

Guest editor's words

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Following the aim of *Synthese*, which tries to bring together diverse research foci and methods within the analytic tradition in a broad sense, John Symons and I started this project of compiling a special issue of *Synthese* called “Analytic Philosophy in China.” The greatest help came from Dr. Xiangdong Xu, who organized a conference, which bore the same title as the special issue in May 2005 at Peking University in China. He solicited contributions from a few of the best analytic philosophers in China for the conference, and later for the special issue. Four of the six research articles in this special issue were based on talks given at this conference.

Due to many technical problems, we could not access the editing tools available at the *Synthese* website. We, especially John, took a lot of effort to find reviewers for the original submissions. We are grateful to the reviewers for their great work. We wish to thank them by mentioning their names, but we cannot, due to our observance of the blind review process.

We aimed to have an inclusive and representative issue of the analytic scholarship in China. But we are not sure how successful our efforts were. We decided to reject some articles due to reviewers' strong objections. But some contributions were not included because their methods and foci are too different from the usual scope of *Synthese* to be included even in a special issue that is aimed to broaden that scope. But these rejections say nothing of the quality of the contributions, and we are sorry to have to exclude them from this special issue. This uneasy feeling is more intense when we consider the fact that we put this issue together in order to broaden the scope and vision of analytic philosophy in the English-speaking world. I would like to mention a few articles that were not included. Prof. Jiaying Chen gave a talk at the conference. He was among the first generation of young Chinese scholars who studied Western philosophy after

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the Cultural Revolution. He started out as a scholar of continental philosophy, being the first Chinese translator of Heidegger's *Being and Time*. After completing a Ph.D. in philosophy at Pennsylvania State University and returning to China, he translated Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* and has continued doing research in the analytic tradition. In the introductory article of the special issue, Yi Jiang and I discuss the more eclectic attitude many Chinese philosophers adopt toward analytic philosophy, continental philosophy, and traditional Chinese philosophy. Prof. Chen is a good example. But his writing style, as a result of this eclectic attitude, does not embody the usual style of *Synthese*. Another example of this eclectic attitude is Prof. Taotao Xing's article, which was submitted for consideration for the special issue. He was trained as a logician and has worked within the analytic tradition. But his article is an excellent analysis of the work of an ancient Chinese logician. Unfortunately, we cannot include this article because its topic is too different from the usual topics covered in *Synthese*. Another article that we did not include is Prof. Linhe Han's paper which is on a special issue concerning the so-called "middle-period" of Wittgenstein and its relation to his early work. Prof. Han is a leading Wittgenstein scholar in China, and he has also applied his analytic method to the studies of traditional Chinese philosophy, for example, the *Zhuangzi*. But the style of his article is very different from the usual style represented in *Synthese*, so we finally decided not to include it.

Moreover, there are quite a few leading analytic philosophers in China whose works we failed to solicit, such as Xiangdong Xu, Lian Cheng, Lu Wang, and Ming Xu, just to mention a few. In general, many contemporary Chinese analytic philosophers were originally trained as mathematicians or logicians, and many have been educated in the U.S. or at other Western institutions (there is an overlapping between the two groups). This fact is shown through the authors whose articles were eventually selected for the special issue. Therefore, it is questionable how diverse the special issue is, and it is even more questionable how representative it is in terms of the general philosophical scholarship in China. However, I think this is perhaps what a moderate approach demands: we need to start with something sufficiently similar that has some difference and gradually open ourselves up to something that has a resemblance to what we are familiar in only the most remote sense.