

## Graduate Study in Philosophy?

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If you've enjoyed your philosophy classes a lot and find yourself waxing philosophical even when it's not required for a course, you may well be thinking of going to graduate school in philosophy, maybe even pursuing philosophy as a *career*!

There are plenty of reasons to do graduate study in philosophy: the material is interesting and challenging; philosophy connects so deeply with so many other fields that, for the intensely curious, a life of philosophy seems to be blanket permission to learn anything and everything you want. Graduate study can be fun: you are surrounded with very bright people who share many interests with you.

Most graduate study in philosophy, certainly at the Ph.D. level, is aimed at an academic career teaching philosophy. 80% of the Ph.D.s in philosophy, according to the American Philosophical Association, are employed in Academia in some way. The academic life can be very attractive: The chance to get paid for doing something you love; lots of flexibility in one's schedule; opportunities for travel; an intellectually stimulating work environment, etc. (But be sure you have a realistic understanding of what "the academic life" is before committing yourself: constant pressure to publish; enough work that you never feel you're getting everything done; usually a lower salary than other career choices available to you; little mobility.)

If these kinds of reasons move you, you should think about taking an advanced degree in philosophy. But you shouldn't go into it blindly. I hope to point to most of the things you should think about in making this decision. The recommendations I make here are mine; they are not necessarily endorsed by the UNH Philosophy Department nor by any of my colleagues. As with all free advice, you're getting exactly what you pay for. I'm sure there will be situations I've not taken account of, and you may be in one of those. But my recommendations are not made in haste or in jest. Make the best decision you can.

### Should You Really?

When you start taking grad study in philosophy seriously, you should be clear about your situation and your goals, and you should take some time to discover the relevant

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<sup>1</sup>These are my opinions. My colleagues have given me valuable suggestions and support in writing this, but in the end, these are my opinions. That most especially means the faults herein are mine, held onto despite my colleagues' best efforts.

facts. Are you, for example, a trust-fund-baby who is in no hurry to decide on a career, but you know you have fun doing philosophy? Or do you already have a lot of student debt, have to make your own way in the post-graduate world, and think you might like a career in philosophy? In the former case, there doesn't seem to be any obstacle to going to grad school just because you feel like it. But if you're in the (more common) situation where you are operating in fairly normal conditions of scarcity, and grad school is supposed to be first step in one possible career path, then you need to start weighing a number of factors before making your decision. This is a decision that is in many ways a choice of self—choosing a career in philosophy is a choice that will determine much of the rest of your life—but that means it is also in part an economic or utilitarian decision. Insofar as those aspects of your situation can be isolated and given a means-ends or cost-benefit analysis, it behooves you to do so. Such an analysis is certainly not final or adequate, IMHO, but a more holistic and reflective decision about who you are and who (and what) you want to become ignores such considerations at its peril.

Though there was a great deal of growth in Academia, including Philosophy, back in 1960's, the job market for philosophers has varied among different levels of bleak since the mid-70's. Here's a link to a letter composed by the APA in 1995, when the job offerings in Philosophy were perhaps at a nadir, offering advice to prospective graduate students. Unfortunately, the "severe undersupply" of qualified faculty in the liberal arts this letter projected for 1997-2002 never materialized. Faculty reaching retirement age haven't retired in droves, and the country seems to have lost the will to support public higher education the way it has in the past. So colleges and universities continue to operate under severe budget restraints. In our own future, we can look forward (?) to a downturn in the number of high-school graduates available for higher education after 2010. That is almost certain to mean further tightening in the job market. For the foreseeable future, there will be more Ph.D.s in philosophy produced than there are jobs available. Of course, that doesn't mean *you* won't get a job. But I think it does mean you have to take seriously the possibility that after 4-6 years (if not longer) in graduate school, you might end up without the career you hoped for. What would that mean to you? Would that make your time in grad school simply wasted effort? Or are you convinced that it would be time well spent and unregretted, even if it does not issue in a job? Is the desire for a career in philosophy so strong that it is worth risking 6 years of hard work in graduate school, even though there is absolutely no guarantee that you'll end up with any career in philosophy, much less the one you want?

If your goal in going to philosophy grad school is to end up with a career teaching philosophy, it is worth finding out how good the grad schools you can get into are at placing their graduates in jobs. The big-name schools usually do fairly well in this

regard, but the lower the ranking of the schools you can get into, the harder it will be for you to have the career you aspire to. So here again, you need to think clearly about what will make you happy, what is acceptable, and what would just be a waste of your time. Will you be happy only if you end up teaching philosophy at a top-flight research institution with a world-renowned philosophy department? Would you be happy teaching a heavy load for not much pay in a small college in North Dakota or Mississippi? Of course, we're just talking about the odds here, and there are ways to move up the academic ladder, wherever you start (publish, publish, publish!), but you should go into grad school aware of the odds you've decided to play.

If you decide the potential reward of a career in philosophy is worth the risk of ending up without a job, there are still other questions you need to confront about the direct costs of that effort. As you know, academic salaries are usually decent but rarely tremendous, so it is reasonable to ask about the price of a graduate education. Ending up with a degree but no job might be acceptable, whereas ending up with a degree, no job, *and* a mountain of debt might not be (and I won't even mention the possibility of not finishing the degree, not having a job, but still having the mountain of debt). Since, for most people, graduate study in philosophy is a career choice, financial considerations ought not to be left to one side. Fortunately, there are many ways to pay for a graduate education, and many schools have significant numbers of graduate assistantships or other aid to support their students. Effectively, getting in to grad school is a two-layer affair. Many grad schools will accept applicants to whom they offer no financial support. Particularly in large schools that use a number of graduate assistants, this is actually tantamount to a vote of no confidence. They're happy to take your money, but they're not willing to invest in you. (I'm told I'm being a bit cynical here: sometimes they just don't have the money to give out.) My own advice is never to go into debt for a graduate degree in philosophy. If you can afford to go without a fellowship or assistantship, great; but think more than twice before taking out a loan to get a graduate degree in philosophy. If *no* grad school is willing to support you with an assistantship, you've got a problem. Maybe you can prove them wrong and get the support subsequently. And what if you're admitted without support to a top-level school and with support to a good, but not so highly-ranked school? There's no easy call here. My message is that you're now at a point in your life where financial realities have to be taken seriously, and your decisions made in full understanding of their consequences.

While I'm being upfront with advice, I'll state another general principle. If you can imagine a happy and satisfying life for yourself doing (almost) anything other than philosophy, do that. Academic philosophy is actually, I think, a fairly tough row to hoe. Grad school is demanding and retains about it something of the air of a hazing ritual

attached to joining the Grand and Holy Order of Phuds, and the outcome of it all is deeply uncertain. Philosophy is an argumentative discipline; your professional life will be spent mostly in taking issue with what others say and defending your claims against attack. If you are uncomfortable in a discipline the fundamental structures of which are adversarial and in which collaboration is unusual, a career in it may not end up suiting you, however much you love philosophy. Moreover, the academic life is certainly not an existence entirely dedicated to learning and reflection—someone has to put food on the table, clothes on the kids, pay the rent, sit on the damned committees, and grade all those \$%^& papers. Don't be seduced by romantic misconceptions. There are some great advantages to the academic life (and I don't want to sell them short), but there a number of ills built into it as well, and you shouldn't forget about them. There is rarely a day goes by that I don't wonder what I am doing in this field. But, then again, when I sit back and think about all the other jobs I could have aimed at, I always come back to the fact that none would satisfy me in the way teaching and writing philosophy does. I do love teaching, and writing is both painful and exhilarating. I am lucky to have a good job I love this much. In effect, I don't feel I had much choice in going into philosophy, but I can recommend it only to someone who is similarly compelled.

You don't have to be in a rush to go to graduate school. If you are not sure it is the path you really want to take, there is no harm in taking some extra time to think about it. Particularly if you are a standard student who has never had time off from school, taking some time away from school after the B.A. can be valuable. I have seen a number of students charge from undergraduate right into graduate school and then, a couple of years in, undergo a crisis of confidence. "I've been going to school all my life. Maybe there are other things out there I'd like better but have never explored." I took a year between undergraduate and graduate school, and it was one of the smarter things I've ever done. The fact that I found myself studying philosophy (Kant and Hegel, no less!) even though I had no classes, no assignments, no obligation to do so, was crucial to showing me that I loved philosophy so much that I had to try to make it my career. The clarity and strength of that resolve was vital when things got tough in graduate school and later (for instance, when I threw away the first attempt at a dissertation after 100 pages).

I've saved up the hardest news for the end of this section: What does it take to get into a very good graduate program in philosophy? For the best schools, it takes a record of consistent excellence. This means a high GPA (3.8, and not much lower), strong GRE scores (at least 700 on each part), a writing sample worthy of publication in an undergraduate journal, and strong references from your professors attesting to your preparation, your diligence, your analytical abilities, and your ability to communicate effectively in speech and in writing. The more languages you command, the better.

Extracurricular activities are not, it seems to me, all that important for grad school; almost always, they'll take the brilliant nerd over the smart, letterman-in-3-sports, head of student government. But brilliance isn't itself enough. Grad schools want to take students who will make steady progress through the program and get their degrees, and the best predictor of academic success is prior academic success. No matter how brilliant you are, a lot of incompletes or other blemishes on your record pose a hurdle you may have to overcome. At the very best schools, your competition is international; you'll be competing against top-flight students from the U.K., Germany, China, and India, among others. In 2004-5, NYU (a top 5 program, many think) was seeking to add 7 students to its Ph.D. program. 253 applications were received; 11 were accepted. In '98-99 Cornell (very good, but second tier<sup>2</sup>, IMHO) offered admission to 12 out of 275 applicants in order to get 6. The figures are not always so depressing. In '98-99, Yale (a surprisingly weak program—but that's a long story) offered admission to 11 out of 104 applicants to get 5 students (and only got 2). UCSD, a pretty good program, accepted 25 of 90 in 2001-2. And with a significant jump down the pecking order, the figures improve markedly. In 2003-4, the University of Utah offered admission to 13 of 16 applicants for its Ph.D. program.<sup>3</sup> If you've been a good student, you can probably get accepted somewhere. But then there's the question of how far down the pecking order you are willing to start. More on that later.

### Which Degree?

An M.A. degree in philosophy has value in some contexts as an ancillary degree (for, instance, for a secondary school teacher or a health professional interested in serving on a hospital ethics board) but it is, in terms of an academic career, without significant value of its own. The Ph.D. is the terminal degree, and while there have been philosophy teachers in higher ed with only an M.A., especially at the community college level, that is increasingly going the way of the dodo. If the point of graduate study is a career teaching philosophy, the Ph.D. is the degree you'll need. A number of the "best" graduate programs in philosophy do not even have a separate Masters degree program.

Still, there are reasons at times to aim for an M.A. As I mentioned, it can be an ancillary degree that serves some purposes well. If money is of no particular concern, using an

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<sup>2</sup>IMHO, the first tier of grad programs contains the top 5 or 6 departments, after that, each tier contains about a dozen programs

<sup>3</sup>These figures come from the American Philosophical Association's *2004 Guide to Graduate Programs in Philosophy Online Edition*.

M.A. program just to explore in greater depth some issues that you are intensely curious about is just fine.

However, many students aren't sure grad school is for them, and think that an M.A. program is a way to try grad school out without making the long-term commitment a Ph.D. program requires. I actually think that is bad strategy: since the M.A. in philosophy isn't independently valuable, and a number of the "best" graduate programs do not have a separate M.A. program, if, after a couple of years of grad school, you decide not to continue on to the Ph.D., there isn't much actual difference between ending up with an M.A. and simply dropping out of a Ph.D. program. Many of the Ph.D. programs that do not have a separate M.A. program award the M.A. at a certain point along the way to the Ph.D. anyway. So failing to complete the Ph.D. program does not even mean that you'll end up without even an M.A. And even in the good graduate programs that do have both an M.A. and a Ph.D. program, it is not automatic that one gets to move up to the Ph.D. program after the M.A. So my recommendation is to get into the best Ph.D. program you can and see if it takes.

But that raises another reason why some students go for an M.A. program: they cannot get into the kind of Ph.D. program they want. Perhaps they got serious about their studies too late during their undergraduate careers and don't have very good records. Then a masters program might allow them to raise their academic profiles sufficiently to get into a better Ph.D. program. Or perhaps they discovered philosophy very late in undergrad school and didn't have time to complete a major or get an adequate background. Tufts University, for example, has an M.A. program that is expressly aimed at students who need to play catch-up and that has an excellent record at getting its M.A. students into top-flight Ph.D. programs. U of Wisconsin-Milwaukee is similar. These are both sound reasons for aiming at an M.A. degree.

The M.A. is not the only alternative to the Ph.D., for there are also a number of programs that award the Ph.D. *plus* another degree. There are a number of J.D./Ph.D. programs, a few M.D./Ph.D. programs, programs in philosophy and cognitive science or neuroscience, and I am sure there are other combinations available out there. Philosophers of science often have a degree in one of the sciences. In this buyers market, young scholars starting off in philosophy of law, bioethics, and philosophy of science feel an increasing pressure to warrant their *bona fides* with a degree in both disciplines. Sometimes a joint program shaves a little time off of what would otherwise be an even longer time spent in grad school. Going to such a program both narrows and broadens one's horizons. It tends to focus one on a very specific area of philosophy, but also opens up opportunities in the other field, law, medicine or public health, the sciences. One of our graduates went to the philosophy and neuroscience program at UCSD and

has ended up concentrating in the neurosciences.

### Choosing your Graduate School

It is rare that there will be a clear winner among graduate schools for your favor. Usually the decision is a complex optimization problem with multiple soft constraints. How do you begin? The more you know about your own interests, the better you'll be able to decide what place is right for you. Very few, if any, schools will be universally strong across all the different issues and subfields of philosophy. So begin with those places that are very strong in those things you're interested in. That seems pretty obvious, but take your own current interests with a grain of salt: I don't know of too many philosophers who ended up writing their dissertation on what they thought they would write it on when they entered grad school. Major shifts in interest from metaphysics to ethics or from ethics to ancient philosophy, etc. are far from uncommon. One department may be strong in the field you want to concentrate in, but otherwise not so good; another may not be as strong in that targeted field, but much stronger otherwise. You'll have greater flexibility in the generally stronger department if your interests shift; that's not a factor to discount.

But how do you find out which departments are strong in your fields of interest? Obviously, asking around in our department can help, and external ratings like the Philosophy Gourmet Report or SPEP can help (always taken with chunks of salt). And you can cruise Grad Program websites and see who does what where. But it is also worth thinking about what articles you have read that you thought were really good, and even going to the library and spending a couple of afternoons browsing through the journals, looking for articles that interest you, giving them a quick skim, and noting who wrote the ones that you liked the most. Then track down the authors and see where they teach. Going to a school where you know someone is doing work you find exciting is a good start, for fairly obvious reasons. It can provide an important level of comfort in otherwise strange surroundings. Grad school applications often ask why you want to go to that school; being able to cite the work of members of the faculty is a very good response. There are some dangers in going to a particular grad program because so-and-so teaches there: so-and-so could move to another department before you show up or (perhaps even worse) after you've started the program. Some of the "stars" in philosophy can be pretty mobile. So-and-so could also be a brilliant writer, but a bad teacher, or worse, a paranoid, vituperative worm. So if there is someone with whom you want to study, contacting him or her isn't a bad idea: is she responsive to your interest in her work, does she encourage your application to the program? Some discrete inquiries about how so-and-so is to work with and how successful her students have been in getting a job are also appropriate. Asking your professors can get some of

this information, but going to graduate-student conferences would be an excellent and efficient way to gather information. Again, the general strength of the program can be an important factor, for it makes so-and-so's presence less crucial. (I chose my grad school because of a particular professor, not fully cognizant of its general strength, and I got lucky: it was a very strong program in general, and the prof didn't go away. But I should have known more.)

There is a pecking order among graduate schools. I'd love to say that you can get a good graduate education almost anywhere, and that the education is what counts, and leave it at that, but that would miss the point. Going to graduate school is ultimately, for most of us, about getting a job in philosophy, and not all graduate schools are equally good at putting you in the best position to get a good job. Clearly, your first priority has to be going someplace where you can get excellent training in what you want to spend the rest of your life doing, and that may not be at a place high in the rankings. And there are excellent scholars with whom one might want to study who are not at a leading school. Fine. But to leave relative ranking out of your considerations in choosing a graduate school would be simply foolish. Find out where the schools you're interested in have placed their students lately, and find out how well they are thought of generally. It does make a difference in how easy it is to get the interviews that will lead to your first job.

Find out also what the grad schools you're looking at do to help place their graduates. Some grad schools have fairly aggressive programs, with a designated placement director who makes sure that candidates are submitted to appropriate job openings, that departments with job openings are "groomed" to think favorably of their candidates, etc. Others give degrees and just turn their students loose, maybe with a reference to the campus placement office. An organized and effective job placement program in the graduate department itself helps significantly.

How much experience/training as a *teacher* will you get in the programs you're looking at? Ultimately, you will be earning your living because of your teaching—only a very few can make a living on the basis of their research. Some programs, but not all, require grad students to do some teaching as a condition of the degree. At some places, particularly larger state universities, one can accumulate a good deal of teaching experience, because graduate teaching assistants are the pool of cheap labor without which the whole system would crumble. At other places teaching is hard to come by. That might seem attractive, because you have that much more time to focus on philosophy itself, but having a reasonable amount of experience in the classroom is actually valuable when you're applying for jobs. Other things being equal, most hiring departments prefer more teaching experience to less, and many would avoid putting

someone in their classrooms who has no experience at all. It also makes a difference whether your teaching experience is solely as an assistant in large lecture courses or you have also been able to teach courses for which you have had sole responsibility. Find out what teaching opportunities are available to graduate students in the programs you're looking at. To complicate matters, TAing is not all good: some programs do ask too much of their teaching assistants, and it can get in the way of their education, perhaps especially at dissertation time. That makes it all the more important to find out what the regimen is at the schools you're looking at.

While I'm on the subject of teaching, I'd like to point to another development in the field. It used to be the case (back in the bronze-age '60s) that one could get a tenure-track job before finishing one's dissertation. But it has been a buyer's market in hiring since then, and the standards for getting a first tenure-track job have risen steadily. It is now fairly common for people with the Ph.D. in hand to spend several years moving from one short-term appointment to another until they have built up a sufficient record of teaching and publications to land the coveted tenure-track appointment. It's a good way to accumulate a variety of teaching experience, but not ideal for writing philosophy. Indeed, graduate students are now being advised to begin publishing while still in grad school, working up their term papers into publishable articles .

Though most graduate programs do offer some teaching opportunities to their students, not too many yet offer any real training in how to teach. Somehow getting a Ph.D. in philosophy and writing a complex research work like a dissertation is also supposed to equip you (magically?) to teach philosophy. I think this is changing and graduate schools are increasingly offering (although not always requiring) some training in how to teach. Find out what the schools you are interested in do in this regard. If some of the schools you're looking at provide or even require such training, count it a plus. It will make you a stronger candidate for your first job. And the more you learn about how to teach, the better you are likely to teach, and the better you are at teaching, the more likely you are to enjoy teaching, and the more you enjoy teaching, the more likely you are to enjoy the academic life you have chosen.

Find out what the graduate student culture is at the various departments you're looking at. Is there a place where the graduate students can meet and talk? Do they? Is the general atmosphere among the graduate students supportive and friendly, or are the grad students competitive with each other? Do they help each other out or undercut and backstab each other? I think this is a huge factor. Not only does it make the difference between an enjoyable and a miserable life in general, but it directly affects the quality of your education. For the simple fact of the matter is that you will learn more from your fellow graduate students than you could possibly learn from the professors.

You will spend so much more time and discussion with your fellow grads that this is virtually inevitable. If the grad students are bright and hard-working, hang together and party together and are always getting involved in one philosophy discussion after another, you'll start absorbing chunks of philosophy that you haven't even bothered to study. If the grad students don't interact much amongst themselves, they'll all suffer. Don't be afraid to visit a grad school to find this out, or even cold call (and/or email) a few of the grad students already there and ask them about this (and about working with the faculty you are interested in). As I mentioned, graduate student conferences are also a good way for find these things out.

How about foreign graduate programs? There are some excellent and well-recognized programs abroad, and I am a huge fan of study abroad. But I actually do think that you need to think twice about taking your degree in a foreign country, if your intention is to teach in the U.S. American schools are a bit reluctant to hire young foreign Ph.D.s: they're not quite sure how much the Ph.D. means "over there," and they often are not as familiar with the referees who would be writing your letters of recommendation. It seems to introduce some extra questions that make it harder to get hired. (I have a friend who took his degree from Oxford under A.J. Ayer and had trouble getting a job back here in the states.) I would not positively recommend against taking a foreign Ph.D., but you need to be aware of the fact that it complicates matters some, and may, e.g., force you to publish more to get the kind of job you want. Degrees from the U.K. or Ireland are less strange to Americans than degrees from other places. I do heartily recommend some study abroad in your graduate career. Some U.S. programs have agreements with programs abroad to facilitate such study, and that is a strong positive in their favor. And there are programs like the Fulbright Program that one can use to study abroad.

### The Skeleton in the Closet

For many of you, the really big question in choosing a graduate program is "Anglo-American or European?" aka "Analytic or Continental?" (The registrar here rather arbitrarily called our requirements "Anglo-American" and "European," a non-standard nomenclature; I will also use "analytic" and "continental.") Personally, I deeply regret that the question is possible and even necessary; overcoming the idea that these are opposed camps and the assumption that departments (must) fall into one camp or the other is, in my view, the great imperative for keeping Philosophy alive and healthy in the Western world. Difference does not entail opposition.

Why is the question necessary? That is, why is there anything to say other than, "Go wherever you find the philosophy most interesting"? Whatever the difference really is

between analytic philosophy and continental philosophy (a question that I think is not nearly as easy to answer as many seem to think), the fact of the matter is that the analytic/continental division is not just a division in philosophical methodology, style, or choice of philosophical heroes: there is a power differential between the two “camps,” and *that* is why it is an issue that needs to be thought about. For whatever reason, analytic philosophy has been the “mainstream” tradition in the U.S., particularly in the big-name graduate departments. The Ivy League institutions (with the troubled exception of Yale) have been bastions of analysis; most of the UC system schools, the Big Ten schools (before Penn State joined), and other leading and visible research departments in philosophy have been heavily Anglo-American. European philosophy has dominated in the large number of Roman Catholic schools (e.g., Marquette, Duquesne, Boston College, Catholic University) and in a scattering of other prominent departments (e.g., The New School, Emory). There have been, and I believe (and hope) the number is increasing, some schools where one can do both. In such schools, one tradition might be in the majority, but practitioners of the other tradition are not disd, dismissed, or derided.

Because the most prominent universities, both nationally and regionally, have been dominantly analytic, lots of smaller schools have followed suit. They love hiring people from the fancy institutions, and those people tend to want to hire more people like themselves. So continental-style philosophers have often had a greater difficulty finding jobs, or have had a smaller range of openings available to them. Analysts also controlled the APA. So practitioners of continental philosophy feel marginalized and, to a degree, oppressed. My impression is that the emotional investment in the opposition has toned down in the last 25 years or so. The APA has sought systematically to include continental philosophers among the nominees for offices (though they have not often won election), and the rumors that continental papers are discriminated against by the program committees for the APA are just false. Perhaps more important, some very prominent philosophers on either side of the line have crossed the boundaries and practiced a more inclusive philosophy: Richard Rorty, Hubert Dreyfus, Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor, Michael Theunissen. Those who do significant work in the history of philosophy often cannot be placed in either the analytic or the continental camp: Karl Ameriks, Fred Beiser, Allen Wood, Henry Allison (to focus on those concerned with German Idealism) don't seem to belong to either camp. So there is hope that the idea that one has to be either analytic or continental, but not both, will slowly fade away.

In the mean time, there is still the problem that philosophers coming out of heavily continental programs are at a disadvantage in the marketplace. Products of the Catholic schools will be taken very seriously by other Catholic schools and continental

programs, but won't have a good chance at a large number of the "mainstream" departments. Whether this is fair or not is beside the point here. Even if something continental is your first and primary love, you shouldn't ignore this fact. If your dream is never to encounter a piece of philosophy with a bunch of symbolic logic in it, and to be able to ignore the so-called "mainstream" of English-language philosophy, you can find programs where that is possible. The price you pay is a far smaller range of jobs that you will be able to apply for when you leave graduate school.

It seems evident to me, then, that non-exclusivity is the better policy. I say that as well for people entirely at home in analytic philosophy. A blindered education in narrowly analytic philosophy that ignores the themes and heroes of the continent is impoverished, and impoverished philosophy is almost always bad philosophy. But there are not (yet) too many departments one can apply to, confident that one can get a great education no matter what kind of philosophy one finally finds oneself most at home in. And there can be a price to pay for a broad education. I took my doctorate from Pittsburgh, a top-flight school thought of as heavily analytic (though the professors I worked with were simply too good to be narrow), but I did my dissertation on Hegel, no hero of analysis. In my job search (admittedly, in the old days), I regularly encountered people who did not know what to make of me. Both sides betrayed their prejudices: the narrowly analytic could not bring themselves to take anyone working on Hegel seriously, and the narrowly continental could not bring themselves to take anyone from Pittsburgh seriously. A pox on both those houses! Luckily, there are non-narrow philosophers out there open to different points of view, and I hope their number is increasing. My advice, then, is to approach all philosophy with an open mind and do the philosophy you love, but be aware of how your choices position you to get the kind of job you want.

Much of what I say about "European" philosophy holds as well for other ways of deviating from "mainstream" philosophy. If your principal interest is, e.g., feminist philosophy, Eastern philosophy, African philosophy, or ecological philosophy, finding a highly-regarded graduate program where you can focus on that interest unimpeded by other concerns and still put yourself in a good job-hunting position is difficult, if not impossible. But it is possible to find good programs (both analytic and continental) where you can pursue these interests seriously in conjunction with your training in other aspects of philosophy.

It could well be that a career in a "mainstream" philosophy department is not what you want anyway. If you have a deep commitment to feminism or to work on issues in ecology or race or social justice, a standard philosophy Ph.D., whether Anglo-American or European, may not satisfy your needs or interests, and your ideal job may not be in a

philosophy department, or not confined to a philosophy department. A Ph.D. in philosophy together with a supporting M.A. or certificate in Women's Studies or Natural Resources or Political Science might position you to find (or create) the kind of job you *really* want. If the philosophy that interests you isn't going to be terribly attractive to the "mainstream" departments, open up some other opportunities by broadening yourself in other ways. Conforming to the commonplace models is convenient, because the paths are already blazed, but don't ever forget that it is possible to make yourself attractive by breaking the mold and combining interdisciplinary competences in a unique way. There are risks to that path, but the rewards are immense.

### Some More Things to Think About

If you are heading for an academic career, it is fairly important to find out as early as possible whether you enjoy teaching. Since, with only a very few exceptions, philosophers earn their keep not by doing philosophy, but by teaching, if you don't enjoy teaching, academic life can be miserable. And it does not follow that if you like being a student, you'll like being a teacher. If you have a chance to be a writing fellow or a logic tutor or practice some other form of instruction, seize it. Students can drive you nuts: enough of them are totally self-involved, treat you like a servant, and do everything possible to evade your best efforts to impart the least little glimmer of knowledge that many teachers soon feel, not just used, but used up. People who become philosophy professors were usually excellent students, self-motivated, eager, and curious. Many of your students will *not* be like that. If you're lucky, you'll have a few students each semester who are like you. Most of your students will be willing to do what they (not you) think of as a reasonable amount for the credits, but some of them will be shockingly unconcerned about their own education and without the least concern for you as a person. Over time, that takes a toll, and you need to love teaching enough that you won't get worn down and worn out by the bad students. Our logic program affords an excellent opportunity to find out early whether teaching suits you (and grad schools seem to count it a plus in admissions). If you don't do that, find some way to teach before or as early as possible in grad school, because if you don't like teaching, you need another line of work.

Does it matter where the graduate school is? I've emphasized often enough that the basic principle is to go to the best, most highly thought-of program that suits your interest you can get into. Geographical factors such as how high the surf is or the availability of good tex-mex cuisine simply shouldn't count. It's a 4-6 year commitment that will determine the rest of your life, so if you refuse to go to a great program because it's in a rural area and you're a city gal, or because it's in a big city and you're a

country boy, you're not really serious about a career in philosophy, are you? The one factor that might impose legitimate geographical restrictions, as far as I can see, is family: Are you married, with a spouse who has compelling needs to be somewhere specific? Are there children from a previous marriage you do not want to be away from?

I've tried to be brutally honest about the difficulty of a career in philosophy, but there is one important, perhaps all-important factor over which you have absolute control. How hard you work. You should expect to work at least as hard as someone in law school or med school. Though going to a highly regarded, first-rate program will grease innumerable wheels, if you slack off, take lots of incompletes and therefore a few extra years in getting done, write a mediocre dissertation, and get poor reviews as a teaching assistant, no one will hire you. If you go to a second- or third-tier school but work hard, learn a lot, make steady progress through the program, always going the extra mile, write excellent papers and a fine dissertation, and get very good ratings as a teacher, you will be in a good position for a job. Indeed, the top student from a #20 grad school will probably do better than a mediocre student from a top 5 school. Once in your first job, if you can publish a fair amount, you'll have a good chance to move up the pecking order yourself. Academia is far from a perfect meritocracy, but even in an imperfect meritocracy first-rate work is generally rewarded in the long haul. It can require immense energy, but then, nothing worth doing is easy.

Needless to say, the lower the rating of the best school you can get into, the harder you can expect to work to "make it" in philosophy. At some point, the calculus won't work out any more. Give yourself a fair shot, perhaps by taking an M.A. at a place from which you then hope to move up, but if the handwriting is on the wall, read it. If you cannot get into a pretty good program, look at other career choices. There are some graduate philosophy programs that just ought not to exist, because their students have no real chance in the field. Don't be a sucker.