

The Role of Comparative Philosophy in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Role of Comparative Philosophy in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

Philosophising at the Big Fault Line

By

Nevad Kahteran

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Dedicated to all our young borderless thinkers

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PREFACE

It is interesting to speculate why some parts of the world seem more appropriate for comparative philosophy than others, rather in the way some soils are better for certain kinds of plant than others. One of the interesting features of the essays and discussions in this volume is that it reflects a good deal on this issue. Comparative philosophy has emerged from its rather marginal status in the past to demanding today a significant role in the philosophical world. One might think that cultures that have traditionally brought together a whole variety of different ways of thinking about theoretical topics would be a rich background to comparative philosophy, but in fact all cultures are like that. The ways in which the world has now become one society is difficult to appreciate for many but it is undeniably true. We are not one society in the sense that everywhere is the same but in the sense that we cannot ignore issues and ideas that arise anywhere. Borders do not exist for ideas, they flourish everywhere, even in places where they are most restricted.

In this collection the variety of intellectual life and its links are explored in a way that suggests the advantages of comparative thought. It is tempting to stick to a narrow curriculum and restrict thought so that one can achieve depth, but such depth is often misleading. It comes at the cost of narrowness and an aversion to the wide range of interesting and important ideas that are available in world philosophy. It is certainly true that there is a limit to how far one can consider a wide variety of ideas and avoid actually working creatively with those ideas. Some thinkers flit from concept to concept and they never really come into contact with each other. This is perhaps how comparative philosophy ought not to be done, since there is always the danger of confusing philosophy with the history of ideas. A procession of exotic ideas is far from philosophy. It certainly can exhibit learning and cultural sensitivity but not the sort of demonstrative form of argumentation that is essential to philosophy.

Readers of this volume are invited to explore a range of ideas from a variety of cultures, and the theme, if there is one, is the need to avoid the prosaic. Let's see what philosophical ideas resonate throughout the world and examine them critically. That is comparative philosophy at its best.

—Oliver Leaman

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The late professor Eliot Deutsch (1931 – 2020), Chung-ying Cheng, Roger T. Ames, Tamara Albertini, Graham Parkes (all from the Philosophy Department University of Hawai'i-Mānoa during my using the Fulbright grant there and later), Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Oliver Leaman, Ben-Ami Scharfstein, Hans Daiber, James W. Heisig, Tu Weiming, Bo Mou, Lee Ming-huei, Ralph Weber, Jana Rošker, Mislav Ježić, Rada Iveković and Dušan Pajin.

Certain chapters in this book appeared, in slightly revised versions, in a number of journals and books, and I am personally thankful to the editors for their previous permission to publish them in this book form.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

DILEMMA BETWEEN “THE MYTH OF COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY OR THE COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY MALGRÉ LUI” REVISITED

The very idea of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a Big Fault Line (not only as a major seismic zone and a prolific source of intraplate earthquakes, seismic activities and seismotectonic faults, but as a boundary between incompatible or irreconcilable beliefs, cultures, or the like)¹ crossed my mind as a suitable term to be put in the title of this collection of essays in book form. Philosophising here *hic et nunc* is much harder and at the same time much more challenging and fascinating as a way of doing philosophy that crosses traditions and seeks a constructive engagement.

Two decades ago Robert E. Allinson² asked the following question: Is there a difference between comparative philosophy and philosophy proper? The question according to him is: “can comparative philosophy exist as an enterprise distinct from any good philosophy? In short, is it possible to find an example of philosophy, whether Eastern or Western, this is far too mild a statement, which is not based on a key comparison or contrast as the source of its inspiration and consequent development?” For him, all philosophy arises in reaction, either as a revolution against or as a completion to a previous philosophy.

For Allinson, it is quite impossible to carry out philosophy in a vacuum and all philosophy is comparative philosophy and the term is too wide to be very useful. In this regard, the notion of comparative philosophy, itself as a

¹ See the link: <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/fault+line>.

² See Robert E. Allinson's contributing article (“The Myth of Comparative Philosophy or the Comparative Philosophy Malgré Lui”) to Bo Mou's edited volume (2001), *Two Roads to Wisdom?--Chinese and Analytic philosophical tradition* (Open Court).

unique and self-subsistent discipline, is a myth, because philosophy always has been comparative philosophy and the very phrase is redundant. It seems that the myth of comparative philosophy has always been well deconstructed regarding this issue, but...

If comparative philosophy is conducted with a Kiplingesque bias of showing the fundamental irreducibility of one system of thinking to another, then such a methodology precludes the possibility of world understanding, and this approach does not serve the cause of intercultural understanding. Comparative philosophy, or in its more proper understanding, integrative philosophy, for him is in the service of intercultural dialogue, and by saying this he is advocating the construction of a common subject matter with a common methodology, taking into account those practical benefits (the advantages of a complementary spiral model of East-West philosophical integration and remaining in a continuous state of openness to the other as producing the most fruitful results for mankind) which will increase the prospect of mutual understanding. A development of a pluralist world culture is occurring in intercultural dialogue, which brings us back to the essential issue, i.e. a common methodology of intercultural hermeneutics, integration and comparative philosophy in spite of itself.

We will repeat his question from this article: Where is all of this leading? Allinson's dilemma is revisited here as this process of philosophising across borders intensifies further in Bosnia and Herzegovina with good reason. Also, I am deeply convinced that this process is unavoidable, and that we cannot be an isolated island, and by doing this we are providing a road map for future comparative philosophy and the Bosnian young borderless thinkers or specialists across borders, even despite the fact that this discipline has the lowest status in professional philosophy. Signs of that global dialogue here, across areas and traditions of philosophy, are already visible:

First, it can be understood as a demythologising of comparative philosophy as a discipline distinct from pure philosophy and simultaneously a reconstruction of comparative philosophy as an exercise in complementary, integrative philosophy in diversifying academic philosophy.

Second, the success of the academic field of comparative philosophy has failed, according to Vytius Silius,³ to diversify the curricula of academic

³ Silus Vytius (2020), „Diversifying Academic Philosophy: The Post-Comparative Turn and Transculturalism“ in *Asian Studies*, 8(2), 257-280.
<https://doi.org/10.4312/as.2020.8.2.257-280>.

philosophy in the context of the institutional structure of the university system and the institutional parochialism of Western academic philosophy, because of a strong collection of studies on the multiple facets of institutional racism not only in philosophy, but all of the academy (for instance, to diversify philosophy courses by including thinkers from Africa and Asia). *Extra academia, nulla philosophia*⁴. For Peter Levine and Silius, “philosophy is a remarkably un-diverse discipline”⁵, lacking in diversity and it has a philosophical prevailing canon with assumptions about the racial superiority of Europe as a source of the monoculturality of academic philosophy:

“This particular Eurocentric version of history of philosophy is still a mainstream position and the exclusivist, homogenizing effects of it are further fortified by the virtual substitution of philosophy with *history* of philosophy in contemporary universities”.⁶

With premeditated plans we took these two papers in this Introductory chapter to help culturally enhance the diversification of academic philosophy in the future in the Balkan region and Bosnia and Herzegovina itself, opening this notion of philosophy in the singular to the notion of philosophies in the plural and simultaneously allowing comparative philosophy to challenge the Eurocentric orientation of the discipline.

Third, the very idea of “fusion philosophy”, launched by Arindam Chakrabarti and Ralph Weber⁷, and the idea of “post-comparative philosophy” suggested by Moeller⁸. For this author, academic philosophy in the West was “hardly open to the notion of philosophies in the plural”⁹. The Eurocentric vocabulary and academic framework of academic philosophy

⁴ Rada Iveković (1994), „The Politics of Comparative Philosophy“, in: *Beyond Orientalism: The Work of Wilhelm Halbfass and its Impact on Indian and Cross-Cultural Studies*, ed. Eli Franco i Karin Preisendanz (Amsterdam: Rodopi), p. 223.

⁵ Silius, p. 259.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Chakrabarti, Arindam & Weber, Ralph (2016), “Afterword/Afterwards in *Comparative Philosophy without Borders* (Bloomsbury Academic), pp. 227-239.

⁸ Moeller, Hans-Georg (2018). „On Comparative and Post-Comparative Philosophy“ in *Appreciating the Chinese Difference: Engaging Roger T. Ames on Methods, Issues, and Roles*, edited by Jim, Behuniak, 31-45. (Albany: State University of New York Press).

⁹ Silius, p. 259.

were discussed in our previous book on comparative philosophy published by our Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo¹⁰.

We can agree with Chakrabarti and Weber¹¹, that simply comparing these philosophical traditions, but not comparing them philosophically will not function at all. By this we mean a border-crossing-experience, i.e. not to be satisfied with the role of being the comparatist, and their warning here is needed: the fusion that fusion philosophy propagates should not be misunderstood as a syncretic inclusion of whatever thought one comes across, and the future of fusion philosophy will be brighter as an act of forward looking philosophising, rather than a backward looking comparison. What they suggested there is the fact that comparative philosophy is only a stage or a phase that has to be overstepped or transcended in order for it to come to fruition as “fusion philosophy” and the idea of “post-comparative philosophy”, which is all about the active and prospective process of philosophising, and not about the retrospective process of balancing the books as suggested by the mentioned paper written by Silius on such a fusion, a postcomparative project. Of course, comparative philosophy for Silius should not be abolished, discarded, or discredited, but completed and complemented.

Part One consists of essays which appeared, in slightly revised versions, in a number of journals and books that focus on relevant resources introducing this field in our region and especially Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Part Two consists of interviews with prominent precursors of knowledge outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We could say that each part stands on its own, while taken together they complement each other in comparative and post-comparative philosophy.

The essays of Part One are all good examples of propaedeutic or an introduction to a subject or area of study in this field in the Balkans and Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular:

1) In the midst of the rising interest in cross-cultural comparative philosophy in the Balkans, as one of the pioneering Bosnian comparative philosophers, the author is convinced that philosophy must diversify or die. The question is: is there a real difference between doing what is here characterised as “comparative philosophy” and simply doing philosophy

¹⁰ Kahteran (2009), *Komparativna filozofija*, Filozofski fakultet u Sarajevu, p. 332.

¹¹ Chakrabarti and Weber, p. 233.

well, or, perhaps, is all philosophy comparative philosophy? This is a chapter about the very possibility of intercultural thinking in a global age on that historically big fault-line, i.e., on the edge of two interconnected and interdependent worlds, the East and the West, and their intercultural encounter, cross-currents, Asian perspectives, ethnocentrism and multiculturalism in contemporary philosophy, beyond philosophical eurocentrism, as a critique of Eurocentrism, toleration in comparative perspective, comparative philosophical methodology, and, finally, the East/West philosophy and the comparative approach, exploring intersections, including sinologism as an alternative to orientalism and postcolonialism. Actually, this chapter, valuing diversity, is putting philosophies versus philosophy in defence of a flexible definition following in the footsteps of the patriarchs of comparative philosophy from Hawai’i and elsewhere. Now it has just been published in *Comparative Philosophy*, Volume 12, No. 1(2021): 127-147.

2) The cultivation of a new spirit of philosophy that transcends the classical borders and opens its understanding of “universality” to a multitude of cultural and intellectual histories is the subject of the recently published *Nove granice kineske filozofije (New Frontiers of Chinese Philosophy)*. The knowledge that is very much needed in Bosnia Herzegovina to enhance young scholars working in the Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian language in the Balkans was encouraged by bringing another distinguished scholar, namely Lee Ming-huei (1953–), from Academia Sinica in Taipei, to deliver his series of public lectures in the country. Finally, the importance of Islamic works in the language of the Neo-Confucianists, i.e. Han Kitāb, and Tu’s’ contribution to the work on Liu Zhi, and his collaborative work with Daisaku Ikeda, which further attracted me to him, represents a deep interpenetration of the Confucian and Islamic traditions, without any kind of syncretism. This chapter was delivered at the University of Ljubljana in its centennial year and has now been published under its changed title: “The Global Significance of Chinese/Taiwanese Philosophy in a Project on Islamic-Confucian-Daoist Dialogue” In: Jana Rošker (2021) (ed.), *Modern and Contemporary Taiwanese Philosophy: Traditional Foundations and New Developments* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 350-382).

3) Paving the way to establishing a platform for Islamic-Confucian-Buddhist dialogue in the Balkans simultaneously joining hands with what has already been done in the meantime by other researchers in this field, and exploring Buddhist, Chinese and Islamic studies in the context of the persistent challenges facing India, China and the Islamic world, the author believes that broadening the philosophical horizons in this regard will be an

exciting experience and cross-cultural exchange taking into account that dialogue among them is more necessary than ever – especially when dialogue increases the effectiveness of listening as the basis for a symbiotic coexistence.

Also, this chapter underlies the importance of relations between contemporary Islamic, Chinese and Buddhist thought and civilisation, as well as the importance of Islamic works in the language of Neo-Confucianism and the rise of the intellectual current in China called the *Han Kitab* and prominent Chinese-Muslim thinkers like Liu Zhi, Ma Zhu, Wang Daiyu and others. The interaction between Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist thought is also stressed in this chapter. Finally, the author summarises what he has learned from Tu Weiming, Sachiko Murata, S. H. Nasr and other prominent scholars about the unique blend of Buddhism and Confucianism in their relation with Islam that has made its appearance in India and China for over one millennium and especially from the seventeenth century onwards. Those acquainted with Islamic languages will find a wealth of terminology that will help bridge the gap between the included philosophical and theological traditions in their quest for global peace.

Finally, through intersecting worlds and identities, the author himself would like to present the common universe of included discourses which is nowadays pushed aside by tunnel vision and short-sightedness in these miserable times of unprecedented parochialism and narrow-mindedness instead of keeping in these academic tracks which will inevitably stimulate true intercultural thinking and dialogue between civilisations in relation to globalisation and cultural pluralisation embodying the wisdom of our predecessors in philosophy and creating world-wide symbiotic society for the 21st century. This paper is now published in: *Synthesis philosophica*, Islamic and Comparative Philosophy. 2016, Vol. 31, No. 2, pp. 433-450.

4) Izutsu Toshihiko's (井筒俊彦, 1914-1993) intercultural dialogue in philosophy: a signpost in the relations between Japan and Islam (published in: *The Herald/Glasnik*, No. 9-10, 2009, pp. 913-932) was written as a result of two visits to Kyoto University and the Japan Academy (established in 1879 in Tokyo) , of which the late Izutsu sensei, the most linguistically gifted of all Japanese philosophers and the first world renowned scholar of Islam to appear in Japan, was from 1982 to 1993 a distinguished member¹². For the first visit, the author was granted by the Japan Foundation, and the second time the author received an invitation from the Global Studies

¹² See: https://www.japan-acad.go.jp/en/members/bukko/ij_gyo.html;

doctoral programme from the ASAFAS, Kyoto University, as the very first Bosnian *kyoju*, or visiting professor there. This chapter discusses Izutsu-sensei’s overview of Zen philosophy that includes its epistemology, ontology, linguistic theory, and aesthetics.

5) This chapter is a continuation of the author’s efforts to meet the challenges of building an inclusive and comparative philosophy and of valuing cultural diversity in the post-war Bosnian circumstances, especially at Sarajevo University, in a spiritual joint venture to rethink distinctive Bosnian forms of transformation in response to the multiple challenges of modernity, given the current political climate in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The key question in it is as follows: should our Bosnian, somewhat damaged pluralistic society and the Balkans as a whole cultivate shared values and a common ground for human understanding in their education systems, in higher learning in particular, and all spheres of life, or become an easy prey of actually prevailing herd philosophies? This is also a question of a radical rethinking of our Bosnian heritage, especially Bosnian early medieval history, and those cultural patterns that have also determined how Bosnians interact with foreign cultures. At the moment, the advent of the imagined global village is far from a cause for celebration. So, bringing the curriculum into accordance with the Bologna guidelines is now one of the focal activities of the University of Sarajevo, and our departments are not exceptional in this regard in the region, and establishing stronger ties in this area based on common points and complementarities where personal contacts are crucial for successful co-operation – or networking is an urgent task. But, the fact is that in recent years philosophers in the Balkan region have begun to show a keen interest in learning the current discourse on religious and philosophical pluralism in this regard. The paper was delivered at the 3rd International Balkan Annual Conference (IBAC): “Bosnia and Herzegovina: in Common History and Multicultural Atmosphere of the Balkans” held from 10 to 13 October 2013 in Sarajevo.

6) This chapter examines implications of the late professor Muhamed Nezirović’s studies of the Spanish-Jewish Sephardic culture, language and literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina, from the specific point of view of Comparative and Eastern Philosophy studies, as well as from that of comparative cultural studies, intercultural dialogue and peace-building. Professor Nezirović (1934 – 2008) successfully found that badly needed measure of balance in his works to bring closer to us Bosnians the medieval cross-pollinations and cross-cultural studies, particularly the Bosnian Sephardic Heritage. Our aim here would be to show that certain aspects of

Bosnian culture – especially those highlighted by this eminent Romanist’s research on Sephardic culture in our country – could represent a very important cornerstone for all the above mentioned comparative disciplines, as well as for intercultural dialogue and multiculturalism generally.

Now it has been published as: “Contribution to the Study of the Work of Professor Muhamad Nezirović (1934–2008) and the Bosnian Sephardic Heritage” (“The Sephardim of Bosnia”) In: *Mélanges en l'honneur de Nikola Kovač et Muhamed Nezirović / Zbornik radova u čast Nikole Kovača i Muhameda Nezirovića*, FF UNSA, Sarajevo, 2018, pp. 73-84.

This paper was delivered at the Fifteenth World Congress of Jewish Studies (the XV WCJS) in Jerusalem, 4th August 2009 and now is published in the *Festschrift* mentioned above.

The interviews of Part Two are with the following distinguished university professors, all precursors of knowledge in this field:

1) Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr from the GWU, one of the foremost scholars of Islamic, religious and comparative studies in the world today (published in: *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies*, 3-1, July 2009, pp. 272–281);

2) Professor Chung-ying Cheng 成中英, *There is more and more dialogue among philosophical and religious traditions in the world today* (published in: the *Ecco/Odjek*, 2007., No. 1, pp. 91-94). He is a distinguished scholar of Chinese philosophy and Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hawai’i at Manoa. He is considered one of the pioneers who formalised the field of Chinese philosophy in the United States in the 1960s;

3) Professor Oliver Leaman, *We have to recognize the face of Other* (published in: the *Ecco/Odjek*, No. 1-2, 2004., pp. 118-121). He is former professor of philosophy and Zantker Professor of Judaic studies at the University of Kentucky, where he has been teaching since 2000. He is particularly interested in Islamic, Jewish and Eastern philosophy;

4) Jana S. Rošker, *Recent Studies of Comparative Philosophy in the Balkans* (published in: *Comparative Philosophy*, Volume 4, No. 2 (2013): 118-123). She studied Sinology and obtained her PhD degree at the Vienna University in Austria. She is the first Slovene Sinologist, co-founder and long-standing Head of the Department of Asian studies at the University of Ljubljana

(Slovenia). She does research in Classical and modern Chinese Philosophy, Ethics, Epistemology, and Methodology of Intercultural research;

5) Konrad Paul Liessman, *Against the simplification of thought and educational ideas* (published in: *Novo vrijeme*, 1st February, 2013, p. 31 & *Philosophy Study*, August 2013, Vol. 3, No. 8, 796-799), Faculty of Philosophy and Education, Faculty Member, and he is one of Austria’s most influential intellectuals; and

6) Professor Ralph Weber, *Towards Post-Comparative Area Studies* done for this series of interviews in January 2021 (published in *Asian Studies*, IX (XXV), 2 (2021), pp. 211–221: <https://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/as>), University of Basel, Institute for European Global Studies, Department Member. He studies Comparative Philosophy, Political Theory, and History of Political Ideas. In December 2014, Weber began his work as an Assistant Professor of European Global Studies at the Institute for European Global Studies of the University of Basel. In 2016, he successfully completed his habilitation in Philosophy (*venia legendi: comparative philosophy*) at the University of Zurich. At the University of Basel, he holds full examination and promotion rights in Political Science, Philosophy, and European Global Studies. In February 2020, he was appointed Associate Professor. Since 2017, he is President of the European Association for Chinese Philosophy.

In conclusion, let us repeat my words from the previous work in this field:¹³

Finally, in this age of globalisation this type of study is now a mega-trend in philosophy, and the aim of the XXII World Congress of Philosophers (the XXII WCP)¹⁴, being held this year in Seoul, is to redefine and to call attention to the need to introduce inter-traditional, cross-cultural, cross-systematic, more integrative and more global studies. Hence our hope that the insanity in the prevailing cult of ethnicity, of the nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina will not impede us in such efforts. To move in the opposite

¹³ Kahteran (2009), *Komparativna filozofija / Comparative Philosophy* (Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo), p. 328.

¹⁴ The 22nd World Congress took place in Seoul, South Korea from July 30 to August 5, 2008 at the Seoul National University. The main theme of the conference was "Rethinking Philosophy Today. Previous, The 24th World Congress of Philosophy (WCP) held in Beijing from Aug. 13 to 20, themed "Learning To Be Human," and next one, the 25th WCP 2023 will be held in Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre in July 2023 (Australia). See Australasian Association of Philosophy (the AAP): <https://www.aap.org.au/WCP2023>, and <https://aap.org.au/blog/6645121>.

direction would be to maintain the continuity of ostensible alterity, of mutual ignorance, between Muslims and non-Muslims, with its distrust, isolation and extremism on both sides.

At last but not least, regarding this issue, it will be interesting *hic et nunc* just to mention the manuscript INTERPRETING CHINESE PHILOSOPHY: A NEW METHODOLOGY written by Jana S. Rošker from the University of Ljubljana, where she expressed some (albeit more general) new theories on the methodology of comparative philosophy with the thinking that the notion (and the methods) of comparative philosophy are outdated in their present forms. Her new book has been accepted for publication at Bloomsbury (and will be published on June 21 this year), and it is one of her last articles on the topic. Regarding the book, the issue of new methodologies in comparative philosophy is described in the subchapter 4.2, but the reader's understanding may be facilitated if they would also take a glimpse at subchapters 1.2 and 1.3. So, beside her referential framework of the very first chapter, and the concluding one for a better understanding of the problems of transcultural comparative philosophy under exactly the same title, both chapters are important for a move from fusion philosophy to philosophy of sublation as she indicated there.

PART I

CHAPTER I

DOING PHILOSOPHY COMPARATIVELY IN THE BALKANS

In the midst of the rising interest in cross-cultural comparative philosophy in the Balkans, as one of the Bosnian pioneering comparative philosophers, the author is convinced that philosophy must diversify or die. The question is: is there a real difference between doing what is here characterised as “comparative philosophy”¹⁵ and simply doing philosophy well, or, perhaps,

¹⁵ <https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/do/search/?q=journal%20of%20comparative%20philosophy&start=0&context=1551039&facet=>. All previous issues of this Journal can be downloaded from this web-site. I am personally thankful to Bo Mou for his feedback comments on my paper beside reviewer's comment ones. Insofar as the development of comparative philosophy in theory and practice in the past decades, “comparative philosophy” is considered to be more inclusive than what is sometimes labeled 'cross-cultural' philosophy; comparative philosophy, as understood broadly in philosophically interesting and engaging way, is a general “cross-tradition” engaging way of doing philosophy, instead of being restricted to “cross-cultural” things: “cross-tradition” is more inclusive than “cross-cultural” as the term ‘tradition’ can cover either different traditions distinguished culturally or by style/orientation [the examples of the former are Chinese philosophy, Indian philosophy..., while the examples of the latter includes “analytic” philosophy, the “Continental” philosophy...(there are manifestations of analytic philosophy, “Continental”-style philosophy in, say, Chinese philosophical tradition <for example, parts of Gongsun Long and the later Mohism are quite “analytic”; Lao Zi’s Dao-De-Jing with its poem-style is a kind of manifestation of “Continental” philosophy>); it is not merely a broad understanding with “cross-tradition” engagement only in verbal usage but has been delivered through substantial collective “comparative philosophy” research projects and their published results [for example, Bo Mou & Richhard Tieszen co-edited anthology volume *Constructive Engagement of Analytic and Continental Approaches in Philosophy: From the Vantage Point of Comparative Philosophy*, Brill 2013] goes that way). In addition, Bo Mou’s recent monograph book, *Cross-Tradition Engagement in Philosophy: A Constructive-Engagement Account* (Routledge 2020), illustrates the value of doing philosophy comparatively.

is all philosophy comparative philosophy? It is a paper about the very possibility of intercultural thinking in a global age on that historically big fault-line, i. e., on the edge of two interconnected and interdependent worlds, the East and the West, and their intercultural encounter, cross-currents, Asian perspectives, ethnocentrism and multiculturalism in contemporary philosophy, beyond philosophical euromonopolism, as a critique of Eurocentrism, toleration in comparative perspective, comparative philosophical methodology, and, finally, the East/West philosophy and the comparative approach, exploring intersections, including sinologism as an alternative to orientalism and postcolonialism. Actually, this paper, valuing diversity, is putting philosophies versus philosophy in defence of a flexible definition following in the footsteps of the patriarchs of comparative philosophy from Hawai'i and elsewhere.

It is indisputable that the cradle of comparative philosophy is Hawai'i (it was institutionalized in the East-West Philosophers' Conference,¹⁶ which took place in Honolulu in 1939 (Marietta Stepanyants, Stepaniants in *PEW*)).¹⁷ The author of this paper is a lucky Bosnian *hapa-haoli* guy, who was invited by the East-West Center¹⁸ and one of the leading patriarchs of Comparative Philosophy, professor Eliot Deutsch¹⁹ from the Philosophy

This is essentially the way our Journal understands comparative philosophy in terms of cross-tradition engagement in philosophy: at the outset of the file "About This Journal" at the journal website, it states that

Comparative Philosophy is a peer-reviewed, open-access/non-profit international journal of philosophy, with emphasis on the constructive engagement of distinct approaches to philosophical issues, problems, themes from different philosophical traditions (whether distinguished culturally or by style/orientation) for the sake of their joint contribution to the common philosophical enterprise and the development of contemporary society, and on general theory and methodology of comparative philosophy.

¹⁶ The East-West Center:

<http://hawaii.edu/phil/journals/east-west-philosophers-conference/>.

¹⁷ See "Retrospective on the Global Reach of the East-West Philosophers' Conferences" (Plenary Address at the Tenth East-West Philosophers' Conference, May 16, 2011) published in *Philosophy East and West* 64(4):829-837, October 2014 at: <https://muse.jhu.edu/>. Prof. Stepanyants (b. 1935) is a Russian philosopher, the founder and the Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair in "Philosophy in the Dialogue of Cultures" and the Chief Research Fellow at the Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences. See further info about her at: www.en.wikipedia.org.

¹⁸ <https://www.eastwestcenter.org/> and <http://hawaii.edu/phil/>.

¹⁹ Eliot Deutsch, a Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa in Honolulu (1967–2008), an eminent philosopher, teacher, and writer, who contributed greatly to the understanding and appreciation of Eastern philosophies in

Department of the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa in Honolulu, to join him, Roger T. Ames,²⁰ Chung-Ying Cheng,²¹ Tamara Albertini,²² and other colleagues there to spend the entire fall semester in 2006, affiliated as a Fulbrighter²³ with their Philosophy Department²⁴ and the East-West Center²⁵ on the very eve of the centennial year of the UH.²⁶

Given that I would agree with Bo Mou, that comparative philosophy as a kind of way of doing philosophy (or a kind of cross-tradition engagement in philosophy) has been carried out from ancient times²⁷, and that Robert E. Allinson's contributing article well makes the point on this. Rather than a totally new thing just newly happening in the 20th century or since the 1930s in Hawaii, I mean by the phrase 'cradle of comparative philosophy is Hawaii...' that Hawaii colleagues' efforts in (or since) 1939 constitute a (first) collective (or more or less systematic) meta-philosophical and meta-methodological emphasis on comparative philosophy (instead of the first beginning of comparative philosophy per se, and that would be what I really intend to deliver above, and to more accurately express it, I consider giving a due modification of the phrase 'the cradle of comparative philosophy' used in this context as 'the first collective efforts in meta-philosophical and meta-methodological emphasis on comparative philosophy', or 'the cradle of one

the West through his many books and papers on comparative philosophy and aesthetics. See <http://hawaii.edu/phil/people/emeriti-faculty/>, as well as https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eliot_Deutsch, and <https://philpapers.org/s/eliot%20deutsch>.

²⁰ Professor Emeritus (1978–2016), who succeeded E. Deutsch as an editor of *Philosophy East & West*, and this journal is now in its seventieth year. See: <http://hawaii.edu/phil/people/emeriti-faculty/>.

²¹ <http://hawaii.edu/phil/people/current-faculty/>.

²² Professor and Department Chair.

²³ The Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program, fall semester 2006.

²⁴ <http://hawaii.edu/phil/>.

²⁵ <https://www.eastwestcenter.org/>.

²⁶ See www.media.proquest.com: Established in 1936 under the leadership of Charles A. Moore and Wing-tsit Chan. Eliot Deutsch succeeded Charles A. Moore upon his retirement in 1967 as editor of *Philosophy East and West* and as professor of comparative philosophy. Highlighting his contributions to transcultural understanding, he was editor (1967-1987) of this international journal *Philosophy East and West: A Quarterly of Comparative Philosophy (PEW)* <https://uhpress.hawaii.edu/title/pew/>, Director of the Sixth Eastern Philosophers conference, and past president of the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy.

²⁷ Robert E. Allinson's contributing article ("The Myth of Comparative Philosophy or the Comparative Philosophy *Malgré Lui*") to Bo Mou's edited volume *Two Roads to Wisdom?--Chinese and Analytic philosophical tradition* (Open Court, 2001).

more or less systematic (meta-philosophical and meta-methodological) reflection on comparative philosophy'.

According to Gerald James Larson and Eliot Deutsch, “comparative or cross-cultural philosophy can be seen as a relative newcomer to the field of philosophy. It has its antecedents in the emergence of comparative studies in nineteenth-century European intellectual history, as well as in the sequence of East-West Philosophers’ Conferences at the University of Hawaii, which began in 1939“.²⁸

Frankly speaking, we do know of the French orientalist and philosopher, Paul Mason Oursel,²⁹ as a pioneer of ‘comparative philosophy’ and his famous book, *La Philosophie Comparée* (1923),³⁰ his Sorbonne doctoral dissertation, applied a comparative method which identified 'analogies' between the philosophies of Europe, India and China; Bartholomeus de Ligt’s *La philosophie comparée* (1929); Henry Corbin’s *The Concept of Comparative Philosophy* (1974),³¹ and some other philosopher-comparatists, but it was definitely institutionalized at the East-West Philosophers’ Conference, and as early as 1977, Archie Bahm affirmed that “comparative philosophy has become a recognized philosophical discipline or field”.³²

In our own region, i.e. Bosnia and Herzegovina and the surrounding countries, the name of the late professor Čedomil Veljačić (Bhikkhu Nanajivako)³³ is inescapable. A pioneer from the former country of

²⁸ See Larson, Gerald James and Eliot Deutsch (eds) (1988), *Interpreting Across Boundaries: New Essays in Comparative Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp. 325. Also, available at:

<https://www.exoticindiaart.com/book/details/interpreting-across-boundaries-new-essays-in-comparative-philosophy-IDE381/>.

²⁹ (1926), *Comparative philosophy* (London, K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co.; New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co.). Translated by F. G. Crookshank, and for his *Objet et Méthode de la Philosophie comparée*, see following link:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20140726005234/http://masson-oursel.fcsh.unl.pt/>.

³⁰ (1923) (Paris, Alcan), 203 pages.

³¹ A Lecture to the Faculty of Letters, University of Teheran, December 1974, Golgonooza Press 1981, translated into our local languages by myself in Nevad Kahteran (2009), *Komparativna filozofija* (Sarajevo: Filozofski fakultet), pp. 193-221 (Henry Corbin, „Pojam komparativne filozofije“).

³² Bahm, Archie (1995), *Comparative Philosophy: Western, Indian and Chinese Philosophies Compared*, revised edition (Albuquerque: World Books), p. 25.

³³ See Veljačić-Akpinar, S. (2016). Čedomil Veljačić and Comparative Philosophy. Remarks on “An Introduction to the Comparative Study of Indian and European

Yugoslavia, his own successors, professors Rada Iveković (b. 1945),³⁴ Mislav Ježić (b. 1952),³⁵ and someone whom we called among rare scholars a philosophical bard, academician Abdulah Šarčević (b. 1929),³⁶ from my Philosophy Department – who paved the way to the introduction of Eastern Philosophies to our curricula in the early 1970s – and owing to him personally we have followed in those footsteps from then onward. Finally, let us mention Dušan Pajin from Belgrade (b. 1942)³⁷. As a practical benefit of my stay in Hawai'i, I have dared to introduce Comparative Philosophy as a subject to our Philosophy Department curricula and I published a pioneering book under exactly the same title³⁸ upon my return to Sarajevo, but also prior to publishing my Fulbright grant project in book form, *Situating the Bosnian Paradigm: The Bosnian Experience of Multicultural Relations*,³⁹ a book that aims to explain the need to introduce Comparative Philosophy, as well as the challenges and benefits of its teaching at our University, and this book also examines the challenges confronting the teaching of Comparative Philosophy at a university-level philosophy curriculum in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a part of the world where multicultural societies are the norm. While specific in its context, its very considerations have implications for a world that is rapidly globalising, creating more opportunities and certainly the need for an intercultural interaction.

In addition, for more than a decade this author has been deeply immersed and engaged as a member of the editorial board of the Journal of

Philosophy” by Čedomil Veljačić. *Synthesis philosophica*, Vol. 31 No. 2, 2016. (2), 249-253. <https://doi.org/10.21464/sp31201>.

³⁴ See www.en.wikipedia.org: Rada Iveković (born 1945) is a Croatian educator, philosopher, and writer. She works as a Professor in the Department of Sociology at Jean Monnet University. Iveković's research interests include comparative philosophy (Asian philosophy, particularly Indian, and Western), feminist theory and feminist philosophy as well as political philosophy. Also, see https://archive.is/20121222055727/http://chst.nctu.edu.tw/war/Rada_CV.htm, and <https://philpapers.org/s/Rada%20Ivekovi%C4%87>.

³⁵ http://info.hazu.hr/en/member_of_academy/personal_pages/mislav_jezic_en/mislav_jezic_en_bibliography/books/.

³⁶ https://www.anubih.ba/images/clanovi/dopisni/biografije/abdulah_sarcevic.pdf; <https://www.unsa.ba/index.php/en/novosti/abdulah-sarcevic-winner-world-award-humanism-2021>. Also, see (2014), *Simpozij Abdulah Šarčević – Filozofsko iskustvo vremena (znanost, filozofija, umjetnost)* (Filozofski fakultet u Sarajevu), pp. 246.

³⁷ See his personal web-site at: <http://afrodita.rcub.bg.ac.rs/~pajin/>.

³⁸ Nevad Kahteran (2009), *Komparativna filozofija*, Sarajevo: Filozofski fakultet, pp. 332.

³⁹ Id. (2008) by Global Scholarly Publications, New York, pp. 195.

Comparative Philosophy,⁴⁰ with Bo Mou⁴¹ as its editor-in-chief (San Jose State University, USA), working simultaneously with distinguished scholars like Tu Weiming,⁴² James W. Heisig,⁴³ Hans Daiber,⁴⁴ Oliver

⁴⁰ See a peer-reviewed, open-access international Journal of Comparative Philosophy: An International Journal of Constructive Engagement of Distinct Approaches toward World Philosophy at the following link:

<https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/comparativephilosophy/editorialboard.html#editorialcommittee>:

Comparative Philosophy is a peer-reviewed, open-access/non-profit international journal of philosophy, with emphasis on the constructive engagement of distinct approaches to philosophical issues, problems, themes from different philosophical traditions (whether distinguished culturally or by style/orientation) for the sake of their joint contribution to the common philosophical enterprise and the development of contemporary society, and on general theory and methodology of comparative philosophy. See: <https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1008&context=comparativephilosophy>.

⁴¹ Bo Mou's Home Page at: <https://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/bmou/>. Nevad Kahteran & Bo Mou (牟博) (eds.) (2018), *Nove granice kineske filozofije* (中國哲學新探索) *New Frontiers of Chinese Philosophy* (El-Kalem, Sarajevo), p. 432.

⁴² See <http://tuweiming.net/about-tu/biography/>, being invited by professor Tu to join him at the Peking University, July-August 2010, which is by all means a great honour and privilege taking into account that my host later organized the Beijing 2018 World Congress of Philosophy: Learning to be Human (13-20 August 2018): <http://wcp2018.pku.edu.cn/yw/index.htm>.

Owing to this short stay as a result we have published (2010) *A Platform for Islamic-Confucian-Daoist Dialogue in the Balkans* (ITD Sedam, Sarajevo), 155 pages.

⁴³ Nevad Kahteran & James W. Heisig (eds.) (2009), *New Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy* (Sarajevo-Nagoya), 240 pages, volume no. 5 in this series: <https://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/en/publications/ejp/>.

⁴⁴ Daiber, Hans (2008), *Islamska misao u dijalogu kultura: inoviranje i posredovanje između antike i srednjeg vijeka* (trilingual edition: KULT B: Sarajevo), pp. 275. (Bosnian); b) Id. (2008), *Islamic Thought in the Dialogue of Cultures: Innovation and Mediation Between Antiquity and Middle Ages* (KULT B: Sarajevo), pp. 275 (English); c) Id. (2008), *Islamisches Denken im Dialog der Kulturen: Innovation und Vermittlung Zwischen Antike und Mittelalter* (KULT B: Sarajevo), pp. 282 (German). Later republished by Brill (2012) as *Islamic Thought in the Dialogue of Culture: A Historical and Bibliographical Survey* (Leiden-Boston), pp. 274.

Leman,⁴⁵ Seyyed Hossein Nasr⁴⁶ among others. For a whole decade already, students from several departments of the Faculty of Philosophy have attended the courses and public lectures delivered by distinguished visiting scholars and philosopher-comparatists in this field, nurturing their inclinations towards comparative reflections, i.e. universalism and inclusivism vs. particularism and exclusivism. Now I would like to start my paper by conveying the opinion of a well-known philosopher that where danger is, there is also the possibility of salvation, which, in fact, is a paraphrase of the following statement in the Holy Qur'an:

“So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief:
verily, with every difficulty there is relief.”⁴⁷

Generally speaking we can say that our generation lives in an unstable world with wars, environmental crisis, economic and cultural globalisation in the current COVID 19 circumstances, and they all contribute not to social and existential stability but to global uncertainty. The matter at stake is as follows: Should we retain confidence in our rational ability to create a new world order that could save us from such uncertainty? The author of this paper sees salvific knowledge in comparative philosophy which might rescue humanity from existential, intellectual as well as spiritual uncertainties – even beside the fact that the Sacred, Ultimate Reality, that is, the source of unity, stability and certitude, is no longer the regulating power in modern societies. Of course, this is diametrically opposed to the currently prevailing perception of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the point is that our whole region has become one of the many places on the map of the world where things are routinely bad, and we need the wisdom I am speaking about more than ever before, both from the philosophical and intellectual standpoint and, even more, in the practical sense of the improvement of daily life with an all-inclusive framework of traditional

⁴⁵ Oliver Leaman (ed.) (2006), *The Qur'an: an Encyclopedia* (Routledge: London-New York), str. 771 (member of Editorial Bord and the author of certain number of entries), including translation of his book (2004) *Lost in Translation: Essays in Islamic and Jewish Philosophy* (Sarajevo: Buybook), as well as (2004) *Islamska estetika: uvodnik / Islamic Aesthetics: An Introduction* (Edinburgh University Press, Islamic Surveys Series; (2005) (Kult B: Sarajevo), pp. 376.

⁴⁶ Nevad Kahteran (2002), *Perenijalna filozofija (Sophia perennis) u mišljenju Rene Guenona, Frithjofa Schuona i Seyyeda Hosseina Nasra*, including a translation of his book on the very first anniversary of the 9/11 events: Seyyed Hossein Nasr (2002), *Srce islama: trajne vrijednosti za čovječanstvo / The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* (El-Kalem: Sarajevo).

⁴⁷ Qur'ān, XCIV: 5-6.

civilisations relating to the multiplicity of holy forms and ethnic genealogies.⁴⁸

Obviously, the answer does not lie in mere refutation of, or confrontation with, these modern and postmodern Western philosophical traditions. We could rather say that the answer could be found in a fruitful association of controversial issues and in an improved understanding of the standpoints themselves and the issues involved. I am not arguing for any kind of heresy but for persevering action with regard to human differences in order to achieve the greatest possible measure of traditional not traditionalist harmony, the lack of which, for the past two or even three decades in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the whole of our region, has been witnessed by the entire international community.

The question is whether there is a real difference between doing what is here characterised as “comparative philosophy” and simply doing philosophy well, or perhaps that all philosophy is comparative philosophy, i.e. comparative philosophy is tantamount to philosophy.⁴⁹ With Bret W. Davis⁵⁰ and others, I will be arguing against the Euromonopolistic claim that philosophy is Western, against stubbornly ethnocentric and racist reasons as well as against unconvincing arguments for making this claim.

It is a dialogue between two or more (contemporaneous or otherwise) philosophers that is made possible through a comparatist philosopher who facilitates their dialogue in order to come up with a solution to a problem (or a set of problems) or to further clarify them, and this is the dominant understanding of comparative philosophy as cross-cultural philosophy – a branch of philosophy which examines and contrasts different traditions of philosophy.

⁴⁸ Kahteran, Nevad (2008), *Situating the Bosnian Paradigm* (Global Scholarly Publication, New York), p. 8.

⁴⁹ Van Norden, Bryan W. (Author), Garfield, Jay L. (Foreword) (2017). *Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto* (Columbia University Press), available at the following link: <https://muse.jhu.edu/journal/156>.

⁵⁰ Bret W. Davis is Professor and Thomas J. Higgins, S. J. Chair in Philosophy at Loyola University Maryland, where he teaches courses on Western, Asian, and cross-cultural philosophy. For further information, see <https://www.loyola.edu/academics/philosophy/faculty/davis>, as well as <https://loyola.academia.edu/BretDavis>.

According to Xiao Ouyang,⁵¹ more than half a century ago Charles A. Moore⁵² foresaw in his journal's first issue a new stage in the development of philosophy "characterized by transcultural co-operation and world perspective"⁵³ Although Moore's enthusiastic vision of "a synthesis between Eastern and Western philosophy" was questioned by other leading philosophers regarding its validity and possibility, the important area of East-West Philosophy and the comparative approach have been recognised by an increasing number of philosophers worldwide. Convinced by the mutual complementarity and significant enrichment of research by this emerging sub-discipline,⁵⁴ Masson-Oursel⁵⁵ held the strong opinion that "true philosophy is comparative philosophy".

In addition, according to one of the Indian pioneer philosopher-comparatists, Poola Tirupati Raju (1904-1992),⁵⁶ "this need to understand is no longer a matter of mere intellectual curiosity but of survival".⁵⁷ And if you visit the web-site of *Philosophy East and West: A Quarterly of Comparative Philosophy*, the world's leading journal dedicated to this field in comparative perspective, you will find the following:

⁵¹ In *Philosophy East and West*, University of Hawai'i Press, Volume 68, Number 1, January 2018, pp. 242-256.

⁵² He was the founder and editor of *Philosophy East and West*. For further info about him, see at the following link: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1397056?seq=1> – "Bibliography: The Publications of Charles A. Moore" by Beatrice T. Yamasaki in *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 17, No. 1/4 (Jan. - Oct., 1967), pp. 173-177.

⁵³ Charles A. Moore - 1952 - *Philosophy East and West* 2 (1):76-78. Essays in East-West Philosophy. Charles Alexander Moore (ed.) - 1951 - Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press.

⁵⁴ According to Bo Mou's mentioned feedback comments, now comparative philosophy has been emphasized as one general way of doing philosophy, as philosophical explorations in various areas of philosophy can, and are expected and encouraged, to take cross-tradition engagement approach.

⁵⁵ See <https://philpapers.org/s/P.%20Masson-Oursel;> (1951, p. 6).

⁵⁶ P. T. Raju played an important part in the modern development of comparative philosophy and brought out Indian philosophy to the attention of the American academy. See, among other, his books: Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (Author), Poolla Tirupati Raju (Editor) (2011). *The Concept of Man: A Study in Comparative Philosophy* (Literary Licensing), p. 382.

⁵⁷ Id. (1962), *Introduction to Comparative Philosophy* (University of Nebraska Press), p. v in its Preface. Also, see Raju, P. T., "Comparative Philosophy and Spiritual Values: East and West", in *PEW*, 13.3: 211-225.