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World Virtue Ethics

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As many chapters in the present volume have shown, virtue ethics has been practiced and theorized in many different ways around the world. Different times and places have different lists of virtues, or differently-conceptualized notions of unified virtue; virtues have been justified in different ways, interrelated in different ways, and had differing degrees of centrality in broader traditions of ethical thinking and practice. The goal of this chapter is to offer present-day theorists some ways of making sense of this diversity, as it informs our philosophical work and ethical living, both today and into the future. The bulk of the chapter is devoted to introducing four standpoints from which one might think about virtue ethics in a world context: tradition-based; rooted global; emergent cosmopolitan; and universal theory. The world impinges in different ways on theorists within each of these frameworks; as we reflect on which standpoint (or perhaps standpoints) we occupy, both the demands and also the opportunities of theorizing virtue ethics in the present, increasingly interconnected world will come into sharper focus.

Before delving into the four standpoints, there are two preliminary matters that we should discuss. To begin with, it is no coincidence that the present volume is the first English-language reference work in ethical theory to give serious attention to the ways in which one should approach its subject in a world context. One only has to look in order to see the richness of

multiple traditions' virtue-ethical theorizing, as recognized both in the present volume and in volumes like Angle and Slote (2013). It makes sense, therefore, that a volume on virtue ethics be the first to tackle the complexities of theorizing in a multi-tradition, multi-lingual world. This is not to say that there is no "world" aspect to consequentialism, deontology, or other ethical approaches: in each of these cases, careful inspection shows that there is also much to reflect upon, as works like Ivanhoe (1991), Im (2011), Slote (2009), and Lee (2013) demonstrate. It is to be hoped that future reference works reflect this fact.

Second, we should note that to the extent ethical diversity has featured in previous philosophical discussions, it has typically been to see how the brute fact of diversity might be accommodated in meta-ethical debates about relativism, absolutism, realism, and so on. While these issues have some bearing on what follows, for the most part this chapter is concerned not with meta-ethical but with meta-philosophical issues: how should we engage in the theoretical and practical work of philosophy, in light of the world's diversity? In particular, how should we study and debate virtue ethics? It is crucial here that other chapters have made it plausible to think that there is some significant overlap in content across traditions, and perhaps even (some) shared concepts or problematiques. Thus, although this chapter is mostly written at a fairly high level of abstraction, its goal is to encourage changes in the ways that we think about and do philosophy, rather than to establish a particular meta-ethical thesis.

1. Tradition-Based

Our starting point is with the way that virtue ethics is pursued within a single tradition. Many analysts have stressed that genuine traditions are characterized by internal diversity and

rational (in the tradition's own terms) debate (Shils 1981; MacIntyre 1988 and 1990; Nussbaum & Sen 1989). MacIntyre's analysis of traditions is well-known and insightful. As he uses the term, traditions exist only when a community engages in enquiry in accord with standards that they collectively recognize, and they do so self-consciously:

 "A tradition of enquiry is more than a coherent movement of thought. It is such a movement in the course of which those engaging in the movement become aware of it and in self-aware fashion attempt to engage in its debates and carry its enquiries forward."

(MacIntyre 1988: 326)

At a particular place and time, it may be possible to identify both fine-grained and more broadly encompassing traditions, many of which are exemplified in the earlier chapters of this volume. For example, it probably makes sense to think of both a Stoic tradition and a broader Hellenistic philosophical tradition, with somewhat different matters being at issue in each case. In cases like these, in which members of a broadly shared linguistic and cultural community also identify as members of distinct sub-communities of enquiry, it will sometimes be helpful to speak of the practices of these sub-communities as sub-traditions. In any event, for MacIntyre and for other writers on tradition, it is crucial that traditions are susceptible to internal critique and progress. MacIntyre uses the inability of certain coherent movements of thought conclusively to answer their own questions as central evidence for concluding that they are not traditions (MacIntyre 1990: 158–160).

Much of the enquiry into virtue ethics that is discussed in this volume's earlier chapters is tradition-based enquiry. Beyond the ways in which one sub-tradition challenges or responds to another, philosophical practice in the world at large makes little impact on such tradition-based

enquiry. There is one way, though, in which simply identifying an alternative approach to virtue ethics as "tradition-based" might make a difference to a contemporary practitioner of virtue ethics. Hansen has argued that "moral tradition respect" accrues to an alternative tradition when we come to see that adherents of a tradition pay serious attention to objections and to rival positions—and especially if they provide "sound responses" to these objections (Hansen 2004: 92). This is very different from simply finding what some other group says to be attractive. Suppose that, upon learning that Confucians place more value on funeral rituals than one's own tradition, one decided, "I see the point of the Confucian practice, and think it's better than what we have been doing; I henceforth embrace the value they place on mourning and funerals." This is not a matter of moral tradition respect, but simply a first-order moral judgment. Hansen's focus is on cases when first-order disagreement persists. If the rival tradition is just a series of unsupported assertions, Hansen says that comparative philosophy gives us no further reason to respect or tolerate these beliefs, beyond our own first-order moral beliefs in toleration. However, when the tradition is positively engaged in defending its positions in light of reasoned critiques from its rivals, then we respect it as a philosophical tradition. Hansen suggests as an analogy the way in which we "positively excuse" someone for his or her good intentions and principled behavior, over and above the more normal case of "negatively excusing" when we simply withhold blame after someone makes a predictable mistake. Similarly, he argues that when a tradition exemplifies high epistemic or philosophical standards by seriously engaging with rival positions, we respect that tradition in such a way that we have an additional (or stronger) reason for the tolerance of continued disagreement.

Hansen says that the mere fact that another tradition endorses a given norm does not give us a reason to believe it, though moral tradition respect leads to strengthened tolerance for the

others and potentially to a mild destabilization of our own views. MacIntyre agrees that the mere fact of others' different views does not give us any reason to change our own. Indeed, because he stresses the different (and even incommensurable) standards by which adherents of different traditions reason, he puts even more emphasis on this point than Hansen. Be this as it may, MacIntyre argues that it is possible for adherents of one tradition to see that their tradition is inferior to another, and to rationally choose to adopt the alternative tradition. One tradition can defeat another. Roughly, the story goes like this: (1) if we perceive our tradition to be in crisis, because it is repeatedly failing by its own standards; and (2) we come to understand the norms and reasoning of a different tradition, perhaps by learning it as a "second first language"; and (3) we furthermore see that the alternative tradition is not in crisis; and finally (4) we see how the alternative tradition can explain in its terms why our own tradition had failed: if all these happen, then we can rationally choose to adopt the new tradition (MacIntyre 1988, 1989).

Both the attribution of moral tradition respect and the more radical recognition that one's tradition is inferior to another are holistic, in the sense that they are about whole traditions rather than about individual aspects of traditions. In the next section, we will consider ways in which those studying virtue ethics in a world context might be able to draw on alternative ideas in a more piecemeal fashion. Before moving on, there is one issue that I have left hanging. Should we understand contemporary virtue ethics—whether Anglo-American, Confucian, Buddhist, or what have you: the essays in this volume's second part—to be tradition-based? This is a pressing question in part because MacIntyre has explicitly denied that modern, academic Western philosophy counts as a tradition. He emphasizes the ways in which concepts and standards of reasoning are interdependent, embedded not just in discursive traditions but also in particular social structures and community activities. He claims that from late-medievals like Duns Scotus

on down to contemporary Anglo-American philosophy, Western philosophy has come to be focused on "problems" that can be identified and perhaps solved independently of the system of thought out of which it emerged. Once the focus is on problems, any purported solution will be *ad hoc* and always subject to an equally *ad hoc* rebuttal (MacIntyre 1990: 152 and 159). There is no simple answer to MacIntyre's charge, but three points may be helpful. First, it is striking that contemporary approaches to virtue ethics, East and West, frequently seek to root themselves in one or more historical figures, texts, or whole traditions. In particular, Aristotle has played this role for many theorists, from Anscombe (1958) to Hursthouse (1999) to Russell (2013). Second, virtue ethics seems to have a greater intimacy with actual communities and their practices than do at least some other strands of contemporary philosophy: the categories emphasized by virtue ethics tend to be thicker, more embedded in communities, cultures, and actual moral education than are the thinner categories associated with deontology or consequentialism. For both these reasons, we can argue that contemporary virtue ethics is indeed tradition-based. Finally, when we turn to the idea of "universal theory" in the final section below, we will see a different type of response to MacIntyre: namely, embracing the idea of consciously distancing ourselves from particularistic traditions.

2. Rooted Global

Tradition-based enquiry is what most thinkers over the ages have done, and what many of us still do most of the time. It is what most of this volume's chapters describe. But the very juxtaposition of different traditions in the volume suggests that its editors are expressing moral tradition respect for ways of engaging in virtue ethics that are rooted in traditions other than their

own. If we set aside the holistic, MacIntyrean switch from one tradition to an alternative tradition, how can we understand the possibilities for working across or between traditions in a more piecemeal fashion? Admittedly, there are many barriers to doing so, from the conceptual to the practical, but there are also good grounds for thinking that it can be done constructively. Roughly speaking, there are two ways to think about working across traditions. The "rooted global" approach emphasizes the persistence of one's home tradition and its goals or values; one remains rooted in this tradition even as one opens up to (and even seeks out) the possibility of stimuli from other traditions. One's goal is progress as seen by one's own tradition's (potentially changeable) standards. We will examine this approach here, and turn to the "emergent cosmopolitan" framework, wherein cross- or trans-tradition consensus becomes an explicit goal, in the following section.

Most philosophers who engage in cross-tradition work recognize that meanings of key terms are tightly bound up with the meanings of other terms, with the inferential connections among these terms, and perhaps with the material practices of a given culture as well. This is all grist for the mill of holists like MacIntyre, who conclude that different philosophical languages are incommensurable with one another. It is essential to realize, though, that one can accept a great deal of meaning holism and yet still countenance working across traditions, if one allows that the constructive crossing of traditions often includes some cautious approximations and temporary vagueness. As one sets about interacting with people from other backgrounds, thinking about one's own values in a disaggregated way can help one to arrive at a certain level of mutual understanding or agreement. Michael Walzer (1994) has put this in terms of "thin" values; unlike "thick" values, when we talk in terms of thin values we do not concern ourselves with their underlying justification, full meaning, or broad inferential connections. We just seek to

find superficial common ground with others. This strategy was put into practice by the drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and made explicit by Jacques Maritain, a philosopher charged with summarizing the views of the world's philosophers on human rights. He famously wrote that "Yes, we agree about the rights, but on condition that no one asks us why" (Maritain 1949: 9). To be sure, one cannot push disaggregation too far. After all, it relies on temporarily resisting many of the inferential connections that give our words their meaning. Alternatively, we might see it as an effort to temporarily step away from some of the social norms whose inertia exerts a mighty influence on what we are able to say to one another, and even understand. As such, the disaggregative perspective is fragile and prone to error. So both as agent engaged in cross-cultural dialogue, and as analyst seeking to understand such conversations, we must cautiously balance the holistic and disaggregative perspectives.

A good example of an effort at this kind of cautious balancing is Stalnaker's idea of "bridge concept." A bridge concept is a "general idea...which can be given enough content to be meaningful and guide comparative inquiry yet [is] still open to greater specification in particular cases" (Stalnaker 2006: 17). Bridge concepts are not "hypotheses about transcultural universals," but rather are tentative hypothesis about general areas within which traditions may be able to speak constructively to one another. Stalnaker adds that careful "analysis of each thinker's vocabulary...safeguards each side's uniqueness within the comparison." For example, Stalnaker suggests that a bridge concept like "person" can enable us fruitfully to compare and challenge ideas found in Augustine and Xunzi, respectively: both turn out to have concepts that can be roughly approximated as "person," and thinking about issues and insights related to the more specific concept in Augustine that we can approximate as "person" allows us to bring new insight and raise new challenges for the more specific set of ideas related to "person" in Xunzi.

Nothing guarantees that bridge concepts are fruitful rather than misleading, of course, and some of Stalnaker's choices have come in for criticism (Kline 2007). Still this is a good illustration of the way that disaggregation might cautiously proceed.

How do we determine if some particular, piecemeal encounter between traditions is constructive? The simplest answer is: an encounter is constructive if we, adherents of our tradition, find it so. Most crudely, if we look to another tradition for an answer to a pre-existing question that we have, and find such an answer, then—all else equal—this is constructive. Of course, comparative philosophers have understood for many years that simply attempting to mine another tradition for answers to our own questions can be problematic. Too often the failure of such a mining expedition leads to the conclusion that the other tradition is not philosophical, after all, instead of suggesting that our questions may not be the only philosophical questions to ask. Another kind of success, after all, can be when we are nudged to see that new questions, or different ways of approaching old questions, might be superior to or at least supplement our existing ones. When, from a disaggregated stance, an agent comes to value something that is given more weight in other groups than in his or her own—for instance, when a Thomist or other Western thinker comes to embrace the importance that Confucians put on ritual and on the virtue of propriety—he or she may be prompted to re-examine his or her own traditions and see if they can be revised so as to give the value in question a firmer footing in the local tradition (MacIntyre 2004; Woodruff 2001).

A second problem with judging success purely in our own, pre-existing terms is that it offers little room for judging whether our interpretation of the alien tradition is, in fact, true to that tradition's larger context and concerns. Suppose that by taking something that Zhu Xi says out of context, a philosopher is stimulated to find a new and promising approach within

contemporary Anglo-American virtue ethics (the novelty and promise as judged within this latter tradition). Is it relevant that the stimulus is not something that Zhu Xi could have actually meant? The answer seems clearly to be both no and yes. No, insofar as we are simply happy to have a fruitful new idea to work with. But yes, it may be a problem, both because it may lead to a broader misunderstanding of Zhu Xi (and perhaps of Neo-Confucianism more broadly) and because we may miss an even deeper stimulus or challenge to our framework, as a result of the misunderstanding. For this reason, philosophers seeking to work across traditions have much to learn from historians or other specialists. But the philosophers are not beholden to the historians to decide whether a given interpretation passes philosophical muster. As mentioned above, disaggregated, creative adaptations of ideas from one tradition to another are risky. Still, the main upshot here is that so long as we bear these costs in mind, the payoffs may well turn out to be substantial, and they will have to be judged on a case-by-case basis.

3. Emergent Cosmopolitan

To this point we have paid too little attention to the challenges posed to cross-tradition philosophizing by differences of language. Worries about translation are one of the main sources of MacIntyre's discomfort with piecemeal philosophical comparison; he argues that modern, global languages like contemporary English, which seem to be able to express ideas from many traditions, have in fact been neutered, shorn of essential connections to tradition and community that enabled older languages to communicate rich ideas and commitments concerning virtue (MacIntyre 1989). The view of this chapter is that while differences of language and historical-cultural context do indeed make difficult the accurate interpretation of one set of ideas in a

different language, time, and place, MacIntyre's talk of incommensurability goes too far. The key is that we can get things right enough—we approximate—in order to make interventions in our local traditions, all of which can then be provisionally assessed in the various terms discussed above. So the linguistic differences among the various traditions of virtue ethics canvassed in this volume are not insuperable barriers to one or another kind of world virtue ethics.

The issues just alluded to are at the center of a large secondary literature (Mou 2001, Angle 2006). Given the meta-philosophical goals of the present chapter, though, a different and more practical kind of linguistic issue should catch our interest. Rather than focusing on Confucius's Chinese and Aristotle's Greek, let us instead ask about the language and other communicative infrastructure (books, journals, conferences, internet, and so on) that enables philosophers with different backgrounds today to interact. Is it possible for philosophers who initially identify with Anglophone neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics, or with Sinophone Confucian virtue ethics, to come to occupy a theoretical position that remains uncommitted to either one, but that, on the basis of good arguments and evidence, seeks to construct or articulate a viable ethical perspective borrowing from each of them and from other sources as well? Of course there are no uncontroversial, standpoint-independent criteria for "good argument" and "good evidence"; the possibility we are exploring is not a "view from nowhere." Rather, as communication, travel, and translation all become easier, there may be emerging not just rooted global philosophy, but actually a trans-national philosophical community that can itself be a source of criteria and evaluation (Angle & Slote 2013: 6).

Call such a possibility "emergent cosmopolitanism." It is very different from the strong cosmopolitanism of Singer (1972) and yet also distinct from the more elastic approach of Appiah

(2007), which is still an argument for our present commitment to a universal morality. Rather than being a first-order normative thesis in ethics or political philosophy, emergent cosmopolitanism describes one way in which philosophy conducted in a world context might develop. Building on the example begun above, let us suppose that Anglophone neo-Aristotelians ("tradition A") are stimulated by the Confucian understanding of ritual propriety (as interpreted, via translation, into the language of tradition A) to some fruitful development of their ideas of virtue. From a rooted global stance, it is relatively unimportant to members of "A" how Sinophone Confucian virtue ethicists ("tradition C") react to this interpretation and appropriation of Confucianism. As noted above, there are reasons why interpreters should care about getting the target of their interpretation right, but these are only considerations that can be weighed against other considerations; they are not necessary conditions for success.

The problem with such a model is that it may be unrealistic in its assumption that As and Cs are walled off from one another. This might have been apt for, say, the important stimulus provided to the European *philosophes* by Jesuit interpretations of Chinese thought in the eighteenth century (Mungello 2012; although see Jensen (1997) on the "Sino-Jesuit community" in China), but it is increasingly problematic in today's world. Contemporary members of traditions like A and C are more and more likely to read one another's work (either directly, or in translation); to react to it in print or at conferences; and for the original authors to be interested in or even concerned about these reactions. As noted above, virtue ethics is one of the areas in which these interactions are more developed than elsewhere. What may distinguish this from previous moments when an extended encounter between traditions led to synthesis—for example, when over the course of centuries Neo-Confucianism emerged from earlier Confucianism and Buddhism—is the potential for multipolar philosophical discussions that

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today's integration and communicative technologies make possible. Only to the degree that openness and inclusiveness characterize our philosophical communities can we genuinely speak of emergent cosmopolitanism.

There are at least three major caveats that must be registered. First, many of the same critiques that have been applied to economic and cultural globalization are potentially applicable to emergent cosmopolitanism within philosophy. To give one example, in Chinese academia, prestige, influence, and increased compensation all come from successful publication in "international" journals, which provides strong incentives to shape research agendas so as to appeal to the already-existing standards of these (primarily Anglophone) journals' editorial boards. Even more basically, consider the degree to which reflection on Confucian virtues is being channeled through academics employed in research universities which, though now ubiquitous in industrialized countries, are of quite recent vintage. This latter fact has led to some Chinese thinkers to question whether Chinese reflective traditions are best understood as "philosophy" in this modern sense (Defoort and Ge 2005). A different reaction, shared by at least some Western academic philosophers, is to argue that the current institutional structure of Western philosophy—and especially its disconnection from practical matters of day-to-day living—itself may be problematic, and that we should pay more attention to philosophy as it is lived (Shusterman 2007). The second caveat is to acknowledge that when we are talking about the emergence of a community with increasingly overlapping standards, we cannot be focused solely on the actions of philosophers. Philosophers need not be passive recipients of changes in the global order; we can be active critics and participants in shaping these changes.

Finally, the third caveat is to insist that any further theorization of what a more cosmopolitan philosophical community would be like must itself be inclusive, looking to

multiple sources for concepts on which the self-understanding of emergent cosmopolitanism can be based. For example, contemporary Chinese philosopher Zhao Tingyang has been arguing for what he calls a "*tianxia*" perspective, which can be partly understood as "from the world, to the world" (Zhao 2009). In fact, Zhao nicely exemplifies an emergent cosmopolitan attitude—albeit not regarding virtue ethics—in that he has worked to take into account reactions to his work published in multiple languages, and both draws on and seeks to speak to philosophical thinking from a range of contemporary communities.

4. Universal Theory

All four approaches canvassed in this chapter make universalist claims. That is, even tradition-based approaches to virtue ethics are making claims about what the virtues are that are meant to apply to all people. Or, if there are limitations in the applicability of full-fledged virtue—Aristotle's natural slaves or perhaps the "masses (*min*)" of early Confucian political thought—these limitations do not depend on participation in the tradition, but on generic features of the individuals in question. To give just one example, there are many statements within the founding texts of the Confucian tradition suggesting that its teachings and insights are relevant to all. When Mencius (6B:2) says "All people can become Yaos or Shuns," he means that any person anywhere has the capacity to become a sage just like Yao or Shun. In the *Analects* (9:13), Confucius says that he wants to dwell among the Yi people outside the Chinese heartland, which leads someone to ask him: "But they are uncouth; how will you manage?" Confucius responds, "If a gentleman were to dwell among them, what uncouthness would there be?" The implication

seems to be that Confucian virtue is not limited by borders or culture, but applies and can spread wherever the virtuous gentleman should go.

Nonetheless, for each of the first three approaches, the justification of these sorts of claims appeals to the standards of one or more particular traditions or communities. The self-understanding of "universal theory," in contrast, minimizes or even denies altogether the rootedness of its theory in a specific tradition, time, or place. One way it may do this is by consciously drawing on an eclectic range of sources, imaginatively treating all texts as if their "authors" were all theorists and all contemporaries of one another. Another mark of universal theory is a close integration with the human or natural sciences, particularly psychology. Finally, another common trait of such work is to focus on solving a range of problems that are taken to be partly definitive of the field of virtue ethics. As noted above, MacIntyre believes that when philosophers focus on problems independently from the tradition-based context out of which they emerged, any purported solution will be *ad hoc* and always subject to an equally *ad hoc* rebuttal.

Before assessing the strengths and weaknesses of universal theory, let us examine an example. Swanton (2003) is explicitly pluralistic in its sources. One of the distinctive characteristics of virtue-ethical universal theory, in fact, is a distancing from Aristotle, who is the source of so much modern discussion of virtues. To set oneself outside a dominant tradition requires a clear challenge to that tradition's guiding assumptions, and Swanton provides many such challenges over the course of her book. Swanton also notes that she aims at a "wide reflective equilibrium" that includes reference to background theories that can help us resolve conflicts among our ethical intuitions (2003: 8-9). In particular, she draws on post-Nietzschean "depth psychology" in order to get at some of the complex facets of our inner life. Her reliance

on some insights from Nietzsche does not mean that she is "rooted" in a Nietzschean tradition, for at least two reasons. First, a wide variety of theorists in psychology and cognitive science play roles in her account. Second, it's simply not obvious that there is such a thing as a Nietzschean tradition related to virtue ethics: no community with practice or standards to which we can see Swanton's work as beholden. Rather, she exemplifies the ecumenical, academic theorist of virtue who sees philosophy, science, educational theory, and therapeutic teachings as all potentially relevant to better articulating the nature of virtue ethics and to solving the problems for it that fellow philosophers have identified.

In the context of our interest in world virtue ethics, one of the attractions of universal theory is quite obvious: it should be equally open to ideas or solutions originating in any tradition or language. And indeed, Swanton has shown interest in engaging critically with non-Euro-American sources (Swanton 2013). Hourdequin (2013) is another example of approaching a philosophical question that is posed in a "universal theory" mode, and seeking to answer it through recourse to a non-Euro-American philosophical source (in this case, the Confucian thinker Mengzi). What, though, should we make of MacIntyre's accusation that non-tradition-based enquiry will inevitably founder on irresolvable, *ad hoc* claims and rebuttals? At least three types of replies might be offered. First, it might be thought that the use of various sciences within universal theory will help to settle debates or narrow the room for disagreement. From Swanton's depth psychology to the social and other forms of psychology employed by combatants in the debates over "situationism" (Slingerland 2011), there seems to be some real evidence that science can indeed help, even if it hardly answers all our questions. Second, is it really so obvious that traditions settle things better than universal theory? This is obviously a huge question that depends not only on the nature of universal theory but also on a more detailed

examination of tradition-based enquiry than can be attempted here. Still, we can observe that the very openness of universal theory to any relevant consideration might offer so much room for maneuver that questions will never be settled: one side or the other can always just shift the ground of discussion. Or perhaps this shifting is itself a good thing, offering a way to challenge the very questions that set the agenda for universal theory? Consider the centrality within Anglophone virtue ethics of the problem of right action. For reasons that Schneewind (1990) raises, it has seemed that virtue ethics faces a problem—a problem that Swanton (2003) and many others have tried to solve. But perhaps there is a difficulty with the way the "problem" is formulated, which resources from other ethical traditions can help us to see (Yu 2013). This leads to a third kind of response, which is that we should not downplay the degree to which even universal theory relies on a community of practitioners with standards (which themselves can be called into question), and that as that community becomes broader, the difference between universal theory and emergent cosmopolitanism blurs.

Conclusion

This chapter is not designed to convince readers that there is one and only one way to study virtue ethics with the world in view. Even tradition-based enquiry can be carried out in a world-acknowledging fashion, if its practitioners periodically look up from their focused enquiries, open themselves at least to granting moral tradition respect to others, and consider the possibilities of rooted-global types of stimuli. The only thing this chapter would firmly resist is the view that everything that needs to be said about virtue ethics emerges from something called the "Western tradition." This stance is problematic from two perspectives: first, there is no single

"tradition," in any recognizable sense, that includes all and only the thinkers or texts that people using the phrase "Western tradition" typically have in mind. Philosophy, as it has developed from the Mediterranean world, to Europe, to North America (and elsewhere), has already interacted with a wide range of traditions and communities that do not show up on standard lists of "Western philosophy." Second, as much of the scholarship references in this chapter—and a number of the other chapters in this volume—seek to demonstrate in detail, both virtue ethics and a recognizably philosophical concern with virtue ethics can be found in traditions around the world. The mere presence of such concerns does not guarantee that the cross-tradition engagement with their ideas, in one of the ways outlined here, will automatically be constructive. As the chapter has tried to show, each approach opens up productive possibilities but also carries with it certain risks. The determination of success will, in each instance, be a matter of case-specific argument. The angel—or *bodhisattva*, or *junzi*—is in the details.

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