



Universität
Basel

Research Project

Authenticity in Comparison: The Case of Chinese Philosophy

Third-party funded project

Project title Authenticity in Comparison: The Case of Chinese Philosophy

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Organisation / Research unit

Europainstitut / European Global Studies (Weber)

Department

Project start 01.10.2016

Probable end 30.11.2019

Status Completed

The aim of this research project is to explore authenticity claims as well as inauthenticity charges with regard to representations of 'Chinese philosophy' in traditional Chinese texts and modern Chinese academic discourse, understood and assessed against the specific disciplinary background of comparative philosophy. To this end, a number of articles will be written, mostly by the doctoral student (that eventually will lead to his dissertation), but also one by the PI and one co-authored by both of them. The central concept to be investigated is authenticity. The project proposes that analyzing the idea of authenticity from the perspective of comparison can contribute to our understanding of authenticity claims in Chinese philosophy specifically, but also of the concept of authenticity in general. The research project pursues a relational theory of authenticity. Concepts of authenticity that are committed to the metaphysical or epistemic doctrine of essentialism, for instance, to a distinction of an inner Chinese essence and its outer philosophical expression, will be rejected. The general critique of essentialism will be supported by analyzing concrete cases. This will reveal how easily essentialism leads to a distorted understanding of the subject and the object of authenticity. Beyond a critique of essentialism, the research project seeks to analyze and explore a variety of non-essentialist understandings of authenticity, the eventually favored relational account being merely one out of several possibilities.

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