PART ONE

SEARLE ON GLOBALIZATION OF PHILOSOPHY
CHAPTER ONE

THE GLOBALIZATION OF PHILOSOPHY*

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I am extremely grateful to the organizers and sponsors of this conference for their efforts and support. There are so many organizations and individuals that I cannot express my gratitude to each individually but only give my collective thanks to all of them. This conference is especially welcome as one of the first steps toward expanding a dialog between Chinese philosophers and the philosophers in the rest of the world. I am sorry to say that I know almost nothing about traditional Chinese Philosophy and I hope to overcome some of my ignorance in the course of these few days. I do however know something about Philosophy in Europe and in North and South America and I will remark on some of its features and on the directions that it seems to have been going during my intellectual lifetime.

Philosophy was often supposed to be identified with particular national cultures in such a way that each national culture was presumed to have its own distinctive national philosophy. In the United States many universities routinely offered a course in “American Philosophy”. The tacit idea was that “American Philosophy” referred to something more well defined than philosophy that happened to have been practiced within the boundaries of the USA and American philosophers were supposed to have something more in common than geography. Indeed, I took such a course as an undergraduate. There were also supposed to be other distinct national philosophies such as English Philosophy, (inaccurately so called, because its most famous exemplar, Hume, was Scottish; and Berkeley, another star, was Irish) and of course there was German Philosophy, French Philosophy, Italian Philosophy, etc. This raises an interesting question, namely, to what extent is it correct or

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