

# Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies

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## *2017–2018 Membership*

Brian J. Bruya, chair (2020)

Manyul Im (2018)

Ethan Mills (2018)

Jason Chen (2019)

Hanti Lin (2019)

Julianne N. Chung (2020)

Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach (2020)

Prasanta S. Bandyopadhyay, newsletter editor

September 30, 2018

To: Amy Ferrer, Executive Director, APA

From: Brian Bruya, Chair, Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies

RE: Annual Committee Report 2017-2018

The charge of the Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies is:

The committee is charged with assessing and reporting on the status of Asians and Asian Americans in the profession. Among its responsibilities are to identify unfair or discriminatory practices and to advise the board and the members of the association of ways in which they may be rectified; to study and propose ways of encouraging and helping Asians and Asian Americans enter the profession; to promote the interaction between Asian and Western philosophical traditions and to help draw out their mutual relevance. The committee seeks to advance teaching and study of Asian and comparative philosophy. It sponsors sessions on Asian philosophy, comparative philosophy, and other relevant topics at divisional meetings.

This charge breaks down into four distinct areas, which are treated below.

**Identity 1. Study Discrimination against Persons** (Identify unfair or discriminatory practices regarding Asians or Asian Americans and ways in which they can be rectified)

See Identity 2 below.

**Identity 2. Promote Ethnic Diversity** (Study and propose ways of encouraging and helping Asians and Asian Americans enter the profession)

CAAAPP sponsored a panel on diversity at the Eastern APA. A summary of the panel appears in Appendix III at the end of this report. From a variety of perspectives, these papers collectively drew relationships among psychology, epistemology, and social justice. What are the roots of problems of diversity in philosophy? What are the consequences? What are some potential solutions? These papers answered these questions by offering both sophisticated theoretical arguments and innovative, practical solutions. I urge the readers of this report to read the full summary.

We also co-sponsored two panels on identity diversity at the Pacific APA (See Appendix I below).

**Content 1. Promote Diversity in Scholarship** (Promote the interaction between Asian and Western philosophical Traditions and to help draw out their mutual relevance)

Five of the other six (we held seven this year) regular CAAAPP panels focused on content diversity, either promoting content diversity or exemplifying content diversity. Of note is Bryan van Norden's author-meets-critics panel on his book *Taking Back Philosophy*. This book makes an extended argument for content diversity in philosophy and is recommended reading for anyone concerned about the lack of diverse content in the field. Two other book panels (Neville's and Ing's) discussed books that do cross-cultural philosophy—Neville's on philosophical theology and Ing's on virtue ethics and moral psychology. Two other panels

mined the rich resources in cross-cultural philosophy of religion—one on the long-standing issue of transcendence vs. immanence, the other under the relatively neglected rubric of transformative experience. Finally, there was a book panel on neglected philosophers of colonial India. (See Appendix I below for a list of all CAAAPP panels at this year's APA meetings.)

The two issues of the Newsletter focused on an exemplary figure in cross-cultural philosophy (Oxford professor Bimal Matilal) and on somatic practices in East Asian philosophy. (See Appendix II below for the table of contents from both issues).

**Content 2. Advance Diversity in Instruction** (Advance the teaching and study of Asian and comparative philosophy)

The diversity panel mentioned above and the panel on Bryan van Norden's book both have implications for diversity in instruction. In both, the case is made that the tragic, embarrassing, racist, ethnocentric, xenophobic lack of multicultural specialists in American philosophy means the perpetuation of a national curriculum in which students are educated to mistakenly believe that philosophy is a solely European-derived enterprise, thereby unjustly marginalizing any person and any content not identified with the European philosophical canon.

In our most recent meeting, CAAAPP decided to create a syllabus diversity advisory coalition. We will approach other diversity committees about how to form the group and execute its functions, which will be to provide one-on-one advising for professors who wish to diversify the content in their philosophy syllabi.

In 2017, the APA circulated a draft of its new Good Practices Guide. CAAAPP drafted and submitted several suggested revisions for the guide largely targeted at ensuring good practices of diversity and inclusion.

CAAAPP submitted a proposal to the APA to create a new diversity committee on multicultural content. The APA returned the proposal, asking that it be endorsed first by other diversity committees. CAAAPP sent the proposal to three other committees. Only one responded, saying that the committee was divided about supporting the creation of a new committee and suggested instead that APA committees work together on projects related to diversification of content. CAAAPP accepted this suggestion. As a first step, CAAAPP is in the process (mentioned above) of creating a coalition of specialists to help professors diversify syllabi.

CAAAPP has also begun posting new titles in Asian philosophy to its APA blog in order to help provide exposure for new books related to Asian philosophy.

Appendix I  
CAAAPP APA Committee Sessions

**Eastern**

1. Author Meets Critics: Bryan W. Van Norden, *Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto*

Chair: Lynne Tirrell (University of Connecticut)

Critics: Julianne Chung (University of Louisville)

Owen Flanagan (Duke University)

Kenneth A. Taylor (Stanford University)

Author: Bryan W. Van Norden (Vassar College and Yale-NUS College)

2. Diversity in Philosophy

Chair: Yong Huang (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Speakers:

B. Tamsin Kimoto (Emory University), “Skin in the Game: Diversity in (Spite of) Professional Philosophy”

Amy Donahue (Kennesaw State University), “Nyāya as Therapy for Collective Gaslighting (AKA, Philosophy Is Feeble When It Isn’t Diverse)”

Julianne Chung (University of Louisville), “Style, Substance, Methodology, and Diversity: A Cross-Cultural Case Study”

Brian Bruya (Eastern Michigan University), “Multiculturalism as Diversity”

Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach (University of Konstanz), “Situating (Cross-Cultural) Philosophy”

3. Author Meets Critics: Robert Neville’s *The Goodness Is One, Its Manifestations Many*

Chair: Brian Bruya (Eastern Michigan University)

Author: Robert Neville (Boston University)

Critics: Warren Frisina (Hofstra University)

Huaiyu Wang (Georgia College and State University)

Yong Huang (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

**Central**

1. Roundtable on Transcendence and Immanence in Asian Philosophy

Chair: Halla Kim (University of Nebraska–Omaha and Sogang University)

Speakers:

Douglas L. Berger (Universiteit Leiden), “The Transcendence-Immanence Problem in Nāgārjuna’s Formulation of the Two Truths”

Bongrae Seok (Alvernia University), “Transcendence and Immanence of Confucian Heaven from the Perspective of Moral Psychology and Moral Development”

Stephen R. Palmquist (Hong Kong Baptist University), “Theological Transcendence and Immanence in Kant and the Compound Yijing”

Halla Kim (University of Nebraska–Omaha and Sogang University), “Ways of Nothingness: Ryu Young-Mo on God”

2. Author Meets Critics: Michael Ing, *The Vulnerability of Integrity in Early Confucian Thought*

Chair: Brian Bruya (Eastern Michigan University)

Critics: Bongrae Seok (Alvernia University)  
Julianne Chung (University of Louisville)  
Alexus McLeod (University of Connecticut, Storrs)  
Author: Michael Ing (Indiana University)

## **Pacific**

### 1. Multicultural Philosophy and Transformative Experience

Chair: Adrian Currie (University of Cambridge)

Speakers:

Nilanjan Das (New York University Shanghai), “Transformative Speech”

Meena Krishnamurthy (University of Michigan), “White Ignorance and How to Overcome It”

Julianne Chung (University of Louisville), “*Wuwei* as Transformative Experience”

Commentator:

L. A. Paul (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

### 2. Book Symposium: Nalini Bhushan and Jay Garfield, *Minds without Fear*

Chair: Prasanta S. Bandyopadhyay (Montana State University)

Speakers:

Saranindranath Tagore (National University of Singapore)

Vrinda Dalmiya (University of Hawai'i at Manoa)

Ankur Barua (University of Cambridge)

Commentators:

Nalini Bhushan (Smith College)

Jay L. Garfield (Smith College and Harvard University)

## Sessions Co-sponsored with other APA Committees at the Pacific APA

### 1. Doing Philosophy with a Disability

Arranged by the APA Committee on Inclusiveness in the Profession.

### 2. Justice in the Aftermath of Injustice: The Limits of Liberalism for People of Color

Arranged by the APA Committee on the Status of Black Philosophers

### 3. The Face and Space of Philosophy

Arranged by the APA Committee on Pre-College Instruction in Philosophy

Appendix II: 2017-2018 CAAAPP Newsletter

**Volume 17, Number 1, Fall 2017**

From the Editors: Ethan Mills and Prasanta Bandyopadhyay

Jonardon Ganeri, An Exemplary Indian Intellectual: Bimal Krishna Matilal

Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad, Philosophy, Indian and Western: Some Thoughts from Bimal Matilal

Richard Hayes, Bimal Krishna Matilal's Style of Doing Philosophy

Purushottama Bilimoria, Three Dogmas of Matilal: Direct Realism, Lingophilia, and Dharma Ethics

Nirmalya Narayan Chakraborty, A Cautionary Note on Matilal's Way of Doing Indian Philosophy

Ethan Mills, Whither the Matilal Strategy?

Kisor K. Chakrabarti, Nyāya Ethical Theory

Anand Jayprakash Vaidya, Bimal Krishna Matilal and the Enduring Significance of the Constructive Engagement Between Contemporary Analytic and Classical Indian Philosophy

Neil Sims, Expanding Matilal's Project through First Person Research

**Volume 17, Number 2, Spring 2018**

Guest Editor: Manyul Im, Ways of Philosophy, Ways of Practice

Bin Song, "Three Sacrificial Rituals" (*sanji*) and the Practicability of Ruist (Confucian) Philosophy

Steven Geisz, Traditional Chinese Body Practice and Philosophical Activity

Alexus McLeod, East Asian Martial Arts as Philosophical Practice

### Appendix III

#### **Draft Report on an APA Panel: “Diversity in Philosophy”** (to appear in future issue of Newsletter)

Ethan Mills  
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

The Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies sponsored a panel entitled “Diversity in Philosophy” at the 2018 Eastern Division Meeting of the APA in Savannah, Georgia. The panel took place on Thursday, January 4, 2018, and it featured B. Tamsin Kimoto (Emory University), Amy Donahue (Kennesaw State University), Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach (University of Konstanz), and Denise Meda Calderon (Texas A&M University). Two other presenters – Brian Bruya (Eastern Michigan University) and Julianne Chung (University of Louisville) – were unable to attend due to weather. The purpose of the present report is to summarize some of each presenter’s talk for the benefit of those who were unable to attend and to further the mission of the Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies by sharing, in a wider context, some of the ideas presented at a panel sponsored by the committee. Please note that the following summaries are neither exhaustive nor authoritative. I encourage readers to contact the authors directly if they would like to read their full papers.

The first talk by B. Tamsin Kimoto, “Skin in the Game: Diversity in (Spite of) Professional Philosophy,” highlighted some of the issues that continue to arise in efforts to make philosophy a more diverse and inclusive profession, especially in light of the recent *Hypatia* controversy. Kimoto focused on the often-articulated idea that marginalized people in the discipline are “hypersensitive” and simply need to develop thicker skins. After glossing some of the relevant literature on diversity problems in the discipline, Kimoto discussed the phenomenological experience of being a marginalized person in the discipline, focusing on the idea of skin. Next, they discussed the notion of epistemic wounding with examples of testimonial quieting (in which an audience simply refuses to acknowledge that a speaker is a knower) and testimonial smothering (in which a speaker withholds testimony due to an audience’s inability or unwillingness to constructively engage with that testimony). Such tactics serve to undermine the epistemic credibility of marginalized people. Kimoto ended with a discussion of a sort of reversal of the idea of epistemic wounding in the idea that admitting marginalized people into the discipline is going to “kill philosophy,” or that the discipline itself will be wounded; Kimoto suggested, however, that perhaps such “wounding” could be a way to reorganize the discipline.

The second talk by Amy Donahue, “Nyāya as Therapy for Collective Gaslighting (AKA, Philosophy is Feeble When It Isn’t Diverse),” applied the contemporary notion of collective gaslighting to the experience of diverse practitioners in the field of philosophy, a process Donahue referred to as “institutionalized gaslighting.” After explaining some of the ways such techniques work as practices of exclusion (e.g., through conference programs, syllabi, grants, tenure criteria, etc.), Donahue argued that these sorts of what she calls “epistemic technologies” might be countered by resources from the Nyāya tradition of classical Indian philosophy. In particular, the type of debate known as *vāda* (friendly, truth-directed deliberation) might prove to be a fruitful inspiration. For instance, the Nyāya criteria for a trustworthy authority (*āpti*), which

apply regardless of one's social standing, might be used to defend the epistemic authority of those who are gaslit. Furthermore, in Nyāya one cannot restate objections that have already been answered; if such a norm were adopted, it might counter incessant requests for diverse practitioners to justify their activities as philosophy. Donahue ended with the intriguing suggestion that Nyāya's epistemic technology might become the basis for an online reasoning platform.

The third talk by Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach, "Situating (Cross-Cultural) Philosophy," focused on the problems and promises for cross-cultural philosophy as an avenue for challenging the underrepresentation of minorities (ethnic, gendered, disability, etc.) in the discipline and more broadly for expanding the appreciation for different modes of meaning making in pluralistic societies. Kirloskar-Steinbach noted the potential hazards when members of dominant groups (such as white men) are tasked with authenticating and representing non-Western philosophy – this situation can serve to re-enforce current hierarchies of epistemic authority. In the second part of the talk, Kirloskar-Steinbach argued that cross-cultural philosophy has the potential to challenge the assumptions that only certain forms of meaning making are valid and that only certain types of people should be engaged in meaning making. Drawing on Nishida Kitaro, she explained a model of dialogue that avoids taking its participants *merely* as representations of their respective traditions but rather as individuals with shifting sets of ethical obligations toward one another, a form of dialogue that might open up exciting new possibilities for meaning making in pluralistic societies.

The fourth talk by Denise Meda Calderon, "Latin American Feminist Philosophy: Distinct Voices on Cultural Identity and Social Justice," offered a critique of traditional, Western epistemology through the work of Latin American and Latinx theorists. Calderon discussed critiques of conceptions of knowledge as *a priori*, objective, and detached from any particular social position or context. Instead, we should see knowledge as situated historically, socially, and politically, a project that Calderon argued provides resources for resonating more with the lived experiences of Latin American and Latinx people as well as offering interesting avenues for inter-disciplinary work between philosophy, history, sociology, and other disciplines. Calderon considered the example of *Tierra Negra*, a photography project meant to promote the inclusion of Black Mexicans but which became problematic, for instance, in that it did not seek input from the subjects of the photos about how they wanted to be represented. Such examples ought to encourage us to situate our own positionality, which will in turn shift dominant paradigms toward inclusion of more perspectives and lived experiences. Calderon ended by examining suggestions from Ofelia Schutte about how attention to situatedness might help to make philosophy more inclusive, for instance by empowering marginalized people to give testimonies of their lived experiences.

Julianne Chung and Brian Bruya were unable to attend the conference due to weather. Bruya's talk was to be based on a recent publication, which he was able to provide.<sup>1</sup> In this paper, Bruya argues in favor of diversifying philosophy in terms of subject matter. Drawing on resources from social science, he makes two claims about human nature: the bad news is that humans seem to have an inherent tendency toward ethnocentrism, but the good news is that diverse groups really are more likely to find better solutions. Bruya then shows how the tendency toward ethnocentrism works against the promotion of diversity in philosophy, particularly with regard to popular, yet flawed resources like *The Philosophical Gourmet Report*.

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Bruya, "Ethnocentrism and Multiculturalism in Contemporary Philosophy," *Philosophy East and West* 67, no. 4 (Oct. 2017): 991-1018.

Bruya proposes that scholars working in non-Western philosophy organize to promote the advancement of multiculturalism in philosophy through demanding more inclusion in the APA, participating in other philosophical societies, and hosting workshops for philosophers seeking to integrate non-Western content into their curricula.

I remind readers that these summaries should not be taken to be complete records of their respective presentations. They are at best partial sketches of fuller, more detailed discussions. My goal is merely to pique readers' interest in what the authors had to say, and I wholeheartedly encourage readers to contact the authors directly. I would like to thank the participants for their presentations and for providing their papers. I'd especially like to thank Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach for organizing the panel and for suggesting that I write this summary.