The Philosophical Personality

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The authors adopt a critico-sociological methodology to investigate the current state of the philosophical profession. According to them, the question concerning the status of philosophy ("What is philosophy?") cannot be answered from within the precinct of philosophical reason alone, since philosophy—understood primarily as a profession—is marked by a constitutive type of self-ignorance that prevents it from reflecting upon its own sociological conditions of actuality. This ignorance, which is both cause and effect of the organization and investment of philosophical desire, causes philosophers to lose themselves in an ideological myth ("the philosopher as idea(l)") according to which philosophers are unaffected by the material conditions in which they exist. This myth prevents philosophers from noticing the extent to which their activity is influenced by extra-philosophical determinants that shape, empirically, who becomes a professional philosopher ("the philosopher as imago") and who doesn't. This article explores the relationship between philosophy's "idea(l)" and its "imago" as a way of shedding light on some of the mechanisms that make philosophy inhospitable for so many women, people of color, and economic minorities.

> We [philosophers] live in something like the laboratory—a humanly orchestrated set of institutions and structures that delimit our interactions and affect our range of experiences… We need to apply our diagnostic impulses to ourselves to develop a more robust and politically conscious reflexivity sufficient to the task to engage philosophically with the politics of philosophy.
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> —Linda Martín Alcoff, 2012 Presidential Address, Eastern APA

This article investigates the nature of contemporary philosophy through a study of what we call "the philosophical personality." Motivated by Theodor Adorno's claim in *The Authoritarian Personality* that the "personality" of an individual describes "a more or less enduring organization of forces within [that] individual" (Adorno 1950, 8), we define the philosophical personality as the profile of the contemporary philosopher that emerges from the organization and interaction of two specific forces: first,

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the force of sociological determination, which encompasses all the social, economic, political, and institutional norms that determine, empirically, who can become a professional philosopher today and who cannot; and second, the force of psychic alignment, which describes the complex ways in which those who become professional philosophers understand themselves *qua* philosophers. The first of these forces generates what we call "the philosopher as *imago*," whereas the second yields "the philosopher as *idea(l)*."

Here, we create a profile of the contemporary philosopher, a living portrait of sorts, by exploring how these forces produce a specific personality type: the philosophical personality. For us, the philosophical personality is a figure who embodies the beliefs and attributes shared by a majority of philosophers who occupy positions of power in the field. As such, it is an effigy of the personality structure of the prototypical philosopher. We do not, however, view the philosophical personality as a universal frame that applies to all members of the philosophical profession equally, since professional philosophy, like all other disciplines, has its insurgents as well as its apologists, its revolutionaries as well as its gatekeepers. But the fact that the landscape of professional philosophy admits of a plurality of voices does not mean that this landscape itself is not shaped by relations of power, visibility, and privilege, by structural patterns and tendencies that affect the comportment, beliefs, and aspirations of those who try to navigate it. Thus, although not all professional philosophers necessarily "have" the philosophical personality, every professional philosopher is immersed in professional, institutional, and cultural spaces in which this personality structure dominates. Our concept of "the philosophical personality" captures these trends by personifying them and elucidates these spaces by surveying them.

We outline our methodology in section I, which is followed in section II by an in-depth account of how each of the two forces referenced above (the "*imago*" and the "*idea(l)*") have reinforced professional philosophy as a predominantly male-, white-, and middle-class-identified profession. Then, in section III, we argue that these forces relate to one another vis-à-vis a logic of concealment that prevents contemporary philosophers from reflecting upon their own field's sociological conditions of actuality. Finally, we conclude in section IV by taking a look at what might be required to make philosophy less inhospitable to women, people of color, and economic minorities.

I. Methodology

Traditionally, philosophers have answered the question "What is philosophy?" *philosophically*, which is to say, by either giving an ostensive definition based on the history of their discipline or by scrutinizing the semantic content of the term "philosophy." Counter to this practice, we start our inquiry into the nature of philosophy with the concrete sociological realities that circumscribe contemporary philosophy as a professional activity and a way of life.

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Inspired by a tradition of philosophical sociology that includes in its ranks figures such as Émile Durkheim, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Pierre Bourdieu (see Adorno 1950; Durkheim 1960; Horkheimer 1972; Bourdieu 1988; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992), our aim in this article is to shed light on the nature, limits, and aspirations of contemporary philosophy by treating it as a concrete social form, as a materially, socially, and historically situated *praxis*.[1] For us, then, the question "What is philosophy?" is not an exclusively philosophical question that could, even in theory, be resolved from within the boundaries of philosophy itself. It is, to a large extent, a sociological one whose resolution demands a sociologically informed method.

At the same time, our background in psychoanalytic theory and group psychology leads us to believe that facts alone cannot disclose the state of contemporary philosophy because the question "What is philosophy?" is not only sociological, but also *psycho*-sociological. Hence, it requires systematic consideration of the myriad ways the *factual* intersects with the *psychological*. In simple terms, to understand "philosophy" it is not enough to tarry with facts and hoard empirical data. It is equally important to also understand how facts and data take on meaning within a psychic economy and to create a psychic profile of that figure for whom philosophy itself is a question—namely, "the philosopher." Who is he? Where does he come from? And, above all, how does he understand himself (and, as we show below, the philosopher is unquestionably a "he")?

To be sure, our methodological starting point will seem peculiar, if not altogether vulgar, to mainstream philosophers who take the question of "the philosophical" to be a private family affair to be dealt with solely from within the confines of their discipline. To them, our method is likely to appear unrefined, perhaps even incendiary, for the simple reason that we turn to something many career philosophers hate: empirical data. Indeed, we turn to empirical data *about their own profession*. Our method may trouble career sociologists as well, accustomed as they are to treating social facts, in Durkheim's famous formulation, "as things." In contrast to this positivistic approach to sociological inquiry, we turn to empirical data not for the sake of describing or systematizing a set of facts that capture, in the clarity of a statistical distribution, philosophy's "truth" as a social form. Rather, we turn to it in order to expose the tremendous gulf that exists between what we call "the philosopher as *imago*" and "the philosopher as *idea(l)*," that is, between who the contemporary philosopher *is* and who he *takes himself to be*.

By "philosopher as *imago*" we mean the figure of the philosopher that is produced by a set of tacit norms of group membership that determine who gets to occupy the subject-position of "philosopher" in the contemporary academy, especially in the Anglo-American context.[2] These norms ensure that those who are exemplars of success in the field—that is, tenured professors at mid- or upper-level research universities—display overwhelming patterns of statistical homogeneity in terms of race, gender, and class. Here, we lean on sociological reason to look at the mechanisms that produce and reproduce this homogeneity and to trace their movement in a web of social relations.

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By "philosopher as *idea(l)*," conversely, we mean those myths and fantasies that those occupying the position of the *imago*—again, those professional philosophers who have, in some sense, "made it" in the field—maintain and disseminate about who they are and what they do. These fantasies, which we all know well, include the Socratic image of the philosopher as a noble seeker of objective truth and as a maverick who stands over and against a community as its unacknowledged better. As the sanctioned and official account of what it means to be a true philosopher, this *idea(l)* represents the *psychic framework* in which the fantasies of professional philosophers are thrown into relief. As we show toward the end of our analysis, however, the efficacy of this psychic framework is predicated upon its ability to repress or conceal the extent to which the philosophical subject-position is produced by concrete social forces. The philosopher as *idea(l)*, then, is responsible for concealing the sociological scaffolding of philosophy itself and for making sure that philosophy's *imago* remains unexamined and, in principle, unexaminable. Our detour through sociology and psychoanalysis is designed to at one and the same time unearth this *imago* and expose the logic of its concealment.

II. The Philosophical Personality: A Profile

The Philosopher as *Imago*

We borrow the term *imago* from biology and psychoanalysis. In biological discourse, it refers to the final stage of maturation reached by an organism over the course of metamorphosis. An *imago* is an internally determined *terminus* or *telos*, an end-result of a specific process of formation that follows natural laws and principles. In psychoanalysis, by contrast, an *imago* is an image generated by a collective unconscious and internalized by a subject. First discussed by Carl Jung, the *imago* is a psychic image, usually the image of a parent or authority figure, that shapes the contours of the subject's personality without being consciously manifest to that subject. In psychoanalytic theory, the *imago* is not a stage achieved through a logic of natural development but an image that plays a key role in a subject's psychic economy (Jung 1925).

For us, the term *imago* describes something internal to philosophy that is *both* a final stage in an empirical process of formation and an implicit image that shapes the philosophical imaginary: the figure of the professional philosopher who has succeeded by the standards established by his field. This figure represents the final stage of an empirical process of formal education that includes undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate training, as well as an image that is produced by the philosophical profession and internalized by its practitioners. It is that to which those in the process of becoming philosophers (undergraduates, graduate students, adjuncts, seasonal faculty, and so on) *aspire*.

Empirical sociological evidence shows that this image of the "successful" professional philosopher has a rather specific profile. Statistically, this figure is

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overwhelmingly white and male. In "Quantifying the Gender Gap: An Empirical Study of the Underrepresentation of Women in Philosophy," Molly Paxton, Carrie Figdor, and Valerie Tiberius argue that women are systematically underrepresented in philosophy and that "the proportion of females reliably decreases as one moves through each level in the academy, from introductory courses through the faculty population" (Paxton, Figdor, and Tiberius 2012, 952). Women are less likely to become philosophy majors as undergraduates (Calhoun 2009), to receive a doctorate in philosophy (Healy 2011), and to be employed in philosophy departments (NCES 2011; Van Camp 2015).[3]

Even as other humanistic disciplines have begun to approximate gender parity in their faculty, philosophy remains a holdout of male dominance (see Lloyd 2002; Haslanger 2008). In "Women in Philosophy," for example, Jennifer Saul notes that women comprise a minority of faculty across the board in philosophy departments and that, of the positions they do occupy, the majority are part-time and non-tenure-track (Saul 2012).[4] As Paxton, Figdor, and Tiberius observe, the higher up the academic hierarchy in philosophy one looks, the scarcer women become. At the highest rung of the ladder, the position where we find the philosopher as *imago*, we find not just *any* philosopher, but a philosopher who has been socialized and sexualized as male. Perched proudly on the pinnacle of academic success, the professional philosopher looks at his surroundings to find himself in a house of mirrors, a man surrounded by men: his colleagues, men; his advisees, men; his students, men. *All of them look like him. All of them strive to be him.*

This philosopher, furthermore, is incontrovertibly white. According to data compiled in 2013 by the American Philosophical Association, "traditionally underrepresented minorities" received, on average, fewer than 5% of all doctoral degrees awarded in philosophy from 1995 to 2009.[5] Like women, but in even smaller cohorts, students of color are excluded from the in-group of professional philosophers by sociological forces that limit their institutional mobility and that maintain the racial identity of the field. By the time minority populations beat the odds and get a PhD, their collective numbers in the profession's upper echelons are so small that they barely even register on a pie chart.[6]

Some people are of the opinion that once students of color complete their PhD, they are free to march straight from the commencement ceremony into a comfortable tenure-track position at an institution of their choice, that they would basically have to—as Anita Allen was told by a white, male professor in the 1970s—"pee on the floor of the American Philosophical Association convention *to not* get a job in philosophy" (Romano 2007). Were this the case, one would expect a spike in the percentage of philosophy professors who identify as people of color relative to the percentage of PhD holders who fall into the same category. But statistically this is not the case. The percentages of people of color in the philosophical professoriate remain the same as (if not, in some cases, slightly lower than) the percentage of people of color who complete their doctorates.[7]

The overabundance of white men has been demonstrated over and again by surveys and statistical analyses of the discipline, and the phenomenon has been the

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object of a growing body of scholarship.[8] More or less completely unstudied, however, is the fact that aside from occupying a position of male and white privilege, the average professional philosopher—the philosopher as *imago*—also comes from an affluent background. Although data on the socioeconomic and class background of professional philosophers is virtually nonexistent, circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that he is comfortably middle- or upper-class and does not come from a low-income or blue-collar family. In spite of efforts to boost diversity in post-secondary education, there continues to be a "class squeeze" that keeps first-generation and lower-class students outside the classroom, outside doctoral programs, and, finally, outside the professoriate, effectively guaranteeing that virtually none of the *hoi polloi* hold tenure-track positions, especially at top institutions.

There is strong indirect evidence that every stage of the formation of the professional academic philosopher weeds out working-class and first-generation college students, starting with the undergraduate degree and continuing into the faculty hiring process. In his 2007 article "Accessibility of the PhD and Professoriate for First-Generation College Graduates," Kevin Kniffin points out that first-generation college students are highly unlikely to attend selective undergraduate institutions and, overall, less likely to finish their degree than their more privileged peers. So in the first leg of the academic race, the herd of first-generation applicants to doctoral programs has already been thinned, which explains why this demographic, as Kniffin notes, is overwhelmingly underrepresented in PhD programs across the board (Kniffin 2007).[9] Moreover, recent inquiries into the population of graduate students who attend the top-10 ranked PhD programs in philosophy in the United States indicate that these students tend to come primarily from "high caliber" undergraduate institutions, the same ones that, according to Kniffin, are least likely to attract, accept, and retain students from the lower class (Kniffin 2007). In a survey conducted by Eric Schwitzgebel, of the doctoral students attending the top-10 Leiter-ranked programs in 2011, only 19% came from non-top-50 state schools (Schwitzgebel 2011).[10] This means that a robust majority (more than 80%) of all doctoral candidates in these philosophy programs—those, not coincidentally, with the best placement records (Carson 2013)—came from top-50 schools. And Schwitzgebel notes that even the 19% figure wildly "overestimates the number of students with genuinely non-elite backgrounds" because many of those who fall under it are students who attended non-top-50 schools that are nonetheless out of reach for the vast majority of lower-class students (Schwitzgebel 2011).

Again, conventional wisdom would maintain that once low-income, first-generation students have the coveted doctorate from a top-ranked program in hand, they have as good a chance of landing the best jobs as any of their more privileged peers. But Kniffin notes that the statistics that are available, incomplete and outdated as they may be, suggest otherwise (Kniffin 2007). The squeeze that poor students feel on the way to the PhD continues to be felt on the path to the professoriate, since the hiring practices of elite institutions mirror the implicit class bias reflected in the selection process of top PhD programs. Data from a 1999 survey of the levels of parental education of faculty shows that Research I and II and Liberal Arts I and II

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institutions "tend to disproportionately hire faculty with parents whose formal education includes advanced degrees" (Kniffin 2007, 62). Those who get interviews, score on-campus visits, and ultimately land those precious few jobs at the top of the academic hierarchy are those who, having grown up in the halls of the academy, are already familiar with its landscape. It is, in simple terms, not only access *to* the PhD that "depends upon the formal education of one's parents and is not equal," but also access *from* it.

This information enables a more concrete picture of the typical professional philosopher to emerge. He is white and he is male. He is also heterosexual, cisgendered,[11] and able-bodied.[12] He is an offspring of the middle class, the child of academics. From the time he entered an elite undergraduate institution to the moment he was awarded tenure at his mid- to top-ranked university, he has worked alongside largely—if not exclusively—people who share his sexual and racial identity as well as his garden-variety middle-class childhood.

This picture comprises an *imago* in the biological and psychoanalytic senses of the word. Like the biological *imago*, this picture is the end-product of the formation process of professional philosophy, the final stage in the development of a successful, fully realized philosopher. Like the *imago* of psychoanalysis, this picture (a white, male, upper-class philosopher working at a respectable institution) provides the determinate content for our tacit collective conception of what the standard, run-of-the-mill philosopher looks like. This conception, which is internalized by current and aspiring members of the profession, shapes the latent content of the philosophical imaginary as an unacknowledged norm. As we show in section III, what makes this *imago* so invisible is the efficacy of "the philosophy as *idea(l)*."

The Philosopher as *Idea(l)*

A combination of "idea" and "ideal," the philosopher as *idea(l)* refers to those fantasies that philosophers entertain and disseminate about the nature of their calling and about their position in the world. These fantasies are generated from narratives *about philosophy* that philosophers inherit from their teachers and mentors and that circulate in various forms throughout their community. These narratives give shape to philosophers' beliefs, impulses, and preoccupations, and produce a psychic representation (at once individual and collective) of what it means to be a philosopher. The philosopher as *idea(l)*, as we understand it, is a mental representation of the figure of "the philosopher" (hence, an "idea" in the modern sense of the term), but one that is valorized and fetishized by philosophers themselves (hence, an "ideal" or "idealization" as well). This *idea(l)*, which is integral to the philosopher's understanding of himself *qua* philosopher, gives us access to the organization of forces within the philosopher that, as Adorno would put it, capture the machinations of his "personality." In short, this *idea(l)* allows us to confront the contemporary philosopher not as he exists (which we have done in the previous section), but as he *thinks* he exists.

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In our view, there are two fantasies that best explain some of what we know about the psychological makeup of contemporary philosophy:

(i) the fantasy of the philosopher's unmediated access to universal truth;
(ii) the fantasy of the philosopher as a maverick who is always ostracized by a larger community that misunderstands him and is threatened by his access to absolute truth.[13]

These fantasies are Janus-faced creatures replete with both historical and psychic significance. From the standpoint of history, they are the effects of narratives that get passed down from one philosophical generation to the next,[14] stories that philosophers have constructed (and still construct) about the history of their own discipline and the nature of their work. From the standpoint of psychology and psychoanalysis, they are schemas that organize the thought-economy of professional philosophers and direct the investment of philosophical desire. They are forces that mold the beliefs, impulses, and preoccupations of professional philosophers and affect how they project themselves onto a social milieu. Consequently, it would be a mistake to view them merely as "screens" or "filters" that philosophers layer on top of a hard kernel of unchanging reality since they are world-disclosing schemas that, as guarantors of historical and psychic meaningfulness, ensure the very coherence of the real. These fantasies, one could say, are the "stuff" of philosophical reality, the furniture of the philosopher's psychic life.

The historical and psychic dimensions of these fantasies mutually reinforce each other. The historical narratives bolster the psychic schemas. Meanwhile, the psychic schemas lend these narratives a subjective feeling of certitude that makes them particularly difficult to challenge. So, to understand the philosophical personality as a whole, we must resist the temptation to dismiss these fantasies (either in their historical or psychic incarnations) as the self-aggrandizing delusions of a sick consciousness (*although, perhaps, they could be that too*). We must see them instead as projections that, as Adorno argues in *Aesthetic Theory*, enable subjects to fuse various elements of being into different kinds of "constellations" that render the real sensible and intelligible at once (Adorno 1984). It is through these philosophical fantasies that philosophers construct a philosophical world.

Fantasy 1: Truth

Much epistemic production in philosophy has historically taken place under the assumption of discursive neutrality; that is to say, under the assumption that the philosopher's "mission" (however this is interpreted) is innocent of all social, political, and economic interests. Although the philosopher, as we show below, has historically seen himself as the torchbearer of a mission with explicitly political ambitions, he nonetheless believes his motivation is entirely free of all particularism. He believes that the only driving force behind his actions is a transparent and transcendent desire for unadulterated truth, for the kind of "erotic" truth (from the Greek, ἔρως) that in Plato's *Symposium* is associated with a higher plane of cognition. As far as he is

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concerned, his mission can only be carried out from a higher perspective from which truth (epistemic and moral) can be grasped at its very source—from a perspective without a standpoint. This explains why, historically, the philosopher has reserved for himself (and for himself only) the right to claim detachment from his situation and speak as if from nowhere.

A key narrative that philosophers tell others and themselves about the nature of philosophy, therefore, is a tale about their romantic liaison with "truth." Perhaps unsurprisingly, this is a story that always ends with the philosopher-figure finding and mastering a truth that, were it not for his intervention, would have been lost to oblivion (at best) or perverted by throngs of nonphilosophical philistines (at worst). This narrative of philosophy as an "analytics of truth," which traces its own historical origins to the Plato-Socrates dyad in 400 B.C.E. or to the idea of "the sage" found among the Eleatics as early as 600 B.C.E., cultivates an attitude that denies the perspectival nature of philosophical speech and persuades the philosopher that he is the only oracle through which truth can make itself manifest. This attitude, crucially, only becomes stronger the more the philosopher comes to believe that his utterances are purged of the first-person particularity from which they emanate, and that the first-person position he occupies has become an absolute nonposition—the absolute nonposition from which unconditioned truth itself speaks.

If we, following Nietzsche, remind "my dear philosopher" to "beware of telling the truth," it is not because we feel inclined to abandon truth-telling in philosophical and meta-philosophical reasoning altogether, but because we sense that the philosopher's consuming obsession with accessing, controlling, and speaking "the truth" ultimately gives the lie to his fantastical self-understanding. Philosophical narratives of this sort, as we have noted above, are not simply fictitious constructs that are passed down through history for the sake of conveying a general moral lesson. They are ideological formations that affect not only how philosophers understand the history of their profession but also how they understand themselves in relation to their world. These narratives, in other words, feed certain impulses, drives, motivations, and desires that alter the self-image of contemporary philosophers and have a real impact on their web of beliefs.

In 2009, David Bourget and David Chalmers conducted a survey of the beliefs held by philosophers.[15] This survey, which was taken by 931 philosophy faculty members, found that the average professor of philosophy has a rather specific worldview: he is a nonskeptical realist who believes that the world exists independently of the mind.[16] And he is a scientific realist who thinks that positive science gives us nomological knowledge of this mind-independent world.[17] For the contemporary philosopher, then, the truth or falsity of claims depends on states of affairs in the world, and truth-functional propositions are confirmed or falsified by empirical observation in accordance with a correspondence theory of truth.[18] In the same way that the world's existence is not affected by the existence or nonexistence of mind, the truth-value of a proposition is unaffected by the perspective from which this proposition is expressed. Truth exists irrespective of both the individual making a knowledge claim and the context in which the claim is made.

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Bourget and Chalmers also found that the average philosopher's realism extends from the epistemological to the moral sphere, as a statistically significant number of respondents reported believing that moral statements are "true" or "false" depending on whether or not they accurately reflect an objective moral reality.[19] This person, furthermore, adheres to the belief that there is a distinction to be made between analytic and synthetic judgments[20] and that certain truths can be known *a priori*.[21] Implicit in this last belief, of course, is the assumption that even if science is the best method we have for describing the nature of the objective world and making sense of phenomena, philosophy gives us access to foundational truths that (logically) precede experience and form the bedrock upon which science itself is built. Philosophy, it is true, may not give us empirical knowledge about the world, but it gives us access to something much more valuable and precious: those universal principles that govern both the natural world that scientists describe and the moral universe that makes possible attributions of praise and blame.[22]

What lends coherence to this motley of beliefs, we argue, is the fantasy that the philosopher has the power to recognize and commandeer truth at its source. Under the spell of this fantasy, the philosopher believes in the existence of an objective truth, both moral and scientific, *that is unchanging and the same for all epistemic subjects*. He also believes that he (and he alone) can have knowledge not only of this objective truth but also of the conditions that render it such. This vaunted presumption is bolstered by the philosopher's conviction that his worldview is part and parcel of a special "calling" dating all the way back to the Golden Age of classical Greece, a calling that must be fulfilled anew with each turn of history's wheel.

Fantasy 2: Maverick

The function of this historical narrative about the philosopher's privileged relationship to truth and its psychic correlate is clear: it allows the philosopher to carve a social identity for himself. Furthermore, the dream of alethic mastery allows the philosopher to foster a second, related fantasy: the fantasy of being a radical who is "out of joint" with the community at large. Of course, the philosopher, being who he is, is not content with simply being a radical. He must be a radical who is fundamentally different from, and *more* radical than, other social misfits whose nonconformity is simply an effect of personal misfortune or, perhaps, of less-than-ideal social engineering (the mad, the quacks, the vagabonds, and so on). These nonphilosophical radicals are radicals by accident, whereas the philosophical maverick is a radical by vocation. He is self-aware of his position at the margins of the social order, and he attributes this marginality to the power of his intellect and his privileged position as the chosen vehicle for the manifestation and expression of truth.

By claiming to stand outside the social sphere precisely on account of his monopoly over truth rather than, say, his economic, social, or political status, the philosopher differentiates himself from other intellectual radicals, including the rhetoricians and the sophists. He differs from the mad by virtue of speaking from a position of intellectual self-awareness, and he differs from the rhetoricians and sophists by virtue

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of speaking the language of truth rather than the language of power. Like the vagabonds and the mad and unlike the sophists, he threatens the establishment. But like the sophists and unlike the vagabonds and the mad, his power of negation is tied to his cognitive capacities rather than his existential condition. The philosopher sees himself as a figure who stands somewhere between the mad and the sophist while being identical to neither. He is a social radical whose power of negation (the negation of both *doxa* and *nomos*) is a function of the life-mission he has chosen and not of the accidents of life that have befallen him.

Thus, another fantasy that philosophers entertain about what it means to be a philosopher is a mythologized understanding of the philosophical subject as a misunderstood and unappreciated cultural maverick who finds himself, almost as if by the necessity of a divine calling, embarked on an unconditioned and unconditional quest for objective truth that pits him against his contemporaries. The philosopher, philosophers affirm, is without community. And he, as he is reflected in his own psychic projection, poses a serious danger to the established order precisely because of his liaison with truth. Historically, this fantasy takes the form of stories about philosophers as "gadflies" who upset an otherwise stultified social order. Psychologically, it takes the form of a persecution complex.[23]

Of course, from the vantage point of history, the persecution of philosophers has been a real and complex phenomenon. Socrates was condemned for impiety. Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake. Spinoza was excommunicated. But philosophers have played many roles and functions in their communities, and not all of them antagonistic. There are as many (if not more) examples of philosophers living quite amicably within their social and political order. For every Socrates, every Bruno, and every Spinoza, there is a Leibniz, a Bergson, and a Schmidt. The question then is not "Why have philosophers been systematically and universally persecuted by those around them?" but "Why are philosophers fixated on instances of persecution?" Is it that all philosophers are truly radicals who, by the very nature of their activity, have the formidable power to bring down the establishment? Or could it be that, perhaps, what is truly constitutive of philosophical life is not persecution as much as a persecution complex?

The historical face of the fantasy of the philosopher as maverick manifests in the philosopher's fixation on accounts of persecuted philosophers, but the psychic face of this same fantasy reveals itself in the persistent and mistaken belief that the philosopher stands at odds not just with the society at large, but also with the currents of thought in his own discipline. In a metastudy of their survey of philosophical beliefs among professional philosophers, Bourget and Chalmers found an intriguing discontinuity between philosophers' reported beliefs about certain topics and what they believe *other* philosophers believe about those same topics. The authors note that they were motivated to conduct their survey in part because philosophers not infrequently make broad claims about the field that may not reflect what most philosophers think but rather what "most people think most people think" (Bourget and Chalmers n.d.). So, in addition to surveying philosophers about their own beliefs, they asked them to indicate what percentage of philosophers they think would agree or disagree with them. The results are suggestive.

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The researchers found that philosophers tend to significantly underestimate how many of their colleagues share their beliefs. In most cases, philosophers underestimated wildly, misjudging what beliefs are most common by at least 20%. For instance, the majority of philosophers believe both that aesthetic value is objective *and* that most other philosophers believe it to be subjective. In a similar register, the percentage of philosophy faculty who identify as "scientific realists" is 75% across the board, regardless of specialization. Yet most in this category also presumed that at least half of their field—perhaps substantially more—disagreed with them on this point. The contemporary philosopher, then, not only holds certain beliefs (e.g., that there is an objective world, he also believes that these beliefs are less widely held within his field than they actually are. He wrongly maintains that his worldview is minoritarian, suggesting that a crucial part of his identity rests on a need to think of himself as being constantly at odds with the world as much as with the main currents of thought in his own field.

These statistical patterns do not reflect the objective position the philosopher occupies among his peers and within his community, but they are a natural consequence of the fantasy that colors his interpretation of himself—the fantasy that he is a lone voice crying in the wilderness, a man without community. As far as he is concerned, the philosopher lives in a harsh social environment that has been overrun by nonphilosophical types who deny him the recognition that he thinks he deserves. This is what creates the abyss that separates, in the philosopher's own mind, the philosopher from communal life. Among nonphilosophers, he is misunderstood and unrecognized. Even among other philosophers, he stands alone.

III. The Content of the Philosophical Personality—The Collusion of *Imago* and *Idea(l)*

Now that we have explored the two main forces that constitute this personality—the force of sociological determination that comprises the "philosopher as *imago*" and the force of psychic alignment produced by "the philosopher as *idea(l)*"—we are in a position to make two important points of clarification. The first is that, for us, the "philosophical personality" is not about the character traits or dispositions of particular individuals; rather, it is about a figure who occupies a position of privilege in the philosophical imaginary and plays a constitutive role in structuring and determining what the contemporary philosopher "looks like." It is about philosophy's avatar. The second is that, for us, the "philosophical personality" is also not only about the distribution of particulars. It is not only a numbers game (although it is that too). Rather, it is about how philosophical desire is produced and cathected and has real-world consequences for philosophical life—for who philosophers are and who can be a philosopher.

We propose that the philosophical personality be understood, quite simply, as the effect of the interaction between philosophy's *imago* and philosophy's *idea(l)*, which is

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to say, as the product of their collusion. But the relationship between these forces follows a very specific logic of concealment analogous to that which mediates the relationship between repressed content and censor mechanism in psychoanalysis: a logic of concealment. The *idea(l)* (that is, that heroic character whom the philosopher takes himself, qua philosopher, to be) blocks the unpalatable *imago* (that is, the philosopher as the product of concrete sociological forces) from philosophy's field of conscious awareness and renders it completely invisible to the philosopher himself. The valorized self-portrait the philosopher paints of himself precludes the recognition of the *imago*, which is his own raw sociological facticity. Why? Because, if allowed to appear to the philosophical consciousness as a definite object, the *imago* would subvert the very ideological foundation this consciousness—as *idea(l)*—presupposes and, indeed, requires. The *idea(l)*, therefore, makes the philosophical personality opaque to itself and prevents the philosopher from seeing, let alone combating, the realities that determine his subject-position in the world. And while growing awareness about philosophy's "diversity problem" (for example, #PhilosophySoWhite) has begun to mitigate the power of this logic of concealment, it has not succeeded at vanquishing it altogether. This logic continues to bind the philosophical personality, acting as its chief unifying principle.

The dynamic interaction of *imago* and *idea(l)* creates a cycle of active ignorance that prevents philosophers from engaging in genuine self-critique, and this ignorance, which defines the philosophical personality as a whole, can be characterized as its proper "content." From an epistemological standpoint, it is important that this cycle of active ignorance be recognized for what it is: a cycle of not only active ignorance but also active *self*-ignorance. Since the Oracle of Delphi, philosophy's injunction has been the demand for self-knowledge: "Know Thyself." Our analysis, however, suggests that as long as the philosophical personality keeps certain sociological realities outside the field of possible philosophical reflection, the philosopher will always fail to fulfill this most fundamental prescription: that as long as the philosophical personality remains what it is (namely, a perverted reflexivity), the fruit of self-knowledge will necessarily elude the philosopher's grasp.

From a political standpoint, this cycle is also a problem. It affects the lives of living, breathing human beings who have gotten tangled up in professional philosophy. In fact, one of our aims in writing this article is to bring attention to a cycle of ignorance that, in our view, is implicated (perhaps as cause or perhaps as effect, although most likely as both) in many of the controversies surrounding philosophy's identity as a white and male activity. These controversies include but are not limited to the Eurocentrism of philosophical curricula, the nuanced and not-so-nuanced politics of philosophy's "canon" (and philosophy's "margins"), the pervasiveness of sexual harassment and sexual violence, the appalling lack of racial and sexual diversity in the profession, the unequal distribution of epistemic authority on account of ascriptive identity markers, and the inertia of philosophy in the face of demands made by those who are excluded by it. Our argument leads to the conclusion that because these pathologies are inscribed deep within philosophy, they cannot be fixed cosmetically.

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IV. Philosophy's Future

In order to meet the demand for self-knowledge and become a welcoming space for individuals from diverse backgrounds, we argue, philosophy must be reimagined at its deepest level. It must stray outside the enchanted circle of its own self-understanding and come to know itself through another. For us, this "other" is a critical sociology. Only by superposing the lenses of sociological reason and critical theory (broadly construed) can the philosopher catch a glimpse, however fleeting, of his actuality and take the decisive step of confronting the extent to which his behavior and professional life are affected by *social facts* and *psychic values* that are not of his own making. Our theoretical and political wager is that a detour through sociology will help demystify philosophy and demythologize that figure for whom philosophy is itself a question: the philosopher. Our hope is that this detour will reveal philosophy's determination by a nonphilosophical outside and bring into sharp relief philosophy's concrete "mode of production," that is, that elaborate system of values, norms, and habits that determines how philosophers understand themselves as individuals, how they relate to one another as professionals, and how they project onto a broader sociohistorical world.

Of course, we do not want to be cynical about philosophy. But we do not want to be naive either. We recognize that institutional and cultural change is hard, and that it requires more than the publication of academic articles in peer-reviewed journals. Still, the labor of demystification is an integral part of this process. And in the case of philosophy—that master-myth that thrives precisely by claiming to disseminate no myths at all (only truths)—this labor is particularly vital. Once philosophy is demythologized with the help of critical sociology, philosophy's face may have to change in significant ways. For starters, the path to philosophical knowledge will cease to be an annular monologue in which the philosopher gets ambushed by his own fantasies, beliefs, and preoccupations, and will re-emerge as a refracted trajectory in which the philosopher, cognizant of the realities of his *imago*, shatters the assumed objectivity of his *idea(l)*. Perhaps the destruction of this *idea(l)* will make space for new philosophical *idea(l)s* that are yet-to-come. Perhaps it won't. What interests us for the immediate future is that it, at the very least, make room for new *imagos*.

Notes

1. We also are influenced by developments in the rising school of French "socio-philosophie," which seeks to reground the philosophical study of philosophy itself within a decidedly praxeological perspective in the wake of Foucault and Bourdieu. Two works that are emblematic of this approach are Fischbach 2009 and Rockhill 2010.

2. We focus on Anglo-American philosophy for two reasons. First, there is more data on Anglo-American philosophers than on philosophers working in other parts of the world. Second, English is the lingua franca of the academy in general and, by extension,

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professional philosophy. Therefore, Anglo-American philosophy enjoys a position of privilege, often standing as exemplary of professional philosophy as such. This focus, however, is not endorsement of philosophy's Eurocentrism but an attempt to challenge it.

3. For empirical research into why female undergrads tend to not major in philosophy, see Thompson et al. 2016.

4. It is also noteworthy that some of the most celebrated female philosophers in the Anglophone world (for example Judith Butler, Seyla Benhabib, Nancy Fraser, Gayatri Spivak, Drucila Cornell, and so on) have appointments outside philosophy departments.

5. See data compiled in 2013 by the APA released under the title "Minorities in Philosophy" (APA 2013) as well as data on the racial and gender distribution of philosophy degrees collected by the "Humanities Indicators" project of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS 2013). Finally, we refer the reader to Botts et al. 2014.

6. Less than 10% of all doctorates in philosophy granted at American institutions in 2009 went to people of color, including Asians and Pacific Islanders, African Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians (APA 2013).

7. According to a 2003 National Center for Education Statistics survey, almost 90% of all full-time instructors of philosophy in the United States are white.

8. When considering the representation of women of color in philosophy, the percentages often shrink to a vanishing point. As of 2011, fewer than 30 of the 11,000 total members of the APA were black women (Gines 2011).

9. In 2014 only 18% of all doctoral recipients were first-generation college students (NSF 2014).

10. Other methods for ranking philosophy programs have recently emerged, such as "The Pluralist Guide."

11. As of 2015, only 4% of APA members identify as LGBT (APA 2016).

12. Disabled people comprise "less than 4% of full-time faculty in philosophy departments in the U.S." (Tremain 2014).

13. These fantasies may be understood as "inferences to the best explanation" that explain both our observations about philosophy's history and the findings of David Bourget and David Chalmers's study (Bourget and Chalmers n.d.).

14. For an account of how intellectual ideas are passed from one generation to another, see Collins 1998.

15. The survey was distributed by e-mail to 99 philosophy departments, 90% of which were well-ranked PhD-conferring departments at Anglophone institutions (Bourget and Chalmers n.d.). Given that the survey was distributed primarily to these prestigious departments, the answers given reflect the general trends in philosophical beliefs among faculty who hold relatively prestigious and powerful positions within the field. All data cited refers to faculty respondents only.

16. 82% of respondents favored nonskeptical realism (Bourget and Chalmers n.d.).

17. 82% of respondents support scientific realism (Bourget and Chalmers n.d.).

18. 51% of respondents subscribe to a correspondence theory of truth (more than twice as popular as any of the four available options) (Bourget and Chalmers n.d.).

19. 56% of respondents identify as "moral realists" (Bourget and Chalmers n.d.).

20. 65% of respondents subscribe to the analytic/synthetic distinction (Bourget and Chalmers n.d.).

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21. 71% of respondents believe in *a priori* knowledge (Bourget and Chalmers n.d.).

22. Extrapolating from a single survey can be, of course, dangerous. Nevertheless, this survey remains the best and most comprehensive empirical research conducted on what contemporary philosophers believe. Additionally, the survey targeted full-time faculty at the most highly ranked departments in (mostly) Anglo-American institutions—in other words, individuals who occupy visible and prestigious positions within the field and have a powerful role in shaping the tenor of academic philosophy. Its results may be fruitfully read in conjunction with the narrative of truth we identify as one of the myths that constitute the philosopher as *idea(l)*.

23. Of course, it is impossible to determine how empirically widespread this fear of persecution is, as no research exists on the subject. Still, the concept of persecution is a common trope in the history of philosophy as it is understood today. This is due, in large part, to the persecution of Socrates by the Athenians in 399 B.C.E. and, subsequently, of Christian philosophers after the fall of Rome. Cavaillé, for instance, notes that "the Christian conception [of persecution] seems to have profoundly influenced the way in which philosophy, whether Christian or not, thinks of its own history, as a history where persecution plays a fundamental role" (Cavaillé 2010, 1).

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