

## BOOK REVIEW

### **Pietro Gori & Lorenzo Serini (Eds.). *Practices of Truth in Philosophy: Historical and Comparative Perspectives***

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The true conception of truth dies when one perceives it as only an ancient theory or mere construction of theories without reflecting on human conditions. It also dies when it is only formulated on the complexity of thought systems that are without human activity. Today, the world is more towards certain metaphysical objects that have connections with our intellectual well-being rather than human practices. People are drafting concepts based on ideas that have no relation to the practice. It is lamentable to say that practice is given no place or is regarded as a latter method, but discovering the concept is viewed as vital. Unfortunately, the word 'philosophy' has taken a different shift due to the Western influence of rationalism and intellectualism that has no connection to life. Some people construct philosophical notions without relating them to practice. To them, philosophy is merely a means of some complicated ideas of construction with no relevance to the practice of life. This is why many people limit philosophical concepts to mental capacities rather than exercising them further. This is because, on the other hand, 'truth' is misunderstood and misconstrued in our society, sometimes with reasonable arguments that do not need to be turned into practice. Whereas, the two words 'philosophy' and 'truth' are sisters, on the one hand, and inseparably tied to practice to improve human conditions, on the other hand.

The book *Practices of Truth in Philosophy: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, edited by Pietro Gori and Lorenzo Serini, is the response to today's illusions about the philosophy of truth that sketches a different picture of the practice of truth in philosophy. This volume's core argument is that truth should be seen as a matter of practice rather than theory. The editors of this collection highlight two important challenges in the history of philosophy and modern philosophical discussions that have constrained the philosophy of truth to theoretical issues. Thus, the vital objective of this contribution is not to be constrained to academic approaches to truth, but rather to be practical (p. 1).

This volume consists of fifteen chapters, including a very well-written introduction. The book is divided into themes, namely, exercising philosophical beliefs, exploring the philosophical traditions for practicing the truth in Western and Eastern classical traditions, examining the non-theoretical approaches to the value of truth in modern and contemporary scholarships, and holistically blending the truth of

practice in different ways geographically, in Chinese, African, and Indian Philosophy of truth and so on (p. 2). The book aims to offer philosophical insights that connect truth and practice (p. 3).

Truth is the subject matter to practice is the argument of the first chapter, and Duncan Pritchard addresses the question of what it would imply for the truth to be a fundamental value (p. 9), discussing Nietzsche and Wittgenstein's arguments declaring that someone who cares about the truth, ought to stimulate this interest towards human condition (p. 19). In the next chapter, Richard Bett discusses the ancient Greeks Skeptics' practice that philosophy is not just to think about but rather something to live about (p. 24). His whole argument revolves around the 'livability' of philosophy, examining the thoughts of Pyrrhonian Sextus Empiricus and the Academic skeptic Carneades. Like Bett, Marta Faustino also approves of philosophy as not merely a set of theories but rather a way of life, a lived practice, and an art of living (p. 42). Observing the history of Cynics, Faustino notes that, like Socrates, Cynics devoted themselves to a philosophical way of life by putting their beliefs into practice (p. 44). However, unlike other ancient philosophers, Socrates and Cynics had a street ministry depending on oral communication rather than writing, shocking people's human conditions and embodying truth through visible manifestation. Faustino maintains that the only difference between them was that rather than intellectual reasoning or questioning, Cynics used their acts to truly exhibit the philosophy of life by dealing with people's false ideas (p. 45). Faustino's further discussion continues with Michel Foucault's conception of Cynicism, in the context of *parrhesia* to show the Cynics' natural way of truth manifest visibility. The whole approach further reveals that the aim of Cynics was not to change one's life in particular, but rather through their radical living to transform the world as a whole (p. 53). To put it in this way, Cynics were not particularly towards changing anyone in specific, but rather their approach was holistic.

Like Faustino, Mercedes Valmisa Oviedo also argues that true knowledge is the embodiment of what the Zhuangists reflect "to be fitting behavior," not a predetermined set of acts that are generally agreed to be beneficial (the case of the Mohists); it is the mindset that refuses to accept anything as true, relativizes what oneself and others take for granted, continually assesses one's opinions, convictions, and values against opposing viewpoints, switches between them without fully embracing or committing to any of them, and responds to circumstances adaptively (p. 73). Oviedo's work provides much more clarity, bringing views of Mohists' and Zhuangists' framework in the anti-dogmatic, sociopolitical, and ethical pluralistic perspectives (p. 75).

The remaining chapters delve further into the relationship between truth and practice in philosophy, such as Lorenzo Serini's view of skepticism as a truth-seeking practice in the Pyrrhonists and Denis Diderot's perspective on analytic and regulative epistemology. The book focuses further on Sandra Shapshay's argument opposing the European tradition's view of truth as the first and foremost theory; Shapshay's conviction incorporates Schopenhauer's insight into this chapter, which emphasizes attaining the truth through practice. In investigating the practice of beauty and compassion in Schopenhauer's conception of truth, Shapshay concludes that one can find these two practices of beauty and compassion in stepping out of self-desires

(p. 138). The study further advances the philosophy of life that directly impacts our whole life rather than particular areas of life. Yasemin Sari's work focuses on Hannah Arendt and transformative politics is the best in this subject. Sari's point of view maintains Hannah Arendt's understanding of truth as the transforming aspect of participation, which is a vital political paradigm. Sari contends that transformative politics entails not just the transformation of the world, but also being participants in the world to manifest their agency in this phenomenon (p. 200). In the latter chapters, the practice of truth continues, ending with another important practice of truth in art, and humanities. Sami Pihlström approaches the conception of pragmatism in art and humanities (p. 277) in William James' pragmatist tradition. Pihlström's whole thesis maintains that this conception of pragmatism should not be reduced to the textbook or framed in classical truth theories and correspondence theories; rather, it must be rich and multifaceted enough to function at many levels (p. 291). The whole point of this study in art and humanities is to take literature as practice-based truth rather than just the abstraction of thoughts or elucidation.

The book is very well drafted and very insightful, making it easy to understand the core argument of the whole book. There is hardly any area that has not been explored or investigated, even human activity in finding the truth in the political arena, art, and humanities, which are all geographically covered quite well. The chapter on Cynicism has provided considerable truth embodied through the cynics' way of life to improve human conditions, and much has been demonstrated in their shocking lifestyle. For instance, their homeless state, begging, masturbating, defecating, and urinating are all very well-crafted, showing their lives in the public sphere (p. 46). However, Cynics' conception of philosophy about marriage has not been reflected even though this study has emphasized Cynics' connection with society's well-being to transform the world to improve the human condition. However, there are books that have sketched Cynics' perspective from the marriage conception of philosophy. For instance, William D. Desmond (*Cynics (Ancient Philosophies)*: Routledge, 2008) has argued that Cynics oppose the issue of marriage. This book might have supplied a bit more to draw out Cynics' opposition to marriage and connect this with their truth and practice. The second is nothing has been offered from the iconic embodiment of philosophy, although the last chapter, *The Pragmatic Conception of Truth and the Practices of Inquiry in the Arts and Humanities* of this study emphasized scholarship in art and humanities as the practice of living a life. However, the argument here is to explore and investigate visible truths not only in symbols, rituals, and ceremonies alone, as one cannot restrict them. The philosophy of life invites us to reflect on this truth visibility in every reality on this earth, and here, the stance needs to be to reflect on every reality that embodies truth. In this way, a chapter could be drafted to discover these truths. The third is that nothing is offered from the work of Sigmund Freud, although well-known philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Michel Foucault, and Frantz Fanon's practice of truth are highly regarded (which is good) to produce new truths. For instance, the thirteenth chapter (in Daniele Lorenzini's case) of the book investigating Nietzsche, Foucault, and Fanon's writings on psychiatry, specifically in

the genealogical practice of truth to produce new truths is exceptional, but nothing is offered from Freud's perspective of generating this new truth.

Last but not least, one area that still needs to be investigated in practicing the truth is the philosophy of dreams in our everyday life. The fourteenth chapter of Ege Selin Islekel's study investigates the life of mothers' movements, indicating that when they gathered, they shared everything, including their dreams and nightmares (p. 260). It means that these dreams and nightmares had something to do with the mothers' movement in the everyday life of philosophy. Again, Freud's framework of 'The Interpretation of Dreams' (1913) could have been borrowed from this perspective to enrich this whole phenomenon and to understand its connection with the philosophy of truth practicing.

Despite this fact, the book is a great work for contemporary philosophers to construct thoughts based on practicing truth to improve human conditions rather than merely theoretical compulsions. This is the best work so far to demonstrate practices of truth in philosophy from historical and comparative perspectives.

## REFERENCES

- Desmond, William D. 2008. *Cynics: Ancient philosophies*. London: Routledge.  
Freud, Sigmund. 1913. *The interpretation of dreams*. New York: Macmillan.

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