

Histories of Philosophy in Global Perspective

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Globalization processes are increasingly shedding a new light not only on our present but also on our history. As a result, the humanities are under more pressure than ever to link their perspectives and research topics with the process of globalization. Moreover, there is a factual need to reassess and reconceptualize our past, present and future in the context of globalization. (Mersmann/Kippenberg 2016)

For more than 20 years, a critical re-assessment and reconceptualization of our past in the humanities, for example in the history departments within the framework of ‘global history’, has progressively taken on distinctly new contours, giving rise to new narratives of world history as interconnected or *entangled histories* (i.a. Reinhard 2016, Osterhammel 2009, Conrad 2013). This new idea not only helps to better understand past and present developments, but also points the way to a future determined by *entangled histories*. In philosophy and its historiography there is still a considerable need for research and innovation in this respect, which has become even more urgent after the World Congress of Philosophy in Beijing in August 2018, where English, French, German, Russian, Arabic, and Chinese were the official languages. From the perspective of the World Congresses of Philosophy, the intellectual landscape has become increasingly globalized in the 20th century; yet the presentation of its history has not been similarly renewed in accordance with these developments. Our task today is therefore to create a new conception of the history of philosophy that, at the same time, prepares future forms of philosophizing from a global perspective in an open discourse. In order to be able to do this, various fields of research need to be studied: problem analysis, new paradigms of representation, and the consequences in terms of content and institutions. Our project therefore involves the analyses and development of the following:

1. The persisting mechanisms of exclusion which gradually made philosophy a purely European project since the end of the 18th century.
2. Explorations of the histories of philosophy cooperatively with philologies that emerged in Europe since the 19th century, for example in Indology, Sinology, Japanology, Arabic Studies, and Jewish Studies.
3. Closer examinations of the histories of philosophy – not solely dedicated to traditions of European philosophy – which have emerged in various European and non-European languages, such as Japanese, Chinese or Arabic.
4. Conceptualizations of *entangled histories* for the history of philosophy with a focus on translation and reception processes.
5. Exploration and analyses of the previous outlines of a global historiography of philosophy, in order to include the horizons developed so far in the search for new narratives of the history/ies of philosophy.
6. An investigatory genealogy of the historiography of philosophy from the paradigm of "peoples", "nations", and "religions" to “continents”, “spheres” (East/West), epochs, various "languages", “cultures”, and “genders” as classification and systematization criteria of philosophies.
7. Examination and analyses of the global institutionalization of philosophy as an academic discipline at universities since the 20th century and its impact on teaching and research in philosophy.

8. Analyses of the institutionalization of philosophy, the impact of the system of trans-regional congresses, such as the "World Congresses of Philosophy", on the globalization of philosophy.
9. Examination of the current self-representation of philosophy from a global perspective through an investigation of philosophy curricula and syllabi of for the "history of philosophy" worldwide, in order to recognize trends in the canonization of philosophy.
10. In view of the global developments in philosophy, the word or concept of philosophy itself needs to be discussed anew.

1. The persisting mechanisms of exclusion which gradually made philosophy a purely European project at the end of the 18th century.

The emergence of the historiography of philosophy in Europe in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries is to be examined from the perspective of how non-European traditions were included or excluded. Where Johann Jakob Brucker in his German language history of philosophy had still included the "philosophy of the Hebrews, Chaldeans, Persians, Arabs and Sabaeans; of the Phoenicians, Egyptians, Moors and Libyans, Celts and Germans; of the Romans, Scythians, Getes and Thracians; and of the Greeks, Jews, Chinese and Japanese" (Brucker 1731–36, Vol. 1), Albert Schweigler's influential "History of Philosophy" (1848, 17th edition 1950) comprised only European ancient and modern philosophy up to Hegel, which at that time was tantamount to a radical "cleansing" of the history of philosophy from all non-European traditions. Schweigler went to extremes in excluding all currents of thought tied to religion. His concept was, as Franz Martin Wimmer puts it, highly "euraequalistic" (Wimmer 2017), i.e. it held that philosophy existed solely in Europe in antiquity (pre-Socratics to Neo-Platonism) and in modern age (Bruno to Hegel). The historiography of philosophy in Europe from the 18th to the 20th century moves between the mentioned poles. On the basis of previous works (e.g. Park 2013, Schneider 1990, Wimmer 1990), it will be necessary to further analyse in detail studies which arguments and representational strategies resulted in excluding from European philosophy historiography in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries not only non-European, but also Arab-Islamic and Jewish philosophy, which are *today* considered an integral part of European philosophy history. Since the history of the exclusions of Arab and Jewish philosophy, for example, traces back to the Renaissance (Hasse 2016), we need to subject older discourses to analysis as well.

2. Explorations of the histories of philosophy cooperatively with philologies that emerged in Europe since the 19th century, for example in Indology, Sinology, Japanology, Arabic Studies, and Jewish Studies.

Simultaneously with the exclusion of the "non-European" from the dominant currents of philosophical historiography within the discipline of philosophy, various philological subjects such as Indology, Sinology, Japanology, Arabic Studies, Jewish Studies, etc. developed in Europe. In these subjects, one studied above all the different languages, which were learned after the model of classical philology (classical Greek and Latin), on the basis of old canonical texts from the different traditions, generally imbued with a philosophical and/or religious character. Thus, in Europe research traditions developed *outside the discipline of philosophy* that dealt, among others, with the Indian, Chinese, Buddhist, Arabic and Jewish history of philosophy. What is striking about these developments is that in Europe two entirely independent strands of the historiography of philosophy flourished. On the one hand, European philosophy and the accompanying historiography of philosophy starting from the 19th century – apart from a few exceptions – *almost exclusively dealt with the history of philosophy in Europe*, whereby it gradually split into countless detailed discourses. On the other hand, in Europe there also did in fact develop a *considerable tradition in the historiography of philosophy, for example, on Indian, Chinese, Jewish, Arabic and Buddhist philosophy*, which has hardly been and is still not recognized by the discipline of philosophy today. This second strand of the historiography of philosophy in Europe must be analysed in its genesis in order to reflect on philosophical motivations

and strategies of representation. The analyses could provide central indications of how a globally oriented history of philosophy should be conceived.

3. Closer examinations of the histories of philosophy – not solely dedicated to traditions of European philosophy – which have emerged in various European and non-European languages, such as Japanese, Chinese or Arabic.

Especially in the 20th century, diverse traditions of the historiography of philosophy in different languages have emerged, for example, in India, China, Japan or the Arab countries. In all varieties they rarely received attention in Europe as independent historiographies of philosophy. For example, Surendranath DASGUPTA (1887–1952) for Indian philosophy, Youlan FENG (1895–1990) for Chinese philosophy, Hajime NAKAMURA (1912–1999) for the history of Japanese thought, and Majid Fakhry (b. 1923) for Islamic philosophy proposed comprehensive outlines of respective histories of philosophy. It is noteworthy that the Chinese-language historiography of philosophy naturally begins with the origins of Chinese thought (ca. 10th–6th centuries BCE), whereas in Japan they tended to regard philosophy as only that which emerged in the wake of the reception of European philosophy since 1868. Therefore, in Japan older traditions are called "histories of thought" (Shisōshi). For the Indian framework it is self-evident to start with the Vedas (ca. 10th century BCE), whereas for India it is to be noted that histories of philosophy were – and are – directly written in English, the lingua franca of Indian intellectuals since colonial times.

However, it was not only in the 20th century that histories of philosophy were written in various languages, but histories of philosophy in Arabic date back to the 10th century. In Chinese, smaller works on the Chinese schools of philosophy can already be found in the *Zhuangzi* (ca. 4th century BCE) The same holds true for Buddhism. The picture is even more complicated for the body of Japanese-language historiography of philosophy because here, since the early 20th century not only were histories of European philosophy written but also histories of Chinese, Buddhist, and Indian philosophies. A similar situation exists in more recent Chinese-language research. With regard to these works, research in Europe is still in its infancy, so that it is necessary to first examine the material in different traditions of thought in order to systematize it in a second step.

4. Conceptualizations of *entangled histories* for the history of philosophy with a focus on translation and reception processes.

For the project of a historiography of philosophy in global terms, a *perspective of entangled histories* has to be developed that goes back to the origins of philosophy, whereby the “origin of philosophy” or the “origins of philosophy” themselves form a central subject of discussion. For at least 30 years, the experience of contemporary entanglements and interconnections has increasingly changed the understanding of our history. Research, too, is abandoning simple national historiographies and shifts the focus to entanglements and interconnections instead. The interconnected and globalized conceptions of our present have slowly become the background for examining ancient history as well. Old partitions and demarcations are abandoned in favour of a globally entangled history that dates back to the earliest days of humanity. One example of such an approach is the *Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* (Johnson 2012), in which the space of Late Antiquity is reconceived as stretching from Europe to Africa and China. In a similar manner, entangled spaces must be designated and described for the history of philosophy that reach from Greece to India, from India to China, from Persia to Spain, from Africa to Europe, from China to Europe, etc. Holenstein’s *Atlas of Philosophy* (Holenstein 2004) and the book *Entangled History of Thought* (*Verflechtungsgeschichte des Denkens*, Elberfeld 2017b) can serve as preliminary work for said perspective.

5. Exploration and analyses of the previous outlines of a global historiography of philosophy, in order to include the horizons developed so far in the search for new narratives of the history of philosophy.

In order to initiate a project for a global historiography of philosophy today, it is essential to study prevailing developments and concepts in greater detail. Although a few more global perspectives on writing the history of philosophy have occasionally surfaced since the early 20th century (Wundt 1909, Jaspers 1957, Schilling 1964), to date there has been only one hardly known work entitled *Global History of Philosophy* by John C. Plott (died 1990), which was published in five volumes in India between 1963 and 1989. Plott attempted to create his own periodization system for this outline, albeit one that only covered Europe and Asia. In his periodization system, besides European designations, he also incorporated entries for China and India: *The Axial Age* (Vol.1, 1963), *The Han-Hellenistic-Bactrian Period* (Vol. 2, 1979), *The Patristic-Sūtra Period* (Vol. 3, 1980), *The Period of Scholasticism I* (Vol. 4., 1984), *The Period of Scholasticism II* (Vol. 5, 1989). The project was left uncompleted. The question remains, however, if a uniform periodization system that comprises all areas makes sense for a global history of philosophy, or whether completely different forms of order are more appropriate.

Further examples of an integrative approach are the *Encyclopédie Philosophique Universelle*, published between 1989 and 1998 in French and initiated by UNESCO, a broad-based attempt to re-orient the entire philosophical discourse from a global perspective, and various presentations published in English from the 1990s onwards entitled "World Philosophy" or "World Philosophies". Among them: Solomon (ed.), *From Africa to Zen. An Invitation to World Philosophy* (1993); Cooper, *World Philosophies. An Historical Introduction* (1996). Deutsch (ed.), *Introduction to World Philosophies* (1997); Deutsch/Bontekoe (eds.), *A Companion to World Philosophies* (1997); Scharfstein, *A Comparative History of World Philosophy. From the Upanishads to Kant* (1998); Smart, *World Philosophies* (1998); Garfield/Edelglass (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of World Philosophy* (2011). These titles indicate that the representations of philosophy in the Anglophone world over the past 25 years display definite globalization tendencies. Some outlines are only concerned with non-European topic; in others, European topics are included for comparison. The choice of topics in the individual works, however, often depends on the research horizons of the authors or editors. This means that the individual conceptions must be studied in order to investigate the respective methodological strategies, the inclusions and exclusions, and the philosophical consequences thereof.

Another important approach in relation to a world history of philosophy is the project of an *Encyclopedia of Concise Concepts by Women Philosophers* under the direction of Ruth Hagengruber and Mary Ellen Waithe, which started its online presence in 2018 (<https://historyofwomenphilosophers.org/ecc/#hwps>). The aim of this project is to include all female philosophers since the beginnings of philosophy in this encyclopedia and thus to make their contributions to the development of philosophy more visible. The editors emphasize the importance of including female philosophers from all regions of the world. The integration of previously marginalized female philosophers also plays an important role in our attempt to trace the entangled histories of philosophy.

A special conception, to be emphasized here, originated with Elmar Holenstein. His *Philosophy Atlas. Places and Ways of Thought (Philosophie-Atlas. Orte und Wege des Denkens)*, 2004) uses the medium of geographical maps linked to commenting texts to present the history of philosophy in a global perspective, starting from its places and their interconnections. When it comes to questions of theorizing on writing the history of philosophy in a global perspective, Franz Martin Wimmer has authored pioneering studies. With his theoretical perspectives as starting points (Wimmer 1990), he has published papers on various facets of global historiography of philosophy in *Polylog. Zeitschrift für interkulturelles Philosophieren*. In this context, the volume *Historiography of Philosophy from a Global Perspective (Philosophiegeschichte in globaler Perspektive)*, Elberfeld 2017a), which attempts to explore and summarize the current state of research, can also be regarded as preparatory.

6. An investigatory genealogy of historiography of philosophy from the paradigm of "peoples", "nations", and "religions" to "continents", "spheres" (East/West), epochs, various "languages", "cultures", and "genders" as classification and systematization criteria of philosophies.

While still in the 18th and 19th Centuries philosophy was often systematized in relation to peoples (the Greeks, the Germans, the French, cf. e.g. Brucker 1731-36), at the beginning of the 20th century the rise of the national states fostered a parallel "nationalization" of philosophy. For example, Sandvoss, in his *History of Philosophy (Geschichte der Philosophie, 1989)* largely takes a national state approach, so that in Europe's case, developments in the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany (DDR), Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, etc. are also presented, in addition to England, France, Germany and Italy. Moreover, he includes, besides the USA, India, and Japan, all other regions of the world such as Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, Peru, Bolivia, Australia, South Korea, Israel, Tibet, Islamic countries, Southeast Asia, and Africa, although the latter three no longer follow the nation-state pattern. The reasons for such generalizations are to be researched specifically.

In addition to peoples and nation states, religions also serve in the historiography of philosophy as distinguishing features for different philosophies such as "Christian", "Buddhist", "Jewish" and "Islamic" philosophy. This criterion also requires separate reflection.

In this context, it is to be discussed in detail whether completely different criteria of differentiation are conceivable for the representation of philosophy in the 20th century, such as, for example, a classification on the basis of languages, so that a distinction could be made between Chinese, Arabic, Italian, Japanese, English philosophy, etc. Every single natural language already creates a pattern of order and differentiation within the framework of real-life structures, which as such implicitly suggests (not defines!) a certain view of the world. Among other things through the contact between different languages, these worldviews remain constantly in motion and create a plurality of possibilities within themselves. Latin has, thus, become a medium of philosophy through translations from Greek. Buddhist Chinese has developed through translations from the region of India. The translation processes generate various philosophical possibilities in the languages, which can then lead to new philosophical approaches. The fact that today certain European languages hold a privileged position of power in philosophy as a result of colonialism becomes obvious, for example, in the African context, where we differentiate between Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone, etc., philosophy. Here, thinking in nations with reference to philosophy plays no role at all, but one classifies on a continental scale (African philosophy) or with reference to colonial languages or autochthonous languages or language families (Yoruba, Igbo, Bantu philosophy). In general, research on the possibility of structuring the history of philosophy on the basis of languages is still in its infancy.

7. Examination and analyses of the global institutionalization of philosophy as an academic discipline at universities since the 20th century and its impact on teaching and research in philosophy.

Since the beginning of the European expansion, the foundation of European universities can be observed worldwide: 1538 Santo Domingo, 1553 Mexico, 1595 Philippines, 1622 Santiago de Chile, etc. At the end of the 19th century, modern universities in the sense of the European model were founded in Japan, China and India: Tokyo in 1877, Beijing in 1898 and Delhi in 1922. Since the 20th century in particular, the system of European universities and sciences has been increasingly exported to Africa, Asia, South America and Australia, as well as to the Islamic countries, which had a long tradition of Islamic universities: Ez-Zitouna founded in Tunis 737, al-Qarawiyīn in Fez (Morocco) 859 and al-Azhar in Cairo 975.

The newly founded universities were often branches of European universities (e.g. the *University of London*) or were created along the European model. At these universities, the various sciences were taught mainly on the basis of European curricula. This also applies to philosophy, where many non-European universities have taught and continue to teach almost exclusively European philosophy. This means that the history of the globalization of philosophy is also a history of violence, since European-North American philosophy was not only made the paradigm of philosophy as such, but was at the same time institutionally anchored worldwide, with the consequence that generations of philosophers in many regions of the world were trained exclusively within this paradigm. Today, this is increasingly viewed critically and referred to by the term "epistemic or cognitive violence" (e.g. Santos 2016). Accordingly, these processes of institutionalization and their persisting consequences for the concept of philosophy and its history must be subjected to a critical examination.

8. Analyses of the institutionalization of philosophy, the impact of the system of trans-regional congresses, such as the "World Congresses of Philosophy", on the globalization of philosophy.

A corrective movement on the institutional level can be observed at the international congresses (e.g. "World Congresses for Philosophy" since 1900, World Congresses for Aesthetics since 1913, Pan-African Congresses since 1919, "East-West-Philosophers-Conference" in Hawai'i since 1939, etc.). Since 1900 these movements are the drivers for the continually growing globalization impulses for philosophy in the sense of an expanding spectrum and international discourses of philosophy.

The series of the "World Congress for Philosophy" shows how philosophers from India, China, Japan, Latin America, Africa and other regions of the world gradually became more visible and received their due attention in the international field of philosophy. It was only in the 1980s that the geographical and content spectrum was achieved which can still be found today at the world congresses. The history of these international congresses illustrates both the gradual integration of non-European/North American philosophies and their representatives into the international discourse of philosophy and the intensification of exchange and cooperation between the various regions of the world, which has been reflected, among other things, in the founding of corresponding organs of publication. Today we are in a rapid process of increased international contacts; however, in philosophy, its significance has yet to be reflected adequately for the development of philosophy itself.

9. Examination of the current self-representation of philosophy from a global perspective through an investigation of philosophy curricula and syllabi of for the "history of philosophy" worldwide, in order to recognize trends in the canonization of philosophy.

Investigating the current self-presentation of philosophy in a global perspective will require going beyond previous conceptions to explore which "histories of philosophy" are being taught in departments of philosophy around the world. This is necessary for posing the question for the "canons" of philosophy, for every attempt at presenting a history of philosophy simultaneously produces a particularly chosen canon. Since the contemporary canon of science is essentially European-North American in character, questions of canonization are particularly critically discussed today, especially in the context of the challenges of decolonization of the sciences and the inclusion of hitherto marginalized traditions of knowledge and their representatives. This also applies to the canon of the history of philosophy, in which philosophical traditions from other regions of the world as well as the contributions of female philosophers hardly play a role. The canon formed by the dominant narrative of the history of philosophy mirrors in the curricula of departments of philosophy, in fact beyond Europe and North America too. As a first step in an empirical study on the canon of philosophy worldwide, data on this topic (as reflected in curricula, course concepts, etc.) will be gathered, which is possible today with relatively little effort over the Internet. The main focus is on

curricula that open up the horizon beyond European-North American philosophy. In a second step, these data will be analysed in more detail with regard to the resulting trends in teaching and research, but also with regard to concrete cooperation possibilities. In a third step, an interactive map will be developed in order to visualize those philosophy institutes in the world that already teach a variety of philosophical traditions today. The question of a globally oriented *Canon of Philosophy* can then be addressed in novel ways in internationally attended workshops.

10. In view of the global developments in philosophy, the word or concept of philosophy itself needs to be discussed anew.

Ultimately, the word or concept of "philosophy" must be re-examined as a whole. For example, the significance of orally transmitted philosophical traditions must be re-examined, the relationship between philosophy and wisdom, or how "ethnophilosophical" concepts such as "Bantu philosophy" or "Inca philosophy" can be meaningfully incorporated into the historiography of philosophy in a global perspective. Since the word "philosophy" even in the European context sees far from consistent use (Elberfeld 2006), the discussion on how the word is to be employed needs to be re-opened if we are to develop a history of philosophy in a global perspective. Given that the word by now has been adopted worldwide in very different languages over the past 100 years, and since histories of philosophy have been written there using this term, e.g., in Japanese and Chinese, the current state of philosophy is in need for a redefinition of the concept from a global perspective.

The project will run for five years from 1 April 2019 to 1 April 2024 and will be conducted under the direction of Prof. Dr. Rolf Elberfeld at the University of Hildesheim. The following the planned research-output:

- A database containing all kinds of histories of philosophy (from the West or other regions) in different languages as well as all existing attempts to write histories of philosophy from a global perspective will be created.
- A map containing all departments of philosophy worldwide with curricula in an intercultural orientation will be developed.
- A book will be prepared in which a possible draft of a "History of Philosophy in a Global Perspective" will be outlined, including the necessary methodological reflections. The book will be shaped in a way that it can be used in introductory philosophy courses. A lasting change in the perspective on the history of philosophy requires that one could orient his or her own horizon globally from the very beginning of the studies.
- Special studies on the aforementioned ten research questions will be published in the form of journal articles and books.

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