Responses

Reflections on Henry Rosemont's »Introductory Statement«

Professor Rosemont contends that the concept of truth of interest to Western philosophers cannot be found in the early Confucian texts such as the *Analects* and that no theory of truth can be attributed to Kongzi (Confucius) or his early followers.[1] I likewise contend that conquest-era Mexica (Aztec) philosophy lacks such a concept and theory of truth.[2] Truth as correspondence, mirroring, representation, or aboutness plays no role in the Mexica's theory of language. Mexica philosophy embraces instead a concept of well-rootedness (*»neltiliztli«* in Nahuatl, the language of the Mexica) that derives its meaning from a conceptual cluster that includes: furthering one's ancestral lineage *(mecayotl)* and inherited lifeway; arranging, ordering, and balancing one's lifeway; as well as appropriateness, rectitude, authenticity, and the ability to be assimilated into one's lifeway *(in cuallotl in yecyotl)*. Mexica *tlamatinime* (»knowers of things,« »sages,« »philosophers«) characterize without equivocation: human beings; the human heart *(yollotl);* human domestic, social, political, and economic arrangements; human ways of acting, thinking, emoting, speaking, eating, and dressing; ceremonial practices and offerings; *in xochitl in cuicatl* (»flower and song«), that is, artistic processes and their products (both linguistic [spoken and sung] and nonlinguistic [instrumental music, picture-writing, and weaving]); and human interrelationships with other-than-human persons, as *nelli* (»rooted«) or *ahmo nelli* (»unrooted«).

The concept of *neltiliztli* is embedded within a larger philosophical conception of human endeavors that I see as path-seeking or »praxis-

[1] Rosemont, Jr., (2014: 154).

[2] Maffie (2002, 2011, 2014a). See also Gingerich (1987). For further discussion regarding the absence of the concept of truth in indigenous American philosophies, see Brotherston (2001); Pratt (2002); Hester and Cheney (2001); and Norton-Smith (2010).

guiding« (to borrow from Rosemont[3]) rather than truth-seeking. Like early Confucianism, I believe that Mexica philosophy of language embraces a path-seeking or praxis-guiding approach to language (as well as to ethics, aesthetics, and epistemology). It speaks not of describing facts or representing reality, but of *ohtlatoca* (»following a path«). It embraces an enactive, performative, regulative, and pragmatic conception of language. Right-path speech aims first and foremost to disclose the path as well as to create, nurture, sustain, and perform relationships between humans, other-than-humans, and cosmos that further the path. Speech acts are judged appropriate or not relative to this goal. Right-path language aims neither at representing reality nor conveying semantically true content. What matters to Mexica *tlamatinime* is whether or not speech acts are rooted in the Mexica way of life and whether or not they sustain, promote, and advance that way of life. What's more, they regard well-ordered speaking as a creative, causally potent force in the world alongside well-ordered living, child-rearing, farming, singing, weaving, and ceremony. Well-arranged words are cut from the same cloth as well-arranged musical notes, dance steps, weaves, drum beats, offerings, and buildings. One and all are avenues of rooting, arranging, ordering, securing, and extending into the future the Mexica path or lifeway, the Mexica way of walking upon »the slippery surface of the earth.«[4]

Mexica philosophers liken the human existential condition to one of walking down a narrow, rocky path along the ridge of a twisting, jagged mountain peak. Humans invariably lose their balance while walking upon this path. They slip, fall, and as a consequence suffer hardships including pain, thirst, hunger, madness, poor health, and death.[5] Human life is inescapably perilous because the very earth upon which humans live is perilous. Indeed, the earth's name, *»tlalticpac,«* means »on the point or summit of the earth,« suggesting a narrow, harpoon-sharp place surrounded by constant dangers.[6] Bernardino de Sahagún, one of several Franciscans sent to New Spain early in the sixteenth-century, extensively interviewed survivors of the Conquest.

[3] Rosemont, Jr. (2014: 155).
[4] See Sahagún (1953–1982: 228); and Burkhart (1989: 58).
[5] See Sahagún (1953–1982: 101, 105, 125–126, 228); Burkhart (1989); and Gingerich (1988).
[6] Michael Launey, quoted in Burkhart (1989: 58). See also Sahagún (1953–1982: 101, 105, 111).

Sahagún compiled his findings in a book entitled *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España*, which includes the following proverb expressing this theme: »*Tlaalahui, tlapetzcahui in tlalticpac,*« »It is slippery, it is slick on the earth.« The proverb was said of a person who had lived an upright, balanced life only to lose her balance and fall into wrongdoing, as if slipping in slick mud.[7] Such wrongdoing resulted in hardship and misfortune. Sahagún records a father's advice along these same lines to his coming-of-age son: »Behold the path [*ohtli*] thou art to follow. In such a manner thou art to live […] On earth we walk, we live, on the ridge of a mountain peak. To the one side is an abyss, to the other side is another abyss. If you go here, or if you go there, you will fall, only through the middle can one go, or live.«[8]

The North American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson (influenced, apparently, by the path-oriented philosophies of the native Delaware and Haudenosaunee peoples of North America) expressed a kindred outlook when writing, »We live amid surfaces, and the true art of life is to skate well on them.«[9] According to the Mexica, we humans live amid slippery surfaces, and the art of life – including the art of using language – is to walk well upon them. Mexica *tlamatinime* accordingly aimed at teaching humans how, like skilled mountaineers, to maintain their balance upon the narrow, jagged summit of the earth. They aimed at instructing humans how to gain a *middle footing* on the path of life, and how to middle themselves in all endeavors. Alternatively expressed, they aimed at instructing humans how to behave as accomplished artisans weaving together the various forces constituting the cosmos and themselves into a well-balanced fabric.[10] Mexica philosophy accordingly embraces an *ethics* – as well as *epistemology*, *aesthetics*, and *social philosophy* – *of nepantla*, one of reciprocity, middling mutuality, and dynamic balancing. Mexica wisdom enjoins humans to weave together into a well-balanced fabric their feelings, thoughts, words, and actions as well as their relationships with family, community, and other-than-human persons (such as plants, animals, springs, earth, and sun). In order to live wisely, live well, live artfully,

[7] Sahagún (1953–1982: 228); trans. by Burkhart (1989: 58).
[8] Sahagún (1953–1982: 101, 125).
[9] Emerson (1955: 303). For the possible influence of indigenous philosophy on Emerson, see Pratt (2002: 214–215).
[10] For related discussion, see Gingerich (1988); Maffie (2014a); and Myerhoff (1974).

and live a genuinely human life, one's living must instantiate *nepantla*-middling and *nepantla*-balancing. In order to minimize the inevitable hardships of life on the slippery earth – the only life humans enjoy since there is no future life after death – one's life must be an artfully crafted *nepantla*-process. In sum, philosophic reflection for the Mexica is first and foremost a *practical* endeavor concerned with creating a good life, not a *theoretical* endeavor concerned with discovering truth.

Jane Hill argues that contemporary Nahuatl-speakers (or Nahuas) »feel that language consists, not in words with proper reference that matches reality, but in highly ritualized dialogues with proper usage matched to a social order that manifests an ideal of deference.«[11] They value neither plain language nor literalism. Speech emphasizes »not denotation, but performance: the proper accomplishment of human relationships as constituted through stereotyped moments of dialogue.« It is »inattentive to the referential dimension.«[12] For this reason, the »forms of behavior appropriate to various roles were encoded in memorized speeches, [such as] the *in huehuetlahtolli*, ›sayings of the elders.‹«[13] What matters for conquest-era Mexica as well as for contemporary Nahuas is whether language is rooted and whether it sustains and creatively furthers the »good path« *(cualli ohtli)*, and thus whether it enables humans to »live well« *(cualli nehmeni)*.[14]

If Rosemont and I are correct, our findings confirm David Hall's contention that Western philosophy's concern with semantic truth is »parochial.«[15] Philosophers can no longer glibly assume, along with Alvin Goldman for example, that »truth is a vital concern for humankind across culture and history,«[16] that all humans »seek true or accu-

[11] Hill (1998: 82).
[12] *Ibid*.
[13] *Ibid*.
[14] Contemporary Quechua-speakers in southern Peru appear to share a similar attitude towards language. According to Catherine Allen, they maintain that humans have a moral responsibility to direct the flow of cosmic energy *(sami)* in ways that promote personal, domestic, community and cosmic balance. This is accomplished in a variety of ways: »in marriage alliances, in discharging of community *cargos*, in private and communal rituals, even in how one offers speech and how one receives the speech of others« (Allen 2002: 74).
[15] Hall (2001). For additional discussion, see Hall and Ames (1998, 1987); Hansen (1985, 1992).
[16] Goldman (1999: 33). For critical discussion, see Maffie (2002).

rate information,«[17] or that a »single concept of truth [viz. correspondence or coherence] seems cross-culturally present.«[18] Truth is not a common interest shared by all world philosophies and hence not well suited to serve as a common ground for sustained cross-cultural philosophical conversations. Focusing on the concept of truth is nevertheless useful – at least initially – since it enables us to highlight the differences separating Western and (at least) some non-Western philosophies. It helps us see path-seeking and truth-seeking as two alternative philosophical orientations and ways of doing philosophy. In doing so it raises questions concerning the enterprise of comparative philosophy itself. How we are to do comparative philosophy: as truth-seekers, path-seekers, or some other way(s)? Is there a single way of doing comparative philosophy? What are the aims of comparative philosophy: universal truth, mutual understanding, human flourishing, etc.? Focusing on the concept of truth alerts us to the fact that not all world philosophies share an interest in truth and thus an interest in discovering or adjudicating truths when doing comparative philosophy.

What's more, path-seekers also tend to be philosophical pluralists. By their lights, all philosophies consist of stories. Path-seekers tell one kind of story, truth-seekers, another kind. Yet neither kind is any more or less true than the other. Similarly, path-seekers tell different stories from one another. According to Mexica *tlamatinime*, for example, the Mexica had their stories, the Mixtecs and Chichimecs, theirs. Here again, no one is more or less true than the other. They are simply alternative stories by which to live one's life. There is no single, correct, or true story to tell or to discover. There is no single correct way to philosophize, think, act, or live that is anchored in some transcendent reality.[19]

The presence or absence of truth thus signals a profound division between Western traditions on the one hand and pre-Han East Asian and many indigenous philosophical traditions of the Americas on the other, since, as Bertrand Ogilvie writes, »Western thought, ever since the birth of philosophy in ancient Greece, has made truth the pivot of

[17] Goldman (1999:3).
[18] (*Ibid*.: 33).
[19] For further discussion, see Hester and Cheney (2001); Burkhart (2004); Maffie (2011, 2003).

its activity, to the detriment of every other undertaking.«[20] Yet such divergence should not surprise us. After all, nothing dictates that all peoples at all times and all places must think in the same terms or think with the same concepts. Nothing dictates that truth – correspondence, coherence, or otherwise – must function as the cornerstone of philosophical inquiry, belief, knowledge, or the use of language. Arguments defending the intrinsic rationality – and hence normative universality – of pursuing truth in matters of speech, belief, or knowledge famously fail or beg the question.

This divide over truth has further, quite far-reaching consequences for cross-cultural philosophy. *If* the concept of truth is »built into« the concept of belief (as Bernard Williams maintains and as most Western philosophers would agree) since belief »aims at truth« (to believe that *p* is to believe that *p is true*),[21] and *if*, in addition, the concepts of truth and perhaps also belief are built into the concept of knowledge (for example, defined as justified truth belief), then it would appear that truth-oriented and path-oriented philosophies will understand belief and knowledge in accordingly divergent ways – a further, profound divide that we must acknowledge in further cross-cultural conversations. And indeed, Confucian and Mexica philosophies do just that: they define belief and knowledge – along with desire, hope, want, and need (what Western philosophers call sentential or propositional attitudes) – in path-oriented ways such as furthering the path or way.[22] Mexica philosophy speaks not of propositional belief (»belief that«) and knowledge (»knowledge that«) but of »*ohtlatoca*« (»following a path«) and »know how« respectively. Right-path knowing *(tlamatilizttli)* consists of knowing the way, knowing *how* to find and map one's way through life; knowing *how* to live properly, to participate in the cosmos, and to live an authentically Mexica life; and finally, knowing

[20] Ogilvie (2004: 103).

[21] Williams (1978).

[22] For relevant discussion, see Hester and Cheney (2001); Maffie (2011, 2014a); Hansen (1992); Hall and Ames (1987, 1998); and Ames, and Rosemont, Jr., (1998). Rodney Needham advanced a similar argument long ago regarding cross-cultural comparisons in anthropology. In *Belief, Language and Experience* (1972: 188) he wrote: »Belief […] does not constitute a natural resemblance among men, and it does not belong to ›the common behavior of mankind‹. It follows from this that when other peoples are said, without qualification, to ›believe‹ anything, it must be entirely unclear what kind of idea or state of mind is being ascribed to them.«

how to extend this way of life into the future. Right-path knowing is active, enactive, performative, participatory, and creative.[23] It is understood in terms of skill, competence, and the ability to make things happen – not in terms of the intellectual apprehension of truths or states of affairs (what Mehdi Hairi Yazdi calls »knowledge by correspondence«).[24] What's more, knowing how (practical knowledge) is not reducible to knowing that (theoretical knowledge). Path-seekers do not understand the relative differences in the practical efficacy of different kinds of »know how« in terms of differences in capturing truth or corresponding with reality. Given their rejection of metaphysics, there simply are no metaphysical explanations of the practical differences between different kinds of »know how« to be had. Explanations of practical efficacy in terms of correspondence, mirroring, or representation, lapse into the realm of the unintelligible.

In closing, truth-oriented and path-oriented philosophies appear to represent two alternative ways of doing philosophy that involve two alternatively conceived constellations of concepts of knowledge, thinking, belief, language, morality, philosophy, and in the end, how to live. Truth-oriented philosophies understand these notions in terms of truth (for example, apprehending, representing, believing, and basing one's actions upon truth). Philosophy is first and foremost a theoretical endeavor aimed at truth. Path-oriented philosophies, by contrast, understand these notions in terms of finding, following, making, and extending the way. Knowledge, reason, language, morality, etc. are about path-making. Philosophy, like life itself, is first and foremost creative and practical.

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[23] According to Hansen (1992) and Ames (2003), classic Confucianism and Daoism embrace right-way conceptions of knowing. Hansen (1992: 8) translates the Chinese word »*zhi*« as »know-how, know-to, or know-about.« Hester and Cheney (2001) and Pratt (2002) maintain that indigenous North American philosophies conceive knowing in terms of knowing how, not knowing that.

[24] Yazdi (1992: 43).

Truth Is Truthfulness: The Japanese Concept of *Makoto*

I What Concept of Truth Is Valued in the Pursuit of Western Philosophy Today?

»Our most common understanding of what we are about is truth […] Philosophers may deflate the meaning of truth and define it by radically different terms, and yet it remains the single most important philosophical norm by which we understand our discipline.« So writes Linda Martin Alcoff, in her presidential address to the American Philosophical Association in December of 2012.[1] Her comment would seem to exclude from philosophy disciplines and thought-traditions that evinced no such primary concern with truth. But in her address Alcoff is anything but exclusionary. She wants to be as inclusive as possible in recognizing diverse philosophical approaches and traditions, as well as differing conceptions of truth and of the role of language in philosophy. She quotes the Ghanaian philosopher and statesman Kwame Nkrumah, who deplores the lack in current Western philosophy of something very close to what Professor Rosemont calls »*praxis-guiding discourse.*« Nkrumah is amazed that Western philosophers

> affect an aristocratic professional unconcern over the social realities of the day. Even the ethical philosophers say that it is not their concern to improve themselves or anybody else […] They say that they are not interested in what made a philosopher say the things he says; but only in the reasons which he gives. Philosophy thus […] loses its arresting power.[2]

[1] Alcoff (2013: 30).

[2] Nkrumah (1970: 54); cited in Alcoff (2013: 23–24). This view seems parallel to the orientation Rosemont finds in Confucian texts that »obliges us to attend not simply to *what* is said, but equally, and often more importantly, *why* it was said in the social context in which all language use takes place« (Rosemont 2014: 156).

By implication Nkrumah advocates philosophy's involvement in practical affairs and the use of language to guide behavior.

Alcoff explicitly examines and criticizes the contention that truth is reached through detached, impartial description. She gives examples to expose the pretense that philosophers' practice of critical detachment has (or should have) no social or political effects on the world, and her examples indicate the need for a »critical engagement« with the ordinary world. She wants philosophers to »make greater demands on truth than simple reference.« Her own project is to show how social and political practices (such as those affecting the demography of philosophers) have made a difference to the truth claims of philosophy. She follows Michel Foucault and others in showing that »our ontologies of truth are embedded within, and partly constituted by, our social domains.« Given this, »we cannot keep epistemology tidily separate from social and political inquiry if we truly want to understand not only truth-effects [the effects of truth claims on human experience], but truth itself.«[3]

Alcoff, along with Rosemont, recognizes that the predominant philosophical conception of truth in the Western academy today is indeed propositional truth. But she wants to expand that concept so as to be more truthful about truth itself, as she understands Friedrich Nietzsche's project. She distances herself from Richard Rorty, who said in effect that the concept of truth no longer had value in the pursuit of philosophy. And she notes that Gianni Vattimo's *Farewell to Truth* bids adieu only to the absolutisms of objectivist truth, precisely to enter into »a more truthful public sphere.«[4] Alcoff joins others in advocating a contextualist approach to truth and to doing philosophy, as opposed to the Western conceit of universal truths independent of contexts.[5] Con-

[3] Alcoff (2013: 29, 32).

[4] Alcoff refers to Gianni Vattimo, *A Farewell to Truth* (2011). In my understanding of this work, it is not that Vattimo himself has no place for truth versus falsehood or truth versus lies. Rather he attempts to place objective truths in a wider context of interpretative schemes. He advocates a critical examination of the contexts wherein politicians, for example, seem able to justify their lies. Vattimo bids farewell to objective or factual truths only insofar as the search for such truths remains oblivious of the horizon, paradigm, or context that defines objectivity by setting the rules of interpretation.

[5] Alcoff (2013: 36). In her contextualism, Alcoff aligns herself with a number of contemporary philosophers from analytic, continental, and non-Western traditions: Martin Heidegger, Gianni Vattimo, Michel Foucault, Helen Longino, Nancy Cartwright, and Latin American philosophers Simon Bolvier, Jose Marti, José Carlos Mariátegui, and

text includes the use of language and the engagement of the philosopher who speaks.

My point is that the notions of praxis-guiding discourse and contextual understanding (as shown in the Confucian *Analects*' story of the stolen sheep) are present in contemporary Western philosophy too, precisely *in the name of truth*. We would miss an important point in Rosemont's comments, however, were we to disregard the cluster of concepts to which a contextualist notion of truth belongs. In Alcoff's sketch it appears that *truth* belongs with *norm*, *context*, *engagement*, *efficacy*, *experience*, and *the ordinary world*.[6] This new constellation deflates the usual textbook cluster (*reference*, *validity*, *proposition*, *denotation*, *connotation*, etc.) in Western philosophy as it is practiced worldwide. In Vattimo's interpretation of truth, this new cluster would also prioritize *civic friendliness* and *communitarian sharing*,[7] notions that appear consonant with the Confucian idea of *appropriateness* mentioned by Rosemont. Whether or not there is a corresponding cluster in ancient Chinese philosophy is an open question. In any case, the very idea of a concept cluster implies recognition of the importance of context.

II What Value Is Given to Concepts of Truth in East Asian Philosophical Traditions? The Example of *Makoto* in Japanese Confucian Philosophy

The contextual concept of truth and its corresponding cluster brings us closer to a concept and cluster explicitly developed by a modern Japanese philosopher. Watsuji Tetsurō (1889–1960), a thinker whose *Ethics* (1937–1949) draws upon Confucian and Buddhist philosophies to critique Western individualism, develops a notion that associates *truth*

Leopoldo Zea. I would place Heidegger's notion of truth as *aletheia* in a different cluster: disclosure and hiddenness, opening and precondition (for propositional truth), essence or essential presencing, authenticity. I will return later to the notion of truth in Heidegger's work.

[6] Alcoff (2013: 25) contrasts the dream of critical detachment with the view that takes »the ordinary to be both source and touchstone for philosophical truth,« a view shared by an unusual cluster of philosophers: Ludwig Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Willard Van Orman Quine, Charles S. Peirce, and David Hume.

[7] »Beyond the Myth of Objective Truth,« in Vattimo (2011: 1–45).

with *truthfulness* or *sincerity* and with *trust*. But what does sincerity have to do with descriptive truth? How could there be a link between something as subjective as sincerity or truthfulness and something so detached – or, alternatively, so socially contextual – as truth?

Translators of Watsuji's *Ethics* have used *sincerity* and *truthfulness* to render the Japanese term *makoto*, a word whose connotations can range from fidelity and honesty to reality and factual truth.[8] Watsuji traces the term to the ancient Chinese notion *cheng* 誠 and in that context places it in a cluster that includes 誠実 fidelity, 信実 truthfulness, 忠実 faithfulness, 心術,言行の純 purity of mind, words and deeds, 真言真事 true words and true things, along with the antonyms 虚偽 and 虚妄, falsehood and deceit.[9] Much depends upon our translations, of course, but as a student of Western philosophy Watsuji is well aware of the concept of propositional or descriptive truth, denoted by the modern Japanese word *shinri* 真理.[10] He deliberately uses that con-

[8] Watsuji generally writes *makoto* in phonetic script, but also uses the sinograph 誠. Historically, 実 and 真 have also been used to render the Japanese word.

[9] Watsuji writes, »From ancient times, a Chinese word *sei* [誠] has been used to denote [*makoto*]. It is also translatable into such words as *seijitsu* [誠実] (»sincerity«), *shinjitsu* [信実] (»truthfulness«), *chūjitsu* [忠実] (»faithfulness«), and simply *jitsu* [実] (»realness«). The Chinese word *sei* [誠] means that one is pure and without falsehood in one's attitude of mind as well as in one's words and deeds. It is therefore evident that the word *sei* stands opposed to falsehood or deceit and that it is equivalent in meaning to true words and true things [真言真事]. The phrase *Sei is the path of Heaven, and to realize it is the path of a human being* [誠者，天之道也；誠之者，人之道也] has been popular among Japanese people from ancient times. The difference between the path of Heaven and that of a human being […] lies in Heaven being truthful and without any deceit of its own [真実無妄] and human beings needing to realize this as truthfulness [誠]« (Seisaku and Carter 1996: 273). Watsuji's original text is *Rinrigaku* 倫理学 (1962: 288). The quoted phrase comes from the *Zhongyong* 中庸, often called the *Doctrine of the Mean* (20:18). For a translation, see Ames and Hall (2001).

[10] It appears that the now common term 真理 for *truth* was introduced in Japan, along with Western philosophy in general, in the late nineteenth century. Inoue Tetsujirō's 1881 dictionary also cites 真実 and simply 理 for types of truth. Inoue Enryō used 真理 to specify »reasoned truth« as distinct from truth (真) in a more general sense. Rainer Schulzer notes the significance of the new concept of truth for unifying all disciplines at the newly established Tokyo University in the 1880s: »Truth is the *formal* regulative idea, which *a priori* contains nothing and excludes nothing […] In one of his lectures, Enryō listed 47 synonyms for the ultimate truth in Buddhism (真理 is not listed) […] Even despite such richness, I suggest, for the reasons discussed above, that *shinri* was not only a new *word* that came into use in Japan, Korea, and China, but indeed that it transported a new *concept* with it« (Schulzer 2012: 55). Appendix G of the dissertation gives a synopsis of the usage of 真理.

cept as part of the cluster he develops and suggests how it is derivative of truthfulness. The correspondence between thought and external things (as Watsuji summarizes the Western notion) does not deserve the name of truth if it does not derive from a practiced correspondence between words and acts, a correspondence shared in a community. If we use the term *truthfulness* to render the latter, more basic notion, then Watsuji argues that truth is reached when truthfulness (or sincerity) informs our judgments. To be truthful does not mean to subjectivize an already given truth; rather truth occurs when truthfulness is directed to things in the world.[11] Watsuji's theory of truth presupposes an ontology developed in earlier sections of his work, in short, in arguments asserting that the concept of a world of external things independent of communal human existence and practices does not capture how things actually are. Truth, like trust, presupposes community, human beings living together. Among Western philosophers, perhaps only the concept of truth espoused by Vattimo comes close to the communal aspect of Watsuji's concept.[12]

Truth for Watsuji is more than correct statement, more than a conformity of words with facts. Watsuji notes that one could intend to deceive but inadvertently describe the facts correctly, and such a description would not constitute truth. Put negatively, truth requires not betraying the trust of others. Similarly, truthfulness is more than the conformity of one's words with one's actions. Words might happen to conform to actions despite one's intent to break a promise, for example. Truthfulness depends on preserving a relationship of trust (信, 信

[11] »In this way, insofar as truth (真理) occurs spatially and temporally, it is a practical truth oriented to action; it is true reality (真実) or truthfulness *(makoto)*, not the truth of contemplation directed to objects. What we call the conformity between thought and the things of the external world, or knowledge possessing universal validity, concerns only this latter kind of truth. The former, the truth of the subject (主体的真理), is ›*makoto*,‹ the truthfulness inherent in actions. It is the truthfulness of human beings that is realized only in the moral unity of human relationships [人倫的合一]. Fundamentally, human beings become aware of this truthfulness by living it, and applying it to the things found in human existence. Speaking of truth or falsity with regard to things in the external world is only a stage of this. Hence, truthfulness does not arise by transferring truth from the standpoint of thought to that of praxis. On the contrary, truth occurs when truthfulness moves into the standpoint of contemplation or thought« (Watsuji 1962: 286–287; my translation).

[12] Vattimo (2011: 10) also notes that the notion of truth-speaking or *aletheuontes* appears in St. Paul's epistles as well as in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 6.

賴). (Watsuji does not seem to consider the possibility that one can speak sincerely and yet misrepresent the facts.)

Watsuji's theory of truth reflects his explicit criticism of traditional Western epistemologies and ethics, as well as his reliance on pre-modern Japanese philosophies that were not influenced by Western sources. The Confucian thinker Hayashi Razan (1583–1657), for example, had defined *makoto* as a kind of correspondence:

> The sinograph for trustworthiness [信] combines those for person and speech. Thus to say something that is not trustworthy is not to act like a person. This suggests that trustworthiness is sincerity, that it refers to what is not false […] Trustworthiness is truth [真実], respect for things, and sincerity [実, read *makoto*]. As truth, trustworthiness entails being doubtless; as sincerity, it means one has no misgivings about things […] [Those who are trustworthy] speak with sincerity in their mouths as well as in their minds: there is no discrepancy between what is said and what is thought.[13]

Itō Jinsai (1627–1705) further clarified the concept of *makoto*. Jinsai relates *makoto* or »sincerity« to how things truly are, not first of all to a disposition of mind or heart. But the practice of aligning one's heart and one's words with how things are is also implied. Sincerity, Jinsai says, is constancy and lack of artifice, modeled in nature and called for in human beings. Drawing upon Chinese Confucian thinkers, Jinsai defines *makoto* first in terms of the Way of Heaven or, we might say, of nature.[14] Nature is without artifice, is free from irregularities. Ex-

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[13] Heisig, Kasulis, and Maraldo (2011: 310, hereafter SB). Razan also says (in John Allen Tucker's translation): »[Wisdom, humaneness, courage] are all, in every respect of practice, one genuine truth [真実]. Yet unless they are carried out with sincerity [実 *makoto*], then wisdom will not be wisdom [and so forth]« (SB 2011: 308). In another passage Razan writes, »Sincerity is the principle of truth and nature (誠トハ、真実自然ノ理也).«

[14] »Sincerity (*sei* 誠) means truth (*jitsu* 實), without an iota of empty fabrications (*kyoka* 虛假) or contrived embellishments (*gishoku* 僞飾). Master Zhu [Xi] stated, ›Sincerity means authentic truth, without any irregularities‹ (*shinjitsu mō naki* 眞實無妄). That is correct. However, most words have antonyms. By considering them, we can clarify our understanding of the meanings of words. Sincerity is an antonym of artifice (*gi* 僞). Thus the definition, ›authentic truth, without any artifice‹ (*shinjitsu mugi*眞實無僞), contains the full meaning of sincerity more powerfully than does Master Zhu's exegesis. Chen Beixi 陳北溪 (1159–1223) observed, ›Sincerity was first used in Confucian discussions of the way of heaven […] In them, it signifies consistency (*ikko* 一箇) […] Summer's heat is followed by the cold of winter. With sunset, the evening moon appears. The birth of spring brings summer's growth. Winter is the season to store the harvest that autumn brings […] For myriad generations, life has been so.‹« Cited in

amples he cites make it clear that the Chinese term *cheng* 誠 denotes, among other ideas, the consistency or constancy of nature. Western notions of constancy and consistency can describe not only things in the world and the processes of nature, but also human behavior and subjective dispositions like sincerity and fidelity. Jinsai and his Chinese sources also give 眞實, *truth* and *reality*, or *true reality*, as synonyms for 誠, *sincerity*. Employing a related cluster of concepts, Jinsai's sources cite irregularity, artifice, and error as antonyms. The translations of 眞實as *truth* and *reality* depend upon contextual interpretation, of course, and may seem to beg the question of the relation of *cheng* 誠 to Western notions of truth. But the link between »sincerity« and »truth« in this East Asian tradition becomes clearer once we see the connection between the constancy of natural things as they are and the call for human beings to be faithful to them. Unlike Heaven or nature – in Jinsai's words, »the unitary generative force pervading all reality«[15] – humans can be inconstant, full of artifice, and erroneous.[16] Jinsai's Confucianism exhorts humans to be sincere, since sincerity is »the whole substance of the moral way« (道之全體) and the foundation of other virtues like humaneness or authoritative conduct (仁), rightness or appropriateness (義), propriety (禮), wisdom or realizing (智), filial piety or filial responsibility (孝), trustworthiness (信), and so forth.[17] The connection with descriptive truth is explicit in another passage, where Jinsai quotes the Chinese scholar Chéng Hào 程顥 (1032–1085): »trustworthiness (信) means being truthful in all things […] neither embellishing nor detracting from the truth when speaking with

Tucker (1998: 173). In a footnote *(ibid.)* Tucker further quotes Beixi: »It was not until Yichuan […] said ›Sincerity is freedom from error,‹ that its meaning became clear. Later [Zhu Xi] added two words, saying, ›Sincerity means reality, truth, and freedom from irregularities,‹ and thus the principle became especially transparent.«

[15] At the beginning of his treatise Jinsai defines the term »the Way of Heaven« (天道) and writes, »A unitary generative force (*ichigenki* 一元氣) pervades all heaven and earth.« Tucker finds similar phrases in Chen Beixi (Tucker 1998: 71).

[16] Jinsai takes up the problem of seeming inconsistencies in Beixi's description of nature or the way of heaven. He notes, for example, that frost can occur in summer, and peach and plum trees have bloomed in winter, and he asks, »How can we avoid the conclusion that heaven is insincere?« In response, Jinsai concludes with the words of Master Su 蘇子 (1036–1101): »People will do anything, but heaven permits no artifice!« (Tucker 1998: 173–174).

[17] Tucker (1998: 174). I supplement Tucker's translations of the names of the virtues with the translations of Ames, and Rosemont, Jr. (1998).

others.«[18] Other pre-modern Japanese Confucians similarly connect truth, reality, and sincerity, and their critics speak of a truth attained by personally knowing reality.[19]

In citing these examples, I have followed the translations of the Japanese word *makoto* and the Chinese *cheng* 誠 as *sincerity*, but the translation does not always fit. Dictionaries define *sincerity* as the quality of being truthful, and negatively as the absence of pretense, deceit, or hypocrisy – all attributes of human behavior and speech. To be sure, its synonyms *genuine* and *real* can describe things in the world, as do some secondary and archaic definitions of *sincerity:* »being in reality as it is in appearance,« and »being without admixture; free; pure.«[20] The English word may derive from the Latin *syn-crescere:* to grow together, as one thing, without adulterants[21] – an etymology that would allow the word to describe things or processes in the world. But current uses of the English *sincerity* restrict the word to describing

[18] »Being truthful in all things« is a translation of *jijitsu o motte suru* 以實. Jinsai explains that »trustworthiness (信) involves neither embellishing nor detracting from the truth when speaking with others. When something exists, we should say so. If nothing exists, we must admit as much. If things are many, we ought to recognize them. When things are few, we must admit the same. Such is trustworthiness.« This term, like »sincerity,« connotes constancy: »Trustworthiness also means fulfilling one's promises […] Ancient sayings such as ›trustworthy as the four seasons,‹ and ›trustworthy rewards and sure punishments,‹ also convey this nuance« (Tucker 1998: 163).

[19] As a critic of Buddhism and Daoism, Jinsai wrote that »Sincerity [誠] means truth [実] […] Zhu Xi says ›truth [真実] without deceit – that is sincerity‹ […] Sincerity is the Way of the sage. The Buddha taught emptiness [空] and Laozi discussed the void [虚], but the Way of Confucius is nothing if not the true principles of reality [実理]. A great chasm of incommensurability yawns between reality [実] and the void« (SB 2011: 356). I have added the quotation of Zhu Xi, not translated in SB. A critic of both Confucianism and Buddhism, Andō Shōeki (1703–1762), taught the importance of personally ascertaining truth and correctly knowing reality: »As for living truth [活真], the earth is located on the central axis of heaven and earth […] the dwelling of the living truth of earth never leaves nor is anything ever added to it, and its spontaneous action does not halt for even the briefest moment. That is why the living truth is so much alive« (SB 2011: 425). »I do not say this based on some speculation of my own, nor because I have been so instructed by some teacher […] I have always been able to apprehend this truth in its totality by looking at the hearth, by observing the human face, and by seeing what was there to see in the hearth of my home and in my own face. Since what I saw was put there by nature […]« (*ibid.*: 428). The critic Tominaga Nakamoto (1715–1746) espoused »the Way of truth« that transcends Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shintō (*ibid.*: 430–434).

[20] *Britannica World Language Dictionary* (1954: 1218).

[21] Ciardi (1980: 360).

persons and their behavior. Apologies, regrets, efforts, and other speech acts and forms of human behavior can be *sincere;* nonhuman things cannot be. In contrast, the Japanese *makoto* does not distinguish between a quality of human dispositions or acts and a quality of nonhuman things or states of affairs. Corresponding roughly to the English *true* or *genuine* as opposed to *fake* or *false, makoto* can describe a feeling or a story as well as things like food, flowers, or homes. Although the word is usually written either in phonetic script or with a single sinograph, it can also be parsed in two sinographs meaning true things or true speech.[22] The word implies both the true state of things and being true to the true state of things.

The single concept *makoto* connotes what many languages use two words to say. The English language has the words *truth* and *truthfulness*, the German language has *Wahrheit* and *Wahrhaftigkeit*, and other languages have similar semantically associated words for these concepts. As we noted, truthfulness, like sincerity, is usually understood as a subjective virtue, whereas declarative truth is supposed to pertain to objective reality or facts. A commonplace notion in the West is that truth is independent of the disposition or the stance of the speaker or actor. This commonplace notion says that truth is what it is regardless of what anyone says or thinks about it. Truthfulness and sincerity, in contrast, depend entirely on the disposition or actions of the person.

The disconnect between truth and truthfulness in laypeople's terms seems even more pronounced in predominant Western philosophical theories. Sincerity and truthfulness are rather vague notions that may play a part in ethical theories in Western philosophy, but play little or no role in theories of knowledge. The concept of truth, on the other hand, has been subjected to rigorous analysis and debate. If there is any common denominator in contemporary Western theories of truth, it is that truth is a property of language. Truth, in predominant theories, relates a statement to a matter or state of affairs that exists independently of the statement. The gap between objective, descriptive truth and intersubjective truthfulness or sincerity would seem to ren-

[22] In addition to the Japanese phonetic script and the three different sinographs 誠, 真, and実 used as single Kanji to render *makoto,* the word can also be parsed as *ma* 真, true, and *koto* 事, thing or state of affairs, with the occasional substitution of *koto* 言, speech, for its homonym *koto* 事, thing.

der the Confucian connection alien or even unintelligible to many Western philosophers. Alcoff and other Western critics of objectivist epistemologies may approximate the East Asian vision, but insofar as they miss the connection between truth and truthfulness, their contextual concept still contrasts with Watsuji's concept and that of pre-modern Confucian philosophers.

III Of What Value Is It to Read Western Theories of Truth and Japanese Theories of Truthfulness in Light of One Another?

The contrast between the East Asian Confucian notion of truthfulness or sincerity (誠) and predominant Western concepts of truth poses a challenge to cross-cultural philosophy. If we leave the matter merely with a contrast, we could conclude only that some philosophical traditions primarily value a theoretical concept of descriptive truth that relates statements to an external world and that other traditions value an intersubjective and practical notion of truthfulness. That contrast can indeed expose assumptions about the different ways that cultures have conceptualized the relation between humans and their world. But if we stop with the contrast, we would not learn as much about the issue as we could. I think that the exercise of cross-cultural philosophy can highlight possible connections between descriptive truth and intersubjective truthfulness in a way that an engagement with texts of a single tradition cannot. From our engagement with non-Western texts, we can move back into Western philosophical traditions with new eyes, as it were, to seek insights that make the tie between truth and truthfulness more convincing. Cross-cultural philosophy can make more plausible the connection developed by Watsuji and implied by pre-modern Japanese Confucian thinkers like Itō Jinsai and Hayashi Razan, who did not presuppose an »external« world. At the same time, it can cast insights offered by Western philosophers in a new light to illuminate the role of truthfulness that is often only implicit in their theories.

Some contemporary Western philosophers in both analytical and continental traditions have proposed theories of truth that take into account the stance and disposition of the speaker or the perceiver. The proponent of speech act theory, John L. Austin, implies an interesting connection between trustworthiness and truthfulness, on the one hand, and the kind of truth that relates statements to facts, on the other. He

argues that when we make declarative statements, we implicitly say, »You can count on me or trust me; I am in a position to know.«[23] With regard to declarative truth, Austin advocates a contextual notion.[24] But Austin also expands the ascription of truth beyond declarative statements and implicitly includes the kind of »praxis-guiding discourse« we find in Confucian texts. For Austin, »assessment as to truth is directed most fundamentally to the illocutionary act,« that is, the act of making a statement or of giving a directive, or in general of saying something with a specific force.[25] Austin's expansion seems puzzling at first: giving directives, recommendations, commands, and the like, are clearly illocutionary acts, but would not seem to pertain to truth.[26] We normally do not say that a command or an exhortation is true or false. Yet such locutions are possible only because the speaker implicitly declares that he or she is authoritative or in a position to rightly enjoin others. A reference to the stance or disposition of the speaker is implied in every illocutionary act. The phenomenologist James G. Hart admirably clarifies the illocutionary feature of locutions: Declaratives always indicate the responsibility of the person who makes a statement. If one says, »The tree is diseased« without evidence, and does

[23] I am grateful to James G. Hart for bringing my attention to Austin's views and for helping me to understand them.

[24] »The truth or falsity of statements is affected by what they leave out or put in and by their being misleading, and so on. Thus, for example, descriptions, which are said to be true or false or, if you like, are ›statements‹ […] are selective and uttered for a purpose. It is essential to realize that ›true‹ and ›false,‹ like ›free‹ and ›unfree,‹ do not stand for anything simple at all; but only for a general dimension of being a right and proper thing to say as opposed to a wrong thing, in these circumstances, to this audience, for these purposes and with these intentions.« Austin (1975: 144–145), cited in Longworth (2013: n.p.). »According to Austin, there is more involved in any such assessment than a simple comparison of requirements imposed by linguistic meaning with the facts […] Austin appears to endorse a form of *deflationism* about truth […] According to this form of deflationism, saying that a statement is true is just a way of saying that the statement has one or another of a range of more specific positive qualities – for example, that it is satisfactory, correct, fair, etc.« Longworth *(ibid.)*. Austin, however, did insist that predicating truth of a statement retains a descriptive function which does not reduce to the performative functions that the act of predication also has.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] In Austin's terminology, giving directives, recommendations, commands, and the like, are illocutionary acts, each of which may also involve different »perlocutionary« acts defined by their effect, such as persuading someone, encouraging someone, or warning someone.

not say, »it seems to me that […]« or »a friend told me that […]« then there is a kind of reprehensibility.[27] By shifting the focus from declarative and exhorting statements to the acts and the agent behind them, these philosophers help us clarify how the truth of statements is tied to the truthfulness of the speaker.[28]

We can also find an implied link between declarative truth and intersubjective truthfulness in the hermeneutical tradition of Western philosophy. The account of truth there takes as its starting point Heidegger's account of truth as disclosure. Heidegger develops alternative notions of truth and of the functions of language that are nevertheless linked to standard concepts of propositional truth. Propositional truth, he claims, presupposes the prior notion of truth as unconcealment and its concomitant concealment, the interplay of disclosure and hiddenness that he saw in the ancient Greek word *a-letheia*. For truth to reside in propositions, the matters that propositions refer to must be laid bare to us, and propositions must have the power to refer and to make evident. Yet the disclosing power of language cannot be reduced to the referential power of propositions. Language can also disclose one's vision of the way things should be and can exhort one to action; language can disclose one's heart and console or reprimand others. In Heidegger's account, language preeminently discloses the wonder of Being. Being needs human be-ing for its disclosure, that is, for the very presencing of phenomena.[29]

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[27] Hart (2009: 94–95).

[28] Two other prominent Western philosophers have written persuasively about the connection between truth and truthfulness. Robert Sokolowski, in his book *The Phenomenology of the Human Person* (2008: 20 and passim), uses the word *veracity* to designate the essentially human desire for or impulse toward truth; the virtue of truthfulness is its proper cultivation. For Sokolowski, veracity is also the common root behind sincerity and accuracy, concepts that Bernard Williams invokes as the two virtues of truthfulness in his *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy* (2002). In these rich resources for comparative philosophers, Williams and Sokolowski focus on the value of truth in a way meant to reflect »everyone's concept of truth« (Williams 2002: 271), rather than a specialized concept in some theory of truth.

[29] For the truth of non-propositional language see, for example, Heidegger (1976: 22–31). Heidegger's concern with this alternative notion of truth is as pervasive in his thinking as his concern with Being. Being and truth are indeed interlinked, as Rosemont mentions, but only because, in Heidegger's reading, Being and truth are matters of the interplay of disclosure and hiddenness. They are so intimately interlinked that Heidegger sometimes speaks of the truthing of Being (to put it in a verbal form), the uncover-

Hans-Georg Gadamer's elaboration of this need brings out the link between disclosive truth and the disposition of the perceiver. For Gadamer we must be predisposed toward phenomena in a certain way to allow them to more fully disclose themselves. The disclosure of phenomena, of how they are in the world, requires the right attunement toward them, a certain responsiveness, openness and willingness to be directed by the matter at hand. David Johnson notes a parallel here with the Dutch philosopher Adriaan Peperzak, who argues that the good perceiver must be open and attentive to what appears, even humble before it, to allow things to speak for themselves.[30] The matter at hand makes demands on our acts of perception, as other people make claims on our acts of recognition. To perceive things and to recognize others in a truthful way, we must be rightly attuned to them – hospitable toward them, as Johnson puts it. In his cross-cultural exercise, Johnson draws upon Nishida Kitarō's notion of acting intuition to show how this attunement is a matter of practice or cultivation. »Acting-intuition is thus a mode of openness that accepts the world on its own terms and allows it to show itself to us and to speak in its own voice.«[31]

The point of this cross-referencing is to make more plausible Watsuji's concept of *makoto* as the attunement of sincerity and, at the same time, as a quality of the world. Austin's insights make more explicit the connection between the stance of the speaker and the declarative truth of statements. Gadamer clarifies the truth of disclosure presupposed by declarative truth and draws attention to the disposition or attunement that disclosure calls for. Vattimo, whose notions of civic friendliness and communitarian sharing were mentioned earlier, brings specificity

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ing and the obscuring of beings, as the essential meaning of Being. But this »truthing« requires Dasein, the very being of us humans. See Heidegger (1989, passim).

[30] For this articulation of Gadamer's and Peperzak's insights I am indebted to Johnson (2014, esp. 58).

[31] Johnson (2014: 64). Johnson (*ibid*.: 62) notes that »a posture of self-effacement« enables such world-disclosure to occur, and partially cites Nishida's statement: »In the sense that the true is the real and the real is true, the true must be that which is in light of acting-intuition. I think we can say that truth is the self-expression of reality in *logos*« (Nishida 2012: 172). For all the deep differences between Nishida's Buddhist-inspired philosophy and Tibetan Buddhist theories as described by Professor Thakchoe in this symposium, there are also deep resonances regarding selflessness that differentiate both from most Western approaches. Nishida insists that the self withdraw in the cultivation of acting intuition. Acting intuition is selfless action. For clarification of these notions see Maraldo (2014a: 350, 359–362).

to the intersubjective theory of truth developed by Watsjui and implied by some Confucians through the centuries.[32] For their part, insights from the East Asian and other non-Western traditions bring to light the role of truthfulness and cultivation – following a way or path – and this is a role that is commonly undervalued in Western theories of truth.[33]

I think that this manner of crossing through philosophical traditions can illuminate classical notions of truth. Those who pursue cross-cultural philosophy inevitably move between different traditions, and so the question is how to do so responsibly or, we may say, truthfully. Gadamer argues that the task is not simply to meet a text on its own terms but also to become aware of the assumptions and prejudices we bring to that meeting. Only then are we able to meet the world of the text halfway, moving into it and making sense of it from our own world of experience. I would add that we can return to our own world enriched by the encounter, better able to pursue philosophical issues such as the nature of truth where it is a concern, but also better able to discern the limits of this concern.[34]

Especially where stark differences become evident in this encounter, I find it far more valuable to elucidate contrasts than to identify similarities, precisely because contrasts are better able to expose unexamined assumptions, to advance self-examination on a cultural level, and to suggest alternatives. To be plausible, of course, a contrast between concepts must assume that they have some common ground as well as distinct differences, and I think that this is the case with notions of truth in Japanese and in Western traditions. The Japanese link between truth and truthfulness contrasts with Western contextual truth as well as propositional truth, but both sides assume some sort of alignment: an alignment of hearts in trust, an alignment of words with deeds, an alignment of descriptions with context, or of statements with facts. It seems that non-Western traditions that have nothing like Wes-

[32] »[…] a broad horizon of civic friendliness and communitarian sharing does not depend on the truth or falsehood of statements;« rather they »make truth, in the descriptive sense of the term, possible« (Vattimo 2011: 9, 11).

[33] Heidegger is an exception insofar as he envisions philosophy as following a path and treats practical knowledge or »know how« as basic to propositional belief.

[34] Indeed, I think this return is precisely what Rosemont, together with Roger Ames, is doing by demonstrating the contemporary relevance of ancient Confucian role ethics. See for example Ames (2011).

tern concepts and theories of truth may nevertheless value some sort of alignment or match. »What matters to Mexica [knowers of things] is whether or not speech acts are rooted in their inherited lifeway and whether or not they sustain, promote, and advance that lifeway,« Professor Maffie writes.[35] What matters to Tibetan Buddhist philosophers is not ultimately a rationally defined and expressed truth but rather a practice of directly perceiving »truth as it is,« Professor Thakchoe writes.[36] An alignment of speech with one's path in life, or of perception with reality, is evidently of value in these traditions.

In the case of ancient Chinese Confucian philosophy, if indeed there is no word corresponding to a concept of truth that is of interest to Western philosophers – and the import of this seems to be debatable[37] – we nevertheless have much to learn from this contrast in philo-

[35] Maffie (2014b: 164). Maffie also cites Jane Hill's argument that contemporary Nahuatl speakers »feel that language consists, not in words with proper reference that matches reality, but in highly ritualized dialogues with proper usage *matched* to a social order that manifest an ideal of deference.« (Hill 1998: 82; my emphasis).

[36] Thakchoe (2014: 203). I suspect that in Tibetan philosophy this direct perception of the truth is ultimately non-dual, not properly expressed as a match between an act or perception and truth or reality as its object. Nevertheless, several formulations invoke the notion of a match or alignment. For example, »All conventional phenomena […] are also ›false‹ (or ›unreal‹) because their mode of existence *does not accord with* their mode of appearance« and »the way in which ultimate truth appears to its respective subject […] *accords with* the way in which it actually exists« (Thakchoe 2014: 190; my emphasis).

[37] I do not wish to take sides here, but I would like to mention A. C. Graham's apparent disagreement with Rosemont, whom Graham mentions with great respect. Graham argues that ancient Chinese language could of course be used to state everyday questions of fact (»a language without sentences in which it is impossible to affirm a fact would lack the communicative function without which it could not serve as a language«) but »neither Western nor Chinese philosophy is concerned primarily with factual issues.« »To say that Chinese philosophers display a ›lack of interest in questions of truth and falsity‹ amounts then to saying that like Western [philosophers] they are not primarily concerned with the factual, but unlike Western [philosophers] they do not use a word which assimilates other questions to the factual. That they would have no concept of Truth is to be taken for granted, but is trivial […] One explores Chinese philosophy by comparing and contrasting Western and Chinese concepts. Even when one fails to notice distinctions, they may be expected to emerge if one finds it profitable to push analysis further.« Graham seems to recognize what I called the common ground for identifying and contrasting notions of truth, namely, a kind of alignment or fit: »One begins to understand why in Chinese philosophy argumentation is conceived solely in terms of whether the name fits the object.« It seems to me that this fit falls under the broad notion of truth-telling. Graham (1989: 395, 396, 410).

sophies. The relevant common ground for contrast, in that case, would be supplied by the broad notion of philosophy and the idea of language usage, if not by a notion of truth. The contrast between valuing statements that correctly convey information and valuing language that guides appropriate behavior or aligns us with a path for life, is a significant discovery that makes it possible for Western philosophers to begin to read East Asian and other non-Western texts as philosophical. The discovery of the very lack of a theory of truth in some traditions or cultures can be of great value in the practice of cross-cultural philosophy. It can reveal supposedly universal concerns to be rather parochial, as Maffie observes.

Similarly valuable is the discovery of concept clusters, in our case, the concepts with which *truth* is related. Insofar as we are »outsiders« to the cultures we study, we learn to recognize our own unnoticed assumptions if we see that a word that might be translated as »truth« belongs to a cluster that clearly differs from concepts that Western philosophies relate to truth. I would add only that clusters evolve just as individual concepts do. Since the late nineteenth century, for example, Japanese philosophers like Watsuji have been able to relate propositional, objective, or descriptive truth (真理, a modern word in Japanese) to broader notions of truth (真) and to truth that is personally embodied *(makoto)*. I wonder how the clusters around the concepts of 信, 誠, 真 have evolved in Chinese thought. Is it only ancient Confucian philosophy that lacks a concept of descriptive truth, with its corresponding cluster, in China? What about Mohism and Neo-Confucian thought? What about Chinese Buddhist notions, many of which do express enlightenment in the imagery of a path or way?[38] I would also

[38] Path imagery is often used to depict Buddhist enlightenment. Indeed, a common East Asian word for what we call »Buddhism« is 佛道, »the Way of the Buddha.« What we call »enlightenment« means expressing and realizing the way (道得) in the understanding of the Japanese Zen philosopher Dōgen (1200–1254). There is no space here to describe the complexity of Sino-Japanese Buddhist notions of truth, but we may note that »truth« is often an appropriate translation of the Buddhist meaning of 道理, roughly »the pattern of the Way.« One dictionary lists several other terms for »truth« in Chinese Buddhism:
眞理 truth, the true principle, the absolute apart from phenomena
眞妄 true and false, real and unreal
眞道 the Truth, the true way; reality
眞 true, authentic, eternal, unchanging
Soothill and Hodous (2003: 331–332).

find it valuable to compare and contrast the way that concept clusters are evaluated, under the name of *conceptual schemes*, for example.[39]

Even where the concept of descriptive truth and its related cluster seem lacking in a tradition, that concept can be at work in the manner in which we pursue cross-cultural philosophy. The absence of a theory of descriptive truth in the non-Western texts we may read does not mean that we interpreters have no interest in descriptive accuracy. Western philosophy's interest in objectivity is not entirely alien to Rosemont's project of understanding philosophers of other traditions »on their own terms.« The objective measure here is given by the terms of the texts we read, along with their contexts and clusters. We try to align our understanding and our translations with such terms. We could say that this is a way of being true to the texts. If we cannot call a translation »false,« we can probably call some translations wrong, and can certainly differentiate between better and worse interpretations, more and less appropriate translations, a point on which Rosemont and Vattimo agree.[40] This seems to be a sign that we inevitably assume some sort of descriptive truth, a fit between our translations and the terms of the text, not only in cross-cultural philosophy, but in all manner of philosophical interpretation.

Let me return finally to Alcoff's remark that truth »remains the single most important philosophical norm by which we understand our discipline.« I have no problem agreeing that traditions like that of ancient Confucianism are truly philosophical even if no concept of propositional truth is to be found in them. And I do think it useful to distinguish such traditions from »Western philosophy.« Assuming for a moment a Western guise and expressing in the form of propositions some of the issues at play in this discussion, I could say I have found the following claims questionable:

[39] Not only the content of the clusters, but their philosophical use too is a matter of debate. A. C. Graham (1989: 428) notes the potential in exploring »alien conceptual schemes« to see how one's own schemes look from the outside. Debates about conceptual schemes in Western analytic philosophy generally concern epistemological issues such as the possibility of an untranslatable language. Wilfrid Sellars makes an epistemological point, critiquing the »myth of the given,« when he states that »one can have the concept of green [for example] only by having a whole battery of concepts of which it is one element« (Sellars 1968: 147–148).

[40] Perhaps Vattimo (2011: 35) overstates the case when he writes, »the difference between true and false is always a difference between interpretations more acceptable and shared and those less so […].«

– that the notion of truth in the Western tradition is limited to the concept of propositional truth;
– that Chinese texts evince no notion of descriptive truth;
– that notions we indisputably find in Chinese texts are unrelated to Western notions of truth;
– and that the concept of truth does not have value in the pursuit of cross-cultural philosophy.

In expressing the issues in this manner and wondering whether the claims are true or false, I may seem already to bind the issues to a notion of propositional truth. But more is involved in this pursuit of cross-cultural philosophy – something more valuable to me than the verification or falsification of claims. I value the way in which we are developing our views and our investigations. We are indeed practicing cross-cultural philosophy as a collaborative endeavor, writing in response to one another in a manner that I presume to be more than playing a game – in a manner that I think requires sincerity and attunement to one another. In the end, perhaps we must continue to ask ourselves: to what sort of truth do we commit ourselves in the practice of cross-cultural philosophy?

–John C. Maraldo, University of North Florida, USA, Emeritus

Tibetan Reflections on the Value of Truth in Cross-Cultural Philosophy[1]

I Introduction

Professor Rosemont is skeptical of the value of cross-cultural philosophy when such scholarship stems from a focus on what he calls »cross-cultural similarities.«[2] His skepticism, with which I fully agree, arises from a philosophical method which often operates on the assumption that »truth« in cross-cultural philosophy must mean the kind that interests contemporary Western philosophers and then, somewhat problematically, asks: how such a concept of truth (or a close analogue thereof) is treated in any non-Western culture.[3] There would be no point in pursuing cross-cultural philosophy if all one sought in another philosophical tradition were the same old »similar« truth with which we are already very familiar within our own tradition. According to Rosemont the approach that specifically seeks »cross-cultural similarities« is highly dubious. It is motivated by the dogma that any concept or theory of truth in non-Western literature, »if it is to be useful philosophically, cannot be too dissimilar from *our own*« (my emphasis).[4]

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[1] I sincerely thank Professor Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach for inviting me to be a part of this interesting and rewarding philosophical debate. My thanks also go to my esteemed debate colleagues, Professor Rosemont, Professor Maffie and Professor Maraldo, for sharing with me their deep and insightful knowledge on this subject matter. I am particularly thankful to Professor Monika Kirloskar-Steinbach and Professor James Maffie for their assistance in editing my problematic Tibetan English into the current version.

[2] Rosemont, Jr. (2014: 152).

[3] »A contemporary scholar trained in the Anglo-American analytic tradition might, for example, be seeking conclusive arguments in favor of the »deflationary« theory of truth as against correspondence, coherence, semantic or pragmatist theories, and consequently might seek insight into the issue(s) by looking at how the concept of truth, or a close analogue thereof, was dealt with in one or more non-Western traditions« (*ibid.*: 151).

[4] (*Ibid.*: 154).

This methodological problem, he argues, stems from the dogma of having found the Truth, objectively.[5]

Although Rosemont is critical of certain ways in which cross-cultural philosophy has been conducted in the past, he is not entirely *opposed to the value* of doing cross-cultural philosophy as long as its methodological scope and its scholarship are broader and more encompassing.

The *method* that drives cross-cultural philosophy has to be an *eagerness* to inquire, investigate, to learn from each other, to better understand and appreciate each other on »their own terms,« says Rosemont.[6] Our willingness to open our own philosophical and cultural presumptions to the scrutiny of others is also essential to doing cross-cultural philosophy well. Only when we are able to open ourselves fully to appreciating the philosophical values of whatever we may discover in cross-cultural enquiry, would we be ready to engage cross-culturally in our philosophical endeavors.

Another reason why cross-cultural philosophy should be carried out is that it offers us a good opportunity to develop insights into the distinctive features of each tradition. It allows us, using James Maffie's words, to stress »the differences separating Western and (at least some) non-Western philosophies.«[7] This is because »contrasts are,« in the words of John C. Maraldo »better able to expose unexamined assumptions, to advance self-examination on a cultural level, and to suggest alternatives.«[8]

Contrasts and similarities that we may discover along the way of doing cross-cultural enquiry should not, in my view, determine the goal and method of cross-cultural philosophy. The objective that drives the pursuit of cross-cultural philosophy is the advancement of philosophical inquiry cross-culturally and the promotion of learning from each other through philosophical exchanges, and thus the fostering of

[5] This approach, he says, objectifies the »other,« and tends to attend only to similarities by ignoring differences. For instance Matteo Ricci, a missionary to China, was able to find the concept of an Abrahamic God in Chinese texts, where non-Christian scholars almost surely could not (*ibid.*: 152).

[6] »I have found it much more useful to approach the philosophical and religious texts of other cultures on their terms rather than mine as much as possible« (Rosemont 2012: 2, 6).

[7] Maffie (2014b: 165).

[8] Maraldo (2014b: 181).

dialogue and discussion with any tradition, irrespective of however different or similar they are culturally and philosophically.

II Truth in Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy

Truth is a central concept to all living Tibetan philosophical schools, in contrast with the Confucian and Mexica philosophies where there is no concept of truth.[9] The value of truth in Tibetan philosophy is, however, not only measured in terms of its theoretical significance but as an unfolding praxis with varying depths and scope.[10] Analogous to Rosemont's »praxis-guiding discourse« in Confucian philosophy and Maffie's »path-seeking« humane endeavors in Mexica philosophy, truth for Tibetan philosophy is to be *lived* and embodied: its realization is the ultimate philosophical goal. Comparable to Maffie's *ohtlatoca* (»following a path«), which embraces an »enactive, performative, regulative and pragmatic conception of language,«[11] truth in Tibetan philosophy is the path (the Way). Only walking the truth-path, it is argued, has the efficacy needed to attain the highest possible human good, which can set humans free from their existential suffering (since all suffering arises due to ignorance of truth). Thus truth is the only sound guide for practice aimed at progressively realizing ultimate freedom, *nirvāṇa*.

Again, like Rosemont's cluster of concepts (including freedom, rights, autonomy, individual, principle, choice, reason, liberty, etc.), in Tibetan philosophical literature the term »truth« *(bden pa / satya)* has many overlapping and multi-layered meanings.[12] Tibetan philosophical texts generally define *bden pa* as having the combination of two meanings: as statements (those that are »taken to be true« and those that are »actually true«) and as states of affairs or kinds of things (those that are »taken to be real« and those that are »real«). Epistemologically speaking, truth is taken to be something that is epistemically reliable, justified, and correct – something that warrants epistemic trust – the sort of truth that is empirically, scientifically, or legally verifiable. In Tibetan

[9] Maffie (2014b: 161).
[10] Thakchoe (2011).
[11] Maffie (2014b: 162).
[12] Maraldo also observes that Linda Martin Alcoff has truth as a concept-cluster where truth belongs to *»norm, context, engagement, efficacy, experience and the ordinary world«* (Maraldo 2014b: 170).

phenomenology, truth has the sense of an *awakened* (awakening) experience – an experiential insight into the reality derived from direct perception and sustained experiential knowing. In soteriology, truth is the Path (or the Way); truth is the guide for practice; truth alone is attributed an efficacy to set humans free from suffering. In ethics, truth means sincerity, honesty, genuineness, originality, coordination, harmony, tranquility, etc. Working from the standpoint of metaphysics and ontology, Tibetan philosophers define truth as »reality« – the so-called reality of things as they are, the ultimate mode of being, a thing's fundamental nature.

All of these meanings of the term »truth« *(satya / bden pa)* are essentially not very different in their semantic range. Tibetan uses of the term »truth« often overlap with each other. The differences are mostly contextual. Even so, it is primarily the ontological and epistemological use of the term »truth« that is most directly relevant to the question of the value of truth in Tibetan philosophy for cross-cultural philosophy. Truth in Tibetan philosophy is not in any way equivalent to any of the Western philosophical conceptions where truth belongs primarily to reference, validity, proposition, denotation, connotation, etc. Tibetan philosophers are neither correspondence theorists nor are they strict coherentists. They are neither pragmatists nor realists, nor anti-realists, nor even deflationary theorists in the Western philosophical sense. Nor do they advance a conception of propositional truth. This notwithstanding, the Western and Tibetan traditions have many interesting points of intersection, with shared and unshared insights into many domains allowing for fruitful dialogue and exchange.[13]

III The Two Truths Debate in Tibetan Philosophy

Tibetan philosophers have always, following their Indian Buddhist counterparts, classified truth into two kinds: conventional truth and ultimate truth. The two truths are not only a core ontological doctrine as it is understood within the Tibetan Buddhist thought, but they are also constitutive of the central theory behind Tibetan Buddhist epistemology, ethics, phenomenology, and soteriology.

Conventional truth is defined as objects or things found by means

[13] See Garfield (2014).

of correct ordinary cognitions (called »conventionally true cognitions«). These things (realities) exist conventionally and are established by the standards of commonsense or ordinary mundane knowledge.[14] Conventional truth is an object that is found by a cognitive process that perceives that which is ultimately unreal, false, and deceptive. All conventional phenomena (including those that we regard as »conventionally real«), according to Tibetan philosophy, are »false« (or »unreal«). Their mode of existence does not accord with their mode of appearance. Things deceptively and falsely appear to our ordinary cognitions to be real, while in actual fact, from a critical ultimate perspective, they are »unreal,« and »empty of essential reality.«

The term »ultimate« refers both to objects and to cognitions apprehending the objects. Therefore this term means objects and cognitions that are »ultimate.« When the term »ultimate« takes up a subjective meaning, it refers to a very specific ability of mental cognition (»direct perceptual awareness,« »mental equipoise,« and/or »reasoning faculty«) that is directed towards the ultimate nature of things. Ultimately true cognition is said to operate on the basis of *how things really are* (as opposed to how they appear in ordinary, conventional cognitions that are taken to be true). Ultimate cognition operates on the basis of the *ultimate mode* of things – what is known ultimately by ultimate knowledge, or what is known through ultimate logical investigation regarding the ultimate nature of things. Therefore this type of cognition is often described as »ultimately true cognition,« or »ultimate knowledge.« So cognition becomes ultimate because of the means adopted to ascertain whether a cognition can indeed be ultimate. When the term »ultimate« takes on its objective connotation, it comes to mean truth found by means of ultimately true cognition. So ultimate truth is defined as »an object found by ultimate knowledge or ultimately true cognition.«

Ultimate truth can also be defined as »a non-deceptive object found by the truth-perceiving cognition.« It is argued that the way in which ultimate truth appears to its respective cognition (ultimately true cognition) accords with the way in which it actually exists. Ultimate reality is therefore non-deceptive, unlike conventional truth,

[14] Maraldo's references to »communal« truth in Watsuji Tetsurō's (1889–1960) philosophy appear to be making a similar point (Maraldo 2014b: 172).

which appears to its cognition deceptively and falsely, and is therefore a deceptive object.[15]

All Indian Buddhist schools – Vaibhāṣika (pan-realists), Sautrāntika (representationalists, logicians), Yogācāra (idealists, phenomenologists), Svātantrika Madhyamaka (autonomist middle-way philosophers) and Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka (consequentialist middle-way philosophers) – came up with very different theories of the two truths.[16] The majority of the classical Tibetan philosophers or four ma-

[15] This is not a type of correspondence theory, though. The object and cognition are not two independent entities corresponding to each other. A cognition, in this context, arises due to the force of an object (but not vice versa), for the object is regarded as one of the necessary conditions for the arising of cognition.

[16] The Vaibhāṣika (pan-realists) have argued that ultimate truth consists of intrinsically real, irreducible spatial units (e.g., atoms) and irreducible temporal units (e.g., instants of consciousness) of the five basic categories – color/shape, feeling, perception, volitional factors, consciousness. Conventional truth, on the other hand, consists of reducible spatial wholes (such as person, table, etc.) or temporal continua (stream of consciousness, etc.). Put simply, the conventional is composite; the ultimate is discrete. The Sautrāntika (representationalists) have argued that the two truths are in fact a division between unique particulars (*ultimate truth*) and universals (*conventional truth*) wherein the former are defined as dynamic, momentary, causally effective, and the objective domain of direct perception; the latter is conceptually constructed of universals. It is static, causally ineffective and the objective domain of the inference. The Yogācāra (idealists, phenomenologists) have maintained that all external objects are entirely unreal, and that only mental objects may be real. There are two forms of Madhyamaka (middle-way philosophy) schools – Svātantrika (autonomist) and Prāsaṅgika (consequentialist). The former has two sub-schools: the Sautrāntika-Svātantrika (representationalist-autonomist) and the Yogācāra-Svātantrika (idealist-autonomist). The Sautrāntika-Svātantrika Madhyamaka account of the two truths fuses the epistemological realism of the Sautrāntika with Madhyamaka's non-foundational ontology. The Madhyamaka supplies the ultimate truth, the Sautrāntika the conventional. The Sautrāntika-Svātantrika Madhyamaka argues that conventionally speaking, all phenomena are intrinsically real *(svabhāvata)*, for they are established as such by the non-analytical cognitions of ordinary beings. Ultimately, they argue that all phenomena are intrinsically unreal *(niḥsvabhāvataḥ)*, for they are established as empty of intrinsic reality from the perspective of exalted analytical cognition (ultimate cognition of enlightened beings). Thus this school argues that Madhyamaka must reject the intrinsic reality of things ultimately, since what is intrinsically unreal (empty) is itself ultimate reality. However, it asserts intrinsic reality of things conventionally, since intrinsic reality itself constitutes conventional reality.
The Yogācāra-Svātantrika Madhyamaka school, as its name suggests, fuses the epistemological idealism of the Yogācāra with Madhyamaka ontology. The Madhyamaka school supplies the ultimate truth, while the Yogācāra supplies the conventional. The Yogācāra account of the conventional truth is that only the *mind* is intrinsically and

jor philosophical schools – Nyingma, Kagyü, Sakya, and Gelug – are self-confessed followers of the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka school of thought, for they argue that the philosophical position advanced here is more coherent and defensible compared with other Indian Buddhist schools. Tibetan philosophers agree that the two truths are undisputedly central to their system of Prāsaṅgika thought. The Tibetan schools and philosophers within the four schools disagreed fiercely amongst themselves on almost every important philosophical question concerning the two truths, however. They disagree on their definitions of the two truths, the relationship between them, their ontological statuses, the epistemic tools for accessing them, the problems concerning the limits of language and thought (as these relate to the notion of ultimate truth), the different epistemic and phenomenological pathways of realizing ultimate truth, and finally, the nature and possibility of knowledge of these two truths and the implications of such knowledge for the attainment of awakening.

Put another way, questions such as: »What is divided into the two truths?,« »How should the two truths be etymologically presented *(sgra bshad)*?,« »How are they defined *(mtshan nyid / nges tshig)*?,« »Why should truth be enumerated *(grangs nges)* into two, why not one?,« and »How are the two truths related: distinct or identical?« have become the standard paradigmatic focus of any discussion of these two truths. The debate amongst Tibetan philosophers stems in large part from the way in which they differently interpret and understand Candrakīrti's theory of the two truths and its philosophical implications.

The Gelug school, for example, argues for a harmonious relationship between the two truths, while the Sakya school rejects such harmony, insisting on the absolute character of ultimate truth and the rejection of conventional truth. The Gelug school contends that the accomplishment of the ultimate goal provides the most coherent epistemic access to the *climactic* unity between the two truths, and thus simultaneous knowledge of the two truths is reserved only for the fully awakened beings. In contrast, Sakya thinkers maintain that the accom-

conventionally real. All objects external to it are conventionally unreal, because they have no intrinsic reality, they are rather mentally constructed pure fictions. The Madhyamaka account of ultimate truth is that analysis exposes even the mind as empty of ultimately intrinsic nature under ultimate analysis. Thus, although all that conventionally exists must exist as having conventionally intrinsic nature, these objects lack ultimate existence, for they are empty of an ultimately intrinsic nature.

plishment of the ultimate goal leads to an ultimate breakdown of all connections between the two truths. Thus, the Sakya school holds that realization of the ultimate disunity between the two truths is a cognitive achievement reserved only for those who have reached the highest goal. For Gelug, Buddhas – those who achieved the highest goal – are conventional truths and dependently arisen phenomena, just like any other thing. For the Sakya school, however, whosoever achieves the highest goal is non-empirical, non-dual, and transcendent.

The Gelug school treats the two truths as mutually entailing. It argues that they share the same ontological status, and that they are both empty and dependently arisen phenomena. The same principle applies to the Gelug ontology of *saṁsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. Since both *saṁsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are dependently arisen and empty of essences, they have equal ontological status. Sakya ontology, on the other hand, treats the two truths as hierarchical and mutually contradictory. It argues that conventional truth and ultimate truth each have their own distinct and independent ontological status. The same distinction is applied in the way it treats *saṁsāra* and *nirvāṇa* ontologically. While conventional truth and *saṁsāra* are treated as dependently arisen and thus as ontologically conditioned *(saṁskṛta, 'dus byas)*, Sakya philosophers argue that ultimate truth and *nirvāṇa* are ontologically unconditioned *(asaṁskṛta, 'dus ma byas)* and transcendent.

The two kinds of knowledge, that of conventional truth and that of ultimate truth – that of *saṁsāra* and that of *nirvāṇa* – are, according to Gelug epistemology, complementary. They are yoked together and cannot be isolated from one another. Just as knowledge of conventional truth depends on that of ultimate truth, so too does knowledge of *saṁsāra* depend on the realization of *nirvāṇa*. One who directly knows conventional truth and *saṁsāra* as dependently arisen and empty, thus also knows ultimate truth and *nirvāṇa* as dependently arisen and empty. Thus, without knowing ultimate truth and *nirvāṇa* as dependently arisen and empty, it is not possible to know conventional truth and *saṁsāra* as dependently arisen and empty. In contrast, according to Sakya epistemology, knowledge of either of the two truths – of *saṁsāra* or *nirvāṇa* – is inconsistent with knowledge of the other. The knowledge of conventional truth and *saṁsāra* as dependently arisen is distinct from and autonomous with respect to that of ultimate truth and *nirvāṇa*. The knowledge of conventional truth and *saṁsāra* as dependently arisen is a mundane one based on knowing conventional

truth and *saṁsāra* as ontologically conditioned, whereas knowledge of ultimate truth and *nirvāṇa* constitutes transcendent knowledge, since it is based on knowing ultimate truth and *nirvāṇa* as ontologically transcendent.[17]

As we can see with such intra-Tibetan philosophical debates concerning culture and language, Tibetan philosophical methods are by no means monolithic and homogeneous dealing with the two truths. Sophisticated and hairsplitting logical and dialectical methods of training in the monastic universities have produced academics and scholars with great debating skills and philosophical dexterity. Critical philosophical exchanges about the two truths between and amongst Tibetan scholars themselves have already produced highly successful intra-cultural philosophical discourse. The exchanges with the classical Brahmanical philosophical traditions have also enabled Tibetan philosophers to hone their cross-cultural philosophical skills, to enrich their methods, to sharpen their metaphysical and epistemological parameters, to gain new insights into the strength and vulnerabilities of their own positions as well as those of opponents, and to develop new strategies to address shortcomings and provide effective defense against the criticisms. Even so, I believe, Tibetan philosophers have much to learn from exchanges with other philosophical traditions (be it with Western philosophy, Chinese philosophy, African philosophy, etc.) and that they also have something to contribute to other traditions by way of engaging in cross-cultural inquiry.

IV The Value of the Two Truths to the Pursuit of Cross-Cultural Philosophy

In the remaining part of this paper, I show how and why the two-truth debate in Tibetan philosophy is valuable to the pursuit of cross-cultural philosophy (by »Tibetan,« I refer to the Gelug school, as its philosophy will be the focus of my analysis). I will argue that the two truths have

[17] In my book – which is a comparative analysis of the conceptions of the two truths by two of Tibet's most well-known philosophers: Tsongkhapa Lobsang Dragpa (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa, 1357–1419), the founder of the Gelug school; and Gorampa Sönam Senge (Go rams pa Bsod nams seng ge, 1429–1489), one of the key Sakya philosophers – I have attempted to show how these dramatic differences follow from their differing hermeneutical approach toward the two truths (Thakchoe 2007).

an ontological »openness« or »malleability« toward cross-cultural philosophy. There are several reasons for this. Perhaps the most important one is that the two truths are, for Tibetan philosophy, freestanding (in themselves); they are not tied down or hardwired in any privileged epistemology, language, culture and philosophy, beliefs, etc. The two truths are the natural processes and events of the world. Therefore they are, culturally unbound, linguistically unspecified, and philosophically *un*privileged.

For Tibetan philosophers ontology and philosophical analysis are deeply interlinked: where analysis ends, is precisely where dogmas and assumptions (such as intrinsic reality, substance, essence, self, soul, God, etc.) begin. According to Tibetan philosophy, the Buddhist realist schools (Theravāda, Vaibhāṣika, and Sautrāntika), employed analysis successfully against conceptual composites, but they are exhausted at the level of atoms and instants, their basic ontological units and ultimate reality. The idealist Yogācāra deployed analysis to dismantle the external world entirely (including the atoms of the realists). That analysis exhausts itself though at the level of non-dualistic consciousness (Yogācāra), whose resistance to analysis, according to this tradition, confirms its ultimacy. For the semi-realist Svātantrika, analysis is used to clear the ultimate domain of intrinsic reality entirely – reasoned analysis arrives at the ultimate truth of emptiness. But the conventional domain is spared analysis, lest it rob conventionality of the intrinsic reality that the Svātantrika believe to be essential to causality. For the Prāsaṅgika, analysis is deployed without exception, and there is nothing that can withstand it. Ultimately everything, seen analytically, is empty of intrinsic reality, including emptiness itself; as a matter of convention, everything, seen analytically, exists only relationally, including relations themselves. The Prāsaṅgika argue that analysis, by showing that things exist insubstantially and relationally, rather than robbing things of causality confirms it. Only things lacking intrinsic nature can contribute to causal interdependence, and analysis confirms that lack.

For this reason Tsongkhapa and his Gelug school defended a thoroughgoing Prāsaṅgika non-realism, or a kind of »global« non-realism, the emptiness of everything. They argue that the »ultimate truth is that nothing is real,« everything is unreal, false, and empty, both conventionally and ultimately. Thus everything is only relational, like plantain trees, water-bubbles, mirages in the desert, reflections of faces

in the mirror, the reflection of the moon in crystal-clear water, magical illusions, etc. Just as all of these illusory phenomena are unreal and only exist due to the coming together of their respective causes and conditions, so-called real things and real persons are ultimately only unreal, impermanent, deceptive, empty of essence, and without self.

Both conventional and ultimate truths, the Gelug argue, are categorically empty of intrinsic nature. Only non-intrinsic truth is associated with causal efficiency. The non-realism of conventional truth is articulated through the equation of dependent arising and causal efficiency. Dependent arising is conventional truth because it arises from its causes and conditions and hence it is non-intrinsic, even conventionally. That which conventionally arises from causes and conditions interdependently, is causally efficient. The non-realism of ultimate truth is articulated through the equation of emptiness and causal efficacy. Emptiness is the ultimate truth because ultimate truth is ultimately unreal. It is ultimately unreal, for it is ultimately empty of any intrinsic nature. And whatever lacks intrinsic nature, ultimately arises dependently, and thus is causally efficient. Being empty of any intrinsic nature, emptiness is, therefore, causally efficient. This follows since whatever is empty of intrinsic nature is a relational and dependently arisen phenomenon, and whatever is relational is causally efficient.

V Tibetan Philosophy's Value in the Pursuit of Cross-Cultural Philosophy

At this point we may ask: how is the »global« non-realism of Tibetan philosophy valuable in the pursuit of cross-cultural philosophy? It is precisely this »global« non-realism, in my view, that leads Tibetan philosophers towards cross-cultural philosophy. The philosophical thought that every truth is unreal, »nothing is ultimately true« does not mean that there is *no truth*. It means truth is strictly *non-intrinsic*, *relational*, and thus interdependent in origin. Truth dependently arises from the collocation of causes and conditions; therefore it is open as it arises from cross-linguistic, cross-epistemic, and cross-cultural practices. This cross-culturally open truth lends itself easily to the cross-culturally open method of inquiry of which cross-cultural philosophy is only one kind.

Following the stellar examples set by the Indian philosophers such as Nāgārjuna, Candrakīrti, etc. Tibetan philosophy self-reflexively subjects everything – from a seed to a Buddha – to rigorous interrogation. No truth whatsoever is protected from the blazes of philosophical investigation. Not only are the fundamental assumptions underlying metaphysics (ontology, causality, etc.), epistemology (cognitions, knowledge, etc.), ethics (karma, morality, etc.), and psychology (emotions, etc.) subjected to sustained interrogation, but the primacy of subjectivity (self, agency, personhood, Godhead) is also exposed to sustained analysis. Even so, the enterprise of cross-cultural philosophy (be it with Western or Eastern philosophical orientations) would benefit Tibetan philosophy in general. It would force Tibetan philosophers to step outside the confines of the presuppositions of Tibetan Buddhist culture and its philosophical parameters, and force them to contemplate fresh philosophical methods to advance their notion of two truths from new or fresh vantage points.[18]

Let us look at the etymology of the term *kun rdzob (saṁvṛti)* to assess how malleable the Tibetan concept of truth is to cross-cultural philosophy. Etymologically the term *kun rdzob (saṁvṛti)*, translated into English as »convention« (even »concealer«[19] in certain context), has come to have three meanings and each of them are significant in understanding Tibetan philosophy's temperament regarding cross-cultural philosophy:[20]

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[18] The two truths debate between the Geluk and Sakya, as I have discussed elsewhere, is a good case study that demonstrates the heterogeneity of Tibetan philosophy in its approach to truth. The ways in which each Tibetan school (or philosopher) has interpreted and approached the two truths depend largely on which Indian Buddhist philosopher or school have cross-culturally influenced the Tibetans counterparts. See Thakchoe (2007).

[19] Newland (1999: 77) consistently translates *samvṛtisatya (kun brdzob bden* pa) as *concealer-truth* and seems to treat *samvṛtisatya* and concealer truth as equivalent, assuming it to be the Gelug pa standard reading. I borrowed his term concealer-truth and use it in the context where *saṁvṛti* is specifically referred to as primal ignorance; however, I do not consider these two terms to be equivalent. Especially in Tsongkhapa's sense, *saṁvṛti* carries a much wider semantic range. All phenomenal objects can be described as *saṁvṛtisatya* but certainly not as concealer-truth, because phenomenal objects themselves do not conceal truth. Rather they are the truths. However, Newland's rendition is consistent with Gorampa's reading. For the latter, every *saṁvṛtisatya* amounts to concealing the truth. And phenomena themselves are not seen as truths. They are rather considered as total illusions, projected by ignorance.

[20] Tsongkhapa (1992: 402–403); Gorampa (1969: 377b), and Newland (1999: 77).

The first sense of the Tibetan term *kun-rdzob (saṁvṛti)* means something that is *mutually interdependent (phan tshun brten pa, paraparasaṁbhavana)*. This should be viewed as a radical contrast with the last meaning of *kun-rdzob*, which equates it with ignorance. *Kun-rdzob* in this context is taken to refer to the mutually interdependent character of the two truths, both epistemically and ontologically, hence *kun-rdzob* is applied exhaustively to *all* phenomena including ultimate truth. What is at issue here does not merely concern the relation between phenomena and the apprehending cognitions, but rather it affects the core ontological status of *all* truths/realities.

With respect to conventional truth, mutual interdependence implies ontological insubstantiality, evanescence, and an absence of essence. In other words, being *mutually interdependent* means that the very existence of all conventional truths depend on their being relational and interdependent – »As all phenomena must arise through a network of their causes and conditions, they simply are empty of the self-defining nature.«[21]

With respect to ultimate truth, *mutual interdependence* refers to the ontological and epistemological interdependence of ultimate truth *(paramārthasatya, don dam bden pa)* in relation to conventional truth. Ultimate truth is entirely dependent on its conventional counterpart. The two are like subject and predicate, in that the latter cannot exist without the former and vice versa. In this sense ultimate truth can be included in the categories of *kun-rdzob* – not because it fulfills the defining criterion of what *kun-rdzob is*, but because it is ontologically and epistemologically interdependent from conventional truth.[22]

Ultimate truth could not be classified as *kun-rdzob* if it is to be given primacy or priority over conventional truth – whether ontological or epistemological. Since Tibetan philosophy accords ultimate truth *(paramārthasatya, don dam bden pa)* and conventional truth *(saṁvṛtisatya, kun rdzob bden pa)* equal status, neither can have precedence over the other. Ultimate truth is the ultimate nature, or ultimate mode, of conventional truth.[23] Since ultimate truth is not possible without a

[21] Tsongkhapa (1997: 205). See Geshe (1997: 138).

[22] Gorampa, while accepting that the second meaning of *kun-rdzob* does apply to empirical truth in both an ontological and epistemological sense, is adamant that it cannot apply to ultimate truth. For him, ultimate truth is ontologically transcendent and absolute – it cannot be *kun-rdzob* at any level.

[23] Geshe (1997: 141).

characterized conventional reality, ultimate truth too must be a dependently arisen phenomenon. Indeed, ultimate truth is none other than the ultimate mode of being of conventional truth. If ultimate truth were not a dependently-arisen phenomenon, it would then be ontologically absolute and therefore essentially real. In that case, ultimate truth would be neither equivalent to an empty phenomenon nor categorizable as *kun-rdzob* – a mutually interdependent phenomenon. Thus this concept of mutually dependent truths, from a cross-cultural philosophical standpoint, is particularly interesting in comparison with philosophical systems that advance a type of absolutism or Vedāntic monism or non-dualism, or even Kantian transcendentalism, which sees phenomena and noumenon quite differently.[24]

The second meaning of *kun-rdzob* is *linguistic convention ('jig rten gyi tha snyad, lokavyavahāra)* or *terms (brda, saṁket, samay)*. According to Tibetan philosophy, this sense of *kun-rdzob*, takes into account the role of linguistic convention. Following Candrakīrti here it is argued that, as linguistic convention, *kun-rdzob* encompasses all sense faculties (the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and intellect), their six corresponding objects (form, sound, aroma, taste, tactility, and ideas), and the six consciousnesses (visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tangibility, mental consciousness) that arise from the contact between the six senses and the six objects.[25] In his *Treatise on the Essence of True Eloquence (Legs bshad snying po)* Tsongkhapa characterizes the philosophy of language in the Prāsaṅgika works of the Indian philosophers – Nāgārjuna, Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti – as being distinctive. The claim is being made that those in the Prāsaṅgika school posit all realities through the force of linguistic convention: language and ontology *(rnam gzhag)* are understood to be mutually embedded within each other, such that »realities *(yod pa)* are merely *(tsam)*

[24] Other Tibetan philosophers such as Gorampa, however, disagree with the Gelug exposition. He argues that conventional and ultimate truths are radically distinct – ultimate truth is not in any respect ontologically dependent or interdependent. Firstly, ultimate truth is not projected by primal ignorance, for it is the only non-deceptive truth. Secondly, ultimate truth has ontological *primacy* over empirical truth. It is, in other words, ontologically distinct and outranks conventional truth. Ultimate truth is ontologically *transcendent* and *absolute*. Hence, according to Gorampa (1969: 377c, 382b), ultimate truth cannot in any circumstance constitute a category of *kun-rdzob*. Modern Indian scholars such as T. R. V. Murti support this view (1955: 244–245).

[25] Tsongkhapa (1992: 403).

names *(ming)*, terms *(brda)* and linguistic conventions *(tha snyad)*.«[26] Language, according to Gelug philosophy, is always meaningful, although it always lacks intrinsic meaning, for it does not have any intrinsically real meaning apart from what social conventions ascribe to it. The real linguistic meaning is nowhere to be found: it is neither in words nor in sentences, not even in its referent. However, since language is dependent in origin, there can be no language without its meaning, likewise there is no meaning without language. Gelug philosophy also argues that there is no such thing as an objectively and uniquely real referent. All referents are always and necessarily linguistic and therefore conceptually constructed. Any linguistic referent is already embedded in language, just as language is already embedded in ontology. Neither language nor ontology has priority over the other.[27]

Both *nirvāṇa* and ultimate truth are linguistic concepts in that they exist as merely names or concepts. Since saṃsāra is also a concept *(rtog pa)*, *nirvāṇa* too must be a concept *(rtog pa)*, for they both exist as mundane linguistic conventions *('jig rten gyi tha snyad)*. Since conventional truth is a concept, ultimate truth too must be a concept, for their existence mutually depends upon each other.

If reality consists simply of linguistic concepts, and if linguistic concepts are utterly empty of intrinsic nature, how could such a reality have any functional or causal efficacy in cross-cultural philosophy? Language is empty of intrinsic nature because it exists neither in its causes – taken collectively or separately – nor in its conditions, nor in the combination of both (causes and conditions), nor again is language anything apart from these causes and conditions. Since linguistic concepts, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, are nowhere to be found, language

[26] Tsongkhapa (1997: 201–202).

[27] The Gelug account of the Prāsaṅgika, therefore, disagrees fundamentally with the Dignāga-Dharmakīrtian idea that reality is uniquely *(svalakṣaṇa)* and intrinsically *(svabhāva)* given to language as its referent, and that language in and of itself is meaningless. Dignāga-Dharmakīrtian realistic nominalism (or conceptualism) operates on the presumption that either language has priority over ontology or ontology has priority over language. It claims that reality and language stand apart from each other independently and constitutively. The Gelug Prāsaṅgika argues that reality is fundamentally a linguistic entity, and it denies any extra-linguistic reality. Meanwhile, in Dignāga-Dharmakīrtian semantic theory, reality can never be a linguistic entity; it must be ineffable, extra-linguistic, and non-conceptual, whereas language is always divorced from reality, operating purely at the conceptual level.

is empty of intrinsic nature. Even so, says Gelug philosophy, empty language is causally effective in doing cross-cultural philosophy, as it would establish the emptiness of the reified »non-empty« philosophical concepts in any tradition, because such concepts themselves are empty when it comes to intrinsic nature.

Empty language is causally effective in cross-cultural philosophy, since the nature of language is dependent in its origin, or relational. Empty words function because they originate dependently from causes and conditions. The causes from which the empty words dependently arise are the four elements – solidity, temperature, moisture, and motion. The conditions from which they dependently arise are intentional efforts to make utterances in the breast, the throat, the lips, the tongue, the roots of teeth, the palate, the nose, the head, etc. Thus, empty words come into existence through a symbiotic relation between the causes and the conditions. Since whatever exists performs some causal function, even empty words, in account of their existence, perform causal functions. This is similar to the causal efficacy of things like carts, pots, clothes, etc., which though empty of intrinsic reality because of being dependent in origin, are occupied with their respective functions, for example, carts for carrying wood, grass, and earth; pots for containing honey, water, and milk; and clothes for protection from cold, wind, and heat. Language functions and is causally effective in doing cross-cultural philosophy precisely on the ground that it is empty of any intrinsic character and therefore dependent in origin.

The third meaning of the Tibetan term *kun rdzob (saṃvṛti)* is nescience or ignorance *(mi shes pa, avidyā* or *ājñāna)* because it conceals *('gebs)*, and thereby *obstructs (sgrib par byed pa)* truths.[28] Truths reified by ignorance are strictly conceptual. Ontologically, such truths are, strictly speaking, non-existent. Despite the reifying agents themselves (ordinary beings) clinging to essences such as realities or truths (real selves, real entities, etc.), those essences do not constitute truths. As argued earlier, Gelug philosophers view everything as being devoid of ontological substance and essentially empty of any substantial mode of being. Gelug philosophy argues that, due to ignorance, even philo-

[28] Since the Sanskrit term *saṁvṛti* equivalent of the Tibetan term *kun rdzob* also applies to the obstruction *(sgrib pa)*, it is explained in these terms; this, however, does not mean to state that all *kun rdzob (saṁvṛti)* are obstructors. If this were true, then the Buddhist soteriological project would be a non-starter.

sophers (like other ordinary persons) intuitively reify or superimpose *(sgro 'dogs pa)* onto phenomena and persons the notion of an essential mode of existence. This ignorance compels even philosophers regardless of pedigree to unconsciously impose conceptually static identities onto ever-transient things around them and to themselves as persons (grasping and clinging to themselves as enduring subjects or substances) and to confuse these identities with ultimate truths.

On this score then, ignorance prevents the truth from being directly perceived by anyone, cross-culturally, cross-linguistically. Thus ignorance is a *concealer (saṁvṛti, kun rdzob)* of truth for every philosopher, irrespective of background.[29] In this sense ignorance *obscures (rmongs par byed)* even so-called philosophical *consciousness*, insofar as it literally obstructs philosophers from seeing the truth (the emptiness of phenomena, or emptiness of persons).

Gelug philosophy argues that reified truths constructed through the power of ignorance are deeply entrenched in human psychology and intuitions, with human conventions taking their validity for granted and people not even questioning their underlying assumptions. Hence, while many philosophers, both Eastern and Western, have taken the truth of subjectivity (consciousness, self, personal identity, etc.) for granted, Tibetan philosophers (like their Indian Mādhyamika counterparts) have vigorously challenged such assumptions and critically exposed problems behind such theories. Only in recent years have Western philosophers seriously started interrogating the assumptions behind personal identity theories (this, if I am correct, may be a fruit of the productive cross-cultural philosophy encounters between Western and Buddhist philosophers).

Even though reified truths such as self, subjectivity, consciousness, etc., may come under sustained attack in the course of cross-cultural engagement, and even though such reified truths are increasingly recognized as philosophically indefensible, the deeper phenomenological or psychological problem of »Ego« continues on unabated. Our egotistic and self-centered intuitions (our desires, attachments to our *own* philosophical views, aversion towards *opposing* views, etc.) still operate within us unchallenged. Untouched even by the rigor of philosophical investigations exposing absurdities, such egotistical intuitions operate

[29] Tsongkhapa (1984: 85). Also see Tsongkhapa (1992: 403–4); Cabezón (1992: 361) offers a similar explanation.

ceaselessly even though they are found to be logically unsustainable. The philosophical insights of non-self theory, though providing some intellectual relief from the fixation on a reified subjectivity, does very little, or nothing at all, to address »the phenomenological problem of ego,« the underlying presumptions fuelling all self-centered desires and selfish intuitions.

In my view, this is where the ultimate limit of all philosophical insights lies. I doubt that even so-called cross-cultural philosophy, however effective its method, will make any contribution to address this deeper problem. All past philosophers of all cultures seem to have failed to rise up above this dogma: ego-centric intuitions, selfish desires, and attachment to their own philosophical views. Even philosophers who have dismantled personal identity theories so elegantly (deflationary theorists, Buddhist reductionists, and so on) are no different from any other person when it comes to ego. This is where all philosophers of all cultures need to break from what I will call the »philosopher's arrogance« (the claim that philosophical insights can penetrate through all dogmas). As philosophers we need to own up to this methodological limit and clearly recognize that we reach the limit of what philosophical methods can offer.

Tibetan philosophers (following their Indian Buddhist counterparts) at least make this admission abundantly clear. For them, addressing the problems of egocentric intuitions lies beyond the scope of any philosophical project. Reason may conceptually demonstrate truth, but reason cannot reach truth. While reason may provide a method for philosophy, direct perception is the only way of comprehending truth as it is. Direct perception has the ability to reach, pierce through, and eradicate the underlying reifying tendencies of innate ignorance because it directly perceives all bodily and mental processes as essentially empty and selfless, and thus as a dependently-arisen series of momentary instants. Philosophy, on the other hand, being purely conceptual, leaves the facts of egocentric intuitions phenomenologically untouched, and so it cannot eliminate reifying tendencies. Absent elimination of this error, it is not possible to realize the selflessness of persons *(gang zag bdag med, pudgala-nairātmya)* or the selflessness of phenomena *(chos kyi bdag med, dharmanairātmya or dharmaśūnyatā)*. Yet, both are critical in order to deconstruct selfish intuitions.

The solution to the most fundamental presumption behind our ordinary intuitions, beliefs, and desires, according to Tibetan philoso-

phy, must come from the phenomenological insights of direct perception *(lhag mthong, vipāśyana):* »deep phenomenological deconstruction« through perceptual awareness of the bodily and mental states as processes, rather than discrete, unified, and enduring units. It is argued that by perceptually deconstructing our psychophysical aggregates into fleeting moments, perceiving them as coreless and empty processes, the reifying tendencies of such egocentric desires, etc., are gradually eradicated. Thus, this type of praxis takes our critical intelligence far beyond the level of conceptual operation, working from within the realm of our body, as it were.

It is clear, then, that the concept of truth in Tibetan philosophy is open to cross-cultural philosophizing. Its ontology of emptiness and its philosophy of language surrounding the two truths do not hinder an engagement with cross-cultural methods. This conclusion follows from the points that I have made, except perhaps the last point (where I have indicated the limits inherent in any philosophical method and offered phenomenological deconstruction through direct perception and meditative reflection as an alternative method).

As long as the »value« of truth in both (or »all«) philosophical traditions in dialogue with Tibetan philosophy are given equal place in this exchange, considered entirely and unconditionally in their own terms, and cross-cultural philosophy is not compromised by any lopsided method (which assumes the superiority of one over the other/s), I firmly believe that the Tibetan philosophical tradition will always learn something useful by engaging with other philosophical traditions. It may even contribute something to other traditions in this dialogue.

–Sonam Thakchoe, University of Tasmania, Australia

Reply: Truth as Truthfulness

Although in principle Western philosophers extol the virtues of dialogue – not least because their tradition begins with it – they have only infrequently employed it since Socrates died, engaging much more often in debate. This symposium has been a heartening exception for me, and augurs well for the future of a cross-cultural philosophy that is truly cross-cultural. Fellow symposiast John Maraldo put it well when he said we are *doing* cross-cultural philosophy – together (Maraldo 2014b: 185).

The four of us appear to share a similar orientation toward the non-Western texts we examine in our research and writing, namely, seeing contrasts as more illuminating overall than similarities, both with respect to learning about the other tradition and coming to see our own in a different light. Of course there will be many similarities across cultures; human beings are much too alike physiologically[1] to be altogether unintelligible to one another despite great differences in thought and behavior brought about by climate, geography, and culture. But at times we must work very hard to understand others, and thus it is almost surely better to focus on differences before seeking the near-familiar – the latter being far more deceptive if too quickly obtained.

Professors Thakchoe, Maffie, and Maraldo all note that even in the West, the concept of truth is not confined merely to propositional content, and I concur fully. In my initial paper there was not room to discuss at any length what might be said about the early Confucian sense of truth other than to note its absence in their writings with respect to propositions. My colleagues all say that in the traditions that they study there is a non-propositional idea of truth that links it to related

[1] I call these likenesses »homoversals,« which I define as »for all human beings, mentally and physically constituted as they are.« See Rosemont (1988).

ideas (concepts) such as *sincerity, authenticity, engagement, experience, context*, and related terms that are reflected in a person's behavior as much as or more than in their speech, which my colleagues tend to use the same term to describe: *truthfulness*.

I found it very striking that in their elaboration of this and related terms all three of them invoked path-imagery, which is also pervasive in early Confucian writings. (The Master said: »If at dawn you learn of and tread the way [*dao*] you can face death at dusk« [4.8].)[2] »Way making,« as Roger Ames and David Hall succinctly put it,[3] is clearly inferable from John Maraldo's paper (especially n. 9, and his description of Watsuji Tetsuro's analysis of *cheng* 誠), and fully explicit in Professor Thakchoe's account of the Tibetan tradition (»walking the truth-path«) and Maffie's explication of *ohtlatoca* (»following a path«). *Dao* 道 is hands down the most pregnant philosophical term in the classical Chinese lexicon, and has been translated a variety of ways (appropriately at times), but its most basic sense is path, or way, or The Way. Path imagery thoroughly permeates the early Confucian texts, beginning with the *Analects*, particularly 8.7: »Scholar-apprentices cannot but be strong and resolved, for they bear a heavy charge and their way *(dao)* is long. Where they take *ren* (仁) as their charge, is it not a heavy one? And where their way ends only in death, is it not indeed long?«

Relatedly, it appears that the paths described by my colleagues are not so much learned or known discursively as actively trod (the use of verbs is significant, I believe). The Chinese graph *zhi* (知) seems to function in the same way for Kongzi. Routinely translated as »knowledge« in English, it is almost never about facts addressing how the world that is known is or came to be, but rather it concerns appropriate conduct and one's feelings for it, and thus Roger Ames and I have rendered it as »realize« whenever possible in our translations. First, »realize« is epistemologically as strong as »know« logically, because just as we can't know that today is Monday if it is in fact Wednesday, we can't realize it either; justified true belief equally characterizes both words. And it is appropriate for *zhi* in another way: if »to finalize« means to make final, then »to realize« is easily interpreted as to make real, and

[2] All quotes from the *Analects* are taken from Ames, and Rosemont, Jr. (1998).

[3] In their translation and commentary of *the Dao De Jin*, beginning with Line 1 of Chapter 1 (Ames, and Hall 2003: 77) and throughout the book.

for Confucius, unless one makes real what one has learned, nothing has really been learned.[4] »Exemplary persons,« said the Master, »would be ashamed if their words outran their deeds« (14.27). And in a well-run state, normative words denoting roles will determine the actions of those who bear those roles: fathers will indeed act as fathers should, just as sons should, too, not to mention the rulers and ministers themselves (13.3). He also said »I am not sure anyone who does not make good on his word is viable as a person« (2.22). And when his student Zigong asked about exemplary persons the Master replied »They first accomplish what they are going to say, and only then say it« (2.13).

Thus we may correctly ascribe – in the sense of »truthfulness« employed by my fellow symposiasts – a concept of »truth« to the early Confucians, but it is not a *theory* of truth and it is not that from which philosophers of language and mind today are seeking theories. Rather must we look to the ordinary, and the moral, and the religious life – as my colleagues here have done – in our own culture to appreciate the Chinese on their own terms, and thus our own as well, but cast in a new (or very old) light. A medieval gentleman would pledge his honor to his bride-to-be, and she in turn would »plight her troth (truth)« to him. The Good Book tells us that »He who *does* the truth comes to the light« (John 3.21, italics added).[5] Fortunate people have »true friends.« And Vaclav Havel attempted to act always as the title of the book by and about him describes his life: *Living in Truth* (1990).

It is this sense of »true« as truthfulness that my fellow symposiasts have in mind when they mention descriptive uses of the term other than as a predicate for sentences. It is highly noteworthy that all four of the philosophical traditions sketched here appear to have much more in common with each other, with the Western past, and with the near-present than any of them have with the sense of truth dominant in Western philosophy today. Professor Maffie's quoting David Hall on the »parochial« nature of Western philosophy is entirely apt in this regard. While Hall may have been a tad strong in his remark, it is surely a healthy antidote to the universalism so definitive of the Western philosophical heritage overall, which has made it so difficult for so

[4] James Maffie hints intriguingly how differences between knowledge and beliefs might be examined cross-culturally in his remarks. My *A Reader's Companion to the Confucian Analects* has a longer account of *zhi* (Rosemont, Jr. 2012).

[5] All biblical quotations are from the *New Oxford Annotated Bible* (Coogan 2007).

many for so long to take seriously the higher reaches of thought in other cultures.

The reason for this neglect is not solely arrogance or chauvinism, however (although both are surely contributory). The concept of propositional truth in philosophical contexts is closely linked to concepts of objectivity, the reality supposedly underlying appearances,[6] even the idea of God – all-knowing, acultural, eternal – who made us in his image. As quoted by Maraldo in his paper, Linda Alcoff expresses a basic insight on this score when she said »[Truth] remains the single most important philosophical norm by which we understand our discipline.« I can live easily without »true« and »false« while interpreting, translating and writing, using »better« or »worse« instead. Yet I don't believe it is just a linguistic bad habit that tempts me to say that when I write, I want what I write (or say) to be *true*. Maraldo, too, suggests pretty much the same thing on the closing page of his paper, where he lists four claims, and wishes to know their truth or falsity (Maraldo 2014b: 185). (For me, they are all false, as I hope I am making clear in my responses herein.) His point, however, is a very simple and straightforward one that of course applies to all of us at times – as should his account of why he isn't going to lose any sleep over the issue. Descriptive truth is not irrelevant to our daily lives, but we shouldn't let that concept of truth determine our reading of non-Western texts (and a number of older Western texts as well) unless we have reasons to be confident that the authors of those texts also saw the primary function of language as the communication of factual information about the external world.[7]

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[6] A most interesting way to appreciate the ubiquity of the reality/appearances distinction in Western philosophy – which shows yet again the potential value of cross-cultural intellectual investigations – comes from Nathan Sivin, the distinguished historian of Chinese sciences, medicine, and religion (Sivin 1977: 110): »Scientific thought began in China, as elsewhere, with attempts to comprehend how it is that although individual things are constantly changing, always coming to be and perishing, nature as a coherent order not only endures but remains conformable to itself. In the West the earliest such attempts identified the unchanging reality with some basic stuff out of which all the things around us, despite their apparent diversity, are formed. In China the earliest and in the long run the most influential scientific explanations were in terms of time. They made sense of the momentary event by fitting it into the cyclical rhythms of natural process.«

[7] However initially counterintuitive, Noam Chomsky has long argued, and at length, that communication is *not* the primary function of human languages; rather is it for the

It may seem that by replacing the true/false dichotomy in my writing, translations and evaluations of philosophical views with better/worse I am embracing a fairly strong form of relativism. I do indeed believe there can be more than one good interpretation of a text, more than one good translation of it, and more than one acceptable moral code for leading a decent human life. Without such prefatory attitudes and beliefs it would be very difficult to do cross-cultural philosophy competently in my opinion. This however, makes me a pluralist, not a relativist.[8] For me there can be no *correct* interpretation (by whose criteria would it be evaluated?), but it doesn't follow that I can't distinguish better or worse interpretations, translations, or ways of life, and I don't think I am at all unusual in this regard, even with respect to my own culture. It would be extraordinarily difficult to make a case for reading Plato as an empiricist or St. Thomas Aquinas as an atheist no matter how strenuously we read their works. I can say Richmond Lattimore's translation of The *Odyssey* is very good, while believing Robert Fitzgerald's remains better.[9] My being a deontologist does not mean I cannot hold utilitarianism, or virtue or care ethics in high regard, and I can easily distinguish all four from the ethics of fascism. I can do all that and more without believing there is a be-all-and-end-all correct translation of a text, nor that there is a One True Morality I should be seeking to discover. Champions of both Mill and Kant have been arguing against (when not ignoring) each other for a century and a half now, but have made very few if any converts. If there is a universal moral code binding on everyone always, I have more confidence that it will be given to us by Vishnu in his next avatar rather than by philosophers debating each other monoculturally.

At the same time, I do not believe philosophers should shrink from struggling to ascertain *better* interpretations of the varying dimensions of the human condition or the writings of their predecessors (cross-culturally); to my mind – as a teacher no less than a practitioner – philosophers should, to put it starkly, be partisans. They should hold views which they can state with clarity, present reasons for holding

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expression of human thought. The arguments are technical, but to me at least are convincing. See Chomsky (1964: esp. 202–205), and Chomsky (1975: 56–73).

[8] The best book on these themes in recent years is David Wong's *Natural Moralities* (2009), which I commend heartily to all cross-cultural scholars.

[9] Lattimore (2007); Fitzgerald (1990).

those views, take challenges to them seriously, modify them in light of significant counter-evidence and/or argument, and not shrink from normativity. If I am at all correct on this score, what functions might efforts at objectivity, neutrality, or impartiality add to this manner of doing philosophy – except enhance self-deception and proscribe prescriptions?

I appreciate very much John Maraldo's and Jim Maffie's employing my notion of concept-clusters for doing cross-cultural philosophy and translation, especially Maraldo's noting their importance methodologically for establishing a context for translation and/or interpretation. Moreover, they put their own concept-clusters to very good effect in their expositions, from which I learned much (especially in Maffie's case, for I must admit to having been abysmally ignorant of Azteca thought before reading his paper). Equally important, to my mind, is that the cluster Maraldo iterates on behalf of Alcoff – *norm*, *context*, *efficacy*, *experience*, *engagement*, *ordinary world* – meshes pretty well with much of what he says of Watsuji Tetsuro's work, and with Professor Thakchoe's account of truth in the Tibetan tradition, as well as with Professor Maffie's and mine for the Azteca and Confucian traditions respectively.

There are other fascinating commonalities I found in the three papers, not only with respect to form and method, but with their content, too, if I have read them aright.

First, for the three traditions adumbrated, »truth« as »truthfulness« seems to suggest the idea of »living in truth,« an integrated way of thinking, feeling and acting. That is to say, truth in the non-descriptive sense linked to truthfulness seems to be linked closely to *activities* of one kind or another, as suggested above, rather than to the idea of *enlightenment* – which is what we would tend to expect at first blush – especially from Buddhist Japan and Tibet, and even more so because of the similar semantic range of the two concepts. But if I have understood them correctly, I believe that they are all saying that a person (monk, nun, lay or atheist) could »live in truth« without having experienced enlightenment.

Moreover, it appears that we may (must?) live truth simply in our daily, ordinary lives, which would certainly be the Confucian view in terms of truth as truthfulness – authenticity, sincerity, etc. »Persons can enlarge the *Dao;* The *Dao* cannot enlarge persons« (15.29). Or again in 2.10: »The Master said ›Watch their actions, observe their

motives, examine wherein they dwell content; won't you know what kind of person they are? Won't you know what kind of person they are?‹«

Again, if I am not reading too much into my colleagues' work (and I hope they will correct me if I have), it would be a most interesting endeavor to examine yet other traditions to see how frequently there is path imagery, or talk of following a way, linked neither to the sense of propositional truth, nor to the TRUTH as attendant on enlightenment, Buddhist or otherwise (Compare with Jesus: »I am the way, and the truth« [John 14.6].)

Equally if not even more interesting, is how the paths are to be trod. For Thakchoe's Tibetans, »walking the truth-path alone is most efficacious.« Maffie's Azteca seem to link the following the path with their cultural brethren; in Maraldo's account of them, Alcoff and Vattimo, in addition to Watsuji, link the path to community; and for Confucius, one walks the path first with one's family – dead as well as living – followed by community, culminating, with luck and much effort, with a religious sense of belonging to the human race, as John Donne said it so movingly: »Any man's death diminishes me, for I am involved in mankind. Therefore do not send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.«[10] This is a wholly admirable attitude and feeling to have and treasure, but is not come by easily, as seen where I quoted Kongzi earlier on scholar-apprentices. (8.7).

Finally, I believe it is important to note – encouraging my fellow symposiasts to comment – another methodological issue which I had not thought through before participating in this symposium: a fuller investigation of how and with whom one treads the way cross-culturally, and why, would almost surely have to be a collaborative venture, which is perhaps to be recommended for future work in cross-cultural philosophy more generally; a number of remarks that I have made herein are due to having several colleagues with similar concerns, but working with different traditions, sharing both with me at the same time, from all of which I have profited substantively. Perhaps the best way for solitary scholars to avoid the barrenness of seeking universal truth is to work with a number of others, attempting to reach consensus on better and worse readings of the materials with which they are

[10] Sermon XVII, on the front cover (Donne 1997).

working, within and across cultures and philosophical divides, and over a wide range of issues.

And that's true.

–Henry Rosemont, Jr., Department of Religious Studies, Brown University, USA