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Leiden
The Netherlands

Moving beyond identity: reading the Zhuangzi and Levinas as resources for comparative philosophy

Berenpas, M.

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Propositions

1. If philosophy wants to learn and understand a disparate cultural philosophical tradition, it has to reflect on the self-other relation into account (Chapter 1).
2. Current methodologies in comparative philosophy insufficiently reflect on the hermeneutical nature of comparative philosophy and do not respond to the problem of bias (Chapter 2).
3. Although Levinas' ethical relation to the Other originates in Jewish religion and Greek universalism, it can provide comparative philosophy with an ethical orientation that does not depend on any particular culture (Chapter 3).
4. The Zhuangzi's articulation of the "pivot of *dào*" is the best perspective that the comparative philosopher can adopt when he or she wants to learn and understand another cultural philosophical tradition (Chapter 4).
5. When comparative philosophy wants to avoid the theoretical colonization of the cultural other, it needs to invest in adopting a Levinasian/Zhuangian discourse of critical self-transformation (Chapter 5).
6. In contrast to the Zhuangzi who endorses carefree wandering, comparative philosophers who abide at the pivot need to eschew and reject the colonization or dehumanization of the cultural other. Being in the pivot also entails that philosophers have the Levinasian infinite responsibility to the Other, which makes their freedom in the pivot a "difficult freedom" (Chapter 5).
7. How to understand and deal with truth in an intercultural context still is an open issue that comparative philosophy needs to reflect on.
8. The Levinasian/Zhuangian conception of ethical competence relies on personal vocation and commitment and can therefore not be taught to future students in comparative philosophy.

9. Being in the pivot and committing ourselves to ethical responsibility enables us to become more sensitive to our beliefs, emotional commitments and assertions and allows us to create space for novel approaches and methodologies.

10. Philosophy departments should require their students to study and understand the different modes of knowing and epistemologies in a variety of disparate philosophical traditions.

11. The Levinasian/Zhuangzian position of ethical responsiveness and emotional constraint can be used as a framework of critical-transformative reflection to illustrate how an intercultural dialogue can be initiated by undermining cultural hegemony.

12. The Levinasian/Zhuangzian position of ethical responsiveness and emotional constraint can make the broader social contribution as offering a resource to promote human flourishing in our modern, liberal world. It offers persons a way to see how different opinions and ways of life can peacefully co-exist.