CONSTRUCTIVE-ENGAGEMENT DIALOGUE:
HOW TO LOOK AT CONTRARIES

AUTHOR MEETS CRITIC:

AN OVERALL-COMPLEMENTARITY-SEEKING ACCOUNT
THAT INCLUDES AND TRANSCENDS HARMONIOUS-
COMPLEMENTARITY-SEEKING PERSPECTIVE:
A COMMENTARY ON CHENYANG LI'S
CONFUCIAN HARMONY-SEEKING ACCOUNT

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In this paper, I have two related purposes in the context of this "constructive-engagement dialogue" section: first, I will present a further expanded version of my previously suggested and explained "overall-complementarity-seeking" account on the methodological issue of how to adequately look at (the tensions and conflicts of) contraries (including both non-mental contraries in the natural world and mental ideological contraries in the human society as part of the inclusive natural world); second, I will give a commentary on the methodological portion of Chenyang Li's Confucian account of seeking harmony. These two purposes are related in this context to this extent. On the one hand, examining Li's harmony-seeking methodological approach will provide a valuable opportunity for my critical reflection, and thus giving a more refined elaboration, on my own account which includes some new contents that have yet to be published before. On the other hand, for an effective presentation and explanation of my commentary on Li's harmony-seeking methodological approach to the issue of how to look at contraries, and with consideration that my commentary is not piece-meal and tactic on individual "trees" but more strategic and holistic on "forest" regarding the addressed methodological issue of how to look at contraries, giving my positive account as a whole will provide a due background and holistic explanatory basis on which to present and explain my commentary.

In this way, my strategy is this. In section 1, I present and explain an expanded version of my previously suggested overall-complementarity-seeking account of how

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to look at contraries.[1] In section 2, I present a commentary on Li's Confucian harmony-seeking account. In the appendix, some preliminary conceptual /explanatory resources and their associated distinctions are presented for the sake of more clearly and accurately characterizing the structure and content of a theoretic approach.

1. AN OVERALL-COMPLEMENTARITY-SEEKING ACCOUNT OF HOW TO LOOK AT CONTRARIES: HOW IT INCLUDES AND TRANSCENDS A HARMONIOUS-COMPLEMENTARITY-SEEKING PERSPECTIVE

In this section, I give a cross-tradition engaging examination of the *yin-yang* model and Hegelian model of how to look at interaction and transformation of contraries as two representative, most influential methodological guiding strategies in looking at the due relation between contraries, respectively in the Chinese and Western traditions. My goal is to suggest and explain an overall-complementarity-seeking account of how to adequately look at contraries, in view of the two models as two engaging source models of adequate *methodological guiding principle*, whose due roles and applications are sensitive to the nature of conflict between contraries and situations. In section 1.1, I examine the *yin-yang* methodological model as suggested in the *Yi-Jing* text through the *Yi-Jing* philosophy (especially in view of its metaphysical foundation and truth-concern basis). In section 1.2, I then present the basic methodological points of the Hegelian model, as suggested in Hegel's philosophy, emphatically explaining some of its methodological points that are especially philosophically interesting and engaging. In section 1.3, after discussing how it is possible for the *yin-yang* model to work together with the Hegelian model, I suggest and explain an overall-complementarity-seeking account of how to adequately look at the due relation of contraries; in so doing, I also explain how this account includes and transcends a harmonious-complementarity-seeking perspective.

1.1 *YIN-YANG* METHODOLOGICAL MODEL OF HOW TO LOOK AT CONTRARIES: METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATION AND

In the following, I first briefly exmaine the metaphysical foundation and the truth-concern basis of the *yin-yang* methodological model of how to look at contraries; I then, explain distinct crucial features of the *yin-yang* model.

1.1.1 *YI-JING* TEXT, *YI-JING* PHILOSOPHY, AND *YIN-YANG* MODEL: METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATION AND TRUTH-CONCERN BASIS

The *Yi-Jing* philosophy means the philosophical dimension of the resources of thought delivered and suggested in the *Yi-Jing* (*I Ching*) text, which also has its "religious"

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[1] It is a substantial expansion of the overall-complementarity-seeking methodological account as given in chapter 4 of Mou 2020 (adding one more complementarity-seeking type besides the previously examined two major types).

dimension, its "literature" dimension, etc. It is known that the *Yi-Jing* text is understood in its classical or narrow sense and in its broad sense: the former means the *Zhou-Yi* 《周易》 text that consists of the sixty-four ideographic symbols, the hexagrams (卦像), and their respective explanatory texts (i.e., *gua-ci* 卦辭 and *yao-ci* 爻辭); in contrast, the *Yi-Jing* text in its broad sense consists of the *Yi-Jing* text in its classical sense and the subsequent commentary elaborations of the *Zhou-Yi* text, called the '*Shi-Yi*' (《十翼》 the *Ten Wings*), i.e., the *Yi-Zhuan* (《易傳》), which are largely Confucian interpretative elaborations of the *Zhou-Yi* text. In this chapter, by "the *Yi-Jing* philosophy", I primarily mean the *Yi-Jing* philosophy in its classical sense, although I will also cite some of the relevant interpretative passages from the *Yi-Zhuang* for the sake of illumination in the subsequent discussion. The *Yi-Jing* philosophy in its classical sense consists primarily of the *yin-yang metaphysical* vision, as delivered in the *Yi-Jing* text in its classical sense, and its suggested *yin-yang* methodological model of how to look at contraries.[2]

In the following, after a brief introduction to the symbolic system of the *Zhou-Yi* text as given (for those readers who are not familiar with this background knowledge), in view of the major objective of this writing, I give a brief explanations of the *yin-yang* metaphysical vision *per se* as delivered in the *Zhou-Yi* text,[3] as the main objective here is to focus on their relations to the *yin-yang* methodological model as the reflective elaboration of the *yin-yang* way of thinking.

In the *Yi-Jing* system, such ideographical symbols as the trigram and the hexagram consists of the divided or/and undivided lines, called "*yao*" (爻) or, as here, "*yao*-line": the divided line "- -", called "*yin-yao*," and undivided lines "—", called "*yang-yao*," when standing alone, are to stand respectively for the two most basic, mutually-opposed but interdependent, interpenetrating and complementary forces, i.e., the yielding force that softly, passively or recessively reveals itself and the hard force that strongly, actively or manifestly reveals itself, which co-exist in everything of the universe (i.e., this natural world) in various and distinct ways insofar as each of particular concrete things has its own distinct identity. The two fundamental types of forces might be identified, in more or less metaphorical terms, as the *yin* force and *yang* force (respectively '*yin*' and '*yang*' for short). The *yin-yao* and *yang-yao* combined together comprise eight trigrams, each of which consists of three *yao* lines, each of which is either *yin-yao* or *yang-yao*; each of the eight trigrams stands for one fundamental process or property; they, together with their original interpretations, are collectively called "八卦" ("*Ba-Gua*", the Eight-Trigrams). A hexagram consists of two of the eight trigrams, respectively as the lower part and the upper part of the hexagram, and thus consists of six *yao* lines, each of which is either *yin-yao* or *yang-yao*. The

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[2] For the reference information of the *Yi-Jing* text in the classical sense and its selected English translations, see my remarks in the entry "*Yi-Jing*" in the "References" part. There is the vast literature on the *Yi-Jing* text, understood in a broad sense, and its related topic, the *Yi-Jing* philosophy understood in a broad sense; with consideration of the focus here, I focus on the methodological resources in the *Yi-Jing* philosophy and on the research that is directly addressed the *yin-yang* model in view of the Hegelian model (primarily, Robert Allinson's relevant writings 1998 and 2003).

[3] For my detailed examination of the *yin-yang* metaphysical vision in the *Yi-Jing* text, see Mou 2003.

lower position has eight choices while the higher position has eight choices, resulting in sixty-four combinations; there are thus total sixty-four hexagrams respectively in the sixty-four "*gua*" (卦) units,[4] whose characteristic features are related to the two fundamental processes or properties in the natural world for which the two constituent trigrams stand respectively. The sixty-four hexagrams are intended to capture the fundamental way the changing patterns of the natural world are and thus stand for its sixty-four changing patterns; each of the sixty-four hexagrams is thus intended to stand for one of the sixty-four changing patterns of the natural world. In the context of the hexagram (and the trigram), once *yang-yao* and *yin-yao* are somehow combined into a whole to represent some natural thing or changing process, *yang-yao* or *yin-yao* denotes a (kind of) *yang*-dominant or *yin*-dominant changing stage of that thing or process rather than *yang* force or *yin* force alone. That is, each changing stage for which a *yang-yao* (or *yin-yao*) stands is the result of the interaction of the two basic forces, *yang* force and *yin* force. Moreover, each of the hexagrams is somehow harmoniously related to the others, especially those immediately preceding and subsequent ones. In this way, in the context of *all* the hexagrams, it would never be the case that *yang* force or *yin* force is always in a dominant position; a *yang*-dominant (or *yin*-dominant) stage or process would change into a *yin*-dominant (or *yang*-dominant) stage or process. As a whole, neither *yin* nor *yang* could claim its dominant priority over the other; they are equal in regard to metaphysical status: they are equally in need in the *yin-yang* unity as a whole. They are interdependent, interactive, and complementary to each other in a harmoniously balanced way.

As indicated before, in the *Yi* system, the sixty-four hexagrams represent sixty-four changing patterns of our environmental nature, i.e., this actual natural world in the process of change. According to the *Yi-Jing* text, any concrete situation and event, when analyzed into six stages of one pattern of changing process, would share and illustrate the structure or pattern captured by one of the sixty-four hexagrams whose meaning is indicated, highlighted and explained by its corresponding explanatory texts, i.e., *gua-ci* and *yao-ci*. In the *Yi-Jing* text (especially in the *yao-ci* part), various exemplars, such as the dragon in the first *gua* unit ("*Qian-Gua*"), are used to illustrate various types of changing processes with their changing patterns and fundamental characters. As explained before, in a *gua* unit, a hexagram consists of two of the eight trigrams, the lower part and the upper part (each of the eight trigrams stands for one fundamental process or property); their certain combinations via hexagrams stand for various changing patterns; there are sixty-four changing patterns for which they

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[4] The basic structure of the *gua* (卦) unit and its terminology is this. A *gua* unit (a hexagram and its original explanatory texts) consists of three parts: (1) the "*gua-xiang*" (卦像) part: an ideographic symbol (as a hexagram name) like "☷" which consists of six divided or/and undivided lines, i.e., *yin-yao* (陰爻) or/and *yang-yao* (陽爻), each of which stands for one of the six stages of the changing pattern signified by the hexagram; (2) the "*gua-ci*" (卦辭) part: an explanatory judgment which gives the name of the *gua* unit (e.g., "乾" of the first *gua* unit) and the meaning of the whole *gua-xiang* (i.e., the whole hexagram name); (3) the "*yao-ci*" (爻辭) part: an explanatory judgment on the meaning of each *yao* line (a divided or undivided lines) in the context of the hexagram.

stand; six *yao-ci* lines (divided and/or undivided lines) of a hexagram, counting from the bottom line, stand for six stages of a changing pattern. In this way, the *Yi* system of sixty-four *gua* units is set out to capture the fundamental way the natural world is through capturing its complementary and harmoniously-balanced changing patterns. In this way, the semantic-truth concern fundamentally underlies the *Yi* system of sixty-four *gua* units, given that semantic notion of truth lies in people's pre-theoretic "way-things-are-capturing" understanding of truth. The *Yi-Jing* text thus delivers the semantic-truth-concern basis for its suggested *yin-yang* methodological model of how to look at contraries.

The *yin-yang* metaphysical vision concerning the relation between changing/ becoming and unchanging/being (as the two most fundamental pair of *yin-yang* contraries), as delivered in the *Yi-Jing* text in the classical sense, constitutes the metaphysical foundation of the *yin-yang* model of how to look at contraries. As shown in the *Yi-Jing* text, the *yin-yang* metaphysical vision is neither a mono-simplex as the changing/becoming-concerned metaphysical perspective alone nor emphasizes changing/becoming only, but instead is a multi-layered metaphysical vision complex: (1) the *yin-yang* metaphysical vision consists of both its perspective dimension and its guiding-principle dimension; (2) its perspective dimension consists of both the changing/becoming-concerned perspective and the unchanging/being-concerned perspective; (3) its guiding-principle dimension consists in a reflective guiding polymerization of changing/becoming-concerned and unchanging/being-concerned perspectives which takes neither priority of changing/becoming over unchanging/being nor priority of unchanging/being over changing/ becoming, but regards changing/ becoming and unchanging/being as fundamentally complementary *yin-yang* opposites in harmonious balance in the unified universe.[5]

1.1.2   CRUCIAL FEATURES OF *YIN-YANG* MODEL:
         SEEKING COMPLEMENTARITY WITHIN UNITY
         AND REACHING HARMONIOUS BALANCE

The *yin-yang* metaphysical vision and the semantic-truth-concern approach as delivered in the *Yi-Jing* text have their strong methodological implication and jointly

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[5] As indicated earlier, I give a detailed analysis of the *yin-yang* metaphysical vision as delivered in the *Yi-Jing* text in Mou 2003 where I explain why one popular or even standard interpretation of the metaphysical central point of the *Yi-Jing* text (the *Zhou-Yi* text) has more or less neglected the complementary status of being-unchanging aspect and thus of the being-unchanging-aspect-concerned perspective that is likewise emphasized (instead of the becoming-changing-aspect-concerned perspective only) in the *Yi-Jing* text. Among others, the popular English translation of the title of the *Yi-Jing* text, (*The*) *Book of Changes*, as given in its two widely used English translations respectively by James Legge (published in 1882) and by Cary F. Baynes (translated from Richard Wilhelm's German translation, published in 1950), has shown such an orientation, although a more adequate translation, in my view, would be "the Book of Unity of Changing and Unchanging" which highlights the becoming-being (changing-unchanging) complementarity, one crucial point of the *yin-yang* metaphysical vision as delivered in the *Yi-Jing* text.

suggest a *yin-yang* model of how to look at contraries. The constitution and interaction between *yin* and *yang* as two across-the-board most basic contraries is considered universal, fundamental, complementary, dynamic, and harmoniously balanced in the following senses. (1) The *yin-yang* constitution and interaction are universal in the sense that *yin* and *yang* together with their interaction exist within all things in the inclusive natural world of which humans are parts. (2) The *yin-yang* interaction is fundamental in the sense that their interaction within are considered to be the ultimate source or pushing force for everything's becoming-process (forming, developing, altering, and changing); (3) The *yin-yang* interaction is complementary in the sense that *yin* and *yang* are not merely co-existing and interdependent but also mutually supportive and supplementary to each other; they are holistic and united into one thing within rather than separate without; (4) it is dynamic in the sense that *yin* and *yang* are in changing process and transform into each other, revealing themselves in the successive stages in the generation of things; (5) it is harmoniously balanced in the sense that *yin* and *yang* seek cooperation and harmonious balance in their interaction.

Among the above characteristic features, two features are crucial: one is capturing/seeking complementarity; the other is achieving harmonious balance. These two crucial features as two distinct emphases of the *yin-yang* model can be well illustrated by two sample "*gua*" units in the *Yi-Jing* text.[6]

In this way, the *yin-yang* model of how to look at contraries as one representative mode of methodological guiding principles concerning how to look at contraries, generally speaking, emphasize complementarity within unity which features distinct contraries by their harmonious balance. Now one might raise one reflectively interesting question this way. On the one hand, indeed, two contraries that are external to each other in a setting can become internal contraries in a larger setting; for example, two persons who are from different families but live in a same neighborhood community can be internal members of this same neighborhood community who contribute to the identity and harmony of this larger community; thus, in many cases,

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[6] For example, in the "*Qian-Gua*" unit, as illustrated by a dragon as an exemplary subject there, when not ready, the dragon does not rush but lying hidden to well prepare itself (first line from bottom); now when it is ready, the dragon captures the moment and takes the action (the second line from the bottom); when creatively acting, it is still alert and careful all way down (the third line); now it takes full action (the fourth line); the dragon is flying in the sky having achieving its goal (the fifth line from bottom); however, if the dragon is flying too high exceeding its limit, then it is doomed to suffer setbacks and thus would repent of its excess; the point here is this: when you are in the high sky feeling so proud, it is also most dangerous moment, and so be careful and still be modest instead of being arrogant (the sixth line). The relevant feature and point of the relation between the *yin* and the *yang* reflected in this changing pattern are these: the low and the high are *complementary*; try to keep them in *harmonious balance* (so don't rush, well prepared when your time has yet come, be careful all way down, etc.). Now let me give a brief explanation of another sample *gua* unit (the "*Tai-Gua*" unit). The name of the eleventh *gua* unit is "*Tai*" meaning peace / unification via interaction. The upper part of its "*gua-xiang*" the *Kun*-trigram (standing for the earth) while the lower part is the *Qian*-trigram (standing for the heaven); those are not their supposed positions: the heaven is to be in the upper while the earth the lower; this thus brings about interactive movement: the lower part is up while the upper part is down (to its supposed position); through such interaction in a complementary and *harmonious* way (as illustrated by the situations related to the six *yao* lines), the unification is to be achieved.

we can look at a pair (or group) of contraries in a holistic way (in view of all relevant aspects and layers of them) and thus treat them as internal contraries within a certain unity; then we can identify, capture or seek their complementarity as mutual support and supplementation that is featured by harmonious balance in the setting of such a unity (with regard to a certain dimension of the unity). However, on the other hand, at least in some cases, there exist genuine contradictory dimensions of contraries; even though a pair (group) of contraries with such contradictory dimensions can be still mutually supportive and supplementary and thus complementary in some way, the contradictory dimensions of the contraries restrict the range, amount and way in which their complementarity presents and manifests itself (say, in a recessive, instead of manifest, way). In the subsequent discussion, to characterize their distinct features and refine the notion of complementarity, I explicitly distinguish two types of complementarity: (1) the type of complementarity which shows concordant mutual support and supplementation within unity in a manifestly harmonious way without involving contradiction or manifest contradiction ('concordant complementarity' for short); (2) the type of complementarity which is restricted by the contradictory dimensions of contraries and thus which shows mutual support and supplementation in a recessive way ('restrictive complementarity" for short).[7] Clearly, the *yin-yang* model highlights and emphatically seeks concordant complementarity of contraries as *yin* and *yang* with their harmonious balance. It seems that the *yin-yang* model has yet to explicitly address and explain restrictive complementarity.

Indeed, the *yin-yang* model emphasizes capturing/seeking complementarity, generally speaking, and especially stresses "concordant" complementarity that features contraries by their harmonious balance. However, this model *per se* implies neither that, generally speaking, it denies the existence of contradiction nor that, specifically speaking, it rejects other types of complementarity. Actually, the *yin-yang* model, if understood in a thorough philosophical way or under appropriate philosophical interpretation, is not only compatible with but also can constructively work with any other methodological model that explicitly addresses and effectively explains some other type of complementarity. The Hegelian methodological model of how to look at contraries is such a model, to be explained in the next section.

1.2 HEGELIAN METHODOLOGICAL MODEL OF HOW TO LOOK AT CONTRARIES

My presentation of the Hegelian model below, in contrast to the preceding presentation of the *yin-yang* model, is intended to be relatively shorter and concise, minimally introducing its background and highlighting its relevant key concepts and major

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[7] 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, 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).

methodological points in Hegel's philosophy as presented in his texts, which (say, the central methodological point of Hegel's dialectics) are basically the common knowledge among the scholars in philosophy. The purpose here is to present the relevant methodological points in Hegel's philosophy through philosophical interpretation for the sake of cross-tradition engaging examination of how it is possible for the *yin-yang* model to work together with the Hegelian model, rather than giving a purely historical description of what actually occurred in Hegel's head based on a comprehensive analysis of his extensive texts. To this extent, I intentionally label the model under examination the 'Hegelian' model, rather than Hegel's model. Indeed, a comprehensive standing-alone comparative case analysis of the *yin-yang* philosophy and the Hegelian philosophy deserves a book-length writing. This is not a goal of this chapter. Some details that are less relevant to the current goal are either briefly addressed (if any) or omitted, because of the focus of this case analysis and of space limit. Indeed, the approach taken in this chapter to the comparative study of the *yin-yang* model and the Hegelian model is neither exclusive nor exhaustive. The treatment here can illustrate one theoretic point made in chapter 3 concerning how philosophical interpretation and textual analysis are intrinsically related in a project of cross-tradition philosophical engagement: the detail degree and coverage of a textual analysis of a target text needs to be sensitive to the purpose and focus of the project, rather than indiscriminately fitting one fixed pattern.

1.2.1   HEGEL'S DIALECTICAL METHOD: THESIS, ANTITHESIS, AND SYNTHESIS VIA SUBLATION

Historically speaking, the Hegelian methodological model of how to look at contraries is suggested in the philosophy of German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) in the Western philosophical tradition. Hegel introduces a dynamic and essentially historical perspective into what had hitherto been a supposedly static and timeless framework for understanding the nature and development of human knowledge (Mind).[8] Hegel conceives of the world in terms of a contradictory progressive movement of Mind or Spirit (*Geist*) towards full self-realization as self-conscious awareness. Hegel's doctrine is thus called 'absolute idealism', and his methodological approach 'Hegel's dialectics'. The process of Mind is not a simpler linear progression, but a perpetual dialectical struggle. By the term 'dialectical' Hegel refers to a "three-step" movement from thesis to antithesis to synthesis whose basic line is this: any given thesis intrinsically involves some internal contradictions which will generate an antithesis (the negation of the original thesis). But the interaction and confrontation between thesis and antithesis in turn leads to fresh tensions or contradictions, thus bringing about the synthesis of the two, which attempts to resolve the previous contradictions by "sublation" (*Aufhebung*)[9]: to preserve or incorporate what are

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[8] Cf., Hegel 1807 and 1812, among others.

[9] The "thesis-antithesis" dyad originated with Kant 1781 (cf., A417-8/B445-6); the "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" triad originated with Fichte 1794/1795 (especially see I: 110-114). in this connection, so to speak, Hegel's own distinct contribution lies mainly in his conception of sublation (see Hegel 1807): he

reasonable and valuable in the contraries, thesis and antithesis, into a new and deeper perspective and discard what are not (negation of the negation).[10] But the synthesis will itself then be subject to further dialectical tension: the process repeats itself in the struggle toward the truth which is the eventual and distant culmination of an arduous dialectical process undergone by Mind.

To Hegel, all things in the universe undergo such three-step movement in their interaction and transformation. For example, consider a seed: take a plant see as a thesis; then a sprout/plant (antithesis) grows out from the seed (thesis); then the plant produces the new seed (a sort of synthesis via "sublation"—keep what are positive in both thesis and antithesis while discarding what is not. In the context of how to treat two seemingly opposite points of view or philosophies, the Hegelian approach would perceive two views as coming into a conflict (thesis and antithesis); thereafter, a resolution is derived via the dialectical process of sublation: two views or two philosophies are at first perceived as antagonistic to each other or in a collision of opposites; in the dialectical collision, the resolution is first to jettison what is no longer valuable or reasonable within the two opposing approaches and then to salvage what is valuable or reasonable; the final stage is to synthesize what is remaining of the two so as to form a third viewpoint which contains something valuable of the two precious views but also transcends either of the previous views or philosophies.

1.2.2 TWO TYPES OF COMPLEMENTARITY IN VIEW OF THEIR PRE-SUBLATION AND POST-SUBLATION CASES: A PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION

One philosophically interesting issue concerning the Hegelian model is how to look at the mutual supportive and supplementary nature and status of the contraries (thesis and antithesis) *before* the crucial movement of sublation and that of the contraries *after* sublation, i.e., the internal contraries within the synthesis as the new thesis of the next three-step movement. It is noted that the issue is raised here from the point of view of philosophical interpretation in two senses: first, the issue is raised for the sake of its philosophical interest and significance, whether or not Hegel historically really raised the issue; second, when exploring the issue, we are not restricted to what Hegel's textual resources actually said regarding the movement of Mind in his account of "absolute idealism": we might further explore the points related to the issue that are either implied in the relevant textual resources or compatible with these resources for the sake of the "philosophical-exploration" goal of pursuing "how things are" regarding the raised issue, instead of the "historical-description" goal of pursuing "how Hegel thinks things are".

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further develops Fichte's synthetic method by sublation which not only cancels (as suggested by Fichte) but *preserves* (parts of) contradictory thesis and antithesis. Notice that, hardly just employing the "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" terminology pattern, Hegel himself used various triad set of terms depending on contexts (such as the triad terms 'Being', 'Nothing' and 'Becoming' in Hegel 1812, 82-82).
[10] Cf., Hegel 1807, §113; 1812, 54, 107.

Let us first consider the first part of the raised issue: how to look at the mutual supportive and supplementary nature and status of the contraries (thesis and antithesis) *before* the crucial movement of sublation. According to the Hegelian line, generally speaking, thesis and antithesis are not only co-existent and interdependent but also make their positive and constructive contributions to the existence and development of each other and thus to the identity of both as a constructive whole, though both also have their contradictory dimensions that brings about the tension between them, before the moment when the further development of the tension brought about by their respective contradictory dimensions needs sublation. To this extent, thesis and antithesis at the pre-sublation stage constitute one unity of thesis and antithesis with their mutual support and supplementation as well as interdependence within the unity, although the contradictory dimensions of thesis and antithesis renders such mutual support and supplementation of contraries with manifest contradictory tension "restrictive" instead of concordant (being restricted by discordant tension) and "recessive" instead of manifest (showing itself in a receive, rather than manifest, way). In this sense, as specified at the end of the preceding section, we might as well call such mutual support and supplementation between contraries 'restrictive complementarity': contraries with such mutual support and supplementation are complementary in character given that the point of complementary character lies in mutual support and supplementation, and contraries with such complementarity are restrictive because the contradictory dimensions of both contraries constitute a kind of restriction on each other's identities and development and on their way of manifesting their mutual support and supplementation. It is important to note that such restrictive character is not just negative and destructive but can be positive and constructive: the contradictory dimension of one contrary can positively and constructively restrict on excessive development of the other contrary when the tension between the contradictory dimensions of both contraries is in a constructive balance (thus labeled '(constructive) restrictive balance'), although the tension can be somehow out of constructive restrictive balance and thus need sublation.

Now how about the mutual supportive and supplementary nature and status of contraries after the crucial movement of synthesis through sublation, i.e., the internal contraries that are sublated from the previous thesis and antithesis in the previous three-step movement and retained within the new thesis of the current three-step movement? As stressed above, the question here is raised from the point of view of philosophical interpretation for the sake of pursuing "how things are" in the natural world of which humans are, instead of sticking to how Hegel think Mind would move. Thus, a further evaluative question can be raised this way: how to "objectively" characterize the relation between these internal contributing elements to the new thesis in the "way-things-are-capturing" sense of 'objective', if the goal here is not to give a purely historical description of Hegel's own account but to examine how the interaction and transformation of contraries in the new thesis after sublation go in the natural world? So to speaking, the complementarity between these reasonable and valuable elements that are sublated respectively from the two contraries, previous thesis and antithesis, and incorporated into a new unity can be mutually supportive and supplementary in

one of two alternative ways: either in a way of manifestly "concordant" or "harmonious balance between those internal distinct but concordant elements within the new thesis (thus as concordant complementarity), or in a way of "restrictive" balance between the manifestly contradictory elements within the new thesis (thus as restrictive complementarity). To Hegel, the latter case is the only alternative because of the throughout *contradictory* process of contraries without exception. However, when we look at the real-life case, the former case is possible (at least before one internal element of the new thesis that is recessively contradictory if any would subsequently develop into the antithesis): either because the agent can explicitly add "concordant complementarity without manifest contradiction between the elements resulting from sublation" as one contributing expectation for sublation even if it is a required one, although it seems that Hegel at least did not explicitly make this expectation for sublation, or because it might happen to be case that these elements resulting from sublation are concordant in their harmonious balance. In the former case, there are several characteristic features: (1) these retained elements in the new thesis as a whole are in co-operation and harmonious balance that fundamentally contributes to the very identity of the new thesis; (2) though there might be internal elements that are recessively contradictory, the tension has yet to develop to the extent to which the new antithesis is explicitly and fully formed up; in other words, the "concordant complementarity" dimension of the new thesis is still in a dominant status, while the "contradiction" dimension has yet to develop to the extent to which the new antithesis is explicitly formed up; (3) the constructive development of the new thesis at its initial post-sublation stage shows that the internal contributing elements within the new thesis are still mutually supportive and supplementary in a dominant and manifest way.

Indeed, it might be the case that, at the very initial stage of the development of the new three-step movement, the complementarity of contraries within the new thesis is concordant complementarity and then, when the antithesis is developed from the thesis, the complementarity between thesis and antithesis (before further sublation if any is in need) would become restrictive complementarity.

In this way, through its conceptual and explanatory resources concerning the foregoing three-step movement of contraries, the Hegelian account under the foregoing philosophical interpretation can explicitly recognize and emphasize the distinct kinds of internal interactions which possess distinct types of complementarity as follows, although Hegel's texts *per se* did not explicitly or formally use the 'complementarity' terminology and its associated lexical distinction between different kinds of complementarity. These distinct types of complementarity are these: (1) restrictive complementarity between thesis and antithesis within the pre-sublation thesis-antithesis unity; (2) restrictive complementarity between those internal contributing elements within the post-sublation thesis that are synthesized via sublation from the previous thesis and antithesis; (3) concordant/harmonious complementarity between those internal contributing elements within the post-sublation thesis that are synthesized via sublation from the previous thesis and antithesis. The Hegelian account can also explain how it is possible for these distinct kinds of internal interactions through synthesis via sublation to transform toward further development. In my view,

these are important contributions that the Hegelian model has made to our understanding and treatment of how to look at contraries. These are also substantial connections in which the *yin-yang* model can work together with the Hegelian model, to be explained in the next subsection.

1.3 HOW IT IS POSSIBLE FOR *YIN-YANG* MODEL TO WORK TOGETHER WITH HEGELIAN MODEL: AN OVERALL-COMPLEMENTARITY-SEEKING ACCOUNT

It is philosophically interesting and engaging to see how the *yin-yang* model and the Hegelian model can jointly contribute to our understanding and treatment of the reflective issue of how to look at the due relation between contraries or conflicting parties. [11] The two models share some common points while having distinctions regarding focus and emphasis. Both models highlight the universal existence of two correlative contraries, *yin* and *yang* or thesis and antithesis; both emphasize that the relations between the contraries are interdependent and interactional; both render the interactional relation fundamental in the sense that the interaction of the two contraries constitutes the ultimate source and final pushing force for the transformation and development of all things in the universe; as far as the interdependent relation is concerned, both consider the interdependent relation dynamic rather than static; as far as the dynamic development is concerned, both stress reaching a kind of (dynamic) balance. However, on the other hand, there are some interesting distinctions in regard to focus and emphasis.

As far as their emphasis on the interaction between the contraries is concerned, roughly speaking (at this point for the heuristic consideration), the *yin-yang* way emphasizes cooperation within, while the Hegelian dialectical way stresses opposition without; insofar as both emphasize balance, the *yin-yang* way endeavors to reach harmony within the *yin-yang* unity through concordant complementarity, while the Hegelian way endeavors to reach synthesis without or beyond thesis-antithesis through sublation. At this moment, one might ask: "Which model is to be followed?" or "Which model is better?" The question *per se* might be misleading if the question presupposes that there be absolutely one absolutely better model. However, the question as presented in that way is not necessarily misleading as the question is not asking "Which model is absolutely or indiscriminately better/superior?" We can see this: given a certain specific "conflict" situation, one model is more adequate and better than the other. The point is this: depending on the distinct nature of the conflict under examination, one can choose one of the two models that would better respond to the conflict nature to better treat it. A more challenging question is this: can we apply the two models to the same case at the same time? That is, when treating one case/situation, can we simultaneously apply both models? One crucial point is this: if an object of

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[11] For a thoughtful comparative examination of the *yin-yang* model and the Hegelian model in view of Buddhist transformational model, see Allinson 2003. The interested reader can compare and contrast Allinson's account to this author's account as suggested in this chapter, although it is not done here due to the goal of this chapter in the book and space limit.

study has two distinct aspects that demand respectively for the two models, we can apply both models to the same object simultaneously.

With the foregoing examination of the *yin-yang* and the Hegelian model, and with consideration that the metaphysical foundation and the truth-concern basis associated with the *yin-yang* model does matter for the goal of cross-tradition engagement as addressed in this book, a philosophically interesting yet engaging question is how it is possible for the *yin-yang* model with its normative metaphysical foundation and truth-concern basis (fundamentally in accordance with the "this-natural-world-whole-recognizing" norm and the "way-things-are-capturing" norm as explained in chapter 1) to work together with the Hegelian model. The question is philosophically interesting because their distinct account can jointly make substantial contributions to our understanding and treatment of the significant jointly concerned reflective issue of how to look at the due relation between contraries; it is engaging because their distinct accounts give different stories that seem to be opposed to each other in significant connections.

In the following, when exploring this philosophically interesting and engaging meta-methodological question, I intend to give an overall-complementarity-seeking account of how to look at the due relation between contraries. My strategy is this. In view of the foregoing general characterization of the shared common points between the two models and their distinct points and emphases in treating the issue of how to look contraries in their treating the interaction and transformation of contraries in the natural world, I present a set of the general "adequacy" conditions for how to adequately bridge contraries; to be sensitive to distinct identities of different types of contraries, and for the sake of keeping the prospective explanatory potency and widespread coverage, I present these across-the-board adequacy conditions in the "schemas" form, which however are neither claimed to be exhaustive nor rendered exclusive but open to be further modified, criticized, revised and/or expanded by any interested reader as well as by this author. Two notes are due at this point. First, by 'overall complementarity' in the phrase 'an overall-complementarity-seeking account', I mean an inclusive, pluralist notion of complementarity which is to cover distinct types of complementarity in an inclusively disjunctive way ("either…or…" but possibly "…and…"). Second, in a given unity or situation, the relevant contributing contraries might be more than two; however, both for the theoretic sake[12] and for the practical convenience, 'contraries' is assumed to be two contraries as a primary pair of contraries in the following schemas of the addressed adequacy conditions.

(1) The adequacy condition (schema) of *capturing* concordant *complementarity between contraries within their unity, under which to adequately look at contraries' concordant-complementarity relation (if any)* ['the concordant-complementarity-seeking condition (schema)' for short].

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[12] That is, one can always identify one *primary* pair of contraries in a given stage of process of interaction and transformation, in line with both models in this connection.

Given that two seemingly competing contraries turn out to be somehow (directly or manifestly, maybe in a dynamic way) mutually supportive and supplementary and thus concordantly complementary to each other within the unity of these contraries and that the *raison d'être* of the unity as part of the natural world is in accordance with the fundamental way of the natural world, a methodological guiding principle is considered adequate (in this connection) if it guides the agent to capture concordant/harmonious complementarity between these contraries within their unity and/or understand such concordant/harmonious complementarity. In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.

In this case, the harmonious contraries under examination are mutually supportive in a manifest way (manifestly making joint contribution to the constructive *raison d'être* of the unity). The *yin-yang* model emphasizes seeking concordant or harmonious complementarity between contraries. Many cases well illustrate concordant complementarity between contraries.[13]

> (2) The adequacy condition (schema) of *capturing restrictive complementarity between contradictory contraries within their unity, under which to adequately look at contradictory contraries' restrictive complementarity (if any)* ['the restrictive-complementarity-seeking condition (schema)' for short].

Given that two contraries turn out to be genuinely "contradictory" [continuously or temporarily at some stage(s) of their development] but make joint contribution to the complete identity of their unity as a whole (thus being somehow (maybe in a dynamic way) mutually supportive or supplementary, though being restricted by their contradictory dimensions) and that the *raison d'être* of the unity as part of the natural world is constructive in the sense that it exists in accordance with the fundamental way of the natural world, a methodological guiding principle is considered adequate (in this connection) if it guides the agent to capture restrictive complementarity between these contradictory contraries within their unity and/or understand such restrictive complementarity. In contrast, it is considered inadequate. In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.

In this case, the contradictory contraries under examination are mutually supportive in a recessive way (recessively making joint contribution to the constructive *raison d'être* of the unity) but are restricted by their contradictory dimensions. The Hegelian model's account of thesis and antithesis as pro-sublation contraries within their pre-sublation unity points to restrictive complementarity between them.

In contrast to the previous case of seeking concordant or harmonious

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[13] For example, Socrates' "universal aspect concerned" perspective and Confucius' "situation aspect concerned" perspective in treating their jointly concerned issue of (filial) piety, to be explained in chapter 5, are concordantly complementary in a manifest way. (For this author's detailed analysis of this case, see Mou 2020, chapter 5.) For another example, Aristotle's "essence-aspect-capturing" perspective (as the "perspective" dimension of his approach as a whole) and Cook Ding's "pack-of-fresh-bone-aspect-capturing" perspective, as cited by Zhuang Zi, in treating the jointly concerned issue of identities of things. (For this author's detailed analysis of this case, see Mou 2020, section 6.2.3 of chapter 6.)

complementarity, this case might be a bit harder for understanding, which I intend to give more explanation. Let me first illustrate the case via (one type of) examples with which most of us might have our first-hand experience. One as a normal human being would often undergo the internal conflict of emotion (being emotional) and rationality (or being rational understood in a broader sense of 'rational' or 'rationality' than mere inter-subjective rationality) when treating some of specific issues in one's life. In some cases, they (being emotional and being rational) are genuinely contradictory (thus in "dilemma" situations) but both per se constructively contribute to one's identity as a whole: when one treats a certain hard situation, one needs both in a non-excessive way instead of totally discarding either one. In some cases, when one rationally treats them (say, at one's behavior level), one still keeps being emotional (say, at the level of one's deep heart); in some other cases, when one emotionally takes care of them manifestly via external action and attitude, one still needs to be rational (say, at the level of one's calm mind); in still some other cases, one needs to be both emotional and rational even at one's manifest behavior and attitude level. In all these cases, the point is that being emotional and being rational in a non-excessive way are both in need in distinct ways regarding these distinct situations, instead of absolutely and indiscriminately discarding either one.

Generally speaking, restrictive complementarity between two contradictory contraries, *given* the constructive *raison d'être* of their unity as a whole, lies in not merely their co-existence and interdependence but also in this: on the one hand, the two contradictory contraries constructively make joint contribution to the complete identity of their unity as a whole (through their mutual support and supplementation in this connection); on the other hand, they jointly plays a constructive role of mutual restriction on excessive development of each other (say, when the emotional becomes too much emotional or of over-emotional impulse, or when the rational becomes too much or excessively-rational); they are thus "restrictively" complementary: although they might be apparently non-concordant, they are eventually mutually supportive in a recessive way and their contradictory and restrictive existence within their unity contribute to each other's healthy and non-excessive existence and development.

(3) The adequacy condition (schema) of *seeking sublation and post-sublation complementarity between new contraries "sublated" from original contraries, under which to adequately look at the due relations between pre-sublation contraries and between post-sublation contraries* ['the post-sublation-complementarity-seeking condition (schema)' for short].

Given that two seemingly competing contraries as a whole somehow cannot be mutually supportive and supplementary (neither in a manifest way 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 sublate these reasonable and valuable

elements from the two original contraries, incorporates 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.

Two notes are due here regarding the post-sublation-complementarity-seeking condition schema. First, the addressed "sublation need" needs to be understood broadly: it can cover the need for sublation of two contraries in social reality when the *raison d'être* of the their unity as a whole is not constructive anymore to the extent that the existence of either one of the contraries or both is not constructive in view of (various manifestations of) the fundamental way of the natural world of which humans and the human society are parts; it also can cover the need for sublation of two contraries in the natural environment when they naturally develop into the stage of synthesis via sublation. For example, there might be two seemingly competing guiding-principle-associated perspective complexes as two approaches to building up a social-economic community: 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) and the welfare-seeking-only perspective (i.e., the welfare-seeking perspective that is associated with a guiding principle which renders this perspective exclusively eligible). It is arguably the case that a constructive and healthy social-economic community does or should have both its profit-seeking layer and its welfare-seeking layer for the sake of its well-being, instead of having one only. In this case, what really makes the two perspective complexes competing or incompatible would be their respectively associated guiding principles that render their respectively guided perspectives exclusively eligible. Then, when a methodological guiding principle seeks a synthetic balance (via sublation) to bring about a new approach that sublates what are reasonable and valuable from the two perspective complexes (i.e., the two involved perspective simplexes *per se*) while disregarding what are not (i.e., the two involved inadequate guiding principles) and seeks their complementarity in the new approach, the methodological guiding principle would be considered to be adequate because it meets the sublation-seeking condition in this case.

Second, the addressed post-sublation complementarity can be mutual support and supplementation in a manifest way or in a recessive way. As far as the result of sublation is concerned, (3) might be the same as (1), reaching *concordant* complementarity of manifest mutual support, which is between harmonious contraries within the original unity in the case (1) and would be between the newly identified harmonious contraries within the post-sublation unity. Similarly, as far as the result of sublation is concerned, (3) might be the same as (2), reaching *restrictive* complementarity of recessive mutual support, which is between contradictory contraries within the original unity in the case (2) and would be between the newly identified contradictory contraries within the post-sublation unity. In this way, meeting the adequacy conditions (1), (2) and (3) are inclusively (rather than exclusive) disjunctive.

(4) The adequacy condition (schema) of seeking critical-reflection-generating complementarity between one contrary that contains some reasonable and valuable element(s) (either its "perspective" dimension including some "eligible" perspective or its "guiding-principle" dimension including some "adequate" guiding-principle element) and another contrary that would include neither eligible perspective nor adequate guiding principle, under which to adequately treat their relation still in a constructively complementary way that would generate critical reflections on why the latter is mistaken and unconstructive (including neither eligible perspective nor adequate guiding principle) on how to learn from the latter's mistakes and lessons ['the critical-reflection-generated-complementarity-seeking condition (schema)' for short].

Given that two contraries turn out to be *that one contrary contains some* reasonable and valuable element(s) (in the case of mental ideological contraries, one contrary includes either some "eligible" perspective in its "perspective" dimension or some "adequate" guiding-principle element in its "guiding-principle" dimension), and the other contrary that includes neither eligible perspective nor adequate guiding principle, although there would be some *raison d'être* of the latter contrary (whether or not the latter contrary as part of the natural world is in accordance with the fundamental way of the natural world), a methodological guiding principle is considered adequate (in this connection) if it guides the agent [either, if the addressed contraries are non-mental ones in the world, the agent who look at them or the agent who holds one of the mental ideological contraries] to generate critical but constructive reflections on why the latter contrary can occur and how it can be overcome and avoid in the future (in plain words, through critical reflection, the agent can learn from the involved parties' mistakes and lessons related to the latter contrary. In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise. In this way, even the case of an extreme approach that would include neither eligible perspective nor adequate guiding principle can be still treated in a constructively complementary way.[14]

In so doing, one is expected to <1> maintain already-achieved complementarity (either already achieved or in the achieving process) by alerting to and overcoming (possible) excessiveness and <2> keep a thorough open-minded and self-criticism

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[14] The fourth "adequacy" condition (type) presented here is a newly added for another type of complementarity seeking, whose initial idea is briefly presented in Mou 2021. Though these distinct types of complementarity are conceptually distinct and can be pursued separately, they might be jointly pursued in a specific project in treating contraries in tension or conflict. For example, given the distinction between methodological perspectives (eligible vs ineligible ones) and methodological guiding principles (adequate vs inadequate ones), concordant-complementarity seeking can be focused on in treating distinct eligible and consistent perspective respectively from different approaches; in contrast, both pre-sublation restrictive complementarity and post-sublation concordant complementarity can be jointly sought in treating distinct eligible but contradictory perspectives respectively from different approaches at the pre-sublation stage and in treating those eligible and consistent perspectives (newly generated from sublation) at the post-sublation stage. Furthermore, whenever there are *ineligible* perspective(s) and/or *inadequate* guiding principle(s) involved in either of different approaches, critical-reflection-generated complementarity can be sought.

attitude towards one's own approach (instead of being *blindly* based on faith or authority). Such further theoretic elaboration might as well be called an 'overall-complementarity-seeking' account.

(5) The adequacy condition (type) of *maintaining already-achieved complementarity (if in need) by overcoming what is excessive (if any) and supplementing what is insufficient (if any) in the development of contraries within their unity, under which to adequately look at the due relation between contraries in a non-excessive way and have them in constructive and balanced development* ['the excessiveness-overcoming condition (schema)' for short].

Given that two seemingly competing contraries turn out to be complementary (either in manifest way or in a recessive way) within the unity of these contraries and that the raison d'être of the unity as part of the natural world is still constructive in the sense that it exists in accordance with the fundamental way of the natural world, a methodological guiding principle is considered adequate (in this connection) if it guide the agent to capture and maintain complementarity between these contraries through overcoming what is excessive (if any) and supplementing what is insufficient (if any) in the development process of contraries within their unity. In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise.

There are two notes regarding the nature of the excessiveness-overcoming condition schema. First, in one sense we can say the previous adequacy condition schemas concerning seeking complementarity implies this adequacy condition schema, as complementarity of contraries implies their non-excessive states; however, as contraries are in dynamic change and development, the already-achieved complementarity of contraries resulting from complementarity-seeking efforts and/or being captured by the previous reflective examination might be damaged or even lost by the excessive development (if any) of one or both of the contraries. To this extent, there is the reflective need to stress continuously maintaining the already-achieved complementarity and alerting the danger of excessive development of one or both of the contraries, unless there is a genuine need for sublation (say, when the *raison d'être* of the unity of the contraries is not constructive anymore).

Second, complementarity is a kind of balance against excessiveness; I have emphatically addressed two types of complementarity, concordant or harmonious complementarity and restrictive complementarity, and thus two types of balance, harmonious balance between concordant contraries and restrictive balance between contradictory contraries. When the yin-yang model emphasizes seeking and maintaining concordant complementarity and thus harmonious balance, it also stresses overcoming excessiveness. This is one significant point of the yin-yang model. However, on the other hand, this emphasis does not automatically include the emphasis on seeking and maintaining restrictive complementarity and thus restrictive balance against overcoming excessiveness in this connection. In this way, the excessiveness-overcoming condition schema as a whole is to substantially enhance the yin-yang model through also stressing overcoming excessiveness in this connection; to this

extent, it is worth singling out as a separate adequacy condition schema in this yin-yang-model-based overall-complementarity-seeking account of how to look at the due relation between contraries.

With the foregoing examination and explanation, the following points can be highlighted as follows:

(1) There are three distinct main types of complementarity to be sought that point respectively to three representative types of contrary cases:

(A) *Seeking concordant (harmonious) complementarity* (between those contraries that can harmoniously work together), as shown in the *Yin-Yang* model of how to look at contraries and as captured by the adequacy condition of *capturing concordant complementarity between contraries within their unity* [i.e., the concordant-complementarity-seeking condition (1)].

(B) *Seeking restrictive complementarity* (between those contradictory contraries that might result in or from sublation), as shown in the Hegelian model of how to look at contraries and as captured *jointly by* the adequacy condition of *capturing restrictive complementarity between contradictory contraries within their unity* ['the restrictive-complementarity-seeking condition (2)] *and t*he adequacy condition of *seeking sublation and post-sublation complementarity between new contraries "sublated" from original contraries* ['the post-sublation-complementarity-seeking condition (3)].

(C) *Seeking critical-reflection-generated complementarity* (when facing a contrary that includes neither eligible perspective nor adequate guiding principle), as captured by the adequacy condition of *seeking critical-reflection-generated complementarity between one contrary that contains* some *reasonable and valuable element(s) (either its "perspective" dimension including some "eligible" perspective or its "guiding-principle" dimension including some "adequate" guiding-principle element) and another contrary that* would include neither eligible perspective nor adequate guiding principle, under which to adequately treat their relation still in a constructively complementary way that would generate critical reflections on why the latter is mistaken and unconstructive and on how to learn from the latter's mistakes and lessons ['the critical-reflection-generated-complementarity-seeking condition (4)].

(2) In so doing, one is expected to <1> maintain already-achieved complementarity by alerting to and overcoming (possible) excessiveness and <2> keep a thorough open-minded and self-criticism attitude towards one's own approach (instead of being *blindly* based on faith or authority). This point is captured by the adequacy condition (type) of maintaining already-achieved complementarity (if in need) by overcoming what is excessive (if any) and supplementing what is insufficient (if any) in the development of contraries within their unity, under which to adequately look at the due relation between contraries in a non-excessive way and have them in constructive and balanced development ['the excessiveness-overcoming condition (5)].

(3) An overall-complementarity-seeking account is intended to capture the foregoing three distinct main types of complementarity-seeking approaches in a holistic way, which points respectively three representative types of contrary cases, while alerting to and overcoming (possible) excessiveness and keeping a thorough open-minded and self-criticism attitude. In this way, the addressed overall-complementarity-

seeking account includes a harmonious-complementarity-seeking perspective in its "perspective" dimension but transcends a harmonious-complementarity-seeking perspective through the guidance of the addressed "adequacy conditions (types)" in its "guiding-principle" dimension.

It is noted that the suggested overall-complementarity-seeking account in terms of the foregoing across-the-board adequacy condition schemas for how to adequately look at the due relationship between contraries is presented as a *general* account concerning various distinct types of contraries in this natural world (understood broadly) of which humans with their associated things are parts: such distinct types of contraries include non-human-mental contraries in the physical world and human-mental contraries; the latter includes distinct individual humans, human social groups or human communities as "contraries" and distinct ideological approaches or methodological perspectives (to a jointly concerned reflective issue) as "contraries". When this general account is applied to a specific type of contraries [among others, distinct (eligible) perspectives in people's philosophical or other intellectual pursuits of "how things are" with one shared strategic goal of truth pursuit], there are two more needs: first, to refine and elaborate the contents of the manifestations of foregoing adequacy condition schemas in treating this type of contraries; second, to supplement additional adequacy conditions in need, being sensitive to distinct features of this types of contraries. In the "conclusion" chapter of Mou 2020, I suggest and explain a set of eleven "adequacy" conditions, as a core part of the suggested "constructive-engagement" meta-methodological framework, for how to maintain adequate methodological guiding principles and thus how to adequately look at the due relationship between distinct perspectives in treating an jointly talked about object of study in philosophy, generally speaking, and an jointly-concerned issue in cross-tradition philosophical engagement, specially speaking. This is a more comprehensive "constructive-engagement" meta-methodological framework of how to look at distinct methodological perspectives as contraries. This comprehensive account of how to adequately look at distinct perspectives includes not only the adequacy conditions that are *directly* about seeking overall complementarity between two (or more than two) distinct (eligible) perspectives, which actually implement and manifest four of the five adequacy condition schemas presented here [i.e., the foregoing adequacy condition schemas (1), (2), (3) and (5) regarding seeking overall complementarity]; it also includes a range of additional adequacy conditions concerning the "adequacy" of how to adequately look at the relation between various relevant eligible perspectives in other connections than (or surrounding) the foregoing overall-complementarity-seeking connections. At the meta-methodological level, besides these adequacy conditions that directly involve seeking overall complementarity, there are *the adequacy condition of recognizing the same object as a whole*, *the adequacy condition of recognizing perspective eligibility*, *the adequacy condition of being sensitive to the agent purpose*, *the adequacy condition of granting equality status*, *the adequacy condition of recognizing new eligible perspectives*, *the adequacy condition of being sensitive to dynamic development of an object of study and thus the due coverage of eligible perspectives*. At the meta-meta-methodological level regarding how to look at the due relationship between the foregoing distinct meta-

methodological adequacy conditions, there is *the adequacy condition of holding a thorough open-minded and self-critical attitude towards the agent's own approach.* dimension.

In this comprehensive account of how to adequately look at the due relationship between distinct perspectives in treating an jointly-talked-about object of study in philosophy, generally speaking, and an jointly-concerned issue in cross-tradition philosophical engagement, specially speaking, let me say a bit more about *the adequacy condition of recognizing the same object as a whole* ('the same-object-whole-recognizing condition' for short) which is this: 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. In contrast, it is considered inadequate (in this connection) if otherwise. This adequacy condition are intrinsically related to the two normative bases for cross-tradition engagement: <1> this adequacy condition actually is one significant variant of the "same-object-whole-recognizing" norm in addressing how to adequately look at distinct approaches; for <2> due to the intrinsic connection between the "same-object-whole-recognizing" norm and the "way-things-are-capturing" norm,[15] this adequacy condition may be also called the "way-things-are-capturing" condition. As for the relation between this adequacy condition and the other meta-methodological adequacy conditions, this adequacy condition is the most basic in two senses: first, all the 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, instead of thus bringing about different objects on their own; second, it is also presupposed by the remaining 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").

2. A COMMENTARY ON CHENYANG LI'S CONFUCIAN HARMONY-SEEKING ACCOUNT

If my understanding is correct, Chenyang Li's whole account, which is labeled 'the Confucian philosophy of Harmony' (Li 2014) and is also labeled 'harmony as a virtue in Confucianism' with more focus on harmony as a virtue (Li & Düring 2022, forthcoming; 'Li 2022' for short below), actually consists of two portions: <1> its substantial portion as one explicitly given approach in social-political philosophy to the issue of what counts as one primary social-political ideal regarding social relationship between individual humans, social groups, and communities; <2> its methodological portion (or its methodological implication) on how to look at contraries. To this extent,

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[15] For this author's detailed explanation of their intrinsic connection, see Mou 2020, chapter 1, section 1.3.

Li's work as a whole (2014 and 2022) is a significant work primarily in the areas of social-political and moral philosophy while related to the issue of philosophical methodology to the extent to be addressed below. As for <1>, the addressed harmony-seeking approach is originally presented in Li 2014 (primarily based on relevant resources from Confucianism) as one significant approach in social-political philosophy "for guidance in dealing with creative tension between Confucianism and democracy" (Li 2014, xiv). As for <2>, the addressed harmony-seeking methodological approach to tensions and conflicts is not limited to treating social relationship between contraries as the human agents and human groups but also "applicable to all things in the world, including human affairs" (Li 2022).

In this commentary, in view of the topic and emphasis of this "constructive-engagement dialogue" section, I focus on the methodological portion of Li's Confucian harmony-seeking account concerning how to look at contraries (it might be as well called 'Li's Confucian harmony-seeking methodological approach to the issue of how to look at contraries'), rather than its substantial portion on harmony as a substantial social-political ideal: "harmony is a desirable goal of human pursuit…for human flourishing…and how human beings ought to act" (Li 2014, 10). With this focus, in my commentary, I suspend and do not include my evaluative remarks on its social-political-approach portion (harmony as a prescriptive social ideal concerning the social relationship between distinct human beings and different social human groups/ communities), although I would largely endorse Li's thoughts on this issue in the area of social-political philosophy.

As far as the structure and content of Li's harmony-seeking methodological approach are concerned, in my opinion, it consists of its "perspective" dimension and its "guiding-principle" dimension, in terms of the conceptual and explanatory resources that are introduced in "Appendix" for the sake of clear presentation and refined understanding.[16] Its "perspective" dimension lies in a harmonious-complementarity-seeking perspective *per se*, which is presented via the cited quotations of an ancient minister-scholar Yan Ying 晏嬰 (578-500 BC), who gives a plain-word characterization of harmonious complementarity in terms of dish cooking and music making metaphors (Li 2022, 2-3), and also explained in terms of "heterogeneity, tension, coordination and cooperation, transformation and growth, and renewal" (Li 2014, 9-10); as one methodological way, it itself is neutral to some extent[17] and is appliable in different substantial situations (say, in dish cooking, or in music making, or in a theoretic setting). There is one "identifying" feature of *harmoniously* complementary contraries: though via internal coordination, they would not lose their "core" identities (without "negating one other"), even if in dynamic changing process with addressed "transformation, growth and renewal" (also cf., Zhang Dainian's characterization in Zhang 1988, which the author cites in Li 2020, 171), in contrast to

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[16] For the distinction between two methodological things, the methodological perspective and the methodological guiding principle together with their associated lexical distinctions, see the relevant explanation in "Appendix".

[17] Whether a methodological perspective in a certain case of contraries is "eligible" or "ineligible" would be sensitive to the nature and status of the contraries under examination.

the case of restrictively-complementary contraries as captured by the Hegelian model (internal contradictory elements in thesis and anti-thesis can develop to the stage of negating one other thought sublation).

Its "guiding-principle" dimension regarding how to regulate and guide the holder of the approach: <i> to evaluate the status of its perspective dimension (i.e., the harmonious-complementarity-seeking methodological perspective *per se*); <ii> to evaluate how its advocated harmony-seeking or harmonious-complementarity-seeking methodological perspective is related to other methodological perspectives (i.e., some other types of complementarity-seeking perspectives if any); <iii> to understand its metaphysical basis or philosophical nature, among others. If my understanding is correct, Li does explicitly say something regarding <iii> which is "Confucian" in nature (which is partially controversial, to be addressed below), explicitly say something regarding <i> (to the extent: advocating/ emphasizing the harmony-seeking methodological perspective but, fairly speaking, having yet to explicitly treat it as the *exclusive* and *exhaustive* one, though one might say that Li's sayings appear to imply that), and has yet to be explicitly and clearly on <ii> (whether there are other types of complementarity-seeking than harmonious-complementarity-seeking and how they would be related to each other). In the above sense, the methodological portion of Li's account has yet to be complete: at the level of its methodological "perspective" dimension, only the harmony-seeking methodological perspective is explicitly presented given that there are other types of complementarity-seeking perspectives; at the level of its methodological "guiding-principle" dimension, the evaluation regarding <ii> has yet to be given, and it would be partially controversial regarding its view on <iii>.

On the one hand, the addressed harmonious-complementarity-seeking perspective *per se* (on the "perspective" dimension of Li's harmony-seeking methodological approach), in my view, is not exclusively "Confucian" in nature and thus should not be rendered "Confucian" (as explained above, the method itself is neutral and can be applied either in a theoretic setting or in a folk context such as dish cooking and music making), because the addressed harmonious-complementarity-seeking perspective *per se* is suggested in the original *Yi-Jing* text in the classical sense, the *Zhou-Yi* text (different from the *Yi-Jing* text in the broad sense which also includes the subsequent largely Confucian interpretative commentary, the *Yi-Zhuang* text), which is not shared by Confucianism alone but also shared by all other major movements of thought in the classical Chinese philosophy – among others, philosophical Daoism (e.g., see the methodological point of chapter 77 of the *Dao-De-Jing*). It is noted that the addressed distinction between "active harmony" and "passive harmony" (Li 2022, 3-4) is more substantial about certain distinct social-political ideals than methodological.

On the other hand, indeed, some components on its "guiding-principle" dimension can be rendered "Confucian". So, if the nature of Li's harmony-seeking methodological approach as a whole is determined at least partially by the nature of its "guiding-principle" dimension, Li's harmony-seeking methodological approach as a whole can be rendered "Confucian" in view of the nature of its "guiding-principle" dimension. For example, the Confucian interpretative commentary treats the metaphysical

orientation regarding the relation between the "changing" and the "unchanging" (the two most basic pair of *yin* and *yang* forces in this natural world) as the (absolute) priority of changing over the unchanging; in my view, this Confucian understanding of the basic metaphysical vision of the *Yi-Jing* text in the classical sense does not capture of the genuine point of the *yin-yang* metaphysical vision as delivered in the *Yi-Jing* text in the classical sense; rather, as explained in Mou 2003, the basic metaphysical vision of the *Yi-Jing* text in the classical sense treats the fundamental relationship between the changing and the unchanging as one most fundamental pair of "yin" and "yang" forces that are fundamentally complementary to each other: neither of them has (absolute) priority over the other. [In this sense, the more adequate English translation of the *Yi-Jing* text in the classical sense is 'The Book of Unity of Changing and Unchanging' (instead of its widely circulated English title 'The Book of Changes'). It is also noted that the Chinese character '*yi*' in the context of the *Zhou-Yi* text has three closely related meanings: "changing", "unchanging", and "easy", instead of "changing" only.] In this sense, and to this extent, the addressed Confucian understanding of the metaphysical orientation of the priority of the changing over the unchanging actually constitutes one guiding-principle component, which is at least controversial or might be rendered "inadequate" (regarding how to understanding the metaphysical basis of the addressed harmony-seeking methodological perspective) in the guiding-principle dimension of the addressed Confucian harmony-complementarity-seeking approach as a whole.

As explained in the suggested overall-complementarity-seeking account, there are three distinct main types of complementarity-seeking perspectives (instead of harmonious-complementarity-seeking perspective only) that point respectively to three representative types of contrary cases: (A) *seeking concordant (harmonious) complementarity* (between those contraries that do or can harmoniously work together), as shown in the *Yin-Yang* model of how to look at contraries, (B) *seeking restrictive complementarity* (between those contradictory contraries that would or might result in or from sublation), as shown in the Hegelian model of how to look at contraries, and (C) *seeking critical-reflection-generated complementarity* (when facing a contrary that includes neither eligible perspective nor adequate guiding principle). The foregoing three types of seeking complementarity, (A), (B) and (C), are to be captured respectively by the (A)-related adequacy condition *of* capturing/seeking *concordant* complementarity between contraries within their unity [i.e., the concordant-complementarity-seeking condition (1)], the (B)-related adequacy conditions, which include the adequacy condition of capturing restrictive complementarity between contradictory contraries within their unity [i.e., the restrictive-complementarity-seeking condition (2)] and the adequacy condition of seeking sublation and post-sublation complementarity between new contraries "sublated" from original contraries [i.e., 'the post-sublation-complementarity-seeking condition (3)], and the (C)-related adequacy condition of seeking critical-reflection-generated complementarity [i.e., 'the critical-reflection-generated-complementarity-seeking condition (4)].

Can we "reconceptualize" or "reconstruct" Confucian harmony-seeking account to cover the other types of complementarity cases so that the thus substantially expanded account can be still rendered 'Confucian'? An *ad hoc* current account is open to or can

be further developed into a more complete account; however, the resulting account that would be more complete might not keep its original identity (in this case, "Confucian") for three considerations. First, there is the genuine and substantial distinction between the addressed three types of contrary cases so that the three types of complementarity-seeking methodological perspectives should not be conflated. Second, there needs to give due substantial credit to the newly added content if it has its previous "ownership", i.e., the correctly-identified previous thinker or text who or which first explicitly delivers the addressed substantial thought (though it might be already implicitly in the folk discourse in a pre-theoretic way) in terms of this thinker's or the text's own relevant conceptual and explanatory resources relatively articulated in the text; among others, the second type of contrary case is treated by the Hegelian methodological model with its articulated "thesis-antithesis-synthesis through sublation" resources, which was not in the previous Confucian resources. It is noted that the fact that the previous account with a certain identity is compatible with or open to being expanded to a more complete account does not imply that the expanded resulting account must substantially keep its original identity. Third, if one maintains that the words, say, 'Confucian' and 'harmony' are just used in some expanded or "reconceptualized" meanings in one's own account, that would make a weaker case in this sense: that would bring the discussion to a mere verbal disagreement and have the discussion lose its philosophically substantial interest and engaging point in this connection.

Let me use a real-life recent example for (more or less) illustration of some of the foregoing theoretic points. Consider our current international virtual conference with its multiple roundtable discussion sessions on cross-tradition engagement on a range of jointly concerned issues and topics. As for its primary goal, if one would say "Let us harmonize (to each other)!", many participants might feel either odd or a bit lost: they perhaps first think about their interpersonal relationship: "Well, we as philosophy colleagues already have our more or less 'harmonious' relationship to the extent that we come together in this conference as an academic get-together meeting through international academic cooperation." Rather, as stated in the description of the goal and emphasis of this conference: how distinct approaches and resources from different philosophical traditions (whether distinguished culturally or by style/ orientation), or from some (ancient) philosophical tradition and contemporary scholarship (philosophy or other intellectual pursuits), can talk to (rather than failing to communicate and understand), engage with (rather than passing by) and *learn from (rather than totally rejecting or dismissing) each other and jointly make constructive contributions* to the development of philosophy and of contemporary society on the addressed jointly-concerned issues/topics. The above phrase 'learn from (rather than totally rejecting or dismissing) each other and jointly make constructive contributions' can be rephrased as "learn from each other and make joint contribution in a *complementary* way" in the multiple sense of 'complementary' that different approaches can be mutually supportive and supplementary to each other in achieving a complete account of the issue: either [A] different perspectives *per se* (or the distinct perspective dimensions of different approaches) are all eligible in the sense that they point to and capture some distinct aspects of the issue under examination and thus they themselves are

harmoniously complementary to each other, or [B] some contrary approaches need to undergo "sublation", keeping what are reasonable and valuable while disregarding what not (say, some inadequate parts of the guiding-principle dimensions of the different approaches under examination) and thus some of their original "core" identities would change, or [C] when, though rare cases, facing a contrary approach that might be totally mistaken (including neither eligible perspective elements nor adequate guiding-principle element in the addressed different ideological contraries), we can take a *critical-reflection-generating-complementarity-seeking* approach to constructively learn from mistakes and lessons.

At this ending moment, I would like to emphasize one point that underlies the overall-complementarity-seeking account of how to look at contraries, i.e., the strategic truth-pursuit goal[18] which constitutes one normative basis for mutual understanding, critical engagement and joint contributions between distinct ideological approaches (given an object of study) and one guiding basis for the issue of how overall complementarity is possible. The strategic truth-pursuit goal points to one cross-tradition shared vision and humanistic spirit that is jointly captured by one ancient maxim from the classical Chinese philosophy "朝聞道夕死可矣"[19] [literally, having heard the *Dao* in the morning, one may die content in the evening] and one ancient maxim from the classical Greek philosophy "*Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*" [Plato is my friend, but truth is a better friend (often translated into Chinese "我爱我师，我更爱真理")].[20] While seeking harmony as one primary normative goal is one very worthy and significant approach in the area of social-political philosophy concerning how to treat the social relationship between different humans or human groups, it is intrinsically related to the truth-pursuit guided overall-complementarity-seeking approach in this sense: establishing a harmonious social relationship between different humans and between contrary human groups is fundamentally related to how to adequately look at the relation between diverse humans' and human groups' distinct ideological approaches in a complementary way, which might resort to either *concordant/harmonious* c*omplementarity or restrictive complementarity or critical-reflection-generated complementarity*, sensitive to the nature of contraries (differences, tensions or conflicts) and situations/contexts, and fundamentally guided by the strategic truth-pursuit goal. Methodologically, seeking the *truth-pursuit guided overall-complementarity* is more inclusive than seeking harmony (harmonious/concordant complementarity); an overall-complementarity-seeking account not only includes but also transcends harmonious-complementarity-seeking perspective.

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[18] By 'truth' I mean what is captured by people's pre-theoretic "way-things-are-capturing" understanding of truth, which plays its fundamental and indispensable explanatory role both in the folk discourse and in the theoretic setting of various intellectual pursuits of "how things are", instead of something else. The *Dao*-pursuit in the classical Chinese philosophy, especially in the tradition of philosophical Daoism, is essentially a variant version of the truth pursuit in Chinese philosophy. (For this author's detailed discussion of these issues, see Mou 2018).

[19] The *Analects* 4.08 (《论语·里仁》).

[20] The maxim is often attributed to Aristotle, as a paraphrase of the <u>Nicomachean Ethics</u> 1096a11–15.

APPENDIX:
SOME PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL RESOURCES
AND THEIR RELATED DISTINCTIONS[21]

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 method or methodological approach to an object of study, together their associated lexical distinctions, are rendered "preliminary" in a double sense: first, as addressed above, they are in need to refine our understanding of 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 study[22] 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 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

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[21] The preliminary materials here are largely excerpts from section 0.2.3 of Mou 2020.

[22] 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.

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 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.[23]

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.

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

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.[24] 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

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[23] 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.

[24] 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.

per se of taking a certain eligible methodological perspective as a working perspective 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 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 sighted 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 sighted (or even blind) in that connection—but, even so, the reflective practice *per se* of taking that eligible perspective 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 taken was actually presented in its agent' ideas and texts indiscriminately as an methodological approach that would manifestly reveal all the three dimensions.

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POSTSCRIPT

Chenyang Li presents a very thoughtful and valuable "discussion" essay [Chenyang Li (2022), "Harmony and Complementarity: A Discussion with Bo Mou", *Comparative Philosophy* 13.2: 145-154 ('Li 2022*' for short to distinguish it from Li 2022 in the "References" above)] on my "commentary" article on his Confucian harmony-seeking account, which deserves further careful reflection. With limited time and space, in the "constructive-engagement" methodological spirit and as one channel of continuing learning from Li's thought while constructively engaging with his approach, I would like to make several brief commentary remarks, which are not to cover each of his points in the "response" part of his paper (as my "commentary" paper has already more or less discussed some of them) but focus on his five-point remarks on how his account differs from my account (Li 2022*, 150-152) and his four-point remarks on his harmony outlook (*op.cit*., 152-153), both of which are interesting and engaging.

About Li' first point on the differences. Li states that "Mou's characterization in terms of "critical reflection" suggests that his account is framed within the context of human agency….The kind of harmony that I have reconstructed also includes harmonies without human agency, and hence without critical reflection. On my account, for example, the world has come through a process of harmonization, from the primordial state of *qi*, to the interactive play of the forces of *yin* and *yang*, further to the evolution of various species on Earth, all prior to the emergence of humanity" (*op.cit*.,150). Li's observation is correct in this connection: the suggested overall-complementarity-seeking account of how to look at contraries is a (meta-) methodological account, neither an account in social-political philosophy nor a comprehensive metaphysical account. However, first, this meta-methodological account together with its truth-pursuit normative basis can be compatible with distinct metaphysical accounts, in view that the notion of truth presupposed in the truth-pursuit goal of philosophical and other intellectual pursuits of "how things are" is essentially people's pre-theoretic "way-things-are-capturing" understanding, which is a "semantic" notion rather than a "metaphysical" notion (if its nature is characterized in such theoretic terms). Second, the three type of seeking overall complementarity of contraries (as explained before) point respectively to distinct types of complementarity that exist between different objects and/or between distinct aspects of an object.

About Li's second point on the differences (*op.cit*., 150). It is his critique of the usage of the term 'contraries' in my account. I think this is a mere verbal disagreement: I simply use the term 'contraries' in a very inclusive way, instead of being restricted to Li's narrow usage. Actually, at the end of the passage on this point, Li makes a correct observation about my way of using this term: "The characterization in terms of "contraries", however, may not be central to Mou's account. They could serve as a metaphor with general applications. Understood loosely, it could be taken to cover broadly *yin-yang* contraries, thesis-antithesis contraries, distinct perspectives, differences, tensions, conflicts, and so forth [note: Mou indicated this broad understanding during our panel discussion]. If so, Mou's use of "contraries" does not constitute a meaningful difference between his and my models" (*ibid*.).

About Li's third point on the difference (*op.cit.*, 150-151). This point is substantial and engaging:

> Mou's account is framed in terms of complementarity, my account of harmony is more than complementarity. To be complementary usually means mutually supplying what each other lacks. While my account of harmony includes complementarity in that sense, it is not limited to complementarity. We may find complementarity in the process of "coordination and cooperation" in my definition of harmony. However, my account of harmony also includes transformation and growth, and renewal. ...Dynamic harmony requires active engagement and mutual transformation in their harmonizing process. In other words, when "harmony" is understood in the way I reconstructed from the Confucian tradition, it includes complementarity as a component but is a broader concept than complementarity. It demands more than complementarity.

Frankly, I disagree to Li's judgement in this crucial connection for two reasons. First, in this passage, Li has yet to do justice to what overall complementarity really means in my account, although he has faithfully recognized (in the first part of his "discussion" essay, see *op.cit.*, 147) my distinction of three representative types of complementarity, *harmonious/concordant complementarity*, *restrictive complementarity*, and *critical-reflection-generated complementarity*, instead of *harmonious complementarity* only. *Methodologically*, harmony in his account (i.e., strictly speaking, the methodological portion of his account concerning how to look at contraries, as explained before) is what is called '*harmonious/concordant complementarity*" in my account, which is included as one component in my account. Second, would Li's notion of "harmony" be inclusive, say, including the "sublation"-related restrictive complementarity? According to the relevant characterization of "harmony" in Li 2014 which is reiterated in his current essay, harmony allows the development of "transformation and growth"; such transformation and growth is through "*coordination*": that is, as already addressed in my "commentary" paper, internal coordination is to go without the involved parties losing their "core" identities (without "negating one other"), even if in dynamic changing process with addressed "transformation, growth and renewal", which is illustrated by his cited "dish cooking" and "music making" metaphors (Li 2022, 2-3) (also cf., Zhang Dainian's characterization in Zhang 1988, which the author cites in Li 2020, 171). Harmony with transformation and growth through such "*coordination*" is substantially different from the case of "restrictively-complementary" contraries as captured by the Hegelian model (internal contradictory elements in thesis and anti-thesis can develop to the stage of negating one other and move into their "synthesis" thought sublation). That is, such development of harmony is through internal *coordination* within the unity of contraries reaching harmony or "harmonious balance", rather than through "sublation" reaching "synthesis" or "synthetic balance".[25] Indeed,

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[25] If one "reconstructs" the usage of the very term 'harmony' to let it stipulatively cover the "sublation"-type of transformation, then methodologically such "reconceptualized" or "reconstructed" notion of harmony is not of the *Yin-Yang* model (with the original basic meaning of '和' (*he*)/'harmony'), much less Confucian; rather, one would need to give the due credit to the methodological dimension of Hegel's

this is one substantial disagreement between Li's account and my account. In this crucial connection, I maintain the major conclusion made in my "commentary" paper: methodologically, seeking the truth-pursuit-guided overall-complementarity is more inclusive than seeking harmony (harmonious/concordant complementarity); an overall-complementarity-seeking account not only includes but also transcends harmonious-complementarity-seeking perspective.

About Li's fourth point on the differences (*op.cit*., 151). Li states that my account "maintain largely a binary structure…usually implies only two involved parties". I am afraid that this is an incorrect understanding of my account in this connection. As emphasized in my account, "…in a given unity or situation, the relevant contributing contraries might be more than two; however, both for the theoretic sake [i.e., one can always identify one *primary* pair of contraries in a given stage of process of interaction and transformation, in line with both models in this connection] and for the practical convenience, 'contraries' is assumed to be two contraries as a primary pair of contraries in the following…" (Mou 2020, 215; Mou 2022, 123).

About Li's fifth point on the differences (*op.cit*., 151-152). Li states that his approach "takes *yin* and *yang* not merely as terminology, but also as qualities in an ontological sense…as relation-based qualities rather than entity-based qualities… On such a view, *yin* and *yang* are relative qualities rather than entity-based qualities.…since relations may exist between things or people in multiple dimensions, their *yin-yang* relations may vary across these dimensions….
harmonies between things or people are not only more than those between contraries or a matter of complementarity, but they are also multi-dimensioned." Although it is unclear whether or how Li's foregoing remarks really capture any substantial difference between our respective accounts, I have one brief commentary note here: when the two terms '*yin*' and '*yang*' (like the terms 'thesis' and 'anti-thesis') used in my methodological account, that does not amount to reducing *yin* and *yang* to merely terminology: rather, the semantic references of the two terms '*yin*' and '*yang*' are very inclusive, restricted to neither "entity-based qualities" nor "relation-based qualities".

My commentary on Li's four-point summary of his harmony outlook is one general point concerning all of Li's four points, instead of a point-by-point analysis. It is noted that essentially all the four points are concerned about the "harmony" relation between "we" as human agents: one key term running through all the four points is '*we*' that designates we as human agents, as cited below (*op.cit*., 152-153; emphasis in italics is mine): <1> the first one is a kind of metaphysical outlook to "understand processes in the world as harmonies and disharmonies…. What *we* have become now is already results of previous harmonizing processes and what *we* will be depends largely on how we will be transformed in the future processes"; <2> the second one is that "*we* will

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thought regarding its explicit theoretic work on the sublation type of transformation that involves what I label 'restrictive complementarity', although in my view all types of complementarity seeking exist in the folk discourse with their pre-theoretic understandings. With this consideration, methodologically, I render my own overall-complementarity-seeking account neither *Yin-Yang* model based only nor Hegelian model based only; rather, I recognize both as parts of its major sources.

value harmony…*we* will value working together, with one another or each other, with other groups and communities, other races and other countries, with the environment, etc. It brings *us* together, builds common grounds, and enables us to join forces in the world to move forward"; <3> the third one is that "*we* recognize differences in the world, between you and me, between *us* and other groups, and so forth. Absolute uniformity should not be our goal. Such an understanding requires tolerance and accommodation"; <4> the third point is that "as far as human society is concerned, *we* will be prepared to adjust ourselves when appropriate as *we* attempt to change others". It is noted that all these points are directly about intern-personal relationship between "we" as human agents.

My general point consists of two related commentary notes on his foregoing harmony outlook. (1) Li's harmony outlook as given here is rather a social-political account concerning intern-personal relationship between "we" as human agents than a methodological account concerning how to look at contraries as distinct ideological approaches/resources; they are not the same thing, as already highlighted at the outset of the "commentary" part of my "commentary" article (see 131-132). (2) The methodological implication of his harmony outlook (i.e., its harmonious-complementarity-seeking perspective to the issue of how to look at contraries can be included in, rather than including as part of his account, my suggested and explained overall-complementary-seeking account, as explained before. To hit the point home, it is arguably correct that seeking harmonious interpersonal relationship between "we" as human agents is neither sufficient nor necessary for seeking overall-complementarity of distinct ideological approaches as contraries. On the one hand, it is not sufficient in the sense that, even if the two (or more than two) persons have their harmonious interpersonal relationship, this does not automatically imply that their distinct ideological approaches as a whole must be harmoniously complementary; on the other hand, it is not necessary in the sense that, even if the two (or more than two) persons do not have their harmonious interpersonal relationship, this does not automatically imply that their distinct ideological approaches cannot be harmoniously complementary. We can easily identify real-life examples for illustration of both.