

# An Alternative Notion of Practice in the Promise of Japanese Philosophy

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My reflections concerning an alternative notion of practice, form part of what I call the promise of Japanese philosophy. By that phrase I wish to point us to the future, a future that must incorporate the past of a vast tradition of thought and activity. The promise of Japanese philosophy points to the contributions that this tradition has yet to make. And the promise relies on us, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, European and North American students of that multi-faceted tradition. It is we who face the challenge of demonstrating the relevance and the significance of philosophical traditions barely studied in the mainstream academic philosophy that dominates European and North American universities. I am particularly interested in contributions to contemporary discussions among Anglo-American and European philosophers who so far have not been much interested in Asian philosophical thought. I will not be speaking about just what defines this thought as Asian and as philosophical, but I do want to comment on my use of the term *Japanese philosophy* here—not once again to try to define it but rather to acknowledge its roots and sources. I will more often use the term *Sino-Japanese philosophy* to indicate the profound influence of Chinese thought on the Japanese islands, including the thought that came to Japan through the Korean

peninsula. I wish to stress here the Chinese and Korean roots of Japanese philosophy, as strong as the European influence on modern thought in Japan has been.<sup>1</sup>

My intent is to investigate possible contributions in the form of alternatives. My ultimate aim is to clarify a number of classical oppositions in mainstream philosophical traditions and show how Sino-Japanese philosophy can offer valuable alternatives. I have in mind alternatives to traditional oppositions that define many problems of interest to mainstream philosophers in Europe and the Americas. These oppositions include:

theory and practice  
 autonomy and dependence, or agency and passivity  
 fact and value, or descriptive and normative  
 experience and language  
 individual and communal  
 self and other  
 self and world, or mind and world  
 passive and active resistance as responses to violence or attack  
 culture and nature  
 mind and matter, or consciousness and brain.

Each of the alternatives deserves a chapter of its own, with another chapter explaining the way that they are intertwined. That is the larger project. But here I will have time to present only part of one of them. Later I will return to the question of how alternatives might work—how they can offer a different way of dealing with classical oppositions and what exactly their promise is.

#### TOWARD AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE OPPOSITION BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

The traditional tension between theory and practice is an area where Sino-Japanese philosophy provides a revealing alternative. Contemporary thought understands practice as divided from a goal that is

1. For further reflections on the notion of Japanese Philosophy, see MARALDO 2004.

the point of an activity or action, the real reason for doing something. Theory on the other hand is thought to be removed from reality and, if value-free, then unable to tell us how things should be. Philosophy in the West counts for the most part as a theoretical discipline. Indeed the mainstream tradition has long been determined by the Greek distinction between the theoretical or contemplative life, and the life of action concerned with practical matters of everyday living. Although the legacy of Socrates cared about how to live a good life as much as how to think rationally, the predominant tendency even in Socrates was first to think through and test the consistency of one's views, and only then to live accordingly. "Think first, then act," has been the pervading principle. *Know-how*, knowing how to do something, has taken second place to *knowing that* something is the case, because philosophy seeks truth and truth, according to the tradition, is instantiated in propositions, not in actions.

To be sure, today we see a lot of emphasis on the applications of philosophical discourse, especially in relatively new subfields such as applied ethics and practical philosophy.<sup>2</sup> Social and political philosophers increasingly see their job as the application, and not only the analysis, of principles and ideas. Yet there is a fundamental difference between the ideas of applied philosophy and notions that we find in several East-Asian philosophical traditions— notions of knowing by way of practice. Let me try to clarify this difference.

To apply some principle or technique means that we already have a clearly defined principle or theory at our disposal. We might apply the utilitarian principle of the greatest good for the greatest number to a particular way of doing business, for example; or we might apply game theory to particular studies of the kind of choices people make. In these cases, the general theoretical idea comes first, which afterwards can be developed into a particular practice or way of doing something. Of course

2. A new MA program in "Practical Philosophy and Applied Ethics" at my former institution, the University of North Florida, "seeks to foster application of ethical and philosophical knowledge to concerns in social, political, economic, and cultural life. The primary objective is to offer practically oriented but philosophically grounded expertise in ethics and normative theory generally." <[www.unf.edu/coas/philosophy/graduate.html](http://www.unf.edu/coas/philosophy/graduate.html)>. Here again we see the focus on application.

the theoretical idea may be discovered by trial and error, or by some activity, but its validity is usually considered independent of its discovery and much more general than the particular process that revealed it. So the first thing we can say tells us what practice in the alternative mode is not: *Practicing does not mean applying previously learned knowledge, that is, a prior theory or principle; it is not a matter of application at all.* To define practice more positively we need to look at some examples.

Let us suppose that one wants to know how to act properly in a particular kind of situation. A contrast between Socrates' method and that of Confucius seems to illustrate two different ways to teach and learn. In Socrates' dialogue with Euthyphro the issue is how to act in a manner that exemplifies *hosion*. *Hosion* is often translated as *piety*, but I think it is very close to what Confucius meant by *li* (禮), which we may call *ritual propriety*. Socrates questions Euthyphro who thinks it is pious or righteous to prosecute his own father for causing the death of a servant. Socrates tests the consistency of the definitions of *hosion* that Euthyphro offers, and exposes the contradictions and ambiguities in his understanding. This dialogue typifies the Socratic *elenchus* or cross-examination in a step-by-step, logical progression. This method does not always lead to a definite conclusion, but is nevertheless considered valuable for the method it teaches.

The *Analects* of Confucius, on the other hand, contain little discursive, logical progression but much exemplification. Confucius uses language more as indication than as a tool of discursive reasoning. He teaches by pointing out examples of actions that one can emulate, not by leading one through a series of propositions to arrive at the right definition. Recall the story about a man who thinks it upright (直) to report his father to the authorities for having stolen a sheep. Confucius replies that in his part of the country one would act differently, for it is upright to cover up for one's father (*Analects* 13:18). The point I want to make has nothing to do with what sounds like ethical relativism ("in our part of the country as opposed to yours"), or with some ideal of filial piety overriding legal justification. Rather, I would like us to notice the relative lack of discourse in this exchange. Confucius does not discursively examine a set of attempted definitions of uprightness to test their validity; he merely points out an example of how one acts rightly. One is to learn

proper action by doing, not by testing the consistency of one's thinking and then applying it.

Does the episode in the *Analects* exemplify the alternative kind of practice whereas the Platonic dialogue does not? I think that we can find something of the alternative sense of practice in both texts, though only in part and with priorities that differ from it. The discursive reasoning that Socrates leads us through actually takes practice, repeated practice, especially for students new to this form of thinking. To be able to think in this way one must do more than read through the dialogue a single time; rather one must enact discursive reasoning in a number of different situations. *How to do that* is what Socrates is trying to teach us: how to think and subsequently how to act accordingly. Here the priority remains: right thinking first, then right action; but right thinking is also a matter of practice.

To understand Confucius, on the other hand, one must do more than look at a particular example of upright action in one episode recorded in the *Analects*. One must rather look at the context of many such episodes. Only by seeing what Confucius points out repeatedly can one begin to live the lesson he wants to teach, to become an example oneself. There the priority is: see (that is, understand) over and over again, and right action follows of itself. This "seeing" is akin to the original meaning of the Greek θεωρεῖν. A kind of theory is at work in Confucian examples too, though not I think a theory that is first articulated in language and then applied to actions. In summary, if Socratic thinking and Confucian seeing both involve practice, this practice arises not after a theory is articulated but rather in the course of a theorizing or seeing, during an exercise in reasoning or in exemplifying. The thinking and seeing themselves are forms of acting or doing.

This reflection offers a step towards a more positive description of the alternative notion of practice. We can note three things so far: *Practice is a matter of training that involves attention and repetition; it is a matter of getting good at something, of performing well; and it presents thinking and seeing as part of doing, of action.*

What about the normative dimension? What about the question of the value, the goodness or the evil, of what one is doing? After all, one might get good at abusing others or at murdering them. It seems one

can practice evil as well as good. To put it this way however implies that we have a prior standard of good and evil and then judge a particular practice as more or less good. By putting it this way, we fall back into the same old oppositions—between theory as principle and practice as application, and between normative and descriptive. I will have to defer an answer to this important question on this occasion; it will require a separate discussion. For now we can indicate how virtuous behavior entails practice.

Learning by doing is actually at work in Aristotle's notion of virtue or *aretē*. One learns what the virtue of courage is, for example, by practicing courage, by being courageous. When judged by the strictures of logical discourse this sort of reasoning appears circular. To know what courage is, one has to practice courage. But how does one tell whether it is courage that she is practicing? How could she tell the difference between a courageous action and a cowardly or a rash one? It seems that she must already know what courage is. This impasse is broken, however, when we see the issue from a different perspective. Courage, or any virtue for that matter, is not the sort of thing that can be grasped by a general definition that is subsequently applied. Whatever general ideas one has about courage, for example, must be tested by actions, by repeated actions that let one get the hang of the thing and perform it excellently, almost by second nature. For Aristotle, to be sure, there is a measure to tell one is practicing courage rather than cowardice or foolhardiness. But this measure, the "golden mean" between the extremes of excess and deficiency, is again something that must be learned or embodied in concrete situations. The golden mean is not first defined discursively and then applied to particular situations. Rather, one learns the virtue of courage as a particular disposition (*hexis*) by experiencing a range of actions and attitudes and finding the mean.<sup>3</sup> I think that Aristotle's account of the virtues pro-

3. Contrary to my interpretation one might object that determining the golden mean for Aristotle requires more than learning through practicing different actions; it requires practical reason. Consider Richard Kraut's interpretation:

The intermediate point that the good person tries to find is "determined by *logos* (reason, account) and in the way that the person of practical reason would determine it" (1107a, 1-2). To say that such a person 'sees' what to do is simply a way of registering the point that the good person's reasoning does

vides an early Greek example of the kind of practice I am talking about, but perhaps I was able to understand it this way only from a perspective I happened to gain from Japanese philosophy.

Often this perspective can help us better understand a mainstream European text or author. Consider the interpretation of Aristotle that says a virtue is a habit that allows one to achieve his or her purpose, so that we need an account of what the human purpose is in order to define human virtues. Suppose we say, following Aristotle, that the purpose or goal (*telos*) of humans is to achieve *eudaimonia*, and that a moral virtue like courage will help us achieve this state. We then know more or less what is courageous and what is not by the measure of achieved *eudaimonia*. Yet we still must have an experiential basis for telling whether this *eudaimonia* is present—all the more so if *eudaimonia* means more than a fleeting feeling of happiness. Like the virtues (*aretē*) themselves, *eudaimonia* cannot be defined propositionally or discursively; it must be lived, and it is lived through practices.

This leads to a fourth characteristic of the alternative notion of practice: *practice defines an activity that is an end in itself, not a means to an end different in kind from the activity*. The notions of the practical and the theoretical stance are fairly complex in Plato and Aristotle,<sup>4</sup> but in

succeed in discovering what is best in each situation. He is “as it were a standard and measure” in the sense that his views should be regarded as authoritative by other members of the community. A standard or measure is something that settles disputes; and because good people are so skilled at discovering the mean in difficult cases, their advice must be sought and heeded. (Kraut, Richard, “Aristotle’s Ethics,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2008 Edition, Edward N. Zalta, ed., URL: <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/aristotle-ethics/>>)

Yet if determining the mean requires practical reason, we may note that the exercise of practical reason is also a practice, at which the good person excels and thus serves as a standard, a person remarkably similar to the Confucian exemplary person 君子. Aristotle appeals to *logos* not only as a prior standard to be applied but as a measure itself learned through practical reasoning: the mean is “determined by logos and in the way that the person of practical reason would determine it.”

4. Richard Parry details the complexity of the Greek notions of theory and practice in the context of the differences between *epistēmē* and *technē*. “The relation, then, between *epistēmē* and *technē* in ancient philosophy offers an interesting contrast with our own notions about theory (pure knowledge) and (experience-based) practice.”

general for Plato practice signifies an activity that results in something separate from the activity itself. Aristotle, on the other hand, clearly recognizes that there is a kind of practice, namely *praxis*, which unlike *poiesis* does not result in a product (*ergon*) separate from the activity, and virtue is the disposition to this kind of action. But Aristotle does demand that both *praxis* and *poiesis* be based on a theoretical account, a *logos*, that is separate from the doing or the making and that informs and guides them.

We can now say more precisely what I said before: the alternative notion of practice presents thinking and seeing as part of doing, of action, but the thinking or seeing is not a separable part as in Aristotle. There is no separate articulated account that is essential to inform or guide the activ-

Plato seems more clearly to identify the practical side with activities that produce things different from the activity itself. In several dialogues, Plato implies “there is a distinction between theoretical and practical *technai*.” Parry notes that in several dialogues

...the *ergon* of a craft [*technē*] is its goal, the goal is frequently identified with a result separate from the activity of the craft... Practical *technē* brings into existence products separate from the *technē* itself, while theoretical *technē* does not.

For Aristotle the issue is more complex. There is a theoretical side to *technē* in that it is based on *logos*: “Aristotle refers to *technē* or craft as itself also *epistēmē* or knowledge because it is a practice grounded in an ‘account’— something involving theoretical understanding.” Two distinctions are clearer: first, that between practical thinking (*praktikē dianoia*), where “we attain truth and falsity with respect to action,” and theoretical thinking (*theōrētikē dianoia*) that “attains truth and falsity”; and secondly, especially in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, between two kinds of activity: making something (*poiēton*) or an activity that is a means to an end, and action (*praktikon*) that is an end in itself. Parry writes:

Presumably Aristotle means to distinguish between activity, whose end is in itself, and making, whose end is a product separate from the activity of making. When someone plays the flute, e.g., typically there is no further product of playing; playing the flute is an end in itself.

Similarly, in the case of virtue, the activity itself is the end; there is no product separate from the virtuous activity. To these distinctions is added one closer to the classical division between theory and practice: In the *Posterior Analytics*,

Scientific [or theoretical] knowledge concerns itself with the world of necessary truths, which stands apart from the world of everyday contingencies, the province of craft [*technē*]. (“Episteme and Techne,” The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, *ut supra*, URL: <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/episteme-techne/>>)



ity. One learns by doing and absorbs the learning, as it were, so that the guidance is internal to the activity. The guiding reason is found not in a separate linguistic account or *logos* but in the 道理 or 筋道 of the activity: the thread or pattern that one learns by taking the path. *Practice in the alternative meaning is theoretical in the sense that it is a seeing as well as a doing, which means that practice embodies both its knowledge or know-how and its goal.*<sup>5</sup> Again, in the alternative view, thinking and seeing themselves approximate forms of practice. (The philosopher who for me has best articulated thinking as a practice is Martin Heidegger. His essay, *Was ist das—die Philosophie?*, proceeds to answer the question not with a definition or series of propositions but by leading the reader down a path, the path he describes as thinking.)

To be sure, some important questions are left unanswered here. What defines a path or distinguishes one activity from others? How is one to tell the right way from deviant ways? These are questions of criteria, and once again suggest the normative issue and the task of demonstrating an alternative to the opposition between normative and descriptive. Here I would only note that the alternative notion of practice requires an alteration in our notions of criteria and testing. The usual meaning of criterion is an outside, ideally objective measure of the rightness, wrongness, or appropriateness of something. The alternative sense of measure would need to be generated on the inside as it were, from out of the activity itself.

#### SOME EXAMPLES OF THE ALTERNATIVE NOTION OF PRACTICE

Where do we find the alternative notion of practice in Japanese philosophers? Certainly it is evident in Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*, in fascicles such as the *Bendōwa* that speaks of practice as the manifestation of realization or enlightenment, and of practice as beginningless and realization

5. It would be premature to claim that such practice is self-corrective. Certainly it is not self-corrective in the sense that some machines with “self-guidance” systems are; they respond to a prior computer program.

as endless. Dōgen's sense of practice as manifestation explicitly subverts the difference between means and end, just as his examples implicitly undermine the classical Western difference between mind and body. On the one hand, because practice takes bodily form, engages the practitioner bodily and disengages discursive thought, it does not fall into the category of mental activity as opposed to physical behavior. On the other hand, because practice requires acute attention it does not fall onto the opposite side of body in the classical Cartesian distinction. Thus we can add to our list of features of the alternative notion: *practice engages the practitioner bodily as well as mentally, or better: it engages the practitioner as a whole*. Japanese philosophers like Nishitani Keiji and Yuasa Yasuo have expanded upon this aspect of practice. Regarding the necessity of the bodily aspect, however, we might raise a further question.

Earlier I remarked that the discursive reasoning and right thinking that Socrates would teach us approximate practice in the alternative sense; discursive reasoning takes practice and is meant to be enacted in a number of different situations. That enactment might be considered a purely mental exercise, however, so where is the bodily engagement there? Since Socrates wants us to act *upon* the reasoning, that is, to act *after* it is performed and *in accordance with* it, many people would regard the performance of reasoning as purely mental. Think and see first, then take action. This priority explains why I implied that the exercise of discursive reasoning approximates but does not quite embody the alternative sense of practice. This aspect of practice may also give us a hint as to why discursive reasoning seems lacking in texts like Dōgen's. Dōgen practiced thinking and composing essays as well as contemplating koans and “just sitting” or *shikantaza*. There may be a “logic” to his essays but they do not exemplify a step-by-step discursive argument. Might it be that his practice of writing and lecturing were exercises in embodied attention, whereas discursive reasoning is practiced and taught as a disengagement with the body?

Turning now to another place where the alternative notion is implied, we can mention Nishida Kitarō's philosophy. Recall Nishida's “action-oriented intuition” (行為的直観), and his *From the Acting to the Seeing* (働くものから見るものへ). Both expressions reverse the usual sequence of “think and understand first, then act.” Although the essays in *From the Acting*

*to the Seeing* are primarily about a theory of consciousness, the title suggests that seeing or understanding proceeds from acting. The essays that develop the notion of 行為の直観 propose a reciprocity between action and intuition, so that we could also speak of “intuition-oriented action” or simply of “action-intuition.” Nishida’s preferred term suggests that acting and seeing are not only connected but that seeing or understanding is performative and productive. (Thus the term might also be translated as “performative intuition.”) Seeing is not a passive taking-in of objects, and acting is not acting on things, or merely producing things outside oneself.

Consider the difference between Nishida’s artistic creativity as a model of action-oriented intuition, and Aristotle’s *poiesis*. As we have seen, Aristotle distinguishes making something (*poiēton*) from action (*praktikon*). The latter activity constitutes an end in itself, whereas the end of making “is a product separate from the activity of making.”<sup>6</sup> Both virtuous acting and making things well are guided by the proper disposition (*hexis*), and both involve an account or *logos* of the acting or making, so that Aristotle, unlike Nishida, also emphasizes the rational side of these forms of acting: practical reasoning is based on the accounts *technē* and *aretē* can give. Nishida on the other hand emphasized the bodily, historical, and “intuitive” nature of the activity. Nishida does not distinguish sharply between *poiesis* and *praxis* in Aristotle’s sense, that is, between an activity that produces objects separate from the activity of making them, on the one hand, and an activity that is an end in itself. Nor does he distinguish sharply between the activity itself and an account of it, a *logos* that guides practical reasoning.

Both distinctions are undercut, or should we say grounded, in a more fundamental attunement, an action-oriented intuition. One model of this performative intuition is artistic creation, which is of course productive, but we would misunderstand it if we saw the produced work as an end separate from the activity itself. What is “produced,” to use that term, is the artist herself, as the embodiment of the activity, as well as the historical world as its inseparable context. The twentieth-century master of calligraphy, Morita Shiryū, influenced no doubt by Nishida,

6. Parry, Richard, *loc. cit.*, note 4 above.

spoke of the calligrapher and her brush as creating one another, making each being what it actively is in a virtually endless web of relationships called the world (MORITA 1970, 124–5). Again, in contrast to Aristotle, the production or rather creation would be misunderstood if we saw it as an application of practical reasoning.

To be sure, there is also an epistemological side to Nishida's action-oriented intuition. The kind of knowing or *epistēmē* that is involved in this intuition is a coming to know by way of interacting with things. What comes to be known is not a world outside oneself. With echoes of Wang Yangming's "unity of knowledge and action" (知行合一), Nishida implies that knowledge entails action; it does not proceed merely from a mental activity of forming beliefs about the world and then mentally confirming or disconfirming them, which are basically theoretical activities. In Nishida there is indeed a theory side, the side of seeing called "intuition" 直観, but unlike the usual connotation of the word, this action-oriented intuition is not a grasp that takes in every relevant thing at once<sup>7</sup>; rather, it is a process and achievement of the embodied self. Using the modern meanings of the words, there is also an "objective" side, or better said, a contra-subjective side to action-oriented intuition: it requires a displacement of the self-centered self or self-conscious self that would act *upon* things rather than interact with them.

To use the calligrapher Morita's example, the person gives herself up in the interaction with the brush, ink, paper, and environment. The calligrapher comes to know a world partially of her own making, and comes to know herself as progressively made by that world. If there is a process of reasoning here is it a give and take, a back and forth, between self and other, rather than an application of an account of the goal. Nishida's action-oriented intuition exemplifies the alternative sense of practice in which neither the goal nor the accounting is a separate thing from the activity itself.

We would limit the field too much, however, if we were to look for the alternative notion of practice only in Buddhist writers or Japanese philosophers inspired by Buddhism. Confucian thinkers both in China

7. CESTARI 1998, 194, referring to 『西田幾多郎全集』 [Complete works of Nishida Kitarō] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2nd edition, 1965–1966), 4: 565–6.

and in Japan also exhibited this notion of practice, in at least some of its features. One example from Japan is the thought of Ogyū Sorai. John Tucker notes that

Sorai emphasized practice as a way to learn, one that was more effective than book learning and the study of texts. In effect, what he advocated was learning how to do something rather than learning how to understand. Or, more positively, he believed that understanding was physical, with the ability to practice something as evidence of one's understanding of it.

This seems to go beyond even Zhu Xi, who “affirmed the value of theoretical study through book learning, but ultimately thought that had to be expressed in the practical world.”<sup>8</sup> An example from China is the thought of Wang Yangming, the founder of the other major school of Neo-Confucianism. It would be worthwhile to explore Wang Yangming's idea of “forming one body with the universe and all things,” as well as his idea of unifying knowledge and action, as sources for understanding practice in an alternative sense.

To sum up the alternative notion of practice, I will attempt a definition that rephrases the features I have mentioned. *By practice I mean action done over and over again, performed for its own sake but with a learning curve toward improvement, with the whole person, “body and soul,” engaged; that is, with attentive seeing or know-how built into the action.* I use the word “action” instead of “activity,” because action implies bodily activity. No doubt this long definition will need to be refined. For now I want to reiterate that I have found this sense of practice most pronounced and best articulated in Sino-Japanese philosophies, although by no means is it totally absent in traditional European philosophy. Indeed in classical Greek philosophy we can also find an alternative to the theory-practice opposition<sup>9</sup> that shares some features of my alternative notion. Again,

8. Personal communication from John Tucker, 10 October 2008. See also John Tucker, “Japanese Confucian Philosophy,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2008 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/japanese-confucian/>>

9. Richard Parry presents the difference and the overlap between *epistēmē* and *technē* as an alternative to the modern difference between theory and practice:

however, the Greek alternative insists on a rational account separate from the practice and so differs from the internal feedback, if you will, of the Sino-Japanese alternative.

#### THE FUNCTION OF ALTERNATIVES

As you may have guessed, this alternative to the opposition between practice and theory overlaps in part with alternatives to the oppositions *mind versus body*, *normative versus descriptive*, and *agency versus passivity*. These connections will have to be explicated on a different occasion. I do, however, want to say something about the whole notion of alternative.

What are my alternatives supposed to do? What is their function, their power or promise, their limits or bounds? To give a very brief and insufficient answer, I have in mind a kind of alternative that is not necessarily a replacement or substitution, an *Ersatz* for an opposition. Nor do I seek another way to dissolve the opposition by reducing one side to the other—theory to practice, for example. Finally, the kind of alternative I propose does not forge the two sides of an opposition together into an overarching synthesis, or combine parts of each side to form a new notion. My aim is rather threefold: to expose unnoticed assumptions in traditional oppositions; to reveal the underlying basis of a tension, or the

*Epistēmē* is the Greek word most often translated as knowledge, while *technē* is translated as either craft or art. These translations, however, may inappropriately harbor some of our contemporary assumptions about the relation between theory (the domain of ‘knowledge’) and practice (the concern of ‘craft’ or ‘art’). Outside of modern science, there is sometimes skepticism about the relevance of theory to practice because it is thought that theory is conducted at so great a remove from reality, the province of practice, that it can lose touch with it. In fact, at the level of practice, concrete experience might be all we need. And within science, theory strives for a value-free view of reality. As a consequence, scientific theory cannot tell us how things should be—the realm of ‘art’ or ‘craft.’ So we must turn elsewhere for answers to the profound, but still practical, questions about how we should live our lives. However, some of the features of this contemporary distinction between theory and practice are not found in the relation between *epistēmē* and *technē*. (*loc. cit.*)

context that makes the distinction possible; and to accommodate rather than discard the reasons behind the opposition.

My hope is ultimately to transform the arena in which philosophy is practiced. In the case of practice, the potential of the alternative is to heal the divide between theory and practice and make philosophy, traditionally a very theoretical discipline, more relevant to everyday life in society. I fear that I have scarcely approached this ambitious aim in these pages, but I think of it as a goal that must be pursued within the practice of philosophizing together.

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