

A Holistic Account of Adequacy Conditions for How to Look at Contraries: How Cross-Tradition Engagement in Philosophy Is Possible

*MOU Bo**

Abstract

The aim of this essay is to give a meta-philosophical and meta-methodological characterization of some central characteristic features comparative philosophy as a general way of doing philosophy through cross-tradition engagement toward world philosophy. This is elucidated by presenting a holistic account of the conditions for maintaining adequate methodological guiding principles for appropriately and effectively considering different approaches to philosophy. This essay is meta-methodological in character: given that comparative philosophy sets out to explore how to adequately look at contraries (especially those from different philosophical traditions, but not limited to them, methodologically speaking), and given the self-reflective philosophical nature of comparative philosophy, exploring adequacy conditions for how to look at contraries is meta-methodological in character but also a significant part of comparative philosophy *per se*. This meta-methodological exploration in comparative philosophy is neither exhaustive nor exclusive: it is not exhaustive because comparative philosophy as a whole has other substantial contents; it is not exclusive because this suggested account itself is open-ended and can include further adequate conditions that would be complementary to the current set from the holistic vantage point, which is exactly one ending point of this essay.

Keywords: comparative philosophy, cross-tradition engagement in philosophy, holistic account, methodological guiding principles (adequate and inadequate ones), methodological perspectives (eligible and ineligible ones)

Celostni opis pogojev ustreznosti pri pogledu na nasprotja: kako je mogoče v filozofijo vključiti različne tradicije

Izvleček

Namen tega eseja je podati metafilozofsko in metametodološko opredelitev nekaterih osrednjih značilnosti primerjalne filozofije kot splošnega načina prakticiranja filozofije z

* MOU Bo, Department of Philosophy, San Jose State University, USA.
Email address: bo.mou@sjsu.edu



vključevanjem različnih tradicij v smeri svetovne filozofije. To je pojasnjeno s celostnim opisom pogojev za ohranjanje ustreznih metodoloških vodil za ustrezno in učinkovito obravnavo različnih pristopov k filozofiji. Ta esej je metametodološke narave: glede na to, da si primerjalna filozofija prizadeva raziskati, kako ustrezno obravnavati nasprotja (zlasti tista iz različnih filozofskih tradicij, vendar metodološko gledano ne omejeno nanje), in glede na samorefleksivno filozofsko naravo primerjalne filozofije je raziskovanje pogojev ustreznosti obravnavanja nasprotij metametodološke narave in hkrati pomemben del primerjalne filozofije kot take. To metametodološko raziskovanje v primerjalni filozofiji ni niti izčrpno niti izključujoče: ni izčrpno, ker ima primerjalna filozofija kot celota še druge bistvene vsebine; ni izključujoče, ker je ta predlagani opis sam po sebi odprt in lahko vključuje nadaljnje ustrezne pogoje, ki bi sedanji sklop dopolnjevali s celostnega gledišča, kar je prav ena od zaključnih točk tega eseja.

Ključne besede: primerjalna filozofija, čeztradicijski angažma v filozofiji, holistični prikaz, metodološka vodila (ustrezna in neustrezna), metodološke perspektive (primerne in neprimerne)

Introduction

At the very outset of this essay, before its purpose and strategy is stated, two notes are due about how I intend to participate in and contribute to the discussion on the specific issue concerning two methodological approaches to Chinese philosophy, respectively labelled “comparative” and “transcultural” ones. First, my way of using the key phrase “comparative philosophy” is in accordance with the “constructive-engagement” strategy of doing comparative philosophy, as shown by a range of international collective projects on cross-tradition engagement in philosophy, in which I have participated as a contributing coordinator, during the past two decades since the beginning of this century, and clearly it is substantially different from the way the phrase is used in the discussion title. To avoid mere verbal disagreement, and to hit the relevant points home, one good strategy in my case is to directly and explicitly give a meta-philosophical and meta-methodological characterization of comparative philosophy toward world philosophy, which distinguishes itself from both what the phrase “comparative philosophy” used in an *ad hoc* narrow sense means and what the phrase “transcultural philosophy” means (as used in the discussion title), but transcends both in a way to be addressed in the next note. Second, in view of my research focus and interest, I think that one effective way to give such a meta-philosophical and meta-methodological characterization of comparative philosophy “as a general way of doing philosophy through cross-tradition engagement” is by way of explaining a holistic account of “adequacy” conditions for maintaining adequate methodological guiding principles concerning how to

adequately look at distinct approaches in philosophy and other intellectual pursuits (“how to look at contraries” for short). This systematic account has been explored, enriched and enhanced especially in three representative writings of this author in the past two decades.¹ This essay marks a momentous accumulating point of developing this account: instead of merely summarizing what has been explored regarding this account, one more substantial adequacy condition is emphatically added in this essay, which renders this account fundamentally “holistic”, as highlighted in the main title of this essay. It is hoped that the resources in this account can be constructive to both sides of the debate.

In this way, the purpose of this essay is to give a meta-philosophical and meta-methodological characterization of comparative philosophy as a general way of doing philosophy through cross-tradition engagement by way of suggesting and explaining a holistic account of adequacy conditions for how to look at contraries. Given that comparative philosophy (no matter how one would preferably label it linguistically²) as a general way (methodology) of doing philosophy, this essay is meta-methodological in character: given that comparative philosophy sets out to explore how to adequately look at contraries (especially those from different philosophical traditions, but not limited to them, methodologically speaking), and given the self-reflective philosophical nature of comparative philosophy, exploring adequacy conditions for how to look at contraries is meta-methodological in character, but is also a significant part of comparative philosophy *per se*. This meta-methodological exploration in comparative philosophy is clearly neither exhaustive nor exclusive: it is not exhaustive because comparative philosophy as a whole has other substantial contents (for example and for illustration, the exploration on normative bases for cross-tradition engagement, the exploration on the issue of (in)commensurability, the exploration on the issue of philosophical interpretation, etc.)³; it is not exclusive because this suggested account itself is open-ended and can include

-
- 1 See Mou (2001; 2010; 2020). Mou (2020) is a monograph book that gives a systematic explanation of a range of theoretic and methodological issues in comparative philosophy as a general way of doing philosophy through cross-tradition engagement. Before that, to my knowledge there are two previous works at the research level of monograph books: one is David Hall and Roger Ames (1995), and the other one is Lin Ma and Jaap Van Brakel (2016). Both take a type of pragmatist approach on the issue (for my analysis of the pragmatic approach on the issue, see Mou (2020, sections 0.1 and 3.4.3)). For a recent monograph book that gives a systematic exploration of methodological issues involved in comparative philosophy, see Jana Rošker (2021).
 - 2 It is noted that, given the widely recognized distinction between the “use” and “mention” of a linguistic item (as addressed in the philosophy of language), the phrase “comparative philosophy” here is “used” to talk about *what it is used to designate*, i.e., a *non-linguistic item* (the substantial general way of doing philosophy through cross-tradition engagement toward world philosophy), rather than being ‘mentioned’ to talk about *this linguistic phrase itself*.
 - 3 For this author’s recent exploration of some of these issues, see Mou (2020, chapters 1, 2 and 3).

further adequate conditions (if any) that would be complementary to the current set from the holistic vantage point, which is exactly one ending point of this essay.

My strategy in this essay is this. Following this introductory part (part 1), in the next part (part 2) entitled “‘Constructive-Engagement’ Strategic Goal and Preliminaries”, as the suggested holistic account itself is associated with and fundamentally guided by the “constructive-engagement” strategic goal and methodological expectations, I first briefly explain the “constructive-engagement” strategic goal and methodological expectations in comparative philosophy; I also introduce some preliminary conceptual and explanatory resources and a range of lexical distinctions that are needed. Then, in the major part of this essay (part 3) entitled “Adequacy Conditions for Methodological Guiding Principles on How to Adequately Look at Contraries: A Holistic Account”, I suggest and explain a holistic account of adequacy conditions for maintaining adequate methodological guiding principles concerning how to adequately look at distinct approaches in philosophy.

“Constructive-Engagement” Strategic Goal and Preliminaries

In this section, first I briefly introduce “constructive-engagement” strategic goal and methodological expectations in doing philosophy comparatively; then I also introduce some preliminary conceptual and explanatory resources and a range of lexical distinctions in need of a clear and refined explanation.

The “Constructive-Engagement” Strategic Goal

One strategic goal and methodological strategy in cross-tradition engagement to bridge distinct approaches and resources from different philosophical traditions, generally and briefly speaking, can be summarized in this way. It is to inquire into how, by way of reflective criticism (including self-criticism) and argumentation and with the guidance of adequate methodological guiding principles, distinct approaches (even though not derivable from or reducible to each other) from different philosophical traditions (whether distinguished culturally or by style and orientation) or respectively from some (ancient) philosophical tradition and contemporary society (“from different traditions” for short)⁴ can talk to and learn

4 Throughout this essay, the phrase “from different *tradition*” or “cross-*tradition*” primarily means the cases addressing the engagement between relevant resources from different *philosophical traditions* but also covers the cases addressing the engagement between relevant resources from some (ancient) philosophical tradition and contemporary society (say, a modern folk treatment or a modern profession). To this extent, in the subsequent discussion, when using such phrases as “from different

from each other and jointly contribute to the development of philosophy and contemporary society on a range of reflective (or reflectively worthy) issues of philosophical (or intellectual) value and significance, which can be jointly concerned and approached through appropriate philosophical interpretation and from a broader philosophical vantage point. The foregoing strategic goal and methodological strategy might as well be called the “constructive engagement” strategic goal and methodological strategy of cross-tradition engagement in philosophy (the “constructive-engagement strategy” for short).⁵

As suggested (explicitly or implicitly) in the foregoing brief characterization, the constructive-engagement strategy as a whole has six related methodological emphases concerning its strategic goal and methodology (as highlighted in italics below) in a coordinate way: (1) it emphasizes *critical engagement for the sake of pursuing truth*; (2) it emphasizes the *constructive contribution* of each of the distinct parties in critical engagement through their learning from each other (though they might be not derivable from or reducible to each other) and making joint contribution to jointly-concerned issues in a complementary way (thus they are not absolutely incompatible); (3) it emphasizes *philosophical interpretation* of the addressed thinkers’ texts instead of mere historical description; (4) it emphasizes the *philosophical-issue-engagement orientation* that aims at making a *contribution to the contemporary development of philosophy* on a range of philosophical issues that can be jointly concerned and approached through philosophical interpretation and from a broader philosophical vantage point; (5) it emphasizes that the foregoing engaging exploration needs to be *guided by adequate methodological principles*; (6) it emphasizes *being open-ended and inclusive* regarding various (eligible) perspectives from distinct approaches in different traditions, especially through the foregoing emphases (1), (2) and (5), and thus providing an effective and inclusive meta-methodological framework and platform of constructive engagement.⁶

philosophical traditions” to address general cases, I employ it in its “generic” sense.

- 5 It is noted that exactly how to label this strategic goal and methodological strategy of cross-tradition engagement in philosophy is relatively unimportant; one can label it in some other way one would reasonably prefer. The methodological strategy is characterized in terms of “constructive engagement” with two major considerations. First, the key words in the phrase (“constructive” and “engagement”) and the whole phrase literally capture some of its crucial features and emphases. Second, the label has been historically associated with the strategy both in relevant documents in print (such as the constitution of the academic association “International Society for Comparative Studies of Chinese and Western Philosophy” (ISCWP), the subtitle as well as the journal theme description of the international journal *Comparative Philosophy* (www.comparativephilosophy.org)) and in the reflective practice of the constructive-engagement strategy (especially in the past two decades) through a range of international collective projects that have been guided by the strategy.
- 6 For more explanation, see section 0.1 of Mou (2020).

Some Preliminary Conceptual Resources and Their Related Distinctions

In this sub-section, in an accessible way, I introduce some preliminary conceptual resources together with their associated lexical distinctions in need for two purposes: first, to have a refined understanding and characterization of some methodological concepts and their related distinctions (among others, “methodological perspectives” and “methodological guiding principles”); second, to more clearly and accurately characterize distinct dimensions of methodological approaches in philosophical inquiries and thus some related methodological points of the constructive-engagement strategy. These conceptual resources concerning the method or methodological approach to an object of study, together with their associated lexical distinctions, are rendered “preliminary” in a double sense. First, as addressed above, they are needed to refine our understanding of the distinct dimensions of a methodological approach for the sake of a sophisticated analysis and treatment of methodology in the subsequent discussion. Second, they do not result from mere armchair speculation but from reflective elaboration of what people actually look at things in their folk lives: this real-life source provides a solid basis for a refined elaboration of the meta-methodological resources in cross-tradition/cross-approach engagement and also have them easily understood when delivered in an accessible way.

It is known that the term “method” or “methodological approach” in philosophical inquiries can mean several things. Given that the term “method” or “methodological approach” means a way of responding to how to approach an object of study, there is the distinction between three kinds of ways or methods, which constitute three distinct dimensions of a methodological approach as a whole, i.e., a methodological perspective (or a perspective method), a methodological instrument (or an instrumental method), and a methodological guiding principle (or a guiding-principle method), as specified below.

1. *A methodological perspective* (or a perspective method) is a way of approaching an object of study⁷ and is intended to point to or focus on a certain aspect of the object and capture or explain that aspect in terms of the characteristics of that aspect, given or assuming that the object possesses that aspect. There are two important distinctions concerning methodological perspectives. First, there is the distinction between *eligible* and *ineligible* methodological perspectives. If the

7 As indicated before, the identity of a (genuine) object of study in philosophical or other intellectual pursuits of “how things are” is understood broadly: as a naturally produced object in physical reality, a constructed object in social reality, a “linguistic” object (such as a word), an abstract object in philosophical theory, or an “issue” object in philosophy (such as the philosophical issue of truth with its distinct but related dimensions), referentially accessible and critically communicable among participants in philosophical dialogue. For more explanation on this, see Mou (2020, section 1.1.5).

object does possess that aspect to which a (token of) methodological perspective (type) is intended to point, the methodological perspective is considered *eligible* regarding that object. Otherwise, the methodological perspective is considered *ineligible* regarding that object. It is also noted that a perspective *type*, generally speaking, cannot be *indiscriminately* rendered *eligible* regarding *all* of the jointly concerned objects of study. Whether or not a specific *token* of a certain perspective type regarding one specific object of study is eligible depends on whether or not it really points to and captures some aspect or layer of the object of study.⁸

Second, there is the distinction between a methodological-perspective simplex and a methodological-perspective complex. A simplex is a single discernible methodological perspective, and a complex is either a combination of simplexes (“multiple perspective complex”) or an association of one perspective (simplex) with a certain methodological guiding principle (“guiding-principle-associated perspective complex”). By “perspective” below I mean a methodological perspective simplex unless otherwise indicated.⁹

2. *A methodological instrument* (or an instrumental method) is a way in which to implement, or give tools to realize, a certain methodological perspective. Methodological instruments are largely neutral in the sense that they can serve to

8 Whether or not there can be an *eligible* perspective *type* whose designated “aspect” would be really possessed by *any* objects of study is largely a metaphysical issue which I do not intend to pursue here.

9 Here and below, for the sake of illustration of relevant methodological points, I use as examples of methodological perspectives two paradigm methodological-perspective models that appear to be so different but can be seen as rather complementary, i.e., the Socrates-style being-aspect-concerned methodological perspective, as suggested and illustrated through Socrates’ characterization of virtue, justice and piety in some earlier Plato dialogues, and the Confucius-style becoming-aspect-concerned methodological perspective as suggested and illustrated through Confucius’ characterization of *ren* (humanity) and *xiao* (filial piety) in the *Analects*. The two methodological perspectives respectively constitute the methodological-perspective dimensions of the two thinkers’ methodological approaches, besides their respective methodological-guiding-principle dimensions and methodological-instrument dimensions. Though there are various aspects or layers of any object, what Socrates was concerned with is the aspect of the object that is stable, definite, regular, constant, unchanged or invariant (stably and invariantly existing in all things) and thus inter-subjectively accessible by any rational mind, as illustrated in his specified three conditions for any adequate definition of piety in the *Euthyphro* (cf., 5c-d). For convenience, a blanket term, “the being-aspect”, can be used to cover those characteristics of the object, or to stand for the aspect of the object that is characterized in terms of the aforementioned characteristics. In contrast, what Confucius was concerned with in the *Analects* is the aspect of the object under examination that is particular, concrete, dynamic, ever-changing, as illustrated in his characterization of (filial) piety in the *Analects* (cf., 2.5. 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8). All those characteristics are intrinsically connected with various situations in which things reveal themselves. A blanket term, “the becoming-aspect”, is used here to refer to these characteristics of the object that essentially involve dynamic change or becoming.

implement different methodological perspectives, though there is still the distinction between more and less effective instruments regarding a given perspective.

3. *A methodological guiding principle* (or a guiding-principle method) regulates and guides a certain methodological perspective (or perspectives) with regard to an object of study. Explicitly assumed or implicitly presupposed by the agent, it guides and regulates how the perspective should be chosen and evaluated and contributes to the establishment of its desiderata (especially the purpose and focus that it is to serve). There is the distinction between *adequate* and *inadequate* methodological guiding principles concerning methodological perspective(s) regarding an object of study. For example, in looking at the relation between the agent's current perspective in treating an object of study and other eligible perspectives (if any), a methodological guiding principle is considered adequate (in regard to recognizing perspective eligibility) when it allows in other eligible perspectives to complement the application of the current perspective and thus has the agent realize that these eligible perspectives do separately capture distinct aspects of the object and thus can jointly make complementary contributions to capturing the way the object is. It is considered inadequate if otherwise.

To help the reader capture their distinctions in a vivid way, let me use the following method-house metaphor to illustrate the relevant points. Suppose that a person intends to approach her destination, say, a house (the object of study), which has several entrances—say, its front door, side door and roof window (a variety of aspects, dimensions or layers of the object of study). She then takes a certain path (a certain methodological perspective) to enter the house, believing that the path leads to the entrance of this side (say, the front door) or the entrance of that side (say, a side door) of the house. If a path really leads to a certain entrance of the house, the path is called an 'eligible' one; if otherwise it is called "ineligible" (thus the distinction between eligible and ineligible methodological perspectives). When she takes a certain path to enter the house, she holds a certain instrument in her hand (a methodological instrument) to clear her path, say, a hatchet if the path is overgrown with brambles or a snow shovel if the path is heavily covered with snow. She also has a certain idea in her mind (a methodological guiding principle) that explains why she takes that path, instead of another, and which guides her to have some understanding, adequate or inadequate, of the relation of that path to other paths (other methodological perspectives), if any, to the house. Surely such a guiding idea can be adequate or inadequate (adequate or inadequate methodological guiding principle). For example, if she recognizes and renders other eligible paths also eligible and thus compatible with her current path, then her guiding idea is adequate; in contrast, if she fails to recognize that and thus renders her current path exclusively

eligible (the only path leading to the house), then her guiding idea is inadequate, though her current path *per se* is indeed eligible.¹⁰

Given the above specifications, there are two preliminary points concerning the relation between a methodological perspective and a methodological guiding principle that are especially relevant.¹¹ First, generally speaking, the merit, status, and function of a methodological perspective (a methodological–perspective simplex) *per se* can be evaluated independently of certain methodological guiding principles that the agent might presuppose in her actual application of the perspective. One’s reflective practice of taking a certain eligible methodological perspective as a working perspective in itself is philosophically positive and innocent in the following senses, whether or not it is associated with or guided by an adequate or inadequate methodological guiding principle in one’s application of the perspective. On the one hand, it is philosophically positive insofar as that perspective really points to or captures a certain aspect of the object and is thus eligible; on the other hand, it is philosophically innocent insofar as one’s reflective practice *per se* of taking that perspective amounts neither to one’s losing sight of other genuine aspects of the object nor to one’s rejecting other eligible perspectives in one’s background thinking nor to one’s presupposing an inadequate methodological guiding principle that would render ineligible other eligible methodological perspectives (if any). In this way, even if an agent’s methodological guiding principle is inadequate in her applying a certain eligible methodological perspective, the eligibility of the methodological perspective still needs to be recognized, and her reflective practice *per se* of taking that perspective still has its due value in philosophical inquiry.

Second, however, it is indeed important for the agent to have an adequate methodological guiding principle, which the agent is expected to presuppose in evaluating the status and nature of the eligible methodological perspectives, applying her methodological perspective, and looking at the relation between her current working perspective and other perspectives. For it does matter whether one’s taking a certain methodological perspective is regulated by an adequate or inadequate guiding principle, especially for the sake of constructive engagement of seemingly competing approaches. When one’s application of an eligible methodological

10 It is noted that I do not intend to use this method-house metaphor here to illustrate, and thus presuppose and advocate, any *ad hoc* conception of philosophizing; in the context of the preceding inclusive characterization of the identities of cross-tradition engagement in philosophy and its constructive-engagement strategy, one is expected to have one’s inclusive understanding of this metaphor and the due meanings of its involved metaphoric terms like “taking a certain path”.

11 These two points are further explained and illustrated in the cross-tradition case analysis of Socrates’ and Confucius’ distinct methodological perspectives in treating the issue of filial piety in chapter 5 of Mou (2020).

perspective as one's working perspective is guided by some adequate guiding principle and thus contributes to a holistic understanding of the object of study, one's application of that perspective would be philosophically constructive and perceptive insofar as one would constructively treat other eligible methodological perspectives (if any) and their relation to one's working perspective and thus have a comprehensive outlook for the sake of a complete account of the object of study. Otherwise, it would be philosophically less constructive and less perceptive (or even blind) in that connection—but, even so, the reflective practice taking that eligible perspective in itself can be still philosophically positive and innocent in the foregoing senses, as indicated before.

In the context of philosophical inquiry, for one thing there is the need to refine the notion of methodological approach into these three distinct but related notions of methodological approach for the sake of adequately characterizing the foregoing three distinct but related methodological ways (in philosophical inquiry). For another thing, in view of their distinction and connection at least at the conceptual level, we might as well regard the three methodological ways as three dimensions of (philosophical) methodology or of the concept of methodological approach, although this by no means takes for granted that any methodological way that has ever been historically adopted was actually presented in its agent's ideas and texts indiscriminately as a methodological approach that would manifestly reveal all the three dimensions.

Adequacy Conditions for Methodological Guiding Principles on How to Adequately Look at Contraries: A Holistic Account

The preceding discussion points to one central concern in the constructive-engagement strategy: how (for the agent of a cross-tradition-engagement project) to adequately look at the relationship between, and thus bridge, distinct approaches to an object of study or a jointly-concerned issue in cross-tradition engagement in philosophy and, more generally speaking, in philosophical inquiries (“how to adequately look at distinct approaches” of “how to look at contraries” for short). This central concern constitutes one core part of the issue of how the constructive engagement in doing philosophy comparatively is possible or how cross-tradition engagement in philosophy is possible. In this section, by means of the conceptual/explanatory resources and lexical distinctions introduced in the preceding section, and in a summary way, I highlight a set of “adequacy” conditions for maintaining adequate methodological guiding principles concerning how to adequately look at distinct approaches in philosophy and in other intellectual pursuits of

“how things are” (understood broadly in its philosophically interesting, engaging and significant way). This set of adequacy conditions constitutes the core of a meta-methodological framework suggested by the “constructive-engagement” account of cross-tradition engagement in philosophy.

(1) *The adequacy condition of recognizing the same object as a whole* (against the “anything-goes” orientation or radical relativism) (“the same-object-whole-recognizing condition” for short). A methodological guiding principle is considered adequate (in this connection) if, given an object (as a whole) of study, it enables the agent to recognize that there is a way that the object objectively is such that people can all talk about that same object as a whole even though they may say different things about the object (concerning its distinct aspects), neither resulting in “anything goes” nor thus bringing about radically different objects on their own.¹² In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.

Two notes are due here. First, this adequacy condition is intrinsically related to the two normative bases in cross-tradition engagement in philosophy¹³: for one thing, in a quite straightforward way, this adequacy condition is one significant variant of the “same-object-whole-recognizing” norm in addressing how to adequately look at distinct approaches; for another thing, due to the intrinsic connection between the “same-object-whole-recognizing” norm and the “way-things-are-capturing” norm, this adequacy condition may be also called the “way-things-are-capturing” condition. Second, this adequacy condition is the most basic among the subsequent meta-methodological adequacy conditions (2) through (10) concerning how to look at the relation between distinct (eligible) perspectives (on one given object of study) as the former is presupposed by the latter in two senses: 1—these other adequacy conditions presuppose that people can all talk about that same object as a whole even though they may say different things about it, rather than thus bringing about different objects on their own; 2—it is also presupposed by these subsequent adequacy conditions for the sake of capturing the way the object is (or is to be), given that the truth pursuit (i.e., the “way-things-are-capturing” pursuit) is one strategic goal for any reflective pursuits of “how things are” (instead of “anything goes” or “mere intellectual game playing”). In this way, this adequacy condition is also meta-methodological in nature concerning how to look at distinct (methodological) perspectives, and thus holistic in character at this meta-methodological level as well as at the methodological level directly regarding the same object as a whole. The addressed intrinsic relation between this

12 For the identity of a (genuine) object of study and the relation between a variety of objects and the inclusive natural world of which humans are parts, see this author’s relevant explanations and discussions in Mou (2020, chapters 1 and 2, especially in section 1.1.5 and section 2.2.2).

13 See this author’s detailed examination of them in Mou (2020, chapter 1).

adequacy condition and the two normative bases and the “presupposition” relation between this adequacy condition and the subsequent other meta-methodological adequacy conditions (2) through (10) are expected to be recognized by a meta-meta-methodological overall-holistic vision regarding the relationship among these meta-methodological adequacy conditions (1) through (10), which will be captured by the last (but not least) adequacy condition (12), the overall-holistic-vision-holding condition.

(2) *The adequacy condition of recognizing perspective eligibility* (“the perspective-eligibility-recognizing condition” for short). A methodological guiding principle that is held or presupposed by the agent who uses some *eligible* methodological perspective concerning an object of study as the agent’s current working perspective is considered adequate (in this connection) when this guiding principle renders any other *eligible* methodological perspectives (if any) also *eligible* and somehow complementary to the application of the current working perspective. In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.

This adequacy condition may be called a ‘minimal’ condition for treating multiple (eligible) perspectives in the sense that it is “minimally” in need by the subsequent adequacy conditions (3) through (10) that somehow address multiple (eligible) perspectives in two ways. First, it is minimally presupposed by the subsequent types of adequacy conditions that directly address the relationship between multiple distinct (eligible) perspectives that are currently given, i.e., the adequacy conditions (3), (4), (7), (8), (9) and (10). Second, it is minimally pursued by the adequacy conditions (5) and (6), to be explained below. It is noted that it might be the case that a given object has only one aspect, and thus there is only one “eligible” perspective to capture the way the object is, although this is not a typical case concerning an object of study with its multiple aspects or layers, and thus can be looked at through multiple eligible perspectives.¹⁴

(3) *The adequacy condition of being sensitive to the agent purpose* (“the agent-purpose-sensitivity condition” for short). A methodological guiding principle is considered adequate (in this connection) if it enables the agent to have the agent’s choice of a certain working perspective, among distinct *eligible* methodological perspectives concerning an object of study, being sensitive to the agent’s purpose and focus (as shown either through distinct dialogue contexts or via distinct sentential contexts) and thus renders the most applicable or the most appropriate

14 For an earlier classical presentation of the point of this adequacy condition, see one key passage from the inner chapter 2 of the *Zhuang-Zi*, as explained regarding its methodological, metaphysical, and epistemological implications respectively in section 1.1.2 of chapter 1, section 6.2.5 of chapter 6, and sections 7.3.1 and 7.3.3 of chapter 7 of Mou (2020).

(the best relative to that purpose) the perspective that (best) serves that purpose. In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.

In view that the suggested meta-methodological framework concerning how to look at distinct perspectives can be viewed as one kind of “objective” perspectivism, this adequacy condition is fundamentally different from one crucial identity of “subjective” perspectivism in this connection. As emphatically explained before, the former holds that, once an object of study is given and thus people can all talk about that same object as a whole even though they may say different things about it, the *eligibility* of a perspective lies in its pointing to and capturing a certain aspect really possessed by the object, instead of “any perspective goes”; consequently, the agent’s purposeful choice is not any perspective that she would subjectively prefer, but is restricted to one of those *eligible* methodological perspectives concerning the object of study. In contrast, the latter takes it that the eligibility of a perspective would lie just in its being projected from the subject.¹⁵

(4) *The adequacy condition of granting equality status* (“the equality-status-granting condition” for short). A methodological guiding principle is considered adequate (in this connection) if it renders all the *eligible* methodological perspectives (perspective simplexes) concerning an object of study equal in the following two senses: being *equally partial* and thus being *equally in need* for the sake of a *complete* account of the object, although one eligible perspective can be rendered more in need or in focus than others only relative to its associated purpose when it is taken in a specific project; thus none of them is *absolutely* superior (or inferior) to the others in the above sense. In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.

It is noted that the *equality-status-granting condition* in the foregoing sense does not necessarily render all eligible perspectives equally *local*, though all of them are partial, in the following sense: if the addressed eligible perspective does point to and capture a certain across-the-board “universal” or “essential” base layer (*if any*, thus as one “basic” part) of the object that gives one defining identity of the object (in view of the other objects of the same “universally-identified” kind and of this layer’s “unifying” role), an adequate methodological guiding principle would render it *basic* instead of merely *local*, although one *basic* eligible methodological perspective is not necessarily or always in current focus (as the

15 The cases as examined in chapter 5 of Mou (2020) (Confucius’ and Socrates’ distinct purposes and emphases in taking their distinct methodological perspectives in their distinct dialogue contexts) and its chapter 8 (distinct purposes and focuses through distinct arguments as presented in distinct sentential contexts in Gongsun Long’s argumentation for his “White-Horse-Not-Horse” thesis) well illustrate, and provide evidence as *explanans* for, this adequacy condition.

agent's current working perspective) in a specific project with its agent's distinct purpose.¹⁶

(5) *The adequacy condition of recognizing new eligible perspectives* (“the new-eligible-perspective-possibility-recognizing condition” for short). A methodological guiding principle is considered adequate (in this connection) if it enables the agent to have an open-minded attitude toward the possibility of a new eligible perspective concerning an object of study that is to point to some genuine aspect of the object but has yet to be realized by the agent because of the “unknown-identity” status of that aspect. A methodological guiding principle is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.

This adequate condition is more epistemologically oriented: an human agent is epistemically restricted (both in the agent's “objective” connection, say, some across-the-board human epistemic limits) and in the agent's “subjective” connection, say, failing to use her other available knowing-contributing organs, as explained in Mou (2020, section 7.3.3) and has yet to know more “unknown” aspects or layers (if any) of the object and thus the more prospective eligible perspectives that are to point to and capture those aspects or layers.¹⁷ The point will be enhanced when the next adequacy condition is also considered.

(6) *The adequacy condition of being sensitive to dynamic development of the due coverage of eligible perspectives* (“the dynamic development-sensitivity condition” for short). A methodological guiding principle is considered adequate (in this connection) if it guides the agent to be sensitive to the dynamic development (*if any*) of an object of study for the sake of realizing and understanding which aspects are (still or currently) genuinely possessed by the object and thus which methodological perspectives are still eligible, on the one hand, and which previous aspects

16 Similar to the case of the adequacy condition (2), for an earlier classical presentation of the point of this adequacy condition, see one key passage from the inner chapter 2 of the *Zhuang-Zi* as explained concerning its methodological, metaphysical and epistemological implications respectively in section 1.1.2 of chapter 1, section 6.2.5 of chapter 6, and section 7.3.1 of chapter 7 of Mou (2020). The point is also highlighted in the title of the whole inner chapter 2 of the *Zhuang-Zi*: “On Equality of Things” (齊物論 *Qi-Wu-Lun*). The cases as examined in chapter 5 (Confucius' and Socrates' distinct purposes and emphases in taking their distinct methodological perspectives in their distinct dialogue contexts) and in sections 6.2.3 (part of its content concerning Aristotle and Zhuang Zi on identities of things) and 6.2.4 (on the relation between 有 *you* being and 無 *wu* non-being) in chapter 6 well illustrate, and provide evidence as *explanans* for, this adequacy condition.

17 The case addressed in section 6.2 of chapter 6 (each of the Quinean line and the Heideggerian line would have yet to know some distinct ‘unknown’ aspects of being, if Lao-Zhuang Daoist approach to the issue of being is on the right track) and the case addressed in section 7.3.3 of chapter 7 (on a variety of human organs contributing to knowing process) well illustrate, and provide evidence as *explanans* for, this adequacy condition.

are lost and thus which previous perspectives not currently eligible anymore, on the other hand. In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.

This adequacy condition calls the agent's attention and sensitivity to this: during the process of the dynamic development (if any) of an object of study, the object might develop some new aspect(s) while losing some of its previous aspects. Consequently, the methodological perspective regarding the previous aspect of the object might be not permanently eligible. A further development of the object might bring about a newly-generated eligible perspective, or a previously ineligible perspective might become eligible, because of its pointing to the new aspect. This adequacy condition highlights the need for the agent's sensitivity to the dynamic development (if any) of an object of study, one important front which can be easily ignored by an agent who is guided by an inadequate methodological guiding principle in this connection.¹⁸

There are two notes on the adequacy conditions (5) and (6) together. First, for the sake of pursuing the adequacy condition (2) in the sense of thoroughly fulfilling it, the adequacy conditions (5) and (6) need to be met if the object has its dynamic-development dimension that would bring about a new aspect of its identity and thus make eligible the new perspective that would point to and capture the new aspect, though this new perspective is not among the current given set of eligible perspectives. Second, these two adequacy conditions in particular can contribute to suggesting an 'objective' criterion for the identities of the issues that can (and should) be jointly concerned (through appropriate philosophical interpretation). It is important to note that the identities of the jointly-concerned issues of philosophy are not the same as, and cannot be exhausted by, the identities of those issues in the existing domain of inquiries: for their identities, the constructive-engagement strategy presupposes neither the current agents' subjective preferences nor the identities of the issues in the existing domain of inquiries; rather, as highlighted

18 This adequacy condition is implicitly yet unequivocally suggested in the *yin-yang* model and the Hegelian model of how to look at contraries as examined in chapter 4 of Mou (2020), both of which emphasize the dynamic change and development of all things in the universe. This adequacy condition can be illustrated by an example concerning widespread interpersonal relationship. Consider an imaginary case of a couple's interpersonal relationship. Suppose that at its earlier stage the couple's relation was good and harmonious, which would render a *yin-yang* perspective "eligible" in characterizing their relationship and thus "eligible" in taking care of the "legal" dimension of their relationship: the couple then decided they (should) stay together with regard to their legal relationship. However, suppose that later on their relationship turned sour with some serious conflict; the conflict is so severe that the "harmony" aspect of their legal relationship is not there anymore; in this situation, the *yin-yang* perspective to look at the current situation is not "eligible" anymore, while the Hegelian model as one perspective to treat the current case has become "eligible", though it was "ineligible" to capture the earlier stage of their relationship.

in the preceding adequacy conditions (5) and (6), i.e., the “new-eligible-perspective-possibility-recognizing” condition and the “dynamic-development-sensitivity” condition, the constructive-engagement strategy is explicitly inclusive to cover both newly-identified aspects of an object of study during the process of our further exploration of the object and newly-developed aspects of an object of study during the process of its dynamic development, both of which are open to newly developed eligible perspectives. In this sense and to this extent, through the suggested set of adequacy conditions, the constructive-engagement strategy can positively contribute to characterizing some “objective” criterion for the identities of those issues that can be jointly-concerned (through due philosophical interpretation). Notice that some problems or issues that were previously identified as different or separate problems or issues, which were (in some cases) further taken to belong to different traditions, turn out to be distinct aspects or layers of a larger issue as a whole (whether it is given explicitly or implicitly).

(7) *The adequacy condition of capturing concordant complementarity* (“the concordant complementarity-capturing condition” for short). Given that multiple distinct yet eligible methodological perspectives concerning an object of study turn out to be mutually supportive and supplementary in a manifest consistent way (thus called “concordantly complementary”), *a methodological guiding principle is considered adequate (in this connection) if it guides the agent to capture such concordant complementarity of these perspectives for the sake of their working together and make joint contribution.* In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.¹⁹

(8) *The adequacy contradiction of capturing restrictive complementarity* (“the restrictive-complementarity-capturing condition” for short). Given that there are two (multiple) different methodological perspectives concerning an object of study which are eligible (i.e., capturing distinct aspects of the object) but which are genuinely contradictory (i.e., the captured distinct aspects are genuine internal contradictory aspects possessed by the object) and that this object with its internal contradictory constituent aspects exists still in a constructive way (rather than in destructive tension up to sublation), a methodological guiding principle would be considered adequate (in this connection) if it guides the agent to 1—recognize

19 Traditionally, complementarity is indiscriminately treated as concordant complementarity without involving any internal contradiction or self-contradiction but harmony. In his comments on the general significance of Niels Bohr’s idea of complementarity in physics, Robert Allinson characterizes its key idea this way: “the core structure of the universe is not perceived of as self-contradictory, but as harmonious with itself” (Allinson 1998, 507); more generally speaking, he identified a complementarity principle with “a principle of harmony” (*op. cit.*, 513). Here I make the distinction between concordant complementarity, which is addressed in this adequacy condition, and restrictive complementarity, which is addressed in the next adequacy condition; for a detailed discussion of this distinction, see Mou (2020, sections 4.3 and 4.4).

the genuinely contradictory state of the involved aspects of the object and thus the eligibility of these “contradictory” perspectives that capture these aspects, and 2—capture *the “restrictive” complementarity of these contradictory yet eligible perspectives with their recessive mutual support for the sake of a complete understanding of the complete identity of the object.* In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.

(9) *The adequacy condition of seeking sublation and post-sublation complementarity* (“the post-sublation-complementarity-seeking condition” for short). Given that two seemingly competing contraries as a whole somehow cannot be mutually supportive and supplementary (neither in a manifest nor in a recessive way) and need their sublation (understood broadly, to be explained below) so that reasonable and valuable elements that are sublated respectively from the two contraries and incorporated into a new unity can be mutually supportive and supplementary (either in a manifest way or in a recessively way), a methodological guiding principle is considered adequate if it guides the agent to sublata these reasonable and valuable elements from the two original contraries, incorporate them into a new unity as new contraries and thus brings about their complementarity, and/or understand such sublation and post-sublation complementarity. In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.²⁰

Now consider one typical case of two contrary approaches to an object of study *in cross-tradition philosophical engagement*: there are two (multiple) seemingly competing guiding-principle-associated perspective complexes concerning an object of study whose perspective parts are eligible (i.e., capturing distinct aspects of the object) but whose respectively associated methodological guiding principles are not only genuinely incompatible but also (one of them or both) inadequate in some other connection(s), either because one of them is inadequate or because both are inadequate, in the addressed other connection(s); then there is the need for sublation of these two perspective complexes.²¹ Given this case, a

20 I give the due credit to Robert Allinson who perhaps first explicitly gives a joint examination of the *Yin-Yang* model as suggested in the *Yi-Jing* text (seeking complementarity) and the Hegelian methodological model (seeking sublation) as suggested in Hegel’s works (such as Hegel 1967 [1807]) and how they can work together in Allinson (2003). My distinct work in this connection is two-fold. First, I make the distinction between two types of complementarities and explain how the two models can be intrinsically related through the relation of two types of complementarity. Second, I combine the adequacy conditions related to the two models, i.e., (7), (8) and (9), with the other adequacy conditions into a systematic methodological framework.

21 For the illustration of such a typical case, the reader can look at this sample example: there are two contrary guiding-principle-associated perspective complexes as two approaches to building up a social-economic community: one is the profit-seeking-only perspective complex (i.e., the profit-seeking perspective that is associated with a guiding principle which renders this perspective exclusively eligible); the other is the welfare-seeking-only perspective (i.e., the welfare-seeking

methodological guiding principle would be considered adequate (in this connection) if it guides the agent to sublimate what is reasonable/appropriate from the two (multiple) guiding-principle-associated perspective complexes (i.e., their eligible perspective parts) while discarding what is not (i.e., the inadequate guiding principle(s) in one (or both) of the perspective complexes). In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.

There are two substantial notes on the set of adequacy conditions (7), (8) and (9) concerning seeking complementarity. First, the foregoing three “adequacy” conditions all address seeking complementarity, but *distinct types* of seeking complementarity: seeking concordant complementarity seeking, seeking restrictive complementarity, and seeking post-sublation complementarity. However, the complementarity resulting from seeking post-sublation complementarity might be either concordant complementarity or restrictive complementarity. As indicated above, they are treated as three substantial and significant instances and manifestations, in the context of cross-tradition philosophical engagement, of the more general “adequacy condition” schemas for how to adequately look at the due relation between contraries as given in an overall-complementarity-seeking account, presented and explained in section 4.4 of chapter 4. As explained there, the addressed overall-complementarity pursuit covers the three types of seeking complementarity in an inclusively disjunctive way (“either...or...” but possibly “...and...”); therefore, although an adequate methodological guiding principle can meet either (7) or (8) but not both, it can meet both (7) and (9) or both (8) and (9), sensitive to specific cases and situations.

Second, if the multiple distinct *eligible* methodological perspectives under examination concerning an object of study are concordant complementary in a manifest way of mutual support, then that is considered to meet adequacy condition (7). If they seem incompatible or contradictory but still constructively make joint contributions to a complete understanding of the identity of the object as a whole (thus having their complementary dimensions), then there is the need to further examine whether these perspectives are perspective simplexes or “guiding-principle-associated” perspective complexes.²² If it is the former (i.e., they are different

perspective that is associated with a guiding principle which renders this perspective exclusively eligible).

22 As specified before, a “guiding-principle-associated” perspective complex is a combination of one perspective simplex plus its associated methodological guiding principle. The case of a “multiple-perspective-combination” perspective complex is trivial in this situation: it can be either reduced to the case of multiple distinct perspectives (perspective simplexes) under the current examination or treated as one result from sublation that has post-sublation complementarity as specified in the adequacy condition (8).

eligible perspective simplexes concerning an object of study which do capture distinct genuinely contradictory aspects of the object whose existence is constructive rather than being destructive and thus up to sublation), then that is considered to meet the adequacy condition (8). If it is the latter (i.e., they are “guiding-principle-associated” perspective complexes whose perspective parts are eligible), and if the associated methodological guiding principles are not only genuinely incompatible but also (one of them or both) inadequate in some other connection(s), then that is considered to meet the adequacy condition (9).

(10) *The adequacy condition of overcoming excessiveness and achieving constructive balance* (“the excessiveness-overcoming condition” for short). Given that there are multiple distinct yet eligible methodological perspectives concerning an object of study which are mutually supportive and thus complementary, whether in a manifest way (thus concordantly complementary) or in a recessive way (thus restrictively complementary), and whether such a complementarity is achieved directly by recognition or indirectly through sublation, *a methodological guiding principle is considered adequate (in this connection) if it guides the agent to maintain already-achieved complementarity by overcoming what is excessive (if any) and supplementing what is insufficient (if any) in treating these distinct eligible perspectives and thus bringing about their constructive balance (either in the form of “concordant” or “harmonious” balance for concordant complementarity or in the form of “restrictive” balance for restrictive complementarity).* In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.

(11) *The open-mind-oriented self-criticism condition.* A methodological guiding principle is considered adequate (in this connection) if it guides one to have a thorough open-minded and self-critical attitude towards one’s own approach (including one’s own methodological guiding principles as well as one’s own methodological perspective simplex or complex). In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.

Though the foregoing adequacy conditions, especially (5), (6) and (9), implicitly point to this condition, it is worth highlighting and explicitly addressing it separately: this adequacy condition would fundamentally distinguish a genuinely philosophical attitude toward criticism and self-criticism from an absolutely faith-based attitude that would take its foundation thing just for granted and would not allow any criticism and challenges to it. The point of this condition is not that one cannot firmly maintain one’s own foundational position or some axiom/norm-like basic principle(s)—it is clear that one has to stop somewhere in one’s account or theoretic system. Rather, the point of this condition is this: one needs to always maintain an open-minded reflective attitude towards all critical challenges to the basic principle on which one’s account or theoretic system is based, and be ready

to make self-criticism and modify, revise, or even give up an alleged basic principle if it turns out to be wrong or mistaken through critical examination and reasonable justification. This adequacy condition together with the next and also last one are meta-meta-methodological in nature as they are about the foregoing adequacy conditions (1) through (11)—they jointly guide and regulate how to look at the foregoing adequacy conditions at a higher and broader strategic vantage point.

(12) *The adequacy condition of holding an overall-holistic vision that coordinates the preceding adequacy conditions in distinct connections into a whole and captures the due relationship between them* (‘the overall-holistic-vision-capturing condition’ for short). A methodological guiding principle is considered adequate (in this overall-holistic connection) if, given an object of study, it guides the agent to strive for a (more) complete understanding of various aspects of the object together with its intrinsically related normative bases, its relevant background, and its possible development, and thus have an overall-holistic vision that reflectively coordinates the preceding meta-methodological adequacy conditions—(1) through (10)—in distinct connections into a whole and captures the due relationships among them. In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.

Though this adequate condition is the last one, it is not the least. If the preceding adequacy conditions (1) through (10) are meta-philosophical in nature, this adequacy condition, like the adequacy condition (11), is meta-meta-methodological in nature because it is about how to look at these meta-methodological adequacy conditions. This adequacy condition is significant in the following sense. It might be the case that one takes an adequate methodological guiding principle in one connection (i.e., meeting one adequacy condition) but fails to do so in another connection (i.e., failing to meet another adequacy condition). For example, given an object of study, one might adopt a methodological guiding principle that meets, say the “agent-purpose-sensitivity” condition but fails to meet, say, the “new-eligible-perspective-possibility-recognizing” condition. The constructive sentiment and expectation for the agent is to strive for a (more) complete understanding of various aspects of the object together with its relevant background so that the agent can have an overall holistic vision that reflectively coordinates the preceding adequacy conditions in distinct connections into a whole and recognizes the due relationships among them. This adequacy condition is to capture such an overall-holistic sentiment and expectation. Through its overall-holistic character, this adequacy condition explicitly points and contributes to the “direction” dimension (“toward world philosophy”) of comparative philosophy (as a general way of doing philosophy through cross-tradition engagement toward world philosophy), a point that will be further elaborated in a separate essay of this author on the theme “comparative philosophy toward world philosophy”.

Three notes are needed here. First, to the extent and in the sense as explained before, given an object of study, the adequacy condition (1) (i.e., the same-object-whole-recognizing condition) is meta-methodological due to the “presupposition” relation between the adequacy condition (1) and the other meta-methodological adequacy conditions (2) through (10) on how to look at the relations among various (methodological) perspectives. In this way, the apparent holistic character of the adequacy condition (1) is thus at the meta-methodological level. In contrast, the overall-holistic-vision-holding condition is overall-holistic in character at the meta-meta-methodological level, which is to guide the agent to see (say) the previously addressed intrinsic relation between the adequacy condition (1) and the two normative bases in cross-tradition engagement in philosophy, the “presupposition” relation between the adequacy condition (1) and the other meta-methodological adequacy conditions (2) through (10), etc.

Second, in the previous presentations of some of those preceding adequacy conditions, some meta-meta-methodological remarks regarding their status and relations with some other adequacy conditions have been made, though these remarks are not parts of these adequacy conditions *per se*. Rather, they are actually implied parts of the overall-holistic vision addressed in the current overall-holistic-vision-holding condition.

Three, the overall-holistic-vision-holding condition and the open-mind-oriented self-criticism condition are intrinsically complementary. On the one hand, the addressed open-minded self-criticism attitude needs to closely work with the holistic condition as one solid compass: one’s being open-minded does not mean having no direction, but needs to move with the aid of a holistic vision of a due direction, due coverages/limits of the preceding meta-methodological adequacy conditions in distinct connections, and how to cross boundaries. On the other hand, a holistic vision does not mean indiscriminate inclusion; rather, a holistic vision *in philosophy* intrinsically points to a reflective or self-critical attitude toward itself. To this extent, the two meta-meta-methodological adequacy conditions are mutually supportive, supplementary, and interpenetrating. They are thus complementary in jointly guiding and regulating how to look at the preceding adequacy conditions. It is arguably correct that, more generally speaking, the adequate conditions (11) and (12), an open-to-criticism attitude and a holistic vision, actually constitute two distinct but complementary characteristic features of the adequate guidance for any philosophical exploration.

With the joint guidance of the adequacy conditions (11) and (12), one substantial point regarding the set of meta-methodological adequacy conditions is this.: any condition on the meta-methodological “adequacy-condition” list *per se* is open

to criticism, instead of being dogmatically imposed, and should be guided in an overall-holistic vision. Indeed, the set of meta-methodological adequacy conditions (1) through (10) have been suggested to serve two purposes. For one thing, it is to explain how it is possible to have adequate methodological guiding principles in cross-tradition philosophical inquiries. For another thing, it is to provide readers with an engaging starting point or an effective stepping-stone, which in itself is not intended to be dogmatically imposed on readers but expected to be a target of critical examination in their own reflective explorations of the issue. The set of adequacy conditions (1) through (10) are thus open-ended with an overall-holistic-vision guidance in two connections. First, any of these adequacy conditions is itself open to be further criticized, modified, or enhanced; second, this set of adequacy condition is open to be further expanded to cover more well-established ones if in need, which would be complementary to the current set from the holistic vantage point.

Acknowledgements

I am thankful to Prof. Jana Rošker for her invitation to write a contribute piece to this special-theme section and to two anonymous reviewers for their constructive commentary feedback to an early version of this essay.

References

- Allinson, Robert E. 1998. "Complementarity as a Model for East-West Integrative Philosophy." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 25 (4): 505–17.
- Allinson, Robert E. 2003. "Hegelian, Yi-Jing, and Buddhist Transformational Models for Comparative Philosophy." In *Comparative Approaches to Chinese Philosophy*, edited by Bo Mou, 60–85. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Confucius (Kong Zi 孔子). *The Lun-Yü 《論語》 (The Analects)*.
- Hall, David L., and Roger T. Ames. 1995. *Anticipating China, Thinking Through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. (1807) [1967]. *The Phenomenology of Mind (Phänomenologie des Geistes)*. Translated by J. B. Baillie. London: Harper & Row.
- Lau, D. C., transl. and intro. 1983. *Confucius: The Analects*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.
- Ma, Lin, and Jaap Van Brakel. 2016. *Fundamentals of Comparative and Intercultural Philosophy*. Albany: SUNY Press.

- Mou, Bo. 2001. “An Analysis of the Structure of Philosophical Methodology: In View of Comparative Philosophy.” In *Two Roads to Wisdom?: Chinese and Analytic Philosophical Traditions*, edited by Bo Mou, 337–64. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company.
- . 2010. “On Constructive-Engagement Strategy of Comparative Philosophy.” *Comparative Philosophy* 1 (1): 1–32. <http://www.comparativephilosophy.org>.
- . 2020. *Cross-Tradition Engagement in Philosophy: A Constructive-Engagement Account*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Plato. 1995. “*Euthyphro*.” In *Classics of Western Philosophy*, edited by Steven M. Cahn (4th edition), 28–40. Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett.
- Rošker S., Jana. 2021. *Interpreting Chinese Philosophy: A New Methodology*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Yi-Jing (I-Ching)* 《易經》. The Chinese original text on which the relevant parts are primarily based: 《周易譯註》 (*The Zhou-Yi: Paraphrase and Annotation*). 1989. Paraphrased and annotated by Huang Shouqi 黃壽祺, and Zhang Shouwen 張壽文 (上海古籍出版社). A Chinese-English bilingual version of the *Yi-Jing* text: 《周易》 (*Book of Changes*). 1882. Translated and annotated by James Legge. Oxford University Press. Edited and paraphrased by Qin Ying 秦穎, and Qin Sui 秦穗 湖南出版社. 1993. *Chinese Text Project*. n. d. <https://ctext.org>.