

EDITOR'S WORDS

The current issue (volume 6, no.1, January 2015) is a special one celebrating the fifth anniversary of this journal, *Comparative Philosophy: An International Journal of Constructive Engagement of Distinct Approaches toward World Philosophy* ('the Journal' for short below). In the past five years since the Journal made its debut via its first issue in January 2010, with the quality as a top priority concern, the Journal has developed steadily and in a healthy way. Indeed, with its distinct "constructive engagement" emphasis and coverage, the status of the Journal is unique compared to other journals in some connections. On the one hand, it is more inclusive on jointly-concerned philosophical issues and topics: its coverage is restricted to neither one philosophical tradition (or one specific tradition centered) nor one particular comparative-engagement pair (e.g., neither the West alone nor the East-West alone, neither the *logos*-centered nor the *dao*-centered, neither the analytic alone nor the "Continental" alone); it can include any particular comparative-engagement pairs of distinct approaches from different philosophical traditions (whether distinguished culturally or by styles and orientations). In the past five years, the Journal has published peer-reviewed articles addressing the constructive engagement of distinct approaches from African, Chinese, Indian, Islamic, Latin American as well as Western philosophical traditions, and from the analytic and "Continental" traditions from the vantage point of comparative philosophy. On the other hand, it is more focused-on and engagement-oriented and goes with its "constructive-engagement" emphasis, instead of mere historical description or being inclusive without critical engagement: an open-minded and pluralist attitude in *doing philosophy* does not stop at being inclusive for its own sake or giving historical data presentation alone, but essentially demands further reflection on how these distinct resources and approaches from different philosophical traditions can critically engage each other to constructively make joint contributions to the contemporary development of philosophy and thus the well-being of contemporary society.

Indeed, the Journal has its distinct emphasis on the constructive engagement of distinct approaches from different philosophical traditions toward world philosophy, as highlighted in the journal subtitle. The constructive engagement strategy as one general strategic methodology in doing philosophy comparatively, briefly speaking, is this: to inquire into how, by way of reflective criticism (including self-criticism) and argumentation, distinct approaches from different philosophical traditions (whether distinguished culturally or by styles and orientations) can learn from each other and jointly contribute to the contemporary development of philosophy (and thus the development of contemporary society) on a range of philosophical issues or topics,

which can be jointly concerned and approached through appropriate philosophical interpretation and/or from a broader philosophical vantage point. One can see from the foregoing brief characterization that the constructive-engagement strategy has four related methodological emphases in a coordinate way: (1) it emphasizes *critical engagement*; (2) it emphasizes *constructive contribution* of each of the parties in critical engagement through learning from each other and joint contribution to jointly-concerned issues; (3) it emphasizes *philosophical interpretation* of the addressed thinkers' texts, instead of mere historical description, through which jointly-concerned philosophical issues and topics can be identified and approached; (4) it emphasizes the *philosophical-issue-engagement orientation* aiming at *contribution to the contemporary development of philosophy* on a range of philosophical issues and topics. The constructive engagement constitutes one crucial identity character of *comparative philosophy* as understood in one fundamental engaging way of doing philosophy.

The contents of the current issue well reflect the foregoing “constructive engagement” emphasis of the Journal. This issue consists of two parts, the major “Articles” part, which includes seven peer-reviewed articles by the authors from Asia, Europe and North America, and the distinct “Constructive-Engagement Dialogue” part, which includes two critics’ engaging articles on a previously published article in the Journal and the author’s “reply” article. The contents of these articles are considered to be intrinsically relevant to the philosophical interest and inquiry of philosophy scholars and students, no matter which specific traditions they study (e.g., Chinese or Indian philosophy) and no matter which style of philosophy they instantiate (e.g., analytic or “Continental” approaches), given that they work on issues and topics under examination in the articles of this issue (and, more generally speaking, those published articles in this Journal). This feature is related to one key expectation of the Journal’s “constructive-engagement” emphasis: during the review process, any of the article authors is to be asked to seriously consider this question: how her thesis and argumentation on distinct approaches from different traditions would be intrinsically relevant to, and contribute to, the issue or topic under her comparative-engagement examination that can be jointly concerned (through appropriate philosophical interpretation) by philosophy scholars and students who work on other distinct approaches from other tradition(s), instead of being interesting merely to those who work on the resources in the same tradition(s). In this connection, the Journal's emphasis on constructive engagement and philosophical relevance constitutes one pivot at which these philosophical explorations on distinct resources from different traditions can be intrinsically and effectively unified through comparative philosophy with the foregoing “inclusive-but-constructively-engaging” character, which otherwise could be easily dismissed as irrelevant to each other.

Bo Mou
January 2015