In a white world, my students' existence is problematized from living in relation to white supremacy. This is an important aspect that philosophy must acknowledge as an existential truth (and maybe more so pedagogically in the HBCU classroom). As a pragmatist and existentialist, an idea from this philosophical literature can impact the self-conception of my students. When Thurman or King write about not internalizing the norms of white supremacy, students often approach me afterwards and confess that they have felt inferior in predominantly white spaces (even if on paper and legally these spaces should be more accessible). Studying King and Thurman

gives them a sense of worthiness, of *somebodyness*, and, most importantly, they begin to see the deeply personal reasons why one might wrestle as these same Black existential writers with the problems they focused on. In addition, while these conversations can be hard for other disciplines, professors of philosophy should take on the burden of showing how philosophers have negotiated those same existential and pragmatic concerns about race, but the caveat is that no matter where you come from, an HBCU philosophy professor should be reading Black thinkers to empower their students directly.

At this point, I anticipate an objection. Logically, someone might raise the following question. I am a traditionally trained philosopher with no competencies in pragmatism, existentialism, and the nuances of African American philosophy. Following this line of thought, they might ask, why should I be reading Black thinkers to empower my students, because that's not what philosophy is for? Our fictionally possible professor may be involved in the defense of free will and write on topics in moral psychology. Assume that this fictional professor is a trained metaethicist. The analytic metaethicist coming out of graduate school could easily land a job teaching at an HBCU as an adjunct or full-time non-tenure track professor where there is no major nor minor, but the traditional courses like Introduction to Philosophy, Logic, and Ethics are taught in the core. They could easily reproduce how they taught philosophy at their PhD-granting institution, and for the most part, you could easily just teach the standard Euro-centric curriculum. In recent discussions with Benjamin Arrah at Bowie State, I found out we use the same book and teach the same sections of logic to both our respective students. In some ways, there are standard approaches to teaching logic, and lots of us teach Descartes and Plato in our Introduction to Philosophy courses that oftentimes makes it look as if there are standardized approaches and readings in philosophy. What's more, this traditional philosopher has been educated to write about philosophy as timeless reproduction of problems. If this fictional professor has a contribution to make to metaethics literature, then it will be in response to someone else that reflects how the contours of a given problem are shaped and thought about currently. In this way, philosophical problems animate his curiosity and this fictional professor may have never regarded philosophy as a source of liberation. My only point is how someone teaches philosophy will say how they regard the assumptions of what they think philosophy can accomplish in philosophy classrooms.

In response to this objection, certainly, our fictional philosopher is not damaging his Black students in any way by not selecting traditional textual readings that I'd argue would not have a positive impact on their personal existence in the same way that I'd approach teaching. I can readily see the benefits of teaching James Cone over David Hume, but I also understand that someone teaching Hume is not thinking about social or political issues, but instead they are thinking more about causation, innate ideas, or personal identity. In fact, it's a helpful coping device to view philosophy as continual argumentation in the classroom at times that informs analytic philosophy. However, I'd also say that this professor has a view of philosophy that neither

harms nor helps students in ways that I think are ultimately useful for my students in the ways I think philosophy should be done, and if I am in charge of those with whom Southern University hires and continues to rehire, I will look for candidates who can have good rapport with the students and can operate independently without oversight. One can still have a different view of what philosophy is for pedagogically and still embrace the infinite worth and dignity of our HBCU students. So I want to be very clear what this meditation on teaching philosophy in the HBCU classroom is about. It's about what I have found to be useful both for myself and my students.

One way that the more neutral orientation to philosophy does not help is in text selection that affirms the humanity of my students. With such readings, sometimes tangential discussions ensue where some students will take more liberty with the discussion. When that happens, I always bring my students' concerns back to the text, but I am always cognizant about how they are currently engaging the material. There isn't a class where I do not ask them what they are thinking with the text displayed in a smart classroom through a projector or screen. Do not meander away from the text in class discussions too much. When discussions of Dubois's double-consciousness stray from understanding the text, I always try to get them to think how Dubois would respond to their points with what we have read together. In nearly all of my classes, my students generally do not know how to engage a philosophical text as an active reader, so facilitating discussions until they understand it is crucially important. It never occurs to them to mark up a text with annotations, so meditating on these thinkers and circulating annotated examples of the text provides ample opportunity to model what a close reading of a text is, and I often design assignments in response to some of these challenges depending upon the class.

Close essay exposition and weekly meditations on the text can track very relevant themes. For instance, many Black authors when meditating on the Black experience have warned against that internalization of inferiority that white supremacy attempts to inculcate, and so one should be teaching thinkers in the HBCUs from the Black Intellectual Tradition as an affirmation of your student's humanity. Readings that affirm Black humanity will generate timely discussions that track with and against their own personal existence that empowers discussion and reflective writing in ways far superior to students writing about Descartes and Plato (now a more daunting challenge made ever more impossible by AI answering the most common prompts we ask from our most commonly taught authors and texts). At this moment, dear reader, this is why choosing the readings of your philosophy classroom is of the utmost importance. You can select thinkers that affirm the humanity of your students in ways that they may have never conceived in addition to whatever else you may want to cover. More powerfully, you can also reveal to your Black students that there is an extant literature from the nineteenth century and onward into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries of thinkers engaging the continual struggles and lived-experience of race.

What's equally important for the white professor in an HBCU setting is just how much your students' experiences

will shock you, especially if you had a middle- to upper-middle-class upbringing in majority-white suburbs. These places insulate one epistemically from the hardship and struggles of what being raced means. When I first started at Savannah State, I was not prepared for just how anxious my students were about white police officers. Understanding this point on an intellectual level is not the same as when you personally know exactly how overpolicing of your students' neighborhoods affects them greatly. Even here, I will not break the confidence of one student's testimony in particular. I only wish to convey that any white professor sensitive to experience as a conceptual tool (as any pragmatic or existentialist is inclined) will be transformed by the bulk of your students' experiences, and it's wrong to think that it will ever stop. Your students have as much to teach you as you do them. What's more, the HBCU classroom is sometimes filled with young people who have navigated or are navigating challenges of poverty and violence, so any philosopher who can thematize oppression and empower them to reflect upon their own experience is worthwhile and possibly more liberating than a philosophy class designed around the reproduction of timeless arguments.

III. THE CHALLENGES OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE HBCU CLASSROOM

There are several theses that make for challenges in the HBCU Classroom. Let me start with the first one.

1. We must be honest as to the legacy of race that informs the development of Western philosophy's presumption and canon of thinkers studied.

As I am a philosopher who thinks in relation to the Black Intellectual Tradition as part of American philosophy (more narrowly what may qualify as "African American Philosophy"), let me start with two pieces of evidence that shape how I conceptualize philosophy within the tradition of American philosophy and the concrete conditions of the HBCU classroom. Let me reproduce some words that not only implicate the United States culture that birthed the white supremacy we contend with today, but also, more provocatively, American philosophy. Let's call this first passage King's assessment.

Slavery in America was perpetuated not merely by human badness but also human blindness. True, the causal basis for the system of slavery must be to a large extent be traced back to the economic factor. Men convinced themselves that a system that was so economically profitable must be morally justifiable. They formulated elaborate theories of racial superiority. . . . This tragic attempt to give moral sanction to an economically profitable system gave birth to the doctrine of white supremacy. Religion and the Bible were cited to crystallize the status quo. Science was commandeered to prove the biological inferiority of the Negro. Even philosophical logic was manipulated to give intellectual credence to the system of slavery. . . . So men conveniently twisted the insights of religion, science, and philosophy to give sanction to the doctrine of white supremacy.

In these words, King's assessment specifically links white supremacy to the socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions of the United States, and the American South is where a majority of HBCU classrooms are located. This system of slavery was birthed in America for economic reasons, what we might call racial capitalism, and entire spheres of culture, including religion, science, and philosophy "give sanction to the doctrine of white supremacy" for that racial capitalism to persist. What's more, notice King uses the present tense in the previous quote. It's "give," not gave. I would argue that it's still "give." What matters, then, in the HBCU classroom regarding King's life is to bring these insights as a counter to what presently gives legitimacy to white supremacy. Beloved community is a counterweight, a radical vision of community, to steer us clear of a world of anti-Blackness (more on this below).

The second is a passage from Ralph Waldo Emerson. From his journals, we know that he chose to visit St. Augustine, Florida, on February 27, 1827. On this occasion, he wrote:

A fortnight since I attended a meeting of the Bible Society. The Treasurer of this institution is Marshall of the district, and by a somewhat unfortunate arrangement had appointed a special meeting of the Society, and a slave auction, at the same time and place, one being the Government house, and the other in the adjoining yard. One ear therefore heard the glad tidings of great joy, whilst the other regaled with "Going, gentleman, going!"

In this passage, there's clearly a rupture in the serene experience of Emerson. The Society of the Bible is meeting adjacent to and outside a slave auction. Emerson is meeting a society of equals, other white people. This is a full decade before Emerson will strike a chord in his "American Scholar" speech in which he argues for a fervent defense of Americans taking charge of their culture away from European inheritance, and yet Emerson is already fully aware of the disconnect between a religion that fuels love and at the same time justifies slavery. Implicit in his reaction is no refutation nor utterance of disgust, but at worst the inconvenience of the Marshall not being well organized in planning two events at the same time. In this way, the start of American philosophy reveals itself as baked in the oven of white supremacy by both the start of this tradition with Emerson sitting at a Bible Society meeting next to a slave auction and as late as Martin Luther King, Jr., whose assessment still rings true even to this day.

Finally, I picked the example of American philosophy because I believe in this philosophical tradition, and I wish it to be better. It's also a tradition I know better than others. As an example, it illustrates the historic necessity to question the status of how some concepts have been problematically understood. The canonical thinkers we take for granted wrote and spoke to the white world's existential and pragmatic concerns in their own time. Yes, that's indeed true, but implicated in that statement is not a free pass not to notice Hegel's elevation of Europe over Africa, Kant's explicit racism, or Locke's endorsement of slavery in composing the Constitution of the Carolinas in 1669. In fact, the presumption of European culture as the

highest culture is embedded in all of these thinkers, and we continue to train other philosophers to think this way about the status of non-Western thinkers. Within the HBCU classroom, however, I present these assumptions to my students before reading any of these thinkers.

2. More than likely, you will operate with a deficit of material resources that your PWI PhD-granting institution had but your HBCU lacks.

As an inductive fact, most people receiving PhDs in philosophy are attending PWI graduate school institutions. If someone is new to higher education and has only experienced well-funded PWIs where there is no dearth of resources, then employment at HBCUs will be shocking, and, anecdotally, this can include African Americans who attended graduate and undergraduate schools at PWIs their entire lives also. With few exceptions, most HBCUs are not wealthy. They are underfunded and not well supported. Covered in Louisiana's own *The Advocate*, the Department of Justice concluded that due to systemic racism, Southern University and A&M College has been denied \$1.1 billion dollars over the last thirty years in funding. With an incoming Republican governor, we are not hopeful that state actions will resolve these funding shortfalls. For this very reason, philosophers at HBCUs are not given the same material resources as other programs on campus. For instance, here at Southern University, my teaching services the core, but there is no minor nor major, and a representative of the library told me that we do not keep books that have no undergraduate or graduate programs on campus. There are three books left over from book reduction in the stacks, and there's no belief at this time (though this is subject to change) that students need to read Plato's *Republic* or Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. My students cannot go check out what philosophy is on their own because my library has chosen to not even own those books and also universities across this nation have decided that intellectual curiosity is not to be rewarded as much as credentialing students. Savannah State is the same way. Given the lack of resources and the paradigm that libraries are more like information literacy centers than places that facilitate faculty research, there are many challenges.

This lack of resources has an effect on my efforts in course design. Many of the HBCU institutions might not have lots of money for purchasing resources in libraries, subscribing to journal article databases, nor travel support to show students what it is to do philosophy professionally. We need to be honest about what this lack of resources does even to the teaching of philosophy (let alone the dearth of support for the humanities more generally at the range of these institutions).

3. As most HBCUs are open-access institutions, some of our students come from failing school districts or school districts that are deprived of resources as compared to their white and affluent schools; these schools do not prepare students for university study and built into failing schools can also be the fact that many students come from lower socioeconomic status backgrounds than your average PWI schools.

This is perhaps the hardest of the three theses that characterizes both my experiences at Savannah State University and Southern University main campus in Baton Rouge. In my experience, teaching can be likened to ministry work in a church. Though secular, just as in ministry, you start where the person understands God (and not what you would like them to finally know about God), so too do you work with students to build them up to succeed at a higher level of what it means to succeed at a four-year institution. You must build students up from where they are starting. In this way, core departments like math and English often re-teach what these failing high schools in poor neighborhoods fail to achieve. Many HBCUs already have co-requisite and remedial courses that must be taken for some students to advance more in the general education courses. In this underpreparation, I never blame students as much as I blame Chatham County and East Baton Rouge Parish School Districts. Many of these same students may be in some form of remediation when they take my philosophy courses alongside their English or math courses.

III. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this essay, I have tried to give an accurate description of the challenges I've faced and how they have affected what I can achieve in my philosophy classroom. What's more, the setting of my institution, the lived-experience of my students, and my own experiences become fuel for philosophical reflection about the dialogical encounter between me and my students. I do not know if these experiences shed light on the many ways that readers of this essay may find resonating with their own experiences. I have several colleagues teaching at HSIs (Hispanic Serving Institutions) who have had similar experiences I've outlined in here. I want to say that there will always be a need to reflect upon our experiences, and this essay serves as an invitation to do so, especially if I have missed some crucial aspect in my descriptions herein. I do not pretend to be giving an exhaustive treatment with these reflections, but merely opening up spaces for others to see first and foremost if their experiences reveal something in common or different. We learn by opening up insight into the experience of others and contrasting ours with another.

I do want to reiterate several points. First, no matter the practical identity of the philosopher, the assumptions of how philosophy is done impacts our ability to adopt an emancipatory stance in our work. One must already accept the duty of the philosopher is to offer analyses that help us understand the world in order to empower people to liberate themselves from false consciousness and frameworks.

Second, philosophical frameworks that ignore the existential, pragmatic, and phenomenological orientation of our students cannot draw from their students' experiences. If you think that students contribute to their own self-understanding through art and philosophy, then ignoring the Black Intellectual Tradition provides no point of initial contact or buy-in from students. This is not to say that your Black students won't find Hume or Descartes fascinating; many do. I just think it helps when I am attempting to build a rapport with students in philosophy. It's within the

presenting the course from day one that we show what texts we've selected. There can be more "buy-in" from students when they know that someone is writing on and navigating similar challenges they face. At an HBCU, that matters a lot and it is anchored in affirming my students' humanity as the first move I make in terms of class design.

Groundings in Metaphilosophy: Garcia, Curry, and the Derelictical Crisis of African American Philosophy

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As a Black philosopher or, as preferred by more cosmopolitan-minded individuals, a philosopher who happens to be Black, I have been forced to become intimate with a certain professional indignity. One of my most frustrating experiences—and one that I am confident is shared by many other Black philosophers—is the nagging experience of encountering allegedly critical philosophical articles intended to engage with Africana philosophy by persons, both Black and white, who possess no appreciable competency or attentive familiarity with the writings of Black philosophers or, more broadly, the Africana intellectual tradition(s). Forever arguing for a distinction between hyper-advocacy and sober scholarship, I also respect the difference between philosophy and advocacy in general. Nevertheless, I do not think that the only good philosophy is philosophy that is committed to registering deliberate political points or that engages only with outstanding disputes in the political arena. My preference, in this essay, is to do philosophy and eschew the seductive lure of advocacy (I engage in the latter in my nonprofessional activities).

In the following brief essay, I will critically respond to J. L. A. Garcia's recent article "Professor Tommy Curry and 'African American Philosophy': What Is It? What Should It Be? Why Care?"¹ My general strategy, first, is to provide a brief description of Curry's article,² which is the unfortunate target of Garcia's critical focus. Second, I provide some critical responses to what I consider the most significant and important points made by Garcia in his critical assessment of Curry.

To begin, I want to stipulate that Garcia's engagement with Curry represents a classic case of a failure to communicate, at least on the part of Garcia. As to be expected, debates about the nature of any tradition of philosophy are invariably metaphilosophical debates. Since Garcia's critical response to Curry is precisely about the nature of African American and, more broadly, Africana philosophy, the exchange is, indeed, a metaphilosophical exercise. This being the case, it is surprisingly disappointing that the reader must wait until the last page of Garcia's short essay for him to acknowledge that the issue between him and Curry is indeed metaphilosophical. Garcia, after unnecessarily trying the patience of any serious reader, writes, "My dispute with Prof. Curry is thus largely a metaphilosophical

one, and anyone interested in carrying it forward should proceed on that basis, as a dispute about how to conduct philosophy."³ Despite the fact that Garcia admits to the debate being metaphilosophical, he fails to extend to Curry the humble courtesy of teasing out Curry's working conception of philosophy—his metaphilosophy. Instead, Garcia indirectly accuses Curry of carelessly mistaking philosophy as equivalent to history, ethnology, etc. But, despite Garcia's delayed acknowledgment, I fully agree with his characterization of the debate between himself and Curry as metaphilosophical. This observation leads to the obvious question: What is a metaphilosophical debate? Among other things, and despite the appearance of vicious circularity, it is reasonable to stipulate a metaphilosophical debate as a critical philosophical conception about the nature of philosophy; it is a critical philosophical take on the nature of philosophy itself—philosophizing about philosophy. As I earlier stated, the debate under discussion is best described as a classic case of miscommunication to the extent that Garcia seemingly fails to acknowledge that Curry is invoking a radically different conception of philosophy, one in fierce opposition to mainstream philosophy and Garcia's own take on this dominant conception of philosophy. The basic yet significant difference implicit in Garcia's disagreement with Curry is Garcia's conception of philosophy as analysis, inclusive of conceptual, linguistic, logical, etc. As he writes, "I think we should be unashamed about using distinctively philosophical methods, especially ones that are conceptual, that take morality seriously by treating moral features as genuine and discovered, that probe into reality's kinds and structures, and that are unabashedly a priori in method (or, at least, that aim at necessary conclusions). We should be bolder, I think, more audacious, in challenging historians, literary critics, sociologists, psychologists, and others to meet our discipline's standards of clarity, imagination, and rigor."⁴ Garcia treats us to a succinct recitation of the "ideological" rhetoric of analytical philosophy—emphasis on conceptual methods, treating morality as a natural kind, the appeal to various forms of realism, and a bold, perhaps somewhat dogmatic, endorsement of a priorism. As well, we witness Garcia's endorsement of a particular conception of philosophy: philosophy in its majestic sovereignty, the hyper-normative discipline, serves as that paradigmatic discipline which determines the standards of truth, meaning, knowledge, etc., that other inferior, descriptive disciplines should passively emulate.

I do not think that Curry would object to the importance of sound thinking, clarity, logic, etc. What I think he would object to is the notion that philosophy is primarily a distinctive, a priori undertaking, tasked with the discovery of various natural kinds, inclusive of structures, substances, etc. Regarding his conception of African American and Africana philosophy, I firmly believe that Curry subscribes to an existential, or an existential phenomenological, conception of philosophy. From another context, it is equally appropriate to alternatively characterize his conception of philosophy as a philosophy of existence. It is also reasonable to credit him with holding that philosophy is emergent from concerns grounded in philosophical anthropology—philosophical questions concerning the nature of human beings or what it means to be human.

These diverse conceptions of philosophy variously frame philosophy as concerned with questions and themes pertaining primarily but not exclusively to human existence, lived experience, or the being-in-the-world of human beings. To be more specific, an existential approach to philosophy is very much consistent with framing African American philosophy as embedded in the totality of the African American experience, while not narrowly limiting experience to sense experience—atomistic sensations. On this conception of things, it is evident why African American history, religion, literature, etc., feature so prominently in African American philosophy and would also significantly infuse African American philosophy with important insights appropriate to any effort to philosophize about African American modes of being. It, nevertheless, does not immediately follow that African American philosophy should be reduced exclusively to either a specific empirical discipline or a combination of them—the motto should be integration but not reductionism.

There is a second approach that assists in erecting a context for understanding Curry's conception of African American philosophy. Thomas Kasulis distinguishes two different approaches to philosophy: engagement (intimacy-oriented) and detachment (integrity-oriented).⁵ It is my contention that Curry favors the approach of critical engagement or intimacy with regard to how one should approach African American philosophy. He does not favor the detached approach (disengagement), a philosophical approach made popular in Western philosophy by Descartes in the seventeenth century.⁶

Kasulis appropriates obvious metaphorical connotations of intimacy to describe his intimacy orientation. The intimacy orientation is relational and not dependent upon notions of independence and detachment. Kasulis exploits the notion of intimacy as in intimating that "[t]he intimate knowledge of another person is based not on detached observation and logic, but on years of sharing and caring. Intimate knowledge of the other person comes from empathy . . . [from] an entrance into the other person's feelings."⁷

The important point here is that the intimacy's conception of philosophy as focused engagement seemingly construes thinking in practical terms, meaning as a certain kind of acquired art or informed judgment. Hence, thinking is not conceived in mechanical terms as in the application of formal principles or rules of thought but, rather, as the type of phenomenon inextricably grounded in practice and experience.

All things being even, it is my contention that, instead of advocating a detached perspective or one of disengagement, Curry recommends an attitude of careful and concerning engagement, the effort to achieve a more sober and insightful familiarity with the totality of African American experience as a precondition for pursuing African American philosophy. This kind of approach is necessary because an approach of detachment risks reinforcing alienation from and ignorance of the African American lived reality. Put differently, adopting the approach of disengaged reason risks becoming blind to the nuances and qualifications, differences, etc., that render African

American experience partly, but not totally, ineffable, as resistance to comprehensive and exhaustive expression in a propositional format. There are relevant hints and clues that are dependent upon indirect ways of communicating transcendental elements that are crucial for there to be an informative understanding of the African American mode of being.

Lastly, there is also a certain sense in which Curry, to quote the title of a recent text, is "taking philosophy back," recusing philosophy from an "essentialist ethnocentrism that defines philosophy as grounded in a particular historical tradition,"⁸ which would be the European philosophical tradition. In other words, Curry does not favor establishing a Eurocentric conception of philosophy as universal but considers definitional/disciplinary philosophical pluralism as appropriate to our contemporary global situation. With this metaphilosophical background in place, I want now to review briefly relevant aspects of Curry's position in order to anchor a context for my response to Garcia.

CURRY ON AFRICAN AMERICAN AND AFRICANA PHILOSOPHY

Curry, among other things, opposes African American philosophers becoming too dependent upon the conceptual and methodological resources of the mainstream philosophical tradition. He intimates that a robust African American philosophy should not excessively restrict itself to the complacent application of mainstream theories to the lived experience of African Americans. As he writes:

African American philosophy largely contents itself in aiming to extend the applicability of white theories molded on a rational European philosophical anthropology of Black anthropos. This optimistic encounter with Western philosophy and the presumptuous designation of Western thought as the "master's tools" is not only a major obstacle to the study of the culturally particular perspectives African-descended people develop through their engagements with colonial modernity but an ideological blinder that prevents Black thinkers from perpetuating any viewpoint incompatible with the integrationist ethic that currently dominates racial discourse.⁹

I take Curry's point to be that African American philosophers and, more generally, Africana philosophers, should cautiously avoid a certain epistemological/theoretical dependency upon Western philosophy. Rather, according to Curry, they should more actively cultivate and develop the indigenous resources of African American philosophy. This latter undertaking would entail the robust utilization of the diverse cultural materials and practices representative of the African American reality. Furthermore, this suggestion need not imply, according to Curry, that there is nothing of substance or relevance (concepts, ideas, principles, etc.) in the Western philosophical tradition that would be beneficial for African American philosophy. Here, there is a significant difference between strategic engagement and passive dependency. Clearly, African American philosophers and,

more generally, Black thinkers are indisputably capable of strategically engaging the Western philosophical tradition without embracing the view that the only legitimate debates and resources for philosophizing are indigenous to the Western philosophical tradition.

From a different perspective, there is a critical observation that I would like to register. Although I consider as reasonable Curry's stance regarding the importance of Black philosophers utilizing resources from the African American context, I think that it would be instructive to note that one would not advise or encourage Black philosophers to restrict themselves only to African American sources. Such a move risks the African American tradition becoming intellectually degenerate, at least if there is the assumption that the only legitimate sources for philosophizing in African American philosophy must be indigenous African American resources. It is a reasonable expectation that a philosophical tradition should not close itself off from borrowing from or directly interacting with other traditions of philosophy. As there is no need to reinvent the wheel, similarly, there is no need to insist that the only viable and legitimate philosophical resources are indigenous to a specific philosophical tradition. But, although I caution against courting unnecessary intellectual segregation, there is still the important and relevant point that Curry supports concerning why Black philosophers should avoid becoming unnecessarily dependent upon others to provide them with original concepts and theories, all in the name of a fake, one-way integration, or hypocritical intellectual exchange. For Curry, there is a crucial difference between fruitful intellectual exchange and the loss of intellectual autonomy.

A second concern addressed by Curry concerns a phenomenon related to the sociology of knowledge. Among other things, the relevant issue pertains to issues of how and why certain ideas are embraced and popularized, as well as why certain thinkers are considered more palatable than others. Curry sounds the alarm because he views the forces of the sociology of knowledge affecting African American philosophy as orchestrated and manipulated by the dominant academic system. And these forces operate in ways that are harmful to the concerns and needs of the African American community. Again, Curry states:

Sustained by an academic reward system that reinforces the tendency of Black scholars to make historic Black thinkers *safe for white consumption* by reading the importance of race and the centrality of culture out of Black thought, African American philosophy functions primarily as academic racial therapy committed to changing the racist dispositions of whites rather than advancing the self-understanding of African peoples.¹⁰

Curry advocates for an African American philosophy grounded in an investigation of the ontological, meaning, the transformational implications of race and culture for the reordering of Being. More specifically, there should be greater awareness regarding the ontological reconfiguration of being instituted by the advent of modernity, and the ways in which this process, among other

things, was propelled by the invention of race and the use of culture as a basis for regulating human differences. On this view, the act of erasing race and bracketing culture, as is so often the case, to avoid betraying liberalism's demand for value neutrality and disengagement from particularity, prematurely delegitimizes some of the credible issues that form the constitutive core of African American philosophy.

Sharing sentiments consistent with what some thinkers would characterize as the eradicating of difference or as the attempt to render as unintelligible what does not immediately conform to the requirements of a regime of sameness, Curry similarly cautions African American philosophers about the dangers of domesticating difference into an anemic, mainstream homogeneity. He identifies this phenomenon of eradicating the African American difference as "epistemological converging." He explains as follows:

Because the practice of "epistemological converging" Black thinking into American and Continental thought is so mainstream, the tendency to reward philosophical status to only those Black thinkers who were well known and prominent in white circles remains unquestioned. . . . [B]lack thinkers who chose to speak, educate, and develop their thought exclusively in Black communities are seen as unfit for philosophical study.¹¹

Curry, in another context, further deliberates on the dangers of epistemological convergence, writing, "*epistemological convergence* [is] the phenomenon by which Black cultural perspectives are only given the status of knowledge to the extent that they extend or reify currently maintained traditions of thought in European philosophy."¹²

I take it that Curry's main complaint, in this context, concerns the fact that the process of "epistemological converging" is a one-way phenomenon, because the expectation is for Black thinkers who desire recognition to demonstrate competence within the dominant philosophical tradition. Accordingly, Black thinkers who choose to pursue research programs intimately grounded in the African American intellectual tradition and/or who display a tendency to address primarily African American audiences are philosophically suspect. The dialectics of recognition, in the case of scholarship, undermines the credibility of certain Black philosophers, but tends to disproportionately favor those persons associated with the normativity of mainstream thought by granting them immediate credibility, which has always been white thinkers.

The upshot of Curry's complaint is to denounce a certain epistemological alienation that targets Black thinkers. The unbalanced utilization of the theoretical and analytical resources that are not necessarily appropriate to the study of the lived experience of African Americans risks rendering African Americans as beyond any possible conceptual taming. Or, in the words of Du Bois, a problem.¹³ Put differently, the assumption that white thinkers provide the theory or, in some cases, the anthropology, while Black thinkers advocate and demand pluralist revision,

is unacceptable for Curry. He explains that “*The problem with this view is that it fails to fulfill the basic need in the field for organic and visceral connections to the people it seeks to study and theorize about.*”¹⁴ Curry’s position, hence, embodies a sober existential philosophical thrust, philosophy as committed to an exploration of human forms of being. I hope that I have successfully captured the crux of Curry’s position. I turn now to critically work through Garcia’s take on Curry’s article.

GARCIA AND THE UNIVERSALITY OF PHILOSOPHY

In general, my position is that Garcia fails in his reading of Curry because of his refusal to apply the principle of charity. He declines to extend to Curry the most charitable, meaning, reasonable interpretation of his position.

First, Garcia fails to center the crucial and emphatic metaphilosophical import of Curry’s position to the extent that Curry has a strong interest in critically working through the nature and status of Africana philosophy, and inclusive of American philosophy. Garcia writes, “It would be a pity and a loss if young people who are developing philosophical skills and with something to offer on issues where philosophy and Black studies intersect were deterred by navel-gazing worries whether what they are doing is really Africana philosophy. What matters for them and for us is that more of them turn their abilities to the topics that have shaped much of Black people’s experience or promise to reshape it[.]”¹⁵ It is quite difficult to appreciate the force of Garcia’s argument, his contention that engaging in metaphilosophical investigations about Africana philosophy is equivalent to an embarrassing loss of time, effort, and talent. It is an undeniable fact that people of African descent have suffered partly because of their denigration by the claim that they are incapable of engaging in philosophical thinking. This is one legacy from Hegel relating to his claim that Africa is “enveloped in the dark mantle of Night,” where existence is circumscribed and shaped by a sensual mode of being.¹⁶ Hence, in order to aggressively counter this problematic claim regarding the philosophical deficit of African peoples, it is not unreasonable for Black philosophers to probe the nature and status of Africana philosophy. Black philosophers cannot choose to adopt a casual attitude concerning the epistemic injustice that threatens them precisely because of the credibility deficit they suffer in their roles as professional philosophers.¹⁷

So, even if a young, Black philosopher pursues the question of Africana philosophy, contrary to Garcia, I do not see why this interest would necessarily detract them from also tackling “issues where philosophy and Black Studies intersect.”¹⁸ I do not think that it is impossible or impractical to pursue parallel research interests in philosophy. For example, if a philosopher devotes thirty to forty years to professional activities, inclusive of teaching, research, and service, why consider it a loss if the philosopher devotes some of his or her time to working in Africana philosophy? To consider a metaphilosophical exploration of Africana philosophy a loss only makes sense on the assumption that either there is no Africana philosophy to investigate or

that the very question of Africana philosophy is nonsensical from the very beginning—an obnoxious category mistake.

Garcia’s second critical point pertains to certain disciplinary matters. This concern focuses on Curry’s reference to the idea of a distinctive Black psychology and Black history. A Black psychology would, among other things, be shaped by its unique methodologies and as well as basic questions constitutive of a distinctive research program not necessarily identical to mainstream psychology. Garcia states his case as follows:

Second, I can claim little knowledge of recent historiography and even less of current empirical psychology, but I wonder whether Prof. Curry is correct to think that either “Black history” or “Black psychology” is really so different in its methodologies from older, more mainstream, subfields in those disciplines. Don’t Black specialists in Black history do the same things as their colleagues, only with different sources[?]¹⁹

First, Garcia, as he admits, displays no appreciation for the extent to which, despite consulting archives and other original sources, the historiography of Black history has been heavily impacted by interdisciplinary modalities justified on the basis of the complexity of the historical reality of African descent peoples in the New World. The old paradigm of Whiggist or positivist history has been questioned on the basis of the limits of representation. Second, as opposed to the linear model of mainstream history which tends to silence non-Western or marginal voices, Black history has eschewed linear conceptions of history that are beholden to metanarratives about the progressive development of history.

A nagging problem that haunts the metanarrative of linear history is its dependency upon an evolutionary logic that assigns people of African descent to either a state of chronic underdevelopment or excludes them altogether from world history. Third, even with regard to archival sources, Garcia seemingly implies that archival research is beyond controversy. Nevertheless, some Black historians have good reasons to adopt a critical attitude in response to the uses of archival research. For example, Michel-Rolph Trouillot in his *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*²⁰ has called attention to the sensitive relation between the exercise of power and the politics of the writing of history. He explains how those with power embrace versions of history premised upon exalting dominant groups while silencing other marginalized voices. One such case is that of the Haitian revolution and the various attempts not to center this event as a defining historical phenomenon. Similarly, Sibylle Fischer, although not a Black historian, in her *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*²¹ documents the obsessive efforts to deny the historical significance of the Haitian revolution. These strategies of disavowal have invested much time and effort in treating the Haitian revolution as a nonevent. That the Haitian revolution was the first major, successful slave revolt in history and that Haiti became the first Black republic in the New World are not granted much historical importance. Regarding the very concept

of history itself, Robert Young in his *White Mythologies*²² critically engages the concept of history to the extent that history, as seen through the lens of Western thought, is treated as a linear, progressive narrative tasked with accounting for the development of human consciousness. Young argues that linear conceptions of history tend to undermine the legitimate concerns of non-Europeans, who are not considered as central agents in propelling the linear development of history. Based upon the considerations reviewed above, there are legitimate reasons for Black scholars to question the basic concepts, assumptions, methodologies, etc., of disciplines, particularly when using these disciplines to study Black existence.

Third, Garcia turns to question the need to designate philosophy as anything other than pure philosophy. Here, his question is as follows: Why assume that philosophy is the study of a particular people and their culture? Again, presupposing a conception of philosophy *qua* philosophy, Garcia intimates that no national-centric, ethnic-centric, racial-centric, etc., conception of philosophy is coherent. As he writes,

But why think African American philosophy is, or should be, a study of Black people, any more than German philosophy is a study of German people, or French philosophy of French people? Should British philosophy be more “Britain-centered,” as Africana philosophy should supposedly be more “African-centered theory”?²³

That Garcia is imposing an uncharitable interpretation of Curry’s position is undeniable. The idea of making Africana philosophy more African-centered need not necessarily entail Africana reductivism: the demand that Africana philosophy should be the distinctive product of Black history, culture, religion, etc. As with the notions of German philosophy or French philosophy, all that one can reasonably mean is that traditions of philosophy, even when designated in national terms, indicate philosophical activities or practices as being situated within a tradition of thinking and the reading of canonical texts. In other words, philosophy is not done from “nowhere” but from within an argumentative context, shaped by, among other things, canonical thinkers, texts, questions, methods, etc., constitutive of a tradition of philosophy. It is possible to broaden this approach in order to flesh out national designations of philosophy. These national designations would, in turn, facilitate the specification of the clusters of concepts, themes, root metaphors, and assumptions that shape or frame styles of thinking. Again, instead of attempting to reduce to patent absurdity the notion of an Africana philosophy grounded in an African-centered theory, one can, contrary to Garcia, easily and charitably render this notion intelligible by contextualizing it to the notion of a tradition of texts or to that of a philosophical imaginary.

Indeed, in another context, Michael Walzer has unapologetically advanced the case for a particularistic metaphilosophical conception of philosophy while deriding unproductive universalistic conceptions of philosophy. Instead of conceiving philosophy as primarily

the attempt to escape particularity, Walzer maintains that to remain within the confines of particularity is not a philosophical failure. Rather the kind of critical, analytical, and evaluative activities associated with philosophy can be discharged within the domain of particularity to articulate and appropriately fine-tune the shared meanings and significances that constitute the realm of particularity—the constellations of thick meanings that constitute a culture. Walzer writes:

My argument is radically particularist. I don’t claim to have achieved any great distance from the social world in which I live. One way to begin the philosophical enterprise—perhaps the original way—is to walk out of the cave, leave the city, climb the mountain, fashion for oneself . . . an objective and universal standpoint. Then one describes the terrain of everyday life from far away, so that it loses its particular contours and takes on a general shape. But I mean to stand in the cave, in the city, on the ground. Another way of doing philosophy is to interpret to one’s fellow citizens the world of meanings that we share.²⁴

It would be an unforgivable oversight not to point out that to the extent that, among other things, sociologists, historians, anthropologists, etc., take seriously the meanings that constitute culture, a particularist approach to philosophy is more amenable to the tactical task of connecting these disciplines to the analytical and rigorous evaluative thrust of philosophy.

Prior to proceeding, I want to briefly provide an example of how the Blues tradition can serve as a source for African American philosophy to illustrate an instance of a resource facilitating philosophical activity. Haunted by persistent historical structures of nonbeing and cruel invisibility, and aware of the despair, social anxiety, and absurdity characteristic of such unimaginable treatment, African Americans became masters of the heroic affirmation of life. This existential affirmation of life by African Americans suggests that even when confronted with threats and assaults against their being, African Americans find creative ways to manifest a basic affirmation of being against threats of nonbeing. Perhaps the most intriguing manifestation of this heroic affirmation is the blues. Ralph Ellison has championed the idea that blues music serves as a metaphor for human existence—the idea of a blues ontology, a philosophy of life grounded in the complexities of improvisation. The existentialist thrust of the blues suggests the notion of “rolling with the punches,” knowing that life is not always easy or fair and that, despite the desperation of difficult situations, there is always the potential of overcoming, of finding a way to work things out. Ellison describes the blues in the following existentialist grammar. He writes:

The blues is an impulse to keep the painful details and episodes of a brutal experience alive in one’s aching consciousness, to finger its jagged edge and to transcend it, not by the consolation of [universal] philosophy but by squeezing from it a near-tragic, near comic lyricism. As a form, the

blues is an autobiographical chronicle of personal catastrophe expressed lyrically.²⁵

Clearly, it is not difficult to tease from Ellison's remarks his keen appreciation for the importance of understanding that the freedom of the individual is not some mechanical option that one summons when things go wrong. Rather, transcending contingent facticity and/or expressing ontological freedom is a matter of working through the horrible details of tragic situations only to emerge more resilient, and utilizing the drama of existential overcoming to prepare for future challenges. The challenges mentioned are representative of the limited situations which from time to time confront the contingent episodes of existential comfort that provide fading orientation. Albert Murray expands Ellison's take on the blues in the following manner. According to Murray,

In a sense the whole point of the blues idiom lyric is to state the facts of life. Not unlike ancient tragedy, it would have the people form whom it is composed and performed confront, acknowledge, and proceed in spite of, and even in terms of, the ugliness and meanness inherent in the human condition. It is thus a device for making the best of a bad situation.

Not by rendering capitulation tolerable, however, and certainly not by consoling those who would compromise their integrity, but—in its orientation to continuity in the face of adversity and absurdity[.] [...]

There is also the candid acknowledgement and sober acceptance of adversity as an inescapable condition of human existence—and perhaps in consequence an affirmative disposition towards all obstacles.²⁶

Murray, in another context, writes that the blues deal “with the most fundamental of all existential imperatives: affirmation, which is to say, reaffirmation and continuity in the face of adversity.”²⁷ Here, I have used blues music as just an instance of a cultural resource that facilitates existential philosophizing. But the African American musical tradition is pregnant with much material for existential philosophical practice. Samuel Floyd, Jr. in his *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States*²⁸ makes the case that African American music provided the resources for the creation of a theory of cultural memory, a theory of African American interpretation, an African American aesthetic, etc.

Fourth, Garcia ironically also faults Curry for unwisely courting favor with essentialist notions of philosophy. In this context, he reads Curry's reference to Africana philosophy as implying that there is a common essence that defines African culture. Again, I find this interpretation misleading for obvious reasons. Garcia states:

We needn't and shouldn't assume that, to use . . . ethnic designations meaningfully, there must exist a French and a German *volksgeist* from

which Descartes and Sartre, Kant and Nietzsche, and the rest, emanate and to which their writings gave voice. There is no reason to think there is, let alone that we can find and articulate such a common spirit across these diverse minds. Just the same holds for Africana Philosophy. It need not be confusing and confused even to use the term, but in doing so, we must take care to avoid unnecessary and unjustified presuppositions of a common culture or mind that must, ought to, or does, underlie the subfield.²⁹

A casual familiarity with Africana intellectual history reveals a conscious awareness that there are no such things as a common African culture or a common African mind—both a culture and mind indisputably shared by all African descent peoples. What many Black thinkers readily admit to and acknowledge are certain patterns or styles of thinking which exist across various African communities. Another way of putting this point is to claim that there exists a family resemblance among African cultures, a family resemblance obvious in religion, music, cosmologies, language, aesthetic, etc. There is even awareness about the diversity of various forms of hybridity that have shaped African cultures in the so-called New World as well as on the African continent. Black scholars distinguish between Francophone Africa, Anglophone Africa, etc. And in the Caribbean, there is an uncontested appreciation for the difference between the French Caribbean, the English Caribbean, the Spanish Caribbean, and the Dutch Caribbean. Acknowledging these differences need not entail any appeal to nor the presupposition of the existence of a common African culture or a common mind shared by all people of African descent.

And, finally, regarding the above concerns, it seems as though Garcia, in his haste to adopt less than reasonable interpretations of Curry's views, categorically excludes Curry from a more charitable reading of things—a reasonable reading of things that he attributes to others. Garcia writes the following regarding and French and German philosophy:

French philosophy and German philosophy are best thought of as the philosophical thinking and writing that's been done by French and German people, respectively.³⁰

Just as Garcia allows for French philosophy and German philosophy to designate philosophy done by French people and German people, one wonders why he refuses to extend a similar view to Curry. While he claims that one need not posit a *Volksgeist* to support the idea of a French philosophy, why the need to insist that Curry is dependent upon positing an African *Volksgeist*?

From a different perspective, Garcia treats the historical conditions of African peoples as identical to the historical situation of Europeans. Consequently, he fails to appreciate that Curry underscores the different circumstances of people of African descent, particularly the horrible history of colonialism, racial discrimination, and racism that have persistently assaulted the conditions of their existence.

Curry, unlike Garcia, is agonizingly sensitive to the ways in which the various regimes of racial subordination have variously shaped the multiple modalities of Black existence. His preference is not to bleach nor to degrade the intensity of the humiliation suffered by people of African descent. Similarly, he denounces efforts to nullify the expression of and the existential force of their creative human agency.

Fifth, Garcia identifies and engages with certain aspects of the dominant philosophical tradition that, according to him, are the unfair targets of Curry's disapproval. As to be expected, Garcia's response is primarily rhetorical and does not offer much in terms of substantive philosophy or, at least, the kind of response that would meaningfully advance his debate with Curry. Garcia maintains:

[P]rof. Curry ties the recent work he dislikes to "a cosmopolitan liberal ethic," "liberalism," "care ethics," and other bugaboos. He needs to explain where he finds these supposed connections, what types of connections they are . . . and, more important, what's wrong with each of them such that it should be avoided.³¹

Of course, I do not presume to know better than Curry his positions on various issues. However, with a few minor corrections, there is a core idea that connects the list of concerns (characterizing them as dislikes is simply too pejorative) that Garcia attributes to Curry. First, like Garcia, I would also fault Curry for not sufficiently enough appreciating the substantive philosophical contribution that care ethics can make to Africana philosophy. I think that to the extent that care ethics is, among other things, a critical working through of traditional ethics and an attempt to philosophically correct, or account for, the male biases of traditional ethics, care ethics can complement the Africana philosophical emphasis on communitarian ethics. As a matter of fact, Alison Jaggar's project in care ethics is highly relevant in this context as she argues for an approach to ethics that is sensitive not only to race but "any other axis of domination."³²

Second, unlike Curry's benign oversight concerning feminist ethics, Garcia scolds Curry for using the phrase "the dominance of normative judgments." Garcia refers to this phrase as one of many "bugaboos" championed by Curry. Here Garcia reveals his uncharitable reading of Curry. Curry uses the phrase in the context of protesting against what he refers to as the "conceptual incarceration" of African American philosophy inquiry "within the confines of white American space."³³ He explains that this confinement "binds the Black mind to the problems of existence in the United States and prevents the intellect of African-descended people from freely moving towards questions involving the retrieval of lost cultural perspectives and heritage in Africana thought."³⁴ Under a charitable interpretation, the phrase "the dominance of normative judgments" can be interpreted in a favorable manner. For example, let us use modern political philosophy as a test case. Modern political philosophy is, among other things, indebted to the distinction between ideal theory and nonideal theory. Using this distinction, mainstream political philosophers occupy themselves with developing principles of justice for ideal

situations where justice is actualized. This is the motivation behind ideal theory and the principles sought are declared normative. On the other hand, nonideal theory is theory that focuses on actual conditions of inequality and argues in favor of tying principles of justice to nonideal conditions in order to correct existing conditions of injustice. From the perspective of nonideal theory, the objective is not to deliver normative principles that can magically apply to all and any situation imaginable. Rather, the task ought to be to produce principles of justice suitably infused with (nonideal) descriptive considerations. In this context, going normative is read as eschewing or ignoring actual conditions of inequality while engaging in flights of fancy to ascertain alleged normative principles of justice, principles not tainted with corrosive contingencies or particularities. Curry supports an African American philosophy that infuses its normative activities with the nonideal circumstances of African American existence.

While allowing for the preceding corrections, the core idea that links Curry's critical assessment of political liberalism and cosmopolitan ethics is his general, yet critical engagement with philosophical liberalism. In this regard, Curry expresses views that are indisputably very similar to views held by the supporters of Afro-pessimism.³⁵ A nagging problem haunting the core of philosophical liberalism is its social ontology, its obsessive attachment to the idea of the individual as the basic unit of political reality. Liberalism's attachment to atomism, and its denial of the reality of collectives or groups as ontologically legitimate, limits the effectiveness of liberalism's inability to directly address the stubborn roots of historical racial injustice because liberalism treats races as unreal. For those who appreciate that races are not natural kinds but socio-cultural or socio-historical realities, liberalism, and its visceral commitment to individualism (social atomism) is neither analytically nor theoretically efficacious in working through the nagging structural and institutional features that sustain the analytical relevance of race.

At the risk of overstating the case in favor of Curry, the problem with liberalism is that its blindness to the ontological realities of race renders it ineffective to deal with the persistent structures of racial subordination and negative institutional outcomes. Ironically, then, liberalism's deficiency regarding race facilitates liberalism's complicity in sustaining asymmetrical racial outcomes. More damaging, however, is the fact that this theoretical and analytical impairment leads to what Avery Gordon and Christopher Newfield call liberal racism. They explain as follows:

Liberal racism [which they call white philosophy] rejects discrimination on the basis of race or color and abhors the subjection of groups on racial grounds. But it upholds and defends systems that produce racializing effects, often in the name of some matter more "urgent" than redressing racial subordination, such as rewarding "merit" or enhancing economic competitiveness. [Among other failures], it treats the categories through which racism operates, is felt, and is addressed as conceptual errors. It thus directs less attention

to the histories, current forms, and social effects of racism . . . than to the problems of race and racial identity, categories it considers politically troubling and intellectually flawed.³⁶

Gordon and Newfield's observation concerning the ease with which liberalism implicitly provides comfort for racist thinking and policies has also been underscored by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva in his *Racism without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*.³⁷

Sixth, Garcia also opposes what he considers as Curry's fateful objection to non-Blacks working in African American philosophy or "at the intersection of philosophy and race studies."³⁸ While Garcia considers Curry's position prejudicial, I will resist joining in such condemnation. My own position is that it is perfectly acceptable for non-Blacks to work at the intersection of philosophy and race studies or, more generally, in Africana philosophy. It simply would be absurd to place a moratorium on all non-Blacks working in these areas of philosophy. Nevertheless, there are two concerns that shed some relevant insight into Curry's position on the role of non-Blacks in African American philosophy. One such concern pertains to the issue of power within the academy. If more and more whites (non-Blacks) are hired to work in African American philosophy or at the intersection of philosophy and race studies, then it is reasonable to be concerned about the nonrepresentation of Blacks in the field of African American philosophy. Why should non-Blacks dominate African American philosophy while Blacks are underrepresented in the field? A second concern, although one that would not absolutely exclude non-Blacks from African American philosophy, is that Curry favors an existential conception of philosophy, one that probes the lived experiences of African Americans. Whereas mainstream philosophers involve themselves with theories of meaning and reference, and otherwise subscribe to a basic analytic philosophical orientation, Curry prefers approaches that are more interpretive and existential. At the risk of exaggeration, to be told that race is semantically empty and that races do not exist is, from the African American perspective, the philosophical equivalent of ethnic cleansing. It is the abstract elimination of Blacks by philosophy. Curry wants Blacks to be the dominate voices in African American philosophy because their participation is a necessary condition for enhancing the existential orientation of African American philosophy. So Curry's concerns can be treated seriously without the much stronger and problematic claim that non-Blacks should be banished from African American philosophy.

Finally, Garcia, while intimating what he construes as Curry's inadequate concern for the material existence of Africana people, advocates that Africana philosophy can best serve Africana people by segregating the positive and beneficial aspects of African diasporic culture from the negative and degenerate aspects. As he writes,

[W]ork in philosophy-and-race may also assist Black, African diasporic, people in their daily lives. . . . One way could be by helping disaggregate "Black culture" so as to enable us better to evaluate

its different cultural works, movements, elements, and so on. After all, not all of them are valuable.³⁹

Again, anyone with a casual familiarity with the Africana intellectual tradition would know that these types of debates have taken place and continue to take place among Africana thinkers. Nevertheless, there is reason for Africana thinkers to be critical of the kind of categorizing that Garcia recommends. For example, there is a horrible history of American social sciences pathologizing Black people. Daryl Scott in his *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880–1966* has documented the unfortunate use of pathology by both the political left and the political right.⁴⁰ This kind of intellectual activity has contributed to the pathologizing of Blacks, as well as severely restricting efforts by Blacks to express their agency. Put differently, under constant global, academic surveillance, Blacks find themselves imprisoned in a maze of pathologies from which escape seems all but impossible.

From another perspective, Victor Anderson in his *Beyond Ontological Black: An Essay on African American Religious and Cultural Criticism* has spiritedly chastised Black thinkers for promoting a problematic racial as well as identity essentialism.⁴¹ He urges Black thinkers to frame Black identity along the lines of class, gender, sex, age, and race and not exclusively on the basis of race. This is simply one instance of a critical effort to radically work through the dynamics of Black identity beyond the unnecessary limitations of only one exclusive axis of being.

CONCLUSION

My task in this brief essay has been to situate Garcia's critical response to Curry within the broader context of issues regarding the nature of philosophy and some of the core debates in African American and, more generally, Africana philosophy. It is my contention that greater openness to and appreciation of nontraditional conceptions of philosophy, as well as diverse philosophical practice, is needed in order to avoid the kind of narrow orientation that Garcia brought to bear on his critical engagement with Curry. As with other philosophers, respectful engagement is not contingent upon agreeing with all the views expressed by Curry. Put differently, that one finds in Curry's essay ideas that one would not endorse does not entail the kind of attempted "schoolboy" trashing that Garcia seemingly thinks that Curry deserves.

NOTES

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2. Tommy Curry, "The Derelictical Crisis of African American Philosophy: How African American Philosophy Fails to Contribute to the study of African-Descended People," *Journal of Black Studies* 42 (2011): 314–33.
3. Garcia, "Professor Tommy Curry," 5.
4. Garcia, "Professor Tommy Curry," 2.
5. Thomas Kasulis, *Intimacy and Integrity: Philosophy and Cultural Difference* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

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7. Kasulis, *Intimacy or Integrity*, 29.
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9. Curry, "The Derelictical Crisis," 315.
10. Curry, "The Derelictical Crisis," 316.
11. Curry, "The Derelictical Crisis," 317.
12. Curry, "The Derelictical Crisis," 320.
13. See, Nahum Chandler, X—The Problem of the Negro as a Problem for Thought (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).
14. Curry, "The Derelictical Crisis," 319.
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25. Ralph Ellison, "Richard Wright's Blues," in *Shadow and Act* (New York: Random House, 1964), 78–79.
26. Albert Murray, *The Hero and the Blues* (Columbia: Missouri University Press, 1978), 36–37, 106–107.
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30. Garcia, "Professor Tommy Curry," 3.
31. Garcia, "Professor Tommy Curry," 4.
32. Jaggar, Alison. "Feminism in Ethics: Moral Justification," in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*, eds. Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 234.
33. Curry, "The Derelictical Crisis," 321.
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35. See, for example, Nahum Dimitri Chandler, *The Problem of the Negro as a Problem for Thought* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014); Jared Sexton "Afropessimism: The Unclear Word", *Rhizomes* 29 (2016): <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/index.html>; Frank Wilderson III, *Red, White, and Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); and Frank Wilderson III, *Afro-Pessimism: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Racked & Dispatched, 2017).
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The Calabar School's Contributions to Contemporary African Philosophy

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INTRODUCTION

Freedom of thought is the greatest right that any human can enjoy. It is the greatest because one's freedom of thought, unlike other forms of rights, does not end where those of others begin. It is boundless, and no one can legitimately be accused or punished for thinking. Philosophy epitomizes this freedom. Thus, in the spirit of free inquiry, philosophy should be what anybody makes of it: I-think-what-I-like kind of endeavor. However, this is not the case because freedom of thought demands intellectual responsibility in philosophy since the discipline is grounded in logical rules. These rules govern what qualifies as correct practice and delineate various philosophical traditions.

Without logical and ontological background, methodological systematicity, and critical and creative rigor that proceed from the first two, there can hardly be a philosophical tradition. Thinking freely is not the same as thinking systematically.¹ Elements of the Calabar School (nowadays better known as Conversational School) who began to congregate at the eastern port city of Calabar, Nigeria, in the 1990s understood this much. When the so-called Great Debate² on the existence of African philosophy was coming to an end, and a period of disillusionment had set in, a new consciousness emerged in the approach of the first-generation members of the Calabar School. This consciousness was to take African philosophy from an orientation of free thinking to that of system thinking. The works of Pantaleon Iroegbu, Innocent Asouzu, Chris Ijiomah, and Andrew Uduigwomen in the 1990s heralded this new orientation in African philosophy, which the conversationalists describe as "the Complementary Turn." This is a methodological turn from Western-styled analysis and phenomenology that had dominated the writings of African philosophers then, to the conversational style! Underlying this methodological turn are the three basic principles of relationality, contextuality, and complementarity. I will revisit this later.

Before this time, much of what was done in African philosophy did not comply with a distinctive system that could be called African. Where some followed any system

at all, the underlying system was not African, but Western. Members of the Calabar School realized that for there to be an authentic African philosophy, distinctive intellectual borders needed to be carved out properly and clearly to distinguish it from other philosophical traditions. Doing this requires the erection of a system comprising of foundation (logic plus ontology = thought system), and architecture (methods formulated from the foundational elements), from which its doctrinal ambience (theories, concepts and principles) could be derived. In the absence of this type of structure, many practitioners of African philosophy indulged in free rather than system thinking. A system is what characterizes a form of thought.

The Calabar School developed a system for African philosophy in which a three-valued logic and a trivalent ontology form the foundation. From this foundation, different methods were devised and used in the articulation of various theories, concepts, and principles. Those methods, including Asouzu's complementary reflection, Ozumba's integrativism, Ijiomah's relationalism, and Chimakonam's conversational method, have now been described as conversational in style. This conversational approach is not in the sense of interlocutory exchanges, but in the technical sense of *relationality, the study of relationships and contexts of relationships between variables*. Among the first-generation members of the School are Innocent Asouzu, Pantaleon Iroegbu, Chris Ijiomah, Godfrey Ozumba, and Andrew Uduigwomen. At the Western port city of Lagos was a lone thinker whose approach was a little similar to those of the Calabar School: his name, Campbell Shittu Momoh. By the millennium years, two other African philosophers, Bruce Janz and Jennifer Lisa Vest, emerged in the United States of America with a similar approach. In a later section, I will discuss the distinguishing traits of the approach of the Calabar School.

In this essay, I will attempt to provide an exposition of some of the key contributions of the Calabar School to contemporary African philosophy. In the first section, I will look at the starting point of their philosophy, covering the identification of another subcategory of wonder called *onuma*. In the second section, I will identify the working assumption and trace the main problem, challenge, and questions that drive the Calabar School's contributions to African philosophy. In the third section, I will highlight some of the major theoretic and conceptual contributions of the School. In the fourth section, I will explicate the logical foundational and methodological backbone that drive the thinking of members of the School. And finally, in the fifth section, I will present the historiographical model developed at the Calabar School for African philosophy. In all, I will avoid detailed exposition and analysis due to a lack of space.

OUR STARTING POINT: WONDER OR NOT?

Since Plato and Aristotle, in their respective works, *Theaetetus* and *Metaphysics*,³ declared wonder to be the starting point of philosophy, philosophers down the ages regularly re-echo this almost dogmatically. Why not, it seems so self-evident to say so. But what is not so self-evident is the sense of wonder intended in each context. Wonder does not have the same sense in all contexts of

its manifestation. Identifying the sense of wonder that strikes in each setting of philosophy's beginning is crucial to understanding that philosophy. We can, for example, understand the philosophy of the Miletians, who thought about the origin of the universe. If we imagine Thales gazing upon the stars, we can share with him the sense of awe (thaumazein) impressed on his mind by the galaxies. This experience, no doubt, can spur anyone to philosophize by raising questions.

But this is not always the sense or the only sense of wonder that instigates philosophizing. Socrates, for example, who wanted to study the basic values and concepts in human society, believing that understanding them might aid us to live well, was spurred by curiosity (*miraculum*) and not awe (thaumazein). Curiosity is a different sense of wonder and understanding it is key to understanding the philosophy it inspires. In recent literature, we owe a mountain of gratitude to Shaun Gallagher, Lauren Reinerman-Jones, Bruce Janz, Patricia Bockelman, and Jörg Trempler⁴ for drawing our attention to the fact that wonder has different senses, such as awe (thaumazein) and curiosity (*miraculum*). But is it possible that there might be other senses of wonder that can suitably inspire systematic philosophy?

The Calabar School holds that the sense of wonder that spurred African philosophers of the twentieth century was neither thaumazein nor *miraculum*. We must understand the key role played by the experience of colonialism in its various ramifications: political, economic, cultural, and intellectual. While the political and economic dimensions imposed all manner of suppression, restriction, and marginalization, the cultural and intellectual dimensions brought epistemic subordination, racialization, dehumanization, and inferiorization. At some point, the anti-colonial activists and scholars were forced to act. Wonder is an emotional experience, but questioning, which it leads to, is a rational activity. Neither awe nor curiosity can suitably be identified as the type of emotion that spurred the philosophical acts of those Africans in the early twentieth century. The ideologies of the various anti-colonial or nationalist movements and the philosophical writings of the intellectuals were not inspired by awe or curiosity. They were spurred by a different subcategory of wonder the Calabar School identifies as *onuma* (angry-frustration).⁵ For example, when J. B. Danquah writes a treatise on the *Akan Doctrine of God*, one readily sees the intention to contradict the colonial scholarship, which declared that Africa has no concept of God.⁶ We can see similar trends in the works of S. K. Akesson, Bolaji Idowu, and John Mbiti.⁷ In the same way, a survey of nationalist literature of Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, Amilcar Cabral, and Kwame Nkrumah discloses the state of mind of the authors. Most of these works are mainly decolonial, suggesting their reactionary tone but also the angry-frustration that inspired them. The Great Debate, which lasted nearly four decades in the history of African philosophy, epitomizes *onuma* as its beginning. This is not dismissive of the fact that in contemporary African philosophy, some works that are being produced lean more to thaumazein and *miraculum* than *onuma*. But it is safe to argue that *onuma* remains the main category of wonder that inspires many African philosophers to this day.

The reason for the above is obvious. Africa has endured and continues to endure harsh experiences that began with slave trade and culminated in colonialism and racialism.⁸ These experiences have confined most African philosophical literature to reactionary scholarship. While not dismissing the necessity of such scholarship, it is not nearly the best trajectory for a new philosophical tradition. If one asks questions about the problems, logic, methodologies, and system of the African philosophical tradition, the poverty of reactionary scholarship will be exposed. In other words, what makes African philosophy a philosophical tradition in its own right? This is the type of question the early campaigners did not, at least, ask in clear terms. As simple as it might sound, this question demands a systematic answer. Answering this question, among others, can give a burgeoning philosophical tradition shape and a clear trajectory. This is what sets the Calabar School's intervention apart from other African philosophy approaches.

OUR IDEOLOGICAL STRUCTURE: WORKING THESIS, PROBLEM, CHALLENGE, AND QUESTIONS

The Calabar School has a characteristically different approach to philosophy based on three fundamental principles that drive the School's ideological structure.⁹ The principles derive from the African thought system and worldview. The first principle called relationality states that "variables necessarily interrelate irrespective of their unique contexts, all things considered, because no variable is an ego solus." The second principle is contextuality. It states that "the relationships between variables occur within specific contexts because context upsets facts." The third, called complementarity, states that "seemingly opposed variables can have a relationship of complementation rather than mere contradiction." The three principles above oil the School's ideological structure, which consist of the basic ideas that inform the School's philosophical standpoint and approach.

Thus, the Calabar School's intervention has a distinctive ideological structure with four components: working thesis, problem, challenge, and questions. I will briefly explain them below.

Working Thesis: The School's approach to philosophy begins with the working thesis that *understanding the nature of relationships that exist between variables and their unique contexts is key to understanding reality, the conflictual problems that confront the universe, and a complementary way to address such problems*. This makes relationship, context, and complementation the three central concepts of African thought from which the three basic principles were formulated. This working thesis also indicates that relational activities are creative, destructive, progressive, regressive, complementary, and motional. On the basis of the working thesis above, the Calabar School's approach identifies one main problem for the twenty-first century, one challenge, and two cardinal questions that drive their research.

The Problem: For the School, the main philosophical problem of the twenty-first century is the problem of border

lines written as separate words. The problem of border lines states that there exists an unbridgeable gap between opposites. This gap is metaphorically too wide that the variables at both ends can never meet even though it is just a line. It is a divisive and polarizing force. When the line is drawn amongst humans, it leads to racism, ethnicism, xenophobia. If it is drawn between sexes, it leads to sexism. When the line is drawn between diverse religious faiths, it leads to credoism. Also, when this line is drawn between people of diverse economic and social statuses, it leads to classism. And when it is drawn between species, it leads to speciesism, and so on. There is a paradox suggested in this problem: it is a border, which suggests that two sides have been brought together. It is also a line that suggests that one thing has been divided. But the problem inheres in the second part of the puzzle. In it, nature, which is one but with various manifestations, is carved up by reason into sets of binary opposites. This is the irrationality of reason in that the different manifestation of nature is erroneously assumed by reason as fundamental. Under this assumption, binary opposites are doomed to always contradict themselves relationally. What this mutual contradiction entails is that such variables cannot have a productive relationship.

The Challenge: Their challenge is to identify the root cause of the problem and proffer ideas to address its various manifestations. But because *relationship* is critical and crucial to the creation of meaning, the Calabar School identifies and faults the bivalent logic for providing the framework for mutual exclusivity of variables through its principles of noncontradiction and excluded-middle. Specifically, the two-valued logic with its truth-gap is identified as the cause of the problem of border lines.¹⁰ To set a different logical agenda, new systems that are three-valued, trivalent, or multivalent have been formulated by members of the School.¹¹ On the bases of these systems, members have made various attempts to grapple with the two main questions.

The Questions: To take up the challenge of addressing the main problem of the twenty-first century, members of the Calabar School grapple with two questions, namely, does difference amount to inferiority? And are opposites irreconcilable? The scholarly works of the members of the School are informed by the main problem and geared towards addressing the two questions. But the Calabar School holds that the differences we see in the manifestation of nature are not fundamental. This means that such differences can be negotiated in ways that allow binaries to go beyond contradiction and construct a complementary relationship.

To do this, members of the Calabar School formulate and employ methodologies that are described as conversational thinking. Conversational thinking has four main distinctive features. First, it focuses on relationships and contexts of relationships between variables rather than merely on the variables themselves. Second, it stipulates that to understand reality in its various manifestations, one must study the context of each variable and its relationships with other variables. Third, the School stipulates that a correct system of African philosophy must have an identifiable foundation (logic plus ontology = thought system),

architecture (methods derived from that background logic), and doctrine (theories or ideas organized along the lines of those methods). Fourth, they identify the ideological structure of their style to include a working thesis, a problem, a challenge, and two main questions. The theoretic contributions of members of the School show various ways each has attempted to address the problem by answering the two questions.

OUR THEORETIC AND CONCEPTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The distinguishing traits of the approach of the Calabar School can be seen in their focus on *relationship* between variables (rather than merely on the variables themselves) as the index for ontological, epistemological, and ethical analysis. They begin from the premise that *relationship* is central to philosophical understanding, not necessarily Dasein, as Martin Heidegger would have it.¹² Even Dasein is nothing without its relationships. Thus, for the Calabar School, being(s) or variables are missing links in the web of reality.¹³ This web of reality represents intricate mazes of relational connections between variables. To understand variables in their various manifestations, one has to study their relationships, their contexts, and the contexts of such relationships. Relationship signals motion, and entities bear witness against their true nature when they are in motion rather than at rest. Heidegger does a fine job with the category of time because time is motion, but the best way to undertake this study is not phenomenology; it is conversational thinking. Phenomenology does not unlock time, as supposed; it entraps it. To get to “things themselves” is a journey back in time, not to the present or the future. In this way, phenomenology bids to study being in its pastness. And the past is a static, frozen time. Phenomenology seems constrained to disclose what things were in the context of a given past and not necessarily what they are or could be. Things do not just *show themselves in themselves*, and “the science of phenomena” may be one of such paths that lead “To the things themselves,” as Heidegger (following Husserl) supposes,¹⁴ but the science of relationships is a better and clearer path to the present and future manifestations of things.

Phenomenology’s obsession with things as they are in themselves undercuts Heidegger’s claim that Dasein is future-oriented through historicity and temporality. A being in motion is always changing. Each point in that motion is a context, which shapes and reshapes that being. Thus, the only place we can access a being is in a specific context. But the properties of such a being are likely to change by the next context. This implies that there is only one context in which we can access a fixed idea of being or being in itself: past. And this appears to be where phenomenology ultimately leads back to. Conversational thinking, on its part, is fluid. The archive of the past must connect with the present and influence the future. In it, every context is transient. No one, according to Heraclitus, can step into the same river twice. Thus, being does not remain the same through the passage of time. Time does being all the justice and injustice imaginable.

Therefore, relationships and their contexts are the focal points of conversational thinking. So, by conversations, the Calabar School means critical and creative relationships, and by conversational approach, they mean i) a relational process of inquiry that ii) interrogates but respects individuality/context, iii) recognises but transcends contradiction, and iv) strives to achieve complementation of opposed variables. This delicate process is what the conversationalists describe as the *conversational method*. There are four types of relationships identified by the Calabar School: difference (thinking of oneself as an “I,” being in itself, but not against others), solidarity (thinking of oneself as a “we,” being for others), contradiction (thinking of oneself as an opposite, being against others), and creative struggle (thinking of oneself with others, being with others). Of the four, creative struggle represents the highest form of relational process. It is critical and creative, progressive and complementary.

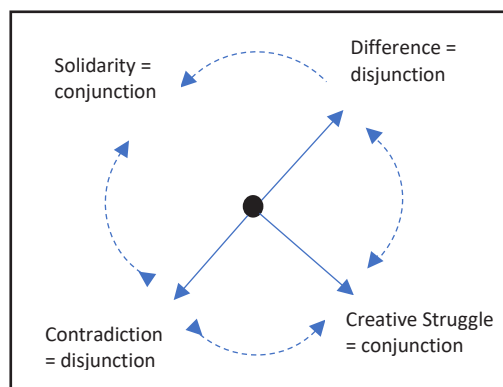


Figure 1: The Cyclic-Elliptical Motion of Relationality

The diagram above shows that the disjunctive motion marshals relationship of difference, setting variables apart, but not necessarily against each other. Attention must be paid to the direction to which the arrows point. The conjunctive motion directs relationship of solidarity, instigating variables to care for others. Similarly, for the relationship of contradiction, the disjunctive motion instigates variables against each other leading to irreconcilable outcomes. Finally, the conjunctive motion enables variables to negotiate their seeming opposition and complement. This is called the relationship of creative struggle. In all, while motion is linear in Western thought, conversational thinking views it as cyclic-elliptical, where the ellipses represent the various contexts in the motion. As creative struggle gives way to difference in the diagram above, contradiction eventually yields to creative struggle, and on and on, the motion continues. Figure 2 below shows the relational tree.

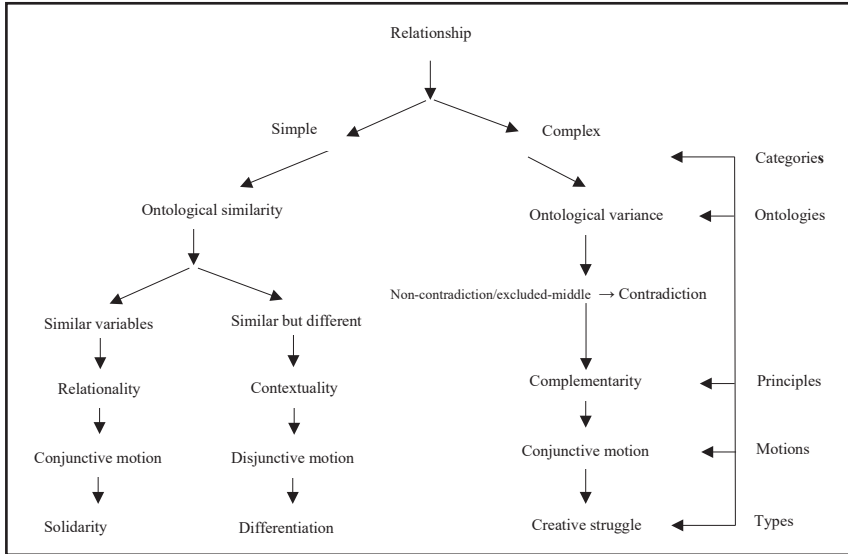


Figure 2: Diagram of the Relational Tree

From the above, the Calabar School more than earned the sobriquet *the shrine of African philosophy*.¹⁵ I should add, contemporary African philosophy. No other group could pick up Kwasi Wiredu's gauntlet¹⁶ to stop talking and start doing African philosophy as the School has done. Debating African philosophy's existence for nearly three decades was not entirely useless, but a great premium must be placed in system-building. In this regard, it has largely been a one-horse race for the last three decades. The Calabar School is unequivocally the only School standing in this regard. Other Schools of African philosophy that wafted serious energy during the debate, such as the Ibadan, Nsukka, Nairobi, Lagos, Ife, Lagon, and Cotonou schools, etc., faded away following the end of the Great Debate. After the debate, African philosophers, some of whom emerged from the faded schools, go about on their own addressing one generational problem or the other. Some have given a good account of themselves, but we owe gratitude to the Calabar School for drawing our attention to the structural importance of systems and designing a model for African philosophy as a tradition in its own right. Their system, which is set on the approach highlighted in the preceding section, encapsulates logical and ontological foundation, methodological structure, and doctrinal ambience. There are various theoretic and conceptual contributions credited to members of this School. It is impossible to gazette all of them in this small space, but an attempt that goes far enough will be made.

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate three dimensions of a system and their components. Logic and ontology make up the foundational dimension. Here, logic deals with the laws that govern reasoning. Ontology deals with realities involved in the reasoning processes. On top of the foundation is the architectural dimension. This consists of the methods that deal with various ways of applying the laws of the background logic. The architectural dimension has arrows at both ends unlike the other two. The second arrow that points downwards shows the connection, which methods must maintain with the background logic. At the peak of the pyramid are the theories, principles, and concepts.

These constitute the doctrinal dimension of a system and represent the organization of ideas along the lines of the methods below. The line of this dimension branches off from the architectural dimension to indicate their connection. The architectural dimension is in the middle and connects the other two dimensions, as Figure 4 shows.

Pantaleon Iroegbu assumed a three-valued logical and ontological foundation.¹⁷ On the basis of such a trivalent framework, he teased out a communitarian methodology and theories in epistemology, ethics, and political philosophy in keeping with the system discussed above. Some of the highlights of his contributions include the zones and connotations of *ùwa*. And some of his conceptual contributions include *kpim*, *ùwa*, belongingness, *enwisdomization*, amongst others. I will not discuss these ideas due to lack of space

and because they are readily available in Iroegbu's works. His approach shows that he believes that border lines are an ontological problem and seeks to dismantle them using his *ùwa* ontology. It is ontology that gives us a picture of reality. If this picture is not painted well, we have a lopsided vision of the world. His answers to the two main questions are that variables are equal and gain impetus by seeking mutual belongingness in *ùwa* where border lines can be eliminated.

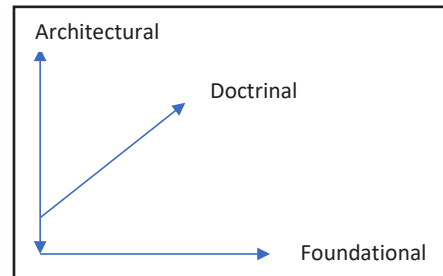


Figure 3: Three dimensions of a System¹⁸

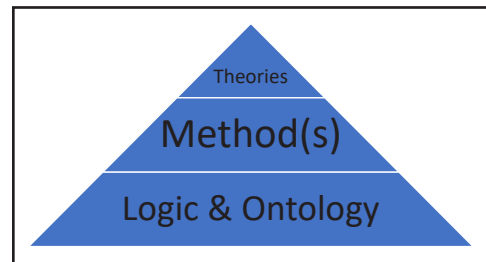


Figure 4. Three components of a System¹⁹

The works of Innocent Asouzu suggest that he believes that the border lines are both a logical and ontological problem in that logic is the tool for studying reality, and ontology defines reality itself.²⁰ So, to address the problem, we must restructure our logical tool to enable us to define reality

accurately. Following the system above, Asouzu formulates a multivalent logic called complementary logic on the basis of which he theorized. For example, he developed Ibuanyidanda ontology as the other component of the foundation. Methodologically, he formulated the method of complementary reflection. He went on to articulate the ethical and epistemological theories to complete the system and address the problem of border lines. Some of the highlights of his contributions include the following five principles: harmonious complementation, progressive transformation, the imperative of complementarism, the truth and authenticity criterion, and the super maxim. Some of his conceptual contributions include missing link, phenomenon of concealment, transcendent categories of unity of consciousness, among many others. His answer to the question about difference amounting to inferiority or superiority is that all entities are missing links in the web of reality. And to the question of whether opposites are irreconcilable, he used the concept of complementarity to demonstrate that transcending contradiction is possible, feasible, and plausible.

Another prominent member of the School is Chris Ijiomah.²¹ He believes that logic should be the starting point if we are to adequately address the problem of border lines. Border lines, for him, is a logical problem. Logic, for him, contains principles that define reality. The two-valued logic with its polar values animates the divisive and polarizing line between binary opposites. He challenges the viability of the principles of noncontradiction and excluded-middle in enabling a comprehensive and accurate interpretation of reality. His response to the questions of difference and irreconcilability of opposites is that variables are equal in the web of reality, and no opposites are incapable of relating equally and productively. Hence, he formulates a trivalent logic called Harmonious Monism. The principles of this logic make way for a three-valued system that overcomes the weakness in the two-valued logic. In it, two polar values can harmonize in the intermediate value as both/and. Ijiomah then articulates a relational method with which he explicates trivalent ontological and epistemological theories. This method prioritizes harmonization of seeming opposites. The highlight of his contributions include his seminal work on three-valued logic, his explication of the nature of relationships amongst realities, principles of inter-communicability, complementarity, and cyclic archetype. Some of his conceptual contributions include harmonious monism, subsumptive monism, humanistic epistemology, structural analogy and logical functionalism (SAALF), among others.

The next thinkers are Godfrey Ozumba, Ozumba and Chimakonam, and Andrew Uduigwomen.²² Ozumba gestures towards a three-valued logic called integrative logic as a foundation for his ethical, metaphysical, and epistemological theories. This is because of the inadequacy of two-valued logic in addressing the border lines problems. His method erected on this logic is called integrativism, which serves as a tool for demonstrating that difference does not amount to inferiority, and that opposites are reconcilable. Together, all three components mimic the system of the Calabar School. His response to the two main questions of difference and irreconcilability

of opposites is that a *via-media* exists in the relationship of realities. This *via-media* is an intermediate mode, where opposites can functionally integrate without losing themselves. His theoretic and conceptual contributions include integrative logic, integrative ethics, integrative ontology, and integrative epistemology, integrativism, to name a few.

Uduigwomen's contribution largely is on offering a framework for addressing the problem of border lines. This can be described as Afro-eclecticism. Difference, for this line of thinking, would not amount to a lopsidedness of inferior or superior type; neither would opposites be irreconcilable. His method consists of eclectic approach. Eclectic thinking allows for a fruitful relational encounter between entities, whether opposed or not. Eclectic thinking rests on a strand of three-valued logic in which two polar values meet at an intermediate mode. Uduigwomen did not proceed to formulate a template for that logic, but it is safe to say that he assumed a three-valued logic for his theorization. The three systems later formulated by members of the School were more than sufficient for his project.

The above five are the leading light of the first-generation members of the Calabar School. They are followed by members of the second generation who built on their achievements to advance the scholarship of the Calabar School. Some of the leading lights of this generation are Jonathan Chimakonam, Mesembe Edet, Fainos Mangena, Pius Mosima, and Ada Agada. I will be extremely brief for this very productive generation as space is limited.

It was Chimakonam who systematized the approach of the School and gave it the name of conversational thinking.²³ He built on the logical formulation of Asouzu and Ijiomah to create a much more advanced system called Ezumezu, complete with three additional laws of thought. Before this time, the accomplishments of the School remained within and were largely unknown elsewhere. Chimakonam constituted the Conversational School as an international wing of the Calabar School to promote the School's contributions internationally. He understudied the methods of the first generation and demonstrated that they shared a lot in common and represented a novel approach to philosophizing. He christened such a style conversational and expanded on its method. Building on the theoretic contributions of the first generation, he developed the doctrine of conversational philosophy as an exercise in meaning-making, with epistemological, ethical, and metaphysical ramifications. He has contributed many concepts and principles that include creative struggle, conversationalism, the three supplementary laws, the three metaphysical principles, context-dependence of value, and benoke point, to name a few. It was also Chimakonam who identified the centrality of relationship and contextual analysis in the works of the first generation and clearly located the two in the thinking of the School. Chimakonam demonstrates that border lines and the two main questions can be addressed using the conversational approach that culminates in creative struggle.

Next is Edet,²⁴ who bases his theories on the logic formulated by Asouzu and later Chimakonam. He also employs the

methods formulated by the two. His main contribution is an ethical theory called Afroxiology. It aims to rescue African values from their colonial trappings. He borrows Wiredu's conceptual decolonization to unveil a liberatory ethics that transcends binary opposition and semantic impositions. Like those before him, Edet addresses the border lines by proposing a *via media* to the individual-community dilemma. Some of his conceptual contributions include conceptual mandelanisation and autonomy-in-community, to name a few.

Mangena²⁵ and Mosima²⁶ both employ the conversational method that rests on a trivalent logic to theorize on different subjects. On the one hand, Mangena investigates moral status, environment, and methodological issues in African philosophy. Mosima, on the other hand, investigates intercultural philosophy, Oruka's philosophic sagacity, and gender issues. Both, like those before them address the main problem and two questions in a way that dispels the binary polarity that characterizes Western scholarship. These two have made several conceptual contributions to the literature.

Agada is the last to be treated in this generation.²⁷ Rising from Asouzu's logical and methodological frameworks, he formulates his metaphysical theory called consolationism. His attempts at addressing the border lines and answering the two main questions can be gleaned in his explication of consolationism. He uses the concept of mood as an intermediate that unites opposites. So, for him, opposites are reconcilable, and difference in fundamentals like intellect and emotion does not amount to a lopsided valuation. The entities on the two sides of the border line can unite in the mood. He has many conceptual contributions, such as mood, homo melancholicus, and consolationism, among others.

We come now to members of the third generation, who are building on the achievements of the first and second generations. For example, Aribiah Attoe has contributed a metaphysical theory called predeterministic historicity,²⁸ and Amara Chimakonam has recently propounded what she calls the personhood-based theory of right action.²⁹ Both of them employ the conversational method grounded in Ezumezu's three-valued logic. Attoe's theory represents an advancement and somewhat radical departure from Asouzu's and Agada's contributions. He offers a deep study of the notion of relationship, which is central to conversational thinking. His contribution crystallizes in what he calls "singular complementarity." The duo have made some conceptual contributions such as singular complementarity, the main principle of personhood-based ethics, and its two exception clauses.

Victor Nweke is another member of this generation.³⁰ He, in particular, has made many contributions geared towards the advancement of conversational thinking, both as a method and philosophy. Enyimba Maduka theorizes conversational thinking in terms of development. Uchenna Ogbonnaya, Segun Samuel, and Diana-Abasi Ibanga have made some conceptual contributions in the area of applied philosophy and on topics in ethics, metaphysics, and environmental ethics. Christiana Idika, Diana Ofana, Zubairu

Bambale, Patrick Ben, and Chukwuemeka Awugosi have applied conversational thinking to different topics. Isaiah Negedu, Emmanuel Ofuasia, Umezurike Ezugwu, Joyline Gwara, and Chukwueloka Uduagwu are using the method in various ways to engage topics that range from logic, decolonial thinking, language, to metaphysics. The list is not exhaustive, but it suffices to say that many members of this generation are working on the existing theories and providing much-needed critical insights, emendations, and polishing of the existing theories. Others are still emerging, whose most important contributions have been to take the existing theories to task in order to open new vistas and extend the frontiers of knowledge. Some include many scholars who are not members of the School but who are adopting, applying, or criticizing the School's method and philosophies in their research, such as Leyla Tavernaro-Haidarian, Akinpelu Oyekunle, Lindokhule Shabane, and Alena Rettova, to name a few. They are providing the much-needed analysis, criticisms, and applications of the theories and principles produced by members of the first and second generations.

OUR LOGICAL, ONTOLOGICAL, AND METHODOLOGICAL LANDING

Members of the Calabar School are wary of the possibility of transliteration, copycat orientation, misrepresentation, misinterpretation, and distortions that could pass for African philosophy. As a result, they ask one fundamental question: What makes a philosophical tradition, or what distinguishes one philosophical tradition from another? Generally, a philosophy necessarily has to be systematic with clear logical and methodological structures. The systematicity, logical, ontological, and methodological tools are deployed in raising and answering questions. Philosophical traditions mark the intersection between culture and philosophy. This is because the philosopher is a being of culture who carries with them their worldview orientation. So, the philosopher becomes tasked with raising questions about problems that arise in his cultural place, specifically, and in his generation, globally.

A philosophical tradition then becomes a philosophical practice whose system, logic, ontology, and methods are shaped by the thought system of a given cultural region. Here, thought system is used in the sense of a combination of logic and ontology. While logic deals with the laws that govern reasoning, ontology deals with the realities involved in the reasoning process, as earlier explained. So, if a given people tend to view reality as bivalent (e.g., mind and/or body) or trivalent (e.g., mind, body, and/or the combination of both), it preempts the logic that can axiomatize it as two-valued or three-valued, respectively. Thought system goes on to shape the methods in a philosophical tradition. Put differently, methods are various ways of applying the laws of the logic that underlies the tradition. Theorizations in a given philosophical tradition become the organization of ideas along the lines of specific methods in that tradition. These make up the structure of any system, including that of a philosophical tradition. Thus, philosophical traditions are distinguished by their thought systems and methods. The Western philosophical tradition, for example, rests on a bivalent thought system, given the dualism that

characterizes its view of reality. The African philosophical tradition rests on a trivalent thought system, given the communitarian ideology that shapes its perception of reality.

From the above, the task which the debaters failed to undertake in African philosophy was to map out its system, showing its foundation (logic and ontology: thought system), architecture (methods), and doctrine (theories, principles and concepts), as we show in the diagrams in Figures 3 and 4. A philosophy does not become a full-fledged tradition in its own right without clarity on the preceding. Otherwise, practitioners of African philosophy may go on to employ methods of other traditions derived from a different logic and ontology (e.g., Western philosophy) while holding onto the idea that they are practicing African philosophy simply by proposing a trivalent idea. In order words, they may begin with bivalent premises and end with a trivalent conclusion, as so often is the case with much literature on African philosophy nowadays.

One of Calabar School's most important contributions to African philosophy is in mapping out its structure comprising of the dimensions and components of a system. This becomes the basic criteria of African philosophical tradition. In this regard, our logical landing could be designated as three or many-valued; of which Asouzu (complementary logic), Ijiomah (harmonious monism), and Chimakonam (Ezumezu) have developed models. Our ontological landing becomes trivalent as can be seen in the works of Iroegbu (*ɔwa* ontology), Asouzu (*ibuanyidanda* ontology), Ijiomah (relational ontology), Ozumba (*integrative* ontology), Agada (*consolationism*), Mangena (*Common Moral Position*), and Chimakonam and Ogbonnaya (*nmekoka* ontology), to name a few. And our methods and theorizations are shaped by the preceding logical and ontological foundations. For Asouzu, it is complementary reflection. Ozumba calls his own method *integrativism*. While Iroegbu describes it as communitarian, Ijiomah calls it relational. Uduigwomen identifies it as eclectic. But each of the above highlights one or the other of the three basic principles (relationality, contextuality, and complementarity). For Chimakonam, any of the above descriptions which fails to capture all three principles would leave the method lopsided. To remedy this, he systematizes the features of all into what he calls *conversational method/thinking*, of which complementarity is its prominent feature. The conversational method, therefore, becomes an appropriate characterization of a method that accommodates all of the three principles. The laws of the three-valued logic—Ezumezu—which spings from those three metaphysical principles have been formulated by J. O. Chimakonam,³¹ and fine-tuned by J. O. Chimakonam and A. E. Chimakonam.³²

OUR HISTORIOGRAPHICAL MODEL FOR AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

The Calabar School begins their historiographical study of African philosophy by asking two questions: What makes a doctrine philosophy? And what makes a philosophy African? These questions are particularly important because to trace the history of a philosophical tradition, one must know when that philosophy's first occurrence as a systematic

study took place. To achieve the preceding, it becomes vital to separate philosophy (a rational and systematic inquiry, involving critical study and creative prescription) from ethnology, culturology, anthropology, and sociology, which are largely empirical and descriptive studies. Further, it is also vital to separate the pre-systematic era of that philosophical tradition from its systematic era. Every philosophical tradition, all things considered, should have both pre-systematic (cultural thoughts dominated by unsubstantiated assumptions and sometimes uncritical claims) and systematic (critical and rigorously generated ideas) epochs. For African philosophy, "[T]he former refers to Africa's philosophical culture, thoughts of the anonymous African thinkers and may include the problems of Egyptian legacy (and also Ethiopian legacy). The latter refers to the periods marking the return of Africa's first eleven, Western-tutored philosophers from the 1920s to date."³³

For the Calabar School, a doctrine is philosophy if it is a rational, critical, systematic inquiry that is creatively prescriptive and grounded in the African thought system that aligns with the structure illustrated in Figures 3 and 4. In such a system, three or many-valued logic and trivalent ontology lay at its foundation, the thought system formed from the combination of the preceding two defines its methods, and the theorizations and conceptualizations follow the lines of such methods. Thus, any philosophy that fails to reflect this structure can reasonably be doubted to be African.

The Calabar School further divides the systematic era into four periods:³⁴

- a. Early period, 1920s – 1960s: In this period, scholars carried out philosophical studies of African cultures as well as ideological/nationalist scholarships.
- b. Middle period, 1960s – 1980s: This is the period of the Great Debate on whether African philosophy exists or not. It is a debate between Traditionalists who sought to construct an African philosophy on excavated African cultural worldview, and the Universalists who sought to demolish such architectonic structure by associating it with ethnophilosophy.
- c. Later period, 1980s – 1990s: This is a period of critical deconstruction and reconstruction. Also, eclectic thinking that sought to reconcile the Traditional and Universal schools defines this period.
- d. New (Contemporary) period, since 1990s: This is the period of system-building characterized by conversational approach.

The above historiography sets the Calabar School's model apart from what is commonly done by other historians of African philosophy who largely, and quite uncritically, adopt the Western model of historiography for African philosophy. This remains a crucially important contribution by the Calabar School.

However, despite their contributions, the School has also faced some criticisms. Some critics question the viability of their method.³⁵ Others wonder if there was any difference in their approach and the approaches of some schools in other traditions.³⁶ Still, there are other critics who challenge their *modus operandi*, claiming that the School is mistaken in more ways than they are willing to admit.³⁷ One thing is sure, every new idea deserves a fair share of criticism since, without it, progress in thought may not be possible.

CONCLUSION

No other school of African philosophy or individual African philosopher has been able to match the Calabar School's type of structure and systemic constructions in their approach to contemporary African philosophy described in this essay. Tsenay Serequeberhan, Bruce Janz, VY Mudimbe, and Jennifer Lisa Vest, to name a few, probably asked and are asking some of the most important questions. Paulin Hountondji, Peter Bodunrin, Kwasi Wiredu, Kwame Gyekye, Olusegun Oladipo, Lucius Outlaw, J. Olubi Sodipo and Barry Hallen, Uzodinma Nwala, Campbell Momoh, Kwame Appiah, Sophie Oluwole, Godwin Sogolo, Nkiru Nzegwu, Obioma Nnaemeka, Oyewumi Oyeronke, Ifi Amadiume, Thaddeus Metz, Mugobe Ramose, Obi Oguejiofor, Joseph Agbakoba, Simphiwe Sesanti, Kevin Behrens, Bernard Matolino, Anke Granes, Olatunji Oyeshile, Jim Unah, Oladele Balogun, Alena Rettova, Motsamai Molefe, Anthony Oyowe, and Björn Freter, to name a few, probably made and are making some of the most riveting analytic contributions on disparate topics. These are all important contributions, most of which are thematic, and a few of them are methodological or historiographical.

However, none of these important philosophers have gone to the depth of demonstrating what the ideological structure and system of African philosophy they subscribe to might look like, as the Calabar School did. In all, only an extremely few may have bothered to formulate a working assumption, basic problem, and questions as the starting point and drivers of African philosophy, as the Calabar School has done.

We are, therefore, at a special moment in contemporary African philosophy when we can say this: behind us is what has been done; here is what is being done; and over there is what awaits us. Are there any schools, besides the Calabar School, that are grappling with the structural issues of African philosophy today and making any definitive preparations for what tomorrow brings? The answer is no, there are no other schools. What we have are individual African philosophers dwelling on diverse thematic issues, often without any clearly defined ideological structure (working thesis, problem, challenge, questions), like that of the Calabar School explicated in this essay.

In any field, schools of thought represent the ideological fronts that define that field and constantly work to refine and extend its frontiers. This is especially crucial for a growing field. Where are the schools of African philosophy that are supposed to grapple with the structural concerns of the field besides the moribund ones that drove the Great Debate? For a philosophical tradition still in its infancy and struggling to find its footing, it is of grave concern that the

field's structural aspect (foundation, architecture, doctrine, and ideological structure) continues to receive insufficient attention. The Calabar School cannot do it alone. More hands are needed on deck. The thematic issues are also important, but without the structural aspect, we can expect the castle to collapse into a pile of rubble in the face of any serious animadversion. To philosophize on themes without commensurate structural components or to imagine the wrong structural component (like doing African philosophy using the structures of Western philosophy, as many do) is like building a castle without pillars at all or with poorly framed pillars. What awaits such an industry *over there* in the future is inevitable, and history can be brutal! This is a call for full disclosure of the structures that underlie the African philosophy we do. We can no longer afford such pretensions in African philosophy.

NOTES

1. In the context of this work, system thinking would mean a systematic process of building systems.
2. See T. U. Nwala, *Critical Review of the Great Debate on African Philosophy (1970–1990)* (Enugu: Hillys Press, 1992).
3. Plato, "Theætetus," 155d; Aristotle, "Metaphysics," 982b.
4. Gallagher et al., *A Neurophenomenology of Awe and Wonder*.
5. Chimakonam, "History of African Philosophy."
6. Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God*.
7. S. K. Akesson, "The Akan Concept of Soul"; Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief*, and John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*.
8. Ruch and Anyanwu, *African Philosophy: An Introduction to the Main Philosophical Trends in Contemporary Africa*.
9. See Chimakonam, "Towards a Personhood-Based Theory of Right Action"; Chimakonam and Chimakonam, "Examining the Logical Argument of the Problem of Evil from an African Perspective."
10. Asouzu, *The Method and Principles of Complementary*; Asouzu, *Ibanyidanda (Complementary Reflection) and Some Basic Philosophical Problems in Africa Today*; Ijiomah, *Harmonious Monism*.
11. See Asouzu, *Method and Principles*; Asouzu, *Ibanyidanda (Complementary Reflection) and Some Basic Philosophical Problems in Africa Today*; Ijiomah, "An Excavation of a Logic in African World-view"; Ijiomah, *Harmonious Monism*; Chimakonam, "The Question of African Logic"; Chimakonam, "The Philosophy of African Logic"; Chimakonam, *Ezumezu: A System of Logic for African Philosophy and Studies*.
12. Heidegger, *Being and Time*.
13. Asouzu, *The Method and Principles of Complementary*; Asouzu, *Ibanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology*.
14. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 50
15. In the decade between 2008 and 2018, the University of Calabar hosted three important international conferences in philosophy. These events brought the system-building strides at the university to the attention of scholars and students not only within Nigeria but internationally. It was around 2015 when some African philosophers began to refer to the institution as the shrine of African philosophy (see, for example, Konye, "African Philosophy: The Twentieth Century Rhetorics of Identity," 344). While informal, it points to the wider recognition of the trailblazing position of the institution in what is called the Complementary Turn in African philosophy.
16. Wiredu, *Philosophy and an African Culture*.
17. Iroegbu, *Enwisdomization and African Philosophy*; Iroegbu, *Metaphysics*; Iroegbu, *Communalism*; Iroegbu, *Kpim of Morality*.
18. Source: Chimakonam, "On the System of Conversational Thinking," 23.

19. Source: Chimakonam, "Overcoming the Three Challenges of Intercultural Philosophy: A Conversational Approach," 10.
20. Asouzu, *The Method and Principles of Complementary*; Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda: New Complementary Ontology*; Asouzu, *Ibuaru: The Heavy Burden of Philosophy*; Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda and the Philosophy of Essence*; Asouzu, *Ibuanyidanda (Complementary Reflection) and Some Basic Philosophical Problems*.
21. Ijiomah, *Humanizing Epistemology*; Ijiomah, "An Excavation of a Logic in African World-view"; Ijiomah, *Harmonious Monism*.
22. Ozumba, *Philosophy and Method of Integrative Humanism*; Ozumba and Chimakonam, *Njikoka Amaka*; and Andrew Uduigwomen, "Philosophy and the Place of African Philosophy."
23. Chimakonam, *Ezumezu: A System of Logic for African Philosophy and Studies*.
24. Edet, "African Philosophy of Values (Afroxiology)"; Edet, "Afroxiology, Conceptual Mandelanization and the Conversational Order in the New Era of African Philosophy."
25. Mangena, "Towards a *hunhu/ubuntu* Dialogical Moral Theory"; Mangena, "Discerning Moral Status in the African Environment"; Mangena, "Hunhu/Ubuntu in the Traditional Thought of Southern Africa"; Mangena, "The Fallacy of Exclusion."
26. Mosima, "Henry Odera Oruka and the Female Sage"; Mosima, "An African Itinerary Towards Intercultural Philosophy"; Mosima, *Philosophic Sagacity and Intercultural Philosophy*.
27. Agada, *Existence and Consolation*; Agada, *Consolationism and Comparative African Philosophy*.
28. Attoe, *Groundwork for a New Kind of African Metaphysics*; Attoe, "Examining the Method and Praxis of Conversationalism."
29. Chimakonam, "Towards a Personhood-Based Theory of Right Action"; Chimakonam, "Sources of Moral Justification in African Ethics."
30. Nweke, "David A. Oyedola and the Imperative to Disambiguate the term 'African Philosopher'"; Nweke, "Questioning the Validity, Veracity and Viability of the Case for 'Cogno-Normative (Complementary) Epistemology'"; Nweke, "Mesembe Edet's Conversation with Innocent Onyewuanyi"; Nweke, "Ekweme as a Principle of Mandelanism."
31. Chimakonam, *Ezumezu: A System of Logic*; Chimakonam, "Sources of Moral Justification in African Ethics."
32. Chimakonam and Chimakonam, "Examining the Logical Argument of the Problem of Evil from an African Perspective."
33. Chimakonam, "History of African Philosophy," s.p.
34. Chimakonam, "History of African Philosophy," s.p.
35. Nweke, "Questioning the Validity, Veracity and Viability of the Case for 'Cogno-Normative (Complementary) Epistemology'"; Attoe, "Examining the Method and Praxis of Conversationalism."
36. Enyimba, "Scepticism in African Philosophy."
37. Rettova, "Post-Genocide, Post-Apartheid"; Rettova, "African Philosophy and African Languages."

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