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*This is the my first attempt writing on Dōgen and his Zen. It was written in the four months

prior to my presentation of it at the University of Tokyo in December 2012. It has a number of

faults, e.g., it fails to properly handle Dōgen's views on the non-duality of practice and

enlightenment, and the non-duality of enlightenment and delusion, among other problems.

However, I still think the treatment of ineffability and the conceptladenness of enlightenment is

onto something, though the understanding of enlightenment herein is far too concerned with

experience. I try to correct for some of these mistakes in later papers tentatively titled, "The Role

of Compassion in Actualizing Dōgen's Zen" and in a paper tentatively titled "Two Dogmas of

Zen Buddhism." This paper is still a draft and I'd be grateful for any feedback, particularly

critical feedback. Please send any to the above email address. Thank you! 7.18.16

The Buddha Still Rides a Bike:
Wittgenstein, Dōgen, and the Entanglement of Language and Enlightenment[1]

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[1] Dōgen writes:

> My late master, old buddha, said, "Gourd vines entangle with gourd vines."
> This teaching has never been seen or heard in the various directions of past and present. My late master alone spoke it. "Gourd vines entangle with gourd vines" means that buddha ancestors master buddha ancestors; buddha ancestors merge with buddha ancestors in realization. This is transmitting mind by mind (Dōgen 1985, 169, Kattō 2).

Regarding Dōgen's use of kattō (entangled vines), Hee-Jin Kim writes:

> Vine (kattō) is another word which is usually given pejorative connotations as an expression of "entanglement," be it of passions and desires, of words and letters, or of theories and interpretations. Dōgen, however, adopts this image as descriptive of the type of communicative relationship between master and disciple which leads to ever greater discovery and understanding of the Dharma, thereby upgrading the status of the metaphor to the level of Dharma itself. …
> …Dōgen suggests that the very texture of the Buddha-dharma is constituted of passions and desires, conflicts and antitheses; and that reason does not exist by freeing itself from paradox any more than paradox can exist independently of the power of reason. Truth lies rather in the mysterious interpenetration of reason and paradox. (Kim 1985, 71-72).

Similarly, as we will see, language and enlightenment are entangled.

Introduction

How should we view the relationship between language and Buddhist enlightenment? Must language be transcended? Is enlightenment experience necessarily ineffable? The purpose of this paper is to argue that language and enlightenment are intimately entwined. To show this we will look at potential problems with a number of dualisms seemingly at the heart of (Mahāyāna) Buddhism. These problems become apparent when applying Ludwig Wittgenstein's and Hilary Putnam's views on the nature of, and the relationship between, mind, language and reality. A central problem concerns what seems to be the received Buddhist view of the relationship between language and enlightenment, language and silence. I will argue that the dualism of language and silence collapses under Wittgensteinian and Putnamian considerations. Further, we will sketch a picture of Eihei Dōgen's Zen in which his understanding of the ineffable and language is one that does not engender the dualism of language and silence; moreover, within Dōgen's philosophy, we witness the collapse of several other dualisms.

This paper breaks down into three parts. In Part One, I set up the basics of Buddhist soteriology before explicating three of Buddhism's central dualisms. Those are the dualisms of delusion and enlightenment; words and silence, i.e., the dualism of being able to describe some aspects of reality and needing to remain silent about the ineffable aspects; and, finally, the dualism of conventional and ultimate truth, i.e., the dualism of the conventional world and the world of enlightenment. In the last section of Part One, I make explicit the ways in which these three dualism are interdependent, such that if one is problematic, they all are.

In Part Two, I begin laying out the problems for the dualism of words and silence by distinguishing between three different types of ineffability. An important part of the argument is that only one of those three types creates the dualism of words and silence. Next, I appeal to implications of Wittgenstein's and Putnam's views on mind, language, and reality to argue that in enlightenment experience, there cannot be the kind of ineffability that engenders the dualism of words and silence. In appealing to Wittgenstein's and Putnam's views, I do not defend them so much as explain them. To this extent, the paper is conditional on the soundness of their views.

In Part Three, I sketch a reading of Dōgen in which language is central to Buddhist practice and enlightenment. Because of the intimacy of language and enlightenment, there is a

kind of collapse of the dualisms of conventional and ultimate reality, and delusion and enlightenment.

Part One

Buddhism: Its Soteriology and Its Dualisms

While it would be unwise to speak too generally about Buddhism, we can say that the aim of all forms of Buddhism is to bring about an end to suffering. Particularly the suffering that results from the inevitability of old age, sickness, and death. That aim is achieved through enlightenment. The root of suffering is craving (clinging/attachment) engendered by false views regarding the existence of a permanent, substantial self, a self that allows for numerical identity of a person over time. One way to view the diverse history and development of Buddhism, and the numerous Buddhist schools in the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna traditions, is as the philosophical development of this general Buddhist picture of suffering, its root, and its cessation.

In this paper, we will focus primarily on the Mahāyāna tradition and the Mādhyamika branch based on the writings of the 2nd to 3rd century CE Indian Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna. This branch line of Buddhism is chosen because it leads to the Zen Buddhism of the 13th century Dōgen, with whom Sōtō Zen was established in Japan. Because of the importance of the philosophy Hua-Yen Buddhism for Dōgen's understanding of time and emptiness, we will also draw on aspects of Hua-Yen Buddhism, as expounded by Garma C.C. Chang.[2]

With the Buddhist picture of the world—suffering, its root, and its cessation—we find a number of significant dualisms. Three central dualisms are those of delusion and enlightenment, language and silence, and conventional and ultimate truth (or conventional and ultimate reality). We will begin by looking in detail at some traditional ways of understanding these dualism.

First dualism: Delusion and Enlightenment

What is Buddhist enlightenment?[3] This question might concern its nature or its point. The latter is perhaps easier sketch. The point of enlightenment is freedom from saṃsāra and suffering. The nature of enlightenment is more difficult to specify. Nevertheless, it can be characterized. D.T. Suzuki writes:

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[2] Chang 1971. Regarding the connection between Dōgen and Hua-Yen, see Kim 2004, 158 and 290 n. 172.

[3] In asking this question, I am ignoring complications regarding different levels or stages of enlightenment.

Satori [enlightenment] may be defined as an intuitive looking into the nature of things in contradistinction to the analytical or logical understanding of it. Practically, it means the unfolding of a new world hitherto unperceived in the confusion of a dualistically-trained mind.[4]

We find here a contrast between the intuitive and analytical/logical, and the unconfused and confused mind. Part of the latter confusion comes, Suzuki says, from a dualistically-trained mind. One of those dualisms will certainly be that of the separation between self and world. Phenomenologically, then, a part of enlightenment experience is a kind of union of the subject and the object of experience.[5]

One way of thinking about enlightenment is as *seeing things as they really are*. So conceived, it is the breaking through of the delusion that comes with a dualistically oriented mind. In the Mahāyāna philosophical schools we find not only the collapse of the dualism of self and other, but of other and other, as well. That is, ultimately, despite appearances, all things are empty of substantial and independent existence. We will examine the nature of this emptiness later. For now, though, we might say that enlightenment is the non-dual experiencing of the emptiness of all things in such a way that there is no more craving/clinging/attachment. Importantly, this is not just a belief state that results from accepting certain arguments, but rather an actual experiencing of the truth of emptiness.

However, while enlightenment so understood involves the collapse of the dualisms of self and other, and even other and other, it seems to open up a new one, namely, the dualism of delusion and enlightenment. There is the deluded world of samsara and suffering, and there is the enlightened world of freedom and peace.[6] The point of Buddhism, one might say, is to go from the former to the latter. One way to characterize the difference between them, and one that we will examine in detail later, is conventional reality and ultimate reality. Those things we deludedly think of as self and other are so only conventionally—ultimately, they are empty. What this means exactly and what might be problematic about such dualisms will be seen below.

While a number of things have so far been said about enlightenment, an often noted aspect of it is its purportedly ineffable nature. Enlightenment experience defies description. This leads us to the next dualism.

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[4] Suzuki 1956, 98.

[5] This would include, too, a non-dual union of the enlightened agent and any action performed.

[6] "World" is meant here in the sense of a person's phenomenological world, how they experience *the* world.

Second Dualism: Words and Silence

Language is often seen as an impediment to enlightenment. Thus, silence and not words (language) are appropriate regarding enlightenment experience. Regarding the role of language in enlightenment, Mario D'Amato writes:

> A dominant theme in Mahāyāna soteriological thought is that language and conceptualization are at the root of the problem with sentient existence, that language and conceptualization are the fundamental afflictions (*kleśas*) leading to the suffering of sentient beings.[7]

So stated, the upshot is that a necessary condition for enlightenment is doing away with conceptualization and language. So the silence of the dualism of language and silence is silence *without conceptualization*.[8]

While one issue with language is that conceptualization might lead to suffering, another issue is that language itself cannot be used to understand enlightenment experience or describe its nature. Let's next turn to several passages from Chang's, *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: The Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism*, as they are representative of much of what one finds regarding the relationship between Buddhist enlightenment and language. Discussing what he takes to be the three main ways one may describe something, Chang writes of the third:

> The third way is to describe through direct "pointing-out" or demonstration. A foreign student asked the English teacher, "What is a table?" Instead of saying that a table is a piece of furniture consisting of a flat board fixed on legs, the teacher pounded the table in front of him forcefully with his fist and said aloud, "This is a table!" Here is a direct demonstration. No explanation or concept is needed here. The best and in fact the only genuine way to describe Emptiness is the third way. It is this approach which is frequently applied in Zen Buddhism. The following is an example.
> A monk called Hung Chou came to visit Master Ma Tsu and asked, "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the West? (What is Śūnyatā [emptiness]?)" Ma Tsu said, "Bow down to me first." As the monk was prostrating himself, Ma Tsu gave him a vigorous kick in the chest. The monk was at once enlightened. He stood up, clapped his hands and laughing loudly, cried, "O, how wonderful this is, how marvelous

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[7] D'Amato 2009, 41-42.

[8] A further illustration of this idea is found in Kim's discussion of Dōgen's views on nonthinking (*hi-shiryō*), thinking (*shiryō*), and not-thinking (*fu-shiryō*). Kim notes Izutsu Toshihiko's interpretation of Dōgen's view of nonthinking in which "thinking is the most serious impediment to spiritual realization" (Kim 2007, 80): "[Toshihiko] …suggests a thinking…that operates in a totally different form and at quite a different level of consciousness from the one we are familiar with in our daily experience; it is activated by wiping out all images, ideas, and concepts from one's consciousness—by opening up to the primordial undifferentiated as the ground of all things prior to their differentiation" (Kim 2007, 80).

this is! Hundreds and thousands of Samādhis and infinite wonders of the truth are now easily realized on the tip of a single hair!"[9]

Two claims to note here are, one, Chang's claim that what he calls "direct demonstration" (and which Wittgenstein calls "ostensive explanation/definition") requires no explanation or concepts, and, second, that Master Ma Tsu's kicking the monk in the chest is such an instance of "direct demonstration." We will return to these points, but first, further representative statements on these issues. Chang later writes regarding the distinction between the *concept* of Śūnyatā (emptiness) and the *experience* of Śūnyatā:

> When Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara says "Form is Emptiness," he does not intend to give his audience an idea or concept; he merely tries to relate a hard-to-describe first-hand experience. Furthermore, the self-negating and "fluid" nature of Śūnyatā is inherently against the construction of any concept that is Svabhāva-bound. Since all concepts are naturally Svabhāva-bound, any concept of Śūnyatā necessarily falls short of its goal, hence the formation of a concept of Śūnyatā usually defeats its own purpose. That is why, eventually, the enlightened sages must remain silent.
>   The next question is, how can we help but treat Śūnyatā as a concept or a "something"? The answer is that this difficulty is unavoidable and can be overcome only through direct realization. The point to note here is that although Śūnyatā is not a concept itself, a concept of Śūnyatā can serve as a pointer to the otherwise inaccessible target. But the pointer is to be discarded when the target is hit. When one reaches the other shore, the ferry boat is left behind.[10]

Here we have five further claims. First, the nature of Śūnyatā resists conceptualization; second, conceptions of Śūnyatā tend to defeat the purpose of forming them; third, because of the first two points, enlightened sages rightly remain silent regarding the experience of Śūnyatā; fourth, while concepts can get in the way of experiencing Śūnyatā, they can nevertheless point at an "otherwise inaccessible target"; but, fifth, having served that purpose, they should be discarded. A further important point to note is that we find herein a distinction between language's being used to point to a non-conceptual experience and language's being used to conceptualize experience. Most of these points will be called into question later when we look at Wittgenstein and Putnam. However, there is a broader point in the Chang passage that is unobjectionable, namely, that attachment to concepts can be problematic. However, insofar as they are, it is not their being concepts that is the problem, but the attachment to them.

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[9] Chang 1971, 63.
[10] Chang 1971, 117-18.

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Perhaps the most influential Buddhist philosopher is Nāgārjuna. One of his greatest contributions to Buddhism is his discussion of emptiness. Commenting on Nāgārjuna's deconstruction of the dualism of substance and attribute, David R. Loy writes:

> With the benefit of hindsight, however, we can notice that Nāgārjuna's critique of such dualisms [as substance and attribute] itself generates another dualism, one that during the following millennium would become increasingly problematical: that between language and silence. This dualism became so important because it reflects an essential and perhaps inescapable dualism at the heart of Buddhism: between delusion (of which language is vehicle) and enlightenment (to which silence is believed to point).
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> Nāgārjuna, of course, is very sensitive to the dualism of *samsāra* and *nirvāna*, and its deconstruction…: there is not the slightest difference between them, for the limits (*kotih*) of the one are the limits of the other…. Its beatitude (*śivah*) is the coming-to-rest of all ways of taking things (*sarvopalambhopaśamah*), the repose of named things (*prapañcopaśamah*), which is why no truth has ever been taught by any Buddha to anyone anywhere (verse 24).
>
> The problem, however, is that this solution to the dualism of delusion and enlightenment resolves the tension between them only by displacing it onto another dualism between the manifold world of named things (*prapañca*) and its coming-to-rest in silence (*prapañcopaśamah*). If nirvāna involves realizing the *śūnyāta* of *samsāra*, for Nāgārjuna that "emptiness" involves the cessation of thought-construction. Some translations de-emphasize this cessation, but many other passages in the *Kārikās* leave no doubt as to Nāgārjuna's perspective on this matter: from the ultimate point of view no predication is possible. The dedicatory verses that begin the *Kārikās* also emphasize that *prapañcopaśamah* is the way things truly are (*pratīyasamutpāda*),…
>
> Nāgārjuna is well aware of the tension intrinsic to the claim that the true characterization of the nature of things is that things cannot be conceptually characterized. His solution, of course, is the two-truths doctrine. All predication is part of the lower truth.[11]

Aside from the clarity of the passage, I quote Loy in full for three reasons. First, to make clear the centrality of the connection between the dualism of enlightenment/delusion, and that of language/silence; second, to emphasize that the latter dualism of language/silence was a central part of one of the most influential Buddhist philosopher's views on emptiness/enlightenment; and, finally, to draw an explicit connection between the dualisms of delusion/enlightenment, language/silence, and conventional/ultimate truth/reality. It is to this last dualism that we now turn.

Third Dualism: Conventional Truth and Ultimate Truth

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[11] Loy 1999, 250-251.

Chris Mortensen helpfully distinguishes three different versions of the distinction between ultimate and conventional. While it's true, as he says, that there are others to be found, these are certainly central:

> (1) There is the distinction between the conventional as concealing, hiding, or obscuring, as opposed to the ultimate as that which is seen clearly and distinctly.
> (2) There is the distinction between the conventional as a truth expressible in words or depending on conventions for its existence, contrasted with the ultimate as a truth which cannot be expressed in words, or which is beyond verbal conventions.
> (3) We have a collection of distinctions which identify the conventional somehow involving a relation, as opposed to the ultimate as being nonrelational or intrinsic.[12]

Mortensen does not take these three versions to be equivalent. And, indeed, each is importantly different. The first focuses on the purported delusive and obscuring aspects of language. The second concerns the second dualism above, namely, words and silence, and the idea that ultimate reality is ineffable. These first two are certainly connected, for if ultimate reality is ineffable but one believes words can be used to apprehend reality truly (non-conventionally), then one will be deluded regarding ultimate reality.

The third concerns the non-relational or intrinsic nature of ultimate reality versus the relational or extrinsic nature of conventional reality. An example of this would be the following. At the heart of delusion is the perception of oneself as a substantial self, existing independently of the world. This separation could be viewed as a product of conventional reality. One way to view conventional reality is as a product of linguistic convention, conventions which reflect our interests. We talk of "I" and "you," "Chris" and "Sara," and attribute a life narrative to the "selves" that we assume to be the referents of these pronouns and names. We are interested in things like ownership, responsibility, and relationships with the "same" individuals over time. Those things, together with the general stability of things (my car, house, and body usually undergo gradual changes) and our needs for food, clothing, shelter, and interpersonal relationships, make it more than useful to unconsciously reify the referents of our terms. However, it is my remaining at, and being attached to, this conventional reality that brings about *my* suffering. Shedding the conventional and realizing ultimate reality is enlightenment. So conventional reality, produced by language and our interests, obscures ultimate reality and produces suffering. And by implication, ultimate reality is that which is beyond convention, beyond our words and interests.

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[12] Mortensen 2009, 4.

Beyond this general characterization of the distinction between ultimate and conventional reality, Buddhist schools differ greatly regarding the nature of ultimate reality. Our focus will be on the Mahāyāna tradition, which, as we have seen, emphasizes the emptiness not only of persons but all of reality.[13] We can clarify emptiness by sketching two of the general lines of reasoning that lead to the conclusion that reality is empty.[14] There are two basic assumptions made regarding the possibility of something's existing substantially and independently. The first is that it would have to be unchanging; the second is that it would have its essential properties intrinsically, i.e., they would not in any way depend on something else for their existence. Nothing that exists meets either condition. All of reality is in constant flux and process, and everything that exists does so as a nexus of causal factors, i.e., it co-arises dependently on other factors.[15]

A simple example of this flux would be a tree over the course of a season. In the winter it is leafless and contains a certain set of atoms. Over the course of the spring to winter, it buds, acquires leaves, those leaves fall off, and over the course of the season it gains and loses constituent parts. It is in flux and is process. At the same time, every aspect of the tree, its size, shape, color, its very existence, depends upon factors external to it, e.g., the quality of the soil, the trees around it (a low light tree needs shade), the sun, the rain, etc. Therefore, since nothing is unchanging or not dependently co-arising, all of reality is empty of substantial existence. The boundaries between "things" are only apparent, they are not substantial. Importantly, that which is designated as conventional reality is conventional because it is the reification through language (convention) of that which is non-substantial. Ultimate reality is empty and non-conventional (non-conceptual/linguistic).

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[13] And, of course, within the Mahāyāna tradition, views of reality vary greatly. We will focus on the Mādhyamika school, but the other main Mahāyāna school, the Yogācāra, endorses a kind of consciousness-only idealism, which the Mādhyamika do not.

[14] Nāgārjuna is the canonical source of the arguments for emptiness. The sketch that follows does not do justice to their diversity or complexity. The sketch is based loosely on Chang's 1971, 69ff, discussion of emptiness.

[15] Garfield and Priest sketch one of Nāgārjuna's arguments in which, "Nāgārjuna argues that the spatial properties…of an object cannot be essential. For it would be absurd to suppose that the spatial location of an object could exist without the object itself—or, conversely, that there could be an object without location. Hence, location and object are interdependent" (2003, 6). It is unclear whether such a dependence is best thought of as a causal dependence. It seems more to be either a conceptual dependence or what we might call a *metaphysical* dependence, these options mirroring the main kinds of necessity: causal, conceptual, and metaphysical.

This dualism of ultimate and conventional reality is not left to stand as such in Buddhism. Discussing Nāgārjuna's treatment of the dualism, Garfield and Priest write:

> As the *Vimalkīrtinirdeśa-sūtra* puts it, "To say this is conventional and this is ultimate is dualistic. To realize that there is no difference between the conventional and the ultimate is to enter the Dharma-door of nonduality," or, as the *Heart Sūtra* puts it more famously, "Form is empty; emptiness is form; form is not different from emptiness; emptiness is not different from form." The identity of the two truths has profound soteriological implications for Nāgārjuna, such as the identity of nirvāna and samsāra.[16]

In the end, then, the substantiality of dependent co-arising and flux would have to be empty, too.[17] They are themselves conventionally designated aspects of reality, after all. The question becomes, then: if emptiness is empty, does that mean that there is no ultimate reality? For the truth about ultimate reality was supposed to be that all is empty. But it turns out that ultimate reality, emptiness, is itself empty. Garfield and Priest, and Mark Siderits, for example, take this to mean that "ultimate reality is hence only conventionally real!"[18] It is unclear in what sense this is correct. However, for reasons of length, we will have to leave this difficult question unanswered.[19]

The Interdependence of the Dualisms

Enlightenment requires becoming free of delusion, delusion is, in part, the product of clinging to conventional reality. Conventional reality is, in part, the product of reifying conceptualizations guided by our interests. Thus, enlightenment seems to require becoming free of conventional reality, not only cognitively but experientially (one's experience is radically altered, not just one's beliefs). Since language requires concepts, becoming free of conceptualizations requires becoming free of language, i.e., silence is required.

The important part of this interdependence of the dualisms for our purposes is that if one falls into question, they all do. If one dualism collapses, they all collapse. If it were to turn out that enlightenment didn't mean becoming free of delusion necessarily engendered by language, then the dualism between language and silence would collapse, as well. If it were to turn out that there was no meaningful distinction to be made between conventional and ultimate reality, where

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[16] Garfield and Priest 2003, 6-7.
[17] See, for example, Siderits 2007, chpt 9.
[18] Garfield and Priest 2003, 6. See Siderits 2007, 203-04.
[19] In a longer version of this paper, I argue that the very idea of ultimate reality in the sense of a reality whose existence is independent of language is senseless, and, therefore, so is the usual understanding of conventional reality.

ultimate reality is that reality that is supposed to be unconcealed, ineffable, and non-relational, then there would be no meaningful distinction between the effable and ineffable, or relational and non-relational existence of things.[20] And, finally, if it were to turn out that the idea of purely ineffable experience was meaningless, then there would be no meaningful distinction to be made between enlightenment and delusion, or ultimate and conventional reality, provided that delusion and conventional reality are understood to be partially constituted by conceptualizations, and enlightenment and ultimate reality are understood as freedom from conventional reality and delusion.

Part Two

A Problem for the Dualism of Words and Silence

When someone says that we must remain silent about something or that something is ineffable, it is important to be as clear as possible as to why. For example, one way of looking at Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is as an explanation of why we must be silent about certain things, such as ethics and aesthetics. The silence is the necessary result of the picture of language that he elucidates in the *Tractatus*. So, why must we remain silent about enlightenment? What about enlightenment is ineffable? Let us address these questions by clarifying the nature of the ineffable.

Let us note, first, that in the context of Buddhist enlightenment experience, what is at issue is the ineffability of an experience or an aspect of experience. So there is a fundamental difference between what is at issue in the ineffability of Buddhist enlightenment experience and the ineffability of the nature of a transcendent god. With the latter, the issue is correctly describing and understanding the nature of something that is not a part of one's empirical world in the way that enlightenment experience is. With this difference in mind let us next distinguish between three different senses of ineffability that are relevant to the experienced world .

Given the idea that language is responsible for concealing ultimate reality, let us begin with what we will call *necessary ineffability*. It is the claim that language and concepts necessarily falsify the true nature of reality, and thus the true nature of reality is necessarily ineffable. Any description will necessarily be a falsification. We saw this idea above in our discussion of the Buddhist dualisms. We conceive of *this* thing as a tree and *that* thing as a table.

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[20] "Relational and non-relational existence of things" in the sense relevant to the two truths doctrine of ultimate and conventional reality.

This thing is a person and *that* thing is a dog. And we talk about them as if they are stable, discrete and unchanging entities that continue to exist over time, when in fact "they" are in constant flux and exist dependently co-arisen, as a nexus of conditions. We ignore the flux and dependent co-arising of their being. Ultimate reality cannot be apprehended by words and concepts because words and concepts necessarily reify, stabilize, and make discrete that which is insubstantial, unstable, and dependently co-arisen. Thus, in the context of the dualism of language and silence, ultimate reality is purportedly necessarily ineffable.

A second type of ineffability, and closely related to necessary ineffability, is the idea of language not so much falsifying reality but rather being somehow *inadequate* or *limited* in its capacity for capturing the true nature of reality. Let us call this *limited ineffability*. One way that there *might* be limited ineffability is that the true nature of reality is not given in ordinary experience; however, our concepts are the product of ordinary experience. Thus, those ordinary concepts are limited in their capacity to describe the true nature of reality. An important issue regarding this kind of ineffability is whether or not it is *necessary*. That is, are the limitations of language something that can be overcome in the hands of someone who is skillful? So we might distinguish, then, between two different modal versions of limited ineffability, namely, *contingent* and *necessary* limited ineffability. On the contingent version, whether language is limited, and whether reality is ineffable, is contingent upon the skillfulness of the one speaking or writing, and on the reality being described. Concepts, and language more generally, are not fixed, and need not be used only literally. In the hands of a skilled poet/writer, metaphor, simile, analogy, etc., can be used to say what the non-poet cannot say. On the other hand, something might be so completely other that our concepts, our language, no matter what the speaker's skill, cannot be expressed or described adequately. Here the "cannot" expresses a logical or metaphysical impossibility.

It is important to note that since both the contingent and necessary versions of limited ineffability specify that language is *limited* in its capacity for describing ultimate reality, neither kind would collapse into necessary ineffability, i.e., neither kind completely falsifies ultimate reality. The difficulty would, of course, be to determine that part of reality that is adequately described by language. Moreover, because whether something is adequate is a matter of degree and is relative to one's purposes, not all cases of limited ineffability will be the same. Thus, there could be a spectrum of the degree of limitation across cases of limited ineffability.

A third type of ineffability we will call *generative* ineffability. Something is *generatively* ineffable when language *alone* cannot be used to let another person know what it is like to experience that thing or aspect of reality (if they have not already experienced it). Language will not reproduce or generate the experience—*what it is like*: one must experience it for oneself. One way in which something could be generatively ineffable is if that which is being referred to is a simple property such that no other property could be referred to to describe it. This is the sense in which a specific shade of blue might be thought ineffable. No matter what you say to someone who has never seen that specific shade, your words alone cannot reproduce it or let the person know what it is like (beyond being colored or generally blue). Importantly, another way that something might be generatively ineffable is in the case of experiencing something like the Buddhist doctrine of no-self or emptiness. Words can be used to explain the doctrine. Arguments can be given for it. Moreover, a person may wholeheartedly endorse the soundness of those arguments, yet nevertheless not experience no-self/emptiness. The words do not generate the experience. Similarly, one might describe the emptiness of reality in terms of x, y, and z. However, while emptiness has thus been described, the description has not, of course, *necessarily* produced the experience of emptiness. Such experience has to come from the sincere engagement in Buddhist practice. Thus, experience of no-self or emptiness could be generatively ineffable, not because they are simple properties like a specific shade of blue, but because any description of them may not let another person know what it is like to experience them.

All importantly, with generative ineffability it is not that language fails to describe some aspect of experience or occludes it; rather, it simply fails to generate the experience or convey what the experience is like. Charging language with a failure here would be like impugning the moon for not illuminating the sun. In the case of a simple property's being generatively ineffable, it necessarily fails to generate the experience. Whereas it seems quite possible that someone in the proper position, could experience no-self or emptiness upon listening to a description of, or argument for, it. Thus, something that is generatively ineffable need not be necessarily ineffable or limitedly ineffable. Regarding the relationship between contingent limited ineffability and generative ineffability, a creative, poetic use of language may overcome the contingent limited ineffability and make clear the nature of that which displays contingent limited ineffability. But at some point, there will be generative ineffability remaining because,

for example, the poetic description bottoms out in simple properties that do not admit of even further poetic description.

We have now seen three important senses of ineffability.[21] In summary they are:

1. *Necessary ineffability*: the claim that language and concepts necessarily falsify the true nature of reality (ultimate reality), and thus the true nature of reality is necessarily ineffable.

2. *Limited ineffability*: the claim that language is either contingently or necessarily limited (inadequate) in its capacity to describe reality.

3. *Generative ineffability*: language *alone* cannot be used to let another person know what it is like to experience that thing or aspect of reality referenced (if they have not already experienced it).

An important claim that will be made regarding these different kinds of ineffability is that while enlightenment experience is often taken to involve either necessary ineffability or necessary limited ineffability, it actually only displays contingent limited ineffability and generative ineffability. Thus, the sense in which one must be silent about enlightenment experience is often misunderstood.

Let us now consider how exactly enlightenment experience might be ineffable. When we speak of enlightenment in what follows, we are talking about a particular experience. We can characterize it as *seeing things as they really are*. So conceived, it is the breaking through of the delusion that comes with a dualistically oriented mind. In the Mahāyāna philosophical schools the idea is that despite appearances, all things are empty. Enlightenment is the non-dual[22] experiencing of the emptiness of all things such that craving/clinging/attachment do not arise.

Recall our earlier discussion of Chang and his claim that, "the best and in fact the only genuine way to describe Emptiness is [by direct demonstration]. It is this approach which is frequently applied in Zen Buddhism."[23] Direct demonstration is the pointing at what is being referenced instead of giving a description of its properties. Moreover, Chang claims that no concept or explanation is needed for a direct demonstration to succeed. Here the important point to take away is the claim that emptiness itself can only be "described" by direct demonstration. We find a similar but importantly different point in Loy:

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[21] These are not meant to exhaust the core concept of ineffability.
[22] Subject and object, agent and action, are one.
[23] Chang 1971, 63.

Nāgārjuna is well aware of the tension intrinsic to the claim that the true characterization of the nature of things is that things cannot be conceptually characterized. His solution, of course, is the two-truths doctrine. All predication is part of the lower truth.[24]

That which is experienced in enlightenment is ultimate reality; however, nothing can be predicated of it at the level of ultimate reality. We, thus, cannot use language to say anything ultimately true about reality.

Putting the above points together, we come away with the idea that enlightenment is a non-dual experience of ultimate reality as empty, *and* neither this emptiness nor any aspect of ultimate reality can be described. Any description of ultimate reality is doomed to be a description of conventional reality; it is doomed to falsify ultimate reality. Thus, ultimate reality displays *necessary* ineffability. Thus, we have the kind of Zen story related by Chang. It isn't words, but a kick to the chest that induces enlightenment.

Let us now give an argument against the claim that enlightenment experience displays necessary ineffability. Upon enlightenment, the enlightened person does not die in the conventional sense of bodily death. And let us assume that the person's enlightenment is firm over time, i.e., it does not diminish or fluctuate. Further, the enlightened nature of enlightened experience is general or complete—it does not pertain to just one portion of experience. That is, we can distinguish between an aspect of experience having a certain quality and the entirety of an experience having a certain quality. For example, in looking at a red flower on a blue background, every aspect of the visual field is colored, but not every aspect is red. Similarly, enlightenment is like the colored aspect of the visual field, not like the limited red aspect of the multicolored field. Further, the enlightened person in virtue of not being a corpse must still engage in the world, eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, going to the bathroom, etc. Finally, the enlightened person can and does still speak.

With these assumption in mind, the *first* step of the argument is to note that enlightenment experience cannot be experience in which differentiation is not possible. That is, becoming enlightened does not suddenly make it the case that one cannot distinguish between a book and a pencil or between a thing's shape and its color. Differentiation requires concepts.[25] Therefore, by our assumptions above, most importantly, that enlightenment is an all-pervasive aspect of experience and it does not fluctuate, enlightenment experience cannot be experience

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[24] Loy 1999, 250-251.
[25] This claim will be defended below.

that is free of differentiation and conceptual categorization. Thus, enlightenment experience is *enlightened experience of differentiation*, and is thus describable. In short, if the enlightened person can differentiate parts of the world, then her enlightened experience does not display necessary ineffability. At this level of consideration it would at most display generative ineffability.

The *second* step of the argument is to consider and respond to the following objection: necessary ineffability applies to that aspect of experience which is the *enlightened experience of differentiation*. That is, in differentiating between a pen and a pencil, the differentiation is experienced in an enlightened way, and it is the latter *way* of differentiating that displays necessary ineffability. But it is unclear how this is going to amount to anything other than limited ineffability and/or generative ineffability. That is, in order to differentiate that aspect of experience which is the *enlightened experience of differentiation* from other aspects of experience, conceptualization (language) must be brought into play, as we are doing now to mark the difference between *enlightened experience of differentiation* and the differentiation itself.

Let us summarize the above two steps of the argument. The experience of an enlightened person is the experience of a person engaged in living in the world. Such experience necessarily involves differentiation. Differentiation requires language. Therefore, what the enlightened person experiences can be described and language does not falsify enlightened experience of reality. Against this, it may be objected that it is the *enlightened experience of differentiation*, not the differentiation itself, that is necessarily ineffable. In response to this objection, we should point out that language cannot falsify necessarily the enlightened experience of differentiation, since language is needed to differentiate that enlightened aspect of experience from all others. Therefore, if the enlightened experience of differentiation is ineffable, it will be generatively and/or limitedly ineffable.

If we allow that the enlightened experience of differentiation might be limitedly ineffable, then it might be *necessarily* limitedly ineffable, which may approach actual necessary ineffability. So, what reason is there to think that the enlightened experience of differentiation is at most *contingently* limitedly ineffable? In brief, the response is that the successful, creative use of language of enlightened people such as Dōgen to describe its nature gives good reason to believe that it is *contingently* limitedly ineffable (and generatively ineffable).

Assuming that it is correct to say that the enlightened experience of differentiation can only possibly display contingent limited ineffability and/or generative ineffability, it will display contingent limited ineffability only if it is non-simple.[26] If it is non-simple, then its "parts" can be described through creative uses of language, but those descriptions will bottom out in generative ineffability. So, let's look briefly at the way it might display generative ineffability. At some level of description, the enlightened experience of differentiation is similar to the case of the color blue or the aroma of coffee. Language cannot be used to generate the experience of blue, but it is needed to differentiate blue from other colors and from non-colored things and to orient ones attention on the blue as blue. As with blue or the aroma of coffee, we can say what it is like—blue is a bit like purple; French Roast coffee smells a bit like toasted marshmallows—but doing so doesn't reproduce the experience or let one know what it is like if one hasn't previously experienced purple or the smell of toasted marshmallows. In this respect, the *enlightened experience of differentiation* (or some aspect of it) is like the color blue or the aroma of coffee in being generatively ineffable. We can say what it is like: it involves the collapse of subject and object (agent and action), and the apprehension of the emptiness of all things. But it is, of course, very different, too, from a color or smell. Two of those differences are its accessibility—it's typically easier to experience blue—and its soteriological importance—smelling your morning coffee, while potentially glorious, is likely not going to end saṃsāra.

Given the above argument, the following two claims need to be defended at this point if it is to succeed:

> 1) Language is needed to differentiate one object or property from another object or property: for example, blue from other colors and other things, and to orient one's attention on the blue as blue.

> 2) In order to differentiate that aspect of experience which is the *enlightened experience of differentiation* from other aspects, conceptualization (the realm of language) must be brought into play.

Regarding 1), let us first note that by saying that "a language is needed" what is meant is that the normative context of a language is needed. This normative context is constituted by dispositional ways of acting and reacting, as well as speaking. Within such a normative context words have meaning, sentences have sense and truth value. Next, the central claim is this: differentiating

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[26] By "non-simple" I mean it has different parts or aspects that admit of description. So any object on your desk would be non-simple in this sense.

between different objects, or different properties of one object, is logically equivalent to pointing at one object or one property in contrast to another, i.e., distinguishing one object or property from another by pointing. And since pointing at one object or property in contrast to another requires a normative (linguistic) context, then so does differentiating one object or property from another more generally. Further, focusing on the blueness of something as blue, requires differentiating that property from other properties in the foregoing sense.

We turn now to Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (*PI*) for a defense of the idea that pointing at one object or property in contrast to another requires a normative (linguistic) context. §§28-32 of *PI* contain the very dense initial moves in Wittgenstein's consideration of the nature of ostensive definitions.[27] An ostensive definition is the defining of a term by gesturing (pointing) at that to which it refers. For example, "That is 'blue'," said while pointing at something blue. At the end of §28, we get the explicit statement of a key point, namely, "an ostensive definition can be variously interpreted in *every* case."[28] One of the main points is that ostensive definitions require a normative linguistic context, and they thus would fail as the foundation of language, and the connection between language and world. The mere pointing absent a preexisting normative context to determine the referent is worse than ambiguous, for absent a normative context, it isn't even pointing. But even if we assume a meaningfulness to pointing, a normative context is needed to establish a range of possible referents. What exactly this means, will become clearer shortly.

In *PI* §33 Wittgenstein considers the objection that a linguistic context is *not* necessary for understanding an ostensive definition—one just needs "to know or guess" whether the person giving the definition is pointing to the shape, size, color, etc. of the object. The immediate response is to question what such pointing consists in. If the answer is that one simply concentrates one's attention on the referent, then the counter response is to ask how such concentration is done. In addressing this question, Wittgenstein gives us a number of concrete cases, two of which are, "It's turning fine, you can already see blue sky again" and "Look what different effects these two blues have." We do different things when looking at colors in different contexts—the same goes for looking at shapes, etc.:

One attends to the shape, sometimes by tracing it, sometimes by screwing up one's eyes

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[27] Wittgenstein sometimes speaks of ostensive definitions and sometimes of ostensive explanations. I'm ignoring the difference for what follows.
[28] Wittgenstein 2009, §28.

so as not to see the colour clearly, and so forth. I want to say: This and similar things are what one does *while* one 'directs one's attention to this or that'. But it isn't only these things that make us say that someone is attending to the shape, the colour, etc. Just as making a move in chess doesn't consist only in pushing a piece from here to there on the board—nor yet in the thoughts and feelings that accompany the move: but in the circumstances that we call "playing a game of chess", "solving a chess problem", and the like.[29]

Thinking something and looking at something are not by themselves what make it the case that one attends to the shape instead of the color of an object. A thought is the thought it is only within a given normative content-determining context. The looking is the looking at the shape instead of a color within the context of a linguistic practice that differentiates shapes from colors. Here is it helpful to appeal to Wittgenstein's notion of a language-game: that whole "consisting of language and the activities into which it is woven…."[30] A normative linguistic context that is capable of determining the contents (meaning) of gestures, words, and thoughts is not an abstract thing but is firmly rooted and enmeshed in the activities and lives of people.[31]

So, when attending to the color instead of the shape of an object, it is not that one need say to oneself, "I'm attending now to blue, now to roundness." Rather, such attending is made possible by the normative background practice of the language, and does not require occurrent thoughts. Language use, and determinate pointing and concentrating, are dispositional abilities, like that of being able to ride a bike. Where bike riding depends on the practice of producing bikes and riding them, pointing at the color rather than the shape depends on the practice of differentiating colors from shapes, etc. If there weren't ever the practice of producing bikes and riding them, then no one would have the dispositional ability to ride a bike. If there weren't ever

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[29] Wittgenstein 2009, §33.
[30] Wittgenstein 2009, §7.
[31] A good illustration of this is:

> Now suppose I sit in my room and hope that N.N. will come and bring me some money, and suppose one minute of this state could be isolated, cut out of its context; would what happened in it then not be hoping?—Think, for example, of the words which you may utter in this time. They are no longer part of this language. And in different surroundings the institution of money doesn't exist either.
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> A coronation is the picture of pomp and dignity. Cut one minute of this proceeding out of its surroundings: the crown is being placed on the head of the king in his coronation robes.—But in different surroundings, gold is the cheapest of metals, its gleam is thought vulgar. There the fabric of the robe is cheap to produce. A crown is a parody of a respectable hat. And so on. (Wittgenstein 2009, §584.)

the practice of differentiating between colors and shapes, then no one would have the dispositional ability to point to one and not the other.

A possible objection to the claim that a normative (linguistic) context is required for pointing at one object or property in contrast to another is to postulate that there is some non-normatively constrained (i.e., non-conceptual) mental ability of human beings to determine what is being pointed at or concentrated upon. I venture that it is not clear what such an ability would consist in; however, let us indulge the claim in order to show a problem with it and a further way in which a normative context is needed to determine the referent of pointing or concentrating one's attention.

As speakers of English (or Japanese, Chinese, etc.), we want to say that we are surrounded by various properties, e.g., colors, shapes, sizes, weights, etc., and objects, e.g., tables, chairs, trees, rocks, bodies of water, persons, etc. So we take it as a matter of course that if a person opens her eyes or puts out her hand, she will be in contact with these properties and objects. But we should be careful about how we understand such assumptions. There is a passage in the posthumously published notes titled *Remarks on Colour* where Wittgenstein considers the possibility of people who have color-shape concepts instead of separate color and shape concepts.

> And what about people who only had colour-shape concepts? Should I say of them that they do not *see* that a green leaf and a green table—when I show them these things—have the same colour or have something in common? What if it had never 'occurred to them' to compare differently shaped objects of the same colour with one another? *Due to their particular background, this comparison was of no importance to them, or had importance only in very exceptional cases, so that no linguistic tool was developed.*[32]

The interpretation of this remark isn't unproblematic; however, the relevant point for us is simply that it reminds us that the question at hand as to whether a person is pointing at or concentrating on the color instead of the size, shape, etc., of something could also be framed in terms of color-shape, color-size, shape-size, etc. And these latter concepts, while unfamiliar, are possible referents of pointing or concentrating one's attention. What a person is pointing at or concentrating on will depend on her circumstances. Without a linguistic context, it is

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[32] My emphasis. Wittgenstein 1977, III §130. While we should be careful when dipping into the different parts of Wittgenstein's *Nachlass* when we are considering *PI*, in the present context, I do not think our appeal to *Remarks on Colour* is problematic, since the remark can be taken to illustrate a general point about language and ostensive gestures that is made in *PI*.

indeterminate as to what her attention is focused on. In other words, the world does not come pre-individuated into objects and properties so that a special human ability could exist that could differentiate objects and properties independently of a normative linguistic context.

A similar point is made by Putnam in his consideration of what he calls conceptual relativity. He illustrates it by discussing the basic notion of an object.[33] Say that there is a world consisting of three indivisible simples, x, y, and z. How many objects are there in this world? According to Putnam, we could legitimately count three objects: x, y, and z. Or we could count seven objects by using the concept of a mereological sum: the concept that any two objects make up a third object. So: x, y, z, and x + y, x+z, y+z, and x+y+z. Whether Putnam is right about that is controversial. However, there certainly are instances in which we do count multiple objects as a single object, e.g., a group of islands is sometimes called an "archipelago," the islands of Japan make up one country, and a group of paintings is so-and-so's "art collection." And it is notoriously difficult to give plausible necessary and sufficient conditions that restrict when any two objects are themselves an object.[34] The upshot for Putnam is clear when he says, "My view is that God himself, if he consented to answer the question, ['Are there *really* three objects or seven?'], would say 'I don't know'; not because His omniscience is limited, but because there is a limit to how far questions make sense."[35] It is only from within a normative context that either answer is possible—absent such a context, the question fails to make sense.

This completes the defense of claim 1) Language is needed to differentiate on object or property from another object or property, for example, blue from other colors and other things, and to orient ones attention on the blue as blue.

What about claim 2) In order to differentiate that aspect of experience which is the enlightened experience of differentiation from other aspects of the enlightened person's experience, conceptualization (language) must be brought into play? This follows from claim 1) because in order to refer to that aspect of reality which is the *enlightened way* the enlightened person is differentiating between objects (pens and pencils) and properties of objects (shapes and

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[33] See, for example, Putnam 2004.
[34] See, for example, Van Cleve 2008 and Markosian 2008 for representative discussions of the difficulties.
[35] Putnam 1987, 19. Putnam's point is reminiscent of the Buddha's refusing to answer such questions as: "Does a liberated being (tathāgata) exists after death or not?" Given the emptiness of self and world, the question lacks sense.

colors), the concepts of "the *way* the enlightened person is differentiating" and "the enlightened experience of differentiation," among others, are required. Just as referring to the blueness of an object requires the concept of blue as a color and as the color blue, instead of, for example, the concept of a blue-ircle (what we would call a blue circle). This completes the argument for the claim that enlightenment experience does not display necessary ineffability. The central reason is that enlightenment experience is *not* undifferentiated, and any differentiation that it may have requires a normative linguistic context: and thus language. Enlightenment experience is effable to that extent.

Nevertheless, we have to be careful when thinking about ineffability and language's purported inability to describe certain things. Take any object, for example, a statue of a Buddha. We can describe it. How? By making statements about its various properties—its size, shape, texture, color, etc. But now describe those. With the color, we can name it and describe its warmth and saturation, for example. But beyond that we are at a loss to describe a particular color. And so we are tempted to say that it is ineffable. But it is not ineffable in the sense of necessary ineffability—in the sense of language falsifying what it is there. It is ineffable in the sense that no further concept is more basic and by appeal to which we might describe it. And no amount of description, nor the name of the color itself, will produce the experience of the color. And from what we have seen, any reference to a color is going to require a normative context. Similarly, reference to that aspect of experience that is enlightened requires a normative context. It is not clear whether we should say that that aspect is a simple property in the way particular shade of blue is; however, it is similar to blue in that words will not (necessarily) produce the experience of enlightenment, even though they are necessary to the normative context for enlightenment.

An example of the requisite normative context is found in the context of Zen Buddhism. In the story related by Chang earlier, the monk being kicked in the chest reaches enlightenment because of the "meaning" of the kick, which is determined by the context of Zen practice. No amount of kicking a 16th century Christian European in the chest would bring him to Satori. Further, this is why, in part, dogs and cats, for example, are not enlightened. We would surely say that their experience of the world is not deluded by concepts or conceptualizations. So why isn't it that they experience the purported emptiness of reality? The answer is, in part, that they lack the normative context.

If the above is correct, then in what way does the dualism between language and silence collapse? The silence that is so often lauded isn't to be lauded because it avoids using language that necessarily falsifies ultimate reality, but because it correctly acknowledges that at some point language will not get you any closer to a particular experience. You must see for yourself. Again, not because of the necessary ineffability of that which is to be experienced. Further, the normative context of Zen, which is constituted by the language and practices of Zen, is needed for the "seeing for oneself." And once one sees for oneself, it is not that one sheds the normative context. When body and mind drop off (*shinjin datsuraku*), as Dōgen says, and subject "becomes" object, the normative background practice of thought and language does not drop off.[36] Just as the Buddha can still ride a bike, *shinjin datsuraku* doesn't mean the dropping off of actions and ability. We will elaborate on this more later, but we can say that the Buddha is ever intimate with reality through the normative background practice of language.

The problem with language is forgetting that while the normative context is necessary—and reading and studying the sutras, and discussions with Zen masters are part of this normative context—becoming attached to the normative context does act as an impediment to seeing things for oneself. Hence, the appropriateness of silence in certain situations. But the problem, again, is not language, but attachment. A further difficulty is using language in a way that doesn't reify or that fully acknowledges the reifying nature of language. However, language need not occlude or distort reality. It may insofar as the normative context becomes an object of attachment or is somehow faulty in the way that the wrongly formulated recipe is faulty in relation to the end of cooking something delicious. But enlightenment experience embodies differentiation at various levels and that differentiation requires a normative, linguistic context. In enlightenment, what is left behind is attachment to that context as if it were enlightenment itself—nevertheless, one remains dispositionally engaged in the normative practice. The Buddha still rides a bike.

Part Three

Dōgen on Enlightenment and Delusion

One of the central contentions of this section is that Dōgen collapses the silence/language dualism in a way that implies the denial of what we have called necessary ineffability. We can read Dōgen in such a way that language plays a central role in enlightenment experience and any ineffability that occurs is generative or contingent limited ineffability. Moreover, a part of

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[36] See, for example, Dōgen 1985, 70, Genjō Kōan 4.

Dōgen's value as a (Zen) Buddhist philosopher is his ability to overcome contingent limited ineffability with his literary skill.

Our discussion of Dōgen will draw heavily on the seminal work of Hee-Jin Kim. Let us begin with a few key passages regarding Kim's understanding of Dōgen's views on language and enlightenment:

> Dōgen's overarching concern in discussing practice and enlightenment was the quest for authentic practice. This concern was a running thread throughout his monastic career. For this reason, he never atemporalized enlightenment by converting its supposed nonduality into a pure consciousness or an apophatic reality that negated any and all conceptual and symbolic mediations.[37]

Further, according to Kim:

> …two further observations on the issue of duality and nonduality, often expressed in terms of differentiation (*shabetsu*) and equality (*byōdō*), are in order. First, nonduality is all too often misunderstood as neutrality, indifference, undifferentiation, atemporality, freedom from moral choice and commitment, and so forth. It should be remembered, however, that "a unitive awareness" (of nonduality), which I previously rendered for *ichinyo* at the very beginning of the present chapter, is still elliptic at best because, however transcendent, total, and veridical, it is in essence a valuation notion of a specific worldview. …
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> On the other hand, often unjustifiably welded into the notion of nonduality has been the most prevalent conception of Zen—largely attributed to D.T. Suzuki—that the essence of Zen consists in the unmediated enlightenment experience (or state of consciousness), totally untainted by ideational and valuational mediations as well as by historical and social conditions. The pure experience (or pure consciousness)—*sui generis*, ineffable and ahistorical—is as such the universal experiential core from which all religions originate and to which they all return. This is the Zen version of *philosophia perennis*, with added Zen and Japanese flavors. Such a Zen, as I see it, is not Dōgen's, because nonduality in this view is thoroughly metaphysicized, rarified, and disembodied so much so that it is ineffective and ineffectual from the standpoint of authentic practice. Furthermore, the arrogation of unlimited universality to itself is flatly contrary to the logic of temporality—situatedness in a specific time and place as a dharma situation (*hōi*)—as unmistakably enunciated in Dōgen's Zen.[38]

These passages are rich, but what should be emphasized for our purposes is the way in which enlightenment experience for Dōgen is not a disembodied, abstract, pure consciousness: a consciousness characterized by "neutrality, indifference, undifferentiation, atemporality, freedom from moral choice and commitment"; nor, we might add, does it display necessary ineffability.

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[37] Kim 2007, 25.
[38] Kim 2007, 35.

Instead, enlightenment experience is a matter of authentic, embodied practice and is both historical and temporal. A part of this picture is the role of language in such a practice. As Kim goes on to say:

> Dōgen's view on this subject, particularly on language, is a far cry from such a conventional one, although he was all too aware of its fundamental limitations and dangers. At any rate, it is absolutely imperative for practitioners to deal with their everyday lives by continually making choices, decisions, and commitments, in terms of revaluated dualities that are informed and empowered by nonduality. In order to effectively engage in the task of daily affairs, they must employ language, the intellect, and critical thinking as a common basis for dialogue and communication with one another, whether they are Buddhists or non-Buddhists, religionists or secularists. Thus, negotiating the Way in pursuit of authentic practice consists in how to do Zen with nondually revaluated duality, now recast in terms of the various pairs of foci.[39]

On this interpretation of Dōgen, being enlightened, experiencing nonduality, experiencing emptiness, is not a matter of being in some ahistorical, atemporal mental state, but is a matter of being completely engaged in a particular practice, Zen practice, that is embodied in one's discriminative thoughts and actions. This way of viewing things takes on a particular importance given Wittgenstein's and Putnam's considerations of the relationship between language, mind, and reality. Enlightenment experience conceived of as a consciousness characterized by "neutrality, indifference, undifferentiation, atemporality" sounds like it is supposed to be a consciousness that has broken through the occluding barrier of words and sees things as they really are, i.e., independently of all concepts. But if Putnam and Wittgenstein, as we have understood them, are right, then, "…we fall into hopeless philosophical error if we commit a 'fallacy of division' and conclude that there [is] a part of the truth that is the 'conventional part' and a part that is the 'factual part.'"[40] Kim's appeal to the idea of foci instead of metaphysical opposites is important in this regard. He reads Dōgen as viewing, for example, duality/nonduality, delusion/enlightenment, and practice/enlightenment, not as substantial, metaphysical opposites, but as differing focal points within the Buddhist salvic project. Similarly, we can view Putnam's point about the factual and the conventional: they are different foci within lived experience, not metaphysicalized opposites.

Regarding discrimination and differentiation, Dōgen, given Kim's reading of him, avoids the hopeless philosophical error elucidated by Putnam. Kim writes:

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[39] Kim 2007, 36-37.
[40] Putnam 1990, Preface x.

To Dōgen's credit, delusion and enlightenment *alike* are rooted in discriminative thinking. Like it or not, you are bound to discriminate and differentiate things, events, and relations, in a myriad of different ways. The activities of discrimination may be self-centered, discriminatory, and restrictive. Yet, discriminative activities, once freed from substantialist, egocentric obsessions, can function compassionately and creatively. Thus there are two kinds of discriminative thinking at an existential level, delusive and enlightened. To Dōgen, whether or not we use discrimination in the Zen salvic project is not the issue; rather, how we use it is. Both the rational and the irrational originate from discriminative thinking, as do the rational and nonrational. … Here, Dōgen takes exception to the traditionalist Zen view that uncritically negates thinking on the grounds of discrimination.[41]

So what is the relationship here between discriminative activities, the ineffable, and language? Enlightenment and practice are not separate. Despite Dōgen's emphasis of it, it is all-important to recognize that practice does not mean only zazen, only sitting, but practice in engagement of one's lived life. From Dōgen's side, it is within this context that enlightenment experience is achievable and has determinate content as enlightenment experience, as it is from Wittgenstein's and Putnam's side that it is within a lived language, a language-game, that words, gestures, and experience have the content that they do.

Oneness of practice and enlightenment

In a lucid article Masao Abe introduces the topic of the oneness of practice and attainment by formulating an early and central question of Dōgen's:

If, as Tendai Buddhism expounds, all sentient being[s] are originally endowed with Buddha-nature and are inherently awakened to their true nature, why is it necessary for so many Buddhists in the past, present, and future to set upon a religious quest and practice various forms of Buddhist discipline to attain enlightenment? Are not that resolve and practice unnecessary?[42]

At one level, the solution to this problem is to recognize that the statement of the problem goes wrong by treating practice and enlightenment as if they are two different things. As Dōgen writes:

Although this inconceivable dharma is abundant in each person, it is not actualized without practice, and it is not experienced without realization. …

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[41] Kim 2007, 84-85.
[42] Abe 1985, 100.

All buddhas continuously abide in it, but do not leave traces of consciousness in their illuminations. Sentient beings continuously move about in it, but illumination is not manifest in their consciousness.[43]

To suppose that practice and realization are not one is nothing but a heretical view; in buddha-dharma they are inseparable. Because practice of the present moment is practice-realization, the practice of beginner's mind is itself the entire original realization.

Therefore, when we give instructions for practicing, we say that you should not have any expectation for realization outside of practice, since this is the immediate original realization. Because this is the realization of practice, there is no boundary in the realization. Because this is the practice of realization, there is no beginning to practice. [44]

Ordinarily, one might think of practice, for example, zazen, as a means to the final state of enlightenment. Dōgen denies this means-ends relationship between practice and enlightenment. This would seem to imply that as soon as one begins practicing, one is enlightened. This is true, but there is a difference between being enlightened and realizing or actualizing it, as Dōgen fully acknowledges. In his "Rules for Zazen" (*zazen-gi*) fascicle, Dōgen writes, "Do not desire to become a buddha; let sitting or lying down drop away. … Be mindful of the passing of time, and engage yourself in zazen as though saving your head from fire."[45] Without such burning engagement, realization is not possible. Yet because of the emptiness of all "things," practice and enlightenment are not different. In a well-known passage, Dōgen writes:

Firewood becomes ash, and it does not become firewood again. Yet, do not suppose that the ash is the future and the firewood past. You should understand that firewood abides in the phenomenal expression of firewood, which fully includes past and future and is independent of past and future. Ash abides in the phenomenal expression of ash, which fully includes future and past. Just as firewood does not become firewood again after it is ash, you do not return to birth after death.[46]

The word translated as "phenomenal expression" here is *hōi*, which literally means "dharma stage" or "dharma position" and is, "The unique, nonrepeatable stage of a thing's existence at a given moment."[47] So at one dharma position we have firewood and at another we have ash. In saying that, "…firewood abides in the phenomenal expression of firewood, which fully includes past and future and is independent of past and future. Ash abides in the phenomenal expression of ash, which fully includes future and past" I take Dōgen to be saying that ash and firewood are

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[43] Dōgen 1985, 143, Bendō-Wa.
[44] Dōgen 1985, 151-52, Bendō-Wa question 7.
[45] Dōgen 1985, 29, Zazen-Gi, 29.
[46] Dōgen 1985, 70, Genjō Kōan number 7.
[47] Dōgen 1985, 318.

both independent and identical. But how is such a seemingly contradictory position possible? A possible answer can be found in Dōgen's views on space and time in relation to emptiness.[48] According to Kim, Dōgen's views were heavily influenced by Hua-yen philosophy. Kim describes the Hua-yen view thus:

> The entire universe consisted of creative processes in which the multiplicity of things and events interacted with and interpenetrated one another without obstruction. Particularities were not obliterated or deficient in any way, yet were unhindered in the perfect harmony of the total Dharma-realm. This nonobstruction (*muge*) was possible through the mediation of emptiness. This grand cosmic process of interaction, interpenetration, and integration in all realms, dimensions, perspectives of the self and the world went on endlessly (*jūjū-mujin*).[49]

On this view, things interact (are separate) but interpenetrate each other in such a way that there is no separation between them. Importantly, this view is four-dimensional, i.e., not only do the tree and soil at a given dharma position (*hōi*) interpenetrate one another, so does the tree at one dharma position and its ashes at a later dharma position. While this exposition of the Hua-yen view is incomplete, it will suffice for our purposes.[50]

The point we should make is that just as the firewood is both ash and not-ash, the person who has yet to realize enlightenment is both enlightened and unenlightened. But in the case of enlightenment and practice there is a further layer. As is often done, we should distinguish between acquired awakening and original awakening.[51] At any given time or dharma position, a person possess Buddha-nature and is, we might say, endowed with original awakening, but it is unrealized. But insofar as that dharma position is both identical with and different from other past and future dharma positions, it encapsulates both original awakening and acquired awakening, provided there is a future dharma position that is a dharma position of acquired awakening. But as with the ash and firewood, such a dharma position of future realization should not be thought of as only future. In this way, practice and realization are one, one possesses original awakening and acquired awakening even when one has, from the point of view of a particular dharma position, not yet realized enlightenment.

All this is preliminary to the central contention of this section. For Dōgen, enlightenment is not a matter of being in a certain mental state that is separable from one's engagement with the

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[48] Kim 2004, 143ff.
[49] Kim 2004, 145.
[50] But see Chang 1971, 121ff.
[51] See, for example, Abe 1985, 103.

world. This is meant, in part, in the same way that in Wittgenstein's example of sitting in his room and hoping that N.N. will come and bring some money, that state of hope and its content are not a product of the state of Wittgenstein's mind at that moment.[52] It is being embedded in a particular language-game, i.e., that whole "consisting of language and the activities into which it is woven…"[53] that determines the content. It is within the broader normative context of a language-game, all the ways of acting and the concomitant institutions of giving, receiving, trusting, visiting, etc., that it makes sense to call something an instance of "hoping N.N. will come and bring some money." Similarly, Zen enlightenment is the embodying of Zen practice over time. So one can be born with Buddha-nature but not realize it until the practice is embodied in the requisite way. It is within the normative context of Zen Buddhism, its language and concepts, its practice of zazen and kōan study, that the intention for, and realization of, enlightenment becomes possible. But enlightenment is not an addition to practice, just as hope is not an addition to a language-game. Further, realized enlightenment itself consists in achieving a particular depth of practice, what Kim referred to as authentic practice. That authentic practice is itself enlightenment.[54]

And that authentic practice, contrary to the dualism of words and silence, operates in and through language. Kim writes:

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[52] Wittgenstein writes:

> Now suppose I sit in my room and hope that N.N. will come and bring me some money, and suppose one minute of this state could be isolated, cut out of its context; would what happened in it then not be hoping?—Think, for example, of the words which you may utter in this time. They are no longer part of this language. And in different surroundings the institution of money doesn't exist either.
> A coronation is the picture of pomp and dignity. Cut one minute of this proceeding out of its surroundings: the crown is being placed on the head of the king in his coronation robes.—But in different surroundings, gold is the cheapest of metals, its gleam is thought vulgar. There the fabric of the robe is cheap to produce. A crown is a parody of a respectable hat. And so on (Wittgenstein 2009, §584).

[53] Wittgenstein 2009, §7.

[54] There is, of course, an important difference between the way in which hope consists not so much in being in a particular state as being engaged in a particular language-game, and enlightenment's consisting not so much in being in a particular mental state as being engaged in a particular practice. First, the realization of enlightenment is an achievement in the way that hoping is not. Secondly, while Wittgenstein might be sitting in his room hoping N.N. will come, even though nothing of his occurrent mental states concerns N.N., being in a realized enlightened state does mean that one's occurrent mental states have a particular, enlightened quality, whether we characterize it as non-detached, nondual, or whatever. Nevertheless, those occurrent states are not separable from the authentic practice and its normative background.

Enlightenment, from Dōgen's perspective, consists of clarifying and penetrating one's muddled discriminative thought in and through our language to attain clarity, depth, and precision in the discriminative thought itself. This is enlightenment or vision.[55]

Enlightenment is a thoroughly conceptualized Zen practice at the level of discriminative engagement with the world, but it is enlightened discriminative engagement. Let us turn now from the oneness of enlightenment and practice, to the specifics of language and the ineffable in Dōgen.

Language and the Ineffable in Dōgen's work

A central concern of this paper has been to undercut some common readings of the dualism of silence and language in Mahāyāna Buddhism, particularly Zen. One of the major causes of confusion, I argued, was the conflation of necessary with limited ineffability and generative ineffability. I now want to argue that we can make sense of the role that language plays for Dōgen by appealing to the distinction between these kinds of ineffability. To begin, let us consider the various possible relationships between language and enlightenment. Here is a list of key, though non-exhaustive, possibilities:

1) Language and linguistic gestures can be used to express one's enlightened state.
2) Language can be used to describe the nature of one's enlightenment experience, i.e., used to describe a world of emptiness and nonduality.
3) Language can be used to facilitate the realization of enlightenment, as, for example, the many Zen stories of a monk realizing enlightenment by hearing a Master's question.
4) Language plays a central role in one's authentic practice which constitutes one's ongoing realized enlightenment.
5) Language can be used to help another realize enlightenment by instructing them, for example, in zazen or a dharma discourse such as the Buddha's initial discourse on the Four Noble Truths.

2) and 4) seem most directly to be related to the question of enlightenment and ineffability. We have seen that on Kim's reading of Dōgen, 4) undercuts one sense in which enlightenment experience is a state of ineffable, pure consciousness of an undifferentiated world of emptiness. While a full account of Dōgen's views on the relationship between language and reality would consider all five of the above, we will only focus on 2) and 4). In looking at 2) we will see that we further touch upon 4).

2), again, is the claim that language can be used to describe the nature of one's enlightenment experience, i.e., used to describe a world of emptiness and nonduality. In the

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[55] Kim 2007, 63.

context of what we might call authentic description, which is, of course, in the context of authentic Buddhist practice, we can see, through Dōgen, and our earlier discussion of ineffability, how this is possible. According to Kim:

> In spite of inherent frailties in their make-up, words are the bearers of ultimate truth. In this respect, words are not different from things, events, or beings—all are "alive" in Dōgen's thought. The dynamics of words as living forces in the context of realization, in turn, legitimates discriminating thought.[56]

But what might it mean to say that "words are the bearers of ultimate truth." It doesn't mean, exactly, that they stand for ultimate truth, or represent it. It is more that they embody it and are not, as Kim says, different from things, events, and beings. As Kim writes elsewhere:

> …there is no metaphysical or experiential hiatus between the symbol and the symbolized. This becomes clearer when we examine Dōgen's discussion of "intimate words" (*mitsugo*). Employing the combination of the two meanings, "intimacy" and "hiddenness," in the Chinese character *mitsu*, Dōgen advanced an ingenious view of mystery. *Mitsugo* is ordinarily understood as "secret words" or "hidden words," the secrecy of hiddenness of which can be removed by extensive learning, supernormal faculties, and the like. In opposition to this interpretation, Dōgen said:

> > The *mitsu* in question means intimacy (*shimmitsu*) and the absence of distance. [When you speak of the Buddhas and ancestors], the Buddhas and ancestors embrace everything; [likewise] you embrace everything and I embrace everything. Practice includes all, a generation includes all, and intimacy includes all.

> Intimate words were those spoken and acted out by us in such a way that there was no hiatus between words and referents, thought and reality, mind and body, and expressions and activities. When a symbol was used in such a nondualistic manner, it was totally intimate with and transparent to the symbolized.[57]

Understanding for the moment the idea of ultimate truth as the world as it is, as we have seen in examining Wittgenstein and Putnam, the idea of the world as it is, is not a world that is unveiled, stripped free of concepts and language. We are only ever fully in contact with the world through our language-games—our conceptual encounters with the world. That contact becomes intimate when the dualities of language and world, and self and world, are dissolved. Body and mind drop off (*shinjin datsuraku*) only through intimacy with a world that is "simultaneously" differentiated through our language-games and empty through realization. The experience of emptiness comes

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[56] Kim 1985, 58.
[57] Kim 2004, 85-86.

through the intimate realization of the insubstantiality of that which we are in contact with only through our language-games. That is, in drinking tea from a bowl, one experiences the world as it is by experiencing the tea bowl as a tea bowl, which is only possible within a particular language-game, and "simultaneously" experiencing the emptiness of the tea bowl, the tea, and one's self in relation to it and the surrounding environment. However, the intimacy of the words depends on the authenticity of one's practice, i.e., one's state of enlightenment, or lack thereof, and on the entanglement of reality and convention in Wittgenstein's and Putnam's sense. As Dōgen writes, "The Tathāgata's speech is clearly different from that of all others; likewise, regarding silence, he and other beings are not the same."[58] The "same" words can be more or less intimate with reality, depending on the speaker/hearer.

Let us turn now to a passage from Wittgenstein that will lead nicely into further issues regarding enlightenment and ineffability. Wittgenstein writes:

> Describe the aroma of coffee!—Why can't it be done? Do we lack the words? And *for what* are words lacking?—But where do we get the idea that such a description must, after all, be possible? Have you ever felt the lack of such a description? Have you tried to describe the aroma and failed?[59]

Whatever Wittgenstein's intentions for writing this remark, let's use it to make a point relevant to our discussion of Dōgen, language, and ineffability. Is the aroma of coffee ineffable? We might first inquire about what it would mean to describe the aroma of coffee. It presumably means giving some meaningful detail that would allow another to understand what it is like to smell it. This is in the same sense that describing the shape and color of a tea bowl allows someone who is not currently viewing it to understand its nature. Is it not possible, then, to describe the aroma of coffee? When describing the tea bowl, we might say that its color is a motley of browns and beiges. That it is cracked and three inches tall. When describing the coffee we don't seem to have access to those sorts of descriptors. However, if it is a French Roast, for example, we might say that it smells *like* toasted marshmallows. If it has been on the burner for too long, we might say that it smells *like* it has been on the burner too long. Whether such descriptions *convey* anything meaningful will depend on how familiar the listener is with the smell of toasted marshmallows or coffee that has been on the burner too long. But the same holds true for the description of the tea bowl, which we don't think of as significantly ineffable in its

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[58] Quoted in Kim 2007, 33.
[59] Wittgenstein 2009, §610.

nature. In both the aroma and the tea bowl case, if there is any ineffability, it is of the generative variety. No description or words will reproduce in the hearer the phenomenological experience itself of seeing the bowl's simple properties or smelling the coffee. And, of course, saying the coffee smells like toasted marshmallows does not exhaust all the qualities of the aroma. However, it is through the language-games, through the normative practice of talking about tea, tea bowls, coffee, aromas, etc., that the experiences are what they are. Those language-games are preconditions for one's being intimate with the tea bowl and the aroma of the coffee. Language does not obscure them so that their true natures exhibit necessary ineffability.

We can see something like this in Dōgen, at least, as Kim reads him. Kim writes in discussing Dōgen's many uses of language:

> Another significant character is *nyo*, which has the dual meaning of "like" or "resemble" on the one hand and "thusness" or "as-it-is-ness" on the other. By using this twofold meaning Dōgen maintains that likeness is thusness, that is, the nondual interfusion of the concept and the conceptualized, or of a relative and absolute meaning. *Nyoze*, which has a double meaning similar to *nyo*, is also interpreted in this way. In the Tsuki fascicle Dōgen writes:
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> > The "like" in the foregoing "like the moon in the water" is the "moon-in-the-water" itself. It is the "thusness of the water," the "thusness of the moon," "within thusness," and the "thusness of within." We are not construing "like" as resemblance: "like" is "thusness."
>
> As we have seen repeatedly, metaphor, simile, parable, and the like in Dōgen are not mere instruments or vehicles of communication, but the bearers and workings of ultimate reality/truth. In this sense Dōgen views language itself as realization rather than as a mere vehicle for communicating truth.[60]

The contexts are different and the "like" of "like the moon in water" is not exactly that of "the aroma is like toasted marshmallows," but we can make a similar point in regard to *like* and *thusness*. The language describing the aroma of the coffee, just as the language describing the tea bowl is the thusness of each. Importantly, in the context of emptiness, the thusness is not merely that of the motley browns and beiges of the bowl and the toasted marshmallow of the aroma, but the emptiness of those things. And that emptiness is itself the thusness of those things. But the "thusness of emptiness," "emptiness of thusness," "thusness of aroma," "thusness of color," etc., are all entangled in and through the language-games and authentic practice of the enlightened

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[60] Kim 1985, 66-67.

"individual" whose experience it is. And one is intimate with thusness through that entanglement.

So far the discussion of Dōgen and language has been focused on the idea that in Dōgen's Zen, language does not obscure reality, but rather is, in part, what allows us to be intimate with the thusness of things. Further, the enlightened person is enlightened through her continued practice and engagement with the world, both of which involve discrimination and differentiation through language. What we have not touched on for any length is Dōgen's playfulness and literary ability to use language in new ways so as to express that which is so difficult to express in Zen, for example, Buddha-nature, the emptiness of things, their nonduality, etc. Here the generatively ineffable and the contingent limited ineffable come together in Dōgen. For it is Dōgen's skill with language that enables him to overcome the contingent limited ineffability in such a way that a reader can be brought to experience that which is generatively ineffable. This does not make Dōgen's words into the finger pointing at the moon, for as we have seen the language is intimate with the world. As Kim says, "…Dōgen views language itself as realization rather than as a mere vehicle for communicating truth."[61]

Dōgen employs a number of what we might call techniques to describe the thusness of things, their Buddha-nature and emptiness. Kim does a masterful job cataloguing these techniques in his seminal, "'The Reasons of Words and Letters.': Dōgen and Kōan Language."[62] Instead of going through these, let's discuss in a general way how we can think of Dōgen's language and the way he overcomes contingent limited ineffability. One way of thinking of the relationship between Dōgen's different uses of language and reality is that of revealing a new aspect of that which is always before us. Let's think about Wittgenstein's use of the duck-rabbit
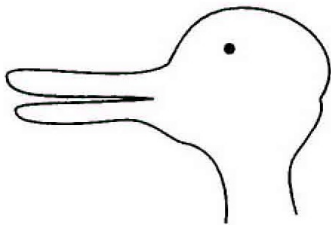

image.

We are intimate with the rabbit aspect in and through our language-games of pictures and rabbits. But seeing that the picture is both rabbit and not rabbit requires a shift, but one that also

[61] Kim 1985, 66-67.
[62] Kim 1985.

depends on language and experience. One who did not know anything about ducks, had never seen one, would not be in a position to see the other aspect. Dōgen's playful language when ingested in the context of one's sincere Buddhist practice allows one to see the duck (emptiness), so to speak, and to see that that before one's eyes is both duck and not-duck, rabbit and not-rabbit.

The metaphor is not exact, certainly. One sees the picture as a rabbit or as a duck, but not both simultaneously. The enlightened person doesn't experience the thusness of the tea bowl, i.e., its tea-bowl-ness and its emptiness as shifting aspects in the way a person sees the duck and then shifts to the rabbit or vice versa. And, very importantly, getting someone to see the duck or getting yourself to see the duck, is easier than getting yourself or another to nondually experience the reality of Buddha-nature, emptiness, etc. The authentic practice that is required for that is a great achievement. Dōgen's language overcomes contingent limited ineffability within the context of that practice and the concomitant language-games in which we engage and our lives are embedded.

Thus, again, if there is any ineffability in enlightenment experience on Dōgen's account, it is generative ineffability and/or contingent limited ineffability, but not necessary ineffability. While attachment to words and letters may occlude reality, may interfere with seeing things as they are, seeing things as they are is not something that is done in the absence of the normative background of both the language-games and authentic practice in which one lives and through which one engages the world.

From the Collapse of One Dualism to the Next

We have witnessed the collapse of the silence/language dualism inside and outside of Dōgen's thought. Within Dōgen's thought we have seen another dualism collapse, namely, that of practice and enlightenment. The two other dualisms with which we began were enlightenment/delusion and ultimate/conventional reality. Where do they stand given the above considerations of Wittgenstein's, Putnam's, and Dōgen's views? Regarding Dōgen's views on the dualism of delusion and enlightenment, Kim writes:

> Delusion and enlightenment differ from one another perspectively, are never metaphysical opposites (such as good and evil, or the one and the many, as ordinarily understood), and are both temporal, coextensive, and coeternal as ongoing salvic processes. In this respect, I would call them "foci" rather than "antithesis" or "polarities." They are orientational and perspectival foci within the structure and dynamics of realization (*genjō*). As such, their boundaries, though provisional, always remain and are

never erased. Yet they are "permeable," so to speak, instead of "incommensurable." In light of such an intimate, dynamic relationship, enlightenment consists not so much in replacing as in dealing with or "negotiating" delusion in the manner consistent with its principles. By the same token, delusion is not ordinary by any means; it is constantly illumined and clarified by enlightenment in the ongoing salvic process, ad infinitum.[63]

The enlightened person operates within delusion. That is, she operates within a world of discrete things (one focal point), but as part of her ongoing practice they are also not-discrete, for they are empty (another focal point). This is akin to the duck-rabbit picture. The duck is not a metaphysical opposite of the rabbit, nor the rabbit of the duck. They are different foci of one and the same thing. Again, the duck-rabbit picture is not a perfect analogy here, for the emptiness of things (enlightenment) is experienced only through the simultaneous differentiation of things (delusion) that are only then empty.

Regarding Dōgen's disfavor toward the doctrine of two truths (the dualism of ultimate and conventional reality) Kim writes:

> ...ultimate truth was more often than not privileged over worldly truth. Candrakīrti's Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika philosophy, according to C.W. Huntington, Jr., holds the incommensurability of the two truths: One "clashes with" but does not "contradict" the other. The worldly truth—our everyday experience through the normal ways of perceiving and thinking—is no more than a launching pad, so to speak, for plunging into the ultimate truth, in which all rational and conceptual contents ("the screen") of the worldly truth are stripped away. In this interpretation, rational and conceptual contents have no soteriological significance except for a pragmatic one. From Dōgen's perspective, the so-called two truths should be thoroughly temporalized as a pair of foci within the dynamics of realization.[64]

As we have seen, the silence/language dualism collapses because of the role of language in authentic enlightenment practice. Enlightenment is not a stripping away of the conventional; it is an authentic engagement with it in time. Just as enlightenment and delusion are a pair of foci instead of opposites, so, too, are what is referred to as ultimate truth/reality and conventional truth/reality. And we become intimate with these foci through our lived language-games and authentic enlightenment practice. Referring back to our discussion of Wittgenstein and Putnam, the idea of ultimate reality, a reality that is stripped of convention, is empty. Fact and convention are too entangled (like Dōgen's vines) for it to make any sense to speak of their separation.

Conclusions

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[63] Kim 2007, 4.
[64] Kim 2007, 25-26.

The central contention of this paper has been that the three Buddhist dualisms of delusion/enlightenment, words/silence, and conventional/ultimate truth are problematic given Wittgenstein's, Putnam's, and Dōgen's views on the relationship between language and reality. A main part of the problem regarding the silence/language dualism stems from a misunderstanding regarding the nature of the different kinds of ineffability, the necessity of a normative, linguistic context for differentiation, and the role of differentiation in enlightenment experience. The central problem for the conventional/ultimate truth dualism is that the "ultimate" is only apprehended through the "conventional." The dualism of delusion/enlightenment collapses when we recognize the way in which enlightenment operates within delusion. A secondary contention of this paper has been that the Zen philosophy of Dōgen offers us a Buddhism that deftly avoids these problematic dualisms.

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