

## EDITOR'S WORDS

The current issue (volume 8, no.2, July 2017) consists of the following contents: (1) it starts with a special-topic section on comparative Chinese-Western epistemology which consists of three peer-reviewed articles respectively by Julianne Chung, Chienkuo Mi, and Weimin Shi on how relevant resources in the classical Chinese philosophy can contribute to the contemporary development of epistemology on the issues of skepticism, virtue epistemology, and ethical knowledge through the unity of knowing and acting; (2) its regular "articles" section consists of two articles respectively by Robert Paul and David Wisdo on how relevant resources in Buddhist and Western philosophical traditions can engage with each other to enhance our understanding of the metaphysical issues of motion and of self; (3) it ends with a memorial piece of Richard Tieszen, an internationally renowned scholar in phenomenology, logic and philosophy of mathematics and a member of the Advisory Board of this journal, through which one significant front of comparative philosophy, the constructive engagement of analytic and "Continental" approaches in philosophy (understood broadly), is also highlighted. As a whole, the current issue of the journal features how relevant resources in different philosophical traditions (whether distinguished culturally or by methodological style/orientation) can effectively talk with and constructively engage each other on a wide variety of jointly-concerned issues and concerns in philosophy, not in moral and social-political philosophy *only* (as misrepresented in some narrowly-informed stereotype understanding) but also strongly in such basic engagement areas of philosophy as epistemology and metaphysics, for the sake of contemporary development of philosophy.

Indeed, as well illustrated by the articles here, the constructive-engagement anticipation and expectation<sup>1</sup> is high but never "impossible"<sup>2</sup>: the constructive-engagement expectation by comparative philosophy is not only philosophically

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<sup>1</sup> As highlighted and explained in the journal theme introduction, *Comparative Philosophy* 1.1: 1-32.

<sup>2</sup> It is noted that such a reflective expectation in philosophy might or could be mis-phrased as, or conflated with, an "impossible double bind" demand to the effect that, regarding "the *existing* domain of inquiry", "[s]how us something we have not seen before [*new to us*], but be sure it looks well and truly *familiar to us* too" (my emphasis in italics) [Amy Olberding (2015), "It's Not Them, It's You: A Case Study Concerning the Exclusion of Non-Western Philosophy", *Comparative Philosophy* 6.2: 15], although such a charge seems to primarily target the demand of those who do resist doing philosophy comparatively *if* their demand would really go that way, instead of a "straw-man" target which I more or less suspect. For the saying on the "existing" domain of inquiry, see my comments on it in my "Editor's Postscript" writing for the special-topic section in which the foregoing cited article is one of the contributing essays (*op.cit.*, 58-66).

interesting and engaging; it is both theoretically possible<sup>3</sup> and has been fruitfully implemented, as witnessed and substantially evidenced by a variety of systematic theoretic work, collective and individual research projects, and rich achievements especially since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (the work of this journal is part of it). To hit the point home and in plain words, through the constructive engagement strategy, relevant rich resources from different philosophical traditions can jointly approach “new” things while engaging “familiar” things at distinct levels, in distinct dimensions and with distinct purposes to both “us” and “them” in our common philosophical community: we achieve “newly” identified and further investigated perspectives and visions, “newly” recognized aspects/frontiers of the perennial jointly-concerned issues, and “newly” identified issues to be jointly-concerned, without being restricted by the “existing” domain of inquiry, while being unified through, and engaging on, reflectively “familiar” jointly-concerned issues/topics (explicitly or implicitly, including the “familiarity” resulting from due philosophical interpretation) and reflectively “familiar” common base norms, which include the same-natural-world norm (we talk about the same natural world in which we jointly live, instead of something else), the same-object norm (we can all talk about the same object even though we may say different things about its distinct aspects), the truth-pursuit norm (to capture the way things are or are to be, instead of “anything goes” and/or self-deception), and the jointly-maintained “critical” character of philosophical inquiry (instead of just blindly taking things for granted). No “dilemma” at all in such reflectively “new” and “familiar” identities but in need of careful and in-depth understanding and sophisticated treatments at various levels of constructive engagement.

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<sup>3</sup> It is noted that some crucial meta-methodological points of the constructive engagement methodology of comparative philosophy can be traced back to the relevant insights of some ancient thinkers, say, Zhuang Zi in the classical Chinese philosophy, whose general methodological strategy (essentially, a kind of objective perspectivism, which *per se* is a further substantial development of the *yin-yang* methodological model as suggested in the *Yi-Jing* text) was consistently presented in the “*Qi-Wu-Lun*” chapter of the *Zhuang-Zi* and powerfully implemented in Zhuang Zi’s treatments of various specific issues (including some epistemological issues). [For a detailed discussion of this, see my “Quine’s Naturalized Epistemology and Zhuangzi’s Daoist Naturalism: How Their Constructive Engagement is Possible,” in *The Philosophical Challenge from China*, edited by Brian Bruya (MIT Press, 2015), 303-337.] In this way and to this extent, it is incorrect to identify the constructive-engagement methodological strategy regarding, say, the reflective practice of the classical Chinese philosophy in terms of “*borrowed* methodologies” or “*borrowed* from specific *Western* philosophies”. This involves a general issue concerning the identities and characteristics of the methodological resources of the classical Chinese philosophy, which I cannot pursue here [for my previous discussion on it, see the “Introduction” essay “On Some Methodological Issues concerning Chinese Philosophy” in *History of Chinese Philosophy*, edited by Bo Mou (Routledge, 2009), 1-39].