FRONTIERS OF JAPANESE PHILOSOPHY

Frontiers of japanese philosophy

edited by

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Preface

Those engaged in philosophy in European and American universities rarely pay attention to the debates past and present going on in Japan. The obvious reason for neglecting such a long and rich intellectual tradition is that few Western philosophers have the requisite linguistic and historical knowledge to evaluate seriously what Japanese philosophy has to say. But there is a still deeper reason, one that is seldom articulated by philosophers in the West. Their lack of engagement with non-Western philosophy is often motivated by the idea that philosophy is an intellectual discipline that emerged in a Western context (namely, ancient Greece), developed into an academic specialization in Western institutions of learning (namely, in medieval universities where philosophy was taken as the core of the "liberal arts"), and played a fundamental role in the rise of Western science (namely, in connection with the construction of a "scientific worldview" in early modern Europe). If there is interest in philosophical currents and schools outside of the West, it is tied up with the question of how Western ideas have been appropriated there and in what directions they have developed.

This approach of non-Western philosophers clearly betrays a colonial attitude. The emergence and evolution of their own tradition are taken as normative for considering other traditions, and foreign modes of thought are finally viewed in the light of their own. However, there are philosophical methods and standards of rationality that can stand on their own without having to be measured against or compared with one's own. Stepping away from the colonial attitude requires critical reflection on one's own tradition. Three things strike me as important in this regard.

First, it is worth asking in which places and under which social, politi-

cal, and institutional conditions philosophy emerged as an intellectual discipline. The concrete milieu leaves a decisive mark on the philosophical questions that are asked. For example, it is no coincidence that, given the varieties of social order in ancient Greece, questions should arise as to what the proper form of the state should be. Similarly it is no coincidence that throughout medieval Western Europe, where the impact of Christianity was strong, the question of the relationship between God and the human person should have been central. Philosophical questions and problems do not fall from the skies; they always rise up out of concrete contexts and historical constellations. To be clearly aware of these contextual ties is to assert critically that one's own questions and problems do not simply belong to a general "philosophia perennis" but are expressions of a specific culture and time. This is particularly clear when one compares one's own questions and problems with those that were posed in another culture and under other circumstances. Only then will the mixture of overlaps and serious differences come to light; only then will it become apparent that there is no way to assert in advance which are the important problems. By engaging with philosophical currents of another culture, one will also be driven to recognize and rethink the birthmarks of one's own philosophical problems

Secondly, it is also worth examining the relationship of philosophical debates to religious, artistic, and scientific debates. Philosophy is not an isolated discipline, untainted by other intellectual pursuits as it were, posing its own questions and constructing its own self-enclosed systems. Rather philosophical debates take up numerous questions that have become dominant in circles outside of philosophy. The famous problem of theodicy, which was discussed in a distinct religious context, is one such example. Without the assumption, within that context, of a good God, the question of how a good God can permit evil in the world would not have been raised. The decisive factor here is that the philosophical problem can only be stated with precision if one takes into account the tacit assumptions prevailing at the time. This means that there is no deciding in advance which contexts are relevant and which problems deserve special attention. We have first to compare various contexts with one another—both within a particular culture and across cultures—and inquire how a problem could become significant in a spe-

cific context. Only then can the uncritical assumption that philosophy is an autonomous discipline be overcome. To be specific, only when one has compared the catalog of philosophical questions posed in the Western tradition (ranging from theodicy to semantic and metaphysical questions) with the corresponding catalog of Japanese philosophy, can one realize that there is no such thing as a "natural" philosophical question, floating free of space and time. What is taken to be important in one philosophical tradition depends in large measure on its ties to structures outside of philosophy, from religion to art to science. In different cultures these ties take completely different forms.

Thirdly, rational standards and claims to conceptual clarify and logical stringency, need to be subjected to critical demonstration. There is no general definition of rationality that can be imposed on all philosophical discourse. Rather these standards take shape within such discourse and serve in part a variety of aims. It is hardly fitting to take the standards that governed medieval scholastic debates and hold them up as the norm of what it is to be rational. They were specific to discussions held in small university circles where they served a specific aim (namely, the interpretation of classical texts). Only a comparison of the standards of rationality elaborated in different contexts can clarify the full range of possibilities and dispose of the idea that the matter can be settled once and for all and formulated in universally applicable terms. This fact becomes even clearer when Western and non-Western standards of rationality are being compared. There is no neutral standpoint from which to decide what is rational; this is a matter to be taken up within philosophical discourse itself. To judge what counts as a rational argument and what does not requires a painstaking reconstruction of different discourses, always keeping in mind historical changes that can take place within such discourse.

Given these three points, a concern with non-Western philosophy is not only important for broadening the current base of philosophical knowledge. Nor does it serve only, as we stated at the outset, to clarify where and how Western philosophy has been received. Engaging non-Western philosophy is a process of critical confrontation with one's own philosophical questions, methods, and standards of rationality. It has an essential contribution to make in overcoming colonial attitudes and see-

ing that if we are to measure foreign philosophies with our own yard-stick, we need to measure our own philosophies with theirs. Japanese philosophy is not simply one more field of specialization for experts. It poses a challenge for all Western philosophers to critically reflect on their own tradition and thereby take seriously the ancient philosophical mandate, "Know yourself!" Self-knowledge succeeds only through knowledge of the other.

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Foreword

The immediate occasion for gathering together the thirteen essays that make up this volume was a conference held at the Humboldt University in Berlin from 18 to 21 October of this year. Entitling the collection *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy* was a natural choice. Geographically, the discussions took place at the periphery of the circle of scholars interested in the indigenous philosophy of Japan. In terms of content, there is much to be found in these pages that reflect pioneer work in the ongoing development of that tradition. The fact is, the number of students abroad, Japanese or otherwise, specializing in the field is already overtaking the number in Japan. The volume, and I would venture to say also the quality, of the research is not far behind. But more than place and focus, it was the frontier ethos that suggested the title. The same spirit of cooperation and exchange that has become a defining mark of those participating in the small but steadily expanding international forum on Japanese philosophy was once again in evidence.

All together, there is no longer anything particularly strange about addressing the future direction of Japanese philosophy from Europe. A mere twenty years ago the claim might have sounded presumptuous, if not slightly ridiculous. Even today the idea that an assembly of scholars from six countries, most of them less than two years on either side of their doctoral dissertation, should in any sense be considered representative of the borderlands of Japanese philosophy may sound to some like little more than misplaced flattery. It is a good deal more than that. Even the language barrier, which so many Japanese intellectuals have so long thought to be an insurmountable obstacle that keeps outsiders permanently at one remove from the subtleties of their native thought and insures that control over its development will remain firmly in the

hands of those who have been born and reared on the inside, has begun to come down, stone by stone, as surely and demonstrably as the Berlin Wall itself. I think it is time to say it clearly: *Japanese philosophy belongs to the world*. No more than Aristotle is primarily for the Greeks, Kierkegaard for the Danes, Llull for the Catalans, or al-Ghazzālī for the Iranians, Dōgen and Nishida have outgrown the circumstances of their birth. Their writings have left the ranks of the arcane and esoteric to be read and studied around the world as part of the general patrimony of philosophy.

The number of up and coming scholars straddling cultures to wrestle with the philosophical texts of Japan, particularly twentieth-century thought, is increasing. Little matter that Western academia is slow to reflect this change. For now, it is enough that this younger generation is motivated and hard at work. In time they will be in a better position than any of us to decide what the next step is and how best to take it.

I am proud to have had the chance to participate in the meetings and to prepare this volume for publication. A special thanks goes to Ralf Müller for organizing the entire event and managing the internet site of "Nihon tetsugaku" to facilitate content among participants and share information with the wider scholarly community. In addition to basic funding from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, I would also like to acknowledge the financial assistance of the Centre d'Etudes Japonaises at the Institut Nationale des Langues et Civilisations Orientals in Paris.

James W. Heisig
15 December 2006
Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture

The Meaning of Heaven
according to Nishi Amane

Saitō Takako

The starting point for this research stemmed from my examination of Nishi Amane's translated words from English to Japanese. I discovered that he used the Chinese character *ri* 理 repeatedly. The word *ri* is commonly translated "principle" in English. For instance, Nishi wrote that the word "philosophy" could be translated by *rigaku riron* 理學理論, which means the study of *ri* and the theory of *ri*. However he wrote that he chose the term *tetsugaku* 哲學 in order not to create confusion between European technical terms and Neo-Confucian technical terms.[1] Nishi translated the term "theology" as *shinrigaku* 神理學,[2] which means the study of the principle of deity. The term "ontology" was translated as *ritaigaku* 理體學,[3] which means the study of the principle of substance. Why did Nishi use this character *ri* so frequently?

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1. 「生性發蘊」,『西周全集』[Complete works of Nishi Amane, hereafter NAZ followed by volume number], (Tokyo: Munataka Shobō, 1961), I: 31.

2. NAZ I: 48 ; NAZ IV: III.

3. NAZ IV: I52.

This was the first question I faced in studying Nishi's works. I came to understand that Nishi used the word *ri* as a cornerstone to clarify European terminology and to translate it into Japanese. I have treated this question in a recently published article.[4]

During the research for that article I discovered the following, "Heaven means the place from which principles are formed."[5] It caught my attention and heightened my curiosity to know precisely what he meant by it. I therefore began my research for the present essay by delving into the meaning of this enigmatic phrase.

Nishi Amane 西周, who was born in 1829 and died in 1897, belongs to the generation of Japanese thinkers who lived through the latter half of the nineteenth century, experiencing firsthand what was undoubtedly the greatest upheaval that Japanese society has ever known.

My aim in this paper is to understand the meaning of Heaven (天 Jap. *ten*; Ch. *tian*), a term that had an absolute, spiritual meaning for Nishi. Much has been published about him in general, notably in Japanese, but work is limited on this particular question. Koizumi Takashi refers briefly to Nishi's belief in Heaven in a 1975 essay, but he does not carry through on his analysis of the notion.[6] Koizumi Takashi's seminal work, *Nishi Amane's Encounter with Western Thought*, published in 1989, recounts the main tenets of Nishi's thought and situates it in relation to Ogyū Sorai (荻生徂徠 1666–1728) and J. S. Mill (1806–1873).[7] Koizumi notes that Sorai exerted a significant influence on Nishi before the latter's discovery of Western thought. An article by Ōkubo Yasuharu published in 2004 compares Nishi Amane's religious thought with that of Nakamura Keiu (1832–1891). According to Ōkubo, Nishi tried to deepen traditional Confucian thinking about Heaven once the Meiji government in 1873 lifted the ban on Christianity and opened the door

4. Saitō Takako "La problématique du *ri* et la philosophie occidentale selon Nishi Amane," *Cipango* 13, (Paris: Publications Langues O', 2006), 78–100.

5. 天トハ理ノ由テ出ル所ヲ指ス者,「教門論」[On religions], NAZ 1,505.

6. Koizumi Takashi 小泉 仰,「西周の宗教観」[The religious perspective of Nishi Amane]『明治思想家の宗教観』[The religious perspective of Meiji thinkers], (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1975), 91–101.

7. Koizumi Takashi, 西周と欧米思想との出会い [Nishi Amane's encounter with Western thought], (Tokyo: Mitsumine Shobō, 1989), 332–4.

for him to develop his ideas on religion. Ōkubo underlines the influence on Nishi of a nineteenth-century Dutch philosopher, Cornelis Willem Opzoomer, particularly with regard to the question of the separation of religion and scientific study.[8]

In what follows I will examine Nishi's meaning of Heaven in relation to another idea he calls on, that of principal or law (理 Jap. *ri*, Ch. *li*), an idea that I have found to be essential to understanding his system of thought. I begin with the notion of "principal" in order to understand his use of the term Heaven.

As far as Nishi's life is concerned, there are various sources such as Koizumi Takashi and Thomas R. H. Havens.[9] It is enough here simply to note that up to the age of twenty-four, Nishi was educated in his fief of Tsuwano, which is situated in present-day Shimane prefecture, and was schooled in Confucianism, the official doctrine of the time. On arriving in Edo in 1854, at the very moment that Commodore Perry and his fleet were sailing into the capital's harbor, he started learning Dutch and English. A few years later, in 1862, the Edo government sent him to Leiden in the Netherlands, where he was to concentrate his studies on national and international law. After two years he returned to Japan where he held numerous high-ranking posts both in the political sphere and in the field of education. He worked in the Ministry for Military Affairs, gave lectures to the emperor, and was one of the founding members of the Tokyo Academy, established in 1879. His writing concerned a wide variety of areas: psychology, logic, morality, law, and politics. Nishi also translated three books into Japanese: one a collection of lecture by his teacher in Leiden, Simon Visseling, entitled 『萬國公法』 *International Public Law; Mental Philosophy, Including the Intellect, Sensibilities, and Will* by Joseph Haven under the title of 『心理學』 (1875 and 1876), and John Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism* under the title 『利學』 (1877). He

8. Ōkubo Yasuharu 大久保健晴, 「明治知識人における宗教論の諸相」[Diverse aspects of religious arguments by intellectuals of the Meiji era],『政治思想研究』May 2004: 59–78.

9. For the life and works of Nishi Amane, see Koizumi Takashi, *op. cit.*; and Thomas R. H. Havens, *Nishi Amane and Modern Japanese Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970). Havens explores mainly the Westernizing tendency of Nishi's thought.

is considered in Japan to be the first translator of fundamental Western scientific terms such as "reason" (*risei* 理性), "idea" (*kannenn* 観念), "subject" (*shutai* 主観), "object" (*kyakkan* 客観) and "philosophy" (*tetsugaku* 哲學). A significant proportion of this terminology is still used in contemporary Japan.

Nishi and the confucian tradition

According to the bibliographic notes recorded in his *Complete Works*, just before leaving for Edo in 1854, Nishi was nominated in his fief as a teacher of Confucian studies.[10] It is thus possible for us to conclude that he was educated in Confucian thought to the point that he was qualified to teach it. After discovering the Western sciences, however, Nishi harshly criticized this tradition and especially the Neo-Confucians of the Song dynasty, among them the Cheng brothers, Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1085) and Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107), and Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200). His main criticism was that Confucianism never makes a clear distinction between politics and morality. He also rejected the idea that the laws of nature and the laws of morality belong to the same level of thought. For Nishi, this confusion, even if it was the work of the Four Sages[11] of the Confucian tradition, could no longer hold true after Western civilizations's discovery of the laws of nature. Nishi added a further criticism by claiming that Confucianism, because of its veneration of antiquity, remains static and incapable of innovation. Nishi underlines the fact that mentalities change according to the age and according to place; they are different for different people and for different social positions. The clear implication is that it is no longer possible to practice a pure form of Confucianism.[12]

Nishi clearly wanted to go beyond the Confucianism of his early edu-

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10. NAZ III: 133.

11. NAZ I: 287. Fuxi 伏羲, King Wen文王 (founder of the Zhou dynasty), The Duke of Zhou 周公 and Confucius: these four characters, the first of whom remains mythical, are considered as Confucian models. According to legend, they wrote the text of the *Yijing* 易経.

12. NAZ I: 274–5, 278, 280.

cation, but it will become clear below why he was not able to shake it off completely. To go beyond this tradition, he focused on the distinction between two areas of study, the intellectual and the physical, giving more weight to the former than to the latter. At the same time, his morality was based on the notion of Heaven, in the ancient Chinese meaning of the term, which can be traced back even further than the beginnings of Confucian thought. In the Edo period a number of thinkers were interested in studying the ancient Chinese texts directly without being influenced by the texts of the Song scholars. Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728), who exerted a significant influence over Nishi, was one of them.[13] It therefore bears looking more closely at the common points he and Sorai shared in their understanding of the idea of Heaven.

Ri AND INTELLECTUAL AND PHYSICAL STUDIES

The traditional way of looking at two areas of study, the intellectual and the physical, as if they belonged to the same level of reflection, was a major source of dissatisfaction for Nishi with the Confucianist tradition. After studying in Leiden, he labored to explain their differences and to separate them. Indeed, in Japan Nishi is considered the first thinker to have tried to distinguish between these two areas of study by drawing on schools of contemporary Western thought.[14]

In order to understand his reasoning, we may consider Nishi's class notes from around 1871.[15] In his lectures he uses the notion of *ri* to translate into Japanese the two English expressions "intellectual science" and "physical science." Intellectual science is translated as "studies of the Principles of the heart" (*shinrijō no gaku* 心理上の學) and physical science as "studies of the Principles of physical things" (*butsurijō no gaku*

13. On this subject, see KOIZUMI Takashi, *op. cit.*, 3–29.

14. See ŌKUBO Toshiyasu 大久保利謙「解説」[Commentary], NAZ 4, 609. Ōkubo suggests as a possible source of the distinction between the two domains in question: Joseph Haven, *Mental Philosophy, Including the Intellect, Sensibilities, and Will* (1857), which Nishi himself translated into Japanese.

15. Nishi started giving classes on European scientific thought in Tokyo once the political situation made it possible.

物理上の學). Before examining these class notes, let us examine Nishi's definition of the term *ri*.

Ri was a key notion in the Neo-Confucian tradition of the Song dynasty, and more precisely in the School of Zhu Xi, which was the official doctrine during Nishi's intellectual training. For example, Cheng Yi claimed that "everything has its Principle." According to him, it was precisely this Principle that gave reality its normative base.[16] According to Zhu Xi, "getting to the root of the Principle of each thing" (窮理 Ch. *quiongli*; Jap. *kyūri*) was the primordial attitude necessary for learning. This expression is used in his commentary on the opening sentence of *The Great Learning*. According to Zhu Xi, persons with this attitude would be able to expand their knowledge of things and arrive at genuine intentions that would lead to a pure heart, and would finally bring about great peace in the entire universe.[17]

In 1882 Nishi composed a few pages devoted to the notion of *ri*.[18] He begins with an etymological explanation in Chinese[19]—to work on jade to bring out its natural veins, and hence to put things in order—and from there goes on to cite passages from classical Chinese texts using this term. He notes that the Neo-Confucians of the Song dynasty were the first to use this term frequently, which was not much used before them. Next Nishi provides three Japanese words that he considers to be synonymous. The first is *kotowari* 事分り, knowing how to separate the whole circumstance into parts, and hence to understand a situation. The second is also pronounced *kotowari* 言分り and means knowing how to separate into parts what has been said, and hence to understand the spoken word. Now since the Chinese character *ri* can be read in Japanese as either *kotowari* or *ri,* we may conclude that Nishi is examining the

16. "Toute chose a son principe. Par exemple, ce qui fait que (*suoyi* 所以) le feu est chaud, que l'eau est froide, et même ce qui régit les rapports entre souverain et ministre, père et fils : ce sont là autant de principes." Translation from Anne Cheng, *Histoire de la pensée chinoise* (Paris: Seuil, Points Essais, 2002), 476.

17. The Zhu Xi text I have referred to is that found in 「大学章句補伝」in 『大学中庸』, 新釈漢文大系 2 (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1967), 123–6.

18. 「尚白箚記」, NAZ 1: 165–72.

19. Nishi relies on the 『説文解字』, NAZ 1, 167.

meaning of the Chinese character *ri* by transcribing it in two different ways in order to highlight the idea of separation and understanding.

His third synonym is *hazu* 筈, which means the natural consequence of reasoning. He goes on to compare the term *ri* with a number of Western words. From the outset he notes the absence of an absolute equivalent, but then indicates the terms "reason," "law of nature," "principle" and "idea" in the Platonic sense. Concerning this latter he writes:

> This term [idea] might seem unrelated to the character *ri*, but, in the end, it has a profound significance that seems almost identical to the definition of the Song Dynasty Neo-Confucians. It is necessary to examine this notion fully.[20]

Without developing the point further, he concludes:

> We know one part of *ri*, but we can not know it in its entirety […]. We can know that *ri* is that which is permanent and necessary, but there is no reason to know its entirety.[21]

What Nishi is doing here is trying to grasp the Western terms for "reason," "principle," "natural law," and "idea" in a Platonic sense by assimilating them to the notion of *ri*. He also wanted to deepen his thinking on the relationship between the Platonic idea and the *ri* of the Song Dynasty Neo-Confucianism, but in the end was unable to do so. We may also note that the *ri* was defined by him as that which is *permanent and necessary*, and as such lies beyond the capacity of human beings to comprehend in its entirety. Taking this definition into account, we may render this term in English as Principle or Law.

Next we turn to a notebook in which Nishi underlines the importance of differentiating the two domains of learning, the physical and the intellectual or moral. He writes:

> [In the West] Two types of study exist: *intellectual science* and *physical science*. In Europe, since ancient times, intellectual science was

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20. 是は理の字と餘り關渉無き様に見ゆれと，深く宋儒の指す理と同一趣の理を徴する語と成れり，是猶下に委しく論す可し，NAZ I: 170.

21. 吾人固より理の一端を知れとも其全體を知る事能はさる事有り，［略］一定必然の者たりと云ふ一端は知れとも其全體は知るに由無き也，NAZ I: 171–2.

called *mental, moral, spiritual,* or *metaphysical* (a study that relates to that which is exterior to the Principles of things). […] As the study of what is exterior to the Principles of things designates that which relates to the Principles of the heart, it is impossible to determine the limits of this domain. For example: fighting an enemy, evaluating his force or studying his weaponry comes under the Principle sof things, while to reflect on strategy or the way to put it into effect concerns the Principles of the heart. […] Even animals can know the Principles of things, but they do not know well what belongs to Principles of the heart. […] In the West, nowadays, the Principles of things are largely exploited, and according to the doctrine of materialism, this is the sum total of study. And yet, such thinking is that of a person who has lost his point of reference and must not be followed. The absence of the study of the Principles of the heart leads to the abolition of the Way of Politeness.

學に intellectual (心理上ノ) science 及ひ physical (物理上ノ) science とて二ツあり，此の心理上の學は古来歐羅巴中定まりなく種々ありて mental なるあり，或は moral 或は spiritual 或は metaphysical（物理外の學）等あり，［…］凡そ物理外の學は即ち心理學なるか故に，此の學に於ては幾何なりと極りあるものにあらさるなり，［…］譬えは今或敵ありて戦ひをなすに，其強サを論じ及び鉄砲器械等に就て論するは物理なり，其計策及び方略の如きは心理なるものなり，［…］物理は禽獣の如きも能く知るものにして，心理に至りては能く知ること能はす，［…］西洋近来に至りては物理大に開け，materialism の説に學は物理にありと云ふに至れり，然れとも甚だ耽溺せし所の語にして強ち従ふへきにあらす，若し心理の學なきときは禮義の道も自から廢するに至るへし[22]

In this passage, as mentioned above, Nishi translates intellectual science as "a study according to the Principles of the heart," and physical science as "a study according to the Principles of physical things." This distinction between two spheres will be important for understanding his reasoning about the relationship between Principle and Heaven.

Secondly, we may note that Nishi thought that even animals—to be perfectly clear, Nishi uses a pejorative word (禽獸) for animals—could

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22 「百學連環」, NAZ IV: 68. Translated by Saitō Takako and Helen Shall. The English words in the original text have been italicized in the translation.

know the Principles of physical things, but that they could not know a moral Principle. Only a human being is capable of this. And thirdly, Nishi is harshly critical of the rise in materialism in the West that could destroy "the Way of Politeness." It is worth underscoring the fact that for Nishi it was obvious that "learning the Principles of the heart" is more valuable than the study of the physical and material world.

In order to better understand Nishi's two expressions, "the Principle of physical things" and "the Principle of the heart," we turn to a book published in 1874 (M. 7),[23] he develops his thinking on these two Principles. In a word, he states that the Principles of physical things are natural laws (*tennen* 天然, which means a "natural state, such as Heaven has created"). Not only the greater universe and the massive starts, but everything from the tiniest drop of water to the plants and animals to the human being are governed by this Principle. No human being, even a Son of Heaven (*Tenshi* 天子) can change it. Exorcisms cannot transform it. This Principle precedes the natural character of a man determined by Heaven at the time of his birth (*sententeki* 先天的, a neologism of Nishi's age intended to translate the Western term *a priori*).

On the other hand, the Principles of the heart apply only to human beings, and only humans can contradict these Principles through unjust actions. These Principles are practicable in differing degrees, but they are not measurable. According to the occasion, the place, the individual, and one's position, the Principles can change. For this reason, it is difficult to quantify them. The Principles of the heart are subsequent to Heaven's determination of the character of an individual (*kōtenteki* 後天的, another neologism of the time to translate the term *a posteriori*).

We may note in passing that Nishi does not distinguish the plural from the singular form of the word Principle (*ri*) in his texts—and indeed, in Japanese, it is almost impossible to be precise on this question since the distinction is generally disregarded—but writes in the text cited above that the Principle of each physical thing is unique and valid for all persons, while the Principles of the heart are much more complex and very difficult to quantify.[24]

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23. 「百一新論」,NAZ I: 277–80.
24. *Ibid.*, NAZ I: 281.

In another text published later, in 1880 (M. 13), Nishi opposes and then reconciles these two types of Principles as distinct forces, both necessary for the development of a society. His reasoning is as follows: natural law is a Principle bestowed by Heaven on all beings. For the human person, the body (*nikutai* 肉體) is sustained by this Principle. If there were only this Principle, however, the strong would overpower the weak, the intelligent would lord it over the dim of wit, and the rich would control the poor. But Heaven also bestows tenderness on human beings (*aizen no jō* 藹然の情) that allows them to act according to Laws of the heart and to neutralize these situations. In a developed country—I assume that Nishi is thinking of the Netherlands, where he lived for two years—one can see the opposite: the weak seizing power from the strong, the dull from the brilliant, the poor from the rich. Nishi concludes:

> Without annihilating the flow of the Principle by which the strong overwhelm the weak, the intelligent suppress the dull, the rich overcome the poor, it is also true that, while using the Principles of the heart which are dynamic factors, and while regulating the degree of annihilation, one controls the degree of neutralization. […] The strong should not take power over the weak, but help them; the intelligent should not take power over the dull, but inform them; the rich should not take power over the poor, but help them. This is to obey Heaven's will; while using the two opposing forces, people manage to obtain a harmony in social relations. It is the law that enables them to achieve social well-being.

> 強能ク弱ヲ制シ，賢能ク愚ヲ制シ，富能ク貧ヲ制スル理ノ流行ヲ阻攪スルコトナク，更ニ心理ノ活機，之カ力ヲ減殺スルノ度ヲ節シ，之ヲ利用シテ以テ中和ノ度ヲ制シ，［略］強ハ弱ヲ制ス可ラス，之ヲ扶クヘシ，賢ハ愚ヲ制ス可ラス，之ヲ暁スヘシ，富ハ貧ヲ制ス可ラス，之ヲ賙フヘシ，是乃チ，兩ラ相反スルノ理勢ヲ利用シテ，以テ天意ニ奉答シ，依テ以テ斯民社交ノ和諧ヲ致シ，福祉ノ域ニ昇ラシムル所ノ例規ナリ[25]

We see here clearly that for Nishi, the Principles of the heart—a neutralizing force over natural laws—are necessary for a society to achieve a harmonious and beneficial state. Moreover, he thinks that the deliberate

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25. 「人生三寶説」, chap. 7, NAZ I: 548.

use of these two forces complies with Heaven's will (天意 Jap. *ten'i*, Ch. *tianyi*).

Heaven

We understand, then, the paramount value of the concept of Heaven in Nishi's thinking. I examine it through his text, 「教門論」 (On religion) 1–7 published in 1874 (m. 7) in *Meiroku zasshi* 『明六雑誌』, a review created in 1873 by Mori Arinori to stimulate discussion and promote the movement of Enlightenment. Nishi was one of its most active authors. Let us note in passing that, in 1873, the Meiji government revoked the prohibition of Christianity; this accounted for a certain number of authors treating religions in the 1874 issues. The text starts with the following sentences:

> Religion is founded on belief (*shin* 信); it takes up roots in what is not possessed by knowledge. When one can know a thing, one has its Principle, however when one can neither possess nor know, one believes the unknowable only starting from the assumption whose foundation is what is known. Its Principle is thus not possessed [of the unknowable]. And so, the belief of common people who consider a tree, a stone, an insect or an animal like a divinity (*kami* 神), as well as the belief of scholars who believe in Heaven (*ten* 天), in Principle (*ri* 理) and in the Lord on High (*jōtei* 上帝), is belief without knowing. In spite of the divergence in these beliefs, the reasons are the same.

> 教門ハ信ニ因テ立ツ者ナリ，信ハ知ノ及ハサル所ニ根サス者ナリ，人既ニ之ヲ知レハ其理ヤ則チ己ノ有トナル，然トモ得テ知ル能ハサレハ唯其知ル所推シテ以テ知ラサル所ヲ信スル耳，故ニ其理タル亦己カ有ニ非ス，然ラハ則チ匹夫匹婦ノ木石，蟲獣ヲ神トシ信スルモ高明博識ノ天ヲ信シ，理ヲ信シ上帝ヲ信スルモ，皆知ラスシテ信スル者ナリ，是差等アリト雖トモ其揆ハ則チ同一ナリ[26]

In this passage, we can find Nishi's position on the relation between knowledge and belief. He thinks that belief is possible beyond the limits

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26. 「教門論」, NAZ I: 493.

of knowledge. Furthermore he considers the totality of "Heaven," the "Principle" and the "Lord on High" to be objects of belief accessible to educated men; uneducated men have objects of belief such as a tree or a stone. I note that in another section of the text from which this quote comes, Nishi uses the adjectives "authentic, simple, and pure" to define an educated person's object of belief, and the adjectives "gauche, coarse, vulgar, and disorderly" to describe the objects of belief of the uneducated.[27] We observe here an evolutionary vision of belief, however, Nishi stresses that any belief is based finally on what is beyond knowledge. For a source of inspiration, the "Lord on High" (上帝 Ch. *shang di,* Jap. *jōtei)* is an expression often employed, for example, in the Book of Poetry (詩経 Ch. *Shi jing,* Jap. *shikyō,* the popular airs and court odes composed around the tenth to the sixth century BCE and collected under the Zhou dynasties, from the eleventh century BCE to 256 AD), one of the canonical texts of Confucianism. In these poems, the "Lord on High" is regarded as the all powerful and personified divinity who expresses and imposes his will while bringing happiness to the virtuous earthly governors (Lords beneath), but natural disorder to the wicked.[28]

Consider the sixth chapter of "On Religion" where Nishi principally develops his thoughts on Heaven. This chapter is written in the form of question and response between two people, the author trying to convince his interlocutor.[29] We summarize here the broad outline of his argument following a thematic order.

First, on the choice of religion, Nishi says that one should never be forced either by popular habits, or by family tradition, or by the idea of recognition or social rewards. He declares that he will choose only that which his heart considers true or close to truth.[30] Then, he introduces the term *dokuchi* 獨知, "knowledge that only oneself knows," which

27. 純情簡潔ノ誠信，鄙粗猥雑.「教門論」, NAZ I, 500.

28. On the "Lord on High," see『中国文化思想事典』[Dictionary of Chinese cultural thinking] (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 2002), 3 ; Anne CHENG, *Histoire de la pensée chinoise,* 54. See also Robert ENO, "T'ien as the King's God," *The Confucian Creation of Heaven*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), 23–4.

29. 「教門論」, chap. 6, NAZ I: 503–6.

30. 唯吾力心ノ眞トシ眞ニ近シトスル者ヲ撰フヘシ，NAZ I: 503.

Nishi created to translate the English term "conscience."[31] According to him, it is only this knowledge of oneself that enables one to judge if one's actions are good or evil, something neither the feudal lord nor a father can do. It seems reasonable to suppose an influence of the Christian concept of conscience here. In any case, Nishi insists on *personal freedom in the choice of religion* as no longer the family's obligation but as belonging to the individual. At the time, the idea was revolutionary, since from the beginning of the seventeenth century until 1867 the government of Tokugawa sought to ban Christianity by obliging each family to be affiliated with a Buddhist temple.

Second, at to what determines a person's human nature (性 Jap. *sei,* Ch. *xing*), it is one of the essential notions of Confucianism that it is neither the feudal lord who nourishes a human being, nor the father who gave birth to one, that determines a person's nature. It is Heaven that provides the human being with a body and with the human nature of heart/mind (心性 Jap. *shinsei*, Ch. *xin xing*). This is the "foundation of the human."[32] No one is equal to Heaven.

I would add here that the phrase "humans were born from Heaven" comes from the *Book of Poetry*.[33] For Nishi, all persons share this gift of Heaven (the body and the nature of the heart). Here we see that he defines Heaven as *the foundation of the human by providing its body and heart*. Nishi does not employ the term "create" but instead uses "distribute or share" (*fusu* 賦ス). In this passage on the foundation of the human being, Nishi's interlocutor initially uses the expression "complete naturalness" (自然ニ, read *jinenni* or *shizenni* in Japanese) to explain the fact that one has one's own body and human nature—good or evil. Nishi asks him how, if each individual acts according to that person's own natural disposition, one can judge the action of a criminal who has acted naturally. To convince his interlocutor, Nishi stresses that Heaven is the guarantor of universality in the criterion of good and evil, and that this criterion is given to all persons. In addition, Nishi explains that

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31. See NAZ I: 631. The word *dokuchi* is not used in modern Japanese.

32. 汝ノ心性汝ノ形骸皆天賦ナラハ，汝ノ本ハ天ニ非スヤ，NAZ I: 505.

33. 天之生我（天の我を生ず）.『詩経』[The Book of Poetry], 新釈漢文大系 2 (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1997), 343.

Heaven has its will because it undertakes the action of distributing the body and human nature.

Thirdly, Nishi remarks on the question of knowledge and Heaven:

> "Even if man can neither grasp nor know Heaven, Heaven is necessarily supreme; there can never be an equivalent."
> [The interlocutor said:] "Heaven is very close to the truth."[34]

Nishi does not affirm that Heaven is the truth since truth refers to something that a human being is capable of knowing and Heaven is not knowable. He expressly uses the term *close to the truth*. We have already seen that Nishi sees belief as reaching beyond knowledge.

Fourth, Nishi specifies that *Heaven does not mean all of the celestial bodies, which are indeed "things"* (*mono* 物). It is a remark that in effect refutes one of Zhu Xi's three definitions of Heaven: Heaven as a physical sky, as a principle and as a Ruler.[35]

The fifth point relates to the relationship between Heaven and Principle (*ri*). Nishi does not accept the doctrine that Heaven is identical with Principle. According to him, this was a mistake made by Song dynasty Neo-Confucians in their interpretation of canonical Confucian texts, even though these doctrines were recognized by a number of his Japanese contemporaries.[36] Nishi stresses that *Heaven is not identical to the Principle* because:

> Heaven means the place from which Principles are formed. So Heaven is not identical to Principle. Heaven is comparable to a king and Principles to his decrees. We couldn't help but laugh if one called the decrees "king."[37]

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34. 所謂天ハ吾得テ之ヲ知ルナシト雖ドモ，必ス無上其偶アルヲ得サルナリ，曰ク稍眞ニ近キ者ナリ，NAZ I: 505.

35. For the meaning of Heaven according to Chinese thinking, see MIZOGUCHI Yūzō 溝口雄三「中国の天」[Chinese heaven],『文学』(Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten) 1987, 12, 194–208 and 1988, 2, 96–112.

36. For example, YASUI Sokuken 安井息軒 wrote「天は則ち理のみ」[Heaven is nothing more than the Principle). See ŌKUBO. *op. cit.*, 60.

37. 天トハ理ノ由テ出ル所ヲ指ス者ニシテ，天ト理ト同一タルニ非ス，今之ヲ譬フル天ハ猶國王ノ如シ，理ハ猶詔敕法令ノ如シ，今詔敕法令ヲ指シテ直ニ之ヲ國王ト云ハ、笑フ可ラサラムヤ，NAZ I: 505–6.

In the first section of this text I examined the expression of the Principle of things (natural law) and moral Principle, concluding that Nishi sees Heaven as providing these two Principles for human beings. In the passage above, Nishi specifies that Heaven conceives these two Principles. At the same time, he makes a clear distinction between the function of Heaven and the function of Principles, another example of his preoccupation with language and the precise meaning of terms. Elsewhere he criticizes the thinking of the Song Neo-Confucians, whose placement of natural phenomenon and human moral values on the same plane is "too coarse a point of view."[38]

Sixth, the author explains the function of the word Heaven as denoting a status above everything and everyone:

> Finally, Heaven is a word that indicates a rank; it simply means a supreme rank without equal.[39]

His intention seems to have been to clarify the linguistic function of the word, but he does not pursue the matter further.

Seventh, Nishi defines Heaven as that which *rewards*. In his view, when one respects the Principles laid down by Heaven, one benefits from eternal happiness, both in this world and beyond it. On the other hand, not to pay them heed is to be condemned to suffer in this world and even after death.[40]

Finally, Nishi concludes that humanity, the master of all beings, consists of recognizing one's heart and nature, as explained above, and appropriating these two Principles into one's life. He writes that if one did not trust in these Principles and their dependence on Heaven, and did not venerate the Way, even if one were to live in a splendid stone building—Nishi is referring to European architecture—that person would be no more than a worm living in a coral reef. The passage in question makes it clear that Nishi considered these the moral values that make one an authentic human being.

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38. 措大の見，NAZ I: 170.
39. 盖シ天ト云フハ其位ヲ指スノ辭ニシテ，至高對ナキヲ云フノミ, NAZ I: 506.
40. 唯詔敕誥命ヲ尊奉スレハ，獨リ現世ノミナラス永遠萬ノ斯ノ幸福ヲ享ク，苟モ此ノ詔敕誥命ニ違ヘハ獨リ來世ノミナラス現世亦斯苦悩ヲ受ケ此罰テキヲ受ク, NAZ I: 506.

To recapitulate the essential points about the notion of Heaven:

- "Heaven," the "Principle," and the "Lord on High" constitute the object of belief of those who are educated.
- One's choice of religion is individual and free.
- Heaven distributes the body and mental nature to human beings.
- Heaven is unknowable to humans. It is supreme and close to the truth, but is not itself the truth because it is unknowable for human beings.
- Heaven does not denote all celestial bodies.
- Heaven creates physical and moral Principles. Both appear from Heaven.
- The word Heaven denotes the supreme rank of Heaven
- Heaven rewards or punishes persons with happiness or suffering.
- Heaven expresses its will; Heaven can be called "Lord on High," and thus allows for personification.
- Respect for Heaven makes one truly human.

Sources of inspiration for nishi's idea of heaven

We may now locate this concept of Heaven in the context of traditional schools of thought and isolate at least four sources of inspiration behind it: *The Book of Poetry* of Ancient China, Ogyū Sorai's ideas of heaven, Zhu Xi's doctrine, and Auguste Comte's evolutionism.

First, as we have seen, the expression "Lord on High" and the idea of Heaven's will are most certainly inherited from the idea of Heaven in *The Book of Poetry*, one of the oldest classical and canonical Confucian texts.[41] There, however, Heaven's will shows itself through natural phe-

41. Indeed, Nishi sometimes has rather a nostalgic vision of the Zhou dynasty period and notably the western Zhou dynasty 西周 (eleventh century to 771 BCE). This is Hasunuma Keisuke's opinion when he analyzes Nishi's own choice of Chinese characters in his first name at the time of the Meiji reform (1867). Nishi chose the zhou 周 character which can be read in Japanese as *amane*. Thus, with his patronymic, his name becomes Nishi Amane 西周. Japanese people can read these characters in the

nomena, so that people as a whole suffer its effects, whereas in Nishi's thought it expresses itself to individuals in the form of pleasing rewards or painful punishments.

A second, and to my mind irrefutable, source of inspiration comes from the writings of Ogyū Sorai. It is well known that Nishi read Sorai's work with great interest. Sorai had the intellectual independence to criticise the work of Zhu Xi who was the subject of orthodox studies during the Edo era.[42] I have found several instances of identical expressions about Heaven in the works of Nishi and Sorai, for example the "respect for Heaven" (*tenkei* 天敬) "the unknowable nature of Heaven for humanity," and "the determination of human nature by Heaven."[43] Well before Nishi's time, in his 1717 work *Benmei* 『弁名』 on discerning the meaning of terms, Sorai had criticized the tendency of Song Dynasty Confucianists to fuse the ideas of Heaven and Principle.

Nishi uses the same argument to criticise a similar tendency in Zhu Xi. But despite this critique, one cannot escape the conclusion that Nishi's knowledge of orthodox Edo era doctrine is the starting point for his thoughts on Heaven. We have already noted his definition of the relationship between Heaven and Principle, namely that Heaven is the origin of Principle. Nishi certainly was careful to separate the two terms yet they remain at the heart of his thinking on Heaven. It is therefore necessary to acknowledge Zhu Xi's notion of Heaven-Principle as a source of inspiration for Nishi.

Regarding Nishi's attitude to Confucianism, his early education and study of the Zhu Xi School seemed to form the basis of the ideas he

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Chinese way as *Sei Shū*, which sounds to Japanese ears like "Western Zhou" which is written with the same characters 西周. Hasunuma's hypothesis seems to me defensible at least as far as the meaning of Heaven is concerned. See HASUNUMA Keisuke 蓮沼啓介,「西周に於ける哲学の成立」[The birth of philosophy in Nishi Amane], (Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 1987), 1–20.

42. KOIZUMI Takashi, *op. cit.*, 32.

43. 天は解を待たず。[…] これを望めば蒼蒼然，冥冥乎として得てこれを測るべからず。See 「弁名」[Distinguishing names] in『荻生徂徠集』[The Ogyū Sorai collection], 日本思想大系 36 (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1973), 120. For an English translation, see John A. Tucker, *Ogyū Sorai's Philosophical Masterworks: The Bendō and Benmei* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).

would go on to refute and replace with the heterodox ideas of Sorai. Nishi and Sorai, however, both acknowledge the importance of the Ancient Chinese period that gave Confucian studies their canonical texts. We may therefore assert that Nishi's thought was in continuity with the Japanese school of Ancient Learning (*kogaku* 古学) of his era.

Nishi's thought, however, is not limited to this school of thought from the Edo era, and we cannot neglect to mention another source of inspiration from contemporary Europe, the evolutionist thinking of Auguste Comte. Nishi discusses the "law of three states" (theological, metaphysical, and positive) of the French philosopher in his lecture on the European sciences.[44] That said, we also have seen Nishi criticize this form of positivism as a kind of "materialism" insofar as it limits itself to the physical world.[45] Nishi clearly gave more importance to studies of the heart than to physical studies, which distinguishes him from Comte for whom research into the laws of nature represented the final stage in the evolution of society. Nishi believed that the more one was educated, the more profound a vision of religion one would attain and the greater the likelihood of arriving at the culmination of belief in Heaven and Principle and the Lord on High, the objects of genuine belief, pure and simple.[46]

All in all, Nishi took a critical approach to learning that was never satisfied with the ideas and the thoughts of others. Concerning his concept of Heaven, I would say that he developed a new set of ideas and that these ideas represent a synthesis of multiple sources of Chinese and Japanese inspiration with contemporary European ideas.

Is nishi's concept of heaven widely accepted?

It remains to be seen to what extent Nishi's concept of Heaven exerted an influence on Japanese thinkers of his era. This is a difficult question to answer with any precision.

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44 「百學連環」, naz iv: 30–31.
45. 「百學連環」, naz iv: 36.
46 「教門論」, naz i: 500.

Nishi's article on religion, which we referred to earlier, was published in the pages of the *Meiroku zasshi,* an avant-garde, liberal review favored by writers and intellectuals who wished to encourage the study of Western thought. As it turned out, the journal only survived for a year and a few months (March 1874 to November 1875), having been brought to an abrupt halt when a new law controlling the publication of newspapers was passed and writers decided to halt publication of the review as a protest against the law.

Be that as it may, at the beginning of the Meiji era the idea of respect for Heaven was widely held by many intellectuals, in particular by those who had been influenced by the Confucian school's texts. For example, Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901), one of Nishi's contemporaries, wrote a famous sentence known to all modern Japanese: "Heaven did not create some persons above others, nor some persons below others." These words were first published in 1871, prior to the publication of Nishi Amane's text on Heaven. One might also cite the example of Nakamura Keiu (1832–1891), who, on the basis of his Confucian understanding of Heaven, was drawn to Christianity during a stay in London at the dawn of the Meiji era.

This was all to change. Some twenty years later, Inoue Kowashi, who is today considered to have been the principal designer of the *Imperial Rescript on Education,* deliberately avoided the expression "respect for Heaven and veneration of divine spirits" (*keiten sonshin* 敬天尊神), because he believed it would lead to a polemic among different groups. In order to create the image of a completely Japanese emperor, he avoided all expressions with blatantly Chinese connotations. The idea of Heavenly rewards was also avoided as he felt it was "too banal."[47] Thus, in the *Imperial Rescript on Education* (1890) the word Heaven was not used to qualify the emperor and is only used once, in the expression *tenjō mukyū no kōun* 天壌無窮ノ皇運, the Heaven-sent eternal imperial destiny.

47. See the letter from Inoue Kowashi 井上毅 to Yamagata Aritomo 山県有朋, dated June 1890. It is reprinted in 日本近代思想大系 [Modern Japanese Thinking] 6 (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1990), 375–7.

Conclusion

We have seen that the concept of "Principle" is defined by Nishi as that which is permanent and necessary, and that human beings can only ever understand partially what Principle is and never really know it fully. The Principle of physical things governs all living bodies, down to the smallest drop of water, whereas the Principle of the heart is unique to human beings. Heaven means the place from which these two categories of Principle are formed. Heaven, the Principle, and the Lord on High constitute the object of belief of the educated. We saw four sources of inspiration of this concept of Heaven and noted how Inoue Kowashi avoided the term and other expressions with Chinese connotations in writing the text of the *Imperial Rescript on Education*.

In the end, it seems to me that Nishi's concept of Heaven was not widely adopted. Still, I would argue that certain meanings of his concept of Heaven were carried by another word, *shizen* 自然. Yanabu Akira notes that in the early years of the Meiji period "natural law" was translated *tenritsu* 天律, literally Heavenly law, or *seihō* 性法, the law of nature made in Heaven. By 1881, the term *shizenhō* 自然法 was often used to refer to natural law. Modern day Japanese still use this term.[48] *Shizen* thus gradually came to replace *Ten* (or *Tenchi*, Heaven and Earth) to refer to the European word "nature."

In support of this hypothesis, I would cite the twentieth-century philosopher Nishitani Keiji (1900–1990). During a conference in the 1970s he spoke of the meaning of *shizen* in a way which went beyond the sum of the objects of natural sciences. He presented *shizen* as a moral force that takes humanity back to its original and authentic mental state. He saw it as including an intangible greatness in comparison to which human beings seem small. He further takes to word to refer to the origin of human existence, claiming that "a person grows in *shizen*."[49] I

48. Yanabu Akira 柳父章, 『翻訳語成立事情』[Conditions in the formation of translation language] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1982), 125–48.

49. 自然のうちから生え出ている，Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治「禅の現代的意義」[The meaning of Zen today],『宗教と非宗教の間』[Between religion and irreligion] (Tokyo: Iwanami gendai bunko, 2001), 89.

cannot help but see a certain affinity between Nishi's concept of Heaven and Nishitani's concept of *shizen*, though proper proof would require further research that takes into account the influence of Zen Buddhism on Nishitani, whose own vocabulary differs significantly from that of Confucianism.

Redefining Philosophy through Assimilation

Nishida Kitarō and Mou Zong-san

Lam Wing-keung

Recently James Heisig and others presented a collection of essays examining the state of the study of Japanese philosophy abroad, calling for a redefinition philosophy itself.[1] Since the introduction of Western philosophy in the late nineteenth century, the definition of philosophy has been reexamined not only in Japan but also in the East Asian philosophical sphere, in which China plays a central role. This paper will explore how redefinitions were worked out in these two Asian philosophical traditions, focusing especially on Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945) and Mou Zong-san 牟宗三 (1909–1995), the two renowned representatives of Kyoto School[2] and Contemporary Neo-Confucianism or "New Confucianism" 新儒教,[3] both of whom were actively involved in philo-

1. See James Heisig, ed. *Japanese Philosophy Abroad* (Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2004).

2. Here the I do not intend to go into debates over the definition of the "Kyoto School," which I basically understand as a group of philosophers who more or less came under the direct philosophical influence of Nishida Kitarō.

3. In this paper, we will not enter into the debate over the definition of "New

sophical dialogue between the East and the West. There is no doubt that both redefined "philosophy" in the course of shaping their own philosophical projects, but in neither case was it a *creatio ex nihilo*. I will attempt here to demonstrate that those seeking to redefine philosophy in contemporary Japan and China, including Nishida and Mou, employed both Western and traditionally Asian ideas in creating their unique philosophies, a method we may characterize as "assimilation."

Philosophical concepts like *junsui keiken* 純粋経験 and *gyakutaiō* 逆対応 in Nishida are assimilations of the notions of "pure experience" and "correspondence," though not limited to the way those terms had been addressed by William James and Daitō Kokushi 大燈国師 respectively. As for Mou, moral metaphysics is an assimilation of Kantian moral philosophy and Confucius' idea of "inner-sage external-king 內聖外王."

I do not mean to understand assimilation simply in terms of the reception of Western philosophers and the making of contemporary Japanese and Chinese philosophies, but would argue that it is a more fundamental and underlying activity. My question here is: How does assimilation function to redefine "philosophy," as exemplified by the approaches of Nishida and Mou to different Asian philosophical traditions? What significance can be attributed to their assimilative gestures towards the "(Western) philosophy" taking place in the East?

In the last few decades in the West, a great deal of research has been done concerning Japanese philosophy, including comparative studies of the Japanese and Western philosophical traditions. However, not much attention has been devoted to the dialogue between Japanese philosophy and the contemporary Chinese philosophical tradition.[4] One of the

Confucianism." For our purposes, New Confucianism refers to the group of philosophers who sought to revive Confucianism after the Qing Dynasty and the attack on Confucianism during the May Fourth Movement, which distinguishes them from classical Confucianism and Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism. Members include, but are not limited to, LIANG Shu-min 梁漱溟, XIONG Shi-li 熊十力, TANG Chun-i 唐君毅, MOU Zong-san 牟宗三, and others. See Ng Yu-kwan『儒家哲學』[The philosophy of Confucianism],（Taipei: Commercial Books, 1995), 215, 228.

4. There are a number of articles on modern Japanese and Chinese philosophical interchange, including NG Yu-kwan「當代新儒學與京都學派的比較：牟宗三與久松真一論覺悟」[A comparative study of contemporary Neo-Confucianism and the Kyoto

aims of this essay is to begin filling this gap by exploring the possibility and significance of philosophical dialogue within the East, specifically, between Japan and China.

Although Nishida was overtly interested in a philosophical dialogue and confrontation with Western philosophy, we should not overlook the philosophical elements of the "East" contained in his overall project. In particular, attention needs to be given to how the "East" was perceived in "Japanese" philosophy. These are precisely where the main concerns of the following pages lie.

Assimilation: a Midwife for the reception and construction of philosophy

Despite the innumerable definitions of philosophy, the word and concept of "philosophy" itself are without doubt derived from its Greek origin. Ever since "philosophy" was introduced to Japan and China, particularly in the late nineteenth century, not only the signifier—the word "philosophy"—but also the signified—the meaning of

school: Mou Zong-san and Hisamatsu Shin'ichi on liberation], in 『牟宗三哲學與唐君毅哲學論』 [The philosophies of Mou Zong-san and Tang Chun-i], Jiang Ryh-shin and Tse Ren-hou, eds., (Taipei: Wenjin, 1997), 243–66; reprinted in Ng Yu-kwan, *The Philosophy of Confucianism*, 273–94; Lin Chen-kuo, 「東方鏡映中的現代性──新儒家與京都學派的比較思想史省察」 [A comparative examination of the intellectual history of New Confucianism and the Kyoto school], 『當代儒學論集：傳統與創新』 [Essays on contemporary Confucianism: Tradition and innovation] (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academic Sinica, 1995), 253–73, reprinted in Lin Chen-kuo, 『空性與現代性：從京都學派、新儒家到多音的佛教詮譯學』 [Emptiness and modernity: The Kyoto school, New Confucianism, and polyphonic Buddhist hermeneutics] (Taipei: New Century Publishing Co., 1999), 131–57, Lin Chen-kuo, 「理性、空性與歷史意識：新儒家與京都學派的哲學對話」 [Rationality, Emptiness and Historical Consciousness: A Philosophical Dialogue between New Confucianism and the Kyoto School]; a paper presented at an international congress on "Eastern Culture and Modern Society: Philosophical Dialogue among Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism" held at the Research Centre for Chinese Philosophy and Culture, Department of Philosophy, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 23–24 November 2006. Compared to the scholarship in the West, however, there is much room for improvement in modern Japanese and Chinese philosophical interchange.

"philosophy"—were adopted by the two Asian traditions, in which assimilation has served as a midwife for receiving Western philosophy but also for constructing it.

As is well known, the word "philosophy" was translated with two ideographic characters, *tetsu* 哲 and *gaku* 学, by Nishi Amane, and since that time has come into common use in Japanese and Chinese [哲学 in simplified Chinese and 哲學 in traditional Chinese], as well as in Korean speaking regions [철학 in Korean]. Although at first untranslated and simply transliterated into one of the Japanese syllabaries as *hirosohi* ヒロソヒ, Nishi finally settled on the two ideographs to render the term. By tracing the background to his translation, we come to realize how significant a role assimilation plays when it comes to the translation into *kanji* of terms that basically originate from the Chinese tradition with its heavy reliance on Confucius thought.

In a postscript to the book *Seiriron* 『性理論』 (1861) written by Tsuda Mamichi, Nishi used the term *kitetsugaku* 希哲学 to refer to "philosophy." Trained in Confucianism, first through the study of Zhu Xi 朱子 and later of Ogyū Sorai,[5] it is no surprise that Nishi employed Confucius' expressions and ideas in speaking of (Western) philosophy. Elsewhere Nishi provided other *kanji* translations for the term "philosophy," among them, *hirosohi* 斐鹵蘇比 in *Kaidaimon* 『開題門』, *kikengaku* 希賢学, and *kyūrigaku* 窮理学 in *Hyakurenkan* 『百学連環』. As pointed out by Ōhashi Ryōsuke, there are at least three characteristic forms of the translations of Western philosophical terms into Japanese used by Nishi, namely, transliteration (e.g., *hirosohi* 斐鹵蘇比 for the phoneme "philosophy"), assimilation with Confucius ideas (e.g., *kikengaku* and *kyūrigaku* for "philosophy" and *ritaigaku* 理体学 for "ontology"), and finally, assimilation with Buddhist concepts (e.g., *nigengaku* 人間学 for "sociology").[6] Except for the obvious phonetic transcriptions, his other

5. See KITANO Hiroyuki 北野裕通 「「哲学」との出会い——西周」[The encounter of "philosophy": Nishi Amane], (Kyoto: Sekaishisōsha, 1997), 7.

6. See ŌHASHI Ryōsuke, 「西洋思想「ヒロソヒ」の翻訳：西周」[The Translation of "Philosophy" of Western Thought: Amane Nishi] 『日本的なもの、ヨーロッパ的なもの』[*Japanese Stuff, European Stuff*], (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1992), 35-52.

translations are clearly assimilations of Confucius and Buddhist ideas, in particular as found in the Chinese heritage. Kitano Hiroyuki points out,

> Even though the (un)translated word *hirosohi* was one of the decisions made by Nishi, it was done by relating European classical words to Confucius literature. In perusing Chinese literature, Nishi was particularly fond of employing the semantic meaning he found embedded there.[7]

In addition, Nishi posited that Western studies of *ki* 気 are rather advanced whereas the analysis of *ri* 理 is comparatively weak.[8] Obviously such interpretations of Western philosophy are carried out through a process of assimilating Neo-Confucius concepts,[9] namely, the use of *ki* and *ri*, into the classifications of Western philosophy.

Translating the Greek word *φιλοσοφία* and other Western ideas by assimilating Confucius' ideas entails both an interpretation of (Western) philosophy and the construction of philosophy. As John Maraldo suggests, rather than refer to this as "translation," this process is better called "trans-lation" to indicate "the process of mediation by which texts convey philosophical methods, problems and terminology."[10] As a "*sine qua non* for the practice of philosophizing,"[11] the method of assimilation that Nishi employed for "trans-lating" Western philosophy indicates that "philosophical" elements can also be found in non-Western traditions, notably in Confucianism and Buddhism. Although one may argue that Nishi's trans-lation remains a "Western prerogative,"[12] Nishi in fact reminds us that philosophy should not be perceived as a monopoly of the West; it is also widely available in the East.

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7. Kitano, "The Encounter of Philosophy," 20.

8. See the citation in Kitano, "The Encounter of Philosophy," 6.

9. *Ibid.*, 8.

10. John C. Maraldo, "Tradition, Textuality, and the Trans-lation of Philosophy," in Charles Wei-hsun Fu and Steven Heine, eds., *Japan in Tradition and Postmodern Perspectives* (Albany: SUNY, 1995), 229. See also John Maraldo, "Defining Philosophy in the Making" in *Japanese Philosophy Abroad*, 237.

11. Maraldo, "Tradition, Textuality, and the Trans-lation of Philosophy," 229.

12. See James Heisig, "Redefining Defining Philosophy: An Apology for a Sourcebook in Japanese Philosophy," *Japanese Philosophy Abraod*, 277.

Moreover, the activity of "trans-lating" philosophizing texts through assimilation is itself a kind of philosophical construction. Whenever "trans-lation" takes place, "the practice of philosophizing" is embedded in a "process of mediation" by assimilating Western ideas along with their respective tradition of terms, technical vocabulary, and thoughts. Using *tetsugaku* 哲学 to refer to "philosophy," not only carries a kind of Confucian orientation, it also directs Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and other languages that make use of Chinese ideographic characters to a certain meaning that differs from the literal meaning of "philosophy," the love of wisdom.

The word *gaku* 学, for instance, carries the sense of study or learning. Even aside from its Confucius origins and orientation, the word *gaku* tends to suggest different ideas of what it means to "philosophize," namely, that "philosophy" has to do with study or a kind of learning. Though not completely unrelated to the Greek etymology, it adds "new" nuances to the term. In other words, whenever "trans-lation" takes place, interpretations are in play and these interpretations are themselves a kind of "philosophizing" that bring new and different connotations with them. Even if these accretions are not entirely "unique," they are rightly considered a kind of "philosophical construction" insofar as they "convey philosophical methods, problems, and terminology."

I do not mean to suggest here that philosophy is something created out of nothing. No matter how creative and unique the appearance and taste of a "new" cheese cake, it inevitably uses some of the "old" ingredients; you cannot make a cheese cake without cheese. Even if no ontological questions are posed, the inquiry into where the word philosophy and its meaning came from entailed, at the time of the entry of Western philosophy into the "East," a degree of transformation, which I am here calling an "assimilation" by way of traditional language and ways of thinking. Whenever one sets out to learn a new language, one does so by translating and assimilating it into one's mother tongue. And, in a still broader sense, assimilation is at work in cross-cultural communication.

The insistence that philosophy is not a monopoly of the West not only implies that the "activity of philosophizing" can be, and in fact has been, conducted in the East, but suggests that this latter may serve as a mir-

ror in which the Western tradition of philosophy can see itself reflected in a new way. Assimilation—the collaboration of Western philosophical words and ideas with their Japanese and Chinese counterparts—does not take place unilaterally from West to East; it involves a mutual interchange.

One thinks here of what John Cobb has to say regarding interreligious dialogue as a process of "mutual transformation" that follows on "mutual understanding"[13] In the course of "trans-lating" "(Western) philosophy" with Japanese and Chinese terminologies and thoughts, these latter must involve a degree of "mutual understanding" with the West and their own respective traditions. Otherwise, it is hard to understand how "trans-lation" could be possible. In the following pages, I will show how Nishida Kitarō and Mou Zong-san employ the method of "assimilation" in the course of encountering and receiving (Western) philosophy and engaging in their own philosophical constructions.

Assimilation in nishida kitarō: the birth of an original philosophy in japan

Seeing assimilation as a midwife implies something newborn. Compared to the "trans-lations" done by Nishi and Tsuda Mamichi in the early years of the Meiji era, Nishida Kitarō has been widely recognized as a world-class thinker and creator of an original philosophy. But his originality is itself an assimilation, not a simple *creatio ex nihilo*.

There is some debate as to whether to refer to Nishida as Japan's first philosopher or not. Concerning his maiden work, *Zen no kenkyū* 『善の研究』 (An inquiry into the good), Takahashi Satomi did not hesitate to single it out as the first philosophical book in Japan since the Meiji era.

> *Zen no kenkyū* carries a unique tone and flavor…. This book is the first and the only philosophical book of our people since the Meiji era. I firmly believe that.[14]

13. John B. Cobb, Jr., *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982).

14. Takahashi Satomi 高橋里美,「意識現象の事実とその意味──西田氏著『善の

The reason Takahashi was so confident of the importance of *Zen no kenkyū* is that he found in its ideas the kind of "originality" and "creativity" [*dokusō* 独創] that "does not merely remain a catalogue of new thoughts, but rather sustains a kind of unification [*renraku tōitsu* 連絡統一] of thought."[15] Obviously there is a comparison here between the West and Japan, and perhaps of other philosophical traditions as well recognized at the time Takahashi was writing his review. As Sayūda Kiichirō commented, the discourse Nishida had framed could be properly considered "Nishida philosophy" in that it embraces a unique system [体系].[16]

As to whether Nishida merits the title of the first philosopher in Japan, John Maraldo offers a very persuasive comment:

> Since originality cannot mean creative-ness *ex nihilo*, formative influences are sought, and then the original and the merely influential are defined in difference from one another.[17]

Nishida "philosophy" did not emerge out of thin air, but was born of "something," and whatever that "something" may turn out to be, it is also to be considered an "object" of Nishida's assimilation. Whatever "new" flavor or original ingredients, the "old" ingredients cannot simply be discounted. But what precisely are these "old" ingredients that Nishida employed in the course of his philosophical construction? What importance do they have for redefining philosophy with regard to other traditions of thought in both the West and the East?

Paging through *Zen no kenkyū*, one may be not a little surprised by the number of names of philosophers and allusions, direct or indirect, to philosophical ideas contained there. The term *junsui keiken* 純粋経験, for

研究』を読む」[The fact and meaning of consciousness: Reading Nishida's *Zen no kenkyū*], in FUJITA Masakatsu 藤田正勝, ed., 『西田哲学研究の歴史』[A history of the study of Nishida philosophy] 『西田哲学選集 別巻二』[*Selected works on Nishida philosophy,* supplementary vol. 2] (Kyoto: Tōeisha, 1998), 9.

15. *Ibid.*, 10.

16. SAYŪDA Kiichirō 左右田喜一郎,「西田哲学の方法について──西田博士の教えを乞う」[On the Method of Nishida philosophy: A plea for the teachings of Dr. Nishida], quoted in FUJITA, *A History of the Study of Nishida Philosophy*, 44.

17. MARALDO, "Traditional, Textuality, and the Trans-lation of Philosophy," 228.

instance, is not an innovation of Nishida himself but rather a notion suggested by contemporaries of his like R. Avenarius (1843–1896), and in the *Empiriokritizismus* of E. Mach (1836–1916), and the *Essays in Radical Empiricism* of William James (1842–1910). Its implied overcoming of the subject-object duality and the accompanying critique of Descartes are also closely related to the thinking of William James.[18]

Another example is Nishida's assimilation of the ideas found in Plato's *Timaeus* to his philosophy of place or *basho* 場所. Even though Nishida clearly state his difference from Plato, he did admit that it is a term that he "assimilates" (倣う).[19] Of course, Nishida did not only employ or assimilate Western ideas, but also drew on the intellectual heritage of the East. As mentioned at the outset, the idea of *gyakutaiō* 逆対応 is an assimilation of a problem addressed by Daitō Kokushi 大燈国師. Or again, Nishida's close personal and intellectual relationship with D. T. Suzuki are reflected in his assimilation of Suzuki's logic of *soku-hi* 即非. Given the sheer number of terms and ideas that Nishida drew from the West and East, it is hard to overestimate the important role that "assimilation" played in the construction of his philosophy.

A detailed and exhaustive analysis of Nishida's assimilation of Western and Eastern philosophical ideas is clearly beyond my reach. I mean only to suggest that there is ample evidence that the originality, creativity and uniqueness of Nishida philosophy—whether in fact he is the first philosopher of Japan or not—supports our thesis that assimilation is a key ingredient in the construction of a philosophy.

Unlike contemporary conventions regarding proper citation and the identification of sources, Nishida used his sources freely, often without a trace. But he *did* use them, including in the forging of his important logic of place. In this connection we may agree with Ōhashi Ryōsuke

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18. Concerning the relationship between *junsui keiken* and Western philosophical ideas, see Kosaka Kunitsugu 小坂国継, 『《善の研究》について』 [On *Zen no kenkyū*], (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2006), 474.

19. See Nishida Kitarō, 「かくの如きイデヤを受け取るものともいうべきものを、プラトンのティマイオスの語に倣うて場所と名づけておく。無論プラントの空間とか、受け取る場所とかいうものと、私の場所と名づけるものとを同じいと考えるのではない」 in 「場所」 [Place] , 『西田幾多郎全集』 [Collected works of Nishida Kitarō] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2003), III: 415.

that, seen from the standpoint of Western philosophy, from ancient Greece to modern times, Nishida represents a "turn in philosophy" (哲学の転回), that is to say, "a turn of place" (場所の転回)."[20] Insofar as such a "turn" is an example of what Thomas Kuhn called a "paradigm shift,"[21] the shift to the "new" requires the presence of an "old" paradigm.

Neither the question of whether Nishida deserves to be called Japan's first philosopher nor whether his philosophy is unique affects the point I wish to argue here: that it is a construction worked out through assimilation. Far from being a mere midwife to oversee the rebirth of "Western" philosophy, neither are his constructions completely simply "newborn." If Nishida has "redefined" philosophy while having his own "unique" philosophy, his redefinition was conducted through assimilating ideas received from East and West alike.

ASSIMILATION IN MOU: CONSOLIDATING THE PHILOSOPHICAL GROUND OF CONFUCIANISM

Similar to the historical events that took place in Japan, China also ended its policy of seclusion as a result of military threats from the West. The call for political reforms in the late Qing Dynasty attracted the attention of intellectuals, though without the kind of focused discussions on modernity we see among the Kyoto School philosophers. With regard to Chinese culture's encounter with Western civilization, especially concerning the ideas of science and democracy, scholars including Liang Shu-min, Xiong Shi-li, Tang Chun-i, Mou Zong-san and others aimed at reviving Confucianism through consolidating its philosophical ground. This group of scholars later came to be considered a philosophical school, namely, Contemporary Neo-Confucianism or "New Confucianism," as distinct from the classical Confucianism of Confucius and

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20. See ŌHASHI Ryōsuke 大橋良介,『西田哲学の世界—— あるいは哲学の転回』[*The world of Nishida philosophy: A philosophical turn*], (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1995).

21. See Thomas KUHN, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996, third edition).

Mencius and the Neo-Confucianism of the Sung and Ming dynasties represented by Zhu Xi and Wang Yang Ming.

The main difference of New Confucianism is its proclaimed mission of reviving Confucianism in the face of Western civilization.[22] Instead of resisting Western philosophy, New Confucianism scholars employed many Western philosophical ideas in the course of re-examining Chinese thought and culture, especially Confucianism. Mou Zong-san, one of the representatives of New Confucianism, drew on Kantian moral philosophy in consolidating Confucius' idea of "inner moral subjectivity" 內在道德主體性, a typical illustration of the importance of the assimilation of Western philosophy into Chinese philosophy.

In one of his writings, 『中國哲學的特質』, *The Characteristics of Chinese Philosophy*, Mou raised the basic question of whether in fact there is such a thing as Chinese philosophy.

> From of old there is no such word as "philosophy" in China. The word "philosophy" came from the Greeks…. If you combine the Greek word "philosophy" [哲學] with the content of Western philosophy, one could say that fundamentally there is no Chinese philosophy.… If one speaks of religion according to the standards of Christianity, Chinese Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism would have nothing to say. If one speaks of philosophy, there is no Westernized philosophy [西方式的哲學] in China…. So what is philosophy? Philosophy is a reflection on and rational explanation of all activities relating to human nature. China has thousands of years of cultural history and, of course, a long history of activity and creativity related to human nature, as well as a history of reflection and explanation, of reason and conceptualization. How could there be no philosophy?[23]

By giving a broad definition to philosophy, "reflection on and rational

22. See Mou Zong-san 牟宗三, Xu Fu-guan 徐復觀, Zhang Jun-mai 張君勱, Tang Chun-i 唐君毅「中國文化與世界」[Chinese culture and the world] 『說中華民族之花果飄零』 [The fragmentation of Chinese culture] (Taipei: Sanmin Books, 1984), 125–92. This article is a manifesto composed by the above-mentioned scholars on Chinese culture and its relationship with Western civilization and the world.

23. Mou Zong-san, 『中國哲學的特質』 [The characteristic of Chinese philosophy], (Taipei: Student Books, 1998), 1–5.

explanation of all activities relating to human nature" Mou argued that it is "ridiculous"[24] to claim that there is no Chinese philosophy. Although there is no word like the Greek term "philosophy" and although the content of Western philosophy is absent—in Mou's words, no "Westernized philosophy"—from Chinese tradition, this hardly seems to provide sufficient grounds for repudiating Chinese philosophy altogether.

> Chinese Philosophy emphasizes "subjectivity" [主體性] and "inner morality." The three main streams of Chinese thought, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, all emphasize subjectivity, though only Confucianism, the mainstream of the three, gives it is particular definition as "inner morality," that is, as moral subjectivity [道德主體性]. In contrast, Western philosophy does not pay attention to subjectivity as much as to objectivity. Its focus and development mainly have to do with "knowledge" [知識].[25]

I am not interested here in justifying the existence of a Chinese philosophy or arguing for its distinctive characteristics. I wish only to point out how the generalized terms in which Mou spoke of Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy serve to reconfirm the importance of assimilation in the reception and construction of philosophy in contemporary China.

Terms like "subjectivity," "objectivity," and "inner morality" are of course not neologisms of Mou, but rather represent an assimilation of Western philosophical concepts and of *kanji* translations made by Japanese scholars. Whether or not Mou's generalizations concerning Western and Chinese philosophy are appropriate or not, what is obvious is that Mou did attempt to redefine "philosophy" by repudiating Westernization and asserting the "uniqueness" of Chinese philosophy. He did not agree that "philosophy" is a monopoly of the West and that Chinese philosophy therefore needed to be "Westernized."

Dedicated to reviving Confucianism, Mou and other members of the New Confucianist movement did not merely tend to glorify the wisdom of Chinese philosophy, but endeavored to use Western philosophical

24. *Ibid.*, 5.
25. *Ibid.*, 5–6.

words and concepts to explain the characteristics of Chinese philosophy. By dubbing the contemporary renaissance movement of Chinese philosophy a "New" Confucianism, they implied there was something "old" embedded in it, both Confucian and otherwise.

What "old" ingredients did Mou pick up on? The most explicit is his assimilation of Kantian moral philosophy to Confucius moral metaphysics. Mou argued that even though the very basic concern of Confucianism is morality, this does not mean that Confucianism confines itself to mundane matters and is indifferent to metaphysics or the question of Being. Mou insisted that morality in Confucianism is not only a matter of "ought," but also a matter of "is," especially in its reference to *tian* 天, heaven. The classical thought of Confucius and Mencius did discuss moral metaphysics as it is typically treated in Western philosophy. Nonetheless, Mou argued, this does not mean Confucianism disregards the question altogether. Concerning the relationship between *tian* and morality, Mou saw echoes of Kant's metaphysics of morals.

> When Mencius talka about 性善, good nature, he is following the idea of *ren* 仁, benevolence, mentioned by Confucius. His analysis of good nature of course is a direct explanation of morality, however, and neither the nature nor benevolence that Confucianism refers to is confined to morality. Confucianism does not merely talk about the *ought* and deny the problem of the *is*…. Although Confucius emphasized benevolence, he never repudiates *tian*…. Accordingly, the metaphysics of morals of Confucianism does entail a kind of moral metaphysics, just as moral theology is embraced in Kant's metaphysics of morals.[26]

Leaving aside the merits of Mou's reading of Kant, it is not hard to see how Mou is attempting to "redefine" Confucianism, at least on the issue of morality, through the assimilation of Kantian philosophy. Arguing that Confucianism does not merely define morality as a matter of "ought" but also a matter of "is," Mou asserted that Confucianism does entail metaphysical concerns.

Why does Mou need to argue that there are metaphysical elements

26. Mou Zong-san, 『中國哲學十九講』 [Nineteen lectures on Chinese philosophy], (Taipei: Student Books, 1997), 75–6.

in Confucianist morality? Why is it necessary to consolidate the meta-physical ground of Confucian morality with Kantian moral philosophy? What significance does this alignment or assimilation have for Chinese philosophy in particular or philosophy in general?

As noted earlier, Mou believed there is no "Westernized philosophy" in China even as he refused to deny the presence of a "Chinese philoso-phy." He believed that whatever "universal truth" there is in philosophy, it should not confined to the West of the East, let alone to China, even though the universal is actualized in specific cultural groups:

> There is an idea [觀念] that directs the activity of the Chinese [中華民族]. Whenever there is an idea, universality is there. But this idea should be expressed by substantial life, that is, by the particular tribal life [民族生命] of the Chinese [中華民族].[27]

It seems to me that this accounts for why Mou did not consider "moral subjectivity" the "essence" of Chinese philosophy but only its "characteristic" or "particularity." By differentiating "universality" from "particularity," what Mou means to say is this: Even though there is no "Westernized" way of moral metaphysics in Confucianism, this does not mean that there is no "Chinese" way of moral metaphysics. Philosophy, including the discourse of moral metaphysics, should no longer be con-sidered a monopoly of the West. Philosophy itself should be opened up or redefined in line with the diversity of particular forms in which it is embedded in different "tribal lives," each of them acting as a mirror reflecting and illumining "Western philosophy."

For example, instead of confining metaphysics to things like Platonic Ideas, Aristotelian Substance, and the Christian God, Mou suggests that concepts like *ren* and *tian* may also speak to a philosophy of Being and even expose the weaknesses of Kantian moral metaphysics.

> Kant speaks only of moral theology, but not of moral metaphys-ics. The word *moral* in moral metaphysics and moral theology is an adjective, because religion and metaphysics are based on morality.

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27. MOU Zong-san, 『中西哲學之會通十四講』 [Fourteen lectures on the dialogue between Chinese and Western philosophy] (Taipei: Student Books, 1990), 7.

> Confucianism does not speak of moral theology but rather of moral metaphysics because Confucianism is not a religion.[28]

Of course, Mou feels no obligation to use or assimilate Kantian moral metaphysics in order to clarify Confucius moral metaphysics. Such assimilation, however, does convey a message that philosophy or the activity of philosophizing should not be confined to its Greek origins. There are indeed different and particular ways of addressing "philosophy." Mou's approach posits that philosophy with its Greek origin should be opened up to "others" and liberated from its confinement to the West.

ASSIMILATION AND DISSIMILATION: FROM MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING TO MUTUAL TRANSFORMATION

From the examples of Nishida and Mou, we may tend to conclude that assimilation only carries the function of "midwife," that is of using "Western" philosophical language and ideas to illustrate and clarify traditional Japanese and Chinese thinking. But we should not overlook the other side of the coin of assimilation—that is, dissimilation. Concepts like *junsui keiken, basho, ren*, and *tian* may have equivalents in Western philosophy or be direct assimilations therefrom, but there are differences as well. We may assume this to be the case with all assimilation. In the "trans-lation" of "philosophy" to *tetsugaku*, of pure experience to *junsui keiken*, of *tian* to the metaphysical ground of morality, there is more at work than a simple exchange of one language for another. No matter how "accurate" the "trans-lation" is, it always carries the possibility of "mis-translation."

At the time that Indian Buddhism entered China, for instance, *śūnyatā* was "trans-lated" into the Taoist concept, *wu* 無. There are similarities between the two concepts, but their differences should not be overlooked. Without undergoing the assimilation and by "dissimilating" its Indian origins, Buddhism might not have been widely accepted and developed in China. By the same token, assimilation may be consid-

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28. Mou Zong-san, *Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy*, 76.

ered a kind of "mutual understanding" in which one's traditional way of thinking is used to take in a "foreign" idea, so that differences and mis-translations are as apparent, and as important, as the reception of novelty. That is to say, assimilation helps mutual understanding between different intellectual traditions and at the same time enhances the possibilities for philosophical advance.

Furthermore, the flow of assimilation is not confined to a single movement from West to East or East to West, but a continual flowing back and forth. For example, if we take Nishida's reworking of the notion of *junsui keiken* into an "original" philosophical standpoint based on the repudiation of subject-object duality, the dissimilated meaning combined with what was assimilated from William James and others, need not stop in Japan but can return to attract the attention of the West and lead it to rethink ideas that originated there. Or again, in assimilating Kantian moral philosophy to the moral metaphysics of Confucianism, Mou showed how moral metaphysics could be sustained without believing in God or a religious principle. Such assimilation may be considered a consolidation of philosophical ground for Confucianism, but it also leads to a rethinking of Kant and a possible weakness in his moral metaphysics. Assimilation is never a one-way monologue, with one party active and the other passive, but is also a two-way dialogue from West to East and East to West. Such dialogue, it seems to me, leads beyond mutual understanding through assimilation to a mutual transformation through dissimilation. It is a "turn of philosophy" based on the Western tradition and returning to enhance the West. Assimilation promotes the redefinition of philosophy, releasing it from its stronghold in the West by acknowledging the many other ways of doing philosophy and constructing philosophies outside the West.

REDEFINING PHILOSOPHY THROUGH ASSIMILATION

Unlike Nishida, Mou does not seem to have felt the need to erect a new philosophical system to set up again Western philosophy. His principal agenda was simply to revive Chinese philosophy by consolidating the philosophical ground of Confucianism by assimilating Western

philosophical ideas. This does not mean, however, that Mou stopped at the stage of mutual understanding without proceeding to mutual transformation. In continually dissimilating Kantian moral philosophy in deference to the moral metaphysics of Confucianism, he stimulates Western philosophers to revisit their received ideas of what moral philosophy is.

The call to redefine philosophy is hardly new. It has accompanied philosophy down through the ages and in any number of forms. Throughout the history of Japanese and Chinese philosophy, especially in the modern period, assimilation is everywhere in evidence. It is hardly a novelty that originated with figures like Nishida and Mou. From the very outset of philosophy's arrival in Japan, thinkers like Nishi and Inoue made ample use of Confucian and Buddhist ideas in "trans-lating" Western ideas. Thus, to repeat, as much as we want to insist on what is new about redefining philosophy today, we can never afford to ignore the much older and more traditional aspects of the project. Nor should we forget that assimilation itself is a philosophically constructive activity. On the one hand, it plays the role of midwife, trans-lating "foreign" words and ideas through particular languages and traditional concepts; and on the other, it philosophizes texts in the course of translation. As we have seen in the examples of Nishida and Mou, we can no longer underestimate the importance of the role that assimilation plays in redefining philosophy for our own times.

The Individual in Kuki's Philosophy

Miyano Makiko

Traditionally Japanese culture has not supported a strong concept of the "self" or "individual." Watsuji Tetsurō, in speaking of this characteristic as an element of Japanese ethical thought from ancient times, observes that to speak of things like "my intention" would have been considered an act unintelligible to other persons and therefore taken as the sign of an "impure heart."[1] For in taking only one's own intentions and feelings into account, one would in effect be creating a division between self and other, and consequently disrupting amicable relations and interpersonal harmony. Conversely, individuals who discarded the "I" and gave themselves over entirely to the social totality would have been thought of as possessing a "clean heart." For joining in the social fabric without concealing or holding back anything promotes a life of harmony.

This insistence on a clean or pure heart—without separation between self and other—forms the basis of Japanese ethics and is what Watsuji has called a "tradition of integrity."[2] In this sense, prior to the Meiji Era the

1. Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 『日本倫理思想史』[History of ethical thought in Japan], in『和辻哲郎全集』[The collected works of Watsuji Tetsurō] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1962), vol. xii: 82.

2. Shimizu Masayuki 清水正之,『国学の他者像』[The image of the "other" in national studies] (Tokyo: Perikansha, 2005).

Japanese did not use concepts like "self" and "individual" in their thinking because neither of them was capable of capturing the sense of the "I within the totality" or dissolving the self within the whole. This way of thinking differs markedly from the concept of the self or individual in traditional European philosophy, especially as articulated in Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* and the "I" who thinks by itself alone.

Nevertheless, as Western ideas began to be introduced into Japan during the Meiji Era, many philosophers began to think in terms of an idea of the "individual." Even so, the power of traditional thought remained strong. Given that no philosophical thought develops completely divorced from its cultural milieu, many thinkers continued unconsciously to reflect and be influenced by tradition and convention concerning the "individual." Examples of this continued influence can be found in Watsuji's ethics of the "between"[3] and Tanabe Hajime's "logic of the species."[4] Both Watsuji and Tanabe clearly thought of each person as an original individual and from there went on to articulate the problems that arise through estrangement from the totality, contingent existence, and the possibility of evil. Still, their final goal remains a return to a totality that transcends the individual, an abandonment of the ego-centered viewpoint. In short, Watsuji and Tanabe embrace the concept of the individual only as a stepping stone en route to a greater "whole."

In contrast to this established tradition, Nishida Kitarō speaks of a kind of "true self," the determination of which takes place as a "self-determination of absolute nothingness" and is necessarily realized through a process of "mutual determinations of and between individuals."[5] In this way, it is possible for individuals to determine the universal and in turn to deepen their own singular individuality.

At the same time, Nishida articulates this relationship between the individual and the universal not as a linear relationship but as a circle in which the determined universal in turn determines the universal. This

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3. Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎,『倫理学』[Ethics], *Collected Works,* vols. X and XI.

4. Tanabe Hajime 田辺元,『田辺元全集』[The collected works of Tanabe Hajime] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1963), vols. VI and VII.

5. Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎「私と世界」[I and the world], in『西田幾多郎全集』 [The collected works of Nishida Kitarō]（Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1949), vol. VII.

circular motion of "inter-self-determination" takes place in the dialectic universal, which is then determined by the circular motion itself. Here there are two totalities: the first constituted by the circular act of an individual, and a second which is the "dialectic universal" determined by this circular act. The individual, as part of a wider mutual determination of individuals based on the self-determination of absolute nothingness, is absorbed into a dialectic circular totality when the two totalities overlap. In a word, the individual moves toward the transcendent totality of the dialectic universal by itself becoming the whole of existence.

Obviously Nishida is not simply dissolving the individual into the totality as Watsuji or Tanabe do. In Nishida's philosophy, we might say, the individual, by itself becoming the totality, aims at a transcendent totality. In the end, however, whether the individual becomes the totality or is absorbed into it, in the thought of all three philosophers the individual is oriented toward the totality. Perhaps we might even say that it is a fundamental characteristic of the individual always to pursue the greater whole. Setting aside the question of whether or not this tendency is a vestige of traditional Japanese thought, the larger question remains of whether the singularity of an individual is realized only insofar as that individual is directed towards the totality, and thus towards assimilation or integration into the whole. Or is the unique meaning of the "individual" rather realized precisely at the that which *separates* it from the totality?

To pursue this question of "true individuality" we need to look more closely at the relationship between the "totality" and the "individual." In this paper, I present some thoughts on the philosophy of Kuki Shūzō, who devoted himself intensively to just this problem. Kuki approaches the problem of the relationship between the individual and the whole from two directions.

The first concerns the relationship between transcendent totality (as a concrete universal) and the individual in the sense in which Nishida and Tanabe approached it—namely, as the clarification of a concrete universal that nevertheless preserves the integrity of the individual. The second direction Kuki takes is a critical analysis of the idea that the meaning of the individual can be located in its process of becoming one with the totality (as in the individual's reduction to the totality or its process of

self-determination). Ultimately, Kuki locates "true individuality " at the point where these two directions meet, and defines this individuality as a relationship not to the totality but to others.

The metaphysical absolute and the individual: the transcendent totality and the individual

In *The Problem of Contingency*[6] Kuki divides the concept of "contingency" into three levels—logical, hypothetical, and disjunctive. To begin with, logical contingency is an attribute belonging to substance, that is, a contingent characteristic of a general conception. Because contingent characteristics gives meaning to an individual, an individual may be regarded, on the level of logic, as a contingent being. At the same time the individual appears to be determined by causality and various events that take place on an empirical level. For instance, I was born because my parents met. But was the reason for their meeting necessary or inevitable?

In such cases we see a conjunction of two different causalities, a "chance meeting of two independent units." If we retrace the steps of this causality, of course, there is always the possibility that we would come to the reason behind such a chance meeting. Even so, that cause would require the pursuit of another, and so on ad infinitum. Ultimately, the end of this infinite retracing lies in a "point x" that simply exists, an original contingency, this is to say, that exists in spite of its potential for *not* existing. As such, the problem of contingency on an empirical level moves us to a metaphysical, disjunctive level at which the very origin of the world comes into question.

Original contingency is thus simultaneously the beginning of the world, the oldest origin. To grasp the substance of this original contingency would allow us to name it the "metaphysical absolute." In metaphysics parlance, this is the absolute whose very necessity arises only out

6. Kuki Shūzō 九鬼周造『偶然性の問題』[The problem of contingency], in 『九鬼周造 全集』[The collected works of Kuki Shūzō, ksz] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980), vol. ii.

of itself and which exists as the origin of the world, completely independent of all other beings. From the viewpoint of this absolute, there can never be found a reason for the existence of a given individual or event (on an empirical level), even if the chain of causality were pursued into infinity. For this reason, Kuki considers the empirical existence of individuals and events to be a matter of simple metaphysical contingency without any absolute raison d'être.

This being the case, in what way does the metaphysical absolute as the only truly necessary "oneness" relate to the individual and to various events? In a word, how does the metaphysical absolute as transcendent totality create individuals, and how does it make possible variety and difference? Does the transcendent totality simply separate the individual from itself, thus rendering the individual a singular and groundless contingency? Or does it deprive individuals of their originality, leaving them with nothing more than the "shadow of an idea"? In chapter 3, section 13, "The Metaphysical Absolute," Kuki attempts to resolve the question of the relationship between transcendent totality and individual by thinking through the ground of the relationship between "original contingency and absolute metaphysical necessity, as well as empirical necessity and metaphysical contingency";[7] In other words, he examines the relationship between necessity and contingency in the Absolute, and necessity and contingency in the individual. We begin with the former.

In the attempt to uncover the reason for the existence of individuals and events arising in the phenomenal world through the pursuit of an infinite chain of causality, all we can ever uncover is this original contingency. This original contingency is not only the end point of causality, but also the starting point of the world and hence that which contains, potentially, all the events that will unfold in the future. As such, original contingency is not the final point of a merely linear trajectory but in fact a circle that contains all possibilities (as parts of the whole). Kuki understands this circle as the absolute: "Although original contingency and metaphysical necessity exist as one within the Absolute, they nevertheless form two centers."[8] If the absolute were characterized only by

7. KSZ II: 238
8. KSZ II: 240

necessity, it could not engender difference and concreteness in that, as a single unity, the absolute necessarily excludes change and negation. But if the absolute is seen to hold original contingency within itself, then the necessity of the absolute is destroyed, and original contingency falls from the realm of the metaphysical into the world—thus becoming the origin and ground of the world and the source of multiplicity and difference. Thus "metaphysical necessity is the static side of the absolute and original contingency its dynamic side."[9]

Insofar as the absolute is not an empty abstract totality but a substantial and concrete totality, it cannot be reduced to either mere necessity or mere contingency. It must rather be understood as an intertwining of necessity and contingency or, as Kuki says, a "necessary-contingency."[10] The absolute is completed only by the existence of the relative and finite (concrete individuals and events). That is to say, the absolute as a whole does not acquire concrete meaning until it recognizes contingency as part of itself. This absolute *qua* "necessary-contingency" can thus be said to mark the dialectical stage of the "in-itself and for-itself." Original contingency is a dynamic that disrupts the necessity of the absolute and begins the world, but it is only individuals and events that actually appear. Such a view reminds us of the relationship between the "self-determination of absolute nothingness" and the "self-determination of the individual" in Nishida's thought. In relation to our first problem—the problem of the relationship between the transcendent totality and the individual—it seems that Kuki is in fact assuming a position close to that of Nishida and Tanabe.

Next we come to the "relationship between empirical necessity and metaphysical contingency," that is to say, the question of whether or not there is any ground or reason behind the existence of the individual. In Nishida's case, the assumption that individuals always exist only in relation to the dialectical universal renders such a question meaningless and irrelevant. Tanabe, on the other hand, a thinker as interested in the contingency of individuals as Kuki, argues that the contingency of the individual must be overcome by a purposive act aimed at the transcen-

9. KSZ II: 240
10. KSZ II: 241

dent totality, thus rendering the individual a necessity. For his part, Kuki takes an original approach to the relationship between the necessity and contingency of individuals in a unique and original way:

> Every individual, as a link in the system of causality, reflects the character of an absolute origin insofar as it is determined by this absolute origin; insofar as every part is a part of the totality, the character of the totality is projected upon each part.

In other words, the individual's way of being and the absolute's way of being are the same. Kuki goes on to say:

> The character of the absolute as "necessary-contingency" takes the appearance of fate as "necessary and contingent being" in each of its parts.… The character of the absolute as "necessary-contingency" manifests as the destiny of each of its individual members and parts as "necessary-contingency."[11]

In this way Kuki understands the individual's correspondence with the absolute as the manifestation of destiny. What character does the individual as a "necessary-contingency" take? Why is this character defined as the moment of "destiny"? To answer this question, we must clarify the sense in which the reality of the life of the individual constitutes a chance event.

Existence as contingency

The original contingency that tears open metaphysical necessity gives birth to a multiplicity of individuals in the world. Accepting their lives as individuals, human beings must have their own names, and act and live as unique and singular "I"s. Although the birth of any human being is contingent, every person maintains its identity as a unique individual, each regarding itself as a singular "I," willing and acting and making decisions resulting in a myriad of different possibilities. According to Kuki this kind of "existence" or way of being is the real meaning

11. KSZ II: 242

of the "true individual." Accordingly, the problem he comes up against next is how to uncover the fundamental construction of existence, given the two realties of the facticity of contingent birth and the individual's identity as a volitional "I." He begins with a critical review of the reality of the individual, focusing on Heidegger's thought, and then proceeds on to frame his own novel concept of existence.[12]

Heidegger's existential analysis and Kuki's critique

Heidegger defines human being as a "being-in-the-world" of *Dasein* (being-there). *Dasein*, in turn, consists of "thrownness" (*Geworfenheit*) and "possibility" (*Möglichkeit*). This thrownness reveals facticity as that which is thrown into the world by chance.[13] Conversely, insofar as *Dasein* is itself being *as* being-possible, it can disclose the world by projecting its own possibilities. However, because *Dasein* is always bound by "thrownness," such possibilities are necessarily "thrown possibilities."[14] Heidegger therefore explains the existential construction of *Dasein* as "thrown projection." The implicit ambivalence of *Dasein,* as both a "thrownness" and as a "projection of possibilities," corresponds to Kuki's concept of existence.

   When *Dasein* as "thrown projection" is driven to anxiety by the sting of conscience, it finds nothingness at its ground. The possibilities of *Dasein* are not produced by *Dasein* itself, since *Dasein* is thrown into the world ("brought into *there* not of its own accord."[15]). Furthermore when one possibility is chosen, this means that other possibilities are left behind. Hence, insofar as *Dasein* "always stands in one possibility or another, it is constantly *not* other possibilities." Such a "not" is the same as the nothingness of *Dasein*'s ground. However, when *Dasein* accepts the nothingness of "thrownness" through an anticipatory determination and projects this nullity as its own possibility into the future, it becomes a grounded existence. According to Heidegger this grounded existence

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   12. Kuki, 「ハイデッ ガーの現象学的存在論」Heidegger's ontological phenomenology], ᴋsᴢ x.
   13. M, Heidegger *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1972), 135.
   14. *Ibid.,* 144.
   15. *Ibid*, 284.

is truly authentic. But what happens to the dual aspects of existence as "thrownness" and "possibility" in the context of such "authenticity?"

"Thrownness" has the characteristic of nothingness insofar as *Dasein* cannot come into being by itself. In this way the original contingency of *Dasein*'s own ground is exposed. But if *Dasein* must confront throughout existence the nothingness of this "thrownness," is it not possible for *Dasein* to accept nothingness and become a grounded existence? Does *Dasein* slip away as well? Perhaps it would help to paraphrase the problem this way: When we confront the nothingness of "thrownness," we stand motionless in front of this nothingness and recognize the groundlessness and contingency of our own life. Groundless "thrownness" is separated from the projection of possibilities toward grounded*ness* by a definitve abyss. And yet, the duality of which the existential construction of *Dasein* consists is based on this very abyss. Thus when *Dasein* attempts to accept thrownness as a "projection of possibility," it covers over and conceals both the abyss itself and *Dasein's* original groundlessness and contingency. At the same time, it is through this acceptance of the "projection of possibilities" that the duality of "thrownness" and "possibility" is unified and overcome.

Kuki criticizes this unification for being based on concealment. Kuki's goal is to take on the full reality of "being a thrownness" by confronting nothingness and searching for a construction of the concept of existence that takes into account the presence of this duality of "thrownness" and "possibility."

Contingency as the fundamental construction of existence

Although Kuki admires Heidegger's articulation of a "thrown project" grounded in the duality of "thrownness" and "possibility," he takes issue with the concealment of this duality in Heidegger's proposed schema of unification. In his essay on "Heidegger's Phenomenological Ontology," Kuki attempts to modify the concept of "thrown projection" in the following manner:

> "Thrownness" is what *Dasein* has already encountered; it is a contingency. A project is never a purposeless project. In order to project, we must understand "thrownness" as a springboard to be projected

from. What is projected falls down, and then we encounter it. That is contingency."[16]

Heidegger's standpoint is not one of contingency. Kuki pauses before his own encounter with "thrownness" and reassigns it a new role as contingency. Heidegger's articulation of the "thrown project" is best understood as a single, continuous motion from "thrownness" to "possibility." However, if we understand the encounter with "thrownness" as a contingency, we find ourselves face to face with the fundamental groundlessness of our existence and cannot help but stop. It is from this contingency, then, that we begin to project our possibilities. That is to say, "thrownness" is not unified into a projection of possibilities by a "thrown project"; rather, contingency functions as a point of conversion and diversion at which "thrownness" and the "projection of possibilities" are simultaneously cut off from one another and bound together. Through this articulation of contingency, Kuki attempts to avoid the dangers of unification via concealment, and thereby to move beyond the domination of possibility and the future in Heidegger's philosophy.

Kuki, however, explains this contingency not as original contingency but as "existence." What does he mean by describing this contingency as "existence"? Contingency, he explains, refers to the present, while possibility refers to the future. The contingency of the present in turn designates the moment in which "possibility encounters reality."[17] Although there are many possibilities in the world, only one is ever actually realized. As long as each possibility contains more or less uncertain elements, the realization of any possibility is contingent. Therefore any realization in the present moment involves contingency. In such a contingent reality we come to understand our "thrownness" and "groundlessness," and to realize that we cannot, through our own personal strength and power, control reality. Kuki articulates this groundless yet *existent* contingency as the point of contact between being and nothingness:

> Although contingency is only an infinitesimal impossibility, seizing this infinitesimal impossibility by its tip, gives "you" to "me" and

16. KSZ X: 87.
17. KSZ II: 209.

allows "me" to receive "you," gives rise to possibility after possibility, and, in the end, finally corresponds to necessity.[18]

As the point of contact between being and nothingness, contingency is the moment at which we encounter the groundlessness of "thrownness" and the starting point from which we orient ourselves toward possibility. As a turning point, this articulation of contingency at the interface of "thrownness" and "possibility" preserves their dual natures without reducing them to one and the same thing. Contingency thus describes the abyss between the two terms and accordingly clarifies the true nature of "thrown projection."

Such an understanding of contingency may serve to clarify the duality of thrown projection, but, as we have seen, when we are made to stop short at our encounter with thrownness, we are confronted with the fundamental groundlessness of our own existence. How can we project possibility in the face of such groundlessness? How does contingency allow us to move from groundlessness toward possibility? In the final chapter of *The Problem of Contingency* Kuki explains what it means to live in the face of contingency:

> The most infinitesimal possibility in the impossibility is realized om and through contingency. By grasping contingency we engender new possibilities. In turn, possibility attains necessity. In this very development lies both the true promise of the Buddha and human salvation understood as destiny.[19]

Contingency is groundless and entails innumerable choices. Consequently, our present reality might have followed a different trajectory from the one it in fact did. Even though reality might not have been exactly as it is, still it does exist and this miraculous grace gives us the uniqueness of our individual lives. We recognize the uniqueness of "thrownness" when we take our "thrownness" as a contingency. By truly understanding this uniqueness, we are able to take up our own "thrownness" and begin to project possibilities. For Heidegger's,

18. KSZ II: 188.
19. KSZ II: 259–60.

Dasein's own possibility is grounded in its "most authentic target" as determined by an anticipatory determination. However a possibility cannot belong to a target that destroys or covers over the contingency within *Dasein*. Instead, we can come to understand our own possibilities and act toward our future only by grasping the contingency of "thrownness." For Kuki, contingency is not only the abyss between the duality of "thrownness" and "possibility," but also the energy we draw on in order to move ahead with our own lives and—as detailed above—the very origin of reality.

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A MOMENT OF CHANCE ENCOUNTER:
INDIVIDUALITY AND FUNDAMENTAL SOCIALITY

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What is Individuality?

Kuki understands the individual as the contingency that is created when the original contingency of the absolute tears necessity open. Accordingly, the individual in Kuki's philosophy lives life as a contingent existence. Because existence as such is thrown into the world, these two forms of contingency—original and existential—do not result in a static state. Where *original* contingency tears apart and divides necessity in a movement that founds the contingent individual, *existential* contingency moves into the space opened up between "thrownness" and "possibility," "bearing with it 'passion' as the principle or life energy of the production of reality."[20] In this way, Kuki's philosophy invariably articulates the concept of the individual as the energy, motion, or force that rends unity in two so that the uniqueness or singularity of the individual is realized neither in a unified totality nor in the integration of the individual, but rather in the moment in and dynamic through which contingency renders necessity a duality. As we saw above, Kuki insists that this sort of "individual" and the absolute share a common structure. Lacking an absolute ground of existence, the individual *as* individual necessarily leaves behind or negates given possibilities in favor of others.

In this way at least, the individual clearly resembles the absolute inso-

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20. KSZ II: 178

far as the absolute holds within it a moment of self-negation (as original contingency). Even so, while it is clear that the absolute reveals its necessity as the singular ground or foundation of the world, where can we locate the necessity of the individual? Certainly, we cannot limit the necessity of the individual—a singular "I"—to the mere facticity of birth. The individual as such lacks any absolute reason for existing, and indeed the individual's contingency stems from this very lack. Individuals, as opposed to the absolute, must take contingency as their point of departure, projecting themselves toward multiple possibilities and thereby existing in reality. By acting as a self-aware individual from the moment of birth, one begins to carve out one's own world—or place in the world—and with it one's own time, the unique time of a single life between birth and death.

The piling up of time and memories becomes, in turn, the individual's personal history which increasingly comes to determine the very being of their "I." Existence itself carries a particular history and, from this perspective, holds and maintains the self-identity of the "I." At the same time, history itself appears as the force of the past that has determined the present being of the "I" and given rise to the very necessity for the "I" to exist in the present. Accordingly, the necessity of the individual lies in that individual's self-history as determined by his or her projection of possibilities. Regardless of the accumulation of a unique personal history, we cannot resolve the contingency of our own origin or answer the question, "Why was I born?". Because we invariably inherit this fundamental contingency alongside our own personal history (and development of a self-identity), we are fundamentally "necessary-contingent beings."

Even so, the more history an individual accumulates, the more that person is bound by the necessity of the past and gradually becomes estranged from his or her own existential contingency. This estrangement should not, however, be understood as an overcoming of contingency but rather as a lapse of memory. By forgetting their own contingency, one can come to believe that one's past was something necessary or inevitable and then to approach the future from this perspective. Such an individual can no longer be thought of as a "necessary-contingent being." Yet even in such cases, a moment of what Kuki calls

"destiny" can shatter the individual's "deadlock" and break through the hard shell of a sense of identity built up out of their history and past, thereby revealing the long forgotten duality of "necessary-contingent being" and allowing the individual to rediscover the "true meaning of individuality." But what is this "destiny"?

The chance encounter with others

Practically speaking, we do not encounter only the groundless, fundamental contingency of our existence in our lives. Our lives also contain choices and chance encounters; at every turn we are tossed about by the contingencies of changing situations and contexts. "When one (of many possible) contingencies has a central and personal meaning for an individual," Kuki writes, "we call this contingency "destiny"."[21] In contrast to the fundamental contingency of existence, "destiny" designates the contingencies that we encounter in our actual lives, especially those so significant as to change the course of our life. How should we live with respect to encounters with such contingencies? Kuki explains:

> An "encounter" is the contingency of a chance meeting between "you" and me in the present. The Buddha has said that "no chance encounter passes in vain." Even though I may be restricted or delimited by my encounter with "you," this encounter nevertheless opens up all the possibilities of my relationship to you in the future.[22]

Such a chance meeting with others is further defined as follows:

> The practical internalization of contingency is simply the self's awareness of the interrelationships between innumerable separate parts. In the moment I encounter an other or others by chance, here or there, I internalize that other "you" in the depth of my own being, binding us together in both anguish and great joy.[23]

The "destiny" of the chance encounter does not mark an encounter with my own contingency but rather the acceptance of the contingency

21. KSZ II: 224
22. KSZ II: 259
23. KSZ II: 258

of the other. While I can forget my own fundamental existential contingency and believe that my life is determined only by the necessity of my own history and historical identity, another's contingency remains a contingency: it cannot be assimilated into my identity (and hence historical necessity), and therefore persists as a contingency even in relation to me. Thus, when I face the contingency of another, my deadlocked sense of self with its apparently historically determined necessity is shaken. It is torn apart and a new dimension opens up. "I" become aware of a contingency that I cannot influence or control; I am made to see the existence of others and the existence of their contingency. These others do not appear as one side of the "I-you" pair, as an external transcendent, or as an absolute otherness. Rather self and other appear as the same part of a concrete totality and encounter each other as a contingent existence. I can imagine that I might have lived your life, as you can imagine having lived mine, and in this way we are brought to a profound sense of mutual understanding and commonality.

I am surprised by this chance encounter, and on the basis of a number of such unique encounters am gradually able to open up to the uniqueness of all others and all encounters, and thereby to the presence of contingency. Such encounters also break apart individuals' dead-locked sense of their own personal and historical necessity and thereby open them up to their own fundamental existential contingency. And it is this dynamic—of opening necessity up to contingency—that allows the individual to recover his or her "true individuality." True individuality is formed, that is, at precisely the moment in which my sense of (necessary) identity is torn open by a chance encounter with an other. At the same time, both self and other recognize one another as equally contingent parts and, in acknowledging this fact, relate and connect at the point of their exposed duality. Kuki concludes:

> A chance encounter makes the self aware of the interrelationship of innumerable parts; at the same time, contingency *qua* "dual relativity" establishes a fundamental social sense through the disclosure of (real) intersubjectivity.[24]

24. KSZ II: 258-259

In sum, Kuki tries to think of individuality without favoring the totality or to the idea that individuality can only be fully realized in a totality. The individual as such, does not discover its own true individuality in relation to the totality but in the duality that tears the totality apart. And this duality, as we have seen, is accomplished at the point of a chance encounter with an other. In precisely that moment in which an individual's sense of identity and necessity is torn open by otherness, the relation between self and other opens up and true individuality comes to the fore.

This moment, in which we come to understand our own individuality, also marks the rupture of the perceived necessity of others and thereby open them up to their own individuality. Kuki therefore refers to the chance encounter between self and others as a "fundamental sociality." In it, he believes, we can accept the enormous diversity of the world and of individuals such as they are. Without recognizing such diversity and difference among individuals, we cannot love others; without truly encountering others, we cannot empathize with them. Nor can we discuss the nature of the world without accepting its variety and range. For all these reasons, Kuki is deeply critical of systems of universal ethics like theories of natural law and urges us:

> In order to prevent "morality" from becoming a mere fiction, and in order to empower our lives with a true sense of justice and right, contingency must be taken up as a stepping-board from which to move forward and face our inner selves."[25]

We might even call Kuki's final standpoint—the culmination of years of struggle—the "origin of ethics."

25. KSZ II: 258

The Conceptualization and Translation of *Jikaku* and *Jiko* in Nishida Kitarō

Uehara Mayuko

Nishida's notion of *jikaku* 自覚 appears in the second stage of his philosophical development, following his attempts to ground philosophy on "pure experience." Beginning with *Intuition and Reflection in Jikaku* (1917),[1] it finds a permanent place in his thinking. The term *jikaku* is particularly attractive for the study of translation because of its wide-ranging conceptual possibilities. In what follows I will focus my remarks on questions of translation between Japanese and French, but trust that they will contribute to the wider discussion of the translation of Japanese philosophical terms into Western languages.

The term *jikaku* 自覚 is made up of two Chinese characters: *ji*, which means "self," and *kaku,* which means "awake." The meaning of the term itself incorporates the significance of the word *jiko* 自己, which, together with *jikaku*, plays a major role in Nishida's writings. *Jiko* is generally taken to be the equivalent of the French *soi* or *moi*, but these latter belong fundamentally to a system of personal pronouns whereas

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1. 『自覚に於ける直観と反省』 in 『西田幾多郎全集』 [The collected works of Nishida Kitarō] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1978), vol. 11.

jiko belongs to a different grammatical system of terms designating the person. The fact that the self-referential phenomenon *soi, moi,* and other pronouns are grammaticalized differently than *jiko* complicates the already difficult conceptual and linguistic problems that face the translator. As a result, the work of interpretation, already an indispensable part of the process of translation, requires reflection not only on the context of the texts in which such words appear, but also on the question of traditional and trans-cultural usage. For what we have in Nishida is nothing less than a blend of cultural influences East and West converging in his notion of *jikaku*.

Jikaku is a philosophical neologism that Nishida first proposed as a translation of "self-consciousness." Later as a result of conceptual criticism and elaboration of the equivalents of self-consciousness, *jikaku* came to join his core vocabulary, standing alongside such basic terms in Western philosophy as *conscience de soi* or *Selbstbewußtsein*. No doubt the Sino-Japanese word *jikaku* carries the terminological legacy of the terms *jiko* and the *ishiki* (意識, consciousness) that includes a variety of Buddhist theoretical uses. Hence the study of translation related to *jikaku* requires a comparative examination of *jiko* and *soi* (or *moi*) through a critical analyse\is of a selection of French translations of Nishida's writings. As we will see, philosophical and linguistic problems are entangled in the process of translation from a source language to a target language.

Our study of translation in Nishida will emphasize the linguistic and terminological aspect of the different problems that arise, rather than focusing strictly on philosophical analysis. It will consist of reading different passages from Nishida's works and analyzing the concepts of *jikaku* and *jiko* within the context in which they appear.

The notion of *jikaku* can be said, in brief, to represent a self-reflective mechanism that grounds the system of consciousness. In grappling with the question of logic in his philosophical project, Nishida went on from an early conceptualization of *jikaku* to forge his notion of *basho* 場所, or "place," to designate the logical aspect of the activity of consciousness corresponding to *jikaku*. These two concepts, both of which involve consciousness, developed in tandem as Nishida's thinking evolved. In this sense, *jikaku* was reconceptualized again and again so that it could

serve as the indispensable and guiding thread that it was. We find it at work in Nishida's critique of Kant, German idealism, and the neo-Kantians, and watch it take shape, step by step, as his thinking develops. It shows up also in his more practical speculations on the structure of the human world and the foundations of human relations, for example, in his analysis of the encounter of *watashi* 私 (I) and *nanji* 汝 (you). In 1944, just the year before he died, Nishida undertook a reappraisal of the notion of *jikaku*

How then can we hope to translate a concept as central as *jikaku*, one so stratified and working at so many and diverse levels? How could we ever hope to produce a single translation in French or English—or any language for that matter?

THE NEOLOGISM *JIKAKU* AS TRANSLATION

The term *jikaku* appeared long before *Intuition and Reflection in Jikaku (*1917), in fact even before the book that launched his philosophical career in 1911, *A Study of the Good*.[2] I would point in particular to the use of the term in two texts written between 1904 and 1906, "A Lecture on Psychology" and "A Proposal for an Ethics."[3] Nishida took the psychology of Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) as his guide in composing his "Lecture," but even so, we can see hints of his original philosophical position there in germ.[4]

A short section of the "Lecture," intended as an outline of Western psychology, is set aside for the concept of *jikaku*. The following extract is taken from this section:

> Ce que l'on appelle "conscience de soi" (*self-consciousness*) n'est qu'une sorte de sentiment qui accompagne cet acte unificateur [de la conscience]. Ce sentiment est constant tel que l'est l'acte unificateur. En ce point naît l'idée de l'identité personnelle (*personal identity*). Pour cette raison, c'est sûrement après le développement de l'acte

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2. 『善の研究』, NKZ I.
3. 『心理学講義』 and 『倫理学草案』.
4. See MUTAI Risaku 務台理作,「後記」[Postface], NKZ XVI, 664–9.

aperceptif et de l'acte de volonté que l'on obtient un *jikaku* suffisant. À l'origine, ce que l'on nomme "soi" n'est pas fixé, et l'idée et le sentiment, obtenus à partir du fait que nous agissons en permanence comme centre unificateur de la conscience, sont associés étroitement au sentiment de soi et en font partie. Ainsi s'explique l'individualité de chacun.

吾人が自己の意識（self-consciousness）といふのは此の統一作用に伴ふ一種の感情にすぎないのである。此の感情は統一作用が不変である如くに不変であるが、此所に personal identity〔人格の同一〕の考を生ずるのである。それであるから吾人が充分なる自覚をうるのは統覚作用や意志作用の発達したる後でなければならぬ。固より吾人が自己と名づくる者は不定であつて、常に吾人が意識統一の中枢となりて働く観念及び感情はこの自己の感情と密接に結合せられ自己の一部分なのである。之が各人の個人性（individuality）である。[5]

Nishida sets the term "self-consciousness" in parentheses after 自己の意識, which is literally rendered as *conscience de soi* in French. 自己の意識 or "self-consciousness" is "a kind of sentiment" and is constant. On the other hand, *jikaku* originates in the development of an "apperceptive act" and an "act of the will". Nishida notes two aspects of self-consciousness here: "personal identity," which means self-identity, and *jikaku,* the result of personal identity being accompanied by an act of consciousness. This self-identity is none other than the constant, unchanging self. *Jiko* or self seems to ground the act of consciousness.

In his "A Proposal for an Ethics" Nishida indicates "self-consciousness" as a translation for *jikaku*.

[…] comme l'acte unificateur de l'intention est la forme fondamentale de la conscience, un acte unificateur identique se répète dans tous les phénomènes mentaux. On appelle *jikaku* (*self-consciousness*) ce dont il est pris conscience quand cet acte devient clair et évident. Ce que l'on nomme *jiko* (*self*) désigne cette unification. Si quelqu'un qui a suffisamment développé ce *jikaku* prend conscience du fait que son acte mental est son propre acte, on l'appelle une personne".

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5. NKZ XVI, 135. Unless otherwise indicated, the French translations are my own.

［ ... ］意思の統一作用は意識の根本的形式であるから凡ての精神現象に於て同一の統一作用が繰り返さるゝのである。此の作用が著しくなり意識さる[る]ものを自覚（self-consciousness）といふのである。吾人が自己（self）といふのはこの統一をさすのである。この自覚が充分に発達し自分の精神作用が自分の作用なることを自覚し居る者を人格（person）といふ。[6]

In this passage, the notion of *jikaku* is clearer than in the foregoing. The two aspects of *jikaku* or self-consciousness, namely, an act of unification (統一作用) and identity (同一), are linked. The repetitive act provides the guiding thread and the manifest fact of this repetition is called *jikaku*. Nishida then gives a very brief definition of 自己 as a translation of the self: the unification of the repetitive act. 人格 or person is here defined as "one who has sufficiently developed this *jikaku*" and "is conscious (aware) that one's mental acts are one's own." In this context, 人格 is involved in identity.

Nishida seems to be distinguishing between two levels in self-consciousness: 自己意識 and *jikaku*. It is interesting to note here that Nishi Amane, a pioneer in the translation of Western philosophical terms into Sino-Japanese terms during the Meiji era, in 1873, proposed 自覚意識 as a translation for self-consciousness.[7]

Eastern sources

As Sueki Fumihiko has pointed out, when we consider the historical context in which modern Japanese philosophy established itself during the Meiji era in relation to Buddhism, Zen was particularly favored by intellectuals like Natsume Sōseki and Hiratsuka Raichō. For "Buddhism is... a thorough investigation of the individual."[8] This is also a very important question in philosophy and naturally attracted philosophers at the time like Nishida who were pursuing conceptualizations of

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6. nkz xvi, 169.
7. He uses the term "セルフコンシウスニス" in his『生性發蘊』, in『西周全集』I: 125. This translation appears in a passage of「哲学編 性理学 (psychology)」where he also treats the notion of "reflection" (省察).
8. Sueki Fumihito 末木文美士, 『近代思想と仏教』(Tokyo: Transview, 2004), 14.

the modern Japanese individual resulting from the aggressive policy of Westernization.

There are admittedly traces of Mahāyāna Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian ideas in Nishida's background, as his writings and his diaries amply attest. Furthermore, he passed his boyhood years in the company of his mother who was a follower of the True Pure Land sect of Shinran. Nishida read the important Chinese classics and was proficient at writing *kanbun* as were other cultivated persons of his generation.

This historical and cultural background is reflected in his philosophy as well. As has often been pointed out, the influence of Buddhism, and especially Zen, is suggested frequently in his writings, beginning with his choice of terminology such as *jikaku*. The difficulty for non-specialists is that his citations of original Buddhist texts are few, and even when he is quoting he often does so without clearly indicating the fact, let alone provide the reader with reference, author, source, and other bibliographical data. For example, in a passage concerning "absolutely contradictory self-identity" (*zettai mujunteki jikodōitsu* 絶対矛盾的自己同一), famous verses of Dōgen appear and are followed by several expressions in Sino-Japanese, all without precise reference.[9]

Consequently, rather than track down Nishida's Buddhist citations or allusions to the original texts of Dōgen, I would opt to concentrate on another aspect, the linguistic resonances of the Buddhist term *jikaku*. My remarks will not draw on philological verification and analyses of Zen literature as it appears in Nishida, but will rather attempt a reflection, through linguistic analysis, on the relationship between Zen logic

9. 「図式的説明」[Diagrammatic explanations], NKZ IX, In this connection, I would cite a remark by James W. HEISIG: "What is peculiar to Nishida, though, and far from convention, was the fact that he could lift whole phrases and sentences from his reading in order to wrestle with the ideas, often without indicating whom he was citing or from where. During his struggles with neo-Kantian thought this is marked: there are times when one simply does not know if it is Nishida or someone Nishida is citing whose view is being discussed. For the philosophical reader this must be kept in mind when reading Nishida's own work, even in translation, since most translators either have not bothered to track down Nishida's sources or were not aware of what was going on." *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School* (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 36.

and Nishida's logic. In so doing, I am presupposing as a background his spiritual experience of sitting in Zen meditation (*zazen*).

Nishida applied himself assiduously to the practice of Zen, above all during the ten years from 1896 to 1906 when he taught at what was then the Fourth High School, a period dominated by intense personal study. He continued his practice of Zen until he was named to a post at Kyoto Imperial University and published his first book, *A Study of the Good* in 1911. Simply put, this practice of "sitting" was part of a general spiritual formation that included his engagement with philosophy. It was not intended as a profession of Buddhist faith.Through this experience Nishida came face to face with what he saw as a profound contradiction between Zen and philosophy, the one advocating thinking, the other not-thinking. According to Ueda Shizuteru, they symbolize respectively East and West, Zen as a concrete form of Buddhism being one of the pillars of Eastern culture, philosophy being the intellectual foundation of two and a half millennia of European history. What Nishida set out to do was take the bold step of entering into the confrontation and synthesizing these two irreconcilable traditions.[10]

As for the choice of the term *jikaku* to translate "self-consciousness" in the two texts treated above, given the dates of their composition (1904–1906), which falls in the midst of his intense spiritual practice, we may suppose that Nishida's practice of sitting in Zen meditation had something to do with its introduction as a philosophical idea.[11]

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10. Ueda Shizuteru 上田閑照, 『西田幾多郎——人間の生涯ということ』 [Nishida Kitarō and this thing called a life] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996), 97–134.

11. Nishida acknowledges his ambitions to reconcile philosophy and *Zen* in a 1943 letter to Nishitani Keiji. Letter 1738 in NKZ XIX, 224–5. Translated freely, it reads: "Nothing would make me happier than if you would kindly have a look at the essay in 『思想』 [Thought] and understand it. Really the whole reason for writing it is that you younger scholars will understand what is written there and carry it further. If I am told that Zen is in the background, I could not be more in agreement. I am not myself and never was knowledgeable in Zen, but as people have come completely to misunderstand Zen, I have come to think that the life of Zen has to do with truly grasping reality. Such a thing may be impossible, but I want somehow to connect it with philosophy. This has been my desire since my thirties. Since I am talking to you I can say it, but when ordinary students who are ignorant of such things talk to me of Zen I resist it with every fiber of my being. They know nothing of Zen and nothing

Jikaku and jiko in Buddhism

For the term *jikaku*, Nakamura Hajime's the 仏教大事典 *Buddhist Lexi-con* gives two definitions: "to awaken oneself" (自分でさとること) and "to open one's eyes to the truth, to awake" (真理に目覚め、さとること).

These concise definitions are expanded by Suzuki Daisetsu. The doctrine of Mahāyāna Buddhist, whatever the sect, is founded on spiritual enlightenment. The notion of 覚 (*kaku*) is inseparable at the roots from the notion of "Buddha" 仏陀, which means "to be awakened," as is clear from the Sanskrit etymology of *budh,* to awaken, to awaken oneself. In quest of the state of the Buddha "who awakened himself and is detached from a life of relativity and constraint," individuals endeavor to attain to perfect enlightenment themselves. The Buddha exercises this preoccupation with liberation through the practice of meditation. In order to attain to enlightenment—that is, to reality and truth—the Buddhist monk seeks to overcome attachment to thinking and speaking in terms of a dualistic logic and to transcend the prejudices of conventional thinking. When the Buddha awakened, "his whole existence came into question." The distinction between the question and the questioner, between self 自己 and non-self 非自己, disappear, leaving only an "unknowing without discrimination." Taking leave of thinking in dichotomies, the awakened comes to a wisdom that restores meaning to the individual and to all other relative forms of knowledge.

The term 自己 is also a key-term in Buddhism. The *Buddhist Lexicon* defines it as "one's self, itself (自分自身のこと), the original self (本来の自己), the self possessed of Buddha nature from birth (生まれながらに仏性をもっている自己)." *Jiko* is itself a translation of the Sanskrit *ātman*, a term implying a substantial self. As Suzuki notes in this connection, prior to attaining wisdom and overcoming the opposition between self and non-self, knowledge is blinded by the illusion of this substantial self or *ātman*.

of philosophy. As if X and Y were the same thing. Since I think they misread my philosophy and misunderstand Zen, I want by and by to give further thought to the standpoint of philosophy and the standpoint of religion. In order to clarify section III of my essay, I am slowly composing something about the relationship between "the structure of the historical world" and *jikaku*….

Although no mention is made in the *Buddhist Lexicon* of the linguistic character of *jiko*, we may point out two uses of the term: the pronominal and the conceptual.

The conceptualization of *jikaku*

Problems of French translation

Let us consider some problems of rendering the terms *jikaku* and *jiko* into French. Nishida scholars have proposed any number of translations for *jikaku*, among them *conscience de soi*, *réalisation de soi*, *prise de conscience*, and *éveil à soi*. The variations reflect the interpretative problem caused by the polysemy of the term itself. But even before that, there are problems of a more linguistic nature that need consideration.

I begin by citing a sentence near the beginning of *Zen no kenkyū* in a published French translation:

1. Expérimenter, c'est un connaître où les faits réels se présentent tels qu'ils sont, un connaître que <u>nous</u> pouvons acquérir en <u>nous</u> soumettant à la réalité des faits, en abandonnant tous <u>nos</u> artifices (intellectuels).[12]

Here is my suggested translation:

Faire une expérience signifie "connaître le réel tel quel". C'est connaître conformément au réel, en écartant complètement tout le travail du soi.

経験するといふのは事実其儘に知るの意である。全く<u>自己</u>の細工を棄て
ゝ、事実に従うて知るのである。[13]

Note that the translator turns the term *jiko* into the possessive adjective *nos* (our). Also, in the original text *jiko* is accompanied by a particle (の) used to designates possession. The translator interprets the expression as belonging to the first person plural. The absence of the term, *soi*

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12. *Essai sur le bien*, trans. by Ôshima Hitoshi (Paris: Éditions Osiris, 1997), 15. emphasis added here and elsewhere.

13. NKZ I: 9

or *moi*, which would indicate the presence of the term *jiko* in the second sense of the original, seems to pose a problem. We need a French equivalent of *jiko* in the translation because Nishida mentions the knowledge of "the fact" (事実) as such (其侭) is in order to distinguish it as a particular kind of knowing. The term *jiko* then appears to mark that "fact." *Nos artifice* (our work) 細工 and *artifices du soi* (the work of the self) are not the same.

A second example consists of two translations of an extract from Nishida's essay "I and You" (私と汝), first published in 1932.

> 2. 1. Que je vois l'absolument autre en moi signifie inversement que je me vois en voyant cet absolument autre et c'est par là que ma subjectivité parvient à se constituer.[14]

> 2. 2. Que je voie l'autre absolu dans mon moi signifie que je me voie moi-même en voyant l'autre absolu, c'est ainsi que s'établit la conscience de soi individuelle.[15]

And my translation of the same passage:

> Voir dans le soi l'absolument autre signifie *a contrario* que je me vois moi-même en voyant l'absolument autre. En ce sens se réalise notre *jikaku* individuel.

> 私が私の自己の中に絶対の他を見るといふことは、逆に私が絶対の他を見ることによつて私が私自身を見るといふことを意味し、かゝる意味に於て我々の個人的自覚といふものが成立するのである。[16]

This passage is concerned with *jikaku* insofar as it is grounded in the interpersonal relation between I and You. Neither *subjectivité* nor *conscience de soi* seem to me suitable translations of *jikaku*. At the time Nishida was writing this essay, *jikaku* was certainly apart of his technical vocabulary, making it impossible to render it simply *conscience de soi*

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14. *L'Entre*, [French translation of Kɪᴍᴜʀᴀ Bin 木村 敏『あいだ』] by Claire Vincent (Grenoble, Editions Jérôme Millon, 2000), 131.

15. *Écrits de psychopathologie phénoménologique* [selected writings of Kɪᴍᴜʀᴀ Bin], trans. by Joël Bouderlique (Paris, ᴘᴜꜰ, 1992), 191.

16. ɴᴋᴢ ᴠɪ: 406–7.

(self-consciousness). The dynamism of human relations he is arguing for is based on communication between I and You, each of whom function as *jikaku*.

As for the term *jiko*, both translators propose to translate it as *moi* because this term renders what is grammatically a simple personal pronoun. But elsewhere in their translation, they use the term *soi* to render *jiko*. But elsewhere in their translation, they use the same term *moi* to render what is grammatically a simple personal pronoun. In the two translations, the first person of the subject "I" introduces the emphatic form of the first personal singular pronoun, *moi-même,* and the reflexive pronoun *me*. But the *moi* of *dans mon moi* in 2.2. is not a pronoun but a noun. Is it not impossible to adopt *soi* in place of *moi*? There seems to be no grammatical continuity between *jiko* and *watashi* (I) in words designating the person. The expression 私の自己 is possible in Japanese, while *mon soi* seems to offend common usage in French. Hence both translators propose *moi*.

To understand just how Nishida conceived of *jikaku*, it is necessary to analyze a variety of texts. For example, consider the following passage from *Intuition and Reflection in Jikaku* 『自覚にけ於る直観と反省』 (1917). In his preface to the work Nishida speaks of his project concerning *jikaku* and its conceptual system, indicating his intention to think of reality (実在) in terms of *jikaku*. He then has this to say of the word:

> The *jikaku* that I propose is not like what the psychologists call *jikaku*, but it is like the *jikaku* of the "transcendental self" or *Tathandlung* of Fichte. I think it was the appendix of Royce's *The World and the Individual*, vol. 1 that suggested to me this idea.[17]

As the above passage indicates, Nishida's *jikaku* system was inspired by Kant, Fichte, and Josiah Royce (1855–1916).[18] He saw the "self-representational system" of Royce as complementing the gradual unfolding of the self-reflective act of consciousness. Royce's idea that the self reproduces itself *(*自己が自己を写す) implies an infinite process of unifying.

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17. NKZ II: 3.

18. Nishida cites Royce's book explicitly later in the text (NKZ II: 16). See also 「論理の理解と数理の理解」 [Understanding the logic of mathematics], NKZ I: 250–67.

Nishida was interested in the idea of an "infinite series" (無限の系列), for which Royce gives as an example of the attempt to make a perfect copy of the map of England from within England. Drawing such a map cannot leave out the self's reproduction of itself insofar as the self who is copying the map needs also to describe its own action as well as itself. Thus the action of reproducing oneself carries on forever and can never be completed. Nishida explains in the following passage on *jikaku*.

> Le soi se réfléchit, c'est-à-dire se recopie, ce n'est pas qu'il se recopie en s'éloignant de lui-même (ou de soi-même) comme on recopie la dite expérience sous forme de concept, mais c'est se recopier à l'intérieur de soi. La réflexion est un fait intérieur au soi. Ainsi, le soi s'ajoute quelque chose. La réflexion est à la fois connaissance de soi et acte d'auto-développement. La véritable identité de soi ne consiste pas en identité statique, mais en développement dynamique. Je pense que notre idée inébranlable d'histoire individuelle se fonde là-dessus.

> 自己が自己を反省する即ち之を写すといふのは、所謂経験を概念の形に於て写すといふ様に、自己を離れて自己を写すのではない、自己の中に自己を写すのである。反省は自己の中の事実である、自己は之に因つて自己に或物を加へるのである、自己の知識であると共に自己発展の作用である。真の自己同一は静的同一ではなく、動的発展である、我々の動かすべからざる個人的歴史の考は之に基くと思ふ。[19]

The essence of the idea lies in the expression 自己が自己を反省する, the self reflecting on itself. This is a formula that will change forms as Nishida progresses in his conceptualization of *jikaku*, as, for example, in the phrases 自己が自己に於て自己を見る (the self sees itself in itself) and 自己の中に自己を見る (seeing the self within the self).[20] Note how the term *jiko* is repeated.

Nishida's purpose is to step over the question of self-objectification to remove the opposition between two aspects of the self, namely, the thinking self (考える自己) and the thought self (考えられる自己). He turned to Kant's notion of "pure apperception" but found that its intellectualism left him unsatisfied, yielding no more than an "intel-

19. NKZ II: 16.
20. NKZV: 387, 43..

lectual *jikaku*" (知的自覚), as he called it. In search of reality, a search that began with his pursuit of the concept of pure experience, Nishida tried to extend the meaning of knowledge to include experience that is immediately given prior to the cognitive split of subject and object. To make this experience intelligible, he tried to think of an object that is *not* opposed to a knowing subject. This is what he had in mind in the opening sentence of the passage just cited: "The self reflects on itself, that is to say reproduces it… It is a reproduction of the self within itself."

His claim that "the reflection is a fact within the self" means that self-reflection is a fact that is not objectifiable. In *jikaku*, self-reflection adds something to the self, namely, knowledge, while the act of self-reflection is objectified and repeated again and again within the self. This is "the act of the self-unfolding." At the same time, he argues that "true self-identity is a dynamic, not a static, identity." By including self-development Nishida means to differentiate *jikaku* from the psychological notion of self-consciousness. This infinite self-reflection guarantees true self-identity both in the act of self-reflection and in the individual history that is constructed through the continuity of acting.

This brings us to the linguistic question. The construction 自己が自己 を反省する (the self reflects itself) adopts *jiko* both as grammatical subject (自己が) and as grammatical object (自己を). The correspondence of the subject with the object rests on the unity of the reflecting *jiko* and the reflected *jiko*. The repetition of the term *jiko* represents the self-reflectiveness of the *jikaku*. It almost sounds as if Nishida were translating into Japanese the French phrase *le soi se réfléchit*. But there is a referential problem here: the French *se* of the verb *se réfléchir* is a pronoun. What of the *jiko* of *jiko ga* and *jiko o*? As I have read the passage, the first is a noun while the second remains ambiguous as to grammatical classification. It seems to be both a noun and a reflexive pronoun. When the term *jiko* is a noun, it designates a concept. Oddly, standard Japanese dictionaries such as the *Kokugo daijiten* (Shōgakkan) and Iwanami's *Kōjien*, as well as Sino-Japanese dictionaries, only list a number of (*onore* おのれ、*ore* わ れ、*jibun* 自分、*jishin* 自身) without providing further information on grammatical classification and usage. Clearly there is further room for exploration of the linguistic nature of the term *jiko*.

In Nishida's texts the uses of *jiko* are not what we could call ordinary

Japanese. He created them as part of a distinctive philosophical idiom. The expression *jiko o* is both meant to be conceptual and to serve as a reflexive pronoun. As a concept, *jiko o* is what is being objectified. As a reflexive pronoun, the correlation of *jiko ga* and *jiko o* introduces a unification of subject and object. As we have noted, in the endless act of *jikaku*, the stages of the objectification are included, and for this reason, we conclude that the Japanese term *jiko* expresses precisely what Nishida had in mind by the notion of *jikaku*.

Conclusion

In the foregoing we have argued on two fronts. The first has to do with the relation between Nishida's *jikaku* and Buddhist enlightenment. We have seen that they are structurally comparable in that each deals with a process aimed at the obliteration of the distinction between subject and object, or self and non-self. The substantial self is included in Nishida's system of *jikaku*, not simply left out. Self-reflection is an evolving process, proceeding step by step from the substantial self to the non-self.

Secondly we raised the linguistic question of the status of *jiko* and found it to be a grammatically ambiguous term. It is not simply a philosophical ambiguity, but one reflected in everyday Japanese usage. The synonym, *jibun* 自分 differs here, since its grammatical status as a reflexive pronoun is fixed. The ambiguity of the term *jiko* is complicated by its function as a translation of the Sanskrit *ātman*, on the one hand, and of the English *self* on the other hand. I would argue that Nishida's use of *jiko* in the creation of various expressions represents a genuine contribution to the modernization of the Japanese language, in addition to contributing to the connection between Buddhism and Western philosophy. In so doing he shared in the tradition that views philosophy as a unity of East and West.

The Locus of Science
and its Place in Japanese Culture

Nishida on the Relationship of Science and Culture

Silja GRAUPE

The history of Japan continues to be marked by the multi-faceted impingement of Western modernity, of which one of the most important aspects has been the massive influx of science.[1] When the Tokugawa policy of seclusion ended with the appearance of the Black Ships of the Americans in 1854, Japan faced the challenge of modernizing itself while at the same time remaining true to its own cultural values. As in so many other parts of the world, the blending of Western science and technique on the one hand, and endogenous cultural practices and values on the other, proved an especially demanding task.

As others have noted, taking up this task became a major concern among Japanese philosophers in the first half of the twentieth century.[2]

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1. An excellent summary of this development can be found in S. N. EISENSTADT, *Japanese Civilization: A Comparative View* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), chap. 17.

2. Thomas KASULIS, "Sushi, Science, and Spirituality: Modern Japanese Philosophy and Its Views of Western Science," *Philosophy East & West* 45/2 (1995): 227–48; Andrew FEENBERG, "Experience and Culture: Nishida's Path 'To the Things Themselves'," *Philosophy East & West* 49/1 (1999), 28–44.

Among them, Nishida Kitarō surely ranks as the single most influential. In particular, his logic of locus (場所の論理) which he developed in the 1930s and continued to revise thereafter, can be read as an effort to locate scientific thinking within a larger system that grants traditional and cultural values a non-subordinate place.[3] Nishida's basic insight here is that every scientific judgment necessarily depends on a certain context, which in turn derives from a broader experiential domain that is beyond the scope of the judgment itself. According to Thomas Kasulis, this insight eventually led Nishida to answer the question of how science and culture interrelate:

> Nishida argued that the realm of empirical judgment is necessarily grounded experientially in a realm of value that it cannot analyze from its own standpoint. Nishida's system attempted to grant Western science its logical place while showing that its experiential ground was what traditional values had affirmed all along. Religion, at least in its Asian forms, was not antagonistic to science, nor was it endangered by science. On the contrary, Nishida argued that spiritual experience is what makes science possible in the first place.[4]

In this way, culture seems to easily ground and encompass science without being endangered by it. From a socio-historic perspective, however, this point of view appears rather problematic.

First of all, Japan's modern history shows how the influx of Western science has not only affected the way the Japanese make empirical judgments about the world; it has also fundamentally changed the experiential ground of their everyday social life itself. Already in Nishida's time, social and institutional practices were rapidly being transformed by scientific progress. Also, values and world-views changed dramatically; at times they even seemed to simply dissolve on contact.[5] This indicates that Western science—at least in certain ways—confronts Japanese tra-

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3. Thomas KASULIS "Japanese Philosophy," *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1998), vol. V: 68–80.
4. *Ibid.*, 78.
5. FEENBERG, "Experience and Culture," 28.

ditions and values rather than being simply encompassed by them. As Ueda notes, this confrontation was strongly felt by Nishida himself:

> Since Nishida had his roots in the Eastern tradition, his encounter with the West was a turbulent one, given the brusque way the West first made inroads into the East…. In a word, Nishida found himself at the exact point where East and West collided with one another full force…. He experienced the full confrontation of East and West as they threw themselves against each other headlong, like rival floats crashing into one another at a *matsuri*.[6]

It is not only the historic experience of Japan, but also the history of science in general, especially that of scientific objectivity, that calls into question the above mentioned subordination of science to culture. This is especially true when we consider modern Western science itself as a continually evolving historical construct, the meaning of which stretches beyond the realm of empirical judgments. This consideration might seem unusual at first glance, since the concept of scientific objectivity has often been considered to be monolithic and immutable and, hence, a trans-historical fact. The claim was that it has to do only with statements about the natural world, independent of all social and historical influences.

As Lorraine Daston and others have shown, however, the claims of scientific objectivity have never been limited to empirical judgments.[7] They have also presupposed a freedom from subjective interpretation and individual bias on the part of individual scientists, their judgments, and their skills. What is more, despite its self-understanding as a value-free enterprise, science has come to shape an ideal of common knowledge which, because of its independence from all local contexts, can claim universal validity. As will become clearer later, this ideal at least implicitly negates the plurality of cultures, because it seeks to annihilate all locally unique forms of experience and knowledge.

These brief considerations already indicate that science—or, more pre-

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6. UEDA Shizuteru, "Nishida's Thought," *The Eastern Buddhist* 28/1 (1995): 34–5.
7. Lorraine DASTON, "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective," *Social Studies of Science* 22 (1992): 597–618.

cisely, scientific objectivity, which is a multi-layered concept[8]—cannot be located in a single *basho* within Nishida's logic of locus. Given this, I will attempt in what follows to reread Nishida's logic of locus in the light of the history of science in order to gain a new understanding of the relationship between science and Japanese culture, one that takes into account both their conflict as well as their co-existence. I will proceed in two stages. First, I will locate science in its own experiential locus (its own place of absolute nothingness in Nishida's terms) prior to considering its relation to Japanese culture. To do this, we need to link Nishida's system of enfolded and enfolding *basho* to the various layers of scientific objectivity as expounded by the history of science. Naturally, I am not attempting to spell out the entire web of connections between these two fields, nor to take into consideration the whole of the history of science, which has grown into an discipline all its own.[9] My point is rather to highlight some interesting connections between these two fields that might have been unconscious to Nishida himself, but which, once made visible, can help us today to understand better his view of science. The second part of my essay will then focus on the relationship between science and Japanese culture.

The Locus of Science

The following passage shows Nishida to have been well aware of the fact that not only Japanese culture but also Western science carries a "spirit of its own":

> Since the Meiji Restoration, our country has been taking in Western culture pellmell. Those who speak rather flippantly of *wakon kansai* (和魂漢才) [or *wakon yōsai* (多恨洋才)] ("Japanese spirit and Chinese [or Western] learning [or crafts]") in this connection may think that one can use these things merely as tools. They forget that every one

8. Lorraine DASTON and Peter GALISON, "The Image of Objectivity," *Representations* 40 (1992): 82.

9. More specifically, my paper limits itself mainly to the history of science as expounded by Lorraine Daston, Peter Galison, and Theodore Porter.

of these things has a spirit of its own. Even the natural sciences carry a spirit proper to the natural sciences. We must digest these things by grasping each in its particular spirit.[10]

Here, Nishida expresses the important idea that we must learn the spirit inherent in the natural sciences if we want to comprehend the effect of these sciences on a given culture.[11] But how can this spirit be grasped? In his logic of locus, Nishida attempts to answer this question, so to speak, from the bottom up. By starting off from the related insights that "all existing things are located in something" and that "being" means "being located,"[12] Nishida moves us from the realm of empirical judgments about the natural world to the question of what these judgments necessarily imply, but cannot, in their own terms, explain. In this way, he wants to show that empirical judgments are not only located within the wider field of individual subjective consciousness, but also that this consciousness grounds itself in the field of a common knowledge which is the same for each and every individual, that is, consciousness in general. Furthermore, Nishida shows that even the latter cannot be considered as simply given, but only exists in a yet wider experiential locus, namely, the world of action.[13] As will become clearer later, even this field is not the last to be explored by Nishida. What is of greater importance here, however, is that in each of its steps, the pattern of argumentation in Nishida's logic of locus remains the same:

There is basically one pattern of argumentation that, when successively applied, forces a move upward from a relatively simple set of categories to a richer and more complex one. The reason for this way of arguing is not just to demonstrate how a more complex categoreal structure develops, but also to show why the richer categories are not

10. Cited from UEDA, "Nishida's Thought," 37–8.

11. *Ibid.,* 38.

12. *Ibid.* 46. Compare also NISHIDA Kitarō, *Logik des Ortes*, trans. by Rolf ELBERFELD (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1999), 72–4.

13. For a summary of Nishida's logic of locus, see James W. HEISIG, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 72-75. Also: Robert. E. CARTER, *The Nothingness Beyond God: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nishida Kitaro* (Paragon House: St. Paul, 1997), 16–58.

reducible to the simpler ones. In this way Nishida hopes to explain the essential dependency of the simpler categories on the more complex, that is, to show why the former can be abstracted from the latter, but the latter cannot be constructed from the former.[14]

In short, "one moves from the instance as verbally judged, to what such judgment necessarily implies, in increasing layers of inclusiveness."[15]

Considering the realm of empirical judgments first, judgments such as "this thing is black"[16] seem to be concerned with what *is* only; they are statements about being, and thus Nishida locates them in the *basho of being*. Speaking of ontological objectivity in this connection, Daston shows that an important concept of scientific objectivity is closely related to such judgments.[17] Ontological objectivity claims that only what "naturally is" can be considered objective. Its object is the passive, represented, and unconscious natural world alone, to which it opposes the active, conscious self, going so far as to present itself as entirely independent from human consciousness as such.[18] Nishida's own view of the scientific world-view alludes to this conception of objectivity:

> Natural science goes on theoretically to organize them [the objects] according to the forms of space, time and causality. Science universally denies the subjective; the "physical world" is constructed thereby. Therefore sounds are considered to be the vibrations of air, colors to be ether waves. Pursuing this direction to its logical conclusion, everything subjective must be negated.[19]

While Nishida thus confirms that science usually denies the subjective, he argues that this denial cannot be complete. "If it [the scientific

14. Robert J. Wargo, *The Logic of Nothingness* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 122.

15. Carter, *The Nothingness beyond God*, 29.

16. This example is given in Nishida Kitarō, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness*, translated by Takeuchi Yoshinori et al. (New York: suny, 1987), 43.

17. Daston, "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective," 599.

18. Jennifer Tannoch-Bland "From Aperspectival Objectivity to Strong Objectivity: The Quest for Moral Objectivity," *Hypatia* 12/1 (1997): 158.

19. Nishida Kitarō, *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy*, translated by David Dilworth (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1970), 245.

world-view] entirely denies the subjective there would be no things, no entities."[20] For Nishida, empirical judgments are not given per se. Even though the internal logic of those judgments does not allow us explicitly to consider the subject making these judgments, it nevertheless implicitly relies on a broader experiential context that assumes the functioning of this very subject. As Nishida notes in more general terms: "If we reflect on the a priori of the natural scientific world, we discover phenomena of consciousness."[21] Here, the individual scientist appears as the ground of his empirical judgments, without being thematized by these judgments himself.

On closer examination, there appears a deep contradiction inherent in empirical judgments. Because these judgments only explicitly state what naturally is, they neutralize the observer (i.e., the scientist) in such a way that he or she does not even enter into the judgment per se. Seemingly, the observer's existence is negated altogether. At the same time, however, empirical judgments implicitly contain judgments about the observer. "To neutralize the role of the observer as ordinary empirical judgments do is to say something about the observer—its role can be neutralized or ignored."[22] Empirical judgments thus negate and affirm the scientist at the same time.

For Nishida, this contradiction makes the transition to another *basho*, another level of explanation, necessary. As Wargo explains:

> The appearance of the contradiction and the recognition of it as a contradiction require a shift to a new set of categories, in other words to a new *basho* which can accommodate the type of entity required to resolve the contradiction.[23]

We have thus to move to another, more inclusive layer of explanation in which we can affirm the contradiction inherent in empirical judgments by making their presuppositions about the neutrality of the observer explicit. Nishida defines this layer as the contextual field of judgments

20. *Ibid.,* 245.
21. NISHIDA, *Intuition and Reflection,* 157.
22. KASULIS, "Sushi, Science, and Spirituality," 238.
23. WARGO, *The Logic of Nothingness,* 136.

about self-consciousness which grounds all empirical knowledge while not being explicable in its terms. While from the standpoint of empirical judgment, this field appears to be nothing, it is, from the standpoint of self-consciousness, very much something. Nishida thus terms it the *basho of relative nothingness.*[24] But what exactly does this *basho* of relative nothingness look like? How can we explicitly think of the scientist being neutralized in the way empirical judgments demand?

While I am not sure to what extent Nishida probes into these questions, the history of science shows that scientific objectivity itself places demands on the person who is making empirical judgments.[25] Speaking of mechanical objectivity in this connection, Daston shows that science demands that the scientist be free of individual bias, refraining not only from personal emotions and judgments but also from unique forms of experience, knowledge, and skill.[26] The demand for objectivity suppresses the human propensity to judge and aestheticize, and thus negates subjective interpretation. In turn, it favors "procedures, devices, and mechanisms designed to eradicate interpretation in reporting and picturing scientific results."[27] Here, objectivity becomes closely associated with knowledge obtained by the use of machines (hence the term "mechanical objectivity"). Minimizing the role of human reflection in judgment, science puts its faith in the objectivity of machines instead of human analysis and judgments. It becomes concerned with "push-button objectivity" alone, where human judgment resembles a mechanical device or is even replaced by one.[28] Ideally speaking, the scientist exists only to "insert an unknown into an instrument, push a button, and get the answer."[29]

The ideal of mechanical objectivity has a negative as well as a positive sense. In its negative sense it attempts to eliminate the mediating presence of the observer entirely or, at least, to rule out the possibility of any

24. KASULIS, "Sushi, Science, and Spirituality," 238.
25. TANNOCH-BLAND, "From Aperspectival Objectivity," 165.
26. DASTON and GALISON "The Image of Objectivity," 81–128.
27. TANNOCH-BLAND, "From Aperspectival Objectivity," 157.
28. Davis BAIRD, *Thing Knowledge*: *A Philosophy of Scientific Instruments* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 19.
29. *Ibid.,* 190. Baird also speaks of "instrumental objectivity" in this connection.

subjective modifications of the scientific procedure. In its positive sense it requires painstaking care and exactitude, infinite patience, unflagging perseverance, preternatural sensory acuity, and an insatiable appetite for work. What unites these positive and negative senses is a sort of heroic self-discipline:

> On the one side, the honesty and self-restraint required to foreswear judgments, interpretation, and even testimony of one's own senses; on the other, the taut concentration required for precise observation and measurement, endlessly repeated around the clock.[30]

Once again, these virtues are ideally embodied in machines:

> It was nineteenth-century commonplace that machines were paragons of certain human virtues. Chief among those virtues were those associated with work: patient, indefatigable, ever-alert machines would relieve human workers whose attention wandered, whose pace slackened, whose hand trembled. Scientists praised automatic recording devices and instruments in much the same terms.… It was not simply that these devices saved the labor of human observers, they surpassed human observers in the laboring virtues … Of course, strictly speaking, no merit attached to these mechanical virtues, for their exercise involved neither free will nor self-command. But the fact that the machines had no choice but to be virtuous struck scientists distrustful of their own powers of self-discipline as a distinct advantage. *Instead of freedom of will, machines offered freedom from will*—from the willful interventions that had come to be seen as the most dangerous aspects of subjectivity.[31]

Turning back to Nishida's logic of locus, we have to ask what makes such freedom from willful interventions possible without being explicitly expressed by the ideal of mechanical objectivity itself. Or in other words, in what place can the scientist be truly impersonal in the sense of mechanical objectivity? There seems to lie a hidden ideal or goal behind the scientific demand for freedom from the individual will, here, which

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30. Daston and Galison "The Image of Objectivity," 83.
31. *Ibid.,* 83, emphasis added.

cannot be itself explained in purely individual terms. Turning back to the scientific ideal of the machine, we might detect the root of this ideal in the machine's ability to reproduce and standardize phenomena in conformity to certain programmed rules and mechanical patterns that cannot be willfully altered. Machines, especially when mass produced, make possible uniform measurement across space and time. As such, they provide "a new model for the scale and perfection to which standardization might strive."[32]

Taken over into science, this ideal is made a norm requiring the scientist to obey certain rules that are to be the same for every member of the scientific community. Here, scientific objectivity is not concerned with individual self-discipline but with an important presupposition of such self-discipline: it calls for rules and standards which form a consensus among the community of scientists and, as such, rules out all individual judgments. Here impersonality appears as an ideal that replaces arbitrariness, idiosyncrasy, and judgment by explicit rules.[33]

Here again, this insight helps clarify Nishida's own view, when he states that "the pure objectivity of knowledge, which does not allow the least element of subjectivity must be based on an… an ideal of knowledge."[34] Speaking of such an ideal of knowledge, however, indicates that another change of place, another leap in the logic of locus, has taken place. This is so because the focus has moved away from the individual scientist and his judgments to a field of universal rules and standards that are common to all scientist and, as such, cannot be explained in individual terms. Scientists lose themselves by becoming one with a common standard located on a trans-individual plane. They transcend their individual horizons by arriving at the horizon of "consciousness in general."[35] Speaking in terms of the logic of locus, science eliminates the validity of any claim based on subjectivity by presupposing a "world

32. *Ibid.*, 99.

33. Theodore Porter, "Quantification and the Accounting Ideal in Science," *Social Studies of Science* 22 (1992), 633.

34. Nishida Kitarō, *Art and Morality*, trans. by David A. Dilworth and Valdo H. Viglielmo (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1973), 195.

35. *Ibid.*, 42.

of common knowledge"[36] in which all scientists operate in the same a priori cognitive structures and thus transcend their own subjective wills. Speaking of aperspectival objectivity in this connection, Daston argues that science attempts to transcend all individual viewpoints or perspectives by establishing a binding communal form of truth which is dependent on thought in general but independent of idiosyncrasies, that is, independent of what I, or you, or any specific number of people think.[37] Going beyond the merely personal, objectivity becomes associated with public knowledge.[38]

Without going in any detail here, it is important to observe that this knowledge is usually associated with quantification—methods that involve counting, measurement, and commensuration (the expression or measurement of characteristics normally represented by different units according to a common metric[39]). Quantification can be described as the knowledge of numbers and calculations, and, as such, can be shared by everyone, independent of differences in individual background. Ideally, it is represented by mathematics; "a language of rules, the kind of language that even a thing as stupid as a computer can use."[40] Mathematics involves constraining rules of discourse which screen out desires, biases and willful interventions of the individual. It can thus form an ideal world of common knowledge determining all individual knowledge without being determined by any individual will.

> The realm of mathematics is… a kind of objective world given to our subjectivity and can be viewed as a creation of a kind of objective spirit. Mathematical understanding involves our uniting directly with this objective spirit and creating in unison with it. The transcendental, necessary nature of mathematical knowledge resides in this.[41]

What is of importance here is that science's common world of knowl-

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36. *Ibid.*, 75.

37. Daston, "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective," 607.

38. Porter, "Quantification and the Accounting Ideal," 641.

39. Wendy N. Espeland and Mitchell L. Stevens, "Commensuration as a Social Process," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24/1 (1998): 313–43.

40. Porter, "Quantification and the Accounting Ideal," 644.

41. Nishida, *Art and Morality*, 76.

edge is transcendental to both the field of empirical judgments (the *basho of being*) and the field of the individual scientist (the *basho of relative nothingness*). More precisely, it is the locus in which both fields simultaneously, yet antithetically, arise. With regard to the former, Nishida writes:

> The world of reality is constructed by the attempt to unite all experience from the standpoint of trans-individual consciousness.[42]

> The material world is a precipitate of the cognitive effort to unify all experience.[43]

Nishida turns an important assumption of science on its head here, because he considers the material (or natural) world not to be independent from the ways we commonly perceive it. Rather, the uniformity of nature appears as being based on the universality of science.[44] What is more, Nishida sees through the scientific world-view as a limited perspective in that it neglects all aspects of nature that cannot be accounted for by the common standards of scientific knowledge. For example, all individual or unique facts are necessarily negated by quantification and a deeper or more accurate knowledge of nature is sacrificed to the demands of communicability.[45] Everything contingent, accidental, inexplicable, or personal is averaged away, leaving behind only large-scale regularities.[46] In the extreme, even accuracy is "sacrificed on the altar of objectivity."[47] As Daston observes:

> The very phenomena had to be pruned and filtered, for some were too variable or capricious to travel well. Already in the eighteenth century, scientists had begun to edit their facts in the name of scientific sociability; by the mid-nineteenth century, the concentration of nature to the communicable had become standard practice among

42. Nishida, *Intuition and Reflection*, 166.
43. *Ibid.*, 156.
44. A claim also made in Lorraine Daston, *Wunder, Beweise und Tatsachen. Zur Geschichte der Rationalität* (Fischer: Frankfurt am Main, 2003), 164.
45. Daston, "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective," 600.
46. Theodore Porter, *Trust in Numbers. The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 85–6.
47. Daston and Galison "The Image of Objectivity," 114.

scientists. It would be an exaggeration, but not a distortion, to claim that it was *scientific communication that was the precondition for the uniformity of nature rather than vice versa*.[48]

There is an obvious contradiction here. On the one hand, science claims its world of common knowledge to be universal. On the other, behind this claim it screens out all unique facts about both nature and society. In this way, it cannot be said to be truly universal. A similar observation can be made in regard to the scientist. Within the world of common knowledge, his knowledge has to conform to common rules and standards. He thus is forced to reduce himself intellectually to a detached, impartial and disinterested observer whose unique characteristics are lost, so as to make him utterly exchangeable:

> [It is] the ethos of the interchangeable and therefore futureless observer—unmarked by nationality, by sensory dullness or acuity, by training or tradition; by quirky apparatus, by colorful writing style, or by any other idiosyncrasy that might interfere with the communication, comparison and accumulation of results. Scientists paid homage to this ideal by contrasting the individualism of the artist with the self-effacing cooperation of the scientists, who no longer came in the singular—*L'art c'est moi, la science, c'est nous*, in Claude Bernard's epigram.[49]

Here, the inconsistency of science's world of common knowledge appears again: its universality implies incompleteness because it negates all forms of unique individual knowledge and skill. At least for Nishida, this means that it cannot claim to be truly universal.[50]

What is important here is the fact that science usually represses the fact that we can become aware of this contradiction *as* contradiction. For from the standpoint of the individual scientist, the world of common knowledge always remains a sort of limiting concept that grounds all scientific observation without being ever turned into an explicit object of

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48. Daston, "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective," 609; emphasis added.

49. *Ibid.*, 609.

50. Nishida, *Art and Morality*, 94.

scientific reflection itself. More to the point, science denies that we can become aware of our own ideals as our *own* ideals. Thus, these impersonal ideals are supposed to determine all knowledge without being objects of the form of knowledge they provide. As a limiting concept, they appear as a "formal idea from the outside, and one to which our intellectual activity ought to conform. The self does not see its own content as its own, but its focus of attention is on the ideal of Truth as an eternal standard to be achieved."[51] Put differently, the world of common knowledge appears to determine the individual scientist without being itself determined by him. As such, it confronts the scientist as if it were a given *law* to be blindly obeyed. Here, a distinct feature of the general relationship between an enfolding *basho* and an enfolded *basho* becomes visible. As Nishida explains:

> As the self-determination of any universal deepens, that determination is transferred to 'that which is within' which can then be thought to be self determining. At the same time the universal itself can no longer be determined and *it merely confronts 'that which is within' simply as law*.[52]

It seems as if all important determinations had already occurred whenever the scientist makes his choices. In this way, science appears as a "view from nowhere"[53]—a place of absolute nothingness in Nishida's terms.

For Nishida however, this place cannot be true absolute nothingness because it cannot account for the whole of our experience but has to suppress various experiential demands. Bending over to accommodate one demand, science destroys the larger unity of the person itself.[54] Because of this incompleteness of knowledge, Nishida searches for another locus, which can subsume the ideals of science in itself and, ultimately, determine them; a field that he closely associates with the free, creative and

51. Carter, *The Nothingness Beyond God*, 41.
52. Nishida quoted in Wargo, *The Logic of Nothingness*, 165–6, emphasis added.
53. A term borrowed from Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
54. Nishida, *Art and Morality*, 94.

self-determining self. "There is profound self-conscious experience at the foundation of knowledge. We cannot even know number without the experience of self-consciousness."[55] We are able to "transcend the objective world of cognition and become free in ourselves…. by internally subsuming the plane of consciousness in general and becoming infinitely creative."[56]

Put differently, in the field of consciousness in general we cannot account for the whole of our selves. "The a priori of mathematical truth is not the whole of the self, and therefore the self can further differentiate and develop."[57] Speaking in terms of the logic of locus, we have to move to another deeper or wider place in which we can conceive of this development appropriately; a place that Nishida often speaks of as the "world of acting-intuition" or, as in the following passage, the "horizon of behavior":

> What I term the horizon of behavior entirely transcends the plane of conceptual knowledge and is the horizon of pure act, which embraces this plane in itself. It transcends consciousness in general; it is the horizon of the creative, free self that it includes.[58]

Once more we see Nishida turn an important presupposition of science on its head: The scientific world-view suggests that its rules and standards of common knowledge are pregiven not only in relation to human understanding but also to human behavior; we can only act in accordance with them. Nishida reverses this relationship by stating that those truths and laws are ultimately grounded in the world of behavior itself.[59] For him, scientific knowledge only exists as an abstract knowledge that touches behavior at its outer limits.[60] He thus argues that science is grounded in an experiential realm, a world of acting-intuition, rather than being an a priori of that realm. In this way, he challenges the primacy given to the idea of disciplined intellect reasoning about the

55. *Ibid.*, 93.
56. *Ibid.*, 108.
57. *Ibid.* 142.
58. *Ibid.*, 72.
59. *Ibid.*, 74.
60. *Ibid.*, 96–7.

world.[61] For him, even the world of common knowledge is located in a particular place, and this place is none other than the world of action.

Particularly in his later work, Nishida identifies this world of action with the world of history, i.e. the real world where multiple individuals mutually determine one another according, for example, to their style of productivity. While it is impossible to give an adequate overview of the various facets of Nishida's account of history here, we feel safe in suggesting that Nishida generally views the world of common knowledge as encompassed by the wider field of social activity. Consider, for example, the following statement:

> Our conceptual knowledge must have originally developed from social production.… Without language there is no thinking, and language, as the philologists say, accompanied originally a common social activity [and production]. Conceptual knowledge is true in so far as it is productive according to its style of productivity. Modern science, too, has developed from this standpoint, and cannot be separated from it. Although modern science has already transcended this standpoint, and even denies it, science started there, and it returns there.… The theory, as theoretical as it may be, has essentially developed from acting-reflecting comprehension of the style of productivity of things, through poesis. Historically, all theory develops from there.[62]

For Nishida, "the standpoint of our thinking is necessarily [situated] in the historical world."[63] More specifically, he places scientific knowledge within the wider experiential field of bodily experience in general and attributes it to behavioral strategies we learn from our cultural and social environment in particular. "In fact, we *learn* to be in the world not through abstract notions, but thanks to cultural and historical forms of behavior, conceivable as automatisms concerning the body, … [that is, through] practical knowledge."[64] It is regrettable that Nishida does not

61. HEISIG, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 81.

62. NISHIDA Kitarō, *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness*, trans. by. R. SCHINZINGER, (Tokyo: Maruzen, 1958), 213.

63. *Ibid.*, 170.

64. Matteo CESTARI, "The Knowing Body, Nishida's Philosophy of Active Intuition," *The Eastern Buddhist* 31/2 (1998): 199.

specify exactly what cultural and historical forms of behavior he believes to enfold science's world of common knowledge, at least not in the texts I have encountered. However, we can usefully bring to bear insights garnered from the history of science to illuminate Nishida's general insight here, because he is, in effect, arguing that scientific knowledge is generated through social processes. What is at stake here is the important, yet admittedly highly disputed, claim that science's own foundation is socially constructed.[65]

My point here is a simple one, namely that further research on this claim is needed because it is crucial for our understanding of the relationship between science and culture. The universality of knowledge as demanded by science seems to be grounded in a socio-historic world of universal experiences, experiences of a "public character" that can be repeated in any given circumstance and, thus, claim independence from local contexts. As Daston shows, the ideal of aperspectival objectivity has grown out of the practical context of scientific communities which, since the mid-nineteenth century, has become increasingly dominated by impersonal communication. Highly selective bonds established between peers have been eliminated as face-to-face meetings, intimate relationships, and cooperation among scientists turn more and more formal.[66] In addition, rigid standardization of weights and measures made possible uniform measurement which in turn was crucial for reconciling and integrating the work of diverse laboratories. More generally, quantification came to function not only as a form of regulated and standardized knowledge, but first and foremost as a powerful tool to standardize experience. It served to rule out everything contingent, accidental, inexplicable, or personal from scientific praxis. Leaving only large scale regularities and uniform standards, quantification enforced the development of impersonal and uniform rules that screen out all unique forms of behavior. It reduced social interaction to a set of rules and conventions and behavior to routines. As such, quantification became a distinctive feature of human organization, a feature that has come to dominate not only the scientific disciplines but also almost every sphere of social

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65. PORTER, "Quantification and the Accounting Ideal," 11.
66. DASTON, "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective," 608–9.

life—from technology and economics to administration and politics to the everyday of interpersonal relationships. As Espeland and Stevens, for example, argue convincingly, commensuration, far from being a mere technical process, has become a fundamental feature of social life:

> Commensuration is… ubiquitous and demands vast resources, discipline and organization. Commensuration can radically transform the world by creating new social categories and backing them with the weight of powerful institutions. Commensuration is political: It reconstructs relations of authority, creates new political entities, and establishes new interpretive frameworks. Despite some advocates' claims, it is not a neutral or merely technical process. Commensuration is everywhere, and we are more likely to notice failures of commensuration than its widespread, varied success.[67]

These findings support and exemplify Nishida's general claim that scientific knowledge is an event taking place in the historical-social world.[68] Given this, his logic of locus draws our attention more closely to the true nature of the relationship between experience and knowledge: For the very reason that the former envelops and grounds the latter, it can never be known by means of scientific argument itself. As the enveloping *basho*, experience cannot be grasped by scientific knowledge; rather, it thoroughly determines it. This is to say, from the standpoint of scientific knowledge, the social-historical world of unified and standardized experience appears as a given. We are confronted with an historically formed set of conventions and habits as though it were a pre-established law:

> That which confronts us in intuition as historical past from the standpoint of acting-intuition, denies our personal Self, from the depth of our life. This is what is truly given to us. That which is given to our personal Self in acting-intuition, is neither merely material, nor does it merely deny us; it must be something that penetrates us demonically. It is something that spurns us with abstract logic, and deceives us under the mask of truth.[69]

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67. Espeland and Stevens, "Commensuration as a Social Process."
68. Nishida, *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness*, 170–1.
69. *Ibid.*, 223.

From the standpoint of science's world of common knowledge, all important determinations within the socio-historic world seem always to have occurred already. There is no movement "'from the formed towards the forming.' There is no room for anything like 'formation' or 'creation'."[70] In other words, there is nothing creative, only an eternal repetition of the same world.

For Nishida, the proof that this perspective is clearly limited lies in the fact that it cannot account for the whole of our experience. First, it does not pay justice to the fact that in the socio-historic world "there is nothing that is merely 'given'."[71] Second, it fails to account for the fact that the socio-historic world is itself continually shaped and determined by our present activity. Its rules and conventions are not simply given; they are rather made valid in different social contexts prior to being perceived as universally valid. As the history of science shows, standards of commonly shared knowledge do not arise simply out of "nowhere" but take shape through a process of collaborative adjustment. According to Porter, this holds true even for mathematics whose success is not to be seen as a miracle but as the result of an arduous process of mutual adjustment.[72] Even numbers are first of all social numbers in the sense that they need to have a social meaning. This is to say, the value they have for scientific measurement and quantification in general is not an a priori given. Rather they are made valid in social contexts, through a process that has to do with social power and negotiation.[73]

Thomas Kuhn argues along similar lines, when he finds that all disciplinary communities continually actively define their standards, concepts, and tools in an ongoing process;[74] an argument also supported by Daston:

> There was nothing inevitable about communicative science; it required hard work on every juncture: new instruments and new methods of

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70. *Ibid.*, 176.
71. Ibid.
72. PORTER, "Quantification and the Accounting Ideal," 17.
73. *Ibid.*, 33.
74. Thomas KUHN, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995).

data analysis were a precondition for amalgamating measurements by far-flung observers; international commissions met and wrangled over the standards of definition that would make the results of, say, statistical or electrical research comparable.[75]

Here, the socio-historic world of science appears not as something determined by universal rules and standards but as an open process of formation. This is again illuminating for Nishida's insight that this world must be both formed and forming. For Nishida, the scientific world-view is problematic because it perceives individuals wrongly as thoroughly limited by given social standards and ideals while barring them from consciously reflecting on, let alone changing them. It treats persons as if they were passively determined by certain, universal social conventions shaped in the past to which they must blindly obey in the present.

Science therefore denies us the most important part of our own nature: creativity. "The world, as mere past, deprives us of our personal Self and our roots of life; this means: the world negates itself; and becomes uncreative."[76] What science negates is the truly unique and creative self who is free to form the world "beyond" any pregiven standard of scientific knowledge and practice. For his part, Nishida strongly affirms that we are "creative factors of a creative world'":

> The individual is creative as an individual; while forming the world, he is, at the same time, a creative part of the self-transforming creative world. This makes the individual and individual.[77]

From such a perspective individuals are truly self-aware, in the sense of a self that determines itself and *knows* that it is doing so.[78] They have become aware of the standards, conventions, and ideals of scientific knowledge and practice and appropriated them to the degree that they are free to follow them, change them, or even entirely negate them. This is not to say that scientific knowledge and experience are completely abandoned. The creative self is trans-scientific, not anti-scientific,

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75. Daston, "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective," 608–9.

76. Nishida, *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness*, 224.

77. *Ibid.*, 173.

78. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 78.

because it continues to include science as one of its possibilities.[79] As a totality, it can never be objectified by any scientific knowledge. It lies, so to speak, 'beyond' all forms of scientific objectification, while serving as their ultimate ground. "It is as no-self, an ultimate intuition out of which and on which all distinctions are based."[80]

This no-self is not, of course, simply self-determining; it also determines the socio-historic world. More precisely, it is both a formed and a forming factor of the latter. "We are shaped, and yet shape that which shapes us by creating, which creation in turn shapes us, as we have shaped it."[81] Evidently, our own participation in, and action upon the world is, far from being objectifiable or standardized, deeply self-contradictory:

> We are determined by the world, and yet we ourselves determine the world. This important *mutuality* must not be lost sight of, for we are not victims but creators. From the creating (from *creatus* to *creatans*), from the formed to the forming is how he describes the situation: we are created by our inheritance and our environment, and yet, we are also capable of re-shaping our environment and of altering our inheritance both for ourselves, and our offspring. We are shaped, and we shape: are conditioned, and yet condition: are determined by our facticity, and yet are radically free to influence and re-create our world.… We are creators of our own destiny, as well as a product of our age, biology and culture.[82]

In similar fashion, the socio-historic world is also self-contradictory because it is determined by our activity as much as it determines this activity. As such, it is not simply an eternally unchanging thing which, as an unchanging substratum, underlies science's world of common knowledge.[83] For Nishida, "this self of ours" and "this world in which we exist"

79. Nishida, *Intuition and Reflection,* 169. Nishida is not speaking here of science in particular but of the intellect in general.

80. Carter, *The Nothingness Beyond God,* 46.

81. *Ibid.,* 119.

82. Robert E. Carter, *Encounter with Enlightenment. A Study of Japanese Ethics* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), 169.

83. Silja Graupe, *Der Ort ökonomischen Denkens. Die Methodologie der Wirtschaftswissenschaften im Licht japanischer Philosophie* (Ontos: Frankfurt/Main, 2005), 209–13.

are mutually dependent and yet contradictory aspects of the same reality. As such, they determine as well as oppose each other.[84] By recognizing this contradiction *as* a contradiction we have, in Nishida's view, already moved to another *basho*, to another layer of explanation. The self-contradictory nature of self and world as well as their discontinuous relationship require a place. For Nishida this place can no longer be something conceptually grasped or in any other way objectified. We find ourselves confronted with the impossibility of an ultimate grounding of how the determination and formation of the world occurs. There simply is no way of objectifying the creative and ongoing formation of the socio-historic world.[85] Rather, it is the ground which determines all concepts of scientific objectivity without being determined itself by anything:

> All individuals must somehow be conceived of as determinations of a universal…. and by the same token, the individual must determine the universal…. The meaning of the individual and the universal must consist of a dialectical determination between the two—not a universal of being determining the individual, but a universal of nothingness in which determination takes place without anything doing the determining.[86]

For Nishida, the real locus of science is one of *true absolute nothingness*, in which no conceptual distinctions are made and to which no scientific statement applies at all, or only with contradictory results.[87] This absolute nothingness breaks through all scientific determinations and at the same time envelops them. It is the "boundless openness" or the "uncircumscribable emptiness" that is not "something" at all, or something of which it can be said that it "lies within," but is the place in which everything, positive and negative, lies.[88]

84. Ueda Shizuteru, "The Difficulty of Understanding Nishida's Philosophy," *The Eastern Buddhist* 28/2 (1995): 182.

85. Elmar Weinmayr, "Denken im Übergang—Kitaro Nishida und Martin Heidegger," *Japan und Heidegger* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1989), 51.

86. Nishida quoted in Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 83.

87. Carter, *The Nothingness Beyond God*, 46.

88. Abe Masao, "The Logic of Absolute Nothingness as Expounded by Nishida Kitarō," *The Eastern Buddhist* 28/2 (1995): 172–3.

By showing absolute nothingness to be the true place of all scientific attempts at objectifying experience, Nishida's *logic of locus* points to the fact that these attempts are ultimately abstractions only; they are conceptualizations which implicitly rely on a wider field of experience which they cannot account for in their own terms and thus fail to describe adequately. While Nishida thus denies the very possibility of expressing the real locus of science itself, he strongly affirms that it can nevertheless be *experienced*. In a final account, the true locus of nothingness is none other than *ordinary, everyday experience*, which, serving as the very ground of conceptualization, forever eludes any scientific explanation.

> In the depth of noetic determination there must be something which that gone beyond so-called intuition. There is behavior that cannot intuit its own content—indeed, this is everyday behavior.[89]

Now this notion of everyday behavior as the true place of science is not simply posited by Nishida's logic of locus. Rather, his rigid inquiry into the layered presuppositions of science itself—part of which I have attempted to reconstruct above—shows it to be the logical ground of science, a ground that is ultimately posited and yet structurally denied by all scientific attempts to explain and control our experience. Still important is the fact that Nishida does not depict true absolute nothingness simply as a background, but as a background against which everything in the foreground appears in its clearest relief.[90] A brief explanation seems in order.

The history of science has made an important general claim about the different conceptual layers of scientific objectivity: they are to be distinguished first of all by what they leave out.[91] We can specify this claim with the help of Nishida's logic of locus. From the standpoint of the *basho of relative nothingness*, for example, individual scientists can become aware of the objects of the natural world as enfolded by their own judgments and, at least partially, as confronting them. And yet, in this moment of awareness they must remain completely unaware of the wider reach of

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89. NISHIDA quoted in WARGO, *The Logic of Nothingness*, 167.
90. HEISIG, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 74.
91. PORTER, "Quantification and the Accounting Ideal," 645.

the enfolding *basho:* the world of common knowledge, the world of action, and the locus of true absolute nothingness. These latter determine the scientists at their work without them being consciously aware of the fact. Accordingly, to the scientists only the foreground of an outer world of material objects standing over and against them clearly exists. From the standpoint of the world of common knowledge, the interrelation between the individual scientists and their judgments about the world (the interrelation of the *basho of being* and the *basho of relative nothingness*) comes into clear relief.

Still, the world of action in its passive dimensions (as formed in the past) as well as in its active dimensions (as formed and forming in the present) remains hidden from view. While it is implicitly considered as a given law that cannot itself be consciously and creatively determined, its existence is usually denied in strong terms. From the standpoint of true absolute nothingness (that is, from the midst of everyday life), however, we see through this world as both formed and forming and become fully self-aware of our own creative potential. At this point, all concepts of scientific objectivity lose their determinative power. Because everything is enfolded in an infinite and unlimited *basho*, nothing is left out in contrast to which scientific objectivity could be defined in any meaningful sense. At the same time, all the various layers of scientific objectivity appear clearly in their distinctiveness as well as their interrelation and interdependence.

The place of science in japanese culture

Having sketched in broad strokes a way to locate science in its own locus of "true absolute nothingness" according to Nishida's philosophy, the question whether such a scheme enables us better to understand the place of science in Japanese culture remains. In order to answer this question, let us begin with a look at the relationship between science and culture from the standpoint of science and its world of common knowledge.

While scientists usually do not even consider such a relationship to exist, the preceding section shows a certain cultural concept to be implicit

in science. If we define culture with Nishida as "experienced content" or the "crystallization' of the social and historical world,"[92] then it is obvious that science grounds itself in a specific culture. More precisely, the enfolding *basho* of science itself is none other than a cultural one; all is various layered standpoints necessarily arise from there. Without going into any detail, there seems to be a distinctive feature of this cultural concept which is of immediate importance here: it is the idea of a unified, common culture which implicitly denies the plurality of cultures in an absolute fashion.

As we have seen, the scientific ideal of universal or common knowledge is enfolded by a field of universal experience which is entirely public in character. Because of this character, this field demands the annihilation in its procedures of not only all unique individual experiences, but also all unique experiences shared by families, groups, communities, nations or cultures. Because scientific knowledge can only exist in a field of unified experience, it demands independence from all locally unique customs, traditions or other forms of personal encounter. In this regard, it is very much like free market exchange:

> Science averaged away everything contingent, accidental, inexplicable or personal, and left only large-scale regularities.… The interactions among instrumentalists, experimentalists and theorists in physics are a bit like a trading zone, involving, say, European merchants and South American Indian craftsmen or farmers. All the meanings—religious, cosmological, ideological—are lost; the traders only need to agree on a price, a number or ratio.… It may even facilitate easy communication if the rich craft techniques of both communities are simply ignored.[93]

We feel free to suggest that science grounds itself in the idea of a unified or even uniform culture, which becomes distinctive as an identity only by what it leaves out: the multiplicity of cultures. By inculcating the formation of a single culture across national and social boundaries, it rivals the multitude of cultures. When it comes to the multiplicity of cultures, however, science tends to think of the cultural influence as a

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92. Nishida, *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy*, 248, 254.
93. Porter, "Quantification and the Accounting Ideal," 645.

"local distorting factor" at best. At worst, all unique forms of cultural experience that do not conform to science's standards and common rules of behavior are negated and, eventually, removed from the picture. Here, cultures, by being reduced to a unity, loose their specificity and cease to be cultures.[94]

The most pressing problem in the scientific standpoint seems to be that science is blind to this process of negation and marginalization. Insofar as this process is an essential, even if not consciously reflected on, part of the social and historical world demanded of science, it remains an inexplicable feature of our experience. It is particularly Nishida's disciple, Nishitani Keiji, who draws attention to this fact. Standing on the field of relative nothingness, we can only perceive the world as being entirely external to us:

> We are accustomed to seeing things from the standpoint of the self, …from within the citadel of the self…. To look at things from the standpoint of the self is always to see things merely as objects, that is, to look at things *without* from a field *within* the self. It means assuming a position vis-à-vis things from which self and things remain fundamentally separated from one another. This standpoint of separation of subject and object, or opposition between within and without, is what we call the field of "consciousness."[95]

By always looking away from ourselves to an outer world, we do not recognize the socio-historical world lying hidden in our own background Thus, we remain unaware of the fact that we ourselves, through our own activity, determine and shape this world. Neither do we recognize that the world determines and shapes us; not as an outer force but as a force working deeply from within our own selves.

> Science is always outer-directed and facing external world. Given that attitude, the field of what might be called the preestablished harmony between the external and internal is relegated to the past; it is hidden from its view. It is in the very essence of the scientific standpoint that

94. Nishida, *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy*, 254.

95. Nishitani Keiji, *Religion and Nothingness*, trans. by Jan Van Bragt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 9.

this be so. Thus science, through its activity, takes effect on domains lying behind it without being aware of the fact.[96]

From the standpoint of either the individual scientist or of science's world of common knowledge, we cannot conceive of the plurality of cultures. At the same time, we are bound to unconsciously, yet actively negate it. The process of marginalizing and destroying other cultures appears as an inevitable fact; as a fundamental feature not only of the past but also of our present everyday activity. As such, it cannot be given any rational explanation. Lying in the background of scientific awareness, it remains an irrational feature of our life. This is a source of bitter conflict between science and culture(s), conflicts which cannot possibly be resolved by rational argumentation but are carried out irrationally in our everyday experience.

If we cannot account for the plurality of culture from the standpoint of science, can we do so from the standpoint of Japanese culture? For Nishida, the answer is clearly in the affirmative. Referring to Japanese culture a "culture of nothingness,"[97] he perceives it as a field of true absolute nothingness. In this way, Japanese culture appears as the background against which the mutual forming process of the multitude of cultures—both modern and traditional—consciously and creatively takes shape.

Obviously, there is an ambiguity here in the term *culture*. In one sense Nishida continues to define cultures as the experienced (given) contents of specific historical worlds. At the same time, he does not mean to identify Japanese culture itself with any of these contents but rather to present it as a kind of "culture of no-culture." It is a place where a multitude of cultures (in the sense of experienced contents) continually take on new forms and new meanings as they interact with one another without having any given form itself. As such, it can even enfold science.

To return to the point we began with, we might say that Kasulis is right in claiming that for Nishida the Japanese cultural experience makes

96. Nishitani Keiji "Science and Zen," *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School*, (Bloomington, In.: World Wisdom, 2004), 111.

97. Nishida, *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy*, 249.

science possible in the first place.[98] But science is here not considered as a place of empirical judgments (a *basho* of being) only but as a socio-historical world which among many other worlds is encompassed by Japanese culture. The latter thus appears as an experiential field which subsumes and envelops many cultures within itself without being determined by any of them. "It receives various forms, but at the same time gives a certain form to them."[99]

At least ideally, Nishida wants Japanese culture to open up a place in which both East and West are "located," a place that embraces and subsumes both.[100] This is not to say, however, that science does not often rival tradition and change it. Far from identifying Japanese culture with any particular static tradition, he located it in the very process of changing and remolding traditions. He preferred to view it as the home-ground where the conflicts of science and tradition are to be consciously and creatively resolved. Thus, though certain traditional forms of experience might change or even dissolve on contact with Western science, Japanese culture as such does not exhibit that vulnerability. What must fundamentally change, however, is the concept of science itself. Even though its ways of knowing and experiencing are not necessarily changed, they are seen through as limited perspectives which cannot (and should not) account for the whole of Japanese experience. In the end, for Nishida science is just that: a certain form of knowledge grounded in a certain way of doing. As such, it has no universal value. It is just another unique perspective, forming as well as formed by a manifold of other unique perspectives.

In closing, I suggest that future research should evaluate, in the light of Japan's own historic experience, this admittedly vague concept of the interrelationship between science and Japanese culture. Is there really a "place of absolute nothingness" at work at the basis of the Japanese program of modernity, a place that transcends and, ultimately, grounds science? And if so, how has it shaped the political, social, and economic

98. Kasulis, "Japanese Philosophy," 77.
99. Nishida, *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy*, 249.
100. Ueda, "Nishida's Thought," 38.

systems of modern and contemporary Japan? In my view, there are important elements in Japan's process of modernization that resonate strongly with Nishida's concept of absolute nothingness and could therefore be used as a hermeneutic to reread his work. One thinks in particular of the often deliberate negation, or bracketing, of any universalistic components associated with either Chinese or, especially in modern times, Western social frameworks while, at the same time, making these frameworks part of the Japanese experience itself.[101] Speaking of a "de-axialization of transcendental and universalistic orientations" in this connection, Eisenstadt, for example, observes:

> As in the earlier encounters with Buddhism and Confucianism the dominant tendency in the Japanese discourse was to claim to represent fully the universal values claimed by the 'other'. But such values were reconstructed in immanentist and particularistic terms, bracketing out or negating their original universalistic and transcendental orientations. Interestingly, such claims even developed with respect to modern technology without attempts at evaluating such technology in transcendental terms.[102]

There are at least two important issues here that merit closer attention. First, it seems to be strongly associated with an absence of universal rules or standardization of behavior which, as we have seen, have usually functioned as the foundation of science in the West. As Tom Rohlen observes, generally speaking, in Japan there is neither an insistence that governmental institutions solve problems by removal from society and objectification, nor is there any policy consensus that distancing should be seen as a key mechanism for establishing everyday order. Rather, the latter seems to stem from that aspect of group involvement in which attachment and interdependence are emphasized. "Social borders and informal processes of management appear much more important than public formal institutions or universal principles of references."[103] According to Nakayama, similar tendencies have also characterized Japanese scientific

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101. EISENSTADT, *Japanese Civilization*, 368.

102. *Ibid.*, 436.

103. Tom ROHLEN, "Order in Japanese Society: Attachment, Authority, and Routine," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 15/1 (1989): 17.

communities.[104] Such observations might prove illuminating of Nishida's own view that in Japan science is consciously grounded in the "nothingness" of creative and non-standardized social interaction.

Second, despite the negation of universalistic orientations associated with Western modernity, Japan has not usually presented itself as antimodern. Both modernity and tradition seem to have been defined not as opposites in confrontation but as highly flexible. Without developing any sharp boundaries between the two, the specification of tradition seems to reveal a certain looseness and ambiguity that facilitate the encompassing of a variety of new items and ways of social life under the stable canopy of being "typically Japanese."[105] Again, this characteristic of Japanese tradition might prove illuminating for Nishida's concept of Japan as a "culture of nothingness." That being so, an interdisciplinary inquiry into Japanese ways of receiving and forming science may help us to develop further a concept of cultural creativity that breaks through the transcendental and universalistic claims of science.

104. Nakayama Shigeru "Japanese Scientific Thought," *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* 15 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978), 728–58.
105. Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization*, 286..

The Idea of the Mirror
in Nishida and Dōgen

Michel DALISSIER

The image of the "mirror" (鏡 *kagami*) appears frequently in the philosophical texts of Nishida Kitarō (西田幾多郎, 1870–1945), where it assumes various functions. Mirror references first occur in reflections on the philosophies of Josiah Royce (1855–1916) and Henri Bergson (1859–1941). The most fascinating and suggestive of Nishida's uses of the image have to do with idea of a "self-enlightening mirror" to probe the philosophical ground of self-illumination.

This idea seems to point back to Buddhist meanings running through Japanese intellectual history. This provides us with a starting point for trying to see how Nishida's philosophical speculations can be critically related to the thought of Dōgen (道元 1200–1253); and from there, going on to ask how it has stimulated contemporary approaches in Japanese philosophy (as, for example, those of Nitta, Ōhashi, and Sakabe).

* This essay is a reworking of pages 284–98, 784–91, and 1127–33 of my doctoral thesis, *Nishida Kitarō, une philosophie de l'unification* (Paris: Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, November 2005), hereafter NKPU. The reader will find an abstract of this dissertation in my paper "La pensée de l'unification" (electronic version at www.reseau-asie.com, "Congrès").

The philosophical conception of mirror.

In his second major work, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness* (1917),[1] Nishida strives to grasp the meaning of the notion of "reflection" (*hansei* 反省) by distinguishing between two complementary, but never completely separable, aspects.[2] One can reflect *on* "something" (*wo hansei suru* を反省する), as when we are "reflecting on our own mental phenomenon"[3] as historical individuals; here, one is aiming at a final "unity" (*tōitsu* 統一, *Einheit*).

But one can also reflect *for* or *about* something, in the sense of building a project in the process of reflection. This "reflection as development" (*hansei sunawachi hatten* 反省即ち発展) he views as an original affirmation of "absolute will." Here, one is operating in terms of an "infinite" (*mugen* 無限, *endlos*)[4] process of "unification" (*tōitsusuru* 統一する, *Vereinigung*). For instance, the Fichtean Self or "I" (*ware* 我, *Ich*) is not simply reflecting *on* itself, or *on* the "not-I" as a pure self, but is also reflecting infinitely *about* itself, as a practical self. It is here that Nishida introduces the image of the mirror:

> As Royce said, from a single project of transcribing the self in the self, we come necessarily to develop an infinite series. For example, let us try to think a project which would consist for us to be in Britain and transcribing a perfect map of Britain. Each given map transcribed would come to give birth to a new project, aiming to transcribe a more perfect map; moreover, this very fact that it must infinitely progress means in general the same thing as when an object put between two clear mirrors goes on infinitely reflecting itself.[5]

We may begin by considering why Nishida uses the verb *utsusu* 写す

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1. Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎『自覚に於ける反省と直観』[Intuition and Reflection in Self-Conscousness, IRSC], in『西田幾多郎全集』[Complete Works of Nishida Kitarō, NKZ] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1987), vol. II. Translated by Valdo H. Viglielmo with Takeuchi Yoshinori and Joseph S. O'Leary (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987).

2. IRSC, 54 (106–7).

3. 我々は自己の精神現象を反省する. IRSC, 155 (314).

4. IRSC, 136 (277).

5. IRSC, 3-4 (15–16).

here, which carries the sense of copying, duplicating, or reproducing something.[6] Simple duplication does nothing but replace a given thing with something else. This is the case with reflection *on* something (let us call it *reflection$_1$*). However, he insists that "at the same time" (*totomoni* と共に) we must add "the meaning of an infinitely unifying development," which can be expressed only if we understand real reflection as a "transcription," a reflection *for* something (which we will call *reflection$_2$*). To transcribe something means, "to add" (*kuwaeru* 加える) a signification to it, while "maintaining" (*ijisuru* 維持する)[7] something of it.

As the example from Josiah Royce shows, an infinite transcription implies a perpetually new actualization of signification, in an "effective" (*genjitsuteki* 現実的, *wirklich*) sense. *Reflection$_1$* is wary of this infinity of signification, seeing in it an infinite regress.[8] But this psychological

6. I have demonstrated in NKPU how Nishida takes advantage of the multiple significations of the verb *utsuru*, making it reflect itself into various forms, each made to correspond to one of the three ways of transcribing the word in Japanese: "transcription" (*utsuru* 写る), "transition" (*utsuru* 移る), and the fact of something "reflecting" or "projecting" itself (*utsuru* 映る).

For the contemporary philosopher ŌHASHI Ryōsuke (大橋良介, 1944–), these three terms complement each other to yield the composite idea of a "wrapping" or "folding" (*tsutsumu* 包む), in the context of a "transformation" (*henkan* 変換, *Transformation*) within an "infinite set" (*mugenshūgō* 無限集合) in mathematics, and essentially characterize the structure of self-consciousness. See 『西田哲学あるいは哲学の転回』 [Nishida's philosophy, or the turning point of philosophy (NPTP)] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1995), 63, 76–7, 91.

7. IRSC, 54 (106–7).

8. J. ROYCE, *The World and the Individual* (WI), (New York: Macmillan, 1920), 499). This book can be found in Nishida's "private library" (*kojinbunko* 個人文庫) located in Kyoto University. It is listed as number 556, p. 68 in YAMASHITA Masao, ed. 山下正男 『西田幾多郎全蔵書目録』 [Catalog of Nishida Kitarō's complete collection of books (Cat.)] (Kyoto: Institute of Cultural Studies of Kyoto University, 1982). The fact that this edition was published after IRSC indicates that Nishida possessed a second copy, since Royce is also quoted in his first works. We should also recall that he had already referred to this Roycian analysis in 「論理の理解と数理の理解」 [Logical understanding and mathematical understanding, LUMU, 1915)], NKZ I: 250–67. See my introduction, translation (with Ibaragi Daisuké 伊原木大祐), and commentary on this essay in *Ebisu* (Tokyo, Maison Franco-Japonaise, 2003), 114–9.

John MARALDO has presented a detailed and critical exposition of the topic, showing how Nishida's and Royce's problems and projects differ from Dedekind's theory. He also demonstrates the importance of the question for current German

limitation of epistemic thinking must not be allowed to conceal the metaphysical progress of effective reality, which is forever in the process of renewing meaning.[9] A map of Britain[10] will contain itself *ad infinitum* as it strives to represent its object always more perfectly, giving us a paradigm of the "universal constitution of things."[11] This idea of a performative "infinitization" comes from the mathematical analysis of Richard Dedekind:[12] a system *S* is infinite if it shows a synthetic capacity to find itself in itself as its own part, rather than analytically differentiating itself from its parts in the division. Nishida insisted that[13] the "actual–effective–infinity"[14] be understood as "infinity inside the finite" (*yūgen nonakani mugen* 有限の中に無限): each finite part, as in the case of the map, witnessing to its infinity through the very fact of returning to itself inside itself, each finite thing punctured to disclose an infinite activity that flows out from it.[15]

The Fichtean *Ich* does not transcribe itself, but refuses to forget itself, thus propagating the "series" (*Reihe*) of itself. The Nishidean "Self" (*jiko* 自己) transcribes itself infinitely in a creative way, "forgetting" (*wasureru* 忘れる) the *I*,[16] in order to recover its true nature, continu-

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philosophical thinking on self-consciousness (Hans Radermacher, Dieter Henrich, Ernst Tugendhat) by suggesting that a Nishidean approach could explain how the objectivity of the fact (*Ansichheit*) constitutes itself in the mirroring of self-consciousness. "Self-Mirroring and Self-Awareness: Dedekind, Royce, and Nishida," in UEDA Shizuteru (ed.) 上田閑照編『西田哲学への問い』[Questions to Nishida's philosophy] (Tokyo, Iwanami, 1999), 85–95, and in English in the present volume, pages 143–63.

9. WI, 500, 508, 537, 540.

10. WI, 502-507. An author who will have a strong influence on the operational epistemology of the late Nishida, Percy BRIDGMAN (1882-1961), also uses this example in "A Physicist's Second Reaction to Mengenlehre," *Scripta Mathematica* II/3, (May 1934), 113.

11. WI, 553.

12. R. DEDEKIND, *Was sind und was sollen die Zahlen?* §5 (Vieweg: Brunswick, 1911), 17, quoted in WI, 510–11.

13. 体系の中に体系を写す IRES, 36 (72). In LUMU, he opposed this to the Hegelian conception of infinity, 154–5 (264-265). See also the lecture 「*Coincidentia oppositorum* と愛」[Love and the coincidence of opposites, 1919], NKZ XIV: 296.

14. *Genjitsutekimugen* 現実的無限, *das aktuelle Unendliche*.

15. I have treated the topological justification of this analysis in NKPU, 993–1000.

16. Cf. 『善の研究』[An inquiry into the good, 1911, IG], NKZ I: 151. Translated by

ously renewing itself in its own transcription, adding itself to itself as something new, "maintaining" (*ijisuru*) itself without respite in its perpetual re-edition.

What does this tell us about Nishida's use of the image of the mirror? Such a transcription cannot be conceived as the property of the reflection of a *single* mirror, which faithfully reproduces the image of what reflects into it in a finite way. That would direct us to the finite identity of the *reflection$_1$*, a simple duplication, that would ground reality ontologically in the "differentiation" (*bunka* 分化) represented in the "face-to-face" of the reflected and the reflecting. Still, we cannot simply turn away from the image of the reflected object; the *I* cannot *forget* the image facing it in the looking glass. With reflection$_2$, on the contrary, the image evoked is of *two* facing "mirrors" (*ryōmeikyō* 両明鏡),[17] each reflecting the image of the object placed between them and thus not imprisoning some *thing*, as in an optical device, but rather liberating the infinite diffraction of the images of *something*. In reflection$_1$, the model and its image are united through a finite distance; in reflection$_2$, the unification of the images of the object is displayed over an infinite distance. In this sense, the diffracted image of the self constitutes a complete oblivion of the notion of the self as a finite form, that is to say, as an *I*.

Among Zen Buddhist thinkers—one thinks here particularly of Dōgen, Suzuki Shōsan (鈴木正三, 1579–1655), and Shidō Bunan (至道無難, 1603–1676)—the idea of "forgetting the self" is alluded to frequently. Frédéric Girard has shown how Nishida reconsidered Dōgen's idea of the "forgetting of the self" in order to avoid a lax or quietist

ABE Masao and Christopher IVES (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 130, and NKPU, 1–52.

17. The allusion to the "two mirrors" (*ryōmeikyō* 両明鏡) in reference to Royce was already present in LUMU, 155 (264). Why does Nishida use this term and not, as elsewhere, the simple term *kagami*? According to the fifth edition of the *Kōjien Dictionnary* 『広辞苑』 (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2002) *meikyō* means, on the one hand, "an unclouded mirror" (*kumorinonai kagami* くもりのない鏡), and on the other, "a clear proof" (*akirakana shōko* 明らかな証拠). Without rushing to conclude that Nishida was already thinking of the Buddhist meaning he would come to later, nonetheless, the term does evoke the two fundamental aspects needed to understood the metaphor of the mirror in this context: as an optical device that can be cleaned, and as a symbol of how reality should be conceived in order to achieve enlightenment.

understanding of it; that is, to think of "keeping the self" as belonging to the act of "taking advantage of the self" in which one studies the self, as something that "is not mine" but is the true self.[18] In this connection, Nishida wrote in 1939:

> The unity of body and mind must be a contradictory self-identity. Our self is never separated from it. The practice and evidence of this unity consists in religious practice. He [Dōgen] says that learning the self is forgetting the self and that forgetting the self occurs when the self is testified to in the thousand laws.[19]

This can help us to understand more clearly how the reflection between mirrors and the notion of the oblivion of the self can be related to each other. *I* am not the one *I* face in the looking glass, as if my "mind" (*kokoro* 心) were contemplating my "body" (*mi* 身), "separated" (*hanarete* 離れて) from it. *I* represent, so to speak, the infinite diffraction of myself (not *my* self) between two mirrors, the continuous perishing of every kind of substantiality[20] for a self simply considered to be "mine," and the everlasting forfeit of oneself for the other.[21] Not only in an aporetical and skeptical sense, but in a creative and ethical one as well, the "self" constitutes a "contradictory self-identity."[22] Herein lies the meaning of the real "*unity* of body and mind" (*shinshin'ichi* 心身一): not a single, punctual, or final "unity" (*tōitsu*), but a "unification," that is an infinite "making" (*suru*) of the unity, or rather an "endless" (*doko-mademo* 何処までも)[23] unity in the making.

18. Frédéric GIRARD: "Le moi dans le bouddhisme japonais," *Ebisu* 6 (1994), 97, 101–4, 116–19. Girard shows *in fine* how this forgetting possesses not only a religious dimension, but also a social one, 111–15, 122–3.

19. *Zushikisetsumei* 「図式説明」 [Schematic explanations}, NKZ IX: 334.

20. "If the subject disappears, something like substance, the archetypal subjective unity, vanishes, and everything become something without substance." 「場所」 [Place] (P, 1926), NKZ IV: 281.

21. In NKPU, 793, I discuss hospitality in the place of absolute nothingness.

22. *Mujuntekij ikodōitsu* 矛盾的自己同一. Cf. Augustin BERQUE, ed., *Logique du lieu et dépassement de la modernité* (Bruxelles: Ousia, 2000), 247–8, 253, Robert SCHINZINGER, *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness: Three Philosophical Essays* (Connecticut: Westport, 1958), 5, and NKPU, 1372–5.

23. Nishida's frequent, if not somewhat obsessive, repetition of this term under-

Thus, the opposition between the two modes of reflection can be extended in analogy to the numerical opposition between one or two mirrors. Given the considerable overlap of Nishida's play on the image and the theory of image developed by Henri Bergson (1859–1941), might we not use Bergson to proceed further?[24] For Bergson, what is given to us is the totality of the images of the material world. This means that, at least theoretically, we should be able to perceive everything, to enter into any thing as if we existed in a space of total optical "refraction." Still, the exigencies of actual action and the limitations of real world reduce the refraction and can even render it invisible in the case of total optical reflection. To this extent, a sort of general economy of action makes integral perception possible, so that images are reflected by my activity but cannot penetrate it.

From a Nishidean perspective, we may say that the total reflection of the single mirror corresponds to *reflection₁ on* something, and the reflection on the surface, which the incidental ray cannot penetrate, is repulsed. For Nishida, this means that rational reflective thinking expresses the "return" (*fukki* 復帰, *regressus*) of "will" (*ishi* 意志), repulsed by the mirror which, in turn, is reduced to one of its "faces" (*kyōmen* 鏡面):

> If will is the development *egressus,* and at the same time the return *regressus,* knowledge appears like the aspect of the return of the will, and the world of the objects of knowledge is the reflection of the form of the will in the face of a mirror.[25]

In contrast, the activity of the optical ray in refraction is one of a *reflection₂ for* in that it is able to go through the face of the mirror. This corresponds to the "aspect" or "direction" (*hōmen* 方面) of a "development" (*hatten* 発展, *egressus*) in which will is not hindered, or at least not completely reflected on any definite "side" or "face" (*men* 面). In comparison, raw reflection₁ seems abstract and dry, rebounding from the surface of the "object" (*taishō* 対象, *Gegenstand*) facing it, staying

scores that fact he considered the very idea of an "end" to be an impossiblity.

24. Henri BERGSON, *Matière et mémoire* (MM) (Paris: P.U.F., 1941), 34–5. Having seen IRSC influenced by this theory, we can freely use this optical analysis here.

25. IRSC, 148 (300–1).

out of it, distinguishing it from others in reflective conceptual analysis, classifying it under a category of "knowledge" (*chishiki* 知識), limited to a process of "recognition" (*ninshiki* 認識). The more effective reflection₂, however, encompasses the other dimension of refraction, penetrating the object that is the target of knowing and rejoining the hidden will that animates it.

This being so, it seems that we end up speaking of the image of the *two mirrors* rather than simply of *the* mirror. Does not reflection also appear *in* the mirror before reflecting *on* or *for* something? In other words, is the true nature of *the* mirror revealed through this duplication and exteriorization of itself?

In the "logic of place" (*bashoteki ronri* 場所的論理) laid out in Nishida's celebrated 1926 essay "Place," we find the image of the mirror reintroduced. We need to remember that Nishida's goal here is to construct a theory of nothingness, a sort of "néontologie."[26] It is based on a fundamental distinction between "absolute nothingness" and two other forms of nothingness: "outright nothingness" (*tan ni mu* 単に無),[27] about which nothing can be said, and "oppositional nothingness" (*tairitsuteki mu* 対立的無), a kind of "nothingness in thought"[28] set in opposition to "being" (有 *u*) but in fact "no more than a species of being."[29]

"The place of oppositional nothingness" corresponds to that physical and intellectual space that can be described as a "mirror reflecting something," or more precisely as "the mirror that reflects things as we ordinarily think of them."[30] In other words, here is a "mirror that simply reflects."[31] The reflected "thing" (*mono* 物) is outside it, giving us the

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26. The reader is referred to my essay: "De la néontologie chez Nishida Kitarō" in 『フランス哲学・思想研究』 [Review of French Philosophy] (Tokyo: Société franco-japonaise de philosophie, 2006), 184–4.

27. IG, 82 (99–100). This outright nothingness is criticized under the form of an "empty word" (*kūmei* 空名), 162 (183), or an "empty thought," a "fantasy" (*kūsō* 空想). See TAKEUCHI Seichi 竹内整一, ed., 『善の研究』用語索引』 [Index of the Terms in "An Inquiry into the Good" (Index IG)] (Tokyo: Pelican, 1996), 99.

28. *Kangaerareta mu* 考へられた無. P, 242.

29. *Nao isshu no u* 尚一種の有. P, 220, 232.

30. 我々は鏡が物を映すと考へる. P, 226.

31. *Tan ni utsusu kagami* 単に映す鏡. P, 231, 259.

paradigmatic looking glass that "reflects the outside,"[32] be it a particular object, a human face, or a patch of cloudy sky. This reflection entails at the same time a "distorting" (*yugameru* 歪める):

> Of course, because the mirror is a kind [species] of being [as oppositional nothingness], it cannot truly reflect the thing itself; the mirror reflects the thing by distorting it; it remains something active in deforming it]. The more that which holds in itself the image of another thing *is* [constitutes a *being*], the less the reflected thing constitutes a [faithful] portrait of the other thing, and the more the reflected thing becomes simply a symbol, a sign of it.[33]

Oppositional nothingness as a looking glass does not produce a pure, non-distorting, reflection, but a symbolization that fetters and hampers the thing as it comes into being, compelling it to be ontologically represented and "take form."[34] This idea points to an important phenomenological theme that has been explored by recent contemporary philosophers such as Nitta Yoshihiro (新田義弘 1929–).[35]

In fact, this "formation" process can be topologicaly[36] described as a *deformation*[37] that takes place in a gradual "ontologization."[38] This is expressed by the sentence: "the more... *is*" (*u de areba aru hodo* 有であれ

32. *Soto wo utsusu kagami* 外を映す鏡, P, 231.

33. P, 226–7. Emphasis added.

34. *Seiritsusuru* 成立する, IRSC, 162(331-332), P, 212–18, NKPU, I221–31, and NITTA Yoshihiro 新田義弘『現代の問いとしての西田哲学』[Nishida's philosophy as a modern question] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1998), 60, 71.

35. Concerning the phenomenological importance of this notion of "deformation," see Y. NITTA, *Nishida's Philosophy as a Modern Question*, 222.

36. By this term, we understand a level of description belonging to the "logic of place" that Nishida worked out by way of a mathematical and psychological topology.

37. In a passage that will be quoted and commented on below, we find this very topic expressed in the idea of a transition from a higher topological layer of $form_2$ to a inferior layer of ontological $form_1$. Nishida argues that: "God is the $form_2$ that determines itself indefinitely. Moreover, it is impossible not to speak of such a $form_2$ as the $form_2$ *without* $form_1$, for it is reflecting itself. God is absolute nothingness. It is possible to speak of *a thing that possesses a* $form_1$ as the shadow of what *does not have any* $form_1$." The emphasis and subscripts are, of course, my own.

38. *Uka suru* 有化する. Cf. Jacynthe TREMBLAY, *Nishida Kitarō: Le jeu de l'individuel et de l'universel* (JIU) (Paris, C.N.R.S. Editions, 2000), 110.

ばある程). The reflected thing hardens and roots itself deeper and deeper in being,[39] breaking away from itself, from where it really takes place, and becomes a "symbol" (*shōchō* 象徴), "the shadow of another thing" (*ta no mono no kage* 他の物の影). This entails a "remainder" (*nokoru* 残る),[40] like an impurity within the reflective surface of the mirror, a default, an incrustation in the polishing of its surface: "a matter still remaining in the bottom of the reflecting mirror."[41] Considering oppositional nothingness as a looking glass places the model and its reflected copy in opposition, establishing a "differentiation." Our former problem of identity becomes an ontological one. For through the looking glass, the one I see *is* not myself; there is, as Michel Henry (1922–2002) has said, a "phenomenological distance" between me and the one I see in such a reflecting "glass."[42] Claude Gergory remarks:

> Nobody had in fact ever seen his image in a mirror. This image we trust is our *énantiomorphe*, different from what it reflects, like the right hand compared to the left hand."[43]

Still we house this image within our ontological scheme;[44] we honor

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39. This view is the contrary of Plato's, for whom the return to the vicinities of being, "of what is divine, immortal and always existent," to contact with the Ideas, allows the soul to escape the *encrustation* that results from its "association with the body." The term follows the logic of the image of the fisherman Glaucos, who had become a god stuck in the depths of the sea and whose body was covered with shells, stones, and seaweed. *Republic*, X: 611c–612a.

From the perspective of a "Platonism of nothingness" (if we be permitted such an expression) after TANABE Hajime's (田辺元, 1885–1962) critiques of Nishida's theories, we would have to think a kind of "scaling" of being, with a perpetual dissolution operating in the place of absolute nothingness. See NKPU, 973–6, 1114–18. On Tanabe's criticisms, see James HEISIG, *Philosophers of Nothingness* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 118–22; Matteo CESTARI "The Knowing Body. Nishida's Philosophy of Active Intuition," *The Eastern Buddhist* XXXI/2 (1998), 202–4, and ŌHASHI, NPTP, 171–4.

40. P, 239–41, 265. I have treated the meaning of this concept in NKPU, 771–80.

41. P, 239.

42. See: Michel HENRY, *L'essence de la manifestation* (Paris: P.U.F., 1963), 74–5.

43. Claude GERGORY, "Chan," *Encyclopedia Universalis*, 5. "Le regard et le miroir," electronic version (Paris: France S. A. 1995).

44. Cf. my essay: "Unity and Vacuity in the Predicate: The Stoics, Frege, P. F.

it and take it for a faithful image of ourselves, because it *is* something in front of us. We can easily appreciate to what extent there is, at this "topological" level, a kind of loss inside being.

There is a special need to emphasize here the fact that the verb *yuga-meru* can also mean "falsify." In IRSC, the "blending," or "infection" (*konnyū* 混入) represents the opposite side of the "transcription" (*utsusu* 写す) of an effective and unifying reality inside itself, along the process of "reflecting for." Nishida still conceived "reflection" (*hansei* 反省) in 1917 in non-topological terms as an operation, taking place inside the course of an infinite unification. Nishida later opted to change the signification of the mirror rather than duplicate it. As a result, the signification of reflection itself changed.[45] This more complicated sense leads in turn to his criticism of the idea of an infinite reflection, frequently in refer-ence to Fichtean theory.[46] Reflection in the sense of *hansei*, whatever form it takes, *on* or *for* something, retains a certain form of exteriority. Within the perspective of generalized interiorization that accompanies the topological turn, both the concept and the word for "reflection" will change.[47] At this point, true reflection is baptized *utsusu* 映す and becomes "reflexive" in a further intimate, internal sense. It is not simply that the unity transcribes itself infinitely. Rather, to be more precise, it continuously reflects *inside* itself.[48]

Strawson, Nishida. A History of Logic under a Topological Enlightenment," *Philoso-phia Osaka* 2 (2007).

45. On the vicissitudes of the general evolution of the term of "reflection" (映る *utsuru*) from IRSC until the late thought of Nishida, the reader, see the analysis of Y. NITTA, *Nishida's Philosophy as a Modern Question*, 18–21, 27, 45.

46. P, 240.

47. For example, in 1926 he states that the Laskian "reflexive category" (*hanseitekihanchū* 反省的範疇, *reflexiv Kategorie*) must be founded on the "predica-tive category" (*jutsugotekihanchū* 述語的範疇): the reflexion *on* or *for* the unification of reality becomes the predication within the place where reality operates, P, 278. See Emil LASK, *La logique de la philosophie et la doctrine des catégories* (Paris: Vrin, 2002).

48. UEHARA Mayuko notes that in Nishida's use of the intransitive verb *utsuru* 映る instead of the transitive *utsusu* 映す, there is a linguistic transition to a more funda-mental level of explanation, the first being more "reflexive" than the second.

We have to understand not only the growing importance of reflection in the sense

The universal effective unity of reality does not represent just one "part" (*bubun* 部分) of itself, but becomes also the "image" (*eizō* 影像) of itself.[49] To a certain extent, an image can be said to hold more "unifying power" than a simple "part." And a "simple part" can be said to be more differentiated from the "whole" than the "reflected" is from the "reflecting." To reflect in this sense thus means that the "universal" (*ippan naru mono* 一般なるもの) finds itself *inside* itself, in a new image of itself that represents more than a simple detached part of itself. The topology of reflection is not to be understood in terms of "part" and "whole." It is not a mereology. This is to be understood in a twofold manner. In the first place, there is no finite partitioning of the universal, as though it retained within itself a certain number of "particulars" (*tokushunarumono* 特殊なる物) to be used up in a process of finite self-determination in one-to-one correspondence with a finite number of parts.[50] In the second place, however, neither is the self-determination of the universal defined by an infinite partitioning, as this is precisely the point of abandoning the view of transcription implied in the paradigm from Dedekind.

Finally, the very idea of a "position" or "point of view" (*tachiba* 立場) itself is what Nishida seems to regard as having been only superficially understood in his earlier position. In 1917 he had considered reflection from the "point of view" of "action." He tried to show how the "intu-

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of *utsuru* on reflection in the sense of *hansei*, but also a rather subtle evolution going on within the very term *utsuru* うつる that was not present in IG. While in IRSC, this term expresses three notions—the "transcription" (写る), the "transition" (移る), and the "reflection" (映る)—in P the latter becomes dominant and gives rise to a whole theory of "wrapping" or "enfolding" (*tsutsumu*) in speculative reflection (see my treatment in NKPU, 884–996). On the one hand, the notion of "transcription" seems to give voice to the Dedekindean mathematical paradigm that Nishida tends to play down, if not entirely remove, from P, although is can be restored topologically in a more embracing meaning. On the other hand, absolute nothingness cannot be assimilated to the pure change represented by "transition" insofar as it is also described as "eternally unchanging" (*eien ni utsurazaru mono* 永遠に移らざるもの).

49. 特殊なるものは一般なるものの部分であり且つその影像である. P, 227.

50. *Sōsetsu*「総説」[General Summary], (GS, 1929) NKZ V: 429–30, translated by R. J. J. WARGO, *The Logic Nothingness: A Study of Nishida Kitarō* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 186–216.

ition" (*chokkan* 直観) of a greater point of view[51] proceeds from "action" (*kōi* 行為),[52] and to demonstrate the sense in which reflection emerges from behind the face of this "act" (*sayō* 作用) and opens up into a new point of view.[53] In time it became clear to him that this meant taking reflection to be an act of exteriorization from a lower point of view. That is surely no longer the case in "Place":

> When we speak of "reflecting," we easily think as if it were an action; but the very fact of reflecting does not issue from the fact of acting; on the contrary, it's only from the fact of reflecting inside ourselves that we can be led to action.[54]

In the logic of topological enlightenment developed in 1926, the position of the "act" rests solely in the "place of oppositional nothingness," which in turn must be set within the "place of absolute nothingness." It is interesting to note how Nishida's topologizing of reality compels him in return to topologize his own thought, or to find a place for the manifestation of his former thematic inside the structure of his new speculation. In an earlier, but still usable terminology, the "self" expresses no more than the "system" (*taikei* 体系)[55] of "reality" (*jitsuzai* 実在) itself, the "Atman" (アートマン *atoman*) [of] the "Brahaman" (*burahaman* ブラハマン),[56] and this system "maintains" (*ijisuru*)[57] itself constantly. Rather than reject his earlier thought (as, for example, Schelling had[58]) Nishida finds a way to find it a proper place in his new thought, and thus to reflect himself in a new kind of mirror, to "return to," to "reflect upon"[59] himself. Only within the "space of true nothingness"[60] can there

51. IRES, 33 (63)
52. IRES, 143(287-288).
53. NKPU, 265-305.
54. P, 228.
55. IG, 9(16).
56. IG, 38, 80(46–7, 97).
57. IRSC, 54(106-107).
58. Jean-François MARQUET, *Restitutions. Etudes d'histoire de la philosophie allemande* (Paris: Vrin, 2001), 59, 139–1.
59. *Onore jishin wo kaerimiru* 己自身を省みる. See the text cited below.
60. 真無の空間. P, 250.

be room for such an increase of thinking space, such an expenditure of philosophical speculative power.

This brings us to a new problem: In what sense can absolute nothingness be represented as a mirror, and to what extent does it undercut the image of that distorting and falsifying mirror? Nishida states that it is "that which reflects in itself its own image, the self-illuminating mirror."[61] Clearly this no longer entails a "differentiation" with itself, as in the case of a distorting mirror, but synthesizes a topological unification by the very fact that it "enlightens itself" *inside* itself.[62] But how is this self-determinating, self-containing enlightenment possible?

A looking glass does not shine by itself. It requires a *thing* to be reflected within it as well as a *source of light* to illuminate the scene. As long as there is *nothing* to begin with, no thing and no source of light, there seems no way for an image to appear on the surface of the mirror. On the one hand, we stand within *a place of absolute nothingness*; on the other, the mirror must *radiate by itself. Nothingness makes the self; nothingness [gives] birth to the (it) self, as an internal reflection.* Since there is still nothing, this nothingness must enlighten a scene within itself—and not without, as with the classical mirror. Therefore, nothingness is always a *place* of nothingness; and a mirror can only shine by itself *in* itself. The very *nothingness* and *self* are topological realities here.

How did Nishida manage to retain the analogy despite the difficulties of the analogy here? In IG, he explains self-enlightenment by referring to Jacob Boehme's (1575–1624) mirror:

> For him, it is only when the will without object, as God must be prior to manifestation, reflects on Himself, makes Himself a mirror [mirrors Himself], that the distinction between subject and object arises; God and the world develop from this point"[63]

61. P, 213, 226, 260.

62. *Jiko jishin wo terasu* 自己自身を照らす. As John Maraldo points out, this expression could also be read "the mirror that enlightens *the self*." We will see how the revelation of the *self-illuminative* character helps to understand *the illumination of the self*, that is what the self *is*, or more precisely, what the self *was* in its fallacious understanding, and what it becomes when his true nature *as such* is revealed.

63. 氏は対象なき意志ともいうべき発現以前の神が己自身を省みること即ち己自身を鏡

The mirror is neither being nor nothingness, but a *medium* through which God manifests (*hatsugen suru* 発現する) himself, so that nothingness becomes being. As *absolute* nothingness, God can only "mirror Himself," "make Himself into a mirror" (*onore jishin wo kagami to nasu* 己自身を鏡となす) in order for anything to "be."

In his 1930 essay "The Intelligible World"[64] Nishida argues that the "noemic determination"[65] of absolute nothingness constitutes the operation through which the mirror produces images in its surface:[66]

> Our spirit ultimately is only a reflecting mirror. Boehme wanted to convey this idea to us when he wrote: "*So denn der erste Wille ein Ungrund ist, zu achten als ein ewig Nichts, so erkennen wir ihn gleich einem Spiegel, darin einer sein eigen Bildnis sieht, gleich einem Leben (sex puncta theosophica).*"[67]

The reflecting mirror makes appear on its surface an image, a color, just as "being" appears in the surface of "nothingness" like an objet of the "Will." This is how nothingness expresses its *thirst* for being. In this sense, we can say that nothingness ontologizes itself (*uka suru*), or colorizes itself: the "world" (*sekai* 世界) is fitted and filled with "colors" (*iro* 色)[68] and forms. It corresponds to the "kenotic" God, who empties[69] Himself in order to give place to creation, who lets go of his power

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となすことに由って主観と客観とが分れ、これより神および世界が発展するといっている。IG, 169(191).

64. 「叡知的世界」 *eichiteki sekai* (NKZ 5, 182). Translation in JIU, 227.

65. *Noemateki gentei* ノエマ的限定, GS, 455–6

66. See my treatment in NKPU, 800–8, where I try to show how Nishida gives a topological interpretation of the theory of nothingness developed by Boehme.

67. Nishida modified the punctuation of the original slightly, giving: "As the original Will is without ground, it can be considered as an eternal nothingness: we recognize it as a mirror inside which a being sees its image, like a life." *Sämmtliche Werke* (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1846), 331, *Cat.* nr. 251, p. 33. Nishida had in his possession a translation in which he had underlined the terms "mirror," "ungroundedness," and "eternal nothing": *Six Theosophic Points and Other Writtings*, trans. by John Rolleston EARLE (London: Constable and Co., 1919), 6, *Cat.* nr. 252 p. 33. I have analyzed the importance of these "annotations" for contemporary research on Japanese philosophy in NKPU, 229–61.

68. We cannot analyze in detail this process of coloration. Cf. NKPU, 1102–7.

69. The act of "emptying" oneself is opposed to "closing" oneself in on oneself,

in order to save humanity in Christ who humbles himself to passion and death.[70] Still, this creation of being is not simply a *creatio ex nihilo* as understood in dualistic or gnostic interpretations.[71] It is mediated by the mirror, *inside which* nothingness creates being.

As Nicolas Bernadieff remarks, "For Boehme the original mystery of being lies in the fact that nothingness has a passion for something." Nothingness is a lack, an "immotivate hunger for something."[72] This "hunger" (*Hunger*)[73] illustrates a "desire" (*Begehren*),[74] an "attraction" (*Unziehen*) towards the "sustenance" (*Speise*) that is "essence," "being," or "color." This hunger excites the liberty it needs to satisfy itself in the creation of being and at the very moment that the enlightenment of the world takes place. In contrast, the "demons" are like always "starving, thirsty, and failing" (*ewig Berhungerte, Berschmachtete und Berdurstete*), without sustenance and overwhelmed by the darkness.[75]

Nothingness, in its hunger, cannot be satisfied with mere nothingness. It must be a mirror that enlightens itself. The plenitude of being is "black" or "white," opaque and without reflection; it represents the foundation in a *Grund*, the solid enclosure within the locus of "determined being" (*gentei serareta u* 限定せられた有).[76] Following Boehme, Nishida understands the dissatisfaction of nothingness as "the unreach-

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which would amount to an enclosure, namely, the closing into determined being. The sense here is that nothingness effectively digs itself out from within itself in a never ending "retreat" (*shirizoku* 退く) into itself (P, 234). Nishida conceived himself as a "miner" (*kōfu* 坑夫) of meaning (cf. "De la néontologie chez Nishida Kitarō," 184). Absolute nothingness empties itself but is never completely "empty" in the negative sense of a pure "vacuity" or "hollowness." We cannot analyze in detail this process of coloration. Cf. NKPU, 1102–7.

70. J. Tremblay, JIU, 140, note.

71. I insist on this point before taking up the controversial interpretation of Nicolas Bernadieff, which I draw on only in order better to understand Nishida's relation to Boehme. Regading this controversy, see J.-F. Marquet "Désir et imagination chez Jacob Boehme," in *Jacob Boehme* (Paris: Vrin, 1979), 83–4, and also 61–2, 115–31.

72. "L'Ungrund et la liberté chez J.Boehme," *Mysterium Magnum* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1945), I: 16, 19.

73. *Sex Puncta*, 12, 14, 18, 42, 63, 68 (335, 337, 339, 353, 366, 368).

74. J.-F. Marquet "Désir et imagination chez Jacob Boehme," 79–83.

75. *Sex Puncta*, 73, 99 (372, 388).

76. P, 217–32.

able bottom of the sea,"[77] an "infinite" (*mugen*) gradation of tones, the impossibility of attaining any foundation (*mutei* 無底, *Ungrund*), the endless pursuit of a "content" (*naiyō* 内容) that slips away.[78] In his 1943 essay "Space," this *Abgrund* is defined as an "eternal nothingness" (*eien no mu* 永遠の無) that functions as the "production of an eternal beginning like a need" (*yokkyū* 欲求, *Sucht*).[79]

In sum, the mirror enlightens itself because of the structural characteristics of this hunger (this lack, the *Sucht* of this generating void called "absolute nothingness") and imposes an "eternal beginning," an endless "quest" (*suchen*) of being and the unity to come. What we find here is no longer, then, a "mirror that simply reflects," but rather "a mirror of *consciousness* that simply reflects";[80] not a "mirror that reflects the outside," but "a mirror that reflects the inside."[81] What becomes of reflection under these conditions?

> To reflect means to restore something as such without distorting its form, to receive it as such. What reflects constitutes within itself the restitution of the thing without itself being any "thing" that acts.[82]

This new concept of *reflection₃* no longer expresses a "formation" leading to an ontological deformation, but rather a *re*-formation. It is *re*flexive in a more original sense. The expression Nishida uses here, *naritachi shimeru koto* 成り立ちしめること, is difficult to translate. It means the "fact" (*koto* こと) of making something "stand up" or "take form" (*naritatsu* 成り立つ), of letting it "become" (*naru* 成る) present, and "stand" (*tatsu* 立つ) as a presence. However, this very "thing," that has lost its real "form" (*katachi* 形) within "the place of being," recovers it inside the "place of absolute nothingness,"[83] which effects a restitution

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77. *Tassuru koto no dekinai umi no soko* 達することのできない海の底.

78. IRSC, 135 (274–5). See 143 (287).

79. 欲求 Sucht として永遠の始をなすと云ふのも.「空間」[Space],『哲学論文集第六』 [Philosophical essays VI], NKZ XI: 197. See also「生命」[Life], NKZ, XI: 323.

80. 単に映す意識の鏡 *tan ni utsusu ishiki no kagami*, P, 231,259.

81. 内を映す鏡 *uchi wo utsusu kagami*, P, 231.

82. P, 226.

83. On this distinction of places, see my essay "De la néontologie chez Nishida Kitarō" and NKPU, 703–56.

of this original "undistorted form" (*katachi wo yugamenai de* 形を歪めないで) of the thing "as such" (*sono mama ni* その儘に).

The mirror eliminates the crust of being, lets the thing reflect itself not as it *is*, not even *such* as it *is*, but simply *as such*, without distortion.[84] Nothingness is thus neither an ineffable nothing, nor non-being, but an elision that marks the disappearance of being, just as the verb *is* disappears in the expression *such as it is*. In absolute nothingness, being vanishes, but the thing *in* itself, liberated from being, is restored—not in a Kantian, but in a topological meaning. This is the reason we should use the expression "make restitution" here, namely, to take into account the causative form expressed by the verbal ending *shimeru* しめる.

To reflect in the place of absolute nothingness, therefore, does not mean to represent some "*thing* which acts" (*hatarakumono* 働くもの), because *such a thing*—and not the *thing as such*—exists only within the place of being. To reflect is not an "action" (*hataraku* 働く). On the contrary (*kore ni taishite* 之に対して), it expresses the activity of making something become, the labor of the activity captured here in the *causative* form of the verb rather than by a *substantive*. Nevertheless, this activity that can be recognized as a "cause" is characterized, surprisingly, as a "reception" (*ukeireru* 受け入れる). In this sense, causality is not just mere production but engages solely with the re-production of what the thing *is* improperly (because ontologically). That is to say, it is a re-ception and a re-integration of the thing as such in a place that renders such "suchness" possible.

To make restitution means to cause and receive, to re-situate, to give to the thing the only place that allows it to "be" what in fact it *is* not, precisely because "being" refers to a place in which the thing is hidden. This enfolding "place of nothingness" represents the only place

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84. See the quotation below in which Nishida silently erases the Chinese character for being (有), which appears twice in the first part of the sentence, and once in the second: being is *being as being* only if it is *nothingness as such*, that is, not *as non-being* (oppositional nothingness), but *as no-being*. Being reveals by itself its true nature as no being at all, as absolute nothingness. In more technical terms, "something which is" (有るものが) can "be such as it is" (そのまゝに有である) only if "being" (有る) itself is "as such nothingness" (そのまゝに無である). Therefore, "something which is" neither is such as it is, nor as non being, but only such as it is not.

that enables the thing to find itself as such, to receive itself as such, by destroying, discarding, and "purifying" (*junka suru* 純化する)[85] the false forms with which it is covered in order to reveal its "pure quality" (*junsui seishitsu* 純粋性質).[86] For the mirror to "enlighten itself" would be to produce in itself an image, instituting and orchestrating the revelation of what it contains inside itself. This means that it brings about the reception of what takes place in it, and then shines through its own reflection.

This raises the question of how to understand the poles of such a receptive and causative operation. Might we not be facing, here, an irresolvable contradiction? One might assume that the restitution of the thing as such indicates no more than the sterility of nothingness. Or, to give it the sense of the Heideggerian *seinlassen*, that it is a kind of "*letting* something be." But this seems to confuse the level of the place here, since the reflection taking place in a creative nothingness must be creative as well:

> To produce being from nothingness is nothing other than making the reflecting mirror reflect. Matter is not determinate inversely to the direction of an act, but rather matter itself becomes a kind of form. Because of the fact that the reflecting mirror, which reflects what stands behind the act, is itself reflected, potency itself becomes act, matter becomes a thing that acts; it is a production of matter from nothingness. This is not production in the order of time but as a seeing, a reflecting on the surface or the mirror of true nothingness.[87]

Thus, "matter" is not what is encountered at the end of the "act" (*sayō*). It is not something that resists in a material or physical sense, nor is it a mere "latency" or "potentiality" in opposition to an "effective reality" in Aristotelian terms,[88] nor again is it the *hylè* that is phenom-

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85. IRSC, 62(122-123). For an exposition of this rich Nishidean "philosophème," see NKPU, 278–9.

86. P, 246–54.

87. P, 248.

88. In the sense that "effective reality" (*genjitsu* 現実) can be brought closer to the "actuality" (*genjitsutai* 現実態, ἐνέργεια, *actus*) and "latency" (*senzai* 潜在) to "power" (*kanōtai* 可能態, δύναμις, *potentia*). Cf. 『哲学思想事典』 [Dictionary of phil-

enologically given in an act of consciousness. Within the opacity and "density" (*mitsu* 密, *dicht*)[89] of the place of being, there is no "matter" (*shitsuryō* 質料, *ὕλη*, *materia*) as opposed to "form" (*keisō* 形相, *εἶδος*, *species*); this appears in the first layer of the place of oppositional nothingness. At a second layer, we find "infinitesimal matter,"[90] that is, matter that has the capacity to take an infinite number of new forms in small increments, so that matter seems to participate in the "production" (*tsukuru* 作る) of its own form.

However, we still have not given the grounds for what makes possible such an animation, or enlightenment, this "self-consciousness" (*jikaku* 自覚)[91] of matter. The answer dwells in the place of absolute nothingness, where matter itself "becomes" the "pure form" (*jun naru keisō* 純なる形相) animating matter, for it depends upon an operation of "production" (*tsukuru*) issued from a "creative nothingness" (*sōzōteki mu* 創造的無).[92] Nothingness operates an "eternal beginning" (*eien no hajime* 永遠の始) that gives birth to the very fact of creating. When matter *annuls* itself

osophical thought] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1998).

 Here, Nishida asks a very important question: We cannot simply oppose "matter" and "form," "potency" and "act," and then postulates that the first "becomes" (*naru* なる) the second. *How* does *δύναμις become ἐνέργεια?* What "force," what "striving," what *Sucht* can explain this passage in energetic terms and gives us a "because" (*niyotte* によって)? Must we not try to inquire "what *stands* behind the act" (*sayō no haigō ni arumono* 作用にあるもの) rather than what *is* opposed to it? Might not the infinite depth of the place of absolute nothingness explain the "snapping" (*yakunyū* 躍入, *Einschnappen*) that casts potential into act? Concerning this latter key notion that Nishida followed Theodor Lipps (1851–1914) in rethinking, see NKPU, 340–50.

 This is the same question he will put to Hegel in his 1935 essay 「私の立場から見たヘーゲルの弁証法」 [Hegel's dialectics seen from my standpoint], NKZ XII: 64–84: How can the dialectical movement operate? What kind of deep effectivity can explain the dialectical "process"? How is the very fact of an *Aufhebung* possible? For more on this topic, see my essay (and the accompanying translation with Ibaragi Daisuké) in the forthcoming *Philosophes du Japon moderne*, ed. by Jacynthe Tremblay (2007).

 89. I have formulated a hypothesis about the relation between Cantor's notion of density and the Nishidean analysis of being, in NKPU, 415, 749.

 90. *Kyokubiteki shitsuryō* 極微的質料, P, 265. Nishida relies here on an analysis by Hermann COHEN (1842–1918).

 91. On this notion, see, NPTP, 55–9, NKPU, 179–83, 857

 92. P, 238–40.

as substantive and opposed to the "form" or the "act," it simply *begins* to form itself and act by itself, that is, to be creative. The ripples in the "surface of the mirror of true nothingness,"[93] like the waves produced by a stone falling in water, create matter. "To reflect the reflecting mirror" is like making a bell ring, a liquid surface undulate.

The creation that "takes place" here consists of a reflection on the surface of nothingness, rather than in a creation *ex nihilo* that begins in nothingness and creates being "inside time" or "in a certain time" (*jikan ni oite* 時間に於て) through the fundamental action, for example, of a divinity. "The fact of seeing" (*miru koto* 見ること) the reflections in the surface of nothingness is what is meant by creating being. This clear and cleansed *vision* explains why we do not find here the kind of distorted being the "symbol" or the "sign" has, but rather the faithful *image* of the thing as such, which is no longer the "image of another thing." Nishida concludes: "To say that something must remain as such means that its being is, as such, nothingness, in other words, that everything is image."[94]

Matter is "the reflected image"[95] of true nothingness. All reality *is* image. What is more, and this is what is distinctive about Nishida's view, none of this is to be understood in ontological terms. This theme brings up two questions that we will take up later:

1. How are we to understand such industry in the production of images?
2. Is not this position the opposite extreme of a philosophy of the image?

Before tackling these questions, let us ask ourselves if the "philosophical speculative power" we referred to earlier and which corresponds to this infinite reflection, cannot be more closely related to the image of the mirror. The *specular* aspect of the mirror refers to the two sides of

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93. 真の無の上に映すこと *shin no mu no ueni utsusukoto.*

94. 有るものがそのま、に有であるといふことは、有るがそのま、に無であると云ふことである、即ちすべて影像であるといふことである。A more general translation will not consider only the being of a thing here, but being in general: "To say that something must stay *as such* means that being as such is nothingness, in other words, that everything is image." P, 247-248.

95. 映されたる影像 P, 240).

Nishidean "speculation" (*shisaku* 思索)[96]: as the production of the image in the reflection of absolute nothingness, and as the fact of becoming this self-enlightening mirror, that is, "becoming nothingness" (*mu to naru* 無となる).[97] To speculate, then, is to think in closer and closer "contact" (*sesshoku* 接触)[98] with absolute nothingness, to "touch" (*sawaru* 触る) it in our meditations. This phenomenon, far from rendering thinking in this way sterile, makes it excessively speculative, losing meaning in vain ("for nothing") in order to locate a "surplus"[99] of meaning for the very sake of the construction of meaning. This is how the "profusion" (*hōfu* 豊富)[100] of reality manifests itself in thinking.

Let us return, with this in mind, to the question of how Nishida's speculation impinges on topics in contemporary Japanese philosophy. To begin with, this industry of image can appear as the metaphorical process of "narration" (*katari* かたり), which consists in the specular transition from one image to another in accord with the functions of "similitude" (*sōjisei* 相似性) and "ambiguity" (*aimaisei* 曖昧性). As Sakabe Megumi (坂部 恵, 1936–) has shown,[101] this is not to be understood in the "horizontal direction" (*suiheihōkō* 水平方向) of the stream of ordinary speech, in which the sentence develops according to the linguistic functions of "contiguity" (*rinsetsusei* 隣接生) and "union" (*ketsugō* 結合) into the "syntagem" (*renji* 連辞). To explain narrative we need to probe the "deep depth" (*fukai okuyuki* 深い奥行き) of a "transversal" (*suichoku* 垂直) dimension of discourse, a new conception of the links between absolute nothingness and narrative aspect.

This infinite metaphoric "abyss" (*fuchi* 淵) explains in return the

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96. The "research" (*kenkyū* 研究) undertaken in *A Study of the Good* may appear bookish, but in later works like 『思索と体験』 [Thinking and experience, 1915] (NKZ I, 203–423) and IRSC, xxiii-xxiv (11), the term *shisaku* 思索 will carry the sense of speculation about nothingness that Nishida was always in pursuit of. Once again, this not to be mistaken for "empty thought" (*kūsō* 空想), IG, 155, 162 (176, 183), *Index* IG, 99, and "fiction" or "illusory phenomenon" (*kagen* 仮現), NKZ X: 480.

97. "It is only when the universal becomes a perfect nothingness that the mirror of consciousness that simply reflects is seen," P, 270.

98. IRES, 124(245). See NKPU 338-340, 397-399, 977-979.

99. *Shōyo* 尚余, *jōyo* 剩余, *yochi* 余地. I analyze this notion in NKPU, 926–34.

100. IRSC, 163 (335).

101. 『かたり』 [Narration] (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1990, 115–29, 140.

"prodigality" or "profusion" (*hōjō* 豊穣) of poetic narration in the use of images to illustrate statements and sentences. In this abyssal place we find a multiplicity inherent in the "metaphoric way" (*inyutekikatei* 隠喩的過程) of the "image" overflowing the simple reference that belongs to the "sign," as well as the "metonimic way" (*kanyutekikatei* 換喩的過程) that belongs to the "symbol," that Nishida localized in oppositional nothingness. In this sense, the profusion of images haunts linguistic reality, and manifests itself in narrative.

This brings us to a second concern. Commenting on the same passage from Nishida, Ōhashi takes up the suggestive example of "virtual reality."[102] "Is it not possible," he asks, "that the world of actuality that I think of as immediate finally shows itself as something mediated through a technical media?" "Virtual reality" offers us the image of a "world mediated by *poiesis*,"[103] or as Nishida says, "a world of images" (*zō no sekai* 像の世界), wholly created (as pure nothingness) and wholly real (as pure being). More precisely, in virtual reality, "being is, as such, nothingness."

The interesting thing about the analysis of Ōhashi for the interpreter of Nishida lies in the way it illustrates, in contemporary terms, the underlying industry of the notion of an "historical world"[104] in Nishida's latter work. Taking its philosophical meaning a step further, we may say that the world finds itself in the place of absolute nothingness, and corresponds to no reality in itself; it is a pure technique, an infinite tool, a rough and continuous creation; in this sense, it is false, virtual. There is no question here of rehearsing some sort of negative Cartesian analysis. That the "world of actuality" shows itself as a shimmer of images does not point to deception in the pursuit of the truth, but rather the core "actuality" (*genjitsu*) of imagination. The image appears to me, and before knowing if it is *true* or *false*, if it *is* or not, it represents an effective technique, an apparatus of appearing. In addition, the place of this industry is the seat

102. ヴァイチャル・リアリティ NPTP, 135–41.

103. *Poieshisuteki ni baikai serareta sekai* ポイエシス的に媒介せられた世界.

104. *Rekishiteki sekai* 歴史的世界. See 「歴史的世界に於ての個物の立場」 [The position of the individual in the historical world (1938)], NKZ IX; translation: "La position de l'individuel dans le monde historique" in JUI.

of an unceasing creation, which enables an endless "de-substantialization."[105] It is because the world is false that it constantly creates and unifies itself; herein, in a topological perspective, dwells its distinctive and unique truth.

Our previous reference to "another philosophy of the image" was to Bergson. The answer to our second question is concerned with the breaking point between Nishida and the French philosopher regarding imagery. For Bergson, too, everything is "image";[106] even nothingness is presented as "an image full of things"[107] or as a particularly elaborated idea.[108] Nothingness for Bergson *is* something, an image created by reflection.[109] For Nishida, in contrast, these images correspond to a *reflection₃* in the mirror of absolute nothingness, the producer of images. That *is* certainly not an elaborated idea, but rather the total destitution and poverty within which alone ontological and intellectual elaboration can be built. Reflection is not conceived as an "external projection"[110] of ideas but as an internal reflection₃ of the mirror.

Once again, an apparently cognate Western analogue to Nishida's notion of the mirror turns out to run contrary to Nishida's assumptions. Does that mean that this strange conception of a "self-enlightening mirror" is original to Nishida? Is it even possible to understand it merely with the intellectual apparatus, concepts, and texts of occidental philosophy? The very idea of "self-enlightening" seems to indicate a Buddhist provenance for the term. Perhaps, then, we would do better to look to the religious and philosophical horizon defined by Buddhism for the conception of a "self-enlightening mirror"? And is there any proof that this is in fact what Nishida himself thought?

105. P, 281.
106. MM, 11.
107. *L'Evolution créatrice* (EC) (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1914), 303. Nishida follows this famous Bergsonian analysis in his French edition of 1910, p. 303. *Cat.* nr. 70 p. 138.
108. EC, 320. Nishida underlines in pencil the phrase "the idea of the whole."
109. EC, 298. The reader may consult another critique of the Bergsonian approach, in a phenomenological and Heideggerian vein, in Jean-Luc Marion, *Réduction et donation* (Paris: P.U.F., 1989), 255–6.
110. MM, 112, 114–15.

The buddhist genealogy
of the self-enlightened mirror.

It is Nishida himself who explicitly discloses the Buddhist con-
notations of the term "self-enlightening mirror." In an essay written one
year before his death, "Towards a Philosophy of Religion with the Con-
cept of Pre-established Harmony as a Guide," the image of the mirror
surfaces again in a discussion of Leibniz.

The reappearance of the mirror image, which we have explored in ear-
lier texts, seems to affirm the global significance of the image in Nishida's
speculations and to confirm our argument that it represents a key notion
and not just an idea specific to one period of his thought.[111]

> God is the form that determines itself indefinitely. Moreover, it is
> impossible not to speak of such a form as the form without form, for it
> is reflecting itself. God is absolute nothingness. It is possible to speak
> of a thing that possesses a form as the shadow of what does not have
> any form. God is the mirror of eternity, the Great circular mirror of
> knowledge.[112]

The evocation of the mirror is introduced here to express its radically
religious signification. God is an infinite operation of "unification,"[113]

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111. Of course, this has to be more carefully argued through an analysis of the
actual texts composed during Nishida's final period. At least in 1930, 1938–1939, and
1944 Nishida will make new references to this notion. John Maraldo ("Self-Mir-
roring and Self-Awarness") has shown how, "the model of self-mirroring is still at
work" in Nishida's "later works." As Bret W. Davis has pointed out, we need to
question the significance of the image of the mirror in such late topics as "intuition in
action" (*kōiteki chokkan* 行為的直観), where the visual paradigm seems to be replaced
by the tactual paradigm of creation. We have shown how the theory of an "industry
of images" can give some interesting insights to develop this topic. In this sense,
Nishida will criticize the "simple theory of reflection" (*moshasetsu* 模写説, *Abbildtheo-
rie*), because of its default to take into account the dimension of the "constitutive"
(*kōseiteki* 構成的) dimension of the "act of expression." See "The Position of the Indi-
vidual in the Historical World," 268 (136).

112. 「予定調和を手引として宗教哲学へ」*Philosophical Essays 6*, nkz xi: 116. I have
kept only the title from the translation of D. A. Dilworth, *The Eastern Buddhist*
iii/1 (1970). The translations are my own.

113. ig, 82 (101).

"the form that determines itself indefinitely" (*mugen*), that is to say, the form that cannot become a "definitive," "finite," or in any sense "limited" (*yūgen* 有限)[114] form or indeed any "*thing* that possesses form" (*katachi aru mono* 形あるもの). Because the form is always "reflecting" (*utsusu* 映す) itself, it cannot become a determined form,[115] as it would if it were instantiated in the "place of determinate being." Therefore, God stands in the place of absolute nothingness.

Here we find the profound "topological" and "optical" significance of the self-illumination of the mirror, which represents an illumination of the self *as such*: the mirror is not enlightening itself to make a definitive image appear at its surface; all "image" (*eizō*) is truly a "shadow" (*kage*), all *form₂* refers to the absence of *form₁*. But the virtual reality of the "shadow" assumes a radically effective meaning here. The mirror illuminates itself infinitely precisely because it cannot cast an externally fixed and decisive light on itself, but instead can only infinitely cast a shadow on itself *as such*. The shadow mirrors the eternal operation of reality, that has to be forever "effective" (*genjitsu*) and in this sense can be said to be the "mirror of eternity" (*eien no kagami* 永遠の鏡).

Furthermore, it is at this juncture that the "Buddhist" and "epistemic" significance of the self-illumination of the mirror arises. God is the "great round mirror of knowledge" (*daienkyōchi* 大円鏡智), an expression that refers to "one of the four kinds of knowledge of Amida Buddha (*nyorai* 如来, *tathāgata*). An intelligence that knows everything would be like a great round mirror reflecting all the colors and forms, and necessarily knowing and enlightening all things.[116] This "intelligence" (*chie* 智慧, *prajñā*) refers to "the action that opens enlightenment and enlightens the truth" instead of referring to philosophical "wisdom" (*sophia*). To self-enlighten is to know the vacuity of all forms in the sense of "empying oneself."[117]

But if Nishida is engaged in rethinking philosophically the Buddhist

114. I have analyzed this term in NKPU, 78.

115. The finite determined *form₁* of a thing that *is* opposes the infinite self-determinating *form₂* of nothingness.

116. See the entry in the *Kōjien Dictionnary*.

117. 空うすること*kūusurukoto*, P, 221.

significance of the notion of mirror, to follow him we must have an idea of where this very significance comes from. We may begin with a very general distinction that has been made within Buddhism. Then, we will try to clarify this first distinction by way of a second one, which will bring us closer to the idea we seek. Finally, we will have to make a geographical transition to arrive at the answer to our problem.

Consider, first, the question, Is the mirror an illusion or is it only the image of an illusion? In Chan Buddhism (*zenshū* 禅宗, *chánzōng*), we must distinguish between a fallacious and a beneficial sense of the image of the "mirror" (*kagami* 鏡, *ādarśa, jìng*).

Fallacious acceptance denotes the denunciation of the infinite "objectivizing projection" that people impose on themselves and the things of the world. Out of this projection, which represents to a certain extent the role of "birth and death" (*shōji* 生死, *samsāra, shēngsǐ*), emerges belief in the "individual soul" (*jiga* 自我, *ātman, zìwǒ*), because the analogy to the looking glass requires someone reflecting in it and constituting an identity by means of that reflection.[118]

Our investigation of the first aspect of this fallacious acceptance begins by seeing how the reflection of the looking glass ultimately entails, in Nishida's terms, an endless representation of the same reality. This is the case with the reciprocal opposition of the reflected and the reflecting, where reflection turns out to be an infinite opposition of a movement of *coming and going*. We should recall here that Nishida always criticizes "reciprocal relation" (*sogō kankei* 相互関係)[119] as a false unification, for example in the Fichtean *Schweben* of imagination, and the Lotzean theory of *Wechselwirkung*.[120] A new allusion to the mirror in 1944 makes this point clearer:

> The endlessly reciprocal relation of independent things is neither mechanical nor teleological. Endlessly, individuals are [express themselves as] individuals and the whole is [expresses itself as] the whole; the world of contradictory self-identity must be a world that expresses itself. We can, of course, say that God expresses himself endlessly as

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118. C. GERGORY, "Chan," 6. "Le pointillé épistémologique."
119. IG, 63–4 (77), P, 215–16, 254. Cf. NKPU, 626–31, 1372–5.
120. See NKPU, 626–31, 774–7.

the absolute present; Leibniz had already pointed this out (*Discours* IX). He states that substance is the mirror of God, or a mirror that expresses the entire universe in his own way.[121] The idea that the monad constitutes one point of view with regard to the world already makes a momentary appearance here. To express oneself requires that the expressing is the expressed, all the while containing infinite expression within itself.

Since expression can merely be considered as the union of opposing things, in the reciprocal relation between two substances; it can be likened to the relation between one person and another. […] Yet even at this point, Leibniz is not aiming at a contradictory self-identical principle of logic.[122]

Leibniz had "caught sight of" (*chakugan shita* 着眼した) the idea of "self-expression" (*jikojishin wo hyōgensuru* 自己自身を表現する) in the idea that a "substance" (*kotai* 個体) expresses itself while expressing the universe "in its own way" (*sorezore no shikata ni yotte* それぞれの仕方によって), like a reflecting "mirror" (*kagami*). This looking glass requires a substance constituting its identity in the moment of reflection. This mirror could be said to enlighten itself according to this idiosyncratic inscription in reflection. Leibniz had further recognized that this self-expression reflects in fact a divine operation, and is thus mostly perceptive in a God who "expresses himself endlessly, as the absolute present,"[123] that is, constitutes "the mirror of eternity" (*eien no kagami*).

Nevertheless, this specular vision is insufficient, and has to be cor-

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121. "Toute substance est comme un monde entier est comme un mirroir de Dieu ou bien de tout l'univers, qu'elle exprime chacune à sa façon, à peu près comme une ville est diversement représentée selon les différentes situation de celui qui la regarde. Ainsi l'univers est en quelque façon multiplié autant de fois qu'il y a de substances, et la gloire de Dieu est redoublée de même par autant de représentations toutes différentes de son ouvrage." *Discours de Métaphysique et correspondance avec Arnauld* (Paris: Vrin, 1993), 45. Nishida makes marginal annotations on this passage in his *Discourse on Metaphysics, Correspondence with Arnauld, and Monadology*, translated by George R. MONTGOMERY (Chicago: Open Court, 1916), 15. *Cat.* nr. 286, p. 37. He underlines the expressions "eine und dieselbe Stadt," "perspektivisch" in the correspounding §57 of the *Monadologie* in his German edition, 448. *Cat.* nr. 28, p. 133.

122. "Towards a Philosophy of Religion," 116–17. Paragraphing added.

123. 絶対現在としての神は、何処までも自己自身を表現する

rected, a critical point Nishida had already made years earlier in 1938.[124] For him the Cartesian philosopher only considers the "expression" (表現 *hyōgen*) according to a simple "reciprocal relation." However, the essential dimension is one of "*self*-expression": the "individual" (*ko* 個) *is* and remains an individual while *expressing* itself, just as the "whole" (*zen'ichi* 全一) remains a whole, "God"; all of reality is caught up in this never-ending self-expression. Yet such self-expression is prior to the reciprocal relation of expression between substantial or human individuals. The "reciprocal relation" is a principle belonging to a logic of "expression" and "union of opposite things" (*sōhan suru mono no ketsugō* 相反するものの結合). These appear as the "expressing" (*hyōgen suru mono* 表現するもの) and the "expressed" (*hyōgen serareru mono* 表現せられるもの).

Nevertheless, the definition of expression according to this opposition is topologically insufficient, in that we remain stuck on the level of oppositional nothingness. This is why Nishida completes the definition by adding a topological element: "To express oneself requires that the expressing is the expressed *while containing an infinite expression with itself*." We now find ourselves confronting a logic of contradictory self-identity and "unification." The contradictory self-identical unity of reality endlessly expresses itself in a topological turn.[125] It "superimposes" (*kasaneru* 重ねる)[126] itself infinitely, suspended within the place of absolute nothingness. In this sense, the mirror does not represent the place of the constitution of the identity of someone or something, but is rather the place of the endless diffraction and levelling of identity within the horizon of self-enlightenment.

This brings us to the second aspect of the fallacious acceptance. Because the looking glass requires that someone be reflected in it and

124. In this connection see "The Position of the Individual in the Historical World," 269 (138).

125. We cannot pursue, within the limits of the present essay, the question of how Nishida eventually conceived the "contradictory self-identity" as a topological unification. In P he develops this theory of the "contradictory unity" (*mujunteki tōitsu* 矛盾的統一), 274–5. In SE he distinguishes "simple reciprocal opposition" (単に相対する *tanni sōtaisuru*) from "reciprocally contradictory unity" (相互矛盾的一 *sōgomujunteki ichi*), 321.

126. I have analyzed this idea of Nishida's in some detail in NKPU, 934-966.

that one's identity be contained in the reflection that is thrown back, the mirror becomes the cause of a specular mystification that generates a false belief in "being."[127] This situation can be conceived emblematically as the "narcissistic fascination" by which persons see themselves in everything.[128] This aspect is present in Nishida's argumentation when he follows Bergson's critique of the narcissistic operation of intelligence that looks into itself as though it were looking into a mirror.[129] We can understand this movement as an infinite monologue,[130] a simple tautology that explains everything by itself. That is why the problem of the number of mirrors is not sufficiently radical from Nishida's perspective, given the invariable and superficial exteriority of reflection, and why we have to imagine a mirror that "reflects *in itself* its own image."

Despite all these shortcomings, this image of the mirror can recover

127. C. Gergory, "Chan," 5 "Le regard et le miroir."

128. In the essay「図式説明」[Schematic explanations (1939)], NKZ IX: 332, following the essay ES, Nishida criticizes "moral action" that is "nothing more than "searching one's head with one's head." He uses here the expression *shōtō bekitō* 将頭 覓頭, which appears in the *Discussions* of *Lin-Chi* († 867). See for example: *Entretiens de Lin-Tsi*, traduits du chinois et commentés par Paul Démiéville (Paris: Fayard, 1972), 148–9. P. Démiéville, *Le Concile de Lhasa* (CL) (Paris: Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1987), 65–7, refers in the *Discussions* to the story of Yajñadatta, a man who liked to see his face in a mirror. One day this image disappears and he starts to run about in search of his head. This image was the product of his imagination that he was chained to. The real head corresponds to enlightenment, our genuine but invisible face that Yajñadatta has overlooked.

Without entering into further detail here, suffice it to note that Nishida will refuse the simplistic idea of a mirror as a simple medium for moral elevation, preferring to quote Dōgen rather than Lin-chi to evoke the essential nature of a "self-enlightening mirror." This refusal corresponds to the transition from a Roycian infinite reflection, that is to "search one's head with one's head" to a topological reflection of nothingness itself. See NKPU, 1334–43.

We should recall that Yajñadatta can be the *philosopher* himself, in contrast to a Nishidean philosophy that strives to "hollow out" itself, to open itself so as to include in itself its former expressions, as well as other philosophies. As J. Maraldo points out: "Nishida's thought may not perfectly "mirror" that of other philosophers, but unless it reflects concerns in common with them, it may end up a hall of mirrors mirroring only themselves with no one to see the show." "Self-Mirroring and Self-Awareness," below, pages 143–4.

129. EC, 170, 223, 228. Cf. NKPU, 531–40.

130. C. Gergory, "Chan," 4: "Bodhi."

a *beneficial meaning* in Chan Buddhism by emphasizing its capacity to demonstrate the ordinary illusions that accompany us throughout life. These are not illusions that will simply leave us at some particular time, but illusions that we need to convert, as circumstances arise, into a "non-deceptive" everyday life, a life in which we live and die at each moment.[131] In other words, the mirror offers only the image of an illusion that we must look at in a new way.[132] It points to the possibility of escaping from the alternative between "being" and "non-being": it is more a "sense of being" that is in question.[133] In fact, it is here, in the beneficial sense of the image, that we can stand firm and recognize the fallacious meaning. The mirror itself reminds us not to live in the illusion symbolized in the comings and goings of reflections in the mirror.[134]

Yet the twofold meaning of the image of the mirror prompts us to reconsider from different perspectives the process of *coming and going* that it sets up. The philosopher does not remain on this level but invites us to conceptualize a higher form of unification, one focused on the "universe" (*uchū* 宇宙)[135] itself. In the perspective of Chan Buddhism, we are asked to consider this process through mental and physical exercises,[136] with the aim of forgetting it rather than, as is the case with Nishida, seeking "the formula of the manifestation of reality."[137] How, then, are we to come to a philosophically clear notion of the "self-enlightening mirror"? If our intuition is correct about looking for an answer in Chan Buddhism and its reading of the mirror as an image of the fallacy of everyday illusion, and from there seeking connections to Nishida's speculations, how can we bring greater precision to this exercise?

At this point we need to pose a second guiding question. Do we need to polish the mirror and wash it so that it can shine by itself? According to Paul Démiéville, the image of the mirror can be understood in

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131. *Ibid*. 2: "Le terme proche."

132. *Ibid*. 1: "Dhyāna."

133. *Ibid*. 8: "Une "pensée" translogique."

134. *Ibid*. 6: "Le pointillé épistémologique."

135. IG, 82 (101).

136. Our next quotation will show that this is the context of the "gradual doctrine" about the vision of the absolute.

137. IG, 63-64(77).

terms of a fundamental distinction within Chan between the "gradual" doctrine (漸, *jiàn, yugapat*) of Shén Xiù (Jishū, 神秀, 606–706) and the "sudden doctrine" (頓, *dùn, karma*) of the sixth patriarch of Zen Buddhism, Dàjiàn Huìnéng (大鑑慧能 Daikan Enō, 638–713).[138] He suggests reconstructing the distinction from the verses of the Platform Sutra:[139]

> For the supporters of the "sudden" doctrine, the vision (*kien*) of the absolute inside us occurs in a "sudden" manner, outside of all temporal, causal, or other *conditions*, without need for a previous imperfect look (*k'an*). By sudden (*touen, yugapat* in Sanskrit, "in one glance," the Platonic *éxaiphnès*) we must understand a total aspect of salvation, linked to a synthetic conception of reality, to a philosophy of the immediate, the instantaneous, the non-temporal, which is simultaneously the eternal. Things are considered "in one glance," intuitively, unconditionally, in a revolutionary perspective, while "gradualism," an analytical doctrine, claims to lead to the absolute by *gradual* processes (*tsien, kramavrittyā* in Sanskrit, the Platonic *éphèxès*), through a progressive succession of various activities, moral and cultural practices, mystical exercises, intellectual studies—a full range of activities that condition salvation. The "suddenists" denied this possibility, claiming to devote themselves merely to the passive experience of the absolute.[140]

The mirror appears then to be inseparable from its complement, *dust*, as an image of the gradual doctrine:

> [...] the bronze mirror that shines by itself in all its purity, *as soon as someone rubs away the dust covering its surface* [...]. Gradualism insists on the necessary effort to get it rid of these alien impurities, to "wipe and rub the mirror." Suddenism wants to take into account only its essential purity, until it comes to refuse itself recognition of the existence of impurity: the distinction of purity and impurity already implies a dualism, a relativism contrary to the unpredicable character of the absolute, which is "empty" of all determination.[141]

138. CL, 10–18 and notes.

139. *Liuzudashi fabaotanjing; sokei daishi betsuden* 『六祖大師法寶壇經』.

140. Paul Démiéville, "Le miroir spirituel" in *Sinologica, Zeitschrift für chinesische Kultur und Wissenschaft* I (1948): 114–15.

141. *Ibid.*, 114, 115. Emphasis added.

The problem here is not so much with the reflection but with the "purification,"[142] with how to eliminate the impurities on the surface. Matters are further complicated when we consider it in the broader context of the problem of self-enlightenment. How is one to let the mirror shine by itself? Or to formulate it in more precisely: How is one to to clean the mirror so as to make its "inherent clarity" visible?[143]

The radical novelty of this problem of self-enlightenment is reinforced when we recall that Taoist China knew the image of the mirror only as a way to illustrate "the impassibility, the passivity, the apathy of the Taoist saint"[144] or "enlightened sovereign."[145] True, the distinction between the reflection and the reflected was dominant. Moreover, the metaphor of the mirror was easily conflated with the symbolism of "water" as a kind of looking glass that reflects "the external world" as long as its "surface" was not clouded or agitated,[146] that is, as long as the water was still, "stopped," not flowing. Nishida, however, insists that the mirror cannot be reduced to a simple and quiet "face" (*kyōmen*). The mirror is essentially living; it is the source of the process of "speculation" itself that animates the mirror. Its surface *ripples*, "undulates"[147] in reflection,[148] in the stream and "fluidity" (*ryūdō* 流動)[149] of unification.

To be "quiet" is to do nothing, like a mirror reflecting *something* or *nothing* —passively.[150] Here the "inherent clarity" of the looking glass is

142. *Ibid.*, 116.
143. *Ibid.*, 116.
144. *Ibid.*, 117.
145. *Ibid.*, 121.
146. *Ibid.*, 118–22.
147. In the philosophy of "the true living will" (*shin ni ikita ishi* 真に生きた意志), "completely free" (*zenzen jiyū* 全然自由, IRSC, 133, 138, 269–70, 300–1), Nishida had already characterized the "development" (*hatten* 発展, *egressus*) of the will as an "undulatory progression" (*hadōteki shinkō* 波動的進行). The most fundamental concept, dating back to 1917, was spoken of as a self-expressing reality, which is only secondarily "fossilized" (*kasekiserareta* 化石せられた), recovered, and distorted in the "footprints" (*sokuseki* 足跡) it leaves behind, much like the mirror is, prior to its reflections and free of any dust that can accumulate on its surface. See NKPU, 475–83.
148. Both in the sense of *reflection₂* and *reflection₃.*. Reflection is both transition in oneself and the production of reflections.
149. IRSC, 97(192). See NKPU, 405-407.
150. The image of the mirror can be said to illustrate a sort of passive nothingness

never self-generated; it is a property of what it reflects and of the purity of its surface. The face of water reflects the entire universe, just as the Leibnizian monad constitutes a "living mirror" of the universe,[151] as Nishida recalls in his 1938 essay.[152] The difference is that for Nishida the mirror of the "universe" is dynamic and hence must be conceived as an increasingly cosmological "unifying force,"[153] in contrast to views of the cosmos as a finite unity totalized in reflection.[154] Thus, the absolute is understood as "the universality in which the diversity of the *world* unifies itself, somewhat like stoicism."[155]

The model of unification considered as a finite and static unity, "calm" and "plain," corresponds to that which enables the reflection:

> One does not look at oneself in the churning stream; *one looks at one-self in still water*, since it is calm. One will not see one's face in rough iron; *one sees it in a clear mirror*, because it is plain.[156]

It is because there is passivity and unity that there is reflection. The

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indifferent to its being reflected:

> Should there be a sound or not, the Bodhisattvas hear. For them the hearing is permanent (*tch'ang* 常), because they had realized that the *essence* of the sound is permanent (*cheng t'i tch'ang kou* 聲體常故) and that hearing had as its *essence* inactivity (*pou tong che wen t'i* 不動是聞體). Hearing is like a mirror that mirrors (this is what maintains its essence as a mirror), whether or not there happen to be visible objects (*rūpa*) to mirror. (CL, 358)

Such an "essence" of the mirror is not an ontological one: the mirror mirrors (that is, we are talking here of the mirror *as such*) whether there *is* something to mirror or not. Nevertheless, such a mirror surely opposes the dynamic and unfolding nothingness Nishida had in mind by refusing the idea of a "stoppage" (*teishi* 停止, *tomaru* 止まる). See NKPU, 66, 73, 103, 130–2.

151. *Monadologie*, §56. Nishida marks the whole passage in his edition *Hauptschriften zur Grundlegung der Philosophie*, 448, *Cat.* nr. 28, p. 133, underling: "lebender, immerwährender Spiegel des Universums," and inscribing "Spiegel" in the margin.

152. See "The Position of the Individual in the Historical World," 230 (71).

153. *Tōitsuryoku* 統一力, IG, I55 (175–6)

154. "All the multiple diversity of the *world* returns for him [Tchouang-tseu] to *unity*" P. Démiéville, "Le miroir spirituel," 118. Emphasis added.

155. *Ibid.*, 120. Emphasis added

156. *Ibid.*, 120. "The Buddhas, from innumerable ages, are detached from any kind of thoughts as 'graspable' or 'ungraspable.' They are without thought or reflection, just as a clear mirror (*meikyō* 明鏡, *míngjìng*)." CL, 83. See also, 95–6, 108.

desiring, intellectual activity, the division, clouds the reflection.[157] How can the active sense of self-illumination be conceived through such a quietist approach? A calm and plain unity is something *finished*, and this is what allows one to look at oneself. This is the ontological domain of *reflection₁*—a reflection that can never enlighten itself. Are we not compelled to conclude that only the topological conception of unification can allow us to understand the self-illuminating power of the mirror? It is because this unity is plunged into the infinite depth of absolute nothingness that it superposes itself in an endless activity of unification. And what ignites such a "self-consciousness" of unity in itself is the eternal flame of absolute nothingness.

That said, the gradualist does approach the metaphorical import of Nishida's problem of purification in the sense that the reflections at the surface of the mirror are like impurities, and the metaphor of the stream water like that of the troubled waters of a pond.[158] Plato, Plotinus, and Philo of Alexandria (13 BCE–54 CE),[159] for all their differences, always understand the mirror in one of two ways, either as an epistemic object of speculation in an etymological sense[160] or as a symbol of the soul and its component part. This latter presents us with the mirror as something that reflects something else and can itself be veiled and distorted by impurities that need to undergo a "purification,"[161] a kind of "baptism"[162] in the Christian sense. Since Plato impurities are seen as a kind of "rust"[163] (an image picked up by Gregory of Nyssa, 335–395) that are assimilated to the other, non-reflective face of the mirror.[164]

Whence this notion of self-illumination? Démiéville clearly marks the turn: "It is never a question of a person relocating purely spiritual purity

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157. "Le miroir spirituel," 121.

158. *Ibid.*, 122, 127. As it is expressed in Arabic philosophy, always associated with the idea of reflecting something else. In al-Ghazzālī (1059–1111) the mirror, that is, the soul, is rusty and needs to be scrubbed and polished.

159. *Ibid.*, 128–30.

160. See also the Gospels and especially Paul's allusion to seeing "in a mirror" as opposed to seeing "face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12).

161. "Le miroir spirituel," 130, 132, 134.

162. *Ibid.*, 132.

163. *Ibid.*, 128, 134.

164. *Ibid.*, 133.

within, an absolute interior. The Chinese were lacking in such notions." The conceptually driven metaphor comes rather from India and Buddhism.[165] Mahāyāna Buddhism, especially in its theories of "emptiness" (*śūnya-vāda*), employs images of reflection, but these have more to do with illusion than with self-illumination. Reflections represent the totality of illusory things floating on the surface of a purely empty reality, and the exteriority of what does the reflecting itself is seen as illusory. Pure emptiness expresses itself rather in the "interpenetration" of all things, symbolized by Indra's net of jewels that reflect off each other, and even more so by "the figure of an individual situated between two mirrors facing each other within which he reflects himself infinitely."[166] This is the same idea Nishida used to characterize the Roycian system of self-representation, and is not unlike images found in Kegon Buddhism.[167]

165. *Ibid.*, 123.

166. *Ibid.*, 123–4.

167. Nishida refers to the Kegon (*Kegonshū* 華厳宗, A*vataṁsaka, Bhuáyánzōng*) School of Buddhism in 「日本文化の問題」[The problem of Japanese culture (1940)], NKZ XII: 283, 346–7. The "free interpretation of facts" is the "absence of obstacle between the facts" or the "free interaction of events with events" (*jiji muge* 事事 無礙) according to the English tradanslation: "The Problem of Japanese Culture (excerpts)," translated by M. ABE and R. DEMARTINO in *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 860. It refers to the Great Master of Xiánshǒu (大師賢首) or Fǎzàng (Hōzō 法蔵 643–712), the third Patriarch of the Kegon School, who expressed the absolute non-substantiality of reality, symbolized by the sun Buddha (*birushana* 毘盧遮那, *vairocana*), as that which "penetrates all things with its infinite light, to which all things return as to their source." Cf. F. Girard, *Un moine de la secte Kegon à l'époque de Kamakura, Myōe (1173–1232) et le "Journal de ses rêves"* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1990), 7, 42–3, 226.

This optical introduction leads us to the image of the mirror as used in Kegon, to illustrate, both esthetically and rationally, the *jijimuge*—even if Nishida does not seem to refer to the image of the mirror in this context (see *Cat.* nr. 745, 750, 1060, 1070, pp. 322–3, 340–1). To begin with, *mirror symmetry* has an esthetical function, for which use, see HAYATA Kazuya: "Generation of Mandala Patterns from Texts that Include Sutras, Poems, and Strings of Words: Methods and Examples," *Forma* 19 (2004): 233–64. In addition, Fǎzàng demonstrated the *jijimuge* to his Imperial patron, the Empress Wǔ Zé Tiān (武则天, 625-705), as expressed in Indra's net of jewels by means of mirrors. Setting up a series of ten mirrors (not just two) in a square room, facing each other—one above, one below, one on each of the walls, and one in each corner—and surrounding a statue of Buddha that was illumined by a single candle in a darkened room. In the third Patriarch's words:

Is this pure coincidence, no more than a chance drawing on a common stock of perceptive experiences? Or does Nishida mean to refer implicitly to Buddhist images? Take the metaphor of the endless reflection between two facing mirrors to represent any oppositional nothingness to be distinguished from absolute nothingness. The latter indicates the locus of a transitive and effective unification; the former, a locus of mutual penetration. The problem of self-illumination is not pursued here in that the idea of "conditioned co-arising" contravenes both the idea of a reflection created by the external world and the idea of a reflection produced by the mirror itself.[168] In other words, *the mirror shines by itself, only to the extent that it is cleaned, that someone else had made visible its "inherent clarity."*[169] The "clear mirror" is a result. Can the fact that the mirror "becomes clear and clean"[170] really be understood as a self-illumination? Despite the problems, we see a fundamental characteristic of absolute nothingness here in the sense that the exteriority of the world is reduced to something like an illusion referring to an "absolute" of which we can say that it is the container inside of which everything operates.

> In each and every reflection of any mirror you will find all the reflections of all the other mirrors, together with a specific Buddha image in each, without omission or misplacement. The principle of interpenetration and containment is clearly shown by this demonstration. Right here, we see an example of one in all and all in one—the mystery of *realm embracing realm ad infinitum* is thus revealed. The principle of the *simultaneous arising of different realms* is so obvious here that no explanation is necessary. These infinite reflections of different realms now simultaneously arise without the slightest effort; they just naturally do so in a perfectly harmonious way.

Zhenji ZHANG, *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 1971), 24. See also: Thomas S. CLEARY, *Entry Into the Inconceivable: An Introduction to Hua-yen Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1983), Francis H. COOK, *Hua-yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 1977). SATŌ Atsushi 佐藤 厚「如来蔵の鏡と華厳の鏡」[The mirror of Ju-lai-shen and the mirror of Hua-yen],『印度学仏教学研究』[Journal of Indian and Buddhist studies] 98 (2001). However, should there be two or ten mirrors opposed, from a Nishidean perspective, the "infinite inter-reflections" (Zhang) belong to the image of the mirror that illustrates oppositional nothingness and not absolute nothingness.

168. *Ibid.*, 125.
169. *Ibid.*, 116.
170. CL, 108.

Historical research, though hinting at the genealogy of this radical conception of self-illumination, only takes us so far. Whereas this image, at least so far as the theme of this essay is concerned, seems to be traceable historically to the debate over suddenist and gradualist doctrines in Chan Buddhism, what are we to make of Démiéville's insistence that China lacks a radical understanding of the self-illuminating mirror? Indeed, a further remarks seems to put Nishida's theory at stake: "I will not trace this metaphor [of the mirror] in medieval and modern literature. Most of those authors are only making *variations* to topics coming from biblical and patristic sources."[171] This seems to recommend that we follow the trajectory of this image in Japanese intellectual history. But how are we to navigate our way across such a vast sea of thinkers, sects, and concepts?

At the end of his essay "Schematic Explanations,"[172] Nishida gives us a clue by quoting a phrase from Dōgen: "If the stranger comes, he appears there; if the Chinese comes, he appears there." Since the original context for this sentence has to do with the image of the mirror,[173] we could hardly find a better place to begin than with the founder of the Sōtō (曹洞宗 Cáodòngzōng) sect of Zen Buddhism in Japan.

> Place is nothing but the extension of the phenomenon. Besides, Dōgen expresses this place of apparition, this field of presentation, through the metaphor of the mirror. We always carry along with us a mirror the size of our world, either one foot long or reaching to infinity. Just as space, without being directly visible, is a condition of

171. "Le miroir spirituel," 135. Emphasis added.

172. "Schematic Explanations," 333. See translation and commentary in NKPU, 1339–41, where we show how Nishida is also alluding to a theory of unification in Dōgen's thought.

173. 胡来胡現、漢来漢現. The sentence appears in the chapter 19 "The Ancient Mirror" (*Kokyō* 古鏡), of the *Treasure of the Eye of the Authentic way* (*Shōbōgenzō*『正法眼蔵』). I refer here to Pierre NAKIMOVITCH, *Dōgen et les paradoxes de la bouddhéité* (DPB) (Genève: Droz S.A., 1999), 133–7, 214, 294, 353; and the Japanese edition published by Iwanami Bunko (Tokyo, 2004), 11–45. It is obviously impossible here to analyze in details the whole chapter as well as the notion of "mirror" according to Dōgen. We will limit ourselves to the relation to Nishida's philosophy in the scope of the topics treated in this paper.

the possibility of seeing: "Everything that is clear is a clear mirror." As a necessary representation, it is not an independent object: "Xuěfēng speaks of a mirror such that if a Barbarian comes, a Barbarian appears in it, and if a Chinese comes, a Chinese appears in it. [These words] do not mean that they come and appear in the mirror, neither within it nor without it nor simply with it. We need to pay attention to these words. At the very moment the Barbarian and the Chinese *come* and *appear,* the ancient mirror makes them *appear* and *come*. If we were to say that the mirror exists even when they are hiding, the apparition would darken and the vision lose all meaning." On the one hand, this explanation shows us through its transformation of the verbs *to come* and *to appear* that the apparition is prior, that it makes possible all comings and happenings, and that *coming* does not mean arriving from a world outside of the mirror. On the other hand, since the condition is contemporaneous with the conditioned and coextensive with it, there is neither being nor appearance of any place apart from what appears in this place. This condition of receptivity had to be understood without opposing the sensible to the intelligible, the spirit to the eye: "In the great round mirror of the Buddhas, …the spirit and the eye look like each other.[174]

We may distinguish three aspects here. First, the "ancient mirror" (*kokyō* 古鏡) represents the sum of apparitions, the appearance itself, in its "priority" to the coming of events, according to a *phenomenological*[175] turn: everything appears in it. Second, the "clear mirror" (*meikyō*) is the apparition of the ancient mirror, the appearing of appearance itself, and the image of *awakening*.[176] In a novel sense, *self*-illumination gives birth to an illumination of the *self*. Thus, finally, this *epistemic* conception reveals a new kind of "knowledge of mirrors," one detached from objective ties, catching "apparitions" and the "self" not *as* "objects" that *are*, but *as such*.[177] To conform itself to its "essence," the mirror itself does

174. P. Nakimovitch, quoting Dōgen (the passages set in quotation marks, 『正法眼蔵』 二, 18, 28, 16) and commenting on Xuěfēng, DPB, 136–7.

175. It is interesting to refer here to the analysis of the phenomenon of appearance by M. Henry, *L'essence de la manifestation*, 63–6.

176. DPB, 214, 353.

177. "Mirroring knowledge" is opposed to the "reliance" (*shoe* 所依, *āśraya*) on

not "exist" (*sonshu suru* 存取する)—except insofar as we take "existence" as meaning ontological acceptance—prior to appearances, as if they were "hiding" themselves (*kuin* 俱隠). Conversely, the appearances does not "exist" prior to the mirror, as "objects," "things," "beings," "persons," "dust or speck."[178] That is why "spirit" (*shin* 心) and "eye" (*gen* 眼) "look like each other" (*sōji* 相似),[179] and why "intelligible" and "sensible," subject and object, are no longer distinguishable in knowing. Dōgen here refers to the very same notion Nishida refers to in his gloss on Leibniz, the "great round mirror" (*daienkyō*) which had been precisely related to "knowledge" (*chi* 智).

At this level, we find indeed the conception of a mirror that does not reflect an external thing approaching it and appearing on its surface. Dōgen,[180] in his gloss of the words of Xuěfēng Yìcún (Seppō Gison 雪峯義存, 822–908) insists on the inversion of the verbs: the "ancient mirror" makes "appear" (現) that which occasions the "coming" (来). Without apparition, there is no coming. We find here the idea of a mirror *making* the images *appear*. As Dōgen states, "While it is neither clarity nor image in itself, it immediately *forges* the images."[181] The Japanese verb *iru* 鋳る is used to "forge" a weapon, "cast" a metal, and "mould" or "shape" a "statue" or "image" (*zō* 像). Accordingly, we may see the "self-enlightening mirror" here. Insofar as the transition from the "ancient mirror" to the "clear mirror" corresponds to an appearing of appearance itself, we can say that the mirror illuminates itself. The mirror also possesses a veridical dimension, which brings it closer to Nishida's allusion to "true

being: "Subjective views rely on [*āśraya*] objects. The one who seeks support and a place to stand is dependent and alienated. We must then abandon all points of anchoring, concrete or abstract, and reverse the mistakes by a "conversion of support" [*āśraya-parāvrtti*] that results in "mirror knowledge" [*adarśajñāna*]. The mirror does not grasp anything, reject anything; it receives [welcomes] the reflections passing by" (DPB, 276).

178. See the next quotation: "Will dust that will not be on the mirror stay in the whole world with ten points East?"

179.『正法眼蔵』二, 16.

180.『正法眼蔵』二, 28.

181. 鏡は金にあらず玉にあらず明にあらず像にあらずといへどもたちまちに鋳像なる『正法眼蔵』二, 19, quoted in DPB, 214; emphasis added.

nothingness," that which produces the thing *as such*. In contrast, false, oppositional nothingness receives it such as it *is*, like a being.

Still, our parallel between the two Japanese thinkers does not stand up to scrutiny. In the first place, the terminology may seem "phenomenological," but even if Nishida endeavored at first to build a theory resembling phenomenology (particularly after his readings of the *Logical Researches* of Husserl from 1915 to 1919), he just as quickly began to criticize it and finally to see it as topologically enclosed in the place of oppositional nothingness.[182] But the self-enlightening mirror represents absolute nothingness. Therefore, if Dōgen's theory were truly phenomenological, explaining Nishida's conception by reference to Dōgen's would entail a kind of topological incoherence. But is this really the case? Do we not find rather in Dōgen a kind of "phenomenalism," understood as a theory of appearing? The kind of "knowledge" involved here implies a complete dissolution of the distinction between "subject" and "object," that runs counter to key phenomenological ideas such as "retention," "constitutive ego," "intentionality," "noesis" and "noema."[183]

Moreover, the real difference between the two thinkers has to do with the aspect of the "wrapping" or "folding." P. Nakimovitch, in his commentary on Dōgen's words cited above, notes the aspect of "place": the mirror is the "place" of apparition that enables the vision of any thing. What role does "place" really play here? Is it a philosophical or a physical idea?[184] For Dōgen, the statement: "If the stranger comes, he appears

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182. GS, 463. NPTP, 179–85.

183. Concerning how Nishida uses these notions in a non-phenomenological sense, see NKPU, 912–15.

184. I would endorse here the remark of Ralf MÜLLER: "But whether, and if so, how to relate Dōgen's writings to modern Western philosophy is a controversial matter. Although it stands in a horizon quite different from ours as regards time, *place*, genre, practical context, and so forth, people do not hesitate to introduce his *Shōbōgenzō* into the dialogue. But the fact is, it was not written in a tradition even remotely resembling Roman or Greek philosophy." "Sources of Philosophy in Premodern Japan?", included in the present volume; emphasis added. We can say at least that Dōgen, like Nishida, seems to reject spatial determinations. The mirror is "neutral" to spatiality, and so must the real place of absolute nothingness be. Moreover, as I am arguing here, it is not only the spatiality but also the topological notion of "wrapping" that helps to distinguish the perspectives of the two thinkers.

there; if the Chinese comes, he appears there" does not mean that these persons "come and appear" (*raigen* 来現) *on the surface of* (*ueni* 上に) the ancient mirror, *within* (*uchini* 裡に), *without* (外に*sotoni*), or simply *with* (*todōsan* と同参) the ancient mirror. Nakimovitch comments: "The mirror stands between the outside and the inside; it is neither external nor internal; it is neutral."[185] With Dōgen, the refusal of all determinations such as "external," "internal," "in," and so forth, is to be understood within the context of "non-dual" thinking (*funi* 不二, *advaita*) and the denial of any archetype emerging to appear in the mirror.

For Nishida, however, the place of absolute nothingness "enfolds" all other localizations and all of reality, with the result that he continually stresses a fundamental interiority, frequently repeating the expressions "located in" (*oite aru* 於いてある) and "within" (*uchi ni* 内に). If absolute nothingness had an exterior, it would cease to be absolute and its exteriority would have to be conceived solely from within interiority.[186] Nakimovich, quoting first Dàjiàn Huìnéng and then Dōgen, clarifies a notion of place that is in no sense a wrapping place:

> It is the mirror knowledge that Huìnéng describe in the stanza:
>
> > At awakening, originally, no trees,
> > The clear mirror is without setting
> > From the origin, no things,
> > Where would the dust be?
>
> We must understand that "all that would be clear is the clear mirror […] Aside from the [question], "Where would [the dust, speck] be?" there would be no "where" for it to be. A fortiori, will dust that cannot be on the mirror stay in the whole world with ten points East?" The face of the mirror neither receives nor reflects any image coming from elsewhere. It merges with the play of appearances. The mirror is neither container, nor screen, nor ground.[187]

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185. 『正法眼蔵』二, 28, quoted in DPB, 214. Emphasis added.

186. P, 215–16. See also the text 『哲学論文集』第四補遺 [Supplement to Philosophical Essays IV, (1944)], NKZ XII: 434. See also Nitta, *Nishida's Philosophy as a Modern Question*, 73, and NKPU, 808–16.

187. DPB, 294. 『正法眼蔵』二, 18.

One should not stay *attached to* or "rely on" (*shoe* 所依, *āśraya,*) the notion of "place," not even as a philosophical category. For Huìnéng the mirror is without a "setting." For Dōgen, apart from the rhetorical question about place, all talk of place is through and through illusory, "*there is no place where.*"[188] For Nishida, in contrast, the mirror represents a certain actuality of a place, an infinite "wrapping" of itself, "containing" (*fukumu* 含む) being inside itself, "inverting" (*honmatsu tentō* 本末転倒) itself to become a flat "screen" and a final "ground."[189]

Clearly the two thinkers diverge on the notion of "place." For Dōgen, there is no place other then the spatial place that is to be questioned as illusory. But the spatial localization for "things" is precisely the flat ground the real place had become by way of ontological enlightenment. For Nishida, there is "*no* place" because the real place is not the spatiality of oppositional nothingness, but the place of absolute *nothingness.* This is where topological questioning itself first becomes possible, a place ceaselessly emptying itself and swallowing (包み込む *tsutsumikomu*) the questions that thinking poses of it. At this level, we find the abyssal place that enables thinking to make a "leap" (*hiyaku* 飛躍) or "fall" into speculation.

The radical novelty of Nishida's philosophical reflections on the mirror, compared to the variety of approaches East and West considered above, lies in his topology. The originality of his idea of a "self-enlightening mirror" lies in the idea of a radical *self*-illumination of reality itself that precedes any concern with the awakening of the individual or of the individual's efforts to make the mirror shine by itself. Such autonomy can only be understood in a place of "emptying" (*kū suru koto*),[190] that is to say, in the place of absolute nothingness.

This dynamic emptiness brings about the "emptying" that refuses and destroys any "finite" (*yūgen* 有限)[191] and fixed determination or "deter-

188. 「いづれのところ」にあらざれば「いづれのところ」なし。
189. It is not possible to reproduce Nishida's theory here. The reader is referred to ISCS, 141, 159 (282–3, 326), and my paper: "De la néontologie chez Nishida Kitarō" as well as the explanations given in NKPU, 513–52, 756–71.
190. P, 221.
191. P, 70.

mined being,"[192] and that entails the infinite unification of everything in reality. Continuously enlightening itself through the disclosure of the emptiness in its abyssal depth, bringing light to darkness and being to non-being, absolute nothingness disappears only in the outer crust of its own reflection. The mirror that enlightens itself disappears when enlightened reflection recovers its original and profuse activity—when, so to speak, the light hides the source of light, when all light comes to be.

192. P, 217–32.

Self-Mirroring and Self-Awareness

Dedekind, Royce, and Nishida

John C. Maraldo

One of the central notions in the philosophy of Nishida Kitarō is that of *jikaku* 自覚 (*self-awareness*), a notion as difficult as it is pervasive. This article attempts to throw light on the meaning of *self-awareness* by investigating its structure. One particular structural model of *self-awareness* seems to have played a decisive role in the formation of Nishida's thought, and to be significant for current debates about the nature of self-consciousness as well. This model describes self-consciousness as a structure in which a whole is mirrored or imaged in a part of itself. Our investigation proceeds by raising several questions for Nishida's philosophy: what is the source of this model? How far can a structural model go to clarify *self-awareness* and other central themes in Nishida's philosophy? And to what extent can Nishida's model resolve problems in the current philosophy of self-consciousness? This last question requires that we go beyond immanent criticism and attempt to question "Nishida philosophy" from the perspective of philosophers with radically different presuppositions. Nishida's thought may not perfectly "mirror" that of other

philosophers, but unless it reflects concerns in common with them, it may end up a hall of mirrors mirroring only themselves with no one to see the show.

The formation of the model of self-awareness in early nishida

The notion of *self-awareness* is first developed in essays compiled in the volume called *Contemplation and Experience* [思索と体験]. Some of these essays, written soon after Nishida completed his pioneering *A Study of the Good* in 1911, launched Nishida's project to give a more logical and universal basis to "pure experience."

Nishida knew that pure experience could be misinterpreted as merely subjective and psychological experience, and so he began to connect it systematically to logical thought. A viable connection would have to preserve the immediate and foundational character of pure experience, but also account for the reflective and discursive (mediated) character of logical thought. Strictly speaking, then, it is not logical thought that should serve as the basis of pure experience but the other way around. In "The Claims of the Pure Logic School of Epistemology," Nishida reaffirms that thought is a logical development of experience, and implies that a certain kind of experience, namely *self-awareness,* is at the basis of all logical thinking.[1]

These comments are expanded in the 1912 essay "Understanding in Logic and in Mathematics."[2] There Nishida uses the concept of *self-awareness* to clarify the nature of logical thinking, and the idea of a "self-representative system" to exemplify *self-awareness.*. The notion of "self-mirroring" or "self-imaging" [*Selbst-abbilden*; *jiko shazō* 自己写像] in turn lies at the basis of self-representative systems. Josiah Royce had developed the idea of self-representative systems in the "Supplementary

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1. 「認識論に於ける純論理派の主張に就いて」,『西田幾多郎全集』[Complete works of Nishida Kitarō, hereafter NKZ followed by volume number]. (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2nd edition 1965–1966), I: 232–3.

2. 「論理の理解と数理の理解」, NKZ I: 250–67.

Essay" to the first series of his 1899 Gifford lectures on the world and the individual. The problems that Royce addresses there overlap only in part with those of Nishida, but both find an answer in a mathematician's speculations on infinity.

Royce's problem

In his supplementary essay, Royce responds to a challenge he reads in Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*: how can we grasp unity in diversity without multiplying diverse particulars into an unthinkable infinite multitude?[3] Every attempt to relate the One and the Many would seem to generate a relation which itself could become one more object of reflection, hence one more particular, ad infinitum, rendering reality as a whole ungraspable by thought. Royce wants to elaborate an intelligible system of the whole of reality and is challenged to find a single instance of self-evident unity in diversity or, as he later puts it, "some case of an unity which develops its own differences out of itself."[4] In his response Royce draws upon the definition of infinity developed in Richard Dedekind's 1888 essay, "Was sind und was sollen die Zahlen?" Nishida, probably led to Dedekind through Royce, quotes from the same essay in addressing a slightly different problem.

Nishida's problem

In Part II of his 1912 essay, Nishida challenges the conclusions of Heinrich Rickert's "Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins," an article published the previous year. Logicians from Frege to Russell had attempted to derive all mathematics from purely logical principles, and were opposed by people like Poincaré who claimed that alogical, intuitive factors, conjunctions like "and" and "or," had been introduced in

3. Josiah Royce, *The World and the Individual*, First Series (New York: Macmillan, 1901; reprinted by Dover Publications, 1959), 473–5. Hereafter Royce.

4. Royce, 496.

the derivation.[5] Rickert as well argued that the concept of numbers could not be derived from purely logical thought and gave as an example of an alogical factor the relation "1 + 1." The idea of addition requires an intuitive factor that pure logic cannot provide; the numerical one is irreducible to the "One" of pure logic, for the sense of opposition between the One and the Other is replaced in mathematics by an intuited, free interchangeability of numerical ones.[6] But what about non-intuitive factors in mathematics, such as the idea of infinity, Nishida asks. How do we get from the consciousness of the purely logical object, some unspecified thing, to the idea of an infinite series in mathematics?[7]

Dedekind and the definition of infinity

Ever since Zeno's paradoxes, philosophers and mathematicians were highly suspicious of infinite series and the notion of infinity. Aristotle argued that the notion of an actually infinite number was contradictory and meaningless,[8] and his argument prevailed until the mid 19th-century when Bernard Bolzano defended the idea that there are actually infinite collections of objects and that in such collections the part can have a one-to-one correspondence with the whole.[9] Georg Cantor furthered this defense by showing how some infinite sets can be counted, i.e., can have a one-to-one correspondence with the natural numbers, while others are uncountable and thus of a higher order of infinity. Richard Dedekind made the infinite series of irrational numbers less objectionable to "good sense" by showing how it could be defined

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5. NKZ I: 256.

6. Heinrich RICKERT, "Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins," *Logos: International Zeitschrift für Philosophie der Kultur*, Band II, Heft 1 (1911/1912), 61. Husserl had suggested that addition has a psychological foundation, in the intuition of "more" and "less"; see chapter 5 of his *Philosophie der Arithmetik*. Nishida had a copy of the 1891 edition of Husserl's work, but he does not seem to have used it in his essay here.

7. NKZ I; 263. Nishida's interest in mathematics (and in Zen as well) derives from his high school mathematics teacher, Hōjō Tokitaka 北条時敬.

8. In the third Book of the *Physics* and elsewhere.

9. In *Paradoxien des Unendlichen*, posthumously published in 1851.

in terms of rational numbers. Both Cantor and Dedekind defined an infinite set as a set that can be mapped onto a part of itself. Mathematicians still consider Cantor's and Dedekind's procedures as pioneering and make use of them; but the features of Dedekind's discussions that intrigued Royce and Nishida find no place in mathematics textbooks today.

For Dedekind, "a system is infinite when it is similar to a proper part of itself," that is, when the whole system can be made to correspond, element for element, to a portion of itself.[10] Dedekind attempts to prove that there actually are such infinite systems by giving an instance of one, namely, "my own realm of thoughts [*meine Gedankenwelt*], that is, the totality T of all things that can be objects of my thought."

We can present Dedekind's proof by way of the following exercise. Think of something, anything at all (call it "t"); t is then an element of the totality T. Now form the thought: "t is an object of my thought." Call this second thought t*; it is an image [*Bild*] or representation of the first, t. Consider the totality of such representations; this totality T* is itself only a part of the totality T, for there are elements of T that are not contained in T* (Dedekind cites "one's own ego" as a example of an element of T that is not in T*). Further, T is "similar" to T* because any difference between elements in T is reflected by a difference between the corresponding elements in T*. The system T, therefore corresponds— element for element to a part of itself, and so by definition, is infinite.

Dedekind's attempted proof is replete with difficulties. First, one's "realm of thoughts" is not an acceptable concept in axiomatic set theory.[11] Secondly, if we translate this concept into a mathematically acceptable notion, the "set of all thoughts" becomes the set of all sets, and this entails various well-known antinomies in set theory. For example, the set of all sets would have to include the set of all sets that are not members of themselves, and thus would entail Russell's paradox. Mathematicians

10. "Ein System heißt unendlich, wenn es einem echten Teile seiner selbst ähnlich ist." Richard DEDEKIND, *Was sind und was sollen die Zahlen?* §5, Definition 64. Repeated in ROYCE, 510–11, and in NKZ I, 264.

11. Herbert MESCHKOWSKI, *Das Problem des Unendlichen: Mathematische und philosophische Texte von Bolzano, Gutberlet, Cantor, Dedekind*, (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1974), 146.

today seem to regard the definition of infinity as axiomatic and to have abandoned attempts to prove the existence of actual infinite sets.

Thirdly, Dedekind's language of "my own ego" [*mein eigenes Ich*] involves many phenomenological difficulties regarding the priority of the ego and the nature of thought. Many phenomenologists, and Nishida as well, would regard the notion of the ego as an afterthought, subsequent to pre-reflective experience; "thinking that I am thinking t" is subsequent to "thinking t" so the ego would somehow first arise in the subset T^*, giving T^* an element not contained in T! Furthermore, second-order, reflective thoughts of the form t^* or "t is an object of my thought" can be said to "contain" the thought t, which means that the set T^* does potentially "contain" all elements in T and hence is not a proper subset.

Answers for royce and nishida

Nevertheless, Royce and Nishida found the concept of one's realm of thoughts fascinating enough to consider reflective thought the prototype of an infinite system. Royce goes beyond Dedekind by taking the ordered structure of reflective thought as the origin, and not merely a typical instance, of the idea of numerical infinity.[12] Nishida uses Royce's explanation to counter Kant and the Neo-Kantians who proposed that the idea of numerical infinity derives from time as a form of intuition, i.e., from a schema of the imagination. For Nishida, as for Royce, the infinite series of the mathematicians derives from the infinity, i.e., the self-imaging quality, of thinking.[13] The activity of reflective thought accounts for the passage from purely logical objects to mathematical infinity, and thus answers Nishida's initial problem. But this notion of the part "imaging" or representing [*abbilden*] the whole was to play a role far beyond this initial answer.

Note that the infinity here does not consist merely in an endless series of reflections, each one step further removed from the original thought,

12. Royce, 526-34,
13. nkz I 263-6.

as if one were to think of something, then think of that thought, then think of that thought of that thought, and so forth. The point, rather, is that each successive reflection mirrors the prior reflection. In this whole series, the infinity consists in the fact that the whole is mirrored in the part; the part adequately represents the whole and reflects any differences within the whole.

Royce sees the series of reflections in question as a process of differentiation of the whole and not merely as an extension of the first part. He argues that it does not reduce to a vain repetition of the same thing over and over again, and makes the case that reflective or self-conscious knowledge is superior to unreflective consciousness or blind faith.[14] But he does not convincingly show that this knowledge is advanced by further reflections beyond the first, beyond knowing that one knows. Note also that we are speaking of a particular kind of collection here. Not every collection or set will have parts that adequately mirror the whole or each other; Dedekind speaks of "proper parts" [*echte Teile*] that leave out some element of the whole. Royce extends the metaphor to "exact" or "perfect" imaging by modifying Dedekind's stipulation that the whole contain elements that are not in any part of it; a part can contain all the elements of the whole and still be only a portion of the whole, as we shall see in the example of the perfect map below.[15]

For Royce the principle of diversity in unity needed to answer Bradley's conundrum is provided by the iterative operation of thinking that systematically reflects on itself: it is united by *one* purpose but completed in infinitely *many* reflections. Royce calls this complex "a self-representative system," that is, "a system that can be exactly represented or imaged, element for element, by one of its own constituent parts."[16] The infinite sets of natural numbers, rational numbers, and irrational or complex numbers, for example, all form self-representative systems.

Nishida's interest in this definition, however, seems to lie more in the

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14. R*OYCE*, 578.

15. Royce later makes mention of the recurrent processes of thought as a portion, imitation, or expression of the whole (p. 569), and defines the first of the series of parts as that which is not representative of anything else (p. 545).

16. R*OYCE*, 512.

perspective of infinite imaging than in the exact, one-to-one correspondence between whole and part. His next major work, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness*, mentions for the second time Royce's illustration of the perfect map that includes a depiction of itself.[17]

THE "PERFECT MAP" EXAMPLE OF A SELF-REPRESENTATIVE SYSTEM

Let us suppose that you wish to draw a map of the very area in which you now find yourself (Royce himself chose England). This map can be as exact as you wish; it will depict all details point for point, so that every detail of the area will have a corresponding detail in the map. Now in order to be complete, this map will have to include a depiction of itself, for the map itself is one detail of the area being mapped. This smaller map within the map will again have to depict a yet smaller map, and so on, ad infinitum. It is, of course, physically impossible to construct such a map containing an infinite number of representations of itself. Mathematically regarded, however, there is nothing mysterious about this project; we can suppose that there somehow exits such a perfect map, no matter how or when it was made. "The endless series of maps within maps… would cluster about a limiting point whose position could be exactly determined." In Royce's words, the infinite multitude of representations is just an expression of the single plan to construct a perfect map upon the very surface to be mapped. The example of the perfect map illustrates the notion of a self-representative system.[18]

Royce's map example conceals a significant difference from Dedekind's definition of infinity. The map of the area contains every element of the area; and each smaller map contains every element of the larger, enveloping map; there is nothing represented in the latter that is not in the former as well. This is unlike Dedekind's definition, where the

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17. 『自覚に於ける直観と反省』, NKZ II, 16.

18. ROYCE, 503–6. Not only are infinite number series in mathematics self-representative systems, so also is the "completed Self" that is fully self-conscious of all its thoughts as its own, and so also is the totality of being or reality. See ROYCE, 513, 520, 534.

subset T* must leave out elements of T in order to be a proper part. And yet, depending upon one's point of view, the map of the area, and each map within a map, can be said to be only a portion of the area or of the enveloping map. From the point of view of someone standing in the enveloped map, that map is identical to the enveloping area or map; it leaves nothing out. But from the point of view of someone standing outside the enveloped map, that map covers only a portion of the space of the enveloping area or map. The map within an area or map is not a "proper part" as Dedekind has defined "part," but it can function as a genuine portion. This shift of viewpoints raises the question of whether there could be an all-comprehensive map that would necessarily include every possible viewer, so that no viewer could be outside the space that is viewed. Royce did not treat this problem, whereas Nishida did, as we shall see. But first we must turn our attention to Nishida's alteration of Dedekind's ideas.

Thinking as infinite self-mirroring

Nishida's reading of Dedekind's original example of infinity is colored by the language of reflection [写像]. He translates Dedekind's original definition as: "a system is infinite when it can reflect itself within itself";[19] and then turns the original instance of such a system, one's infinite world of thought, to thought about the self: "In reflective consciousness, making the self an object of thinking can again be made an object of thinking," ad infinitum, like an image reflected between two mirrors, or like Royce's perfect map.[20] Once again, however, the infinitude of thinking does not consist in an endless series of representations of itself; that would be a "bad infinity." Thinking in the proper sense of the word is not merely representational consciousness; it is "consciousness of validity and truth," a process of critical self-reflection that, in the successive examination of propositions, entails an infinity of the kind

19. 「ある体系が自己の中に自分を写し得る時に無限である」, NKZ I: 264.
20. 「反省的意識に於いて、自己を思惟の対象とすることを又自己の思惟の対象とすることができる」, NKZ I: 264.

previously defined. Nishida abbreviates Bolzano's formulation: if a proposition A is true, then the proposition A' that asserts the truth of A is also true, and the proposition "A' is true" is also true, ad infinitum.[21] Nishida, like William James, speaks here of thinking as a form of consciousness, but opposes James to follow Bolzano and Royce in insisting upon the orientation of thought to truth. This orientation gives thinking its unity, a dynamic unity like that of other self-representative systems which "reflect the self within the self." This, says Nishida, is the unity of *self-awareness*.[22]

A CONCEPTUAL LIMIT TO THE SELF-REFLECTING MODEL OF SELF- AWARENESS?

The notion of truth implied here would seem to be that of a coherence theory rather than a correspondence theory of truth. For in this model the unity of *self-awareness* and, accordingly, of thinking would preclude reference to an objective realm outside of the system of thought or *self-awareness*; there could be no correspondence between thought and objects exterior to the realm of thought. The realm of thought, as in Dedekind's original proof, must be all-inclusive, a set of all sets, which as we have seen is problematic. We shall leave the problem of truth in Nishida for another occasion; here we assume the coherence notion of truth and point out a parallel problem that occurs within the self-mirroring model of thought and *self-awareness,* a problem which threatens their unity. To define the problem we return to Royce's example of an endless series of maps united by a single purpose. If this map is to be perfect in the sense of complete, it must contain a representation of the place from which the map-maker projects the map. But that is impossible, for the place of projection necessarily lies outside the area

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21. NKZ I, 265; ROYCE, 544.

22. NKZ I: 265. In his early essays in *Contemplation and Experience* [思索と体験], (NKZ I: 334–74), Nishida draws upon Bolzano's *Wissenshaftslehre* that replaces Kantian discourse about thinking and judging with discourse about propositions. See also Gottlob FREGE, "Der Gedanke," which distinguishes thoughts from mere psychological representations [*Vorstellungen*].

mapped. There is evidently something very imperfect about this supposedly perfect map.

If we switch to the example of the image infinitely reflected between two mirrors, the same problem occurs: the image (real or reflected) is seen from a vantage point that is itself never reflected in the mirrors. If we consider Dedekind's example of an infinite realm of thoughts, then the thinker, or the activity of thinking, is never included in the realm of thoughts; and so that realm may be infinite but it is not all-inclusive. An essential part that determines the system is excluded; and this problem of exclusion reappears whatever the metaphor, whether that of mapping or that of mirroring, and whatever the nature of the self that thinks, whether it is substance or activity or process.

In some unpublished lectures on Nishida, referring to Royce's example of the perfect map of England, Ueda Shizuteru has suggested a solution to this problem. Instead of thinking of a particular person that depicts England from a particular vantage point, we may speak metaphorically of England depicting England. This manner of speaking, strange as it may sound, is consistent with a purely structural model of *self-awareness* that is metaphysically neutral. This model makes no assumptions about whether something like England could be a conscious being. Describing England as "*self-aware* " in the structural interpretation implies not that it is self-conscious but only that it is self-reflecting or imaging in the way that a mirror or calm lake is reflective. There is, accordingly, no self or map-maker excluded from the self-representation, but the problem of exclusion still arises. Insofar as the concept of England implies areas outside of England, this self-representative system is not complete, its self-reflecting not "perfect." The "perfect" self-reflective system would have to be the world as the ultimate totality. In fact, as Ueda frequently points out,[23] Nishida later comes to speak of the world as *self-aware* [自覚的]; the world reflects itself in itself, with nothing left out. Indeed, "nothingness" [*mu* 無] *is* the name of the ultimate place that encompasses all possible vantage points and that itself cannot be viewed from any other place outside it.

23. See UEDA Shizuteru,「経験と自覚」[Experience and Self-Awareness], in *Shisō* 思想 no. 738 (December 1985), 17-46 and no. 744 (June 1986), 60-90.

Still, a conceptual difficulty arises. Insofar as the concepts of reflecting, imaging, representing etc. presuppose someone *to whom* something is represented, consciousness or awareness seems to be required of the system. England may not itself need to be "self-aware" in order to be self-reflective as two mirrors are self-reflective, but some outside awareness would seem to be required in order for England to appear *as* England, *as* self-reflective, etc. A "seer" *to whom* things appear is needed; and if the world itself is in some sense the ultimate "to whom" or dative of manifestation, then the world is in some sense conscious or aware, and not merely self-reflective. Here the purely structural model finds its limit.

In some lecture notes of 1926, Nishida seems to intimate this difficulty. He calls nothingness or *mu* "what mirrors," and says that beings are "what is therein mirrored." Then he qualifies this metaphor with the statement that "in absolute nothingness there is nothing that mirrors." Without something that mirrors, there is of course nothing that is mirrored, and nothing *to whom* something is mirrored. Yet mirroring is not thereby eliminated; rather, it is a "modification" [変様] or "determination" [限定] of "the place of absolute nothingness [無の場所]."[24] As all-inclusive, this ultimate "place" must include its own principle of determination; mirroring must lie *within* it. This suggests a sense in which self-mirroring is not descriptive of the ultimate (absolute nothingness) in Nishida's philosophy.

A limit is also suggested in essays written in 1929. Nishida speaks of "seeing without a seer" and of the state of no-self [無我] in which there is no seeing or knowing self.[25] Here we are no longer dealing with *jikaku* as self-consciousness in which an I or ego knows itself. *Jikaku*, both as a self-mirroring structure and as egological self-awareness, finds its limits in absolute nothingness.

Nevertheless, we may fruitfully explore the extent to which the self-mirroring model clarifies the notions of self-awareness [*jikaku* 自覚], self-aware system [*jikakuteki taikei* 自覚的体系], place [*basho* 場所], and other notions in Nishida's thought. The following treats only a few examples; it is not intended to be a thorough or conclusive analysis. Moreover, our

24. NKZ XIII, 294;295.
25. NKZ V, 427; 444.

discussion does not attempt to draw a line between *jikaku* as self-consciousness and as Buddhist self-awakening, nor to discern whether the one connotation prevails over the other in specific passages in Nishida's philosophy. Rather, we focus on *jikaku* as a self-reflective structure.

SELF-REFLECTIVE STRUCTURES IN NISHIDA'S PHILOSOPHY

The sense of *self-awareness* that governs Nishida's early writings is clearly Fichte's self-consciousness as the activity that endlessly constitutes the self, an activity in which self knows itself, in which knowing subject and known object are one. In the beginning of *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness*, Nishida proposes that this sense of *self-awareness* resolves a problem that arose in *A Study of the Good* : how can reflection, which is after the fact and removed from immediate experience, arise out of that experience? In developing this notion of *self-awareness* Nishida remarks:

> The self's reflection on the self, its reflecting (in the sense of mirroring) itself, cannot be brought to a halt at this point, for self-reflection consists in an unending process of unification....[26]

This remark leads to Royce's example of mapping England within England and to the example of two facing mirrors. What is noteworthy here is that Nishida has identified reflection as thought [*hansei* 反省] with reflection as mirroring [写すこと]; the self thinking about itself is structurally the same as the self reflecting itself within itself infinitely, just as the map infinitely projects itself or the object between the two mirrors projects its image infinitely. Nishida is not oblivious of the problem that the acting (reflecting) self can never adequately become an object of reflection.[27] He attempts to circumvent this problem by reminding the

26. *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness*, translated by Valdo H. Viglielmo with Takeuchi Yoshinori and Joseph S. O'Leary (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), 4. The original is NKZ II: 16.

27. NKZ II: 17–18.

reader that the object is not pre-given; rather, reflection is constructive: "To reflect is to construct, that is to think." This of course follows Fichte, for whom self-knowing is constructive of the self, as well as the Marburg Neo-Kantians, for whom thinking is *erzeugend*, productive. Later in this work, Nishida, again following Fichte, remarks that *self-awareness* is not simply an instance where knower and known are one. The self knows that knower and known are one, and this awareness of identity is *erzeugend* or constitutive of it.[28] Yet this description suggests a knowing self that somehow is prior to the identity of knower and known, a prior self that is already constructed, as it were, before self-knowing. Is there a self prior to its knowing of itself or does it first arise in and through this knowing; and is the known self really identical with the knowing self, or only a partial objectification of it?

The model of self-reflection that Nishida adapts from Dedekind and Royce would seem to suggest an answer to the problems of objectification and priority. We might think, for example, that the knowing self is reflected or mirrored in the known self just as the infinite whole is reflected in a proper part or a portion of itself. In Dedekind's definition, that proper part obviously does not contain all elements of the whole; or, in Royce's example, the portion does not cover the same area as the whole. Likewise the momentarily reflecting self is not included in the known or objectified self.

But can we really speak of the known self as a "part" or "portion" of the knowing self? And in what sense does the former reflect the latter? An adequate answer comes only with a shift in level. The known self is expressed as the "I" or subject of judgments of the form "I f" where f is any predicate. Here the known self is defined by the predicate, but the act of predication itself is not expressed in the judgment. That act appears only on a different, more concrete and comprehensive level. It is not that the known self reflects the knowing self, but rather that judgments reflect acts of judging. This relation provides an answer to the problems of priority and objectification mentioned above: the act is not prior to the judgment but co-arises with it; and the judgment is not the

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28. NKZ II: 106; 108.

act objectified, for the present act of judging can never be captured on the level of judgment. These points will be significant for our later discussion of current objections to the notion of self-consciousness.

This relation between judgment and act also fits our model of self-reflective infinity. First, it involves an incompleteness on the part of the judgment; the judgment leaves out the act. Secondly, this relation involves "similarity," i.e., a correspondence between differences: the difference (within the judgment) between subject and predicate corresponds to the difference between judgment and judging act. Note that the shift in level is also a shift from Dedekind's original definition of infinity or from Royce's map example. In Nishida we are no longer dealing with a correspondence between differences on one level and differences on another, or between details in one map and details in the smaller map. In Nishida. the more concrete level includes the difference between itself and the more abstract level, and that difference corresponds to the difference between elements of the more abstract level:

> *concrete* level of act (judgment versus act
> > *abstract* level of judgment [subject versus predicate])

Nishida came to call the more concrete level of act the *predicative* side [述語的面].

The talk of sides or levels anticipates the notion of *place* [*basho* 場所] in Nishida. This notion too is elucidated by recalling its self-reflective structure. A very revealing passage in *The Self-aware System of Universals*, published in 1930, may serve to add precision to our previous discussion. Nishida says he needs to clarify the relation between two senses of *self-awareness*, but in effect he explains how the predicate of judgments is related to *place* and how *place* is *self-aware*.[29] We may summarize Nishida's deliberations this way: In a judgment of the form S is P, S is a member of P, that is, the predicate or logical universal P contains the subject S; S is "placed" within P. Further, the connection between S and P is established within consciousness; in this sense, the predicate is "placed" within consciousness, a universal of a higher order. In other words, a place is within a (more inclusive) place.

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29. 『一般者の自覚的体系』, NKZ V: 64.

This judgmental consciousness (Nishida uses the phrase *jikakuteki ishiki* 自覚的意識 at this point), however, belongs within a even higher order universal that is the very activity of mediating truth in judgments (Nishida call this universal "will"). Hence (judgmental) consciousness itself is within the will (to truth), or, once again, a place is within a more inclusive place. Finally, that which mediates itself in the form of will is what is "truly self-aware," i.e., is "what sees itself [in itself]; and this in turn is "*in* the ultimate place." The talk of the "place that envelops *self-awareness*" implies, once again, that *self-awareness* itself is not the ultimate place.

The notion of "places within places" seems quite similar to Royce's idea of maps within maps, although Nishida does not remark on this similarity. Can we say that the lower order, less inclusive place is a perfect image or representation of the higher order place, as the smaller map in Royce's example "perfectly" images the larger map? What kind of correspondence can we find between the less and the more inclusive *basho*? "Will" for example, is not perfectly reflected in judgmental consciousness, in that the latter does not contain the pure dynamic activity of will that underlies intentional consciousness. (This is precisely why Nishida finds a need to go behind or beyond the form of consciousness expressed in judgments.) Schematically, we must add an intermediate level to our former diagram:

will or pure act {intentional consciousness versus pure act intentional consciousness (intentional consciousness versus judgment judgment [subject versus predicate])}

In later works Nishida shifts from the metaphor of "place within place," i.e., of a lesser context within a more inclusive context, to the language of contradictory self-identities. After Nishida develops the notion of the world as a *dialectical* universal, he seems to reconcile differences not by picturing one "place" embedded in another, but by binding them together immediately into unities or "self-identities." Nevertheless, the model of self-mirroring is still at work. In the 1943 essay "On Self-Awareness," for example, he proposes that self-identity is not that of a substance, nor is it a process or even an activity; rather it is a self-identity related to *place*, a "contradictory self-identity of many and one." But,

he asks, what makes this *place-related*? "Just what is being, as related to place, and what is place-related self-identity? We are compelled to say: it is a matter of reflecting (mirroring) self within itself; representing self within the self."[30] Yet how does "contradictory self-identity" involve self-reflecting or mirroring? Nishida insists on the absolute differentiation and discontinuity of the many and the one; their *contradictory* self-identity means that their difference is maintained and held together immediately in a unity, not that difference is dissolved. Likewise, in Dedekind's definition, an infinite set and a subset of it are different but equivalent sets; in Royce's example, the master map and the smaller maps are different but equivalent projections. In Dedekind's set theory, the difference consists in the fact that there are elements of the first set that are not contained in the proper subset, and yet a one-to-one correspondence or equivalence is maintained. In Royce's map example, the difference arises when a point of view is taken outside the smaller map. These instances of self-mirroring, then, entail a kind of contradictory self-identity, one wherein difference and equivalence coexist. This is not to say that Nishida directly arrived at the notion of contradictory self-identity from that of self-reflecting, only that the two notions can be shown to display a parallel structure.

In the same essay, Nishida remarks:

> The reality of the self consists in the imaging of the self itself represented within itself. To speak of imaging and representing may be considered mere speculation [*kagen* 仮現], but the world here is united with the absolute One…

Next he immediately connects the two notions: "in this self-representation or contradictory self-identity of the world…" (It is important to keep in mind here that the term *hyōgen* 表現 that Nishida uses is the translation of Royce's "self-representation" in the sense of self-imaging; it does not simply mean "self-expression.") Nishida writes that this structure constitutes the very actuality of the world: "there is no reality of the world separate from self-representation; the world is something which

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30. NKZ X: 479.

represents self within self."[31] This language is repeated in Nishida's last work, where for example he speaks of the self as the focal point where world reflects itself in itself.[32]

These examples suggest that "self-reflection" or "self-mirroring" is a structure throughout Nishida that that can go a long way to clarify the notions of *jikaku* and *basho*. What about the notions of *jikakuteki taikei* (*self-aware* systems) and *jikakuteki gentei* (*self-aware* determinations)? What is a "self-conscious system"? For many philosophers, to describe anything that does not have a mind or brain as "self-conscious" is absurd. Other philosophers will give some credence to Hegelian notions of an emergent rationality that transcends individual minds and might be called "spirit," even "self-conscious spirit." Descriptions of the "self-understanding" of a collective body, a nation, tradition or institution, for example, imply this notion of self-conscious spirit, even if in an admittedly metaphorical sense.

In ordinary Japanese, *jikakuteki* can describe being fully aware of one's role or duties in life, for example; or, by metaphorical extension, it can describe the awareness of a larger community, e.g. of Japanese people, regarding some issue. But Nishida goes beyond these usages to describe systems of color, space, or time, for example, or even "the determination of nothingness," as "self-aware." Does it make sense to call these systems and determinations "self-reflective"? It remains a task beyond the confines of the present essay to examine how much this model can clarify Nishida's notions of *jikakuteki taikei* and *jikakuteki gentei*.

Challenges to nishida's philosophy of "self-awareness" from current german thought

We consider finally whether this structure can clear up some difficulties in the current philosophy of self-consciousness (*Selbstbewußtsein*). In a recent dictionary article on *Selbstbewußtsein*, Hans Radermacher points out an amphiboly in the traditional notion of self-

31. nkz x: 480-1.
32. nkz xi: 378.

consciousness.[33] Self-consciousness is made to assume a double function: It is supposedly both certain self-knowledge, where knower and known are identical, and the condition for the (uncertain) knowledge of the world. This means that it is both consciousness of self and the condition for all intentional consciousness of objects existing in themselves (*an sich*). But if this self too exists in itself (*an sich*), then self-consciousness is a condition for itself! This amphiboly may be expressed in propositional form as follows: When we say, "I know that p," "I know" expresses knowledge of a fact that should be independent of my knowing it, whether that fact is about myself or about other things. On the other hand, in theories that take self-consciousness as foundational, "I know that p" is said to be the adequate formulation of p, so that p is dependent upon self-knowing.

It would seem that Nishida falls into this difficulty. From his early to his middle periods, he frequently appeals to the paradigm of the identity of knowing self and known self in *self-awareness*.[34] He implies over and over again that *self-awareness* is a basic condition for intentional consciousness, even that our consciousness of the identity of things depends upon our awareness of our own self-identity.[35] How then can he maintain the objectivity of facts and yet preserve the priority of self-consciousness?

In "The Intelligible World," Nishida resolves this problem by his "place within place scheme," i.e., by placing the universal of judgments or propositions *in* the universal of *self-awareness*. He implies that p or, more precisely, the judgment "S is P" occurs on one level and that we must move to the higher (or deeper) level of *self-awareness* to realize the content of the judgment or, in our terms, to realize the independence of the fact. On this plane, the priority of self-consciousness over judgments and the independence of what is judged are not antithetical but correlative. The higher plane of consciousness "mirrors its own contents."[36] We

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33. *Handbuch philosophischer Grundbegriffe*, ed. Krings, Baumgartner & Wild (Munich: Kösel Verlag, 1974), 1318.

34. For example, in NKZ II: 106; III: 247; and V: 106.

35. The former, for example, in NKZ V: 73, 433; and the latter in VII: 322.

36. NKZ : 128.

can say that this mirroring makes the difference or the *Ansichsein* of the content visible.

Ernst Tugendhat has also attacked the traditional structural model of self-consciousness (*Selbstbewußtsein*). If we attempt to clarify self-consciousness on the model of *Reflexion*, a problem of circularity arises: Self-consciousness consists supposedly in the self's turning back to itself, in a *Sichzurückwenden*. This presupposes a given self. On the other hand, this self supposedly consists in the act of turning back, in the act of *Selbstreflexion* whereby the knower = the known. In other words, the self first arises in the act of turning back, but the act of turning back requires a self to turn back to! Tugendhat next mentions Dieter Henrich's early attempt to resolve this problem by appealing to Fichte's notion of the "I" or self positing itself (*Sich-Setzen des Ich*). The "I" posits itself immediately and is conscious of itself immediately. But to Tugendhat the notion of self-positing (*Sich-Setzen*) is incoherent; and Henrich also admits that we don't get rid of the circle by considering it immediate. The model of a self-reflexive or even self-relating (*selbstbeziehendes*) self-consciousness is not viable.[37]

Of course Tugendhat uses the notion of self-consciousness in a much more restricted sense than Nishida's *jikaku*. Tugendhat's self-consciousness is restricted to a propositional form, "I know that I *f*," where *f* is a predicate referring to any state of consciousness (*Bewußtseinszustand*).[38] Nishida's *jikaku* underlies the level of judgments or propositions, as we have seen. Tugendhat also points out that the *Reflexionsmodell* is based upon a subject-object dichotomy; Nishida questions this dichotomy. But does not the objection that the self-reflexive model is circular hold for the self-mirroring (self-reflective) model of *self-awareness*? Is there a circularity in "the self mirrors itself in itself' or "the self sees itself in itself" or "the world reflects itself in itself"? Yes, if these expressions

37. Ernst Tugendhat, *Selbstbewußtsein und Selbstbestimmung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979), 62–4. Henrich in a later essay continues to grapple with these problems but substitutes for a self-reflexive definition of self a definition that comes closer to Nishida: the "I" is that which can have a particular standpoint. See "Selbstbewußtsein und speculatives Denken" in his book *Fluchtlinien* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982), 125–80, especially 136.

38. Tugendhat, 50.

are taken to assert a straightforward identity of reflecting and reflected self or world. No, if the difference between whole and part, inherent in Dedekind's definition and in Royce's map example, is maintained. And no, if the "in itself" refers to a *basho* within a *basho,* or if the identity is a unity of absolute contradictories, as in later Nishida.

The issue of identity leads to the second problem that Tugendhat points out and that Henrich faces with the traditional model. Self-consciousness means that I grasp or know myself. But how can I know that it is myself that I grasp? I can know this, Tugendhat argues, only mediately, through reference to what others know of me.[39] So-called self-consciousness, he concludes, is not really immediate knowledge. To a certain extent this problem is diffused by Nishida's shift first from an epistemological to a metaphysical interest in self-consciousness;[40] then later from the level or *basho* of propositions to that of pure, dynamic activity, and finally to *basho* as medium or dialectical universal. But Tugendhat's objection does point to an important question for "Nishida philosophy": Is not the immediacy implied in such descriptions as "the world reflects itself in itself" forfeited in the notion of a mediating universal?

We have attempted to test some strengths and weaknesses of an explanation of self-consciousness. The model of self-mirroring cannot explain all aspects of Nishida's *jikaku* that we have examined, nor have we by any means examined all that there are. Still, our model does prove to be invaluable to the understanding of this difficult and pervasive notion.

39. TUGENDHAT, 68, 88.
40. See KADOWAKI Takuji 門脇卓爾「自己意識と自覚」[Self-consciousness and *jikaku*],『理想』(summer 1987), 99–101.

Getting Back to Premodern Japan

Tanabe's Reading of Dōgen

Ralf Müller

"Listen to the clapping of *one* hand!"[1] On 18 May 1958 Martin Heidegger used this *kōan* of Zen master Hakuin Ekaku 白隠慧鶴 (1686–1769) to conclude a seminar he had taught jointly with the Rinzai Buddhist Hisamatsu Shin'ichi 久松真一 (1889–1980). Though taken from a Buddhist source, Heidegger hinted at the importance of its meaning for "us" today insofar as it hints at where "the Japanese already are" and have been for centuries—namely, living in the culture of Zen. Throughout his own philosophical thought he tried to reach out to where "they" are by seeking the "undefiled" source of a "saying" that is not trapped by Western metaphysical terminology.[2] This is why Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, and in particular Chan and Zen, attracted his attention for a period, during which his Asian students "served" as his primary conduit to ancient sources by providing him with translations from the

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1. Cited here as an English rendering of Heidegger's wording. See M. Heidegger and S. Hisamatsu, "Die Kunst und das Denken. Protokoll eines Colloquiums am 18. Mai 1958 (A. Guzzoni)," in H. Buchner, ed., *Japan und Heidegger: Gedenkschrift der Stadt Meßkirch zum 100. Geburtstag Martin Heideggers*, (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1989), 215.

2. Cf. M. Heidegger, "Aus einem Gespräch von der Sprache," in his *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Stuttgart: Neske, 1993), 87.

original texts. Meantime, Heidegger tended to neglect modern Japanese writings, such as those of his contemporary Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎 (1870–1945). One may wonder why Heidegger did not work his way step by step from the modern world of Europe to modern Japan, and then probe further back to, say, medieval sources. What made him think he could jump directly into the highly specialized field of premodern Asian thought to deal with something like Zen, and then be able to make sense of peculiar aspects such as the *kōan*, whilst bypassing the vast discursive resources of the Buddhist tradition from which it was born?

Here I will take up a more gradual approach to the complexities of Zen by way of the thought of one of Heidegger's visitors from the East. In contrast to Nishida, who was unsystematic in his allusions to Asian sources, his student, Tanabe Hajime 田辺 元 (1885–1962), worked out in the 1930s an interpretation of the thinking of the prominent medieval Japanese Buddhist monk Eihei Dōgen 永平道元 (1200–1253), founder of the Japanese Sōtō Zen sect.

Tanabe began by consciously following in the footsteps of an earlier interpretation of Dōgen worked out by Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 (1889–1960), a cultural historian who was one of the first to see the philosophical import of the monk's long-neglected writings.[3] That said, Tanabe is probably the first prominent *philosopher* to suggest a metaphysical interpretation of Dōgen and to demonstrate how his speculations surpass a great deal of Western philosophy and Asian thought. Like Watsuji he tried to uncover the premodern sources of *Japanese* philosophy, not in order to insulate his homeland's culture from the growing influence of modern Western culture, but in order to open it up and make a contribution to a wider "world culture." Generally acknowledged as one of the few Japanese thinkers to inherit the *dharma* of a Chinese master and develop a distinctive style of Zen in Japan, Dōgen stands as one of those frontier thinkers who serve to distinguish the thought of Japan from that of its "big brother" China.

Tanabe's and Watsuji's interpretation share a central focus: both concentrate on Dōgen's conviction that language, *dōtoku* 道得, represents

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3. Cf. R. MÜLLER, "Watsuji Tetsurō et la découverte de la philosophie prémoderne," in J. Tremblay, *Philosophes du Japon au 20e siècle* (2007, forthcoming).

"the perfect expression of Buddhist truth." Dōgen's speculations in his magnum opus, the *Shōbōgenzō*, suggest a concept of philosophy in many ways similar to the Western idea of *logos*. At the same time, his work is commonly taken to be exceptionally important in the tradition of Chinese and Japanese Zen.

Zen is often regarded as dismissing language, underscoring its dismissal through the use of the *kōan* to mark off the boundaries of speech and writing. That at least is the way the *kōan* are viewed by many intellectuals who have taken Zen to be a kind of mysticism. The misunderstanding dates back to the spread of Rinzai (Chin. Linji) Zen, a sect that gives priority to the use of *kōan* in the rigorous training of its monks. Rather than fall into this negative appraisal of *kōan* usage, Dōgen makes extensive use of them, weaving a considerable number of them into his otherwise analytic, rational, and discursive prose. One might say that Dōgen inverted the traditional Zen axiom of "seeing into one's nature, *without* relying on words and letters" by advancing insights and explanations that rely heavily on "words and letters."

In what follows I would like to present Tanabe's interpretation of Dōgen as one example of how to read him as a philosophical resource, more particularly, as a resource for *Japanese* philosophy. Dōgen's treatment of language and Tanabe's corresponding treatment of Dōgen's use of "words and letters" will only be touched upon briefly here. My primary concern will be to throw light on some historical aspects of Tanabe's interpretation.

The history of dōgen's reception

It is important to note that when philosophers—as was the case with Heidegger—become interested in Asian thought, they tend to head directly to the sources and not bother with the secondary literature. In the case of Dōgen, early twentieth-century interpretations such as those of Watsuji and Tanabe are treated with benign neglect. At best they are relegated to footnotes, there to received a modicum of recognition when they agree with an author's interpretation. Their actual argu-

ments are left to one side. This becomes clear as one takes a closer look at how Zen has figured in Western intellectual history.

At least as far as the German reception of Dōgen is concerned, it may be said that his influence was minor compared to that of Rinzai Zen. Ever since the publication in 1925 of *Zen: Der lebendige Buddhismus in Japan* by Ōhazama Shūei 大巌秀栄 with a foreword by the celebrated scholar Rudolf Otto, Zen has been narrowed down to Rinzai and its characteristic use of *kōan*. In the earliest accounts of Japanese Zen published in German, however, both schools were given equal attention. Dōgen's biography was extensively laid out for the first time in Germany in 1904 by the Protestant Hans Haas, who translated Dōgen's instructions for *zazen* ten years later. After reading the book, another important figure in religious studies, Friedrich Heiler, dismissed Dōgen's approach to meditation as Buddhism in a stage of atrophy. He felt that Dōgen had reduced Zen to little more than a primitive form of psychotherapy. In consequence of Heiler's influence, the monk was ignored for another twenty years.

Up to 1945, the sole positive philosophical account of Dōgen was to be found in a brief work by Kitayama Jun'yū 北山淳友 (1902–1962). In 1940 Kitayama published his translation of the *Genjōkōan,* which he dedicated to Otto, claiming it to be "one of the greatest and most important masterworks of Buddhist mysticism and philosophy."[4] In the same year, Takechi Tatehito 武市健人 (1901–1986), another Japanese living in Germany at that time, mentioned the *Shōbōgenzō* in a short description of the philosophy of the Kyoto School. Already in this article we find a reference to the work of Tanabe, citing the 1939 work, "My View of the Philosophy of the *Shōbōgenzō*." In Takechi's words, Tanabe "regards Dōgen as the precursor of *his own* logic of absolute mediation,"[5] a comment that will find an echo among later critics of Tanabe's interpretations.

4. KITAYAMA Junyu, "Genjō Kōan. Aus dem Zen-Text *Shōbō genzō* von Patriarch Dōgen," *Quellenstudien zur Religionsgeschichte* 1 (1940): 1.

5. TAKECHI Tatehito, "Japanische Philosophie der Gegenwart," *Blätter für Deutsche Philosophie. Zeitschrift der Deutschen Philosophischen Gesellschaft* 14/3 (1940): 298; emphasis added.

After the war, Oscar Benl in the field of Japanese studies and Heinrich Dumoulin in religious studies were the first directly to engage Dōgen's thought. From a standpoint he called "religious metaphysics," Dumoulin related Dōgen to the ancient traditions of China and India, undisturbed by reproaches against the paradoxical logic he saw in them. The same holds true for the ground-breaking work on Dōgen done by Hee-Jin Kim for a 1965 doctoral theses and later revised for publication in 1975. He terms Dōgen a "mystical realist," devising any number of enigmatic explanations of what he meant by the phrase.

Kim's account of Dōgen's life and thought remains the most detailed account in Western scholarship.[6] He provides the reader with a short summary of the history of the reception of Dōgen, in the course of which he mentions the name of Dōgen's discoverer to whom we referred earlier, Watsuji Tetsurō. The publication of Watsuji's essays in 1926 gave impetus to the broad reception of Dōgen in the intellectual history of modern Japan. Kim cites Tanabe in this connection: "Indeed his thought seems to have already had an insight into, and to have made a declaration of, the direction to which the systematic thought of today's philosophy should move."[7] Unfortunately, other than that Kim overlooks the cultural and political implications of Tanabe's interest in Dōgen.

Neither Tanabe nor Watsuji were the first to read Dōgen from a philosophical point of view. One can go back as far as Inoue Enryō 井上円了 (1858–1919) who published an *Outline of the Philosophy of the Zen Sect* (禪宗哲學序論) in 1893, in which he treats Dōgen as a philosopher on the matter of the relationship between the relative and the absolute. In articles published in 1902 and 1906 in the Sōtō Zen journal *Wayūshi* (和融誌, later renamed *Zengaku zasshi* 禪學雜誌, and once again *Daiichigi* 第一義) other aspects of Dōgen's thought, such as his "anthropology," are taken up. Finally, as early as 1911 we find essays by Yodono Yōjun 淀野耀淳 (1879–1918) on Dōgen's philosophy and religion in the pages of

6. On Kim and other English works, see Thomas P. Kasulis, "The Zen Philosopher: A Review Article on Dōgen scholarship in English," *Philosophy East and West* 28/3 (1978).

7. Hee-Jin Kim, *Eihei Dōgen: Mystical Realist* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004), 3.

Eastern Philosophy（東洋哲學）, drawing attention to Dōgen's place in Zen history and examining themes found in his philosophy.[8]

Yodono stressed Dōgen's reflections on language, not confining himself to the remarkable way he used the Japanese language itself. Citing Dōgen's criticism of the traditional Zen idea of a transmission beyond the spoken or written word,[9] Yodono distinguishes him from *kōan*-based Zen but at the same time locates him implicitly within the wider Asian tradition. As the journal title indicates, the idea of a *Japanese* philosophy, as distinct from *Eastern* philosophy in general, had not yet taken hold.

Tanabe's approach

Around the turn of the twentieth century, the idea of *Japanese* philosophy was being dismissed by some, such as Nakae Chōmin, and affirmed by others, like Inoue Tetsujirō. In either case, prevailing consensus on the historical reconstruction of premodern sources of philosophy in Japan saw the Confucian tradition as pre-eminent, thus linking Japanese intellectual history closely to the Chinese. In the following decades, as the idea of a distinctively *Japanese* tradition of philosophical thought gained strength, so, too, did the task of returning to the founders of Buddhist sects in Japan. Watsuji seems to have been the first explicitly to explore the possibilities Dōgen offered in this regard. Tanabe shared the general idea, but it took him some time before he singled out Dōgen out as *the* source of Japanese philosophy.

Tanabe is said to have become acquainted with Zen quite early, through his father. His first published remarks on Zen, however, only appear a few years before his book on Dōgen. Prevailing currents of thought indeed offer a background against which to read what he has to say of Zen, but Tanabe's interest in topics like society, history, culture, and politics demonstrates a far reaching interest in Japanese philosophy

8. On Yodono, see R. MÜLLER, "La religion et la philosophie de Dōgen" (Paris: *Résau Asie*, 2007, forthcoming).

9. YODONO Yōjun 淀野耀淳, 「道元の宗教及哲学」[The religion and philosophy of Dōgen], 『東洋哲学』[Eastern philosophy] 18/3–7, no. 4, 22.

that is equally important in explaining his interest in Dōgen as one of the sources of Japanese philosophy. At the same time, the intellectual tides and cultural "urgency" of the day help illumine the reasons for Tanabe's forceful and yet somewhat *forced* reading of the *Shōbōgenzō*. While the *forced* reading will be addressed first, it must be remarked that both Zen and Dōgen remain so influential on Tanabe's thought that it is even possible, as Himi Kiyoshi 氷見 潔 has pointed out, to read his 1946 masterpiece, *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, as a series of paradoxes, or *kōan*, guiding reason to the realization of the "fundamental and intrinsic contradictoriness of reality as such," that is, to a *genjōkōan* 現成公案 —an obvious allusion to a term coined in the *Shōbōgenzō*. Without questioning the *forceful* nature of Tanabe's 1939 interpretation of Dōgen as a philosopher and its lasting impact, it needs to be evaluated alongside the later efforts of philosophers both East and West.

The initial stimulus for Tanabe's work on Dōgen was a summer meeting of the Committee for the Promotion of Science, hosted by the Japanese Ministry of Cultural Affairs in July of 1938. He delivered a lecture entitled "The Predecessor of Japanese Philosophy." which in turn formed the basis for an essay published in October of that year in the journal *Philosophical Studies* as "The Philosophy of the Eihei *Shōbōgenzō*." A mere seven months later, in May 1939, Tanabe published a revised and expanded version with the Iwanami publishing house, *My View on the Philosophy of the Shōbōgenzō*. In its preface, dated March of that year, he thanked his "friend Watsuji Tetsurō" for the inspiration to compose a treatise on Dōgen, an inspiration that took almost twenty years to reach book form. It is included in volume 5 of Tanabe's collected works.

The original text consists of six chapters spanning 104 pages.[10] After a short preface, Tanabe devotes ten pages to "Tradition and the Fate of Japanese Thought," and fifteen pages to "The *Shōbōgenzō* of Dōgen, the Predecessor of Japanese Philosophy," a previously published section. He then devotes twenty pages to "The Absolute Mediation of *Dōtoku*" (道得, or "the perfect expression of truth"). The second half of the book

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10. Tanabe Hajime, 『正法眼蔵の哲学私観』 [My view on the philosophy of the *Shōbōgenzō*, ps] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1939).

deals with "The Historicity of the Absolute," "The Passage of Time," and "The Standpoint of the Absolute Reality."

Even though Tanabe broadens and deepens his interpretation of Dōgen in the course of the text, his way of reading only becomes clear in the course of his third chapter on Dōgen's idea of language. I will take up the first half of the text where we can see connections to his ideas on the tradition and fate of Japanese thought. Indeed, it seems to me that any systematic treatment of Tanabe's interpretation will have to focus on this section. The issue of temporality, a much debated topic ever since the rediscovery of Dōgen, accounts for the bulk of the second half of the text. There Tanabe raises questions with reference to Heidegger and parallel to his own philosophy of time. Dōgen's interpreters regularly point to the significance of the *Shōbōgenzō* fascicle *Uji* (有時), a text acknowledged as outstanding in the history Buddhist literature for its peculiar exploration of the relation of existence (*u* 有) and time (*ji* 時). For this reason, it tends to be treated independently of the other fascicles. Moreover, it is easy to regard this part of Dōgen's thought as philosophical, given its evident links to the contemporary Western discourse on time.

If, however, we approach the basic question of how to treat Dōgen's thought—or at least his main work, *Shōbōgenzō*—as a *whole* in terms of its relation to *philosophy*, a different approach is called for. Language offers a good approach here, both because language itself is a necessary, and perhaps even sufficient, means to philosophize, and because Dōgen himself is concerned with scripture and spoken words in the transmission of Buddhist *truth*. As has often been remarked, Dōgen's use of language and his ingenuity with words are astonishing. Yet few interpreters have come to grips with this fact on *philosophical* grounds. In particular, no one, at least to my knowledge, has carried on the analysis of the term *dōtoku* and the *Shōbōgenzō* fascicle of the same name that Watsuji and Tanabe initiated.[11] Focusing on language (*dōtoku*) can help us to place

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11. See the analysis of Dōgen by Hee-Jin KIM based, in part, on his dissertation, "'The Reason of Words and Letters': Dōgen and Kōan Language," in William LAFLEUR, *Dōgen Studies* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1985). Kim mentions, but does not discuss, Watsuji's interpretation of *dōtoku* 道得, despite the apparent debt

Dōgen's writings in proper proximity to our notions of philosophy; it also opens a panorama on the whole of the *Shōbōgenzō*. On both counts, we are doing something quite different from focusing thematically on an intrinsically philosophical question like time.

Treating the *Shōbōgenzō* as a philosophical masterpiece departs from two more common approaches: the social scientific view that takes the text simply as a historical object (for examination in fields like philology, buddhology, and so on); and the view of adherents of the Sōtō sect that hold the contents and presentation of the book in less than adequately critical veneration. As is the case with other "scriptures," it was long forbidden to print the *Shōbōgenzō,* with the result that the book remained hidden in monasteries for centuries. Tanabe addresses both of these concerns, defending himself, first of all, against accusations from the side of the faithful. He admits to being a "man without relation to a religious sect," and states that he would "not know how the teachings of the founder Dōgen are dealt with nowadays in the Sōtō sect, or how the *Shōbōgenzō* is being interpreted."[12] How could he, as a layman and *mongekan* 門外漢, read the *Shōbōgenzō* from a philosophical point of view? Would this not amount to simple "blasphemy"?

For Tanabe, following Watsuji's lead, it seemed a matter of duty that he uncover a previously hidden side in Dōgen in order to "honor" him as the precursor of Japanese philosophy. This, in turn, would serve to "reinforce the general self-confidence of the Japanese towards their speculative abilities."[13] This, of course, is not an *argument* for reading Dōgen as a philosopher, but it does show what was motivating Tanabe. Another motivation, and one more closely linked to the history of philosophy, was the desire to demonstrate the significance of the *Shōbōgenzō* for modern philosophy as such, to argue that it points beyond Japan and has a contribution to make to Western philosophy as well.

Tanabe himself points to still another aspect of his extra-confessional

to the latter's thought. Recent publications by Rolf Elberfeld, Steven Heine, Victor Sōgen Hori, and Carl Olson draw on Kim's work but do not deploy his remarkable analysis.

12. TANABE, PS, i-ii.
13. TANABE, PS, i.

approach. Not only is he not an adherent of Sōtō Zen or familiar with how the sect treats Dōgen's teaching, but he lacks the *experiential* background in that he does not practice *zazen*,[14] an apparent prerequisite for accessing the relevant dimensions of a text like the *Shōbōgenzō*. Tanabe's critics often return to the neglect of these three aspects, beginning with Masunaga Reihō 増永霊鳳 (1902–1981), who complained as early as 1939 that in Tanabe's reading of Dōgen "the domain of religion is diminished, if not replaced, by philosophy."[15] From the side of the faithful, this represents the core of their critique of the philosopher's reading of Dōgen.

Others have argued in a similar vein. James W. Heisig quotes a student of Tanabe's: "Shida Shōzō traces Tanabe's route to Dōgen through Watsuji and seems to reflect the general opinion of scholars in the field that his commentaries are more a platform for his own philosophy than they are a fair appraisal of Dōgen's own views."[16] Shida's comments should stand as a warning against an uncritical approach to Dōgen. His basic idea is that Tanabe's treatment undercuts the autonomy of religion, in effect converting all of the *Shōbōgenzō* into philosophy. The same complaint is raised against Watsuji, though he does not offer any detailed argument for either claim. Nonetheless, his view of Tanabe and Watsuji needs to be set in against a more general background of the neglect of Tanabe's interpretation of Dōgen, particular among Western scholars. Even where he is cited as an authority to shore up one or the other conclusion, the grounds for doing so lie outside of Tanabe's own philosophical arguments.

To approach Tanabe's own reading of Dōgen with any philosophical rigor, then, we need to address this criticism without letting it eclipse his contribution altogether. Tanabe's interpretation is a useful model, despite the fact that it reflects the turbulent times in which it was written, especially in its tendency to incorporate Dōgen's views into Tanabe's

14. Cf. TANABE, PS, ii.

15. MASUNAGA Reihō 増永霊鳳「田辺元博士著『正法眼蔵の哲学私観』」『宗教研究』 [Religious studies] 3 (1939), 628.

16. J. W. HEISIG, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 324.

particular frame of interests. Even so, if it is hard to agree with much of Tanabe's interpretation, it should be noted that he himself was well aware of the difficulties of his undertaking. He states at the outset that his treatise will not encompass the whole of the life work of Dōgen or even the whole of the *Shōbōgenzō*. In fact, he does not even treat its ideas systematically,[17] preferring to see his work more as a preliminary attempt open to later revision.

At the same time Tanabe takes a critical stance towards his "fellow" scholar, Watsuji, insofar as the latter opts to read Dōgen from the standpoint of a historian rather than from that of a philosopher. Watsuji is correct in the sense that the *Shōbōgenzō* is a particular text composed at a particular period in Japan's past. But it deserves to be treated, Tanabe insists, as a text of the greatest importance for modern philosophy both East and West. In his view, the text outshines its counterparts in the depth of its speculation.[18]

The context of tanabe's work

By putting the question of culture at the beginning of his analysis of Dōgen, Tanabe signaled that his interest in Dōgen relates to a larger concern about Japanese tradition and the position of Japan within world culture. While the ambivalence of the imperatives that derive from this concern became clear by the end of the war, in the 1930s they could still be seen as fostering the idea of Japanese intervention in the global crisis occasioned by the Western *Zeitgeist*. After the defeat of China and Russia, Japanese military and economical self-assertion could be (and by the nationalists, was) construed as a readiness to "help out" intellectually and culturally on a global scale. For Tanabe, Japan's assimilation of Chinese culture over the centuries were a prototype of the way Japan could play an intermediary role in global culture—for instance, by using Japanese Buddhism as a basis to incorporate Western philosophy. Tanabe

17. Cf. Tanabe, ps, iii.
18. Tanabe, ps, iii.

points in particular to Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō,* which he sees as more suited to the task than Western metaphysics.

"Culture," Tanabe asserted, "constitutes itself generally as a syntheses of adopting tradition and deploying individuality."[19] One such individuality is represented by the monk Dōgen, whose works display both the adoption of Chinese Buddhism and the engagement of a specific Japanese strain of thinking. Eight hundred years later, Buddhism would once again be called on to play a distinctive role:

> Japanese Buddhism is the evolution of Buddhism and therein the evolution of Japanese thought. By embracing and assimilating Buddhism as one of the world religions, Japanese thinking as such develops and realizes a global character. Through opening up itself in such a manner, Japan—as a particular species—becomes part of mankind by way of an individual's creation [此様に自己を開くことに依って特殊的種としての日本が、個人の創造を通じて人類的となるのである].[20]

As we have noted, however, Tanabe's allegiance to Japanese tradition was ensnared in a political position as well. In 1937, two years before the Dōgen book, Tanabe wrote a response to Minoda Muneki 蓑田胸喜, a nationalist defender of the emperor system who had accused Tanabe of intellectual treason. In it we find the following sentence: "I believe it is no exaggeration to call the 95-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* of Dōgen the treasure-house of dialectics in Japan."[21] He attempted to legitimize his idea of the dialectic of "absolute mediation" by appealing to traditional Japanese sources. Well versed in Hegel and Marx, Tanabe nevertheless seemed to need this connection to the past in time of war so as not to run the danger of being called a traitor for using Western terms laden with political overtones. His reaction to Minoda backs up ideas developed in essays composed the year before (1936). There he mentions in passing the importance of *zazen* for politicians and intellectuals of the Meiji period. They possessed the wisdom, Tanabe argued, to open themselves to Western science and thinking at the same time as they

19. TANABE PS, I.
20. TANABE PS, 6.
21. THZ VIII: 17.

nourished their minds by sitting in meditation.[22] Still, to an ultra-nationalist like Minoda, Tanabe's plea for a critical adoption of Western culture smacked of submissiveness.

In a 1936 essay entitled "Common Sense, Philosophy, and Science," Tanabe discussed Eastern thought in contrast to Western philosophy, pointing to Buddhist wisdom as a "commonsense correlative to philosophy" insofar as its knowledge is mediated by action. In it he set the deeper wisdom of Zen in stark contrast to any kind of mysticism:

> In the same way that common sense is living knowledge, this philosophy [of Zen Buddhist wisdom] is living philosophy. The wisdom of this philosophy is not conceptually organized as a system of thought, but is, in the end, expressed in action. In Zen, a blow with the stick or a shout suffices to express the truth perfectly [*dōtoku* 道得]. The intertwining of language [*gonji no kattō* 言辞の葛藤] is only of secondary importance.[23]

Already here, one notices an appreciation of the Buddhist tradition that is to increase in later works: it seems to have a quality missing in modern Western science, even though admittedly it lacks an adequate conceptual framework to express it as such.

We should note that what Tanabe has to say here about the use of the stick and the shouting differs from his future stance towards Rinzai practice. A year later, in 1937, he gave a different twist to the relation of language and the expression of truth, that is to *kattō* 葛藤, the intertwining of language, and *dōtoku* 道得, verbal expression perfected to voice the truth. He drew on Dōgen as a Zen monk who gave primacy of place to language, that is, to a symbolic system that reaches beyond the expressive use of the stick and shouting. Once again, I cite a passage from his response to Minoda Muneki, in which he puts Japanese Buddhism in broad perspective, concluding with a remark on Dōgen's dialectics:

> Shōtoku Taishi may be thought to have incorporated Mahāyāna Buddhism into the Japanese spirit; through him Japanese culture advanced from a state of immediacy to a mode of mediation by absolute nega-

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22. Cf. THZ V: 264.
23. THZ V: 203.

tion. This did not, of course, leave ancient Shintō unchanged. One may even say that Shōtoku Taishi opened up the truth of Shintō and elevated the concreteness of the Japanese spirit. If so, we must assume that the dialectics of absolute negation is the philosophical method of Japanese thinking. To deploy this logic as logic and to call it dialectic means to mediate Japanese thinking by Western philosophy, a way of thinking that is found throughout Mahāyāna Buddhism. For this reason I find it no exaggeration to call the 95-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō* of Dōgen the treasure-house of dialectics in Japan. Therein the intertwining of truth is at once its perfect expression [*kattō ha sunawachi dōtoku* 葛藤は即ち道得]. The residuum of being that Hegel's dialectics leaves is wiped out and completely turned into nothing; the transformative mediation of absolute emptiness is realized."[24]

Leaving aside the tangled phrases of the passage, it seems clear that Tanabe gives Buddhism the function of unraveling the "genuine" quality of the Japanese being and places Dōgen at the end of a process in which the "foreign" sources of Buddhism are perfectly assimilated and made into something new, which in turn equips Japanese culture to process Western science and philosophy. With Buddhism, the meaning of Japan's "native" thought and religion (Shinto) becomes "concrete," or, in dialectical terms, it breaks through its immediacy and arrives at a state of reflection. Zen, as part of the same movement, shows up in Dōgen's work with a different quality, transformed from the immediate expression of truth through gesture (shouting, use of the stick, and so on) into "reflexive expression" by language. In this way Tanabe elevates "the intertwining of truth by language" to "its perfect expression."

ASPECTS OF THE INTERPRETATION OF DŌGEN

Tanabe alludes to Dōgen towards the end of a series of articles in which he tries to ground his philosophy systematically through a scheme developed in confrontation with Hegel and serving to distance himself from Nishida's "logic of place." He called his scheme a "logic

24. THZ VIII: 17.

of species." Concretely, his aim is to present a different appreciation of religion, particularly of Buddhism—different, that is, from Nishida's. As is well known, Nishida was fond of Zen, having practiced *zazen* for years and been a close friend of Suzuki Daisetsu, the most celebrated advocate of Zen in the Western world. Like Suzuki he was affiliated with the Rinzai lineage and refers most often in his writings to its patriarchs.

Tanabe "opposes" their appreciation of Zen by centering attention on the founder of the Sōtō sect, Dōgen. He contends that the practice of Zen, in particular Rinzai Zen, tends to be confused with a direct access to the absolute. By way of *kōan* training, the practicing subject seems to gain the ability to intuit the divine. In Tanabe's view, Nishida grounds his philosophy on such an attitude of self-empowerment towards the absolute.[25] He therefore criticizes his teacher for conflating religion and philosophy in his advocacy of a union between the intuiting subject and the absolute. The general outlines of Tanabe's critique is well known. What is less known is the fact that Dōgen comes into play here, showing up where one would normally expect the name of Shinran, the founder of Pure Land Buddhism: it is to Dōgen that Tanabe appeals when he constructs his idea of the relation between the finite and the infinite.

Simply put, in contrast to the idea of self-power, Shinran teaches a submissive attitude towards the absolute, a way of complete and unqualified surrender to the salvific power of Amida Buddha. In place of Nishida's aesthetic approach to the sublime, which Tanabe felt skewed it into a religious world view, Tanabe, particularly in his later works, favors a form of religious experience that symbolizes the hardships of our fleeting existence. It is this experience that brings the human being up against its limits, with no other way of escape than rescue by Amida Buddha. Unselfish ethical action is the only way we have to collaborate in our own salvation.

En route to this devotional stance, Tanabe encounters Dōgen who he calls on to bridge the gap between the polar opposites of Rinzai and Shinran. Tanabe highlights the middle position of Dōgen, stressing both ethical deeds as the will to submit completely to this life and rational

25. Cf. Tanabe ps, chap. 3.

expression of the basic mode of our existence. He interprets a crucial term of Dōgen's, *genjōkōan*,[26] as signalling the apparently insurmountable contradiction of life. Dōgen, he argues, recognizes the bounds of human reason that cannot be overcome by any critical self-assertion of the finite subject. By setting Dōgen up in a middle ground between the two other monks, Tanabe attributes to him implicitly the role of the "specific" that mediates their relationship to one another.

Mediated relationships are a basic feature of Tanabe's philosophy of that period. This is why he does not ask if Dōgen's work *is* philosophy, but rather if he can be treated as *belonging* (*zoku suru* 属する) to philosophy,[27] that is, as capable of being subsumed in or otherwise related to philosophy. Before he gives his answer in the affirmative, Tanabe takes a step back and thinks through what religion and philosophy mean "Religion and philosophy," he states, "stand in *relation*"[28] to one another, in that each in its own way "makes the *relation* between the absolute and the relative the crucial problem"[29] to be resolved. It is possible to see Tanabe's thought as revolving around the idea of "relation,"[30] which puts him in line with "modern" philosophy's tendency to give the idea of relation priority over that of substance. Whatever Tanabe's own debt to Hegel, it is really only since Hegel that "relation" and "relatedness" have taken a positive role in ontology as opposed to being viewed as mere derivatives of substance.[31]

But how to understand the *relationships* between religion and philos-

26. TANABE PS, 95.

27. TANABE PS, 12.

28. *Ibid*; emphasis added.

29. *Ibid*; emphasis added.

30. As suggested in HEISIG, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 116ff.

31. In the twentieth century, relation becomes explicitly a term of debate as for example in Ernst CASSIRER's work; see, for example, his "Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff" of 1910. Others like Bernhard WELTE point to consequences of this shift to "relation" for philosophy of religion and regard it as a schema to divide the history of philosophy in two opposed views; cf. "Relation" in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* VIII: 600–2. In most positive appraisals, "relation" is taken to be the basic principle to set up a "pluralistic" concept for our *Weltverstehen*; insofar as it constitutes the base of our understanding, it serves, or is supposed to serve, as the unifying principle.

ophy, between the absolute and the relative or relatives? Tanabe uses a wide range of expressions to address the question. In many cases he stresses a seemingly paradoxical relatedness, according to which both religion and philosophy, both absolute and relative, exist independently of themselves but not without depending intrinsically on their opposite. One hears a faint echo of the familiar, if rarely critically examined, "paradoxical logic" of Buddhism in Tanabe's adoption of the copulative *soku* 即: "The term soku signifies a *relation*, in which the opposites unite."[32] In the strictly logical sense of a unification of non-identical contradictories, it is hard to make sense of such a relation.[33] And Tanabe is not about to deny the usefulness of the principles of analytical logic. His aim is rather to show the limits of that utility, drawing on seemingly nonsensical phrases to highlight the boundaries of its validity. This suggests that it may be helpful to translate *soku* (as well as *sōsoku* 相即) at times in more positive terms as "correlation" or "mutual relation" in order to show this aspect of complementary dependency.

Returning to Tanabe's distinction between religion and philosophy, he writes that philosophy is "correlated to religion in its aim at understanding the absolute meaning of historical reality,"[34] which is considered "relative." In other words, the standpoint of philosophy is set squarely within history, the only place there is to seek the absolute. The absolute is not to be located in a world beyond but in the relativity of the here and now. From a philosophical standpoint, it is never possible to reach the absolute, only perpetually to seek it. In the striving, one is forever bound to the limits of human existence. Contrary, but not contradictory, to this, human finitude is overcome in religion as one lets go of reliance on one's own power and submits, in an act of repentance, to the absolute. It is an act of self-negation admitting one's temporal and factual inability to overcome one's finitude. At the same time, the absolute is dependent on the relative insofar as it is dependent on a spontaneous

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32. THZ v: 202; emphasis added.

33. Nicholas JONES walks us through different argumentations of how to appropriately grasp *soku* in logical terms: "The Logic of *Soku* in the Kyoto School," *Philosophy East and West* 54/3 (2004).

34. TANABE PS, 12–13.

act of repentance, that is, an act of autonomous submission performed by a relative being. This relationship is not a static one; by nature it is dynamic, propelled by the momentum of negation and mutual mediation through negation between the absolute and the relative.

Tanabe considers Buddhism close to philosophy in the sense that it holds knowledge based on wisdom to be a means of becoming a Buddha.[35] This is clear in Dōgen, who left behind a massive body of written work, composed in a style that is not just enigmatic preaching but a rational and analytic attempt to explain the world in a Buddhist way. This is the basis for Tanabe's placement of Dōgen in opposition to Rinzai. As he sees it, the mediation between the relative and the absolute in the Rinzai sect is executed only expressively—for example, in using a stick or shouting loudly to arouse one to awakening. In contrast, Tanabe has this to say of Dōgen's *dōtoku*, the perfect expression of truth:

> If we take the word *dōtoku* in its literal sense as a dialogical mediation of speech, then, according to Dōgen, the truth of the Buddha is not limited to become aware of it in a sudden awakening in accord with the traditional dictum about "not relying on words and letters, pointing directly to the heart of man, seeing one's own nature and becoming Buddha." It is clear that Dōgen takes the road of philosophy in order to penetrate the dialogical dialectic thoroughly. This dialectic is carried through by questioning and answering relatives set in opposition to one another.[36]

Despite Tanabe's talk of relatives, it requires *qualified* relatives to turn the give-and-take of a simple dialogue into an expression of truth. This is the task of the bodhisattvas (awakened beings) who remain in the human world, the realm of constant flux. Bodhisattvas continue in their practice of the Buddhist path even though they have already crossed over to salvation. They have experienced the extraordinary, but choose to stay behind in the ordinary world in order to promote the salvation of all sentient beings. This is what Tanabe has in mind when he writes that "talk and non-talk correlate, the absolute and the relative, mediate one

35. Cf. *ibid.,* 14.
36. *Ibid.,* 19.

another."[37] This manifests "the discourse of philosophy that corresponds to 'going beyond Buddha'" as the ongoing practice of the way in this life. In terms of ethical work undertaken for the good of all sentient beings "religion is mediated with philosophy."[38] Tanabe writes:

> As Dōgen clearly states: "The wonders that the Buddhas and patriarchs hold up in the air and turn around is knowledge and understanding." Truly, his *Shōbōgenzō* shows the highest approximation to dialectical speculation.[39]

Here again we come up against the nearly impenetrable density of Tanabe's wording. One is often hard put to paraphrase in straightforward language what it is that makes him see (his own) dialectical method reflected in Dōgen's words.

We recall that he had placed Dōgen in a middle ground between Rinzai and Shinran. Elsewhere he puts him in a similar relation to Shinran and Nichiren:

> All three founders of Japanese Buddhism appearing almost at the same time in the Kamakura period—Dōgen, Shinran, and Nichiren—correspond in the logical relation of their thought as genus, individual and species, respectively. This may seem only coincidence, but one may also see a deeper meaning in it. Would it be wrong to say, that, from this point of view, the perfection of Japanese Buddhism is achieved on the basis of these three being unified in reciprocal transformation?[40]

Tanabe leaves open the question of how to mediate the three syllogistically. That he might have an answer to this can be inferred from a third, and more detailed, instance of the application of the same schema in which he takes up the relationships between Shinran's notions of religious act, faith, and witness.[41]

Be that as it may, Dōgen's most marked difference from Shinran and Nichiren lies in his philosophical work, in which he "masters the Japa-

37. *Ibid.*, 19.
38. *Ibid.*, 19–20.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, 20.
41. Cf. *ibid.*, 54.

nese language freely, enlivens logic and makes the unspoken and unexplained manifest through words and talk."[42] Exactly how he does this needs further investigation. The repeated use of the same simple *and* complex framework detailed above gives us reason to take a critical look at Tanabe's enterprise. That said, however, his conviction that Dōgen's use and reflection of language should itself be seen as a perfect expression of Buddhist truth obliges us to a closer look at this matter as a philosophical question. In particular, we need to flesh out the picture of just *how* Dōgen sees language expressing truth. Tanabe's book offers some general ideas about what such an analysis would look like; further scrutiny, I am persuaded, will lead us to reconsider Tanabe's problematic about how this can, and how it cannot, be worked out. This task, the more difficult side of interpreting Dōgen and interpreting Tanabe's reading of him, remains to be done.

42. *Ibid.*, 20.

Nishida's "Self-Identity of Absolute Contradiction" and Hegel

Absolute Negation and Dialectics

Maren Zimmermann

In taking the human being and an idea of self and world as their point of departure, both Nishida and Hegel sought a logic to grasp reality in its original indivisibility, prior to the split between subject and object. Both believed that negation and negativity are fundamental constituents of everything that exists. In addition, for both the attempt to find an absolute basis of unity and the immanent negativity inherent in it (experienced as the immanence of transcendence) was of central significance. The distinction between their philosophical paths is marked by the way they articulate the internal structure of a ground (or non-ground) of this self-constituting and self-cancelling construct. At least this is how Nishida saw it in his deliberate turn away from the Hegelian dialectic:

> When I mention the concept of place, it is the place of absolute *mu* [nothingness]. This place encompasses much of the dialectic, which is represented purely as a process-oriented form of thought. My con-

ception of the dialectic stands opposed to the Hegelian one. Mine is Buddhist.[1]

To Nishida absolute nothingness "shows in Hegel's dialectic a hidden place, which, as the locus of and simultaneously as, absolute nothingness, conceals in itself its own dialectical movement."[2]

The problematic at the heart of this reproach against the inverting of the negation of negation into an affirmation comes to this: How is the connection, the relationship between negation and affirmation organized internally? Does the inverting of the negative into the positive imply that the latter takes on "something in addition" that elevates it to a higher order?

Hegel's understanding of absolute negativity as the unity of specific negation and the negation of negation—which may serve as a basis of defence against Nishida's criticism—shows rather that the inversion of negation represents the

> turning point of the movement of the Notion. It is the simple point of the negative relation to self, the innermost source of all activity of all animate and spiritual self-movement, the dialectical soul that everything true possesses and through which alone it is true; for on this subjectivity alone rests the sublating of the opposition between the Notion and reality, and the unity that is truth.[3]

Whatever one thinks of Nishida's criticism of Hegel's dialectic as such, it does give us a valuable key to clearing up the question of how Nishida understands logic and dialectics. As he puts it, "true dialectics must be a science of concrete thought. True dialectics must be the way in which reality explains itself."[4]

The irreplaceable value of a model of logical contradiction for which negations serve as the "motors," Nishida's thesis goes, consists in the fact that it preserves the un-subsumable status of subject and object, particular and universal, and so forth. The insistence on mutually oppos-

ELBERFELD 1999, 300
HEGEL, GW XII: 246. Translation from MILLER 1969.
Cited in MATSUDO 1990, 48.
KOPF 2004, 78.

ing identities avoids the "hegemony" of a monistic One. What needs to be shown in order "to develop a theory of knowledge in which subject and object are neither identical to nor different from each other"[5] is how contradiction, as both the expression and the positing of simultaneous and equally balanced contradictories, is itself grounded.

The question posed here in relation to this *place*—as Nishida would have it—of absolute nothingness brings us to the very limits of thought. Whether we suppose that some ultimate thought can no longer think itself depends on whether we apprehend this thought as an absolute. To be an absolute, an ultimate place demands that every thematization, determination, finite thought, idea, or expression is always also an indication of the fact that we have not actually reached this ultimate place. We require a breakthrough—a breakthrough to the place that enfolds in itself all preceding occurrences and as such can no longer be articulated in the forms and guises used for the places that preceded it. As the locus, this breakthrough place stands over them, transcending them, but equally it must not simply hold the status of the transcendent, for otherwise the fundamental (Platonic) problem of *metexis*—the question of the participation of the principle and the instantiations of the principle—will arise.

Nishida's Absolute

Seeing absolute nothingness as an identity of self-contradiction does not make it an empty nothingness. "A nothingness, separated from being," he writes, "is not the true nothingness; the one, separated from all, is not the true one; equality, separated from difference, is not the true equality."[6] Nishida interprets negativity and nothingness as a place that, insofar as it *leaves its own self out,* can be both everything in itself and nothing in itself. As total calmness, nothing is nowhere.

In his final essay, "The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview," Nishida writes:

Nishida 1987b, 211–12.
Nishida 2001, 225.

> According to the Chinese characters [*zettai* 絶対], "absolute" means
> destroying [*zessuru* 絶する] all opposing forces [*tai* 対]. But that
> which simply destroys the opposites is simply nothing or mere noth-
> ingness…. If the absolute stood in some sense opposed to beings,
> it would be relative and not absolute. On the other hand, even that
> which destroys the opposites is not absolute. Herein lies the self-con-
> tradiction of the absolute.[7]

Nishida goes on to describe how an all-encompassing universal can
establish and determine itself in such a way that the relative is under-
stood as the expression and form of the (self-) negation of the abso-
lute. By means of this special self-contradictory identity of individuals,
Nishida establishes the true self that partakes of both the dimension of
finitude and that of infinity. With his logic of place and logic of predi-
cates, Nishida sets his sights, as he had from the beginning, on a *place*
that will provide the ground of affirmation and absolute negation. This
ground or place is none other than the affirmation of absolute nega-
tion and the negation of absolute affirmation. The movement between
affirmation and negation is a *self-contradiction* that makes creativity pos-
sible.

In Nishida's works, one of the chief "functions" of nothingness is to
serve as the ground and source of all that exists, while at the same time
revealing and maintaining its non-substantiality. Seen from the perspec-
tive of the place of absolute nothingness, every subject-object connection
is already a mediated thought, which means that it has already departed
from the foundational dimension of true reality. Understanding subject
and object as null and ontologically without substance implies an episte-
mological negativity of the subject.[8] As he says:

> One cannot grasp the totality of the mind from the standpoint of
> knowledge. This is so because the mind is not an object of an act of
> knowing, but that which constitutes the ground of knowing. What
> the *Mādhyamaka-kārikā* [of Nāgārjuna] calls *kū* ["the empty"; Skt.
> *śūnyatā*] is empty because it is observed from the standpoint of know-

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MATSUDO 1990, 30–1.
Cited in MATSUDO 1990, 32.

ing. In fact it is a powerfully creative reality, the vital force that shapes the ground of knowing.[9]

   This latter aspect of reality is decisive insofar as it is a place that only appears and has value to thought as emptiness. If one tries to grasp this place by epistemological means, it loses its status as the place that grounds knowledge. Even if it is clear that absolute nothingness, as the place of the absolute ground, transcends and encompasses the sort of oppositional nothingness that destroys the opposites, we may still ask whether and in what way Being is organized for us around nothingness. Guy Axtell claims that "there is no explicit suggestion that either the idea of being or the idea of nothingness is cognitively privileged."[10] But this seems to overlook the obvious sense that Nishida gives to absolute nothingness, namely as a powerful creative force that shows nothingness itself to be an "ontological negativity."[11]

   In order to bring reality and life into existence, and to sustain them there, nothingness must, as we have pointed out earlier, remain in control as a shaping force. It must "be" a place for this to occur. This nothingness is a nothingness of fullness (not of vacuity) that includes being in itself. Here one must make an effort to detach the question of the logical conjunction of being and nothingness from the usual rhetoric that contrasts the nothingness of the East with the being of the West.[12] Near the end of *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Awareness* we find Nishida giving clearer indications of an idea of nothingness on a par with that of being:

> Like our will, which is nothingness while it is being, and being while it is nothingness, this world transcends even the categories of being and nothingness…, for here being is born out of nothingness.[13]

   See Axtell 1991, 170.
   Matsudo 1990, 32. According to Matsudo, "philosophy remains ontology," even if it clearly is without substance.
   Far from wishing for the idea of "place" to smooth over naively and uncritically every distinction among positions, closer examination shows it to be close to making supposedly unbridgeable tendencies approach one another.
   Heisig 2001, 296.
   See Hanh 1993.

The radical critique of positing a substantial ground to reality is deeply rooted in Buddhist thought. One of the sources to which Nishida turned in this regard was the logic of the Diamond Sutra.

THE DIAMOND SUTRA: *PRAJÑĀ* AND *SOKU-HI*

Nishida frequently repeats a formula from the Diamond Sutra[14] which states that *a spirit who lives nowhere clings to nothing*. To recognize this belief and reflect on it in one's life requires what Nishida calls *heart spirit* and *radical everydayness*.[15] What is the use of learning the Sutra by heart? What practical advice does the Sutra offer to acquire the knowledge of the true self and the true form of the world and reality?

The central concern of the Diamond Sutra is to show how one can reach a standpoint of non-ego that rejects everything particular, fixed, and isolated. It is a basic tenet of Buddhist philosophy that all arising is an arising in dependency, and that the constituents of existence are not real in themselves.[16] Like a diamond, *prajñā*—the supreme wisdom that is the goal of life—cuts through all illusions. It accomplishes this by way of a kind of *via negativa* aimed at every false notion we harbor concerning the world, reality, and particularly the self. At the same time, *prajñā* combines the everyday lived world with spiritual activity and knowledge. The immense importance placed on the practical—repeated again and again in the Sutra like the turning of a prayer wheel—opens a horizon on the question of human happiness and restores actual life to its rightful place in the foreground. Privileging the practical in this way demands a non-dual relationship, free of monistic and one-dimensional tendencies.

The Sutra addresses negation in a wider context: negation as an internal correlation with contradiction, and negation as absolute nothing-

See NISHIDA 1991.

See, for example, SHIMIZU 1981. Note also the remark by UEDA: The "true self [is arrived at as a] dynamic event that takes place for one towards, with, for, through, and from an other.… It is in itself a nothingness, and in this nothingness universal relations are centered on a once-and-for-all uniqueness" (1974: 145).

See KOPF 2005, 319–21.

ness.[17] Its logic of *soku-hi* is formulated as *A is not A, therefore it is A*. By this is meant an immediate and direct comprehension of truth and reality—what Yamaguchi calls "the truth of interdependent origination."[18] Nishida uses the *soku-hi* logic as a "heuristic tool,"[19] a fact that, according to Suzuki,[20] clearly demonstrates Nishida's belief that Buddhist tradition provides an adequate means to articulate this specific unity.[21]

How should *A* be understood here? In view of the foundational Buddhist idea of the nonsubstantiality of all things and the self, it is obviously not a substantial essence. The Diamond Sutra conceives of *A* in all its contradictory aspects and implications from a holistic point of view. The primacy of the relationship between *A* and *not A* here illustrates the way back to the point of, or perhaps better, the sphere of origin. Representing everything that can happen and everything that can be thought, *A* is described by means of a *logic of not*. The *soku-hi* is simultaneously the identity of contradictories and the contradictories themselves: *A is not A, therefore it is A.*

But what of the law of non-contradiction? The Diamond Sutra does not repudiate it. It simply states that the ground of the law of identity must transcend the contradictories without equating them. Axtell describes this reality from the unitive viewpoint of a "logic of life":

> The logic of *soku-hi,* or "is and is not" represents a balanced logic of symbolization reflecting sensitivity to the mutual determination of universality and particularity in nature, and a corresponding emphasis on non-attachment to linguistic predicates and subjects as representatives of the real.[22]

SHIMIZU 1981, 153.

KOPF 2004, 83.

Suzuki is said to be the first to elaborate the logic of *soku-hi* from the Diamond Sutra. On the question of the different readings and receptions of the text, see especially KOPF 2005, 320–1.

HASHI (2000, 174–5) argues that Suzuki's epistemological perspective is not sufficiently grounded, in addition to which it presupposes familiarity with Zen practice, both of which make it liable to misunderstanding without further explanation. Suzuki himself is said to have recognized this towards the end of his life.

AXTELL 1991, 177.

SHIMIZU 1981, 21. *Engi* 縁起 is the Sino-Japanese translation of the Sanskrit

Both sides of the opposition or contradiction—*A* as well as *not A* — remain active in the ordinary and mutually exclusive fashion of their opposition, and *as such* are grasped as the unity of the contradiction. Shimizu Masumi puts it this way:

> The meaning of contradiction is theoretically that of a full opposition that leaves no bonds intact. But reality cannot begin from such a concept. The "logic of *engi*" consists in the fact that reality is necessarily mediated between contradictories and grasped as a contradictory "identity," that is, as an "identity of *soku-hi.*"[23]

The *logic of engi* refers to the logic of dependent emergence; it underscores once more the belief that no thing arises or exists in itself alone. Even the immediate posited as prior to or above contradiction is conceived to express an identity without form.[24]

One of the main reasons Nishida uses *prajñā*-logic is to bolster his criticisms against conventional abstract logic, which, as he once wrote to Suzuki, is incapable of formulating an absolute.[25] As Axtell observes, Nishida's reliance on negative logic shows that he is "not attempting to construct a synthesis that resolves opposition…. that the contradictory identity of self and absolute refers us to a relation that is unmediated by concept."[26]

Hegel's negative unity: concrete universality as the unity of contradiction

Arguments for a non-duality that at the same time avoids monism, so important for Nishida's philosophical project, can also be found in Hegel. German idealism can be read as a project that seeks to overcome the dualism of the modern era. Hegel's philosophical

pratītya-samutpāda.

See Ueda's comment (1974, 148) that "immediacy [remains] in formless unity…. Distinction means unity and unity means distinction."

Heisig 2002, 65–7, 306–7. See also Shimizu 1981, 17.

Axtell 1991, 171.

Hegel, gw iv: 14. Unification is described as "Being emerging… out of total-

grip on reality and its reformulation as "world" not only represents thought about thought but also thought about being and nothingness (or negativity). Hegel claimed that in his age "the power of unification has disappeared from the life of men, and opposites have lost their living relationship and reciprocity, accruing autonomy."[27] Hegel believed that his contemporaries mistakenly regarded the independent status of opposing elements as a deficiency, and in its place erected a petrified and one-sided philosophy of reflection. The resulting notion of the absolute blocked the mediation of the two spheres that need to become one in the idea. "To represent this mutual interpenetration of opposite poles is the task of a dialectical logic as onto[theo]logy."[28]

The consideration of absolute idea as subject-object understands concepts as objective thoughts. As a metaphysical principle of reason, the absolute spirit makes negativity the foundation of a positive and negative—living and dynamic—totality. This understanding of reality requires that the law of contradiction be valid without being limited by opposing, either-or determinations. Hegel's view of speculative truth as a totality goes beyond opposing determinations by seeing them as sublated aspects of the absolute. Nothing acts in isolation, neither the absolute nor the opposing determinations; the only real action is an interaction.[29]

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ity" (16).

BICKMANN 2003, 207: "Only at the end of the process, through this reciprocal interpenetration of poles, can we anticipate the principle that alone renders the whole process conceivable."

In terms of structural method, the process of negation comes down to a dialectical moment "through which the incipient universal, out of itself, defines itself as its own other" (HEGEL, GW XII: 242). The first negative step in the method is the mediation of the first immediacy, which is also the mediated. The second step is "a relationship, a relation to… the other in itself, the other of an other, …and thereby, as a contradiction, it posits its own dialectic" (HEGEL, GW XII: 245). The method is self-contradictory in the sense that it is a negation of the first step (positive affirmation), and yet contains this excluded part (that which has been negated) in itself. The first negation is conditioned—in distinction to the unconditioned undetermined immediate—and this makes it dialectically a contradiction; it contains the "material, the antithetical determinations, within a single relationship" (HEGEL, GW XII: 246). At this "point" the negation of negation encloses both sides, and in mediating them mediates itself as its own object. This is treated at the end of the *Science of Logic*.

HEGEL, Vorlesung, GW X: 87.

As Hegel writes, "What is inherent in the element of speculation is not unity alone or division alone, but both together."[30] Only as a negative unity can it be a process at all.

Against this background, absolute negativity is seen as the unity of a specific negation and the negation of that negation. The various functions of absolute negation generate otherness—an otherness that belongs to absolute negation itself. Only when this is guaranteed can the problem of a unity that is differentiated in itself be solved. Only thus can negativity overcome the dichotomy of speculative thought. As Giancarlo Movia has observed:

> From the very beginning, Hegel makes mediation absolute in his speculative logic.… The elevation of mediation to an absolute is the elevation of negation to an absolute.[31]

Dialectic contradiction is a marker for the elements at the ground of Hegel's logic. Contradiction, an expression of indissoluble non-identity,[32] a guarantee of the "equality" and "oneness" of contradictory elements, becomes an permanent dynamic of "eternal negativity." For Hegel, the negation of the negation *is* affirmation; and this in turn means that affirmation is the negation of a negation, or absolute negativity. This lies at the heart of the potential of the absolute in its dialectical movement. But how are these elements organized around *this* identity?

It is with this question that Nishida begins his assault on Hegel's logic. Hegel does not explicitly treat the (ontological) ground of negativity as an abyss or non-ground. Ha Tai Kim observes:

> Nishida was not totally satisfied with Hegel's rationalistic schematic dialectic. Nishida sought a dynamic dialectic, and found an irrational element in the Hegelian dialectic. This was possible for him because he read Hegelian dialectic in the light of Zen Buddhism.[33]

In this same vein, Nishida himself contends:

MOVIA 2002, 25.
See TAKAYAMA 2005, 216–23.
KIM 1995, 27.
NISHIDA 1987B, 125–6.

In Hegel's logic, contradiction is precisely the discursive form of logic's own self-development…. Logic is the discursive form of our thinking. And we will only be able to clarify what logic is by reflecting on the form of our own thinking."[34]

Interpreting Hegel's logic as discursive, however, runs counter to Hegel's own understanding. As I stressed at the outset, Hegelian logic must be clearly distinguished from discursiveness of any sort. His concept of negation argues that the succession of logical elements[35] follow neither discursively nor temporally but rather unfold in a series of self-referential negations of one and the same absolute.

At the same time, the process of Hegelian negation is always engaged with the empirical world. It does not abandon the logic of understanding; instead it revises and negates the claim to ultimate knowledge and its monopoly on truth. In the Hegelian sense, negation means sublation (*Aufheben*); it is a denial that also contains an affirmation: "lifted up out of and retained, being sublated… is not being disposed of."[36]

Nishida's *topos* dialectic and hegel's *process* dialectic

Negativity and negation can, and indeed must, indicate a nothingness, a *place* not itself mediated by conceptuality or otherwise articulated. Paradoxically, at the same time this place begs to be experienced. As Matsudo Yukio notes, for Nishida philosophy is

the conflict one has with one's own life… This pre-philosophical attitude to the question of why we philosophize corresponds precisely to the traditional East Asian attitude to life and is nothing other than a religious way of thinking.[37]

In Nishida's case, a "vivid experience of the Absolute" stands at the

See Hegel, gw xx: 118–20, §79–83.
Hashi 2000, 109
Matsudo 1990, 25.
Fujita 2003, 52. Fujita also takes up in more detail the relationship between

center of his thought.[38] In his earlier idea of reality as "pure experience," immediacy is the *leitmotiv*. His aim was to overcome the teleological character of Hegel's logic by elaborating the logical structure of pure experience. The crux of the difference between Nishida and Hegel may be viewed as a distinction between process and completion. In Hegel's case, the manifestation of the unfolding—the self-reiterating course of the one and the same self-propagating dynamic—is at the same time a witness to its own necessity. This is central to his argument. Nishida, for his part, is not interested in the dialectical unfolding as such but rather in the actual completion of the process in the place of absolute nothingness. Both their dialectics—the one a speculative dialectic of process, the other a topological dialectic grounded in a logic of *soku-hi*—insist on the importance of self-determination as contradiction. Both understand completion to occur in contradiction and aim at uncovering the ground of that contradiction.

For Hegel a true speculative concept (namely, the absolute) is always a real concept which, on achieving its cognitive completion, grasps its objective reality. As we see in the concluding chapter of the *Science of Logic,* objective reality is the result of a process by which the true concept (or absolute idea) conceives and assimilates the *other as its own*. But the very conceptual possibility of one's "own other" inevitably entails an other that is never wholly absorbed in *das Eigene*, and *das Eigene* is never wholly absorbed in the other. The utter otherness of reason is a negation that foreshadows absolute negation. As Fujita Masakatsu puts it:

> The separated, the negative, or the unreal is [according to Hegel] a necessary moment of the real. This has to endure a moment of separation and negation in order, thereby, to become the real.[39]

The critical question here is how Hegel and Nishida deal with the two elements that make up the final and absolute contradiction. Kim, aligning Nishida's thought with Zen philosophy, offers the following explanation:

philosophy and religion.
  Fujita 2000, 117.
  Kim 1995, 23–4.

What really distinguishes Zen from the dialectic of Hegel may be found in its thoroughgoing contradiction included in the antinomy. In Hegel, the antinomy is sublated in the synthesis, as cancelling and preserving the original antinomy, thus progressing towards an endless realization of the possibilities of the original term. But Zen simply asserts the identity [of] the antinomy, without following the three-way dialectical process of Hegel. The antithesis, instead of developing into a synthesis, reverts to the thesis, and Zen simply declares that thesis is antithesis and antithesis is thesis.[40]

This interpretation of the Hegelian dialectic bypasses the decisive fact and condition of Hegel's concept of an absolute: the overcoming of contradiction. This does *not* mean a simple discarding of the antinomy as pure nothing, which would be the case in abstract logic, but a contradictory negating in which the terms of the antinomy arrive at existence and identity. This *act* of overcoming has to be regarded as the core of Hegelian philosophy. The *de facto* need for movement and completion stems from the underlying need for mediation. In Nishida's case, mediation is bound to an idea of negation that establishes between the opposites a unity of thought and existence in which nondifferentiation does not mean that one is reduced to the other. At the structural level, absolute negativity plays the role of intermediary; it serves as the "place" of the self-constitution of the absolute.

Such an understanding of unity circumvents the violence of a final and all-inclusive appropriation and instead tries to rethink Hegelian negativity in an open-ended fashion, retaining the possibility of a self-identity that enables the other to be its own other without ceasing to be itself. Nishida expresses this aspect of dialectical unity as follows:

The mediation of place [*topos*] is a real, discontinuous continuity, a contradictory self-identity or a dialectical unity. To say that independent things mutually influence each other means that the place determines itself. Here something new emerges as *topos*, namely a determination of relatedness: by the fact that the present determines the present itself, something new emerges in the present. This novelty

Nɪsʜɪᴅᴀ 1990, 60–1.

is a consequence or phenomenon produced by mutual interaction among things.[41]

This passage raises the question of mutual *identification*, insofar as the novelty emerging from a *topos*-related self-determination is an *action* of two opposing elements on each other. The "new" is, in effect, an occurrence that "takes place" within this *topos*. Only dialectical thought can grasp this kind of mediation:

> From the standpoint of abstract logic, it is impossible to claim that things that contradict each other are connected; they contradict each other precisely because they *cannot* be connected. But there would be no contradiction if they did not come into contact with each other somewhere. The very fact of each other is already a synthesis. This is the realm of dialectical logic.[42]

How are we to conceive of this "movement" philosophically? How can we think, in other words, the *creative*? How can we make the *how* of dialectical genesis logically transparent?

Hegel's insistence on the meaningfulness of the momentary and the "mere coming-together of moments" underlines his representation and unfolding of the dialectical principle. This insistence reinforces the claim that speculative and negative unity lay on the dynamic:

> For sake of the freedom that the concept achieves in it, the idea contains within itself its own most severe opposition; its rest consists in the security and certitude of eternally producing and eternally overcoming that opposition.[43]

This rest-in-movement is constituted by the three-fold activity of production, overcoming, and synthesis. The simultaneity of disclosed and undisclosable elements guarantees the value of, as well as the truth of, the principle and—not least of all—its freedom.

If Hegel himself points to this self-moving dynamic as the origin and ontological ground of absolute negation, Nishida aims rather at a locus

NISHIDA 1958, 177.
HEGEL, GW XII: 177.
HENRICH 1989, 213–29.

of nothingness that is logically prior to any process. The question of *how* this realm of nothingness *is* at the moment that it becomes manifest in the finite world of being, remains to be answered.

Self-identity does not come about through a direct self-positing, but through the self's negation of its own authenticity. If the prime mover here is not self-aware, that is, if it does not possess itself as an object in this self-knowing, then this process is exterior to the self and conditioned by ourside factors. Both Nishida and Hegel emphasize the irrevocable nature of self-determination. Like Hegel, for whom the autonomous nature of negation[44] is essential to the genesis and maintenance of its own alterity, Nishida, too, emphasizes the self-relating aspect of absolute nothingness:

> What is face to face with itself must negate itself. But what negates itself must in some sense exhibit the same origin as itself. For what possesses no connection to itself cannot negate itself.… The absolute must contain in itself absolute self-negation. The fact that it contains in itself absolute self-negation likewise means that it becomes absolute nothingness.[45]

It is critical here to see the sense in which for Hegel negativity remains the "prototype" of all subjectivity, such that he is able to refer to the "point of absolute negativity" as beginning from itself and related to itself.[46] The sublation of contradiction takes place within the structure of subjectivity, and is therefore to be seen as "the most interior, most objective moment of life and the spirit, whereby a subject, a person is a free existence."[47] Hegel argues that the infinite is the truth of the finite and, conversely, that the infinite can only be determined and satisfied in itself when it includes the element of the finite. It is in this sense that Ōhashi Ryōsuke argues:

NISHIDA 2001, 225.

HEGEL, GW XII: 177.

HEGEL, GW XII: 246–7. There it is also stated, "As the absolute negativity, the negative moment is that of absolute mediation, the unity that is the subjectivity and the soul."

ŌHASHI 1984, 31.

> Hegel's *is* has to be understood as "active" and transitive. In the speculative determination of the finite and the infinite, the usual rule (God is infinite, I am finite) does not apply.[48]

In Hegel's words, "God may as well be the finite, and I as well the infinite."[49] Ōhashi concludes, "The *is*, understood in its truth, has another sense than that of activity, vitality, and spirituality."[50]

PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE

This dialectical way of thinking—arguing neither dualistically nor monistically—is, I submit, the consequence of a worldview with two objectives: to establish the world as a living organism and to integrate humans into the world in such a way that they can realize themselves by understanding that the responsibility and freedom that mark their self-determination—in both the positive and negative sense—belong absolutely to an immanent-transcendent primordial principle.[51]

A crucial point of convergence with Hegel's position may be seen in Nishida's insistence on the necessary yet contradictory nature of the relationship between nothingness and the true self as the highest realization of one's humanity. Both philosophers sought to achieve a unifying ground in which the opposites could retain their autonomy without being absorbed into a greater totality. This ground is characterized logically as a dialectic rooted in contradiction and negation that provides the foundation of all life and movement. Negativity *animates* thought, as Hegel said; it is "the energy of thought."[52]

Reading Hegel in the broader context suggested by Nishida may seem to weaken the place of thought in his philosophy and logic of negation through excessive self-reflection on thinking. But in fact the dynamic

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From the *Theorie Werkausgabe* XVI: 192, cited in ŌHASHI 1984, 31.

ŌHASHI 1984, 31.

Nishida's "basic pre-philosophical belief is that the 'true self' is identical to the essence of nature or the whole of the cosmos." MATSUDO 1990, 29.

HEGEL, GW IX: 27.

Cited in MATSUDO 1990, 26.

of the Hegelian dialectic is based on a non-discursive form of speculative logic that may be closer to a logic of *soku-hi* relationships than one might assume from Nishida's criticisms alone.

For both thinkers, the driving force of contradiction is a real manifestation of a vital, absolute spirit. What I have tried to show here is that the ultimate cognitive and linguistic structure of reality and of the absolute (be it conceived as being or as nothingness) needs to be understood in terms of an open dynamic that keeps life, the individual person, the true self, and, finally, the life of life itself—the cosmos—within our field of vision. When Nishida writes that "philosophy is nothing other than the self-conscious expression of life,"[53] and Hegel that "the absolute idea alone [is]… being, eternally ceaseless life, self-knowing truth,"[54] they are both speaking of a vision that is central to their thought.

Only in its lived vitality can the idea produced by the dialectical be said to be true.[55] The idea posits itself by mediating itself negatively and it is this movement that takes place from out of itself precisely because it occurs from that which is most alive deep within itself. The all-encompassing unity such movement leads to is not a fixed and static condition but always an over an open-ended process:

> If the step into contradiction is correctly understood and performed, it is likewise the cancellation of the opposition between concept and reality; it is the unity that is truth. Hegel grounded this paradoxical-sounding equation of generating a contradiction and then dissolving it in the idea that the elimination of the self-contradiction within knowing keeps it cut off from the life that signals its reverse—the "return to life."[56]

It is at this point that brings philosophy and life into contact:

> What is relative cannot be said to stand up against an absolute. Conversely, an absolute that merely opposes the relative is not the true absolute; for in that case it would merely be relative, too. When a

HEGEL, GW XII: 236.
HEGEL, GW XII: 248.
MENKE 1992, 59.
NISHIDA 1987B, 68.

relative being faces the true absolute it cannot exist. It must pass over into nothing. The living self relates to the divine, encounters the divine, only through dying—only in this paradoxical form.[57]

Nishida seems to have arrived at what Hegel calls "the point of contradiction… and in it the negation that is the indwelling pulsation of self-movement and vitality."[58]

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Toward a World of Worlds

Nishida, the Kyoto School, and the Place of Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Bret W. Davis

How should we conceive of the one world which encompasses our various cultural worlds? What is the place in which encounters between cultures should take place?

In this essay I look to the Kyoto School for suggestions of an answer to this most pressing yet perplexing question. My focus will be on the founder and central figure of the School, Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎 (1870–1945), but I will also discuss along the way Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治 (1990–1990) and Kōyama Iwao 高山岩男 (1905–1994). This must also be a critical examination, given the erstwhile entanglements of the Kyoto School in the imperialistic politics of wartime Japan. Hence, after developing a mainly sympathetic interpretation of their (in particular Nishida's) philosophies of cross-cultural dialogue, I will critically discuss certain problematic elements of their thoughts on culture and politics.

But let us rather begin self-critically, namely, with some reflections on the Euro-America-centric topography of today's world of globalization.

The euro-america-centric
topography of globalization

Cross-cultural encounters are taking place today more often and more widely than ever before in history. The "place" in which these encounters are taking place can be understood in several respects. In addition to older mediums, which range from immigration and colonization to travel literature and scholarly study, today's transportation and communications technologies have spread out and speeded up cultural exchange through such mediums as television, film, mass tourism, and, of course, the Internet.

Indeed, the very meaning of "locality" has been put in question by these modern mediums; local places are losing their uniqueness and orienting capacity in the "disembedding" or "displacing" process of global modernization.[1] Paradoxically, modern technology both enables and undermines cross-cultural encounter. It not only provides ease of communication, it also tends to homogenize the voices that speak to one another. We do not take the time to learn about one another's roots, or patiently set down new ones ourselves in foreign soil; rather, as we fly around the world to look-alike cities and log in to cyberspace to create virtual realities, we are uprooted and displaced in the process.

Modern technology not only homogenizes; at another level it can herterogenize, splintering us into new specialized groupings. Airplanes and the Internet are gradually edging out the go-between of the nation-state; today we speak less of "internationalization" and more of "globalization."[2] While wars and international sports competitions continue to

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On "disembedding," see Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 17ff. Also 40–3, where Giddens considers the possibility of "reembedding" or the "recreation of locality" in the space of modern globalization. On the problem of the modern loss of place, see Edward Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), and *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). See also Bret W. Davis, "The Displacement of Modernity," *Dokyo International Review* 14 (2001): 215–35.

2. Today in Japan one hears of *gurōbaruka* グローバル化 (globalization) much more often than of *kokusaika* 国際化 (internationalization), although the latter had

fan the flames of nationalism, more and more people today are tending to identify themselves with groups organized around common interests rather than with nationalities. We form multinational groups of individuals interested in, say, Japanese philosophy or sailboat races. But still, what is the space in which we form these groups? For instance, what language do these groups speak when they meet in hotels or on the Internet?

Let us focus here on the example of language, which is, in fact, much more than just an example. Language is not just one cultural artifact among others; it is largely responsible for defining the very sense and parameters of a cultural world. According to Heidegger, language is the "house of being," which led him to suggest: "If humans dwell within the claim of being through language, then we Europeans presumably dwell in an entirely different house than do East Asian humans."[3] Wittgenstein wrote that "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world."[4] If a language is a house or even a world, then the earth is rich in worlds. Or at least it was. It is predicted that during the next century at least half of the world's approximately 6000 languages will become extinct. Insofar as linguistic diversity is a "benchmark for cultural diversity," since "each language has its own window on the world," what some linguists call "language death" is "symptomatic of cultural death: a way of life disap-

been a catchphrase until a decade or more ago. This change in terminology reflects both the fact that cultural exchange is no longer restricted to relations between nations, and also the fact that the linguistic medium for this exchange is ever more predominantly English; *sekaika* 世界化 (globalization or, in French, *mondialization*) is not a word, although there is nothing to prevent it from having become one.

3. Martin HEIDEGGER, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 12 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1985), 85; *On the Way to Language*, trans. by Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 5, translation modified.

4. Ludwig WITTGENSTEIN, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 56 (§5.6). This statement retains its significance beyond the restrictions of the representational philosophy of language of this early work. Wittgenstein later speaks of a plurality of "language games," each defining a "form of life," as collectively defining the shifting parameters of the worlds in which we dwell. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 11 (§23).

pears with the death of a language."[5] The earth is becoming poorer in linguistic houses and cultural worlds.

Insofar as we are coming to speak the same language, we are coming to inhabit the same cultural world. The price for this commonality is not only the richness of cultural variety, but also a certain kind of social equality. The increasingly common linguistic world of English is not equally inhabited. For example, a Japanese, an Egyptian, and a German meet at a business meeting or at an academic conference—and most often they speak English. On the one hand, this common second language makes communication possible, and the benefits of this semi-direct contact are undeniably significant. And yet, what price is paid? They do not learn to speak one another's languages, or often even those of their neighbors,[6] and to this extent their mutual understanding of

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5. Daniel NETTLE and Suzanne ROMAINE, *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 7, 14. While they acknowledge the social-political and economic forces that are causing languages to become extinct, Nettle and Romaine argue for the importance of maintaining linguistic and cultural diversity, since "allowing languages and cultures to die directly reduces the sum total of our knowledge about the world, for it removes some of the voices articulating its richness and variety, just as the extinction of any species entails sacrificing some unique part of the environment" (199). They also quote Ron CROCOMBE as writing:

> Nothing would more quickly stultify human creativity or impoverish the richness of cultural diversity than a single world culture. Cultural uniformity is not likely to bring peace: it is much more likely to bring totalitarianism. A unitary system is easier for a privileged few to dominate. (199)

Recognizing the need for global communication as well as local identity, Nettle and Romaine promote bilingualism or multilingualism (173, 190ff). Jacques DERRIDA, who is less sanguine about the solution of bilingualism, comments on this problem as follows:

> Today, on this earth of humans, certain people must yield to the homo-hegemony of dominant languages. They must learn the language of the masters, of capital and machines; they must lose their idiom in order to survive or live better. A tragic economy, an impossible council. I do not know whether salvation for the other presupposes the salvation of the idiom.

Monoligualism of the Other; or, the Prosthesis of Origin, trans. by Patrick Mensah (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 30.

6. In public schools Japanese students are rarely if ever given the opportunity to study Korean or Chinese before college, although English education begins in elementary or middle school.

one other's cultures remains limited. They meet in a fourth party's linguistic and cultural space. Is this space "neutral"? Certainly not. English belongs to a particular language family and has distinct cultural roots. In our scenario, the German has a distinct advantage, for his or her language and culture are much closer to English than that of the other two conversation partners. If British and American persons join the conversation, they will even more clearly occupy a certain position of authority; for the others must keep pace with their fluency and conform to their grammar and vocabulary.

Some have argued that it is appropriate that English has become the global lingua franca, since it has manifested an exceptional ability to incorporate vocabulary from other languages—just as the "melting pot" of American society has allegedly absorbed generations of immigrants and their cultures. But is the capacity to incorporate others a sign of linguistic and cultural openness or imperialism? It might be argued that it is proper for the United States to be the center of globalization because it is itself a successful multicultural society. Yet even if we exchange the metaphor of a "salad bowl" for that of a "melting pot," so that differences are preserved in the mix, the question remains: Where did the "bowl" itself come from? Despite all the cultural influences it continues to openly embrace and creatively absorb, America's linguistic, philosophical, political, and cultural base remains predominantly European in origin. The place in which Native Americans, Arab Americans, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and European Americans interrelate is decidedly more European in origin than it is Native American, Arab, African, or Latin American.[7] The encompassing "bowl" of American society remains in large part fundamentally determined by its Western, European genealogy. Even the debates over "multiculturalism" refer predominantly, and quite often even exclusively, to Western philosophies.[8]

7. Hispanic and African Americans are clearly more influential than other minority groups. Hispanic influence is perhaps due not only to population numbers but also to the proximity of their language and culture to English and North America. African Americans are of course significantly influential in a number of cultural arenas; yet one of the irreversible atrocities of slavery was that it cut their direct ties to the languages and cultures of Africa.

8. This is true of the landmark volume edited by Amy GUTMANN, *Multicultural-*

Despite periodic outcries against economic and cultural imperialism, the Western world—in particular America—continues to firmly occupy a privileged position at the hub of the centripetal wheel of globalization. Just as for centuries around the globe "modernization" has proven difficult to distinguish from "Westernization," today "globalization" is equally difficult to divorce from "Americanization." At its worst the new world order of the so-called "global village" is—as this oxymoronic expression in fact implies—decidedly parochial. One village has gone out and incorporated the globe.[9] The America-centric global village is not so much cosmopolitan as, literally, *uni-versal*, a world in which all are "turned towards one" and ultimately perhaps even "turned into one."[10]

ism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). This is also often paradoxically the case for debates in post-colonialism and critiques of imperialism. John TOMLINSON argues that most of the very values by which we criticize the phenomena of "cultural imperialism" have mainly Western historical and cultural provenances, including "the liberal values of respect for the plurality of 'ways of living'." *Cultural Imperialism* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1991), 6. And yet, some non-Western philosophers, including members of the Kyoto School, have in fact developed critiques of political and cultural imperialism which draw deeply on non-Western as well as Western sources. For a variety of non-Western perspectives on comparative political theory, see Fred DALLMAYR, ed., *Border Crossings: Toward a Comparative Political Theory* (New York: Lexington Books, 1999).

9. In this regard it is thought-provoking to note a statement that President George W. Bush affirmed about his relation to his hometown: "You can take the boy out of Crawford, but not Crawford out of the boy" (from an interview with Katie Couric on a CBS News Special, "Fives Years Later: How Safe are We?" aired in Baltimore on September 6, 2006). Does the spread of freedom and democracy require a cowboy mentality of rounding up and prodding along those who stray from the "wagon trail" that leads to (the) U.S. as the proper "end of history"? Francis FUKUYAMA, a former deputy director of the U.S. State Department's Policy Planning Staff (who more recently, however, broke with the rank and file of the Neoconservatives to oppose the Iraq War), argues that "History" is a single "wagon trail" leading to liberal democracy, free market capitalism, and the "homogenization of mankind," and that cultural differences can be explained as different stages on this path where some peoples temporarily lag behind, having gotten "stuck in ruts" or been "attacked by Indians." *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 338–9.

10. See John AYTO, *Dictionary of Word Origins* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1990), 550. CASEY marks an important distinction between the "universe" and the "cosmos."

"Uni-verse," *universum* in its original Latin form, means turning around *one*

While the Kyoto School philosophers were always willing and eager to learn from the West, this learning was intended to critically supplement, not to replace, their Eastern heritage. Their remarkable openness to the West was paired with a staunch resistance to its cultural as well as political imperialism; and they boldly attempted to steer a middle course through the pendulum swing within Japan between colonial Eurocentrism and reactionary Japanism.[11]

Nishitani's new world
beyond the dichotomy of east and west

As a group of modern Japanese scholars of Western philosophy who are also steeped in Mahayana Buddhism and other strands of East Asian thought and culture, the Kyoto School stands at a pivotal crossroads between Eastern and Western cultures. And as highly gifted and original philosophers in their own right, they are as well equipped as anyone to, as Nishitani Keiji put it, "lay the foundations of thought for a world in the making." On the precarious yet promising standpoint of modern Japanese philosophers, Nishitani writes:

> We Japanese have fallen heir to the two completely different cultures of East and West…. Our [perilous] condition is that of being torn apart between Western and Eastern civilizations; looked at from the other way around, however, this also means that two great cultures are gathered together in a single self. This is a great privilege that Westerners themselves do no share in … but at the same time this

totalized whole…. In contrast, "cosmos" signifies the particularity of place; taken as a collective term, it signifies the ingrediency of places in discrete place-worlds. *The Fate of Place*, 78. A truly cosmopolitan world could thus be thought to imply a unity-in-diversity, as opposed to an imperialistically homogeneous cultural universe.

11. James Heisig writes that the aim of the Kyoto School philosophers was twofold: "an introduction of *Japanese* philosophy into world philosophy while at the same time using western philosophy for a second look at Japanese thought trapped in fascination with its own uniqueness." *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 270.

puts a heavy responsibility on our shoulders: to lay the foundations of thought for a world in the making, for a new world united beyond the divide of East and West [*tōyō to seiyō to no betsu o koete hitotsu ni natta atarashii sekai* 東洋と西洋との別を超えて一つになった新しい世界].[12]

These striking remarks have been quoted in part by Jan Van Bragt, and again by Graham Parkes, in the introductions to their English translations of Nishitani's 『宗教とは何か』 and 『ニヒリズム』.[13] Yet the original context and audience for the remarks need to be kept in mind. They were intended not as a confident proclamation to Western readers, but rather as an encouragement to Japanese philosophers who, immersed in their study of Western philosophy, were failing to bring this study into dialogue with the cultural background and philosophical resources of their own Eastern heritage. Only after emphasizing the need to acknowledge the disadvantages and dangers of being "torn apart" (*hikisakareteiru* 引き裂かれている) by standing between two radically different cultural traditions, does Nishitani then suggest the not yet fully realized positive potential of this situation.

The remarks were penned by Nishitani in 1967, long after Japan's imperialistic political ambitions had been obliterated. Nishitani is thus not talking here about a political role for Japan in uniting East and West. A quarter of a century earlier Nishitani had in fact attempted to attribute such a world-historical mission to the Japanese nation. Elsewhere I have argued that Nishitani's wartime politicization of his project of overcoming Western modernity by way of passing through it, and specifically his attribution of a world-historical political role to the Japanese nation, constituted a detour from the central endeavor of his fundamentally existential and religious philosophy.[14] Obviously, no account of the

12. From Nishitani's preface to 『現代日本の哲学』 [Contemporary Japanese philosophy], Nɪsʜɪᴛᴀɴɪ Keiji, ed. (Kyoto: Yūkonsha, 1967), 2–4.

13. Nɪsʜɪᴛᴀɴɪ Keiji, *Religion and Nothingness* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), xxviii; and his *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism* (New York: sᴜɴʏ, 1990), xviii.

14. Bret W. Dᴀᴠɪs, "Turns to and from Political Philosophy: The Case of Nishitani Keiji," in Christopher Gᴏᴛᴏ-Jᴏɴᴇs, ed., *Re-politicising the Kyoto School qua Philosophy* (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

Kyoto School's social and political thought can afford to ignore their political ventures and misadventures during the war,[15] and I will critically address some central aspects of this issue in the latter parts of this essay. And yet, neither should an inquiry into the contemporary significance of their cross-cultural philosophies be restricted to an examination of their entanglements with the wartime politics of the Japanese Empire.

In the postwar remarks quoted above Nishitani is clearly referring not to a political but rather to a philosophical and cultural synthesis that would transcend the dichotomy between East and West. Yet the political implications of the very use of such global categories as "East" and "West" have also come under scrutiny, especially after Edward Said exposed the extent to which the concept of the "Orient" was used to hypostatize, distort, and disparage the alterity of Near Eastern cultures,[16] and after "East Asia" was used by wartime Japanese politicians and some intellectuals to disguise its own imperialism under the cloak of cultural commonality and solidarity against Western imperialism.[17]

Generalizations, indeed, always risk distortion by way of reducing a manifold of phenomena to a single sense. (Even proper nouns can be thought of as distorting generalizations, in the sense that, as Nishida writes, there is an alterity or "discontinuity" even between my self today and my self yesterday.) The question is not whether we may legitimately risk generalizations—to speak and think we must—but rather whether "East" and "West" are *always over-generalizations*. They certainly *often* are; but always?[18] Whether the generalizations of "East" and "West"

15. For an overview of this issue, see section 4 of Bret W. DAVIS, "The Kyoto School," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2006 Edition), Edward N. ZALTA, ed. http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2006/entries/kyoto-school/. For two excellent collections on this topic, see James W. HEISIG and John C. MARALDO, eds., *Rude Awakenings: Zen, The Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), and GOTO-JONES, ed., *Re-politicising the Kyoto School qua Philosophy*.

16. Edward SAID, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

17. ARISAKA Yōkō finds Nishida to have ultimately been in effect complicit in this strategy: "Beyond 'East and West': Nishida's Universalism and Postcolonial Critique," in DALLMAYR, *Border Crossings*, 247–8.

18. I have suggested elsewhere that it can *provisionally and in certain contexts* make sense to refer to the Greek-Judeo-Christian-Euro-American tradition as "the

make more sense than they distort in the context of Nishitani's remarks depends in part on how we are to understand the projected synthesis beyond the dichotomy of Eastern and Western cultures.[19]

When Nishitani speaks of "a new world in the making," is he referring to "the one and only world," or to "a world among other worlds"?[20] If it is the latter, then Japan's synthesis of East and West could presumably be understood as one among other possible syntheses. If, on the other hand, Nishitani is in fact speaking in the singular of "*the* new world beyond differences of East and West," would this necessarily imply a unity that eradicates cultural differences? The broader context of Nishitani's thought suggest rather that this new world should be understood as a kind of "unity-in-diversity," where cultural differences would be able to coexist within a shared place of dialogical exchange. Just as, according to Nishitani, the interpersonal relation of nonduality implies that "self and other are not one, and not two [*jita wa fuitsu deari, funi dearu* 自他は不一であり、不二である],"[21] in this new world different cultures would interrelate in the manner of dialogical intertwinement rather than monological fusion. To adapt one of Nishitani's metaphors,[22] the unity-in-diversity of a world would be like a house with internal walls that not

West" and, at least from a Japanese Buddhist standpoint, to speak at times of "the East" ("The Kyoto School," section 5.1).

19. It is interesting to note in this regard a programmatic shift in the early East-West Philosopher's Conferences held in Hawai'i periodically since 1939. While at the first conference, organizer Charles Moore spoke of combining East and West into a "single world civilization," and while the second conference (1949) was given the ambitious title "An Attempt at World Philosophical Synthesis," "the mood of the second conference appears to have shifted away from the idea of a universal philosophical synthesis towards the encouragement of open-ended dialogue." J. J. CLARKE, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 121. Grand cultural syntheses began to fall under suspicion even before "grand narratives" did.

20. Interpretation is of course complicated here by the fact that there are no definite and indefinite articles in Japanese.

21. 『西谷啓治著作集』[Collected writings of Nishitani Keiji, NKC] (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1986–1995), XII: 277–8, 285; NISHITANI Keiji, "The I-Thou Relation in Zen Buddhism," trans. by N. A. Waddell, in Fredrick FRANCK, ed., *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 49, 56.

22. NKC XIII: 133, 141.

only separate but also connect different rooms—like semi-opaque *shōji* 障子 that allow for both private individuality and communal intimacy.

Interpreted along these lines, Nishitani's remarks could be taken to imply that Eastern cultures—which had heretofore shared a neighborhood with various houses both separated and connected by an assortment of walls, fences, gateways, and pathways—would now merge with the neighborhood of the West, with all its interconnected houses, to build together (and presumably with others) a cosmopolitan community of unity-in-diversity for humanity.

NISHIDA'S WORLDLY WORLD
OR WORLD OF WORLDS

Ōhashi Ryōsuke writes that a central achievement of the Kyoto School was their concrete realization that Europe is but one relative world among others within a "world of worlds" (*shosekai no sekai* 諸世界 の世界).[23] We might then understand Nishitani's anticipated new world in terms of what his teacher, Nishida Kitarō, spoke of as a *sekai-teki sekai* 世界的世界: a "worldly world"[24] or—in a more interpretive translation yet one which expresses an important implication of Nishida's thought—a "world of worlds."[25]

23. ŌHASHI Ryōsuke 大橋良介『日本的なもの、ヨーロッパ的なもの』[Things Japanese, things European] (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1992), 153.

24. Rolf Elberfeld translates Nishida's *sekai-teki sekai* as *welthafte Welt(en)* "worldly world(s)"—and explains the "dialectical interplay of singular and plural" in this term as follows:

> zum einen bedeutet "welthafte Welt" die globale Welt und zum anderen handelt es sich um eine einzelne "welthafte Welt", d.h. eine besondere Welt, die in die gemeinsame Gestaltung der verschiedenen Welten in der einen globalen Welt eingetreten ist.

Kitarō Nishida (1870–1945). Moderne japanische Philosophie und die Frage nach der Interkulteralität (Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999], 208; see also 18, 234.

25. V. H. VIGLIELMO renders *sekai-teki sekai* as "world of worlds" and as "multiworld" in his translation of Nishida's "Fundamental Principles of a New World Order," in David DILWORTH et al., eds., *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy: Selected Documents* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998). Christopher GOTO-JONES also translates and interprets Nishida's *sekai-teki sekai* as "world of worlds." *Political*

These two translations can be seen as complimentary. The most straightforward translation of *sekai-teki sekai* is "worldly world." Perhaps because of its apparently awkward redundancy, some scholars have translated *sekai-teki sekai* as "global world." But this not only lends itself to conflation with what is today called "globalization," it also glosses over the point of the redundancy: A truly worldly world would be one which lives up to its name—similar to the sense in which, for Confucianism, a king is only truly a king when he behaves in a kingly manner.[26] For Nishida, the world is truly worldly when it serves as a place of unity-in-diversity for the interaction of a plurality of particular cultural worlds, and is in this sense a "world of worlds."

In Nishida's development of his "logic of place," he often spoke of various enveloping "worlds," such as the "physical world," "the biological world," and the "historical world." Of these three, the last is claimed to be most real, as it envelopes the other two. Even the physical world, he says, must be considered to be creatively historical in its foundation.[27] The historical world is itself horizontally divided into a plurality of cultural worlds. In part analogous to the evolution of a variety of species in the biological world, in the historical world too various "species" (*shu* 種) have developed.[28] These various cultural microcosms are each in one sense complete and in another sense partial worlds; as "monads" they

Philosophy in Japan: Nishida, The Kyoto School, and Co-Prosperity (London: Routledge, 2005), 32, 92.

26. See *Analects*, 13.3, and *Mencius*, 1A7, in Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Van Norden, eds., *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (New York and London: Seven Bridges Press, 2001), 34–5, 114–19.

27. 『西田幾多郎全集』[Complete works of Nishida Kitarō, NKZ] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1987–1989), XIV: 283. See also NKZ XIV: 211, where Nishida diagrams the direction of his way of thinking, namely from the human world to that of nature, in contrast to the direction of "the usual way of thinking," namely from nature to the human world (see also NKZ VIII: 282).

28. NKZ XIV: 290. See, however, NKZ XI: 456, where Nishida distinguishes the ethnic "species" of humans from the biological species of animals. Only the former are fully creative expressions of a creative world. As he writes elsewhere, "biological life is environmental, not truly worldly." Humans, by contrast, are born as "self-determinations of the eternal present"; as historical beings we are "creative elements of a creative world" capable of "counter-determining" our worlds (NKZ VIII: 286 and 314).

each reflect the entire world, but they do so from a particular perspective and in a particular manner.[29] Yet there is no ahistorical objective account of the world which transcends these particular cultural differences in perception. According to Nishida, "reality is historical reality," and "perception" itself is only possible through the medium of a cultural tradition.[30] Hence, a truly worldly world can only be opened up by way of a cross-cultural dialogue which brings these various microcosmic worlds into communication with one another without canceling out their specific perspectival differences.

Let us now examine a couple of key passages where Nishida develops his idea of a *sekai-teki sekai* (translated here as "world of worlds"):

> That each national ethnic people transcends itself while remaining true to itself in constructing a single world of worlds, must entail that each transcends itself and, *each in accordance with its regional traditions*, constructs first of all a particular world. Moreover, the particular worlds constructed on an historical foundation in this way will unite, and the entire world will be made into a single world of worlds. In such a world of worlds, while each nation and its people live their own distinctive historical life, through their respective world-historical missions they unite in one world of worlds.[31]

29. ELBERFELD argues that Nishida's "monadological" conception of culture offers us a genuine alternative to the opposition between universalism and relativism (*Kitarō Nishida*, 212–13; see 255–6).

30. NKZ XIV: 378–9. Commenting on recent developments in quantum physics, which recognizes the constitutive role of the observer in observation, Nishida writes "I think perhaps present-day physics is also gradually coming to the point of saying that the true world is the historical world" (NKZ XIV: 283).

31. NKZ XII: 428. In this text「世界新秩序の原理」[Principles of a new world order] (NKZ XII: 426–34), as in other works such as『日本文化の問題』[The problem of Japanese culture] (NKZ XII: 277–383), Nishida attempts to take up and reinterpret ideas that were at the time being propagated as imperialistic ideology, such as "the eight directions constitute one universe" (*hakkō iu* 八紘為宇). It should be kept in mind that "Principles of a New World Order" was rewritten and "simplified" by Tanabe Juri in order to make it more accessible to the authorities whom Nishida was trying (unsuccessfully, it turns out) to influence. On the debate that has surrounded this controversial text, and Nishida's political thought in general, see ARISAKA Yōkō, "The Nishida Enigma: 'The Principle of the New World Order,'" *Monumenta Nip-*

Just as a national culture is formed as a contradictory identity between individuals—whom it forms and at the same time by whom it is formed—Nishida suggests that a "particular world" (*tokushu-teki sekai* 特殊的世界), such as that of East Asia, can be formed through the interaction of its various specific national cultures, such as those of Japan and China.

Later we will have to return to the problematic political context and implications of this vision of a unified East Asia. But here let us note another passage where Nishida speaks of the formation of a "world culture" in the sense of a world of cultures.

> Cultures—as the self-aware contents of the world of historical reality, which is the contradictory identity of individual determination qua [*soku* 即] universal determination and universal determination qua individual determination—cannot in principle become merely one. For a culture to lose its particularity means that it ceases to be a culture. Yet to develop the standpoint of a unique culture does not entail simply an advance in the direction of abstract individuality. This [too] would amount to nothing less that the negation of culture. [Rather,] a true world culture will be formed [only] when various cultures, while maintaining their own individual standpoints, develop themselves through the mediation of the world.[32]

A true world of worlds would thus be neither a monocultural fusion, which would abolish cultural difference, nor a relativistic dispersion, which would reify assertions of uniqueness; rather, it would be a multicultural conversation, where cultures maintain and develop their uniqueness only by way of opening themselves up to ongoing dialogue with one another.

On the one hand, this opening up involves not only a willingness to critically appropriate valuable aspects of other cultures, but also a movement through self-negation, that is, a willingness to call into question, rethink, and in some cases abandon aspects of one's cultural tradition.[33]

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ponica 51/1 (1996): 81–106; and GOTO-JONES, *Political Philosophy in Japan*, 75ff.

32. NKZ VII: 452–53.

33. In fact, Nishida at times positively interprets the culture-negating aspects of the modern globalizing age as provoking an opening up of isolated and unquestioned specificity (see NKZ XI: 457).

On the other hand, it also involves self-expression, that is, learning to rearticulate valuable aspects of one's culture and offering these to others for consideration. By each undergoing this process of critical self-opening and creative self-expression, cultures can mutually supplement one another, thus playing a role in the cooperative formation of the worldly world. This *sekai-teki sekai* would be a world which gathers the irreducible plurality of cultural spheres into a dynamically harmonious "contradictory identity" (*mujun-teki jikodōitsu* 矛盾的自己同一).

To be sure, this "contradictory identity" is not always only a matter of harmonious cooperation. In places Nishida speaks of the worldly world of contradictory identity, not only in terms of "mutual supplementation,"[34] but also in terms of a "mutual struggle" and "competition." He even claims that the emergence of nationalism and globalism go hand in hand, since the world becomes real only when national cultures become internally aware of one another, and can thus assert their particularity over against one another.[35]

Nishida accepts that historical ages have in the past always been established by a nation taking charge and unifying a world, and that the global world as a whole was first unified by Western imperialism. And yet, he goes on to say, we stand on the brink of a radically new world-historical era where we must go beyond the simple paradigm of mutual competition between "nations in opposition." Above all, Nishida repeatedly emphasizes, "the imperialistic idea that puts one ethnic nation in the center surely belongs to the past."[36] The new global paradigm must be pluralistic rather than imperialistic, and this implies moving beyond competitive antagonism to mutually transforming dialogue, to the cooperative construction of a "world of worlds," a unity-in-diversity to which each nation contributes on the basis of its own global perspective or, as Nishida is prone to say, its own "world-historical mission."

34. NKZ XII: 392.

35. See NKZ VIII: 529; NKZ XII: 334 and 412–13. On the question of war and struggle in Nishida's thought, see UEDA Shizuteru, "Nishida, Nationalism, and the War in Question," in HEISIG and MARALDO, *Rude Awakenings*, 95–6; and Elberfeld, *Kitarō Nishida*, 223–2.

36. NKZ X: 256, 337.

Nishida thus understands the formation of a "world of worlds" to be the *telos* towards which contemporary world history should be moving. This teleology does not steer us towards an end of cultural diversity in the sense of a "homogenization of mankind."[37] Neither does it abandon us to a "clash of civilizations."[38] Rather, its end would be the realized beginning of an ongoing and mutually transformative dialogue of unity-in-diversity.

An (implicit) ethics of cross-cultural dialogue

Nishida's vision of the formation of a world of worlds, wherein cultures could freely enter into dialectical and dialogical relations with one another, would seem to imply certain trans-cultural ethical or moral principles; indeed he repeatedly speaks of a "principle of world-of-worlds formation" (*sekai-teki sekai keisei no genri* 世界的世界形成の原理) and of "world-of-worlds formationism" (*sekai-teki sekai keisei-shugi* 世界的世界形成主義).

To begin with, we can find sources for an ethics (or metaethics) of cross-cultural dialogue in Nishida's ontology (or rather "meontology") of "Absolute Nothingness" (*zettai mu* 絶対無) and in his account of the I/thou relation. In the present context, one could understand "the place of Absolute Nothingness" as a formless unity that would gather the various cultural worlds without forcing one into the mold of another, and without reducing their differences to the sameness of an underlying "universal of being."

According to Nishida, since "there is no universal [of being] whatsoever that subsumes the I and the thou,"[39] the locus of genuine interpersonal encounter must be thought of in terms of the place of Absolute

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37. See Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, 338–9, and note 9 above.

38. See Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

39. nkz vi: 381.

Nothingness. Through self-negation a true individual realizes itself as a focal point of the self-determination of the place of Absolute Nothingness, a creative element of a creative world which essentially exists in dialectical interaction—in Buddhist parlance, interdependent origination—with other individuals.[40] Such a true individual is said to encounter the interpersonal thou in the depths of its own self-awareness. But this would not reduce the alterity of the Other to the sameness of one's own subjectivity insofar as Nishida argues that "there is no responsibility as long as the Other that is seen at the bottom of the self is thought of as the self. Only when I am I in virtue of the thou I harbor at my depths do I have an infinite responsibility at the bottom of my existence itself."[41] Moreover, since individual selves are formed by way of a dialectic of mutual determination with the cultures in which they are situated, a responsibility toward an individual Other implies a responsibility toward his or her culture as well.

The world of worlds thus cannot be thought of as a being. Establishing the place of cross-cultural dialogue on the basis of a particular cultural form, political entity, or religious dogma would inevitably institute an arbitrary hierarchy that tends towards disenfranchisement and imperialism. Hence, the world of worlds must be thought of as a place of Absolute Nothingness. As a formless Absolute Nothingness, the world of worlds would gather the various cultural worlds in such a manner that the form of one is not reduced to the form of another. The world of worlds would be something like a circle whose center is both (permanently and exclusively) nowhere and (potentially) everywhere. Cultural exchange would then be like different salads sharing ingredients without a common salad bowl.

But this must not mean that the world of worlds would simply be a static and vacuously empty space—for that would amount to a mere

40. See NKZ VII: 306.

41. NKZ VI: 420. Despite the fact that he quotes this passage, Heisig nevertheless argues that Nishida's (and in general the Kyoto School's) philosophy of "self-awareness" precludes a genuine relationship with the interpersonal Other (*Philosophers of Nothingness*, 82–86). For a response to Heisig's critique, see Bret W. DAVIS, "Introducing the Kyoto School as World Philosophy," *The Eastern Buddhist* 34/2 (Autumn 2002): 158ff.

"relative nothingness" and even an "everything is permitted" nihilism. Rather, the world of worlds would in some sense be a medium[42] of dialectical and dialogical interaction, a medium which is not a substance but more like a concrete and dynamic principle of mediation. While it is not a universal Being, Nishida's Absolute Nothingness clearly does imply certain dialectical and kenotic (i.e., self-emptying) directives. It would seem, then, that we could derive a morality of cross-cultural dialogue from Nishida's thought.

And yet, Nishida in fact rejects the idea of a universal or trans-cultural "morality" (*dōtoku* 道徳) per se. In contrast to "religion," which concerns a direct relation between the individual and the Absolute (or rather, to be precise, a relation of "inverse correspondence" between the self-negating finite individual and the self-negating infinite Absolute), he claims that "morality" originates in the mediating realm of the nation. "The nation is the wellspring of morality; but it cannot be said to be the wellspring of religion."[43]

With regard to the idea that moral norms are realized only in concrete historical nations, Nishida is no doubt influenced—both directly and indirectly through the writings of Tanabe Hajime and other Kyoto School thinkers—by Hegel's critique of Kant. According to Hegel, the categorical imperatives of Kant's *Moralität* were so abstract as to be vacuous, and thus in need of being filled in with the concrete ethics (*Sittlichkeit*) of the historical communities within which moral agents always find themselves.

This is not the place to consider Hegel's ethical and political philosophy, and to examine the extent to which it can successfully withstand charges of paving the way for twentieth-century nationalism and even totalitarianism.[44] Yet one serious problem with rooting morality completely in the nation is that this threatens to leave the individual bereft of

42. In his diagrams, Nishida often uses "M" (*Medium*) for Absolute Nothingness or for a world as an identity of contradictories, "A" (*Allgemeines*) for a universal, and "e" (*Einzelnes*) for an individual.

43. NKZ XI: 463; see also NKZ XII: 398.

44. For an excellent sympathetic account of Hegel's ethical and political philosophy, see Charles TAYLOR, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), part IV.

moral sources with which to criticize unjust laws or nations. By appealing to a moral Law beyond the laws of their governments, Socrates, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King were able to offer moral resistance to legal injustices. Another problem with rooting morality completely in the nation is that we would then be unable to establish internationally binding codes. As is well known, the need to officially acknowledge a category of trans-national "crimes against humanity" became urgent after World War II in order to prosecute Nazi officials, such as Adolf Eichmann, who professed to be merely following the law of their land as they sent millions to be murdered.[45]

Does Nishida's thought restrict the reach not only of concrete ethics, but also of morality as such to the nation? In fact, I think that we can find at least an implicit trans-national morality articulated in Nishida's thought. To begin with, the very impulse to root morality in the nation could itself paradoxically be said to rest on a trans-national moral respect for the dignity and autonomy of peoples and their cultures. Nishida often speaks of the world as "the self-determination of a circle with no center and no circumference,"[46] and he is fond of repeating Leopold von Ranke's idea that every historical age (and, for Nishida, cultural world) touches God directly.[47] These thoughts staunchly resist the idea that one age is but a step on the way to another, or that one people's culture is peripheral and another's central.

Yet, although he says that "national morality and morality are not two things," Nishida also claims that, in today's "age of global self-awareness" (*sekai-jikaku no jidai* 世界自覚の時代), "the time has come to clarify the essence of morality [*dōtoku to iu mono no honshitsu* 道徳と云ふものの本質]."[48] This "essence of morality" would be both national and international, insofar as the "true nation" (*shin no kokka* 真の国家) contains the principle of world-of-worlds formation within itself. In a passage sharply critical of "Anglo-American imperialism," Nishida writes:

45. See Hannah ARENDT, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006).

46. NKZ VII: 208. Nishitani writes that, on the ultimate "field of *śūnyatā*, the center is everywhere" (NKC X: 178; *Religion and Nothingness*, 158).

47. NKZ XII: 61.

48. NKZ XII: 408.

> In historical world-formation, the center must always be on ethnic peoples. This is the motivating force of world-formation.... However, an ethnic nationalism which does not include a true worldliness within itself, which puts itself in the center and thinks of the world only from there, is an ethnic egoism, and cannot help but fall into an ideology of aggression and imperialism.... Only when an ethnic people includes within itself a principle of world-of-worlds formation does it become a true nation. It is then that it becomes a wellspring of morality.[49]

Here the idea of the nation as a wellspring of morality is qualified by the idea that, in order to first of all become a "true nation," a people must avoid falling into ethnic egoism. In other words, we may interpret, *there is an ethical criterion for becoming a wellspring of morality.* A nation has an a priori duty to become an authentic nation by including the "principle of world-of-worlds formation" within itself.[50]

This would also imply a restriction on what cultures and nations qualify to be considered a genuine "focal point" or provisional center of the self-determination of the world as the circumferenceless circle of Absolute Nothingness. The center is not actually everywhere, but rather only at those points which are self-negating as well as self-expressive, those points which are open to dialectical and dialogical interaction with others. This qualification is crucial, because otherwise we lose any basis for international and cross-cultural critique. Without it, even a national culture which glorifies imperialistic aggression would have to be affirmed as a wellspring of morality and a legitimate focal point of world-formation. While Nishida acknowledges that in the course of history some nations will be more influential (formational) and others more receptive (material-like), he stresses that:

> In its relation to another ethnic people, a true nation will unite together with them on the standpoint of the self-formation of the historical world which forms them both. What does not express the world within itself, that is, what is not moral [*dōgi-teki* 道義的], is

49. NKZ XII: 432–3.
50. NKZ XI: 455.

not a [true] nation. What emerges merely from exclusionary ethnic nationalism is nothing other than ideologies of aggression and imperialism.[51]

While avoiding the unrealistic assertion of a blanket equality between nations, that is to say, while acknowledging a place for healthy competition and shifting roles of leadership and influence, Nishida's conception of the world of worlds as a dialectical and dialogical place of Absolute Nothingness implies a principle of ethical respect for the alterity and autonomy of other cultures which should never be imperialistically reduced to the form of one's own.

To be sure, there are problems with Nishida's view of the nation and, as we shall discuss later, with his specific idea of "national polity" (*kokutai* 国体). In general he saw nations as the proper vehicles for historical development and cross-cultural dialogue; but, in fact, "nation" and "*kokutai*" may themselves be seen as cultural and historical determinations subject to change. While the Western idea of the nation—along with debates between nationalism and internationalism—occupied the center of the political stage from the late eighteenth century through the twentieth century, today nations are beginning to play a diminishing role in cross-cultural dialogue. Not only has more direct contact between individuals—which is, of course, still mediated by the cultural and linguistic worlds of those individuals—dramatically increased, but, more problematically, multinational corporations play a most powerful mediating role in contemporary globalization.

Also, it needs to be critically pointed out, as John Maraldo does, how "Nishida took for granted that a single people formed the ethnic basis of a nation state." Thus, although Nishida "foresaw *a multicultural world* of different ethnic nations," he "did not recognize or foresee multi-ethnic or *multicultural nations*."[52] Cross-cultural dialogue must in fact be seen as taking place *within* nations as well as *between* them. Just as individuals should be allowed to freely engage in a dialectical relation of

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51. NKZ XII: 404.

52. John MARALDO, "The Problem of World Culture: Towards an Appropriation of Nishida's Philosophy of Culture," *The Eastern Buddhist* 28/2: 194.

mutual determination with their cultures, in a multicultural nation the various cultures should be allowed to take part in shaping the wider social space in which they exist.

But even without accepting Nishida's view of the nation, and thus his "internationalism" per se, we can still glean from his conception of "world-of-worlds formationism" certain ethical principles for cross-cultural dialogue. For example:

1. A culture's specificity should not be imposed on others.
2. In today's de facto post-isolationist age, cultural specificity shouldn't be either reified or abandoned, but should rather be brought into cross-cultural dialogue.
3. In cross-cultural dialogue, cultural traditions should not only be maintained, but also critically and creatively developed in a dialectical process where "the old shapes and is in turn shaped by the new."
4. In cross-cultural dialogue, cultural groups should not only consider critically appropriating foreign cultural achievements, but should also offer their own cultural achievements to others for consideration.

The first principle prohibits cultural imperialism, while the remaining three go on to say that and how a culture should be engaged in cross-cultural dialogue. While not meant to be exhaustive, these principles can be understood both as guidelines for cross-cultural encounter, and as marking certain limits of respect for cultural difference. As Nishida says that a nation that does not contain a principle of globality (i.e., awareness of and openness to the wider world) within itself is not a true nation, we could say that to the extent to which a culture withdraws into ethnocentric self-enclosure[53]—and is thus in danger of slipping

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53. We have to leave open here the possibility that an ethnic people has the right to decline to enter the post-isolationist age and open itself to dialogue with other cultures. We have no more right today than we did in 1853 to unilaterally force a country to open itself to cross-cultural exchange. On the other hand, a regime has no right to suppress the choice of a populace to end its isolation, either overtly or pre-emptively by keeping it uninformed. Yet, insofar as giving a populace the chance to make an informed choice is, to an extent, tantamount to opening it up to the world, the choice of "continued isolation" would to that extent be one of "withdrawal into

into xenophobia or imperialism toward the outside, and suppression of differences or even "ethnic cleansing" toward the inside—it forfeits its worthiness of respect.[54]

Nishida and kōyama's study of cultural types

In the remaining sections of this essay I will continue to fill out and begin to more critically examine Nishida's vision of establishing a world of worlds. I will do so by way of bringing into consideration the thought of Kōyama Iwao 高山岩男. I introduce Kōyama into the discussion here first of all because, among the members of the Kyoto School,

isolation." Moreover, this informed choice of withdrawal would need to be repeated each generation.

54. Perhaps a complementary trans-cultural ethical principle could be developed from Tanabe Hajime's attempts to work out a "logic of the specific" (which were clearly influential on Nishida's cultural and political philosophy). As James Heisig has suggested, a potent critique of the implicit ethnocentrism in the so-called "global village" can be gleaned from Tanabe's work on the logic of the specific, despite Tanabe's forgetfulness of his own best insights in certain highly problematic wartime texts. See "Tanabe's Logic of the Specific and the Critique of the Global Village," *The Eastern Buddhist* 28/2: 198–224; also see Heisig's "Tanabe's Logic of the Specific and the Spirit of Nationalism," in Heisig and Maraldo, *Rude Awakenings*. Tanabe's writings on the logic of the specific can be found in volumes VI and VII of 『田辺元全集』 [Complete works of Tanabe Hajime] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1964). A constant danger in neglecting cultural specificity is that cosmopolitan visions of a universal "humanity" tend to conceal a specific cultural determination dressed up as a universal definition of human nature. Tanabe argues that the individual (i.e., the person) and the universal (i.e., the world) can be brought together only by way of a mediating third term, the specific (i.e., cultural ethnicity). The move from what Bergson calls a "closed society" to an "open society" cannot be made by individuals who would somehow immediately jump out of their ethnic specificity into a would-be universal "world community," since the individual cannot simply shed his or her cultural facticity. This could be taken to mean that, along with individuals, their specific cultures themselves must be transformed so as to become open to dialogue with others. This idea could then also serve as a basis for cross-cultural critique. Respect for cultural differences must be balanced with a critique of cultures (or those elements in cultures) that fail to cultivate such respect toward others. "Respect for cultural specificity" would thus be a trans-cultural ethical principle that implies a criterion for disqualification.

he in particular concentrated on the question of culture, the critique of imperialism, and the idea of a postmodern multicultural world of worlds. Moreover, certain problematic elements of the Kyoto School's cultural and political thought are clearly pronounced in Kōyama's writings. Indeed, on the basis of his contributions to the famous (or infamous) *Chūōkōron* discussions, contemporary critics may be inclined to prematurely dismiss Kōyama's cultural and political thought as nothing more than an illegitimate attempt to justify Japan's imperialistic construction of a "Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere" (*daitōakyōeiken* 大東亜共栄圏) during the Pacific War.[55] Yet aspects of Kōyama's arguments for internationalism and multiculturalism are arguably still highly relevant today.

Kōyama's 1938 public "Monday lectures" at Kyoto University on cultural morphology, which resulted in the 1939 publication of his *The Study of Cultural Types* (*Bunkaruikeigaku* 文化類型学),[56] were not only influenced by, but also probably exerted a counter-influence on the ever-developing thought of his teacher, Nishida.[57] Indeed, Kōyama's study of cultural types summarizes and supplements a number of central themes in Nishida's philosophy of culture.

In the concluding pages of *The Study of Cultural Types*, Kōyama writes the following passage in an attempt to define the "structure of the worldly world" (*sekai-teki sekai no kōzō* 世界的世界の構造) in contrast to a world united under the yoke of European imperialism:

> The structure of the worldly world cannot simply be the inverse of the structure of the European world, namely, an East Asian world-

55. See Kōsaka Masaaki 高坂正顕 et al., 『世界史的立場と日本』 [The world-historical standpoint and Japan] (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1943), 171–2, where Kōyama follows Nishitani in claiming that the "Idea of the Greater East Asia War" can be understood to justify Japan's past aggressive actions against China.

56. This text is available today in KŌYAMA Iwao 高山岩男, 『文化類型学・呼応の原理 [The study of cultural types, the principle of call and response], ed. Saitō Giichi (Kyoto: Tōeisha, 2001). My references will be to this edition.

57. Agustín JACINTO mentions Kōyama's lectures in his remarks on "Nishida's ongoing dialogue" with his students and colleagues ("The Return of the Past: Tradition and the Political Microcosm in the Later Nishida," in HEISIG and MARALDO, *Rude Awakenings*, 146–7), but I know of no study that explores this relation.

structure that would incorporate the European world. For this East Asian structure would be [essentially] the same as that of the present European world, which is based merely on the power relation of master and servant. Such [reversal of roles] would inevitably give rise to an endless repetition of struggles for reversals. The structure of the worldly world must [be based instead on] a moral and humanitarian principle [*dōgi-teki jinkaku-teki na genri* 道義的人格的な原理] which goes beyond this principle of power. In accordance with this principle, I do not incorporate You by means of power, but rather I encounter You as a transcendent Other. It is a principle of human interaction where I and You maintain our mutual independence while at the same time meeting in harmony [*mutsubiau* 睦び合う]. This is the principle for the ordered structure of the worldly world.[58]

Earlier in the book Kōyama had written that, although world history indeed reveals a tendency toward "establishing a unifying world which gradually encompasses [regional] worlds," this does *not* entail a "loss of the cultures of the various worlds and various ethnicities which differ according to geography and climate [*chiiki-teki fūdo-teki ni kotonaru sho-sekai ya minzoku no bunka wa ushinawarezu* 地域的風土的に異なる諸世界や諸民族の文化は失われず]." The internationalization of cultures does not imply a unilateral homogenization, but rather a simultaneous rationalization/universalization and individuation/particularization. "When a common world is established, an ethnic nationality finally becomes unique; and, at the same time, it takes on a worldly character which makes it commensurable with others." Thus, the "world is a place where the uniqueness and generality of ethnic mentalities are simultaneously established," a place of "the harmonization of universalization and individualization [*ippanka to koseika to no sōgōchōwa* 一般化と個性化との総合調和]," which he says can only be thought of in terms of a "place of Nothingness."[59]

Kōyama's text thus supplements Nishida's claim in "The Problem of Japanese Culture" (*Nihon-bunka no mondai* 日本文化の問題, the 1938 inaugural "Monday lecture"), that, even though "until now Westerners

58. Kōyama, *The Study of Cultural Types*, 167.
59. *Ibid.*, 17–18 and 23–4.

have thought that their own culture is the most superior human culture that exists, and that human culture inevitably develops in the direction of their own culture," in fact the West will no more subsume the East than the East will subsume the West. "Rather," Nishida goes on to say, "East and West are like two branches of the same tree. They are divided in two and yet supplement one another at the base and roots."[60]

At the end of his 1934 essay, "The Forms of Eastern and Western Ancient Cultures Seen from a Metaphysical Standpoint" (形而上学的立場から見た東西古代の文化形態), Nishida had written that, when comparing Eastern and Western cultures, and when seeking to determine the significance of Japanese culture within Eastern culture, we must recognize that "strong points are at once weak points," and that "we can only know the path along which we should truly progress by deeply fathoming ourselves and by attaining a good understanding of others."[61] In this essay Japanese culture is put on par with Greek, Christian, Chinese, and Indian cultures, but the implications are that it has as much to learn from them as it has to contribute in return.

However, by the time of his 1938 lecture, "The Problem of Japanese Culture," Japan is said to be especially capable of serving as the "place" for this dialogue and mutual supplementation of cultures. Nishida claims Japanese culture is a "musical" culture without rigid form, and, although this lack may be considered a deficit, in fact this is what has given it "the special character of repeatedly taking in foreign cultures as they are and transforming itself." He then concludes that "for Japan to become world-historical means that it progressively gathers all cultures and creates a great synthetic culture."[62] Japan would then, it appears, no longer be just one cultural world among others in a world of worlds; it would be *the* or at least *a* world which gathers all worlds. One senses that Nishida begins to slip from a multicultural cosmopolitanism towards a "particular universalism," which in turn all too easily plays into the hands of the kind of ethnocentric imperialism against which he so strongly protested.

60. NKZ XIV: 404–6.
61. NKZ VII: 453.
62. NKZ XIV: 416–17.

This slippage is clearly at work in Kōyama's text as well. After the first long passage quoted above from the conclusion to *The Study of Cultural Types*, Kōyama writes:

> The [world-historical] mission of Japan… is to bring about the completion of this worldly world that is ordered by a humanitarian ethic…. The task of contemporary world history is the transposition from a European world to a worldly world, and it is Japan that stands in the middle of this whirlpool. Japanese history is at the same time world history.[63]

The final sentence of Kōyama's book reads:

> To participate in the creation of a new culture while looking back at ancient culture, this is the mission given to contemporary Japanese, who have already absorbed Eastern and Western culture in their past and who are in the process of opening up a worldly world [*sekai-teki sekai* 世界的世界].[64]

SPECTERS OF CULTURAL ESSENTIALISM AND JAPANISM

Up to this point, I have mainly attempted to sympathetically retrieve and develop some indications for thinking the place of cross-cultural dialogue from Nishida and the Kyoto School. This sympathetic retrieval, however, must now be balanced with a critical examination of certain problematic aspects of their cultural and political thought. I will focus on two problems. The first concerns the question of cultural identity and in particular what Kōyama unambiguously refers to as an "unchanging essence" underlying tradition. Nishida's dialectical thought would seem to preclude such an assertion of unchanging essence, and yet, as we shall see, he places the Imperial Household at the center of Japanese tradition as an "absolute present" which unites past and future. The second and most vexing problem, which was already introduced at the end of the previous section, is their assertion that it is the world-

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63. Kōyama, *The Study of Cultural Types*, 167–8.
64. *Ibid.*, 169.

historical mission of Japan to establish a truly worldly world. These two problems are interrelated in their thought, and can both be considered aspects of "Japanism," understood in this context as *the assertion of a unique essence of Japan, an essence which makes Japan superior to other cultures and which puts it in a position to serve as model and leader for a new global age*. The former problem in part sets the stage for the latter, and so I will discuss them in this order.

According to Kōyama, cultures are not only defined according to a dialectical process of historical development, in which they appropriate from, and differentiate themselves over against, other cultures; cultures also possess an "unchanging essence" that persists through this historical process of development. This remains an unresolved, yet quite explicit, tension in his text.

On the one hand, Kōyama acknowledges that, while a culture is the product of a particular ethnic mentality, ethnic mentality is itself an "historical product" (*rekishi-teki sanbutsu* 歴史的産物).[65] Moreover, he claims that ethnic mentality is not some fixed and immovable substance, but that it necessarily develops in relation to (that is, under the influence of and in contrast to) other cultures. At one point he even claims that "all cultures are formed in the midst of cultural exchange, and thus there is none that is not a synthesis of manifold types [*fukugō-ruikei* 複合類型]."[66]

On the other hand, despite this emphasis on the historically fluid and dialectical development of cultures, Kōyama nevertheless clearly asserts that there is "something immobile and unchanging [*fudōfuhen no mono* 不動不変のもの] at the deep base of ethnic mentality," that there is "an ethnic mentality's unchanging particularity that flows at the base of and pervades all ages."[67] It is this "unchanging essence of an ethnic mentality" (*fuekina minzokuseishin no honshitsu* 不易な民族精神の本質)[68] that is said to define a cultural type, and the aim of Kōyama's cultural morphology is to distill such essences from out of their complex historical devel-

65. *Ibid.*, 6–8.
66. *Ibid.*, 9, 100.
67. *Ibid.*, 9.
68. *Ibid.*, 10.

opments, and thus to "reconstruct the ideal types"[69] of what he sees as the seven main cultures of the world: Ancient Greek, Indian, Christian, Buddhist, Chinese, [Modern] Western, and Japanese cultures. I cannot here give due critical consideration to Kōyama's bold, sometimes insightful and frequently thought-provoking, yet often also markedly biased characterizations of these seven "cultural types."[70] What becomes clear by the time we reach the final chapters on (modern) Western culture and Japanese culture is that the text does not intend to be just a neutral classification of types; it is also quite explicitly an injunction against Western imperialism, an argument for "the decline of the West," and a pronouncement of the world-historical moment for Japan.

Kōyama's criticism of Western imperialism and his critique of modern Western culture remain some of the more thought-provoking sections of his text. One of the text's most troubling aspects, however, especially given the historical context of 1939, is not just *that* Kōyama claims an "unchanging essence" for Japan, but rather *what* he claims defines this essence. The first defining characteristic of Japan's cultural type he gives

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69. *Ibid*., 12.

70. Even his list raises serious questions: Why these and only these seven cultures? What about Islamic and African cultures? Why separate Buddhist from Indian culture, but not Judaic from Christian culture? Although I will be concerned more with his Japanese bias, let me also give here one example of a *Western* bias evidenced in Kōyama's text. He claims that "philosophy" is born out of the negation of "myth," yet "religion" arises to counteract the anthropocentrism of philosophical reason. The proper relation of dialectical tension between philosophy and religion is, he claims, paradigmatically (*tenkei-teki ni* 典型的に) manifested in the relation of "unity in contradiction" between Greek philosophy and Christian religion in the history of the West. From this standpoint, KŌYAMA criticizes Indian culture for failing to clearly distinguish philosophy and religion, and Chinese culture for conflating religion with ethics (*The Study of Cultural Types*, 26–7). And yet, as I have argued elsewhere, one of the significant aspects of the Kyoto School's provocatively ambivalent "philosophy of religion" is to have called into question the typically Western account of the relation between philosophy and religion. See my "Rethinking Reason, Faith, and Practice: On the Buddhist Background of the Kyoto School," 『宗教哲学研究』[Studies in the philosophy of religion] 23 (2006): 1–12; and my "Provocative Ambivalences in Japanese Philosophy of Religion: With a Focus on Nishida and Zen," in James W. HEISIG, ed., *Japanese Philosophy Abroad* (Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2004).

is "the myth of the nation" (*kokka no shinwa* 国家の神話), a myth which links the historical and essential origin of the Japanese nation to the divine origin of the Imperial Household.[71] In fact, the first example he gives in the book for an unchanging cultural essence is "the thought of reverence and the heart of loyalty to the Imperial Household," which is said to be "an unchanging national sentiment that pervades every age" of Japanese history.[72]

Nishida also claims a pride of place for the Imperial Household in his account of Japanese culture. Indeed, he claims that the Imperial Household is the "absolute present" (*zettai genzai* 絶対現在) that unifies Japan temporally as well as spatially. "In our national polity, the Imperial Household is the beginning and end of the world. It envelopes past and future, and everything, as the self-determination of the absolute present, develops with it at the center."[73]

But if Kōyama's claim that cultures possess an "unchanging essence" lies in unresolved tension with the historical and dialectical side of his theory of culture, even less would Nishida's philosophy seem to allow anything to underlie the dialectical process of history, which always moves according to his fundamental principle of "from that which is made to that which makes" (*tsukurareta mono kara tsukuru mono e* 作られたものから作るものへ). Can Nishida's thoroughly dialectical thought—which rejects the ontology of substance and which criticizes even Hegelian dialectics for presupposing an underlying process of Spirit as substance becoming subject—be made compatible with a cultural essentialism?

To be sure, Nishida does compare the various national and cultural "species" with Platonic Ideas. And yet, these cultural forms are not said to be ahistorical substances, but rather historical formations. Like biological species, which develop over time, he sees cultural species as historically formed and presumably always in the process of reformation. He writes that human societies, such as Japan and China, historically develop in ongoing processes wherein "something created becomes

71. Kōyama, *The Study of Cultural Types*, 119.
72. *Ibid.*, 10.
73. NKZ XII: 409.

itself in turn creative."[74] Once developed into a distinct formation, such a national culture may, in a certain sense, live on forever; Nishida says that even after a nation such as that of ancient Greece or India perishes, its "culture may still become a resource for the life of other nations."[75] Yet this idea of cultural immortality would not imply an uncreated eternal essence.

In 1934 Nishida wrote that, while Japanese "culture" was created through an assimilation of Indian and Chinese cultures, "Japanese ethnos" (*nihon-minzoku* 日本民族) had been "formed" (*keisei serareta* 形成せられた) prior to that.[76] How was this prehistorical ethnicity itself formed? It was presumably a prior layer in the dialectical process of temporal—if not yet properly "historical"—formation. For if it were an underlying essence of, and unchanging agent for *all* layers of cultural formation and assimilation, where would such an essence come from; would it simply have shined down one day from the heavens?

One might expect that Nishida's thoughts on "tradition" would clear this matter up once and for all. Nishida claims that tradition is a dynamic process wherein "the new is guided by the old and, at the same time, the new changes the old."[77] There would seem to be no room for an unchanging essence in this thoroughly dialectical process. And yet, Nishida also enigmatically speaks of tradition as a "catalyst" for this process of historical change. Insofar as the scientific definition of "catalyst" indicates something which promotes a chemical reaction *but which does not itself change in the process*,[78] is there after all something essentially unchanging about tradition for Nishida?

Along with many of his thoughts on tradition, Nishida appropriates the idea of "catalyst" from T. S. Eliot. And yet, Eliot in fact uses the notion of catalyst to refer to the *mind* of the poet as a self-abnegating receptacle in which various feelings from the past and present of a tradi-

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74. NKZ XIV: 289–90.
75. NKZ XII: 424–5.
76. NKZ VII: 441.
77. NKZ XIV: 384.
78. I thank Silja Graupe for calling my attention to this scientific definition of "catalyst," which I also found clearly expressed by T. S. Eliot (see note 79 below).

tion are at liberty to enter into new combinations. Eliot does not speak of tradition itself as a catalyst. Rather, the poet's mind, which serves as a medium for the combination of a plethora of "feelings, phrases, images," is like the shred of platinum that remains "neutral, inert, and unchanged" even as it facilitates a creative combination of gasses.[79] By contrast, Nishida writes: "As a catalyst, tradition unifies a world… and from there a poem is born."[80] For Nishida, the poem and the poet are apparently somehow born out of the catalyst of tradition, rather than, as for Eliot, the catalyst of the poet's mind being the vehicle for the movement of tradition.

Nishida also speaks of tradition as the "self-determination of the eternal present" and as "a force that forms history" as a process of "making and being made."[81] We could perhaps interpret this force of tradition, which is always changing yet always the same, as something like Heraclitus' fire. And if for Heraclitus the *logos* (river) persists through the ever changing phenomena of the world (waters), we could say that for Nishida what is constant is nothing but the dialectical principle of "from that which is made to that which makes." This understanding of tradition as "the constitutive principle of the historical world"[82] would be a law of tradition rather than a particular tradition.

As we have seen, however, Nishida does speak of the Imperial Household as itself an absolute present, the self-determination of which unifies Japan over space and time. The unchanging catalyst of Japanese tradition would then not only be a dialectical principle of change, it would also appear to be this particular cultural and political institution. While

79. T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in *The Waste Land and Other Writings* (New York: Modern Library, 2001), 104. While Eliot does claim that the poet must have an "historical sense" of "the timeless as well as of the temporal," that is, of the "simultaneous existence" of "the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer" as well as of one's own place in time, the "timeless" he speaks of is by no means unchanging. On the contrary, the "ideal order" among the "existing monuments [of all past art is necessarily] modified by the introduction of the new… work of art," for "the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past" (101–2). For Eliot, then, there is no unchanging essence of a tradition.

80. nkz xiv: 381; see 384, 399.

81. nkz xi: 189; see also nkz xii: 378–9.

82. nkz xiv: 384.

various political powers came and went, the Imperial Household purportedly remained the quasi-transcendent stillness in the midst of the storm of Japanese history. It provided the non-subjective and non-egoistic place for competition and cooperation.[83]

To be sure, Nishida does not crudely deify the Emperor or absolutize the Imperial Household. In general he prefers to speak of the "Imperial Household" (*kōshitsu* 皇室) and not directly of the person or the family lineage of the Emperor.[84] He speaks of the Imperial Household as a "being of nothingness" (*mu no u* 無の有) and not as "Absolute Nothingness," as *an* "identity of contradictories" and not as *the* "absolute identity of contradictories."[85] Moreover, he specifically states that "The Imperial Household is the beginning and the end of *our* world,"[86] not of *the* world. Would it then be merely the center of one world among others in the wider world of worlds?

Yet Nishida does claim a unique world-historical role for the Japanese "national polity," and thus for the Imperial Household at its center. Moreover, while he claims that "we must not simply pride ourselves on the particularity of our national polity, but rather fix our attention on its world-historical depth and breadth," he supports Japan's claim to a world-historical role by claiming that the "uniqueness" of the Japanese national polity lies in its capacity for a dialectical identity of immanence and transcendence.[87] Although Nishida explicitly avoids directly equat-

83. Yusa Michiko points out that as early as 1918 Nishida wrote that he understood the "unbroken line" of the Imperial Household as "a symbol of great mercy, altruism, and partnership." NKZ XVIII: 207, as quoted in Yusa's essay, "Nishida and Totalitarianism: A Philosopher's Resistance," in Heisig and Maraldo, *Rude Awakenings*, 109.

84. See Jacinto, "The Return of the Past," 142–3. Jacinto suggests that *kōshitsu* should be translated as "Imperial Throne" rather than as "Imperial Household," but it seems to me that the latter can also be understood as the place and not the person of the Emperor.

85. NKZ 12, 336; see Ueda, "Nishida, Nationalism, and the War in Question," 94–5.

86. NKZ XII: 430, emphasis added. In an uncharacteristic mistranslation Arisaka renders the phrase "our world" as "the world," giving the passage an overtly globally ethnocentric meaning. "Beyond 'East' and 'West'," 242.

87. NKZ XII: 410–11.

ing the nation with a transcendent religious realm, he does claim that the nation "must be that which reflects the Pure Land in this world."[88] And the Japanese people are evidently in a privileged position to establish their nation as an immanent reflection of transcendence, since "the true essence of the Japanese spirit consists in the fact that that which is transcendent is thoroughly immanent and that which is immanent is thoroughly transcendent."[89] Thus Nishida can assert that "the basic principle of national polity [*kokutai no hongi* 国体の本義], which … is word-historically formative as the self-determination of the absolute present, is grasped and awakened to only in our own national polity [of Japan]."[90] This puts Japan in a position not only where it has the legitimate responsibility to establish the "East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere," but indeed where "the solution to the world-historical task [in 1943] may be said to be given in the principle of our national polity. Not only should America and England submit to it, but the Axis nations as well will come to model themselves on it."[91]

The purported world-historical mission of Japan is to spread to the world the principle of world-of-worlds formation. Since Japan has uniquely maintained and cultivated the non-imperialistic yet unifying principle of "the eight directions constitute one universe" (*hakkō iu* 八紘為宇) within its tradition centered on the Imperial Household, its duty is to unite East Asia and then the world at large. Japan would, after all, be destined to establish not just *a* world of worlds, but *the* world of worlds.

Questionable dilemmas and unavoidable aporias

The Kyoto School philosophers were not unaware of the tension in their thought between the denunciation of (Western) imperialism and the assertion of a world-historical leadership role for Japan. We

88. NKZ XI: 463–4.
89. NKZ XII: 434.
90. NKZ XII: 415; see 410.
91. NKZ XII: 434.

have seen that Nishida repeatedly denounced imperialism, and, at least in his private correspondence, he was clearly and often severely critical of the reality of Japan's politics and its imperialistic establishing of the Co-Prosperity Sphere.[92] Moreover, in his published texts Nishida certainly tried to redirect the political course of Japan by way of what Ueda Shizuteru 上田閑照 has called his "semantic struggle" or "tug-of-war over meaning" with regard to such catch-phrases as "the eight directions constitute one universe" and the "Imperial Way" (*kōdō* 皇道).[93]

Far from proffering "a thinly disguised justification … for Japanese aggression and continuing imperialism," or from "defining the philosophic contours of Japanese fascism,"[94] Nishida and the Kyoto School in general can be understood as struggling to engage in what Ōhashi Ryōsuke has called "anti-establishment cooperation" or "oppositional cooperation" (*hantaisei-teki kyōryoku* 反体制的協力).[95] All the political writings of the Kyoto School during the war years must be read in light of the razor's edge of immanent critique they were attempting to walk. Nevertheless, this does not relieve us of the responsibility to critically read these writings, which at times involves turning the light of immanent critique back on the compromised and otherwise problematic elements of their own texts.

Nishida warned that Japan must not approach other nations as one "subject" that "negates other subjects and tries to make them over into itself." This, he says, is "nothing other than imperialism." In contrast to this degenerate way of imperialism, the true Imperial Way, according to Nishida, proceeds by way of self-negation, that is, in the manner of Dōgen's "dropping off body and mind." If it proceeds in this self-emp-

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92. For a number of passages from Nishida's private correspondence in this regard, see UEDA, "Nishida, Nationalism, and the War in Question," 90; YUSA, "Nishida and Totalitarianism," 112–25; and GOTO-JONES, *Political Philosophy in Japan*, 94.

93. UEDA, "Nishida, Nationalism, and the War in Question," 90–5.

94. See the often criticized characterization (or polemical caricature) of the Kyoto School in Tetsuo NAJITA and H. D. HAROOTUNIAN, "Japan's Revolt against the West," in Bob Tadashi WAKABAYASHI, ed., *Modern Japanese Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 238–9.

95. ŌHASHI Ryōsuke 大橋良介,『京都学派と日本海軍』[The Kyoto school and the Japanese navy] (Kyoto: PHP Shinsho, 2001), 20ff.

tying manner to develop the Co-Prosperity Sphere, Nishida proposes, "rather than confront other subjects as a subject, Japan will *envelop them as a world* (*sekai toshite ta no shutai o tsutsumu* 世界として他の主体を包む)."[96] Nevertheless, we must ask, would reforming Japan from an aggressively incorporating subject into a non-egoistically embracing world really provide a radical alternative to imperialism as such? Or would it just make for more benevolent empire? Is the root problem of imperialism only a matter of bellicose and self-interested national subjectivity, or is it not also a matter of attributing to any one nation the capacity to envelop the world?

In the midst of the *Chūōkōron* discussions, which contain many of the Kyoto School's most blatant assertions of Japan's purported world-historical mission, Nishitani manages to state the dilemma of distinguishing Japan's role in East Asia from (Western) imperialism quite clearly:

> On the one hand, Japan is to awaken each ethnic nation to its own self-awareness and transform it into something capable of autonomous activity. On the other hand, Japan is at the same time to maintain its leadership position. These two sides are mutually bound together, even if on the surface they seem to stand in contradiction. I think the fundamental question is how to think these two in such a manner that they are not in contradiction.[97]

Of course, one could say that there was no way to solve this dilemma, and therefore that Japan's claim to leadership should have been abandoned. After the war, Nishitani defended his wartime efforts to walk a middle path of neither remaining silently on the sidelines nor uncriti-

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96. NKZ XII: 349, emphasis added. Elsewhere Nishida writes of "our nation's peculiar subjective principle" as a matter of "emptying the self to envelop the Other" (NKZ XII: 434). ARISAKA writes that "the defenders [of Nishida's political thought] argue that in his theory the words 'Japan' or the "Imperial House' cannot refer to a *particular entity*, a 'being,' since they represent his philosophical concept of 'absolute nothingness' as the 'field' or 'place' [*basho*] in which all nations coexist dialectically. In other words, Japan is *not* one of these nations which interact, but is in fact an empty 'scene' in which all others work out their mutual existence." "Beyond 'East' and 'West'," 244.

97. KŌSAKA et al., *The World-Historical Standpoint and Japan*, 205.

cally submitting to the political tide of the times, but rather of working to "open up from within a path for overcoming the extreme nationalism [that was becoming increasingly prevalent at the time]."[98] Yet in hindsight, given the historical realities—as opposed to the Kyoto School's ideals, which, as we have seen, were not always themselves unproblematic—of Japan's "leadership," and given the fact that the Kyoto School's immanent critique was co-opted by the imperialist regime more than it succeeded in altering its imperialism, one could argue that they should have jettisoned the path of "oppositional cooperation" for that of outright (or at least silent) resistance.

The debate over the intent and effects of the Kyoto School's critique of and/or complicity with Japan's extreme nationalism and imperialism during the Pacific War continues.[99] But let us here return from the past to the present, and reconsider how we are to critically appropriate their philosophies for our current attempts to think the place of cross-cultural dialogue. In the first parts of this essay, I have attempted to glean a number of positive contributions from their thought in this regard, before critically examining certain problematic specters of cultural essentialism and Japanism. The question is: Can we exorcise these specters from their thought and develop from the rest a viable conception of a world of worlds? To a significant degree, I think the answer is yes; and this is indeed a major part of what I have attempted to begin to do here. But we must also ask: Even after a thorough exorcism, would such a concep-

98. NKC IV: 384.

99. Responding to a wave of hypercritical treatments, two books have recently appeared which, despite vast differences in tenor and method, both defend political philosophies of the Kyoto School. In *Political Philosophy in Japan: Nishida, The Kyoto School, and Co-Prosperity*, GOTO-JONES painstakingly argues that Nishida's political thought, which draws deeply on East Asian as well as Western sources, remains an original and viable contribution to contemporary political theory. In *Defending Japan's Pacific War: The Kyoto School Philosophers and Post-White Power* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), David WILLIAMS provocatively asserts that Tanabe Hajime and other Kyoto School thinkers should be reevaluated as vanguards in a revolt against the racism and victor's justice that he sees as pervading orthodox Western accounts of history and the current Euro-America-centric global order. For a discerning review article of these two books, see John Maraldo, "The War Over the Kyoto School," *Monumenta Nipponica* 61/3 (Autumn 2006): 375–401.

tion still—of necessity perhaps—contain residues of cultural specificity, if not lingering specters of Japanism? Can the vision of a world of worlds as a place of Absolute Nothingness (understood as a dynamic field of dialectical and dialogical interaction) be completely extracted from its culturally specific roots and generalized into a neutral meeting place?

Let us turn the question back on ourselves. Today we—let me be specific, Americans—are globalizing our way of life, often under the banner of spreading freedom and democracy. Of course, we are also spreading more problematic aspects of our way of life, such as dehumanizing technologies and exploitative capitalism. But let us take even our most noble ideals of freedom and democracy. Are we so sure of a specific notion of freedom that we are willing to unilaterally universalize it? There are, after all, many concepts of freedom. As Nishitani has pointed out, a mere "negative freedom" (in the sense of a freedom from external constraints) does not guarantee a genuine autonomy, insofar as we reduce ourselves to consumers driven about from below by an "infinite drive" to gratify the base appetites of our insatiable egos.[100]

And what happened to the debate over how to strike a tenuous balance (or "contradictory identity") between freedom and equality?[101] After the rise and fall of communism, we hesitate to even speak of promoting economic equality, and when we do talk of spreading equality it gets reduced to a handful of basic human rights, including of course the right to participate as a consumer and, if one has the capital, as an investor in the "free market."

My point here is that the ideal of "freedom" should not just serve as an uncritical slogan, for it must always be critically defined and balanced with other ideals. Democracy, too, must be continually debated

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100. See NKC X: 259–60; *Religion and Nothingness*, 235–7; Bret W. Davis,「神の死から意志の大死へ——ポスト・ニーチの哲学者としての西谷啓治」in Fujita Masakatsu 藤田正勝 and Bret W. Davis, eds.,『世界のなかの日本の哲学』[Japanese philosophy in the world] (Kyoto: Shōwadō, 2005), 208–10.

101. Kōyama argues that there is an irresolvable self-contradiction in the twin ideals of freedom and equality in liberal society, pointing out that free market capitalism allows equality (and thus any real freedom of opportunity) to be sacrificed to the freedom of individuals to pursue their self-interests (Kōyama, *The Study of Cultural Types*, 113; also see Kōsaka et al., *The World-Historical Standpoint and Japan*, 349).

and redefined, as well as balanced with non-democratic institutions such as education. And such debates always take place within or between specific cultural contexts, contexts which determine in part our individual and communal ideas and ideals.

Nishida had a point when he wrote that "there has never been an abstract universal morality. Even the moral theory of the Enlightenment age was fitted to a particular age and ethnicity."[102] It is, of course, largely from the Enlightenment that we get many of our commonplace conceptions of freedom and democracy. What historical and ethnic presuppositions do these conceptions harbor? As communitarian critics of Enlightenment conceptions of liberal democracy have argued, such conceptions often presuppose a particular notion of human beings as "atomistic" individual subjects, individuals who are motivated primarily by self-interested desires yet equipped with a faculty of reason which allows them to enter into social contracts of mutual advantage with other such individuals.[103] Because of its own cultural specificity, Charles Taylor has argued that Western democratic liberalism cannot simply serve as the place of cross-cultural dialogue: "Liberalism is not a possible meeting ground for all cultures, but is the political expression of one range of cultures, and quite incompatible with other ranges."[104]

102. NKZ XII: 408.

103. For an excellent collection of articles by leading proponents of communitarianism and liberalism, see Shlomo AVINERI and Avner DE-SHALIT, eds., *Communitarianism and Individualism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). For a communitarian critique of the liberal concept of the individual, see for example Alasdair MACINTYRE, "Justice as a Virtue," *ibid.*, 58–9. In his article, "Atomism," Charles TAYLOR argues that "the free individual of the West is only what he is by virtue of the whole society and civilization which brought him to be and which nourishes him" (*ibid.*, 45). In her mediating response to the communitarian critique, Amy GUTMANN argues that "the real, and recognized, dilemma of modern liberalism… is not that people are naturally egoistical, but that they disagree about the nature of the good life" ("Communitarian Critics of Liberalism," in *ibid.*, 130). The challenging question which arises out of the liberal-communitarian debate, then, could be understood to be the question of how to conceive of a democratic space which does justice, not merely to competing individuals, but also to co-existing cultures and their different conceptions of the good life.

104. Charles TAYLOR, "The Politics of Recognition," in GUTMANN, *Multiculturalism*, 62.

Liberal individualism is also challenged by the conception of human being found in the East Asian background of the Kyoto School. By drawing on East Asian Buddhist and Confucian sources, Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 has argued that "ethics" (*rinri* 倫理) concerns the "between-ness" (*aidagara* 間柄) of persons who can no more be isolated from their interpersonal context than they can be wholly reduced to a static group identity.[105] Nishida, Nishitani, and Ueda have drawn on Mahayana Buddhist ideas to claim that the true self is a "self that is not a self" (*jiko narazaru jiko* 自己ならざる自己), insofar as it achieves its interdependent and non-substantial selfhood only in a dialectical process of self-affirmation by way of self-negation.[106]

The Kyoto School's ideas, no more and no less than those of Western philosophies, have specific genealogies. Yet to note the cultural origins of such ideas does not necessarily mean to limit the extent of their viability to their original cultural spheres. Just as Western ideas of freedom and democracy can and should be offered to non-Western peoples, Japanese ideas can and should be allowed to help us critically and creatively rethink our own cultural specificity. The point is that in either case we generally should not *impose* such ideas on one another; rather, we should *offer* them to each other for dialogical consideration.

At times, however, in the name of justice—and in spite of the fact that our conceptions of "justice" too are laden with cultural specificity—we must risk cross-cultural imposition. Sometimes the line must be drawn where cross-cultural openness gives way to criticism; and, more rarely, we must even risk venturing out in the name of a "just war." In other words, for the sake of a more binding principle of justice, we must at times risk breaking the principle of non-imposition of cultural specificity. Even Taylor, who argues that "liberalism can't and shouldn't claim complete cultural neutrality," does not infer from this a pacifist imperative

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105. *Watsuji Tetsurō's Rinrigaku: Ethics in Japan*, trans. by YAMAMOTO Seisaku and Robert CARTER (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996). For a critique of individualism that draws on Pure Land Buddhism and on Watsuji, see ŌKŌCHI Ryōgi 大河内了義『異文化理解の原点』[Principles of understanding foreign cultures] (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1995), 226–45.

106. For a sketch of this idea of "the self that is not a self," see Davis, "The Kyoto School," section 3.6.

of non-interference: "Liberalism is also a fighting creed."[107] But the risk here is as real as is at times the ethical imperative to take it. Today, as the so-called "war on terrorism" blends with a deeply ambivalent fight to spread our conceptions of freedom and democracy to the Islamic world, we find ourselves increasingly exposed to the terrible physical and moral dangers of taking this risk. The Kyoto School philosophers, in their time, ran the risk of taking their ethical ideals—such as "the principle of world-of-worlds formation"—as fighting creeds, and inadvertently succumbed in part to the danger of aiding rather than reforming Japanese imperialism.

To critically note the grave risk of generalizing a specific conception of the just and the good, however, cannot in the end provide us with an excuse for never taking it. The enigma of how to conceive—both theoretically and practically—a world of worlds, as an open place wherein a genuine dialogue of cultures can take place, remains with us. And its core aporia is one that we must pass through, again and again, rather than avoid: We can only ever draw on and develop ideas with specific cultural genealogies in our efforts to conceive of the place wherein a dialogue between cultures should take place. Mindful of this aporia, we can at least venture here a modest general rule for attempting to think the proper place of cross-cultural dialogue, namely, that *this thinking must itself proceed dialogically*. The place for dialogue can itself only, and ever again, be opened up dialogically. In this essay on the Kyoto School, I have attempted not only to indicate some of the problems that haunt their thought, but first of all to show that their cross-cultural philosophies have much to contribute to this critical conversation.

107. TAYLOR, "The Politics of Recognition," in GUTMANN, *Multiculturalism*, 62.

Absolute Nothingness and Metanoetics

The Logic of Conversion in Tanabe Hajime

Takehana Yōsuke

In a "postscript" to *The Historicistic Development of Mathematics and Physics* (『数理の歴史主義的展開』, 1954), Tanabe Hajime 田辺 元 briefly looks back on the course of his philosophical life: "The first half of my philosophical research advanced by following Professor Nishida, and the later years by objecting to him" (XII: 233).[1] Obviously it was this later period that produced what we normally think of as Tanabe's own philosophy, driven by the desire to develop a philosophy critical of his one-time mentor Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎. His criticisms of Nishida, severe and multifaceted as they are, may be epitomized in the complaint that Nishida's nothingness is unmediated. To correct this Tanabe tries to work out a radical grounding of nothingness in what he calls a "logic of absolute mediation" (*zettai baikai no ronri* 絶対媒介の論理).

1. 『田辺元全集』 [Complete works of Tanabe Hajime] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1963–1964), 15 vols., cited in the text as THZ, followed by volume and page. The translations from *Philosophy as Metanoetics* are based on the English translation by Takeuchi Yoshinori et al. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), hereafter PM. All italics in the quotations are my own.

What is the significance of this mediated nothingness? In my view Tanabe's concept of nothingness is always *mediated* through the finiteness of human beings who exist in the historical world. It is widely accepted that Nishida employs the term "absolute nothingness" in order to express the reality of human existence in this world. When nothingness is described as *absolute*, this is to indicate the reality that cannot be understood objectively in rational terms. This absoluteness, however, did not necessarily include an opposition to the relative. Therein lies an unresolved problem in Nishida's philosophy. For insofar as absolute nothingness not only points to the original reality of human existence but also serves as a kind of philosophical principle, we are driven to the following question: How can human beings, as finite beings, relate to such an *absolute* principle?

As Nishitani Keiji accurately points out, one of the great facts of life is that we usually position ourselves on a standpoint of "discrimination" (*funbutsu* 分別), yet "Nishida seems not to take sufficient account of this fact philosophically or to find for it an appropriate place in his overall system."[2] In this sense, it could be said that Nishida's nothingness disregards the fact of the finiteness of human beings. To borrow Nishitani's phrase, it is this "Achilles heel" in Nishida's philosophy that shapes the standpoint of Tanabe's philosophy and gives it its originality.

The reason Tanabe is strongly conscious of the distance between the absolute and the relative is that he rejects philosophical views that seek to explain the historical world by way of a particular ultimate principle. Accordingly, he severely criticizes the absolute in Hegel or the "self-awareness of absolute nothingness" (*zettai mu no jikaku* 絶対無の自覚) in Nishida as leading to a rationalization of history. If Tanabe himself accepts absolute nothingness as a philosophical principle, it is only insofar as it is characterized as "something pursued" by the finite. But when it comes to illuminating the essence of the historical world through the concept of absolute nothingness, he inevitably faces the question: How can absolute nothingness itself be connected with the historical world? The whole development of Tanabe's thought from the time of his logic

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2. NISHITANI Keiji 西谷啓治, *Nishida Kitarō*, trans. by Yamamoto Seisaku and James W. Heisig (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 185.

of the species (*shu no ronri* 種の論理) may be said to represent an attempt to solve this aporia, the solution to which comes in 1946 with *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, a significant turning point in his thought. In what follows I should like to spell out Tanabe's understanding of absolute nothingness by clarifying the evolution of his philosophy from the logic of the species to the *Metanoetics.*

In his *Metanoetics* Tanabe indicates a shift from a standpoint of "self-power" (*jiriki* 自力) to a reconstruction of philosophy on the basis of "Other-power" (*tariki* 他力). This turnabout in his thought has its ground in an "inner experience" of metanoesis brought about by a sense of philosophical failure. To be sure, the "conversion," itself a richly ambivalent term in Tanabe,[3] gives added depth to his existential or religious-philosophical standpoint, but we are still left with the question: What is the *logical* meaning of this conversion? Far from simply abandoning the idea of absolute nothingness, Tanabe tries to develop it more logically. From this point of view, metanoetics is defined as "a *philosophy* that is not a philosophy" (*tetsugaku naranu tetsugaku* 哲学ならぬ 哲学), even though metanoetics is an attempt to "resurrect" philosophy by means of an Other-power that transcends mere reason, and thus in effect makes of metanoetics "a philosophy *that is not a philosophy.*[4] When

3. The concept of *tenkan* 転換 under consideration here to express the mutual and paradoxical dynamic at work between the relative and the absolute is difficult to capture in a single English word without inviting misunderstanding. I have elected to render it "conversion" because it maintains the opposition that the idea of "transformation" tends to do away with, and because of the convenient ambiguity contained in that word. "Conversion" connotes both a "transformation" in the sense one thing "turning into" another and a kind of revolving or "turning point." The direct connotation of a conceptual or religious *metanoia* (a conversion in thinking), which Japanese expresses in other terms, is sometimes, but not always, intended. Given this problem, the translators of *Philosophy as Metanoetics* opted to adjust the rendering of the term according to context but generally preferred "transformation."

4. NAKANO Hajime 中埜 肇 remarks. "As is shown in contradictory expressions such as 'a philosophy that is not a philosophy' and 'the philosophy of Other-power,' philosophy, as philosophy, that is to say, as a rational thinking, has no doubt already perished here [in *Metanoetics*]. Although the fact is clearly stated by Tanabe himself, the logic of dialectical mediation, which for him is nothing less than philosophy itself, lives on. How can we account for this?" 『田辺元集』 [An anthology of Tanabe Hajime] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1975), 456. The question is directly related to the understanding of the *Metano-*

we set the treatment of absolute nothingness in *Metanoetics* within the broader context of Tanabe's thought, we come to another set of questions: Where does the need to adopt the standpoint of metanoetics originate in Tanabe's thought? And in what does the *logical* significance of the "conversion" in *Metanoetics* consist?[5] Each of these questions deserves to be looked at closely.

Tanabe's idea of absolute nothingness

I begin with a brief review of the characteristics of Tanabe's absolute nothingness from his 1932 book *Hegel's Philosophy and Dialectics* (『ヘーゲル哲学と弁証法』) to his early essays on the "logic of the species" (1934–1935).

Generally speaking, as a philosophical principle, absolute nothingness cannot to substantialized into any form of being. In Nishida it is regarded as the "place," or *basho* 場所, of a predicate that cannot become

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etics, although Nakano himself insists that the standpoint of metanoetics should not be bound entirely to the logic of absolute mediation. This paper is an attempt to answer the same question.

5. The logical necessity for Tanabe to take the standpoint of metanoetics has already been discussed by a number of scholars from a variety of different perspectives. According to Nishitani, for example, if one carries the moment of finiteness with Tanabe to its furthest extreme where absolute nothingness is manifested only in the praxis of the finite, then the self-identity of the subject that remains in praxis collapses, and this necessarily brings Tanabe to a metanoetics where absolute nothingness appears as "absolute Other-power" (*Nishida Kitarō*, 168–71). Kōsaka Masaaki 高坂正顕, in speaking of the problem of religiosity in Tanabe's philosophy, points out that the penchant for religion is already present in his earlier philosophy (for example, in the element of "belief" introduced into dialectical unity or in his devotional approach to Dōgen in the essay "My Philosophical View of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*" [『正法眼蔵の哲学私観』, 1939], and this forms the foundation of the standpoint of "metanoetics." See his 『西田哲学と田辺哲学』 [Nishida's philosophy and Tanabe's philosophy], in 『高坂正顕著作集』 [The collected works of Kōsaka Masaaki, hereafter KMC] (Tokyo: Risōsha, 1964–1970), VIII: 338–41). Takeuchi Yoshinori 武内義範 argues that the standpoint of "absolute critique" (絶対批判), which makes up the logical side of metanoetics, is derived from Kant's practical reason, on which Tanabe's philosophy is originally based,「宗教哲学──その理解のための序章」[Philosophy of religion: A preface to its understanding],『田辺哲学とは』[What is Tanabe's philosophy?] (Kyoto: Tōeisha, 1991), 181–4.

a subject. In Tanabe, on the contrary, it is the ongoing and undetermined act of mediation itself. This is the first and most important characteristic of Tanabe's absolute nothingness:

> Nothingness, of course, does not exist as such (if it were, it would be being, not nothingness) but consists in the act of negating being. Absolute nothingness is the further negation of this act and therefore represents the mediating unity that negates the negating activity of nothingness, bracketing it and restoring negated being as emptiness. (VI: 131)

All of this Tanabe condenses into the simple phrase, "Absolute nothingness means the act of negatively mediating itself in an absolute manner" (VI: 473).

This aspect of absolute nothingness is based on Tanabe's "logic of absolute mediation," which is both the fundamental standpoint of his philosophy and the brunt of his criticism against Nishida. His view is that all immediacy needs to be understood as part of a process of absolute mediation: "In philosophy, logic must be an absolute mediation that does not presuppose any immediacy, an absolute mediation in which even presuppositions are mediated" (VI: 172). This is possible because immediacy is defined as the negative mediation on which the logical affirmation is based, or in Tanabe's words, because "every negation is considered as a negation in affirmation and becomes a mediation for affirmation" (VI: 173). Tanabe's aim here is to provide a logical grounding for his logic of the species by regarding the element of immediate life (the species) not only as something resisting rational logic but also as the negative mediation through which logic comes about.

Here we see the link between the logic of absolute mediation and Tanabe's critique of Nishida. To claim that any logic completes itself by taking immediacy as its negative mediation implies that any logic that is *not* mediated by a negative aspect and stands alone on its own inevitably collapses into the immediate. Thus even Nishida's absolute nothingness, insofar as it is not mediated by the negative aspect of the species, remains stuck in the immediate:

> The mediation of nothingness is actually a mere immediacy.… The logic of the *basho* of nothingness is not the logic it appears to be since

it takes as its standpoint not absolute mediation but the immediacy of place. (VI: 202–3)

This criticism of Nishida's absolute nothingness is what gives Tanabe's thought its first distinguishing character, namely the location of the essence of absolute nothingness in the act of mediation. More concretely, Tanabe considers absolute nothingness to be mediated by the negative element of the species, or by the act that affirms this element in the negation of negation.

A second characteristic of Tanabe's absolute nothingness, as we have seen, is that it does not determine itself as a *basho* but is "pursued" by the finite. This is apparent in his allusion to absolute nothingness as "the *transcendent* whole" (*chōetsuteki zentai* 超越的全体). In a clear reference to Hegel's *Idee* as the subject of the absolute universal (*zettai fuhen no shukan* 絶対普遍の主観), he writes:

> This is *the transcendent whole* that manifests itself everywhere as the ground of the dynamic relative unity that unfolds in making negation its mediation in the essentially relative opposition of subject and object, but which, at the same time, transcends every relative unity and embraces within itself the dynamic development of this unity. *Although it does not therefore exist in the way the finite-relative exists, it must be understood as what is always awakened to as the ground of the dynamic development of the finite relative existences.* This refers to the *nothingness, indeed the absolute nothingness, at the ground of being.* It also refers to the emptiness that transcends being and nothingness and into which both enter. (III: 103)

Tanabe also expresses this "transcendent whole" as "purposiveness without a purpose" (*mokuteki naki gōmokutekisei* 目的なき合目的性), and, in this sense, considers it a kind of teleological principle. This is why he speaks of it as a transcendent *whole*. By this he does not have in mind a whole that subordinates to itself the finite "parts" that exist historically, determining what direction they should take. If that were the case, history would turn into a kind of emanation from nothingness. Eager to avoid all teleological necessity in history, Tanabe was uncompromising in his criticism of Hegel's absolute and Nishida's "self-awareness of absolute nothingness" and insisted that the "whole" of which he spoke

could only be transcendent vis-à-vis social-historical existence. In this sense, "the transcendent whole" can be said to be an absolute nothingness for the finite.

This "transcendent whole" is manifested in the finite through praxis. In other words, it is the transcendent whole that appears as the "purposiveness *without purpose*" in the practical self-awareness of "the moment of the acting present" (*kōiteki genzai no shunkan* 行為的現在の瞬間, III: 168), in which the finite negates the kind of praxis aimed at realizing particular value:

> Moral praxis differs from action that merely has a sense of purpose. It is not an act in pursuit of a finite purpose and the realization of a relative value, but a volitional act that makes life itself its purpose and sees absolute value in itself. The good is the value that belongs only to this volitional act as absolute value, and the content of the good is a "purposiveness without purpose" whose aim is an *absolutely negative transcendent whole*. (III: 413–4)

Accordingly, the third characteristics of absolute nothingness consists in the assertion that only this moral praxis can enable the manifestation of absolute nothingness, which can be thought of entirely as a transcendent *for the finite*.

THE SELF-ALIENATION OF THE GENUS AND THE IDEA OF ABSOLUTE NOTHINGNESS

Tanabe's thought took concrete shape as a "logic of the species." As opposed to Nishida's logic of "individual–genus," Tanabe proposed a logic of "individual–*species*–genus" to stress the importance of negative mediation. But more than that, Tanabe intended his new logic to be a kind of "social ontology" insofar as it includes the particular elements of the species, things like race and class, that are left out of a scheme that thinks only in terms of individuals on the one side and the whole of the world on the other. This accounts for his practical interest in a critical analysis of the nation's control of individuals and in transforming the ground of that control into a "nation of humanity" (*jinrui-*

teki kokka 人類的国家). Hence logic of the species discloses the following concrete structure:

individual
race (ethnic nation)
nation (of humanity).

In this scheme absolute nothingness occupies the position of genus, that is, the nation understood as a nation of humanity. Obviously it does not correspond to any de facto existing nation since, as the act of mediation itself, absolute nothingness cannot simply be identified with that which is being mediated. Absolute nothingness is rather the principle that enables realization of the nation as genus. In a word, for Tanabe, the actual *specific* society, marked by the conflict of ego among individual egos competing with one another, is transformed into a community of human relationships based on a self-awareness of finiteness and realized in concrete moral praxis. This community, he asserts, is what he means by the nation as genus, as a "nation of humanity" sustained by finite beings with the will to overturn their limitations as a species, that is to negate the negativity that identifies them as belonging to a species. It is absolute nothingness that forms the foundational support for this negation of negation. The following passage illustrates the point:

> The absolute negating form of unity [the genus] not only secures the self-negation of the species in its mediating role, it preserves the negativity of the species as a negating element, making it a starting point and a mediator of conversion. This *practical turning point*—or what we may call a *punctum saliens aller Lebendigkeit*—is none other than the individual. Through the individual's action the species is negatively transformed into the collective unity of the genus, and the element of species, which represents the unity in itself, becomes the genus as a whole. (VI: 489)

This idea of the individual serving as a "practical point" for changing species into genus is sustained throughout Tanabe's logic of the species in the pre-war years.

It is worth noting here that the transcendent character of absolute nothingness for the finite is reflected in the nation itself, insofar as the

activity of absolute nothingness embodies an actualization of the "nation as genus." Simply put, the nation assumes the character of an ideal in the logic of the species, as witnessed in the following passage:

> The mediation for this sublation [of the species as substratum (*kitai* 基体) into the "nation as genus"] is the individual, who forms the harmonious relationship of self-*qua*-other within the nation. This absolute mediation of genus–species–individual is the logic of social being. It is, of course, not so much an actual fact as it is a *task to be fulfilled by praxis.* (VI: 233)

Tosaka Jun 戸坂 潤 is among those who criticizes this idealization of the nation:

> The important point is that the nation that Dr. Tanabe insists on so earnestly is an ideal nation or—to put it in terms that save it from sliding into an Hegelian emanationism—a kind of nation as nothingness, which is not to be identified with actually existing nations like Japan, China, Manchuria, Italy, or Ethiopia. As an ideal of moral praxis the nation should have this meaning, and it does not matter what concrete actual relation it bears to real nations (and the same case be said of races).[6]

Tanabe was sensitive to these sorts of criticism. While stressing that the nation in his logic of the species should not be regarded only as the aim of moral praxis, he candidly admits that it remains an ideal.[7] Later modifications to his position may be said to represent an answer to this question.

Given the general structure of the logic of the species, the idealistic conception of the nation is not necessarily a flaw that needs modifying. It was a more practical concern that drove Tanabe to alter the logical status of the nation, namely to expand his logic from a *social* ontology to include a *historical* ontology.

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6. TOSAKA Jun 戸坂 潤,「『種の論理』——田辺元博士の所説に就いて」[The logic of the species: The theory of Dr. Tanabe Hajime],『戸坂潤全集』[Complete works of Tosaka Jun] (Tokyo; Keisō Shobō, 1966–1979), III: 300.

7. See, for example. THZ VI: 453–4, VII: 30.

Concerning the relation between the logic of the species and history, Tanabe has this to say:

> History, especially history based on the standpoint of the "particular," can only be constructed by regarding the species as a substratum. The mediating role that history plays stems from the mediating nature of the species…. Is it only as a logic of the substratum that the logic of the species can hope to survive as a logic of history? (VI: 203)

As Tanabe notes, we need to bring into the picture the aspect of the species not covered by the individual or the genus. But it is not possible to explain the formation of the historical world through the mutual mediation of individual, species, genus as long as the genus remains, as it did for Tanabe, out in the "beyond" as an ideal nation. For the logic of the species to become a historical ontology, the genus needs to be understood not only as an ideal transcending the actual but also as something concretely related to the historical world as such.

This problem is addressed by the introduction of the concept of the "self-alienation of the genus" (*rui no jiko sogai* 類の自己疎外), spelled out in two 1937 essays: 「種の論理に対する批評に答う」[A reply to critiques of the logic of the species] and 「種の論理の意味を明にす」[A clarification of the meaning of the logic of the species].[8] Originally, the idea of the self-alienation of the genus was intended as an answer to the criticisms raised by Takahashi Satomi 高橋里美 and Mutai Risaku 務台理作 against Tanabe's new logic.[9] Briefly put, both of them argued that the introduction of the aspect of the species is only required if one first accepts his view of logic, since the immediate and the irrational contradict his asser-

8. The idea of the self-alienation of the genus had in fact already appeared earlier. For example, we read in his 『論理の社会存在論的構造』[The socio-ontological structure of logic, 1936]: "The genus cannot be relativized as a species; it is only when the genus loses its absolute universality through its own *self-alienation* that it falls into the species" (VI: 327). It is thus more accurate to say that in responding to his critics Tanabe was giving this idea a more centrol role than it had before.

9. TAKAHASHI Satomi 高橋里美,「種の論理について」[On the logic of species],『思想』[Thought] 175, 177, 178 (1936–1937); MUTAI Risaku 務台理作,「社会存在論に於ける世界構造の問題」[The problem of the structure of world in the social ontology]『哲学論叢』[Philosophical debate] 5 (1937).

tion that everything can be subsumed into a "logic of absolute mediation." In response, he argues that the historical world, as the species of the finite existing in the present, is not only immediate but also alienated from the past unity of the genus, and in this sense is mediated by the genus.

As the following statement makes clear, Tanabe's reasons for speaking of the species as a self-alienation of the genus is to establish concrete point of contact between genus and reality:

> Given that affirmation is always made by way of a dialectical negation and that alienation always accompanies unity, it seems obvious that the dualistic division of historical reality must be understood, as I have, in terms of the alienated aspect of unity. (VI: 454)

At the same time, he acknowledges the inadequacies of the theory insofar as the irrationality we find in reality cannot be explained simply as a self-alienation of genus. This imperfection in the logic of the species, he goes on, was "inevitable, given my original intentions with the idea and stems from the presence of an ahistorical tendency in my thinking."

The important point here is that this concept effected a change in Tanabe's idea of absolute nothingness. Previously he had seen the essence of absolute nothingness to lie in the individual's affirmation of the negativity of the species, in the negation of a negation. Broadly conceived, this meant that absolute nothingness marked a move from the particular to the universal. With the notion of the self-alienation of the genus, however, the unity of the genus realized by the individual in the absolute-negative act of nothingness disintegrates and descends into the being of the species. In this sense, absolute nothingness is defined as the act of making the self-alienation of the genus function as a negative mediation in order to achieve absolute negativity. In other words, in alienating itself in the move from the universal to the particular, it returns from the particular to the universal, the alienation serving to mediate the regression. "Absolute nothingness," he writes, "mediates being which in turn mediates its way back to itself" (VI: 473), adding later that "absolute negation returns to itself by way of the mediation of the self-negation as self-alienation" (VI: 474). Hence the shift in orientation from the universal to the particular.

THE *ŌGEN* OF THE NATION AND
THE *GENSŌ* OF ABSOLUTE NOTHINGNESS

We see a certain evolution of the logic of the species as historical philosophy in the notion of the self-alienation of the genus where the suggestion is made that the meaning of history as process consists in the threefold mediation of individual–species–genus. Tanabe was not himself convinced, however, that his logic of the species was sufficiently historical. This brings us to the next step in his development of the logic into a full-fledged historical philosophy.

Two opposing tendencies are present in the shaping of history through the mediation of the species: the tendency for the individual to achieve the genus by making the species its negative mediation, and the tendency for the genus to lose its unity and fall into its alienated form owing to the disruptive nature of the species at the ground of the genus. Clearly the self-alienation of the genus belongs to the latter. It cannot lie within the realm of rational activity and hence is something contingent for individuals. For history harbors irrational elements and develops in a way that lies beyond the capacities of individuals to effect. In fact, however, Tanabe does not call on the self-alienation of the genus to complete the transformation of the logic of the species into a historical philosophy. In the final pages of "A Clarification of the Meaning of the Logic of the Species" he asserts that "the logic of the species must be a logic of historical reality and at the same time a logic of *ethics*" (VI: 521). As we have seen, it is from a standpoint of moral praxis that Tanabe seeks to historicize his logic, a task he tackles in his 1939 essay「国家的存在の論理」[The logic of national existence]. He states at the outset:

> Up until now, what I have discussed as "social ontology" represents only a partial structure of what self-awareness of historical social reality itself is. This social ontology does not arrive at the practical self-awareness of development-qua-construction and becoming-qua-praxis (*hatten soku kennsetsu, seisei soku kōi* 発展即建設、生成即行為) in and for itself. It is not until social ontology develops into a logic of history that it can become self-awareness of concrete reality. (VII: 27)

This practical self–awareness of development-qua-construction and

becoming-qua-praxis is meant to indicate a standpoint that regards historical development as the process of human beings forming nations. This is what makes it a logic of history for Tanabe, a historical philosophy whose subject is the nation:

> Social existence develops historically only through the constructive praxis [of nations]. (VII: 29)

> It is not that first there is a world and then nations come about, but rather the historical world is formed only in tandem with the birth of nation. (VII: 57)

From these statements we see that for Tanabe moral praxis no longer refers simply to the standpoint from which the individual exists in reality but to the whole of the historical world. It can therefore be said to function as a principle of historical philosophy and thus to set up a relationship between the two in which the process of bringing about nations through praxis can be directly regarded as history itself.

The concept of the nation itself needs to be adjusted to justify such a position. For this reason, Tanabe proposes seeing the nation as the *ōgen* 応現 of absolute nothingness. He takes the term *ōgen* from the Diamond Sutra to mean "manifesting itself according to the occasion" (VII: 60). He adopts it to explain the way in which absolute nothingness manifests itself in being as its own other. "The *ōgen* of nothingness is being as the negation of nothingness and at the same time as its manifestation [*genjō* 現成]" (VII: 61). Noting that all social institutions include some kind of organization (VII: 76), he describes them as concrete historical manifestations of nationhood and as "national mediations" (VII: 79).[10] On this basis, he tries to show that the nation is not separate from reality but appears in the historical world itself as the *ōgen* of absolute nothingness.

Tanabe further elaborates the concept of *ōgen* by the *gensō* 還相 or

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10. Tanabe does not in fact absolutize the modern form of the nation state; nor does it think that it takes shape and develops in history as an inevitable outgrowth of human society. Nevertheless his understanding of the nation as a form of organization that societies possess historically implies that to some extent the nation belongs to the society that actualizes it. This seems to lead to the conclusion that Tanabe is affirming the reality of the state as it is.

"returning" of absolute nothingness (VII: 61). He uses this word, Buddhist in origin, to denote a movement from the absolute to the relative or from transcendence to immanence. Its opposite movement is called *osō* 往相 "going," as we see in the following passage:

> "Going" [*osō*] does not arise without a corresponding "returning" [*gensō*] of transcendence to immanence, because the going takes its sense of moving from immanence to transcendence only when transcendence reciprocates by mediating immanence and lifting it up to itself. (VII: 148)

Tanabe regards this *gensō* as an indispensable ingredient in his logic of absolute mediation:

> It is necessary for dialectics to have the aspect of *gensō*. Insofar as it has only the aspect of *osō* in practical mediation, it cannot be absolutely mediated. (VII: 64)

The criticism implied here is directed at his own position thus far:

> I have strongly opposed views that end up making absolute nothingness a kind of immediacy in a *basho* of nothingness precisely because this conflicts with the dialectic of absolute mediation. That said, I have to confess that I was stuck in the opposite abstraction in my standpoint of practical mediation as heretofore conceived. While I can see no way of avoiding the conclusion that the immediacy of nothingness as *basho* is an abstraction that eventually turns nothingness into being, the mere practical standpoint of absolute mediation is an abstraction headed in the opposite direction insofar as it considers nothingness merely as nothingness in itself and hence makes it immediate. (VII: 61)

As these statement show, Tanabe is questioning his previous view of absolute nothingness as conceived merely in terms of *osō*, that is, merely in terms of praxis by the relative, and adjusting it in order to stress that the logic of absolute mediation must include the element of *gensō* as well. The logic of absolute mediation, therefore, means that action from the immanent and relative to the transcendent and absolute is mediated absolutely by the reverse movement, so that absolute nothingness can

be said to complete its activity only when mediated by the relative aspect of *gensō*.

As I indicated earlier, this movement from the absolute to the relative in absolute nothingness had already shown up in Tanabe's discussion of the self-alienation of the genus and his subsequent rethinking of the structure of absolute nothingness.[11] This movement comes into sharper relief with the introduction of the *gensō* of absolute nothingness and its treatment in his logic of absolute mediation.

We may therefore infer that the development of the logic of the species that has to do with the ideal nature of the nation is the same process that absolute nothingness must follow, and should not merely be regarded as an initial transcendent gradually assuming the movement of a "return." In this sense, the notion of *ōgen* may be seen to represent a final solution to the problem. At the same time, this process entails an expansion of the role of the nation in the logic of the species—an idea that Tanabe himself would later come to criticize in his *Metanoetics*.

Nonetheless, his logic of absolute mediation, as the mutually mediated activity of the relative and the absolute with an emphasis on the *gensō* of absolute nothingness, survives to play a fundamental role after the *Metanoetics*. In this sense, the development that his logic of the species underwent may be said to have laid the ground for Tanabe's later thought.

We should not overlook the discontinuity resulting from the notion of *ōgen*. That is to say, the logic of the species had already shifted its focus away from the species and been reoriented toward a "logic of the *genus* or *nation*." True, the essence of the logic of the species, the negative mediating role that species played vis-à-vis absolute nothingness,

11. The word *gensō* itself had already appeared in "A Clarification of the Meaning of the Logic of the Species," but there it was used not to characterize absolute nothingness but to explain the dual nature of the individual. According to Tanabe, it is through the mediation of the individual that the species is raised to the level of the genus, and at the same time it is because of the individual that the genus descends into species. In that context, he speak of the individual as "the intersection of *ōsō* and *gensō*" (VI: 491). *Gensō* means the movement from genus to species here and, in this sense, we can think of it as virtually identical with the self-alienation of the genus, though Tanabe himself does not draw the connection.

remained despite the talk of a self-alienation of the genus. But Tanabe no longer sought this negative mediation in the species but turned to the genus or nation instead:

> The *ōgen* of nothingness is being as the negation of nothingness and at the same time as its manifestation. *This ōgen is none other than being as negative mediation,* which in the concrete means that non-being is at the same time being. (VII: 61)

Hence the attempt to use the logic of the species to solve the problem of the nation ended up transfiguring it into a logic of the nation.[12]

The standpoint of metanoetics

The dissatisfaction prompted by this turn to a "logic of the nation" found an outlet in his philosophy of metanoetics. In his preface to 『種の論理の弁証法』 [A dialectics of the logic of the species] that followed his *Metanoetics* in 1947 he writes:

> In my earlier thinking, it was inevitable that I would slip into a tendency toward the very Hegelian rationalism I had always criticized, to absolutize the nation as he had done and to absorb into it the freedom of individuals because nothingness, the principle of absolute mediation, …was not yet sufficiently negative and had not yet been made to transcend to the bottom of contradiction, and thus was incapable of sloughing off its identity with reason. (VII: 253–4)

It is interesting that he faults the incompleteness of his notion of absolute nothingness for the fall into Hegelian rationalism. To pursue this point, we may begin with a brief consideration of metanoetics (*zangedō* 懺悔道).

To begin with, metanoetics is understood as the absolutely radical standpoint of finite being, a standpoint in which the self realizes its ineluctable limits and lets go of itself in despair:

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12. Tanabe ceases to use the term "logic of the species" after "The Logic of National Existence," apparently intent on replacing this idea with the fated idea of a "logic of the nation."

> Metanoesis must begin with a casting away of the self that is no longer qualified to exist because it is forced to recognize, through suffering and sorrow, that its being is valueless. (IX: 20; PM, 5)

In the encounter with radical evil, however, the self is paradoxically resurrected: "Amazingly enough, however, the power urging us to forsake ourselves is at the same time the very power that reaffirms our once negated being." This is the second meaning of metanoetics, its "affirmative aspect" in contrast to the "negative aspect" of submission (IX: 21; PM, 6). In short, metanoesis entails both repentance and "conversion"; the original self-awareness of the finitude of self is at the same time its "breakthrough" (*Durchbruch*) (IX: 19; PM, 4).

Clearly metanoetics, as the way of metanoesis, is not mere objective description but is expressed in subjective terms closely related to Tanabe's own experience. Still, it is not merely an effusion of his personal sentiment or simple confession of belief. This is evident in his adoption of "absolute critique" (*zettai hihan* 絶対批判) as the corresponding "logic of the metanoetics":

> Metanoetics is not a product of my subjective feeling; nor is it simply a matter of my having been so overpowered by the Pure Land Shin doctrine expounded by Shinran that I was forced to mold my thought in conformity to it alone. I would argue that metanoetics is the inevitable result of philosophy pursued as the critique of reason. Accordingly, I refer to metanoetics as *absolute critique. (*IX: 46; PM, 37)

This absolute critique, which constitutes the negative aspect of metanoetics, reinforces the complete collapse of autonomous reason as a ground for philosophy. Tanabe discusses this problem in connection with the Kantian critique:

> Contrary to what Kant thought in his critical philosophy, it is impossible for the autonomy of reason to provide its own foundations. Reason endowed with the capacity for self-criticism cannot evade the ultimate predicament of the autonomies of practical reason, since it is caught up in the radical evil stemming from basic human finitude. The critique of reason needs to be pressed to the point of an abso-

lute critique through "absolute disruption" and absolute crisis, which constitute the self-abandonment of reason. (IX: 32; PM, 19–20)

For Tanabe, the inadequacy of Kant's criticism consists in the fact that he excluded reason from the critique and, as a result, did not bring himself to question the very idea of a rational critique. This makes his critique fundamentally flawed. If, on the other hand, the reason doing the criticizing is itself to become an object of criticism, this would seem to require a second reason, thus landing us in the helpless position of an infinite regress. This self-contradiction is why a truly radical critique brings about its own collapse: "It is both a matter of destiny and ultimate truth that in the pursuit of full autonomy, reason must finally break down" (XI: 48; PM, 39).

Nor is practical reason any help in removing this self-contradiction, and that for the simple reason that human existence is by nature rooted in radical evil. As Tanabe notes, "the confrontation of ethics with radical evil cannot avoid facing an antinomy and arriving ultimately at *zange* [metanoesis]" (IX: 124; PM, 127). Although this problem is not pursued along the lines of the *Critique of Practical Reason*,[13] Tanabe explains that freedom and contingency, good and evil, are absolutely opposed and yet at the same time so dependent on each other that the antinomy inevitably brings us to "the contradiction that what ought to be is not, and what ought not to be is" (IX: 153; PM, 159), a contradiction beyond even the powers of practical reason.

What is important for us to note here is that this "absolute critique" marks the self-surrender of the standpoint of moral praxis on which Tanabe's philosophy had essentially been based.[14] Previously, praxis meant an overcoming of the will by a finite being in order to pursue a particular value; it was the sole condition for the manifestation of absolute nothingness and the realization of the nation. In *Metanoetics*, how-

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13. KŌSAKA Masaaki discusses this problem in relation to the concrete content of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason. Nishida's Philosophy and Tanabe's Philosophy,* KMC VIII: 341–9.

14. What is being denied here is praxis based on "self-power," not praxis as such. This continues to be Tanabe's fundamental standpoint after *Metanoetics.* He considers the resurrection of finite beings through the activity of "Other-power" to be a kind of praxis (*kōi* 行為) which he names *gyō* 行, adopting a religious term.

ever, this possibility of negating the will is completely discarded. Finite beings are considered to be rooted in radical evil and thus driven to self-contradiction.

In other words, the defining mark of Tanabe's dialectic here is that he sought to base dialectical synthesis not on speculation, as Hegel had, but on practical reason, or as he put it, an advance "from Kant to Hegel" accompanied by a return "from Hegel to Kant":

> We may say that understanding Hegel properly requires reviving Kant's standpoint towards the priority of practical reason and giving it a solid footing. (III: 134)

But when we come to the logic of absolute critique, reason loses its ability to sustain its autonomy even in a practical sense. Accordingly, there is no alternative but to forsake the dialectical synthesis secured in the standpoint of moral praxis.

Absolute nothingness as a principle of conversion

The next point to be clarified is the significance of the "affirmative aspect" of metanoetics, that is, the sense in which finite being is resurrected by "Other-power." This will also help clear up the question of how the metanoetics came to affect Tanabe's understanding of absolute nothingness.

The claim that moral praxis is abandoned through "absolute critique" assumes that Tanabe is able to negate completely his idea of grasping absolute nothingness from a finite position, or as he says, from a standpoint of "self-power" or *ōso*. As a result, the gap between the absolute and relative, which could be bridged only barely by practical self-awareness, becomes an *absolute* gap in the context of absolute critique, and absolute nothingness acquires the meaning of the transcendent Other over and against the finite. To borrow Tanabe's phrase, absolute nothingness, "which is nothingness in every sense of the word, is transcendentally opposed to the nature of our existence as beings, and it in no

way allows us to think of it as identifiable with an absolute-qua-relativene" (VII: 360).

I find this idea of the transcendence of absolute nothingness essential to reaching the logical core of the *Metanoetics*. It is precisely the absence of the aspect of transcendence in absolute nothingness that accounts for the absolutizing of the nation:

> Nothingness lacked transcendence in my thought when I was not aware of a religious action-faith-witness (*gyōshinshō* 行信証) mediated through absolute nothingness in metanoetics. For this reason, I could not avoid the tendency, on the one hand, to expropriate the individual subject with the result that the absoluteness of nothingness became immanent to and identical with the individual subject; and on the other hand, to become identified with the substratum of species and, as a result, to absolutize the nation. (VII: 367)

As noted earlier, Tanabe originally considered absolute nothingness to be a transcendent counter-positioned to the finite. This attitude stemmed from his criticism that the *basho* in which Nishida places absolute nothingness and the absolute in Hegel inevitably end up in a kind of Plotinian "emanationism," becoming so completely "given" that the problem of individual sin and historical contingency are swept aside. In developing his logic of the species the aspect of "returning" or *gensō* gradually came to make itself felt in the idea of absolute nothingness as a way to overcome the problem of the nation that was a consequence of this way of viewing the transcendence of absolute nothingness. From the viewpoint of metanoetics, he would later fault this idea of the nation for relying on an insufficiently transcendent idea of nothingness.

On the one hand, absolute nothingness is said to act on the finite self in metanoetis as *gensō,* meaning that the salvation of the self is wrought not by the self but by Other-power. On the other hand, Tanabe insists that introducing the notion of *gensō* does not imply that absolute nothingness becomes an immanent principle of history, but rather that it remains transcendent vis-à-vis the finite. These two aspects of absolute nothingness are diametrically opposed: there is no alternative but to recognize that absolute nothingness includes an aspect of *gensō* in which praxis by "self-power" is completely negated and the way from the rela-

tive to the absolute is blocked. Unless *gensō* is taken in a radical sense, the absolute rupture is lost and absolute nothingness inevitably slides into immanence. The fundamental question in the *Metanoetics* is thus how to relate these two contradictory aspects of absolute nothingness, how to justify its transcendence while preserving its aspect of *gensō*."

The contradiction is resolved only by seeing the absolute distance of the relative from the absolute as a form of mediation that enables absolute nothingness to "return," that is to say, to manifest itself in the relative. In other words, absolute nothingness is realized only through the independence of the finite that opposed it negatively as absolutely other. Thus absolute nothingness becomes "a self-negating principle" that makes its affirmation possible by negating itself toward the finite. "The absolute, as absolute mediation, is *a self-negating principle*, for which reason the absolute allows the relative—as the negative aspect of the absolute—to possess a relative independence" (IX: 35; PM, 24). Absolute nothingness allows itself to be mediated by the independence of the finite and hence to become a "self-negating principle." To put it concretely, it allows for the sin of the finite. For this reason absolute nothingness is defined as "nothingness-qua-*love* (*mu soku ai* 無即愛)" or as a "Great Nay-qua-*Great Compassion* (*daihi soku daihi* 大非即大悲)" (IX: 5; PM, li).

Such self-negativity of absolute nothingness does not, however, entail a unilateral structuring of the absolute, as if it could stand alone in opposition to the relative. Were this the case, nothingness would lose its nature of ceaseless activity and take the fixed form of a being. Thus Tanabe sees absolute nothingness as mediated in the self-negating performance of metanoesis by the finite and, in this sense, defines it as *nothingness*-qua-love and *Great Nay*-qua-Great Compassion. The relationship is one of strict mutuality, like two sides of a single coin: absolute nothingness realizing itself affirmatively by grounding the independence of the finite as its mediation, the finite recovering its existence on the basis of "love" or of "Great Compassion." Tanabe describes this mutuality of the relative and the absolute as follows:

> The self-negation and transformation wrought by relative beings among themselves is made possible because they are affirmed by nothingness, whereas this self-negating act of nothingness becomes its own

affirmation and its realization in the world. *This absolute transformation* [*zettai tenkan* 絶対転換] *is truly absolute nothingness and at the same time absolute mediation.* (IX: 152; PM, 158)

To paraphrase: the finite is the negative other standing in opposition to absolute nothingness because, as being, it is rooted in radical evil and is inclined to rebel against what is absolute. If the absolute were an immediate and static existence without any relation to the finite, it could not be absolute nothingness. Absoluteness, *as nothingness in act*, must therefore be thought to affirm itself only through the mediation of the finite as its own negative other. This means that it declines to affirm itself out of itself alone and, *in an act of self-negation*, allows for sin in the finite. This act is manifest as "love" or "Great Compassion." Absolute nothingness manifests such self-negativity only when the unbridgeable gap between the relative and the absolute expands itself to the extreme at which the finite persists in its independence and the absolute stands opposed as transcendent other. To the extent that the distance from the absolute is unbridgeable, leaving the finite no choice but to collapse and fall apart; and in thus negating its existence out of awareness of its sin, absolute nothingness is able to manifest its self-negating act and the finite to recover its existence.

This relationship in which the affirmation of the relative is at the same time the self-negation of the absolute, and the affirmation of the absolute at the same time the self-negation of the former—to borrow Tanabe's phrase, the mutuality in which "the affirmation of independence is made possible only through the negation of dependency and… the self-negation of dependency is made possible only through the affirmation of independence" (IX: 248; PM, 273)—is the essence of the "absolute mediation" as found in the *Metanoetics*. The absolute is defined as absolute nothingness in virtue of its *self-negating* act mediated through the independence of the finite. Tanabe speaks of this aspect of absolute nothingness as a transforming "conversion" (*tenkan* 転換) rather than as a "self-negating principle." As I understand him, his aim is to show clearly that absolute nothingness does not stop at the unilateral act of relating itself to the finite as a mere self-negating principle but includes its own *mediation through the self-negation of the finite*. It is absolute nothing-

ness as *an act of transforming conversion* that fundamentally supports the paradoxical and mutually reversible relation in which the affirmation and the negation of the relative and the absolute are inseparably intertwined. Consequently, the *logical* meaning of conversion in the *Metanoetics* is to be sought at the point where absolute nothingness is transformed into a self-negating principle of *conversion*.

Evidently this gives Tanabe a way to solve the problem of the aporia I pointed to at the start: How are we to explain a relationship in which absolute nothingness positions itself vis-à-vis the historical world without removing the finiteness that belongs to human beings? The more this finiteness is stressed, the more absolute nothingness comes to be seen as "pursued" by the finite, removing the possibility of connecting it concretely to the historical world. If, however, the link of absolute nothingness to reality is explained by seeing it simply as a principle immanent to history, then finitude, and with it the radical evil and contingency of human beings, are obliged to recede. This is the aporia towards which the logic of the species was eventually driven as Tanabe developed it until, in his *Metanoetics,* he argued that *the finiteness of human beings itself is the only possible basis for absolute nothingness to relate to the historical world through self-negation or gensō.*

The originality of Tanabe's philosophy does not stop at his insistence on the self-negation of absolute nothingness. This question had already been raised by Nishida in 『無の自覚的限定』[The self-awakened determination of nothingness, 1932].[15] Rather, the originality lies in his idea that the self-negation of absolute nothingness must always be mediated by the self-negation of the finite, and as a result, that nothingness must be considered a principle of *conversion*. This approach seems to me not only to show one way to inherit Nishida's philosophy critically but also suggests that the idea of absolute nothingness can lay the foundations for a new ontology amidst the current climate of opinion that would dismiss discussions about what the historical world in which we exist as mere metaphysics.

It was through Tanabe that Nishida came to realize the problem of the self-negation of absolute nothingness, namely, how nothingness itself is related to the historical world. But this is too complicated a question to treat in any detail here.

Watsuji Tetsurō's Ethics of Milieu

Pauline Couteau

When we reflect on a given philosophy, we tend to associate it with a *place*, implicitly assuming that geographical location itself modifies the very reflexive processes of thought. If this is the case, might it not be possible to think of the "place" in which a philosophy develops as a milieu or site of formation and development? May we not think of "place" itself as a construction that takes place within the very different circumstances of previous encounters—encounters that may, in turn, shape philosophical identity?

The "place" of the philosophical texts explored in this essay is post-Meiji Era Japan, one of the most fertile sites of radically different thought in-the-making. During the first part of the twentieth century, the philosophers of the Kyoto School, centered around the charismatic figure of Nishida Kitarō, worked to elaborate a new topology of philosophical thought, fundamentally different from but nevertheless in dialogue with that of the West. From this encounter between the Kyoto School and the West, new and original approaches to the traditional problems of philosophy emerged, allowing us, even obliging us, to rethink the very terms by means of which we understand our relationship to the world. It should be stressed in this connection that the Kyoto School did not simply re-contextualize or re-situate existing Western philosophical con-

cepts. Since equivalents for fundamental philosophical terms often did not exist in the Japanese language, Japanese thinkers were forced over the course of several decades to create new words and concepts *within* their own idiom in order to "translate" and express the philosophical thought of the West.[1] In reading the philosophies of other cultures, Japanese and European thinkers alike must remain attentive to the presuppositions inherent in language itself.

Watsuji Tetsurō, the subject of this essay, could easily be pointed to as an example of a philosopher whose thought took shape on the fertile ground of such cross-cultural encounter. Many of Watsuji's own reflections on the nature of the human being were developed in the context of a dialogue with Heidegger's *Being and Time,* as well as with existentialist thought more generally (which tends to conceptualize existence in ways relatively near to that of Buddhism). Although the two approaches are in many ways close, existentialism remains an analysis of the human being as an autonomous individual, primarily understood neither in its relation to others nor to the living environment. Watsuji, on the other hand, defines ethics as "the study of human being*s*,"[2] understanding by this the relationship between the individual and society, between human beings and their milieu, which he takes to be a fundamental characteristic of human existence.

Given the social and environmental problems that face us in the early years of the twenty-first century, we might say that at this moment in history the relationship between human beings and their existential milieu has shown itself to be more problematic—and more dangerous—than ever before. One does not have to fall into gloom-mongering to realize that current understandings of this relationship have come to threaten the very survival of our milieu and hence, too, of the human beings that depend on it. It is our contention here that Watsuji's thought can give us the intellectual means to approach this relationship from a truly ethical perspective. Through Watsuji's *mesology*, understood as the study of the existential milieu, and his ethics or "study of human being*s*," we will

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1. As an example, see the essay by SAITŌ Takako in this volume (pages 1–21).

2. 「人間の学としての倫理学」 [Ethics as a study of human beings] was published in 1934, one year before *Fūdo*. This essay anticipates the content of his *Ethics*.

argue, it is possible to conceive of a new and different approach to such relationships, rooted in the distinctive traits of particular cultures and their respective ideas of the world. Focusing on the texts of *Ethics* and *Fūdo*,[3] we begin with an analysis of Watsuji's conception of human existence and then proceed with an explication of his major concepts. It is our hope that this reading will help to open up some of the possibilities, and potential applications, of this singular thinker.

WATSUJI'S JOURNEY

Watsuji Tetsurō (1889–1960) is regarded as one of the greatest figures in the circle surrounding the "Kyoto School." I use the term "surrounding" deliberately because, in spite of the fact that Watsuji was deeply influenced by Nishida's philosophy, he is generally not considered a member of the closest circle of Nishida's "school." One of the reasons for this may be geographical. Although in 1925 Nishida offered Watsuji a lectureship at Kyoto Imperial University to oversee all the courses in ethics, a mere two years later Watsuji was sent to Germany for three years of study and research, as was customary for many Japanese academics at that time. In the end, Watsuji was forced to return to Japan prematurely due to the death of his father. After holding a part-time position at Ryūkoku University, in 1931 he was appointed professor at Kyoto University. In 1934 he was offered the position of full professor at Tokyo Imperial University's Faculty of Letters. Watsuji took up the position in 1934 and remained there until his retirement in 1949. Thus, although Watsuji clearly shared Nishida's project of deepening the dialogue between East and West and of building a "neontology"[4] respon-

3. WATSUJI Tetsurō『倫理学』[Ethics], included in『和辻全集』[Collected works of WATSUJI Tetsurō, hereafter WTZ];『風土』[Milieu, referred to in the text as *Fūdo*], WTZ VIII: 1–256

4. This neologism is taken from the paper of Michel Dalissier, included in the present volume (pages 99–142). It is meant to stress the difference between the standpoints of nothingness and of being. The Greek term *meontology*—the ontology of non-being as opposed to that of absolute being—does not work, since the distinction marked here is not that of the dualism of being and non-being. This term is also

sive to a milieu other than that of Europe, the geographical distance between them helps to explain why Watsuji is nevertheless often considered separately from the core of the Kyoto School.

Although Watsuji had many philosophical interests, his thought is primarily oriented to ethics, understood in the sense of the original Greek *ethos*, or the rules proper to each community. For Watsuji such an ethics is inseparable from the study of milieu or "mesology" (in Augustin BERQUE's translation[5]). Just to skim through Watsuji's bibliography is intimidating. In addition to commentaries on major philosophers such as Aristotle and Kant, Watsuji wrote a number of treatises on ancient architecture and thought as well as traditional Japanese drama, ethics and aesthetics, Buddhism and Confucianism, Greek thought, and so on. Such a diversity of themes and subjects underscores the fact that Watsuji's philosophy is located at the intersection between past and future and also between the diverse *places* in which various forms of thought and philosophy have developed.

One might even say that Watsuji's intention was, in his own inimitable way, to sketch a "cartography" of thought. Watsuji's first graduation thesis—on Nietzsche—was rejected by Inoue Tetsujirō, then the highest authority in philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University. He then wrote a new dissertation in 1912 on "Schopenhauer's Pessimism and the Theory of Salvation," followed by an essay on Kierkegaard in 1915. Watsuji's strong affinity for Nietzsche is reflected in a comment in his diary: "I believe that authentic Japanese blood corresponds to Nietzsche."[6] The opposition between the Apollonian and the Dionysian in Nietzsche's philosophy is echoed in Watsuji's own articulation of human existence. And, like Nietzsche, the young Watsuji was very attracted to Romantic poetry. It is not hard to imagine him as a sensitive and idealistic thinker, passionate about life in its tragic essence.

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used in some interpretations of Sartre.

5. *Fūdogaku* 風土学 means literally the study of climate and culture. BERQUE translates the term as "mesology" in his French translation of the introduction and first chapter of *Fūdo* (1996). In his own research, Berque applies Watsuji's concepts of 風土学 *fūdogaku* and 風土性 *fūdosei (mediance)* to phenomenological geography. We use these concepts throughout our paper.

6. Abstract of Watsuji's diary, in ISAMU 1981, 280.

In any case, Watsuji's interest in the romantic exaltation of the individual eventually gave way to a more balanced understanding of human nature. Watsuji became increasingly interested in the thought of Natsume Sōseki, whose own work contested the advantages of Western-style individualism, and this interest ultimately moderated his fascination with Western ways of life. Through his participation in a reflection group led by Sōseki in the last years of his life, Watsuji began to doubt the sustainability of a society based only on the glory of individual interests. Combined with his own experiences of living and travelling abroad, Sōseki's influence persuaded Watsuji to seek out new ways of understanding human existence.

Although Watsuji ultimately became a strong critic of the "frenetic" individualism characteristic of modernity, his developed thought does not call for the *destruction* of the individual. Instead, he argues that to the extent that individuals exist, they are always and necessarily connected to others. A wholly independent individual, with no relationship to others, can only be a chimera, a phantom of the living human being in its full complexity and relationality. Watsuji's goal became to articulate the human being not as an isolated atom but as a being whose very existence is constituted by a "practical interconnections of acts."[7] Because humans are relational beings, Watsuji argues, their very individuality stems from their difference *from others*, or in other words, from the heterogeneity of the multiple contingencies of existence.

Heidegger's *Being and Time,* which Watsuji came across in Germany shortly after its publication in 1927, undeniably had a huge influence on his own work. It was after reading this text, as Watsuji himself writes at the beginning of *Fūdo*, that he first came to seriously consider the importance of environmental milieu for human existence. Nevertheless, if we look closely at Watsuji's work we can find traces of an awareness of *mediance* even prior to his readings of Heidegger.[8] Further, where Hei-

7. This is Carter and Yamamoto's translation for the expression: 主体的行為的連関 *shutaiteki kōiteki renkan*. See WATSUJI 1996.

8. A reflection by Yuasa Yasuo on volume 22 of Watsuji's *Collected Works* indicates that already from his early years Watsuji was concerned with milieu, especially in the context of aesthetics.

degger focuses on temporality alone as the defining structural moment of human existence, Watsuji, even in his early work, considers spatiality of equal importance. Reading *Being and Time* was a great philosophical awakening, but in the end Watsuji remained unsatisfied.

Ultimately, as Watsuji saw it, Heidegger's focus on temporality results in the determination of *Dasein* as an irreducibly *individual* existence. This insight led to Watsuji's short opus, *Fūdo*, still one of the most discussed of Watsuji's books abroad. Although undeniably subject to potential criticism, the central idea of *Fūdo* was a breakthrough in understanding the relationship between human beings and milieu. In fact, most criticisms of *Fūdo* have less to do with its central theoretical propositions than with the supposed determinism that follows from these conclusions. In his defence, the objectivity required for a true theory of determinism is simply not present in the work. Many of the statements cited as evidence of determinism are in fact closer to the subjective observations of a travel notebook than to the clear-cut assertions of a scientific inquiry. Much of the time Watsuji's observations amount to little more than basic praise of Japanese specificity.

Nevertheless we must take these criticisms seriously. Here, however, it is worth questioning whether or not the English translation of *Fūdo* (against which most of these criticisms are lodged) accurately reflects the Japanese original—all the more so given that Watsuji himself expressed doubts as to the accuracy of the English translation, which was published by the Japanese Ministry of Education and commissioned by UNESCO. Based on my reading of the two texts, I would say that the English version tends to represent Watsuji's thoughts in a significantly more deterministic way than anything to be found in the original. Furthermore, Watsuji's primary focus, the interdependence of human beings and the places in which they live, suggests the *diversity* that can be found in the world in spite of the homogenizing processes of globalization. Watsuji is not proposing a kind of uniform world community at the *expense of* individual differences, but rather a world community that can exist in harmony *in spite of* these differences. Along these lines, we should take seriously Watsuji's own idealistic purpose as expressed in his foreword to the English translation of *Fūdo*:

If all the peoples of the world would only try to understand each other by forgetting for a moment the apparent peculiarities which history, traditions, habits and environment have shaped and would think solely of the common problems facing them as human beings since the dawn of civilization, the universal character of all peoples would appear and all causes of prejudice and misunderstanding would disappear and all mankind would unite in their efforts to enrich their lives with spiritual values and happiness.[9]

Unlike certain received ideas concerning Watsuji's "true" intentions, I find the inner project of Watsuji's philosophy to be in fact very close to the ideal expressed in this abstract. Moreover, Watsuji's continued interest in Western philosophy and his ongoing mediation between European and Japanese thought should be taken as an indication of his interest in the uniqueness and specificity of any given milieu, even though, for Watsuji, such individual differences will ultimately serve as further testimony to the universality of the human experience, insofar as the fact that all human beings differ from one another is also something we share.

Watsuji's theory of the existential milieu

Watsuji's theory of milieu is, *a priori*, based on a very simple idea: it is nonsense to cut the human being off from its existential milieu or the study of milieu from its history, and vice versa. Every milieu is historical and history, in turn, is "medial." One of Watsuji's goals is to reintegrate aspects of the human experience that prevailing philosophical schools and disciplines typically divide up and treat in isolation from one another. For Watsuji, conceiving of "existence" in the terms of dualisms or distinctions only destroys the full reality of what it means to be a human being. Instead, the concrete existence of human beings should be understood as grounded in the "practical interconnections of acts" which are always both individual *and* social, temporal *and* spatial. To ignore these interconnections is inevitably to divide the human

9. WTZ xxiv: 146. "The Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples," written in September 1959 and published on March 31, 1960.

being into two dimensions, the individual and the social, and to further strengthen this division by studying each side in a separate disciplinary field. In the case of the social sciences, this division results in the separate fields of psychology/anthropology and epistemology/sociology. Such separations, we might add, are the result not only of the division of human existence into the disparate dimensions of the individual and the social, but also the consequence of a long and entrenched tradition within Western philosophy that opposes mind and body and makes this opposition into the fundamental principle of human existence.

At the beginning of his *Ethics*, Watsuji uses Scheler's anthropological typology to underscore the fact that the human being has *always* been considered only through the lens of a dualistic conception of a mind and body. Although the respective studies of the mind and body share much in common, the fundamental gulf that separates them is never crossed, not even in early twentieth-century thought. Watsuji's thought, on the other hand, opens up an approach through which it is possible to link together everything that goes into making a human being human. Watsuji's thought, through a new logic of non-opposition, can also help us to recover much of the complexity and fullness that was lost or excluded by the West.

Here Watsuji is following the lead of Nishida, who questioned the primacy of Aristotle's formal logic in order to formulate his own logic of "non-contradictory opposition," expressed in terms of abstract and concrete logic. In Nishida's formulation, concrete logic alone reaches or includes the whole of human existence, while abstract logic serves only as an intermediary means of conceiving this whole. Watsuji's study of the milieu is an attempt to overcome this distinction between the concrete and the abstract in the terms of subjectivity and objectivity (as deployed in the study of human existence). We should note here that, contrary to charges of determinism, Watsuji emphasizes the subjective element of human beings' interactions with their milieu as well as the process of *reciprocal* determination that such interactions bring about.

At this point let us look more closely at Watsuji's theory of milieu.[10]

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10. See Watsuji Tetsurō, 『風土』第一章の出版「思想」WTZ XIV: 365.

Fūdo 風土, or milieu or, more literally, "wind and soil," refers to the soil, landscape, dimensions, and environment of a given land as well as the more subjective determinants of a place. Objective facts are only one part of what is expressed in the word *milieu*, and indeed the ordinary connotations of the term are probably more accurate when all is said and done, namely the totality of what surrounds human beings living together in a given place. In order to explain the phenomenal nature of milieu, Watsuji uses the easily understood example of cold. In general, Watsuji writes, we analyze cold first in the terms of phenomenological intentionality and therefore relate the feeling of coldness strictly to *individual* consciousness. But obviously we cannot stop at intentional structure in analyzing the "I" who experiences the cold. The perception of cold also has important social connections. We experience the coldness of the air *together*, even if every individual's experience differs in subtle ways. This example shows the "betweenness" of a community experiencing any given constitutive element of their milieu at the same time. Rather than simply experience "coldness," we also experience, or discover, the "we" as a social link[11] in a primordial way. Thus the experience of cold cannot be considered an independent or isolated perception. It is only in connection with the phenomenal perceptions of others that we can be said to truly "feel" the cold.

In fact, our experience of any number of "natural" phenomena is multidimensional, involving both the physical senses and subjective emotions and feelings. Thus, within a given cultural milieu, we may feel melancholy during the autumn, as the leaves fall, or happiness along with the blossoming of cherry trees in the spring. In these experiences it is not just that we are being influenced by strictly climatic phenomenon, but that "we find ourselves as the social link within the milieu."[12] Far from determining the "I" as a subject experiencing some objective phenomenon, this "common" understanding of experience suggests that both individual and social creativity are involved in human responses to phenomena within their milieu. When it is cold, for example, we have

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11. This "social link" is 間柄, which we might also translate with Bernard Stevens as "interity."

12. WTZ XIV: 396.

various forms of heating and clothing which differ according to place and culture. In the springtime we might enjoy the beauty of the landscape together by picnicking under the trees, playing music, or dancing—again, all social, place-specific forms of experiencing and responding to a shared milieu. Such examples suggest less an inner subjectivity than an implicit understanding of our being-in-common within a milieu. The shared character of such responses becomes explicit in the architecture, food, and clothing of a given place, and these elements, in turn, serve to witness to a community's response to its milieu. Although such cultural artefacts can be exported and shared by other cultures, they retain the traces of the specific milieu in which they were formed. To generalize the point, we might say "you can take a person out of their milieu, but you can never take the milieu out of that person's heart."

Not just some but *every* fact of daily life is determined through the relationship between a community and its milieu that has developed over decades, even centuries. What we experience in our own milieu is in fact a cumulative reflection of the way in which the people of this milieu have come to understand it over the course of generations. Although we carry this "medial" past into all our present experiences, it should not be understood as a deterministic burden but rather as a testament to the endless adaptations people make relative to their environment and changing circumstances. In fact, as Watsuji says, because human existence is primordially always relative to a "going outside of ourselves"[13] into and through relationality, the social link that we discover in our shared experiences of milieu is the very locus of our freedom as human beings. Ultimately our experience of milieu takes place within the dual framework of a receptivity to the phenomena we find, in combination with activities related to this receptivity or reception. Watsuji calls this dual structure *kanjushi hatarakidasu kōzō* 感受し働き出す構造, emphasizing the reciprocal influences at work within our everyday experience, involving and implicating our feelings as well as our ways of being in the world as human beings.

13. This expression is based on Heidegger's interpretation of the word *ex-istere*. Watsuji uses the expression 外に出ている, "going outside," to stress the fact that a human being as such is always involved in a relationship to exteriority.

The place of ethics in human existence

The Japanese word for human being is *ningen* 人間, which can be rendered literally as a person (人) in an interstice (間). In fact the second character is a word with multiple meanings and pronunciations. It can describe the "emptiness" of an artistic creation in which its beauty is revealed, for instance, or a suggestive, breath-like moment of silence in music. Reflecting this rich possibility of meaning, the concept of *ningen* as a whole underscores the spatiality of human beings and the bodily nature of their existence. It is through this fundamental embodiment that human beings begin relating to others; first to their family, then to school and their workplace, and finally to the "entirety" of the nation. Because of the "negative structure of human existence," each stage is related to the next by way of a negation. Even so, each negation, in a certain sense, preserves or depends on everything that came before it. Thus when we negate our individual self to affirm ourselves as sharing in a relationship, we affirm at the same time that such relational being is possible by virtue of our individuality. An exclusively independent individual is an illusion; it would be no more than a corpse, a mere physical body in which no real human being could exist. A full "human being" is inseparable from both his individual and communal dimensions and, indeed, can only be said to truly exist by virtue of these relations.[14]

In any case, human beings, understood in this way, are fundamentally spatial, existing only as an interstice or meeting place between the individual and everything to which it is related, both other human beings as well as the surrounding milieu (which will, in turn, have been shaped through interactions with human beings in the endless play of mutual determinations). Accordingly, Watsuji suggests that it is more accurate to speak of "humanology" (*ningengaku* 人間学) or the study of humans as interrelated beings, than simply of anthropology (*jinruigaku* 人類学.), the study of humans. From the perspective of ethics, this humanology is an "ethics" in the sense of a science of the ways in which humans situate themselves and relate to others in a friendly community.

14. See WATSUJI 1996, 125.

To proceed with our explanation of human existence, we noted previously that the human being is *not* a "mere" individual, since individuality "is nothing but a moment in human existence."[15] In contrast to Descartes' I = I, Watsuji poses the relationship between beings as the very basis of existence. Indeed for him, *to be* a human being *is* to be located in "betweenness" (*aidagara* 間柄). This *aidagara* entails not only the relationship between two individuals, but also the social relations of an entire community. Consequently it is possible to see *aidagara* as requiring by its very nature of the study of milieu as an ethic. For Watsuji, ethics is defined as the study of human beings and has nothing to with the study of what a human being is in general, or of morality based on individual consciousness. Watsuji's "ethics" is the concrete study of humans as social and individual, or rather of human's socio-ethical existence. Such a formulation is, of course, opposed to transcendentalist ideas of a "universal" human kind of being divorced from the particularity of its own becoming. As Watsuji writes:

> Such a thing as the existence of human beings in general does not exist in reality. What was deemed universally human by Europeans, in the past, was outstandingly European-like.[16]

Watsuji, Nishitani, and the Kyoto School in general found this "European-like" concept of the human being problematic; it simply did not fit with their own understanding of the human within an Asian context. In fact, although the Enlightenment view of human nature eventually became the guiding principle of "universal" human rights in modernity, in fact that view represents a specifically European viewpoint. For Watsuji, on the other hand, the study of human existence supposes the study of the milieu in which humans live and all these elements must be understood together in order to fully comprehend the complexity of the actual lived world. The heterogeneity of communities and their respective milieus must be preserved in order to understand both the specificities of different cultures and their relationship to one another. Hence Watsuji's attempts to analyze Japanese culture in terms of its

15. *Ibid.*, 24.
16. *Ibid.*, 26.

uniqueness and in the terms of commonalties shared with other cultures in order to preserve its unique existential milieu for future generations. His goal is both to keep alive the sense of milieu that might otherwise be lost in the mimesis of European thought, and, at the same time, to allow for a concept of milieu that can be shared with and used to understand other cultures and the more comprehensive ways in which all cultures relate.

"Ningen," Watsuji writes, "is nothing else than the realization of that movement of negation."[17] The dialectic of this negation is clearly rooted in Nishida's concept of the "self-identity of absolute contradiction." According to this formulation, within the spatio-temporal structure of human existence, both past and future are present in the moment as the locus of their interrelation. Nishida's broader concept of the historical world, as that which constructs itself through the dialectical movement from created to creator, is also present in Watsuji's description of existential milieu, although he explicitly locates himself in Heidegger's methodological lineage. For example, he defines the human being as a "being for life" (*sei he no sonzai* 生への存在), methodologically following, though obviously not replicating, Heidegger's definition of *Dasein* as "a being-toward-death." Since Watsuji's *ningen* is both an individual and a social being, its death as an individual body does not mean the "death" of its presence in a community, since it can endure in the form of a creative presence and in relationships to other human beings. If past and future are negated in the present, the present can be a place in which to build a *historialité* with the future on the horizon.

Because Watsuji's methodology is based on Heidegger's phenomenological hermeneutics, he takes daily facts as a starting point in his attempt to analyze the fundamental structure of human existence while maintaining its ground in a dialectic of emptiness. Watsuji considers spatiality by examining two essential realities of urban life: communication and transportation. This choice of focus indicates the salience of "passage" in his work, here generalized as the passage between the human being *within* a social space, and the passage of human beings themselves relative to social space. Spatiality is not seen here as an a priori sub-

17. *Ibid.,* 35.

stance or ground but as something that comes into being only through encounters. As a result, the temporality of space is premised on contingency (*gūzensei* 偶然性).

To understand this concept as metaphor may help. Think of space as a path or walkway. Every human being stands at a crossroad of countless different paths. If we see each individual as its own path, the possibility is always there that any given individual will or will not fully realize its path. According to Watsuji, however, an individual's success or failure is not random, nor is it simply the result of the individual's "free" will. Rather it depends on the individual's ability to rely on the path itself, to trust things as they are, and thereby to "become" itself. This self-awakening is certainly close to Heidegger's description of *Dasein* as an authentic being in the process of becoming what it is. The difference is that for Watsuji the "way" of every *ningen* is realized only through the negation of every singular moment, negations that, in turn, mark the realization of the self as a non-self or *anātman*. Seen in this way, the spatial and temporal structure of the human being is nothing other than the "practical interconnections of acts" that ground human existence.

To be sure, the concept of "space" is not without its ambiguities. Watsuji uses the word *kūkan* 空間 (space) when referring specifically to the place of "betweenness," echoing Nishida's use of *basho*. In this context, *kūkan* designates the space of self-awakening, not in a metaphysical but in a practical, everyday sense. Watsuji further distinguishes his concepts of space and time from milieu and history. His use of the term *fūdo* comes very close to Nishida's *kankyō* (environment), although in his book *Fūdo*, the term *kankyō* is used to designate the environment as an objective existence—a measurable, quantifiable "place"—whereas *fūdo* is used to designate the subjective milieu. *Fūdo* itself is thus the space of those reciprocal co-determinative interconnections between milieu and human existence that operate in the dynamic of self-negation. As such, Watsuji's exposition of the structure of space and time in human existence should only be taken as his way of introducing the reader to his methodology in preparation for the more concrete analyses that must be performed within the *specific* "space" of the milieu. Just as seeds cannot grow simply by themselves, so this kind of analysis can only take place within a specific, singular context.

Truth and trust as the seeds of ethics

Human existence is both individual and social, grounded in the "practical interconnections of acts" and realized as a socio-ethical unity. A socio-ethical unity cannot exist apart from the existence of distinct individuals, but in order for this unity to become a real "community," individuals must negate themselves, even as the community, in turn, must be negated in order for individuality to be realized within it. If this reciprocal movement were terminated, socio-ethical unity would give way to a totalitarian society. Accordingly, it is inaccurate to claim that the individual in Watsuji's thought is "absorbed" in the whole, given that the individual is, in fact, the very basis of any *true* unity. The more an individual is realized, the more a true socio-ethical unity can be achieved.

Furthermore, for Watsuji every community of human beings needs to be grounded on a structure of solidarity, by which he understands a given set of shared commitments or "common ground." From a simple couple to an entire nation, every stage of the development of the individual manifests its own unique structure of solidarity. The gradual accumulation of such structures eventually results in the individual's development of a unique "persona" indicative of his or her relationships to and connections with others. For instance, a given individual might acquire the persona of teacher, husband, politician, and father. On the basis of such structures, existential values are concretized and life in a shared community—a community of shared commitments and relationships—is made possible.

For Watsuji, human relationships are ethical from the very beginning, and, consequently, they are grounded in trust (*shinrai* 信頼). Because trust can only take place within the context of a community, and yet allows individuals to realize themselves relative to this community, it can be thought of as the "seed" of self-realization. Here we need to understand the ethical relationship between individuals as both virtual and actual. Ethics is inherent in every relation but it must be actualized through the dynamic of negation over time. Thus ethics is not normative in any universalistic sense, but rather depends on the nature of a given relationship. Accordingly, the "ought" between a father and a

son is not the same as that between two strangers or two lovers. Ethical relations vary according to who is involved and according to the larger situation or context of their involvement. Hence, on a macro-level, we cannot claim that relationships in Europe are any more ethical than those in South America or elsewhere. The facticity of ethics depends on milieu and on a mutual respect for human lives.

In Western discourse, ethics is often considered normative or proscriptive, a set of "oughts" that control human relationships, based on the assumption that humans, as individuals, are primarily motivated by their own personal interests. According to such a view, the social contract that guarantees cooperative community life requires an act of coercion embodied in the nation-state. Ethics is thus understood in the terms of external "oughts" that rely on individuals' "transcendence" of their own self-interests. Even though the strength and determination needed to carry out such an ethical self-transcendence belongs to the human heart, it is nevertheless understood as the transcendence of a proscriptive external ought. In Watsuji's philosophy, however, the very distinction between the "is" and the "ought" is blurred. If human beings are always and necessarily connected to others, their relationships are, a priori, ethical, insofar as ethics describes the rules that govern a community. Nevertheless, these ethically constitutive relationships must be endlessly realized through the negative dialectic that determines the human process of becoming itself.

The question thus becomes: how is ethics realized in the existence of human beings? Or, conversely, how does a relation become *un*ethical? Watsuji argues that as long as each community manifests its own unique structure of solidarity and, by extension, community-specific values based on that unique structure, the ground of ethics must be sought in *makoto*. *Makoto* enables realization of the five relationships: husband and wife, father and son, elder and younger, prince and subject, friend and friend. These five relations correspond with the actualization of the path of Heaven that structures human life. It is no coincidence here that Watsuji bases his own analyses of community on practical being in the world, given that traditional Confucianism focuses on the "political" world and the rules belonging to and governing social communities. Where Confucianism grounds these rules in Heaven, Watsuji

focuses on the concrete study of human beings in the world. Even so, he was strongly influenced by Neo-Confucian thinkers who attempted to link the metaphysical dimensions of Confucius' "Way" with embodied human existence and embodied inter-subjective relations. Etymologically, he links the word *shinrai* 信頼 (trust) to *makoto* to define it as "that which relies on *makoto*," suggesting that the very reality of things, as they are, lies in their relationality: reality is truth, understood as the mutual reliance of things.

For Watsuji, "human relations are relations of trust; where human relations prevail, trust is also established."[18] Trust relies on the realization of the spatio-temporal movement of individual and community. It grounds every relationship between persons, serving as a kind of tacit "contract" giving individuals confidence even among strangers. This contract, however, has nothing in common with the Western idea of a "social contract" which is said to ground human community on the organizing principles of a State. Watsuji's contract is inherent in human existence itself: as soon as individuals "come out" of themselves to meet an other (and thereby to become themselves), trust is manifest.

It is when this kind of dialectical process stops that falsehood appears. Even so, "it is always at some place and on some occasion, in the complex and inexhaustible interconnections of acts, that truthfulness does not occur in human existence."[19] Falsehood can exist but, ultimately, it never replaces truthfulness as the root of human existence. This is true, in part, because truth itself is seen not as an objective fact of human epistemology but as completely and irreducibly *subjective*. Thus the attitude of the believer determines whether or not something is "true." This perspectivist conception of truth is not simple individual relativism but a consequence of the truth of "betweenness" or relationality. For example, if we intentionally lie to someone in order to hurt that person, we betray the trust at the bottom of our relationship. But if our lie is intended to soothe or comfort, we cannot really refer to it as mere deceit. Whatever truth is to be found in human relationships—understood as inherently ethical—lies within and depends on "betweenness."

18. *Ibid.*, 271.
19. *Ibid.*, 281.

Watsuji's use of the concept of *makoto* allows us to think of ethics concretely, that is, as something always and ever determined in the context of a given milieu. Once again, this milieu need to be understood as a practical reality made up of the relations between individuals, crystallized within specific communities, and interrelated in the broader context of the whole earth. It is not without reason that such an idea of truth and trust in the dual structure of human existence looks to be idealistic. Indeed, Watsuji does describe a dialectically unified world in which truth and trust, rather than deceitfulness, are taken as the norm. But it would be a mistake to think that he simply overlooks the possibility of evil or wicked acts. His is rather an attempt to move away from the assumption that individuals are a priori selfish, and to advance toward the belief that by living in a balanced way—where both individual and social interests co-exist in harmony—we can, in fact, trust our own instincts and rely on things "as they are." Such a belief, or trust, would in turn make it possible to live in the world without submitting to the will of the "powers that be," renouncing one's individuality under the pressure to belong to society. If we can harmonize the interests of the individual and the community, we will not have to live in fear of anyone, and there will be no threat of annihilation by others or of our desire to annihilate them.

The most important task a human is charged with is to "take care" of our relationships, both those to other beings and those to our milieu, since even as we shape and build these relationships, they, too, shape and build us. We must also take an interest in what happens in the here and now, since our immediate actions prepare and influence both our present and our future. This "taking an interest" means, ultimately, to be among things and to be concerned with them.

Might we not therefore conclude that for Watsuji ethics is basically always a philosophy of the milieu? Opposing every form of subjection—be it the subservience of individual interests or the interests of the community—Watsuji's philosophy urges awareness of our betweenness, of that which constitutes our distinctive human interiority, without privileging one side over the other. Human beings are not isolated atoms in larger molecules. We are, through and through, individual *and* social, constituted by a multiplicity of "betweens" that determine our being

in the here and now. This here and now, in turn, is connected to the future, in that our present actions help to shape both our own future and the future of our community and milieu. For all these reasons, Watsuji's philosophy can help us understand how to "be" together with the entire earth as our horizon.

Watsuji's ethics at the crossroads of cultures

In both his methodology and his sources, Watsuji was undoubtedly influenced by the Western philosophical tradition. Nevertheless his main concepts are grounded in Buddhist, Confucian, and Shinto thought—a mixture that places him at the crossroads of very different cultures. The radical otherness of his philosophy makes it impossible to limit the application of his ideas to their birthplace; they deserve to be read around the world as a discourse with the potential to deepen and change our perception of what it means to be ethical. From the ground of his own comparative studies of ethics and culture, Watsuji's thought suggests what we may call a true "ethics of milieu."

Watsuji invites us to think from a "middle" position, locating ourselves within the complex "interconnections of acts" that make us who we are. From this standpoint, ethics cannot but take shape as an ethics of the milieu, focused not on individual consciousness but on the "between" of relationships. Because we only exist on the basis of such relations we must take care of them. As "being-towards-life," humans need to engage in the here and now as the building blocks of future generations.

Even as I write, ecological disasters have become commonplace, and the urban centers continue to expand into uglier and uglier landscapes that are less and less human. Faced with a future in which these problems will only become more widespread, only the sort of philosophy of milieu that Watsuji aimed at can help us cultivate a truly ethical and aesthetic relationship to the world about us.

An eloquent example of an expropriation of Watsuji's philosophy can be found in the work of Kuwako Toshio, who develops his own interpretation of Watsuji's *fūdo* in such texts as *Environmental Philosophy*

and *The Philosophy of Sense*.[20] He focuses on the relation between body and space in order to construct a new framework for relating to our environment. According to Kuwako, the destruction of the existential milieu signals the renunciation of human existence itself to destructive powers.

Another important aspect of Watsuji's own work, one that was passed over in this essay, is his meditations on aesthetics. Essays such as *A Pilgrimage to Ancient Temples* and *Mask and Persona*[21] helped to revitalize interest among intellectuals in native Japanese culture at a time when an overwhelming preference for Western culture had resulted in a feeling of general contempt for all things Japanese. There are good reasons for seeing Watsuji as concerned with rooting Japanese communality in the ground of culture, as something shared by those living within a given milieu.

Because his ethics is based so completely on concrete, corporeal relationships, it leaves no room for allegiance to an empty state. Sadly enough, there *are* in fact statements in his writings expressing reverence for a "powerful state," though it is extremely difficult to determine to what degree Watsuji actually believed in such ideas, and to what degree they were simply a reflection of the prevalent State rhetoric. If criticism aimed at Watsuji's supposed nationalism cannot simply be rejected outright, neither does it make sense to decide on that basis alone to ignore or discredit the whole of Watsuji's work. It is both possible and beneficial to treat Watsuji's thought on its principal merits, as we have tried to do here, disentangled from all such nationalist pretense.

In the realm of aesthetics, for instance, the philosopher Sakabe Megumi has contributed enormously to a fair and accurate reading of Watsuji and in so doing, helped clarify the enduring value of his work. Indeed it is precisely through this sort of encounter with texts written in a different milieu and in a different set of circumstances that we can appreciate the specificity of the milieu in which we live today. Only through examining and understanding such differences can we hope

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20. Kuwako Toshio 桑子敏雄,『感性の哲学』(Tokyo: NHK Books, 2001);『風土の中の環境哲学』(Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1998).

21.「古寺巡礼」WTZ II: 1–192: ;「面とペルソナ」XVII: 285–450.

ourselves to avoid the dangers inherent in particular customs and languages.

Rather than letting Watsuji's supposed nationalism cloud the whole of his contribution to philosophy and ethics, we should appreciate the many ways in which he has opened philosophy up to fundamental human relationality, and consider how best to make use of these ideas in confronting the global changes and challenges that face us today. Even if we take Watsuji's work as no more than a hint at the true nature of human existence, that hint may well turn out to constitute for us an "ought," stimulating us to find a way to walk his path in our present circumstances, in Japan and in Europe, but also around the world.

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Yuasa Yasuo's Theory of the Body

Britta Boutry-Stadelmann

In this essay I would like to present some of the reflections of Yuasa Yasuo 湯浅泰雄 (1925–2005) on the body in order to underscore the importance of the body for our perception of reality. In Euro-American philosophy, the body is generally not given explicit theoretical treatment as one of the factors shaping society and our perception of reality. Yuasa, in contrast, integrates the body as a concept into philosophy. As he himself remarks, he started out by concentrating on the concept of self (*jiko* 自己) but gradually became interested in the body (*shintai* 身体) as a means to further study and understand reality. My aim here is to demonstrate how Yuasa's philosophy of the body developed from a specifically Japanese philosophical background.

No doubt we would be hard pressed to claim that any given idea or concept in Japanese philosophy is entirely unique to Japan. Nevertheless, even concepts that may have been introduced from Europe or elsewhere—such as Nishida's well-known concept of "pure experience" which was inspired originally by William James and Ernst Mach—change as they are taken up and adapted by Japanese thinkers. Thus, for example, Nishida took "pure experience" as the starting point for his philosophy, which was not the case either for James or Mach. Indeed it is the distinctive way in which Nishida "handles" or uses this already extant

concept that is its strong point, not the "invention" of the concept itself. The same may be said of Yuasa's theory of the body: the idea itself is not new, but Yuasa's handling of it sheds new light on the role of the body in philosophy—in both ancient Japanese thought and in Ancient Greek ontology as a theory of matter and spirit.

Why a "theory of the body"?

Our culture is not body-friendly in the sense that physical well-being is not among the criteria used to evaluate quality of life. Modernity is generally expressed in terms of mathematical figures (economical criteria) and by the degree of democracy and individual freedom (sociological criteria). The state of the body is by and large left out of the evaluative framework. In fact, the idea of well-being stems from a different system of values which itself is in need of more adequate exploration.

To be sure, we have to acknowledge that the place and importance of the body has changed with modernity's interest in a comprehensive understanding of medicine and diet, so much so that a sort of "body cult" is part and parcel of contemporary life. This way of valuing well-being, however, amounts often to little more than a recent fashion, symbolized by the "wellness centers" that have mushroomed in the major metropolitan centers of the world. Such trendy well-being is not what I have in mind. Instead, I wish to consider how a philosopher like Yuasa presents the body as a counterpart of the mind and expounds on the ways in which mind and body ideally work together in harmony.

Yuasa's starting point

At first Yuasa's interests were focused more on ancient and medieval Japanese thought, and from there turned to pre-modern modes of thought and philosophy [Shaner 1989, 8]. Yuasa concentrated on studying the concept of the self as developed by Nishida Kitarō, Watsuji Tetsurō, Miki Kiyoshi, and Tanabe Hajime, drawing on others authors

as well, such as Hatano Seiichi. Through his study of their writings, as well as of the works of the French existentialist philosopher Merleau-Ponty, Yuasa was inspired to pursue the crucial role played by the body in Japanese intellectual history.

The initial catalyst for Yuasa's theory of the body came from in his own critical readings of European philosophy. For Yuasa, Descartes' separation of mind and body initiated a philosophical tradition in which mind (spirit) and body (matter) are opposed. In the history of ideas, this separation led to the development of two very different, and seemingly incompatible, systems of thought: idealism (in which mind is privileged over the body) and materialism (in which the body is privileged over mind).

Critical of this division, Yuasa followed his own intuitions and set out to reconcile idealism and materialism by approaching the problem of mind and matter not in terms of their opposition but in terms of their harmony. Rather than insisting on their rigid difference, Yuasa treated body and spirit as a whole. In order to accomplish this, Yuasa sought thinkers who were already engaged in this kind of non-dualistic philosophy. In retracing the role of the body through history, Yuasa found that many Asian thinkers took the synergistic nature of the operations of mind and body as a given [SHANER 1989, 234]. This approach to body and mind as a unity was not generally viewed as a "naturally" experienced phenomenon, however, but rather as a synergy requiring conscious effort and special training (*shugyō* 修行). This training often took the form of meditation (either sitting meditation or more dynamic types of meditation through movement), as a practice through which the harmony of mind and body could be cultivated. The goal of such training was typically expressed as the attainment of an "awakening"（*satori* 悟り）. Yuasa provides some historical examples in which this kind of awakening is described:

> Eisai 栄西 (1141–1215), founder of the Rinzai school of Zen in Japan, calls this awakening of mind and body *shinshin ichinyo* 心身一如, the unity or oneness of heart/mind and body).

> Dōgen 道元 (1200–1253), founder of the Sōtō school of Zen in Japan, describes the awakening as *shinjin datsuraku* 身心脱落, the

dropping-off of body and heart/mind) in the *Genjō Kōan* chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō*. In Dōgen's writings, "dropping-off" body and mind means dropping any distinction between the two. Dōgen and the Sōtō school consider that such awakening is not possible without *zazen* (sitting meditation) and the undertaking of practical duties in daily life (cleaning, preparing food) that naturally and necessarily involve the body.

Myōe (明恵 1173–1232) left behind, according to Yuasa, numerous accounts of "mystical" experiences and coined the term *shinjin gyōnen*" 心身凝然, the crystallization of heart/mind and body as an expression of the perfect unity of the two.

The writings of all three monks provide us with testimonies of "out-of-the-ordinary" experiences of "awakening," or an "altered state of consciousness" in which body and mind work together as a unity, and in which any kind of dialectical opposition drops away. Such experiences, achieved through exercise, meditation, or prayer, allow mind and body to function together rather than in opposition.

On the one hand, then, European intellectual history can be characterized in terms of a certain mind-body dualism (which might also be defined as "temporary dualism") that, at least in Descartes' case, served primarily as a methodological approach for defining the human conception of reality through reason and logic. While it is not impossible to conceive of less dualistic approaches to human functioning within the constraints of this tradition, such attempts have never belonged to the mainstream of European philosophical thought. In effect, the scission of mind and body initiated by Descartes can be said to have led Western philosophy into a kind of deep aporia.

In the much longer history of Western philosophy's dualism that begins well before Descartes, the idea that mind and body are taken as two separate but interconnected extremes, in which the spiritual dimension is appreciated and the bodily dimension depreciated, has produced a wide spectrum of variations, occasionally even producing theories so extreme as to argue for the total opposition of mind and body to one another. Such was the case in Plato's theory of perception as well as in

Augustinian and Neo-Platonic religious thought in which matter was considered as an impediment to true knowledge.

On the other hand, we can turn to any number of Japanese thinkers, including the three figures mentioned above, who take up a non-dualistic theory of mind and body, exemplified by *satori* and the unification of mind and body through meditation, as a methodology with which to explore reality in ways even more profound than those which can be accomplished through the use of reason alone. Still, it bears repeating that these practitioners understood this unification to be the result of training and considered the attainment of such altered, higher states of consciousness to be something quite different from the ordinary, everyday workings of the mind and heart.

Yuasa did not restrict his readings to religious thinkers, but also developed his theories of the body through an engagement with modern Japanese philosophers such as Watsuji and Nishida, both of whom had a profound influence on Japanese thought in the twentieth century and beyond. Although Nishida is often thought of as a thinker deeply influenced by the Zen religious tradition, Yuasa considers him to be more an eastern *philosopher* than a spokesman for a specific religious tradition. Nishida, for his part, was also deeply influenced by Western thinkers such as William James and Henri Bergson.

In this regard, one might even argue that Yuasa's interest in Nishida and his elaboration of a theory of the body was indirectly stimulated and influenced by James and Bergson. One thinks directly of the concepts of "pure experience" and "intuition," both developed by James and Bergson in the context of the body and later taken up by Nishida: "pure experience" designating experience in the form of a "continuous stream" that flows prior to the interventions of reason and any awareness of a division between subjects and objects; and "intuition" designating a kind of global consciousness that surpasses a merely rational, self-reflective consciousness. Although Nishida used a fair amount of Neo-Kantian terminology, his thought does not fit well with the Kantian framework of idealistic rationalism. Rather he placed greater emphasis on non-rationalistic intuition as a way of knowing, and this in turn gave him his general propensity for taking religious sentiments and religious approaches more seriously than others before him had done.

Medical approaches to body and mind

As he pursued his studies of the historical relationship between mind and body, Yuasa, eventually became interested in various definitions of science (for instance, objectivistic science and subjectivistic science) and in the medical-scientific approach to the body in its relationship to mind.

Among others, Yuasa studied the writing of Louis Pasteur (1822–1895) in France and Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902) in Germany, who were instrumental in turning medicine into an "objective" science and establishing the foundations of modern medical science, and both of whom made conscious efforts to separate their work from the psychological dimension of human life. Pasteur's work in bacteriology and the development of antibacterial medications, and Virchow's investigations into the pathology of cells and experiments with surgical techniques to remove them from the body captured Yuasa's attention. In the end, however, Yuasa found himself among the many contemporaries of his who found this approach to the human being ultimately dissatisfying.

To underscore the differences between Western medicine and more traditional Eastern medicine, many thinkers turned to some of the beliefs of traditional Chinese medicine, whose influence has spread far and wide across Asia through the centuries. Practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine treat the body as a total living system which "produces" illness rather than as a mechanical system that is attacked from the outside. Accordingly, such practitioners believe that the body itself must be reinforced in order to return it to a state of health; disease and illness are never treated as something that can or should be cut or taken away from the body. In contrast, the typical approach of Western doctors is more akin to that of a mechanic removing some malfunctioning widget or other that has been obstructing the proper functioning of a machine.

For all these reasons, Yuasa was compelled to search beyond the traditional Western natural sciences and to explore other fields and disciplines in the search for an approach that does not treat the body as only a *mechanical* unity or the mind as something directed *exclusively* by reason. This is not to say that he set out to dispose of Western system altogether in favor of an Eastern one, but only that he sought com-

mon ground between them. Yuasa's philosophical project can this be described as an attempt to build a bridge between objective scientific knowledge and intuitive, individual experience in order to answer questions such as: How does meditation act on the body? How can we explain the energy flow induced by acupuncture? How can we reveal the psychological dimensions of medicine?

The quasi-body system

Yuasa's readings and observations led him to the idea of a "quasi-body system"—a kind of map that represents the link or shared space between mind and body, in which the mental or "energetic" body crosses over into the physiological body. Such a system is hinted at, for example, in the flow of *ki* energy (気) directed by the body's meridians (*keiraku* 径) through a number of acupuncture points (*tsubo* 壷), and tapped into in the practice of acupuncture. In 1974 Motoyama Hiroshi's electro-physiological measurements recorded this energy "scientifically" for the first time, effectively proving the existence of a mental or energetic dimension of the human being. One may well suppose that numerous other phenomenon now classified vaguely as "para-normal" and the widely documented cases of mental healing might also be explained one day on the basis of this system. Today, however, the tendency is to evaluate them primarily for their curative effects, in general avoiding the question of their possible scientific foundations.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Euro-American philosophers rediscovered the importance of the body: William James, Wilhelm Dilthey, and Henri Bergson were among those who sought to develop theories of the body in opposition to the ruling scientific and positivistic interpretations of human life. The matter-mind debate entered a fertile new period and was taken up and developed within the philosophies of existentialism and phenomenology. The idea of an interface between mind and body was explicitly taken up by Bergson in his theory of the "système sensori-moteur." For Bergson, the brain was less an organ of cognition than the organ that coordinates the body's movements; from this perspective, the movement of the body can be understood as the

movement of the mind with the body or in it. Later Maurice Merleau-Ponty took an explicitly phenomenological approach, treating perception as a fundamental act of knowing and understood the body not as a simple object but as a continuous condition of human experience. Life, he argued, is itself a *corporéité* and consciousness is itself corporeal—all in sharp contrast to the received Cartesian mind-body dualism.

This sort of thinking of the relationship between mind and body, as we noted, is well known in alternative forms of medicine (mainly Asian), where human beings are thought to be in control of many bodily functions generally considered beyond the reach of consciousness, "unconscious" functions such as motor reflexes, autonomous nerves, heartbeat, body temperature, perception of pain, and so forth.

Practical vs. theoretical knowledge

The Western philosophical system, which clearly divides (and even opposes) body and matter from mind and privileges the latter, also tends to value *theoria* over *praxis*. From the Enlightenment on, Descartes' division of mind and body promoted the separation of philosophy (as the analysis of mental ideas) from science (observations of the body and the material world around us) into distinct disciplines.

Here again Yuasa sought to counter this tendency by drawing on traditions of the East in which experience and practical knowledge were generally accepted as the truer approach to reality. In particular, Yuasa located this alternate perspective in what we might call an "Eastern'"metaphysics of immanence. From this perspective, individual, personalized experience is seen as authentic and sincere, and therefore meaningful and "true." Transcendental or universal concepts, on the other hand, are seen as mere abstractions.

Thinking through the assumptions and principal ideas of this native Asian metaphysics, Yuasa locates a fundamental difference between Eastern and Western definitions of knowledge（*chi* 知). According to traditional Eastern thought, true knowledge proceeds from bodily experience (*taiken* 体験) and metaphysics is not separated from the body. In the West, on the other hand, knowledge is almost exclusively considered

to be a mental function and the body as an obstruction, interfering with the mind's true insight into metaphysical truth.

OF WHAT USE IS A THEORY OF THE BODY FOR EVERYDAY LIFE?

What benefit is there in seeking common ground between spiritual phenomena and traditional science and its methods, as opposed to viewing them as totally unrelated and mutually irrelevant in the realm of theory? One way to clarify the relevance of such a dialogue is through "body scale theory" as used in rural planning and urban studies, both of which are disciplines greatly affected by social and political concerns but which may also be more philosophical in nature.

It is a fact that the majority of people on earth live in urban areas, be they low-density urban zones, in which people generally travel longer distances and thus are often characterized by considerable reliance on automobiles, or high-density areas with well-developed public transportation networks as well as short-distance vehicles such as bicycles, taxis, and motorbikes. Both types of urban life tend to be heavily dependent on "speed," both in terms of the movement of traffic and the exchange of information and business and transactions. Until recently, speed was valued insofar as it was linked to economic prosperity.

More recent studies, however, have begun to question the value of speed in human interactions and the benefits of automotive speed in the larger context of urban safety. Given that the human brain cannot process interpersonal relations or apply personal values at speeds above 20 miles per hour, the authorization of higher speed limits within urban areas results in higher accident rates and contributed in general to the overall impersonal, anonymous, and even hostile atmosphere of city life.

A European project called "Shared Space" (www.shared-space.org) has developed new guidelines for traffic "taming" and urban design that show promise in tackling these questions. The principles behind the project can be described as a sort of "back-to-the-body scale" theory. In essence, it advocates the redefinition of public space as a social zone that is capable of functioning in a variety of ways for a variety of users, at the

same time as it allows for interactions between users that are less predictable and more intuitive. Paradoxically, this system promotes a kind of "creative chaos" as a necessary ground for the fostering of responsibility in those who use the system and therefore provide an alternative foundation for public security. Instead of allowing or even promoting the idea of "the faster, the better," speed in general is discouraged and the apparatus of acceleration is regulated to a degree that speed does not lead to the deterioration of our senses, nerves, and bodily awareness. Taming traffic speed, therefore, fosters human interaction and assures a "body scale" for the urban context. Clearly, taking the body (or, better, the "body-mind") as our point of reference promotes the development of new solutions to problems of urban planning and traffic control.

Conclusion

Inspired by Yuasa's work, I have tried to approach the body-mind debate from a practical point of view. How do we understand the body? Is it an obstacle to a more profound understanding, or a tool in its own right with which to achieve authentic insight? We have seen, if only briefly, two very different traditions of thinking regarding the relationship between mind and body. Although the Eastern tradition, as presented here, has been generally depicted as "body friendly" and the Western tradition as generally disposed to favor the mind, Yuasa's writings not only set out the difference but also open up a number of parallels and connections between the two, which he, in turn, has developed as a genuinely new system of thought.

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