

Being a Foreigner in Philosophy: A Taxonomy

VERENA ERLENBUSCH

The question of diversity, both with regard to the demographic profile of philosophers as well as the content of philosophical inquiry, has received much attention in recent years. One figure that has gone relatively unnoticed is that of the foreigner. To the extent that philosophers have taken the foreigner as their object of inquiry, they have focused largely on challenges nonnative speakers of English face in a profession conducted predominantly in English. Yet an understanding of the foreigner in terms of the nonnative speaker does not exhaust the conceptual space of the foreigner. This article provides a more nuanced conceptual apparatus that allows for a more precise identification and discussion of other ways in which one can be a foreigner in philosophy. I develop a taxonomy of different conceptions of the foreigner, namely the linguistic, material, cultural, and epistemic foreigner; I discuss the different and specific challenges they face; and I show how foreigners enrich philosophical practice.

I. INTRODUCTION

The question of diversity, both with regard to the demographic profile of philosophers as well as the content of philosophical inquiry, has received much attention in recent years. The main focus has been on the underrepresentation of women philosophers as well as philosophers of color. In addition, some philosophers have worked hard to bring to our attention the marginalization of disabled philosophers, and discussions are emerging of the ways in which class and being a first-generation college student affect one's experience as a professional philosopher. One figure that has gone relatively unnoticed is that of the foreigner. To the extent that philosophers have taken the foreigner as their object of inquiry, they have focused largely on challenges nonnative speakers of English face in a profession conducted predominantly in English.

Yet an understanding of the foreigner in terms of the nonnative speaker does not exhaust the conceptual space of the foreigner. Since not all foreigners are nonnative speakers, a focus on the nonnative speaker captures the experience of only some foreigners. Moreover, there are challenges faced by foreigners regardless of their language

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competency. For example, Canadian citizens working in the United States have to navigate complex immigration procedures and are vulnerable to having their status revoked if they fail to secure permanent positions. Similarly, Americans working in the UK have to report to the Home Office if they fail to go to their workplace for more than a week. A concept of foreigners as nonnative speakers not only fails to capture their experience, but actually obscures the fact that they are foreigners. There is, in other words, some conceptual vagueness, if not confusion, with regard to the foreigner. What exactly do we mean when we speak about the foreigner, and what problems is the concept of the foreigner supposed to elucidate?

In this article, I survey the conceptual landscape in order to clarify the stakes of philosophical discussions of the foreigner. I argue that a more nuanced conceptual apparatus allows for more clarity and a more precise discussion of the different and specific challenges faced by foreigners in philosophy. In section II, I delimit the scope of my discussion, clarify key terms and concepts, and make explicit the aims and scope of this article. In section III, I develop a taxonomy of different conceptions of foreigners, namely linguistic, material, cultural, and epistemic foreigners. Finally, in section IV, I argue that a clear appraisal of distinct concepts of the foreigner also elucidates the various ways in which foreigners enrich philosophical practice and describe what foreigners have to offer to philosophy.

II. THE CHALLENGE OF THE FOREIGNER

Before offering a brief survey of existing literature on the foreigner, it is necessary to delimit the scope and clarify the terms of the present discussion. First, the question of foreigners in philosophy could be examined at a very general conceptual level, independent of particular national or professional contexts. However, much of the discussion has emphasized the dominance of Anglo-America in contemporary professional philosophy. Most of the institutions deemed elite are located in the United States and, to a lesser extent, the United Kingdom, and philosophical practice today is conducted largely in English. Even in countries whose language is not English, philosophers find themselves under pressure to publish in English in the discipline's top-tier journals and to present their work in English at various national and international conferences. The dominance of English in research output also means that philosophy is taught increasingly in English, as most influential philosophical debates are in English. Countries that resist these developments are becoming increasingly insular (Engel 1987; James 2012). In keeping with these sociological facts about the discipline of philosophy, the focus of this article will be on the foreigner in contemporary Anglo-American philosophical practice and communities.

Next, this article seeks to describe challenges foreigners face by virtue of being foreigners. This raises the question, who is a foreigner? We can delineate two different senses of the foreigner, which are commonly used in ordinary language.¹ On the one hand, a foreigner is defined as a person who comes from a country other than one's own. That is, the term *foreigner* is attributed to others based on considerations

of origin or nationality. On the other hand, and in a more informal sense, we also describe as foreigners persons who are strangers or outsiders in relation to a particular group, culture, or place. These two senses of *foreigner* correspond to different experiences of foreignness. The aim of this article is to set out challenges people might face along those different dimensions. To be sure, concrete individuals experience various constellations of different dimensions of foreignness. Moreover, their experiences might be inflected by other forms of identity such as gender, race, class, ability, and so on. As we will see, however, the challenges faced by an Asian woman by virtue of being a foreigner may be relevantly similar to those of a white Canadian man, even though their experiences as academics or philosophers are otherwise very different. This suggests that the challenges faced by foreigners are not reducible to other categories of identity. Put differently, there are challenges specific to foreigners that can be disaggregated, at least conceptually, from other kinds of challenges. My aim is to identify those challenges while at the same time recognizing that foreignness intersects with gender, race, class, ability, and so on.

This also suggests that the category of the foreigner is conceptually distinct from discrimination and marginalization. That is, one can be a foreigner without being marginalized. In describing challenges that foreigners face, I seek to take account of situations or tasks specific to foreigners that require cognitive, emotional, physical, or financial effort that is not required by natives. I do not presuppose that challenges constitute harms or injustices that merit intervention, that they necessarily lead to marginalization and disadvantage, or that they are inherently unfair. In fact, as I suggest in section IV, being a foreigner can be advantageous and enriching for the individual as well as for academic and philosophical practice.

Finally, although there is a substantive body of literature on various forms of marginalization that is relevant for the present discussion, the concept of the foreigner as such has not received much attention in the philosophical literature. People have, however, reported on their experiences of feeling foreign both in formal and informal media such as blogs and newspapers (see What is it like 2016). In this article, I seek to clarify the terms of these discussions through the conceptual lens of the foreigner. A possible objection to my use of such informal media is that testimony provided there is unreliable because it is anecdotal. Although I agree that we should exercise caution about the nature and scope of the conclusions we draw from this evidence, I nevertheless consider use of such testimony as justified and even necessary. First, dearth of peer-reviewed accounts should not be taken as evidence that the concept of the foreigner is philosophically uninteresting or unimportant. Rather, given the abundance of reports of foreigners in informal media, the shortage of academic discussion suggests that the category of the foreigner and its relation to philosophical practice is ripe for investigation. Second, these reports should not be dismissed because they are anecdotal. As Phyllis Rooney notes with regard to the marginalization of women in philosophy, failure to take seriously anecdotal evidence about specific experiences may actually constitute a form of testimonial injustice. On her view, demands for better evidence “function as a stalling move, particularly when collecting the requested data would take significant time and energy which would

normally place the burden of proof back on the members of the marginalized group” (Rooney 2012, 329). For Rooney, women’s reports of their experiences are evidence that should be taken seriously, even if they do not warrant definitive causal explanations of women’s underrepresentation in philosophy. Similarly, to avoid delaying philosophical exploration of a socially and theoretically relevant category, anecdotal reports by foreigners in informal venues must suffice as evidence and motivation for considering the specific challenges foreigners face *qua* being foreigners until “better” data is forthcoming.

III. A TAXONOMY OF THE FOREIGNER

THE LINGUISTIC FOREIGNER

To the extent that particular challenges experienced by foreigners are the object of examination in discussions of inclusiveness in philosophy, by far the most attention has been given to the condition of nonnative speakers of English. Data collected and analyzed by Moti Mizrahi suggest that the number of full-time faculty members who are “English-as-a-second-language” (ESL) speakers is lower in philosophy than in other disciplines (Mizrahi 2013). Gabriele Contessa reports that only two of the 50 most-cited authors in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and six of the top 100 are nonnative speakers (Contessa 2014). Likewise, only 5.8 percent of the 500 most cited works published between 1993 and 2013 in *Philosophical Review*, *Journal of Philosophy*, *Noûs*, and *Mind* were written by nonnative speakers.

Some philosophers have begun to explore whether the challenges ESL philosophers face constitute disadvantages (see Mizrahi 2014; Protasi 2014; Ayala 2015). Here, however, I want to focus on the particular concept of the foreigner operative in discussions of the nonnative speaker condition. Based on its emphasis on language and accented speech, I propose to call this the *linguistic foreigner*:

- (1) Linguistic foreigners are individuals who work primarily in a language that is not their native language.

The main challenges linguistic foreigners, including fluent speakers of a second language, face are increased cognitive effort required to work in a language that is not their native language, moments of fatigue, insecurity, irritability, and a higher prevalence of errors (see Klein 1986; Sears 1998; Pütz and Sicola 2010). Moreover, linguistic foreigners may be attributed credibility and/or competency deficits because stylistic considerations and unusual forms of expression affect readers’ and reviewers’ judgment of written work (see Ayala 2015). A related worry is that nonnative speakers may be judged less competent because, as Mizrahi explains, “some philosophers think of philosophy as essentially conceptual analysis using formal logic and/or ordinary language, and since most philosophy in the analytic tradition is done in English, they might also think that doing conceptual analysis well requires being proficient in English”

(Mizrahi 2013). A commenter identified as “New Asst Prof” in a discussion thread on “Research Advice for Non-Native English Speaking Philosophers” at the blog *Daily Nous* comes close to expressing this view:

It does seem to me like excellent academic writing should have correct grammar and style. It does not seem like mere native-speaker bias to insist on this, and to prefer, for example, journal articles that have elegant phrasing and just the right English-language expressions. (Weinberg 2015a)

Although this particular commenter might merely be expressing an aesthetic preference for clarity, building linguistic competence into clarity as a normative requirement of “good philosophy” runs the risk of limiting “good philosophy” to philosophy done in “good English.”

The idea that one must command “good English” to do “good philosophy” highlights another dimension of being a linguistic foreigner, which nonnative speakers share with some native speakers. This is the dimension of accented speech. Empirical research shows that foreign accents are generally regarded as indicative of a lack of competence and intelligence (see Giles 1970; Brown, Giles, and Thakerar 1985; Nesdale and Rooney 1996; Garrett 2010; Levis and Moyer 2014).² Yet it is important to note that not all foreign accents are judged equally negatively.³ Moreover, speakers of some varieties of native speech, such as African American English, Indian vernaculars, or working-class accents, are also regarded as less competent (see Purnell, Idsardi, and Baugh 1999; Urciuoli 2013; Wolfram 2013; Young et al. 2013; Fuchs 2015). Although such accents trigger negative biases because they are seen as indicative of a speaker’s racial, ethnic, or class identity, the concept of the linguistic foreigner is nevertheless useful to highlight commonalities in the experience of speakers of nonstandard vernaculars that would be obscured by an exclusive focus on other identity categories. In light of this discussion, we may suggest the following modified concept of linguistic foreigners:

(2) Linguistic foreigners are individuals whose accent is stereotyped as inferior to vernaculars recognized as Standard English.

Even though this modified concept of linguistic foreigners enables us to track experiences of foreignness along various dimensions of foreignness, the focus on language obfuscates the experiences of native speakers of English who live and work in a country that is not their native country. What concept of the foreigner captures their experience?

THE MATERIAL FOREIGNER

Native speakers of English who live and work abroad face specific challenges that differ from, but are in many ways no less significant for their professional flourishing than those of linguistic foreigners. To capture the significance of material conditions

such as immigration status, institutional support, or hiring policies, I propose the following concept of the *material foreigner*.

- (3) Material foreigners live and work in a country that is not their native country, regardless of whether they are native speakers of the official or dominant language(s) of their country of residence.

It is important to distinguish material foreigners from linguistic foreigners because individuals face specific challenges by virtue of not being citizens of their country of residence. These challenges might include culture shock, lack of support structures, bureaucratic hurdles, complex and expensive immigration procedures, disruptions in health care, difficulty securing accommodations, and so on. These are in principle independent of linguistic competence, even though they may be compounded by lack of language proficiency and also intersect with race, gender, ability, social status, and so on. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify challenges common to material foreigners regardless of these other factors.

To illustrate these commonalities, consider the cases of Miwa Hirono, a British academic with Japanese citizenship, and Darren Hudson Hick, a Canadian philosopher working in the United States. In 2013, Hirono's application for indefinite leave to remain was denied by the Home Office, even though she had a permanent position and was an internationally recognized expert on China and a foreign-policy advisor to the British Government. The reason cited for the denial was a retrospective application of a new immigration policy issued in 2012, according to which applicants are forbidden to leave the UK for more than 180 days during any of the preceding five years. Not only had Hirono exceeded this number in 2009 and 2010, well before the 180-day absence prohibition applied, but most of this time was spent researching China's peacekeeping operations with the approval and in the service of the University of Nottingham, the Research Council, and, thus, the British government. After a lengthy appeals process, Hirono decided to move her family to Japan, where she accepted a position at the University of Tokyo (Hirono 2015; Jump 2015). In a similarly dramatic case, Hick lost his tenure-track position at Susquehanna University in 2013 because the HR employee tasked with filing his green card application missed a deadline. Allegedly forced to re-advertise Hick's job while he was going through his mid-tenure review, the University offered the position to another candidate. Hick has since held a temporary position at a different university (Leiter 2013).

Even though these stories seem exceptional, they throw into sharp relief the vulnerabilities of material foreigners. The mental, emotional, and financial efforts associated with the meticulous collection of all necessary documentation, the possibility of a negative decision on one's residency, the legal and filing fees associated with immigration-related matters, and the dependence on the good will, competence, and timeliness of university staff in filing immigration paperwork also affect those material foreigners whose immigration proceedings are successful. Moreover, all material foreigners have to adjust to new cultural norms, navigate unfamiliar institutions, and build support structures.⁴ All of this is time-consuming, imposes great financial and emotional burdens, and may seriously impede research productivity.

The figure of the material foreigner also intersects with another dimension of being a foreigner in philosophy, namely by virtue of receiving (part of) one's professional training in an institutional culture that lacks name recognition. As a consequence, many material foreigners may lack what the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu calls cultural and social capital, that is, habituation to a particular academic culture, competence in that culture, and social connections. For Bourdieu, these forms of cultural and social capital are largely symbolic insofar as they do not measure a person's actual academic qualifications, but rather track the form and means by which this capital is transmitted and acquired (Bourdieu 1986).

Bourdieu's emphasis on the symbolic efficacy of cultural capital captures what philosophers like Jennifer Saul and Helen De Cruz have discussed under the rubric of prestige bias (Saul 2012; De Cruz 2016). Prestige bias is a negative prejudice against institutions that lack name recognition. In philosophy, prestige or pedigree is usually determined in reference to the ranking produced for the *Philosophical Gourmet Report* (PGR). Since the PGR ranks institutions in the English-speaking world, many material foreigners might receive their training in institutions not included in the PGR. As a consequence, they may experience themselves as foreigners to a particular institutional culture who face challenges distinct from those faced by linguistic and material foreigners.

THE CULTURAL FOREIGNER

It is useful to distinguish individuals who lack cultural capital from linguistic and material foreigners because being outside of a particular professional culture generates distinct challenges in a discipline where pedigree matters a great deal. We can see this in the importance of the PGR in universities' hiring decisions (Saul 2012). In an unpublished study on prestige bias in philosophy, De Cruz shows that higher-ranked programs place proportionately more candidates and also hire primarily among themselves (De Cruz 2016).⁵ The result is that in the 2013/14 job season, 54% of placed candidates came from programs ranked in the PGR, and 31% came from top-ten PGR programs. By contrast, only 15% of placed candidates graduated from unranked departments.

Should we conceive of philosophers without pedigree as foreigners in philosophy, and if so, in what sense? I argue that individuals who are outside of a particular professional culture that aids professional success may usefully be understood along the dimensions of foreignness as lack of belonging to a particular group. Because they lack a certain cultural capital that is acquired through a particular transmission process and yields professional advantages, we should understand them as *cultural foreigners*.

- (4) Cultural foreigners occupy a place on the margins of hegemonic professional culture.

According to De Cruz's findings regarding the role of pedigree on the job market, an obvious challenge faced by cultural foreigners in philosophy is a smaller chance of

landing a tenure-track job. Moreover, knowing that they do might have significant psychological and emotional consequences. Commenter “Gradjunct,” for instance, describes feeling discouraged “to see that 88-90% of TT [tenure-track] hires were from Leiter-ranked schools. As someone outside those echelons it gives very little hope for success in finding TT work” (Arvan 2014).

Yet pedigree may also function to alleviate other forms of prejudice such as competency deficits due to foreign accents. Saray Ayala notes that institutional affiliation affects hearers’ patience with accented speech (Ayala 2015). That this is the case indicates the presence of a particular professional culture that differentially attributes credibility and competency based on institutional affiliation that is irreducible to other forms of foreignness. Even native speakers from lower-ranked or unranked institutions suffer a credibility or competency deficit. Their disadvantage might be ameliorated by their language competency, but they are nevertheless foreigners in the kind of professional culture that seems to be required for a successful career.

The importance of pedigree in professional philosophy does not just generate challenges for cultural foreigners, but also affects the discipline. As a commenter at the *Philosophy Smoker* blog argues, the practice of screening for pedigree in job applications “prevents the quick rise of talented philosophers, and instead, it perpetuates an unfair elitism in the profession” (Mr. Zero 2012). According to this commenter, elitism and prestige bias are unfair because they work against qualified individuals without pedigree.

It is not immediately obvious, however, that this is the case. It might be possible, for instance, that pedigree tracks philosophical skills because only the best philosophers are accepted by top programs. Marcus Arvan presents this claim in a 2012 blog post, where he describes pedigree as a form of distribution of labor. Because “people have to compete to get into top programs” and, “once in programs, they have to compete with other top people,” Arvan suggests that we might safely conclude that “there is a division of labor designed to separate top talent from lesser talents” (Arvan 2012). On this view, pedigree is an accurate reflection of one’s philosophical chops because only the most talented individuals get into and succeed in top-ranked programs. Moreover, Arvan maintains that there is ample opportunity for philosophers without pedigree to rise to the top of the profession through the high quality of their work. “The quality of one’s work,” he writes, “speaks louder than words, pedigree, and all the rest” (Arvan 2012).

Implicit in Arvan’s characterization of pedigree is the assumption that the discipline of philosophy is meritocratic. Some philosophers have suggested that this assumption serves to reproduce the structure of the profession by creating, perhaps inadvertently, a normative image of the field and its practitioners. The flip side is that those who do not fit this image may feel that they do not belong and are, thus, foreigners in the discipline.

De Cruz suggests that pedigree does not track merit or talent, but is instead the result of “careful coaching and planning during one’s high school years, in a milieu that puts a premium on pedigree and recognizes its importance for future success” (De Cruz 2014). This milieu, she contends, is largely white and (upper-) middle-class.

It is in this demographic group that one finds the economic, cultural, and social capital that facilitates education at an elite institution. That is, this segment of the population can afford tuition, values education, and has knowledge of the application process and the long-term choices and activities that grant admission to a top institution. Many first-generation students from poor and/or ethnic minority backgrounds often lack these forms of capital. There may be exceptional individuals who are able to overcome these obstacles, but De Cruz suggests that, overall, pedigree is not indicative of merit, but is a means of screening out poor and minority individuals.

Further, Fiona Jenkins has argued that the emphasis on pedigree as indicative of merit serves to reproduce the structure of the discipline. This is because merit itself is measured in ways that promote the self-reproduction of a particular kind of work: namely, a kind of work to which the perspective of philosophers of color, women philosophers, disabled philosophers, LGBT philosophers, trans* philosophers, and poor or first-generation philosophers is largely foreign. Jenkins thus maintains that philosophy's "meta-justificatory framework" that determines what counts as excellence and constrains the questions that can be asked prioritize a particular kind of individual (Jenkins 2013, 89). Because this particular viewpoint is, however, posited as neutral and universal, the experiences of philosophers who do not fit this image not only appear foreign to philosophical inquiry, but also damaging to the quality of philosophical work.

THE EPISTEMIC FOREIGNER

The sentiment that one is a foreigner in philosophy by virtue of the work one does is articulated by Gayle Salamon in her essay, "Justification and Queer Method, or Leaving Philosophy." Salamon argues that philosophy is characterized by a "persistent need for justification" of kinds of inquiry perceived as incongruent with accepted standards of philosophical quality, such as neutrality, objectivity, rationality, and so on (Salamon 2009, 228). In other words, philosophical inquiry is legitimately philosophical if it can demonstrate its epistemic standing as philosophy in reference to a set of norms of justification. For Salamon, these norms exclude her work in queer theory from the sphere of philosophy "proper." This devaluation of her work as "not quite philosophy" ultimately led Salamon to leave "a discipline to which I never really belonged" for a position in Princeton's English Department (230).

Kristie Dotson echoes the experience articulated by Salamon of not belonging, that is, of being a foreigner in philosophy. Drawing on Salamon's work, Dotson identifies a culture of justification in professional philosophy that systematically excludes diverse practitioners of philosophy, including philosophers who work in non-core (for example, feminist philosophy, African-American philosophy), nonanalytic (for example, existentialism, phenomenology), and non-Western (for example, Buddhist philosophy, Latin-American philosophy) areas. Taking as her point of departure the infamous question, "how is this paper philosophy?," Dotson argues that professional philosophy is characterized by a disciplinary culture that both permits and requires that this

question be asked and answered, particularly if a project does not exhibit *prima facie* congruence with accepted norms of justification. Because these norms are informed by the perspectives traditionally represented in philosophy, they are only apparently universal and “univocally relevant” (Dotson 2012, 8). In fact, they reflect a largely white, male, able-bodied, straight, financially secure perspective and as such, serve to maintain philosophy’s conceptual whiteness, maleness, ability, class, straightness, and so on. For Dotson, the culture of justification produces disciplinary structures that are inhospitable to philosophers whose inquiry is driven by an explicit concern with (nonwhite, nonmale) identity. Because of its incongruence with operative standards of justification, their work is epistemically suspicious at best and at worst, not philosophy.

I believe that we have good reason to consider through the lens of the foreigner the experience philosophers like Dotson and Salamon report. The concept of the foreigner not only captures the sense of not belonging they describe, but it also enables us to grasp unique challenges that philosophy’s culture of justification presents for philosophers whose experiences might otherwise differ significantly. I therefore suggest the concept of the *epistemic foreigner* to characterize those who are regularly called on to explain how their work is philosophy.

(5) Epistemic foreigners’ work is incongruent with the norms of justification operative in professional philosophy.

Note that the norms of justification identified by Salamon and Dotson foreground properties of the work one does, rather than of the person doing the work. Yet in professional philosophy we also find demands for justification that target the epistemic standing of persons doing work that is *prima facie* congruent with accepted justificatory norms. Consider, for example, the following comment sent by an anonymous philosophy professor to the blog *Daily Nous*.

“Critical thinking” means a very particular sort of thing to philosophers (mostly identifying, reconstructing, and evaluating arguments), but in the desperate struggle to stay relevant, other academic disciplines have started to appropriate the term “critical thinking” to describe what they do. I have read blog posts and articles by historians and literature professors, for example, who claim to teach critical thinking. But when non-philosophers say that they teach critical thinking, they seem to mean that they are teaching students how to question authority, challenge the dominant narrative, resist hegemony, and so on. These are obviously important things to teach, but they don’t have much to do with arguments and logic. In my philosophy department, we do not offer a course called “critical thinking,” but there is a course with that name offered in another department. I talked to a student who took that course, and she told me that she did not know what a deductive argument was, nor had she ever heard of *modus ponens* or *modus tollens*. Should we philosophers worry about this, or should we be ecumenical about the meaning of “critical thinking?” (Weinberg 2015b)

We could examine this comment on a number of levels, including the underlying assumption that decisions about what ought to constitute critical thinking are properly and, perhaps, exclusively within the purview of philosophy. For the purpose of this article, however, I want to focus on the competency deficit attributed to non-philosophers, who are said to merely *claim* to teach critical thinking. This denial does not, on the face of it, issue from a concern with the failure of philosophical work to align with the epistemic requirements of philosophy, but from the person doing the work not being a philosopher. That is, competency is denied by virtue of (a lack of) disciplinary affiliation.

Although we might be tempted to suggest that the position of the nonphilosopher in relation to the discipline of philosophy is best understood in terms of a concept of the *disciplinary foreigner*, it seems to me that the latter is not a distinct category. The disciplinary foreigner is, ultimately, an epistemic foreigner because disciplinary distinctions presumably track epistemically relevant differences among disciplines, such as particular objects of inquiry, specific kinds of questions, and distinct methodologies marshaled to study and answer them. On this view, not being a philosopher is indicative of not doing philosophical work, that is, work that is congruent with accepted norms of justification. Disciplinary affiliation here stands in as a proxy for an intellectual practice that is or is not properly philosophical. Thus, the charge of not being a real philosopher is a challenge to demonstrate that despite one's training in or affiliation with an adjacent discipline, one's work is actually and legitimately philosophical.

In this section, I have attempted to clarify various concepts of the foreigner in philosophy culled from existing descriptions of foreignness along its different dimensions. I also identified distinct challenges associated with different concepts of the foreigner in hopes that a clearer understanding of these challenges will foster further normative work on the figure of the foreigner in philosophical debates about inclusiveness. In what follows, I want to leave behind the question of the challenges foreigners face in philosophy and instead ask what foreigners contribute to philosophy.

IV. PHILOSOPHY AND THE FOREIGNER

The question of what work foreigners do for philosophy is inspired by Bonnie Honig's book *Democracy and the Foreigner*, in which she calls time on discussions of democracy and citizenship that treat the foreigner as a problem to be solved. Honig suggests that we replace the question, "how should we solve the problem of foreignness," with a different question, namely "what problems does foreignness solve for us" (Honig 2003, 4). This change of perspective, she argues, enables us to recognize the importance of the foreigner for saving, repairing, or refounding regimes that have become corrupted.⁶ What, then, do foreigners have to offer to philosophy?

In the first instance, the preceding discussion suggests that the figure of the foreigner in some of its articulations serves as a justificatory figure that lends legitimacy to the existence of philosophy as a discipline as well as the concrete form in which it is currently practiced.

Philosophy is notoriously difficult to define. If we look at it genealogically, we find a heterogeneous set of practices that lack coherence and unity. There is no one philosophical methodology and no unifying interest in a certain kind of object or question of inquiry. Lorna Finlayson proposes the fitting image of a sausage to describe the “mish-mash of disparate, perhaps unsavory ingredients that are artificially presented as a unity, as if crammed into a smooth, synthetic skin” that is philosophy (Finlayson 2015, 188). As a result, it is difficult to neatly distinguish philosophy from other fields of inquiry with which it shares key concerns, including psychology, neuroscience, sociology, political science, law, and so forth (see, for example, Wolfson 1958; Deleuze and Guattari 1994; Priest 2006; Glock 2008). Some versions of the foreigner, most important perhaps the epistemic foreigner, might thus be regarded as symptomatic of an effort to protect a recognizable notion of philosophy as distinct from these other domains.

A different way of making this point is to say that the proliferation of foreigners in philosophy has its conditions of possibility in a particular understanding of philosophy that is itself shaped by a specific social and historical context. That is, the various concepts of the foreigner surveyed in the previous section are both permitted and required by a discipline that is invested in its own disciplinary purity precisely because it struggles to survive in an institutional landscape shaped by economic and business imperatives. As a comment by Ben Hale on the *Daily Nous* post cited above suggests, disciplinary-border policing might have more to do with pragmatic considerations about the institutional status of philosophy than with concerns over the content of critical thinking courses offered by nonphilosophers. Hale argues, in a time when “philosophy is on the ropes in almost all areas,” ceding ground to other disciplines does not help “reinforce our importance within the academy”—an importance that is already questioned, if not denied outright (cited in Weinberg 2015b).

From a more cynical perspective, we could add that foreigners serve an important function in the maintenance of the belief in philosophy’s meritocratic structure. On this view, the success of some exceptional members of underrepresented groups is the condition of possibility for the assertion that quality of work is all that matters for professional success.⁷

In addition to these pragmatic and justificatory functions of the foreigner, foreigners also make various epistemic contributions to philosophy. Honig argues that foreigners are especially well suited to repair corrupt democratic regimes because they have tools, talents, skills, and so on, that these regimes need, but lack (Honig 2003). Analogously, foreigners in philosophy are able to import epistemically relevant features that enrich the practice of philosophy. This is perhaps most obvious in the case of epistemic foreigners. Not only are there many areas of philosophical research that benefit from interdisciplinarity and/or draw from resources in cognate fields (for example, linguistics, computer science, neuroscience, social psychology, and so on), but an increasing number of philosophers revisit long-standing questions in one sub-field of philosophy by drawing on recent developments in ostensibly “unrelated” sub-fields. Debates on epistemic injustice as well as the recent uptake of ideology and propaganda in metaphysics and epistemology serve as examples (see Fricker 2007; Haslanger 2011; Dotson 2012; Medina 2012; Stanley 2015).

In addition to cross-pollination between disciplines as well as across different sub-fields of philosophy, foreigners may have useful resources to challenge and expand the concepts and intuitions driving philosophical work. In particular, linguistic foreigners have access to different styles of reasoning, which may bring into relief the cultural and historical specificity of apparently universal concepts.⁸ Contessa cites as an example the claim that knowing-how is a form of knowing-that, which is implausible to speakers of languages that have two distinct words to express the concept of knowledge (Contessa 2014). The difference between the Latin *sapere* and *cognoscere* as well as its Spanish, French, and Italian cognates, or the distinction between the German *wissen* and *kennen*, make it impossible for speakers of these languages to collapse knowing-how into knowing-that. Even if this impossibility does not disprove that knowing-how is a form of knowing-that, it should give philosophers defending the claim pause to consider the assumed universality of their intuitions as well as the constraints placed on their thinking by the English language. Similarly, linguistic foreigners have linguistic and conceptual resources that can help us avoid problematic philosophical claims that arise on the basis of mistranslations or the constraints of the English language (Ayala 2015). Consider the German words “*Erlebnis*” and “*Erfahrung*,” which are both translated into English as “experience.” Similarly, “*Verstand*” and “*Vernunft*” are both rendered as “reason” in English translation. It should not be controversial to point out that something of the original meaning is lost in translation, which flattens the distinctiveness and nuance of the original terms. This loss of meaning may have important philosophical consequences, especially when inaccurate or even mistranslations become the basis for philosophical claims. Linguistic foreigners can help us identify arguments or interpretations that may not be warranted by the original text.

Material foreigners may be especially well placed to recognize the operation as well as the limitations of enculturated practices, concepts, and forms of thought. As Edward Said notes in “Reflections on Exile,” the exile’s experience “makes possible originality of vision.”

Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that—to borrow a phrase from music—is contrapuntal. (Said 2002, 148)

Like the presence of different and independent musical lines in contrapuntal compositions, material foreigners hold different perspectives simultaneously. These not only disrupt their own habitual ways of seeing and thinking, but also shed critical light on what is taken for granted. The contrapuntal awareness of material foreigners cultivates an openness of mind that opens up new avenues of thought.

Philosophical practice might further benefit from the presence of cultural foreigners. This is especially true if it is indeed the case that philosophers without pedigree and other privileges have to work harder for similar accomplishments.⁹ On this view, philosophers who lack certain resources have to compensate for such disadvantages by honing the kind of resilience, creativity, and hard work that a meritocratic

discipline should reward. In addition, cultural foreigners might be more likely to work in subfields of philosophy that tend to be underrepresented in elite institutions.¹⁰ If it is true that the top-ranked departments reproduce a certain kind of philosophy, cultural foreigners appear to be important for the intellectual diversity of the discipline.

In conclusion, I have examined descriptions of foreignness along its different dimensions—most important as pertaining to nationality and in the sense of not belonging to a particular group, culture, or place—in order to distinguish different concepts of the foreigner operative in these reports. Laying no claim to completeness, I proposed to differentiate among linguistic, material, cultural, and epistemic foreigners so as to better identify the specific and distinct structures that enable their existence, the particular challenges each of these figures faces, and the potential benefits their presence may have for philosophical practice. I have not undertaken here a critical examination of the normative implications of these challenges, nor have I examined what, if any, obligations institutions, the discipline of philosophy, or individual philosophers may have to foreigners. I hope, however, that the discussion I have offered here might serve as conceptual groundwork for such ameliorative projects.

NOTES

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1. See as an example the entry on “foreigner” in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

2. For an excellent synthesis of the literature, see Ayala 2015.

3. In the United States, Spanish and Asian accents appear to be penalized more than other foreign accents. See Ryan, Carranza, and Moffie 1977; Brennan and Brennan 1981; Davila, Bohara, and Saenz 1993; Lindemann 2003.

4. Note, also, that many material foreigners experience “reverse culture shock” upon returning to their native country (Gaw 2000).

5. See also Carolyn Dicey Jennings’s collection and analysis of placement data (*Academic Placement Data and Analysis* 2016).

6. In *The Cultural Politics of Analytic Philosophy*, Thomas L. Akehurst discusses the role of the foreigner in the founding moment of modern analytic philosophy. He argues that contemporary Anglo-American philosophy was founded in Britain as a political critique and, indeed, rejection of the continental philosophy of Hegel and Nietzsche and shows that analytic philosophy emerged as a political project that joined together ostensibly British values of freedom and tolerance, political virtue, and philosophical method (Akehurst 2010).

7. For a version of this argument in the context of race-based affirmative action and Black exceptionalism, see Alexander 2010.

8. Elif Yavnik discusses a similar phenomenon under the banner of existential dislocation and its ability to create spaces of communication and creativity (Yavnik n.d.).

9. De Cruz makes this point when she suggests that, all things being equal, “a student from an unranked or lowly ranked program with roughly the same number and quality of publications as a student from a top program is a more promising candidate, as the unranked program-candidate has likely faced and overcome more obstacles than the top-program candidate, who also got the benefit and support that comes with such programs” (De Cruz 2014).

10. Consider the Pluralist’s Guide to graduate programs in philosophy as a case in point. The purpose of the Pluralist’s Guide was to provide information on subfields of philosophy that are largely underrepresented in most philosophy departments, including African philosophy, American philosophy, continental philosophy, critical philosophy of race and ethnicity, feminist philosophy, GLBT studies, and Latin American philosophy (Pluralist’s Guide 2016). Although the guide does not rank departments but instead offers program recommendations, it is noteworthy that many of the departments with strengths in these areas are not represented in the PGR.

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